

# AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY

*Southern Highlands Group*

*...your local native garden club*

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A Lambertia formosa flower in early March, illuminated by the sun, in the Bundanoon end of the Morton National Park. Full of nectar and especially welcome to us and the birds when so little is in flower.

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## The Next Diary Dates

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**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> April** – Talk on “Save Kosci” by Linda Groom. Moss Vale CWA rooms at 2pm.

Linda Groom, Convenor of Save Kosci will give an illustrated presentation on the need to save plant and animal species in Kosciuszko National park threatened by feral animals, particularly wild horses. “The Politics of Walking”: a 560 km protest walk was made last year to bring this matter to people’s attention.



**Thursday 2nd May** - Outing to Goulburn Wetlands starting at 1.30 pm in Goulburn. *Details on where to meet will be sent later.*

Those who wish to car pool please meet at Bowral pool ready to leave at 12.30 pm. Walk will be followed by afternoon tea at the Greengrocer Café in Goulburn at about 3.30 pm. This visit will be led by FROGS (Friends and Residents of Goulburn Swamplands).

The Goulburn Wetlands project aims to convert an abandoned brick pit into public parkland and a natural storm-water treatment system by restoring local ecosystems. This is an extension of an ambitious project by FROGS which in January 2012 was incorporated as a Landcare Group. Planned works aim to improve the aesthetic design, biodiversity, water quality and bank stability of the site, through systematic replacement of weed species with local native plants, creating habitat for native animals and birds. There are even bird hides.

*It’s an easy walk on flat terrain. The site is exposed so a hat is essential plus sunscreen and closed in shoes.*

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## Program for 2019

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Please note the dates in your diary, and come along, perhaps bring a friend, to enjoy the talks and outings. Any member is welcome to attend committee meetings.

**N.B. Planning this far ahead means that the odd detail may change but the dates will mostly stay the same.** Your newsletter or emails will keep you posted on further details and any changes. Newsletters will be published mid-month: in January, March, May, July, September and November. Please feel free to share this newsletter with anyone who might be interested.

*Please note that committee meetings have moved from the second Monday of the month to the second Tuesday of the month.*

Date	General Meetings	Outings	Committee Meetings
<b>2019</b>	<i>1st Thursday of the month at 2pm Feb. April, June, August, Oct, Nov. at the CWA rooms, Elizabeth Street, Moss Vale</i>	<i>1st Thursday in the month following the CWA General Meeting. 2pm unless otherwise advised</i>	<i>2nd Tuesday of month at 2pm</i>
<b>April</b>	4th April Linda Groom, Convenor of Save Kosci		9th April Kris's
<b>May</b>		2nd May outing to Goulburn Wetlands	14th May Erica's
<b>June</b>	6th June Geoff Goodfellow from Wingecarribee Shire Council [retired] to talk on frogs	* 5pm Saturday 22nd June <b>Winter Solstice Party</b> at Kris Gow's home	11th June Bill's
<b>July</b>		4th July Visit to the Burrawang coachwood rainforest garden of APS member Deanna Pryke-Abertillery	9th July Louise's
<b>Aug</b>	1st August Speaker on Fire Management, history, ecology and current practice - to be confirmed		13th August Kay's
<b>Sept</b>		5th Sept Wattle walk at Mt Annan Botanical Gardens plus BBQ	10th Sept Sarah's
<b>Oct</b>	3rd October Louise Egerton talk on Birds of the Southern Highlands through the seasons		8th Oct Kris's
<b>Nov</b>	7th November Erica Rink on her W.A. wildflower trip		12th Nov Trisha's
<b>Dec</b>		Sunday 1st Dec Xmas party at Sarah Cains	

\* **Celebrate the Winter Solstice** - You are invited.

**Place:** Kris Gow's home, 32 Boolwey Street, Bowral.

**Date and Time:** Saturday 22nd June, 5 pm start.

**Please bring a plate to share. Drinks will be provided.**

Hope to see you there.

