

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY

Southern Highlands Group

...your local native garden club

AGM via Zoom on 3rd Feb.
Please send in your nomination to Kim if you wish to stand on the committee.

Visit to Jonquil's Mittagong garden Thursday March 3rd

SHAPS Committee:

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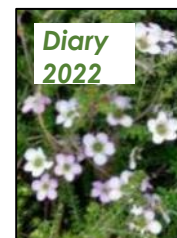


It was quite a thrill seeing these tall Xmas bells in the Bundanoon end of the Morton National Park in early January. Maybe they flower there every year and I'd never before been in the right place at the right time. But it was a first for me. They are said to be common in moist open heath on sandstone. I reckon that these are *Blandfordia nobilis* as they have tubular rather than flared flowers.

Upcoming Program

AGM Thursday 3rd February 2022 at 2pm via Zoom

This year we will not be having a lecture to follow the AGM, and the AGM will be on Zoom. You have been sent an email invitation to the Zoom meeting, specifying time, and a link, and this will include nomination forms if you want to stand on the committee.



Thursday March 3rd at 2pm - Visit the garden of SHAPS member Jonquil Temple

Quill Cottage
16 Applegate Close, Mittagong

Jonquil has kindly let us visit her garden. The garden is over an acre in size. It was a bare paddock 20 years ago and has been transformed. It's a mixed garden but has plenty of natives and many "features". Jonquil will give a short talk about the garden before we wander around it.

We will serve afternoon tea plus light refreshments. There are outdoor places to have tea if fine, or there is a long undercover verandah. You need to bring your own cup. There will be plants and Barbara's lovely flower cards for sale so please bring small change.

There is plenty of parking on the street with a short walk up to the garden and house. It's a fabulous garden so we hope that a lot of you can make it.

As usual there will be QR codes and hand sanitiser at the gate. **Visitors MUST be double vaccinated.**

2022 Program

	General Meetings. 1 st Thursday in the month 2pm as specified	Outings 1 st Thursday in the month as specified	Committee meeting. 2 nd Monday of the month
Feb	AGM on Zoom 2pm 3/2/22		14/2/22 Louise
Mar		Garden visit to Jonquil Temple's at 16 Applegate Close, Mittagong, 2pm on 3/3/22. Plants & cards sale.	14/3/22
April	Greening Australia talk - Ian Raynor at Moss Vale CWA. 2pm on 7/4/22.		11/4/22
May		Possible planting activity with Greening Australia 5/5/22	9/5/22

With the insecurity that Covid brings, we will be organising more outdoor activities and fewer speakers than in normal years. We will also advertise events only a few months in advance although other activities are in the pipeline.

End of Year Gathering at Carrington Falls

Robyn Kremer



Carrington Falls was an inspired choice for our end of year gathering. Water was thundering 90m down the dark cliff face into a rippled pool surrounded by lush ferns of the Kangaroo River. Warm sunshine highlighted the myriad shapes of trunks, foliage & flora visible from the well formed circuit pathway.

Our group of 23 gathered for lunch in the picnic area. Several of our generous member propagators supplied an interesting variety of plants for a draw.



On the circuit path some of us were lucky enough to see a calm female gang gang interrupting her lunch to gaze at us.

Beside the track, stalked conesticks (*Petrophile pedunculata*) contrasted with *Epacris longifolia* & some pink & white *Leptospermums*.



The dramatic silhouettes of swamp banksias (*Banksia paludosa*) often jutting from the sides of the cliff, providing food & shelter for native birds, enhanced wonderful valley vistas.



Callicoma serratifolia in bloom beside the circuit path attracted pollinators

The Native Grace Nursery with its extensive range of indigenous plants, including herbs & edible species provided an opportunity for shopping for gifts for friends or one's own garden. Located in Robertson, it is well positioned to encourage visitors to grow some of the indigenous species that thrive in the rich basalt soil at Carrington Falls. Our group enthusiastically supported them.

