



Native Plants for NSW - Quarter 1 2026



Collage of pea flowers (M Abell)

From the President

Dear {Contact_First_Name},

The Society is active, not only in the promotion of Australian plants in gardens but also in advances of scientific knowledge. This was emphasised by the November gathering at Mount Annan Botanic Gardens. The Plant Bank tour was well attended, and a lot of interesting information was provided about the scientific research taking place there. Furthermore, the guest speaker after lunch was a scientist from the Research Centre for Ecosystem Resilience who described his work on the decline in tree species due to the invasive fungal pathogen “myrtle rust”. This project is investigating the complex ways that rust, fire, genetics and mating behaviour are interacting.

Following on from this there are a number of articles in this newsletter which should stimulate thinking about plants and environmental issues, and I would also encourage all members to keep the May AGM in their diaries. As well as keeping up with the Society's direction, all positions fall vacant and there are opportunities for members to contribute in many ways.

John Desmond, President

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Events and activities



(*Epacris longiflora*)

Newcastle meeting and talk: Conservation Detection Dogs – Talk by Courtney Etherington

When: 7:00pm 4th February 2026

Where: Hunter Wetlands, Shortland

Join Newcastle APS for a free talk with conservation ecologist and dog handler Courtney Etherington, along with her Conservation Detection Dog, Milo.

Trainer, handler and qualified ecologist and dedicated freelance Conservation Detection Agency, with Dog Milo. Specialising in elusive and threatened species, their work aims to improve conservation outcomes for Australian ecosystems and native species.

All members and their guests are warmly invited. A bush food supper will follow the meeting — please bring a bush food plate to share.

More details [here](#)

Northern Beaches meeting and talk: Jeniffer Gomez Camargo

When: 7:00pm 5th February 2026
Where: Stony Range Regional Botanic Garden, Dee Why

We will begin with a discussion on the Orchidaceae plant family. Following this, guest speaker Jeniffer Gomez Camargo will be presenting on "Pollination bird strategies across continents: a long travel from the Eastern Colombian Andes mountains to the forests of Sydney". Jennifer is a biologist and artist with experience in ornithological monitoring, biodiversity assessments, and environmental consulting, with a strong background in Neotropical bird taxonomy and field ecology. Skilled in avifauna survey techniques (visual and auditory censuses, mist-netting), data management, and technical reporting for environmental impact studies.

More details [here](#)

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. More information can be found [here](#).

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>



Burrendong Botanic Garden & Arboretum - launch of Living Collections Plan 2026+

When: 9am Thurs 12th February 2026
Where: 95 Tara Rd Mumbil

BBGA is renowned for legacy collections of Eucalypts, Prostanthera and Western Australian flora, an elaborate Fern Gully, and a myriad of genera-based collections representing major Australian plant groups. Maintaining these extensive plant collections across the 164-hectare landscape of BBGA requires significant resources.

RSVP by 6th Feb to projects@burrendongarboretum.org

More details [here](#)

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

History and Development of Armidale Arboretum



The water feature at the Armidale Arboretum (from the pamphlet)

The 16-hectare Armidale Arboretum was originally gazetted as a Public Reserve in 1882. The site was neglected until the mid 1960's when a proposal to rezone the land for residential use provoked public protest. When the original zoning was reconfirmed and a Board of Trustees had been established, the Trustees commissioned Mr Rob Margules to draw up a development plan which was paid for by a group of interested citizens. At the same time Prof. John McGarity prepared a soil study. A planting programme began, including the windbreaks and buffer zones at the western end of the Arboretum.

Maria Hitchcock designed and wrote an informative pamphlet about the fascinating history of this site, read on to find out more.

[Read more](#)

Garden news and tips



Bursaria spinosa is an easy and useful plant for gardens. Although thorny and sometimes difficult to maintain, it can be grown in out-of-the-way areas or used as a barrier plant. Very hardy once established and highly recommended for attracting small native birds. Warren and Gloria Sheather share some tips on how to grow this beauty.

