

# AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY

*Southern Highlands Group*

*...your local native garden club*

## **Southern Highlands**

### **SHAPS Committee:**

President  
Bill Mullard

Vice President  
Louise Egerton

Secretary  
Kim Zegenhagen

Treasurer  
John Desmond

Newsletter Editor  
Trisha Arbib

Communications Officer  
Jen Slattery

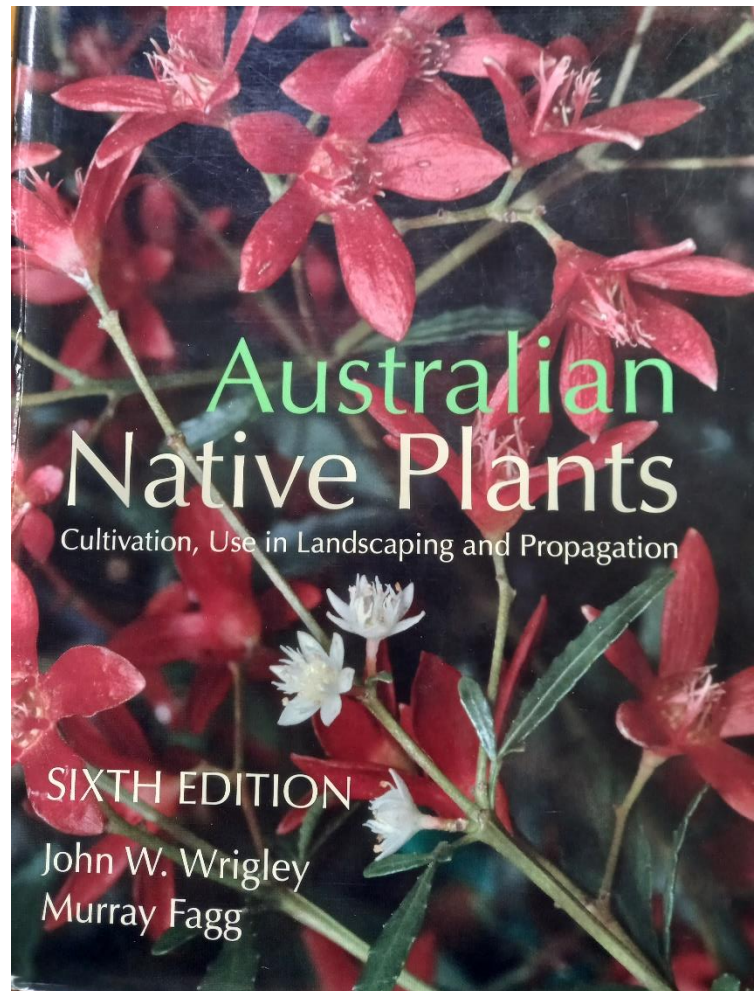
Committee Members  
Marjorie Lobban

Paul Osborne

APS Committee

southernhighlandsaps@gmail.com

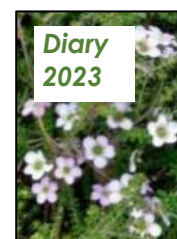
[www.austplants.com.au/  
Southern-Highlands](http://www.austplants.com.au/Southern-Highlands)



My Australian native plants “bible” for many years - Wrigley and Fagg. I am thankful for the many times I consult it, not just when I am putting together a newsletter. I like the descriptions of genera, followed by descriptions of species and hybrids. I like noting whether the symbol for frost hardy is present; the identification of natural distribution, method of propagation and of course characteristics. The whole interspersed with photos, not of every plant described, but a fair few.

## Upcoming Program

As usual there was no meeting in January. Our AGM and brief talks by members will be held on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February. Members will talk about such things as plans for this year, the proposed walk at Mount Alexandra/Lake Alexandra and taking photos there for iNaturalist, post-downpour gardening, problem weeds and pruning.



Please think about standing for the committee. You will have received details from our communications officer.

