



Hobart Group Newsletter January 2024

Happy New Year to One and All



Scaevola aemula white flowers and foliage, Fairy fanflower, Sue and Mike's garden Acton Park, photo by Sue Newman

Welcome to New Members

Greetings from the APST Hobart Group to new members Joan Whittier and Duane Moeller from Cygnet, Andy van Emmerik of South Hobart and Meg Lorang from Lindisfarne. We hope you can join us at our meetings, propagation sessions, walks and/or excursions. Please you make yourself known at our Plants Sale, Meetings or a propagation session, where, if you haven't already done so, you can select a plant for your garden or balcony/porch. Thank you for joining our Society.

Event Calendar

(Carmen Walker, Prue Wright and the Program team)

NOTE: FOR EXCURSIONS AND GARDEN VISITS, IF RAIN HAS BEEN OCCURRING UP TO 1 HOUR BEFORE THE EVENT IS DUE TO START, IT WILL BE CANCELLED.

If in doubt, phone or email the Contact person (details of contact persons on page 2).

3 February, Saturday, 1.30 to 5.00pm, Propagation, Kingston Primary School Nursery, setting more cuttings of floriferous plants for the October Plants Sale, potting up struck cuttings and of size seedlings, potting on small plants, weeding as required; contact: Bruce Champion.

4 February, Saturday, Walk at the Needles, Gordon River Road, for *Hewardia/Isophysis* flowers. Details to follow; contact: Christine Corbett.

7 February, Wednesday, 2.00pm, Kingborough Day Meeting, B Block meeting room, for a general discussion and finish doing the programme; contact: Carmen Walker.

14 February, Wednesday, 7.00pm, Hobart Group, General Meeting, Marcus Ragus, Landscaper and Horticulturist will give a presentation on landscaping, including using rocks in the garden. Committee meeting at 6.30pm all welcome; contact: Prue Wright.

17 February, Saturday, Garden visit - details to be advised later; contact: Prue Wright.

2 March, Saturday, 1.30 to 5.00pm, Propagation, Kingston Primary School Nursery, setting more cuttings of floriferous plants for the October Plants Sale, potting up struck cuttings and of size seedlings, potting on small plants, weeding as required; contact: Bruce Champion.

3 March, Sunday, Walk Details to follow; contact: Christine Corbett.

6 March, Wednesday, 2.00pm, Kingborough Day Meeting, garden visit, details later; contact: Carmen Walker.

13 March, Wednesday, 7.00pm, Hobart Group, Annual General & General Meetings, Election of new President, Secretary, Treasurer and Committee members, followed by general meeting activity to be advised. Committee meeting at 6.30pm all welcome; contact: Prue Wright.

16 March, Saturday, Excursion, more details later.

23 March, Saturday, APST Inc. AGM hosted by Hobart Group, more details later.

Contacts:

Carmen Walker: 0421 449 446 or cwalker4761@gmail.com Jenny Boyer: 0434 970 576 or jennyaboyer@gmail.com
Bruce Champion: 0408 146 041 or brchamp@ozemail.com.au Prue Wright: 0438 410 192 or apsthobartsec@gmail.com
Christine Corbett: 0447 299 334 or corbettchristinem@gmail.com

Locations:

Kingborough Day Meeting, B Block Kingston Library, entry via Church Street for parking.

Kingston Primary School Library is accessed via the school's carpark off Church Street. Park in the top (staff) carpark. Walk in through the wide main path up the steps to the sandwich board pointing through playground then through the playground to the library passage access door on the right. Enter and walk to the automatic library doors on the left to join our meeting.

Kingston Primary School Nursery Our nursery is at the rear of the school. Access is off Sherburd Street via Freeman Street off Church Street. Park up the driveway between the end of the school and the basketball courts and walk along the back of the school to the open gate in the tall colorbond fence.

The President's Bit

Jenny Boyer - President

Happy New Year to all Members.

I hope you have had a rejuvenating break over the holiday season and are ready for a fine start to the APST Hobart Group program for 2024. The dedicated nursery team didn't get a break and always need more assistance. A chance to join them and learn from experienced people.

We have a repeat walk to the Needles scheduled on the 4th February for superb views of the Southwest mountains and hopefully some dark purple *Isophysis tasmanica* flowers showing off above their tufts. Then at our February meeting on the 14th we are being treated to a talk by renowned horticulturist and landscaper, Marcus Regus.

