

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY

Southern Highlands Group

...your local native garden club

Coming up:

Thursday 5th August 2pm at
CWA Rooms, Moss Vale

Dr Allan Stiles from the
Robertson Environment
Protection Society on the
recently published "A Guide to
the Robertson Rainforest:
Trees, Shrubs, Vines and Ferns
of the Yarrowa Brush"

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Recently seen at the Adelaide Central Market.
Beautiful. But when will people stop thinking that
proteas and leucadendrons are Australian natives?



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Upcoming Program

Unfortunately due to a new flare up of Covid-19 we had to postpone our July meeting. Our prime concern is to abide by the regulations and keep our members safe.

All meetings and garden visits will follow whatever Covid safety rules are then current.

Details of garden visits will be given closer to the date.

**Thursday August 5th, 2pm**

Talk at the Moss Vale CWA by Dr Allan Stiles from the Robertson Environment Protection Society. He will speak about *A Guide to the Robertson Rainforest: Trees, Shrubs, Vines and Ferns of the Yarrowa Brush* recently published by REPS.

Thursday September 2nd, 2pm

Visit to Margaret's professionally landscaped garden in Moss Vale.

Thursday October 7th, 2pm

Visit to Tanya's 11ha property with exclusively native plantings in Moss Vale.

Thursday November 4th, 2pm

Visit to a Bundanoon garden.

Thursday December 2nd End of year party.

Thursday February 3rd 2022 AGM

Southern Highlands Nature Map

John Desmond

After more than a year long absence due to the pandemic, we finally returned to CWA Hall at Moss Vale for a meeting on 3 June this year. Our guest speaker was Karen Guymer from Wingecarribee Shire Council who described the development and operation of the Southern Highlands Nature Map. This is a very exciting initiative as it harnesses the power and resources of citizen science to contribute to biodiversity monitoring in Wingecarribee and Wollondilly shires. Data is shared with the Atlas of Living Australia and future developments will allow the sharing of data with BioNet (NSW Wildlife Atlas) which may guide land use planning, biosecurity planning and local and regional decision making.

The development of Naturemap in the Southern Highlands was commenced in 2019 and was based on the methodology of Canberra Naturemap. This was developed initially as a volunteer group concerned with the protection of endangered plants, particularly the Canberra Spider Orchid. Commencing with plants in 2014 it has gradually expanded to birds, animals, fish and fungi. The Naturemap system has now expanded to a number of regional areas across eastern Australia. An important part of the data verification is the use of moderators with taxonomic or ecologic expertise and this means that after clearance by moderators the data is robust and can be used in decision making. Unusual or unidentified sightings can be uploaded for expert identification. For a non expert, browsing the species photos on the site can help with identification and provide a useful educational experience. There is an underlying security model so that locations of sensitive plant and animal species are safeguarded at all times.

Because Naturemap is in an embryonic stage in the Southern Highlands at present the number of species is still growing but as an example there have been about 1,100 plants identified as native to the ACT with several hundred more in the surrounding areas. In addition over 600 exotic and non native species have established in the regional bushland. In time it is likely that similar figures may apply to our region.

All members are encouraged to make use of the Naturemap process to record observations and to ensure that this valuable tool continues to operate. There are regional variations in organisation. For instance Albury and Wodonga councils are regional partners of Naturemap but on the south coast Eurobodalla and Shoalhaven Councils are yet to sign up. At present Wingecarribee Council is committed to the use and development of Naturemap and it is important that future Councils continue this involvement.

Anyone can participate in the Naturemap process by visiting the web page directly at <https://naturemapr.org> and selecting Southern Highlands region. To create a login you will need a username, email address and password and then upload sightings. The easiest way to upload sightings is via a photo taken by a mobile phone with gps coordinates. There are a number of handouts on the Council website to explain the process further.

Arid isn't Arid. Native Plants in Two Arid Botanic Gardens, South Australia

Trisha Arbib

Visits to two botanic gardens in South Australia were highlights of our road trip to Goolwa, at the mouth of the Murray River in South Australia, via Broken Hill in May/June 2021.

Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden, Port Augusta

The 250 hectare Garden is nestled in the foothills of the spectacular Flinders Ranges at the tip of the Spencer Gulf, 300 kilometres north of Adelaide.



This arid lands botanic garden was established to research, conserve and promote Australia's southern arid areas' flora (not just South Australia's). Arid areas of Australia are defined as areas where the rainfall is no greater than 250mm a year. They occur in every state and territory in Australia except Tasmania. But they certainly don't exemplify the other meaning of arid, of "lacking in interest, excitement or meaning."

Many of the plants at the Botanic Garden are becoming rare in the wild because of land cultivation, low rainfall and extreme weather conditions. Temperatures here range from a couple of degrees below zero with possible frost, up to the high forties and, at times extreme winds. The Garden is relatively new. From a proposal in 1981, the Garden was officially opened in 1996.

It was so good to be able to give names to some of the myriad small spiny silver shrubs that we had seen along the road in the arid parts of South Australia, and also on the way to Bourke and Tibooburra in NSW, and a great opportunity to see so many arid zone plants in one place. There are four signposted walking tracks, Highlights Walk, Children's Walk, Regional Walk and Red Cliff Walk. With an Eremophila garden, a garden of rare plants, an on-leash dog park, Red Cliff lookout and a bird hide, together with a licensed café, gift shop and nursery it is an impressive setup. The Regional Walk took us through plants of the sand dunes, the Great Victorian Desert, Central Highlands, the Flinders Ranges, and the Gawler Ranges.

It wasn't the time of year, late May, to see much in flower, and not the famous Sturt Desert Pea. It wasn't only flowers that were of interest. Incredible to learn that some of the Western Myalls, *Acacia papyrocarpa* that we were seeing in the Garden were believed to be more than 600 years old. They rely on seed alone to reproduce, and as germination is triggered by exceptional late summer rainfall, widespread reproduction may only occur four or five times in a century. The vaunted birds and wildlife were not much in evidence.

Some standouts for me are in these photos.



Stunning huge flowers of the Ooldea Mallee, Eucalyptus youngiana. Buds approx. 60mm across.



Eremophila stenophylla. One of the many Eremophilas which are a feature in the Gardens



Eucalyptus kruseana, Book Leaf Mallee. Flowers in groups of about 15 encircling the branch. It is only found in 3 hilly areas near Kalgoorlie W.A.



The fascinating Acacia peuce. Found in only 3 isolated areas in the Simpson Desert



Close up of pod and foliage of Acacia peuce. Long sharp needle like foliage. If it hadn't been for the large crenulated green pods I would have thought from a distance that it was some weird arid lands Casuarina.

Curator Michael Anlezark says that the future for desert plants is good while there are places like the Arid Lands Botanic Gardens that help protect them. "We can put resources into conservation and research so that these species will always be available. We've got the genetic plant material that will enable us to avoid, at all costs, losing these species forever."

Pangarinda Botanic Garden, Wellington S.A.

Near the Coorong at the mouth of the Murray River, this 30 hectare Botanic Garden was a much lower key affair than the one at Port Augusta. No café, no gift shop, no nursery. It is promoted as "Community Based Conservation" of rare and threatened flora from Australia's drier regions. This includes flora from the drier agricultural regions of South Australia, particularly the Murray Mallee and Coorong as well as Murray River and Kangaroo Island, and Western Australian 'biodiversity hot-spots' where many species are suffering severe decline.

Planted and maintained by a dedicated group of native plant enthusiasts, aided by Coorong District Council, it is considered a valuable conservation and educational resource, and a haven for birds. The plants' natural conditions have been replicated: • very good drainage • low humus and low nutrient levels • excellent rainfall infiltration.

First conceived of in 1993, by 2010 approximately 12 hectares had been planted. 2000 seedlings of local provenance were planted by volunteers as part of the Olympic Landcare 2000 project. Every year school children help to add to the planting. The site was originally

weed infested, eroded sand drifts with a few remnant patches of native pines *Callitris gracilis*. It was inspirational to see what has been achieved.

