

# Blandfordia



North Shore Group  
(ABN 87 002 680 408)

March 2021

## *From our President Sue Bowen*

At our AGM in February, I was very thrilled to award our **Noel Rosten New Member Encouragement Award 2020 to Tania Lamble**, convenor of both our Val Williams Scholarship and Propagation. Tania has been a member for only a short time and has already taken on two major responsibilities. Thank you for your hard work Tania!

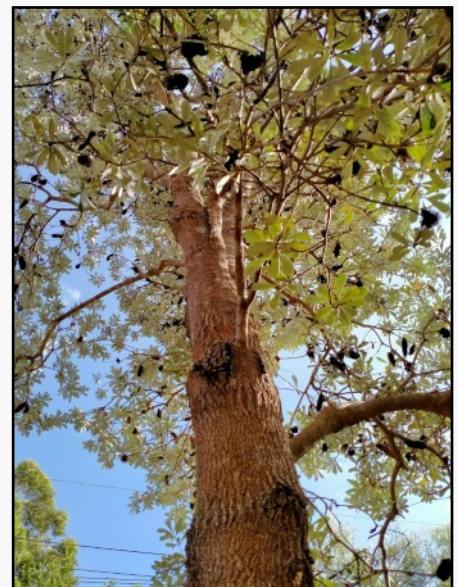
I was also thrilled to award one of our long-standing, hard-working convenors with the **Melba Dyer Award 2020 to Jan Marshall**. Not only has Jan Marshall looked after our Wildflower display at Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden for many years, she has done so despite being locked down in the Avalon Covid-19 cluster, and now having a broken ankle! Thank you for your hard work Jan!

I am so pleased that we are making progress on our long-hoped-for improvements to our shadehouse and access path at Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden. The path has just been completed and the shadehouse improvements are due to happen after our 13<sup>th</sup> March plant sale (*see p. 2*).

Don't forget to book in for our plant sale on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> March. With face-to face meetings and plant sales still cancelled, our occasional major plant sales are a way of providing you with new plants while raising funds for our 2021 activities. Our shadehouse is full of plants wanting new homes! (*see p.2 for more details*)

Finally, our sympathy goes out to Wendy Grimm and her family on the recent passing of her mother.

*Sue Bowen*



Saturday 20 March – APS NSW quarterly gathering: New grevillea hybrids with Peter Olde OAM. For full details see your APS NSW enewsletter – March 2021 email 28<sup>th</sup> Feb

## PLANT SALE 13<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2021

We are holding a low-key plant sale from our shadehouse at Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden on

**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> March**

KWG 420 Mona Vale Road, St Ives

Our plants have grown well over summer and we have a wide range (although not huge numbers of each species) of plants needing new homes.

The sale will be for **APS members and friends**, and is by **prior booking only**.

You can book at 10 minute intervals between 9am and 4.30pm on a first in, first booked basis. This will allow us to be Covid compliant, as well as avoiding over-crowding in our small shadehouse and the car park.



Please book with Sue Bowen, on [suzanneebowen@gmail.com](mailto:suzanneebowen@gmail.com) or 0478 957 951.

You will need to bring your own boxes/bags for your plants and we prefer payment by credit card.

The sale will go ahead regardless of the weather. If wet, please bring protective weather gear.

To help you with your selections on the day we will distribute a list of the plants available (and their growing details) before the sale. We will also provide you with further directions.



## FROM QUAGMIRE to PROMENADE



After receiving a letter from Ku-ring-gai Council warning us that our shade house and the 10 metre path beside it posed threats to the safety of volunteers, we went into action.

We engaged a handyman to clear the path of the remaining debris (NSG working bee in December cleared much of the material) and prepare a trench.

Previous attempts to drain this area did not employ a jackhammer so it was not surprising to observe that as soon as the trench was dug, the water started flowing in.



By laying a new drainage sock and joining it to the waste-water pipe from the sink, the area should be drier. There will always be moisture because the path is downhill from the community nursery which uses a lot of water. Fortunately a hanging swamp which surrounds the southern and eastern sides of our shade house absorbs the run-off from the path.



Before the blue metal (all 4 tonnes of it) was laid, it was necessary to remove large quantities of mud that sat on the rock slabs. Once that was done, the blue metal stopped sinking into the quagmire and the path began to take shape!

Two weeks later, after heavy rain, the path is flat, firm and fit for walking on.

