

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY

Southern Highlands Group

...your local native garden club

Xmas Celebration
Thursday 2nd December

Meet at the Robertson nursery Amazing Grace at 10.30am. Then on to nearby Carrington Falls for walks and a picnic lunch. Details to follow via email.

SHAPS Committee:

President
Bill Mullard

Vice President
Louise Egerton

Secretary
Kim Zegenhagen

Treasurer
John Desmond

Newsletter Editor
Trisha Arbib

Communications Officer
Erica Rink

Committee Member
Chris Goodwin

APS Committee
southernhighlandsaps@gmail.com

[www.austplants.com.au/
Southern-Highlands](http://www.austplants.com.au/Southern-Highlands)



One of the many beautiful photos sent by our members of flowers seen on their bush walks or in their gardens. This one of a light form of *Dampiera stricta* nestling against other plants was taken by Barbara Eckersley in Morton National Park.

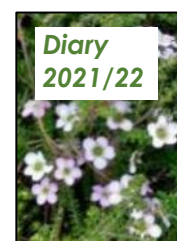
With regret, we want to let you know that Martin Lemann, husband of one of our founders, Jane Lemann, has died.

He will be remembered lovingly by his family and friends and we extend our deepest sympathy to Jane, Cate, Andy and George as they grieve the loss of a well loved husband and father.

Upcoming Program

Xmas Celebration Thursday 2nd December

This will be a great chance to catch up. Meet at the Robertson nursery *Native Grace* at 10.30am to explore the nursery. Then on to nearby Carrington Falls at 11.30, for walks, possibly a swim, and a picnic lunch at 12 noon. Details to follow via email. Members must be fully vaccinated.



The nursery sells only Australian native plants. Luke is a horticulturist who worked for 20 years at Warriependi. Their website www.nativegrace.com.au tells you more.

AGM Thursday 3rd February 2022

Our AGM's are notably short. It will be followed by a talk, to be decided.

We were very fortunate to have visits to two local gardens in the last few weeks. Members really responded to the chance after recent Covid lockdowns and cancellations. Reports on the gardens follow. Editor

Tanya Excell's Garden

Paul Osborne



Tanya in full flight in her explanatory talk

This first outing of our Southern Highlands APS on 28th October, 2021 was, unsurprisingly, well attended after many months of postponements and no meetings this winter.

At the end of suburban Wyatt Street, Moss Vale is the entrance and oak tree lined drive into the Old Rectory, Tanya's five and a half acre garden and fine home. Built in 1906 it belonged for most of its life to the Church of England.

Near the house nestled amongst established exotic trees and shrubs our host, a long time environmental campaigner, gave an explanatory talk. Wishing to create good habitat for birds, lizards and animals was a major motivation for changes in the garden. Wariapendi Nursery was enlisted for help in a design, then planting out natives for improved biodiversity.



Large swathes of previously barren land towards the back boundary were prepared, planted with 1500, mainly tubestock and mulched. All done in the last 12 months or so since Tanya took ownership in 2020. Most are thriving and should be looking fine before long if this summer is a kind one.

Quite a number of mature eucalypts are found about the property. Some providing backdrop and shelter to new plants while they grow into an understory. In a paddock by itself a single *Eucalyptus macarthurii* stands strongly, perhaps a remnant of the original landscape.

A grove of she-oaks, possibly *Allocasuarina littoralis*, will in time enliven an area towards one corner of the property. From there mown pathways lead in and around the many leptospermums, callistemons, acacias, banksias prostantheras, eucalypts, philothecas, tuftty grasses and more. Many of these, particularly tea trees were in flower or bud.



Sitting naturally in the open ground is a new pond, part of water management plans. No doubt this will further encourage a range of different creatures and plants.

A couple of pointy mounds of leftover earth have been planted with everlasting daisies and parsley.

So walking through the older flower and vegie gardens, orchard and such to find the landscape transformed by Australian plants was a delight on

this warm day. Despite many neighbours along the fence line, looking back to glimpses of the chimneys and house it feels like being in a country garden with long grasses and open sky.

Afternoon tea was enjoyed amongst a buzz of people reconnecting.



SHAPS November Visit to 32 Brigadoon Drive, Bundanoon

Robyn Mamouney

We were surprised but excited by an invitation to show our garden in May. The garden was, and is still, a work in progress, but we were pleased to share the results with other gardeners and it gave us an opportunity to reflect on what we have done so far. However the planned day was abandoned, as drenching rain persisted for three days: our rain gauge recorded 247 mm for 4-6 May. After six months anticipation, rain in November was no deterrent.

