

EAST HILLS GROUP NEWSLETTER



MARCH 2017

NEXT EHG MEETING:

From 7 pm for 7.30 pm start, Wednesday 1 March 2017

**Guest speaker: Paul Dipuglia
Neutrog Fertilisers**

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 March edition of the East Hills Group Newsletter. This issue is very full! It includes notes and photos from the February meeting (including both the talk and the plant table), our financial summary for 2015/2016, our President's Report for 2016 and notes about coming events. Special thanks to Karlo Taliana and David Crawford for photos in this issue. Don't forget the **APS NSW Quarterly Gathering** which will be held before our next EHG meeting. This is **hosted by APS Menai Wildflower Group and includes plant sales and a talk about the Pink Flannel Flower.**

Enjoy your garden and see you soon!

Jan Douglas, Editor

In this newsletter:

- A note from the President
- February plant table notes & photos
- Notes & photos from the February meeting and talk
- 2015/2016 financial summary
- 2016 President's annual report
- Coming events – dates to note
- EHG contact details.

www.easthills.austplants.com.au



FROM THE PRESIDENT

We had another good meeting in February, with Karlo giving an interesting if sobering presentation on rare and unusual plants from Australia. Many of these plants have tiny populations and are extremely vulnerable to extinction - and it's not just in the country: one of the specimens is from the Bankstown Airport site.

The hot summer is proving a challenge to our plants. While we might believe that our Australian plants have evolved to handle such conditions, we are now witnessing record temperatures for extended periods, not just one day. Plants may be able to tolerate high temperatures for a short period, but when it goes on for a week coupled with high overnight temperatures the high rate of evaporation can be too much for many plants. I know I have lost a number of plants this summer and I fear our bushland and the fauna might be suffering. I have noticed on recent trips into our nearby forested areas that birds seem to be particularly quiet.

Our nearest APS neighbour, Menai Wildflower Group, are hosting the first quarterly gathering of APS this year, on Saturday 25th February. If you have the time, it would be good to support Menai and APS and attend the function. I find these days are always interesting and there are always plenty of good plants for sale.

Graham Fry
President.



APS NSW QUARTERLY GATHERING
Saturday 25 February 2017
hosted by Menai Wildflower Group
Illawong Rural Fire Brigade Headquarters

Details are in the current issue of
Native Plants for NSW.

1 pm start

Fire station gardens open from 11 am

Tea and coffee from 11 am

Optional pre-meeting walk but you must register!

EHG February meeting - Rare and unusual Australian plants Presentation by Karlo Taliana

The notes below were provided by Karlo. Liz Cameron compiled notes from the meeting and included in these some hyperlinks to related sites, so I have included these with Karlo's notes.

Karlo explained that since becoming interested in native plants he has become fascinated by their incredible diversity. Karlo offered the group 'a small sprinkle of what's out there' in the way of rare and unusual plant species, strange colour forms and shapes.

Karlo began with the 'medium rare':

Kunzea newbeyi – This species is normally quite inconspicuous unless in flower when the flower heads are stunning. First scientific discovery in 1964, then elusive for 50 years until recent surveys by Bush Heritage Australia identified small populations. Only five populations around the Fitzgerald NP and Stirling Range NP.

Angianthus globuliformis – About 50 new plant species are discovered in WA each year. This species was found near Lake Grace in the Wheat-belt region in May last year and officially named in August. This rare daisy became WA's only 10,000th known species. www.abc.net.au/news/2015-08-12/rare-daisy-angianthus-globuliformis-10000th-native-plant-species/6690050

Then the 'very rare':

Last year, there were close to 100 native plant species on the critically-endangered list – this is the most threatened level a species can be given before becoming extinct. Quite often it is due to its restricted distribution which makes its populations susceptible to bushfires, soil pathogens and the activities of mankind (whether agriculture, mining, roadworks or other developments).

