

From: "Australian Plants Society NSW" <APS@wildapricot.org>
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To: "RHONDA DANIELS" <rhdaniels@bigpond.com>
Reply-To: "enewsletter Editor" <enewsletter@austplants.com.au>

Welcome to the May enewsletter



Native Plants for NSW – May 2020

The monthly enewsletter of the Australian Plants Society NSW



Appreciating our local natural environments more than ever (Ralph Cartwright photographed in the Royal National Park by Peter Rae, Sydney Morning Herald)

In our May issue

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Welcome to the enewsletter

This month marks two anniversaries: the one year birthday of the enewsletter and the 250th anniversary of Cook and Banks in Australia. Thanks for feedback on the last issue's ideas to use more time at home to maintain a sense of native plant community. Your stories, photos, virtual events, feedback and more are welcome. Please email the editor, Rhonda Daniels, at enewsletter@austplants.com.au

Our enewsletter is emailed to members at the end of the month. Each issue is also saved as a pdf file [here](#).

From the President John Aitken

I hope that you and your families are well during this period of uncertainty. While our movements have been restricted and many are working from home, it has provided an ideal opportunity to enjoy the beauty of our bushland and native plants. On my walks through bushland reserves near me I have been amazed and heartened by the number of families exploring them. Many I have chatted to, from the mandatory distance of 1.5 metres, have told me it was the first time they had explored the reserves and expressed their joy. Hopefully, they will continue to enjoy our bushland and its flora and appreciate the need to treasure and protect it.

To engage with our members, Sutherland Group trialled a very successful meeting using the APS NSW Zoom subscription. Fifty one members attended, with 40 from Sutherland Group and 11 from other groups. A number of groups are also considering Zoom for their meetings.

Our AGM will be held using Zoom on Saturday 16 May, followed by a talk by Dr Brett Summerell, Chief Botanist, Royal Botanic Gardens. I encourage you to register for the AGM and attend the meeting. Details below.

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AGM and talk by Zoom: Saturday, 16 May 2020

2 pm – Annual General Meeting

Our AGM will be held by Zoom, an easy to use video conferencing app. Read all the details [here](#), including the agenda, Annual Report 2019 and Zoom arrangements. Please register or complete the proxy form.

Key dates:

- Saturday, 2 May – Please email completed nomination forms for Board positions.
- Wednesday, 13 May – Please email any financial questions, so we can provide responses at the AGM.
- Thursday, 14 May – Please email proxies to secretary@austplants.com.au

2.30 pm – Talk by Dr Brett Summerell: From Banks (Joseph) to Bushfires

Dr Brett Summerell, Director Research and Chief Botanist at the Botanic Gardens and Centennial Parklands, will discuss the botanical work of Banks and Solander, the herbarium collection they created and its scientific importance, and the impact of the bushfires on Australia's unique plant life. Using Zoom, you can see Brett and his powerpoint presentation.

Over 250 years ago, the global botanical community became aware of the diversity of Australian plants when Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander on board HMB Endeavour, with Lt James Cook at the helm, sailed into Botany Bay. Over the next eight days they collected plant specimens furiously, and together with collections in Queensland, most notably at Endeavour River in Far North Queensland, they amassed the largest collection of Australian plants then known. This collection highlighted the diversity and uniqueness of Australian plants and set in train a fascination with our amazing flora.

It also set in place other factors of history which have had a very detrimental impact on the original inhabitants of this country – its people, fauna and flora. For plants,

this impact has been dramatic and horrendously exemplified by our recent fires.

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Activities for more time at home – follow-up and feedback

Our April enewsletter featured ideas for more time at home [here](#). Here's some follow-up and feedback. Send suggestions or reviews of websites or other activities to share to Rhonda Daniels at enewsletter@austplants.com.au

Index for *Native Plants for NSW*

An index of the last 10 years of *Native Plants for NSW* is now available on our website [here](#), making it easier to track down that article you vaguely remember and want to read again.

Facebook sites

Peter Wauchope from Southern Tablelands Group recommends two Facebook sites:

- **Australian Native Plant Enthusiasts forum**, run by SA moderators for the entire continent with 30,000 members
- **Australian native plant noticeboard & marketplace**, a related, newly formed group with 4,000+ members that includes advertising of sales – personal and District Group.

Peter says “I have found these sites extremely helpful especially when members arrive with species and no names. Many APS members use the site and, as with the marketplace, it’s a great place to advertise events and sales also, whether they be Group sales or private.”

Buying plants online

Some nurseries that sell online only are listed on our website [here](#). Other nurseries with a physical presence also post or courier orders to customers.

