



March 2024 Newsletter

Upcoming Club Meetings and Events

March

11 March (Monday) 2.00pm:

Club Meeting.

Speaker: Robyn Bible

“The Geranium Lady”

25 March (Monday) 2.00pm:

Garden visit to Eleanor Dartnell’s Garden, 55 Westgrove Rd, Exeter

April

8 April (Monday) 2.00pm:

Club Meeting.

Speaker: Daniel Webb from

“Orkid” speaking on orchids

22 April (Monday) 10.30am:

Garden visit to Andrew Feros & Warrick Johnson’s Garden, 10 Riversdale Ave Burradoo



President’s Message

Hi All

It is almost the end of February, where does the time go. I was sitting out the back in the sun watching all the bees on the flowering Sedum they were so busy enjoying the sun and the water drops sitting on the flowers. Hopefully, we can enjoy a bit more sun before the colder weather sets in.

Checking on the newsletter for March 2023 for some inspiration, Deb reminded us all that June is just around the corner and all of the committee will be vacating their positions as per our constitution. I am hoping that some will apply for re-election to help with the ongoing running of the club, but if you are interested in joining us please don’t hesitate to contact either myself or any of the committee members and we will be only too happy to show you the way.

In March 2023 Robyn Bible, ‘The Geranium Lady,’ should have been our guest speaker but unfortunately due to no fault of her own couldn’t be with us. Hopefully, in March 2024 we will finally get to meet & greet Robyn and learn all about Geraniums.

Take care

Sue

From the Editor

Welcome to March.

Our speaker this month will be Robyn Bible who will be talking about Geraniums in general.

This will be Robyn's fourth attempt to make it to Bowral, with Covid restrictions and road accidents preventing her from making it to our meeting.

Come along and discover how useful and varied these plants can be in your garden.



Please note the March Garden Visit on Monday 25 March will be at 2.00pm not the usual 10.30am.

You can now click on coloured text to access more information. Control and click.....

Deb



Don't forget to plant your Sweet Peas!

What's on.....

2 Sep - 27 May: Red Cow Farm Open Garden. 7480 Illawarra Hwy, Sutton Forest

9 March: Bowral Uniting Church Autumn Fair, starting at 8am at the Bowral Uniting Church

9 - 10 March: Hartley Gardens, 10.00am - 4.00pm both days
Includes Highfields Garden, Hartvale Garden and Wild Meadows Garden

15 March: HGS Autumn Flower Show, Uniting Church Hall.

22 March: Wildwood Gardens in Bilpin will open from Friday 22 March

23 March: CWA Kandos Gardens Fair in Kandos NSW

23 March: SHBG Earth Hour in the gardens, 4pm – 9pm. Sustainability stalls, free sustainability workshops and creative workshops available for children 4-14 years.

13 - 14 Apr: The Collector's Plant Fair Hawkesbury Race Club, Clarendon
<https://www.collectorsplantfair.com.au/>

26 - 27 Apr: 2024 Autumn Open Garden Weekend & Plant Fair at SHBG
[Information](#)

26 - 28 Apr: 9am to 4pm
Oldbury Farm Estate. Your ticket will be valid for one day only. You can also pre-book a tour of the Oldbury Farm Garden and Arboretum with one of the head gardeners. The Oldbury Farm Estate ticket also includes a free pass into the SHBG Plant Fair.

Stop Agapanthus Spreading

Did you know that the agapanthus plant is listed as an environmental weed in Wingecarribee?

During the summer, I admired their showy flowers throughout the Highlands. With huge heads of white or blue flowers on tall stems, they make effective displays in the centre of large roundabouts and as garden edging plants.

Agapanthus plants are natives of southern Africa and, even when not flowering, are attractive with their year-round foliage. They are low maintenance and spread via fleshy rhizomes. The thick roots bind soil and can help reduce erosion on sloping sites. This makes them tough, as anyone who has tried to divide or dig out an established clump can tell you.

Why are they environmental weeds? It's because they have the potential to spread into bushland and add to the loss of biodiversity in these areas. For this reason, we should remove the seed heads to limit the threat to our natural areas.

It's easy to do. Simply cut off the seed heads once the flowers have passed and put them in a bag in your red bin – not your green organics bin. This way, the seeds won't get mixed with other green waste at the Resource Recovery Centre. You can add the leaves and stems to your green bin or chop them into your compost heap.

If you haven't already done this, now is the time to tidy agapanthus. It's simple and, not only will you have neat plants, but will also be helping keep a weed out of our bushland. Alternatively, if you love the look of agapanthus but don't want the seeds to spread, you can buy sterile forms of the plant. These ones don't set any seed.

