

Native Plants for NSW - Quarter 1 2025



Chelsea Garden at Olinda (H Miles)

From the President

Dear Jane,

This issue features a report on the ANPSA conference in Melbourne, which covered some important conservation issues as well as the administration of the national body and some very interesting tours and garden inspections. As well there is a range of articles on fungi, bonsai, woody pears and the role of urban forests in the future under accelerating climate change.

The administration of the Australian Plants Society NSW is under increasing pressure due to falling levels of involvement and a notice has gone out to all members and District Groups asking for discussion of the issues and for more

members and District Groups asking for discussion of the issues and for more assistance.

We sadly note the recent passing of Bernie Farrell who was active in a wide range of roles within APS, most recently as President of the Central Coast Group but also through assistance to other groups and administrator of a number of facebook groups. We are so grateful for his contributions.

John Desmond, President

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Events and activities



Paul Nicholson

APS NSW Quarterly Gathering - hosted by Northern Beaches Group

When: Saturday 15th March 2025 from 10am.

Where: North Curl Curl Community Hall. Cnr of Abbott Rd and Griffin Rd, North Curl Curl NSW 2099

Program:

10am - Michael Kneipp from Northern Beaches Council will lead a guided tour of the North Curl Curl nursery and the nearby dunes, showcasing significant bush regeneration efforts, leaving from North Curl Curl Community Hall.

12-1pm: (BYO) Lunch at North Curl Curl Community Hall

1pm: Presentation - Paul Nicholson, Manager of Volunteer Programs at the Botanic Gardens of Sydney, will deliver an engaging talk. Many APS members have previously enjoyed Paul's insightful presentations at the Royal Botanic Gardens, where he has led bespoke tours for APS specialist groups. Paul's expertise spans all Australian plants, with a special interest in rainforest species and Gondwana connections.

Paul began his career at the Gardens in 1993 as a horticultural apprentice and transitioned to volunteer program management in 2015 after 20 years as a horticulturist.

\$5 attendance fee payable by card only. More information [here](#)

Central Coast - Meeting & talk: Rapidly Regenerating Australia (Anna Noon)

When: Saturday 8th February, 1:30pm

Where: Philip House, 21 Old Mount Penang Road, Kariong.

Join Anna for an inspiring presentation on her work with the Lake Macquarie-based not-for-profit, The Groundswell Collective. Discover the impactful initiatives they deliver, including the Lake Mac Seed Library, Tiny Forests, and their new children's book, The Tiny Forest. Anna will also share insights into her professional and personal journey, highlighting her passion for social, environmental, and climate justice, and her unwavering dedication to creating resilient, regenerative communities.

All welcome. \$3 for members and guests

More details [here](#)



Epacris longiflora

Dates for the Diary

ANPSA biennial conferences

The next conference is 24–28 August 2026, hosted by APS South Australia in Alice Springs with the theme Amazing Arid Australia.

The conference after that is in August 2028, hosted by Native Plants Queensland likely in Toowoomba with the theme Beyond the Great Divide. For this one, there is a survey to assist with planning - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MNSGWMW>



And finally, don't forget there is a full listing of all APS NSW events including district groups on our website [here](#)

ANPSA conference 2024

Having only attended parts of ANPSA conferences in the past, Jennifer Farrer decided that this year she would go for the full immersive experience. Part of the attraction was that it was being held in her hometown of Melbourne, and one of the post-conference tours was to The Grampians—an area she had visited several times before. This was an opportunity to explore it again, but this time with local plant experts.

Her expectations were far exceeded—the conference was an amazing experience on many levels. First and foremost, every speaker delivered an excellent presentation. She's written a separate report about Dr. Greg Moore's lecture on the importance of urban trees, which sparked many conversations in the days that followed. Other plenary sessions included Damien Cook discussing wetland restoration, Prof. John Rayner on the value of naturalistic planting in public landscapes (including creating wildflower meadows), and Julie Weatherhead from Peppermint Ridge Farm in Tynong North, who spoke about the use of native foods.



Millie Ross (J Farrer)

[Read more](#)

Garden news and tips


[Read the story](#)

The Woody Pear

A few months ago, Ricki Nash was at the back of her bush block and decided to check on the stand of Woody Pears growing in a sheltered position between sandstone boulders and the cliff above the creek. As she approached the trees, she noticed fruit along with new flower buds, and since she had my secateurs, she decided to collect some of the old fruit to see if she could get the seeds to germinate.

Once back at the house, she placed the fruit in a warm spot near the lounge room window, and within a few weeks, the follicles opened, revealing two winged seeds in each of the three fruits.

Exploring the Art of Native Bonsai: A Recap of the 40th Annual Bonsai Show

On October 19, bonsai enthusiasts gathered at the renowned Ray Nesci's Nursery in Dural for the 40th Annual Bonsai Show, hosted by the School of Bonsai. This event marked a vibrant showcase of bonsai craftsmanship, drawing together artists, hobbyists, and admirers of the ancient art. The event highlighted a unique, growing trend: cultivating Australian native plants as bonsai, a practice that is not only visually striking but also fosters a deep connection with Australia's natural flora.

