



HARBOUR GEORGES RIVER Group of APS NSW NEWSLETTER – March 2024

NEXT HARBOUR GEORGES RIVER EVENT:

Wednesday 3rd April, 6 pm for bistro dinner
Club Burwood, 97 Burwood Road, Burwood.

Note this is NOT our usual venue

Presentation at 7:30 pm

Topic: Plants of Extreme Conditions

With

Assoc. Professor Andy Leigh from UTS

Please email Liz on elsmere02@gmail.com to confirm you are attending.

VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

Welcome to the March 2024 edition of the APS Harbour Georges River Group Newsletter.

Our next meeting is in a NEW VENUE, at Burwood RSL's other site, 97 Burwood Road, opposite the train station. Dinner will be at Café 97 in the club.

March was a busy month, and the newsletter contains reports on several activities done in conjunction with other local groups, all under Group News. There is a full report on the Quarterly gathering, from 2 of our members. **Other groups events coming in April** are covered in the section on Neighbourhood Watch, plus a summary of progress on the Inner West Council's biodiversity strategy development. Does your Local Council have one?

Dorothy Luther, Editor

In the spirit of reconciliation, the APS Harbour Georges River group acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

<https://www.austplants.com.au/Harbour-Georges-River>

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1 dance of the Angophora, Oatley Park, photo by Li Feng

NEXT MEETING

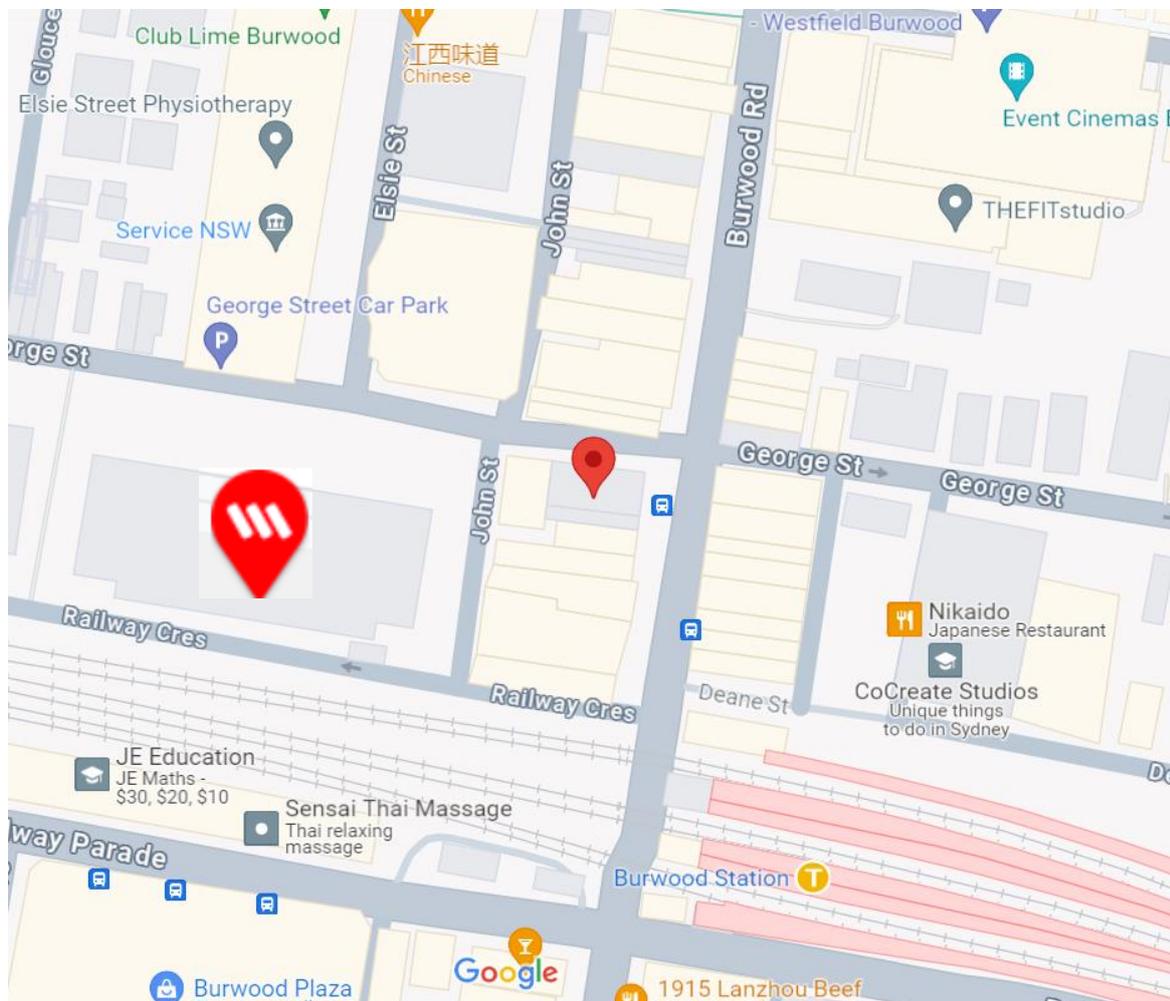
Adaptations of Australian Plants in Extreme Conditions

