



# NEWSLETTER

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## B U S H C A R E

SUMMER 2024 – ISSUE 64

### COORDINATOR'S UPDATE

by Gareth Debney  
Bushland Management Coordinator



Caption: Participants of the Native Havens Garden Tour 2024 visiting Robin Lilienthal's Garden by Andrew Scott, 11 August 2024

With the wetter conditions we've experienced over the past three or so years, germination and plant growth have generally been booming! No doubt you will have observed many bushland areas recovering since the last drought of 2017-2019. Bushcare volunteer numbers have also been recovering. Participation reached a low point after the second COVID-19 lockdown (restrictions eased in October 2021). Since this time, the Bushland team has been promoting the program through letterbox drops, word of mouth, social media, and other online and print campaigns. It took a while, but we are now seeing participation at pre-COVID levels and a steady stream of new volunteer enquiries. While this has been encouraging, that darn wetter-than-average weather has also forced many Bushcare group sessions to be cancelled, dampening that critical moment where interest in volunteering is converted into action...

As the breeding season for Magpies and Butcher Birds draws to a close, some interesting results have been reported through the Magpie Alert website, where members of the public

can record swooping and striking. This year, there were some 3,420 swooping magpies recorded across Australia, with around 13% (or 427) reportedly causing an injury. In NSW, this figure was lower – around 10% of the total 853 reported swoops resulted in injury. As you'd expect, swooping peaked around the middle of September, which is pretty much on trend according to the long-term data. Lucky for us, of the top 10 'angriest' Magpies reported across the country, only one in NSW made the list while a whopping three were recorded in the ACT. What conclusions can we draw from that, I wonder...? Rather than demonising what is a natural, protective behaviour for some of our most iconic native birds, resources like Magpie Alert raise awareness and understanding in the community and promote adaptation to these relatively short-term seasonal behaviours. So next year, as spring rolls around, remember Magpie Alert and be sure to record any brushes with the beak of your local warbler.

Another useful tool for reporting memorable wildlife experiences, particularly in urban areas, is the Big

City Birds app and website. Focusing on five species of bird that have adapted well (maybe too well) to our urban environment, Big City Birds helps us learn more about the Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Australian Brush Turkey, Australian White Ibis, Little Corella and Long-billed Corella. I'd encourage North Sydney residents to record nest mounds, roost trees, and numbers and density of Brush Turkeys on Big City Birds. This information will help Council investigate ways to address some of the more difficult Brush Turkey behaviours, while also promoting their ecological virtues!

The Bushland team facilitated 42 Bushcare workshops, events and activities this year. In addition to our regular Bushcare and Adopt-a-Plot meetings, there were 11 school holiday activities; Bushcare Essentials training; market stalls; and school and corporate volunteer days. Highlights included a harbour cruise for the northern region Aboriginal festival attended by 74 people and co-facilitated by Lane Cove Bushland team; a popular Tick Talk webinar with Stephen Doggett of Westmead Hospital; our 25th anniversary Building Bridges

to Boorowa planting trip; National Tree Day supported by 83 community members and families; and the Bushcare Community Nursery Open Day, which hosted more than 80 residents and provided 500 endemic plants for local gardens.

On behalf of the Bushland team, I'd like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all our wonderful volunteers and program

supporters. Without your ongoing contributions, North Sydney Bushcare would not be the highly valued and respected program that it is. Special thanks must also go to our Bushcare Group convenors. These individuals go above and beyond each month to help run Bushcare in a positive, efficient and inclusive way. Thank you to Kim (Smoothiey); John (Badangi); Mary-Lyn

(Harry Howard); Lyn (Nursery); Lynne (Balls Head); Kathy (Cremorne Point); Victoria (Brightmore); Sissi (Primrose); Steve (Mortlock & Tunks East) and Andrew (Tunks West). We look forward to celebrating our ecological wins of 2024 with you at the Bushcare Christmas Party in December. Have a happy, safe and restful festive season.

