

BUDAWANGIA*

AN E-NEWSLETTER FOR ALL THOSE INTERESTED IN THE NATIVE PLANTS OF THE NSW SOUTH COAST

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Aims: To connect those interested in the native flora of the NSW South Coast, to share up to date information on the flora of the region and to broaden the appreciation of the region's native plants.

Editorial

This month has not seen the very hot days usually experienced in February; rainfall has not been terribly high but constant, resulting in a below average figure for the month. The escarpment received good and well above average rainfall in January, so the fungi should appear in profusion during March. Some fungi were appearing in late February at Minnamurra Rainforest, so do not forget your camera if you are visiting the moist forests of the region in the coming month. This edition contains a piece on the sheoaks or casuarinas. The six species in this region, ranging from shrubs to very large trees, occur in almost all habitats, except rainforest. Another article looks at identifying three small herbaceous native species that have similar looking leaves and can sometimes confuse. The regular features include a solution to the mystery weed from last month and another in the wetland plants series. The Friends of Minnamurra Rainforest had their first weeding day this month and there is more on *Solanum celatum*.

Free public seminar - Five Islands Nature Reserve. The islands are home to many internationally significant seabirds - little penguins, shearwaters and petrels make burrows for nesting. This habitat is being threatened by invasive weeds spreading over the islands, choking the entrance to the birds' homes. NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), in partnership with the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife, invite the local community to an informative free seminar. You will be able to learn about and contribute to NPWS's seabird habitat and breeding site restoration project. A variety of speakers will discuss the islands' ecological history, seabirds, restoration project progress. You will also be able to join the 'Friends of Five Islands' volunteer group. NPWS is also seeking any historical photos of the Five Islands to help document previous land uses and vegetation types.

Date: Thursday 5 March 2015 Time: 6.30pm to 8.30pm Location: City Beach Function Centre, 1 Marine Drive, Wollongong, NSW, 2500. TO REGISTER FOR THIS EVENT RSVP BY 2 MARCH 2015 BY EMAIL FIVEISLANDS@ENVIRONMENT.NSW.GOV.AU OR PHONE (02) 4223 3000.

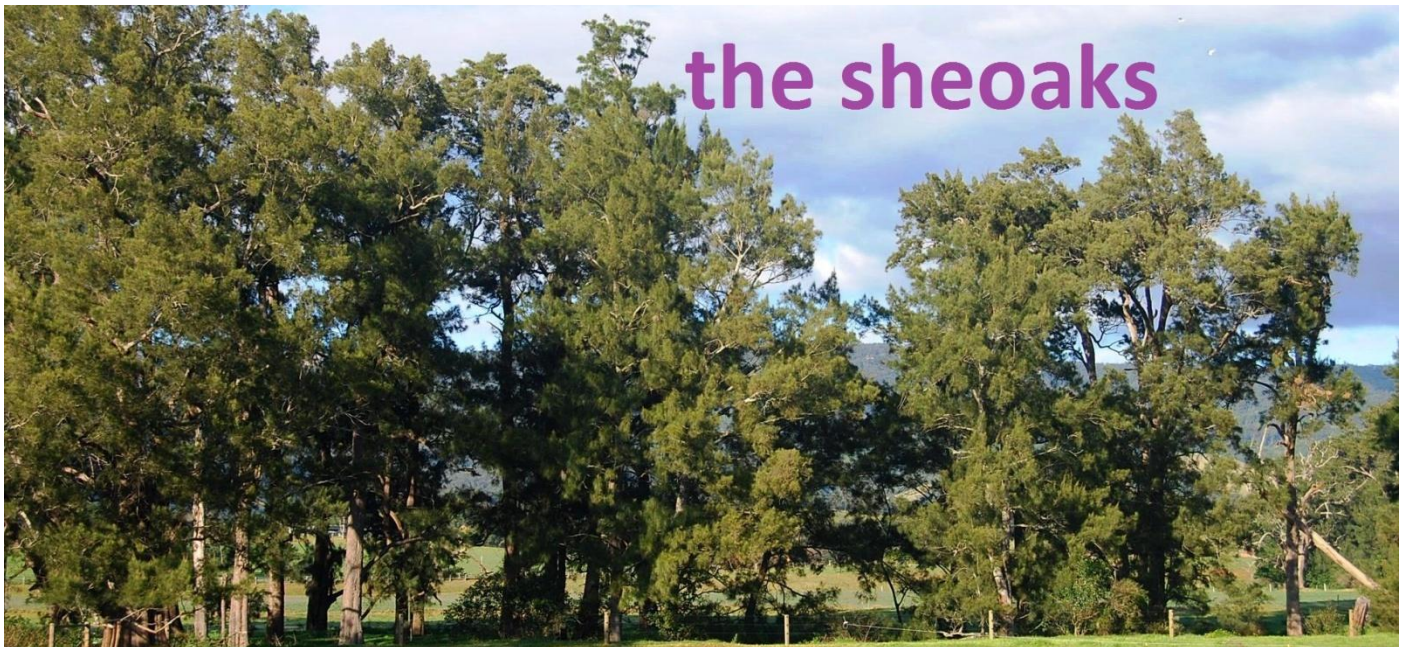
I would be pleased to receive appropriate articles, however small, on interesting observations, new discoveries, plant name changes, etc., up to two A4 pages, including some photographs. Deadline is one week before end of the calendar month

