

Bowral Garden Club Inc.

(Established in 1963)

Affiliated with Garden Clubs of Australia Inc

ADDRESS: PO BOX 910, BOWRAL NSW 2576

Patrons: Chris & Charlotte Webb OAM

NEWSLETTER APRIL 2014



Friendship through Gardening

What's happening in April

7 April (Monday) 10.30am: Morning tea and garden visit to Lois and Doug Morrison's garden, 40 Narellan Road, Moss Vale.

14 April (Monday) 1.30pm: Club Meeting:

Speaker: Myles Baldwin, horticulturist, landscape gardener, writer, curator of the Australian Garden Show in Sydney. His topic is: "Australian Coastal Gardens".

(Easter: Good Friday 18 April- Easter Monday 21 April)

(Anzac Day: Friday 25 April)

26-27 April (Saturday and Sunday): Town and Country Open Gardens Weekend - Eight gardens open, including a plant stall (in aid of the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens).

What's happening in May

6 May (Tuesday) 7.30pm: Jane Edmunson, ABC *Garden Australia* presenter, at the Uniting Church Hall (with the Bundanoon Garden Club). Free entry

12 May (Monday) 1.30pm: AGM, followed by a *Question and Answer Session* on all things horticultural, led by our patrons Chris and Charlotte Webb.

Please note the date 27 May (Tuesday) 10.30am: Morning tea and garden visit to Carole and Alan Smith's garden, "Merricott", 102 Merrigang Street Bowral. (Gold coin donation for Cancer Research Mesothelioma Unit)

Theme for the month: Windflowers



Notice of Annual General Meeting

**The AGM will be held on
Monday 12 May 2014**

The new committee will be elected. Please note: nomination forms will be available at the April Club meeting or contact a committee member if one is required.

The annual subscription of \$30 will also be due at the AGM.

From the Editor

A warm welcome to all our new members. It is a pleasure to meet you and we look forward to your participation in our club meetings and outings.

Having been inspired by Les Musgrave at our potting morning, I came home and enthusiastically potted fuchsia cuttings from Noelene and Bob's garden and from my own. I do not think they are ready to be potted on yet. I am nurturing my little fuchsias under the overhanging branches of the Manchurian pear tree, as Les told us he keeps his potted cuttings sheltered under a tree. I do hope you have all been similarly motivated and we have a great plant stall later this year.

April is a peak month for planting spring bulbs, and for my birthday gift, my daughter gave me a wonderful assortment of bulbs for my garden. My granddaughter gave me a garden hanging she bought in Switzerland and my son-in-law, a bottle of French fizz to be consumed in my garden. Love my family. My bulbs are in the crisper section of the refrigerator, the ornament is hanging is where Bea placed it, and the fizz remains in its tin container waiting to be imbibed, probably after I have planted all the bulbs.

Spring bulbs also make wonderful Easter eggs for gardeners young and old, the shape is almost perfect and, for a touch of festive fun, you could wrap the bulbs in colourful foil.

What an interesting talk by Rick Shepherd and the sustainable way he is developing the gardens at Retford Park, formerly the home of the Hordern family and now owned by James Fairfax.

On 24 February, 33 members and friends arrived at another great garden to be escorted around the grounds of Milton Park by its head gardener Peter Berk. The garden was originally laid out in a typical Georgian style. However, only the tree and shrub plantings remain to give much of the beauty seen today. It was a glorious day enjoyed by all and rounded up by the lavish morning tea presented to us with the caution of only one scone per person, and watery tea to wash it down. One of our members made our end of the table chuckle when she asked if there were any more scones, alas, no, there were not. The advantage of the long wait for our refreshments after our walk, was to give rise to more mirth and time to

chat amongst ourselves so the morning was a pleasant time spent with friends.

Carole Scott



Golden squash

Three of our members produced vegetables from the seeds given to us at our Christmas party despite the difficult weather conditions experienced.

Congratulations to Catherine Mah, Pat Keen and Mary Mowbray.



From the President

April is one of my favourite months in the garden. It's not too hot, not too cold—just right—and the mosquitoes have disappeared. The warm soil is ready for anything that you care to plant. Seedlings planted in summer may have died in the hot, dry conditions but now your new ones will have an excellent chance to establish themselves with good root systems before winter sets in. A dose of Seasol always helps. And it might rain.