## WHATEVER HAPPENED TO OPAL?

By Michael Quinnell – Sydney Wildlife Rescue Volunteer

It has been five years since a media frenzy erupted when a 1.5m snake decided to join commuters on Wollstonecraft Railway platform.

Lacking an Opal card, the snake left the platform, taking up a vantage point in a tree above the rail lines.

Concerned that it might drop onto the rail lines, Customer Service Attendant Melissa O'Connor made travellers aware of its presence and monitored its movements until Sydney Wildlife volunteer snake handlers, Michael Quinnell and Trish Kroll, arrived to retrieve it.

The snake was found to have suffered head wounds and was taken to North Shore Veterinary Hospital for assessment.

After lengthy treatment in the care of Sydney Wildlife volunteers, the non-venomous NSW native Diamond Python (*Morelia spilota spilota*) was declared permanently blind. Under wildlife protocols, this meant it was unable to be returned to the wild and destined for euthanasia.

Reluctant to consign an otherwise healthy specimen to such a fate, a successful application was made to the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service for an exemption.

Five years on and named for her railway adventure, 'Opal' is now an active member of Sydney Wildlife's education team, where she has introduced around 100 new members to handling and rehabilitating her species.

"Unfortunately, our native reptiles are not well understood by many people," said Michael, Reptile Coordinator for Sydney Wildlife, adding that snake sightings are not uncommon and should be no more alarming than any other wildlife.

"As the weather warms, our reptilian residents are leaving their winter shelters and on the move, seeking food, water and, yes, love. Sightings are on the increase and the reports escalate. In most cases, there is little cause for concern.

"Most of our local snakes are non-venomous and pose no risk to residents, but all snakes are harmless if left undisturbed. None are aggressive but they will react defensively if they feel threatened or cornered."

Simple precautions for homeowners include removing hiding places such as overgrown yards or builders' debris and removing anything that might attract rodents – a favourite snake snack.

In the event of a sighting, remove children and pets from the area and keep an eye on the snake's whereabouts. It will likely move on and not be seen again.

If it strays indoors, leave removal to the experts. **Sydney Wildlife Rescue** operates 24/7. **Phone 9413 4300** to report injured or orphaned wildlife. If you'd like to become a volunteer or donate, find out more at [www.sydneywildlife.org.au](http://www.sydneywildlife.org.au)



Caption: North Sydney volunteer Toni with Opal at a Sydney Wildlife Rescue training course at the North Sydney Community Centre

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# WILDLIFE WATCH UPDATE (SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 2024)

This season saw the highest ever bird count on the annual Wildlife Watch Walk and Talk – 40 species in just over three hours! After Council’s introduction to the Wildlife Watch Citizen Science program, birder Mark Fuller led our group on a walk through Tunks Park, Cammeray. We were delighted to see the Brown Gerygone in its nest, as well as Spotted Pardalotes beside their burrow in a pile of soil, among a plethora of other local and migratory birds.

Many other people were busy spotting various species throughout the neighbourhoods... from Buff-banded Rails popping out of Lomandras to Blue-tongued Lizards sunning themselves on backyard pavers; Eastern Water Dragons on logs to a multitude of insects burgeoning, providing nourishment for Tawny Frogmouths who had been taking it easy over the winter, waiting for more food to arise.

Spring 2024 sightings included:



Caption: The Brown Gerygone (*Gerygone mouki*) is part of the warbler family – related to scrubwrens and thornbills – but it constructs a dome-shaped nest with a side entrance, often suspended from a thin branch. Photographs by Mark Fuller [www.avianation.com.au](http://www.avianation.com.au)