[Read more](#)

Bursaria spinosa (W & G Sheather)



Dites robinsoniana (S Pearson)

We also bring you the 'in my garden' series, from the South East Group newsletter to share with you a number of members' experiences growing various plants in their garden. They feature plants such as the Lord Howe Wedding Lily (*Dites robinsoniana*), *Prostanthera* 'Poorinda Ballerina' and a very impressive story about a *Xanthorrhoea australis* by John Knight. He writes that his *Xanthorrhoea australis*, now over 20 years old (having spent its first 8 years in a pot) has flowered reliably for years, and is a magnet for all manner of insects, including Painted Lady and Imperial Jezabel butterflies, competing with the Cabbage White, Tiger moths, Hoverflies and ants. Birds also are keen for some honey, with wattlebirds attempting to keep others at bay, but having no luck with the aggressive Rainbow Lorikeets, immune to their attacks. Crimson Rosellas also find the plant a tasty source of nourishment, and just recently the plant was visited by some Scarlet Honeyeaters.

[Read more](#)

Conservation



D. Clyne

Conserving plants and their pollinators – there's more to it than bees

For the last thirty years, scientists have been concerned about increasing threats to animals that act as plant pollinators. Over the last several years, concern has greatly increased. The worry is that pollinator numbers are dropping and that this will adversely affect plants that rely on these animals to reproduce. This decline is caused by human activities that have a detrimental effect on the size and quality of plant and animal habitats, including human-induced climate change, urbanisation, land clearing, improper use of pesticides (especially neonicotinoids, which are among the most widely used insecticides on plants) and the spread of pathogens and introduced species.

Peter Geelan-Small shares with us more about this important topic and what we can do to help pollinators survive.

[Read the story](#)

*Wanderer Butterfly on a Callistemon (bottlebrush).
(Densey Clyne)*

Study Group Updates July - December 2025



Kennedia prostrata cascading over a retaining wall.
Bedggood garden, Horsham, Vic.



Dryandra quercifolia x corvijuga (K Collins)

Do you have a particular special interest in native plants? Verna Aslin shares with us summaries of what the [ANPSA Study groups](#) have been up to between July - December 2025, including:

- Dryandra
- Garden Design
- Australian Food Plants
- Grafting
- Australian Pea Flowers
- Australian Plants for Containers
- Acacia
- Isopogon & Petrophile
- Ferns
- Eucalyptus
- Grevillea
- Hakea
- Correa

Read July - Sept

Read Oct-Dec

A Growing Passion for Native Plants and Botanical Art – Helen Moon

The Illawarra Group feature their members in their newsletter, and we introduce you to member Helen Moon.

Helen was inspired by her mother who was a founding member of the Wollongong Garden Club and so it was inevitable that she developed a passion for gardening and plants. After leaving teaching, she worked part-time for the National Trust managing the Old Courthouse in Wollongong, which allowed time to study Western Calligraphy and become actively involved in several garden and plant societies.

Helen took up botanical art and helped create a Florilegium of rare and endangered local plants, resulting in 23 completed paintings now displayed in the Towri Centre at the Wollongong Botanic Garden and Wollongong City Council Administration building. Helen has a growing love of native plants, especially the Flying Duck Orchid (*Caleana major*) which she says really does look like a fat duck in flight (it does!)



Lomandra longifolia (H Moon)

[Read the story](#)

Final words...

Introducing our newest volunteer Barbara Lewis who is taking on the role of content editor for this eNewsletter. Barbara says she: 'is a member of the Southern Tablelands district group- which comes with a hefty interest in cold climate, frost tolerant and hot dry environments; also to travel to other NSW regions. I don't have a botanical background - only a mother who introduced me to the benefits and beauty of Australian native plants. Consequently, I am using this volunteer stint until someone else steps up with higher qualifications for the role, to learn about the plants and regions of NSW.' Welcome Barbara, and thank you for your support and help!

More final words...

Want to help provide advice for the future of NSW national parks?

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service are seeking community members to apply to join regional advisory committees across the state.

It's an opportunity to use your skills and experience to advise on park management and discuss important issues for the future of national parks.

You'll receive sittings fees for work at meetings, and travel is covered.

Applications are now open. To learn more, visit: environment.nsw.gov.au/RACS

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