Friends of Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden at Port Augusta in South Australia, are offering half price mail order sales from their nursery. Many of the arid zone native plants produced at the Port Augusta nursery thrive in higher rainfall areas and blend well with other native and exotic Mediterranean climate plants. Some of the plants are not available anywhere else. This may help keep the Botanic Garden “afloat” during this difficult time as the café, gift shop and plant sales area are closed, though the Garden is still open to visitors. Email John Zwar for a list of plants available at jzwar@bigpond.com

The art of botanical illustration

Watch a [14 minute video](#) on YouTube of artist Angela Lober painting a Norfolk Island pine in watercolours, part of a Sydney Living Museums exhibition in 2016. Very calming.

250th anniversary: Joseph Banks

Articles on Joseph Banks by university researchers at The Conversation website:

- [Joseph Banks: traveller, botanist and agent of the British Empire](#) by David Andress, University of Portsmouth. For celebrated botanist Joseph Banks, his voyage with James Cook was more about extending imperial power than simply discovery.

- [**Botany and the colonisation of Australia in 1770**](#) by Bruce Buchan, Griffith University. Botany was an integral feature of Britain's colonial and imperial ambitions.
- [**Buried under colonial concrete, Botany Bay has even been robbed of its botany**](#) by Rebecca Hamilton, Dan Penny, Josephine Gillespie and Shane Ingrey. To conserve ecosystems that escaped European exploitation and mismanagement, we must listen to environmental histories to complement scientific research.
- Also Sir Joseph Banks' papers at the State Library of NSW [website](#).

250th anniversary: Endeavour voyage online exhibition and new book

'Endeavour Voyage: The Untold Stories of Cook and the First Australians' is a new online exhibition from the National Museum of Australia. It features a specially commissioned film made in collaboration with Indigenous communities including descendants of those whose ancestors witnessed Cook's passage. The film reimagines the message of the Endeavour's arrival being passed up the east coast.

New content will be released on the website to mirror the Endeavour's voyage up the east coast between April and August 1770 and key moments. Enjoy from the comfort of home. Details [here](#).

East Coast Encounters 1770, a new book from the Sutherland Shire Historical Society, looks back on the first recorded contact between the Aboriginal people of Kamay Botany Bay and Europeans. Unlike many traditional histories, it presents a new assessment of the events of 250 years ago in ten articles by different authors. It aims to increase awareness of these largely unknown perspectives and debunk myths that either hero-worship or vilify Cook. Available from [Sutherland Shire Historical Society](#).



Spare time? Help develop plant profiles for our website

We have over 400 plant profiles on our website, developed by Jeff Howes and Warren and Gloria Sheather. Our plant database [here](#) attracts a lot of visitors to our website, and is an important resource to keep updating.

If you like a bit of writing and research, then this might be a job for you! Alan Fairley, a wonderful native plant author and photographer, has also given us permission to use over 2,500 of his Sydney native plant images. We've developed a list of possible plants to profile and a template to use. Of course, if you have knowledge and images of other plants not on our list, we'd welcome them as well.

Dan Clarke is managing the overall project. Email Dan at daniel@lykos.com.au for more information and to let him know if you'd like to develop a profile (or two).



Conservation submission

APS NSW has sent a submission stating our position to the Royal Commission into National Disaster Arrangements and also intends to make a submission to the NSW inquiry. John Aitken thanks Dan Clarke, APS NSW Conservation Officer, and Board member Tony Maxwell for their efforts in preparing these reports.

Read our submission [here](#). Photo: Mount Banks recovering from fire (Heather Miles)



Member in the media

On Thursday 23 April, Sutherland Group member Ralph Cartwright, also Treasurer of Friends of the Royal, was featured in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on local bushwalking with great photos too.

Ralph explains how it happened: "I was contacted by the Sydney Morning Herald Urban Affairs reporter, Angus Thompson, who got my contact details from the Friends of Royal page who wanted to talk to someone still bushwalking in the Royal in the time of coronavirus. We had a brief chat for quotes and he sent a veteran photographer, Peter Rae, to meet me. We walked to the end of the wheelchair-accessible Bungoona path near the park entrance at Loftus for the shoot. The lookout offers fantastic scenic views of Hacking River as the photo shows. I did mention I was also a member of APS but that didn't make it into the story."

Read the newspaper article [here](#).



Amazing greys

Heather Miles and other APS members have written many great articles for the GardenDrum gardening website. To make them more accessible, we are now putting them directly on our website. Brian Roach writes about some of his favourite grey-foliaged plants – perfect for our changing conditions. Brian says "let's hear it for Amazing Greys – how sweet the ground that sees a stretch of these".

