

EAST HILLS GROUP NEWSLETTER



APRIL 2017

NEXT EHG MEETING:

From 7 pm for 7.30 pm start, Wednesday 5 April 2017

Guest speaker: Dr Trevor Wilson

National Herbarium of NSW

Pollination of *Prostanthera* and its allies

LUGARNO-PEAKHURST UNITING CHURCH

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

Visitors are welcome.

If you can, please bring something to share for supper, and labelled specimens for the plant table.

WELCOME to the April 2017 edition of the East Hills Group Newsletter. As well as the usual items, we have information from our Treasurer about recent plant sales, and photos of our immediate past president spreading the word on Australian plants.

Enjoy your garden! I hope the wet weather has done your plants more good than harm.

Jan Douglas, Editor

In this newsletter:

- A note from the President
- March plant table notes & photos
- Notes & photos from the March meeting
- Coming events – dates to note
- EHG contact details.

www.easthills.austplants.com.au



FROM THE PRESIDENT

The first APS NSW regional meeting for the year was held at Menai on the 25th February. It was a good day, with Lloyd Hedges giving a very interesting talk on his experiences in finding and then propagating the Pink Flannel Flower. East Hills Group had a table at the meeting and were very successful in selling many plants - we need to thank Karlo and the others who have assisted in the propagation of plants during our monthly work days at Menai.

After all the recent rain it's hard to believe that only 4-6 weeks ago we were frantically watering our gardens. And haven't the plants responded to the rain!. Of course it is not just the plants – we have a small pond which we let dry out over the past few months, but as soon as we had enough rain to put a small amount of water in the pond the frogs responded: Very loud chorus on the first night, and by the next morning the pond had 5 patches of egg froth, then after a few days tadpoles were swimming about. It is amazing how nature responds so rapidly to changing weather conditions.

March has been a big bird month for us – we have been to two bird conferences and an evening talk. The latter was by Ross Crates, a PhD student doing fantastic work on Regent Honeyeaters – it was such an inspiration to hear a talk where good sensible science is finding reasons for their decline and possibly solutions.

Finally, don't forget to come to our April meeting when we have a professional botanist talking to us about pollination of prostantheras and similar plants, which should be very interesting.

Graham Fry
President.

ILLAWARRA GREVILLEA PARK

OPEN DAYS

Saturday 6 May 2017 & Sunday 7 May 2017
Saturday 13 May 2017 & Sunday 14 May 2017

www.grevilleapark.com.au

EHG March 2017 meeting AUSTRALIA – BEAUTIFUL AND UNUSUAL

Tony Porritt

Our advertised speaker for the March meeting was unable to attend due to sudden health problems. Tony Porritt, member of APS NSW Sutherland Group and of Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society, came to our rescue at short notice.

Liz Cameron compiled the following notes, and Tony provided the photos.

Tony and Kate Porritt have travelled extensively by 4WD in Australia over the past 15-20 years, camping in remote areas where they could enjoy the proximity of dramatic and challenging natural landscapes. They have visited the four extremities of mainland Australia, including the least known, Steep Point in Western Australia, and seen the country in drought and flood. Tony screened videos of crossing sand dunes and rivers but emphasised they always travelled with plenty of water and fuel and approached unfamiliar obstacles with caution.



Tony illustrated a variety of ingenious outback directional signs – some more useful/informative than others. In northern Australia, the variety of styles of Indigenous rock paintings and engravings caught his attention. The photos also reflected Tony's fascination with unusual rock formations and bark textures.

One striking photo captured the prolific flowering of grass trees *Xanthorrhoea* in a fire-blackened woodland on white sand.



There was a series of images of pea flowers (one of Tony's favourite families) illustrating a surprising variety colour and leaf form, from Scarlet Runner (*Kennedia prostrata*) to deep orange and red 'eggs and bacon'.



Clockwise, from top left:
Kennedia prostrata,
unidentified pea flower,
Daviesia brevifolia,
Dillwynia parvifolia.



Inland and tropical grevilleas featured, also demonstrating the diversity of colours and shapes of flower spikes, and the range of leaf shapes. Colour was the common theme in a series of shots of blue and mauve flowers including *Comesperma*, *Prostanthera* and many *Solanum* species.



Tony's slide show took us right across Australia and back again, sharing familiar and unfamiliar landmarks and flora; we appreciated his generosity in stepping in at short notice to entertain our group.

PROPAGATION PAYS!

