

EAST HILLS GROUP NEWSLETTER



DECEMBER 2016

NEXT EHG MEETING:

Early start: from 6 pm for 6.30 pm start, Wednesday 7 December 2016

Christmas celebration:

Dinner, Annual General Meeting, and Crazy Whist

*There will be **no plant table**, but you can bring a floral arrangement if you like!*

LUGARNO-PEAKHURST UNITING CHURCH

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

Visitors are welcome – **Members and visitors: please RSVP to Karlo** to assist with catering.

There is a \$5 entry charge to assist with catering costs.

Members, lots of help is needed! Please come early, say 5.30 pm, to help set up.

Please bring:

- a salad or dessert to share at dinner,
- a pack of playing cards if you have a pack available,
- something for the raffle hampers.

WELCOME to the December edition of the East Hills Group Newsletter. I hope to see you at our AGM and Christmas celebration!

Jan Douglas, Editor

In this newsletter:

- A note from the President
- Coming events–Reminders, dates to note
- November Plant Table – notes and photos
- Notes & photos from our November meeting
- EHG contact details.

www.easthills.austplants.com.au



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our November meeting was again interesting and enjoyable. Numbers were down, but eleven members and three visitors listened to a very well prepared talk by Shauna Chadlowe from Australian Wildlife Conservancy. Shauna updated us on the work with which AWC is involved. It was pleasing to hear that the Federal Government has joined with AWC in their work, conserving two large areas in the Kimberley region of WA.

Regarding our AGM: at the November meeting we had names put forward for several positions for office bearers for 2017, which is very encouraging. There is an opening for a treasurer, and the fact that we have some nominations for other positions doesn't preclude others from nominating for these positions.

I hope most of our members are able to attend our Christmas meeting and enjoy a nice meal to start the evening on Wednesday 7th December at 6.00 pm for a 6.30 pm start. Bring something for the raffle hampers and also a salad dish or a sweet for supper.

Graham Walters
President



REMEMBERING HARRY BRIAN

This photo of a special Wollemi Pine (*Wollemia nobilis*) comes from Dorothy and Kyrill Taylor, in remembrance of our friend Harry Brian, who died a year ago on 10 November 2015.

This plant, now about five years old, was given to Kyrill and Dorothy by Harry. Dorothy reports that it is flourishing, with many light green tips on the branch ends.



THE NOVEMBER 2016 PLANT TABLE

Hugh Stacy

Plants brought to our meeting on 2nd November included:

Alloxylon flammeum (Queensland Tree Waratah)
Banksia speciosa (Showy Banksia)
Chamelaucium x Verticordia hybrid 'Paddy's Pink'
Eremophila calorhabdos
Eremophila drummondii
Goodenia sp.
Graptophyllum excelsum
Graptophyllum ilicifolium (Holly Fuchsia)
Grevillea 'Gold Fever'
Hibbertia scandens
Homoranthus prolixus (Granite Homoranthus)
Melaleuca gibbosa (Slender Honey Myrtle)
Melaleuca hypericifolia (Red Honey Myrtle, Hillock Bush)
Myoporum floribundum
Phaius tancarvilleae (Swamp Orchid)(Photo at right)
Scaevola aemula
Scholtzia uberifolia
Syzigium wilsonii ssp. *wilsonii* (Powderpuff Lilly Pilly)
Verticordia muelleriana ssp. *muelleriana*
Verticordia spicata



Photos: David Crawford

Homoranthus prolixus

This is a shrub about 80 cm high which spreads horizontally with the ends of branches growing upwards; the name derives from Latin *prolixus*, meaning stretched out. Tiny leaves are opposite, decussate (successive pairs at right angles), 3-6 mm long, to 1 mm wide with ends tapered. Plants currently available in cultivation open yellow flowers (some wild plants may be red), 5 mm long, in groups up to six on the upper part of each branch, normally in October to November.

This species from northern NSW has become available to APS members only since 2014. It occurs in various localised places in woodland and heath, on shallow acidic sand near granite or volcanic outcrops north of Tamworth and south of Inverell, and at sites near Manilla and Bendemeer. While *H. prolixus* is reported to be locally abundant in only two known sites, one about 2 km square and the other on private property, the fragmented nature of its distribution in small populations makes various



Photos: Brian Roach
Native Plants for NSW April 2014

threats very real.