We are thrilled that in May we will have a combined outing in the Southern Highlands with the Australian Native Plants Society, Canberra Region (ANPSC).

### SHAPS – Provisional 2023 Program.

It's necessarily a rough outline at the moment. But lots in the pipeline.

	General Meetings. 1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday 2pm Feb, April, June, August, October, at Moss Vale CWA.	Outings 1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday in next month after general meeting	Committee meeting. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday of month
Jan			9/1/23 Marjorie's
Feb 2/2/23	AGM at CWA at 2pm. Brief talks by members		13/2/23
Mar 2/3/23		Outdoor activity using iNaturalist.	13/3/23
April 6/4/23	Talk about iNaturalist		10/4/23
May 4/5/23		Visit to an Exeter garden, and a bush walk in Bundanoon with ANPSC (i.e the Canberra Australian plant society group)	8/5/23
June 1/6/23	TBA		12/6/23
July 6/7/23		Our own BioBlitz TBC	10/7/23
Aug 3/8/23	TBA		14/8/23
Sep 7/9/23		Activity with Greening Australia TBC	11/9/23
Oct 5/10/23	Jen Slattery talks about grasses	BioBlitz 27-30 <sup>th</sup> Medway	9/10/23
Nov 2/11/23		Garden visit TBC	13/11/23
Dec 7/12/23		Xmas party	11/12/23

## Xmas Get Together and Garden Visit

### Robyn Kremer

Our hostess, Jonquil Temple was very happy to welcome a crowd of members to her garden in early December to enjoy a late afternoon stroll & share delicious refreshments.

Twice previously she had prepared for our group & the heavens had opened. Being on a northerly slope with beautiful vistas to the farmland rising behind her garden & to the Gib to the East, Jonquil creates informal plantings of natives & exotics. Visitors discover this idiosyncratic garden via meandering pathways edged in bark sheathes.



*Pamela admiring the luminescent appeal of Acacia 'Limelight'*

*Acacia 'Limelight'* was remarkable especially when Pamela adorned in a lime green blouse admired the delicacy of its foliage.

One small group of visitors appreciated Jen's clarification of the difference between sedges with edges & grasses with knees. A rivulet flowing through the garden during the wet years has encouraged verdant growth of a variety of native & exotic species.

A merry group of enthusiasts gathering around Margorie's plant stall. Business was brisk till an overflowing table of delicious party fare diverted attention from choosing plants.



*Jane & Marjorie discussing tubestock remaining.*

The atmosphere was convivial which augurs well for well supported activities in 2023.

Jonquil displays many interesting objects in her garden & was thrilled to receive a small bird sculpture to further enhance the beautiful environment which she loves to share.





Photos Louise Egerton and Robyn Kremer

## Over the hedge with Erica and Kim – January 2023

### Erica Rink and Kim Zegenhagen



Looking back on past issues of our newsletter we note that last January we talked about edible natives. We both planted Warrigal Greens. Kim has grown and eaten lots. Erica is now making a second attempt. It seems the first location she planted in was not ideal.

La Nina is not quite finished, so more rain can be expected this summer. However, we can also expect plenty of heat. If you have a pond and/or bird baths don't forget to keep them topped up. Bees and other insects also need a drink but can drown in deeper water. A shallow dish is ideal for them. A shallow pond with sticks or stones can act as a landing place. Water can evaporate at an alarming rate during hot spells. Oxygen levels in a pond will become low if the water is still. Spraying water on the surface will increase oxygen levels. All aquatic life will benefit.





In damp summers slug damage can occur. You don't have to resort to pellets to get rid of these pesky little horrors. Try putting down wood in the garden bed. Slugs like cool, dark, and moist hiding places. The wood can then be turned over which exposes the slugs to birds in the vicinity. Alternatively, just pick them up and dispose of them. Plants which are particularly prone to slug attack can be surrounded with a layer of crushed eggshells. Slugs don't like crossing a coarse surface. A shallow dish with beer in it is an excellent trap. The slugs and snails smell the beer, imbibe, get drunk and drown.

