

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, 15 Nov
from **7:00 pm**

Sutherland Group Meeting Tony Porritt will share photos from his trip to East Arnhem Land At GyMEA Community Hall, see diary.

Sun, 3 Dec
Thu, 7 Dec

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

Wed, 21 Feb, 2024

Sutherland Group Meeting

Look out for..

[*Hymenosporum flavum \(native frangipani\)*](#)



H. flavum in a Menai garden (Ph: P. Shelton)

This attractive tree will grow to 6 – 15 metres according to most references. Some suggest even taller. It forms a columnar canopy, so can fit nicely in an urban garden, and it can be pruned to shape. Flowers are plentiful, nicely scented, usually white or cream aging to yellow, but some can show a some extra touches of red. It grows in NSW, north from the greater Sydney area through to Northern Queensland. It can be seen around Sydney occasionally used as a street tree.

Hymenosporum 'Gold Nugget' is a popular dwarf form, growing to about 1m x 1m.

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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](#)

11- 19 Nov

Australian Pollinator Week Following closely after the Aussie Bird Count for National Bird week in October is Australian Pollinator Week. Same thing – get out and about, observe and record. We still have so much to learn about what pollinates all our various native plants. Details: <https://www.australianpollinatorweek.org.au/>

Wed, 15 Nov

Sutherland group meeting. In our final meeting of the year, member Tony Porritt will share photos from his trip to East Arnhem Land in northern Australia. Enjoy Tony's photos with the new brighter, data projector we have just bought.

First, we will have our super-speedy AGM. There is nothing to fear. Some officebearers are willing to continue, but we do need a speaker convenor for 2024, and a secretary. Ask a committee member for more information before or on the night.

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, Sun 18-19 Nov APS NSW Annual get together, Goulburn - Southern Tablelands Group have planned a weekend away based at Goulburn. Details on the APS NSW website [here](#) and you can register now. Details also in the APS NSW enewsletter.

Nov, Dec

Seed collecting on various dates

Check the Sutherland Shire Council Bushcare page for details of seed collecting sessions in November and December.

Details: <https://www.sutherlandshire.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/bushcare/bushcare-events>

Sun, 3 Dec

Thu, 7 Dec

Joseph Banks Reserve working bees at Manooka Place, Kareela, from 9 am.

We have two working sessions a month at Joseph Banks Reserve – the first Thursday with Bushcare Officer Grace Lonergan and the first Sunday of the month. Council has advised that Sunday volunteers should be Bushcare volunteers, and sign a risk assessment each session.

Sun, 10 Dec

Sutherland Group end of year gathering, 3–5 pm

All are welcome at our end-of-year afternoon tea gathering at Joseph Banks Reserve, Manooka Place, Kareela. We'll be down on the terrace, adjoining the rainforest area. Please bring something to share.

We'll have some excess books from our library, chosen by Clare McColl and others donated by members, available for a gold coin donation. There's always a treasure to be found.

Wed, 24 Jan, 2024 **Next Committee meeting**

Wed, 21 Feb, 2024 **Sutherland Group Meeting**

Look out for our newsletter a few days before the meeting.

From 30 Sep, 2024 **ANPSA Biennial Conference, Melbourne – Gardens for Life**

It's less than 12 months to the next ANPSA conference in Melbourne, hosted by APS Victoria. Register your interest and read the newsletters with details of the pre and post-conference tours on the conference website [here](#). Regular attendees know that the tours can book out quickly.

What is ANPSA? [The Australian Native Plants Society \(Australia\)](#), our national body.

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)

Check their activities page [here](https://austplants.com.au/Harbour-Georges-River/)
<https://austplants.com.au/Harbour-Georges-River/>

Menai Wildflower Group

Usually on the 2nd Saturday of the month
(Check links below, closer to the date)

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](#)

At the October meeting

Invasive Species Officer Linda Brown talks on the SSC' Weed Species program.

Linda outlined the relatively recent changes to NSW legislation in how weeds are managed and categorised. The old concept of noxious weeds is now gone (I regret that I may not hear some people mistakenly refer to them as "obnoxious" any more 😊); with the former Noxious Weeds Act 1993 replaced by the Biosecurity Act 2015 in NSW. Weeds can now be categorised as 'priority weeds' under this new Act.