I can't get out of the habit of spring-cleaning in March (despite having lived in Australia since 1982!), and while clearing out the hall cupboard I found several seed packets, some of which I bought at Diggers on the Mornington Peninsula last August. So in the shady areas I'll be scattering *Aquilegia vulgaris* 'Lime Sorbet' and *Impatiens* (Busy Lizzie). In the sunny beds I'll be sowing *Tropaeolum minus* (Nasturtium) 'Empress of India'—with its dark green leaves and brilliant red-orange flowers— and *Cerintho major*. This latter plant is supposed to have been the favourite of the late Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother—the beautiful grey/mauve foliage is very attractive and the pendulous purple-blue bells last for ages.

Our lawns look a bit patchy, to put it mildly, and the weeds have spread alarmingly in some areas. I prefer not to use herbicides and happily spend time weeding with an old knife to dig out the roots. It's thinking time.

A happy gardener

"Each of us has special lawn problems, and they are legion. The more you care, the worse and the more numerous the problems become. One of my keenest and most skilled of gardening friends can turn a completely blind eye to weeds in his turf. He is, I should say, a happy gardener. But I do find his plantains obtrusive and, after all, they succumb most readily to a dose of selective weedkiller; more promptly than daisies by far. However, he points out that they would leave a nasty gap." Christopher Lloyd, *The Well-Tempered Garden* (Cassell & Co, London, rev. edn 2001) p. 255.

There are people who hate *Anemone hupehensis* (the Japanese anemone or wind flower) because it spreads and is very difficult to eradicate once it is established. Personally I love the plant and enjoy all the colours from white through pale pink to dark pink. It brightens up the garden all through autumn. The salvias, plectranthus and the begonias (large and small), really come into their own at this time of year too, and the *Banksia marginata* and the *Crocea* are lovely.

For a month the house has been in disarray while we had the family bathroom renovated and, while I was engaged with that, Clive was building his gazebo at the bottom of the garden. He was inspired by the gazebos and tea-houses we visited in Japan last May—each one with its own special view. Ours is called:

カンガルーの見える小屋 (Kangaroo-viewing gazebo)

We can watch the kangaroos in the early morning and evening. The bold and beautiful fox, which eats all the rabbits on the paddock, is also seen regularly. The wombat's hole is near the gazebo though we rarely see him/her, but while Clive was busy up ladders, the echidna came waddling through the ferns— and so did the tiny button quails, much to our delight. When we have time to sit, we find ourselves drawn down the garden to sit and admire the view. Don't forget to enjoy your garden too!

Meg Probyn

March 17 visit to Waterfall Cottage.

We left Mittagong RSL at 8am for a coach trip to Waterfall Cottage, situated on 3 hectares of rainforest on Sydney's Northern Beaches in Bayview. The tropical garden (owned by Jeanne Villani) is stunning and we were delighted by its magical quality and its sheer loveliness. Lunch was great fun too - at Waterfront Cafe and General Store, Church Point, with a spectacular view overlooking Pittwater harbour.

A wonderful day thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Meg Probyn

(photos by Noelene Bailey, Celia Finimore)

In the garden of Waterfall Cottage



Lunch at Waterfront Café and General Store
Church Point



Singapore Gardens by the Bay

An update March 2014.

I had a wonderful time in Singapore, however, Singapore city is in serious drought, no rain for over a month and driest since 1869! The grass is brown and the tree ferns and plantings in the trees are looking very sad and droopy. Security was very much in evidence as we departed the same day as Malaysian aircraft problem. I had my boarding pass stamped and checked by three different men before boarding, I've never had this done before.

At the gardens we entered the huge glass dome at Bay South Garden and immediately were in the Australian plants section. The first plants were the xanthorrhoea (southern grass trees) with huge soft heads of grass impressively standing in groves; we were thrilled to see our own native flora. The main entrance also housed unusual baobabs of the cool-dry Mediterranean and subtropical regions. One had a huge split in the bark, and Graham Ross explained that termites were discovered in the tree after it was planted into the display and treatment has remedied this. We saw anigozanthos (kangaroo paws) red and yellow growing tall among xerochrysum bracteatum (paper daisies), callistemon (bottle brushes) and numerous other Australian plants. A covering of fine pebbles made a cool base for the plants.

