

# AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY

*Southern Highlands Group*

*...your local native garden club*

4<sup>th</sup> August Richard Batterley will help us take better photographs - talk

11<sup>th</sup> August photography practical with Richard Batterley

1<sup>st</sup> September visit to Margaret Hammond's garden, Moss Vale

## **Southern Highlands**

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This photo of a fascinating fungus was taken in the Southern Highlands by SHAPS member Harper Wright in April this year. He saw it on the bark of a eucalypt. Such an amazing yellow and shape. Does anyone have a name for it? Read and see more about fungi in this newsletter.

**Upcoming Program**

**SHAPS 2022 Program Summary**

	<b>General Meetings</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month or as specified, at 2pm at Moss Vale CWA	<b>Outings</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month or as specified	<b>Committee meeting</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month
July		Visit to Jonquil Temple’s garden <b>7<sup>th</sup> July</b> CANCELLED	11/7/22
Aug	Richard Batterley- talk on better using your mobile phone to photograph plants. Moss Vale CWA. <b>2pm on Thursday 4th August</b>	<b>Thursday August 11<sup>th</sup>, 11am to 1pm.</b> Richard Batterley – follow on practical exercise in photography. At Mount Annan Botanical Gardens. Numbers limited.	8/8/22 at Kim’s
Sept		Visit to Margaret Hammond’s garden at 41 Argyle Street Moss Vale <b>1<sup>st</sup> Sept at 2pm</b>  ANPSA Biennial Conference- Kiama <b>10-16 Sept.</b>	12/9/22
Oct	Roger Farrow will talk on those forgotten pollinators, the beetles and flies at <b>2pm on 6<sup>th</sup> October</b>		10/10/22
Nov		SHAPS hosting APS NSW weekend <b>12/13 November</b> in Southern Highlands.	14/11/22
Dec	Jen Slattery talk on native grasses and collecting seed in the wild at <b>2pm on 1<sup>st</sup> December</b>	Xmas party	12/12/22

Sadly the July visit to Jonquil’s garden was cancelled due to the prolonged rain. It will happen at a later date.

**Details of coming events**

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> August 2pm at Moss Vale CWA**

Richard Batterley to speak on better using our digital phone cameras (see details on next page).



**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> August 11 am to 1pm at Mount Annan Botanical Gardens**

Richard will also conduct a **practical session** the week following his talk. You are welcome to attend the lecture and not do the practical session. However, you will need to attend the lecture before taking part in the practical session. Details of car pooling and meeting place will be sent by email. Numbers are limited. Please let a member of the committee know if you wish to take part. Either tell someone at the next meeting or email the committee at [southernhighlandsaps@gmail.com](mailto:southernhighlandsaps@gmail.com).

**From Richard Batterley:**

*What do I intend to do in your SHAPS sessions?*

Help people understand just what their phone can do as a camera and show there are “extras” that can expand its photographic capability. To get people to become more comfortable with their phone and help them understand what makes a good photograph and how to do it. It’s simple really! But also to show what can be done with some more advanced thinking and equipment. It’s about going good, better, best. And then put it into practice in the practical session.

*About me.*

I took my first photograph when I was about 7 years old (and actually still have the camera I used). I took many photographs and learnt more about photography in my school years and then went to what was then the world’s foremost photographic college at the Polytechnic of Regent Street where I gained a degree in photographic arts. But when I applied for a job in several advertising agencies, because I was in the first year of the first degree in photography in UK, no one had ever heard of a degree in photography. But because I had a degree they put me in account management and strategic planning. And there I stayed throughout my working career, in various positions in London and then Australia. Finally becoming Asia Pacific Regional Strategy and Planning Director for one of the world’s leading marketing consulting groups.

When I decided to step back from the internal role and set up my own consulting company, I also decided to go back to photography and put one day aside each week to pursue that aim. I am probably what is known as an image maker. I don’t do commission work, but take the photographs I want to take and people then buy large, limited edition prints of my work. I have held a number of one man exhibitions, including being the first photographer whose work was featured in Coco Republic. I am a regular speaker on things photographic and am currently leading a number of photography courses for the University of The Third Age.

