



# BUSHLAND NEWS

KATANDRA BUSHLAND SANCTUARY NEWSLETTER  
Winter 2023

Greetings from Katandra.

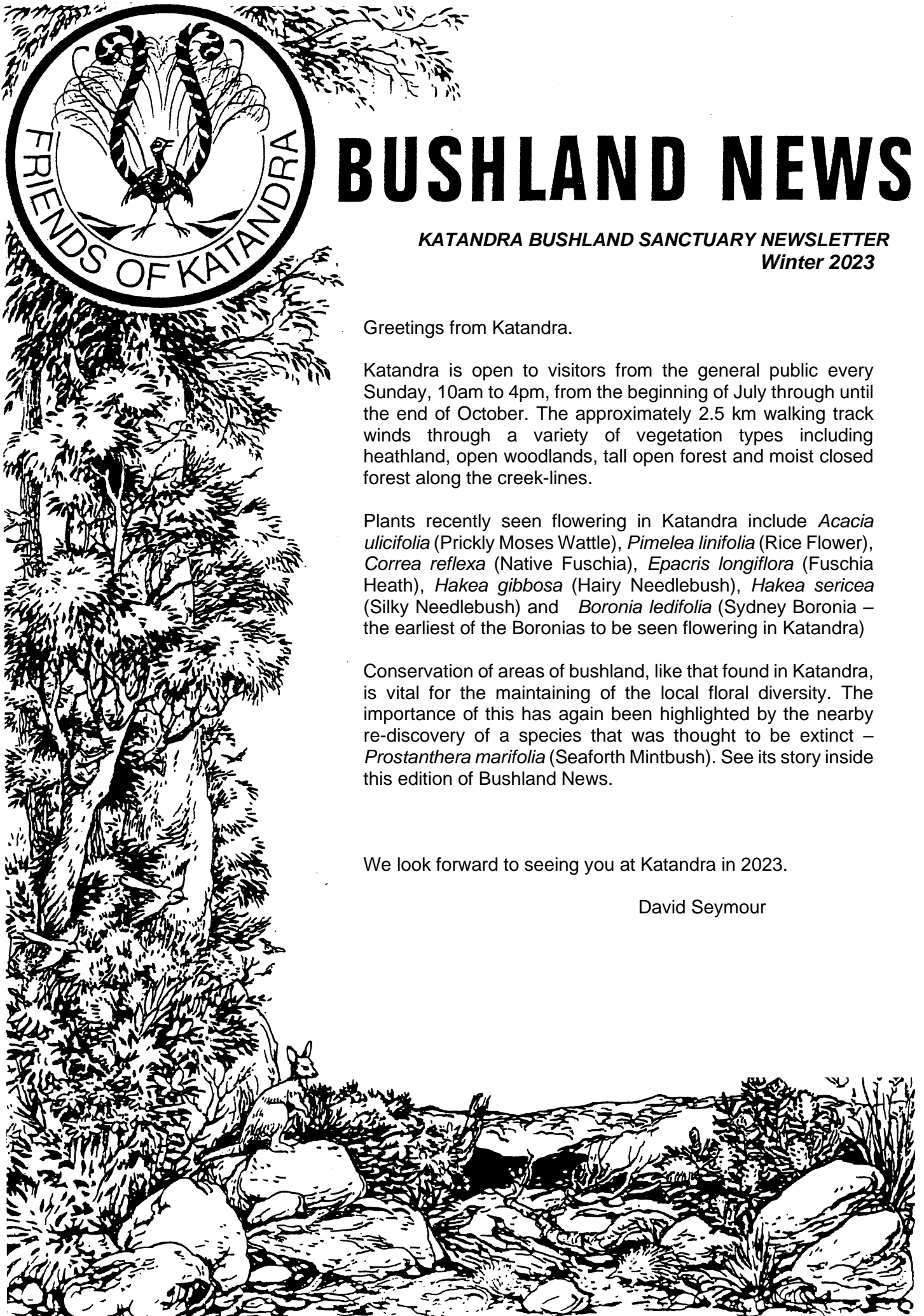
Katandra is open to visitors from the general public every Sunday, 10am to 4pm, from the beginning of July through until the end of October. The approximately 2.5 km walking track winds through a variety of vegetation types including heathland, open woodlands, tall open forest and moist closed forest along the creek-lines.

