

PNHA NEWS

Autumn 2021 Issue 87

Pittwater Natural Heritage Association - thinking locally, acting locally

PNHA UPDATE

Grant projects:

Mona Vale Dunes - two projects

1. Our project funded by the Federal Government Communities Environment program is progressing well. We're very glad to be getting this autumn rain as we will be planting tubestock in May and need damp sand to get the plants off to a good start before the weather warms up again. The most challenging weed here is Green Cestrum, a poisonous shrub with tufts of yellow flowers and then berries. It suckers when cut down, and is deep rooted. A real survivor but gradually disappearing here. The project has to be completed by end of June this year.

2. On the south side of the track to the beach from Golf Avenue, Northern Beaches Council and PNHA are providing funds for maintenance weeding. This is where in June 17 2006 PNHA and other volunteers planted 775 tubestock of local coastal natives donated by PNHA to the project (a NSW Environmental Trusts grant) to restore native vegetation on the dunes. The planting was a great success, but weeds now here are Turkey Rhubarb and Coastal Morning Glory.

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Turkey Rhubarb, *Rumex sagittatus*, formerly *Acetosa sagittata*, is a very difficult perennial weed to control. Native to southern Africa. It scrambles over other vegetation, growing from a network of tubers attached to the underground stems. Its tiny flowers are in large clusters, each with one seed. As it grows among dense wattle and other dune vegetation, digging out all the tubers is impossible. Spraying or scraping stems with Glyphosate is one control. If you can't dig it out or use herbicide, make sure not to let it flower.



PNHA is on Facebook Want to get in touch?

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INSIDE: More Projects: Avalon Golf Course, *Grevillea caleyi*.

NBC and PNHA: NBC Bushland & Biodiversity Policy, Local Housing Strategy, bushland at 8 Forest Rd Warriewood, Newport Littoral Rainforest.

Trad Biocontrol at Narrabeen Creek, Mona Vale Trees, Cayratia & Moths, Melaleuca Sawflies, Lily Caterpillar, Quiet: Cuckoos and Cicadas

Avalon Golf Course bushland:

Funds from the Federal Government Communities Environment program grant here are now expended. All that remains for us to do is publicity about the major weeds: African Olive and *Ochna serrulate* (Mickey Mouse Plant), and some tree planting around the course. That has to be completed by June 30 this year. Geoff Searl has led a bushcare group on the golf course for many years, making great progress, but lack of volunteers lead to last month's work being called off. Know anyone who can give them a couple of hours on the second Wednesday afternoon of the month? Contact Geoff on 0439 292 566.

Saving Caley's Grevillea, *Grevillea caleyi*

We are still unable to work within the Bahai Temple area, so instead will be funding bush regeneration work near the Terrey Hills Golf Club where the *Grevillea* also occurs. We had a bushcare morning there on March 15 alongside the bush regeneration contractors from Australian Bushland Restoration company. This grant is from Greater Sydney Local Land Services, in partnership with NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. This morning marked the end of our volunteer bushcare commitment to the *Grevillea caleyi* project though we continue to fund the contract work and manage the grant.

This is a beautiful bush area rich in species in the Proteaceae family as well as *G. caleyi*, such as Waratahs, Geebung, Hairpin Banksia *B. spinulosa* and Mountain Devil *Lambertia formosa*



G. caleyi seedling



Hairpin Banksia, *B. spinulosa*

Campaigning to look after our natural environment never stops.

The Council's long-awaited Bushland and Biodiversity Policy has at last been adopted. We commented to Council that it is excellent as a policy but has to have strategies and plans and plenty of funding to be effective. We have been invited to talk about these with Council staff in the next few weeks.

The NBC's proposed Local Housing Strategy is of concern for many reasons, but PNHA's response focused on the possible loss of bushland and trees in the Pittwater area. Our submission was emailed to members on February 19.

8 Forest Rd Warriewood. This land is the subject of a revised DA providing medium density housing on part of the property, now awaiting a decision. The land now zoned R2 (residential) formerly had glasshouses for vegetable growing. Another steeper section of the property is zoned RU2 (rural) and contains a farmhouse built in 1922. The magnificent trees and rocky terrain label it as rightly being part of the escarpment bushland now protected as Ingleside Chase Reserve, to which it is adjacent. A person who rented that house for several years made detailed observations of the rich wildlife on the land. The Land and Environment Court in addressing problems with the original DA, determined that the old house then empty in 2017 must be protected. This was not done and it has since suffered from neglect and vandalism, though not irremediably.

The current DA proposes part of that RU2 land to be used as a road, required for bushfire safety if development is to occur on the former farm land. We submitted that if part of that RU2 zoned land is to be used for a road, that this should only happen after another DA has been submitted and approved, and if it is approved then as a condition of consent the remainder of the RU2 land be added to Ingleside Chase Reserve, where we believe it belongs.

