



Newsletter of Menai Wildflower Group

August 2022

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Spring is in the air

After a cold winter, the days are lengthening and the sun is shining (sometimes). It's a great time to get out and enjoy some of our local bushland which, after all the winter rain, looks like it will be putting on another floriferous spring. There are some APS activities coming up including the ANPSA Biennial Conference, at Kiama and, more locally, a walk around Warumbul with Greg, Lloyd and Pam. The wet winter has been perfect for plant growth, unfortunately including weeds, so extra hands at the fire station garden are always welcome. Wattle Day is coming up on 1 September and the wattles are looking spectacular for it. Find out more about the history and meaning of Wattle Day at the National Museum of Australia,

<https://www.nma.gov.au/explore/blog/wattle-day>.



Local wattle flowering well. P Forbes.

July meeting

Our president, Peter Olde took us back to colonial Sydney in his presentation on the early European botanists exploring the amazing indigenous plants of the new colony. This was a great prequel to John Knight's previous discussion of native plants in the horticulture trade.

Peter began his very entertaining talk on the history of our earliest botanists. Joseph Banks and Dr Daniel Solander's work on their visit with Cook in 1770 was the first botanical investigation of Australia and resulted in an enormous collection of images and pressed specimens of unique Australian flora. Its arrival back in Europe sparked public and scientific interest with a four day talk in Latin to the Linnaean Society presenting their results.

Other botanists followed as the British established their colony. The First Fleet officers and early colonists, included several amateur naturalists such as Lieutenant Tench, showed interest but further scientific investigations were financed by wealthy patrons such as Banks, who continued his

interest in Australia by supporting further botanical surveys. George Caley was sent to NSW in 1800 as a botanical collector for Banks. Also in 1800, Banks approved Scot Robert Brown (of Brownian motion fame) as the naturalist on Matthew Flinders' expedition to answer the question of whether New Holland was one island or several. Other scientific staff on the expedition included the renowned botanical illustrator, Ferdinand Bauer and gardener Peter Good, who was to collect live plants and viable seed for Kew Gardens. Caley and Brown named numerous Australian plant genera and species.

Peter also described the cutthroat nature of botanical investigation, with rival scientists claiming the privilege of discovery. Peter has personal experience of this kind of extreme plagiarism when a researcher purloined his research after hearing Peter's talk on initial DNA analysis that defined Grevilleas as Hakeas. Peter was not convinced by these findings and further investigation proved they were incorrect but in the meantime another author published the results as his own. This demonstrates one of the consequences when researchers don't adhere to the etiquette of scientific discovery.

G Jackson

August meeting

Tom Kristensen introduced us to the vicissitudes of 'Counting Koalas' a pursuit he carried out with Steve Anyon-Smith during the Covid lockdown. From a whim it has developed into a major undertaking. From the first one they spotted they have recorded over 100 individuals, some of course seen many times. Starting from the Woronora Dam they have moved down the Woronora to the Needles and crossed to Mill Creek down to the Georges.

Sorting one koala out from another is a challenge. Apart from difference in size many koalas have distinctive physical features from battle damaged ears to delicate nostril mottling that are as individual as fingerprints. Tom also told us their names, many of which had echoes of National Park staff. But, as it was just first names, I guess it does not mean they were related.



Local koala. P Forbes.

Tom made a great case for coordination of the information from the different organizations that study koalas, because Tom and Steve came across many koalas with tags in their ears but could not find out who put them there or any information at all about them. That information will be lurking somewhere clogging up cabinets or computers, of no use to anyone. If nose markings are unique there is a great opportunity to use his photographic database for researchers into koalas for years to come and expand it into a state wide resource. That would make Tom and Steve's contribution to koala science unique.

L Hedges

Coming events

Aug 28 Walk back into history and enjoy the beautiful scenery of **Warumbul** in RNP. Join Lloyd, Greg and Pam as they explain the history and botany of this 19th century resort. This is a fairly flat and short walk although there are some steeper rough tracks to explore the whole extent. Those extensions are optional so you can avoid them. Bring usual walking gear and morning tea. There are toilets but no other facilities.



Looking towards Jibbon from Warrumul. P Forbes.

3,4,10,11 Sep Grevillea Park Botanical Gardens
open days.

11-16 Sep ANPSA Biennial Conference, Kiama. Australian Flora – Past Present Future at the Kiama Pavilion, Saturday 10 to Friday 16 September \$140/day or \$600 for full conference
More information at <https://austplants.com.au/ANPSA-Biennial-Conference-2022>

8 Oct Bring along a treasure from your garden or a bush gem (photo only, in that case) for a **show and tell** with **Lloyd**.

