

CALEYI



NORTHERN BEACHES GROUP

austplants.com.au/northern-beaches

April 2021

Australian Plants Society Northern Beaches
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CALENDAR

Thursday April 1, 2021 APS Northern Beaches Meeting at Stony Range Regional Botanic Garden, Dee Why.
7pm AGM. If you would like to nominate yourself for a position please send your nomination to apsnorthernbeaches@gmail.com.
7.30 pm Presentation 'Show & Tell'.
Supper. Only tea & coffee. Please bring your own cup.

Saturday April 17 APS Northern Beaches Group visit Penny Hunstead's garden at Newport.

Sunday May 9 APS Northern Beaches Group visit Illawarra Grevillea Park, Bulli.

Sunday September 12, 2021 Stony Range Diamond Jubilee Spring Festival.

ANPSA Biennial Conference 2021 now scheduled for 2022: Australian flora - past present future. The conference is being hosted by the Australian Plants Society NSW in the beautiful village of Kiama on the south coast. To register an expression of interest, click the '<https://austplants.com.au/event-3403188>'

Many thanks to this month's wonderful contributors **Harry Loots and Penny Hunstead.**

APS NORTHERN BEACHES WALKS.

Storm warnings prompted our Walks Coordinator, Anne Gray, to cancel the scheduled walk to the Challenger Walk at West Head. For once the forecast was exceedingly accurate.

In lieu of a report on the flowering situation on the Challenger here is a selection of beautiful shots taken by the late **Richard Hunstead** on the nearby Elvina Track in March 2008.





Banksia spinulosa



Banksia oblongifolia



Crowea saligna



Platysace linearifolia



Gomfobium latifolium



Epacris pulchella



Utricularia uniflora



Calytrix tetragona



Persoonia pinitfolia



Acacia terminalis

PINK FLANNEL FLOWERS

Harry Loots

They have been a media sensation, a boon to the Mountains tourist industry and have kindled a passion for Australian wild flowers. Articles have been written in the Sydney Morning Herald, the Australian and the Guardian. Who could have predicted such a floral bonanza 12 months after devastating fires that razed the bush? Pink flannel flowers, *Actinotus forsythii*, have been found growing en masse on exposed flat sandy rock shelves along Narrow Neck west of Katoomba, at Ikara Head off Victoria Falls Road, on Dobbs Drift and Gooch's Crater north of Lithgow, in the Morton National Park near Bundanoon and along the Sassafras track in the Budawang. All these locations were severely affected by the 2019-2020 bushfires.



Although infrequently seen in abundance, pink flannel flowers are not rare. As bushfire ephemerals their seeds germinate after fire, responding to bushfire smoke rather than heat. The smoke-derived chemical karrikinolide is the active ingredient that triggers the plants' emergence. Exposure to light is also important.

I first came across pink flannel flowers many years ago in the Budawang Ranges to the west of Nowra where there was no evidence of a bushfire. I found four pink flannel flowers growing in cracks in the sandstone shelf. The location was extremely exposed to the wind and sun.

During the 2019-2020 summer NSW experienced some of the worst bushfires ever. Twelve months later in early January 2021 I saw the first few pink flannel flowers growing in the gully leading to the Farmers Creek Dam No.2 in Lithgow.



By late January word had gotten out amongst plant lovers. On a cold, wet day I drove to Narrow Neck near Katoomba with Lindy Monson, where in amongst the burnt Banksia there was an extensive display of pink flannel flowers. It was still a deserted area and National Parks had not yet installed barriers or signs.



Then on a Sunday in early March I was surprised at the traffic encountered on the usually empty Victoria Falls Road. There were large groups of university students who had walked from Mount Victoria station and cars were parked in all available spaces 300 metres either side of the Ikara Head track. At the track entrance National Parks had posted signs indicating where flowers were to be found. The walk along the track with Lindy and Alix Goodwin was a constant stop and start as room was made for long lines of people. However, nobody was disappointed with the display on the Ikara Head rock shelf. It was beyond expectation.



