

# Blandfordia



North Shore Group  
(ABN 87 002 680 408)

MAY 2020

## GOOD NEWS

**POSTPONEMENT of ALL live APS NSG activities but not all APS activities have stopped.**

While we are disappointed to announce that due to the situation with the Covid 19 pandemic all live events continue to be cancelled. The good news is that **virtual options** are available.

ALL APS NSG members should have received an email titled "APS NSW AGM & Speaker, Dr. Brett Summerell, Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2020." (Email sent on 23<sup>rd</sup> April.) If you didn't receive this email, please go to <https://austplants.com.au/event-3668305> for full details. We would like as many people as possible to use the APSNSW meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> May to try out the format.

Dr. Brett Summerell will speak on the Banks and Solander collection held by the Royal Botanic Gardens and also about bushland regeneration following the bushfires. The speaker will be presenting between 2.30pm - 3.15pm.

Meanwhile, the APS NSG April Committee meeting was held via Zoom and this meeting went well. Sue Fredrickson "attended" a virtual meeting of Sutherland APS recently and commented that this worked very well. APS NSG is investigating the potential of holding some of the 2020 meetings via similar technology. Please let our president, Sue Bowen, [suzannebowen@gmail.com](mailto:suzannebowen@gmail.com) know how you find the session. Your feedback will help APS NSG prepare for planned future online presentations.

### *Your Second Chance to be published*

APS NSG is celebrating its **60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** this year. Would you like to write a piece for *Blandfordia* about your experience with the group: some funny or happy memories, and/or what being a member means to you?

Please contact Jan Williamson [janw7531@gmail.com](mailto:janw7531@gmail.com) with your contributions.

**BUSHFIRE DONATION** At the April committee meeting it was agreed that a donation of \$2000 from APS NSG to Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens would be made. Hopefully, there will be other opportunities during the year to supplement this donation. If you would like to donate directly to ERBG your donation should be sent to **Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens**

BSB: **641 800** Account No: **200175567**. Use **Bushfire donation** as the identifying element (maybe "Bushfire donation APS NSG member" as the identifying element to make it clear that it is part of the total from APS NSG).

If you would prefer to send a cheque: Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens, PO Box 1068, Batemans Bay 2536

## 2020 VAL WILLIAMS SCHOLARSHIP

### The High Quality of Applications

Reading the eight proposals submitted for the Val Williams Scholarship this year was quite an education. I echo the words of the Head of the Committee in saying "...most of them were of a very high quality. Consequently, it was very difficult to separate the top candidates."

The committee report continues, "We awarded the Val Williams scholarship for 2020 to **Shubham Chhajer**, a PhD candidate at Macquarie University under the supervision of Professor Ian Wright. The title of his PhD research is, '*Hydraulic drivers of photosynthetic variation in co-occurring plant species in Sydney region: a least-cost theory approach*'. Plants need to photosynthesise efficiently to grow and be healthy and to do this they require access to carbon dioxide and water. During periods of water stress there are trade-offs in obtaining CO<sub>2</sub> for photosynthesis and preventing excessive water loss. Shubham is investigating the photosynthetic variation among co-occurring species in relation to their hydraulic strategies on a range of native plants from the Sydney region by applying a new theoretical model to the problem. The money awarded to this student will pay for stable isotope analyses of foliar carbon which is needed to obtain reliable estimates of leaf gas exchange rates that is central to this study."

I want to acquaint you with the research proposed by the other candidates too.

One project is investigating which plant species support pollinator health when resources are scarce so that key species with high visitation rates are identified. Another is focused on how the plant traits of street trees are linked with their functional diversity\*. From this proposal I learned that to encourage biodiversity in our urban environment, the ratio of species:genus:family should ideally be 10:20:30 with a maximum of 10% of one species in a suburb.

Unsurprisingly, the effects of fire and drought were a big concern for our young botanists. It seems that pyrogenic flowering\*\* is associated with plants that have transient seed banks like Waratah, Gymea Lily and Blandfordia. Without canopy or persistent soil seed banks these species' reproductive effort is affected by changing fire seasonality. One of the applicants aims to focus on *Doryanthes excelsa* (Gymea Lily) to elucidate the mechanisms of fire and fire season on its seed biology.