There is a risk-based assessment and management of weeds in NSW, with a risk level and feasibility to control always assessed. Linda took us through the "generalised invasion curve" which shows the amount of economic return in terms of cost-effective measures. The curve goes through the stages of "prevention", "eradication", "containment" and "asset-based protection". The return on economic investment declines drastically when we reach the containment and asset-protection stages for weed control and it usually means the weed has well and truly established; and has started to do serious ecological and economic damage.

Weeds can be categorised as "state priority weeds" and "regional priority weeds". At the State level, these can be regulated through prohibited matters, control orders, mandatory measures and biosecurity zones. Regional weeds may represent a risk to a specific region (e.g., agricultural region) and management actions here are governed by regional weeds committees.

A crux of the legislation is that risk-based decision making together with prioritisation means that weed management response are reasonably practical, managed to the degree or risk posed and flexible and non-prescriptive.

Here I will refer you to this online pdf:

https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1418263/Weeds-and-Biosecurity-Handbook.pdf

Linda has the power, as a council officer, to enter premises, gather information and evidence and seize plant or animal material for destruction later.

Linda gave us some front-line experiences, which involved a species call Mexican Feather Grass (**Nassella tenuissima*). A couple of species of *Nassella* are now well-known in NSW, such as Chilean Needle Grass (**N. neesiana*) and Serrated Tussock Grass (**N. trichotoma*). You can find Chilean Needle Grass in Sydney in some bushland reserves (often highly disturbed) and Serrated Tussock is easily found on farms as close as the Southern Highlands.

Mexican Feather Grass is still classified as a prohibited matter and Linda found it growing on a road verge in Barden Ridge in 2020. Apparently, it was planted by someone in a garden there in the 1980s and it may have been purchased as a "native grass". A survey of the Barden Ridge area was done and the grass was found in many road verges, as well as people's front yards. This species was also growing on the Bangor Bypass. Once liaison with landowners was done, these grasses were removed and heavily targeted and a widespread and intensive education campaign was also undertaken. Plants along the Bangor Bypass were also targeted with the help of the RMS. Linda worked with the NSW Department of Primary Industries on this project, which demonstrates how serious it was. Linda mentioned that she and the DPI left the Shire to check out a nursery which was reportedly selling this species as a native species. These grasses can appear very similar to our native genera such as *Poa* and *Austrostipa* and mis-identifications are also exacerbating the introduction and spread, and causing general confusion.

We got a detailed education on aquatic weeds. We can imagine that these are very difficult to manage, often growing in shallow to deep fresh to brackish water with some invading drier land as well. Frogbit (**Limnobium laevigatum*) is a serious problem in dams and waterways and Linda has had to use her authority to control and eradicate it on some residences. Others include Water Lettuce (**Pistia stratiotes*) and Water Poppy (**Hydrocleys nymphoides*).

Salvinia (**Salvinia molesta*) is a very well-known aquatic fern that can double in size in two to three days. The dreaded Alligator Weed (**Alternanthera philoxeroides*) was also reviewed – a plant that forms densely and strongly-rooted mats, easily breaking off at the nodes if one tries to pull it up.

Other more dry-land species included Sea Spurge (**Euphorbia paralias*) and Glory Lily (**Gloriosa superba*) – weeds that have “gotten away from us” and caused severe ecological impacts. Annoyingly, people choose to grow them in gardens.

Linda reviewed some of the dreaded asparagus ferns. We would definitely be familiar with some of these in Sutherland Shire but we are now worried about more such as **A. virgatus*, **A. macowanii*, **A. africanus* and **A. falcatus*.

A few other well-knowns were shown such as Bitou Bush and Boneseed. These are two scientifically-demonstrated different subspecies of **Chrysanthemoides monilifera*. Boneseed invades areas much further inland whereas Bitou Bush tends to stick to sand dunes on the beach.

Linda has to deal with all of these in her daily tasks and has coordinated several programs in Sutherland Shire such as The Boneseed Program, Aquatic Weeds Program and the Mexican Feather Grass Program (as we heard earlier).