Thank you committee for a memorable outing.

Snippets

The Fighting Plagues and Predators report was developed by CSIRO and the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions. It provides a consolidated look at the state of Australia's invasive species problem and a path towards a pest and weed-free future. As outlined in the report invasive species are the greatest issue facing Australia's environment

From feral cats to toxic toads, choking weeds, deadly fungi, armies of ants and climate change, Australia is in the grip of an unprecedented attack on our native wildlife, environment and way of life. More of our unique flora and fauna is in danger of disappearing by 2050 unless urgent action is taken.

Find a link on the austplants website at <https://resources.austplants.com.au/stories/fighting-plagues-and-predators-report/>



Louise was wondering what tea tree hybrid this is? I suggested it might be *Leptospermum 'Aphrodite.'* Any thoughts from other members gratefully received.

Please send your response to southernhighlandsaps@gmail.com with Ref: Louise.

Summit of the Gib

Chris Goodwin

By December 2019 the Gib was a dry brown heap. The trees on the rocky summit all appeared dead. The view across the top was unobstructed with no sign of the grasses and shrubs that had always been there. A closer inspection of the summit showed just two plants still thriving. Two large native olive trees, *Notelaea venosa* thrived in the heat and dry. In January 2020 people passing by offered condolences that the fire had reached us here. The summit certainly looked burnt. It wasn't. It was just the drought.

In March 2020 the rains came. For months there was no run off despite the constant wet as the land soaked up the moisture. Then the *Lomandra* began to show green growth. Hundreds of tiny shoots of *Platysace lanceolata* appeared at the base of the dead *Leptospermum brevipes* and *Melaleuca hypericifolia*. Within months juvenile cabbage gum leaves, *Eucalyptus amplifolia*, began to sprout on slender young trunks. And mistletoe adorned the older branches. The rebound had begun.

Two years of above average rain and the area is thriving. Plants that haven't been seen in years including the slender *Stackhousia viminea* and *Hibbertia ovata* are abundant. Billy buttons abound. The *Platysace* matured this summer and are in flowers in their hundreds. The *Xerochrysum bracteatum* are beginning to proliferate and will be flowering in numbers very soon.

But best of all the eucalypts (Sydney Peppermint, *Eucalyptus piperita* and Gully Gum, *E. smithii*) and acacia have grown back. Even a few of the black she-oaks *Allocasuarina littoralis* have made it through. The birds have returned and so have the mammals.

It's time to quietly walk through.



Platysace lanceolata in flower



Gristle ferns *Blechnum cartilagineum*, *Eucalypts* and *Acacia mearnsii*



Lomandra longifolia and *Acacia mearnsii*



Golden everlasting paper daisy *Xerochrysum bracteatum* in a green landscape



Dodonaea viscosa



Melaleuca hypericifolia



Stypandra glauca, nodding blue lily

Over the Hedge with Kim and Erica

Kim Zegenhagen and Erica Rink



Australian Native Plant Jobs for January and February

Alert to all you worm farmers out there! The weather can be hot so make sure your worm farm is in a coolish place. Don't let your wriggly friends cook in the next heatwave. If moving isn't possible, cover the farm with shade cloth or insulate with a layer of old carpet. Another suggestion is to wet the compost down from time to time to ensure it doesn't dry out. In hot weather pour several litres of water over the worm farm every week. The bonus is more worm wee.

Now seems a good time to talk about edible natives.

Warrigal greens is a bush food you can plant then harvest in only a few weeks. They are hardy but if you want lush and tender leaves then water well and provide fertile soil. They are a great little plant to start you on your bush foods adventure.

They are also called New Zealand Spinach or Botany Bay spinach; Warrigal Greens are native to Australia and New Zealand. They are a sprawling plant around 50cm high and trailing around 1-2 metres long. Plant your seeds in spring and summer. Soak seeds for 1-2 hours before sowing, and then plant in seed tray around two and a half times the diameter of the seed. They can be bought on-line.