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## Snippets

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### Native Plants for NSW Going Digital

We wish to alert members that the hard copy journal "Native Plants for New South Wales" is to go online starting in early May. The good news is that the quarterly journal will become a monthly [10–11 times per year] e-newsletter. There will be an official notification soon. The hard copy version of "Australian Plants" will still be sent in the post four times a year. Those of our members who do not own computers will be concerned. You may be able to access a library's or a friend's computer to view it on the APS NSW website.

### Gang-Gang Cockatoos, *Callocephalon fimbriatum* – Fran Mullard



*Gang-gangs at Fran and Bill's bird bath in Exeter*

Otherwise known as the red-crowned or helmeted cockatoo, the Gang-gang is one of the most charismatic birds in Australian eucalypt forests. In the words of John Gould, "every sighting is an occasion" and I couldn't agree more!

I can remember my very first sighting of Gang-gangs feasting in a row of cypresses at the Browley Street side of Moss Vale Primary School, some time during the 1980'S. These birds were so insouciant and tame that you could almost reach out and touch them, so accustomed were they to the noisy presence of children at play. I was quite captivated by them then and have remained so.

We are lucky enough to have on our property a forested area which includes box-eucalypts, acacias and casuarinas, trees which happen to be the favourite food of these beautiful birds, so we often see them and hear them as they go about their daily business. In fact, one usually hears them before seeing them, especially when they (in cavalier fashion!) bombard our polycarbonate roof with discarded seed capsules from the gum nearby! They also make their presence known with their call resembling a creaking gate and their contented growling while feeding.

These birds don't spend a lot of time on the ground, so it is a real treat when "mum, dad and the kids" come to the bird baths for a drink and a "poolside parley" and we are able to observe them more closely. They are alert but not alarmed and at times there have been up to eight birds present. They don't stay long and once airborne it's hard to keep up with them as they are such aeronautical experts, with a swooping, rocking style, who "fly like everyone's watching!"

Bill first noted them as occasional visitors in the 1990'S but, much to our delight, they have become regulars. Gang-gangs mate for life and can have up to three young in a season, with both parents incubating and rearing their young, so we look forward to many more sightings.

Gang-gangs have been designated as vulnerable since 2017 on the NSW Environment and Heritage Site.

### Pleasure in the post - *Hypocalymma linifolium* – Trisha Arbib

In a previous newsletter I wrote of my love of a pink flowering *Hypocalymma* which I now think is *H. angustifolium*. This is a small arching shrub with fine narrow leaves and stems which in spring are covered with tiny pink and white flowers. So I was very excited when looking at a catalogue from Mole Station Native Plant Nursery to see that they had listed a yellow *Hypocalymma*, *H. linifolium*. I hadn't known that a yellow species existed. The nursery is 42kms from Tenterfield in the northern tablelands of NSW so plants are frost hardy.



*Yet another yellow Hypocalymma.  
H. xanthopetalum.*

Stems are covered with small fluffy yellow flowers in the leaf axils. It is said to flower from July to October, grow to a metre in sun or part shade and withstand periods of dryness.

Now it is just a small tube stock plant delivered in a box by Australia Post with others that I could not resist. But I can just visualise it in my garden, miraculously grown, laden with flowers. I am so looking forward to it.

### Summer Food for Birds – Sylvia David



*Acacia seed pods*

*In the last newsletter Louise Egerton asked for advice: “My birdie mates are complaining [late December/January] that there’s not too much in their gardens to bring in the birds at the moment. The hot summer sun has sent them skedaddling for cover and there’s nothing to eat.” Sylvia David’s informative answer follows.*

Louise, I have just re-read your plea for summer treats for bird.

The most popular snack for the greatest variety of birds seems to be my Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*). After the spring rain many of these trees have set an enormous quantity of seed and I can hear happy munching by Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, some Gang Gangs, Corellas, King Parrots, Rosellas and Red Wattlebirds. Lots of little birds in the tree, too, but not sure what they are eating.

I had to tie bags on branches so I could get some seeds for propagation off the Silver Wattle (*Acacia dealbata*), Hop Wattle (*A. stricta*) and Red-stemmed Wattle (*A. rubida*); must be tasty!

The Yellow-tailed Blacks have also got hungry/bold enough to come and eat the cones from the Hairpin Banksia (*B. spinulosa*) just a few metres from my back deck. They also like the cones on the *B. paludosa* and Fern Leaf Banksia (*B. oblongifolia*).