12 Nov **AGM plus a speaker TBA.**



Lambertia on Curra Moors. P Forbes.

Kind thanks from Wood's family

Dear Committee and Wildflower Club members,

Words cannot express how much our family appreciated your thoughtfulness, your generosity and support during this difficult time.

The native wildflower basket spray was truly magnificent. So many people commented that it was the loveliest they had ever seen.

Mum was a woman of strength and beauty. She had many loves in her life but the passion she held so dear was her love for the Australian bush and native flora. She would have been beyond touched by your beautiful wildflower tribute, it was perfect.

Thank you all for the treasured friendships, past and present, she developed over many years.

With our warmest regards,

Colleen, Margaret & Kathy

Heather's daughters.

M Payne



Caliatryx on Curra Moors. P Forbes.

Editor

Peter describes two new Grevilleas

Two new Grevillea species have recently been described by Peter Olde, MWG's President and leader of the APS Grevillea Study Group. Both species, *Grevillea gilmourii* and *G. milleriana* are related closely to *G. macleayana* which occurs in the Nowra–Ulladulla region. *G. milleriana* was serendipitously discovered on Maddens Plains, in a perched swamp. Only one plant was found but the discovery confirmed the existence of the plant that has been seen and searched for much earlier (around 2000) but not collected. Its recognition as a biological species rather than as a self-sown hybrid is discussed in Peter's paper (see reference details below).



Grevillea milleriana. P Olde.

All three species are linked morphologically and historically to the Victorian species *G. barklyana* F.Muell. ex Benth., which remains taxonomically unaltered from recent treatments. For the sake of convenience, all four species (*G. barklyana*, *G. macleayana*, *G. gilmourii* and *G. milleriana*) are grouped informally into an alliance, the *Grevillea barklyana* alliance, for which diagnostic characters are outlined and two identification keys are given. They are putative members of the *Aspleniifolia*/*Hookeriana* Subgroup of the *Grevillea pteridifolia* Group.

Grevillea gilmourii is separated from *G. macleayana* (McGill) Olde & Marriott where it had previously been treated as the 'Deua form', a geographically disjunct, divided-leaf variant. The separate formal recognition of *G. gilmourii* here necessitates a revised

delineation of *G. macleayana* to restrict it to populations with undivided leaves only, incorporating recent clarification to terminology in relation to leaf lobing. Both newly described species have divided leaves and are known from only small populations. *G. gilmourii* is a small upright tree that has some leaves divided also but not toothed. They are lobed. It occurs in Deua NP on volcanic soils in a small population only. This location is quite disjunct from known populations of *G. macleayana* which only has simple leaves.

Conservation recommendations are provided for both new species.



Grevillea macleayana. P Olde.

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Grevillea gilmourii Olde and *G. milleriana* Olde (Proteaceae: Grevilleoideae: Hakeinae), two species newly described from New South Wales
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National Herbarium of New South Wales,
Australian Institute of Botanical Science, Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust, Locked Bag 6002, Mount Annan NSW 2567, Australia



Grevillea intricata at fire station. P Forbes.

Vulnerable Cockatoos

Federal Environment Minister, Tania Plibersek, has recently moved the SE Glossy Black Cockatoos to the Vulnerable category as threats to their environment continue to impact. As covered in our earlier newsletter, a Save our Species project (see NSW Environment and Heritage online) led by Lauren Hook from National Parks has been trying to improve their environment by replanting a corridor of suitable trees (Allocasuarina are a good food source) to link up the areas they migrate across. Menai Wildflower Group supports this project by propagating and supplying the seedlings. With more funding announced we hope we can increase our contribution to over 15,000. Great work from the team at the Tip Nursery.

To read more about this issue see <https://www.australiangeographic.com.au/news/2022/08/south-eastern-glossy-black-cockatoo-mountain-skink-added-to-federal-threatened-species-list/>

P Forbes

Rare Eucalypt confirmed as new species

ABC is reporting that an unassuming shrubby eucalypt with cup-shaped fruit from the Hills District is a distinct species, *Eucalyptus* sp. Cattai. That makes it an incredibly rare eucalypt, with only 700 individual trees left in

some of the most densely developed areas of Sydney. Although it was spotted in the 1990s, it was not till recently that genomic testing confirmed that the mallee is not simply a hybrid. Eucalyptus species are notoriously promiscuous and readily hybridise. However, the results showed, not only was this not a hybrid of two other species, but also that it was more distantly related than expected, demonstrating an unanticipated biodiversity in the Sydney region. Being so close to future development puts it under extreme pressure and it is listed as critically endangered. For this reason, seedlings are being grown at the Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan, to be planted in secret locations. Ironically, many of the seedlings are hybrids!

