

# CALGAROO

September 2021



*Eucalyptus parramattensis* - Calgaroo

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

## **\*Our Program**

**Friday 24 September 2021** 8 pm Zoom meeting – see page 18

**Saturday 23 October 2021** 2 pm Bushwalk O’Hara’s Creek Cranstons Road Dural. Leader Jennifer Farrer

**Saturday 27 November 2021** 2 pm Christmas Breakup at Gumnut Hall. Speaker Malcolm Johnston “Cattai Creek from the source to the Hawkesbury”

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

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## Propagation - trial and (not many) errors

Ricki (Erica) Nash

My propagating journey with native plants began in June last year whilst studying Horticulture at Wentworth Falls TAFE, when I could not get into the glasshouse as much as I wanted due to the rules around COVID-19.

So where best to try and apply all this new-found knowledge but at home of course! Some of the first plants I tried were *Syzygium paniculatum* (Lilly Pilly) seedlings collected from in between the sandstone rocks at the base of the parent tree growing in our front yard. Previously I have used the fruit for making chutneys and jams, the latter tasting the best! As they grew, I potted all the plants on and they continue to do well. Recently, Jim took one of the larger trees and planted it down the back behind the Native Frangipani (*Hymenosporum flavum*) and the Blueberry Ash (*Elaeocarpus reticulatis*) – pink form.

Whilst these were growing, I decided to try propagating native seed . . . the first which caught my eye was the Gymea Lily (*Doryanthes excelsa*), which had finished flowering. When I noticed the head was sufficiently dry, I placed a tarpaulin on the ground and shook the stem which encouraged the seed to fall out. I collected this, checked it with a “loupe” or jewellery eyepiece to make sure the seed did not have any signs of infection or had been eaten by an insect, then placed the seed-raising mix into a medium-sized pot. I placed several seeds just under the surface of the soil and lightly sprinkled it with commercially prepared coarse river sand. To maintain the humidity, I covered the pot with a large plastic zip-lock bag. To my amazement, they germinated in early September and it was so exciting. I felt like I’d struck gold!



These are the *Doryanthes* today

At about the same time I had collected the seed from the Gymea Lily, I’d also collected some seed from a Grevillea Golden Lyre growing on our embankment garden. Anyone who has been to Malcolm and Jenny Johnston’s garden (Boongala) will have seen some magnificent specimens growing there, and it was actually during one of their open garden weekends some years ago that we bought this plant. From the six seeds I sowed, two germinated and I managed to pot them on all the time keeping their tender frames inside a Bunnings plastic

storage container which acted as a glasshouse. A few weeks later I took them out for a few hours each day to 'harden off', but they didn't like it, and subsequently dampened off and died. Such a shame as they had come so far and given me so much joy! I have recently planted more seed so here's hoping!

### One of my first Golden Lyres before it succumbed

*Allocasuarina Littoralis*, which grows in a thinning mass outside our back gate and whose cones provide a feast for the Glossy Black Cockatoos, soon became my next project, so after collecting several cones, I planted the seed from these. They too have done well and continue to grow, albeit slowly but the plan is to replant them in this zone despite the large sandstone rock shelf, so I am hoping they will find a foothold.



I have always loved Eucalypts! Some of my favourites being the mighty River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) and Sydney Red Gum (*Angophora costata*). The latter in particular is present in our gully, and one of them is very old with a beautiful hollow halfway up its trunk. We hope that the Powerful Owl which we hear calling some nights from down in that direction is roosting there, but to date, we have not spied anything standing at its entrance.

If you have been over to walk the Koolewong Track at West Head in Ku-ring-gai National Park there was a beauty on the cliff edge! I say was, because some years back she was struck by lightning which took out her centre, and she is but a shell of the magnificent specimen I first encountered in the early 80s. Its roots resembled molten wax as it tried to find a way to cling onto life.

My real favourite is the one deep down in Galston Gorge. When you drive across the Bailey Bridge on your way back from Hornsby, you will pass through a stand of Casuarinas, then the road momentarily widens and there perched on top of the cliff edge directly above you stands this beautiful forest matriarch. She must be at least 100 years old! So next time you pass through here slow down and look straight up and you will see her. Of course, if you are coming down from the Galston side, you could pull over to the far left in this widened section of the road, get out of your car with camera in hand when it is safe to do so and take a photo.

