On the go with Dan

Welcome to summer. You know what that means: warm weather and water, time with the family and a January break from bushcare.

Many of you will be well aware of my passion for hiking and the outdoors. That’s why I have decided to use this issue to showcase the benefits of hiking as well as recommending some of my favourite books, podcasts and documentaries on the topic. It isn’t all about hiking though! We still have time to recap recent events, discover a common fungi and learn about a whacky insect.

Dan
Randwick City Council
Bushcare Officer

Fruit body: Expands from a light cinnamon, slightly pointed ‘egg’. Has two layers: the outer layer, or ‘rays’ (exoperidium); and an endoperidium, the ‘ball’ that holds the spores. Up to 7 cm wide.

Exoperidium: The thick outer layer of the egg splits into about eight rays, which curl back to form a ‘star’ and reveal the endoperidium. When very mature the rays curl so far backwards they split horizontally to form a saucer or collar around the endoperidium.

Endoperidium: Light brown, with a hint of red, papery thin dull circular ball containing spores. Has a small finely pleated raised pore (ostiole) through which the spores are released.

Spores: Dark brown, globose, spiny, 5 μm diameter.

Habitat: Gregarious.

Season: Summer to autumn.

Comments: Common. Cosmopolitan. Widespread. One of the largest earth stars. The large sturdy build, cup-like remnants under the spore case (endoperidium), and cinnamon/light to mid-brown colours make this a very distinctive and easily recognised species.

Information sourced from A Guide to the Common Fungi of Coastal New South Wales by the Department of Primary Industries.
This year walkers were treated to a magnificent display of native wildflowers at two different locations: Kamay Botany Bay National Park in La Perouse and Malabar Headland National Park in Malabar. Each location offered something slightly different with a mixture of coastal views, historical sites and native plant species.

Local plant expert Danny Hirschfeld kept walkers entertained with his extensive plant knowledge and dry sense of humour. Participants learnt about some of the threatening processes that can harm native bushland (weed invasion, exotic animals, development, soil disturbance, illegal dumping) as well as tips to implement in the home garden and while bushwalking (planting of indigenous species, weed control, responsible pet management). Both walks traversed sections that included Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub, a critically endangered ecological plant community.

The flowers on display at La Perouse were particularly spectacular with some of the highlights including: Chloanthes stoechadis, Epacris longiflora, Correa reflexa, Pultenaea daphnoides, Dillwynia floribunda, Philotheca buxifolia, Eriostemon australasius, Bossiaea scolopendria and Hardenbergia violacea. One plant that wasn’t looked upon so pleasantly was the aptly named Thin Stink Weed (Opercularia aspera) also commonly referred to a ‘fart bush’ due to its disagreeable aroma!

The exposed coastal location of Malabar Headland allowed walkers to view some of the hardy natives that thrive in windy, salt-laden and shallow soil environments. Some of the plants on show included: Carpobrotus glaucescens, Epacris tubifolia, Sprengelia incarnata, Leptospermum laevigatum, Pimelia linifolia and Conospermum ellipticum. Participants learnt about the adaptations these plants have that allow them to occur in such a harsh environment and the influence the salt laden winds have on their height and habit. While the weather is warm and the flowers are in bloom, it’s a great time of year to get out and explore these beautiful locations that we are lucky enough to have on our doorstep.
The Therapy of Hiking

“I only went out for a walk and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found, was really going in.”
John Muir

One of the things I love most about hiking is just how simple it is. Find a route, put on some shoes and off you go. We are blessed in Sydney to have many beautiful urban walks as well as natural landscapes to explore only a stone’s throw away. It’s relatively easy to find a one hour walk or a multi-day option close by with only a little research and that makes hiking an activity for everyone. Whether you’re young or old, an expert or an amateur, there’s a trail out there that will be perfect for you.

In today’s world of modern technology it’s especially important for people to take a break, slow down and be present in nature. Luckily it seems that more people are beginning to realise this and take advantage of the restorative potential of our natural environment.