Some favourite plants:



Exploring Pangarinda Botanic Gardens on a gorgeous blue sky day



Hakea laurina 'Stockdale Sensation'.
Ha keas were a feature of the Garden



Eucalyptus sp. with purple leaves which look amazing with the lime yellow flowers



Interesting foliage of Hakea victoria



Eucalyptus macrocarpa



Banksia media. Gorgeous teddy bear like flowers in different colours on the one plant

But, much as I like labels and knowing what plants are, even better was the surprise of the southern edge of the **Sturt National Park**. Just north of Tibooburra, which in itself is 3.5 hours' drive north of Broken Hill, in Corner Country – NSW, SA and Qld. Wandering a short distance from the car and finding among the granite rocks and red soil and the occasional low shrub, the most beautiful grasses with grey fluffy heads, and wildflowers scattered and also nestled among the rocks. No paths, no signs. No one else but us. Quite magical.



and

in closeup:



Wonderful.

Wattles, wattles, wattles!

Kim Zegenhagen

There was a recent article in Gardening Australia magazine about wattles which got me thinking about wattles in the Southern Highlands.

How many of us knew that Acacia species and cultivars cover anything and everything from prostrate to 30m tall and in width from 30cm to 10m? They include a wide variety of trees, shrubs, and woody groundcovers. They have wonderful flowers in winter and spring. They attract birds and insects. They can be grown in sun or semi shade. If that is not versatile then what is?

Fortunately, here in the Southern Highlands we have some species perfectly suited to our environment. This is particularly important as the adaptability of wattles has led to some species becoming too successful. For example, the golden wattle from NSW, our national floral emblem, is now considered a weed in some regions of WA and Tasmania.

I have 2 Cootamundra wattles in my garden. I recently found out they are naturally occurring in Morton National Park in small numbers. This is a relief as I was concerned they might be considered a weed. It is recommended that to prevent non-local wattles from becoming a weedy problem they should be pruned after flowering to prevent seeding. All wattles can handle a good pruning and it prevents them becoming too woody and makes them a great feature plant.

Below are a few examples of local wattles which are considered rare and or bush fire affected in our region. Unfortunately, I can only locate seeds for Mabel’s wattle on-line. All other wattles listed do not seem to be available as either plant or seeds. So, if anyone has seeds for these wattles and wants help in propagating, I think SHAPS members would gladly assist.

Genus & species	Common name	Type	Local areas where it occurs (see below)
Acacia hamiltoniana	Hamilton’s Wattle	shrub	MRT
Acacia mabellae	Mabel’s wattle	tree	MRT
Acacia subtilinervis	Net veined wattle	shrub	MRT
Acacia bynoeana	Bynoe’s wattle, Tiny wattle	shrub	CDX/MRT/PEN
Acacia echinula	Hedgehog wattle	shrub	CDX/ILE/MRT/MER
Acacia yalwalensis	Yalwal wattle	shrub	MRT
Acacia chalkeri	Chalker’s wattle	shrub	JEL
Acacia flocktoniae	Flockton wattle	shrub	CDX

CDX- Cordeaux/Avon/Nepean area

JEL-Jellore

ILE- Illawarra escarpment

MER-Meryla

MRT-Morton

PEN-Penrose

Snippets

Our local Wingecarribee Shire Bushcare supervisor Jen Slattery is retiring. Her gift from the WSC workers and volunteers was a water colour of *Eucalyptus macarthurii* by Jane Pye, a very talented watercolourist and SHAPS member.



Jen Slattery on the right, Jane Pye on the left

Notes from NSW APS Strategy Meeting – Kristine Gow

It can be beneficial to see beyond the doings of our local group. Here are notes by Kristine Gow who attended the latest strategy meeting on the 19th and 20th June in Parramatta.

1. Contact members who haven't rejoined and ask their reasons. To rectify situation. Exit interviews?
2. Have major plant sales to raise money.
3. Market day before biennial in 2022.
4. Grants to group for propagation.
5. Open gardens to stimulate local interest.
6. Change name of study groups to interest groups.
7. Fund research and annual scholarship for research.
8. Board meetings held via ZOOM, would like a nominated member to join in on meeting.

9. **Biennial conference update September 2022 in Kiama, NSW** - None of this is final.