Wednesday 4th April from 6 pm

Harbour Georges River group evening gathering at the Burwood Club. 6 pm dinner (optional, Café 97) followed by 7.30 pm meeting and talk 'Research on the adaptations of Australian plants in desert and alpine landscapes' – an informal slide show by A/Prof Andy Leigh, UTS (also a member of APS HGR).

We have a booking for a large table at Café 97 for 6 pm. The meeting is in the **Level 2 Balcony room, access via Front entry stairs & or via Service lift.**

Please note the venue for this meeting is Club Burwood, 97 Burwood Road, Burwood, **not** Club Burwood RSL in Shaftesbury Road. It is conveniently located half a block from Burwood Station.



A new Wilson Car Park has been opened 50 metres from Club Burwood on 36 George Street (entry via Railway Crescent). The car park is open 24 hours, 7 days a week and has flat rate parking, Monday to Friday – \$15.

Alternatively, the Council Pay & Display car park at 34 George St (shown as 'George St Carpark' on the map) is \$4.70 per hour. Booking for 3 hours is \$14.10

LAST MEETING

APS NSW Gathering, Saturday 9 March

Thanks to Liz Cameron for the following report:

APS Quarterly gathering 9 March 2024 – hosted by North Shore Group at the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden in St Ives.

The gathering was very well attended and included nine HGR members.

Liz and Graham joined the **spider and insect walk** led by Helen Smith and two colleagues, whose trained eyes discovered a range of invertebrates for us. The walk started at the pond - Helen explained many insects feed and breed around water, so a pond is a focus for spiders that feed on insects. Resting on the reeds in the pond were dragonflies and damselflies, and tiny golden and green dwarf tree frogs (*Litoria fallax*). Spiders seen included a male orb-weaver sheltering underneath a leaf (smaller than a female and with longer legs for wandering in search of a mate) and an immature net-casting spider holding its lacy snare between its front legs. Leaf-curling spiders were concealed within their dead leaf shelters.

A **scribbly gum trunk** (*Eucalyptus haemastoma*) was liberally inscribed and Helen described the life history of the moth (*Ogmograptis* species) whose tiny caterpillars create the scribbles. Climbing the same trunk was the colourful caterpillar of a cup moth, progressing in a rolling motion like a caterpillar tractor, with its venomous spines retracted. A green caterpillar feeding on the leaves of *Hibiscus heterophyllus* also attracted the attention of photographers – the transverse or hibiscus caterpillar *Xanthodes transversa*. [Photo by a tour guide]. The colour pattern changes as the caterpillar matures.



2 Moth, Nolidae - Hibiscus Caterpillar - photo by Cynthia Chan

Caley's Pavilion is situated in a very leafy part of the Wildflower Garden and apart from the invertebrates we were shown, bird calls and activity were a constant feature during the day. Lunch was eaten in and around the Pavilion, where the North Shore Group had a good variety of propagated plants for sale, as well as beautiful cards featuring photos of native flora and fauna and landscapes, taken by members Pam and Jim Lawler.