*Editor: To get the most out of Richard’s advice, I plan to finally look at my “How to Use Camera” instructions on my digital phone before his talk, and also look again at options under “Edit” on my phone camera.*

**Thursday September 1<sup>st</sup> 2pm**

Visit to Margaret Hammond’s garden at 41 Argyle Street, Moss Vale. This lovely garden was designed by well known Southern Highlands garden designer, Owen Dark, using Australian native plants. Plants have grown vigorously and have led to a marked increase in bird life. The garden has a very natural not over designed look.

## APS NSW Get Together in the Southern Highlands November Annual Gathering Saturday 12 - Sunday 13 November 2022

You will have seen in the recent NSW APS e-newsletter that our November weekend in the Southern Highlands is now out there and open for registration by APS members all over NSW. Your committee has planned a great weekend and it's a chance to show off our region. Let's have a good size SHAPS contingent there.

*To register you will need to go to the NSW APS website*

<https://austplants.com.au/event-4877519> **YOU CAN REGISTER NOW**

The details below have been copied from the NSW APS website and are also in the latest NSW e-newsletter.

- **Get together registration – \$45.00**  
Includes weekend activities, morning tea and lunch on Saturday.  
(Saturday evening dinner not included.)
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- **Get together registration plus dinner and talk on Saturday night – \$90.00**  
Includes Saturday morning tea, Saturday lunch, get together sessions and Saturday two-course dinner

Venue on Saturday: Exeter Village Hall, 10 Exeter Rd, Exeter NSW 2579



The Southern Highlands Group of APS NSW is hosting this year's weekend get-together at Exeter, Sutton Forest and Moss Vale on Saturday 12 and at Bowral on Sunday, 13 November.

The Southern Highlands Group has organised a variety of exciting activities for the weekend, including a plants sale on the Sunday.

This weekend offers a wonderful chance to see and enjoy a beautiful part of NSW and catch up with friends you may not have seen for a while. These weekends are extremely popular and it is essential that you register for the event.

Price of the get-together including morning tea, lunch and the get together sessions along with dinner and talk at Mittagong RSL on the Saturday night is \$90. If you only wish to attend the morning tea, lunch and get together sessions, the price is \$45. You can book and pay for both through the registration.

Guests are welcome to attend.

If you have any questions please contact John Aitken at <http://office@austplants.com.au>

### **Program:**

#### **Saturday, 12 November 2022**

**9.30am** - Registration and morning tea provided by Exeter CWA

**10am** - Acknowledgement of Country welcome to participants by our president Bill Mullard, and the president of APS NSW, Heather Miles.

Speaker: Dan Clarke, APS NSW Conservation Officer and environmentalist - The Vegetation of the Wingecarribee Area.



Dan is a botanical consultant who operates DM Clarke Botanical Consulting Services which provides flora survey services, consultancy advice, and vegetation management and bushland regeneration services. Dan has worked as a botanist in the environmental consultancy industry since February 2011. He is currently the Conservation Officer for APS NSW. Dan has undertaken extensive vegetation surveys of the Wingecarribee area for the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. He is an experienced speaker and will inspire you with his investigations of the vegetation of the Wingecarribee area.

**12 noon** - lunch provided by Exeter CWA.

**1.00 - 3.30pm** - visit to two large but very different gardens. The group will be divided into two, with each half visiting the following gardens at different times.

- Tanya Excel's 2.26ha property, at Moss Vale. A garden conversion.
- The Martins' rural property, at Sutton Forest. Extensive native and exotic plantings, large dam.

**6.30pm for 7.00pm** - Dinner, private room Mittagong RSL Club, Cnr Hume Hwy & Bessemer St, Mittagong NSW 2575. Cost \$45.

A talk by Jane Lemann, member APS NSW Southern Highland Group and co-ordinator of Mt Gibraltar bush care.

### Sunday, 13 November 2022

**9.30 - 11.30am** - escorted walks at Mt. Gibraltar. Choice of easy or more difficult.

**12 - 1.00pm** - Lunch, individual responsibility, with plenty of choice venues in Bowral.

**1-3 pm:** Kris Gow's and Sarah Cains' gardens in Bowral plus plant sale. Both are small gardens so staggered visits are required. The gardens are located near each other so that walking or driving between each is optional.