- **Buff-banded Rail** (Waverton Park) foraging on the ground and in between Lomandras and ferns.
- **Australian Magpie** (Neutral Bay urban, Wollstonecraft urban) seen harassing a Channel-billed Cuckoo; following a person along the footpath (likely after food).
- **Australasian Figbird** (Badangi Reserve, Wollstonecraft urban) pair seen harassing a pair of Australian Magpies who were trying to raid their nest; female feeding on ripe fruit of Bangalow Palm.
- **Common Brown Crane Fly** (Neutral Bay urban) caught in the web of a Silver Orb Spider.
- **Australian Wood Duck** (Anderson Park Neutral Bay) pair with two ducklings – one adult swam in front of a dog to distract it while the other duck led the young ones to the water’s edge.
- **Brushtail Possum** (Neutral Bay urban) found dead on road, no obvious sign of injury.
- **Rakali** (Camberay, Berry Island, Waverton Park) footprints seen along the sandy foreshores, telling us where they have been.
- **Australian Painted Lady** (Primrose Park, Brightmore Reserve) feeding on Crofton Weed flowers.
- **Red-bellied Black Snake** (Cremorne Reserve) sunning itself on the edge of vegetation, near a walkway.
- **Bogong Moth** (Neutral Bay urban) found dead inside building.
- **Crab Spider** (Primrose Park, Brightmore Reserve) on fig tree, Sandpaper Fig and Rice Flower.
- **Rainbow Lorikeet** (Badangi Reserve, Berry Island Reserve, Cremorne urban) pair moving about tree hollows; young heard calling from inside tree hollow; several seen gorging on *Monotoca elliptica* fruit; feeding on Bottlebrush flowers.
- **Spotted Pardalote** (Tunks Park) pair nesting in an exposed pile of soil, guarding entrance to the burrow.
- **Channel-billed Cuckoos** (Tunks Park, Balls Head, Primrose Park, Brightmore Reserve, Neutral Bay urban) being chased by other Channel-billed Cuckoos, or Noisy Miners, Pied Currawongs or Magpies; two chicks being fed in a Pied Currawong nest.
- **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** (Badangi Reserve, Primrose Park) disputing territory around tree hollows; one seen squawking at the entrance to a hollow, covering it with its wings, as Rainbow Lorikeets moved around.
- **Silvereyes** (Tunks Park).
- **Red-whiskered Bulbul** (Tunks Park).
- **Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo** (Cremorne).
- **Eastern Whipbird** (Tunks Park, Primrose Park) pairs heard calling to one another.
- **Australian Brush Turkey** (Cremorne Point, Badangi Reserve, Cammeray urban, North Sydney urban, Kirribilli urban) males maintaining mounds, sometimes with females nearby and some chicks seen; one eating an apple...
- **Brown Gerygone** (Tunks Park) seen in and around their nest.
- **Superb Fairy-wren** (Gore Cove, Tunks Park, Badangi Reserve).
- **Variegated Fairy-wren** (Cremorne Reserve, Balls Head Reserve, Badangi Reserve, Primrose Park) males in breeding plumage.
- **Australian Golden Whistler** (Tunks Park).
- **Nectar Scarab** (Brightmore Reserve) on *Kunzea ambigua* flower.
- **Welcome Swallow** (Berry Island, Carradah Park, Primrose Park, Neutral Bay urban, Cremorne Reserve).
- **White-browed Scrubwren** (Cremorne Reserve) seen in *Lantana camara*.

For a full list of species, or to enter your own, go to [northsydney.nsw.gov.au/WildlifeWatch](http://northsydney.nsw.gov.au/WildlifeWatch) and click on ‘Submit or view sightings’.

You can also contribute sightings by contacting us. We would love to hear your wildlife stories! Contact Council’s Bushland Project Officer on 9936 8100 or email [council@northsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@northsydney.nsw.gov.au)

by Karina Hanemann – Bushland Project Officer

# WILDFLOWER WALK AT NORTH HEAD

By Andrew Scott – Bushcare Officer

On Sunday 13 October, a very windy day, 18 Bushcare volunteers and community members joined the Bushland team for our annual wildflower walk, this year to North Head.

On arrival, we met our hosts Judy and Geoff Lambert, North Head Sanctuary Foundation (NHSF) volunteers, at Bandicoot Heaven at the NHSF Headquarters and Education Centre, and the adjoining community nursery within the North Head Sanctuary Precinct.

