



Blooming lovely: Joseph Banks Native Plants Reserve volunteer Leonie Hogue holds the Champion ribbon awarded for the reserve's native blooms, with council park staff (left to right) Barry Milton, Graham Blundell and Chris Dunn.

Picture: Chris Lane

Native plants take out top prizes

By Jim Gainsford

SUTHERLAND Shire Council's Joseph Banks Native Plants Reserve at Kareela has won six first prizes in the mixed native flowers categories at the Sydney Royal Easter Show.

The reserve's grevilleas, banksias and mixed native flowers and foliage won six first prizes, two seconds and the Champion ribbon for mixed native Australian blooms.

The reserve in Manooka Place, Kareela, is one of only a few specialised gardens in Sydney devoted entirely to Australian native plants.

Long-time volunteer at the reserve Leonie Hogue, who is vice-president of the Australian Plant Society's Sutherland branch, helped select the specimens from the garden for the show.

Ms Hogue, who has been a volunteer at the garden for more than 20 years, said the prizes recognised the hard work of the gardeners and volunteers who worked tirelessly at the garden throughout the years.

Sutherland Shire mayor Phil Blight said the nine awards were an outstanding result.

The reserve won six awards last year.

"The prizes are a testament

to the many hours of hard work from volunteers and council staff in maintaining and caring for the reserve," he said.

New volunteers are always welcome at the reserve, with volunteer working bees on the first Sunday of the month at 9.30am and first Thursday of the month at 9.30am.

"For anyone who is downsizing to a unit but who still wants to keep their hand in gardening this is a perfect opportunity to get involved," Ms Hogue said.

"You only have to do as much as you want and there's always morning tea and a chat."

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