

APS EAST HILLS GROUP NEWSLETTER



November 2019

NEXT EHG MEETING:

7.30 pm, Wednesday 6 November 2019

Bird capture and banding in Indonesia

Alan Leishman

Please bring specimens for the plant table and something to share for supper.

LUGARNO-PEAKHURST UNITING CHURCH

909 Forest Road Lugarno (opposite the Chivers Hill Lugarno shops)

VISITORS ARE WELCOME

WELCOME to the November 2019 edition of the APS East Hills Group Newsletter. It's a simpler and shorter version than usual as your editor returned from Western Australia and the ANPSA Blooming Biodiversity with pneumonia and other infections which are still causing problems. Dave and I enjoyed the conference and tours very much until we got sick!

Thanks to contributions by Liz Cameron, Graham Fry, Tony Porritt and Karlo Taliana, this issue contains many of the usual features: a note from our President, notes and photos from members' presentations and the plant table. Graham Walters' notes from the October plant table will appear in the December newsletter.

Jan Douglas
Editor

<http://austplants.com.au/East-Hills>



A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The APS NSW Board met on 21 October. The main subject discussed was the recent ANPSA Conference in Albany. A number of Board members were in Albany and it was interesting to listen to their comments about the conference and the learnings, especially regarding excursions and catering and the required numbers of volunteers. Of course the issue of many people getting sick probably also affected people's opinions. As you know, NSW will be hosting the next conference in 2021 and it will be a major undertaking. The Board learnt a lot from the conference and we will be trying to achieve an excellent result in 2021. We will all need to be involved in some way, whether it be assisting with catering, leading excursions, information providers, etc. The conference will be held in Kiama and there will be pre- and post-conference tours to interesting botanical areas. I am sure that locations that we are familiar with will be on the excursion list.

East Hills Group's turn has come around again to host an APS NSW Quarterly Gathering: it will be the March 2020 meeting. So again we will need volunteers to help in many ways. I was wondering about an excursion and was favouring a walk around Yeramba Lagoon which I have had good reports from some of our friends who walked there recently. Also, we have Karlo with his extensive knowledge of the area, who I am sure could make a significant contribution as well.

Finally, Liz and I recently helped on the Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society Inc stand at the Oatley Lions Festival. We sold over 150 tube stock provided by the Menai Wildflower Group. These festivals are a good opportunity to talk to people about conservation issues as well as for selling plants. It was nice talking to people about growing natives and I was pleasantly surprised by how knowledgeable many of our customers were about native plants. It shows that our messages about growing native plants is now mainstream and is a great reflection on our members past and present who have devoted many hours to the cause.

Graham Fry
President, East Hills Group



Photos above by Jan Douglas: Flowers in Marie and Des O'Connor's garden, September 2019.

Our final APS NSW event of the year will be held on Saturday, 16 November, and will be hosted by the Northern Beaches Group in Warriewood on Sydney's Northern Beaches at

**Angophora Room, Nelson Heather Community Centre,
5 Jacksons Rd, Warriewood NSW 2102**

Cost: \$5 per person

Program:

10am Meet at the Nelson Heather Community Centre for tea and coffee.

Please bring your own plates and drinking cups.

10.30am Choice of two guided walks through the beautiful Warriewood Wetlands.

Meet in the car parking area at the Nelson Heather Community Centre at 10.30am

Warriewood Wetland is the largest remaining sand plain wetland in the northern Sydney area. It provides a variety of habitats for native animals and also plays a vital role in flood mitigation, nutrient recycling and filtering sediments. The wetlands contain several Endangered Ecological Communities.



12 - 1pm Lunch. Bring your own lunch to the Nelson Heather Community Centre where tea, coffee and refreshments will be available.

Plants will be available for sale from 12 noon.

1 - 3pm Guest speaker Liz Benson 'My Life with Wally' or 'My Life with the Wollemi Pine'

Liz Benson is a very accomplished speaker who will trace the discovery of the Wollemi Pine and discuss current and fossil relatives. She will also discuss the causes of the forest types that have arisen in Australia in the past and present.



In her role as an Education Officer with the Royal Botanic Gardens, Liz has had the opportunity to talk about the Wollemi Pine on many occasions, particularly in the schools Program for Senior Biology students studying the topic Evolution of the Australian Biota. This syllabus topic had been prompted by the interest generated in Gondwanan history of Australia by the discovery of the Wollemi Pine in 1994.

A member who has previously heard Liz present commented: 'Her presentation was first class. She went back to the time before the continents were separated and traced the development of today's flora. Her coverage of the discovery and significance of the Wollemi Pine was excellent and well-illustrated.'

[The information above comes from the APS NSW website at <https://austplants.com.au/event-3441083> and <https://austplants.com.au/resources/Documents/Events/Quarterly%20Gathering%20Nov%202019.pdf>]

FROM OUR OCTOBER MEETING
MEMBERS' PRESENTATIONS

Notes by Liz Cameron

AUSTRALIAN TRAVELS – TONY PORRIT

Tony Porritt shared photos and stories from travels he and Kate have undertaken in Australia.