Acanthocladium dockeri – This species is currently restricted to SA although Herbarium records indicate it occurred in NSW around the time of European settlement. It was first recorded during the Burke & Wills Expedition in 1860 but was not recorded again until 1910. By 1992 it was thought to be extinct. From 1999 onwards, four or five populations were found in the mid-north region of SA, all within a 22km radius. The former NSW populations along the Murray & Darling Rivers are extinct. Among the SA populations, trials have found low levels of seed set as a result of low pollen viability. In the field, plants have only been observed reproducing vegetatively by suckering from roots and shoots. In the laboratory, seedlings have only been successfully raised by tissue culture, indicating low seedling vigour. The remaining plant in the wild all have low genetic variability, low seed viability and appear to reproduce only by suckering from roots or stems. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-07-25/acanthocladium-dockeri-flowers.jpg/5623476>

Rhizanthella slateri (Eastern Underground Orchid) – Rarely seen orchid with a 15cm long fleshy stem emerging from a horizontal rhizome; cluster of purple flowers emerge through

surface to leaf litter. Pollinated by flies. Restricted to ten locations within NSW with Bulahdelah being the largest of these (up to 60 individuals) – this is the northern-most limit of this species, quite disjunct from the other locations. Kink in the shape of the Pacific Hwy due to the presence of the Bulahdelah population. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2010-11-05/rare-orchid-successfully-relocated/2325796>

Banksia vincentia – Australia’s rarest banksia known, with only five plants remaining in the wild in Vincentia, Jervis Bay. Easy to propagate from cuttings but difficult to establish in the garden. Low growing shrub 0.75 m H x 1 – 2 m W . Flower-heads are maroon to black just prior to anthesis. Threats include urban development, fire, invasive weeds, pathogens and theft. Road built through middle of population – this altered the drainage of the site. Conservation efforts include storing and germinating seed as well as cultivating new plants from cuttings. [Photo: Karlo Taliana.]



Hibiscus insularis (Phillip Island Hibiscus) – from small isle off south coast of Norfolk Island. Introduced herbivores all but wiped out the entire population – now these have been eradicated, the species is slowly recovering. However, there is no genetic diversity within species, so soil pathogens still pose a threat. Plants are available for sale within the EHG if anyone wishes try growing this species. Upright shrub to 2m H, plant in part-sun, well drained nutrient-rich soil. The friable porous soils they grow in at Phillip Island do not hold water well, so I’m assuming that the soil needs to remain moist but not waterlogged! [Our specimens are growing well in very dry, well-drained, sandy spots in part shade. There used to be magnificent hedges of this plant adjacent to the café at RBG Mt Annan – not sure if they are still there. – Editor.] <http://jerry-coleby-williams.net/2014/08/23/the-ultimate-hibiscus/>

Hibbertia puberula ssp glabrescens (Bankstown Hibbertia) – prostrate species with about 50 plants first noted in 2006 within a 2 hectare portion of Bankstown Airport. It has not been found in any other location. In 2009, its numbers were reduced to about 30 plants. Unfortunately, it grows in an area overrun by weeds and is also at risk from the potential airport development, disease and extreme weather changes. Experts have successfully propagated this critically endangered species from cuttings, but these are yet to be re-introduced into their natural habitat. <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedSpeciesApp/profileData.aspx?id=20140&cmaName=Hawkesbury-Nepean>

Then ‘unusual species’:

Leptosema daviesioides [Fabaceae] (the ‘Upside Down Plant’) – Emus have been seen to sip the nectar from their flowers. Pea-flower - Inland species endemic to WA – around Kalgoorlie. <http://esperancewildflowers.blogspot.com.au/2009/08/upside-down-pea-bush-leptosema.html>

Macrozamia dyeri [Zamiaceae] – one of three Macrozamia native to WA, *M. dyeri* is native to deep coastal sands in Cape Arid NP (100 km east of Esperance); the other two occur along the west coast in the Perth region. *M. dyeri* develops a trunk from the accumulation of leaf bases in a similar way to a grass tree – some plants are hundreds of years old. They need fire to flower and their trunks are usually black because of it. Like *Xanthorrhoea*, they suffer no ill-effects of bushfire no matter how often they are burnt. [Sadly my experience is that *Xanthorrhoea* can be killed by fire – what experiences do other members have? – Editor.] Male and female plants. Seeds are toxic.

Macrozamia riedlei [Zamiaceae] – one of the other WA Macrozamia – native to more lateritic soils and in the Jarrah forests. Reported cases of poisoning from this cycad are the earliest for any native plant. *M. riedlei* is mentioned as causing sickness in men eating the seeds by Vlaming in 1697, La Perouse in 1788, Flinders in 1801, and Sir George Grey in 1839.