### **Your own billabong**

Have you ever considered a do-it-yourself billabong? Mounds on a slope along contour lines can be sited to hold precious water. But what if you are on a flat site? Try creating donut shaped mounds. They will trap water at the centre, thereby making in effect a billabong. Excavate topsoil from the middle of a mound and pile it up around the mound's edges. Whenever it rains the well will catch extra water which will gradually soak into the base of the mound. This creates great opportunities to harvest and store water. The top of mounds provides a niche for plants that prefer drier feet. Moisture-loving plants will do well in the base of the mounds.

To keep the ground from drying out ground covers are good and so is a layer of mulch. 5-6 cms is good to suppress weeds and keep plant roots cool.

More great ideas in the next edition. So, keep a look out!

---

## **Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne Revisited**

---

### **Trisha Arbib**

Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne is part of the Royal Botanic Gardens family. It is made up of the Australian Garden, an award-winning contemporary botanic garden, surrounded by over 300 hectares of remnant native bushland. It was set up in its present form in 2012. All native plants. Transformed from a sand mine and scrub, it was designed by Victorian landscape architects T.C.L. aiming to show visitors the diversity, beauty and functionality of Australian native plants. Cranbourne Gardens is recognised as a site of State significance for plant and wildlife conservation, home to over 25 endangered or rare and threatened species.

A few years ago, Yvonne Crofts wrote an interesting piece on Cranbourne for this newsletter. So interesting that I have been determined ever since to go there. I finally got my chance. Here is my take on it.

When I looked at other people’s photos of this place the one that had always intrigued me was a representation on the ground of Australia’s red centre, the Red Sand Garden. A huge garden of red soil with islands of silver-grey plants. It was the first thing we looked at. And we were disappointed. Although it does look amazing in this photo also. It’s like an artist’s representation (which was obviously what was intended) rather than an attempt to give a real feel of the outback. Although the colours are incredible.



We had had that amazing real-life experience in the Sturt National Park up near the Corner, the NSW/SA/Qld borders a few years ago. There I was just in 7<sup>th</sup> heaven with the plants, the red soil and blue sky.

So here, as well as the blobs of silver plants, there is a line of yellow plants representing the early explorers heading north. I’m not sure what the white cement marks represent, possibly salt lakes. And there are just a few plantings including red kangaroo paws near the edge of the Red Sand Garden.

But that was our only disappointment. We decided to go on a tour of the huge gardens in one of those little carriages that I’d always looked at with disdain. We were the only ones, with a very nice driver/guide from South America whose accent was occasionally non decipherable. Most of what he said about plants I knew but I nodded as if I didn’t, to be polite. It was a good idea as it gave life to the layout on the map and then we walked around for ages.



I enjoyed it more than my companion. He found the formal Australian Garden too contrived; civilised gardens using natives rather than a feeling of the bush.

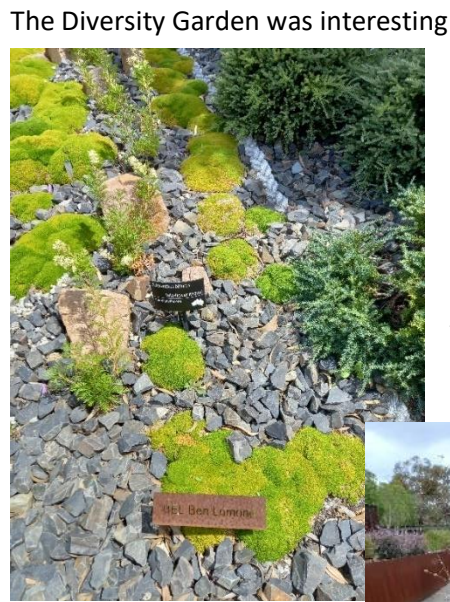
You can see from the map how intricate the architect designed Garden is, with so many sections.



There was a lake with cement lily pads across it. I’m not too keen on the cement.