NORTHERN BEACHES NURSERIES

Specialist Australian Native Plants Nurseries (A)
Nurseries Stocking Australian Native Plants (B)

Flower Power – 277 Mona Vale Rd, Terrey Hills. 9486 3222 8 – 5.30 (B)
Flower Power – 22 Macpherson St, Warriewood. 9997 8244 8 – 5.30 (B)
Four Seasons -- 200 Forest Way, Belrose. 9450 1606 7-5 (B)
Harvest Seeds – 281 Mona Vale Rd, Terrey Hills 9450 2699 8 – 4 (A)
Indigo Nursery – 56 Wattle Rd, Ingleside 9970 8709 9 – 3 (A)
Kulgoa Nursery – 297 Kulgoa Cresc., Terrey Hills 9450 1217 7.30 – 5 (B)

Compiled by Penny Hunstead

THE FORAGER'S CODE: WILD MUSHROOM HUNTERS URGED TO TAKE A CONSCIOUS, CONSERVATIVE APPROACH

The Guardian March 17, 2021 Natasha May

Interest in wild mushroom foraging is on the rise in Australia, but without adequate information and care it can be far from a harmless hobby



A selection of foraged mushrooms from Alison Pouliot's guide. Photograph: CSIRO publishing

Every autumn when the Swiss go out to collect mushrooms, before they return home in the evening to dunk them in fondue, they hand their basket to the Pilzkontrolleur. This mushroom inspector will pluck out any toxic fungi and send them home with what is safe to eat.

The fashion for foraging has made it to Australia, but locally there are no Pilzkontrolleur offices to visit with your harvest.

Ecologist Alison Pouliot says that while Indigenous Australians have the "oldest foraging culture in the world", much of Australian society has traditionally been mycophobic – afraid of mushrooms – thanks to the influence of equally fungal-fearing British forebears. Now, waves of immigration from continental Europe and Asia and, more recently, high end restaurant trends, means mushroom foraging is "increasing whether we agree with it or not".

When foraging goes awry, the consequences can be deadly. In 2020, one man died and at least eight people were hospitalised after eating poisonous mushrooms. A common and potentially lethal species, the death cap, has grown so prolifically in Canberra this year that ACT Health has advised Canberrans to avoid foraging altogether.

The dangers are not only mortal, but legal. In Australia, federal, state and local laws vary significantly regarding foraging on public land. Many state forests, like those in New South Wales, allow foragers to pick mushrooms for personal consumption without a permit but in other areas foragers may be subject to hefty fines, and their actions may disrupt delicate ecosystems.

With the potential human health and environmental implications of mushroom foraging top of mind, Pouliot has released a book, *Wild Mushrooming: A Guide for Foragers*, co-written with mycologist Tom May and published by the CSIRO. The aim of the book is to "offer a philosophy and a framework and protocol that minimises the risk of both human and environmental harm".

Pouliot describes this philosophy as "slow mushrooming". It requires you to focus on a single species at a time, learning where, when and how it grows, alongside "all its diagnostic features" – not just how it looks, but how it feels and smells.

This ethos of foraging "consciously and conservatively" is not only to mitigate health risks, but also to limit one's impact. Pouliot describes this as "the forager's code" – "to leave no sign of your presence. Tread softly to minimise environmental harm in consideration of other people and animals". After all, "you can never eat 30 mushrooms!"

Finding a Pilzkontrolleur

This mushroom season, which is set to be a bumper crop thanks to recent rains, Pouliot is running 50 fungi and foraging workshops across forests in Victoria, NSW and the ACT.

She isn't the only one. Other professional foragers like Diego Bonetto in NSW, Cameron Russel in Victoria's Mornington Peninsula, Kate Grigg in South Australia and Moss House in NSW all offer guided harvests.