Nature offers one of the most reliable boosts to mental and physical well-being. Recent research from the University of East Anglia confirms what many nature-lovers already know: living close to nature and spending time outside has significant and wide-ranging health benefits. The research team studied data from 20 countries including the UK, US, Spain, France, Germany, Australia and Japan. The study revealed that exposure to greenspace reduces the risk of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, premature death, preterm birth, stress and high blood pressure. That’s all well and good but we don’t need science to prove this.

Spend some time outside immersed in nature and you will soon feel less stressed, restored, more aware of your surroundings and hopefully happy. Being out in nature, away from the chaos of our daily lives and technology, can allow us to connect with ourselves and nature in a way that brings peace and a sense of wellbeing.

“Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilised people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is a necessity; and that mountain parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life.”
John Muir

Leave No Trace

While out in nature it’s important to consider our individual impact on the surrounding environment.

The most considerate way to do this is to follow the Leave No Trace principles. Leave No Trace is an internationally accepted way of minimising impacts on the places we visit.

You can do your bit by following these seven principles:
1. Plan ahead and prepare
2. Travel and camp on durable surfaces
3. Dispose of waste properly
4. Leave what you find
5. Minimise campfire impacts
6. Respect wildlife
7. Be considerate of your hosts and other visitors

More detailed information on Leave No Trace can be found at - Int.org.au
Secateurs and loppers
Secateurs are the basic pruning tool. Buy a good-quality pair, because poor-quality secateurs won’t stay sharp and are likely to damage plants – just make sure they’re the right size for your hand. A basic pair of secateurs can cut a stem or branch up to 1cm thick. For thicker stems or branches you will need a pair of long-handled loppers or a pruning saw or bow saw. Loppers have larger blades than secateurs and the longer handles gives you more leverage.

Trowel
A trowel has a short handle and a small scooped, and pointed, blade and is used for weeding, planting and transplanting.

Dandelion/Daisy Weeder
A simple tool that combines a fork with a pivoting mechanism for hand-removing weeds with a long taproot.

Shovel
A shovel has a curved, scooped blade and is used for moving, lifting and turning soil.

Spade
The blade of a spade is usually flatter and sharper than the blade of a shovel and is often squared off at the bottom. A spade can be used to edge a garden, slice turf neatly, cut roots, or scrape soil or mulch off a flat surface such as a footpath or truck or ute bed.

Hoe
A hoe has a flat blade attached at right angles to a long handle. It is used for aerating or mounding soil and for making rows. It can also be useful for weeding.

Garden fork
A garden fork is used for loosening compacted soil, aerating small areas, lifting and dividing plants, digging weeds, incorporating compost into garden beds and dividing perennials. The tines are metal and tapered.
Rakes
A garden rake has a long handle and short sturdy metal prongs and is used for levelling and grading soil, aerating the soil surface, and removing lumps, rocks and shallow-rooted weeds. For lighter chores such as raking leaves and gentle cultivation use a leaf rake. This rake can also be used for spreading mulch.

Wheelbarrow
While not strictly a tool, a wheelbarrow is essential for moving compost, mulch and, of course, tools around the yard. It’s also good for taking prunings and other green garden waste to the compost bin. If you’re moving heavy loads, get a wheelbarrow made of steel rather than plastic. A two-wheeled model is the most stable for heavy loads, although a single wheel can be easier to manoeuvre over rough ground.

Gloves
Again, not strictly a tool, but vital for keeping your hands clean as well as protecting them from blisters, thorns, bites and other damage.

Hose
A hose is essential for watering in the garden. Hoses are usually made from rubber or vinyl. Rubber is more expensive, but is far more long-lasting than vinyl and much easier to work with. Make sure your hose is long enough to reach all parts of the garden.

