

Celebrating 60 Years of Sutherland Group 1963 – 2023

About Sutherland Group

We meet at 7:00 pm every third Wednesday from February to November at GyMEA Community Centre, 39 GyMEA Bay Rd, GyMEA. Visitors welcome.

We support awareness and conservation of Australian native plants.

Visit our [website](http://austplants.com.au/Sutherland) & Facebook

<http://austplants.com.au/Sutherland>



www.facebook.com/APS.Sutherland

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Newsletter Deadline:

Second Wednesday of the month

Coming up..

Wed, 17 May
from **7:00 pm**

Sutherland Group Meeting Bush Tucker Plants
+ Gardening Responsibly – Samantha Newton
At GyMEA Community Hall, see diary.

Thu, 1 Jun
Sun, 4 Jun

JB Reserve working bees
more information [here](#)

Wed, 21 Jun

Sutherland Group Meeting

Look out for..

Banksia integrifolia (prostrate form)



Prostrate form of *B. integrifolia* at JB Reserve (Ph: Paul Sheaffe)

This prostrate form of the Coastal Banksia makes a fairly low maintenance ground cover plant, but regular pruning can help shape it to meet your requirements. Like [the tree form](#) it grows quite quickly, and sometimes the flowers get a bit contorted finding their way into the sun. This year's plentiful rain has seen them flowering well.

Over time it will grow densely and layer up to a plant about 1 m high, 2 m wide. It does well in coastal areas and sandy soils. Its leaves have distinctive silvery undersides.

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For your diary

Contact John Arney ph 9525 0449, johnarney@ozemail.com.au

we follow [APS NSW Health and Safety guidelines](#)

Wed, 17 May

Sutherland group meeting. Samantha Newton from Tonbo Garden Design will show how bush tucker plants are a great way to add interest to a garden and engage kids and non-gardeners. She shares her favourite bush tucker plants and the challenges, successes and failures of a bush tucker garden.

She will also explain the Gardening Responsibly science-based initiative to identify invasive plants and encourage better choices in plant selection. Anyone with good plant knowledge can use the spreadsheet-based assessment process.

Do you have some favourite bush tucker plants to bring in for the plant table? Perhaps you have some useful edible plant cuttings or seeds to bring in? There will be some Davidson's Plum seedlings in the raffle.

After the talk, we'll have our plant table segment which showcases native plants in Shire gardens at this time of year. Bring along a specimen of your own and have it identified. For this month let's try to emphasise Bush food plants you have growing in the Sutherland area. Feel free to accompany specimens by submitting photos for the newsletter.

Please note the new earlier start to our meetings for 2023. The hall will be open at **7 pm**. Our President Leonie Hogue will formally start the meeting at around **7.30 pm**, followed by our speaker. Come from 7 pm for a cup of tea, chat, plants and books, and enjoy the earlier finish.

All visitors welcome **from 7.00 pm** for 7:30 start at Gymea Community Hall, 39 Gymea Bay Rd.

Sat, 20 May

[APS NSW quarterly gathering](#) and AGM hosted by the Central Coast group

Check details in the APS NSW newsletter. Heather Miles will be stepping down as President, but John Aitken is continuing as Vice-President to provide transition support. Location: Phillip House, 21 Old Mt. Penang Rd, Kariong

**Sun, 21 May
9:30**

Illawarra Group are taking walk on Sunday 21st May starting at 9:30 at Stanwell Tops, led by Michael Swire, to be followed by our next meeting at 11:30.

Meet at the carpark where the Wodi Wodi track starts, corner of Bendena Gardens and Stonehaven Road (car park entrance marked by blue bus on map). Tumbling Waters Retreat is across the road from the car park where we will meet.

Please RSVP by the 19 May: illawarra@austplants.com.au if you wish to attend.

**Thu, 1 Jun
Sun, 4 Jun**

[Joseph Banks Reserve](#) working bees, from 9 am.

