

Blandfordia



North Shore Group
(ABN 87 002 680 408)

SEPTEMBER 2020

North Shore held a very successful plant sale on Saturday 22nd and Sunday 23rd August at Ku-ring-gai Wildflower garden despite Covid-19 restrictions. The purpose of the sale was to clean out our shade house to make room for new stock & to raise money for the Val Williams Scholarship. We usually sell our plants at the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower, Art and Garden Festival, but this event was cancelled this year and lots of our plants were ready for new homes. Our sale this year was done in accordance with the requirements of a Covid-19 Safety Plan for a non-food market. Unusually, we didn't buy in plants to sell on consignment. The Covid-19 restrictions did mean, however, that we had to put considerably more effort and organisation into the sale beyond just getting the plants ready for sale. Members also had to fill new roles at the sale.



Attendance was by pre-booking only, through me, to ensure safe spacing within Caley's Pavilion. Customers were given arrival times, at 15 minute intervals, throughout Saturday and Sunday. This was a big change for most of them, as they are used to arriving at the start of a plant sale to get the best choice! I had many customers who wanted to arrive at the same time at the start of the sale on Saturday morning! However, when I explained that bookings were made on a first come first time available due to Covid restrictions, most were understanding. Some people were disappointed, nonetheless, when their time was on Sunday, rather than on Saturday.

Our plant sale was held inside Caley's Pavilion but our Covid marshall and entry desk, (where people had to check in and be marked off on our attendance list), were outside the entry to the pavilion. Customers moved through Caley's putting plants into their own boxes and bags and then exited to the sales desk outside. Payments were advertised as 'contactless preferred' and the vast majority of customers complied with this request.

The marshall performed an essential role welcoming people to our 'Covid Safe' sale and controlling entry in accordance with our attendance list and keeping an eye on appropriate social distancing inside. Masks were worn by us and attendees.

I was amazed by how many plants some people bought and we had to replenish our stocks regularly until our shade house was virtually empty of anything saleable! Unfortunately some people were disappointed because they couldn't get a time but while we had sufficient customers for a third day, we just ran out of plants!.

Our advertising was extremely effective via APS and Ku-ring-gai Council's e-sustainability newsletter and bushcare network and we were very pleased to see a number of members, including some new North Shore members, attending the sale.

Edible plants of any sort were very popular as were our *Libertia paniculatas* (in full flower), *Telopea speciosissimas* and orchids (just coming into flower). The last three were all propagated in, or collected as seed or 'pups' from, local members' gardens.

Next year who knows??

Written by Sue Bowen

PS We raised more than \$4,000 and a special thanks to all our helper and growers: Pam & Jim, Rae, Wendy & Phillip, Sue, Margaret, David, Judy, Helen R, Jan, Gillian, Kylie, Tania & Bruce, Hugh & Helen S.

Images by Jan Williamson

Do you still need plants?

Message from APS NSG member, **Brian Roach**: "Reluctantly I've decided not to hold my usual open garden & plant sales weekend this Spring for obvious reasons. I was asked by a friend a couple of months ago if it was possible to over-service a garden? I assured him it wasn't and no doubt most of us have been passing away our time in relative isolation in such a way. As earlier in the year, I'm quite happy to take orders for plants for collection at Westleigh at an arranged time with payment being made by EFT either before or after collection. I've updated my catalogue of available plants and it can be accessed at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_qkKmj2j07Q0GBMfopSq9QO9-4OCFpFE/view?usp=sharing Needless to say, all plants are in limited numbers to varying extents so orders will be processed in priority of receipt and I will then advise by return email just what plants are still available along with the total cost and my banking details."

Alternatively **Boongala Gardens** Mal & Jenny Johnston 76 Pitt Town Rd, Kenthurst will have plants available.

SEE website for full details and Covid-19 Requirements www.boongalagardens.com

Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday 10am to 4pm from Friday the 28th August to Monday the 28th September, 2020

Monday APS NSG Walks programme KWG – September 2020

at the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden (KWG) 420 Mona Vale Road, St Ives

Modified outdoor activity due to Covid-19

In September we will continue to hold Walks at KWG unless major changes are made to the rules.