Peter and I moved into Brigadoon Drive early in Spring 2015, following a very wet August. The house, perched on a slope above the road, was surrounded by mown grass with a dozen mature Eucalypt trees at the rear. We looked forward to creating a new garden with spectacular views of Morton national park to the south-east. The trees were obviously a dominant feature, protected in the subdivision plans, but we had no specific garden plans other than not to spend all our garden time mowing! The former owners had begun a commitment to Australian natives with some existing plantings of still small tube stock defining areas around the house, driveway and some boundaries: (*Leptospermum* 'Cardwell' and 'Copper Glow', *Philotheca* 'Winter Rouge', *Banksia spinulosa* (prostrate form), various species of *Melaleuca*) and along the driveway (*Callistemon* 'Little John').

Spring that year was a real shock with a profusion of weeds springing out of the soil. We began in the front south-east corner removing plantain, thistles, paspalum and kikuyu amongst many weeds and enlisted mowing assistance, but it was pretty clear that we needed a more drastic approach. We got properly started when some friends advised on doing some wholesale removal of the plant cover engulfing the small plants on the upper bank and replacing it with mulch. As we worked through that spring and summer we quickly became aware of Eucalypt seedlings emerging in large numbers everywhere, even under our deck, and other small plants appearing underneath the main grass cover. We recognised native geranium, *Viola* and *Dichondra* and *Lomandra longifolia* and *Poa* but realised there



Big old growth Eucalypts behind house

were more emerging that we couldn't identify and there was the strong possibility that they might be mistaken for 'weeds'!

A visit to Wingecarribee Council regarding our property uncovered a Flora and Fauna Assessment from 2006. The assessment considered its value as a remnant of Robertson Basalt Tall Open Forest (RBTOF) and the list of species growing on the site included some from that endangered community. The mature trees were identified as *Eucalyptus cypellocarpa*, *E. obliqua* and *E. fastigata*. The assessment concluded that the vegetation was likely to be a (degraded) transition of RBTOF with the also endangered Southern Highlands Shale Woodlands. Of the 70 species identified 44% were native. We were encouraged by this although at the time we could not

see many of them. We had earlier commissioned a garden design with suggested plantings but then decided that plants and seeds still remaining in our garden from its bushy origins had a greater chance of surviving if we developed the garden ourselves, more gradually. As well, encouraging naturally occurring plants would create a better backdrop for the large eucalypts, with Morton NP nearby for inspiration.

We quickly adopted greater use of hardwood mulch so that we could manage weeds but create space for beautiful emerging native plants. We removed some of the kikuyu turf and other introduced plants (cherry laurel, evergreen dogwood, agapanthus, non-native violets, blackberry, iris and other garden plants and unidentified weeds of many types). We found a useful publication - *RBTOF in the Sydney Basin Bioregion* - on the NSW Department of Environment website which included other published sources of information which we could access. We used the lists of characteristic species as a guide for sourcing plants that would suitably increase the diversity in the rear sections of the block. We particularly



Old growth trees behind the house with regrowth on the right

needed to increase the mid storey and the quickest way was to allow seedlings of *Pittosporum undulatum* and *Solanum aviculare* to grow along with the Eucalypt saplings and *Acacia melanoxylon* and *A. mearnsii*.

The published sources also helped us identify the naturally occurring, low growing or twining plants on the site and remove the weeds that might hinder them. There are now large numbers in most areas of the garden of *Clematis aristata*,

Eustrephus latifolius, *Glycine clandestina*, *Geranium homeanum*, *Pteridium esculentum*, *Veronica plebeia*, *Viola banksii*, *V. betonicifolia*, *Acaena novae-zelandiae*, *Asperula conferta*, *Wahlenbergia*, *Dichondra repens*, *Poa sp*, *Microleana stipoides* and *Themada australis*.

Others we are not yet sure of but may include *Austrodanthonia*, *Austrostipa* and *Echinopogon* species. More critically, we are also not yet certain that the 2006 assessment has correctly identified the mature trees and there are now many new ones! Help!!

Plants that have been added to the more natural areas on the western back of the block include : *Acronychia oblongifolia*, *Phebalium squamulosum subsp squamulosum*, *Panax sambuccifolia* (unsuccessful), *Lomatia myracoides*, *Prostanthera lasianthos*, *Libertia pandiculata*, *Daviesia ulicifolia*, *Indigofera australis*, *Prostanthera rotundifolia*, *Bursaria spinosa*, *Rubus parvifolius*, *Geitonoplesium cymosum*, *Pandorea pandorana*, *Hardenbergia violacea*, *Eucalyptus viminalis*, *Poa labillardierei* and *Carex appressa*.

With so many large trees, there are occasional drops of branches, sometimes the size of small trees. In periodic extreme wet weather events, large volumes of water were running down the property, so we began creating barriers with this wood to slow down and

minimise rain water run-off and reduce the need for watering the garden. We are also now making our own mulch to support the garden.