If you are looking for one, watch out for -

- a shrubby type of eucalypt up to five metres tall, without a main trunk
- flower buds in the shape of a pea
- on close observation, a cap on the bud which is similar in shape to a church steeple



(Supplied: Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan)

From <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-07-21/new-eucalypt-species-sydney-botanic-gardens/101255680>

Editor

Of interest

Keep in contact with upcoming events at APS NSW using the calendar [here](#), or enjoy a range of past presentations on the NSW APS Youtube channel. Go to Youtube and search for the NSW APS channel for more.

If you are quick, you can vote for Australia's favourite tree [here](#). There are already over 100,000 votes and the elimination rounds are starting. The 20 trees left include many gum trees — the ghost gum, gungurru, karri, mountain ash, red flowering gum, river red gum, snow gum and Sydney red gum, as well as the Moreton Bay fig, golden wattle and Illawarra flame tree. Already out of the race are the coolibah, the mulga, and grey mangrove, among others with the red cabbage palm getting the "black stump" award for the least votes. You can see other Science Week events at [National Science Week](#).

If your garden has been visited by bandicoots you may be annoyed by these charming creatures. Find out how they are bouncing back after the fires and how they help your garden [here](#).

And learn how the Indigenous people of WA's Western Desert used [wattles](#) for thousands of years.

Sutherland APS reported that the Grevillea Park at Bulli has been recognised with the NSW Governor opening the Illawarra Grevillea Park Botanic Garden. Lloyd was one of the attendees who saw the opening of the new picnic shelter and rainforest walk and is hopeful that this recognition will foster the Park's long term success.

Editor



Banksia praemorsa flowering at the fire station, P Forbes.

News from the Nurseries

Members Lloyd, Greg, Patsy, Marian and Pam plus friends and associates John and Barr, have been hard at work revamping the tip nursery. The glass of the hothouse got a good clean just before it was mysteriously damaged. At the same time some tube stock was stolen so we assume that some panes were broken by a collision during a quick getaway.



All clean on left but damaged panes removed on right.

Fortunately, we were able to salvage some panes from a similar hot house that was being demolished so a bit of work solved the problem very cheaply. We enjoyed cleaning more dirty glass!

The shade house had grown very dark due to overhanging trees and dirt and lichen build-up on the shade cloth.



Very shady shade house!



Team at work replacing roof.

Some new shade cloth over the top has made a big difference and its installation provided a challenging but fun team project, especially working in gluggy mud. With an added clean-up inside it is looking much more professional. The old lichen-encrusted shade cloth was adaptively reused as silt-mesh flooring for the waterlogged area between the shade house and polyhouse.



And a new walkway from the old shadecloth.

Lastly, the polyhouse has been (debatably) spruced up by removal of its luxuriant carpet of liverwort. Now we can feel spring in the air, and the much delayed potting mix has finally turned up, we are ramping up propagation. Tube stock production for the Glossies in the Mist and Adopt-a-Tree projects are on-going and seed stores are getting sorted for priority sowing of many more plants for sale and distribution. Coming up soon are more Grevillea Park open days, the SSC Bushcare Fair at Parc Menai, and the APS conference in Kiama, which all have plant sales.

L Hedges, P Nagle and P Forbes

Adopt a tree

Members Adrian and Janine have been propagating tubestock for Rotary's 'Adopt a Tree' program. Around 8750 tubestock (approx. 1000 from MWG) are to be planted in eight sites in SE NSW in the coming spring. All the property owners have already commenced re-greening their properties and have great plans to continue re-vegetating the landscape and increasing biodiversity.



If you would like to join a planting event/s you can [book](#) directly to register directly for the event/s of your choice. Planting will start at

9am on the Saturday of each event and participants will plant throughout the day. On Sunday you can relax (on a couple of weekends you can continue planting), look at previous plantings on the property or visit local towns. You are most welcome to camp, as most properties have some shower & toilet facilities. All volunteers will self-cater all of their meals.

Call Adrian 0424 478 498 if you have any questions.

Date	Location
10 September	Moorlands, Dalton
24 September	Moorlands, Dalton
8 October	Moorabinda, Crookwell
15 October	Severn Park, Berridale
16 October	Severn Park, Berridale
22 October	Belubula Park, Canowindra
23 October	Belubula Park, Canowindra
29 October	Peelwood, North of Crookwell
5 November	Calrossie Farm, Mandemarr
6 November	Renrow Park, High Range



Red flowers of grevillea at fire station. M Jackson.



Gymea Lily, fire station garden. P Forbes.

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