Our bush block is dominated by *Eucalyptus punctata* (Grey Gum), pictured, and *Corymbia eximia* (Yellow Bloodwood), so of course these became my next interest. With the first batch of *E. punctata*, I planted the chaff and seed together in cell trays, but when they germinated the plants were too close to each other, so when it came time to 'pot on', I ended up having to sacrifice the weaker-looking plants. In the end, I only had about six plants that survived, because most of the others died from either root injury or damping



off. Since then, I have managed to propagate twelve other *E. punctata* and eight *Corymbia eximia*, all of which have been recently moved to forester pots. Recently I planted one of the survivors from the first batch which is now approximately 18" high back in the bush not far from a very mature *E. punctata*.



*Eucalyptus punctata* seedlings - from the first batch (left) and second batch (right)

Back in May this year, a friend gave me a few woody capsules of the critically endangered *Eucalyptus* sp. *Cattai*, of which there are about 200 mallee-like trees between Annangrove and Glenorie. Separating the tiny black seeds from the chaff, I planted about 10 of these into two little seed trays. About two weeks later they germinated which was wonderful to see! However, they grow quite slowly, and recently after they gained their second set of true leaves, I transferred them very carefully into a cell tray which I keep in a mini glasshouse.



Here's one of the *E. sp. Cattai* seedlings

Apart from *Eucalyptus*, I also ventured into *Banksias*, *B. serrata* being one of the most prolific on our block together with *B. spinulosa*. For variety, we had also planted some years ago a *Banksia integrifolia*. It was more difficult to access the seed from the *B. serrata*, so one day when we were having a pile burn, using a long pair of BBQ tongs, I got as close to the fire as possible and dangled the cone over the flames. However, it was just too hot for me, so in the end, I referred to the book titled *Banksia* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed) by Kathy and Kevin Collins and Alex George, and turned on the oven until it reached 120 degrees C, then placed the cones on a tray for about one hour with good results! The valves opened, allowing me to remove the seeds with a clean pair of blunt-ended tweezers. From here I prepared a seed tray using Searles Seed Raising Mix, gently scraping a small pocket into the top of the soil bed whereupon I stuck the seed head-down, leaving the wing exposed, and gently backfilled around this structure. The *B. serrata* were planted in mid- May 2021 and have nearly all germinated, with the first set of true leaves just appearing now.



Seedlings of *Banksia serrata* (above) and *B. integrifolia* (right)

The *B. integrifolia* seeds were sown in late March 2021 and were “potted on” in April. These are quite cute as you can see in the photo.

I have only ever used Searles Seed Raising Mix, and rarely add sand or perlite or vermiculite like many other propagators/recipes suggest. The mix is prepared commercially and contains peat moss, Penetraide rewetting granules, and fertilisers for up to transplanting at the two-leaf stage as per AS 3743.

At the moment I am also trying to propagate *Hakea sericea*. The first time I tried, both plants which germinated ‘dampened off’ and could not be saved. Now I have another which I potted on, but it looks like it might just do the same as the previous two, so I’ll have to work out a way to prevent this from occurring. Anyone who has grown Hakeas from seed and had success . . . I am open to suggestions.

It’s been trial and error. I keep notes about the plants’ progress, things I notice about the leaves and plants in general, nursery records, and take photographs often, storing these in the computer for future reference.

Above all, I have really enjoyed being a part of the Australian Plants Society, as it has ignited a real passion, and I appreciate the group here at Parramatta – Hills, as everyone is most helpful with plant identification and sharing their experiences with growing Australian Native Plants. Likewise joining many of the Study Groups such as Grevillea, Banksia, Eucalypt, and Garden Design has been very worthwhile, and I have enjoyed the meetings and reading the newsletters very much. Everyone is happy to share, and members are very knowledgeable about the various plants from years of research, study, and experience.