We have two working sessions a month a Joseph Banks Reserve – the first Thursday with Bushcare Officer Grace Lonergan and the first Sunday of the month. However, those times do not suit everyone. New staff member at the reserve Polly Simmonds welcomes volunteer support, so if you'd like to help, please visit Polly and introduce yourself. A walk around the reserve shows there are many ways to make a difference in diverse areas, whether you like working in the sun or shade, hand weeding or tidying up debris. There aren't lots of big weedy Pittosporums to hack out, but there's still plenty to do.

Wed, 21 Jun

Sutherland Group Meeting. Our summer trips to Charlotte Pass

Liz Aitken will present a video of APS Sutherland Group's trips to Charlotte Pass in the Snowy Mountains to look at native plants. We have been visiting for a week in summer every 2 years, for over 20 years, with many great memories formed.

Wed, 5 Jul

Sutherland Group Committee meeting – location TBA

Sat, 22 July

Native Bush Food Garden workshop with Narelle Happ at Sydney Wildflower Nursery Heathcote. 10 am to 12 noon

Bookings: <https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing?eid=932027&>

Other APS groups nearby

Have you considered visiting another local APS group? Each group welcomes APS members and visitors, so check your diary. Please try to confirm meetings at the group sites provided.

Harbour Georges River (formerly East Hills)

Sunday, 7 May from 10 am - Visit to Sydney Park
Check their activities page [here](#)
<https://austplants.com.au/Harbour-Georges-River/>

Menai Wildflower Group

Usually on the 2nd Saturday of the month
(Check links below)

Illawong Rural Fire Brigade
Old Illawarra Rd, Illawong



<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100068944233153>

<https://austplants.com.au/Menai-Wildflower>

Illawarra Group - check for activities at their [web site](#)

See diary for their upcoming walk.

At the April meeting

Our local grevilleas with Peter Olde



There is quite a bit to talk about in just one image of a *Grevillea buxifolia* flower ([Ph: Dan Clarke](#))

Peter Olde, a former president of APS NSW and Sutherland Group, says his life was transformed by finding the Society for Growing Australian Plants (the original name of APS) and Philip Moore and discovering taxonomy and how to use a microscope. He has extensively studied and published on the *Grevillea* genus.

Recognising species: biological vs phylogenetic concepts

We give names to plants to give them an identity, but much is unresolved and botany has transformed over time. There are two different approaches to recognising species and subspecies, which affects naming. We used to think of a species as meaning no interbreeding, known as the biological species concept, which tended to be based on visible morphological differences. Now, we can study species in the context of evolutionary history and genetics, known as the phylogenetic species concept where species are units of evolution. A phylogenetic species is a population having a shared and unique evolutionary history. Most *Grevillea* subspecies are good phylogenetic species. Because slight differences can usually be found, the concept tends to encourage division of species into ever-smaller groups. Peter says he tends to be a splitter, rather than a clumper. Today we have the tools to reconstruct evolutionary history. We can separate a plant's genes from its morphology which can yield some surprises about evolutionary history and relationships.

Sutherland Shire species

Of the 400 known species of *Grevillea* (heading towards 500) and 110 recognised *Grevillea* species in NSW, Sutherland Shire has 9 species: *G. buxifolia* ssp. *buxifolia*, *G. diffusa* (2 or maybe 3 subspecies), *G. longifolia*, *G. mucronulata*, *G. oleoides*, *G. patulifolia*, *G. sericea* ssp. *sericea*, and *G. sphacelata*. Two species are endemic to our area: *G. diffusa* ssp. *diffusa* and *G. diffusa* ssp. *constablei*. There are of course many *Grevillea* cultivars and hybrids which are popular garden plants (see our plant table for just a few).

The species are grouped below by flower colour – pink, green, white/grey and red, as that is what is usually noticed.

Pink spider flowers – *Grevillea sericea* subsp. *sericea*. If generative mode is an important taxonomic character then *G. sericea* can be divided into 4 species, including a root-suckering form in the Blue Mountains. In Sydney, the plants are killed by fire and are apparently insect-pollinated (no perfume). More observation is required. *Grevillea patulifolia* appears very similar to *Grevillea sericea* and grows in a very similar habitat. Its most northerly population is at Heathcote National Park and along the old Princes Highway near Garrawarra, although it is difficult to find there now. The plants at Heathcote all regenerate from seed.