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## Edible Plants Indigenous Knowledge and Bush Tucker Gardens

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### John Desmond

At our meeting on 2 June we were treated to a fascinating talk by Pat Hall, who worked with National Parks and Wildlife Service for 36 years until 2014, but has returned as a volunteer on a number of regional projects.

As background, Pat outlined the extent of the area she worked when working for National Parks which encompasses the Highlands, and extends to Batemans Bay in the South, Goulburn to the West, Balmoral to the North and Wollongong on the Coast. Originally, the NPWS administered the National Parks in the area from



an administration centre at Fitzroy Falls, but it was not so well known to the general public until the construction of the visitors centre when John Fahey was the responsible Minister and also the local state member.



As part of Pat's work with National Parks and growing up in Jervis Bay, she established close links with the local Gundungurra people. Traditional knowledge of plants and their uses was displayed and a small sample of local plants were discussed in some detail, and passed around the audience which really brought the presentation to life.

*Banksia serrata* was used as a torch because of its slow burning and also as a hairbrush.

*Lomandra* was chewed to build saliva for assistance when walking long distances, and the seed of the Lomandra was used to make bread



*Sarsparilla* vine was an important medicinal plant. Some samples leaves were distributed and chewing the leaves does certainly appear to be very like cough medicine.

Tea Tree leaves can be crushed to clear nasal blockages. The bark of the tree can be used as a dye when treating kangaroo skins. The bark can be burnt to attract insects which would drop into the creek enabling the men to catch fish.

Many flowering plants such as Banksias, Honey Flower etc. would be dipped into water to create a sweet drink.

Coastal wattle could be dropped into still water to reduce oxygen levels, provoking fish to rise to the surface. It was also used as lather for soap.



The stem of the grass tree would be used as a spear when catching fish as it was so light it would rise to the surface.

To encourage greater appreciation of this traditional knowledge Pat is involved in a programme to develop bush tucker gardens in local primary schools. This programme, in partnership with Aunty Sharyn (Gundungurra Elder) and Melissa Wiya, (Council Liaison Officer) is designed to encourage schools to learn more about Indigenous Culture and the cultivation of edible plants in particular. The programme so far has been well received and a number of schools are already participating with others interested.

The presentation left the audience feeling that they had encountered some new knowledge and with a greater appreciation of the native plants in our region.

Editor: *Images of signs in this report are from school projects, courtesy of Pat Hall.*

## Fabulous Fungi

**Text by Janet Wright, all but two photos by Harper Wright**



*Phallus rubicundus* is in the stinkhorn family and is a Saprophyte. Photo by Janet Wright

The last two autumns have been quite wet, and as a result we have enjoyed an explosion of fungi. Some are fairly drab brown or grey in colour, whereas others are bright red or yellow. Some last upwards of a week or more, and others are 24-hour wonders. However, all these organisms play a very important part in our ecosystems.

What constitutes a fungus? They are a large group of spore producing organisms that feed on organic matter and include moulds, mushrooms, and toadstools. Fungal biodiversity plays an important role in soil ecosystems which in turn affects plant health and growth, and this knowledge is being used in both agriculture and horticulture to improve the health of managed soils.

Fungi can be classified into three main groups based on how they obtain their nutrients. All three groups have different interactions with plant life: mycorrhizal, saprophytic, and parasitic.

**Mycorrhizal or symbiotic fungi** have a beneficial association with plants, e.g. plants in the genera Epacris, Leucopogon and Wollisia.



*Amanita muscaria*

**Amanita muscaria**, is an introduced mycorrhizal fungus which thrives in carpets of pine needles but has spread to native myrtle beech forests.

There are 2 main groups of mycorrhizal fungi: Ectomycorrhizal, with more than 6,000 species, and Endomycorrhizal. Ectomycorrhizal have dense mats of specialised filaments that surround their host's roots that don't invade the cells. What we see above ground are the reproductive organs or fruiting bodies. They can come in

many shapes and sizes, e.g. mushrooms, toadstools, coral, puffballs to name but a few.

Endomycorrhizal fungi fully penetrate their hosts' cell walls and some need these fungi throughout life e.g. *Thelymitra ixioides* (spotted sun orchid) needs a fungal partner to survive beyond the germination stage.



