



# North Head Sanctuary Foundation Inc

## Custodians of North Head

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### Education Room - Bandicoot Heaven

We are closed until further notice due to COVID-19.

### Native Plant Nursery

We are back at the Nursery and are busy working in our areas. There is always a lot to do.



Here are some volunteers busy cleaning the drain. During the recent heavy rain, the drain flooded, as it could not cope with the volume of water.

Unfortunately, we cannot take any new volunteers at present, unless they are a member of North Head Sanctuary Foundation. For more details, please send an email to [northhead@fastmail.com.au](mailto:northhead@fastmail.com.au)

### *Pandorea pandorana*



Photo Jenny Wilson

Or Wonga-Wonga vine is a tall vigorous climber with spectacular bunches of flowers. It can be seen now in masses of flowers near the entrance/exit of the Hanging Swamp, Bluefish end.

### A Field of Herons

Peter Macinnis

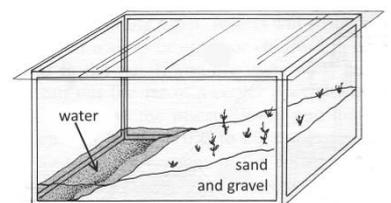
I'm quite a good shot with a rifle, but as a pacifist, I only shoot things that don't scream, bleed or shoot back. While ordinary snipers need a spotter, I don't snipe, but my wife and Jenny Wilson both act as spotters for my photographic activity. When Jenny told me about a strange thing, just south of the 'igloo', I went to look. It appeared to be flowers poking up through a bed of moss. At ground level, it looked like a mob of miniature herons, but it was just mosses reproducing. Each 'heron head' is a capsule that releases spores when conditions are just right.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, mosses, ferns, algae and lichens were the principal members of the **cryptogams**, roughly meaning "hidden seeds". We don't use that word any more, mainly because we can see how the mosses reproduce, if we know how to look. In the nursery, you can often see something like the lower shots, poking out of small pots.



As the labelled photo (top right) shows, each capsule has two covers, and when the operculum comes off, there is an opening, called the peristome. Set around the opening, there are triangular 'teeth' that move in and out, depending on the humidity, so spores are released in dry conditions, when they can drift further. The rest of the biology lesson is left to the reader.

For serious detail, you need a microscope, but mosses make good pets, and I recommend a setup like this, made from an old fish tank. To 'seed' this, I transplanted odd bits



of moss, filched from waste ground, but I also crumbled bits of dried moss onto the surface.

At one stage, we had a swimming pool, where red-crowned toadlets would often end up. Now children all 'know' that frogs live in water, but this is wrong: amphibians *breed* in water, but they *bloat and drown* in water, so I would scoop them out, place them in the tank to dry out, then release them, well away from the pool. This sort of setup is also good for spiders, and as it's generally against the law to keep any amphibians, that's probably a better use for it.

Or you can just keep mosses: there's no law against *that!*

## Back in Time

The stone obelisk is on the other side of the road from the Third Cemetery on North Head and is in Quarantine Station area. The HMAT Medic was bound for the front (WWI) but was returned when armistice was declared. On arrival at Sydney, it was quarantined on 21 November 1918 with influenza. Two soldiers

engraved their names into the Obelisk. They were:- Private Edgar Robert Sheppard, born on 3 April 1900, and was from Victoria. He was in 17th General Service Reinforcements - V. He was released from Quarantine on 29 December 1918.

Jenny Wilson



Private Ralph Edwin Wester Weaver, born on 24 May 1897 and was from Victoria. He was in 17 General Service Reinforcements and released on 26 December 1918.

## Sydney Morning Herald (NSW :1842-1954), Wednesday 25 December 1918 "TROOPS FROM MEDIC.

A detachment of 138 troops from the Medic, consisting of the 17th, 26th, and 27th General Service Reinforcements, will be released from quarantine to-morrow. The Victorians, who number 42, will leave by the 7.50 p.m. train for Melbourne. The New South Wales men will be taken to the Victoria Barracks in special trams. The balance of troops from the Medic, 170 in all, will be released from quarantine on Saturday morning. The New South Wales men will be taken to the Victoria Barracks by special trams. The Victorians, 26 in number, will leave by train at 7.50 p.m. on Sunday for Melbourne. They will stay at Rose Hall on Saturday night."

## Turkey Rhubarb (*Acetosa sagittata*)

Judy Lambert

Also known as Rambling Dock

This scrambling perennial is not as aggressively invasive as other weeds featured in recent newsletters. However, it



is a persistent problem for those working hard to keep our garden beds and planted areas tidy to give small native plants their best chance. Turkey Rhubarb grows from large underground tubers and has arrow-shaped leaves (each 3-6cm long and 1-6cm wide) with spreading auricles (ear-shaped projections from their base). In spring and summer, it has long branching



clusters (up to 30cm long) of small white or greenish-white flowers. Three cream, pinkish or light brown paper-like wings surround its nut-like seeds which are produced in summer and

autumn.

Photos Geoff Lambert

Usually found in sunny gardens and in disturbed areas, Turkey Rhubarb is spread by wind and water. Despite the efforts of our North Head volunteers, Turkey Rhubarb can usually be found climbing over the bushes above the Parade Ground, opposite the Barracks building.