Green spider flowers – *Grevillea mucronulata*. This species is in serious need of revision. It is very variable in leaf shape and pistil length, is widely distributed and has had various names over time. Sutherland Shire is towards the northern end of its distribution. It grows in dry sclerophyll forest, in sand to clay soils over sandstone and shale or rarely granite.

White/grey spider flowers – *Grevillea buxifolia*. This species is fairly widespread around Sydney and, in its narrowest morphological sense, reaches its southern limit in the Royal National Park. It is or was common in Royal National Park, and the Menai–Illawong area and along Heathcote Rd. It is a robust species. It was the first *Grevillea* introduced to horticulture in the UK in 1794. It is pollinated naturally by carpet bees but the introduced honey bee is a major pollinator today. *Grevillea sphacelata* has smaller white flowers. It is a widespread, reasonably uniform species that grows with *G. buxifolia* over a wide area of its extensive range.

Red spider flowers – *Grevillea diffusa* ssp. *diffusa* is widespread along Heathcote Rd and in the Campbelltown area to Picton Rd. It generally has greyish leaves and is a mounded shrub to about 50 cm high. It is possibly pollinated by small nectar-feeding birds but more probably by bees. *G. diffusa* and relatives have a tight globose flower head. *Grevillea diffusa* ssp. *constablei* is restricted to Royal National Park south to Helensburgh and in Heathcote National Park where it intergrades with ssp. *diffusa* along the track to Lake Eckersley. It is a generally taller shrub to 2 m and has red or black-red flowers. *Grevillea* sp. aff. *diffusa* is found along Bungoona Track, north of Audley in the Royal and at Swallow Rock Grays Point. There are hybrids elsewhere (such as near Audley ranger's cottage) between *G. sericea* and *G. diffusa* ssp. *constablei* which need to be differentiated first.

Red spider flowers – *Grevillea oleoides* (referring to the olive-like leaf). There are many forms and at least two different methods of fire response. One is a robust shrub to 2 m that is killed by fire; the other is 0.5 m in swamps that is root-suckering. The latter occurs in high heaths around Heathcote. This species, which does not extend north of Sydney Harbour, is being reviewed taxonomically with a view to recognising some of its variants.

Dark red toothbrush flowers – *Grevillea longifolia*. It is quite strong in Royal National Park in moister areas. The main issue is differentiating it from the similar *G. aspleniifolia* which has curled hairs under the leaf and purple styles. *G. longifolia* has straight hairs on the leaf undersurface and pink to yellow styles.

Other grevilleas grow in nearby areas, and in other parts of Sydney, including some found north of the harbour such as *G. linearifolia* (white flower) and *G. speciosa* (red flower). The latest two *Grevillea* species recognised were described only last year: *G. milleriana* (with a purple toothbrush flower, and relatively close by at Maddens Plains) and *G. gilmourii*.

More information on grevilleas

- Join the national *Grevillea* Study Group here, with regular newsletters and activities: https://anpsa.org.au/study_group/grevillea-study-group
- Track down a library or second-hand copy of the three volumes of *The Grevillea Book* by Peter Olde and Neil Marriott (1994).
- Check Sydney region grevilleas in *Field Guide to the Native Plants of Sydney* by Les Robinson.
- Read some of Peter's recent taxonomic publications on *Grevillea* at: <https://resources.austplants.com.au/information/aps-nsw-news/newsletters-journals-and-publications/publications/>



G. longifolia (ph: D. Clarke, [APS NSW website](#))

Rhonda Daniels – A summary based on notes provided by Peter Olde

On the plant table

The plant table is a great way to see what grows well in Sutherland Shire and what flowers when. Please free to email some photos in addition to showing the plant specimens at the meeting. These may be included in the newsletter. You can email by reply to the newsletter or to Dan Clarke at: dmclarkebotanical@icloud.com