Kevin Mills, Jamberoo, NSW.

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All photographs ©Kevin Mills 2015, unless otherwise stated.

* *Budawangia* is a monotypic, endemic genus restricted to the Budawang Range on the western edge of the South Coast region. The genus was named by Telford in 1992; the species *Budawangia gnidioides* (Ericaceae) was previously *Rupicola gnidioides*.



River Oak *Casuarina cunninghamiana*

Species of sheoaks, genera *Casuarina* and *Allocasuarina* (Casuarinaceae), are found throughout the region, from coastal swamps to high altitude woodlands. The following six species can be found in the region:

- Scrub Sheoak *Allocasuarina distyla* – common and widespread on sandstone soils throughout the region.
- Dwarf Sheoak *Allocasuarina nana* - grows at high altitudes, occurs at Barren Grounds. Forms dense and extensive stands on exposed ridges on the Southern tablelands.
- Drooping Sheoak *Allocasuarina verticillata* - coastal occurrence in a few places, such as Bass Point and on coast near Batemans Bay.
- Forest Oak *Allocasuarina torulosa* – a moderately large tree in forest, south to about Macquarie Pass
- Swamp Sheoak *Allocasuarina paludosa* – sandstone soils, often on moist soils; south from north of Sydney.
- Sheoak *Allocasuarina diminuta* ssp. *annectens* – mostly the Sassafras to Braidwood area.

Perhaps the most common sheoak is Black She-oak *Allocasuarina littoralis*. Despite the specific name, it does not grow near the sea. This is a very common she-oak, growing in many habitats, most commonly in forest and woodland on poor to moderate quality soils. The seeds of this tree are the favoured food of the Glossy Black-Cockatoo in this region; chewed cone found below a tree are a sure sign that the cockatoo has been feeding above.

Two species of *Casuarina* occur in the region. The common species along the coast is Swamp Oak *Casuarina glauca*, which grows on the margins of estuaries and across nearby floodplains. This species is often used in garden plantings, in windbreaks and in parks. The tree readily suckers and thickets of root suckers are often seen on the edges of paddocks, etc. River Oak *Casuarina cunninghamiana*, as the common name suggests, grows along rivers and streams and across floodplains, but not in brackish water as does *C. glauca*. This species grows to be a very large tree, such as along the upper Minnamurra River and the larger rivers further to the south.



Female plant of *Allocasuarina distyla*.



Habit of *Allocasuarina nana* (c. 1 m tall)



Casuarina glauca.

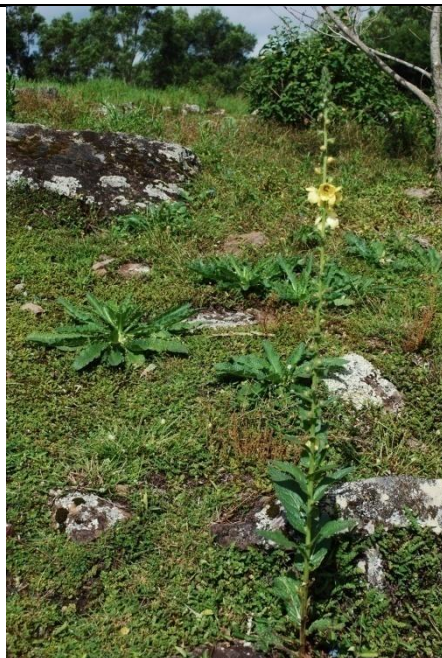


Allocasuarina littoralis
(male trees on left, females trees on right)

