

OCT 2014

Turpentine and Ironbark Transition Forest

By Jutta Hamilton

On a recent bushwalk in Arcadia, I was struck by the beauty of a thick stand of Turpentine trees along the slopes of a sheltered Hawkesbury Sandstone gully.

The tall, straight and handsome trees with fibrous bark and their dull grey-green stiff foliage set them apart from the surrounding Eucalyptus. Turpentines (*Syncarpia glomulifera*) are known for their longevity, that can be in excess of 300 years and they can re-sprout after wildfire. Flowering occurs in our area reliably around October. They come in the form clusters of creamy white flowers at the end of their branches. Their woody aggregated fruits look like mini spaceships. The timber is very resistant to fire and very durable in salt water. It is highly regarded and milled extensively for structural purposes, telegraph poles, beams and wharfs. They are literally the timber that built Sydney.



Turpentines are common in our catchment and are adequately conserved as a single species, however the vegetation communities in which Turpentine live are highly threatened and classified as Critically Endangered.

Turpentine-Ironbark Forest was extensively cleared for its timber, market gardens and orchards, grazing and urban expansion. Current and future threats are considered to be clearing for development, grazing, mowing, increased nutrient loads, weed invasion and inappropriate fire regimes. A good example of Turpentine-Ironbark Forest is Carrs Bush in Fagan Park. It retains all of the necessary elements of a complete forest from ground covers, understory plants, tall timbers and wildlife.

Turpentine-Ironbark Forest is a rich habitat for mammals and birds, providing homes for species dependant on hollows in tress for shelter, this includes the Powerful Owl and Glossy Black-Cockatoo. So it didn't come at a surprise when the neighbours told me about spotting a Powerful Owl roosting in one of our very tall and mature Turpentine trees.

The forest also acts as a natural water purifier, feeding clean water into the Hawkesbury, helping maintain the health of the river.

So enjoy what we still have, the remaining Turpentine-Ironbark Forests represents 4,5% of the original 26,000 hectares in Sydney and is spread over a handful of reserves like Carrs Bush.

Contact us: StillCreekLandcare@iinet.net.au, ph: 9653 2056. Look us up on Facebook or StillCreekLandcare.com.au.



Noxious Weed Found in Hornsby Shire

An invasive noxious weed has been found in Hornsby Shire and Council is urging residents to report any sightings.

Boneseed, which is classified as a Class 1 noxious weed in New South Wales, has been discovered in Hornsby, Mount Colah, Mount Kuring-gai, Berowra, Glenorie, Dural and Epping.

It may also be present in other suburbs within Hornsby Shire. The weed is native to South Africa, and has the ability to aggressively invade native Australian bushland while also posing a threat to significant rare or threatened species.

Without effective control, it has the potential to spread into new areas, with most of southern New South Wales under threat.

Its status as a Class 1 noxious weed means it must be eradicated from the land and it is the responsibility of the land's owner or occupier to control boneseed on their property.

Any residents who have seen boneseed growing in Hornsby Shire are encouraged to contact Council's Natural Resources team to report the location by calling 9847 6832 or emailing bushland@hornsby.nsw.gov.au.

Council's Natural Resource Officers can assist with identification and information on control, removal and eradication of Boneseed on your property.

Boneseed can be identified by the following features:



- Shrubs up to three metres high.
- Flowers are yellow with 5-8 petals and up to three centimetres in diameter. Peak flowering occurs from August to October.
- Leaves are 3-9 centimetres long and alternate along the stems. They are oval shaped with irregularly serrated edges. New growth is covered with white hairs that are shed as the leaves mature.
- Woody stems are branched and upright.
- Young fruit are round, green and fleshy, turning black when mature. They contain a single, smooth, round seed (6-7 millimetre diameter) which is bone-coloured when dry, giving it the name 'boneseed'.

The Australian Plants Society

The Australian Plants Society-North Shore Group meets on the second Friday of the month at 8pm in the Willow Park Community Hall, 25 Edgeworth David Avenue, Hornsby. The speaker for October 12th is Greg Bourke and his topic is "Australian Carnivorous Plants".

The speaker for November 14th is Margarita Clayton and her topic is "Lomandras and Xanthorrhoeas (Grass trees)".

Visitors welcome. Native plants for sale. Further information at www.blandfordia.org.au

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