*Mycorrhizal growth on potted Achillea.* Photo by Janet Wright



*Thelymitra ixoides* Spotted sun orchid

Mycorrhizal fungi are rarely seen, but this does not detract from their positive contribution to native gardens. Starter packs of mycorrhizal fungi can be bought from good garden centres and native nurseries. When I was given a Wollemi pine in England about 12 years ago, it came with a packet of mycorrhizal fungi to sprinkle in the hole before planting the sapling. It survived Cheshire winters, and in just under 10 years it grew to over 2 metres in height.

**Saprophytic fungi** breakdown organic matter, e.g. leaf litter, thereby producing important ingredients in healthy soils.



*Aseroe rubra*



*Clathrus archeri*



*Pseudocolos fusiformis*

**Parasitic fungi** derive nutrients from plants and thereby harm their hosts. For example, *Armillaria luteobubalina* (Australian Honey fungus) is a primary cause of Eucalyptus death and forest dieback.

Fungi are often seen in gardens, but their actions are less effective on cultivated soils that have been heavily fertilised and manured. Of course, the use of fungicides can also inhibit all fungi. Good gardening practice, using minimum amount of the above, will save not only time and money but also help protect the environment. It is important to understand which fungi you have in your garden, and what they contribute to your garden, before trying to eradicate them.

*All photographs were taken in the Southern Highlands.*



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## Over the Hedge with Kim and Erica

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### Kim Zegenhagen and Erica Rink



As promised in the last Newsletter, this month we are talking about ground covers or lawn substitutes. You can plant them in rockeries or areas where they can cascade over rocks, walls, and slopes. Ground covers are like mulch in that they keep the soil moist and help in weed control. They also help with erosion. In low traffic areas they can be an alternative to grass. You may still want to put in a path, mulch, or stepping stones for high traffic areas. You can plant ground covers in pots, either keep them pruned or allow them to escape into the garden. Prune them if you want them contained.

The following plants are all frost tolerant.

The native violet (*Viola hederacea*) is vigorous, does best in moist soil but will tolerate a wide range of conditions. It grows from underground runners and to propagate you just dig up clumps with root runners and replant.

*Myoporum parvifolium*, fine leaf or broad leaf (common name Boobialla). With a name like that who could resist. It is a dense ground cover, suppressing weeds. It has a small flower as well in either pink or white. It is propagated by softwood cuttings taken in spring.

Another favourite is *Scleranthus biflorus* or Canberra grass. It tolerates a wide range of conditions but does better with some sun. It will begin to self-seed but is not invasive, just forms little clumps of dense green cover. It feels springy to the touch.

A great plant for most conditions is Pigface (*Carpobrotus*). It's the fleshy cactus like plant with the pinky purple flower. As a bonus it is edible although we haven't tried it.

Final ground cover is *Dichondra repens*. It is a tough plant that prefers dappled light but will tolerate full sun and part shade, sometimes called kidney weed. Very good alternative to lawn with light traffic.

You can grow ground covers around the fruit trees, both as a weed suppressant and as a grass substitute. They are a great idea in places that are hard to mow, so don't mow - put in ground covers



*Dichondra repens*



*Myoporum parvifolium*



*Pigface Carpobrotus*



*Scleranthus biflorus*

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**And some more.....**

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**Wingecarribee Greener Footprint Fair – Paul Osborne**



*This gorgeous sooty owl was a bit of competition!*

On Saturday 25th June Wingecarribee Council held a fair at the Town Hall and Bendooley Place precinct in Bowral promoting sustainability. Starting late morning and going through to 4pm a steady flow of interested people moved about the stalls and displays.

SHAPS was invited to have a table in the courtyard amongst others, including delightful neighbours: a Brown Falcon and Lesser Sooty Owl from Feathered Friends Hawking Experience. A good amount of small plants were sold and our flyers taken, as well as some quality engagement with passers-by.

Inside the Hall was a lively space, particularly around the book sale and Winzero corner.

Some of the varied stallholders were organic food producers, an energy company, solar lighting, Reviva, Bowral, Beekeeping, Search Dogs Sydney with their calm animals, food vendors and more.

On a small stage outside some brief talks were interspersed with live music.