- There is high risk of fire causing local extinctions.
- Rural subdivisions and clearing for agriculture could further fragment habitat.
- Such small plants can be damaged or destroyed by animals (feral or domestic).
- Damage may occur by human activity (roadworks, bushwalkers, etc).

Surely practical measures can be taken to counter all of these possibilities, and should.

It would be constructive for members presently growing this interesting plant to report their experiences so far. Does it adapt to heavier soils? Can it stand humidity? Will it grow in shade? Is it reasonably drought resistant? Has anyone collected or tried to germinate seed? Is it fanciful to wonder whether some seedlings of these yellow-flowered cutting-grown plants might have red flowers instead? (This happens with *Grevillea juniperina*, which flowers either golden yellow or red from seed.)

Melaleuca gibbosa

This plant occurs naturally in swampy areas of heath and open forest, often over limestone, along coastal parts of SA and Victoria, and also Tasmania. It grows as an open shrub to 2 m high and broad, with small ovate leaves 2-6 mm long in opposite pairs, sessile and decussate, the tips turning down. Mauve flowers form low on new branches in spikes about 1.5 cm long; as the fruits develop the branches thicken around them, forming swollen humps, while the branch continues to grow. The name refers to these distinctive swellings (the Latin word *gibbosus* means very humped). Flowering extends from October to February.



Photo: Warren & Gloria Sheather
<http://austplants.com.au/plant-profiles-base/from-our-cold-climate-garden-sorted/380-melaleuca-gibbosa.html>

M. gibbosa is a hardy plant, commonly cultivated interstate. It grows well in most soils and aspects. This species occupies a range similar to that of *M. decussata* across SA and Victoria and the two are known to hybridise. Both species have mauve flowers, very attractive on opening but soon fading. *M. decussata* may have some flowers on short shoots which are male only; it has linear leaves to 15 mm long with axes angled towards the growing tip of the branch, whereas the ends of broader, shorter leaves of *M. gibbosa* are always turned down towards the base.

Melaleuca hypericifolia

A rounded shrub of the slopes from Bermagui to Sydney along the south coast of NSW, this plant can be found inland to the foot of the Blue Mountains. It presents a dense leaf mass, ideal for screening. New fresh green leaves are opposite, almost sessile and decussate, elliptical and softly pointed, 2-4 cm long to 13 mm wide, becoming a matt mid green when mature. Plants may reach 4 m high by 2 m spread, but can be controlled by pruning. Thinning of branches growing inwards is



recommended to improve the flower display; red spikes 6 cm long and 5 cm diameter develop on older wood from October to February. This is a reliable garden plant with pleasant foliage which may flower in three years from seed, in sandy soil with plenty of sun and moisture.

The name of this species is derived from the genus *Hypericum* and Latin *folium*, a leaf. The leaves of this *Melaleuca* must have reminded the English botanist J.E. Smith of certain European species of *Hypericum*, which has over 400 species worldwide, though only two are Australian native plants.



Photos: Jan Douglas

Syzigium wilsonii* ssp. *wilsonii

This is a beautiful small tree, an ornament to any garden. It grows naturally as an understorey plant from near sea level to 800 m, endemic in undisturbed rainforests in north-east Queensland. Yet it grows reliably from Cairns to Sydney as a rounded shrub 2 m tall by 2 m diameter. It has opposite lanceolate leaves to 15 cm with short petioles, matt deep green above and lighter underneath; new growth opens reddish pink and gradually grades to green through successively paler shades.



Photo: Brian Walters
<http://anpsa.org.au/s-wil.html>

The flowers appear in October to December, each with four petals and sepals and many long free stamens coloured rich wine red. A number of flowers are attached by pedicels radiating from the top of a peduncle, while several peduncles are spaced along and around a central stem. If all flowers are open the conflorescence¹ can appear spherical, to 10 cm across, with massed stamens emanating from the stem. Fruits are fleshy, white and 1.5 cm long. Plants require well composted soil and do better with some shade.

¹ conflorescence: a branch system bearing flowers in which the main axis bears uniflorescences, but is itself qualitatively different in structure from the uniflorescences.