Pouliot says that culinary and land care organisations, as well as many local councils, also offer tours. Learning to forage with the help of an expert guide is the closest thing to a Pilzkontrolleur Australians have access to, and a tour guide will also ensure foraging only takes place in areas where it is legal.

Most of these tours will be taking place in the coming weeks, as many mushroom species typically occur in autumn. Pouliot explains that, as the moisture level increases and the soil temperatures drop, these conditions act as a trigger to stimulate the fruiting of fungi.

The best time is often when there has been rain the week or two before. In addition to the expertise on offer through workshops, Pouliot recommends using multiple sources of reliable and evidence-based data including guides, talking to experts and looking up information online.

Saffron milk caps, a starter mushroom



Saffron Milk Cap (*Lactarius deliciosus*). Photograph: Alison Pouliot

Abundant and easy to recognise, Pouliot recommends first-time foragers start off looking for the saffron milk cap (*Lactarius deliciosus*), because it possesses several unique "diagnostic features" that make identification mistakes less likely.

Here, she shares how to identify one, the "slow mushrooming" way.

These mushrooms grow with pine trees, in the ground among the pine needle litter. The Oberon and Belanglo State Forests are the best places to find them in NSW, while in Victoria they can be found in Mount Macedon and the Mornington Peninsula.

Diagnostic features



Saffron Milk Cap. Photograph: Alison Pouliot

The saffron milk cap's cap starts out convex (like a hump) and then flattens and becomes funnel shaped (concave)

Have a look at the stem: the stem itself is not smooth, it's got little pits in it, which look like a giraffe's neck

Size: it is a big mushroom with an average diameter of 15-20cm (but it can be bigger)

If you were to break that stem with your fingers, straight away you'll notice the stem is hollow. If you break it, it comes apart in little crumbly pieces. This is that's very different to most mushrooms, which are very fibrous

One really good clue to identify saffron milk caps is in the name – if you break the cap or gills, you'll see droplets of intense saffron orange milk. No other species in Australian pine forests have this feature, so if you've got milk, you've got a milk cap.

If you're still not sure, come back a couple of hours later to look at where you broke the mushroom. Saffron milk caps oxidise and become green in a really obvious way.

You can also note the smell: this one has a fruity, almost fragrant smell, which is lighter than the heavy earthen smell of most mushrooms.

Pouliot says that recognising smells and textures can be an important part of the identification process. But while you shouldn't be scared to smell and touch a mushroom, it is good practice to wash your hands afterwards.

What should you do if you're unsure of the species?

NSW Forestry Corporation's advice is "if in doubt, throw it out". However, you can also check the species through uploading photos on online platforms for identification. The best one is iNaturalist. Another option is sending a specimen into fungimap, but you'll need to dry the specimen first.

If you're worried you've ingested the wrong kind of mushroom, there are two options:

If you have any suspicion at all that you've eaten a poisonous mushroom, call 000 immediately.

If you have mild symptoms and you haven't been near an oak tree (where death cap mushrooms grow), call the poisons information hotline on 131 126.

What should you do with foraged mushrooms?

"Always cook wild mushrooms," advises Pouliot. This is not just for flavour, but for health and hygiene reasons too. "I always think simple is best," she adds. "Savour the wonderful unique flavours of the mushroom. The classic way is butter and garlic and maybe one herb."

Pouliot's final piece of advice is to always save one mushroom. "If you do eat mushrooms that you collect, always keep one specimen uneaten. Because if there is the case of misidentification, that specimen will help the doctor figure out what it is."



FUNGI X BOTANICA EXHIBITION

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FUNGI



Artwork featured above by Stephanie Chambers, Anna Voytsekovich, and Beverly Allen.

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This exhibition will include many genres including, photography, graphite, watercolour and acrylic art works, ceramics, glass, paper art and sculpture all focusing on the intriguing world of FUNGI!!

Find out about the incredible uses of fungi in medicine, textiles, building materials, regenerating soils and breaking down toxic material in our talks. More details to follow.