The original semi-formal plantings around the house, now well grown, have been extended to include *Correa decumbens*, *Hardenbergia violacea*, *Billardiera scandens*, *Aotus ericoides*, *Acacia fimbriata* and *A. fimbriata* (dwarf), *Leptospermum Mesmer Eyes*, *Prostanthera ovalifolia*, *Boronia megastigma* and *B. Purple Jared*, and *Dianella caerulea Little Jess*.



Path between upper and lower banks below the house, with *Banksias*

By enabling existing seeds in the soil to grow and adding species suitable for this region and particular sites in the block, distinct garden areas have developed in addition to the section with mature trees. There is a grove of new naturally occurring trees and grasses around the water easement which in wet weather 'events' forms a small 'creek'; an open 'meadow' in the centre (with naturally occurring low growers plus *Dillwynia retorta*, *Brachycome multifida* and *Chrysocephalum apiculatum*); and a grass and bush area on the steep banks at the front with *Banksia spinulosa*, *B serrata*, *B. marginata*, *B.ericifolia*, *Grevillea lanigera 'Mt Tamboritha'*, *Lasiopetalum ferrugineum*, *Banksia paludosa*, *Carex appressa* and *Orthrosanthus multiflorus*.

Weeds are an ongoing challenge. Learning to identify the weeds and their growing habits too means we are in a better position to prevent them

taking over. If we're too complacent because we are winning this battle, the weeds are always ready to strike back. But now the balance is on the side of our beautiful Australian plants.

Gardening with Erica and Kim

Erica Rink and Kim Zegenhagen

Australian Native Plant Jobs for November and December

Spring flowering natives such as **Boronias**, **Eriostemons (pink wax flower)** and **Philothecas (long leaf waxflower)** should be trimmed back behind their spent flowers at this time of year and given a feed with a low phosphorus fertiliser for Australian plants.

Ensure that any new plantings you have made through spring are being toughened up for the hot summer months ahead. Plants recently bought from retail outlets have had lots of watering, so you need to keep the water up to them for a couple of months until their root systems get properly established in the soil. This is especially important in hot dry periods.

If you have clay below loam you may need to add approximately 30 litres of water to the hole and add gypsum before planting.

This is an excellent time to tip prune any new plantings of trees and shrubs. Pinch out soft, sappy new shoots to encourage a bushier habit with more flowers.

Melaleucas are tough and adaptable plants. They are also great bee and bird attractors (rosellas, honeyeaters, and parrots) when they are in flower. This is an ideal time to plant them and the birds and bees will help the environment by spreading around pollen.

Tall varieties of **Kangaroo Paw** will be flowering in most parts of Australia and the top half of the flower stem can be cut for indoor decoration now. This prolongs their blooming for an extra month or two. It stimulates the dormant buds lower on the stem to grow out and flower. Cut back spent flower stems of kangaroo paws and the old leaves associated with it should be removed. This will hasten the development of lateral buds from the base of the shoot. These buds will then grow to produce the next flush of flowers for the following season.

If you want to attract more birds to your garden such as honeyeaters and friarbirds, then plant kangaroo paws. These birds love them.

Lilly pillies will benefit from a light trim with hedge shears this month. A handful of slow-release native plant fertiliser watered in around the base of the plant will stimulate the next flush of vegetative growth which is particularly useful if you are trying to establish a lilly pilly hedge. If your variety of lilly pilly is prone to psyllid damage (which causes leaf pimpling), pruning will also help to remove damaged foliage. (Kim has a lilly pilly hedge so this is relevant to him).



Red wattlebird enjoying nectar from a kangaroo paw

Stay tuned for more excellent suggestions in the next issue.

Happy gardening, E & K.

SHAPS Members' Late Spring/Summer Photos

**Barbara Eckersley, Louise Egerton, Yvonne Crofts, Charles Harper Wright,
Chris Goodwin, Pam Tippett, Paul Osborne**

I was thrilled that SHAPS members sent in their late spring photos, some from their gardens, others from bush walks. Too many photos from some contributors to print them all, but all welcome.



Flannel flowers need no introduction but they are growing in sheets across burnt woodlands on local sandstone this year. Like so many wildflowers among eucalypts that have lost their canopy leaves, the sun has filtered through to the forest floor, warming the soil and sparking remarkable displays. Photo Louise Egerton. On way to Viewpoint Lookout, Morton NP



Chloanthes stoechadis. I had never seen this plant before and spent many hours flicking through books and web pages. With a flower that looks for all the world like an Eremophila but wasn't; perhaps a westringia family or mint bush? Nope. The bobby leaves were decidedly different. Turns out to be in the mint family, Lamiaceae. Photo Louise Egerton on way to Viewpoint Lookout, Morton NP



Photo by Pam Tippett of Boronia in her garden



Eriostemon australasius on Caves Creek Track. Photo Charles Harper Wright



Thysanotus tuberosus Fringe lily. Photo Charles Harper Wright on the Cave Creek Track



Stunning colours of *Kennedia nigricans*. Photo by Chris Goodwin. Still flowering in her Mittagong garden.



