



## April 2023 Newsletter

### Upcoming Club Meetings and Events

#### April

##### **3 April (Monday) 1.30pm:**

Club Meeting:

Speakers: John Weatherstone – “Sustainable Farming Practices” and John Siemon, Director of Horticulture, Royal Botanic Gardens & Domain Trust.

*This is a Friendship Afternoon with a gathering of Southern Highlands & Districts Garden Clubs. Catered Afternoon Tea – Cost \$10*

**Note:** this is the **first Monday** of the month due to Easter.

##### **26 April (Wednesday) 7.30am**

Coach Tour. ‘Morning in the Gorge’ – Cruise on the ‘Nepean Belle’ and ‘Behind the Scenes’ tour at Mother Earth Nursery, Cranebrook.

##### **8 May (Monday) 2.00pm:**

Club Meeting:

Speakers: Kirstine McKay from Life at Greenlaw – ‘Gardening and Green Living’

##### **8 May (Monday) 10.30am:**

Garden visit to a surprise garden.

### President’s Message

*A*re the times really a changin’?

*A*ccording to Gerard Oldfield, the Dahlia Man from Mittagong, the soil temperature only reached 20°C at the beginning of this March. From January – March 2023 the average temperature was only 24.3°C with very few days over 30°C.

*H*ave you had the same problem with your vegetables not growing and/or not ripening as early as they normally do?

*T*he seasons seem to have moved a month, backward or forward depending which way you look at it. Does this mean we should be planting crops one month later to cater for this apparent change? It does bring to mind the use of walled gardens, preferably brick, to cosset the warm rays of the sun and protect from the strong winds. I have used that idea with a brush

fence to protect my rose garden and it worked very well. I still have some super blooms today in very late March.

*I*t’s a good thing I stick to growing flowers and not veggies, because I haven’t a clue. All I know, is that if we rearrange everything to cater for changes in climate and rainfall, it will all change again and we’ll be in drought!

*I* do know there has not been enough sunshine to adequately power my solar lights to the same extent. And this weekend sees the end of daylight saving. Don’t forget to turn your clocks back or you’ll be living in the future. I will miss the sun.

*K*eeP smiling and be kind to each other.....

*Deb*

## What's on.....

**20 Feb – 30 Apr:** AirBee N Bee –  
Honey & Hive

[https://www.airbnb.com.au/experiences/195514?s=67&unique\\_share\\_id=728328a8-c4c1-4b31-99ad-78c73df15993](https://www.airbnb.com.au/experiences/195514?s=67&unique_share_id=728328a8-c4c1-4b31-99ad-78c73df15993)

**2 April:** Make Perfect Compost: No Dig, No Turn, No Fuss Methods.  
9.15am – 12.15pm. Bundanoon.  
<https://wynlenhouse.com.au/store/make-perfect-compost-no-dig-no-turn/>

**9 April:** Make your own Chicken Feed. Wynlen House, Bundanoon  
9.15am – 1.15pm  
<https://wynlenhouse.com.au/store/poultry-nutrition-making-your-own-layer-ration-1/>

**15 - 16 April:**  
Glorious Gardens in the Southern Highlands. Garden visits will run from 10am – 12pm and 2pm – 4pm on both days.  
<https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/event/two-day-visit-to-southern-highlands-country-gardens/>

**16 April:** The Bath House Garden Hunter Valley in Oakhampton Heights will open.  
<https://www.thebathhousegarden.com.au/>

**22 - 23 April:** 9am to 4pm  
Southern Highlands Botanical Gardens Open Gardens and Plant Fair.

**6-7 May:** Robertson Potato Festival  
<https://potatofestival.com.au/>

Private Gardens of Monaro -  
Private Tour Dates in Cooma will open within the coming week.  
<http://www.privategardensofmonaro.com.au/the-gardens>

The Gardens at Eryldene Historic House will be open between 10:00am and 12:00 noon on the **second Friday of each month from March to November 2023.**  
<http://www.eryldene.com.au>

## From the Editor

Autumn is considered the best time to start planting. Cooler temperatures and milder days inspire us to get out into the garden. I find early morning after a cuppa & toast an ideal time to potter, picking out weeds, cutting back damaged or overgrown plants and assessing what needs attention. Pansies, snapdragons and alyssum are arriving at the nursery, time to fill in those gaps from the spent summer annuals and think about where we can add more bulbs for the Spring.

In this issue we have a couple more contributors to the newsletter, thank you to Catherine and Kristine and also regular contributor Erica. If you have some gardening news or knowledge to share, please let Deb know, we'd love to hear from you.

Wishing all a Happy Easter!

Happy Gardening!

*Ro2*



### Positions Vacant as of 5 June, 2023

- ❖ President
- ❖ Vice President
- ❖ Secretary
- ❖ Membership Secretary
- ❖ Treasurer

If you would like a nomination form, please email [president@bowralgardenclub.com](mailto:president@bowralgardenclub.com) and I can send you one. Position Duty Statements are also available.