The event was co-ordinated by Gavin Dostal, Environment Officer -Sustainability at Wingecarribee Shire Council to allow local businesses, environmental groups and residents to share stories and promote sustainable living initiatives.

## Three Stories about Seeds

### Sowing seed from drones at Mt Annan

Follow the link to read of a fascinating trial at the Australian Botanic Gardens at Mount Annan.

[https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-06-19/giant-drones-dropping-tree-seeds/101150496?utm\\_source=sfmc&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=abc\\_news\\_newsmail\\_am\\_sfmc&utm\\_term=&utm\\_id=1887815&sfmc\\_id=129949304](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-06-19/giant-drones-dropping-tree-seeds/101150496?utm_source=sfmc&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=abc_news_newsmail_am_sfmc&utm_term=&utm_id=1887815&sfmc_id=129949304)

Instead of planting tube stock, giant drones are being used to plant 40 thousand tree pods a day, 25 times faster than conventional methods. The drones can be programmed to only plant in successful positions. This is to combat the introduced African olive tree which originally covered almost 20% of the 416 hectare Gardens. I see these pesky olive trees from the train to Sydney. Now 85% of them have been cleared.

### Regeneration of Mighty Ash trees in Victoria

Efforts to regenerate Victoria's towering ash forests, which are being regularly decimated by bushfires, involve climbing huge trees to access the tiny seed. The 2019-2020 Black Summer bush fires through eastern Victoria impacted 88 thousand hectares of ash forest, killing 25 thousand hectares of young ash trees. It takes 20 years for ash trees to be mature and develop seed and before this event they were threatened by fires in 2003, 2006/07, 2013 and 2017.

More than 4.5 tonnes of tiny seeds have been dropped by helicopter and fixed wing aircraft across Gippsland and NE Victoria. Trees can grow 50 metres tall in 35 years of sowing seed.

Read about it at [https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-06-18/victoria-ash-forests-at-risk-tree-climbers-search-for-seed/101131560?utm\\_source=sfmc&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=abc\\_news\\_newsmail\\_am\\_sfmc&utm\\_term=&utm\\_id=1887705&sfmc\\_id=129949304](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-06-18/victoria-ash-forests-at-risk-tree-climbers-search-for-seed/101131560?utm_source=sfmc&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=abc_news_newsmail_am_sfmc&utm_term=&utm_id=1887705&sfmc_id=129949304)

### Sydney's Seed Bank Moves to New Premises

Those orange boxes that you have seen for sale at our latest SHAPS meeting became available because of Sydney's seed bank moving from Sydney to the herbarium at the Botanical Garden at Mount Annan. Their previous containers were no longer needed.

The Herbarium, temperature-controlled at 16 degrees, stores 1.4 million specimens of seeds and plants collected from Australia and its Pacific Island neighbours, in 70,000 boxes that are all meticulously ordered.

Among the collections lie seeds collected by Joseph Banks and Dr Daniel Solander on their voyage with James Cook over 250 years ago. Over the past year, the historic collections have moved to their new home. Their old home, in the city, was built about 50 years ago and seeds were prone to mould and insects.

“The Herbarium collections are a snapshot of plant diversity over time and space,” said Dr Brett Summerell, chief botanist at the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney. “The collections get used for mundane plant identification to try and understand if new weeds have been introduced, or what species may have poisoned cattle, through to the things like forensic botany, that is, what plant material may be associated with a crime.”

“Because we have this collection and groups of collections, we can also start to look at things like how flowering times have changed over 250 years and how the environment might be changing.”

Among the collections are plants that have become extinct, including species that once thrived in Turrumurra in the 1850s before the area was urbanised.

As part of the move, each specimen has been digitalized, and will be accessible to people around the world. Dr Summerell said this would decrease the number of times each specimen has to be taken out of storage and so preserve their condition.

*Taken from an article by Laura Chung and Amelia McGuire from the SMH, reported in Calgaroo July 2022, the newsletter of the Parramatta and Hills District group APS.*

Many thanks  
to all  
contributors

I'd like to thank John Desmond, Janet and Harper Wright, Kim Zegenhagen and Erica Rink, and Paul Osborne for their contributions to this newsletter.

