

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY

Southern Highlands Group

...your local native garden club

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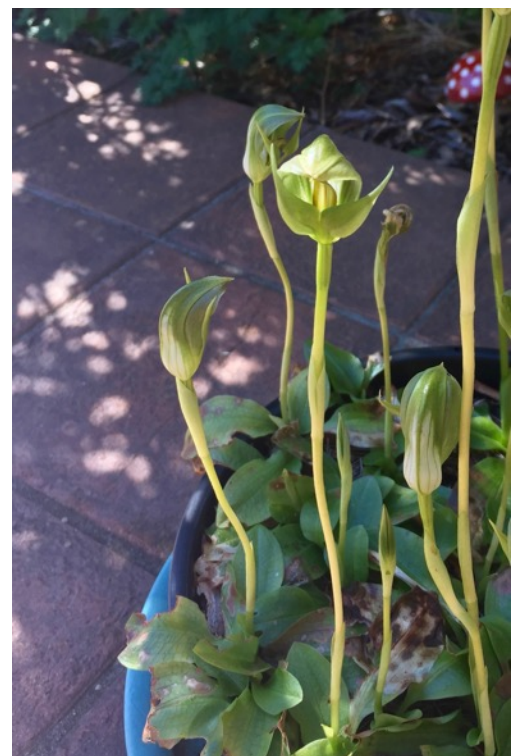
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Treasures in Erica's garden.

Pterostylis curta.

Terrestrial Orchids, by Erica Rink. *See front page photos.*

About seven years ago I mail ordered from Nesbits Orchids a small selection of their dormant tubers. The orchids come as little bulbs about the tip of your little finger in size. They come with instructions as to how to plant them and divide them later when they have multiplied. I have been successful with *Pterostylis curta* and will bring some to sell next year at one of our meetings. They are dormant in summer and appear in winter, flowering late Winter to Spring. I usually re pot mine in February. I strain the little bulbs through a plastic ricotta strainer and they seem to breed like rabbits - so I now have too many for my home garden. They need a protected spot, mine grow under our rhododendrons which give dappled light.

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Diary Dates

October

Monday 9th Excursion arranged by Jenny Simons to collect *Leptomaria acida* berries for jelly.

See notes below in Snippets.

21/22nd Bundanoon Garden Ramble

23rd: Committee meeting (Bill's)

November

2nd: AGM and social meeting - photos of ourselves and our outings / plants for sale /afternoon tea and fun. Bring any suggestions you have for activities in 2018.

20th: Committee meeting (Louise's)

December 3rd: Christmas Party - more details to come

Snippets

Many thanks to the writing team. Contributors to this edition - Louise Egerton, Jane Pye, Trisha Arbib Erica Rink and Jenny Simons. We'd love to hear from you if you like to write and haven't yet been hunted down! And a request - when you write for the NL and use the full botanic name of a plant (both genera and species e.g. *Acacia melanoxylon*) would you kindly put the name in italics? Thank you. This will save a lot of editing time.

Identification, please. Can anyone help Bill out with ident of the two plants pictured below? Bills email: bfmullard@gmail.com



Book Review: The Australian Bird Guide: Authors: Peter Menkhorst, Danny Rogers, Rohan Clarke, Je Davies, Peter Marsack, Kim Franklin

The most comprehensive and beautifully illustrated field guide to Australia's unique birdlife. The Australian Bird Guide sets a new standard in field guides, providing an indispensable reference for all birders and naturalists looking to explore Australia's magnificent and unique birdlife. Australia's avifauna is large, diverse and spectacular, reflecting the continent's impressive range of habitats and evolutionary history. With specially commissioned paintings of over 900 species, The Australian Bird Guide is the most comprehensive field guide to Australian birds ever seen. The guide features around 4700 colour illustrations, with particular emphasis on providing new detail required to identify difficult groups and distinctive plumages. Comprehensive species accounts have been written by a dedicated team of ornithologists to ensure identification caption details, distribution and status are current and accurate. Coverage of all species and distinctive subspecies recorded in Australia and its external territories, using the latest taxonomy. Indexed by both the common and scientific names. Follow hashtag #ausbirdguide on social media.