Garden Design

Heather Miles' presentation in the afternoon – a workshop on native garden design - was very well supported by hand-out worksheets, books and diagrams. Participants were invited to make 'bubble diagrams' of their own gardens and use butter paper overlays to experiment with various designs. Heather illustrated examples of designs she had executed in her own gardens and for others, and was frank about describing mistakes she had made with some plantings. Her native garden in the Hunter Valley on clay soil was developed from scratch and her plantings had to cope with westerly winds. Her garden in Killara was re-designed to accommodate some existing plantings, and was not purely a native garden. Heather expanded on the following categories of garden style:

- Formal – symmetrical, geometric, focal points, paths, water features, steps, topiary, evergreen foliage, static, independent of the location
- Informal – links to surrounding landscape, asymmetrical, massed plantings, ornaments, textures
- Wild/naturalistic – inspired by meadows and woodlands, diverse plant communities, indigenous species, perennials and woody shrubs, emphasis on wildlife habitat.

For more information, see the web site of the Garden Design study group of ANPSA, at https://anpsa.org.au/study_group/garden-design-study-group/

And hear from Australian Institute of Landscape Architect (AILA) Fellow Lawrence Smith, FAILA, AM talking about his journey into Landscape Architecture

<https://www.aila.org.au/Web/Web/News/Articles/QLD/conversation-fellows-lawrence-smith.aspx>

The discussion following Heather’s presentation included advice on protecting plantings in rural areas from wallabies and hares – install tree guards until the plants are tall enough to avoid browsing, then remove the guards. There was further opportunity for discussion on garden design as participants indulged in a generous afternoon tea.

Threatened Plant Species in the Garden

Thanks to Phyllis Heggie for the following

The Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden is in St Ives and boasts 123 hectares of pristine bushland. Two of the garden’s keen volunteers led a walk with a focus on threatened plant species, ie listed by Australian/NSW Governments, and/or the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN Red List).

The notes and images provided here are based on the tour and follow-up research:



3 *Grevillia caleyi*, photo APS NSW plant database

Grevillia caleyi (Caley’s grevillea) – a specimen is planted opposite the main entrance of Caley’s Pavilion within a small, fenced area. The species grows in a restricted area, approximately 8 square km, on Hawkesbury sandstone within the Ku-ring-gai and Northern Beaches Local Government Areas. It is a toothbrush grevillea with burgundy-red flowers, mainly in winter and spring. Plants are killed by fire and rely entirely on seed for regeneration.

Genoplesium bauera (yellow gnat-orchid, Bauer’s midge orchid, brittle midge orchid) – this species has a single tubular leaf that surrounds the stem. We were fortunate to sight a few of the orchids in flower. It occurs only in NSW in highly fragmented populations. The volunteers at KWG locate, record, and monitor all known specimens within the garden.

Genoplesium bauera, photo PlantNET <https://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au> [18/03/2024]





Melaleuca deanei (Deane’s paperbark) – a shrub up to 3m high with grey flaky bark. It was pointed out to us that the small leaves lie parallel to the stem and have many oil glands. *M. deanei* is known to have a low rate of flowering and tends to spread by suckering. The small patches growing at KWG are likely to be clones. The species occurs only in NSW and is known from a few disjunct sites including Ku-ring-gai/Berowra, Holsworthy/Wedderburn, and west of Nowra.

Melaleuca deanei, photo Phyllis Heggie

Haloragodendron lucasii – a straggling shrub mostly 1-1.5m high with hairless, four-angled stems, and narrow, toothed leaves 25-30mm long. In spring it produces creamy-white flowers with four petals. Specimens that we observed in the Knoll Garden have been planted. The species was presumed extinct until it was rediscovered in 1986 at St Ives.

Haloragodendron lucasii, photo APS NSW plant database (original source Australian Plant Image Index APII, photo a.9837)



GROUP NEWS

Visit to Oatley Park

The Menai Wildflower Group kindly invited us to join them for an exploration of Oatley Park, led by Lloyd Hedges, on Saturday 24th February. As well as visitors from HGR group, there were a number of members of the Oatley Flora and Fauna group, commonly known as OFF. There is quite a lot of overlapping membership between the 3 groups.



4 King parrots house hunting. photo by Li Feng.

We started from the top car park at the end of Oatley Park Ave, next to the playing field, and walked along the track to the Bush Park Playground. We soon branched off to the left from the main track onto a faint bush track. Lloyd pointed out the changes in tree species, indicating changes in soil quality, as we descended from the shale tops to the sandstone at the water’s edge.