A couple of summer flowering bottlebrushes are very popular with some little birds like honeyeaters. *Callistemon Injune* (which I think is a form of *C. sieberi*) has also been an amazing fodder for both native and exotic bees, as has the C. Pink Champagne. My *Melaleuca hypericifolia* and also *M. gibbosa* provide great habitat, too. A few flowers on the *Grevillea rosmariniifolia* add a bit of dietary variety. I always seem to have some *Correa* species flowering, too, which the Eastern Spinebills love.

Haven't seen the Rosellas getting into the *Indigofera* seeds yet or into the *Dianella* berries (not a good performance this year) but they will come. Just looked out the window and remembered how popular the seeds on the Blackthorn (*Bursaria spinosa*) have been.

Oh, and I forgot to mention the parrots love the Dusky Coral Pea (*Kennedia rubicunda*) growing over my chook run, as do my domesticated birds who gobble up the high protein seeds that fall into their territory.

Of course, putting water out for the birds is essential during the hot summer months.

What your question highlighted Louise is that many of us plant for "us" primarily rather than for our "visitors".

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## Origins of Botanical Art – A Talk by Dr Geoff Cains

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### Yvonne Crofts

At our first meeting of the year in February, we were treated to not only an absorbing glimpse of the world of botanic art and its origins, but to the skills of an accomplished researcher, Dr Geoff Cains, Head of the Dermatology Research Group at the Ingram Institute based at the Liverpool Hospital.

The earliest botanical illustrations in Europe were used to identify medicinal plants. They were copied by hand on vellum and translated into many languages. The oldest surviving one is *Codex vindobonensis* a copy of Dioscorides's *De Materia Medica*, made in 515.

With the advent of the printing press, a greater number of plants could be illustrated, albeit relatively simply and naïvely and the information widely disseminated. *The Garden of Health* by Johannes de Cuba is the most famous. By the 16<sup>th</sup> Century illustrations from the Americas but also folkloric and mythical creatures featured and the purpose extended beyond medicinal to being a type of encyclopedia.



*Bramble, Rubus fruticosus, Vienna, Dioscorides, about 515 A.D.*

Later in that century, John Parkinson, a great English herbalist and botanist whose garden was at Lincoln in the Fields, wrote *Paradisi in Sole*, which featured 108 full paged plates of orchard, flower and vegetable garden plants.



*Waratah, in A Specimen of the Botany of New Holland 1793 by James Edward Smith.*

When reports from Australia burst on the world stage, Europeans were so excited by our unique flora and fauna they began recording, illustrating and publishing very early on. James Edward Smith's spectacularly vibrant waratah (1793) captivated everyone.

Less lifelike, but competent and accurate were the illustrations by Sarah Stone in *Journal of a Voyage to NSW* (1790) by John White, a surgeon-naturalist. Not surprising, she was drawing from his dehydrated specimens!

The renowned Ferdinand Bauer, a botanist, who accompanied Flinders on his circumnavigation of Australia produced some of the finest hand-painted lithographs of Australian specimens in the early 1800s.

However the accolades, though not acknowledged at the time, belong to women illustrators; drawing was an acceptable occupation!

Those who illustrated in the decorative tradition included the unprepossessing and modest, Fanny de Mole *Wild Flowers of South Australia*, 1861 and the curious and observant Fanny Ann Charsley, *The Wild Flowers Around Melbourne*, 1867. Later on came Margaret Preston, 1875-1963, a nationalist who wanted to promote our national identity, even using indigenous motifs.

Significantly, in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, some women earned an income producing accurate scientific drawings. For example, Rosa Catherine Fiveash was highly regarded but not accredited for her illustrations of orchids from S.A. . But the Scott sisters, Harriett and Helena, became Australia's most prominent and professional natural history illustrators. Their book *Australian Lepidoptera and their Transformations* drew on the unique environment on Ash Island in the Hunter River where they lived and featured scientific depictions of plants as well as the moths and butterflies.