Published by CSIRO Publishing. Paperback | May 2017 | \$ 49.95 ISBN: 9780643097544 | 576 pages | 245 x 170 mm.

Bowral Lions Park. Wonderful to see three healthy, maturing Kurrajong trees - *Brachychiton populneus*. (Origin of the species name: Brachychiton is Greek for short and here means short tunic, referring to the loose outer covering of the seed; populneus is Latin and means poplar-like, referring to the shape of the leaves). These trees are bravely showing the flag for Australian plants amongst the camellias and daffs. This is an all-too-rare sight in our local public parks. Blow them a kiss as you pass by the park on the corner of Bowral and Bong Bong Sts, Bowral! *Photos next page.*



Kay and Sarah have bravely ventured onto **the new SHAPS website** and updated our district page with photos and an overview of our activities. Have a look and tell us what you think.

Leptomeria Jelly - Jenny Simons: I've discovered another place for gathering the fruit, on crown land, off the Wombeyan Caves Road. I'm planning to go there on Monday 9 October to gather ripe fruit and make jelly afterwards. Everyone is invited to join the expedition to pick fruit. Then Erica, George and I (and another person, who is wanted to help clean the fruit, a fiddly process - please ring me to volunteer on 4861 1767) will take the fruit to my place and make the jelly in the afternoon. If all goes well, everyone who picks fruit will get back a small jar of jelly. We will meet at the Bowral Swimming Pool for car pooling at 9.30 am. Please bring with you some plastic bags to collect the fruit in, and a small jar or two that we can put the jelly in. Also bring some morning tea. **Acacia Tea:** I followed Trish's advice, went to Source in Springett's Arcade, Bowral, and bought a small quantity of ground acacia seed, about \$5 worth. I made the tea by putting a coffeespoonful of seed in a mug and then adding boiling water. As it brews, the mixture settles at the bottom and I didn't need to strain it. It makes a pleasant hot drink with a woody smell. Then I reread Robyn's report of the talk in the newsletter and found I should have dry

roasted the seed, so I dry roasted some of it. Then followed a taste test: equal measures of seed and equal quantities of water. Result? I preferred the drink with the seed just as it came from the shop.



Letter below from Jenny Simons re a wattle on the plant table which had us confused at the last meeting (*photo at left*).

Dear Sarah, I took the plant table sample home and am still laughing about our collective ignorance: it is *Acacia podalyriifolia*, Queensland Silver Wattle, one of the wattles

that are perhaps invasive! I was pleased to have that specimen to press and add to my folio of pressed specimens, as I didn't have it, and thus failed to identify it. I was also interested to note that Erica's specimen had particularly large leaves, so asked her to bring me a second specimen when we met at the Mittagong Garden Club the next day, and found that the leaves farther down the stem are smaller and thus agree with the botanical description.

Report from August meeting - Speaker: Alan Stephenson on orchids

story and photo by *Louise Egerton*



If you weren't an orchid hunter before listening to Alan Stephenson talk at our August meeting, you will be now, and the timing was brilliant; just before the flowering season gets underway. At our altitude September is a good month to start the hunt.

Alan gave us a visual run-down of what orchids we might expect to find in our part of the world but what was most impressive about his presentation was how precisely he could pinpoint where to look.

For example, at Fitzroy

Falls during spring you might well come across the Streaked Rock Orchid, *Dockrillia striolata* or, strolling down the East Rim Track and raising your eyes up into the branches of the ironbarks, the Ironbark Feather Orchid, *Tropilis aemulum*. Both these orchids used to be in the genus *Dendrobium*, as indeed did the well-known Sydney Rock Orchid, now known as *Thelychiton speciosus*. This magnificent rock orchid can be found all around the Shoalhaven escarpments but don't be surprised if it doesn't flower every year: one in every 4 is more usual.