Tecticornia verrucosa [Chenopodiaceae] – native succulent endemic to numerous inland locations throughout Australian mainland. Produces copious quantities of large edible seeds.

Pimelea decora [Thymelaeaceae] - an annual or short lived perennial, native to north central Queensland. Collected north of Hughenden in 1980. Rocky plain on clay soil. Germinated the seed but it didn't thrive, possibly due to Sydney humidity. Has potential as a potted annual. <http://www.travelling-australia.info/CollHughenden/Pic4B.html>

Leschenaultia macrantha [Goodeniaceae] (Wreath Flower) – groundcover with 1 m spread. Often found growing on roadside verges on the northern sandplains north of Perth up to Geraldton – usually just inland from the coast. Common name is obvious with the flowers occurring around the circumference of the plant. The flowers are the largest of the genus, hence, the species name 'macrantha'. Red-flowering forms have been found. Difficult to grow from seed but easy from cuttings – very difficult to maintain in cultivation even in correct climate. I think it would be great to try in a hanging basket, but I've never seen it for sale. Most nurserymen have indicated that it is very difficult to maintain once cuttings strike.



[Photo: Peter Nydegger]

Pandanus spiralis [Pandanaceae] – (Screw Palm) – found in northern Australia; very common in the Kimberley Region. It can grow up to 10 m high.

Then 'Freaks of nature':

Double-headed Waratah – growing for several years in a colleague's garden in Yagoona. It has double-budded in more than one season. Sometimes one of the buds falls off before the dominant bud opens.

[Photo: Karlo Taliana]



Double-headed *Banksia blechnifolia* at Cranbourne RBG. An extreme case of **fasciation in *Banksia praemorsa*** (yellow form) where the shape of flower head resembles a foot - as long as you don't mind the six toes...

THE FEBRUARY 2017 PLANT TABLE

Hugh Stacy

Plants brought to our meeting on February 1 were:

Buckinghamia celsissima (Ivory Curl Flower)

Correa decumbens

Dendrobium monophyllum (Lily of the Valley Orchid)

Eremophila latrobei (Warty Fuchsia Bush)

Eremophila warnesii

Grevillea formosa (Mt. Brockman Grevillea)

Grevillea leptobotrys (Tangled Grevillea)

Grevillea 'Sunset Bronze'

Phaius australis syn. *P. tancarvilleae* (Swamp Orchid)

Tetragonia tetragonioides (Warrigal Spinach)

Buckinghamia celsissima: The flowers form a fine display. The name is from the superlative form *celsissimus* of the Latin *celsus*, so meaning *especially noble* or *immensely proud*. Several of them flower profusely as street trees on both sides of Stoney Creek Road approaching Forest Road in Bexley. Described previously in EHG newsletter, March 2015.

[Photos: David Crawford.]



Dendrobium monophyllum: This orchid grows from the Clarence River north to Cooktown, colonising trees and rock faces where there is plenty of light. Its main flowering time is early summer, the yellowest of all Australian orchids, with a powerful sweet perfume. Most forms have flowers 6-8 mm across, bell-shaped, shy to open, all facing in the same direction, normally inclined downward. (These characters have earned this species its name 'Lily of the Valley Orchid'.) Usually a raceme has fewer than 20 flowers, its length 5-12 cm. A single leaf 13 cm long, thin and leathery, surrounds the flower spike, both growing from the top of a pseudobulb about 10 cm long.



[Photo: D Crawford.]

***Eremophila latrobei*:** An erect shrub 2 m high by 2 m diameter, this plant may have pink or red flowers to 3 cm long in winter or spring. Is it frost tolerant? It occurs in SA, NSW, Qld, NT and WA.



[Photos, clockwise, from top left: K Taliana, D Crawford, D Crawford, K Taliana.]



***Grevillea formosa*:** This species grows in the Kakadu area of the Northern Territory in shallow sand on exposed rocky outcrops; there summer conditions are hot and very humid with 800-1200 mm rainfall. While *G. formosa* can thrive in our Sydney summer, it hates our wet and cold periods in winter and even grafted plants may be killed by frost.