NHSF was formed in 2002, after the need for an ecological sanctuary at North Head was identified at a community forum hosted by Sydney Harbour Federation Trust and the National Parks and Wildlife Service, following the return of Commonwealth lands to the State. North Head had in the past been dedicated to quarantine and military uses. NHSF, among others, has advocated for integrated management of the whole of North Head to protect and conserve its natural, Aboriginal, built and cultural values.

Geoff has a deep connection with North Head. He has been volunteering for the Foundation since 2009 and a member for much longer. It was the first place he visited in Sydney on return from his pharmacologist studies in New York, where he and his wife Judy lived for three years.

At Bandicoot Heaven, Geoff gave us some background about the environment and history of North Head. It is just over 250 hectares in area, with an extraordinary diversity of plants, around 500 native species, and 18 different habitat types including the second largest remaining area of Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub (ESBS), a critically endangered ecological community. North Head is a headland of Hawkesbury Sandstone capped in part by Aeolian Sands (windblown sands) where the endangered scrub grows. Geoff said the first record of fire stick farming was recorded here.

We started our walk opposite Bandicoot Heaven heading south, a route that took in the best of the ESBS. Judy told us we were passing through a long-unburnt area and, directly opposite, an area subject to a well-controlled hazard reduction burn in May 2016.

We were interested to see many climbing Bootlace Orchids (*Erythrorchis cassythoides*) characterised by their dark wiry and leafless stems with bunches of yellow-green banana-shaped flowers in bloom. Geoff told us this mycotrophic herb (symbiotic with fungi) became less common after the Coastal Tea Trees (*Gaudium laevigatum*) in the area were culled to prevent them inhibiting the growth of the other heathland plants. The rusty coloured flowers of *Lasiopetalum ferrugineum* stole our attention along the way as did the Pink Five Corners (*Styphelia triflora*).

Then it was onto the Third Quarantine Cemetery, home a few interesting plants, including a Woody Pear (*Xylomelum pyriforme*) and several orchid species including the Flying Duck Orchid (*Caleana major*) as well as typical ESBS species. Here, the weathered gravestones, surrounded by native flowers contrasted against the backdrop of the deep blue Pacific Ocean, made for a truly stunning view.

Circling back home along the Avenue of Honour we passed through ESBS that was subjected to hot fire in an escaped burn in October 2020 but is now regenerating well after a slow start to recovery.

We stopped at the 'Hanging Swamp' – not a true geological feature but a human-assisted Sydney Freshwater Wetland created during army days of track and road building. This was of interest mostly because of its stark contrast with the rest of the area and the fact that it is thriving frog habitat, with at least six species present when the water is 'up', Geoff told us.

On our return, we enjoyed a cup of tea under the lean-to of Bandicoot Heaven before boarding the community bus and heading home. Many thanks to Geoff and Judy for being great hosts. Highly involved in their local community as they are, we are especially appreciative of them accommodating our visit so soon after the busy local government election period.

For more information about North Head Sanctuary visit [www.northheadsanctuaryfoundation.org.au](http://www.northheadsanctuaryfoundation.org.au)



**Caption:** Pink Five Corners (*Styphelia triflora*) at North Head Sanctuary by Andrew Scott, 13 October 2024



**Caption:** Bootlace Orchids (*Erythrorchis cassythoides*) at North Head Sanctuary by Andrew Scott, 13 October 2024

# GREATER SYDNEY LANDCARE REGIONAL GATHERING 2024

By Angela Bibby – Regional Landcare Coordinator | Greater Sydney Landcare



Caption: Attendees of the Greater Sydney Landcare Regional Gathering at The Connection Event Space in Rhodes, 30 August 2024

On Friday 30 August, Greater Sydney Landcare hosted its second regional gathering at The Connection Event Space in Rhodes.

It was an exciting day of celebrating Landcare community achievements, building connections and looking to the future. Those who attended were invited to have their say on the issues that matter to them and connect with like-minded Landcarers, finding support and developing ideas for improving the future. Bushcare Officer Andrew Scott attended on behalf of North Sydney Council Bushcare, contributing ideas about how the region can move forward in terms of conservation.

