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Welcome to the May enewsletter



Native Plants for NSW – May 2021

The monthly enewsletter of the Australian Plants Society NSW



Australian plants at the Royal Easter Show 2021 (photo: Leonie Hogue)

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Welcome to the enewsletter

Having seen John Aitken's service as President first hand over many years, I thank John for his great contribution and support as he steps down at our AGM.

As new members join every month, some information is repeated in each enewsletter. Each issue is also saved as a pdf file [here](#). Stories, photos, events and feedback are welcome. Please email the editor Rhonda Daniels at enewsletter@austplants.com.au

From the President John Aitken

This is my last report as President of APS NSW. Having completed six years in this role, it is time to hand the baton on. I would like to thank

the Board and all those other members, especially those of Sutherland Group, for their encouragement and wonderful support over the past six years. It has been an honour and a privilege to have been President of the Australian Plants Society, with its passionate commitment to growing, promoting, sharing and conserving our beautiful indigenous plants.

Graham Fry, delegate for East Hills Group, recently retired from the Board. I would like to thank Graham for his valuable contributions. We always welcome new members on the Board and fresh ideas on improving our society. Please [email](#) me or secretary Heather Miles for more information.

It is also a time to remember the achievements of life member Betty Rymer who contributed so much to the Society over many years, as noted below.

The Board has been working on a draft strategic plan for the next three to five years. District group presidents or their representatives have been invited to a workshop to discuss the plan on 19 and 20 June in Parramatta. This will be an excellent forum to discuss whether the proposed plan has the right context, balance and actions, and its implementation. It would be wonderful if all district groups could be represented at this very important event so the final plan reflects the aspirations of all groups.

Looking forward to seeing many of you at our quarterly gathering and AGM on Saturday 15 May at Kurnell.

Activities – May quarterly gathering and AGM

Saturday 15 May

9 am – 12 noon: Banks–Solander walk, Kamay National Park

Meet at the Kurnell Visitor Centre inside Kamay National Park at 9.15 am for a 9.30 am start for a guided walk along the Banks–Solander track. This well-maintained track is an easy 700 m walk featuring many of the plants collected by Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander during their eight day visit to Botany Bay in April 1770. Take a virtual tour of the Banks–Solander track on [Google Street View Trekker](#).

12 noon – 1 pm: Lunch. Bring your own and enjoy it at the hall or on the foreshore of Botany Bay. Food can be purchased at Kurnell Visitor Centre (limited), Silver Beach Cafe and Milkhouse Kurnell.

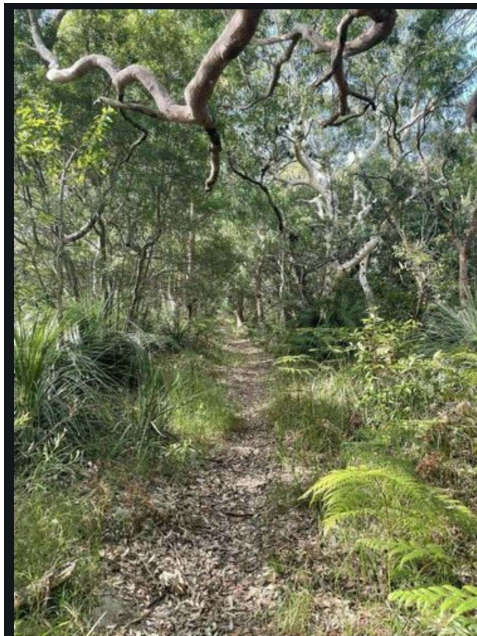
1 – 3 pm: Marton Community Hall, 92–94 Captain Cook Drive, Kurnell. Hall open from 12 noon with plant sales. \$5 entry fee covers afternoon tea and associated costs.

1 – 1.30 pm: APS NSW Annual General Meeting. Details below.

1.30 – 3 pm: Talk by Dan Clarke and John Arney on the plants that Banks and Solander collected and described during their visit to Botany Bay in 1770. Dan, a well-known environmental consultant and the APS NSW Conservation Officer, and John have extensive knowledge of the flora of the Kamay National Park and surrounds.

2.30 pm: Afternoon tea provided by Sutherland Group.

Details [here](#).



AGM – Saturday 15 May, Kurnell

Our AGM will be held 1–1.30 pm at Marton Community Hall, 92–94 Captain Cook Drive, Kurnell.

The agenda including the minutes from the previous AGM is available [here](#). It has been updated with the board nominations of Leonie Hogue and Kris Gow for Life membership and John Arney for the Conservation Award.