Erica Spinks



Trading Table News

Apart from all the lovely plants you normally bring to our trading table, each month, I would like to suggest a theme plant you could propagate.

The plant for March on the trading table will be Geraniums. It is about now they need a tidy up and a great time to take cuttings to share. You can just place soft stem cuttings in water and wait for roots to grow and then pot on. However, I do have better success by dipping these soft stems in root hormone, placing the cutting around the pot and leaving them in a sunny spot. Don't use a plastic bag to cover them as they don't like high humidity.

Good luck and we look forward to lots of geraniums on the table.

Deb Raynel

Plant of the Month

The Dahlia

Dahlias produce a dramatic display of colour and form in Summer and Autumn in a huge variety of sizes, shapes and colours. Shapes vary from balls and pompoms to simple daisy and anemone.

Plant in an area that gets plenty of sun for best results and the soil needs to be well drained, rich and moist. Protect from wind if possible and remember to stake tall varieties as wind and heavy rain will damage blooms.

They are not frost tolerant and benefit from being lifted in colder regions.

When fertilizing use a product lower in nitrogen and higher in phosphorous to encourage good blooms.

As dahlias grow, pinch out the growing tips to encourage lateral growth and a fuller bush. Regularly cut flowers to promote flowering – they make great cut flowers to display in vases. Flowering lasts 3-5 months. When flowers start to fade in late autumn, cut the bush back by half, and when leaves start to fade, cut the shrub right back to ground level.

There is a style and size of Dahlia for every need, from pots, garden borders and mass plantings.

Dahlia "Café au Lait"



What's the difference between weather and climate?

You can't weather a tree, but you can climate. (As in climb it!)

“A garden is not a place. It’s a journey”

Monty Don, British TV Gardener

Product of the Month

Gyganic for Veggies, Fruit & Citrus is a premium biologically based, chemically boosted fertiliser developed specifically to meet the needs of all vegetable, fruit and citrus plants. Having been expertly and rigorously tested by members of the Rare Fruit Society of South Australia (RFSSA) before its release, Gyganic is also one of our most trusted products for backyard vegetable gardeners, orchard managers and commercial growers across Australia.

The RFSSA is a South Australian-based group of over a thousand fruit and citrus enthusiasts, including a number of members who are state, national and world authorities on fruit and citrus growing. A large part of their focus is on the preservation of rare and endangered species of fruit trees. After the success of Sudden Impact for Roses with rose societies across Australia, the group approached Neutrog to develop a fertiliser to meet the specific needs of fruit and citrus plants.

Trials first began with a product called ‘Total Impact’ which was a horticultural fertiliser in Neutrog’s commercial range, but it soon became clear that members were supplementing their feeding program with other applications such as kelp, seaweed, humates and various bacterial inoculants. This inspired Neutrog to modify the fertiliser to include GOGO Juice to create a product that not only supplies a complete range of nutrients but also boosts beneficial bacteria.

This product is known today as Gyganic for Veggies, Fruit & Citrus.

Gyganic Applications

Gyganic for Veggies, Fruit and Citrus has been specifically developed to enhance fruit size, quality and taste. It is a premium organic based, chemically boosted complete fertilizer with the full range of nutrients in an organic form, coupled with boosted levels of nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, iron and magnesium. In addition, Gyganic’s unique organic base of manure, humates and rock phosphate have been composted and blended with the biologically active GOGO Juice containing kelp and seaweed, producing a very nutritious organic base product high in organic carbon.

You can sign up to the Neutrog Newsletters, by going to their website and subscribing to receive very useful information on a monthly basis.

Source: [Neutrog](#)



Benefits of Rainwater

Have you noticed that after rainfall plants seem greener, cleaner and lusher? That's because rainwater has benefits for plants that tap water simply cannot deliver.

Make the most out of the recent rain and use it to re-energise and refresh your indoor plants! You can either collect rainwater in a bucket to use later, or pop your indoor plants outside for a couple of hours.

The rain contains more Nitrogen and Oxygen than most tap water, and because your plant roots are receiving them directly, you'll notice them grow quicker and greener with rainwater. Plus, micro-nutrients and minerals, which are already present in the soil, are unlocked by the rainwater soaking through and then readily absorbed by the plant roots.

Rainwater is free of salts, minerals and treated chemicals, which are all typically found in tap water. These chemicals, once soaked into the soil can build up over time, altering the soil pH and killing beneficial microbe/fungal communities, and thereby affecting plant health.

The optimum soil pH for most plants to grow is 5.5 to 7 which is slightly acidic to neutral. Rainwater naturally is around a pH 7 scale - the ideal pH for plants. Also, rainwater aids in flushing out chemicals in the soil, as a result of watering with tap or groundwater, helping balance out the soil pH.

