



BUSHLAND NEWS

*KATANDRA BUSHLAND SANCTUARY NEWSLETTER
Summer 2023*

Best wishes for the New Year.

The Katandra bushland has enjoyed good rainfall in recent times, last year's total rainfall recorded at Mona Vale was 2266mm, almost double the annual average of 1185mm. This was the highest annual average since recording began at Mona Vale in 1969. January 2023 has continued the trend with 163mm, well up on the 108mm average. The leeches enjoy these moist conditions, one of the reasons why, as preparation for the open season, we clear the walking track of much of the fallen leaf matter. This greatly reduces the number of leeches visitors are likely to encounter on the walking track.

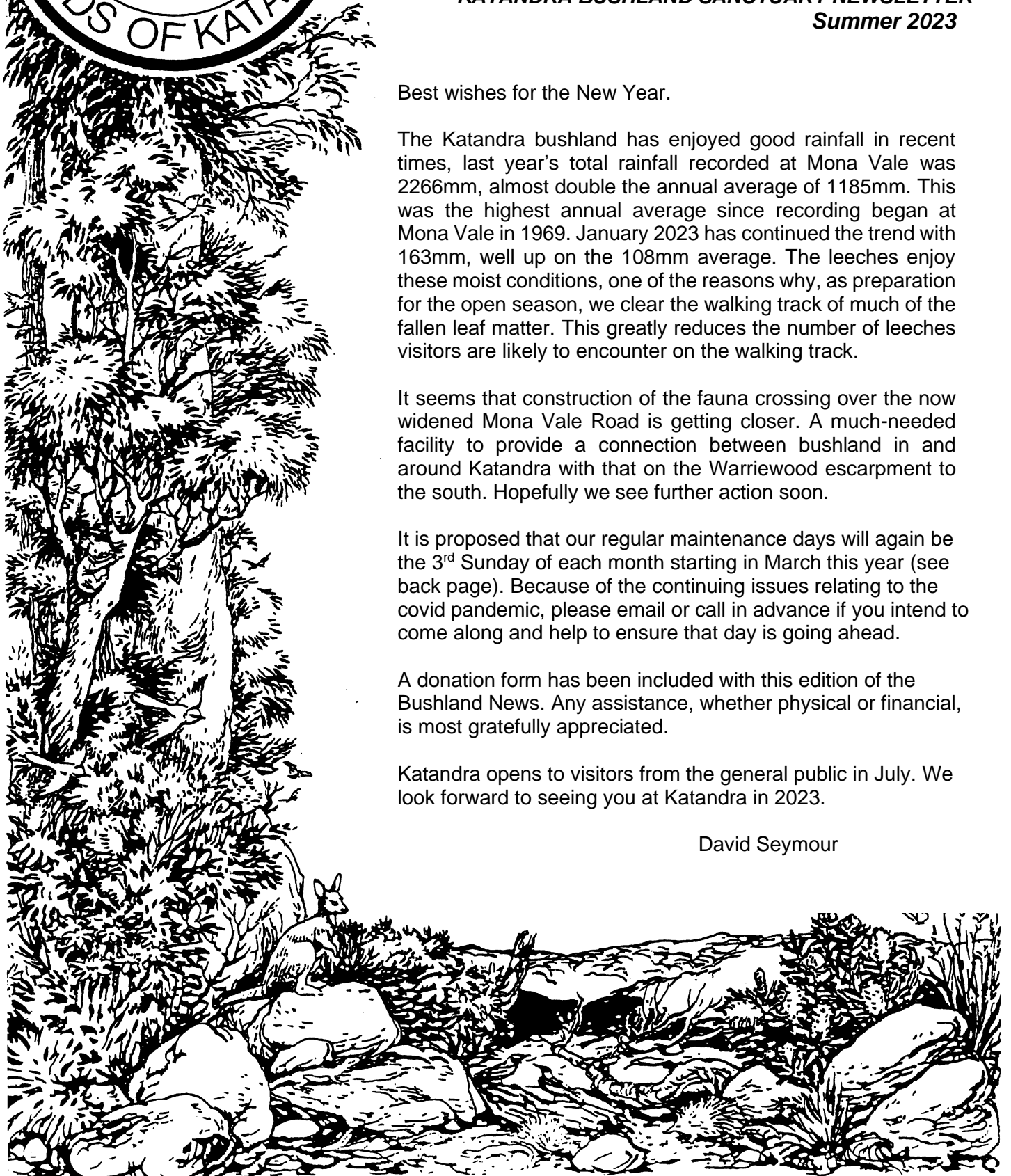
It seems that construction of the fauna crossing over the now widened Mona Vale Road is getting closer. A much-needed facility to provide a connection between bushland in and around Katandra with that on the Warriewood escarpment to the south. Hopefully we see further action soon.

It is proposed that our regular maintenance days will again be the 3rd Sunday of each month starting in March this year (see back page). Because of the continuing issues relating to the covid pandemic, please email or call in advance if you intend to come along and help to ensure that day is going ahead.

A donation form has been included with this edition of the Bushland News. Any assistance, whether physical or financial, is most gratefully appreciated.

Katandra opens to visitors from the general public in July. We look forward to seeing you at Katandra in 2023.