Please email secretary@austrplants.com.au to:

- send your apologies
- nominate a proxy for your vote if you cannot attend by completing the Proxy form [here](#) and returning by Thursday 13 May to secretary@austrplants.com.au
- ask a financial question by Wednesday 12 May for responses at the AGM
- nominate for a Board position by completing the form [here](#) and returning by Saturday 1 May.

Our Annual Report 2020

Our Annual Report 2020 presents our activities in a disrupted year. John Aitken says 'It is wonderful reading and a credit to the energy and dedication of the groups'. As well as the usual group reports, there are reports on conservation work at several levels – by our conservation officer, groups and individual members. There are also over 60 images of both people and plants to enjoy.

Our 2020 Annual Report is [here](#) (note: large file size).



Activities – meetings, plant sales and walks

Across our APS groups, there are various approaches to meetings this year. Please check the calendar on the website [here](#) for event details. Groups are encouraged to email event details to secretary@austrplants.com.au

1–2 May and 8–9 May – Open days and plant sales at Illawarra Grevillea Park at Bulli

Enjoy grevilleas and more at the first of the year's open days, 10 am to 4 pm. Plants for sale. Entry fee \$7 adult. Details [here](#).

Friday 14 May – North Shore Group

North Shore Group is returning to a physical meeting at Hornsby in May with speaker Bruce Usher on his photography book. Details [here](#) including the need to book. A Zoom recording of the April meeting by David Bambridge on going native in the urban landscape is [here](#).

Saturday 15 May – APS NSW quarterly gathering at Kurnell. Details above.

Monday 24 May – Walk at Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden on bush foods and fibres

Be guided by members of North Shore Group to see and learn about native plants. The walk-only session is free and no prior knowledge is required. Walks are easy to medium, from 10 am to about 12 noon. Meet at 9.45 am Caley's Pavilion. Please book your place by the Saturday before the walk with Wendy Grimm at wagrimm@tpg.com.au or phone 0419 323 035.



Remembering life member Betty Rymer

Life member Betty Rymer, who died in April aged almost 99 years, was a passionate lover of Australian plants and a consummate educator. With a double degree in teaching and biology, Betty was always keen to share her knowledge. Betty's wonderful shows at Castle Hill were on a grand scale, packed full of interest. In 1991 Betty was awarded life membership in recognition of her tremendous contributions to the Society and to native plants over many years at the group and state levels including as a director for 8 years. Later, she personally answered all queries about native plants that came in to the Society's office.

One of Betty's messages for garden design was "you learn from nature – don't try to change what you've got – look at what nature is telling you to do". She applied this at the Community Environment Centre Annangrove, where she helped plan and maintain the demonstration waterwise native garden. When Betty moved from Kenthurst in 2011 she donated some of her ferns to the garden, and they still survive today.

Betty will be remembered as a passionate scientist, researcher, gardener, teacher, writer and supporter of native plants. She was an inspiration and will be fondly remembered and greatly missed.

Read more by Ian Cox [here](#). Photo below: Betty with Lesley Waite.

Family and friends are invited to a memorial and morning tea at 11 am on Saturday 8 May at Dural. For details, please contact Vicki (0407 182 440) or Colin (0477 134 464).



Spectacular flowers at the Easter Show 2021

After the cancellation of the Easter Show in 2020 due to COVID-19, the Australian plants competition returned with a spectacular display this year. Several groups entered, with Menai Group winning the Grand Champion. Long-time entrant Leonie Hogue from Sutherland Group said 'The most successful thing was the lovely show made by all the entries. A steward stopped me to particularly comment on the wonderful display of Australian plants each year.'

See more [here](#) and photos from the 2019 Easter Show [here](#).

Photo below: Marie O'Connor (by Leonie Hogue).



A walk at Narrow Neck

When Ian Cox and Lesley Waite go bushwalking, they cast their eyes around, and will admire and photograph virtually anything – a scenic view, a trunk with unusual colours, a rock with lichen, or an attractive plant, animal or insect. Although the main purpose of their February trip was the pink flannel flowers (see our April enewsletter for lots on that), they captured some other delights too, such as the eucalypts below.

Read more [here](#). Another article by Ian on the Newnes Plateau and the Gardens of Stone, also with photos by Lesley Waite, is on the ANPSA website [here](#).



Flowering and plant selection – answers from our experts group

We continue to receive many emails with queries about native plants. Glenda Browne summarises recent questions and answers on flowering and plant selection including Acacia flowering history and non-flowering of *Acacia baileyana purpurea* and *Hakea bakeriana* and plant selection for root depth, hedges and in the cold Central West.

Glenda also handles inquiries about permissions for reuse of our material. Our articles and photos are popular and we often get requests to share articles and to use our photos. Permission is granted in most cases for non-commercial uses, with proper attribution. Recently our photos have been included in a paper on moth species distribution, and in a brochure on bush fruits for Hawaiian farmers.