Facilitator David Newell led the day, and feedback suggests that those who came along left feeling motivated, connected and inspired.

After reviewing the ‘raw harvest’ (all notes and comments collected on the day), Greater Sydney Landcare has put together a summary of the common themes from the gathering, which will help guide our strategic direction over the next two years.

Hopefully our third gathering will be even bigger and better, with more successes to celebrate!

See results at [greatersydneylandcare.org](http://greatersydneylandcare.org)

## LORD HOWE ISLAND BUSH REGENERATION

By Anne Pickles – NSC Wildlife Watch Volunteer

In May this year I joined members of the Friends of Lord Howe Island on an ecotour led by the island’s naturalist Ian Hutton OAM. We spent a great week assisting the Lord Howe Island Board with their weed eradication program. We also assisted residents with revegetating a cleared area with native plants. Many members of the Friends of Lord Howe Island also volunteer with mainland Bushcare groups, including the North Sydney Bushcare program, so there was much sharing of stories and expertise.

Lord Howe Island, around 700km east of Port Macquarie, is a beautiful World Heritage-listed volcanic island with a unique ecosystem and many endemic plants and animals. I’ve been volunteering with the Friends of Lord Howe Island for over 20 years, during which time there has been enormous progress in weed management on the island. It is wonderful to visit areas where we spent years weeding huge infestations of ground (*Asparagus aethiopicus*) and climbing (*Asparagus plumosus*) Asparagus Fern that are now vibrant palm forest. There is now so little Asparagus Fern left that we have had to move on to other weeds like Coastal Morning Glory (*Ipomoea cairica*), Cape Gooseberry (*Physalis peruviana*), Sea Spurge (*Euphorbia paralias*) and introduced grasses.

This time, it was fascinating to see the changes resulting from the eradication of rats and mice in 2019. Seabirds are returning to breed on the main island and can be seen roosting around

the settlement. On afternoon walks we observed seedlings sprouting everywhere; previously vast amounts of seeds were eaten by rodents. The endemic Lord Howe Woodhen has gone from a population of around 250 before the rodent eradication to more than 2,000 due to the availability of invertebrate food. Woodhens now appear wherever we are weeding to investigate what we are doing in their territory. The future may bring reintroductions of species that were driven to extinction on the main island, such as the Lord Howe Island Stick Insect (*Dryococelus australis*).

For more information about the Friends of Lord Howe Island, visit [friendslhi.com.au](http://friendslhi.com.au)



Caption: Anne at Kim’s Lookout by Trish Evans

# BUSHCARE COMMUNITY NURSERY UPDATE

by Clare McElroy – Nursery Supervisor

Do you ever feel that time inexplicably speeds up towards the end of the year? The light changes, plants grow faster, Christmas decorations sprout forth and we're suddenly hurtling headfirst into an end-of-year event pile up.

This is especially true in the nursery where our seasonal schedule of seed collection, seed sowing and potting up collides with order dispatch, festive events and holidays.

Our annual Nursery Open Day was held on 21 September and was well attended by the local community. This event provides an opportunity for North Sydney residents to visit the nursery and sign up for our Bushcare and Native Havens (garden habitat) programs. As always, residents get to take home free local plants that we've grown in the nursery and, this year, we gave away over 500 plants for residents to create native habitat at home.

In October, we ran our popular hands-on native seed propagation workshop, where participants learn techniques and aftercare for growing native plants from seed. This year, we sowed a selection of Banksia, Acacia, Isopogon, Eucalypt, Hakea, Ozothamnus and native grasses, with germination now underway in the steamy polyhouses. Good job from our seven participants!

Also in October, we added a second volunteer nursery group. On the second and fourth Thursday of the month, we now have a morning session with the original nursery volunteers, and an afternoon session with our new group. All up, that's around 15 nursery volunteers meeting once a fortnight. In a small nursery like ours, that means getting creative with nursery tasks so that everyone has a chance to get their hands dirty and learn new skills.