It was surprising to see huge stands of white and pink daisies of the type we grow in our gardens, as I was expecting to see only exotic plants. The daisies were in the Mediterranean section together with huge overflowing plantings of gazanias falling down over a wall.

The floral display theme changes each season. The display this early spring in Singapore was a very English garden. Roses, petunias, clematis, geraniums, hydrangeas, hollyhocks, sweet peas and every plant you would see in a cottage garden. The colours were strong and there were figures of horses, and lanced knights. The hydrangeas were all coloured hot pink, planted in a curved sway with fig trees with twisted stems interspersed among them.

We then passed through turnstiles into the dome housing the Cloud Forest. The tall waterfall was spraying out loudly and was very cooling. The plantings here were from the cool-moist tropical montane region, complete with a man-made mountain planted with highland pitcher plants, orchids, ferns and other mountain plants. The path was steep and winding up the mountain. We were shown a yellow camellia tree which is rare, and has never been able to be propagated. Many botanists have tried to do so, however, it always lets them down. Grown in mountain areas the leaves were not as the usual camellia type. At the top of the mountain there is a Cloud Walk which hangs over the void and winds down the outside of the mountain with cooling mist spraying out onto the plantings. The Cloud Walk goes deep into the heart of Crystal Mountain and shows how mountains are formed and the vital role they play in the formation of landfalls on earth.

Outside were the Supertrees their "trunks" covered in plants, many being Proteas in silver, rose pink and red together with climbing flowering and green vines. The plants have grown since Carole was there and now are reaching up to the outstretching top steel structure. The Supertrees are 16 storeys high and are man-made structures of steel and situated around the outside Gardens. There are twelve at the Supertree Grove and the

remaining six are placed in clusters of threes at the Golden and Silver Gardens. There is a suspended 22 metre high skyway which sways when walked on and from there the Supertrees can be viewed from above. At night a music and light show is presented to the public free of charge. The lights illuminate the Supertrees and the various coloured lights move up and down the trunks and the canopy. A couple of the Supertrees have small flashing lights illuminating outwards on their many steel "branches". It was a wonderful finale to a visit to the Gardens By The Bay and Supertrees, Singapore.

Kay Lawson



LEST WE FORGET

When in Singapore I visited the Kranji War Cemetery which is situated 22 kilometres north of the city overlooking the Straits of Johore. On the 8th February 1942 the Japanese crossed the Johore Straits and landed at the mouth of the Kranji River, where the cemetery now stands. Fierce fighting ensued but the Commonwealth Forces were outnumbered and the air strength of the Japanese resulted in a withdrawal. The Fall of Singapore took only one week.

There are now 4461 Commonwealth casualties of WW1 buried or commemorated at Kranji Cemetery, 850 are unidentified, and there is a collective grave of 69 Chinese servicemen forces. Reading the headstones of the Australian men buried here, it was noted most of the dead were in the 40 plus age group. However, there were younger men, 19 being the youngest. Each grave has its own plant and the cemetery is maintained to an extremely high standard, and even in the present drought conditions was looking quite green.

Direct quote from the website: "Within Kranji War Cemetery stands the Singapore Memorial bearing the names of over 24,000 casualties of the Commonwealth land and air forces who have no known grave. Many of these have no known date of death and are accorded within our records the date or period from when they were known to be missing or captured. The land forces commemorated by the memorial died during the campaigns in Malaya and Indonesia or in subsequent captivity, many of them during the construction of the Burma-Thailand railway, or at sea while being transported into imprisonment elsewhere. The memorial also commemorates airmen who died during operations over the whole of southern and eastern Asia and the surrounding seas and ocean."

Every ANZAC day there is a very moving dawn service attended by many visitors to Singapore especially for this service.

Kay Lawson

GARLIC

A growing guide – by Margaret Stuart

Garlic, *Allium sativum*, is a member of the onion/leek family. It needs a cool to cold winter to develop good bulbs. Garlic has a 7-8 month growing season and should

not be grown in the same position year after year. Good results are achieved by digging in a lucerne hay mulch, or green manure crop, the previous season, and some chook poo enriched compost for the previous summer's crop, but garlic does not need heavy fertilizing. A good clean healthy, not too heavy soil will be satisfactory.