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# The need for fire to sustain the diversity of fire-adapted vegetation

## A response to the need for any management intervention of bushfire-affected rare plants

Roger Farrow\*

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I have been studying the regeneration and recovery of the vegetation in the Moreton National Park (Nerriga Road Area) and Tallaganda National Park (Mulloon Fire Trail) following the 2019–2020 mega-fires. The shrub and forb layers in these National Parks were completely obliterated by the intensity of the fires leaving just a bed of ash. Although my observations are not strictly quantitative (e.g. through the use of quadrats etc.), I did return to the same places to identify what was coming back and took photos.

These observations were complemented by a review of the extensive literature about the impact of fire on Australia's flora and discussions with colleagues, including Michael Doherty (CSIRO). Michael has undertaken a long-term study (using quadrats) of the recovery of vegetation in Namadgi NP after the mega fire of 2003. He found no net loss of species.

My conclusion is that the Australian flora outside of the rainforest ecosystem is highly adapted to survive fire. Most species, from the largest tree such as Mountain Ash to the smallest forb such as the Pink Flannel flower, are dependent on fire for successful reproduction and long-term survival. Many species of Proteaceae and Myrtaceae only release their seeds after fire. Fire has always been part of the earth's environment. It is closely associated with the appearance and radiation of the angiosperms in the Cretaceous era, 100 mya, and goes back to the very start of plant life on land in the Devonian era.

The post-fire response of the vegetation, especially if there is significant follow up rain, is that species diversity actually **increases** in the aftermath of the fire. This is due to the germination of plants from the seedbank that has been steadily building up during the inter-fire period. Hard-coated seeds of the Fabaceae and Mimosaceae are a conspicuous element here, as they need a dormancy-breaker like fire to germinate. In addition, there are also species with tiny seeds that remain dormant until there is a very hot fire (*Dampiera fusca*, *Actinotus forsythii* etc.). Species diversity starts to decline post fire as regrowing shrubs outcompete the forbs and fire-dependent ephemerals that disappear. This response applies to all species, whether common or rare.

Soil is a great insulator and plants in fire-affected ground also regrow from underground rootstocks (sedges, grasses and other monocotyledons), bulbs and corms, (many monocotyledons, including orchids), taproots (many Apiaceae Asteraceae and others) and lignotubers. Shoots sprout from above-ground, epicormic strands in the stems of Myrtaceae. All these survival mechanisms are seen in the plants growing back in fire-affected areas of Moreton and Tallaganda NPs and elsewhere.

## Examples

1. **Orchids.** Unprecedented numbers of orchids appeared in the autumn and spring following the Morton NP mega-fire. They include several threatened species, namely *Corunastylis superba*, *C. plumosa* (new locality), and *Caladenia tessellata*, plus other species like *Prasophyllum australe*, never seen before, presumably because it was hidden under the dense cover of shrubs in previous years.



*Corunastylis densa*

2. **Fire-dependent ephemerals.** Vast numbers of seedlings appeared after the fires and included three species never seen in the previous two decades in the Nerriga area, *Actinotus forsythii*, *A. gibbonsi*, and *Commersonia hermannifolia*. These could not be identified until they flowered. Their seeds could have been in the seed bank for decades since after the last major fire. These plants are also known as **obligate pyrogenic species**.



*Actinotus forsythii* seedlings

3. **Pomaderris.** Tallaganda NP contains six known species of Pomaderris and all the plants were destroyed by the mega-fire. Some, such as *P. costata*, were in a senescent stage before the fire. By the following spring, large numbers of seedlings of all the known species were abundant and more widespread than before. By August 2021, some seedlings had produced flower buds



*Pomaderris costata*



*Pomaderris elliptica*



*Pomaderris phyllicifolia*



*Pomaderris aff. intermedia* "Bungonia"

4. ***Dampiera fusca***. Two years after the 2003 ACT mega-fire, a blue carpet of *D.fusca* appeared on several summits in the Brindabella Range among the burnt out shrubs. These were new records for the ACT. The plants only lasted two years before disappearing, leaving their progeny in the seed bank.