Mount Gibraltar is a top spot for orchids, especially the Greenhoods (photo above) many species of which have been transferred out of the genus *Pterostylis* into that of *Diplodium*. Colonies of Nodding Greenhoods, *Pterostylis nutans*, may be found here as may Scarlet Greenhoods, *D. coccinum*, which only thrive above 500-600m. Also growing on The Gib is the Tableland Orchid, *D. abruptum* and Maroonhood, *Pterostylis pedunculata*.

If you're in Robertson in September it might be worth visiting the cemetery there to see if you can find the epiphytic Orange Blossom Orchid, *Sarcochilus falcatus*, displaying its spectacular white flowers. The roots of this orchid wrap around the high limbs of old trees, often in the company of the Rock Felt Fern, *Pyrrhosia rupestris*. Penrose Cemetery, too, is apparently a good place for orchids.

Other top orchid sleuthing spots are around Belmore, Twin and Minnamurra Falls, where the aptly named Escarpment or Waterfall Orchid, *D. pulchellum* may be found among the mossy rocks. Try Longnose Point or Badgery Lookout at Tallong in March through to June for the Dainty Greenhood, *D. reflexum* or the Autumn Greenhood, *D. revolutum*.

Identifying orchids can be tricky. Alan suggests turning over leaves, where possible; underside colours are often a good clue. He also advises walking all round an orchid: subtle markings may also help you. Don't be discouraged by the geographical distributions given in books. 'You can never tell where you are going to find something,' he says. For example, he found a critically endangered species, *Speculantha ventricosa*, supposedly endemic to the Shoalhaven, in Tallong and Lake Alexandra. So keep your eyes peeled.

Should you need help with identification Alan is happy to help if you send him a photograph and as much detail as possible about when, where and how you found the plant. You may also wish to obtain a copy of his illustrated book, *Orchid Species of the Shoalhaven*. Alan can be contacted at affine@tpg.com.au

September Garden visit to Bundanoon.

Sarah Cains



The weather was so cold on the day we visited two Bundanoon gardens that it seemed unlikely many would come along, but clearly it takes more than a freezing wind to dampen the enthusiasm of SHAPS members. All rugged up in our warmest coats and beanies, over twenty hardy souls spent a great afternoon examining the many horticultural delights in the gardens of Sandy Berry and Ian Smith, and their neighbours, Joe and Rosanna Mercieca, who also kindly offered to open their garden for us. Sandy and Ian's plantings are natives and food plants and Joe and Rosanna have a mixed garden.

Sandy and Ian lived in Canberra where they developed a native habitat garden which was full of birds and other wildlife. They bought the half-acre Bundanoon property and moved in 2011. The house had been built in 1984 and the garden was planted with pines and other exotic conifers, rhododendrons, camellias, hydrangeas, buxus, bulbs, birches and other commonly grown exotics. There was no habitat and limited wildlife. Sandy and Ian wanted to live with wildlife, natives and food plants, so courageously, they removed most of the established exotic plantings.

The soil is rich basalt and the drainage naturally good, so despite some structural damage where soil had been scraped away for road works, they had good basics to work with. The present healthy and vital garden is a tribute to Sandy and Ian's commitment, skill and hard work. All of us

who visited are gardeners and we are quick to recognise hands-on owners as distinct from 'cheque book' gardeners!

Wood chip has been used as a mulch and Sandy assured us that it does not cause 'draw down' if only used on the soil surface. No fertiliser is applied and the 'watering system' is two people with a hose and watering cans. Kangaroos and wombats wander in from surrounding bushland, and, on the day, the garden was flitting with native birds despite wild winds and twenty extra humans sharing the space.