For planting, choose bulbs with the largest cloves, since they produce stronger plants. Keep the bulbs intact through the late summer in a cool dry place, but not the refrigerator.

Plant in mid- March to mid- April and harvest in early November. About the end of March, prepare the area, removing weeds if any, and dig over the soil a little. Plant the cloves about 15 cm apart with about 20 cm between rows which run North/South, in full sun. Make sure the drainage is good.

Split the bulbs into individual cloves, and plant the cloves, pointy end up, about twice the depth of the clove, and water. After about 5-14 days the little green shoots will emerge, at this time apply mulch to suppress weeds. Water when the soil is dry about 5 cm down. You can give the plants a side dressing of nitrogen after about 6 weeks, if you think they need it but don't overdo it.

In September the plants start to 'bulb up' or produce cloves at the base and will probably develop what looks like a stem with a bud. This is called a scape and contains small bulbils, which will grow if planted, next season.

Unless very dry, stop watering in late September/early October. A garlic plant has 11 leaves. When the lower 5 leaves have withered and the top is still green, probably by early/mid- November, you can dig the plants. Carefully push a fork into the soil well clear of the plant and lift, shaking the soil off the roots. The bulb bruises easily so handle gently. Hang in bunches in a shady place, for 3-4 weeks until the tops have dried. It is important to dig the plants before they collapse completely so that you have a good layer of skins over the bulb to help it to keep.

Best wishes for a good crop.

Margaret Stuart



Garden tips for April

Plant: Deciduous trees for colour, choosing suitable size to your garden. Plant peony tubers, and spring flowering annuals and bulbs. Remember, plant anemones point down and ranunculus claws down, all other bulbs plant point up.

Prune: Long shoots on climbing roses, shrubs and hedges with a light hand, final prune for rampant climbers,

Transplant: Evergreen shrubs.

Remove: Summer annuals.

Spray: Roses for black spot and powdery mildew.

Mulch: Sansanqua camellias.

Muriel's Musings

My January mishap with the stinging, burning milky white sap from the Euphorbia Wolfenii is now but a painful memory so I won't go on about it in detail. I can now even laugh about how the gardening terms confused the nurses at the A & E ward. Three of them were writing down the details, in triplicate no doubt, name, date of birth, address? A muffled "Myosotis Street, "How do you spell it?"

"My o so tis. It means Forget- me-nots." Then, "What has happened to you?" " I've Euphorbia Wolfenii sap in my eyes". " How did that happen?" " There must have been some residue on the handle of the secateurs" I was then wheeled into the Minor Ops room and told" Doctor will see you shortly", which is hospital speak for "how long is a piece of string?" I knew they hadn't forgotten me when I heard someone on a phone saying " She has wolf sap in her eyes"

A petite doctor came in and took a swab of my eyeball, it was 8.6 PH, on the acid side, and very 'ouchy', so they flushed my eyes with a litre of saline and some pain relief drops and I was allowed to go home. The doctor said it would take a few days to settle down, she wasn't wrong, it took almost a week!! There was I with curtains drawn and dark glasses on, looking and feeling like the wrong end of a hangover! Oh, by the way, the report for my doctor said the sap was on the handle of the rake!

I know my hands and fingers are not as strong and nimble as they used to be, but I ask you, don't you find bottles, jars and containers harder to open these days? My wonderful family have brought me three state-of-the-art openers, but last week even they didn't work. On my shopping list I had written, not necessarily in the following order, 'Johnnie Walker', 'Harpic white and shine', a pump action container of 'Sorbelene', and a re-fill for a plugin 'Airwick' room freshener. Now here's the catch, once home I found that, (a) I didn't have the strength to squeeze and turn the cap on the 'Harpic', neither did the openers, (b) no amount of pulling up or pushing down on the pump handle delivered any 'Sorbelene' and (c) there is just a fraction of difference in the size of the little bottles of room fragrances, so I soon found that the little bottle of 'Ambi Pur', I had chosen because I rather liked the idea of frangipani and vanilla fragrance wafting thru the rooms wouldn't fit into the 'Airwick' plug. Fortunately the cap on the bottle of 'Johnnie Walker' unscrewed without any difficulty, BUT there was no way I was going to slosh any of that around the toilet bowl or rub it on my arms and legs or waft it through the rooms. So I did the sensible thing and saved it for its intended purpose, to ease that little dry tickle in my throat that comes on every evening just as I settle down to watch the ABC news at 7 o'clock. But, I've saved the best news to the last.

