

NEWSLETTER

March 2024



EHB NO LONGER HAS A POSTAL ADDRESS

Use the email, please.

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

Committee 2024

President: Pam Riordan
Vice President: Maxine Tyler
Treasurer: Peter Day
Secretary: Janet Atkins
Committee Members:
June Barkman
Sarah Dudley
Penny Hussey
Mal Myers
Robyn Rudeforth

Email:

For all contacts, please use the WSWA's generic email:
eastern.hills.branch@wildflowersocietywa.org.au

Facebook:

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

COMING EVENTS: MAR

Thursday 7th March
Committee Meeting
3.00pm Octagonal Hall

Seed Cleaning
Wednesday 6th and 20th March
9.00am Octagonal Hall

Propagation Group
Monday 18th March
12 noon Octagonal Hall
Bring lunch.

Evening Meeting Friday 22nd March Steve Hopper "The genus *Haemodorum*"

Prof. Steve Hopper needs no introduction to members of the Wildflower Society, having been a leading botanical researcher for many years. As a post-graduate student, he worked on the family Haemodoraceae while studying Kangaroo Paws. (Have you read his super little book "*Kangaroo Paws and Catspaws*" that was published in 1993? If not, it's in the library!)

Recently he has been studying the type genus for the family, *Haemodorum*, the Bloodroots. They are those spindly things that produce black flowers in early summer. Distribution, pollination, aboriginal uses - be prepared to be amazed!



Haemodorum laxum

As Steve now lives in Albany, this will be a 'Zoom' meeting, but you will be able to ask questions directly.

COMING EVENTS: APRIL

Thursday 4th March Committee Meeting

3.00pm Octagonal Hall

Seed Cleaning

Wednesday 3rd and 17th April

9.00am Octagonal Hall

Propagation Group

Monday 15th April

12 noon Octagonal Hall

Bring lunch.

Evening Meeting

Friday 26th April

Bronwyn Keighery

“The Whicher Range”

7.30 pm Octagonal Hall

In the Wildflower Society, Bronwyn is probably better known than her husband Greg. For years she has served on the Committee, been a principal organiser of the Plant Survey programme as well as Editor of the WSWA's Newsletter. A highly knowledgeable botanical authority and a good speaker as well!

She is going to talk to us about the Whicher Range, the low plateau that rises behind the marine scarp that lies to the south of Capel and Busselton. This is a fascinating area that is stuffed full of unusual plants – and most people don't give it a second glance, their eyes being fixed on the coast.

Come and see what you are missing, and plan your next trip south!

With any luck there will be a few things flowering this month – don't forget to bring them to the nature table!

KELLERBERRIN EXCURSION IN AUGUST

We are in the process of planning an extended excursion to Kellerberrin at the

end of August. There is accommodation available at 'The Prev' (<https://theprev.com.au/>) and we are thinking of 3-4 days.

Possible excursions include a visit to Richard Mc Dowell at his Wheatbelt Native Gardens nursery, an outing with the Merredin Branch and a visit to one of the nearby granite outcrops.

REPORTS

Evening Meeting Friday 23rd February Greg Keighery: “The importance of botanist Robert Brown”

WOW! The year started off with a bang! The hall was full, with lots of visitors, making the largest audience we have had for a while. It was super to talk to so many new people – who all heard about it through Facebook apparently.

The only glitch was that the Quiz that started the evening was a “Retrospective” so newcomers wouldn't have had a clue about many of the answers! Apologies to those people! 28 points were possible and the winning group got 26! Wow! Nice to find out that people remember what we do – and read the Newsletter!

Greg Keighery gave a superb talk about Robert Brown and his importance to Australian botany. I knew he was a towering figure, but not by how much! Born in Scotland in 1773, he studied in Edinburgh then was given a place as botanist on the “Investigator”, Captain Mathew Flinders, on a trip to survey all the unknown parts of the Australian coastline. Leaving in 1801, the trip took five years. The WA bits investigated were the South Coast and part of the Kimberley, but while there the ship sprung a leak and had to go to Indonesia for repairs.

Brown returned to England in 1805 with around 3,000 plant specimens from Australia. He donated them to the British Museum and took a paid position as the Curator. Later he worked for Joseph Banks who provided him with a house and a generous stipend to continue his work.

Brown was not a Flora writer, but he was a meticulous observer and classifier. He looked for relationships and so defined families and genera, thus making sense of the mass of new material coming from the south. He was, in effect, the first professional botanist, as opposed to the gentlemen botanists (who did not have to work for a living) such as Banks, Bentham and Hooker.

So, what was his legacy to modern Australia? It is huge. His work underpins the structure of the flora as we understand it today. He defined 56 families (eg Proteaceae), 440 genera (eg *Franklandia* and *Isopogon*) and about 3,000 new species. He was a meticulous observer, pointing out how *Kingia* could not be in the same family as *Xanthorrhoea* for example. In what is now Torndirrup NP he collected 121 species (out of the 600+ recorded now) but he was collecting at the height of summer. While in Sydney, he wrote about all the weeds that were established around the new settlement. Got the idea?

Greg summarised by calling him “the most influential botanist who has ever worked on the Australian Flora”. There are several books written about him. Why not get one, and read more?

Penny Hussey

PLANT SALE

This year's Plant sale will take place on Saturday 11th May 9.00am – 2.00pm with set up all day Friday 10th May. Helpers will be needed for both days. Growers have been busy over summer and in some cases for the past 12 months. If you have not sold plants previously and would like to do so please make contact with either Mitzi Wehlack (wehlackmilica@gmail.com) or Janet Atkins (atkinsrj@iinet.net.au) .

Plants must be W.A. species and you need to be a member of the Wildflower Society. This is the main fundraiser for the Branch with 40% of the takings used to fund our operations for the year. A lot of help is needed over both days. For those who have not participated in the past what we broadly need (there will be jobs for everyone) is below.

Friday 10th May

- 8.00am – 10.00am – Set up trestles etc a bit of muscle needed
- 10.00am- 2.00pm – Shift plants from vehicles to benches, some labelling and pricing
- 2.00pm -? Final table sort

Saturday 11th May

- 8.00am – 9.00am Put out plant labels, tidy and sort
- 9.00am Gates Open. We need people to help purchasers choose plants, cashiers etc
- 12.00pm onwards start cleaning up with sale still operating
- Most importantly we need a small catering corps to water and feed the troupes – most important job.

If you would like to be involved please contact Janet on the branch email or atkinsrj@iinet.net.au . As you can see, plant knowledge is not a requirement!

Propagation Group -

The tin has still got a lot of IOUs in it!!!!

WE STILL NEED A SOCIAL MEDIA GURU

We are looking for someone to increase our branch's presence on social media. To advertise our events, post photos of activities and generally promote us.

You don't need to be a botanist, we can supply lots of photos. We would like you to review our settings and connections with other groups on facebook. Basically we want someone who KNOWS how to get the most out of facebook and for that matter other digital media sources. Contact Pam on pamela.riordan@gmail.com or phone 93782523/0408909897

CLEANER APPOINTED

We have at last sourced a cleaner for the hall. Paula will start in March so I'm sure you'll see the difference very soon



Acacia mearnsii
Blue Wattle

An attractive, summer-flowering, medium-sized wattle from the Avon Valley. Grows well in Perth gardens.

Look for it at the Plant Sale!

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