With the AGM coming up in March, I again ask the question: Do you care about the APST Hobart Group? There are people considering nominations for most committee positions but we are in need of someone willing to be nominated for president. The Group also needs to appoint two people to be on the state body. This involves four meetings a year two of which are by ZOOM.

All positions will be declared vacant before the election. I will not be standing for reelection as President, just completing some projects still outstanding.

The Program Committee is working well but needs someone to focus on garden visits and short excursions to ensure a diverse program to cater for the varied interests and abilities of our members.

Please consider being more involved in the management of the Group.

Kingborough Day Meeting

Carmen Walker

On 6 December five Members met at Legacy Park and enjoyed a BBQ and shared lunch and when it started to get cold we went to the Botanical Gardens Cafe for a hot drink and chat.

Next meeting will be on 7 February at 2pm in B Block meeting room. The entrance is Church Street Kingston. We will have a general discussion and finish doing the programme.

Propagation

Nursery Coordinator

The propagation session on 2 December was attended by 8 keen propagators and they did a great job setting punnets of cuttings including: *Leptospermum* "Seclusion" and *L.* "Aphrodite", *Bauera sessiliflora* and *Crowea exalata*; set seed of hot water treated *Kennedia* species from Rose's garden, *Styphelia humifusa* (Syn. *Astoloma humifusum*) from Cape Direction and *Veronica perfoliata*. two bins of soil (two were mixed). Lots of pots and other places were weeded by our diligent weeders, thank you all!

The propagation session on 6 January 2024 was attended by 7 busy propagators who set cuttings of *Hypocalymma angustifolia*, *Boronia heterophylla*, *B. citriodora* and *Melaleuca lateritia*. Labels were inserted where required into potted up plants and the excess and washed labels were sorted into the drawers. Seeds of *Acacia ulicifolia* and *A. gunnii* were hot water treated and the swollen seeds put on wet tissue paper in a lidded plastic food container until they germinate and can be transferred to a seedling puttet of seed mix. 1½ bins of weed were extracted by super weeders Christine and Phil. Thank you all!

The next propagation session will be on Saturday 3 February. Please bring some cuttings from your gardens along to be set in the mist propagator, especially Tasmanian species. We need a large range of plants and especially need lots of prostrate plants. So, come and join us playing with plants at our Kingston Primary School Nursery.

Special thanks to Phil Sumner who collected a ½ m³ of arena sand for our soil mixes from Leslievale Garden and Firewood Supplies, reversed his ute down the back lane and with Bruce's help, transferred it in his barrow from his ute into the sand bin in the nursery. Great job, thank you Phil.

Flowering Plants in My Garden: More Eucalypts

Sue Newman

Eucalyptus nutans is another West Australian tree that is flowering for the first time in my garden. The flowers are not big but a striking dark red colour with cream anthers. It is classified as rare, only found in one area near Bremer Bay in the south. Growing only to about 3 metres it is ideal for small gardens and, according to info on the net, it can be grown in clay as long as it is well drained. I'm hoping to be able to collect seed. It is known as a mallee but doesn't have a lignotuber.



Eucalyptus nutans buds, flowers and leaves



Eucalyptus nutans small flowering bush

A while ago I wrote about *Eucalyptus preissiana* which was flowering for the first time. Its common name is Bell fruited mallee and I can now see how it comes to have that name, see photo, rather appropriate for Christmas. Also watching for seeds on that.



Eucalyptus preissiana new fruit ->

Photos by Sue Newman

Christine's flower of a couple of months ago

Christine Howells

As we all know, WA has an amazing variety of stunning flowers, so how does one select one to write about? Answer: with difficulty!

I was there in October last year so in some parts the initial spring flush had faded, but there was still plenty to get excited about. One that I found particularly attractive, and which at the time I had in the garden (since deceased), was *Xanthosia rotundifolia*. The common name for this species is 'Southern Cross' because of the shape of the inflorescence. It mostly occurs as a small shrub in the undergrowth of forests in the southwest. It was often a rather straggly plant, but with a bit more light it can be a rounded to spreading shrub to 1 m across and high, with oval to round leaves on long stalks. The flower heads can be up to 7 cm across and are creamy white maturing to soft shades of pink, with prominent bracts holding the actual flowers. As one might expect mine seemed to be smaller in all its parts and the flowers were quite small and not nearly as spectacular, but what can one expect when it likes rather sandier loam than I gave it! It does well in a pot or rock garden so I will have to do better another time...