Read more [here](#). Photo below: *Hakea bakeriana* (Rhonda Daniels)



National conservation update

The Conservation Officer for our national organisation Australian Native Plants Society (Australia), Dr Eddy Wajon, reports on current issues including:

- the National Myrtle Rust Symposium held in Ballina in March
- final report of the review of the federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act
- outcomes of the National Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements
- conservation issues at Jandakot Airport, Western Australia.

Read more [here](#). John Aitken encourages members to read and sign the online [Statement of Concern petition](#) on myrtle rust. Eddy welcomes members contacting him.

Study Group updates

Explore our wide range of national [Study Groups](#) and their newsletter archives. Read how to join a group for free [here](#). Our Study Group liaison officer Nicole Maher summarises recent newsletters.

Acacia Study Group Newsletter 149, February 2021

Blaxland High School students have been involved in a project to send wattle seeds into space. Seeds of *Acacia pycnantha* are being sent to the International Space Station, returning to the school six months later. The students intend to grow the seeds, alongside seeds that haven't left the earth, and plant the seedlings in the school grounds.

Maranoa Botanic Gardens, in eastern Melbourne, was opened to the public in 1926 and now covers 2.6 hectares. It has about 240 different species of *Acacia*, with one of the most outstanding wattles being a specimen of *Acacia binervia* planted in 1994. It is about 8 m high and 15 m across at its greatest width. It has attractive bluish grey foliage, and magnificent golden yellow rod-like flowers around October. A recent episode of Gardening Australia noted that "For the D'harwal people of Port Jackson, the blooming of the Kai'arrewan (*Acacia binervia*) signifies the warm, wet season of Parra'dowee and means fish are moving into bays and estuaries." Deaths have been reported in livestock which have eaten the leaves of this plant. The leaves contain cyanogenetic glycosides which can break down in the stomach of animals, producing prussic acid.

Photo below: *Acacia binervia* (by Alan Fairley)



Australian Plants for Containers Study Group Newsletter 37, March 2021

Group Leaders Ros and Ben Walcott were involved in the choice of the shrub *Correa* 'Canberra Bells' to celebrate the centenary of Canberra in 2013. It is a small shrub, 1 m x 1 m, with red and cream bell-shaped flowers from late summer to winter. The plant has performed far better in a pot than in the ground.

ABC's Gardening Australia on 5 March featured Dr Tony Scalzo from Kings Park Botanic Gardens demonstrating how to grow Western Australian plants in pots. Tony uses native potting soil and adds a good handful of perlite to the mix (horticultural sand is a good substitute for perlite). He puts two or three different plants together in a pot, and tops with a mulch of clay pebbles.

Isopogon and Petrophile Study Group Newsletter 28, April 2021

Catriona Bate discusses ant pollination as ants are commonly observed to visit *Isopogon* and *Petrophile* plants. Ants are generally considered to be poor pollinators, as they must crawl to each flower to reach their reward, and are also commonly smaller than the reproductive structures of flowers. In addition, ants have been found to produce secretions through their body that actually kill pollen (although some species, such as *Conospermum undulatum*, have developed resistance to these antibiotic ant secretions). Some *Isopogon* and *Petrophile* species may use ant pollination, particularly where plants are low-growing, flowers are small or flowers have low amounts of pollen. Catriona poses that the low fertility of *Isopogon* fruit may be caused, at least in some species, by ants inhibiting the germination of pollen grains. In contrast, some *Petrophile* species may have developed resistance to ant secretions. Members are asked to keep an eye out for insects visiting isopogons and petrophiles, and photograph them if possible, to help document pollinators in these genera.

Below: the newsletter's feature species *Isopogon baxteri* (from original drawing by Margaret Pieroni)



More reading

- Avenues of Honour: trees planted to remember our war dead by Dr Gregory Moore from the University of Melbourne at The Conversation [here](#)

On the APS NSW website

Our [website](#) has our membership benefits, [how to join](#), District Group details, and resources including our ever-expanding plant profile database. Members get a membership renewal email and can also renew online [here](#). The form in *Australian Plants* is for the journal only.

We have recently revised and uploaded some of our older fact sheets to the website:

- Reliable native daisies for the Sydney region [here](#)
- Growing plants in clay soils [here](#)
- Plants for clay soils or clay loams [here](#)
- Propagation of native plants [here](#).

Each of these can also be downloaded as a pdf.

Photo finish



Ants on *Petrophile rigida* from WA (photo: Isopogon and Petrophile Study Group newsletter)

This enewsletter is emailed to members of the Australian Plants Society NSW

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