

Bushland *Newsletter*

WINTER 19



On the go with Dan

With winter bringing on some cooler weather we'll have the chance to continue installing indigenous plantings at our bushcare sites while keeping an eye on the horizon for migrating whales. The crisp weather presents an excellent opportunity to get out and explore Sydney without the heat or crowds of summer. Read on below to find out about weeds to watch out for, hanging plants and a great local walk filled with ocean vistas, historical sites and magnificent flora.

**Dan Randwick City Council
Bushcare Officer**

Volunteer Coordinators Meeting

Every quarter I attend a Volunteers Coordinator Meeting that brings together bushcare officers from Councils within the Greater Sydney area. It provides a fantastic opportunity to catch up on what other Councils are doing as well as brainstorm on current issues. Randwick Council hosted the most recent meeting in March at the outdoor classroom down at Randwick Environment Park. Attendees listened to presentations by local bee expert Elke Haege on native bees and former Randwick Council employee Danny Hirschfeld on Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub and how it came to be listed as a Critically Endangered Ecological Community. In the afternoon a field trip was conducted to check out the Western Escarpment Walking Track at Malabar Headland National Park. It was a great day and I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to showcase Randwick's beautiful coastal location.



North Sydney Bushcare Exchange

In May, North Sydney bushcare volunteers joined us down at Maroubra Dunes bushcare. They had a great time working alongside our regular volunteers on the attack against Turkey Rhubarb although they found it difficult to concentrate with such a stunning view of South Maroubra Beach on the horizon! Later in the year some of our volunteers will conduct a reciprocal visit to lend a hand with bushcare at Balls Head Reserve in Waverton.

Things to do this winter



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 1 June. 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 all other gardening enquiries.

Saturday 1 June, 9am – 3pm 2B Barker Street, Kingsford



Explore La Perouse

La Perouse is the northern headland of Kamay Botany Bay National Park, near Maroubra. You'll find fantastic walks, diving spots and historic sites just a quick trip from Sydney's centre. The area was named after the French explorer who arrived in Botany Bay a week after the First Fleet, and whose disappearance was a long held mystery. Find out about the area's history and Aboriginal culture at the La Perouse Museum or take a guided tour of Bare Island Fort.

Henry Head Circuit Walk

Distance: 7.4 km

Time: 3 hrs

Start/End point: Cann Park, Anzac Parade

Located less than 20km from Sydney city, this return walk heads from La Perouse to Cape Banks, in Kamay Botany Bay National Park, returning via the Jennifer Street boardwalk. This moderate walk offers several historic sites, beaches, whale watching, and great bird watching along the way.

The track follows beaches and cliff tops as it visits World War One and Two gun and lookout stations. The side trip to the coastal cemetery is worthwhile, giving a glimpse into lives from the past. The Jennifer Street section of this circuit allows access through a section of Critically Endangered Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub that once occupied a much larger part of the Sydney region. A varied and interesting day out in the Botany Bay National Park.



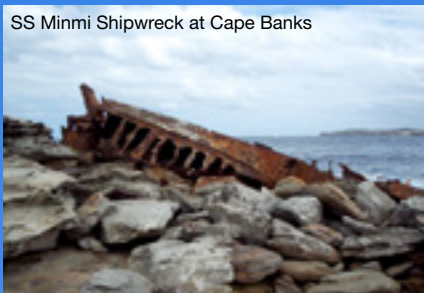
Start from the southern end of Cann Park and continue past pretty Congwong Beach, taking a swim along the way, to connect with the Henry Head walking track. Moderate fitness is recommended, but your efforts are rewarded with

Little Congwong Beach



breathtaking views around Botany Bay, from Bare Island in La Perouse to Cape Solander in Kurnell. The track heads through coastal heath, dotted with native acacias, Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub and spring wildflowers. Once you reach Henry Head take a break and admire the views. Be sure to check out Endeavour Lighthouse and the historic World War II battlements – part of Sydney’s early coastal defence system. From here you can either retrace your steps back to the start for a shorter 4 km walk or continue on to complete the loop.

SS Minmi Shipwreck at Cape Banks

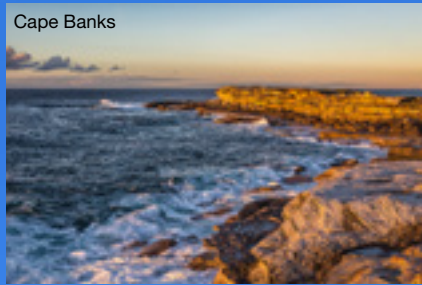


From Henry Head the track continues for another 1.2 km, passing Cruwee Cove and NSW golf course, before crossing the footbridge to Cape Banks. The rocky escarpment of Cape Banks forms the northern headland of Botany Bay. Take time to enjoy the coastal views, eroded sandstone rock formations, and the

rustling shipwreck of the SS Minmi. In winter, Cape Banks is a prime whale watching spot, as migrating humpback and southern right whales breach and frolic in the Pacific Ocean.