*Deb*

## Plant of the Month

**S**treptocarpus are originally from South Africa and are sometimes referred to as the 'Cape Primrose'. Although the common purple flowering varieties with the long tubular flowers are the hardiest, many of the new cultivars are more colourful. They are usually grown in hanging baskets or in pots, however in the right conditions they have been used as a ground cover plant. Always grown in a filtered shade position with moist but also a well-drained soil that mimics the natural habitat of Streptocarpus Species.



**S**treptocarpus grow well in similar conditions to that of African Violets

however they are probably a little easier. They require a moist soil, however not a wet one. Let them dry out once in a while.

They are low maintenance once established and flower freely from the spring through to autumn. Often grown in the pots used for African Violets with the 'Wick' watering system.

- Old foliage can be removed as needed.
- Remember to divide as they fill the pot to avoid overcrowding.
- Fertilize using a weak seaweed based solution.
- Allow for good air circulation
- Protect from snails and slugs
- Propagate from leaf cuttings

Source: <https://www.nurseriesonline.com.au/plant-index/perennial-plants/streptocarpus/>

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*"Every leaf speaks bliss to me, fluttering from the autumn tree."*

*Emily Brontë*

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**S**treptocarpus 'Pretty Turtle' is a new and exciting breed with a pale green on contrasting dark green pattern on its leaves which is reminiscent of a turtle shell! Its leaves are fleshy, round and hairy and grow in a rosette-like fashion. It makes for an eye-catching, yet undemanding houseplant perfect for small spaces!



## Glorious crepe myrtle

by Erica Spinks

*T*here's a crepe myrtle tree in my garden that was planted by the previous owner. It needed some love so, last year, I cut the branches back heavily to promote a better shape and encourage new growth. Now it is in full flower and looks splendid.

*I* love crepe myrtles (*Lagerstroemia*). They are the ultimate trees to admire all year round. In autumn, their leaves turn wonderful shades of orange and red before they fall to the ground to make a colourful carpet. The leafless branches form shapely silhouettes against winter skies, especially those clear blue skies we get on cold days.

*A*s a crepe myrtle gets older, the bark becomes a fabulous sight in winter. With its mottled shades of brown, silvery grey and even salmon pink, the patterning is an attractive feature. With ageing, the bark peels off in layers to reveal a smooth trunk underneath.

*I*n spring, the new leaves start to show on branches. They are, like leaves on most deciduous trees, fresh and unblemished. This is followed by clusters of flowers held in panicles in summer.

*T*here are now miniature forms, plants with dark foliage, and powdery mildew resistant forms. With the range of hybrids available for purchase, there really is something for everyone.

*M*y only regret about my crepe myrtle tree is that it was planted behind our garden shed, so can't be admired from any window in the house. It's too big to

relocate so I've done the only sensible thing – I planted another one!

*Erica*

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## Native plant

By Kristine Gow

*I*f you are looking for a small tree that ticks all the boxes look no further than *Hakea petiolaris* x *laurina*, sold as *Hakea* "Pin Ball". It is a cross between *Hakea petiolaris*, commonly known as sea-urchin hakea, and *Hakea laurina* commonly known as pin-cushion hakea.

*I* have one growing on the council verge outside my home, unfortunately hidden behind other shrubs and rarely noticed by walkers. But certainly not overlooked by the birds and bees. It is a smaller tree than the straight species only growing to about 4 metres high by 2 metres wide, frost hardy once established and requires a sunny aspect and good drainage.

*F*lowering occurs late winter into spring, unfortunately to date my tree hasn't set seed.

*Hakea* "Pin Ball" is a beautiful, small, feature tree with spectacular flowers, dense habit and a winner with the birds and bees.

*Kristine*



## Sterilising Soil

By Catherine Kyngdon

Once upon a time there was a little weatherboard cottage in Mittagong with a Kooka Oven in the kitchen, kept shining with a special stove black. It boasted the best grilled lamb chops in winter cooked over an opening in the top of the wood burning stove and the best roast dinners no 5 star restaurant could ever emulate.

The garden outside was very productive. From soil preparation, composting to harvest and weeding, there was a time in every season for something to do.

I managed to visit one day for a cuppa but stopped when the smell of burning wood suddenly filled the sitting room and stopped the conversation.

My father-in-law quickly moved into the kitchen and very carefully carried out a smoking wooden seed tray filled with soil.

As he was concentrating on getting the tray safely outside and I was somewhat surprised, I only got a mumbled answer when I asked what was happening.

But all came clear recently when reading an article by Jackie French in "Earth Garden" magazine. Ms French suggested that sterilising soil in either a microwave or oven would kill mould spores.

I can only imagine the avenues that would have opened for my father-in-law if a microwave had found its way into the kitchen.

But I'll never forget my mother-in-law's patient voice calling for her husband from the sitting room to take the soil outside as it was done.

