

# CALGAROO

July 2021



*Eucalyptus parramattensis* - Calgaroo

**Newsletter of the Parramatta and Hills District Group  
Australian Plants Society NSW Ltd**

## **\*Program for the remainder of 2021**

**Saturday 24 July** Members' Meeting at Gumnut Hall. Speaker Lachlan Turner "Bushland Photography"

**Saturday 21 August** Bushwalk Cobar Ridge Marramarra National Park. Leader Marilyn Cross

**Saturday 25 September** Garden Visit. Garden of Alan and Jean Wright Baulkham Hills

**Saturday 23 October** Bushwalk O'Hara's Creek Cranstons Road Dural. Leader Jennifer Farrer

**Saturday 27 November** Christmas Breakup at Gumnut Hall. Speaker Malcolm Johnston "Cattai Creek from the source to the Hawkesbury"

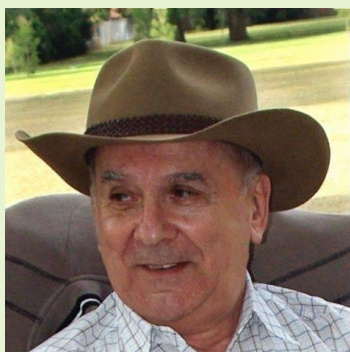
*All activities start at 2 pm.*

***\*Every event is subject to possible COVID restrictions. Jennifer will advise us by email if they apply.***

## Members' meeting

Saturday 24 July 2pm at Gumnut Hall Gumnut Place Cherrybrook

Speaker: Lachlan Turner "Bushland Photography"



Local photography expert Lachlan Turner will give tips on getting the best results for photographing our local bushland and native plants, and also show some inspirational examples for those who are keen to search out the hidden wonders that exist in our local bushland areas. This presentation is not about the virtues of, or the technical aspects of, the various types of cameras, but is more about demonstrating results when using any camera to capture memorable and notable bushland

images. This can be done no matter which type of camera is used.

Lachlan has produced several guides to the flora of The Hills District through his work as a volunteer at the Annangrove Environment Centre where he also runs regular photography workshops.



One of Lachlan's photos of *Styphelia laeta* growing in Fred Caterson Reserve Castle Hill

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## Garden renewal

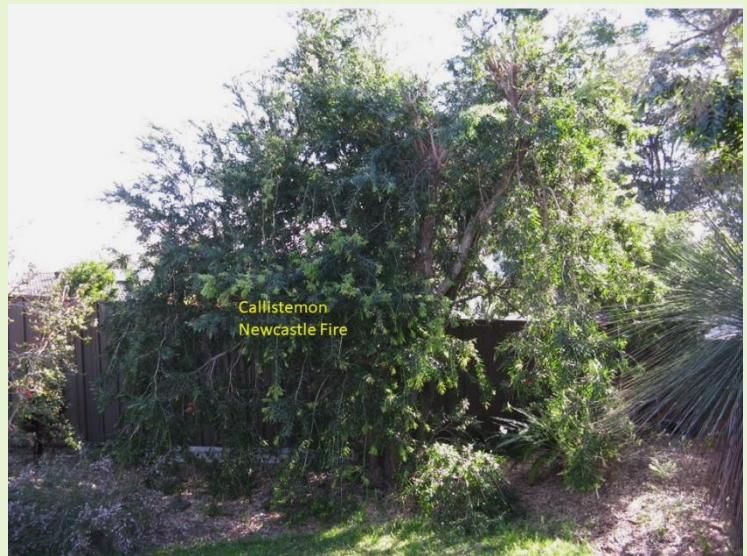
Alan Wright

For various reasons it is sometimes necessary to dig up plants and consign them to the recycling bin or compost heap. Our experience has been a mixture of plants dying, wrong plant in the wrong place due to inexperience or misinformation on the label, and the desire just to have a change.



For example, when we moved onto our block in 1970, about 8 months after arriving in Australia, we planted several gum trees too close to the house, a banana tree because it seemed like a good idea at the time; a rubber plant which became a monster, and soon after, a jacaranda to give shade over an above-ground pool!

More recently, a *Callistemon* 'Newcastle Fire' has been a problem. It was sold to us as a shrub to grow to 4 ft, so it was planted – unintentionally - above a sewer line. OK to begin with, but it grew to about 5m and the roots blocked the sewer line on a couple of occasions. A costly business! It had to go, little by little, until only the mallee - type stumps remained, leaving a large area to be revegetated.



This enabled the sun to reach a 40-years-old *Melaleuca* Robin Redbreast, and it has not stopped flowering since.