Liz Cameron, EHG Treasurer

The income of East Hills Group has benefitted greatly by the sale of plants that members have propagated at the facilities provided by Menai Wildflower Group. Karlo, as Propagation Officer, deserves a lot of the credit for this.

At the talk given by Graham Walters to the Revesby Garden Club on 4 February, \$39 was raised. The quarterly gathering hosted by Menai Wildflower Group resulted in sales of \$170 and a further \$29 was raised at the March meeting of EHG. That totals \$239 in one month.

THE MARCH 2017 PLANT TABLE

Hugh Stacy

Members brought the following plants to our meeting on March 1:

Banksia media
Correa 'Redex'
Epacris longiflora
Epacris microphylla
Hakea sp.
Hakea salicifolia
Hibbertia obtusifolia
Homoranthus porteri
Hypocalymma puniceum (Large Myrtle)
Nymphoides crenata (Yellow Water Snowflake)

Banksia media: Widespread across southern Western Australia, this is one western species which shows some resistance to *Phytophthora cinnamomi* in our wet and humid summers while tolerating sandy loams, red clays and limestone content. The habit of western banksias to flower at the ends of branches, above the foliage, is an advantage for flower arrangements. This one has iconic yellow spikes, although some may carry a light orange tan.



Photo from gardensonline.com.au

What does the name mean? This question was asked at the plant table, but no member answered. The specific name is from the Latin word *medius* = middle, though in 1830 Robert Brown apparently did not indicate his thoughts as to what might be on either side. As one of the few who, even now, have sailed around our continent, was he thinking of its place in the flora, or perhaps of its leaves, toothed somewhere between coastal *B. integrifolia* and *B. serrata*?

Correa 'Redex': Whatever else is known or conjectured about this plant, it originated on Kangaroo Island, South Australia. The name is a slick reminder of the supposed hybrid parents, *C. reflexa* and *C. decumbens*. although current thought is that another of this island's local species, *C. backhouseana* var. *orbicularis*, rather than *C. reflexa*, is more likely to be involved. Another cultivar called 'Dancing Lipsticks' is also said to be such a hybrid; however its registration has been refused by the Australian Cultivar Registration Authority on the grounds that the name 'Redex' takes priority. Kangaroo Island, apparently, is home for a number of these natural hybrids.

This upright open shrub is adaptable to most conditions, whether in acid or alkaline soils (to pH 8), full sun or shade, hardy in frost or drought. Narrow tubular flowers are 30 x 7 mm, deep pink for half the length from the brown calyx cap, grading to golden brown at the tips.

Hibbertia pedunculata: Generally this plant is prostrate, growing diffusely, but may be erect. It has small crowded alternate oblong leaves to 6 x 1.5 mm with revolute edges and apex tipped down.

Yellow spring flowers are axillary, carried singly on peduncles longer than the leaves, usually 1-2 cm diameter; this specimen had flowers 3 cm across, very fragile in transit. It spreads to 60 cm x 20 cm high, tending to root at the nodes. It is known as a reliable and rewarding rockery plant.

H. pedunculata is widespread in open forest on sandy or light loam, from coast to the western slopes in the Sydney region and is also found in Victoria and Queensland.

***Hypocalymma puniceum*:** The Large Myrtle grows to 60 cm high by 40 cm across in a limited distribution in the WA wheat belt, contained in an arc to the east of, and centred on Perth. It has narrow leaves to 2.5 cm, It features deep pink flowers 1.5 cm diameter in late summer and autumn, unusually large for this genus. This lovely plant is one of many from the west which is short-lived in our climate; for all our members it was a treat to see a locally cultivated sprig.

It seems that a variety, *H. puniceum* ssp. *Cadoux*, has recently been described from a small area in the north of the range.



Nymphoides crenata Left: Flower on stalk, showing submerged stolon and spent flowers; Centre: Flower showing fringed petals; Right: leaves, showing wavy edge. Photos: Jan Douglas.

EHG SPREADING THE WORD!

Graham Walters has been busy spreading the word about Australian native plants – he gave a talk to Revesby Garden Club on February and to an Ikebana flower arranging group in Chatswood on 16 March. Karlo Taliana (Revesby) and Hugh Stacy (Revesby and Chatswood) provided support and information. As mentioned earlier, plants were sold by Karlo at the Revesby talk. Below are a few photos of the Revesby Garden Club talk, provided by Graham's daughter, Sue Walters.