Tania Lamble

Co-convenor of Propagation



12<sup>th</sup> February 2021

**The topic of Mark “Skippy” Schuster’s talk was *Living on the Razor’s Edge’: a personal perspective on trying to balance fire management for both asset protection & biodiversity.***

Mark is now working for Ku-ring-gai Council and is keen to discuss with anyone interested in the maintenance and good health of the environment and its biodiversity and local fire safety. He has been involved with fire management for the past 11 years.

Mark has visited with Wendy the sites of *Genoplesium baueri* and Sue B at some of the bushcare sites in KWG. Mark commented that Ku-ring-gai & Hornsby Council lands are in the highest fire risk areas due to the extent of, and nature of, the suburban interface with bushland. There is a Hornsby/ Ku-ring-gai Bush fire Risk Management Committee. <http://hkbfmc.org/>.

We all appreciate, from experience and especially from 2019/2020 experiences of fires, how complex fires are and how so many factors interact to influence the frequency, severity and extent of fire in our country. The impact of fire on flora and fauna, as well as on humans and assets, is highly significant. Some areas are definitely NOT suitable for houses and other assets to be built on. Climate factors such as ambient temperatures, droughts, fires, rainfall, floods, etc all contribute to this very COMPLEX issue. Cumulative impacts of fire and the relationship between variables, such as fire frequency, fire intensity, season (time of year) and extent of the affected area will affect the outcomes of fires. Currently many animals and plants are closer to extinction (this is forever!) than previously. This is a result of many things impacting on them, including in some cases, fire.

Mark discussed some of the techniques of using fire to stop wildfires. These techniques include prescribed (controlled) burns, mechanical barriers and back burns at the time of active fires. There is also the need for education and awareness for residents and good planning. Mosaic burning is a technique where different areas in the same larger area are subjected to a cool burn on each occasion when a prescribed burn occurs. Theoretically, no wild fires occur between each burn. Theoretically the cool burn allows most animals to relocate to nearby areas while the fire passes and then recolonise the burnt area afterwards. The impacts on flora and ground conditions are also planned to be more controlled and to create a more sustainable outcome.

For biodiversity to be maintained habitat needs to be protected so that food and shelter remain for the animals and conditions for the endemic plants are sustained. Prescriptions for flora already exist and stipulate the recommended interval in years between fires. Inappropriate burns may let other species colonise and become the predominant species. Mark commented that the key to successful management is to know the local area of bushland and how it “ticks”. Soil moisture levels and the seasonality of burns for reproductive stages of plants and animals also contribute to the complexity and difficulty in making the best decisions about fires and fire management. The impact of the burns on human health and crops also have to be factored into the decisions e.g. wetter burns create more smoke.

Again, summed up in one word- COMPLEX.

Thanks to Mark for his most informative talk. We look forward to being able to have more informal chats with him at KWG.

Recommended resources:

*Flammable Australia: Fire Regimes, Biodiversity and Ecosystems in a Changing World,*

Edited by: Ross A Bradstock, A Malcolm Gill, Richard J Williams

Nature Conservation Council: <https://www.nature.org.au/healthy-ecosystems/hotspots-project/>

Tying in with Mark’s informative talk, Sue Fredrickson then presented some images of Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens in 2014 (APS NSG annual trip), February 2020 immediately post fires and then in January 2021 as regeneration is evident. Thanks Sue.

*Written by Jan Williamson*

*From Jeff Howes*



I was down around the Eden area of NSW in early March and the bush fire devastation was still so apparent. Many Eucalyptus are still struggling to strongly grow their usually vigorous epicormal growth and many more are completely dead.

This picture shows a scene of the coast that normally you would not see unless you were on the head land. As well no small birds or insects were seen.

All in all, a huge area of our burnt state trying to recover.

Poor fellow my country indeed.

**Excellent resource for identifying and finding Australian native plants** *Jeff Howes*

There are currently approximately 500 plants in the Resource section of the APS NSW web site and a lot more still to be added.

<https://resources.austplants.com.au/plant-database/>

Use the search and filtering features in the table below to find plants of interest and then click on a plant's **Image** or **Title** to view plant details.

Please note that the table of plants can be alphabetised by clicking on the heading at the top of each column.

Also, any plants such as cultivars that use inverted commas e.g. *Banksia* 'Giant Candles', appear **after** those without any inverted commas, such as *Banksia robur*.

ARTICLES of possible interest to our members.