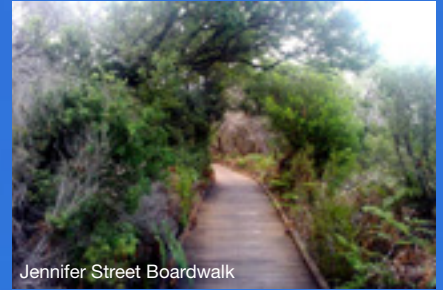
From Cape Banks return to the golf course and follow the Cape Banks fire trail to the north until you link up with Cape Banks Road opposite the Westpac Lifesaver Helicopter Base. Turn right and follow the road until you reach the coast hospital cemetery on the right. Explore here before

Cape Banks



continuing along the road for just under a kilometre until you link up with the Jennifer Street Boardwalk on the right. The boardwalk is a short, wheelchair-accessible walking track in La Perouse.

The Jennifer Street boardwalk takes you on an elevated short walk through one of Sydney’s last remaining tracts of Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub. Lining the boardwalk are Sydney red gums, grass trees, Sydney peppermint and grey gums. Many of these plants were once found in abundance in the coastal areas of Sydney between North Head and Botany Bay but now only remnants remain. This walk gives you a glimpse of what the entire area would have once looked like.



Jennifer Street Boardwalk

Once you reach Jennifer Street you need to follow the road for a little while. Turn right and follow Jennifer Street until you reach Reservoir Street on your left. Continue along Reservoir Street as it curves to the left into Grose Street. From Gross St you can follow the signposted Congwong Trail which enters the bushland on the left hand side of the street. Be sure to take the right hand path 50 metres along the trail to stay on the right course! You will soon pop out onto Henry Head Lane. Cross over and continue on the trail and you will soon be back on Anzac Parade. Turn left and follow Anzac Parade for 300 metres to return to your starting point.

Main image: Henry Head

Some information for this article was sourced from NSW National Parks and Wild Walks websites.



From the Nursery

Wild, wild weed

Winter is a great time to get weeds under control. Below is a list of 10 of the worst weed offenders in the garden.



As with pests, prevention is better than cure. Weeds will find it harder to get established in a healthy, vigorous garden. Similarly, mulch or dense groundcover plants help control weeds by preventing weed seed germinating, or preventing seed reaching the ground in the first place.

If weeds do start to grow, try to eradicate them before they get established, and definitely before they set seed. If the weeds already have seed heads, wrap a plastic bag around the seed heads before removing the weed as this will prevent dispersal of the seeds.

Non-chemical treatments include covering the area with layers of newspaper or black plastic to block the sun and prevent weeds photosynthesising. This process can take several months. Alternatively, you can use steam or boiling water to either kill the plant or damage the above-ground parts of the plant and again impair its ability to manufacture food.

As an alternative to commercial herbicides you can brush a salt and vinegar solution (1 cup salt to 1 litre vinegar) onto weeds to kill them.



Asthma Weed produces thousands of seeds

1. Asthma Weed (*Parietaria judaica*)

Asthma Weed is a hairy perennial plant that grows to 20-80cm high with soft, oval-to lance-shaped leaves and reddish woody stems. The sticky hairs can be a skin irritant and the pollen highly allergenic. Asthma weed produces thousands of seeds and will regrow from root cuttings.

Hand remove, wearing gloves and making sure to remove the root, or use a glyphosate-based herbicide. Bag any waste and place it in general waste rather than green waste.



The carrot top-shaped leaves of Bindii. (Credit: Harry Rose South West Rocks, Australia CC BY 2.0)

2. Bindii (*Soliva pterosperma*)

Bindii is an annual weed that is adapted to grow in dry locations where few other plants can survive. Commonly growing in lawns, it produces a prickly, painful seed in mid spring.

Bindii grows very low to the ground with parsley or carrot-top shaped leaves. It produces a single flower that eventually develops into the prickly seed. It can be pulled up or dug out, but make sure to remove all the roots or it will regrow. In the lawn, Bindii can also be killed easily with a selective herbicide.



