



NEWSLETTER

October 2021

P.O. Box 111, GLEN FORREST, WA 6071P

Meet: Octagonal Hall, 52, McGlew Rd., Glen Forrest.
4th Friday of the month. [Doors open 7.00pm for 7.30pm](#)

Committee 2021

President: Penny Hussey
Vice President: Fran Kininmonth
Treasurer: Peter Day
Secretary: Janet Atkins
Committee Members:
June Barkman
Mal Myers
Maxine Tyler
Robin Rudeforth

Email:

For all email contact to individual Committee Members please use the WSWA's generic email:
eastern.hills.branch@wildflowersocietywa.org.au

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/easternhillswildflowersoc/>

COVID NOTE: Once again, we must emphasise that scheduled events will go ahead – provided there is not a mandatory restriction due to Covid19. It is your responsibility to keep up to date with those!

Coming Events October

Thursday 7th October

Committee Meeting
3pm Octagonal Hall

Wednesday 13th and 27th October

Seed Cleaning
9am Octagonal Hall

Monday 18th October

Propagation Group.
Octagonal Hall, 12 noon.
Evening Meeting

Friday 22nd October

Leonie Monks
"Threatened Flora Translocations"

Leonie Monks works on the management and conservation of Threatened Flora, including the value of fire and of intact insect populations in plant life cycles. She will tell us how the Spiral-fruited Wattle was brought back from extinction, and give details of the huge amount of planning that goes into Flora Management Plans.

This talk should open our eyes to the complexity of the natural world that links plant to place.

There will be a Quiz. Don't forget specimens for the Nature Table.

Wildflower Ramble

There will not be a ramble this month.

Coming Events Nov.

Thursday 4th November

Committee Meeting
3pm Octagonal Hall

Wednesday 10th and 24th Nov.

Seed Cleaning
9am Octagonal Hall

Monday 15^h November

Propagation Group.
Octagonal Hall, 12 noon.

Evening Meeting

Friday 26th November
AGM

Wildflower Ramble

Sunday 28th November
To be arranged.

REPORTS

Evening Meeting Friday 24th September “From Red Box and Beyond – Western Australian Herbarium collections and their use in biodiversity science”
Shelley James

Shelley was due to talk to us earlier in the year, but then – snap lockdown! – the meeting was cancelled at three hours notice! We were very pleased that she was able to reschedule.

Shelley started by saying that she originally came from Western Australia, but she has spent much of her working life overseas, including 20 years in Hawaii, before retuning to be appointed Collections Manager at the Herbarium. It is considered a ‘Regional Herbarium’ as most of its 822,000 items are from this State.

She explained how specimens are prepared, including that they are frozen to kill organisms that could destroy the preserved plant tissue. Here she acknowledged the invaluable work of volunteers, without whom the scientific institution would undoubtedly be buried under a mountain of unprocessed specimens.

All the data, including images, is now online, and the Perth stuff has been used 4 million times this year already, so making it much more accessible for international study. Also you can find out how many times a particular collection has been used – ‘brownie points’ for the scientist concerned! All in all, a herbarium is not just a dusty pile of old bits – it is a priceless resource that can be used to illuminate how the ecological scene changes over time! Wow!

We had a guest Quizmaster this month. Ken Wadley took us on a trip to Central Australia and I thoroughly enjoyed trying to answer for once. They were challenging questions, and the winning group got 21 out of 35 correct. Well done! There were also some superb plants exhibited on the nature table.

Penny Hussey

Sunday 26th September
Wildflower Ramble
Glen Forest Superblock and Nyaania Creek

Very common plants – same family, two different genera. Can you name them both? If not, you should come on a wildflower ramble!



The lightning flashed and the thunder roared, the streets were flowing rivers – it was with some misgivings that I set off for the rendezvous. Surely no-one would be daft enough to go walking in this! O faint heart! Twelve of us set off and for part of the time we had glorious sun to enjoy the colourful wildflower display.