Part of Diversity Garden – Tasmanian Southern Ranges, and Ben Lomond



The Diversity Garden was interesting. Each Australian bioregion sampled here is represented by a thin strip of garden, separated by ropes, composed of some plants and mineral matter representative of that bioregion.



A clever section showed what small landscaped home gardeners could do with native plants (see photo on right for one example). These gardens were in a block and included a Greening Cities Garden, a Lifestyle Garden, Backyard Garden, and a Promenade Plaza. Not sure which one this is!

I also liked the Gondwana garden, and I was especially attracted to a beautiful seaside “landscape” with pebbles and silver and grey-green plants and windswept Melaleucas.



A grove of eucalypts with beautiful mottled brown bark, closely planted, stimulated ideas of doing something similar, of grouping eucalypts as we often do with silver birches. One would need to

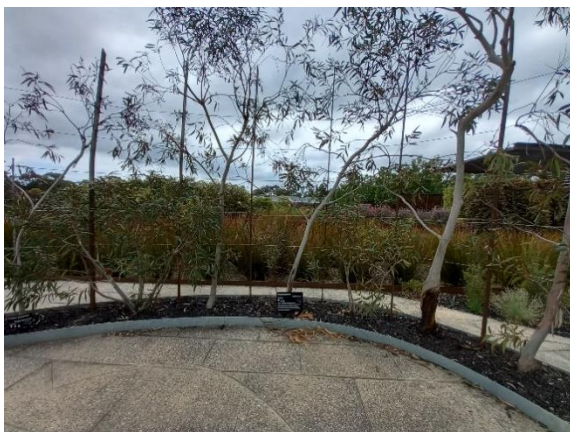
research which eucalypts to use. One of our Bowral members has done it successfully with mallee gums. Can anyone help with identification of these gum trees? And would they grow here?



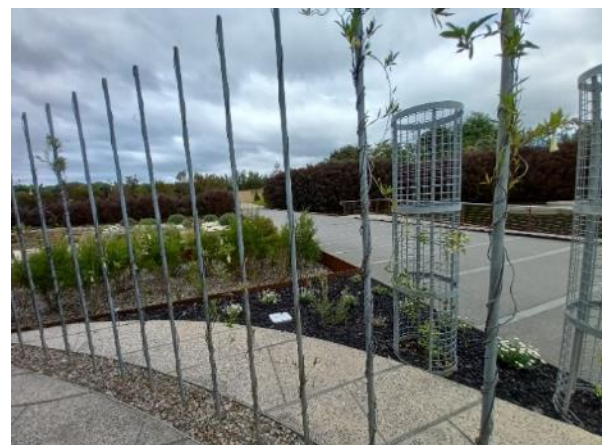
*Grove of Eucalypt only a small distance apart*

I found an experiment with espaliering snow gums interesting, but a friend that I showed the espalier photo to said that they hadn't grown much in 10 years, so maybe this won't be a success story.

I was also interested to see the metal poles and cages for slender climbers.



*Experiment with espaliered snow gums*



*Interesting supports for climbers. Billardiera on the poles.*



But it wasn't all formal demonstration gardens. We also followed lovely winding paths, more like in the Canberra Botanic Gardens, with native plants on each side. The whole thing was quite an experience.

We saw some beautiful bronze wing pigeons, and an endangered Southern Brown Bandicoot. There were signs up to alert you to snakes, but they were hiding that day. I leave you with images of beautiful red, and lilac kangaroo paws.



We left the Garden after a delicious potato and rosemary soup laced with olive oil in their café. The whole experience left a good taste in our mouths.

---

## Plant Profile – *Myoporum floribundum*

---

**Trisha Arbib**

This plant in flower has always attracted me. But in my garden, even after several attempts, the shrub would never grow straight. The main trunk always had a kink in it and a lean to the side which I would try to remedy by leaning it against a bamboo stake. And the serried hanging leaves which look so attractive when offset by the flowers, to my mind hung rather dismally at other times. But this specimen at



Cranbourne Botanic Gardens made me fall in love all over again.