Randwick City Council Nursery Open Day
The nursery is open to the public from 9am until 3pm weekdays. Four times each year the nursery also opens on a Saturday. The next nursery open day will be on Saturday 7 December. Randwick City nursery stocks a large range of indigenous and native plants perfect for our sandy soils and coastal conditions. Horticultural staff will be on hand to assist you with plant selection, provide tips on sustainable and habitat gardening practices and answer other gardening enquiries.

Saturday 7 December
9am to 4pm
2B Barker Street, Kingsford

The sharpest tool
If you buy good-quality tools and take care of them they will last for years. Store tools out of the weather and clean and dry tools before putting them away. Timber handles should be oiled regularly or they will dry out and the metal blades of saws and secateurs should be wiped with an oiled rag to prevent rust. Secateurs and other tools should be disinfected between tasks to reduce the chance of spreading disease. Use a sharpening stone to keep blades and the edges of spades and shovels sharp.
## Working bee calendar

### BUSHCARE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>DEC</th>
<th>JAN</th>
<th>FEB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clovelly Bay</td>
<td>Designated car parking spaces opposite 8 Eastbourne Ave, Clovelly</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>9 – 11am</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred Hollows Reserve</td>
<td>Bligh Place entrance, Randwick</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>9 – 1pm</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gordons Bay</td>
<td>Access via UNSW Clifftbrook Campus Grounds, 45 Beach Street, Coogee</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>9am – 1pm</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Reserve</td>
<td>Vehicular entry to Coogee Surf Life Saving Club</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>8 – 10am</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladies Pool</td>
<td>McIvers Rock Baths, Grant Reserve, Coogee</td>
<td>Sunday and Thursday</td>
<td>8 – 10am</td>
<td>1 and 19</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 and 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Malabar</td>
<td>End of Manwaring Avenue, Maroubra</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>12 – 3pm</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Bay Foreshore</td>
<td>Corner of Howe Street and Bay Parade, Malabar</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>9am – 1pm</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maroubra Dunes</td>
<td>South Maroubra SLSC car park</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>9am – 1pm</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Henry</td>
<td>Alternate between opposite 2 Millard Drive and the corner of Jennifer and Harvey Streets, Little Bay</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>9am – 1pm</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randwick Environment Park</td>
<td>Corner of Dooligah Avenue and Burragulung Street, Randwick</td>
<td>Wednesday and Saturday</td>
<td>9am – 12 noon</td>
<td>4 and 21</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5 and 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wylies Baths</td>
<td>At the picnic tables above Wylies Baths, Neptune Street, Coogee</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>9.30am – 11.30pm</td>
<td>10 only</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11 and 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Little Bay Landcare</td>
<td>Between 119 and 121 Bilga Crescent, Malabar, Contact Kerry Gordon on (02) 9311 7647 for more information.</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>8am – 12 noon</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Contact Kerry</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Magic Point (Malabar Headland)</td>
<td>Contact Claire Bettington on (02) 9344 8589 for the meeting place.</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>9am – 1pm</td>
<td>12, 19, 26</td>
<td>Contact Claire</td>
<td>13, 20, 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Malabar Headland West</td>
<td>Contact Don Kerr on (02) 9311 2665 for the meeting place.</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>9am – 1pm</td>
<td>1, 8, 15, 22, 29</td>
<td>Contact Don</td>
<td>2, 9, 16, 23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denotes non-council-run groups. Please contact organisers directly.

### PARKCARE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>DEC</th>
<th>JAN</th>
<th>FEB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alison Road</td>
<td>Corner of Alison Road and Beach Street, Coogee</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>8 – 10am</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clyde Street</td>
<td>Clyde Street Reserve, Randwick</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>1 – 3pm</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Tramline</td>
<td>Dudley Street entrance, Randwick</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>8 –10am</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Podcast and Book Recommendations

Australian Hiker
By Tim and Gill Savage
Australian Hiker was established in November 2016 with the goal of being an independent and knowledgeable source of information on hiking trails, gear and related advice. Its focus is on Australian trails, however, they do also review iconic overseas trails. Tim and Gill’s philosophy is based on providing first-hand advice based on what they have experienced, where they have hiked, what gear they have used and what they know.