To include people not members.

Cost increased due increased cost of accommodation, buses and tours.

Concerns about Covid restrictions

Will need volunteers to help from district groups

10th September to Friday 16 September dates of conference.

Planning of pre and post tours - not confirmed as yet - would like people to indicate on web site which tour they are interested in. Lord Howe Island pre and post tours about 6 days.

Pilliga, Warrumbungles and Mt Kaptur about 6 days.

Blue Mountains pre conference about 5 days, stay in Wallerawang at Black Gold Motel.

On the Sunday a market fair-welcome and registration. On Monday the start of conference

in the pavilion. Tuesday conference and dinner. Wednesday 14th September excursion.

Provide about 7 different excursions, pick two, meals provided, walk options. Thursday

conference talks and study group discussion. Friday an excursion and final day.

Theme of the conference: Australian flora - past present future. We aim to journey back 40,000 years ago to the landscape of the past, then come to the present with its successes and challenges and consider the future and what actions we can take to better grow and preserve our precious native flora.

APS NSW <https://austplants.com.au/ANPSA-Biennial-Conference-2022>

A Surprise on the Way to Carrington Falls – Trisha Arbib

Turning to the right instead of our usual left turn, just before Carrington Falls in the



Budderoo National Park, we came across a sign indicating that we were within a short walking distance of Nellies Glen.

So beautiful, with the waterfall falling over the rocks into the pool and framed by the surrounding bush. Like an old fashioned picture postcard.



Nellies Glen has been a popular gathering place for locals since the 19th century.

The natural swimming hole in its idyllic setting will be perfect for a swim when the weather gets warmer than today's maximum of 6 degrees Celsius!

Everywhere was the pouched coral fern

Gleichenia dicarpa, which also features on the sign. Long a favourite of mine it looks delicate yet has a wiriness and flexibility. Wikipedia tells me that *G. dicarpa* is found throughout eastern Australia, from Queensland through New South Wales and Victoria, in Tasmania and New Zealand.

A common plant, often seen growing under waterfalls, in peatlands, under cliffs and in tall open forest. It can grow in nutrient poor conditions, preferring high humidity and good levels of sunshine and moisture. Its tangled roots collect detritus and prevent erosion. It can also be a pioneer species of disturbed ground.



Gleichenia dicarpa, Pouched coral fern

Nearby enticing walks were Warris Chair Lookout and Missingham's Lookouts. Next time.

A Boom in Australian Native Cut Flowers During the Pandemic

Originally reported by the ABC 6th August 2020

I imagine that nothing essential has changed.

For more details see <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-08-06/boom-in-native-flowers-grows-during-covid-pandemic/12519474>

Micro Forests in Canberra Offer Hope Against Climate Change

Reported by the ABC on 8th July 2021

A micro forest is being grown in Downer in a bid to offset global warming, and more are on the way. Advocates point to research that shows the important role of forests in storing carbon and helping to fight climate change. A CSIRO study has shown that on a February day the difference between a shaded and unshaded Canberra street was as much as 15 degrees Celsius.

The local micro forests are adapted to Australian conditions from a concept by Akira Miyawaki, a botanist in Japan who wants to restore biodiversity in urban environments. The Canberra ones are not trying to replicate the natural environment, instead trialling plants that are native to different parts of Australia, to see what will best cope with warmer temperatures. Local landscape architect Edwina Robinson has been the original driving force and locals and crowd funding have raised \$70,000.

For details go to <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-07-08/act-micro-forests-in-canberra-offer-hope-against-climate-change/100274670>

Attractive New Logo for the Southern Highlands Australian Plant Society

The group's emblem is *Grevillea arenaria* subsp. *arenaria*



Beautifully painted by president Bill Mullard's sister Joy Neeson. Proudly displayed on our website.

www.austplants.com.au/Southern-Highlands

Many thanks Joy.

I'd like to thank John Desmond, Kim Zegenhagen, Kristine Gow and Joy Neeson who contributed to this newsletter. Contributions are always welcome. Please write to me at trisharbib@gmail.com with suggestions.

MANY THANKS
to all
contributors to
this newsletter.