3. Caustic Weed (*Chamaesyce prostrata*)

Multi-branched prostrate plant with deep green small leaves with a green centre and red stems. Hand remove.



Castor Oil Plant

4. Castor Oil Plant (*Ricinus communis*)

Castor Oil Plant is a garden escapee that has become a weed of wasteland and sometimes makes its way back into gardens. Growing up to 3m high, it has large, deeply divided fig-like leaves, red stems and large burred seeds. The leaves, flowers and seeds are highly poisonous. Easily hand removed. Wear gloves and eye protection.

5. Chinese Celtis (*Celtis sinensis*)

Deciduous or semi-deciduous tree to 30m that is becoming an increasing problem in Sydney. The attractive orange fruit are spread by birds. Best controlled by removing the young seedlings by hand.



Dandelion and its distinctive yellow flower

6. Dandelion (*Taraxacum spp*)

Dandelions have a rosette of bright green serrated leaves low to the ground and distinctive yellow daisy flowers. Hand removal is easier when the plants are young because of the deep tap root system of established plants. Any piece of the root left in the ground will probably grow back. Pull out young dandelions by grasping them firmly under the leaves and wiggling gently to dislodge the taproot from the soil. Alternatively, use a hand trowel or weeding tool to dig them out.



Masses of fleabane on a verge

7. Flax Fleabane (*Conyza bonariensis*)

Flax Fleabane is usually under a metre tall and is an erect plant with hairy grey-green stems and leaves. Dense flower heads from spring to autumn. There are other species of fleabane which look similar and are also weeds. They are often found on disturbed sites and roadsides.

When plants are younger you can remove them fairly easily by hand. For older plants you can either dig out the weed or moisten the soil to make hand removal easier. Fleabane is resistant to several herbicides.



Madeira Vine making its way up a tree trunk

8. Madeira Vine (*Andredera cordifolia*)

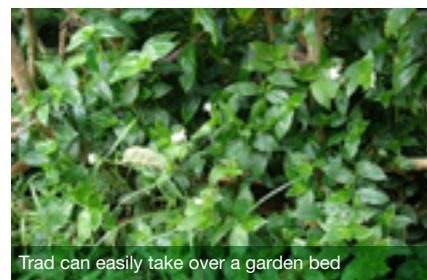
Madeira Vine is a vigorous, twining vine that can smother host plants and can spread from vegetative fragments or aerial tubers. The leaves are bright green, fleshy, egg or heart-shaped and alternately arranged. The flowers are small, fragrant and creamy in drooping clusters up to 20cm long.

Madeira Vine is hard to remove by hand once it gets established. The aerial tubers often fall as the plant is pulled off host plants and are shed if the vine is cut. If hand-removed, all parts must be bagged and placed in the general waste. The best solution for an established plant is to scrape the stem and paint the scraped section with a glyphosate-based herbicide.

9. Onion Weed (*Asphodelus fistulosus*)

Onion Weed has strap-like, grey-green leaves with a distinctive oniony smell, and heads of small white flowers with papery bracts. Onion Weed is hard to remove by hand because of the many bulblets attached to the main bulb.

The waxy leaf can also make it hard to use a foliar spray. Steam or hot water will impair the weed's growth or it can be hand painted with a glyphosate concentrate. Cutting the plant first will make hand-painting more effective.



Trad can easily take over a garden bed

10. Tradescantia, Wandering Jew (*Tradescantia fluminensis*)

Tradescantia, known as Trad, is a vigorous creeper that can take over a garden bed. It is shade tolerant and moisture loving. The leaves are dark green and glossy, simple, alternate and ovate. The flowers are small and white, with three petals and six hairy stamens. It is sometimes confused with the native Commelina (*Commelina cyanea*), which has blue flowers.

Trad can grow again from fragments of vegetation so it is important to bag any waste and place it in general waste. It can also be sprayed with glyphosate or painted with a glyphosate concentrate.

Weeds into feed

Solarise weeds by placing them in a plastic bag and leaving them in the sun for four to eight weeks to dry out and cook. You can then put the residue in your compost bin and turn it into wonderful humous.

Turn weeds into a liquid soil conditioner by placing them in a container or bin filled with water. Use a container with a tight-fitting lid and leave for about eight weeks to allow the weeds to decompose.