Last month, we had fun with fire, scorching Banksia fruits on the old kettle barbecue to facilitate seed release (and yes, marshmallows were provided!). The soot and smoke made an interesting change from the routine housekeeping jobs and enforced hygiene protocols of most nursery work – it felt like a fittingly festive end to the yearly volunteer program.

## Birth announcements

The nursery is proud to announce the safe arrival of three Tawny Frogmouth chicks! Our facilities earned such good reviews last year that the Tawnies decided to book in again (same room) for their 2024 season. It's a bit crowded now, what with the chicks almost adult size and still sharing the same room, but the dining options are good and there's no shortage of tasty moths for an evening meal.

Ramon, our Australian Brush Turkey lodger, has built himself a fine nesting mound above the nursery and is currently entertaining female visitors. He was most appreciative of the freshly laid mulch on the Coal Loader gardens and, after he helped himself to most of it, our gardeners ordered him a small pile of his own. The urge is strong however, and Ramon has continued his raking regardless of who owns the mulch.



Caption: Plant profile information to accompany plant giveaways, and Avril Lim, local resident, receiving free endemic plants at the Bushcare Community Nursery Open Day on 21 September 2024 by Andrew Scott



Caption: Ramon, an Australian Brush Turkey at the Coal Loader by Andrew Scott

# NATIVE PLANT PROFILE: SNAKE VINE VS PEARL VINE

By Tom Windon – Bush Regenerator

Many native plant species can appear very similar. For example, Balls Head Reserve is home to two native vines from the Menispermaceae family, Pearl Vine and Snake Vine.

The family Menispermaceae are climbers (rarely shrubs or trees) and mostly dioecious (separate male and female plants). Their leaves are usually attached by a stem to the branch, without any teeth or serration. They often have veins projecting from the base of the leaf, and no stipules. The flower head may be axillary (from the junction between leaves and plant stem), cymose (a central stem with a single flower), umbellate (clustered on stalks from a common centre), racemose (like a cluster of grapes) or paniculate (branched).

## PEARL VINE (*Sarcopetalum harveyanum*)

Family: Menispermaceae

Habit: A climber or scrambler.

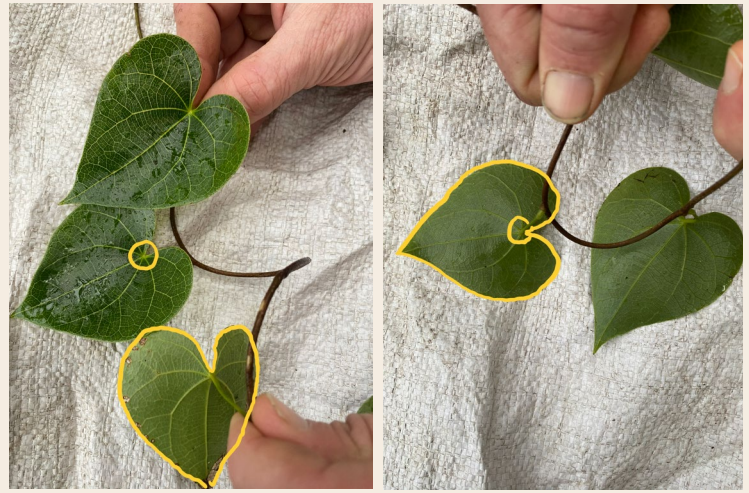
Habitat: Common in sheltered gullies and rainforest margins.

Leaves: Heart shaped, tough and glossy on long hairless stalks.

Flowers: Tiny, in racemes. Flowering in spring to summer.

Fruit: A red drupe 5-8mm wide.

Name history: *Harveyanum* in honour of Dr WH Harvey, Professor of Botany at Trinity College, Dublin.



**Caption:** *Sarcopetalum* leaves: heart shaped, tough and glossy on long hairless stalks

## SNAKE VINE (*Stephania japonica*)

Family: Menispermaceae

Habit: Climber or twiner, slender stems without prickles; dioecious.