*Catherine*

### Treasurer's Report as at 27 March, 2023

Opening Balance:	\$15,271.11
Income	1,892.07
Expenses	-873.98
Closing Balance:	\$16,289.20

### Your Committee

<b>President:</b>	Deb Evered 48621407
<b>Vice-President:</b>	Ray Bradley 0416191905
<b>Secretary:</b>	Claire Wormleaton 0438627572
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Sue Ciscato 0448112321
Membership:	Sue Ciscato
Public Office:	Sue Ciscato
Welfare Officer:	Judith Lewis 0438523660
General committee:	Glenys Lilliendal, Judith Lewis, Pam Mildwater

### Our Thanks to:

Mt. Murray Nursery for their continued support of our Club by providing the lucky door prizes each month.  
Visit their web site at:  
<https://www.mtmurraynursery.com/>  
for gardening news and specials.  
Did you know that Mt. Murray Nursery also offers members a 5% discount on the 3rd Tuesday of every month.  
Just show your membership badge.

*Website: [bowralgardenclub.com](http://bowralgardenclub.com)  
Newsletter Editor: Rosalyn Mulligan*

**Congratulations** to our members who entered in the Highlands Garden Society Bowral Inc. in association with Southern Highlands Regional Rose Society Autumn Rose Show.

**A**nnette Lane won Reserve Champion for 'Magic Show, Champion David Austin for 'The Poet's Wife' and Champion Fruit and/or Vegetables  
Well done Annette!



**R**ay Bradley  
First prize - minimum of five cuts or leaves of Foliage



First and second prize – 'single cut of David Austin roses'



Second prize – 'a cascade'



Second prize – 'float bowl of roses'

First timer Roz Mulligan First prize– Novice for 'Rose of Narromine



Second prize – 'Vase of Roses'

And second prize – 3 cuts of fuchsias.

*It is with sadness we advise of the passing of our member Judith Collins. Judy joined our club in November 2020 and was active in the club and enjoyed coming on many of our bus trips.*

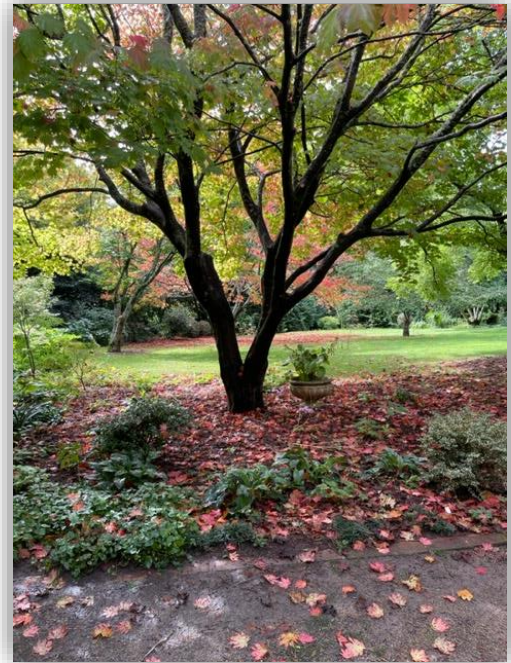
*'She left us in early March'*

*Rest in peace Judy*

A circular inset photograph showing a woman with short brown hair, wearing a patterned top, smiling and holding a glass of wine. She is seated at a table with other people, likely at a social gathering or club meeting.

## Garden Visit to Suzy Dowsett

Well, this was a treat. A 2-acre garden full of rare and unusual plants. If you let a little rain put you off, what a shame. It was a beautiful morning in Bundanoon as we wandered the park like expanse. Most notable was the tranquillity and the peace as you wandered around the trees and behind bushes.



A house for the chickens, an empty one for the ducks, a caged vegetable garden and specimens not seen in the average garden. The maples were glorious, camellias towered over fences and the carpet of naturalized baby cyclamens was so pretty.



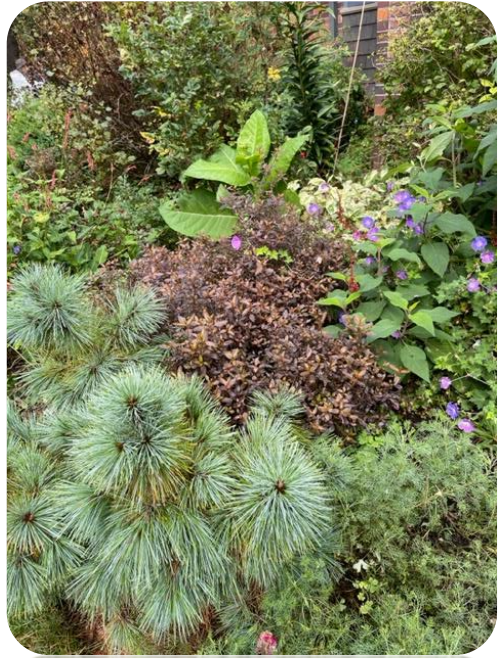


*This* garden has been a life's work for Suzy who has lived here for 33 years and if you see her around the villages, you can be assured she's filling her van with more treasures.



*The* garden has been open for SHBG and one normally has to pay an entry fee. Today it was free, with a cuppa, and the attention of 2 friendly puppies and not one single drop of rain!





Thank you,  
Suzy, just fabulous.