Post Script: A March 17 recommendation by NB Council is that the old house must be conserved.

Littoral Rainforest at 62 & 85 Hillside Rd Newport. Block 85 contains bushland and a house tenanted for many years. Block 62 is entirely bushland. Council proposed reclassifying the blocks, 85 as operational land and 65 as community land.

We argued that both be classified as Community land. Firstly, it is against the intent of the NSW Government as communicated to the community in a media release by the Hon Rob Stokes, Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, on 23 August 2019. In this press release Minister Stokes states: *More than 10,000 square metres of Littoral rainforest near Newport will be preserved as public open space thanks to a \$4.6 million joint investment by the NSW Government and Northern Beaches Council.*

We believe that classifying 85 Hillside Road as Operational Land makes it unable to be used as public open space, so we asked that Northern Beaches Council act consistently with the intent of the Minister's stated aim by classifying both lots as Community Land.

It is possible for the tenant to occupy the house by licence, for as long as required.

A decision is to be made at the NBC May meeting.



Narrabeen Creek Trad Biocontrol release February 24 2021

We planted more infected Trad into large areas of thick Trad along the bank of Narrabeen Creek in Warriewood. The planting areas are marked with red and white hazard tape so we can find the planted stems and monitor whether the infection is spreading. It is a leaf smut, a type of fungus known only to live on Trad.



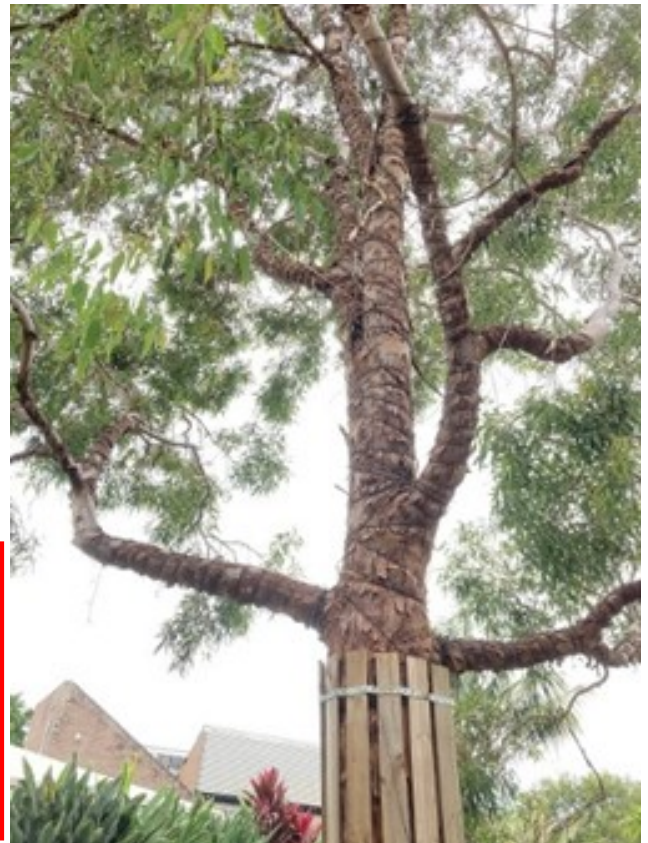
We are optimistic but have to be patient, as it may take up to a year for the disease to become established. The lower yellow marker on this map is near Flower Power nursery.

We planted infected Trad in October 2020 at several sites but so far have not observed any results. The sites: right side of the boardwalk toward Irrawong waterfall, an area of McCarrs Creek reserve and near Whale Beach Rd on Bangalley Head reserve. Watch out for trad with blotchy yellowing leaves.

Mona Vale Trees to be set free

Near the former Café Racer beside Pittwater Rd in Mona Vale Village Park we noticed two of the Angophoras bound up with old Christmas lights wires and palings used to protect trees from damage during development. The trees are unable to expand their trunks and branches, and bark that should be shed each year is caught under the wires.

We contacted NBC asking for the trees to be set free. Action has been slow, but word is that the palings will be removed. The wires are connected to mains power, so an electrician will be called.