Plants recently seen flowering in Katandra include *Acacia ulicifolia* (Prickly Moses Wattle), *Pimelea linifolia* (Rice Flower), *Correa reflexa* (Native Fuschia), *Epacris longiflora* (Fuschia Heath), *Hakea gibbosa* (Hairy Needlebush), *Hakea sericea* (Silky Needlebush) and *Boronia ledifolia* (Sydney Boronia – the earliest of the Boronias to be seen flowering in Katandra)

Conservation of areas of bushland, like that found in Katandra, is vital for the maintaining of the local floral diversity. The importance of this has again been highlighted by the nearby re-discovery of a species that was thought to be extinct – *Prostanthera marifolia* (Seaforth Mintbush). See its story inside this edition of Bushland News.

We look forward to seeing you at Katandra in 2023.

David Seymour



## **Prostanthera marifolia**

### **The re-discovery of an “extinct” species**

*Prostanthera* is a genus of plants from the Lamiaceae family commonly referred to as “Mint Bushes”.

*Prostanthera marifolia* (Seaforth Mintbush) is an erect, openly branched shrub that grows to approximately 30 cm high. Its leaves are green, sparsely to moderately hairy and oval to almost elliptic in shape. It has faintly aromatic foliage and delicate purple to mauve flowers. *P. marifolia* is closely related to another Lamiaceae species found growing in Katandra, *Prostanthera denticulata* (Rough Mintbush).



*Prostanthera marifolia*, image Alan Fairley

*P. marifolia* was first described in 1810 and was recorded from around Middle Harbour in northern Sydney and on Mangrove Mountain, 100 km north of Sydney. Many more recent attempts to re-collect this species were unsuccessful and due to an absence of records over a number of decades, the species was presumed to be extinct.

However, it was rediscovered in 2001 near the suburb of Seaforth in northern Sydney and it has since been found in three nearby locations, each location partially separated by urban development. This suggests that possibly this was once a single population now fragmented by loss of habitat.

The conservation status of Seaforth Mintbush was transferred from the extinct category to the critically endangered category on 9 September 2011 as a result of its re-discovery in 2001. Very little is known about the ecology of this species, much information available is an extrapolation from the general characteristics of

flora in the *Prostanthera* genus. An important unknown is its response to fire. The threat of continued habitat loss remains as one of the biggest threats to the survival of this species.

Does *P. marifolia* grow in Katandra?

While it is unlikely that it does, flora lists for Katandra are based on flora surveys carried out prior to its re-discovery. There could be a surprise waiting.

This is however, another reminder of the importance of the conservation of significant areas of local bushland to help preserve the floral diversity that it contains.

### **Uncommon Flora in Katandra**

Previous editions of the Bushland News have highlighted some of the rare or uncommon plants found in Katandra. This edition continues this theme, taking a look at *Prostanthera denticulata*, a member of the Lamiaceae family of plants.

#### **Lamiaceae**

Lamiaceae is a family of plants commonly known as the mint or sage family. World-wide there are about 7000 species, approximately 250 of which occur in Australia. Most are fragrant herbs or shrubs, many of which are well-known for their culinary (mint, rosemary, lavender, sage, lemon balm and marjoram and thyme) and medicinal (salvia, catnip, motherwort) uses. Teak (*Tectona grandis*), the tropical hardwood tree species that supplies durable and water-resistant timber for construction and furniture, is also a member of the Lamiaceae family.

Most species have aromatic leaves due to the presence of volatile-oil producing glands. The flowers are usually strongly irregular, many with a shape described as labiate, having 5 petals varying in size, fused at their base forming a tube.