Australian women botanic artists with an international reputation and continuing in this tradition include Celia Rosser, *The Banksias 2000* and Elsie (Marg) Stones 1920-2018, who illustrated *Curtis's Botanical Magazine* for 25 years and was especially invited to illustrate *The Flora of Louisiana 1991*.

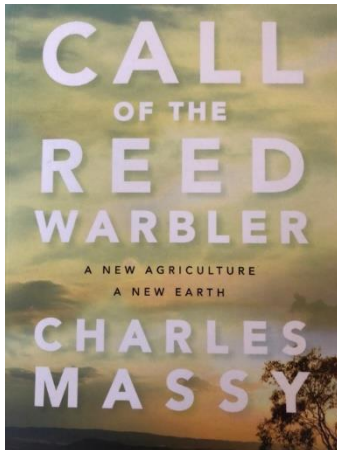
In light of this glorious tradition, what then are we to make of the latest trend; tattooing waratahs on human skin!

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## Book Review – Call of the Reed Warbler by Charles Massy

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Louise Egerton



For most SHAPS members an interest in native plants goes beyond an aesthetic appreciation of Australia's flora. We watch the weather, consider the soil, notice the changes through the year. We see our backyards in context to the wider living world.

So, for those of you who have yet to hear of Massy's influential work, *Call of the Reed Warbler*, subtitled *A New Agriculture A New Earth*, I thought it worth bringing to your attention.

Published in 2017, it provides an overview of a quiet revolution underway among many Australian farmers aware that all is far from well on their land. Massy is a merino sheep breeder living on the Monaro, not a million miles from the Southern Highlands. He has interviewed many landowners who have woken up to the bitter realisation that their farms, like his own, were simply incapable of endless viable production. This realisation has often been born out of adversity. Drought, exhausted soil, salinity, erosion, dieback and wildfires have led to heartache, and for some, an eureka moment: a moment when farmers have questioned, for the first time, the traditional European techniques that they, and often many generations before them, have understood to be good practice.

Here are the stories of those who they have dared to think outside the square and try something different. These are just some of Australia's (and sometimes international) practitioners of 'regenerative agriculture' that have thought long and hard about the ways in which Mother Nature self-organises. Weaning themselves off the treadmill of seasonal ploughing, burning, sowing, industrial-style fertilising and pest-proofing, they have found ways to reinvigorate their soils by reinstating the microcosmic world that kickstarts natural lifecycles. They have looked at the contours of their land and planted strategically to provide shelter-belts, windbreaks, shade, protection for their stock, erosion and salinity control. By so doing they have encouraged natural pest predators such as parasitic wasps, spiders and insectivorous micro-bats and birds.

It hasn't all been smooth sailing. Landscapes are complex and dynamic. There are synergies and inter-dependencies that are not always apparent, even to the most observant of us. Inevitably experimentation can lead to unforeseen outcomes but, on the whole, there have been some remarkable and inspiring results. It motivated me to take a good look at the state of my soil on my little patch.

Massy goes beyond the issues of land care to discuss 'the entrenchment of the modern Mechanical mind' and why it is so hard to change our mindset. The latter part of the book broadens his thesis into wider considerations, such as human and animal health, and genetics. There is so much food for thought here. Despite its length and need for an editor, I highly recommend it to anyone who is interested in natural processes.



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## Wingecarribee Shire Council's Habitat for Wildlife

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Trisha Arbib



You will have seen the yellow metal plaques on fences with the message Habitat for wildlife and a cute image of a possum, a kookaburra and a frog [none looking very wild!] plus a banksia flower. It is quite likely that you have one. They are a great initiative of Wingecarribee Shire Council. And they're free. All you have to do is be a resident of the Wingecarribee Shire ..... and apply.