We had three *Acacia iteaphylla* plants which just died for no reason that we could establish - despite the expert knowledge of our Group and of the Acacia Study Group.





We replanted this particular area with smaller plants including a small *Callistemon*, *Grevillea* 'Yamba Sunshine', and smaller ground covers.



Also in this area is the endangered *Hibiscus insularis* - Phillip Island Hibiscus - which again for no obvious reason appeared to be dying. We did a 'Peter Cundall' (a hard prune) on it, and it is now a healthy specimen.

Occasionally stuff happens over which you have no control. Such was the construction of a two-storey dwelling very close to our rear fence line in the block which had always been vacant. This means that the plants in that area are deprived of direct sunlight for about 6 months of the year.



Prior to the building event, a *Banksia ericifolia* 'Red Rover' was too large for the position and was removed and replaced with *Banksia spinulosa*, *Grevillea* 'Superb' and a few smaller ground covers.



Another area renewed is near the house as it had become a real dog's breakfast. The *Acacia vestita* had an attack of borers, the *Grevillea x semperflorens* was rampant, a large *Lomandra* was out of hand, and *Grevillea* 'Ned Kelly' was beginning to show its age.



This area was partially cleared and replanted with more manageable plants including: *Ricinocarpus* hybrid (Wedding Bush); another *Acacia vestita* (seedling from original); *Graptophyllum ilicifolium*; *Grevillea* Lady 'O'.



There are two plants which we would never, ever plant again:

*Lomandra sp.*

The seeds have germinated and there are literally hundreds of small shoots everywhere.



*Hibiscus geranioides*

We were given these as seedlings at our visit to Mt. Annan Botanic Gardens a few years ago. As they were from the Broome area of WA we thought they would be a bit difficult to grow. Wrong! The root system is massive, being at least twice as long as the plant. The seeds from the flowers sprouted and we had dozens of seedlings from each plant, all with substantial root systems and we are still weeding out seedlings. So be warned!



The front garden has been through a similar exercise. Having lost all our Geraldton Wax shrubs to Myrtle Rust a few years ago, we were heartened to have several return as seedlings. But this is a story for another day.

## Australia or Africa? The botanical controversy over who can call their plants 'Acacia'

There's an interesting article on this subject from ABC Science [here](#).

As it says, in the year 2000, DNA studies showed that the Acacia genus was actually at least five separate genera: one large, primarily Australian group, two groups of around two hundred species found across Africa, Asia and the Americas, and three much smaller groups found in the Americas.



Since then, there has been much debate among botanists worldwide as to which group should retain the genus name 'Acacia'. At committee meetings of the International Association for Plant Taxonomy, and at the 2005 International Botanical Congress in Vienna, the votes were fairly evenly divided. However, at the International Botanical Congress held in Melbourne in 2011, a clear majority voted in favour of the Australian group having the Acacia type, and hence retaining the name.

So, we came fairly close to having the name of our beloved wattles changed to *Racosperma*!

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### Quotations

*A life spent making mistakes is not only more honourable, but more useful than a life spent doing nothing.*

- George Bernard Shaw

(This applies particularly to gardening - you learn lots from your mistakes!)

*. . . this plague has forced us to recognise how much joy we take from exploring the world, how many of us have switched . . . to exploring local paths, streams and gardens, and how a lusty kind of wonder can fuel us.*

- Julia Baird

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### Flannel Flowers

Ian Cox

This story is mainly about white Flannel Flowers - *Actinotus helianthi* – not the pink ones that you see photos of everywhere!

*Actinotus helianthi* grows naturally in my bush, but these don't have large or numerous flowers. In my garden there are two attractive introduced populations that are self-perpetuating - they flower, shed seed, germinate and flower again without any help from me. They flower best from about September to January, and live for two or three years.





The first introduced population, named Federation Stars, was developed by Mt Annan Botanical Gardens in commemoration of the centenary of federation in 2001. We purchased one or two plants, and they have done the rest by self-seeding.

The other introduced Flannel Flower originated from coastal Queensland. They have a compact habit and large flowers, and were established by a handful of seeds obtained from a visit to Merv Hodge's garden a few years ago. The seeds were just sprinkled on the ground and they germinated.



Although these Flannel Flowers came from coastal Queensland, they are quite at home here now. Photo Heather Miles.



Flannel Flowers sometimes germinate very easily, on this occasion on top of a wooden seat.



If you would like to try germinating Flannel Flower seeds in your garden, let me know and I'll collect some for you. You will have to wait until summer though.