We walked along the beach at Jew Fish Bay to the swimming pool & stopped for a rest. Then climbed the stairs to walk around the Headland Track. The land here is much sandier & supports twisted angophoras and Xanthoreas. Further round, the land has been burned and the bush becomes Banksias and Kunzeas. We discovered an interesting Snake vine (*Stephania japonica*) lurking among the weeds that no one in the group had noticed before.

Coming back, we took the approved route to the Bush Park Playground and returned to our cars. So, we didn’t see the Castle after all. It remains a mystery. Most of the group went off to a café in Mortdale for lunch.

Visit to Wangal Park, Croydon

On 14 March 2024 from 5pm to 6pm, Uncle John Dickson from Nangahmi Ngallia Aboriginal Corporation led a group tour through Wangal Park to raise awareness of the history of First Nations people and their culture within the area. This was arranged by Burwood Council.

Wangal Park was part of the Homebush wetlands, and now, like Sydney Park, is regenerated from old brick pits. Much of the park is undulating grasslands, but the low-lying section has been made into an artificial wetland with 2 ponds and a raised walkway over the dividing



5 the wetland - photo by Dorothy

wall. At some times it must be quite full of water as there is a high tide mud line. The pipes connecting the 2 ponds are above the water line at present.

Uncle John explained that the traditional way of looking after a water hole was to harvest the reed stems to make into mats & baskets. This kept an access path clear and prevented the pond from clogging up – a kind of weeding.

The water hole has some resident water hens and a couple of buff banded rails, as well as a kookaburra, a galah and some swallows – no noisy miners! Uncle John mentioned that water hens are good birds to

have around even though they are not fit to eat. They attract other water birds such as ducks which are good eating and they are a good warning system against snakes.

There were many other tales of traditional life, fishing, tree species and medicinal plants.

For those who missed out, there will be 3 more of these tours in April, May and July. See “A Yarn and Wander through Burwood Council Parks” below.

Unwin Green Street, Saturday 23rd March

Brunch Meeting at Lydia Feng’s place - Wildlife, bush, plans for regeneration.

We gathered at 10 am for a delicious multi-cultural brunch of Thai fish cakes, sweet potato slice and spanakopita, followed by almond biscotti and home-made muffins. Between eating we inspected Lydia’s tiny but overflowing garden of natives and Chinese herbs and discussed where to put a possum box. Greg was called on to identify a few mysteries including some self-propagated ferns.

Michael, our chief bird photographer, spotted and photographed an amazing range of small birds in the weedy patch next door, and several bugs including a native bee. The weedy patch is very steep down to the river and has an obvious small stream where tall pampas type weeds grow. Further down there are privets and other trees. We hope that the proliferation of less attractive weeds is at least soaking up the heavy metals & acid from the soil. Regeneration will be quite a challenge. ‘a bit at a time’ as Lydia says.

Geraldine from WIRES thought it would be a very good place to release some species of birds recovering from injuries. She begged us to always call Inner West WIRES for an injured bird, because your local vet will probably just euthanise it.



6 photo by Li Feng

To work off the food, we walked thru the Wolli Creek Regional Park to Jackson Pace and back, checking out the butterfly home and the small bird spot, between the multi trunked Turpentine, Pittosporum and Epacris just coming into flower. This section of the valley has largely escaped clearing although it has its fair share of rubbish, including a dumped filing cabinet.

Michael then took us to Cooks River to see a Powerful owl that a neighbour had spotted. This rounded out a very enjoyable and productive day.

Clemtown Park Uniting Church Garden

Obvious progress has now been made.

A working bee of parishioners and others on Sat 2nd March dug up the whole patch where the native garden is to be planted. We dug each sod & turned it upside down, then covered the whole area in cardboard. It was raining lightly but that didn't deter anyone - at least it wasn't so hot. The following week, a smaller team covered the cardboard with a thick layer of mulch.

So now the area is to fallow until winter, hopefully killing the buffalo grass, without killing the micro-organisms. And then the planting begins.

The water tank has been cancelled as the native garden won't need it and the vegetable gardens can be watered from a convenient tap.



7 work in progress -the last sods turned. - photo by Dorothy

ANPSA Biennial Conference

ANPSA is the national parent body of APS NSW and the other state-based groups. It holds a week-long national conference every 2nd year. Each state takes it in turn to host the conference. Last time it was NSW turn, and was held in Wollongong. The next conference is hosted by the Victorian group from 30th Sep – 4th Oct 2024.