1. This Fungimap webinar with Roy Halling (Professor Emeritus of Mycology, New York Botanical Garden) discusses Boletes (Pores, no gills). We hope it enhances the understanding and appreciation of the amazing range of boletes we have in Australia which underpin the health of many of our ecosystems.

Roy discusses how he came to be interested in fungi, & boletes in particular, as well as how he has spent much time in Australia.

Here is the link to the recording of the webinar:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-X68zACUcin0RggNjliMxY3dXPn5IbJE/view?usp=sharing>

For more information on documenting boletes, Roy recommends people visit <http://sweetgum.nybg.org/science/projects/boletineae/>, then click on 'Resources' in top menu bar, scroll down and click on 'Collecting Guide-Description Worksheets'.

These are free PDFs with instructions, guidance and illustrated worksheets on how to properly document specimens.

Two examples of successfully regenerating/ rewilding locations

2. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-02-07/walker-swamp-blue-gum-plantation-transformed-back-to-wetlands/13110128>

3. <https://www.rewildingbritain.org.uk/rewilding-projects/knepp-castle-estate>

### ***Blandfordia* History**

I was talking to our current *Blandfordia* editor and I was surprised to find out that all North Shore members now received the newsletter in a digital format and paper copies are long gone.

Who said that our older members are not digital literate.

Back when I was editor starting in 1998, for three years, only six North Shore Group members out of 186 received their copy of *Blandfordia* by email as a PDF attachment.

To send out the paper copy version each month entailed a lot of work and went like this:

I produced the six page newsletter using Adobe PageMaker software and then printed it out on a basic HP5L laser printer that cost \$700 and had 4Mb of memory (a lot in those days).

I then took the newly printed copy to Snap Printing in Hornsby and they printed 180 paper copies. On collection a few days later, I then folded them in thirds making it a DL size and stuck an address label for each member on them. The address labels were printed out each month using MS Word. I then sorted them by post code and took them to Australia Post for franking and posting. Phew and all to a tight time frame.

Another job of the NL editor was printing out the name tags for new members and old members that lost them.

*Written by Jeff Howes*

*Some comments from the current editor, Jan Williamson:* When I commenced in 2013, I was also trotting off to the local printer each month, folding and posting several copies. Due to the cost, these hard copies were in black and white. This is obviously not the best way to appreciate flowers. The last of the hard copies was sent in late 2019.

# APS NSG Events in March 2021

## 12<sup>th</sup> March APS NSG March Meeting

7.45pm for 8pm start on Zoom platform.

My Topic is about photographing Australian native plants.

*Speaker:* **David Roberts**

*Topic:* **Photos for a brag sheet or plant ID**

*Background:* The talk will cover some thoughts and ideas on taking photographs of plants. It will cover the general photographic principles and plant-specific challenges. My aim is to try to encourage people to enhance their photography skills and admire their own results.

David's credentials include:

Profession Bush Regenerator (only new)

Qualifications Conservation and Land management certificate 3

Member of Rural Fire service ( 17 years )

Member of APS for 1 year

Amateur Photographer

I live in Pennant Hills backing on to Lane Cove National Park. This image was taken in my office.



## When do we return to face to face meetings?

Due to space restrictions at Beatrice Taylor Hall, the meeting still needs to be held on a virtual platform.

The committee is acutely aware that this format is not as congenial as our regular meeting and is endeavouring to return to face to face meetings as soon as possible. In the meantime, we are fortunate that speakers are supporting our meetings and hope that you are enjoying hearing our speakers and seeing the images from the comfort of your home. If you do not have the technology available, please contact a committee member to see if we can assist you to attend the meeting in a safe manner.

The decision regarding each meeting is made at the monthly committee meeting. Please check with Blandfordia for details.

Next Meeting : 9<sup>th</sup> April 2021 Speaker **David Bambridge** ( Garden Makers) will speak on landscaping gardens.

## 13<sup>th</sup> March Plant sale ( see page 2)

### Walks and Talks Programme 2021 MONDAY 15<sup>th</sup> March

**Introduction to Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden** 420 Mona Vale Road St Ives  
(Also see page 6 of February *Blandfordia* 2021)

These walk only sessions are free. No prior knowledge is required and information sheets will be provided. Please bring your own name badge. Meet at 9.45 am at Caley's Pavilion in KWG.