Please note:

We are accepting non-members on the walks but pre-registration is essential.

In September there will be five 'Walk Only' sessions (no lecture)

It is essential to book your place by the Saturday prior to the Monday walk.

Please ring Wendy on 0419 323 035 or email wagrimm@tpg.com.au

- Group numbers & social distancing will be maintained as per NSW advice.
- Walks are easy to medium. Sessions will run 10am to about 12 noon.
- Please wear a hat, have suitable footwear and bring water.



Date	Walk focus
Sept 7	Monday Pea shrubs & vines (Fabaceae, Faboideae)
Sept 14	Monday Orchids & other monocotyledon plants
Sept 21	Monday Waratahs and other members of Family Proteaceae

Wendy Grimm

Jeff Howes sent the following:
From a tweet by Jason Smith PhD
@ForestPathology

He quoted:
Nice to see one my #Wollemia nobilis grafts (on #Agathis robusta) rootstock growing strong now. This approach allows this species to avoid #Phytophthora root disease in cultivation

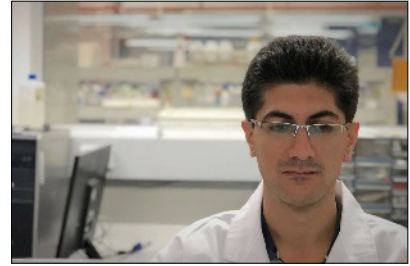


Next Meeting of North Shore Group

11th September 2020

On via a Zoom meeting on Friday 11th September

Speaker: Farhad Masoomi-Aladizgeh



Topic: Australian ecotypes of *Themeda triandra* (Kangaroo grass)

Background: My PhD at Macquarie University is mainly on identifying stress tolerance genes in plants from distantly related crop relatives. It is well known that native plants are valuable genetic resources, harbouring resistance genes to environmental fluctuations. Climate change is going to adversely impact agricultural products in the near future; thus, steps should be taken by researchers to tackle the problem!

I am already working on cotton proteomics to discover genes related to male sterility after exposure to high temperatures. Under the supervision of Professor Brian Atwell, we aim to find key pathways involved in plant male sterility under heat stress and introduce the key genes that can be applied for crop improvement at high temperatures.

The Valette Williams Scholarship has led us to start a new project on a stress tolerant species in Australia, *Themeda triandra* (kangaroo grass). A diverse collection of its ecotypes provides high genetic diversity with which to find 'molecular signatures' for environmental traits. DArTSeq™ protocol, a high-throughput sequencing approach, will be performed using DArT (Diversity Arrays Technology) markers for gene mapping and diversity studies of kangaroo grass ecotypes where there is no previous sequence information. Having the same genetic codes: adenine (A), guanine (G), cytosine (C), and thymine (T), plants respond to the changing environment too!

Plant ID session will follow the talk. Images to janw7531@gmail.com by **Monday 7th September** please. Images of plants/flowers that may be of interest to other members are also welcome. Spring has definitely sprung.

Join the meeting with a cuppa in the comfort of your own home.

As is normal for the meetings the session will start at 7.30 pm with the meeting and speaker at 8 pm. It is recommended that people join well before 8 pm so that any technical concerns can be addressed. Please follow the instructions for the meeting in the email that came with your September *Blandfordia*. Sue Fredrickson will be co ordinating the meeting. If you have any queries about how to use Zoom please contact Sue on paulandsuefreddo@bigpond.com.

OCTOBER meeting also via Zoom Speaker and topic TBA : see October *Blandfordia*

Any feedback/ comments about the zoom meetings please contact Sue Bowen suzanneebowen@gmail.com or Jan Williamson janw7531@gmail.com

At the August meeting Tania asked about a plant that is overgrowing a banksia tree. It was identified as *Cissus antarctica*, Kangaroo Vine. While it is a native plant several members reported that it extremely invasive and difficult to contain. A plant which is best not to encourage in the garden.