Book now for early bird rates. To register your interest, go to <https://apsvic.org.au/anpsa-biennial-conference-2024>

Tours before and after will go to Victoria's best wildflower areas and day excursions will feature new botanic gardens, private gardens and wild areas.

More general information is available on the ANPSA web site at <https://anpsa.org.au/anpsa-biennial-conference-and-seminar/>

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

There is a lot happening in our patch, with community groups and local councils being active in promoting native plants. I welcome contributions - stories about your other favourite groups.

Cooks River Mini Tour, Sat 27th April, 10 am

Since many of the congregation of Clemton Park Uniting Church are Tongan, they have little idea what an 'Australian Bush Garden' looks like. We're arranging a tour of part of the Cooks River to get an idea. Doug Benson (author of 'Missing Jig Saw Pieces, bush plants of the Cooks River Valley') has kindly agreed to lead the tour on Saturday morning, 27th April.

We will start from Foord Ave, Hurlstone Park at the Cooks River foot bridge. We will tour the Foord Ave and Ewen Park bush care sites and maybe other sites if time and energy permit.

You can park in Foord Ave or across the bridge in Waterside Crescent or Younger Ave. There are foot paths to the river and easy access to the footbridge.

A Yarn and Wander through Burwood Council Parks

Thanks to Billie Ayling for this information.

Join us for a walk and talk through our parks. All welcome.

Uncle John Dickson from Nangahmi Ngallia Aboriginal Corporation will lead a tour through our parks to raise awareness of the history of First Nations people and their culture within the area.

11 April 2024 at Henley Park, Mitchell Street, Enfield from 4pm - 5pm

16 May 2024 at Cooks River, Flockhart Park, Hextol St, Croydon Park from 4pm - 5pm

11 July 2024 at Burwood Park, Park Ave, Burwood from 4pm - 5pm NAIDOC Week

See https://www.burwood.nsw.gov.au/For-Residents/Our-Community/Community-Programs/A-Yarn-and-Wander-through-our-Parks-ev_d7cd2a8e744d4c3494935e9c65e383d4 for latest details and to book your place.

Inner West Council Biodiversity Strategy

The Inner West group of ACF hosted Ryan Jones, newly hired by Inner West Council to create a biodiversity strategy for them. He gave a summary of the old strategies, left from the previous Marrickville, Leichhardt & Ashfield councils. The conclusion is that there was some progress at site level, but uneven progress overall.

Some interesting jargon to drop into your conversations:

Ecosystem services - these are benefits of biodiversity to humans, such as health and liveability, cooling, managing water runoff (hydrology), so the strategy is about the delivery of essential services. Biodiversity is a multi-function solution, not an add-on.

Biodiversity values – the financial value of these benefits, which can be matched against the **Opportunity cost** of not building high rise human accommodation.

Population growth & **densification** - the extra 40,000 people that the State Government wants to squeeze into the Inner West. Presumably while still aiming for the 40% tree canopy cover mentioned last month.

The strategy is to include mid story and understory species, as well as the tree canopy.

Since the Council can't create more open space, it needs innovative solutions – public & private land, small spaces, novel habitats such as railway corridors. All to be done by mid year. We await the outcome with interest.

RANDOM JOTTINGS

These are items of general interest found on the World Wide Web & other sources. All contributions for future editions gratefully accepted.

Mapping Edges

<https://www.mappingedges.org/>

This is an initiative of 2 of our members, Alexandra Crosby and Ilaria Vanni, who are both Associate Professors at the University of Technology.

“At Mapping Edges, we study the relationship between plants and people and what it tells us about the past, present, and future of the urban environment. Our work is both framed and informed by plant-based ecologies – what we call the ‘planty universe’. The ‘edges’ in our name refer to the idea of edge or ecotone as a transition zone between different ecosystems. Elements from these ecosystems make edges rich in biodiversity.

As researchers, we work at the ‘edges’ of research disciplines – design research and ethnography – and methodologies to cross-pollinate new ideas. We have a particular interest in both recombinant and civic ecologies and their role in how we design cities to respond to the growing challenge of the climate breakdown.”

Recombinant ecologies are human created; civic ecologies are community projects.