Another applicant explained that the endangered *Persoonia hirsuta* (pictured) lacks proteoid cluster roots which assist in the uptake of water and nutrients, particularly phosphorus. She wants to know if fire might modify soil properties and thereby mitigate the effects of dieback that currently threatens to wipe out this beautiful Geebung.



Still another will address the effect of fire seasonality on post-dispersal seed predation. Here, the focus is on "serotinous species" which retain their seeds in the canopy and release them after fire.

A different project aims to quantify mortality and evaluate recovery of species in various biomes by measuring the loss of hydraulic conductivity in the conductive tissue of native trees and shrubs. Similarly, another student wishes to study the productivity and water-use strategies of liana vines in response to elevated carbon dioxide across dry and wet periods.

We can look forward to hearing the 2019 winner, Farhad Masoomi-Aladizgeh discuss his research findings later this year. Our members can be proud that our fund-raising activities contribute to this worthwhile scholarship fund. The quality of the applications shows how much our financial assistance is valued.

*Tania Lamble*

Convener

Selection Committee of Val Williams Scholarship

North Shore Group APS

\**Functional diversity concerns the range of things that organisms do in communities and ecosystems.*

\*\**Pyrogenic flowering is the fire stimulated flowering of plants*

## CONGRATULATIONS

On Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April, Wendy Grimm's hard work and research on the orchid species *Genoplesium baueri* was acknowledged and rewarded!  
Wendy was awarded a Master of Philosophy Degree by Macquarie University.

To quote a Macquarie University Abstract of a talk she gave there:

"The aim of this research was to examine the demographics and biology of *Genoplesium baueri* R.Br., an endangered terrestrial orchid species endemic to the Sydney Basin, New South Wales. This was done by carrying out a systematic study (2009-2018) of all individual plants in two key northern *G. baueri* populations. The number and variation in population and plant size; reproductive effort; timing of population emergence and field mortality were studied. These results and natural history observations were used to construct a diagram of the above- and below-ground stages of the proposed lifecycle of plant development and mortality of *G. baueri*."

Had it been more normal times, Wendy would have been attending her graduation ceremony on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April at Macquarie University and receiving her award. Instead, she had to be content to have it delivered to her home. That, however does not detract from the important findings of her work.

Well done Wendy- Congratulations from all of us!

Written by and image by Sue Fredrickson



## WALKS & TALKS Programme

This very popular and informative programme has been running for many years. While the 2020 W&T sessions are currently cancelled the notes that accompany the talks can be found on the website. Just click on this link, <https://austplants.com.au/North-Shore-Walks-&-Talks>

You will have received a separate attachment with this email titled the Fungi Walk 2020-Virtual. Many thanks to Wendy Grimm for providing these notes.



## Notices and Reminders

**13<sup>th</sup> FJC Rogers Seminar 2020** on Mint Bushes & Allied Genera Registrations are now on hold.  
Please check this website for updates: <https://apsvic.org.au/fjc-rogers-seminar-2020/>

**2021 Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> September to Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2021**



**Australian flora - Past present future**  
ANPSA 2021 Biennial Conference - Kiama







## Exciting things happening in the Westleigh area

First time in 30 years my firewheel tree -- *Stenocrous sinuatus* -- has flowered and thanks to some cheeky parrots I can see the flowers in close up. Stunning. Each flower is approx 100 mm in diameter.

Jeff Howes

\*\*\*\*\*

Jan & Steve Williamson had an exciting experience on 23<sup>rd</sup> April at about 10 pm when they heard a Powerful Owl calling nearby. This was the first time we had heard one calling since we moved here 34 years ago. We have seen them nearby on a few occasions but never heard their call. It was very clear and serene. The lack of traffic probably helped us to be able to hear so clearly.