I have now gone onto a balanced diet.

I balance the things that are good for me with the things that aren't.

Muriel Stuart

Berrima School Kitchen Garden

Last week Buck and I joined the Southern Highlands Garden History Society to visit the Berrima Primary School kitchen garden and to view the wonderful showcase Stephanie Alexander kitchen attached to the school.

We viewed the school vegetable garden at the top of the hill consisting of 24 rectangular garden beds, whilst being served by the children with non-alcoholic punch, mini spinach quiches, pear or peach chutney on sourdough bread with emmental cheese and basil pesto on bread with tomatoes.

This was followed by an interesting talk by the head master and a dedicated teacher.

The garden had become productive after 3 years, which enabled the school to apply for a Stephanie Alexander Grant. The school was awarded \$60,000 which soon disappeared as the windows and doors cost \$32,000. Stainless steel bench tops on fine timber open shelves and Ilve appliances soon ate up the remainder of the money. Much effort by the P&C and the voluntary efforts of parents with carpentry skills, means the school now has a wonderful kitchen.

The collection of vegetables I saw were, a choko vine, beans on a wonderful trellis, beetroot, tomatoes, egg-plant, carrot, pumpkin, squash, spring onions, potatoes, lettuce and rhubarb.

There is a wonderful chook yard and all the vegetable scraps are thrown over the tall wire fence onto the concrete slab for the fowls to eat and scratch to their heart's content.

There is also an orchard with apples, pears, peaches and raspberry canes. The herb garden has basil, sage, parsley, mint, oregano and garlic, which they sell for a good profit. There is a bush garden featuring grevilleas, callistemons, salvias etc. In the trees were colourful wood craft owls, echidnas and French knitting snakes made by the children.

The boys use their energy to attack the compost with gusto, and a spade, and it is then wheeled and spread over the vegetable garden.

The children have developed many social skills as well as gardening, composting and soil management. They are taught to set tables, wait at tables, good dietetics and food preparation

Some of the goodies the children have created from their garden are peach, pear and tomato chutneys, basil pesto and garlic dip. The children are learning entrepreneurial skills selling this produce at the local Berrima markets every second Sunday of the month.

I hope the school produces many Berrima master-chefs, Berrima nursery-men and perhaps creative landscape gardeners. It is not surprising that the school has more families applying for placement at the school than there are positions available.

I would like to suggest that our garden club consider a visit to the school at some future date.

Margaret Buckland



BOWRAL GARDEN CLUB INC

Minutes of General Meeting 10 February 2014

Uniting Church Hall, Bendooley Street Bowral

Present: 54 members and 11 visitors.

Apologies: Keith Bailey, Helen Buchanan, Valerie Davey, Meg Hemming, Michael and Pat O'Boyle, Janice Scott, Lorraine Stott.

President Meg Probyn opened the meeting at 1.30pm and welcomed everyone present especially new members and guests and introduced the guest speaker, Rick Shepherd, head gardener at Retford Park, who also has his own consultancy "Sustainable Gardens", specialising in design, landscaping and maintenance.

Rick gave a most interesting presentation on Retford Park, beginning with the picture of the imposing and pretty Victorian Italianate house built in the 1880s by the Hordern family. The Horderns had a great love of trees, as can be seen with the international collection of maples, elms, NZ conifers, Canary Island oak, Japanese oak, Bunya pine and many conifers which still grace this impressive garden.

Retford Park is now owned by James Fairfax AO, who enjoys Australian works of art in his garden: "From the Heights of the Yansee" made by Jan King, three figures "The Conversation" made by Heidi McGeoch (Bowral), "Euphoric Angel" by Inge King and other interesting pieces like the copy of a Romanian bus-stop, which was reproduced from a photo Mr Fairfax had taken in Europe, and built by Richard Walker (Bowral).