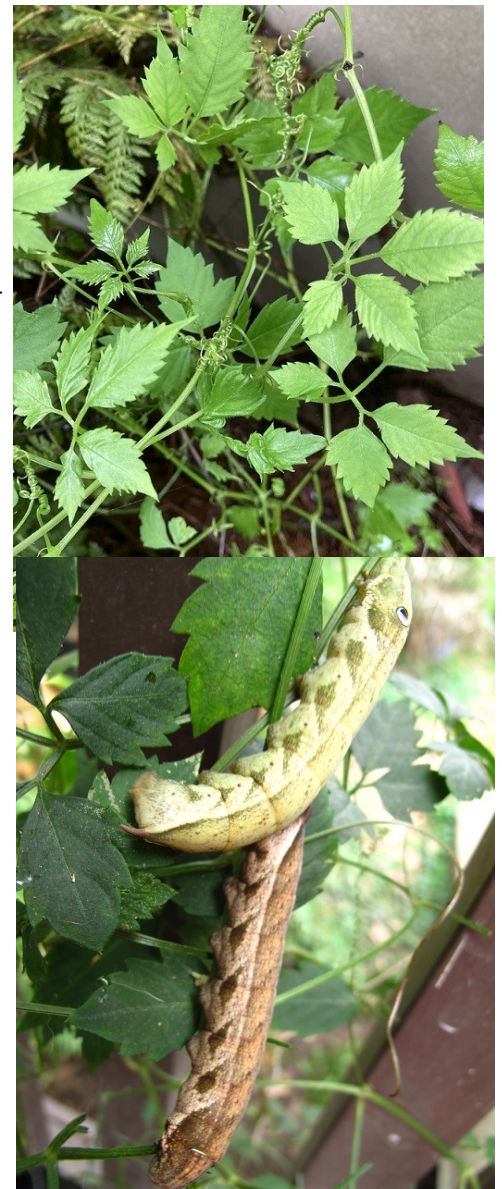
Feedback please !

We enjoy writing our PNHA Newsletter and Pittwater Nature. But do you enjoy reading them? Please let us know what you think. We value your comments, suggestions and criticisms (constructive we hope)

Native Grape and Moths

Native Grape *Cayratia clematidea* is a slender but rampant native climber in the warmer months. It can smother and overburden small shrubs and trees. It often dies down over winter but as it grows from a tuber it will re-sprout later.

Although it can be bit of a pest in the garden, it is foodplant for some spectacular moth caterpillars. Some of these are Hawkmoths, large moths that can hover to collect nectar from and pollinate flowers. The caterpillars have to shed their skins five or six times as they grow. These stages are called instars. Their appearance as a newly hatched tiny grub can be completely different from how they look when about to pupate. **The Pale Brown Hawkmoth** *Theretra latreillii* is pale green when very young and it has a long thin black spike, not a sting, at the tail end. But colours vary in later instars, from green to brown with oblique stripes and that harmless spike. Each Hawkmoth larva also has false eye spots which enlarge for a few seconds when the larva is alarmed, a defensive action. These fully grown larvae are about 7cm long.



Impatiens Hawkmoth *Theretra oldenlandii*

Impatiens Balsam *Impatiens walleriana*, also called Busy Lizzy and native to Africa, has almost disappeared now because of IDM, Impatiens Downy Mildew, *Plasmopara obducens*, a fungus disease. Cultivars and the New Guinea species *Impatiens hawkeri* now available are resistant. This means that bush regenerators don't find it as a weed any more but maybe there is less food plant for the Hawkmoth. Anyway, as well as Native Grape, food plants include Arum Lily, Climbing Guinea Flower *Hibbertia scandens* and Native Violet *Viola hederacea*.



Left: young larva. Above: head down, about ready to pupate.



Left: the larva pupates on the ground among leaf litter.

Right: adult moth. Body is about 5 cm long



Pupa and adult images from <http://lepidoptera.butterflyhouse.com.au/sphi/oldenlandiae.html>

Cayratia is a foodplant for another moth, the **Josephs Coat Moth, *Aristida agricola*** which flies during the day. Cultivated grape is another foodplant. The caterpillar tucks its head under when disturbed. The hairs do not sting. When about to pupate the white bands turn orange. The caterpillars usually pupate in a cocoon on a branch. According to Don Herbison-Evans at lepi-



doptera.butterfly.house.com.au they spend hours chewing bark into small pieces with which they cover their cocoon as it is formed. Moth wingspan about 6cm.



Paperbark leaves being eaten ? Caterpillars with spiky tails?

The **Melaleuca Sawfly** *Lophyrotoma zonalis* appears each March/April. It is related to bees and wasps, as it has four wings, whereas a true fly has only two. The sawfly lays many eggs on the foliage of certain Melaleucas (Paperbarks) including 1. Bracelet Honey Myrtle *Melaleuca armillaris*, 2. Snow in Summer *M. linariifolia* and 3. *M. hypericifolia*, a small red-flowered paperbark. The larvae emerge in great numbers, defoliating a great part of the tree or shrub. Their tiny yellow droppings colour the ground below.

This doesn't kill the plant, though it looks as though it is dying; foliage will grow back eventually. On smaller shrubs you may be able to brush off the larvae to reduce damage.