8 recombinant ecology in Marrickville, from the MappingEdges web site

African Tree-Planting Project Making a Difference

In a world of monoculture cash crops, an innovative African project is persuading farmers to plant biodiverse forest gardens that feed the family, protect the soil and expand tree cover.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/mar/13/seven-times-size-of-manhattan-the-african-tree-planting-project-making-a-difference>

Initiatives like TREES are playing an important role in reversing decades of ecosystem degradation, especially across the Sahel, pushing back desertification, increasing climate resilience and improving the wellbeing of farmers and their communities.

The protection of primary forests is a priority for the global climate, local biodiversity and regional water cycles. Those functions, built up over centuries, cannot be fully replaced by new plantations and restoration projects. But TREES and similar programmes can help to alleviate ecological and economic problems in already degraded areas.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Newsletters Received – March 2024

The full text of the APS newsletters is available from the APS website, on the District Group pages – usually under ‘Resources’. Not all District groups write newsletters. Here is a complete list of groups with fairly current newsletters. Those showing ‘log in’ are only available to members of the group. Those with ‘Yes’ are available to everyone.

Group	Most recent	Available
Armidale	Summer 2023	yes
Blue Mountains	Spring 2023	log in
Central Coast	Articles	log in
Hunter Valley	June 2023	log in
Illawarra	Mar-April 2024	yes
Menai	summer 2024	yes
Newcastle	Apr/ May 2023	log in
North Shore	March 2024	yes
Northern Beaches	March 2024	yes
Nowra	November 2023	log in
Parra and Hills	March 2024	yes
South East	November 2023	yes
Southern Highlands	January 2024	yes
Southern Tablelands	latest Feb 2021	yes
Sutherland	March 2024	yes

The ones where I receive an emailed copy are summarised below.

Australian Plants Society, Northern Beaches Group - Newsletter March 2024

Royal Botanic Gardens, Australian rainforest walk with Paul Nicholson – interesting species described. The botanical imperialism of weeds and crops: how alien plant species on the first fleet changed Australia (from The Conversation Jan 26, 2024). How did early relationships between flower colour and animal pollinators emerge?

Australian Plants Society, Hunter Valley - Newsletter February 2024

Identifying and using microclimates around your garden – especially the amount of moisture. Promo on the Garden Design Study Group by Heather Miles. Garden shredders.

Australian Plants Society, Parramatta Hills Group - Newsletter March 2024

Report on walk to Narrawang Wetlands and Newington Nature Reserve, Sydney Olympic Park. Plantbank and the Orchid Research Project at Mt Annan Botanic Garden – the necessary mycorrhizal fungus. AGM and annual report. Links to interesting articles. Growing ferns in pots. The correspondence of Ferdinand von Mueller is being digitised.

Australian Plants Society, Sutherland Group - Newsletter March 2024

An interesting talk on the plant known as Native Yam or Murnong (*Microseris lanceolata*). Extensive plant table report. Native bees harvesting kino from Angophoras.