As we entered the garden our attention was grabbed by a thriving Gynea Lily (*Doryanthes excelsa*). Some of us wondered about its frost tolerance, but our question was answered by the healthy nature of the plant. Sandy told us the site is on a ridge and is therefore protected from the heaviest frosts. Across the driveway from the lily were waratahs (Shady Lady and Braidwood Brilliant) bursting with fat buds. Some still held the beautiful woody fruit from the previous season's flowers. Amongst many more interesting plants is a little specimen of *Banksia blechnifolia*, a dwarf, spreading shrub from WA. Dusky red inflorescences were just beginning to appear amongst its upright, stiff leaves. Other banksias included six specimens of *B robur*, a compact form of *B marginata* and *B paludosa*. These plants are more usually found on sandstone, but it seems that plants that grow on sandstone will grow even better on basalt. A clump of *Blandfordia nobilis* (Christmas Bells), is thoughtfully accommodated where Sandy and Ian can keep it moist by swooshing water from the birdbath when it needs cleaning.

Two eucalypts caught our attention, the beautiful *E pauciflora* - always a winner, and a specimen of *E olsenii* (Woila gum) which is named for Sandy and Ian's bushwalker friend, Ian Olsen, the original collector of the plant. It is relatively 'tame' for a euc, growing to a maximum height around 10m, and has a very restricted natural distribution in mountains northeast of Cooma. The local Carrington Falls grevillea, a bunch of glorious wattles and a handsome *Casuarina littoralis* tree were additional points of interest in the front garden.

At the side of the house netted fruit trees and a vegie garden are established and sitting happily beside the pathway is a flowering specimen of the flannel flower - *Actinotus helianthi* (photo at right) amidst several very vigorous kangaroo paws (*Anigozathus spp.*) In the back garden the emphasis is on trees less likely to be found planted in our district. They are arranged in a developing rainforest garden. Those amongst us who have spent time walking in the alpine regions of Victoria and Tasmania were delighted to see *Nothofagus cunninghamii* (myrtle beech), which, in the wild forms either a tall tree or a bushy shrub to approx 15m. It is a cousin of the deciduous beeches famed for splendid autumn displays in Tasmanian alpine regions. Additional treasures are healthy elkhorn and staghorn ferns, *Eucryphia lucida*, of Leatherwood honey fame and the brush muttonwood (*Myrsine howittiana*). Photo right: Flannel flower *Actinotus helianthi*.



A very welcome cup of tea made by Ian was next on the agenda. We huddled on Sandy and Ian's verandah sheltering from the wind and warming up before crossing the road to enjoy Joe and Rosanna's garden.

This is a really excellent example of a garden of mixed exotics and natives. Clearly the owners are delighting in choosing, arranging and maintaining to perfection the wide range of plants in their care. We stepped carefully - there were so many little treasures underfoot - every space is filled.

This garden slopes away behind the house - a contrast to Sandy and Ian's more level block. Joe has undertaken garden construction and made use of the slope with walls, pathways and other features, all very professionally constructed. Beckoning the visitor to the bottom of the garden is a pretty little summer house - again constructed by Joe. From that vantage point the visitor can enjoy a patch of bushland - a sample viewing of the original vegetation of Bundanoon.

Thank you to Sandy and Ian, Joe and Rosanna. We so enjoyed our visit to your inspirational gardens.



Hammock Hill Reserve, East Bowral

story and photos by Jane Pye



Hammock Hill Reserve is best known for its enormous wombats. They're more than waist high, but docile. They are sculptures, created by Canberra artist, Neil Dickinson and were installed in 2002 as a new sort of playground, and they have proved popular with the very young. The wombat family is in a clearing of native trees and shrubs near the path, with a seat for grandparents to rest before continuing their walk to the lookout at the far end. For those not in the know, Hammock Hill is hidden in East Bowral, a couple of hundred metres east of the Scottish Arms, with five narrow entrances to the surrounding roads. There's a lookout and picnic table on the hill. From Kiameron Place a cement path leads to the wombats through native plantings and mown grass, then a gravel

