



# North Head Sanctuary Foundation

## Custodians of North Head

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### Annual General Meeting

Will be held on Saturday 23 August at 2pm in our Education Room - Bandicoot Heaven.

At this meeting elections will be held for all positions and updates given for the last financial year.

### Education Room – Bandicoot Heaven

Our community education room is open 10am to 4pm Saturdays and Sundays in Building 20. Call in to have a chat or gather information. If you'd like to help others get to know more about North Head, please contact Judy Lambert on 9949 3521(ah) or email

[twsombat@optusnet.com.au](mailto:twsombat@optusnet.com.au)

### Facilities in Bandicoot Heaven

In addition to the displays and brochures in Bandicoot Heaven (the NHSF Visitor Centre) which you can see, there is a range of resources open to all. These include:

- . A number of flora, fauna & bird identification books
- . Videos and slide shows on a range of subjects
- . Thousands of electronic publications on many features of North Head
- . Historical newspaper clippings
- . Indexes and catalogues to a wide range of North Head material held by other organisations
- . Thousands of photographs of the flora and fauna of North Head by NHSF photographers
- . Maps- historical and modern

Free gardening and related books to take away.

The material is added to and updated constantly.

### *Petrophile sessilis*



Or Cone Sticks. A shrub to 2 metres tall. Leaves are stiff with sharply spreading segment. Flowers are creamy yellow. The cones are egg shaped. Now in flower.

### AWC North Head Sanctuary Bush Rat (*Rattus fuscipes*) reintroduction

Dr Jennifer Anson (AWC)

A team of volunteers and Prue Fabian (a PhD student from Sydney University) have been working on reintroducing bush rats into North Head Sanctuary on behalf of SHFT. Bush rats are a native species that, unlike black rats, are not often found around houses but prefer thick vegetation. They feed on fungi, grasses, fruits and seeds and can be an important component of the ecosystem.

Urbanisation and competition with the invasive black rat led to the localised extinction of native bush rats from North Head several years ago. However if bush rats are given an advantage they may be capable of inhibiting black rat invasion.

Black rats were intensively removed from a small area of the Sanctuary and bush rats from Muogomarra Nature Reserve have been released into North Head. Radio transmitters have been attached to some of the bush rats and they are being radio tracked to look at how they use their new environment.



Radio tracking will be occurring over the next few weeks both during the day and in the evenings. Please contact Jennifer if you are interested in volunteering.

[jennifer.anson@australianwildlife.org](mailto:jennifer.anson@australianwildlife.org)

### Native Plant Nursery

In July, the fencing of the third plot in the Sue Halmagyi Endangered Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub (ESBS) Regeneration Trial was completed by Nursery volunteers, with Nick Skelton ([ecology.net.au](http://ecology.net.au)), Jane Williams and his volunteers. The materials were paid for by North Head Sanctuary Public Fund. The money was donated in memory of Sue.

We also had a visit from Catriona Wagg, together with volunteers from Warringah Community Nursery which is sited near Manly Dam.

## Flying ants

Peter Macinnis

There are two lay reactions to "flying ants". Some people think them as real as flying monkeys or drop bears, while a larger group will assure you that they exist, and they are termites on the move. In fact, they are proper ants, Formicidae, but not the usual ground-runners.

Flying ants are the sexually mature forms that the ants (and Australia alone has some 3000 species) use to establish new colonies. The confusion with termites is understandable, because "white ants" also use a similar dispersal method.

Termites, though, are more closely related to the cockroaches, while the ants are near relatives of wasps. Ants and termites are both important recyclers, but I will stay with the ants here. The termites can wait.

Old bush wisdom says ants swarm and send off their colonists on days when it is warm and humid, though some scientists think suitable air currents need to be available. Humidity and warmth seem to be the main factors.

It helps them if many nests swarm at the same time: it gives the ants a better chance of slipping past the birds and bats seeking a tasty snack. There is also a better chance of cross-breeding between nests, so it's a win-win.



You will usually see the males first, because there are more of them, and a smaller number of "queens" or fertile females. The males, as you can see above, are roughly the same size as the non-fertile female workers. The queens, on the other hand, are much larger, because they will need to lay enough eggs to raise the first crop of workers for the new nest.



A queen, males and workers. The pipe is a 45 mm diameter, so the workers are about 12 mm long.

The workers do a lot of fornicating (this is the technical term for "rushing around" and a great word for mentioning in sedate tea parties). People say the workers are grooming the queen, but nobody seems to quite know what this achieves,



When they fly off, the males and females mate on the wing, the males die soon after and the queens land, find or make a shelter, and start laying eggs, if they are lucky. Flying ants may be alarming, but without flying ants, there would be no ants. Without ants, your garden would stink from all the dead animals.

Learn to like flying ants!

## Third Cemetery

Jenny Wilson



"PEPPER.—March 21, suddenly, Sidney Cecil, second beloved son of John and Annie Pepper, of Windsor-street, Paddington, in his 19th year. Dearly loved. Very deeply regretted. God calls first those He loves best."  
Sydney Morning Herald Friday 23 March 1900

Cecil was taken to Quarantine Station from Paddington on 20 March 1900 and died the next day about noon of bubonic plague. He was 19 years old.

## Stony Range Botanic Garden Spring Festival Sunday 24 August 10-4pm

Native plant sales, guided walks and Angus Stewart will open the event at 11am.

613 Pittwater Road DEE WHY