Once they have established, plant them around 60cm apart in the ground. Leaves will be ready to harvest in around 8 to 10 weeks. Plants will self-sow so you can pot up and give them to friends. You can also grow plants from cuttings. Warrigal greens enjoy full sun and well-drained soil. Plants are rarely affected by disease or pest issues. They can tolerate mild frosts.

Like silverbeet, leaves contain oxalic acid, and this can cause kidney stones and affect the absorption of calcium so it's important to blanch leaves to remove most of the oxalic acid before eating. Don't drink the water you blanch them in because the oxalic acid will dissolve into the water. Use in a quiche, frittata, omelette, or stir-fry (once blanched). You can make pesto by substituting basil for Warrigal greens and macadamias for pine nuts. Blanch the greens for a minute then put in cold water.

Warrigal greens contain high levels of vitamin C and they were used by early explorers and settlers to fight scurvy. Indigenous Australians also ate it, although the extent to which is unknown.

Warrigal green seeds are available at <https://www.localseeds.com.au/product/warrigal-greens/> and <https://natif.com.au/products/warrigal-greens>

Stay tuned for more excellent suggestions in the next issue.

Happy gardening, E & K.

What'll We Eat – Wattle Seed as Bush Tucker

Trisha Arbib

Erica and Kim's take on Warrigal Greens prompted me to share what I know about wattle seed as bush tucker. The first question people generally ask is can we eat all types of wattle seed? The second, what do the seeds taste like and how do you use them?



Over 900 Australian Acacia species have been recorded. And it would be impossible to give a yea or nay for each one. I've read (in *Wild Lime* by Juleigh Robbins) that delicious wattle seed can be obtained from *Acacia aneura*, *A. victoriae*, *A. retinodes* and the golden wattle *A. pycnantha* among others. Other edible wattles I've seen mentioned are *A.sophorae*, *A.notabilis*, *A. delbata*, *A. implexa* and *A.fimbriata* the Brisbane wattle.

Robbins says that most wattles seem to be edible, but some like *A. ligulata* taste bad. A few species have been specifically mentioned in my research as best avoided, including *A.ligulata*, which has some reputation for making your hair fall out and *A.georginae* (Georgina gidgee), various parts of which can contain some fluoroacetate. This compound is the same as the commercial "1080" poison, used for vermin!

I have no first hand knowledge of using seed straight from the tree. It seems that flavour varies. Robbins reports that coastal wattle has a rich nutty and almost fatty flavour, whilst *A. victoriae* is much darker and has a deeper nut flavour with hints of chicory and coffee.

Edible wattle seed mentioned in *Mutooroo: Plant Use by Australian Aboriginal People* compiled by Glenn Leiper are *A. complonata*, *A. farnesiana*, *A. holosericae* and *A. sophorae*. Of all those Acacias that I've mentioned in this article only *Acacia implexa* is endemic to the Southern Highlands Shale Forest and Woodland. But please do your own research before you try.

It would seem that the bushfood industry wisely prefers to use species which already have some history of safe use in traditional Aboriginal communities. Gundabluely (*A.victoriae*) has been the most popular selection, partly because it is very widespread through inland and some coastal areas, grows quickly, and has fairly large seeds. But it is normally quite prickly, which complicates seed gathering and the seed crop can be somewhat unreliable.

Some wattles such as Mulga *Acacia aneura* can be a prolific source of food, yielding up to 100kg per hectare in the wild. Wattle seed can have higher levels of nutrients than wheat and rice. I don't know if you remember Vic Cherikoff from Bush Tucker Supply and Jean-Paul Bruneteau of Sydney restaurant Ribberies who first promoted the culinary use of wattle seed in the early 1980's. In the bushfood industry wattle seed has probably the highest profile of all the bush tucker.