- Each walking group will contain no more than 23 people.
- Social distancing will be maintained as per NSW advice.
- **It is essential to book your place** by the Saturday prior to the walk.  
Please email or ring Wendy and supply your name, mobile number and emergency contact. Email: [wagrimm@tpg.com.au](mailto:wagrimm@tpg.com.au) Phone: **0419 323 035**

Walks are easy/medium. Sessions run 10 am to about 12 noon. Please wear a hat, have suitable footwear and bring water/snack. Sunscreen and insect repellent would also be a good idea.

**15<sup>th</sup> March** Monday **Introduction to KWG A guided walk**

**19<sup>th</sup> April** Monday **Wildlife**

### Propagation at KWG

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> March  
, 7<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> April

*Contact:*

Tania Lamble 0415 043 671

**Bushcare** at KWG 3<sup>rd</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> &  
31<sup>st</sup> March, 14<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> April

*Contact:*

Sue Bowen 0478 957 951

**The Knoll** 12<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> March &  
9<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> April

*Contact:* Michael Griffith

[michaelgriffith1@gmail.com](mailto:michaelgriffith1@gmail.com)

## New Members

A big welcome to new members Alissa Cook, Todd Stark and Beth Gower. All these members are also members of other groups.

Members are reminded that we can all enjoy membership of one or more district groups and participation (at discounted rate) in their activities, as well as receiving their newsletter. For more details see

<https://austplants.com.au/Join-APS/>

### February Committee meeting notes (virtual zoom meeting)

The following items were discussed:

- Regular APS NSG activities
- Unfilled positions on 2021 Committee
- Shade house at KWG - future renovations
- Plant sale
- Speakers' Programme 2021
- Financial matters
- APS NSW representative report
- APS NSG involvement in local council promotional events

## 2021 APS NSG Committee

### HELP is still needed

Elections were held at 13<sup>th</sup> November general meeting. The **following positions remain unfilled**:

**Vice president.** The main responsibility of this position is to be the **coordinator of the Speakers' Programme.**

### Publicity Officer

### Health and Safety Officer

### Excursions officer (garden visits)

### Conservation Officer

If you are interested in any of these positions please contact Sue Bowen 0478 957 951 or [suzannebowen@gmail.com](mailto:suzannebowen@gmail.com)

Position descriptions are available, plus current and past committee members will offer plenty of support.

### Jan's update on some of the wildlife at her home and the gremlins in the system.

My thanks to those members who identified the moth in the last issue of *Blandfordia* and gave insight into my query about the different colours visible with the image when flash was used.

Noela Kirkwood commented 'I think your article with photo of a beautiful moth is "Granny's Cloak Moth" *Speiredonia spectans*, Family Noctuidae. It comes to our house, particularly under the house from time to time, being nocturnal. Hard to find out the origin of its quirky common name. It has a distinct reptilian motif on its wings. Correspondence says "although it appears dark brown in natural light, flash photography brings out vivid blue and purple hues" (as you said) It is a particularly beautiful insect.'

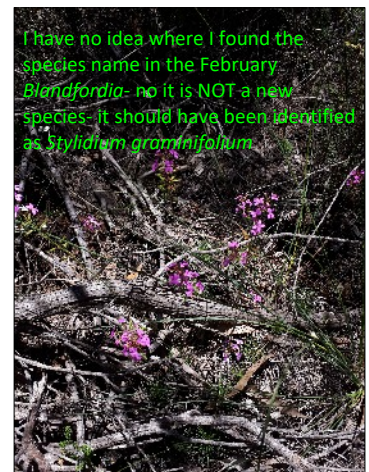
Ref. *A Wild Australia Guide: Butterflies and Moths: Identification, Habitat, Behavior, Conservation Status* Paperback – 2008 by Patrick Honan (Author)

Wendy Grimm had one visit their home in 2015 and identified it at that time.

They are SO spectacular, that we all note their presence.

Ian Dunn commented : " I think that it is because most flashes have a high blue and ultra-violet component. The moth's scales on the wings have the micro-architecture that has a structural colour property of reflecting blue light. See the attached article. I have noticed a similar flash property when photographing yellow tailed black cockatoos where their tail appears yellow to the eye, but appears white when photographed with a flash. The yellow patches on the cheeks of the cockatoo remain yellow under these circumstances. I interpret this to be a yellow pigment on the cheeks and a structural colour on the tail."

In late January we had this visitor on two nights in the same week. Peron's tree frog, *Litoria peronii*. All very exciting.



I have no idea where I found the species name in the February *Blandfordia*- no it is NOT a new species- it should have been identified as *Stylidion grandifolium*.