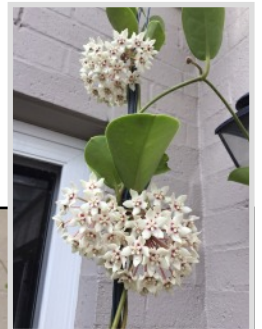
Jan W

*The Powerful Owl's voice is a slowly uttered, rather mournful, loud, two-syllable note that sounds like "woo-hoo", each note lasting just over half a second with a brief pause in between. The second note is often slightly higher pitched than the first, more so in the female than in the male.* <https://wildambience.com/wildlife-sounds/powerful-owl/>  
<http://birdlife.org.au/projects/powerful-owl-project>

## New Members

A big welcome to new members Julie Iyengar, David Roberts, Inge Buchanan, Martine Magers and Lexie Wood-Weber.

We hope that you enjoy your association with APS NSG and its members. We look forward to getting to know you and share with you knowledge and enjoyment of our wonderful native plants.



### Message from APS NSG President, Sue Bowen

Who could have guessed that so much would happen in such a short time to change our lifestyle! The change has been profound for me as I'm sure it has been for everyone! One week I had every day filled with activities, many involving meetings and group activities away from home, while the next was nearly empty, with most activities home-based.

The emphasis on staying home has, however, had its bright side. It has allowed me to go for a long walk every day, do more gardening at home and take on individual activities that I just didn't make time for previously. I now spend some time every day digging out a 25 m long swathe of Liriopes that I was going to replace with Lomandra 'Tanikas' **one day!** I also remove a chaff bag full of madeira vine from my local bush every week.

I hope that you have all found new and exciting things to do while looking after yourselves at home. There is so much online to entertain and inform us and there are new challenges for many of us, me included, of learning how to communicate with our loved ones online and of participating in group, online meetings.

Your committee bravely held its April meeting via Zoom and is also looking at holding our June general meeting via Zoom. We will continue to produce *Blandfordia* during the lock-down and have also agreed to donate \$2,000 to the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens for bushfire rehabilitation.

Please keep learning about and growing our native plants!



Margaret Hamilton's *Hoya australis* looking magnificent



Hopefully the North Shore Group members are keeping safe and sane in the safety of our homes. As you know, our monthly group bushwalks can't be held in these times of social distancing. We are however legally allowed out for exercise in family groups with whom we share our house, in pairs or alone. Most of us have no doubt noticed how much more walking is taking place as people realise what a boost to the mood it is, on top of the obvious physical health benefits which are well known.

At this time especially, you are very lucky if you have access to local bush with good tracks along which to get the exercise and to also enjoy the beauty of the bush. I am finding I am appreciating these opportunities even more than ever at present and have become more observant and awe-inspired in the bush. Most of our members reside in either Ku-ring-gai or Hornsby Shires, both of these areas being blessed with big areas of National Park and bush reserves.

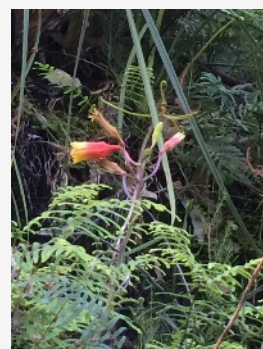
The milder temperatures of autumn and the lower angle of the sun help to make it a very pleasant time of year to bushwalk, including lovely light effects. We have had a lot of perfect days weatherwise too. There is plenty of flowering going on locally and lately in the bush- the Banksias are about to be at their best, *Crowea saligna*, *Epacris pulchella*, *Bossiaea heterophylla* and *Persoonia pinifolia*, for example, all provide splashes of colour and autumn is peak mushroom and fungus time. With the slowdown of our pace of life and the extra time it presents, why not photograph and identify the plants you see- consult Native Plants books or email photos to club friends who have good general local plant ID skills? That way, we all learn and reinforce our plant knowledge. Our Newsletter editor also welcomes contributions of interesting photos of bush or plants that you have taken.