Ted Shaw's image of *Rulingia hermanniifolia*.

This prostrate ground cover won't cause any problems.

New Members

A big welcome to new members Michael Abbott, Cherith Piper, James Indsto and Marysia Nowak.

We hope that you enjoy your association with APS NSG and its members. We look forward to the return to more opportunities to meet you in person. In the meantime we hope that we can all share knowledge and enjoyment of our wonderful native plants.

One spot to find interesting and informative articles is the APSNSW site which covers all the affiliated groups in the state.

<https://austplants.com.au/>

It is with sadness that APS NSG members have recently had to farewell two of our very loyal and special members. Our sincerest condolences are offered to Anne Fisher and Herta Watts and their families and special friends. Both Alec and Ron are greatly missed and we thank them for their passion and commitment to members and to Australian native plants.

Alec Fisher was a member for around 27 years and contributed in so many ways: excursions officer, treasurer, Walks & Talks presenter, convener of Plant ID course, passionate supporter of Val Williams Scholarship, “ chief” of the APS NSG 50th Anniversary celebrations, assisting in providing interpretive signage at KWG and one of the major driving forces behind The Knoll garden at KWG. Prior to retirement Alec taught Principles of Ecology and Environmental Assessment to engineering students at UNSW. Alec and Anne had travelled extensively, both overseas and within Australia.

Vale **Dr Alec Fisher**

Long standing Australian Plants Society member, Alec Fisher was passionate about The Knoll, about maintaining it ready for visits by school groups, by families on the weekend and by the occasional overseas visitor keen to see our native plants in their natural environment.

Alec loved to be there when such visitors entered the hallowed gates of The Knoll, always ready to point out the latest flowering species or to show them, especially the younger children, the native bee hive, with humming, stingless bees crowding around the entrance of the hive in a hollow log perched near the brilliantly yellow flowering *Hibbertia scandens*.

Alec brought to The Knoll, fortnightly at the very least, new native plantings (mostly local plants), usually sourced from native nurseries. He would spend much of his time finding perfect spots for these plants amidst the flowering red *Grevillea speciosa* or purple *Melaleuca thymifolia*.

I was one of a small group of volunteers (that included by wife Rose and Stephen Brown) who would gather with Alec fortnightly to help with the weeding, sweeping, pruning, mowing and repair of pathways and construction of protective edging for the precious plants that had found residence in this sanctuary.

It had been Alec’s endeavours, with Wendy Grimm and others, a decade or so earlier, to restore The Knoll as an example of an Australian Native garden. They had managed to find the funds (some \$10,000) to create a wallaby-, rabbit- proof fence around this sacred area, allowing all the wonderful native plants, scattered throughout the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower garden, to have a safe, munch-free environment in which they could thrive.

So with great joy and a sense of privilege, I with my fellow volunteers would gather fortnightly around Alec, standing next to his ageless white Forester as he took out the sign up sheet (“got to sign this before we work, for insurance purposes”), and then proceeded to designate and delegate.

This might be done by way of a “walk around the site to see what is needed where”. After this, Stephen might be given the task of filling the pond, using “the empty milk bottles in the boot of the Forester”, and then clearing the top path, Rose might be given the task of weeding the lower bed, and I, mysteriously, nominated as “a dab hand at constructing”, would be given the job of repairing collapsed bed-edgings, making sure that “you fill all the interstices”. Alec loved finding ways of drawing attention to the odd soundings of words as he described our tasks in detail.

We all relished our time with him, and especially our morning teas, sometimes even our lunches, when we would gather round a wooden table in Lambert’s clearing, or around one of the wooden park benches in The Knoll itself. Tea, coffee, nut bars, sandwiches (and the occasional imaginary “cream bun” – an in-joke) would furnish our rural repast which would be replete with an analysis of the current news, reminiscences about travel experiences, reflections on literature and what was going on in the world of native plants. And then, of course, where to next: with our plans for the subsequent weeks at The Knoll?