path continues through tall trees. There's a network of mown paths maintained by the council's contractors. The Wingecarribee Bushcare team does a terrific job in reducing and eliminating weeds and rabbits. The reserve was, well, reserved, as part of the subdivision plan for East Bowral, where open space was required as part of the deal. The area was grazing land, and pasture grasses persist in the lower areas. The ground cover is not as rich as on undisturbed land, but there are *Wahlenbergia sp*, some bulbine lilies, plenty of *Hardenbergia violacea*, glycine, desmodium, *Clematis aristata* and *C. microphylla* (unusual in the shire). There's a good canopy of big trees including *Eucalyptus cypellocarpa*

(favourite fodder tree of koalas), *E. amplifolia*, *E. macarthuri*, *E. radiata* and more. The mid storey is mainly kangaroo apple, blackwood, olearias, *Acacia falciformis*, and planted wattles, teatrees, paperbarks and hakeas. Planting continues near the wombats and there are some nice indigofera and bursaria plants.

In terms of animals, wombats were described as plentiful in 2002, but they disappeared years ago. This year there's evidence that they're back. Echidnas have been seen, and there are signs that koalas may have visited. And I've heard rumours of a wallaby or two. Birds are mainly the loud sort, corellas, cockatoos and miners, but wedge-tailed eagles, gang-gangs and tawny frogmouths have been identified. Watch this space...

This is a well used reserve with walkers, bike riders, cubby house builders, dog walkers, and strollers who want a pleasant quiet walk close to home off the road. What could be nicer?

On Hammock Hill
by local poet, Mark Tredennick

This is my devotion, then: to walk
sometimes
with the dog
through the sclerophyll
Cathedral of the morning. To let myself
Off my lead and follow a half-made track,
thinking a
dilapidated liturgy,
Through bracken fern and native raspberry,
three kinds
Of gum and a hundred kinds of weed,
toward
nowhere in particular.

For the dog, the trail is a cartography
of smells, its
landmarks
Excrement and rabbit holes and old impressions
Left in mud. For me, it's a way
I can't find, most times, to lose
My way among brown butterflies; to fall out of the frantic schedules of the shallow
Hours that count down most of one's time on earth. The forest path
is a labyrinth of bells and several local species

Of solitude. I go out daily, hoping for the rest of me,
the otherness in all of us; I come back with dew
Drenched boots. And a weary dog. Inside my life - is it like this for *you*? -
I'm the blowfly that got inside the house: open two windows
And watch it beat itself up
against every way it can't get out, until
It can't remember why it wanted to. This is my devotion, then: to walk
with the dog among frogsong and falling bark:
see if I can't lose myself for the trees.



A joyful plant story and some colourful words of the botanical kind

Trisha Arbib

Hypocalymma angustifolium: This dainty little shrub in the Myrtaceae family has a mouthful of a



botanical name, but is also known more prosaically as white myrtle. I first saw a photo of it on the Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens' website and I was attracted to the daintiness of its form and its arching habit. And then I was so excited to see it in their nursery that I had to buy not one but two. It has a beautiful airiness when seen as a whole but also deserves closer inspection. Flowering in the spring as it is now it is a mass of pink and white flowers. Pink in bud, opening to white. You will see that at every node, and they are close together,

are four small flowers and two almost needle like thin green leaves. My shrubs must be about one metre high by one metre wide, and I've planted them close together so that they arch into each other. Mine are growing in full sun, but they can grow in the shade, are frost hardy, and don't seem to need any special attention, although I read that they need excellent drainage. The plant fair at the Sydney botanic gardens is on in October. Buy at least one. What an easy way to be happy!

At right: Trisha's two plants growing intertwined.



Below is the second in our SHAPS newsletter of a series on the meanings of words used in naming Australian native plants. This time we look at colour.