The garden has weeping maples, a succulent collection, a peony collection, a grey garden with teucrum balls, white agapanthus, and native plants prostathera, podocarpus and westringia. Rick is creating a "sustainable garden" and has reduced the use of chemicals by up to 90%. 1500 cubic metres of mulch was produced last year instead of burning garden material. Compost is also produced on a large scale, to which is added valuable manure from the chooks, cows and even the donkey. Rick reminded us to look after the biological health of the soil— "All the fertility comes from what we put in the soil".

The park has a resident bower bird and to increase the bird life Rick supplies nesting boxes and native plants. There are also water features with grasses planted to enhance the habitat for birds and tortoises. The garden at Retford Park provides the house with most of the fruit and vegetables to be consumed from the orchard and the vegetable garden, including herbs, fennel, dill and artichoke. Bees in the orchard helps the environment as well as producing honey for the family and guests. Rick urged us to look beyond the fence and provide habitat and water for birds and to keep our gardens sustainable and free of chemicals.

Eric Paananen gave a vote of thanks and a small gift to Rick.

Minutes of the general meeting held on 10 February 2014 were accepted. Moved Pamela Cornett. Seconded, Margaret Buckland.

Correspondence In: Highlands Garden Bulletin, March 2014 www.highlandsgardensociety.org.au ; Southern Highlands Open Gardens - Town & Country - Saturday 26 & Sunday 27 April 2014 10am to 4 pm www.shbg.com.au . All the correspondence was on the notice board.

Financial Report: Noelene Bailey moved that the financial report be accepted as follows: balance in cheque account as at 31 January 2014 - \$6,769.38; plus balance in savings account \$3,582.94. Total funds on hand as at 28 February 2014 - \$12,394.32. Seconded, Glenys Lilliendal.

General Business:

- Squash seeds - Pat Keen produced a 969g squash, Mary Mowbray also produced one only slightly smaller and Catherine produced another smaller squash.
- Waterfall Cottage Garden Tour on 17 March 2014.
- 24 March 2014 - Peter and Carol Scott's garden visit has been postponed so members will meet at Berrima Cottage Nursery at 10.30am followed by coffee at the Magpie Café.
- 7 April 2014 - 10.30am Morning Tea and garden visit to Lois and Doug Morrison's garden, 40 Narellan Road, Moss Vale.
- 26 & 27 April 2014 - Eight Open Gardens in aid of the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens: Three historic properties open at Olbury Road Sutton Forest -Olbury Farm, Oldbury Vale and Oldbury Cottage; plus "Allways" Loftus Parade off Werai Road, Exeter; "Benbullen" 450 Meryla Rd. Manchester Square, Moss Vale; "Gowan Brae" 14 Charlotte Street, Burradoo; "Greenwood" 15 Kimberley Drive, Bowral; "Quindalup" 130 Sproules Lane, Bowral (where there will be a plant sale).

Treasurer report for February 2014

Cheque A/C balance brought

fwd end Jan 6769.38

Income for Feb 2488.00

\$1935.00 of this was for the

Waterfall Cottage Tour and

\$378.00 was collected for the

Milton Park Tour

Expenses for Feb 446.00

\$396.00 of this was to pay for

Milton Park Tour

Chq A/C bal for end Feb 8811.38

Savings A/C bal brought

fwd from end Jan 3525.47

Income for Feb 57.47

Savings A/C bal for end Feb 3582.94

Total funds in hand

as at 28th Feb 12394.32

President: Meg Probyn (4871 3134)

Vice-President: Pam Bailey (4869 5117)

Secretary: Lorraine Richardson (4862 2677)

Treasurer: Noelene Bailey (4862 3741)

Newsletter Editor: Carole Scott (4862 4766)

Public Officer: Eric Paananen

Trading table: Michael Launders

Seed Box: Barbara Wilson

Membership and Front Desk: Pat Keen, Catherine Mah, Michael O'Boyle, Janice Scott, Anne Stegman

Afternoon tea hosts: Margaret Buckland, Wendy Gamble, Glenys Lilliendal, Doreen Plumridge

Website: bowralgardenclub.com