This is a low shrub that spreads to 2 m across, seldom reaching 1 m high. Branches carry leaves to 18 cm long, all growing from one side, deeply divided with thin lobes only 1 mm wide, a soft grey green reflecting silver in sunlight. Plants flower summer to winter, featuring terminal toothbrush inflorescences, some 30 cm long, packed with individual flowers green in bud, perianths 10 mm long becoming yellow later, green styles turning yellow and ageing orange, the pistils to 6 cm long. The Latin adjective *formosus* means *handsome* or *beautiful*. [Photos: K Taliana.]



Grevillea leptobotrys: A low shrub which adapts its habit differently in different places; dense or prostrate, lignotuberous or suckering, to 40 cm high and usually 1 m wide. Leaves are rarely simple or entire, mid to grey green, usually much divided and extremely variable in shape and size, some over 25 cm, averaging 10 cm, usually with pungent tips. An inflorescence is 3-5 cm long, terminal on its erect peduncle, at times more than one arising together to form the conflorescence. Tiny pink perianths are only 2 mm long, the pistil just 4-6 mm, the whole flower group appears narrow and fragile. The specific name arises from Greek words *leptos* (slender, fine or weak) and *botrys* (referring to the conflorescence). Flowering occurs from late spring to summer.



G. leptobotrys grows naturally in a variety of gravelly soils, from sandy loam to clay, usually in flat areas of forest and eucalypt woodlands. It requires the best drainage (achieved by at least 0.5 m of gravel or small stones below the plant) in warm sheltered positions with a little shade. The soil around the plant must never dry out, but never be waterlogged. [Photo: K Taliana.]

THE BUSINESS

East Hills Group meeting - 1 February 2017

Meeting notes by Liz Cameron.

Meeting commenced at 8 pm. Graham Fry (chair) welcomed members to the meeting and commented on the torrid weather our gardens had been suffering. 15 in attendance, apology from Jan Douglas. We appreciated the effort Boyd made to attend the meeting, travelling by public transport because his car was still out of action. Marie and Des O'Connor formally joined the East Hills Group, while remaining members of the Sutherland Group, by paying a surcharge of \$10.

Announcements:

Saturday 11th February at 10 am – Rhonda Daniels will be leading a Walk and Talk about Bush Tucker, in Joseph Banks Native Plants Reserve. Walk will take about an hour, stay for morning tea and a chat. Event is free but please book by contacting Rhonda.

Saturday 25th February at 1 pm – APS NSW Quarterly Regional Gathering hosted by Menai Wildflower Group; Lloyd Hedges will speak on 'The Pink Flannel Flower: What has been learned'.

Graham referred to the recently released APS NSW Strategic Plan, 59 pages long; (a succinct summary was published on page 2 of the February 2017 Newsletter of East Hills Group).

Royal Easter Show 2017 – there was discussion on whether East Hills Group was prepared to enter the native flower competition, nominations being due on 15th March. Karlo and Marie described the great amount of time and effort involved, but emphasised that a big display of native flora at the Show benefits the APS as a whole. It was decided we would not enter the competition but instead contribute plants to Sutherland Group for their entries, which will be co-ordinated once again by Leonie Hogue. Marie O'Connor will be working with Leonie and offered to collect plants from EHG members.

Volunteers are needed to look after the APS stall at the Show from Thursday 6th to Tuesday 11th April; please contact Leonie Hogue on ph. 9528 6083. Those helping on the stall receive free entry to the Show.

Future speakers at EHG meetings:

Graham Walters has been lining up speakers – those for March and April are confirmed and May is in the pipeline. Our fourth Biennial Trivia Night, cleverly devised by Karlo once again, will probably be in June.

Rare and Unusual Australian Plants – slide presentation by Karlo Taliana

Karlo didn't claim any specialist knowledge on his topic; he pointed out anyone could give such a talk if prepared to undertake research on the Internet. [See page 3 for an abbreviated account of Karlo's talk - Editor.]

Following Karlo's talk there was a group discussion on propagation. Marie and Vida respectively described successes they'd had with material harvested from previous meetings (swamp orchid *Phaius* sp. from a flower stalk exhibited by Kyrill, and *Grevillea leptobotrys* from Graham Fry's vase of flowers at the Christmas meeting). [Photo of *Phaius* by D Crawford.]