Rainwater washes off any dust or debris on your indoor plant's leaves, helping clear out their pores (Stomata). This greatly improves their ability to take in

CO₂ and nutrients for photosynthesis, promoting healthy plant growth.

Source: [lovethegarden](#)

Spider Plants

If you're looking for an indoor plant that tolerates lower than optimum conditions, this could be a good choice.

Spider Plants are fantastic air-purifiers and super resilient – making them easy to grow for even the most notorious of houseplant killers.

Tolerating a wide range of growing conditions, including low-light and periods of dryness, Spider Plants suffer from few problems. You may find that brown tips are the biggest problem with your Spider Plant.



Hazel King OAM FAIH

Hazel died on 31 August 2023 at the age of 91. She was one of Australia's most highly respected horticulturists.

Hazel was presented with numerous awards for her contributions, most notably an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in 2021 for her contribution to horticulture and local history.

She enjoyed sharing quotes about gardening and life and this one is very apt....

"There are two kinds of people, those who do the work and those who take the credit. Try to be in the first group, there is less competition there."



Jeanne Villani OAM

Sadly, Jeanne passed away on February 2 at her home "Highdown" in Bowral. She led a full and exciting life and was well known to many of us in the Highlands.

A generous lady who loved to share her garden and did with BGC in October 2019.



Geraniums vs Pelargoniums

With Robyn Bible "The Geranium Lady" coming to see us in March, perhaps a little background information will be useful.

Geraniums and Pelargoniums are closely related but in fact, two different types of plants. They are from the same family but have different genus. Geraniums are herbaceous perennials, and pelargoniums can be annual plants for many.

The flowering time for both is from Spring to Autumn, obviously depending on your climate region.

Geraniums are generally tougher and perform better in our cooler climate and can be easily propagated from cuttings. Pelargoniums don't really like the frost.

As for pests, they attract very similar bugs and caterpillars are the main culprit. So small and yet so hungry. They also suffer the same diseases, mainly fungal, rust and powdery mildew can do a lot of damage. One way to avoid these problems is to water the soil rather than the leaves and if in pots, don't let them stand in saucers of water or become water logged. This can lead to rot.



Keep your plants pruned for shape and remove damaged leaves and spent flower heads. Even though geraniums are hardy plants, they respond well to an all purpose feed (not too much nitrogen) during the growing and flowering periods.

Recipe of the Month

Have you still got some Zucchini hanging around?

Try this recipe and bring it along to the next meeting.....

Zucchini Slice

The slice can be made a day ahead.

375gm zucchini
1 large onion
3 rashers bacon
1 cup (125gm) grated tasty cheese
1 cup self raising flour
½ cup oil
5 eggs

Grease a 19cm x 29cm rectangular pan.

Coarsely grate unpeeled zucchini, finely chop onion and bacon.

Combine zucchini, onion, bacon, cheese, sifted flour, oil and eggs in a bowl. Mix well.

Pour mixture into prepared pan, bake in moderate oven about 30 minutes or until well browned and set in the centre.

Not suitable to freeze

Not suitable to microwave

If you have a favourite recipe please send to:

evered.debra@optusnet.com.au

Passion Vine Hoppers

These nasty little devils start out as juvenile "fluffy bums" and are easier to eradicate at that stage.

The adults look like a flat moth with see through wings with a mottled brown pattern.

They can cause wilting and stunting and they produce vast amounts of honeydew on which sooty mould may grow. Sooty mould can inhibit photosynthesis and cause leaf drop.

You can try Pyrethrum to dispose of these pests or Mavrik by Yates.



Juvenile "fluffy bum"



Adult hopper

Jobs for March

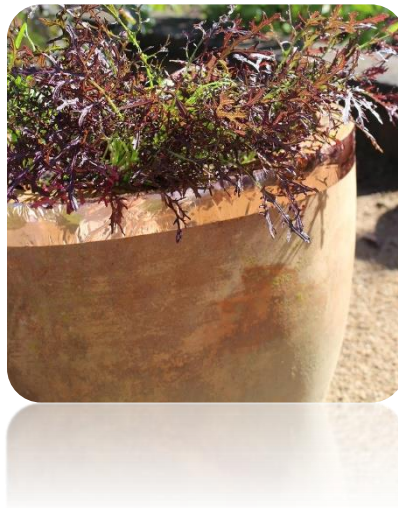
Clean up under fruit trees and shrubs in general so fungal diseases don't set in. Don't put fallen fruit in your compost, it may be diseased.