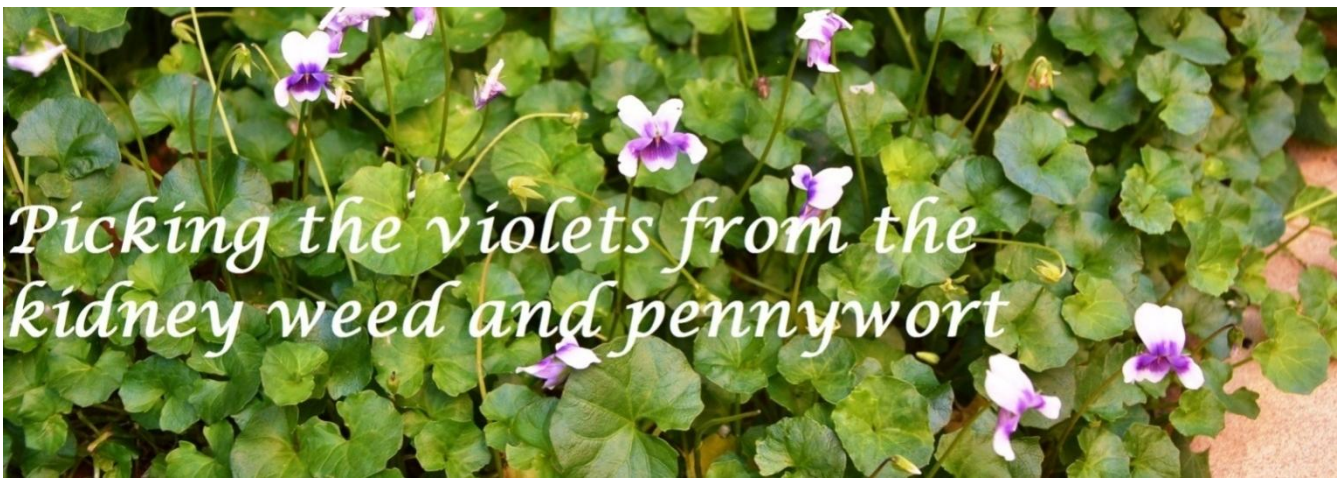
Mystery Weed Answered

Last month's mystery weed was the herbaceous species known as Twiggy Mullein *Verbascum virgatum* (Scrophulariaceae). The initial leaves are almost prostrate, while the later flowering stem can be over two metres tall. The yellow flowers are quite attractive and perhaps the species was introduced as a garden plant.

Photographs take in Jamberoo valley.



Spreading Nut-heads *Epaltes australis* (Asteraceae) is a small native plant and quite common around freshwater wetlands and ephemeral wet areas, where it can easily be overlooked. The common name Nut-heads refers to the brownish flowering heads. The species occurs throughout Australia.



Several ground-hugging plants can be difficult to tell apart and I have often been asked about the differences in the leaves. So that consistent identification is made. Here I have looked at three species, all in different families, which could be mistaken on the basis of leaves only.

Viola hederacea (Violaceae)

The Native Violet leaves are glabrous, circular and usually with angled edges or small teeth. Like the two species below, this plant spreads by runners that root at the node, thus forming carpets of plants in damp places. The plant is a popular garden plant because of its attractive white and purple flowers, as shown above.



Dichondra repens (Convolvulaceae)

Kidney Weed has hairy, circular leaves without angled or pointed edges. Extensive runners extend the plant quite quickly and can be the bane of home gardeners. It has been suggested as a replacement for grass to form a 'lawn' in shady places.



Centella asiatica (Apiaceae)

The glabrous leaves of Asian Pennywort are circular with crenate (scalloped) margins. The plant, occurring from India to Australia, has medicinal properties and has been promoted as a treatment for everything from arthritis to skin cancer. Arthritis sufferers are advised to eat two leaves a day for 12 weeks to relieve pain; I make no claims as to its effectiveness!



Minnamurra Rainforest Weeding Work Continues

Early February saw the Friends of Minnamurra Rainforest out working for first in 2015, concentrating on Lantana along the river above the picnic area. The group celebrate two years of working in the forest in March. Feel free to send in short stories about other Bushcare groups, etc. in the region.



We should be at the top by lunch time!



Working along the edge of the forest to remove Lantana.

***Solanum celatum* again**

Following the previous notes on the threatened shrub *Solanum celatum*, Marcus (Dapto) sent in some photos of plants he has identified as this species at Mount Brown. The photograph opposite is of the mature fruit of this *Solanum*.

Photograph: Marcus Burgess, 29 January 2015.