Of course, Linda does not only worry about plants but fauna are also part of her job. We all gasped when the Cane Toad (**Rhinella marina*) was found in Sutherland Shire at Taren Point in 2008, apparently hitching a ride within some pipes on a truck. A massive coordinated effort was made to capture and remove toads (including some nightly volunteer sessions) and the last toad was seen in 2014. But then....two toads were spotted in Caringbah in 2021. These were also captured! None have been seen since- whew!! It is due to Council and resident efforts that these have been contained.

A second species of concern is the Red-eared Slider Turtle (*Trachemys scripta elegans*). These have a terrible established track record for invading ecosystems around the world and the fear is they will do so here. They are often bought as pets and then let go once they get too large and start to smell.

There is not a lot we can do about the Red Fox, Koi Carp or Rusa Deer. These are here to stay but are subject to management projects.

Linda encouraged us to remain vigilant and to report any prohibited matters that we know of to Council or the Department of Primary Industries. We have a lot of established feral pests in Sutherland but we need to consider that more species could establish and invade the beautiful bushland areas we love.

This was a very informative talk that really made you want to “up-your-game” in terms of looking for biodiversity threats.

Dan Clarke

<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/weeds>



What can you do to find out more? Here are some points of contact:

NSW DPI Help line - 1800 680 244 or web site – weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au or via QR code

Download the free “NSW weedwise” app for you smart phone

Linda Brown at Sutherland Shire Council 02 9710 0333

Here’s what Joan found when she looked

At our last meeting, Linda Brown, Sutherland Shire Council’s Invasive Species Officer’s topic caught my attention. I had noticed a couple of strange looking plants in my back yard after all the rain we had earlier in the year.

After the meeting, looking through Linda’s weed material and Weed Chart there were what looked like my two plants. Thanks to my trusty phone I photographed the two plants.

I contacted Linda the next day and she said to dig them out and bring them down to her office for her to look at. She identified them as weeds but not ‘invasive species.’ They were *Solanum aviculare* - the Kangaroo apple, a native weed of Australia and New Zealand and *Sisyrinchium rosulatum* - Scourweed, which is native to South America but widely naturalised in NSW.



Solanum aviculare,
Kangaroo apple



Sisyrinchium rosulatum,
scourweed

Joan Collins

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](https://www.facebook.com/ausplants/), 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

Myrtaceae

Melaleuca hypericifolia (Hillock Bush) A very attractive sprawling shrub to 6 m tall with papery bark and vivid red-orange inflorescences. It also has decussate leaves which are very striking. Usually found close to the coast but commonly cultivated – it grows fairly reliably.

Kunzea ambigua (Tick Bush) Naturally forms dense thickets in sandstone areas. Easy to grow shrub to about 5 m tall. Prolific white/cream and honey-scented inflorescences in October-November.

Joan Collins' plant is over 50 years old!

Syzygium wilsonii (Powerpuff Lilly Pilly) A medium shrub to 3 m high, it is from tropical Queensland rainforests. Grows slowly to begin with but can then put on spurts of fast growth. The inflorescences are stunning – red to purple “pompoms”. But the foliage is also attractive – dull green lanceolate leaves with new growth being red to brown. Plant in a shaded and sheltered position in enriched soil. Tip prune after flowering and as it is establishing.

Baeckea micrantha (Heath Myrtle) This taxon has a confusing history in that the range of its forms have now been split off into various new species names (including *Babingtonia micrantha*, *Sannantha pluriflora* and *S. micrantha*). However, it is still sold by this name. It is a beautiful compact shrub and looks very much at home in any Japanese garden! Pruned to a dense shape, it will grow to a metre or so high and can be a metre or two wide. Small rotate white flowers can be prolific. A very useful plant to create form and structure in a garden.

Calothamnus quadrifidus (One-sided Bottlebrush) A Western Australian myrtle that one-sided bottlebrush-like flowers. This plant will grow to about 2.5 m tall and can have a spread for several metres. It has grey-green needle leaves to about 3 cm long but is soft to the touch. It may flower for long periods of time through spring and summer. Can form a dense and compact shrub if pruned. Grows well in most areas. This is a very attractive plant.

