



OFF News

Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc.

Protecting the local environment since 1955

<http://off.oatleypark.com>

Issue 8/14

Aug/Sept

WATTLE DAY 1ST SEPTEMBER

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, patriotic Australians in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney formed associations to promote wattle as a national emblem and to advocate the recognition of a National Wattle Day. The first Wattle Day celebrations took place in New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia on 1st Sept 1910.



Wattle Day enthusiasm soon spread to the other states and reached a peak during World War I, when the day was used as a focus for raising money for Australia's war effort. After the war, Wattle Day continued to be associated with fundraising for charitable causes. Following World War II, the tradition tapered off, and it was not until the 1980s that a campaign to revive Wattle Day began, led by Maria Hitchcock of the Australian Plants Society.

In 1988, the Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) was made Australia's official floral emblem, and in 1992 the Commonwealth Government formally designated 1st Sept as National Wattle Day. www.australiangeographic.com.au/

FAUNA SUPPORT

The [Australian Ecosystems Foundation](http://www.australianecosystems.com.au/) has supported breeding programs for native fauna species beginning at the Secret Creek Sanctuary. The Sanctuary is located on the edge of Lithgow, in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage area. The primary focus of the Sanctuary is breeding for the conservation of threatened and declining species of the region.



It also provides an opportunity for public education and engagement; for visitors to see and learn all about regional native species and their habitats, all within a 2 hour drive from Sydney. Tours are only available from Thurs to Sat evenings, as part of a dining experience at Secret Creek Café. Bookings can be made only through Secret Creek Cafe www.secretcreekcafe.com

OATLEY PARK'S FLOWERS IN AUGUST

The August list can be found on our website. An example for this month is this Purple Twining Pea (*Hardenbergia violacea*), a twiner with veined leaves and violet pea flowers, commonly scrambling over shrubs or up small trees. <http://off.oatleypark.com/>



WATTLE

There are over 600 different species of Wattle found all over Australia with shapes varying from low, spreading shrubs to large, upright trees, often called 'Mulga'. Whilst most flower in early spring and summer, there are wattles that bloom all year. [Wattles](http://off.oatleypark.com/) are the most widespread of all Australian plants, some inhabiting the most remote and inhospitable areas, growing in parched sand in the desert under the scorching sun, spiked, hard and leafless. In the rainforest gullies, they have soft feathery foliage with pale golden heads.

HELP REDUCE ENERGY DEMAND

Appliances left plugged in can add up to 10% of our power bills: an easy way to save is by switching appliances off at the wall. Turn lights off when not required; only run the dishwasher when full, let the machine clean the dishes on its own, and use eco-settings when possible.

If heating a room, use an appropriately sized heater for the area. Place it away from windows, where heat can be lost, and do not heat unoccupied rooms. Make the most out of the sun's natural warmth by opening blinds and curtains during the day, but keep them closed when your heater is on, and in the evenings.

The best way to [save power and money](#) is to research ways to become more energy efficient. By doing your homework, you can become energy wise. Did you know that fridges and freezers use more electricity when they are nearly empty than when they are full? Passing tips to other members of your household may help foster good energy habits.

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY RESOURCES

In Australia geothermal energy is a natural resource which is not utilised as a form of energy. However there are known and potential locations near the centre of the county in which geothermal energy is detectable. Exploratory geothermal wells have been drilled to test for the presence of high temperature geothermal activity and such high levels were detected. As a result, projects will eventuate in the coming years and more exploration is expected at potential locations.

South Australia has been described as "Australia's hot rock haven" and emission free and renewable energy forms could provide an estimated 6.8% of Australia's base load power needs by 2030. According to an estimate by the Centre for International Economics, Australia has enough geothermal energy to contribute electricity for 450 years.

[Renewable energy in Australia-](#)

POWERFUL OWLS BREEDING IN THIS AREA

Understanding the habitat requirements of breeding [Powerful Owls](#) (*Ninox strenua*) in Sydney is an important step in improving species management in urban areas. The lower Georges River is under surveillance; a study by Birdlife Australia focusing on the population dynamics, breeding success and requirements of owls in the Greater Sydney Area is in its third year.



In addition, the owls of the lower Georges River are under surveillance for a study led by Chris Lloyd, who is speaking to the Society at our 22nd September meeting.

For reasons that are still unknown, the breeding season in 2014 has been later than previous years, with many breeding pairs commencing nesting in July. Two breeding pairs in Oatley and surrounds are leading the charge, having laid eggs in June. In an achievement for the St George area, chicks from these owls have been heard at both sites, and seen in one. According to David Bain of Birdlife Australia, these are the first of the season.