We were very pleased to have Kathy Wood join us – she has done years of superb management work in this area, and could graphically describe the daunting weed problems that had to be attacked – so successfully that the result looks totally natural. With Janet Atkins there as well to provide ID and horticultural detail, there was a wealth of expertise to answer the questions of some local residents who also came along.

It made for a slow ramble – two hours to cover 2km. At one stage a walking group thundered past, storming off into the distance – if it had been dry, you would have seen the dust kicked up by their hooves!

We have added quite a few more species to EHB’s ‘Superblock Plant List’. If you would like a copy of this, please contact me through our generic email.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Patersonia umbrosa var. *xanthina*
Yellow Flag



This is a clumping perennial with many linear leaves crowded close to the stem. The leaves are slightly ribbed.

The bright yellow flowers are produced from August to October. It grows in lateritic soil as an understorey plant in forest of the Darling Range as far south at the Stirling Range. At this point, and down along the South Coast, the flowers are purple and the plant is no longer variety *xanthina*.

It is propagated from seed

Robin Rudeforth



Patersonia umbrosa var *xanthina* in Hackets Gully.

NEWS

WANTED – MORE SEED FOR THE SEED BANK!

It is seed collecting time again! Please look out for seed on plants on your property that you can collect seed from, to donate the seed bank. The seed has been very popular this year, and we need some fresh stock. You will soon receive an email about this!

Does anyone have *Patersonia umbrosa* var. *xanthina*, for example?

Thank you!

Thank you to all the people who donated sheets, towels, pillow cases etc for the wildlife injured in the Woorooloo bushfire. They were given to a wildlife rescue organisation called 'Mamas and Papas' based in Toodyay. Animals rescued after the fire included joeys, possums and bobtails. All the animals that were cared for have been released back into the wild.

I will be taking some more items to the organisation soon, if anyone has items to donate. Fluffy material such as dressing gowns and baby blankets can be made into pouches, for example. A good use for things you no longer want!

Robin Rudeforth

WEED WATCH

Babiana angustifolia
Baboon Flower



Babianas meld into the background on granites and forest floor, until they burst into eye-catching flower in October and you start realising they are quite widespread.

Brought from South Africa as garden plants, they have spread into bushland, in clay based wetlands on the Swan Coastal Plain from Gingin southward and mainly on granites and along tracks in the Hills. It is also spreading in the Avon Valley, and at Albany.

The plants we have here are almost certainly horticultural cultivars, and they have a wide variety of colours, from palest lilac to deep magenta and velvety purple. Sometimes there are splashes of white or red within the flower. Indeed, a wonderful show in your rock garden!

To remove them from the bush is not as easy as it might look, as you cannot blanket-spray, because they grow interspersed among desirable things. Individual plants can be herbicided or dug out, but they produce many corms and seeds, so this will have to be repeated in following years.

As with all such species, try to remove them when a few plants first appear. Don't let them spread widely, or the task will become too daunting.

Penny Hussey

A PLANT TO WATCH OUT FOR

Among the ground flora on laterite under Jarrah are a lot of tufty plants with linear leaves that one tends to think of as 'sedgy

things'. But then, in spring they produce flowers (especially after fire) and if you look at them very carefully, you will see that some of the tiny flowers are shaped like lilies. There are Lomandras, in the family Asparagaceae (was Anthericaceae, was Liliaceae) like the one below which as photographed by Jan Pitman on her property in September. They all have male flowers with stamens and female flowers with an ovary.



This is *Lomandra caespitosa*, Tufted Mat Rush, an important soil stabilising component of the forest understory.

The other three species you are most likely to notice flowering this spring both have taller flowering stems. *L. preisii* has yellow green or purple flowers held together in a tight cylinder. *L. nigricans* has white male flowers in a loose branching panicle, the female spike is much less obvious. *L. purpurea* has a panicle of purple male flowers on a stem up to 1m tall. There are at least 14 other species in the Perth area. Watch out for Lomandras on your spring bushwalks!

Penny Hussey

The views and opinions expressed in the articles in this Newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Wildflower Society of Western Australia