David Seymour



Bertya Brownii

Bertya Brownii is one of the locally rare plants found growing in Katandra. It appears on the national rare species list (Briggs and Leigh 1996). Some reports state that its only Sydney records are in Mona Vale (including Katandra) and Deep Creek while other reports claim it to be also growing near Mt Colah.

B. brownii is a slender shrub growing to 2 metres, occasionally 3 metres, preferring moist sheltered places in woodland. It has soft, flat, oblong-lanceolate shaped leaves, about 40mm long and 10mm wide, which are dark green on top and paler underneath. The stem and leaves are covered in a dense felt of star-hairs.

Being a member of the Euphorbiaceae family of plants, *B. brownii* is monoecious, having separate male and female flowers appearing on the same plant. These tiny, solitary flowers appear between May and July.



A female flower growing from the axil of a furry stem and leaf of B. brownii



The tiny male flower of B. brownii taking the appearance of a candle standing on a plate.

Euphorbiaceae

Euphorbiaceae, sometimes referred to as the spurge family, is the fifth largest family of the flowering plants. This mainly tropical family has almost 7000 species worldwide. In Australia there are about 230 species in 58 genera.

While many spurges are herbs, there are also many rainforest trees – the greatest concentration in Australia being around the Atherton Tableland in north-eastern Queensland.

The flowers of Euphorbiaceae species are usually small and unisexual, with the male and female flowers on the same plant. Petals are rarely present with flowers often enclosed by an involucre – a whorl of bracts or modified leaves.



Poinsettias (Euphorbia pulcherrima), well known for their colourful involucre, are members of the Euphorbiaceae family of plants

The leaves always have stipules – small scales or leaf-like appendages on either side of the base of the leaf stalk - which serve to help protect the leaf in bud. While stipules can be found in many plant families, they are especially distinctive of Euphorbiaceae. Even if the stipules fall their presence can be recognised by the scars visibly remaining behind. Another distinguishing feature is the fruit which is typically ball-shaped and 3-chambered. The stems of many species contain a milky latex which can be toxic or irritative.

This family of plants includes many that are used commercially. Some are important food sources, some provide medicinal drugs while others are dangerous for the poisons within. Some common examples are described below.

Hevea brasiliensis, a tall tree native to the Amazon commonly known as Para Rubber Tree, is the source of natural rubber.

Manihot esculenta, commonly called Cassava, has an edible starch root which is the third largest source of food carbohydrates in the tropics behind rice and maize.

Ricinus communis or castor oil plant is classified as a noxious weed in many local council areas across Sydney. The castor seed is the source of castor oil which has a variety of uses in medicine, cosmetics and as a lubricant. The seed also contains ricin, a highly potent toxin, which is also present in other parts of the plant in lower concentrations. Hence the need for caution when trying to control or remove this plant.

Euphorbia pulcherrima or Poinsettia, a native of Central America, is a common garden plant widely grown for its impressive red and green foliage.

Croton tiglium is one of the 50 fundamental herbs used in traditional Chinese medicine. The seeds are used to treat constipation but only after they have been through a detoxification process. The plant itself is also poisonous with the bark used as an arrow poison.

In the 1990s the original Euphorbiaceae family was split into 4 different families. Those members remaining in the “new” Euphorbiaceae family are uni-ovulate, having only one ovule in each loculus (chamber in the ovary), while those placed in the other families are bi-ovulate (2 ovules per loculus).

There are 5 member species of Euphorbiaceae growing in Katandra –

Amperea xiphioclada (Broom spurge)

Bertya brownii – see previous article

Monotaxis linifolia

Homalanthus nutans (previously *Omalanthus nutans*)

Ricinocarpos pinifolius (Wedding Bush) – shown below.

Note - Both *Bertya brownii* and *Monotaxis linifolia* are considered to be rare or uncommon in the Sydney area.



Ricinocarpos pinifolius (Wedding Bush)

Katandra also contains six other plant species that were originally classified in the Euphorbiaceae family but are no longer.



Phyllanthus tenellus (shown above) is one of the former Euphorbiaceae members but now in the Phyllanthaceae family. It is a weed that often pops up in gardens and disturbed ground. It closely resembles the native *Phyllanthus gunnii* (Shrubby spurge). A native of Madagascar, *P. tenellus* is now naturalised in many parts of the world, including the Northern Beaches of Sydney. Neither of these two Phyllanthaceae species occur in Katandra, however the closely related *P. hirtellus* (Thyme Spurge) does.



Phyllanthus hirtellus (image NB Council)

New Residents



New residents have taken the opportunity to inhabit the toll shed in Katandra over Christmas

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

(Cover Design by the late Walter Cunningham)

Enquiries: phone 0431857407 or by email
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

Friends of Katandra

PO Box 365 Mona Vale NSW 1660



I / We,
(full name)

of
(address including postcode) (phone)

Email : (please print clearly).....

- would like to join the Friends of Katandra mail list and receive copies of the Bushland News quarterly newsletter
- would like to make a donation to assist in caring for the sanctuary. I enclose a cheque / money order made payable to the Katandra Bushland Sanctuary Trust for
 - \$10.00
 - \$15.00
 - other (please specify).....

Alternatively donations can be made by direct deposit into the Katandra Bushland Sanctuary Trust account BSB 082132 Account No. 509347998

Signature.....

Date.....