BOTANICA

This will be the 21st exhibition of Botanica to be held in our Sydney Gardens. Over the years Botanica has set a high benchmark in the botanical art world with many of the artists having enviable worldwide reputations.

The Foundation and Friends have played a significant role in the recognition of excellence in this genre and celebrate each artist's success. After a very successful 20th Anniversary exhibition in 2019 we are looking forward to welcoming these artists to once again treat us to the results of their many talents. Although some of the botanical artists will be submitting works of fungi, mushrooms and lichens, others will be focusing on plants and pollinators.

All items in the exhibition are for sale with proceeds going to the artists who keep our culture rich and vibrant and to assisting Foundation and Friends of the Botanic Gardens support horticulture, conservation, scientific research and education programs within your Botanic Gardens.

Save the date! Get a first look at Fungi x Botanica at the Opening Night Celebration on Friday, 23rd April. Meet the curators, sip on a glass of Tyrrell's wine, and enjoy shopping for artworks in the beautiful Lion Gate Lodge before the general public. Book

Saturday 24 April - Sunday 9 May
10AM - 4PM

Lion Gate Lodge Garden
The Royal Botanic Garden
Mrs Macquaries Road, Sydney .

'MASSIVE DRAWCARD': STATE STUMPS UP \$2.8M FOR NEW AUSTRALIAN GARDEN IN DANDENONG RANGES

The Age March 16, 2021 Carolyn Webb

Acting Premier James Merlino has been busy running the state, but he still made time to phone landscape designer Phillip Johnson on Monday morning with some good news.

It was to say the state government had contributed the final \$2.8 million needed for Mr Johnson's Australian Garden at Olinda, in Melbourne's east, to go ahead.



Landscape designer Phillip Johnson at the Australian Garden site, a former golf course, in Olinda. Credit: Chris Hopkins

Mr Johnson said on Tuesday that he was "over the moon" and "very excited" that he could now replicate the exhibit that won him and collaborator Wes Fleming the best in show title at London's prestigious Chelsea Flower Show in 2013.

It had been his dream while designing the Chelsea piece "to complete the full cycle and bring it back to the place that inspired me, back to the Dandenongs".

The \$2.8 million, signed off by Tourism Minister Martin Pakula, is in addition to \$1 million the state government had already given to kick-start the project, with philanthropists providing \$340,000. Mr Johnson is now awaiting Shire of Yarra Ranges planning approval.

Mr Merlino, who chairs the Australian Garden's committee and is the state member for Monbulk, said the public garden would be "a massive drawcard for the Dandenong Ranges and will attract visitors from around the country and the globe".



An artist's impression of how the completed Australian Garden will look.

Set on 4000 square metres of the former Olinda Golf Course, it will be more than 20 times bigger than the Chelsea piece, which the Queen and Prince Harry toured in London.

The Olinda version will retain elements from Chelsea such as waterfalls spilling into a billabong, rockeries and a centerpiece waratah flower sculpture designed by architect Dylan Brady.

There will be views over the Yarra Valley, picnic areas and winding paths, and more than 30,000 plants from 426 Australian species including bottle trees, tree ferns, banksias, grevilleas and the endangered Wollemi pine.

Mr Johnson said the Dandenong Ranges were known for their exotic gardens, with "lots of azaleas and rhododendrons and hydrangeas".

He wants to convey to visitors that it is important in their own backyards to use sustainable plants that are suited to climate change, and that native plants can be beautiful.

His aim is "to inspire people to connect to the beauty of nature. And I think with what we've all gone through during COVID, we crave getting out of lockdown to get into nature. We realise how important our gardens are, for our mental health."

Twenty-five workers, including horticultural students, will start building in November and it is possible the garden could open by May 2022.

Mr Johnson said the garden, a new addition to the Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden, could help lure tourists back to the Dandenongs, where businesses were hit hard by the COVID-19 travel restrictions.

The Australian Garden is among 30 new infrastructure projects, worth \$46 million, named in the state government's \$465 million Victorian Tourism Recovery Package.



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