*Dampiera fusca*, Booroomba Rocks

It has been suggested that the survival of rare or threatened plant (ROTAP) species has been put at risk by the mega-fires of 2019–2020, notwithstanding their adaptations to survive fire. To demonstrate an adverse impact of fire, we still need evidence that such species have not left any progeny in the aftermath of the fire. Most plants are put on the ROTAP list



because of factors like loss of habitat and lack of burning at an appropriate temperature. For example, In *Pomaderris bodalla* it has been shown that low temperature control burns adversely affect mature plants without breaking seed dormancy leading to population declines. In another case, the loss of *Prasophyllum petalum* from Captains Flat cemetery reserve was probably due to lack of burning, that resulted in a thick thatch of *Themeda* developing and shrub invasion by *Hakea microcarpa* and *Kunzea ericoides*.

Any restoration work in burnt areas should probably focus on tasks like weed removal, although the heathlands of Moreton NP and the forests of Tallaganda NP are remarkably weed free.

Finally, I do not expect to see any loss of plant species, whether common or rare in Moreton and Tallaganda National Parks, despite one of the most intense fires on record.

## References

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## \*About the author

Dr Roger Farrow is a retired insect ecologist who previously worked at CSIRO, Division of Entomology. After retiring he joined the Canberra Branch of the Australian Native Plants Society to further his interest in native plants and their relationships with insects, especially pollinators. For more than two decades he has led excursions with the Society to places of botanic interest both in the local area and further afield. He is the author of "*Insects of South-Eastern Australia: an ecological and behavioural guide*" (CSIRO 2016) and co-author of "*Field Guide to Orchids of the Southern Tablelands of NSW including the ACT*" (2020).

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## Perlite

Mark Abell

You have probably heard of Perlite and its use in plant propagating mixes and as an additive to potting mixes. You may even have a bag or two of it that you use. So what's the deal?

**What is it?** Perlite is a chemically inert sterile material that is made from volcanic glass that has high water content. When it is heated to very high temperatures, around 900C, it expands like popcorn into the white material that we know it as. The resultant material is very light and is over ten times its original volume. As a non-organic mineral, it does not

break down readily and has a long life in pots and growing media. Perlite has fine white dust, and care should be taken to not breathe it in. Wetting it down first is a good way to reduce the dust. In addition to importing Perlite, Australia produces it in Chilagoe (west of Cairns).

**What does it do?** Perlite is full of tiny air compartments, and it has a large surface area. The centre of the 'beads' tends to stay dry, with the outer surface good at holding water. The granular nature of the perlite beads allows for air and water to easily move through the media. By both holding water in the beads & allowing water to drain through the media, it manages to do two seeming opposite things.

**Uses.** Perlite comes in several sizes, from medium, through to coarse, super coarse and jumbo. Pictured is jumbo (top), and the standard Bunnings bag (probably medium). The smaller sizes are good for use in propagating mixes and smaller pots, whilst the larger sizes can be used as a component of orchid mixes, and in larger pots. Additional uses include hydroponics and cacti. As well as improving the drainage in potting mixes, perlite does not break down like the organic parts of a potting mix, and thus helps to reduce the compaction and settling in the mix that occurs over time. Furthermore, the light weight of the perlite helps to make larger pots and hanging baskets somewhat less heavy.



As it does not break down, it can also be used in garden beds to help with drainage, particularly if you have heavy clay soils. However, given the cost, it would probably be better to dig gypsum, compost and other organic material into the soil first.

**Where do you get it?** It tends to come in two main bag sizes - very big (100 L) and small (5 L). With some searching around I was able to get a more modest 50 litre bag of the jumbo grade perlite (Enfield Produce) delivered. Small 5 litre bags of 'medium' grade perlite are readily available from Bunnings and many garden centres.

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## Looking for resources to help ID plants?

*(Thanks to East Hills Group's newsletter)*

Try the Facebook group "NSW Native Plant Identification"  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/332752936930981>. This group is a place where people can upload photos of plants they wish to identify and help others with their queries.

It's both public - anyone can see who's in the group and what they post - and visible - anyone can find this group - and is based in NSW. The administrator/ moderator is Joel Cohen, Biodiversity Sampling Technical Officer at The Royal Botanic Garden, Sydney and Herbarium Support Officer at National Herbarium of New South Wales, so it's a reasonably reputable source. It has over 9,000 members. Several people at the President's workshop recommended it.

## Photo Gallery



*Bossiaea scolopendria* (left), and *Actinotus minor* (right), from a recent visit to the Quarry Road fire trail.