Dahlias and Chrysanthemums may need staking, especially with the storms we are experiencing

Keep watch for aphids on roses and vegetables. I was surprised to see new buds absolutely covered with aphids. If you spray them, don't forget the underside of the leaves. I like Eco-oil from Eco Organic Products or Eco Neem Oil

Watch for the caterpillars of the White Cabbage Butterfly on cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli and other brassicas. I like Success from Yates

Again, with all this rain, the slugs and snails are out in force. Try a saucer of beer to attract them, then drop into soapy water to kill them. Alternatively, use snail bait. Copper tapes are good to use around pots and raised garden beds



Plant broccoli, cauliflower, rocket, and broad beans

Plant your Sweet Pea seeds on St Patrick's Day – March 17. Don't forget a trellis or some support system for them to climb on

Keep on top of the weeds. If you're too busy, try to at least cut off flowers, otherwise they will spread weed seeds all around the garden

Prepare the soil for those bulbs you chose last month. Mix compost, old manure and some Dynamic Lifter to your bulb bed.

After liliiums die down, divide the bulb clumps and plant out in other parts of the garden

Our Garden Visit to Wynlen House

Another successful garden visit, this time to Bronwyn and Helen's patch to check out how they practise what they preach. A picture tells a thousand words.....



What a wonderland of greenery and produce. Our members who attended had many questions and were given lots of answers and options.

You will notice the little green fence in the above photo, put there to support the small beans, keeping them upright.

Methods of deterring pests are environmentally friendly rather than chemically done - Humming tape to dissuade the birds, tin trays to protect the tomatoes and a snail pellet that really works!



We were also given a lesson on composting. Using very simple and straightforward methods, a black compost bin, vegetable scraps, sawdust and a hearty spray of homemade lactobacillus to get everything moving and Bob's your uncle! Bronwyn says this is an easy and proven method for making your own compost.



Bronwyn has been kind enough to share her lactobacillus recipe with us. Give it a go and get your compost moving too.

[Lactobacillus Serum \(See Covering page for the link\)](#)

Wynlen House is an example of how much can be achieved in a small space and its owners love to share. Bronwyn and Helen run courses to share their knowledge and give guidance to would be vegetable growers.

“Grow Fabulous Food Program” : Online Mentoring for Vegetable Growers with Wynlen House Artisan Village Farm and Learning Centre

Every month we will send you a garden action update specifically tailored to the season and your cool/cold climate region that includes:

- a monthly action plan for the garden
- what to plant as seeds, seedlings and for propagation
- what's happening with the weather and the impact for growing
- articles about growing methods, soil care, rotation, companions and much more
- Access to the **help desk** via email or phone for advice about vegetable growing, pests, disease, etc in your vegetable patch. We have lifelong experience and

- extensive knowledge from our 15 years as cold climate organic market gardeners to help guide you through your productive garden challenges
- Regular Zoom or Facebook live sessions to talk about preparing and growing the best produce possible with the resources available to you
- Membership of our private Facebook community group for sharing ideas and asking question about your vegetable growing
- Discounted enrollment in any of our on-line or on-farm classes,

First month includes a personal Zoom consultation where we can discuss your growing plans and ambitions and begin the work to help you realise your goals of self reliance.



Grow Fabulous Food
wynlenhouse.com.au

Financial Summary for February

As at 25th February 2024

Income	\$483
Expenses	\$522

Balance at Bank	\$11,292
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Float (including Petty Cash)	\$185
Debit Gift Card balance	\$42
Winter Solstice Lunch deposit	\$200

Available Funds	\$11,719
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Notes:

Feb meeting hall hire yet to be paid

My Pretty Turtle

Streptocarpus Pretty Turtle is a member of the Gesneriaceae family and is also known as Cape Primrose or False African Violet. 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.

Streptocarpus 'Pretty Turtle' will thrive in a spot with bright, indirect light and can tolerate a few hours of direct morning sun. It loves humidity, so it would be an ideal choice for a bathroom or kitchen.

My Pretty Turtle sits on a table in the outside flyscreen area where it receives early morning sun and plenty of light. I have it sitting in a dish where I water it from the bottom as they don't like to get their leaves wet. It has taken about 1-2 years.

Roz Mulligan

Your Committee

President:	Sue Ciscato 0448112321
Vice-President:	Judith Lewis 0438523660
Secretary:	Claire Wormleaton 0438627572
Treasurer:	Roz Mulligan 0410583849
Membership:	Sue Ciscato
Public Officer:	Sue Ciscato
Welfare Officer:	Judith Lewis

General Committee:

Glenys Lilliendal, Deb Evered, Robyn Hook, Ray Bradley.

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.

We thank Mitre 10 in Mittagong for their assistance with our raffle prizes.

Website: bowralgardenclub.com

Newsletter Editor: Deb Evered