Each fortnight was a real delight; it was a delight to be working at The Knoll; and it was a special delight to be working with Alec during his last passionate days of planting and caring for one of the cornerstones of the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden.

Alec we miss you and we hope that we can carry forward some of your enthusiasm for this precious piece of local bushland.

Rest in peace.

Michael Griffith

(Michael and Rose have worked with Alec at The Knoll for the past 4 years.)

Vale **Dr Ron Watts**

Sadly we note the sudden and untimely death of our well-known member, Ron Watts. Retiring after many years as a dedicated medical practitioner Ron was able to pursue as one of his hobbies- his interest in Australian native plants. Ron and his wife, Herta, joined the North Shore Group of APS. For the last two years he was a member of the group assessing applications for the student scholarship awarded by the group each year. Ron described this assessment task as quite a difficult one but nevertheless very rewarding.

Ron also became a regular and valued participant in our Walks and Talks Program. With his wide general knowledge (including of Latin!) his contributions to the discussions were very welcome and always to the point. A keen photographer, he was never without one of his cameras on our walks. Only a few weeks ago, as we looked at a *Darwinia fascicularis* plant he told us of the photos he had just taken of the special way in which the pollen becomes attached to the style during the development of the flower. We had him lined up for a special short talk on the topic!

Ron was great company and will be sorely missed by all of us. The attached photograph of him was prior to one of our long walks in 2016.

Bob Failes



GROUP WALK Sunday 13th SEPTEMBER to Centre Track Ku-ring-gai National Park

Spring flowering will be in full swing for this month's walk!

The Centre Track is at Terrey Hills. It may not have the panoramic water views of some of the other West Head area walks but for flower diversity, it is hard to beat. Having said that, it does have some nice expansive bush views. Being in heathland with largely low vegetation, the sunny environment results in good flowering. If we are lucky we may see the much admired Native Rose *Boronia serrulata*.

The track is relatively easy, 3.3km from start to end, mainly fire trail width and mostly flat with a small gradual hill half way and a short, not too steep descent at its end. It will be decided on the day whether we do the track just one way (a car will be left at the end) or return (6.6km), depending on our progress time wise. Lunch stop will be on a big sunny rock with a bush view.

This day will be an excellent opportunity to become familiar with or reacquaint yourself with many flowering natives. We will be checking off/ adding to a plant list which will be used in September 2021 or 2022 (Covid dependent) when North Shore will be hosting the Kiama pre-conference Sydney tour's interstate visitors on the Centre Track walk.

NB Pre registration will be required for this walk, as is required for the Covid Safety Plan. Please ring Sue Fredrickson on 0401 362 921 or email paulandsuefreddo@bigpond.com by Saturday 12th September morning, the day before the walk. I will require your name, mobile phone number and emergency contact number in order to do a "no contact" attendance sheet.

Meeting Place: Corner McCarrs Creek Rd and General San Martin Drive Terrey Hills. This is where one of the pay stations into the National Park was formerly located. There is roadside parking available.

Meeting time: 10.30am Sunday 13th September

What to bring : Good walking shoes, plenty of water, lunch, snacks, sun protection including hat, perhaps wet weather gear, hand sanitiser.

Please ring Sue to check that the walk will go ahead if the weather looks threatening.

Looking for Bees with Michael Batley

This is a very abridged summary of Michael's talk. The full talk will be included in the APS NSW enewsletter.



Michael wants us to train ourselves to look for bees, then find them, and then recognise them. The first message is to look at a dark area near the bottom of the plant/flowers for movement, not at the flowers. When plants are in flower the insects will be there. Then focus on what is causing the movement.

Many of these creatures are very small and move very quickly, so that the fact that bees have 4 wings and flies have 2 wings may not be easy to discern. Note the behaviour of the creatures: how do their legs move? (often bees cycle their legs before landing), leaf cutter bees hold their wings out when landing while resin bees hold their wings over their body when landing. Some may stay on the wing while collecting nectar so their wings don't stop moving. Note the style of the movement- fast? jerky? busy?