Jeff Howes is keen to share some of his vast experience in growing Australian native plants

## SOILS

I am glad the topic of soils has been raised as I have of 40 plus years of trying to grow plants on my suburban block in the northern end of Sydney that has a thin, 10 to 15cm layer of loam over a clay base that is then over shale. As well, it is also a dry garden due to a neighbour's very mature *E. citriodora* growing on one boundary and on the other boundary a very mature English oak and my *E. haemastoma* I planted because I like the scribbles that is now far too big and too close to the house (that is another story).

When I first started gardening in the 1970s, Western Australian plants were all the rage so I planted many and of course lost most of them. The problem with gardening over clay is that you cannot dig a hole into the clay to plant as it forms a sump that holds water for too long and this can rot the roots of plants sensitive to too much moisture. So I tried raised beds of 'native plant mix' and planted smaller plants hoping they establish. This mix contained very little 'soil' and had a high level of humus which composted down over a few years, leaving a mix that was hard to keep watered. Again more plant losses.

So I decided to undertake some research and I found the secret to my sometimes success. There are basically three broad types of soils types: heavy clay, fine loam and sandy. To grow plants in these three broad soil types you need to select plants that grow naturally in those soils types. For heavier soils you should select plants that naturally grow in heavier soils that retain moisture as these plants have a stronger root structure that can penetrate the heavy soils and thus grow. The converse applies to plants that grow in very fine and well drained soils. In the wild they are seen to be only a metre high and surviving drought in 40 degree heat BUT often they have a fine root system that may go down many metres where it is cool and perhaps some moisture. Planting these plant in heavy soils will result in them just sitting there as their roots cannot penetrate the heavier soil and thus die for lack of moisture and nutrients.

For new gardens I found that I need to select plants carefully so that they will establish and form the backbone of my garden. Once this has happens tried to grow all the more desirable and harder to grow plants that need extra care. They often only lasted a few years in my heavier soil but that was OK as their death did not leave gaps in my plantings.

For my hedging requirements I have found that there are many semi- rainforest plants such as *Acmenia* etc that grow very well in heavier soils and plant selection is much easier.

As well, allowances must be made for shade and moisture requirements

A few of my long term successes in my heavier soil are:

*Acacia fimbriata*, *Acacia iteaphylla*, *Astartea fascicularis*, *Baeckea linifolia*, *Baeckea virgata*, *Callistemon* species, *Calytrix tetragona*, *Correa reflexa*, *Darwinia citriodora*, *Elaeocarpus reticulatus*, *Grevillea 'Moonlight'*, *Grevillea juniperina* and their hybrids, *Grevillea* species – grafted, *Indigofera australis*, *Melaleuca fulgens*, *Melaleuca lateritia*, *Melaleuca thymifolia*, *Thryptomene saxicola*, *Westringia fruticosa* and their hybrids, *Westringia longifolia*, *Brachyscome angustifolia*, *Brachyscome multifida*

Some other sources of quality native plants. See links for full details and Covid Safe policies.

Boongala Native Gardens & Rainforest Open Days Plant sales, open gardens & rainforest walk

[www.boongalagardens.com](http://www.boongalagardens.com)

Brian Roach Westleigh Native Plants [westleighnativeplants@gmail.com](mailto:westleighnativeplants@gmail.com)

### Committee Contacts

**President:** Sue Bowen 0478 957 951

**Secretary:** Judy Jeffery 0429 438 598

Email: [secretary@blandfordia.org.au](mailto:secretary@blandfordia.org.au)

**Website:** <https://austplants.com.au/North-Shore>

The preferred method for Membership Applications & Renewals is to go to the APS NSW website and follow the instructions at <https://austplants.com.au/about-membership>

If joining or renewing online presents any problems assistance can be given by emailing your query to [membership@blandfordia.org.au](mailto:membership@blandfordia.org.au)

For your convenience, an EFT payment option is now available.

**Treasurer:** Helen Ray [treasurer@blandfordia.org.au](mailto:treasurer@blandfordia.org.au)

**Newsletter Editor:** Jan Williamson 9875 2262 [janw7531@gmail.com](mailto:janw7531@gmail.com)

**Newsletter submissions:** Deadline for submissions is the third Friday of the month.

For the April 2021 edition this will be 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021 Editor: [janw7531@gmail.com](mailto:janw7531@gmail.com)

***Blandfordia*** The Newsletter of the Australian Plants Society North Shore Group