Working bee calendar

BUSHCARE

GROUP	LOCATION	DAY	TIME	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
Clovelly Bay	Designated car parking spaces opposite 8 Eastbourne Ave, Clovelly	Friday	9am-11am	14	12	9
Fred Hollows Reserve	Bligh Place entrance, Randwick	Wednesday	9am-1pm	12	10	14
Gordons Bay	Access via UNSW Cliffbrook Campus Grounds, 45 Beach Street, Coogee	Sunday	9am-1pm	9	14	11
Grant Reserve	Vehicular entry to Coogee Surf Life Saving Club	Wednesday	8am-10am	19	17	21
Ladies Pool	Mclvers Rock Baths, Grant Reserve, Coogee	Sunday and Thursday	9am-11am	2 and 20	7 and 18	4 and 15
Lake Malabar	End of Manwaring Avenue, Maroubra	Wednesday	12pm-3pm	19	17	21
Long Bay Foreshore	Corner of Howe Street and Bay Parade, Malabar	Saturday	9am-1pm	1	6	3
Maroubra Dunes	South Maroubra SLSC car park	Thursday	9am-1pm	6	4	1
Prince Henry	Alternate between opposite 2 Millard Drive & the corner of Jennifer and Harvey Street, Little Bay	Saturday	9am-1pm	8	13	10
Randwick Environment Park	Corner of Dooligah Avenue and Burragulung Street, Randwick	Wednesday and Saturday	9am-12pm	5 and 15	3 and 20	7 and 17
Wylies Baths	At the picnic tables above Wylies Baths, Neptune Street, Coogee	Tuesday	9.30am-11.30am	11 and 25	9 and 23	13 and 27
Little Bay Landcare	Between 119 and 121 Bilga Crescent, Malabar. Contact Kerry Gordon on (02) 9311 7647 for more information.	Saturday	8am-12pm	1	6	3
Magic Point (Malabar Headland)*	Contact Claire Bettington on (02) 9344 8589 for the meeting place.	Thursday	9am-1pm	13, 20, 27	11, 18, 25	8, 15, 22, 29
Malabar Headland West*	Contact Don Kerr on (02) 9311 2665 for the meeting place.	Sunday	9am-1pm	2, 9, 16, 23, 30	7, 14, 21, 28	4, 11, 18, 25

PARKCARE

GROUP	LOCATION	DAY	TIME	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
Alison Road	Corner of Alison Road and Beach Street, Coogee	Wednesday	8am-10am	26	24	28
Clyde Street	Clyde Street Reserve, Randwick	Saturday	1pm-3pm	15	20	17
Old Tramline	Dudley Street entrance, Randwick	Thursday	8am-10am	13	11	8

Hanging beauties

Elkhorns (*Platycerium bifurcatum*) and staghorns (*Platycerium superbum*) are some of the most amazing-looking plants yet, despite their exotic appearance, they're relatively easy to grow.

They are classified as epiphytic ferns, which means that they grow on other plants but are not parasitic. The reason they look so different to most other plants is that they have evolved to survive in the treetops where they grow on branches, tree trunks and fallen logs. Both species can be found in moist forests in Eastern Australia.

The easiest way to distinguish between the two types of fern is that elkhorns have many plants growing together in communities and they have smaller, slender fronds. Whereas staghorns tend to grow as larger individuals. Both species grow in warm, humid forests.

Elks and stags have minimal root systems (just enough to anchor them to the tree) but they're well adapted to catch leaves, debris and rainwater falling from above. Unlike most other plants, which absorb water and nutrients through their roots, these ferns can only survive if they capture sufficient quantities of moisture and nutrients from the surrounding air.



Plantlets are evident even on small elkhorns.
© D. Gordon and E. Robertson

Common name: Elkhorn

Scientific name: *Platycerium bifurcatum*

The most common and widespread species in Australia. In southern New South Wales it grows frequently into large masses on boulders and rock faces. Further north, in Queensland, it is found mainly on trees. It grows in a variety of habitats from high in the trees of the rainforests to Casuarina swamps and to open forest, where it has been found growing on the trunks of old cycads. Plantlets grow from buds on the

outer lower margins of the nest leaves and by this way the species grows into huge clumps, sometimes so large that their host cannot support them and they crash to the ground.

Distinguishing features: True fronds branching in the upper half, the ultimate segments up to 30 cm long and up to 3 cm wide; base of true fronds narrowly wedge shaped; the deeply lobed nest leaves.

Distribution: Northern QLD to southern NSW.



Large staghorn growing above smaller elkhorn.
© Tatiana Gerus

Common name: Staghorn

Scientific name: *Platycerium superbum*

This fern is easily grown and very common in cultivation and is one of the most spectacular in the world. It entirely lacks the ability to produce plantlets and the single plant just gets larger each season. The true fronds of a large specimen may dangle for over 2m. The young plants at first only produce nest leaves. These press tightly against the host, covering the root system but eventually a small antler is produced. The species grows on trees or rocks, generally in rainforest.