The Broadleafed Paperbark *Melaleuca quinquenervia* doesn't seem to be subject to the sawflies' annual ravages of the other poor Melaleucas. This species has become a noxious weed in southern Florida and other states. It was hoped this sawfly could be introduced as a biological control. One article we Googled reported that in testing in USA quarantine the sawfly larvae defoliated a *M. quinquenervia*. <https://www.invasive.org/biocontrol/8AutralianPaperbarkTree.html>

Maybe the sawflies ate it, having no other option. But we couldn't find a report of the introduction going ahead.



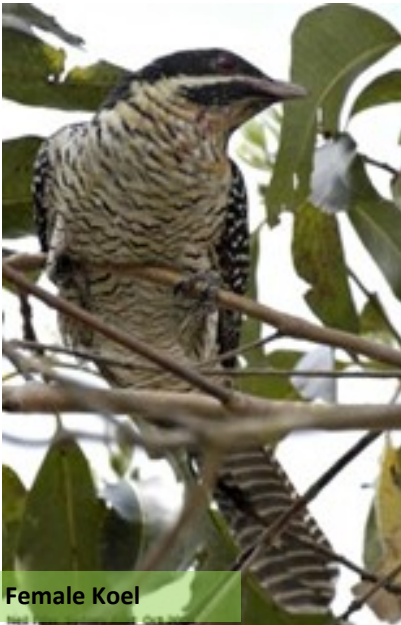
Swamp Lilies and Cliveas being eaten?

Lily Caterpillar *Spodoptera picta* is to blame.

The caterpillars may be more familiar than the moth which has a wingspan of 4cm. The species is found in eastern Australia as well as south east Asia and the western Pacific. The moth lays its eggs on the underside of the leaf covered by brown hairs.

More information at:

<http://lepidoptera.butterflyhouse.com.au/acro/picta.html>

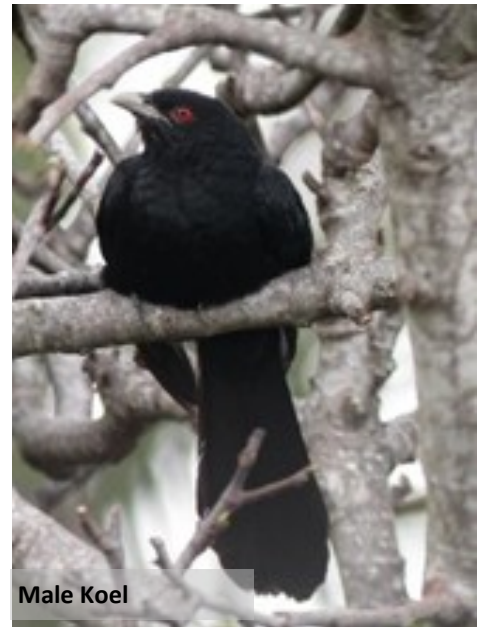


Female Koel

Have you noticed the *Quiet*?

The last cuckoos of autumn have gone north. Channel-billed Cuckoos and Eastern Koels have left with their young. These biological parents outsource the care of their offspring to Pied Currawongs and Red Wattlebirds, and other birds. The cuckoo nestlings displace the host birds' nestlings. Technically they are described as brood parasites, and the CB Cuckoo is the world's largest.

However their host species have their first nesting early in spring, before the cuckoos arrive in September. So there will always be surrogate parents for the



Male Koel

cuckoos in future years. The squawks and shrieks of the CB Cuckoo as it flies make it easily visible. Not so the more discreet Eastern Koel. The male fledgling looks like a female until his first moult in autumn, when he grows his glossy black adult male plumage. **Photos by Neil Fifer.**



A photo guide to common cicadas of the Greater Sydney Region

SECOND EDITION



Dr Nathan Emery

The *Quiet* is also thanks to Cicadas ending their season.

But come August-September, the first species will emerge and start calling. We recommend this excellent guide to enable you to work out which is which among the more than 40 Cicada species of the Sydney region..

As well as superb photos, it can answer questions about

- ◆ how loud are each cicada's calls in decibels (a male Green Gocer's call reaches 104-106dB)
- ◆ Cicadas and plants
- ◆ When the different species emerge

You'll meet the Brown Bunyip, the Razor Grinder and the Sand Fairy, as well as the familiar Green Grocer and Floury Baker. As the blurb says, "whether you want to learn more about our cicada fauna, identify cicadas in the field or just enjoy images, you'll soon find yourself in love with our noisiest insects."

Cost: \$20.00. order online:

<https://cicadarama.square.site/s/shop>

Membership of **Pittwater Natural Heritage Association Landcare Group** is open to all who share our aims of caring for the natural environment of the Pittwater area and working to enhance and protect it. You can find a Membership Application form on our website <http://pnha.org.au/join/> or contact us on pnhainfo@gmail.com for one to be sent to you.

Cost \$20 per year, \$10 unwaged.