This year's exhibition included a stunning range of bonsai created from native Australian plants, each offering its own distinct charm and personality. For both seasoned bonsai practitioners and those new to the craft, the show was an inspiring display of what's possible when traditional Japanese techniques meet the resilience and character of Australia's native species.



Callistemon citrinus (Ian Cox)

[Read the story](#)

Conservation



Corymbia 'summer red' (J Barrow)

[Read the story](#)

Propagating fickle plants in a changing environment

The bright red flowers of Western Australian Corymbias are hard to miss! People have been trying to reliably produce these red-flowered trees since the late 1800s and it's a lot harder than you might think. Seeds do not produce plants with flowers of a reliable colour, and cuttings have had very low success rate.

How to do this wasn't cracked till about 25 years ago and the whole saga makes an interesting story. It leads on to how plants might fare on our warming planet and how we might be able to predict which plants could face a heightened risk to survival. Good science and lots of time and effort provided the answers to both.

Urban Forests for people and climate change

As the climate warms, we can expect more frequent storms with greater intensity and higher rainfall. Urban forests will play a vital role in addressing the challenges of our changing climate. However, the benefits of urban forests are not shared equally, with significant disparities in green spaces across suburbs in our cities.

Studies conducted overseas show a strong link between better health outcomes and living in areas with more tree cover. Unfortunately, in Australia, the most disadvantaged communities often have the least access to green spaces and tree canopy.

Dr. Moore highlighted the "3:30:300" rule as a guideline for optimal urban tree coverage. This means that everyone should be able to see at least three trees from their home, their property should have 30% tree canopy cover, and green recreational spaces should be accessible within 300 meters of their home.

Interestingly, research has also shown that property values increase when there are trees on the property—up to a canopy cover of 30%. Beyond this, property values may decrease, as people desire trees but not dense forest-like coverage in residential areas.

[Read the story](#)

Fantastic Fungi



Violet coral fungus, Clavaria zollingeri (D. Noble)

Historically, discussions about nature have focused on flora and fauna. However, we are now encouraged to consider the “three Fs”—flora, fauna, and fungi. Fungus belong to their own kingdom and are more closely related to animals than plants. Despite their importance, fungi are rarely protected by environmental legislation.

David Noble gave a talk to Sutherland group in August 2024 and Dan Clarke wrote the talk up so we can all learn more about this amazing kingdom.

[Read the story](#)

Garden Visits

Connect with nature at the Chelsea Australian garden at Olinda

Phillip Johnson and his team have recreated the award winning Chelsea Garden Show ‘The Australian garden’. The Chelsea Australian garden is located at Olinda in the Dandenong Ranges in Victoria. Driven by his passion to connect with nature, Phillip has built a garden that uplifts the spirit. It presents an opportunity to heal the earth and soul.

In 2013, Phillip Johnson, Wes Fleming and the Trailfinders won the Chelsea Flower Show Gold Award and Best in Show. A decade on, we can see the Australian garden in situ, over 20 times bigger!



Chelsea Australian Garden (H Miles)

[Read the story](#)

*Correa OMG*
[Read the story](#)

Garden Visit – Maria and Don Hitchcock’s Garden, ‘Fangorn’

A fine and warm morning was enjoyed at Maria and Don Hitchcock’s garden, Fangorn, on Saturday, 17 February. The visit followed a much-welcomed storm the previous afternoon, which delivered between 8 and 47 mm of rain across Armidale, depending on location. The garden was looking particularly vibrant as a result.

The day began with morning tea, during which Maria shared the story of the house, garden, and nursery. She recounted her involvement with the Australian Plant Society’s Armidale branch and her efforts to challenge the prevailing belief that Armidale gardens should only feature non-native plants.

Final words... Looking back through our archive stories, we noticed a few gorgeous photos of a lorikeet enjoying nectar from dwarf eucalyptus we [wanted to share with you!](#)

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South Australian Lake Eyre & Flinders Range Tour 10-Day Camping/Accommodated Tour - Departs Alice Springs 19 June 2025 - Max 10 participants

On this fascinating 10-day journey from Alice Springs to Adelaide, we will explore the opal capital of Australia, Coober Pedy, visit Australia's largest Salt Lake, Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre, and discover the 8000-hectare natural amphitheatre of mountains known as Wilpena Pound in the Flinders Ranges. Along the way, we will travel on the iconic Oodnadatta Track, soak in a natural spa under the stars, discover rare and unique wildlife, and delve into the rich cultural heritage of the South Australian outback.



NEW Flinders Ranges Tour 8-Day Camping/Accommodated Tour - Departs Adelaide 9 July 2025 - Max 10 participants

This tour begins and ends in Adelaide and showcases the very best of the northern and southern Flinders Ranges, including the Gammon Ranges, Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary and Wilpena Pound. Tom Grove, Coates Wildlife Tours' Managing Director, will be the Tour Leader and Driver on this trip. Join Tom on this 8-day outback adventure showcasing the rare wildlife and rugged beauty of the Flinders Ranges.



Contact us for further information on these tours and for details of our full natural history expedition program.
Ph: 1800 676 016 or 08 9330 6066 - Web: www.coateswildlifetours.com.au - Email: info@coateswildlifetours.com.au