To quote from their website [www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/services/environment/get-involved/habitat-for-wildlife](http://www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/services/environment/get-involved/habitat-for-wildlife):

*“Habitat for Wildlife is about providing a backyard garden that is wildlife friendly, and is for people who live in the Wingecarribee Shire who love native animals.*

*It is about making small changes to your backyard to improve habitat values and to encourage native birds, moths, butterflies, insects, frogs and lizards to visit or live in your garden. Creating a wildlife refuge in your backyard will increase the likelihood of a native animal's survival and movement through a landscape.*

*Tips can be provided on how you manage pets, how you think about and plan your garden design and through the installation of bird baths, native grasses, shrubs and trees and other features such as rocky gardens, nest boxes in trees, or ponds that will encourage and protect native animals. You can be as creative as you like!”*

The Council gives you the sign and a \$10 voucher for a native plant. You should also receive resources including the Backyard Habitat Planting guide, subscription to the Wingecarribee Web and Wildlife Wingecarribee E-Newsletters, and access to workshops and events as they happen.

You obviously don't need a sign or to sign up to Council to promote these values or to access the very informative Habitat for Wildlife website. On the website I've seen notices of a native bee seminar, links to a brochure from Greening Australia on planting for birds, results from Aussie Backyard Bird counts, and a chance to download the Backyard Habitat Planting Guide.

To me putting up a sign is an indication of commitment to literally “provide a habitat for our wildlife.” The signs say this not only to ourselves as a reminder, and to our human visitors, but also to passers-by when signs are fixed to boundary areas adjoining the road. Maybe it will encourage them to make their backyards more habitat friendly too.

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## Report on March Walk, The Box Vale Mine Track

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John Desmond



*The Expeditioners*

The Box Vale Loop track is a great day walk for reasonably fit bushwalkers, being very close to Mittagong and covering a wide variety of scenery and vegetation types. The full walk is a brisk six hour eleven kilometre loop but as specialist plant enthusiasts we covered a very small part of it in great detail.

On a perfect autumn day, not too hot or too cold, twelve members left the car park at 2 pm and headed down to Nattai Creek.



*Nattai Creek*

Extensive vistas of paper daisies were in flower.



Along the creek there were many fine examples of *Exocarpus strictus*, sometimes known as Dwarf cherry. The main features of this interesting plant are the tiny flowers less than 2mm, and the small cherry like fruit varying in colour from mauve to purplish black. A short detour led to a small reservoir often popular with waterbirds but on this day there were only a few ducks and some swamp hens.

*Contd. on next page*

But it was not long before the reference books needed to be unpacked to identify some of the smaller flowering plants.



*Hyacinth orchid,  
Dipodium punctatum .*



*Carrot tops, Platysace linearifolia small shrub with tiny star flowers good in flower arrangements*



*Pomax umbellata showing its candelabra of seed pods*

The track climbed from the creek and joined the path cut for the railway in 1888 to carry coal from Nattai Gorge. As this was only used for a very short time there is little sign of railway activity today. We then entered the deep Casuarina cutting with the Black She-oaks (*Allocasuarina littoralis*) after which the cutting is named growing above it. This is the main feed tree of the Glossy Black Cockatoo.

At the end of the cutting the vista opened up to very tall Eucalypts and a wide variety of smaller flowering shrubs. The main trees in this area are the Scribbly Gum (*Eucalyptus sclerophylla*) the Brittle Gum (*Eucalyptus mannifera*) and the Silvertop Ash (*Eucalyptus sieberi*). There are also Narrow Leaved Peppermint (*Eucalyptus radiata*) and Blue Stringybark (*Eucalyptus agglomerata*).

A common shrub in this area is the Narrow-leaved geebung or *Persoonia linearis*. It has attractive small yellow flowers over a long period of time then followed by small green fruit. It is not often seen in home gardens but is well suited to this area.



*Narrow leafed geebung, Persoonia linearis*

The party rested at the clearing where the track divided with one leg going on to the tunnel and Nattai lookout and the other direction leading to Forty Foot Falls. Given the length of time taken for detailed viewing and identification it was decided to return from here and perhaps explore the remainder of the track another day.

We arrived back at the cars a little after 4 pm with all participants pleased with the outing.

*Photographs on the walk by John Desmond, with the addition of four "small plant" photos by Barbara Eckersley and Yvonne Crofts.*



I'd like to thank Yvonne Crofts, John Desmond, Louise Egerton, Fran Mullard, Sylvia David, and Barbara Eckersley.

I'd love to hear from any of you with stories to tell, snippets to share, books to review or questions you want answered.... There is so much knowledge in our membership. Let's share it as much as possible.

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