1. Brahminy Kite near its nest in the Kimberleys. These strikingly-patterned birds of prey (chestnut body, white head, neck & chest) are widespread along the northern coast of Australia and occur as far south as Newcastle; also found in southern, and South East Asia. They are fish-eaters but also steal food from other fish-eating birds, and feed on carrion.



2. Orange-bellied Parrot photographed at a feeding station at Melaleuca in South-west Tasmania, where they breed. Only 100-300 birds are left in the wild and intensive efforts are being taken to improve their breeding success and their survival during migration between Tasmania and the Victorian coast. Tony and Kate visited Tasmania in April on a trip that included a visit to the Tarkine as well as Melaleuca.



3. *Calytrix mimiana*, a rare fringe myrtle or starflower that Tony photographed in the Caranbarini Waterhole Conservation Park, near Borrooloola in the Northern Territory. He described a gruelling scramble through rough terrain in temperatures around 40°C to locate and photograph this species, which is restricted to the vicinity of Borrooloola and was only described in 1980. Tony was delighted his efforts were rewarded by finding some deep pink flowers on the sparse pendulous branches emerging from sandstone crevices.



4. Mysterious arrangement of rocks on the coast at Doubtful Bay in the Kimberleys – photos taken from the ground and from a drone. This area is Aboriginal land with no access by road and it is seldom visited. Large rocks have been arranged in two long parallel rows, stretching for several hundred metres, but the Aboriginal owners of the land have no knowledge of their origin. A professor of archaeology in Western Australia first reported the existence of this rock arrangement to the general public.

5. Lace Monitor in Capertee National Park. Tony screened a short video of a large well-fed goanna walking nonchalantly along, unconcerned by people standing nearby. Tony and Kate visited the area in late September with a group from Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society. They reported the Capertee Valley is very dry at present and the Capertee River has been reduced to waterholes within the National Park; many typically nocturnal animals such as wombats were out feeding during the day.

AUSTRALIAN ARID LANDS BOTANIC GARDEN – GRAHAM FRY

Graham Fry talked about the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden (AALBG) in Port Augusta which he and Liz visited early in October. They took a guided walk with a Friend of the AALBG who was active in the Garden’s propagation program and provided an informative introduction to the Garden.



She began in the *Eremophila* Garden which highlighted the great diversity in growth habit, foliage and flower colour in this genus. (See photos above and below.) This diversity was illustrated by a large bushy *Eremophila bignoniiflora* with showy pink flowers, the tall thin spikes of Red Rod *Eremophila calorhabdos* (which coincidentally Karlo brought from his garden for the plant table) and the mauve flowers of the Dolomite Fuchsia Bush, *Eremophila christopheri*.



L to R: *Eremophila bignoniiflora*, *Eremophila calorhabdos*, *Eremophila christopheri*

Other arid plants in flower included the colourful Butterfly Bush *Petalostylis labicheoides*, Regal Birdflower *Crotalaria cunninghamii* (Photo below L.) and Goldfields Bottlebrush *Melaleuca coccinea* (Photo below R.).



The rich diversity of plants growing in the Garden was a magnet for birds including many arid land honeyeaters. Graham was impressed by the unusual foliage of the Bookleaf Mallee *Eucalyptus kruseana* and bought a seedling, one of many *AridSmart plants propagated in the Garden and available for sale in the shop. The gift and garden shop also had a comprehensive range of books and cards and Australian-made souvenirs and bush tucker.

The AALBG is 250 ha in extent and beyond the developed gardens there is a beautifully landscaped artificial waterhole and bird hide, and the Red Cliff Lookout where Graham and Liz found information boards detailing the exploration of Spencer's Gulf by Matthew Flinders and his companions including Robert Brown and Ferdinand Bauer.

(Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden <http://www.aalbg.sa.gov.au>)

EREMOPHILA MACKINLAYI – KYRILL TAYLOR

Kyrill Taylor had brought along his Desert Pride, *Eremophila mackinlayi*, with an abundance of attractive deep lilac flowers contrasting with felty grey-green leaves. His original plant came from Charles Farrugia of the Eremophila Study Group – Sydney Branch; Kyrill took cuttings from it and now has about five individual plants.



Photo at right of *Eremophila mackinlayi* subsp. *mackinlayi* by Ross Dawkins <http://anpsa.org.au/eremophilaSG/gallery/e-mackinlayi.html>

FROM OUR OCTOBER MEETING PLANT TABLE – OCTOBER 2019

List: Liz Cameron

Thanks to everyone who brought specimens.

There are no plant notes this newsletter but they will be included in the December newsletter.