Kyrill mentioned the very successful propagation being done by the Isopogon and Petrophile Study Group led by Phil Trickett and Catriona Bate; they have also been generous in sending Eremophila cuttings to the Eremophila Group. Asked for his secrets for propagating Eremophilas, Kyrill said he has a collection of epithets he hurls at them.

Kyrill reminded members that the APS NSW seed bank always appreciates donations of seeds.

Karlo brought a collection of plants that he had propagated and raised \$84 from their sale; added to income from the purchase of raffle tickets, \$120 was raised at the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 9.35 pm following the plant table and raffle, and supper was served.

2016 PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

I think East Hills had an interesting year. We had a diversity of speakers who covered a wide range of topics:

Tony Wales, the River keeper; Robbie Renu, horticulturist, on green walls and roofs; our member Dorothy Luther covering efforts to improve her local area by planting spare spaces using local native plants; Sue Forster on her experiences during re-enactment of the 1915 Cooee March; ecologist John Martin on wing-tagging of White Ibis; Shauna Chadlowe from Australian Wildlife Conservancy updating us on their efforts to control ferals within the natural areas they control. Karlo Taliana, Graham Fry, Hugh Stacy, Jan Douglas and others of our members entertained and educated us with short talks on a variety of topics related to native plants etc.

We had good weather for our morning tea and guided walk at Sylvan Grove Native Garden, but numbers were down on the previous year, about seventeen all told. Jim Mackay carried out his usual expert guidance and answered questions, and we are indebted to him for helping to make the day an enjoyable experience.

Several members once again manned the stall at East Hills Girls Technical High School where we had marginal success with sales and wonder if the effort is worthwhile. Many thanks to our helpers on that day and for those who supplied the plants. Thanks also to Graham Fry and Liz Cameron for sale of plants at the Oatley Festival in October.

In December at our AGM and Christmas celebration meeting we provided a cold meat and salad meal followed by Crazy Whist. The numbers were boosted to about twenty with people from neighbouring groups. The raffle and supper ended a very nice meeting

My appreciation to the committee, especially Jan Douglas for the newsletter and all those who provided the supper goodies and helped in other ways to make 2016 a year to look back on with some satisfaction and pride.

Graham Walters
President East Hills Group APS NSW (2016)

2015/16 FINANCIAL REPORT

East Hills Group Australian Plants Society

INCOME	2015/16	2014/15
Membership dues	\$688.00	\$614.00
Plant Sales	\$592.65	\$439.50
Raffles	\$440.40	\$556.50
Donations		\$61.00
Trivia Night		\$192.00
Xmas Night	\$145.00	
Interest	\$0.36	\$ 0.36
TOTAL	\$1866.41	\$1863.36

EXPENDITURE

Payments to APS	\$531.00	\$626.40
Plant Purchases	\$246.00	\$242.00
Cost of Activities	\$70.00	\$250.00
Meeting Costs	\$590.75	\$323.40
Donations	\$200.00	\$200.00
Sundries	\$143.00	\$298.00
Postage		
TOTAL	\$1780.75	\$1939.40

Surplus/Deficit **\$85.66**

Account Balance	at 31 st October 2015	\$4,074.18
	at 31 st October 2016	\$4,159.84

Graham Fry
Hon Treasurer
17th December 2016

COMING EVENTS – CHECK YOUR DIARY!

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 shaping the map of Tasmania. More details in the next newsletter!

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

Saturday 25 February 1 pm	APS NSW Gathering hosted by Menai Wildflower Group For more details see current issue of Native Plants for NSW
Wednesday 1 March From 7 for 7.30 pm start	East Hills Group meeting – Paul Dipuglia from Neutrog Fertilisers
Saturday 4 March 1 pm	East Hills Group propagation meeting with Menai Wildflower Group. Illawong Rural Fire Brigade Headquarters
Wednesday 8 March 7 pm	Menai Wildflower Group – Jason Cockayne speaking on Stanley Island – Yindayin (off north Queensland) Illawong Rural Fire Brigade Headquarters
Wednesday 15 March 8 pm	Sutherland Group meeting – Tony Wales on the Georges River Riverkeeper Program GyMEA Community Hall, 39 GyMEA Bay Rd, GyMEA
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 <i>Prostanthera</i> and its allies.

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