Leptospermum rotundifolium (Round-leaved Teatree) Shrub to about 2 m high and 3 m across with large pink rotate flowers, it is found naturally south of Sydney. Has rounded small leaves and makes a good screen or feature plant. It is also resistant to salt spray. Prune after flowering for a better show next year.

The purple specimen at the meeting was probably 'Lavender Queen'

Verticordia x Chamaelaucium 'Paddy's Pink' A medium sized shrub with rose pink flowers in spring, which are great cut flowers. It grows to around 2 metres tall and wide. The foliage has a spicy fragrance. Likes a well-drained soil in a sunny spot, with low humidity.

Asteliaceae

***Cordyline stricta* (Narrow-leaved Palm Lily)** A Sydney native found in wet sclerophyll forest and rainforest – it is related to Asparagus. Can grow to 5 m tall. The leaves are large and linear – glossy dark green. Showy inflorescences bear large numbers of small purple flowers from the axils. Black berries produced after flowering. Plant in a semi-shaded spot in moist soils with some enrichment. Makes an excellent indoor plant.

***Cordyline murchisoniae* (Dwarf Palm Lily)** Another native cordyline to 6 m tall which is endemic to Queensland – from coastal rainforest. It has leaves to 18 cm long and 5 cm wide – mid green in colour. The flower-panicles emerge in spring; in bud the flowers are pinkish and then generally open white with nice yellow anthers. Best grown on an enriched soil in a shady location.



C. murchisoniae (Ph: P. Shelton)

Apiaceae

***Actinotus helianthi* (Flannel Flower)** Perennial found in sandy soils. A variety of forms exist across its natural range. Showy white daisy-like flowers at the terminals with blue-green dissected foliage. Grow in sand with good drainage.

Thymelaeaceae

***Pimelea ferruginea* (Pink Rice Flower)** Shrub to 1 m high and about 1 m wide. Has the typical decussate leaf arrangement of Pimelea and stunning heads of pink flowers. Native to western Australia, it likes a well-drained soil. Plant on a mound in a rockery or slope, it can tolerate full sun or partial shade. Very attractive – plant in groups for best effect. There is a very showy cultivar called 'Bonne Petite'

Asteraceae

***Chrysocephalum apiculatum* (Billy Buttons)** Attractive scrambling groundcover with blue-grey foliage and golden terminal daisy- inflorescences. Native to NSW and widespread. It has a wide

range of forms. Excellent border plant and used for mass planting. Prune regularly but lightly.

***Rhodanthe chlorocephala* (Pink and White Everlasting)** A native paperdaisy from WA and SA. It grows to 60cm tall with fine linear foliage which is grey-green. Produces copious daisy heads (capitula) which are a cluster of modified daisy flowers called florets. The florets are surrounded by papery bracts.

It creates a very attractive display and you can see them at Joseph Banks Garden near the carpark.

Give full sun to dappled shade and good drainage. Likes a sandy soil. Can be germinated from seed very readily. Very showy!

***Xerochrysum bracteatum* (Golden Everlasting)** An attractive paper daisy with different coloured forms, they can be put in pots or placed in gardens. Likes a raised spot with good drainage in full sun. Can be temperamental but in a successful mass planting, they are stunning!

Eupomatiaceae

***Eupomatia laurina* (Bolwarra / Copper Laurel)** A locally native tree to rainforest areas, such as the Royal NP and similar areas. It grows to about 5 metres tall with spindly branches and large fleshy green leaves to 10 cm long and 5 cm wide.

The flowers are white with linear petals. They are pollinated by a single species of weevil. Can be cultivated, they grow slowly but reliably. Best grown on an enriched sandy soil.

Acanthaceae

***Graptophyllum ilicifolium* (Mt Blackwood Holly)** Large rainforest shrub from QLD with showy scarlet flowers, it is a very interesting plant and is also endangered naturally. Will grow to 5 m high and has ovate leaves with toothed margins. Grows better in warmer climates so pick a warm spot. Give it light shade and prune to promote flowering.