Photos Ricki Nash.

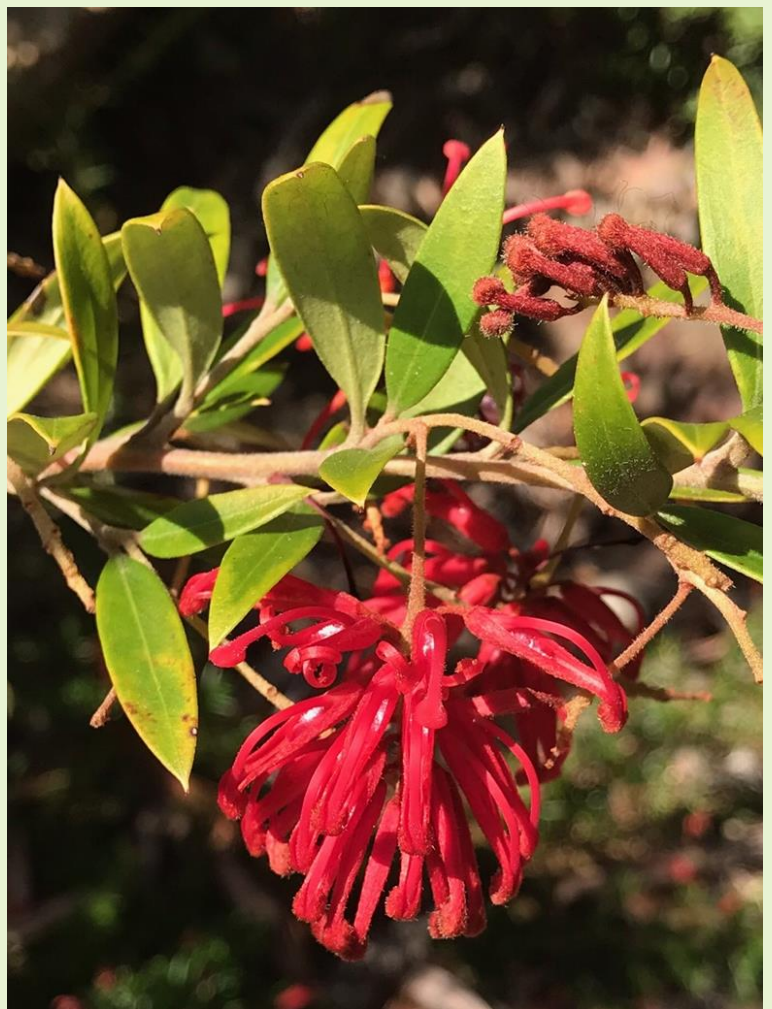
*Prostanthera striatiflora* (right) is an erect shrub to about 1.5m high and wide, and looks stunning when in flower late winter/spring. Although it comes from dry areas of inland Australia, it grows well in Sydney, and is easy to propagate from cuttings. After flowering it should be pruned by about a third.

Photo Lesley Waite.



'Lady O' is an outstanding, hardy, must-have Grevillea. It flowers all year in full sun or part shade, and the bees love it. 'Lady O' grows about 1.2m high and 1.5m wide, and is easy to propagate from cuttings.

Photo Lesley Waite.



*Eremophila racemosa* is upright to about 1m tall and .5m wide, and is best in full sun. Flowering is mainly in spring but can occur at other times. There's also another attractive form with yellow and white flowers. It's easy to propagate from cuttings and worth growing, although not long-lived in Sydney. It might need staking during strong winds.

Photo Lesley Waite.

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*Two or three years ago Keith Muir of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness spoke to our Group about the Gardens of Stone, and what should be done to protect it. Here's an edited email from Chris Gambian, Chief Executive of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, dated 3 August 2021:*

## **Gardens of Stone – good news!**

When Centennial Coal cancelled its Angus Place coal mine application this week, five threatened wetlands in the Gardens of Stone were saved and 123 million tonnes of coal was kept safely in the ground. That's equivalent to two years of NSW's total climate pollution. But how did this victory happen in a state where coal companies are used to getting their way, no matter the cost?