The photograph above is of a juvenile owl at one of the Oatley sites on the day after fledging. [Report by Matt Mo, Bev Pedder, and Peter Hayler].

Meetings of the Society are held at the Uniting Church Hall, Fredrick St Oatley [cnr. of Letitia St] starting at 7.45pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month. Visitors and accompanied children are welcome at all meetings and excursions.

COMING EVENTS

Aug 25th (Mon) 7.45pm monthly meeting-Gary Schoer speaking on NPA proposal for a Sydney Marine Park.

Aug 30th (Sat) Field day involving the [Sphinx Memorial](#) to **Bobbin Head wildflower stroll in the [Ku ring gai Chase National Park](#)**, walking along Old Bobbin Head Service Track. It will be an easy stroll identifying plants. Weather and energy permitting, we will head down to Bobbin Head for lunch and continue the circuit along Cowan Creek and back up steep 150m to the Sphinx (Total 10 km). Meet 9.30am at National Park gates North Turrumurra. Park outside NP if you wish to avoid entry fee. The drive is about 1hr 20mins from Oatley. Car seats are available. **Leader: Alan Fairley ☎- 9570 8332**

Sept 10th (Wed) Spring visit to [Sylvan Grove Native Garden](#). meet 10am for a cuppa before the guided walk. Car seats available - phone after 6th Sept. **Leader: Liz Cameron ☎ 95806621**

Sept 22nd (Mon) 7.45pm monthly meeting with Chris Lloyd speaking on The Changing ecology of the Georges River & Powerful Owls.

Oct10-12th (Weekend) Field trip to [Capertee National Park](#): If you still want to book, please try quickly but there may not be any vacancies. Contact **Leader: Debbie Andrew ☎ 95702695** [Details of meeting arrangements in next OFF News].

Oct 27th (Mon) 7.45 pm monthly meeting with Jim Vickery speaking on Rainwater Harvesting in Oatley.

TALK: TRAVELLING THE SILK ROAD 28th July

Rodger Robertson started his talk by exploring the history of Silk and the Silk Road. The name was coined in the late 19th Century by the uncle of the Red Baron- Ferdinand Von Richthofen.

The Silk Road was a trading route between China and Europe and commenced around 200BC and ending when the sea routes were found around



Africa. The trade included many items not only silk. The talk then went to the 11000km train journey from Beijing to Moscow via the west of China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. The wealthy cities of the Silk Road had fallen when the trade stopped and they fell into ruin. However, the Russian conquest in the late 19th Century and the rebuilding by the Communists to win over the locals had seen past glories restored. Magnificent and elaborate mosques, minarets, and madrassas are now found all through the old Silk Road route. The talk finished with some impressions on the "Stans" and their people and societies. It was a very favourable impression of three nations who are just like us in their basic desires.

WALK: BLUE TRACK NEAR ANSTO August 2nd

The weather was kind to the 33 early morning risers who participated in this combined OFF and Menai Wildflower Group Field trip. The walk was along the Blue Track adjacent to the ANSTO restricted zone at Lucas Heights. There was an early start to flowering for some of the [Gynea Lilies](#) that decided to show their stunning red petals. Generally, the spring flowers appeared to be getting ready to bloom, and we were pleased to see [Epacris microphylla](#) and some showy wattles in flower.

The walk took us from open forest along Barden Creek to see the King Ferns ([Todea barbarus](#)). There was a wide variety of communities within this reserve including upland swamp with Sword Rush ([Gahnia sieberiana](#)) and coral ferns ([Gleichenia dicarpa](#)). This walk, approx. 2.6km long, was a fairly graded walk which could be lengthened or shortened with the aid of the '[Bardens 'n' Bush](#)' guide, a worthwhile text to use on the day.

More Information regarding this area is available on [Menai Wildflower Group's](#) website. [Report by Leader Jason Cockayne]



Doryanthes excelsa - Gynea Lily *Grevillea sericea* - Pink Spider Flower

FOR NOTING

Australian Bird Fair will be the first large-scale bird and wildlife event of its kind on Oct 25-26th at Sydney Olympic Park. www.birdfair.com.au/favicon.ico

Australian Plant Society [APS] provides great information about our native flora. Details from the East Hills Group of the Society are available by just clicking the hyperlink. easthills.austplants.com.au/

Myles Dunphy Streamwatch, next meets 9am on Tues 23rd Sept. [Info: Sharyn ☎9579 1262, Heather ☎ 0425 291 879] [Streamwatch-in-Action](#)

The International Union for Conservation Of Nature [IUCN] is holding the World Parks Congress at Sydney Olympic Park in November. [IUCN](#)