G. ilicifolium (Ph: P. Shelton)

Lobeliaceae

***Isotoma axillaris* (Rock Isotome, Australian harebell)** A very attractive perennial herb found over much of NSW on rocky crevices and outcrops on granite or sandstone, it has strongly dissected thistle-like foliage and large bright purple star-shaped flowers at the terminals. They grow well if adequate moisture is given. Can also flower right through summer. Plant along borders for good affect. Prune back hard after flowering to encourage new growth and flowering the next season. Prefers a light, well- drained soil.



I. axillaris (Ph: J, Howes, [APS resourceses](#))

Lamiaceae

***Ajuga australis* (Austral Bugle)** A variable species not often cultivated, herbaceous with purple/mauve flowers. It grows all over NSW and has a range of forms. Studied by Dan Clarke during his university education, he has found that some forms take readily to gardens and others do not. A collection from Mt Panorama has done very well at Joseph Banks Native Plants Reserve with some loving care, and has been divided. Would be a good addition to a native cottage garden.

Fabaceae

***Senna coronilloides* (Silver Cassia)** John Aitken has this one growing and I am fairly sure this is what is it. It is found mainly on the upper western slopes of NSW and through most of eastern Queensland. It is commonly found in Brigalow Woodland.

Nice pinnate green leaves and deep yellow flowers.

Likely grows well in a sunny spot on sandy soil. Hardy.

Malvaceae

***Alyogyne* 'Blue Heeler' (Lilac Hibiscus)** This cultivar was brought in by Ruth, it grows to about 1 x 1 metre. It has lovely blue-pink-purple hibiscus flowers to about 6 cm across and lobed crinkled leaves.

Hardy and does well in a full-sun position with reliable drainage. Keep the pruning up for a much better plant.

Haemodoraceae

***Anigozanthos* cultivars (Kangaroo Paws)** Native to WA. Strappy-leaved perennial with elongated inflorescences in varying colours. Phil stated that the tall ones are easier to grow and the opposite goes for the small ones. Give good drainage and a sunny position. Cultivars include 'Yellow Gem' and 'Lavender Queen'.

Proteaceae

***Grevillea buxifolia* (Grey Spider Flower)** Found locally on pure sandstone and sandy soils, it has short rounded leaves and terminal grey-spider inflorescences. Grow in well-drained soil in sun or semi-sun positions.

Goodeniaceae

***Scaevola aemula* (Fan flower)**

Groundcover/scrambler with purple or pink or fan-shaped flowers and toothed leaves. Easy to grow and propagate. Grow in part shade. Also does well in hanging baskets. There is a cultivar called 'Aussie Crawl'. The cultivar at the meeting was 'Blue Haze'

Dan Clarke

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 enewsletter, please email enewsletter@austplants.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.

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.

In flower at Joseph Banks Reserve

Coming into summer, our seasonal paper daisies have finished but there are still plenty of flowers to enjoy, from the big to small. Obvious from afar are the red flowers of *Alloxylon flammeum* (tree waratah) near the BBQ area. The *Tecomanthe hillii* climber on the trellis near the toilets with its large pink trumpet flowers and the large pink hibiscus behind it are also hard to miss.



Goodenia ovata, prostrate form (Ph: P. Shelton)

More delicate flowers include the white flowers of the *Myoporum* groundcover and the newly planted *Actinotus helianthi* at the entrance. Some groundcovers just keep flowering regardless including *Chrysocephalum apiculatum* (yellow buttons) and the prostrate *Goodenia ovata*.



Tecomanthe hillii
(ph: R. Daniels)

Whether you can come to our afternoon tea on the terrace on Sunday 10 December, or wander around at another time, there's always something to enjoy. There are many new plantings. If you have an unusual plant or seedling that needs a good home, please bring it to a working bee or drop in and see

Polly.

Rhonda Daniels

A Recent Garden Trend – Crevice Gardens

Last week, an article in the Gardening section of the *SMH* about these gardens said

About 50 years after the rockery had its last big horticultural moment, another type of rocky landscape is coming to the fore. Way more extreme than anything we did in the '70s, the crevice garden is tougher, craggier and rockier than the rock gardens of old.

For one, the stone is positioned upright and on edge, thereby playing up the vertical. Secondly, these slices, or sometimes wedges, of rock are placed so close together that there are only narrow slithers of planting space in between.