Almost ninety years ago, in 1932, Miles Dunphy proposed that this spectacular slice of Wiradjuri Country, the Gardens of Stone, should be protected as part of his vision for the Greater Blue Mountains National Park.



Since then, the Blue Mountains National Park and World Heritage Area have been declared, but the last 39,000 hectares of the Gardens of Stone remain unprotected – because coal companies had an interest in mining deep underneath the ground.

Over those ninety years groups like Colong Foundation for Wilderness, the Blue Mountains Conservation Society, Lithgow Environment Group, Bushwalking NSW, the Colo Committee, National Parks Association of NSW, and the National Trust have kept the Gardens of Stone vision alive, and documented and resisted the irreversible damage that underground coal mining has done to the rare ecosystems, cultural heritage and spectacular cliffs and pagodas above.

Chris Jonkers and Julie Favell from the Lithgow Environment Group have been monitoring endangered wetlands for over thirty years, while Dr Haydn Washington from Colo Committee and Keith Muir from the Colong Foundation for Wilderness spearheaded the campaign for many years, finding and publishing irrefutable evidence of the damage done by coal mines and achieving recognition of the unique ecology of the area.

For years, Centennial Coal denied they were damaging the wetlands and waterways, and paid consultants to convince state and federal governments that they wouldn't drain these endangered ecosystems.

However, decades of tireless work and mounting scientific evidence forced Centennial Coal to admit in its most recent application that it would completely drain five remaining endangered wetlands, destroying the habitat of some of NSW's rarest threatened plant and animals. Yet even this admission wasn't enough to stop the mine. NSW development laws provide a pathway for Centennial to simply pay for "offsets" while destroying the last wetlands.

As the assessment process for the Angus Place expansion came to a head over the last two years, the campaign ramped up.

Nature Conservation Council investigations last year revealed that the company was cheating on its greenhouse emissions assessment – it failed to account for 97% of the climate pollution it would cause.

Over 1,000 Nature Conservation Council supporters made submissions objecting to the mine, and campaigners from the Gardens of Stone Alliance groups pored over the thousands of pages of application documents to identify the incorrect assumptions, concerning impacts and hidden details.

Local tourism operators also voiced their concerns about the mine – Thomas Ebersoll from Newnes Hotel gathered 11,000 petition signatures opposing the mine, and Emirates One & Only Wolgan Valley voiced their concerns about over 100 workers who would lose their jobs if the streams and rivers the resort relies on dry up due to the mine.

The Colong Foundation and Gardens of Stone Alliance commissioned economic analysis showing that Lithgow has a bright future by protecting and investing in its natural heritage, with eco-tourism set to bring hundreds of thousands of visitors to the region. The Nature Conservation Council teamed up with Lithgow Environment Centre to tell the story of the wetlands being turned to ashes by longwall mining on social media.

And this year the Nature Conservation Council and Gardens of Stone Alliance organised a field trip for journalists and Members of Parliament to tour the area and see what was under threat with their own eyes.



Members of Parliament tour the Gardens of Stone: Rose Jackson MLC, Jo Haylen MP, Catherine Cusack MLC and Justin Field MLC.

After the 'Parliamentary Friends of Nature' trip, Members of Parliament from Labor, Liberal, Greens and Independents all worked to protect this spectacular region. Government MP Catherine Cusack made a strong speech in parliament and took the issue up with the Planning and Environment Ministers.

Meanwhile, the demand for coal was slowly waning as solar and wind power reduce the need to mine more coal. The NSW renewable energy roadmap that passed parliament in late 2020 prepares the state for a future without coal generation which took away the mining company's trump card.

Over in Thailand Centennial Coal's parent company, Banpu announced a plan to turn away from fossil fuels, which the Nature Conservation Council leveraged locally to point out the inconsistency of opening a new mine in Australia to mine coal until 2053.

Finally, in the face of a growing wave of public, political and scientific opposition, and declining demand for their product, Centennial Coal withdrew its application.

Centennial Coal has already stated that they will submit a new coal mine proposal in the region, albeit ten times smaller, further from the World Heritage Area and using a less damaging bord and pillar mining technique.

### **What's Next?**

With the Angus Place coal mine expansion withdrawn, this clears the way for protecting the final 39,000 hectares of the Gardens of Stone and implementing the Destination Pagoda tourist management plan for the reservation.