In my photo you can see the long narrow-linear leaves

dropping from the horizontal branches. The white flowers in small clusters are borne on top of the branches in spring.

It is a spreading shrub to 3m high by 3m across. I have seen it espaliered against a wall. It needs well-drained soil in part shade or full sun. It naturally occurs in NSW and Victoria.

My “bible”, Wrigley and Fagg, *Australian Native Plants*, describes it as an “outstanding specimen plant. Foliage and habit are particular attractions.”




---

### A Snippet

---

#### Dan Clark’s Talk

Here is the link to the talk that Dan Clark gave at our NSW APS weekend in November.

His detailed informative talk was on *the Vegetation of the Wingecarribee Shire Local Government Area*. Dan and his team surveyed 150 vegetation lots (quadrats) to inform the drafting of the Shire’s new vegetation map in 2015.

<https://resources.austplants.com.au/wp-content/uploads/Presentation2-1.pdf>

---

## Close to the Edge: A Drive to Wombeyan Caves

---

Trisha Arbib



Hearing that the road from the Mittagong end had been improved, we set off recently on a fine summer's day. The road from this end was certainly doable, with a good driver, with it going from sealed to unsealed and back to sealed. Reasonable gravel surface with the usual pot holes that we have become so accustomed to. Only one car wide, and no phone reception if anything went wrong. Multiple flood ways with no depth indicators.

The scenery was spectacular and wild. Well worth the trip. Amazing deep gorges and mountains with the road winding around the rim, with a huge drop to our right. With of course no safety fence. Then, in parts, the country flattened out to give way to cleared land and some houses. Further on, glimpses of a river, and the road wound down to the beautiful Wollondilly River, canoeists and camp sites.

After the river, winding back up the other side of the gorge towards Goulburn, we thought the Caves must be just up the road. But the 15kms took forever at our necessarily careful pace. And then they were closed until the end of June 2023! But we had really gone for the drive.

The bush was beautiful. And varied. I can't comment on the Eucalypts, but I found it unusual the way one type of understorey gave way to another with very little overlap. Although there were sections of unidentified plants in between. Perhaps it was due to different aspects as the road wound around the gorge, perhaps a change in soil. Sections of the way had masses of pale, yellow wattle with long drooping leaves. Further on, no more wattle, but attractive flowering grasses, then waves of a bright yellow flowered ground cover. On the way up from the river, the largest flowering shrubs of *Ozothamnus* that I have ever seen.



I photographed some of the flowering plants seen along the roadside. Most of them taken out of the car window! Can anyone help me with identification? I only know the *Ozothamnus*. And is the white spray of flowers *Leucopogon*? Hard to see the detail, both out of the car window and in the photo.



---

## And There's More Snippets

---

### Robyn Kremer writes on borers in her garden



Is it only in damp Mittagong, that borers have targeted the *Allocasuarinas*, planted a few years ago, to attract the Glossy Black Cockatoos?

Each of our plants has at least 2 borers in residence. We cut one below the lowest wound a few weeks ago & we are pleased to see new shoots appearing. I hope they will branch rather than being spindly & tall.

Sadly the Glossy Blacks won't be finding food & shelter in our garden for a while. If they choose *Casuarina cunningghamiana*, they will be spoilt for choice as top pruning 15 months ago has resulted in luxuriant regrowth.

And not a borer in sight!

### Movement of Yellow-Tailed Black Cockatoos

They have been spotted in large numbers in northern NSW as they move into urban areas. Mick Roderick, Birdlife Australia's NSW woodland bird program manager reports for the ABC. He recently counted an amazing 310 of them flying north over Urunga in half an hour, mainly in family pairs or groups of 3. He said it was possible that they had moved into urban areas in search of seeds and insect larvae, if not available in their natural environment. They would normally be up in the mountains during the summer, not on the coastal plains.

He said the species' numbers are secure at the moment but it was important to ensure that their natural habitat, including enormously large tree hollows, was not reduced.

Many thanks to contributors – Robyn Kremer, Erica Rink, Kim Zegenhagen and Louise Egerton