Plant steward Phil Keane's nursery, [Ausplants R Us](http://AusplantsRUs.com), is in Sutherland. Visits by appointment or check out sale days (often Saturday 12 – 4:30) on <https://www.facebook.com/ausplants/>
Ph: 0435 410 857 or ausplantsrus@gmail.com
...and some will also be on the [APS online plant profile database](#)

With grevilleas our meeting topic, there were several grevilleas on the plant table. Those with large brush flowers included *Grevillea* 'Molly' (red flowers), *G.* 'Sylvia' (deep pink flowers), and *G.* 'Kay Williams' from Leonie with soft lemon/pink flowers. *G.* 'Lana Maree' has large pink flowers, and is low and wide, with an arching habit. *Grevillea* 'Golden Lyre' (a cross between *G.* 'Honey Gem' and *formosa*) has long yellow flowers.



G. 'Golden Lyre' at JB Reserve (Ph: P. Sheaffe)

G. 'Orange Marmalade', with orange spider flowers, is one of the largest grevilleas that has a spider flower form, rather than the large brush flower of the tropical grevilleas. It is a cross between *G. venusta* x *G. glossadenia*, and is very vigorous.

The smaller grevilleas tend to have a spider flower. A popular group of cultivars are the *Grevillea lanigera/rosmarinifolia/alpina* crosses with a small pinky red spider flower, and small grey foliage. These can have imaginative cultivar names such as *G.* 'Winter Delight'. One shrub with an pinky-

apricot spider flower and divided leaves might have been *Grevillea* 'Winparra Gold' or *Grevillea* 'Sid Reynolds', and copes with dry conditions.



G. 'Marmalade' at JB Reserve (Ph: P Sheaffe)

In moist shady conditions, some groundcovers just go wild – think *Dichondra*, *Viola* and *Plectranthus*. Sometimes this is good and sometimes not so good. They can usually be controlled fairly easily, and tend to shrink back when conditions dry out. Jan Taylor brought in some pieces of *Plectranthus* to share, if anyone doesn't already have some. *Plectranthus argentatus* is a taller form with larger silvery grey-green leaves, while *Plectranthus cremnus* is a much flatter, small lower growing form with a blue flower spike and smaller brighter green leaves.

Asplenium bulbiferum, known as hen and chicken fern, is good for shady spots. The plant produces little 'plantlets' on the tip of the fronds and there were some for people to take home.

Boyd brought in a shrub with variegated leaves and a tall purple flower. Identification eas aided with google lens with the conclusion [Vitex trifolia 'Variegata'](#) which is not native. Note that Google lens does work better for exotics than for native plants.

The raffle prizes provided by Phil Keane included *Philotheca buxifolia* and *Banksia integrifolia* prostrate.

If you have excess stock of something in your garden that others may like, feel free to bring in some to our meetings – whether seeds, cutting material, seedlings or material to divide.

Rhonda Daniels

More information can be found at these websites:
www.anspa.org.au www.anbg.gov.au
plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au www.wikipedia.org
resources.austplants.com.au/plant-database/

Plus: Dan Clarke has all the monthly plant table information compiled in his [Plant Table Master List](#) document available from [our web site](#).

News and More

Membership

If you are not receiving the monthly APS NSW e-newsletter, please email newsletter@ausplants.com.au so we can sort out whether we have your correct email address in our records. Each monthly issue is emailed at the end of the previous month.

Membership renewal

Members receive an email from APS NSW when their membership is due through the year and can renew online on the APS website. Check your membership status with our treasurer Anne Webb at the next meeting or by phone.

More free books and magazines for new members

At the meeting, look out for books and back issues of *Australian Plants* journals from the collections of our members including Doug Rickard and others. A gold coin donation for significant books, but many available for free.

Update your first aid for free

In 2020, we received a federal government volunteer grant for first aid training. We still have some left. Members can complete the one day first aid course at the St George and Sutherland Community College at Jannali. It is held regularly through the year on Saturdays, approx. 9 am to 3 pm.

If you would like to attend, check the dates here www.sgsc.edu.au/courses/WorkSkills/first-aid-courses and contact and pay the college directly or phone 8543 7412. Let me know at rhDaniels@bigpond.com so we can keep track and reimburse you \$120 on course completion. We all benefit from up-to-date first aid knowledge.