Destination Pagoda is a plan written by Ian Brown and Elizabeth Dudley-Bestow for boosting the Lithgow economy by protecting and investing in the untapped scenic and ecological values of the region.

[Learn more about Destination Pagoda and what the reservation would look like](#)

The NCC team will be working hard toward this historic protection in partnership with the rest of the Gardens of Stone Alliance, building on ninety years of hard work by so many luminaries in the NSW environment movement.

But the battle is far from over. If you'd like to know more about how you can get involved in the campaign, [sign up here](#) or visit one of the Gardens of Stone member groups: [Lithgow Environment Group](#), [Blue Mountains Conservation Society](#), [Colong Foundation for Wilderness](#) or the [National Parks Association of NSW](#) to learn more about what they are doing to move this important campaign forward.

Here's to more success for nature and the climate in the future.

Chris Gambian,  
Chief Executive,  
Nature Conservation Council

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## Botany and beta roots

Angie Michaelis

*About 5% of English words derive directly from Greek – but the proportion of scientific or technical words is much greater. Can Ancient Greek help with plant names?*

*Last month, Angie started at the beginning, at A . . .*

The second letter of the Greek alphabet, *beta*, gives us the most important word of all: *bio*, for 'life'.

The **biota** is the life, the flora and fauna, of a region.

**Biography** is 'writing' + 'life'. **Biology** is the study (or 'explanation', from Greek *-logia*) of life. *Bio* even lurks in the word **amphibian**: *amphi-* means 'both', and amphibians live on both land and in water.

Let's move to **botany**. In Ancient Greek *botane* meant 'pasture', or 'grass' or 'herbs', and one of my favourite little Australian plants pokes up from the herb layer: the Bulbine Lily. ***Bulbine bulbosa*** uses the Greek word *bolbos* not once but twice. The vowels are a bit mixed up – blame the Romans who borrowed the word first. The English name is actually no better: the plant is no longer classed as a Lily, and the swollen food storage part is not a true bulb (it is a corm, an underground fleshy stem, which also has fleshy roots).



*Bulbine bulbosa*



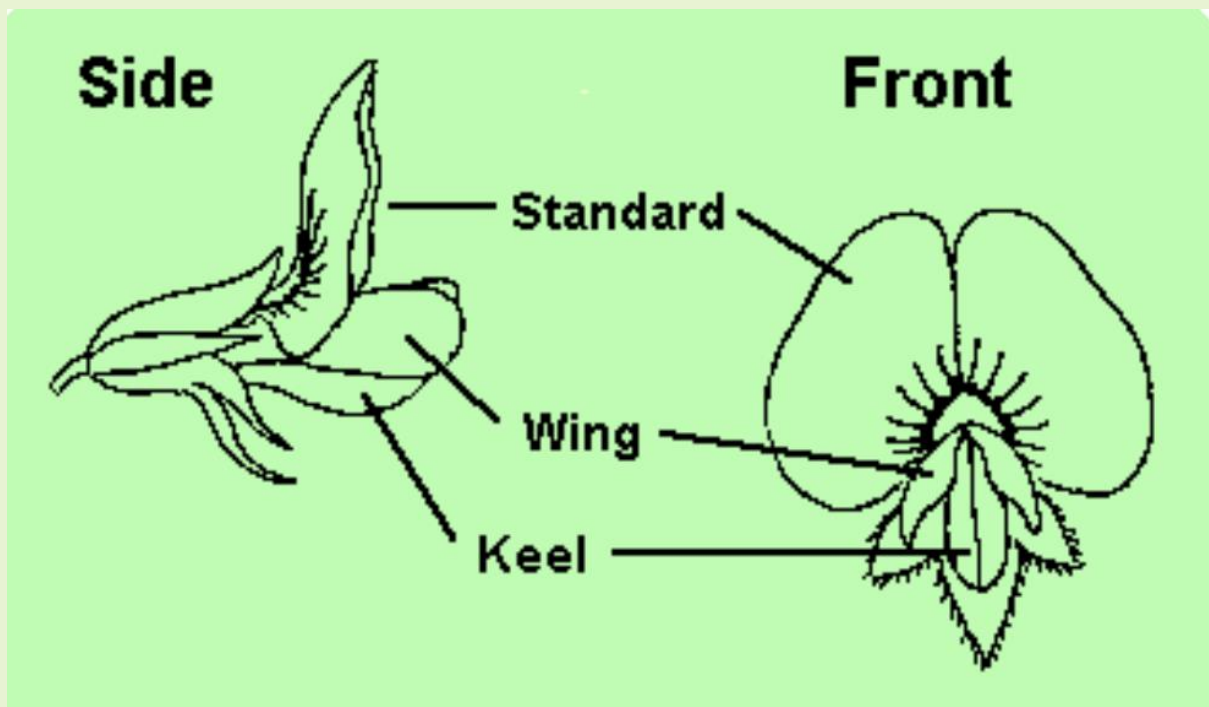
Then there is *botryoides*, as in the common Sydney *Eucalyptus botryoides*. *Botrys* is a bunch of grapes; *-oides*, which we will meet often, means ‘-like’. The author of the species, the botanist who first described it, thought the cluster of flowers, or its capsules, was like a bunch of grapes. The same could be said for many, many of our 900 or so species of eucalypt.