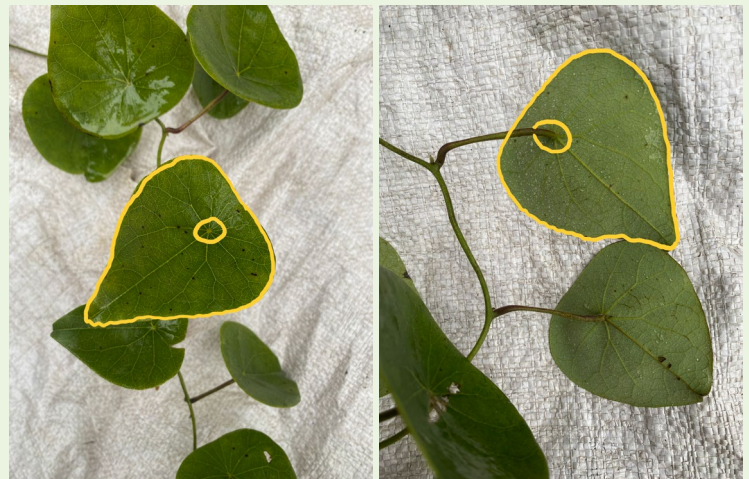
Habitat: Common in rainforests and sheltered gullies, especially near the sea.

Leaves: Heart shaped, peltate, stalk attaching to the middle of the leaf surface, firm textured but not stiff, also hairless.

Flowers: Small greenish flower, spreading axillary compound umbels. Flowering in summer.

Fruit: A shiny yellow-orange or red drupe about 5mm wide.

Name history: *Japonica* meaning Japanese, as the species was first collected there.



**Caption:** *Stephania* leaves: heart shaped, peltate, stalk attaching to the middle of the leaf surface, firm textured but not stiff, also hairless.

### Similarities

- Habitat: rainforest/gully vegetation
- Hairless leaf and stem
- Growing habits: climber/scrambler
- Similar colour

### Differences

- Flowering time: Snake Vine in summer, Pearl Vine in spring-summer
- Leaf shape and arrangement: Pearl Vine being heart shaped with the stem attaching at the base of the leaf, Snake Vine being heart shaped with a peltate leaf with the stem attaching to the middle of the leaf base

### References

- Robinson, L – *Field Guide to the Native Plants of Sydney*
- Fairley, A & Moore, P – *Native Plants of the Sydney Region*
- PlantNET – *FloraOnline*, [plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/floraonline.htm](http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/floraonline.htm)

Images by Tom Windon at Balls Head Reserve

# BUSHCARE EVENTS CALENDAR

Bookings must be made for all events at [www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/bushcare](http://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/bushcare) or 9936 8100

## FEBRUARY

- 15 **Bushwalk – Berry Island** | Saturday 10am to 1pm
- 23 **Bushcare Essentials Training** | Sunday 7am to 4pm
- 20-23 **Barrington Tops Scotch Broom Control** | Thursday to Sunday  
Enquiries: Bushcare Officer on 9936 8100

## MARCH

- 1 **Look-a-Likes (Natives v Weeds) Workshop** | Saturday 9am to 12pm
- 1 **Bushcare Stall – Northside Produce Markets** | Saturday 8am to 12pm
- 9 **Seed Propagation Workshop** | Sunday 6pm to 8pm
- 13 **Bushcare Convenor Meeting** | Thursday 6pm to 8pm
- 22 **Eucalyptus Day Walk** | Saturday 10am to 1pm
- 31 **Curl Curl Community Nursery Visit** | Monday 8am to 3pm

## APRIL

- 15 **Family Bushwalk** | Tuesday 10.30am to 12pm
- 16 **Family Kayak** | Wednesday 10.30am to 12pm
- 18 **Bird and Bug Hunt** | Friday 10.30am to 12pm
- 24 **Spotlight Walk and Talk** | Thursday 5.30pm to 8.30pm