THE BUSINESS

East Hills Group meeting - 1 March 2017

Meeting notes by Liz Cameron.

The APS East Hills Group meeting on 1 March 2017 at Lugarno-Peakhurst Uniting Church commenced at 7.45 pm. Seventeen attended, including two visitors from Menai Wildflower Group.

Graham Fry (chair) confirmed the message that Jan had circulated by email to some members, that the speaker from Neutrog was ill and would not be able to speak to the meeting. Instead, APS member Tony Porritt had agreed to present a slide show illustrating landscapes and flora in many parts of Australia.

Announcements:

Graham thanked Jan for getting the newsletter out in good time as usual.

Quarterly Regional meeting hosted by Menai Wildflower Group on Saturday 25 February was very well attended (about 70 people). It was agreed that quarterly meetings have benefitted by the switch from evening meetings at Ermington to Saturday gatherings hosted by different groups on a rotational basis.

David suggested that East Hills Group get in early with an offer to host another regional gathering in 2018 in Spring when we can showcase Sylvan Grove. We can seek funds from the Region for the hire of a hall for the meeting.

Propagation day at Menai next Saturday (4 March). Karlo explained the stages of the plants that EHG has been propagating in trays in the greenhouse and hothouse.

Speaker at the next EHG meeting on 5 April will be Dr Trevor Wilson from the National Herbarium of NSW who will speak on pollination of *Prostanthera* and its allies.

Karlo asked members to think about suitable prizes for the Trivia Night in June. He will approach some nurseries for gift vouchers.

Jan packaged and distributed *Rhodanthe* seeds donated by former EHG member Val Finch. Kyrill provided advice on the propagation methods he has found successful – in early May spread cow manure and allow it to mature for 7-10 days, then scatter seeds and rake in gently, preferably following a shower of rain.

Jason Cockayne announced that Georges River Council has implemented a recycling program for plastic pots; they can be delivered to the Council Depot on Roberts Avenue on the second Saturday of the month when the nursery is open.

Tony Porritt then gave his talk on Australia – Beautiful and Unusual.

The meeting concluded at 9.30 pm following the plant table and raffle, and supper was served.

JANUARY 2018 – ANPSA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Australian Native Plants Society (Australia) Inc. (ANPSA) presents a national conference every two years, in conjunction with the ANPSA Biennial General Meeting. These rotate through the six states and the ACT. Tasmania is to be the host in January 2018. The 2018 conference theme is *Grass Roots to Mountain Tops*, depicted in the logo with *Themeda* (the grass roots) and the mountain tops forming the shape of the map of Tasmania.



Conference Program

- Sunday 14 January - Registration
- Monday 15 – Friday 19 January - Half day talks and half day excursions
- Monday 15 – Reception at Government House Hobart
- Tuesday 16 - A J Swaby Address – open to the public
- Tuesday 16 - Australian Plants Awards
- Thursday 18 - Conference dinner

Pre-conference tours

- Alpine to Rainforest (five days)
- King Island, via Melbourne (five days)
- Hobart environs, including Mt Field National Park (four days)
- Bruny Island (one day)

Post-conference tours

- Alpine to Rainforest (five days)
- King Island (if pre-conference tour fills)

More details at [APST \(Australian Plants Society Tasmania, Inc.\) www.apstas.org.au](http://www.apstas.org.au)



COMING EVENTS – CHECK YOUR DIARY!

You can find more district group events at <http://www.austplants-nsw.org.au/calendar6.html> .

Wednesday 5 April From 7 for 7.30 pm start	East Hills Group meeting – Dr Trevor Wilson from the National Herbarium of NSW will speak on pollination of Prostanthera and its allies.
Saturday 8 April 1 pm	East Hills Group propagation meeting with Menai Wildflower Group. Illawong Rural Fire Brigade Headquarters
Wednesday 12 April 7 pm	Menai Wildflower Group – Illawong Rural Fire Brigade Headquarters
Wednesday 19 April From 7.45 for 8 pm	Sutherland Group meeting – Are our cities hostile environments for floral visitors? GyMEA Community Hall, 39 GyMEA Bay Rd, GyMEA
Wednesday 3 May	East Hills Group meeting – Liza Schaeper , Principal Project Officer: - Saving our Species, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage
Saturday 6 May & Sunday 7 May	Illawarra Grevillea Park open days. \$5 entry for adults, children free.
Saturday 13 May & Sunday 14 May	Illawarra Grevillea Park open days. \$5 entry for adults, children free.



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