Thelymitra ixioides Dotted sun orchid. Photo Barbara Eckersley, Morton NP



Hybanthus monopetalus Photo Barbara Eckersley, Morton NP



Dendrobiums – Photo by Pam Tippett, in her garden



Sarcochilus falcatus Orange Blossom Orchid from the Robertson area. Photo Paul Osborne



More a landscape than a photo of a plant. Photo by Yvonne Crofts of Isopogon in Morton NP. It would be wonderful to be able to do this in our gardens.

Well, That's One Way to Propagate

Louise Egerton

The Habitat Gardeners in Bundanoon recently propagated a small form of NSW Christmas Bush (*Ceratopetalum gummerifum*) known as Johanna's Christmas. But they did it using a most unusual method.

They laid spent flowers, calyces down, on a moist propagating mix. With the lid on and the vents all shut, they put it on a heat mat and waited...and waited...3 months.

Eventually the seed at the centre of the calyx sent a root down into the propagating mix and lifted it up to form a miniature umbrella!

The success rate to healthy seedlings was probably about 10%. This might not sound very much but when you consider the unconventional propagation technique, it seems pretty good.



Calyx rising up on its stem

Later some leaves started to peek out of the top.

Snippets

Nesting Boxes Available.

Information from Christine Hannan

Wildlife Rescue South Coast have nesting boxes which they would like to make available to interested residents of the Southern Highlands. Following the Black Summer bush fires the organisation received a supply, of which about 20 remain. The organisation would like to see them being used.

The boxes are being distributed through one of the local services - Native Wildlife Rescue in Robertson, managed by Kerstin Schweth who has been rehabilitating wombats, wallabies, kangaroos, and koalas for more than 15 years. Many of the animals require round the clock care which is very demanding for carers in terms of time and energy, in addition to resources needed for medications, housing and food.

Boxes suit a variety of birds and animals, including microbats. **Boxes are available by contacting Christine Hannan (APS member), Moss Vale ph. 0411500708**

Cost: \$20 for large and \$10.00 small

<https://www.facebook.com/NativeWildlifeRescue/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Wildlife.Rescue.SC>



Cole' Planter Boxes Update – Louise Egerton



The planter boxes outside Bowral's Coles supermarket are looking absolutely fabulous. Hats off to 3 dedicated APS members: Sarah Cains for a brilliant selection of plants and their care and to Kay Fintan and Margaret Weatherall who continue to maintain watering and upkeep to these happy-looking native plants.

Myrtle Rust - Sydney University studies of selected natives and their level of resistance



Testing was conducted by Dr. Karanjeet Sandhu, a Myrtle Rust Pathologist from the Plant Breeding Institute, Faculty of Agriculture & Environment from The University of Sydney.

The following link was found on the Ozbreed site via the online, Landscape magazine.

<https://www.ozbreed.com.au/testing-plants-for-myrtle-rust-resistance/>

You can follow the link to see the results of testing a wide variety of Callistemons. For Sydney and southern NSW myrtle rust isn't as severe as elsewhere in Australia. Based on these tests, the moderately as well as the highly resistant plants can be confidently planted.

The study shows that new and improved Callistemon species are much more resistant to myrtle rust.

How You Can Contribute to the Weed Scan Project

This is a National Project conducted by the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions and the NSW Dept. of Primary Industries.



It aims to identify all weeds in Australia by compiling a photographic data base. This will enable all Australians to identify any weed from its photograph and get advice on how to control or eradicate it.

You can contribute to building up this data base by taking photos with a mobile phone or digital camera between now and May-June 2022. Weeds can be in your garden, in parks, on the sides of roads... anywhere.

You will need to photograph the whole plant, then the leaves, flowers (if present), growth habit or distinctive features and send them into WEEDSCAN.

First see <http://weeds.org.au/identify/weeds-photo-submissions/> for more information and for how to go about it.

Many thanks to
all contributors to
this newsletter

I'd like to thank Paul Osborne, Robyn Mamouney, Erica Rink, Kim Zegenhagen, Louise Egerton, Pam Tippett, Charles Harper Wright, Chris Goodwin, Barbara Eckersley, Yvonne Crofts and Christine Hannan for their contributions.

Please write to me at trisharbib@gmail.com with suggestions.

And don't forget I'd love your photos of summer Australian native flowers for the January newsletter. Flowers from your garden or from the bush.