Here is a link to that article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and it is well worth a read, and contains a few interesting photos including a potted crevice garden.

[Mind the gap: The growing popularity of crevice gardens](#) (by Megan Backhouse)

I recently visited what must be one of the most impressive public examples of this style, the quite amazing [Arctic-alpine Botanical Garden](#) which is in the Arctic Circle, in Tromso, Norway. Not surprisingly, it is the world's most northerly Botanic Garden. This is my excuse to share a few pictures I collected. For better photos, you can Google it mate, or start here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HLfsqKcm8Jk>



Helichrysum chionophyllum



Rocky paths, rock gardens and plenty of labels



The eastern side of the garden is a crevice rock garden that flows down the hill towards the harbour

Labelling is very thorough and garden areas are laid out by country and other categories. It might be worth posing this question: Where is the section for Australia? Tied as it is to the Tromso University, they are bound to be interested in filling this crucial gap to fill every niche. They do have a New Zealand section.

Peter Shelton

Recollections of our monthly meetings

Having attended over 300 monthly meetings on the third Wednesday of the month at our Gynea hall in my time as a Sutherland Group member I have enjoyed and learned so much from the many diverse speakers and topics on native plants and related issues. Talks are memorable for all sorts of different reasons. Some speakers were famous including renowned paleobotanist and author Dr Mary White, and others were local experts such as Les Bursill interpreting our local Aboriginal rock art. We've had many members share their particular interests and travels and Sutherland Council staff share how they are caring for our local environment through Bushcare, Greenweb, seeds, weeds and pests (I'm still on the list to get Greenweb plant vouchers).

For some reason, the animal topics stick in my mind – cane toads heading south to Sutherland Shire, fire ants (a long time ago but still an issue), brush turkeys adapting to urban life, and turtles being rescued from dams in western Sydney being cleared for development. Not to mention all the micro-animals living in our soil from our late Doug Rickard.

The plant topics are also memorable – even more so after having to concentrate, get the names right, and write up a report for the newsletter. I remember Gynea lilies (ancient plants that have coped well with changing conditions), our local orchids (thanks to Margaret Bradhurst, and later turned into a book), grasses (they really are hard to ID) and the challenges of running a plant nursery.

We've had so many enthusiastic and passionate academics and students talking about their environmental research, including extensive and painstaking field work counting or measuring in difficult conditions and over long periods of time. New tools, advanced statistical analysis and DNA and genetics are becoming more important in understanding relationships.

Some of our speakers have shared travel experiences from further afield and from places I may not visit in Queensland, WA, central and northern Australia, the Grampians, Tasmania, Kangaroo Island and New Zealand.

Speakers who bring "props" to their talks are also memorable including actual flying foxes, John Salmon demonstrating his bushcare trolley, Narelle Happ with bush food samples, and Kyrill Taylor with his collection of ferns. We've had practical topics with propagation workshops (need a good sweep up after that) and soil testing.

Bees, bush tucker and garden design are always popular topics attracting visitors. Following trends in society, attendance at our meetings has gradually



P. Keane working the Spring plant table (Ph: P. Sheaffe)

declined over time. I remember over 50 people at meetings when I first joined. Technology has also changed over time, from actual slide shows with slides in a carousel to now usually powerpoints (with labelled photos), and sometimes videos. We have just upgraded our technology for our meetings with a new data projector and new laptop. After our speakers, our plant steward Phil Keane has been a highlight sharing information and tips on what people are growing in local gardens.

Looking to 2024

Many thanks to Ralph Cartwright for organising our speakers for many years and to John Arney for ensuring the technology works on the night. We are looking for a new speaker convenor for 2024. With emails, it is easy to communicate with and arrange speakers. We already have a list of potential speakers and contact details, with a standard email to use. Please consider how you can help keep our meetings going. They have been such an important part of our group's 60 years, bringing people together and sharing enthusiasm and knowledge about native plants.

PS Just because I didn't mention a topic doesn't mean it wasn't memorable!

Rhonda Daniels

Also Flowering Now



[Pale vanilla lily](#) with some seeds formed
Arthropodium milleflorum



[Lolly bush, Hairy clerodendrum](#)
Clerodendrum tomentosum (Ph: P. Shelton)