Xanthosia rotundifolia flower cluster

Xanthosia is in the family Apiaceae (the same as carrots) and there are 20 – 25 genera in Australia with about 150 species most of which are endemic. Tasmania has 13 genera and 36 species, with five *Xanthosia* species.

Photo by Christine Howells

Wollemi Pine Success Story in a Home Garden.

Lorraine Pender

Many years ago my son gifted me a *Wollemi nobilis*, Wollemi pine. It was the typical size that were being sold via the Nursery and came wrapped with a cardboard information write up outlining the discovery of the Wollemi and its journey for release to the public. I knew we would not be able to continue to live on our acreage so the Wollemi was gradually potted on as it grew until it lived in a very large pot. It was kept under a large Blackwood for protection from the elements. Eventually it moved with us when we downsized. But we had a shed to build and then a new garden to landscape but it suffered this neglect very well being shifted around until we had one of those fine drizzly days that come in from the east and alas I did not notice that the drain holes had become blocked so it sat for several days immersed in water. Walking by I glanced down and oh no saw that there was about 1 mm of water above the soil level. I quickly set to and drained this water away. To begin with it showed no ill effects but slowly the lower branches started to yellow and over a span of several months one by one the branches fell. I thought I had killed it for sure but then the opportunity for it to be planted into the newly created garden came so in it went. My soil is very poor grey sand but probably the excellent drainage saved the plant as now it would be hard to overwater. It looked very sad as at least half its height of by now, almost a meter tall, had shed the lower branches. However a year on it started to push out new growth from the base and now it is multi trunked and looking very happy.



Wollemi nobilis, planted & recovering well

It has since produced seeds two years in a row and both lots went into the fridge in paper bags as I was not too sure how to grow them. After seeing a segment on Gardening Australia and also a talk given at an evening APST Hobart Group meeting I was prepared to give it a go. So November 12th 2023 I placed



Wollemi nobilis cones



Wollemi 1 month old seedlings



Wollemi seedlings with first branchlet

5 punnets of planted seeds into my greenhouse. I was surprised to see within a week the first seedling had started to push through and one by one over the span of approximately one month 37 seeds germinated. 27 were from 2 years previous and 10 from one year ago. I planted only the seeds that I thought were viable and every one germinated. The photos you see is the parent Wollemi as it is now with the lower growth almost hiding a bare trunk. And the male pollen cones that have shed the pollen and the round female cones swelling nicely. Two more photos are the seedlings at one month on from germinating and a second photo as they were on the 17th January 2024 showing a first branchlet and the tip of a trunk. So never give up on a plant. Nature has a way of surviving. My next challenge will be to pot on the seedlings and get them through to planting out size. Wish me luck?

Photos by Lorraine Pender

Decline of birds

This article is taken directly from the book: Cuckoo 'Cheating by Nature', written by Nick Davies and released by Bloomsbury Publishing in 2015.

"According to the latest assessment by Stuart Butchart and his colleagues from Birdlife International, 1240 species of birds (12%, or one in eight of the some 10,000 species extant today) are threatened with extinction. To this we may add another 838 species, (8%) as near threatened; giving a total of 2078 species, or 1/5th of the world's bird species of conservation concern.

There has been a steady and continuing deterioration in the status of birds in the last three decades, with even familiar common species now in decline. In Europe, there have been particularly marked declines in farmland species and in long-distance migrants that breed in Europe and winter in sub-Saharan Africa. The principal threat is from human activities, particularly habitat loss as forests are destroyed and wetlands drained to provide land for the needs of our growing human populations.

This decline in birds is an indicator of a more general decline in all biodiversity. While our goals continue to be dominated by short-term

Philip Sumner



Galahs



Grey Butcher-birds



Black-backed Magpie

economic gain, rather than long-term values, the natural world will inevitably continue to diminish. Yet recent estimates suggest that conservation is eminently affordable, if only we changed our values.



The conservation of sufficient habitat to ensure the survival of the world's endangered bird species

Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos would cost some \$78 billion per year. This is less than 20% of the annual global consumer spending on soft drinks, or less than 50% of the global annual bonuses paid to bankers in recent years".

I don't make any claims to solutions but this book was written and released over 8 years ago and we all know extinctions are occurring more frequently and habitat loss and destruction is increasing at a faster rate around the globe. Just look to our own Short Tailed Shearwaters, Tasmanian Devils, Wombats, Swift and Orange Bellied Parrots, Sooty and Pied Oystercatchers...the list goes on. Using food and shelter plants and water helps to bring birds into our garden, when it suits them.

Photos by Phil Sumner

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