Staghorns make for a spectacular feature in any garden. © cultivar413

Distinguishing features: The evergreen nest leaves; the absence of plantlets; the single fertile area at the first fork of the true frond.

Distribution: QLD, northern NSW; also Malaysia.

Simple steps to add interest

If you'd like to add some interest to your garden follow these simple steps to re-create their natural environment:

Position: Light shade with occasional patches of sunlight. Although they can be grown in cold areas regular frosts will kill them.

Drainage: Good drainage is essential and easy to attain if the plants are attached to a suitable backing board made of long-lasting material. Recycled timber or an existing tree stump are ideal. Tie the fern on with a soft tie made out of something like an old stocking. With time if it becomes heavy its best to support it from beneath with some sturdy wire threaded through an old piece of plastic hose (to prevent the wire cutting into the fern).

Watering: Established ferns tolerate periods of drought, but in dry weather a once weekly soaking will help, especially when establishing young plants or plants moved to a new location.

Feeding: Feed gently as they have minimal nutrient requirements usually, existing on little more than the rotting leaves they've managed to collect. Seaweed fertiliser is best but only use half the recommended strength. Artificial fertilisers can burn the fronds.

Pests and diseases: Being relatively maintenance free these plants are not overly prone to pests and diseases. Don't worry about large brown felt patches that develop beneath the fronds. These are the spores, the dust-like particles that represent the reproductive stage of the plant. It's a sign of a healthy adult plant.

Some information sourced from Australian Ferns and Fern Allies by D.L. Jones and S.C. Clemesha

Bright colour and interesting structure make this an easily identifiable fungi species. © Ian Dodd



Jelly colonies

Spatula Jelly fungi (*Dacryopinax spathularia*) have fruit bodies that are gelatinous in texture.

Spatula jelly is a common cosmopolitan species that is widely distributed in Asia and is also known to occur in Hawaii, Europe and South America. It is a bright golden yellow colour, stalked, tough jelly usually with a flattened petal-like top, to 1.5 cm tall.

The upper surface is smooth whilst the lower stem is 2 mm wide, red-brown, narrow and tough. The minute spores are colourless, elliptic-cylindrical shaped and slightly curved. They are produced on the outer surface of the fruit body. Spatula jelly prefers moist areas where it grows from dead wood of varying sizes. This species, when dry, becomes very hard, dark red-brown and shrinks back into cracks in the woody substrate, rehydrating when there is enough moisture. Rather than growing in a particular season they appear whenever there is sufficient rain to revive them and can appear in large clustered groupings. Colonies may exist in the same location for several years.



Large colony growing out of timber. © Doug Beckers



Australian Birds of Prey in Flight

A photographic guide by Richard Seaton, Mat Gilfedder, and Stephen Debus

Identify the eagles, hawks, kites and falcons flying high above you with this photographic guide.

Birds of prey spend most of their time in flight and, when viewed from the ground, they are notoriously hard to identify. Australian Birds of Prey in Flight is a photographic guide to the eagles, hawks, kites and falcons flying high above you. Individual species profiles describe distinguishing features and the text is supported by detailed images showing the birds at six different angles and poses, using photographs from many of Australia's leading bird photographers. Annotated multi-species comparison plates highlight key features that can help differentiate birds of prey in flight.

This book will be of value to anyone who wants to learn more about Australia's birds of prey, and will provide a useful reference for identifying soaring birds in the field, and also while trying to identify images from your own camera.

Information sourced from CSIRO publishing.

QuestaGame App

Experience the adventure of your local wildlife. QuestaGame takes you outdoors – to your backyard, a local park, a hiking trail, anywhere. Join quests and compete with other players to photograph animals and plants in the wild. Your mission: Saving life on Earth.

The game includes all species in your country, using national and global databases. Submit sightings of animals and plants and receive identifications, expert feedback – plus gold reward and experience points. Join quests, buy equipment, gain levels, build your collection, join clans, conquer territories, move up the leaderboard and become one of the great adventurers of all time.

All sightings are geo-tagged with location, date, time and submitted to your country's national database (with your permission) – so you can not only map your conquests, but also help scientists, researchers, planners and others record and protect your region's biodiversity while you play.

Some important features:

- Clans and Head-to-Head Challenges.
- Comms featured allows you to see what the community is up to.
- QuestaLab allows you to earn gold and gain expertise levels identifying other players' sightings.
- Featured sightings...and more!

For more information be sure to visit <http://www.questagame.com>