*P.denticulata* flowering in Katandra

Katandra is home to two species of Lamiaceae - *Prostanthera denticulata* and *Plectranthus parviflorus*

### **Prostanthera denticulata**

Known as Rough Mint Bush, *P. denticulata* is a diffuse, tangled shrub that grows to about 1.5m. While it occurs in scattered locations along the coast of NSW, it is considered locally uncommon. It does however, grow prolifically in Katandra. Quite recent studies have shown that the coastal *P. denticulata* is distinct from those found elsewhere in NSW and Victoria, with some of these previously identified as *P. denticulata* now being designated as different species.

The leaves are 5-12cm long, opposite and sparsely spread along the stems. They have slightly recurved margins and are lined with a few obscure teeth (*denticulata* means finely toothed). The stems are covered with small, stiff hairs giving a slightly raspy feel.

The purple flowers are about 10mm long and mainly appear in winter and spring. The petals are lobed, two lobes at the top and three lobes below, fused at the base forming a short tube.

### **Plectranthus parviflorus**

*P. parviflorus*, commonly known as Cockspur Flower, is a small perennial herbaceous shrub that grows to about 60cm.



*P. parviflorus* growing in Katandra

It has fleshy red-brown stems with toothed leaves that are slightly succulent and covered with short, soft hair. It is a hardy species growing in a variety of conditions, often in sheltered gullies especially in rocky areas with shallow soils. It can be found right along the coast and ranges of Eastern Australia. It produces tiny sweetly scented bluish-purple flowers on long terminal spikes throughout much of the year. (*parviflorus* means small-flowered). The whole plant exudes a menthol fragrance.

### **Updates**



The road widening work on Mona Vale Road continues. While plenty of progress is being made it seems unlikely that it will be completed by the year's end as advertised. Foundation work for the construction of the proposed vegetated fauna overpass can be seen in the top half of the photo above (taken in June).

Meanwhile the noticeboard in Katandra has been given a makeover (see photo below). The improvements allow more information about the flora and fauna found in the Sanctuary to be provided to visitors, all protected from the weather.



Katandra website -  
[katandrabushlandsanctuary.com](http://katandrabushlandsanctuary.com)

**KATANDRA BUSHLAND SANCTUARY**  
Foley's Hill, Lane Cove Rd, Ingleside NSW  
Department of Lands Reserve No 86487  
Founder: the late Harold Alfred Seymour  
Managed by Katandra Bushland Sanctuary Trust.  
Phone: 0431857407

OPEN: Every Sunday: July, August, September,  
October  
HOURS: 10 am — 4 pm  
ADMISSION: \$5 donation

**KATANDRA BUSHLAND SANCTUARY TRUST**  
**PO Box 365 Mona Vale NSW 1660**

President: David Seymour  
Vice-President: Roberta Conroy  
Secretary: (acting) David Seymour  
Treasurer: Peter Hammond  
Minutes Secretary: Julie Emerson  
Bushland News Editors: Marita Macrae

(Cover Design by the late Walter Cunningham)

**Enquiries: phone 0431857407 or by email**  
**[information@katandra.org](mailto:information@katandra.org)**

## **PUBLIC OPEN DAYS 2023**

Each Sunday of July–October  
10 am – 4 pm  
Picnic tables are available for use should you  
wish to bring along a picnic lunch to enjoy in the  
Sanctuary

## **DIARY DATES 2023**

### **FOUNDER'S DAY (to be confirmed)** **Sunday 16th August, 12 noon**

Bring your lunch to cook on the wood-burning  
BBQs. The trust will provide 'dessert', drinks, tea  
and coffee.

### **SANCTUARY MAINTENANCE 2023**

(3rd Sunday March–November)

9 am Sunday 19 March  
9 am Sunday 16 April  
9 am Sunday 21 May  
9 am Sunday 18 June  
9 am Sunday 16 July  
9 am Sunday 17 September  
9 am Sunday 15 October  
9 am Sunday 19 November

### **Volunteers are needed**

If you can assist on maintenance days or with  
welcoming visitors to Katandra on open days,  
please phone 0431857407

---

Katandra Bushland Sanctuary Trust  
PO Box 365 Mona Vale NSW 1660