The bush on my land was burnt in a planned ecological/hazard reduction burn five years ago, and this caused the Flannel Flowers to flower profusely two and three years later. Since then, they have gradually decreased in numbers and flowering intensity as the other species have become more dominant. When the next fire comes, they will return.

While on the subject of Flannel Flowers, a few years ago some of the ladies of our Group had meetings where they made beautiful things using native plants. They called themselves 'crafty'! Here's a photo of two of their exquisite pieces featuring *Actinotus minor*. They would bring beauty to anywhere in the home!



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## Your emails

### From Grahame Forrest

Hi Ian - you really are keeping up the standard of Calgaroo. This (June) issue is full of interest.

Your comments on the animals and insects in your garden included mention of skinks.

We have skinks seen daily in my garden and the rockeries. However, I also have a very small pond surrounded by rocks. Frogs love it and serenade us most nights. Unfortunately, their amorous activities are not being rewarded as the skinks seem to demolish the spawn that is seen often. Tadpoles are also edible but there is little sign that any grow into adult frogs. Would anyone know how the skinks can be kept at bay?



*Thanks, Grahame, for your interesting comments.  
I suppose if you constantly have frogs, they must be breeding somewhere. Do you think that a few eggs remain and hatch into tadpoles in your pond and ultimately turn into frogs?  
Surely the skinks don't eat the tadpoles?*

*Can anyone help Grahame?*



## Bushwalk along Quarry Road fire trail June 2021

Pip Gibian

On 26<sup>th</sup> June thirteen members collected at the end of Quarry Road, Dural, on a fine, cool afternoon. From there the Quarry Road fire trail extends to Berowra Creek in the Eloura Bushland, not that any of our walks would go that far. There is too much to see and admire along this sandy ridgetop. This ridge supports a huge number of plant species.

Being before mid-winter, we did not expect to see as many flowers, and we were pleased to see more than expected. This trail is known for its banksias, and *B. marginata*, *B. spinulosa* and *B. ericifolia* lit up the roadside bush. Flowers were seen on many other species, such as *Acacia ulicifolia* and *A. suaveolens*, *Woolfsia pungens*, *Epacris pulchella*, *Grevillea speciosa* and *Bossiaea heterophylla*. Others were in full bud, such as *Bossiaea scolopendria*, *Grevillea buxifolia* and *Phyllota phyllicoides*.

Tony Maxwell had provided a list of likely species prepared from internet sites like ALA (Atlas of Living Australia). We added many more to the list. This walk was a very good exercise in the recognition of native plants from foliage appearances and form. It was enjoyed by all our very observant members.

### Plants identified on the walk:

*Acacia longifolia	Dampiera stricta	Lambertia formosa
*Acacia myrtifolia	Darwinia biflora	Leptospermum trinervium
Acacia suaveolens	Dianella prunina	Leucopogon mircophyllus
Acacia ulicifolia	Dillwynia elegans	Lindsaea linearis
Actinotus helianthi	*Dodonea triquetra	Lindsaea microphylla
Actinotus minor	*Drosera peltata	Lomatia silaifolia
Allocasuarina littoralis	Epacris pulchella	Micrantheum ericoides
Angophora costata	Eucalyptus haemastoma	Mitrasacme polymorpha
Angophora hispida	*Eucalyptus sclerophylla	*Monotoca scoparia
Banksia ericifolia	Gomphlobium grandiflorum	Patersonia sericea
Banksia marginata	*Gompholobium minor	Persoonia levis
Banksia oblongifolia	Grevillea buxifolia	Persoonia pinifolia
Banksia serrata	Grevillea speciosa	Petrophile pulchella
Banksia spinulosa	Hakea dactyloides	Phyllota phyllicoides
Bossiaea heterophylla	Hakea gibbosa	Platysace linearifolia
Bossiaea scolopendria	Hakea propinqua	Tetratheca ericifolia
Cassinia denticulata	Hakea sericea	*Thelymitra ixioides
Caustis flexuosa	*Isopogon anemonifolius	Woolfsia pungens
*Caustis pentandra	*Isopogon anethifolius	Xanthorrhoea media
Ceratopetalum gummiferum	*Kunzea ambigua	
Conospermum longifolium		and one Fungus
Corymbia gummifera		Rimaria strictus
Crowea exalata		

\*Denotes not on computer list for Quarry Road



It's your *Calgaroo*

Please send your articles, comments, observations and photos for the next Calgaroo to [itcox@bigpond.com](mailto:itcox@bigpond.com)



## **Parramatta and Hills District Group**

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