Other Groups Newsletters

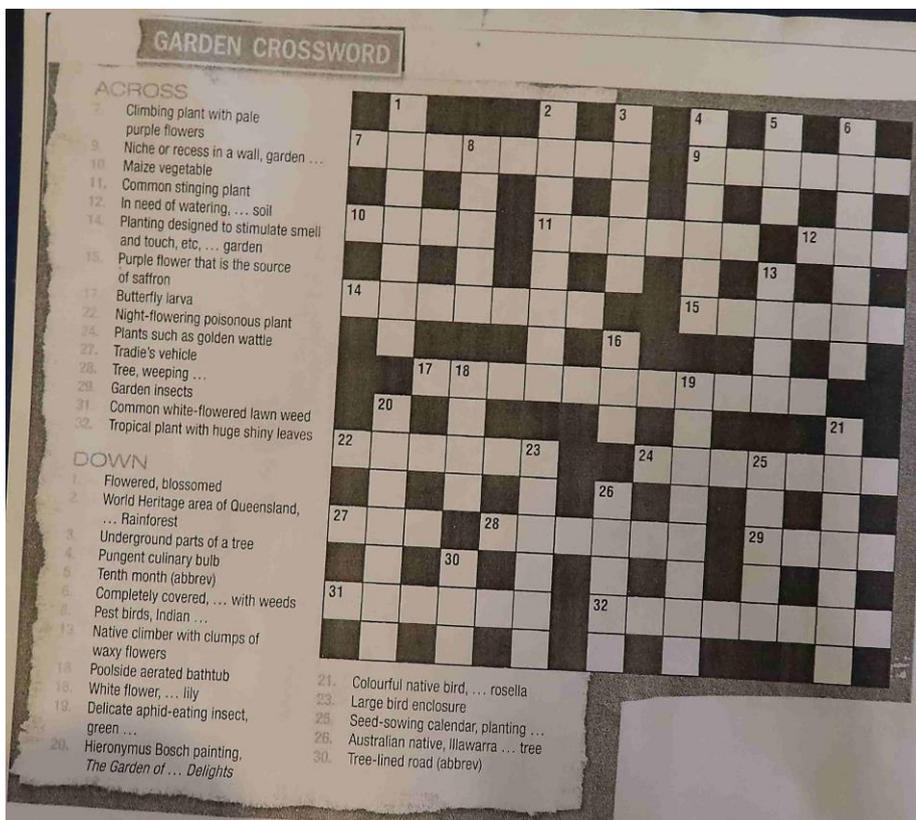
We have begun to swap newsletters with other environmental groups in the Harbour Georges River area. Links to their web sites are provided where available. Copies of newsletters are available from the editor on request for about a month.

National Parks & Wildlife Service – Naturescapes, March 2024

Enhance your visit to a NSW National Park and experience our free self-guided audio tours on your mobile phone. Hear native bird calls, discover interesting facts and get first-hand tips from our rangers. Audio tours are on offer in Royal National Park and Sydney Harbour National Park, with more available soon. <https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/self-guided-tours>

Clean and Green Environmental Newsletter (Canterbury Bankstown Council) March 2024

Wurridjal Festival, March 14 - April 7, During the month of March, Cooks River People gather for Wurridjal Festival to celebrate the strong communities and ecologies along the river. The festival marks the start of a season when thousands of mullet – known as ‘Wurridjal’ in the Aboriginal languages spoken in the Sydney region – enter the Cooks River during their pre-spawning migration along the east coast of Australia. Make a booking at <https://cooksriver.org.au/wurridjal-festival-2024> or by calling our customer service team at 9707 9000.



Garden crossword,
courtesy of Menai
Wildflower Group
copied from a puzzle book
enlarge to about 150% to
read it.
Have fun!
answers next month.

COMING EVENTS

For further details of coming events for other district groups, please see the APS NSW website at <http://austplants.com.au/calendar>

Wednesday April 3rd, from 6 pm	APS HGR meeting at Club Burwood, 97 Burwood Road, Burwood, Dinner from 6 pm, Presentation at 7:30 pm, 'Plants of Extreme Conditions'
Friday April 5 at 6pm	Wurridjal Festival on Cooks River Film Screening: "River", at the River Canoe Club. Make a booking at https://cooksriver.org.au/wurridjal-festival-2024
Thursday 11 April, 4pm - 5pm	A Yarn and Wander through Henley Park, Mitchell Street, Enfield, with Uncle John Dickson. arranged by Burwood Council
Wed, 17 April	Sutherland Group meeting - Propagation workshop Look out for their newsletter a few days before the meeting.
Sunday 21 April, 10am – 4pm	OPEN DAY "Behind the Wall" tour of the Paul Sorensen Gardens of Mahratta, an historical house and garden at Wahroonga (NSW). For more information and House Tour bookings go to www.mahratta.org.au
Saturday, 27th April, 10 am	Cooks River Mini Tour with Doug Benson, organised by the Clemton Park Uniting Church congregation.
Saturday 11th May, tours from 11 am Presentation 1 pm	APS NSW Quarterly meeting and AGM hosted by Parramatta Hills group, at Gumnut Hall, Gumnut Place, Cherrybrook. (aka Cherrybrook Community Preschool) Speaker Dan Clarke 'Plants of the Cumberland Plain'
Thursday 1st May, 4 pm to 5 pm	A Yarn and Wander through Cooks River, Flockhart Park, Hextol St, Croydon Park, with Uncle John Dickson. arranged by Burwood Council

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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1328674687627886>

<https://www.austplants.com.au/Harbour-Georges-River>