



Killcare Wagstaffe Trust

Newsletter

April 2017

Annual General Meeting

Sunday May 7th at 9.30 am
at the Maitland Bay Information Centre.

All visitors and residents are welcome

Guest speaker. TBA

Maitland Bay Information Centre

Many thanks to those members who responded to our call for volunteers. Keeping the Centre staffed is one of the responsibilities of the Trust. Anybody else who would like to volunteer can contact Deb Holloman on 4320 4224.

Gai Davies has taken on the job of decorating the window of the centre with displays of local plant life.

Why not feed native birds and animals?

Feeding native birds and animals can be fun. My kids used to love feeding the Kookaburras with their grandfather and Kooka became his name for the rest of his life.

The experts strongly discourage this practice for several good reasons.

Firstly it can make them sick. The food we provide tends to be the equivalent of junk food, lacking the variety of their natural diet.

Necrotizing enteritis and Beak and Feather disease are both fatal for lorikeets and have been directly related to inadequate artificial diets, and to the unsanitary conditions of trays and other containers from which they were being fed.

Secondly, feeding birds and animals can alter the population balance. Some birds and animals prosper at the expense of others. When currawongs and ravens are hand-fed they breed up and prey on smaller birds. Crimson rosellas can displace other birds and mammals that shelter in tree hollows.

Thirdly, it can affect normal animal behaviour. Easy access to food can cause animals to lose their ability to forage for natural foods. Animals that expect to be fed by people can become aggressive, harassing people for food when they are hungry.

This can happen surprisingly quickly. I recently hand-fed a friendly water dragon that liked sunning himself on our front steps. The next day he came running over when he saw me and I was suckered into feeding him again. The next night he marched straight into the house, which he had never done before, and jumped up on my partner's lap while we were having dinner. When I tried to chase him out, he ran over and bit me on the toe. Once bitten, twice shy - my lesson learned.



The culprit



The good news is that there are responsible ways to attract wildlife to your backyard without endangering yourself or the natural order.

Plant trees such as hakeas, acacias, casuarinas and eucalypts to provide natural foods for visiting birds. Create flowering habitats for honeyeaters with banksias, bottlebrushes and grevilleas. Include some prickly shrubs for smaller birds to hide in.

If you'd like to observe birds up close, install a bird bath or water feature. A water feature may also attract frogs. Nesting boxes can help to attract possums and birds.

To avoid scaring the wildlife away, be sure to keep any cats and dogs inside the house at night.

Red Bloodwoods in Flower

In March, the Peninsula was treated to a magnificent display of flowering Red Bloodwoods (*Corymbia gummifera*).

When only one species of eucalypt is flowering it is easy to see where it grows. The red bloodwoods seem to be restricted to the Hawkesbury sandstone soils on the ridges. They particularly like a northern aspect.

Individuals are scattered along the top of Wards Hill Rd, along the Scenic Drive and along the ridges of Box head, especially above the Hardy's Bay Club, Pretty Beach and Wagstaffe.

The flowers attract the pollen eaters to the area including flying foxes and honeyeaters.



While most definitely a gum tree - oozing a red resin when damaged - it is not a Eucalyptus but a species of the Corymbia genus, along with the Spotted gum.

The timber is reddish in colour - as its name suggests. Although quite hard, it has a tendency to split when sawn lengthways and is mainly used for poles and posts.



Not all eucalypts are Eucalyptus

A main aim of the Trust is to improve awareness and understanding of our local environment. One of the best ways of doing this is to get to know plant and animal species by name.

Unfortunately this is made a little difficult for the amateur by the inconsistencies in the way we use both common and botanical names. A good example is the difference in meaning between the terms Eucalypts and Eucalyptus. To my mind this borders on the sadistic.

The term 'eucalypt' refers to three closely related genera of the Myrtaceae family – Eucalyptus with 758 species, Corymbia with 93 species and Angophora with 10 species. Colloquially they are called 'gum trees' because many of them exude resin when damaged.

The term Eucalyptus is derived from the Greek eu- meaning 'well' and kalyptos meaning 'covered'. This refers to the small cap or lid (operculum), which covers the flower bud before it blooms. The term was first used in 1788 by botanists in England studying samples bought back on Cook's voyages.

It seems unlikely that this term was used if the early botanists were not also aware of another type of tree with similar leaves but whose flower bud had no cap. In any event the term Angophora was in also in use before the end of the 18th century.

Angophora species have no flower bud cap. The name Angophora comes from the Greek phora meaning 'carries' and angos meaning 'jar' or 'vessel' which refers to the cup-shaped fruit borne by members of this genus.

Another important difference between Eucalyptus (and Corymbia) species and the Angophora species is that the leaves of the former grow alternately and those of the Angophoras are opposite.

On the Peninsula we tend to use the term Angophora to refer to the Angophora costata or Sydney Red Gum, or Smooth Barked Apple. Unfortunately this disguises the fact that there is another common angophora in the area, Angophora floribunda or Rough Barked Apple. This has a soft rough bark that extends along all branches and, like all angophoras, has opposite leaves.

The genus Corymbia is named from the Latin corymbium. A 'corymb' refers to the form of the flower clusters. It was not formally used until 1995 and was in response to a recognition that many trees classified as Eucalyptus were in fact closer to the Angophoras than the other Eucalyptus species. These included the spotted gum, the bloodwoods and the ghost gums.

The close relationship between the Corymbia and Angophora is obvious in the way they both present their blossoms in big bunches at the end of branches as opposed to eucalypts, which present blossoms along the branches and so they are not so obviously displayed



Angophora floribunda

Floating Landcare – NPWS

Local NPWS have three floating Landcare events coming up in April and May. Come visit some spectacular spots in our area and help with removal of environmental weeds. Tools and instruction provided.

APRIL 23 - Rileys island – meet at Lions Club Park Brickwharf Rd. Woy at 8:30 or Merrits wharf Empire Bay at 8:45 for a boat ride to Rileys Island - 8:30 -12:30

MAY 6 – Lobster Beach – meet at Wagstaffe wharf at 9:00 for a boat ride to Lobster Beach – BBQ lunch provided – 9:00 – 1:00

May 27 – Woy Woy Bay – Meet at Lions Club Park, Brickwharf Rd Woy Woy at 8:30 – for a boat ride to Woy Woy Bay . Morning tea provided.



Wagstaffe War on Weeds – April 22—8:30-12:30

Come join us for a morning of bush regeneration in Bouddi National Park on the ridge above Albert St. Tools, instruction and sausage sizzle provided. Meet at gate across Albert St at 8:30 .

For more information on this or the previous item – contact Deb Holloman – 43 204 224
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