100 Days of Solitude
Documentary by Jose Diaz
Emulating historical writers and adventurers, Jose Diaz, a Spanish photographer embarks on a unique adventure to live for 100 days in a cabin in the mountains of Redes Natural Park (Asturias) connecting to nature and documenting the beauty of his surroundings. Being largely self-sufficient and in solitude, Diaz shows that this simple way of life is still possible in our frantic world. His aim to live in harmony with nature is put to the test as he tries to maintain his mental faculties without being carried away by loneliness and isolation. His craft as a photographer is clearly evident through the beautiful scenes and natural landscapes he captures. This documentary is currently available on Netflix.

The First 40 Miles
By Heather and Josh Legler
If you are new to backpacking, or if you’re hopelessly in love with someone who wants you to love backpacking, then this podcast is for you. This husband and wife team delve into the essentials, how to lighten your load, and how to make the most of your time on the trail. Although this is from an American perspective, a lot of the information is highly relevant, especially for young families wanting to get their children interested in the outdoors. Although this podcast is no longer running, they still have over 200 episodes to listen to.

Into the Wild
By Jon Krakauer
Into the Wild examines the true story of Chris McCandless, a young man from a well-to-do family who in April 1992, hitchhiked to Alaska and walked alone into the wilderness north of Mount Denali. He had given $25,000 in savings to charity, abandoned his car and most of his other possessions, burned all the cash in his wallet, and invented a new life for himself. Four months later, a party of moose hunters found his decomposed body. How McCandless came to die is the unforgettable story of Into the Wild.

Jon Krakauer explores the obsession which leads some people
to explore the outer limits of self, leave civilisation behind and seek enlightenment through solitude and contact with nature. A 2007 film adaptation of Into the Wild was also produced.

These simple but profound musings have inspired many to embrace his philosophy of individualism and love of nature. More than a century and a half later, his message is timelier than ever.

“We need the tonic of wildness... At the same time that we are earnest to explore and learn all things, we require that all things be mysterious and unexplorable, that land and sea be indefinitely wild, unsurveyed and unfathomed by us because unfathomable. We can never have enough of nature.”

The diverse and carefully chosen routes range from the rugged delights of the Pembrokeshire Coastal Path in Wales to the lush wilderness of Jamaica and the Harz Witches’ Trail high in the German mountains. The hand-picked excursions include overland paths, urban trails, mountain passes, coastal and shoreline strolls, and walks that explore the heritage of the world’s most culturally rich destinations. There are gentle walks for beginners – some lasting barely an hour – and more demanding challenges for seasoned enthusiasts that will take months to achieve.

Every page provides a wealth of information about a must-try walk, including start and end points, overall distance, difficulty rating, terrain and an estimate of the time it should take to complete, along with links to specially commissioned digital route maps. In short, this book is an essential reference guide for all those who love to get out of their cars, get off their bikes and lace up their walking shoes.

**Walden**

*By Henry David Thoreau*

“I learned this, at least, by my experiment: that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavours to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.”

In 1845, Thoreau moved to a cabin that he built with his own hands on the shores of Walden Pond in Massachusetts. Shedding the trivial ties that he felt bound much of humanity, he reaped from the land both physically and mentally, and pursued truth in the quiet of nature. In Walden, he explains how separating oneself from the world of men can truly awaken the sleeping self. Thoreau believes that you have not truly existed until you adopt such a lifestyle – and only then can you re-enter society, as an enlightened being.

**1001 Walks You Must Experience Before You Die**

*By Barry Stone*

A perfect guide to the world’s most exhilarating walks. The ever-increasing passion for recreational walking is given fresh impetus with the creation of each new national park and wilderness area, the construction of every new walkway and the clearing of another trail. The growth in popularity of pathways and woodland walks, and the conversion of canal banks and disused railways around the world to mixed-use walk-and cycle-ways, means we now have unprecedented access to our cities and to ever-increasing tracts of our rural heritage.