<http://plantnet.rbgsvd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&glossary=yes&alpha=C>

uniflorescence: a unit inflorescence forming part of a conflorescence.

<http://plantnet.rbgsvd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&glossary=yes&alpha=T-U>

inflorescence: a general term for the flower-bearing system of a plant, and more particularly for portions of such systems separated from one another by vegetative portions of the plant.

<http://plantnet.rbgsvd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&glossary=yes&alpha=L>

THE BUSINESS

EHG November meeting: Wednesday 2 November 2016

Notes by Karlo Taliana.

Guest Speaker – Shauna Chadlowe – ‘Changing the Game: providing new hope for Australia’s threatened wildlife’. Following our guest speaker, Group President Graham Walters chaired the meeting with 13 others in attendance.

News/Business:

- Graham Fry has made members aware of the book ‘Native Orchids of Southern Sydney’ by Margaret Bradhurst that is available for purchase with some profits going to our EHG.
- Graham Walters raised the issue of whether other members from our Group may consider stepping forward to take over the roles of Secretary and Treasurer. In addition, while Jan Douglas is willing to continue as our Newsletter Editor (if no-one comes forward), she would be happy to step aside if another person would like to take over as Newsletter Editor. Graham Fry has indicated that he is willing to take on the role of Group President in 2017. Karlo has offered to take on the role of Propagation Officer – with communication among EHG members being essential to ensure that our plants at Illawong Rural Fire Brigade Headquarters are kept watered over summer. Apparently, the shade-house where our plants are kept has an automated watering system, but Karlo will monitor the plants on a regular basis. For next year, we’ll be trying to propagate different species to the past few years – in particular, those which may flower around spring time.
- Outgoing President, Graham Walters, has requested that all EHG members look out for speakers for our meetings for next year. In March, we’ll have a representative from Neutrog Fertilisers speaking; while in April, Trevor Wilson will speak on Pollination of *Prostanthera* and its Allies.
- Regarding our Christmas meeting on Wed 7th Dec 2016: all members are asked to bring a salad, dessert or platter of some sort, plus items for the Christmas hamper raffle. This meeting will commence at 6 pm, with dinner (cold meats, salads) to be served at 6.30pm. Karlo to donate a nursery plant as second prize in the Christmas raffle along with 3 or 4 other good quality plants. There will be no lucky door prize, nor will there be any plant ID table – this will ensure that the evening concludes at a reasonable hour. A brief AGM will follow dinner, then the Crazy Whist card game and desserts, tea and coffee will be served. A small selection of plants will be available for sale.
- Graham Walters has asked for some assistance with preparing a slideshow for a talk he will do in February 2017 for the Revesby Garden Club. Karlo has offered to assist Graham with this task.
- Karlo will email invitations to APS Groups from Menai, Macarthur and Sutherland to our Christmas meeting. The RSVP date will be set for one week prior.
- At our February meeting in 2017, following our 2017 planning and business matters, Karlo will present a brief talk on Rare and Unusual Australian Plants.



SOME PHOTOS FROM THE QUARTERLY GATHERING



Photos: Jan Douglas

COMING EVENTS – CHECK YOUR DIARY!

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

Wednesday 7 December From 6 pm for 6.30 pm start	East Hills Group meeting – Christmas celebration: Dinner, AGM and Crazy Whist. See page 1 for details.
Sunday 11 December From 3 pm	Sutherland Group – Christmas afternoon tea in Joseph Banks Native Plants Reserve.
Wednesday 14 December From 6 pm	Menai Wildflower Group Christmas BBQ. Bring food to barbecue and your own drinks. Salads will be provided.
Wednesday 1 February 2017 From 7 for 7.30 pm start	East Hills Group meeting – Planning for 2017. Presentation by Karlo Taliana: Rare and unusual Australian plants.

East Hills Group contacts

President	Graham Walters	9534 3039	agwalters@bigpond.com
Secretary	Karlo Taliana	9786 8299	karlo.taliana@optusnet.com.au
Newsletter Editor	Jan Douglas	9533 2187	janhd@iinet.net.au
Website Editor	Karlo Taliana	9786 8299	karlo.taliana@optusnet.com.au

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