Another place to spot the bees is at their nests. Ground nests will often have little piles of dirt near the entrance holes from their excavation of the tunnels. A bee may be spotted zigzagging close to the entrance as they look for the entrance. When the bee leaves it may do a circuit of the immediate area to reinforce the location of the nest. The ground nest entrances are often in the middle of walking tracks- watch your steps. Other bees nest in trees, especially resin bees. Carpenter bee often nest in Xanthorrhoea and dead banksia, often when white fungus is present. Dead tree stumps, sandstone and base of termite mounds are other common sites for nests.

Other signs to look for are damage to leaves and petals, flower buds and flowers e.g. leaf cutter cut holes or flowers may be split open along natural contours.

Bees usually prefer sunny and warm conditions. They tend to be more active during the middle of the day. While colour is not usually a preference, sometimes the bees display a preference for a particular flower type.

One of the questions after the talk was *which predators attack bees?* These include parasitic wasps that invade nests, spiders and parasitic bees that infiltrate the nests of other bees. Bee hotels often attract wasps. Michael commented that bee hotels may not be of great conservation value to the bees but they are very useful in giving people the opportunity to see and appreciate bees.

Thanks to Michael for helping us to open our eyes and encouraging us to look more carefully at all the little creatures flying around.

Written by Jan Williamson

By chance the following programme was on ABC programme Conversations (Radio National & ABC site) on the same day. Toby acknowledged the work and influence of Michael Batley during the interview.

<https://www.abc.net.au/radio-australia/programs/conversations/toby-smith-rpt/12537042>

The brutal and beautiful world of Australia's native bees

Toby Smith 14th August 2020



Chorizema cordatum, the Heart-leaf Flame Pea, is a native of south-western Western Australia but does well in Thornleigh.

Another rambling attractive plant from WA, *Templetonia retusa*, in Jan W's garden.



Please contact the coordinators prior to any attendance and check NSW Government restrictions as well at this website <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/what-you-can-and-cant-do-under-rules>

Plant Propagation at KWG on Wednesdays 9th & 23rd September Margaret Hamilton on 9488 5234 & Sue Bowen on 0478 957 951

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

Modified Walks Programme: see page 2 Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden St Ives
Wendy Grimm 0419 323 035

W&T Notes are still on website: Please note the information on the walks is as on page 2. [Walks and Talks](#)

The Knoll KWG Contact: Michael Griffith
michaelgriffith1@gmail.com



Micromyrtus ciliata Jan W.

Notices and Reminders

13th FJC Rogers Seminar 2020 on Mint Bushes & Allied Genera. 24th & 25th October 2020.

There is now a new format and registration form. The lectures from 5 speakers will be available on line on week before the event. Please contact jcrogers@apsvic.org.au if you would like a registration form. Note: the Registration form says \$25 per person. This is NOT per person per day. It is a bonus if you are coming for 2 days. It is the same cost as coming for 1 day. If you are registering 4 people you need to fill in at least 2 forms, or one for each person at a different address.

Please check these websites for updates <https://apsvic.org.au/fjc-rogers-seminar-2020/>

This is particularly pertinent given the current situation with Covid- 19 in Victoria.

2021 Sunday 12th September to Thursday 17th September 2021



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

Australian Plants
SOCIETY NSW

August 2020 Committee Notes

Meeting was a virtual meeting using Zoom technology

- Future meetings
- APS NSW matters from APS NSG delegate (Sue Fredrickson)
- Group activities for September & October
- APS NSG interactions with KWG & KC

Committee Contacts

President: Sue Bowen 0478 957 951

Secretary: Judy Jeffery 0429 438 598

Email: 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

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

Treasurer: Helen Ray treasurer@blandfordia.org.au

Newsletter Editor: Jan Williamson 9875 2262 janw7531@gmail.com

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

For the October 2020 edition this will be 18th September 2020 Editor: janw7531@gmail.com

Blandfordia The Newsletter of the Australian Plants Society North Shore Group