Read more [here](#). Photo: *Eremophila 'Kalbarri Carpet'*



Thanks for 60 years of Australian Plants

Responding to the 60th anniversary of *Australian Plants*, very long-time member Bryan Baker writes:

To all. Time certainly flies. I became a member in August 1962 and joined at Bill Payne's home. [Bill was the long-time editor of *Australian Plants*, from East Hills Group]. I was to move from Melbourne to Sydney in early 1963. I believe I have all the quarterly magazines and look forward to receiving each issue. I now live 11 km west of Merriwa on black soil. It restricts the plants I can grow. Previously I was at West Pennant Hills. At that time, I think the name was Bob Caldwell, teaching at Ryde Horticulture classes, plus Max Hewitt (Verticordia) visited my garden a number of times. The popularity of our plants has grown so much from back then. Congratulations and thanks to all who manage the "Society".

Study Group updates

This is the time to explore all our [Study Groups](#) and their newsletter archives. There's quite a choice. Read how to join a group for free [here](#). Study Group liaison officer Nicole Maher summarises recent newsletters.

[Australian Plants for Containers](#) Study Group Newsletter No. 35, April 2020

The newsletter has successes and reflections on failures by members across the country on growing natives in pots. Species successfully grown in pots include the tropical fern Terrestrial Elkhorn (*Microsorum punctatum*) in Queensland, Mountain Pepper (*Tasmannia lanceolata*) in South Australia, Mountain Bells (*Paphia meiniana*) in Tasmania, and a number of species of *Banksia*, *Boronia* and *Telopea* in the ACT. Advantages of pots include: growing natives not suited to your local soil, portability, and moving plants to protect them from frosts. Issues include keeping pots weed-free, remembering to fertilise, and maintaining through very hot periods. Fran Middleton offers advice on re-potting: re-pot plants in mild weather; if you have to sever large roots (eg if the pot was placed directly on top of soil), immediately remove a substantial amount of top growth to keep the balance right for transpiration; and finally, a tonic may help plant and person after such an ordeal!

[Dryandra](#) Study Group Newsletter No. 78, February 2020

Members are invited to join the new Dryandra Lovers Group on Facebook. Group Leader Margaret Pieroni describes her recent travels around southern WA to find and photograph *Dryandra* taxa to fill gaps in the Group's digital collection, which features photos of the flower head and at least one view of the plant. Members report seeing branches on plants of several *Dryandra* species dying during the drought, with speculation that they are sacrificing some of their foliage to survive.

[Fern](#) Study Group Newsletter No. 144, February 2020

The Group is seeking a new Leader. The out of print Fern volume of *Flora of Australia*, vol 48, is now available as a free electronic download. Member Ron Wilkins extols the virtues of *Pellaea falcata* and *Rumohra adiantiformis*, two ferns he describes as 'independent', as they survive hot and dry times with little to no attention. A research paper reports on the new classification of all Australian ferns and lycophytes, which comprises 528 species and sub-species, with eight newly recorded and six newly recognised species included.

[Grevillea](#) Study Group Newsletter No. 115, February 2020

Member Ray Brown received an Order of Australia Medal in the Australia Day

Honours List for Services to the Environment and Conservation, recognising his voluntary work in establishing and directing the Illawarra Grevillea Park from 1984 to the present.

While grevilleas have evolved to respond favourably to bushfires, regenerating freely from seed lying dormant in the soils, they rely on good follow-up rain in autumn and winter. The changing climate in recent years, with increased frequency of bushfires and little follow-up rain, has meant very little regeneration now occurs. This reinforces the importance of having living collections in gardens, to act as backups. Neil Marriot, curator of the Living Collection, describes some of the hybrid seedlings which have sprung up, and rues the fact that several beautiful specimens are unlikely to be released commercially due to the nursery trade's aversion to slightly prickly foliage. ACT member Masumi Robertson made an incredibly generous donation to purchase Lucid software to create a Grevillea identification key.

On the APS NSW website

Our [website](#) has our membership benefits, [how to join](#), District Group details, office-bearers and many resources including our Plant Profile database. Members receive an email reminder about membership renewal and can also renew online [here](#). The form in *Australian Plants* is for the journal only.

Catch up on:

- [Winter delights by name](#)
- [Celebrating Australian natives at the Easter Show 2019](#)
- [Watch Menai Group on Gardening Australia](#)

Photo finish

 [?](#)
Senna artemisioides – one of Brian Roach's amazing greys (photo: Rhonda Daniels)

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

Australian Plants Society NSW

www.austplants.com.au

enewsletter@austplants.com.au

PO Box 263, Cremorne Junction NSW 2090

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