Tony and Kate Porritt:

Callistemon sp. – two specimens: one has red flowers which, Tony said, attract honey bees while the other variety they brought has magenta flowers that are attractive to native bees.
Chamelaucium uncinatum x *Verticordia plumosa* 'Paddy's Pink'
Eremophila maculata (Spotted Emu Bush)

Hibbertia scandens (Twining Guinea Flower) (Photo at right, Jan Douglas)

A specimen of *Isopogon anemonifolius* (Broad-leaved Drumsticks) with simple leaves which Australian botanist Edwin Cheel described as 'form simplicifolia' in 1923, from collections from Mount Victoria and Hornsby and said it had mostly unlobed (simple) leaves compared with the typical form of *I. anemonifolius*.
Leptospermum 'Love Affair' - deep pink flowers.



Karlo Taliana:

Eremophila calorhabdos (Red Rod)

Grevillea banksii 'Candelabra'

Grevillea laurifolia (Laurel-leaf Grevillea)

Grevillea 'Majestic'

Verticordia galeata Karlo noted it was tough and one of the best and largest of the yellow-flowered verticordias.

Pileanthus rubronitidus (Shining Copper Cups) Karlo has about four different species of *Pileanthus* and this one has branches with prominent oil glands that produce a very sticky exudate.

Verticordia plumosa (Plumed Featherflower) - one parent of 'Paddy's Pink'.



L to R above: *Eremophila calorhabdos*, *Grevillea laurifolia*, *Grevillea* 'Majestic'
(All photos by Karlo Taliana.)

L to R below: *Pileanthus rubronitidus*, *Verticordia plumosa*



Kyrill Taylor:

Eremophila mackinlayi (Desert Pride)

Graham Fry:

Graptophyllum excelsum (Scarlet Fuchsia)

Prostanthera sp. (Mintbush)

Isopogon anethifolius (Narrow-leaved Drumsticks)

Ricinocarpos pinifolius (Wedding Bush).



(Photos above taken at Sylvan Grove Native Garden, September 2019 by Jan Douglas.)

FROM OUR OCTOBER MEETING MEETING NOTES

Notes by Liz Cameron

APS NSW - East Hills Group meeting, Wednesday 9 October 2019.

The meeting opened at 7.45 pm with an attendance of ten, including Sutherland Group member Doug Rickard. Apologies from Jan Douglas, Dave Crawford, Boyd Webster and Karl Schurr.

Announcements:

1. Menai Wildflower Group meeting next Saturday 12 October, 1 pm – Alan Leishman speaking about his experiences in Java, Sulawesi and Bali banding birds, including the effect of the Wallace Line, a transitional faunal line between Asia and Australia.
2. APS NSW Quarterly Gathering hosted by Northern Beaches, in Warriewood on Saturday, 16 November. Guided walks of the Warriewood Wetlands in the morning, afternoon speaker will be Liz Benson on Discovering the Wollemi Pine. More information: <https://austplants.com.au/event-3441083> or see page 3 of this newsletter.

Members' talks followed. [Notes and photos from members talk start on page 4 of this newsletter - Editor.]

After the presentations, four plants that Karlo had brought were raffled and others sold, before members gathered round the plant table to share a colourful range of spring flowers. The meeting concluded at 9.10 pm with supper.

COMING EVENTS – CHECK YOUR DIARY!

You can find more district group events on the APS NSW website at <http://austplants.com.au/calendar>

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| Wednesday 6 November 2019 From 7.15 for 7.30 pm | East Hills Group meeting – Bird capture and banding in Indonesia, presented by Alan Leishman. |
| Wednesday 13 November 7 pm | Menai Wildflower Group – AGM and talk by Brad Van Luyt on Working with Woody Weeds. Illawong Rural Fire Brigade Headquarters, Old Illawarra Road, Illawong. For a map: https://austplants.com.au/Menai-Activities |
| Saturday 16 November | APS NSW quarterly gathering hosted by Northern Beaches Group. See page 3 for more information. |
| Wednesday 20 November From 7.45pm for 8pm | Sutherland Group meeting – Rob Champion, a landscape designer and ecologist from New Zealand, shares information on New Zealand flora. NZ is known for its wet Gondwanan rainforests of ferns and mosses, and for the flax and cabbage tree. GyMEA Community Hall, 39 GyMEA Bay Rd, GyMEA For a map: https://austplants.com.au/resources/Pictures/Sutherland%20District%20Group/GyMEA%20Community%20Centre.png |

EAST HILLS GROUP CONTACTS

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|-------------------|---------------|-----------|--|
| President | Graham Fry | 9580 6621 | fryg45@gmail.com |
| Secretary | Liz Cameron | 9580 6621 | elsmere02@gmail.com |
| Newsletter Editor | Jan Douglas | 9533 2187 | janhd@iinet.net.au |
| Website Editor | Karlo Taliana | 9786 8299 | karlo.taliana@optusnet.com.au |

<http://austplants.com.au/East-Hills>