Some tips for safe bushwalking, especially at this time:

- \* Whenever possible, walk with someone. Whether alone or accompanied, take a fully charged mobile phone and try to stick to tracks that have mobile phone reception in case help is needed.
- \* Notify someone of where you plan to walk and when you plan to return and confirm your safe return with them ASAP.
- \* We may be inspired to take bushwalks along tracks that we are not used to, just for some variety for instance. That brings with it a slightly elevated risk of injury due to unpredicted extra challenge. Perhaps you have done a particular walk a long time ago and don't remember that you were younger then when you tackled it! Research the walk beforehand in books, on the internet or maybe by ringing a friend who is more familiar with it to get an idea of distance and climbs involved. Exhaustion can make us more prone to slips and falls and it is not a good time to have to get taken off to a hospital!
- \* Snakes may still be about while there is warm weather. It's always good to carry a wide, elasticised compression bandage, just in case.
- \* Take plenty of water with you. Take food too to keep up your energy levels and in case of emergency. A warm, and preferably wind proof, jacket is a good idea as the weather is becoming cooler.
- \* As always, keep to the track, wear sturdy shoes and take care.

*Happy bushwalking! Sue F*

*Kylie Hanks spotted this Blandfordia on 23<sup>rd</sup> April. It seems to be confused about its flowering time.*



### Plant Propagation at KWG on Wednesdays 2019

Margaret Hamilton on 9488 5234

**Ku-ring-gai Council Bushcare at KWG** Sue Bowen on 0478 957 951

**Monday [Walks and Talks](#) at the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden St Ives**  
Monday Wendy Grimm 0419 323 035

**The Knoll KWG** Contact: Michael Griffith  
[michaelgriffith1@gmail.com](mailto:michaelgriffith1@gmail.com)

Members and friends will be most welcome at these activities when the situation improves.

### April 2020 Committee Notes

Meeting was a virtual meeting using Zoom technology

- Donation of \$2000 to Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens
- VW Scholarship 2020. Value of 2021 will be decided later in the year.
- Budget- difficult to assess as there are now so many unknowns in 2020/2021.
- APS NSW activities & AGM to be held via Zoom technology on 16<sup>th</sup> May
- APS NSG 2020. Possibility of using various technologies to hold meetings.
- KWG Shadehouse and The Knoll

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All APSNSG members offer their condolences to Noni and Barry Lees on the recent death of their son, Brad. We are thinking of you and your family at this time of great sadness.



### Next Meeting of North Shore Group TBA

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

The group aims to provide a diverse range of topics and speakers so that the varied interests of people attending are catered for.  
For new members or people who may be interested in joining APS NSG please have a look at the APS NSG link above to see what we covered in 2019.

The programme for 2020 was to be

February Simon Leake *The soils & vegetation of Barangaroo*

March Bruce Usher *Angophora costata and friends- A Visual Journey*

April Judy Harrington *Glossy Black-cockatoo*

May Daniel Clarke *Conservation in APS NSW* ( this is the NSW state body)

June Michael Batley *Looking for bees*

July Sue Bowen *An interactive plant ID session*

August Narelle Smith *Sir Joseph Banks life's works and the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1770 HMS Endeavour Voyage*

September Farhad Masoomi-Aladizgeh *Australian ecotypes of Themeda triandra (kangaroo grass)*

October *An interactive session. How have your plants fared in the past 12 months*

November Jackie Wilson *Why some of our iconic plants and animals of the Snowy Mountains are under threat*

December *Christmas party and 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration*

It is expected that the talks at meetings that were organised for this year will be able to be rescheduled in the future, maybe soon as part of a Zoom meeting. Many thanks to Wendy Grimm who is coordinating the speakers programme.

### 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/Join-APS/>**

If joining or renewing online presents any problems assistance can be given at any general meeting. Please speak to Genevieve Meares or Helen Ray. Alternatively email 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 June 2020 edition this will be 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020 Editor: [janw7531@gmail.com](mailto:janw7531@gmail.com)

## Blandfordia

The Newsletter of the Australian Plants Society North Shore Group