## MAY

- 10 **Wildlife Habitat Tour** | Saturday 9.30am to 1pm
- 30-1 **Building Bridges to Boorowa** | Friday to Sunday  
Enquiries: Bushland Management Coordinator on 9936 8100

## BOOK REVIEW: AMAZING ANNOYING BIRDS BY DR ANN GÖTH

On the evening of Wednesday 21 August, a capacity audience at Stanton Library enjoyed a lively and entertaining talk from Dr Ann Göth, author of *Amazing Annoying Birds: Living with Australian Brush-Turkeys*. Despite many of the audience being there to find out how to deter Brush Turkeys from damaging their gardens, most will have left the talk knowing much more about the nature and lifecycle of the Brush Turkey and what you legally can and cannot do to manage your relationship with your neighbourhood birds.

If you missed the talk, don't despair, all the information (and more!) is available in Dr Göth's book. *Amazing Annoying Birds* is an engaging read, with short chapters clearly conveying scientific information about Brush Turkeys and relating it to behaviours you can see in your own backyard. Accurate and lively drawings by the author, along with photographs, illustrate characteristics and behaviour. Although it is aimed at adults, the book would also be useful for school projects.

As Dr Göth explains, much media coverage of Brush Turkeys is negative and inaccurate. Brush Turkeys are native to

Australia and are returning to areas along the east coast where they were hunted to near-extinction before receiving legal protection in 1974. The Brush Turkeys in North Sydney are returning home.

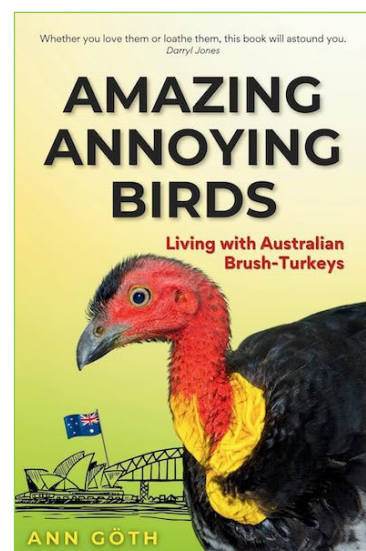
The lifecycle of Brush Turkeys is fascinating. Building a compost mound to incubate your eggs is highly unusual in the bird world. This drives the behaviour of male Brush Turkeys in the breeding season between July and February as they strive to keep their mounds at 32.5–34.5°C. Female Brush Turkeys can tell if a male is good at keeping his mound at the right temperature and choose which mounds to lay their eggs in. When the chicks hatch deep inside the mound, they spend about two days working their way to the surface before running off and fending for themselves without any care from their parents.

A fascinating chapter in the book explains the Brush Turkey's place in Aboriginal lore and stories, and how they are important totem animals for many Aboriginal clans. The family that Brush Turkeys belong to has been in Australia for at least 3 million years; they are part of the ecosystem.

I heartily recommend this book to anyone interested in Brush Turkeys or wanting information on how to share a garden or Bushcare site with them.

Dr Ann Göth, *Amazing Annoying Birds: Living with Australian Brush-Turkeys*, Natural Publishing, 2023, available from [anngothauthor.com](http://anngothauthor.com) or for loan from Stanton Library

by Anne Pickles – Wildlife Watch Volunteer



Caption: Cover of *Amazing Annoying Birds: Living with Australian Brush-Turkeys* by Dr Ann Göth



Did you know North Sydney Council Bushcare has a Facebook page? Like us at [www.facebook.com/bushcare](http://www.facebook.com/bushcare)



Visit regenTV the Australian Association of Bush regenerators video platform, view recordings of webinars, field days and forums. [www.aabr.org.au/regenTV](http://www.aabr.org.au/regenTV)

**For more information** or to make a booking for any of these workshops or special events please contact the Bushcare Officer on 9936 8100. Printed on 100% recycled paper.

Gratitude to all our contributors who take the time to put ideas and research into words so we can learn. Thank you.

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