Rhonda Daniels

Birds in Backyards

When is a good time to contribute a bird survey? Well, there is no bad time, but there are some specific periods when extra surveys are encouraged. Holly Parsons presents on surveys in this recent zoom meeting, now available for [replay on YouTube](#). She explains a number of things about how the new web site set up works as they make a few changes. There are Apps to download to conduct the survey and a few comments on how the data is being used. There may be more live zoom opportunities in the near future; you can register at the web site.

Youtube link: [Birds Meet: Surveys](#)

These web sites now work together, but you generally don't need to reference them separately:

<https://www.birdsinbackyards.net/>

[Welcome to Birdata! \(birdlife.org.au\)](http://www.birdlife.org.au)

Unearthed: Southern Sydney Collections, a Hazelhurst Project

An upcoming exhibition is being planned, showcasing the unique and unseen collections of southern Sydney. The exhibition is titled *Unearthed: Southern Sydney Collections* and it's being developed by Hazelhurst's curators, Carrie Kibbler and Naomi Stewart.

They are searching for unique, interesting or rare collections to include.

The exhibition will be taking place at Hazelhurst later this year and will be open to the public from Saturday 25 November 2023 to Sunday 28 January 2024.

The Curators will be making time to visit collectors in coming months. For the exhibition, all works will be documented and there will be a formal loan agreement in place. Hazelhurst will also cover all insurance, collection and return costs and will provide suitable display equipment/furniture for your collection.

If this is something you would be interested in, they are very keen to hear from you!

Please contact Hazelhurst's curators if you have any further questions or would love to participate in their show, contact them at hazelhurst@ssc.nsw.gov.au or call on 02 8536 5700.

Sutherland Shire Citizens Heritage Festival at Joseph Banks Reserve, Kareela

Our Heritage Festival open day on Saturday 22 April was our first big public event at Joseph Banks in some time. We had a tidy up around the entry area the day before. We unfurled our new banners and the Council pop-up marquee kept us out of the sun. We welcomed and spoke to several different types of visitors – those who specifically came for the event, neighbours with kids on their usual visit, people who just happened to be visiting, and people who got off the Heritage bus on its hourly visit.



Clare and Rhonda under the gazebo (ph: B. Simpson)

We led guided walks (thanks to Clare McColl for her huge efforts) and had a colourful display of photos developed for the 50th anniversary of Joseph Banks Reserve in 2020. Our pre-loved books and morning tea were popular, and we gave away local plants from Sutherland Council nursery. Flower arrangements by Leonie Hogue (*Banksia robur* and grevilleas) and Joan Zande were eye-catching.



Morinda jasminoides



Persoonia pinifolia (Geebung)



Welcome sign at JB Reserve (Ph: P. Sheaffe)

As always, it's a lovely place to spend time and we all had a chat and catch-up. Peter Shelton put up a mistletoe seed, and new member Paul Sheaffe realised he used to live in Clare's street! Thanks to everyone who volunteered in all the various ways required, from our JB regulars, to some newer faces. Publicity is always critical, and this will be a focus for the Heritage Festival next year.



Plum pine fruit (*Podocarpus elatus*)



Anne preparing the kiosk area

(ph: B. Simpson)

Rhonda Daniels

Sydney Royal Easter Show

This year Sutherland's team had great results again at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. Here are a few pictures, and the summary is Firsts - 5, 2nd - 1, 3rd - 1, Highly Commended - 1 and Joan Zande won the Champion. Well done to Joan Zande and Marie O'Connor for all their hard work.

Joan's winning arrangement included fruits from several different cordylines (*C. stricta*, *C. petiolaris*, *C. rubra*), golden berries of diamond leaf pittosporum (*Auranticarpa rhombifolia*) and the red-tipped sceptres of Cunjevoi Lily (*Allocasia brisbanensis*).



Fruit arrangement wins champion Ribbon



Banksia arrangement



Firewheel tree (*Stenocarpus sinuatus*)



Grevilleas bench (Photos: Joan Zande)

Leonie Hogue

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