*Roasted and ground seed of
Acacia victoriae*

I have used roasted and ground wattle seed that has been produced commercially. It had an attractive coffee nutty flavour when I used it in biscuits and to make coffee, and when I tasted it in ice cream. I bought the ground seed from the bulk food shop *The Source* in Springetts Arcade in Bowral. It is expensive per kg but it weighs little. They also sell lemon myrtle, savoury bush dukka and outback bush curry mix. You can buy whole raw and processed seed of *Acacia victoriae* online from <https://www.bushfoodaustralia.com/wattleseed/> but they are out of stock until harvest in March 2022.

To use your own harvested wattle seeds, dry roast them for about 30 minutes in a 160 degree oven until they pop. Grind when cool in a coffee grinder, they are too hard for a mortar and pestle or blender. They store for a long time. Before using either heat in a dry pan as you would for spices, or infuse in boiling liquids like water or milk.

Present day non-Aboriginal usage tends to have nothing to do with Aboriginal usage. These "products" have been incorporated into western cooking styles and allied ingredients. Depending on the wattle species, Aborigines traditionally eat the seed either cooked fresh in its pod or dry roasted and ground on stones to make damper, and also the sweet gums that ooze from the trees. Wattle is also used in antiseptic lotions and post-natal smoke treatments, and the timber is used to make boomerangs and coolamons.

I have found non traditional recipes for wattle seed in breads and cake, icecream and mousse, in savoury sauces and in crusts and stuffings of meat, as a syrup and a caffeine free coffee substitute. In baking, the wattle seed is used as a flavouring and not as the flour.

Mostly, commercial products are prepared by lightly baking the seed, then grinding it to a powder. The most popular commercial products containing wattle seed are breads, biscuits, cakes, and ice cream. Wattle seed is gluten-free. Wattle seed could also be a useful ingredient in diabetic diets, as the carbohydrates are absorbed quite slowly, so providing energy over a long period.

I'm happy to pass on the recipe that I've used for wattle seed shortbread. Just write to me at trisharbib@gmail.com

SHAPS Members' Summer Photos

**Charles Harper Wright, Barbara Eckersley, Pam Tippet ,
Erica Rink and Trisha Arbib**



Probably Marsdenia suaveolens Photo Barbara Eckersley in Morton National Park late December/early January



It is interesting that Flannel flowers are still flowering in Morton National Park in mid-January. Photo Barbara Eckersley



*Taken on Gibbergunyah by Charles Harper Wright.
Does anyone know its name?*



Hyacinth orchid Dipodium punctatum Photo by Charles Harper Wright on Gibbergunyah



Taken on Gibbergunyah by Charles Harper Wright. **Does anyone know its name?**



Grevillea diminuta in bud. Photo Trisha Arbib in her Bundanoon garden



Isotoma axillaris Photo Trisha Arbib in her Bundanoon garden



Lomatia silaifolia Photo by Erica Rink in her Mittagong garden



Baeckea imbricatum Photo Pam Tippett in her Bundanoon garden



Veronica perfoliata white form. Not nearly as striking as the blue, but interesting for the collector. Photo Pam Tippett in her garden.



An abundance of seed pods on *Hovea acutifolia*
Photo Trisha Arbib in her Bundanoon garden



Jasminum suavissimum Photo Pam Tippett in her Bundanoon garden

Many thanks to
all contributors to
this newsletter

I'd like to thank Chris Goodwin, Robyn Kremer, Kim Zegenhagen, Erica Rink, Charles Harper Wright, Barbara Eckersley and Pam Tippett for their contributions.

Please write to me at trisharbib@gmail.com with suggestions for articles or snippets.

And don't forget I'd love **your photos of autumn Australian native flowers** for the March newsletter. Flowers from your garden or from the bush. Please talk to me if you want advice. I do like photos that show flowers and leaves in enough closeup to allow others to identify the plant. And if possible a note on when and where the photo was taken and any relevant details are appreciated. Let's do it! *It's a great way to contribute to the group and most of us have photos in our phones.*