I love words and the most amazing array of words are used in the botanical names of plants, particularly in naming the species. Words like *glaucescens*, *biglandulosum*, *pinnatifolius*, *milleflorum*, *gaudichaudii*. Many sound delightful just as words but they also have meaning and tell us a lot about a plant before we even look at it, or look it up in a book or on the internet. They are mostly Latin in derivation and so their meaning may not be obvious. The species name, the second name of a plant after its genus, can refer to the growth habit of the plant, its colour, aspects of the leaf, flower or fruit, the name of the person who discovered it, another plant it has similarity with, country of origin. The ending of the species name will change according to whether the generic name is male or female e.g. *alba* is female, *album* is male.

Some examples:

alba: White as in the *Correa alba* flower.

argentea: In the white myrtle tree, *Rhodamnia argentea* this refers to the silvery white underside of its leaves.

rosea: Describes the pink flowers of *Thryptomene rosea*.

purpurea: Mauve-pink, well almost purple, flowers of *Thomasia purpurea*.

viridiflorus: Describes the greenish flower spikes of *Callistemon viridiflorus*.

caerulescens: Sky blue, as in *Acacia caerulescens*. This species name surprised me at first. But this is the Buchan Blue Wattle with blue-grey branches.

glaucous: Getting into greater subtleties of colour, glaucous means a light bluish green or greenish blue, covered with a whitish bloom, as in *Stypantra glauca*, where I assume it refers to the linear leaves which sheathe the stem.

Other species names referring to colour include *azurea* for blue, *coccineus* scarlet and *rubra* red, *ferrugineus* rusty, *lacteous* milky, and *nigra* black,

I'm finding it hard to think of Australian native plants with species names meaning yellow viz. *luteus*, *sulphureus*, and *flavum*, except for *Acacia flavescens*, the common name of which is



Yellow Wattle. If you know more Australian native plants with colourful names please write in and let us know.

Sunday morning and we have just visited the wonderful Cambewarra Mountain garden of Frank Howarth and Peter McCarthy.

A member of the Nowra group put this little black pea flower in my hand, remarking on its unusual beauty. I don't know its name, but immediately I thought of Trish's article above. Surely this plant must be called

Something nigra! SC

A visit from the Nowra APS Group

Jenny Simons

This event was organised personally by Jenny. Clearly everybody had a lovely day of garden visiting!

As forecast in the last Newsletter, members of the Nowra Group came to visit native gardens in the Bowral area. There were seventeen visitors; also Robyn Kremer and Jonquil Temple came to help with the serving of morning tea, and then to accompany us on the visits, and Kris Gow kindly lent her urn and provided a native plant for them to raffle. Fran Simons also turned up and directed traffic, when, in spite of my typed and circulated sets of instructions, people nevertheless managed to get lost.

After the visit, a very kind thank you letter arrived and a copy of their Newsletter, which had a great review of the visit. They noted the drastic changes to my garden after the removal of eighteen radiata pines and fourteen lelandiis, (all of them huge and unstable) and were specially interested in the wattles. In Philip's garden they noted the acacias, casuarinas, paperbarks and eucalypts. They were admiring of his careful and methodical labelling of every specimen and of the garden layout. Kris's garden was admired for its variety of plants, the number of plants in her small garden, the number of plants in flower, the ornaments and decorations and the propagating area. In general, the visitors were impressed by the 'difficulties' of growing plants in a cold climate.

After a stop at the Gib Entrance Wall, we visited the Lookout, both of which were enjoyed and then had lunch in the shelter shed in the picnic area. The Newsletter's editorial included a thoughtful rundown of the Gib Reserve and a tribute to the bush regenerators, for their long and successful work. We shall meet the Nowra Group again when we visit Tree Fern Lodge at Beaumont.

A few days before the Nowra visit, some members of the Macarthur Group also called in to see my garden, a sociable visit, with lunch eaten on my terrace before they went off to explore the delights of Bowral.



Finally...

In Sandy Berry and Ian Smith's beautiful and productive Bundanoon garden.

Empty pods on a waratah at left and - no prize for guessing the other one!