*Brachy*, or *brachys*, meaning ‘short’, is quite commonly used, as in these three examples.

To decipher *Brachycome*, or *Brachyscome* as botanists today call it, we need to know that *come* is ‘a head of hair’. It refers to the short hairs on the top of the seed that help it fly in the wind – but you will need a hand lens as well as your Greek dictionary.

*Brachychiton*? To its 19<sup>th</sup> century authors, its seed coat looked like a short *chiton* (a tunic worn in ancient Greece). Not the easiest ID feature for a Kurrajong, Bottle Tree, or Illawarra Flame!

*Brachysema*? ‘Short’ + ‘standard’: a reminder to compare the flower’s short standard with its longer keel petal, which might solve some puzzles over peas.



Parts of a pea flower Woolcock, *Australian Plants*, 12 (95)

But now the WA genus *Brachysema* has become *Gastrolobium* – and explaining *Gastrolobium* will have to wait for the third letter of the Greek alphabet: gamma, a.k.a. G.

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## **Report from Committee Meeting 2 September 2021**

Jennifer Farrer

### **Zoom Meeting Friday 24 September 8.00 pm**

It will be no surprise that given the current restrictions we have decided that there can be no face-to-face activity for our Members' meeting in September. We have decided to hold a meeting on Zoom, and as Zoom meetings work best when there is plenty of interaction, we are asking members to share the activities they have undertaken to stay sane in lockdown. Send some photos of what you have been doing and we will collate a PowerPoint presentation and ask you to speak to your contribution. There will also be an opportunity to share flowers from your garden. Remember to have a black or white background to hold them against when presenting.

Please also note the change of date and time. This will be a one-off evening meeting to enable you all to spend as much time outdoors in Spring.

### **Neutrog offer**

Members will have read in the NSW newsletter of the opportunity for members to obtain discounted products from Neutrog. You will soon receive an email from the Group inviting you to join the scheme. This is an optional extra for members. For the scheme to be a success we need a representative from our Group to take delivery of the orders once a quarter. We need someone who has secure storage for a quantity of product which will be delivered by truck on a pallet. So easy access to the property is also a necessity. Members who have ordered products will be told when they are available and will generally have two days to collect them. The Group representative will not be responsible for collecting payment. This will be made when ordering from the Neutrog website. The representative will be provided with a list of the products ordered for each member.

If you are interested in taking on this role please let Jennifer know at [apsparrahills@gmail.com](mailto:apsparrahills@gmail.com)

### **Region NSW Gathering May 2023**

Parramatta Hills has hosted several successful Gatherings for NSW Region members in the past. We were all set to host another one in March 2020 just after the State was locked down. We have been asked to host another one in May 2023. We won't ask you to put it in your diary because you probably don't have one! Just don't be surprised when planning commences for this event later next year.

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Share your stories . . .

What have you been doing in the garden?

Email me at [itcox@bigpond.com](mailto:itcox@bigpond.com) for the next Calgaroo.



## **Parramatta and Hills District Group**

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