

# 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



*Friendship through Gardening*

## NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2013



### Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year!

It doesn't seem very long ago that we were putting away the Christmas decorations—this year has flown by as it always does when we are enjoying life and keeping busy. The party at Janice and Steve Scott's home on Monday 25 November was a resounding success and that was our final celebration for the Golden Anniversary Year—well, almost the final, since we have a Christmas party lunch on Monday 2 December. We started the year with our Anniversary lunch at Milton Park and it seems as if we've been having fun every month. I look forward to another enjoyable year in 2014 and wish everyone a happy, healthy Christmas break and a wonderful year ahead. This is my last newsletter as *Editor*—Carole Scott has very kindly agreed to take over in February 2014.

*Meg Probyn*



*Margaret Missingham and Muriel Stuart raising their glasses in a toast to the Club (photo Celia Finimore)*

### What's happening in December

**Monday 2 December at 12 noon:** Christmas lunch at Sutton Forest Inn, Illawarra Highway. If you want to come but haven't booked already, please contact Meg on 4871 3134.

**Sunday 8 December at 10.30am:** The Official Opening of the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens by the NSW State Governor Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO. The ceremony will include the dedication of all the sponsored trees and the unveiling of a plaque commemorating the time capsule for the sesquicentenary of Bowral and Moss Vale and the SHBG.

**There will be a plant stall (and don't forget if you have any plants to donate, please bring them to the site by 8.30 am).**

**Sunday 8 December at 7.00pm:** The Berrima District Music Group will present its annual Christmas Concert in St Jude's Church Bowral.

**Saturday 14 December 6.30–9.30pm:** Carols by the Lake at Lake Alexandra, Mittagong. Food stalls open from 5.30pm, Christmas carols, a visit from Santa, kids craft corner, photography competition, lanterns on the lake, fireworks at 8.50pm. In case of wet weather, carols will be moved to St Stephens Church.

### What's happening in February 2014

**Monday 10 February: 1.30pm:** Club meeting at the new venue: Uniting Church Hall, Boolwey Street, Bowral. Guest Speaker: Paul Kirkpatrick on Cruden Farm and the Australian Botanic Gardens at Cranbourne.

### Photos from the Party 25 November



*Muriel, Meg and Janice (photo Noelene Bailey)*



*Kathy Watson, Steve Scott and Kay Lawson*



*The party in full swing (see more photos on the website)*

### **Muriel's Musings**

Hope this isn't the beginning of the end—but nothing comical has happened to me since the last musings!! There was the hail storm that stripped the roses and the young leaves from the Japanese maples and left a 'helluva' mess of my windows, of gum tree leaves and bark 'n sticks all over my lawns when the street guttering overflowed. Both TV screens went on the blink—causing me to have a major panic attack. After pressing every button on the remotes, I took notice of the advice to "check antenna" so I went out on the deck and gave the antenna aerial wire a hearty tug and normal service was restored.

Enjoyed a flurry of happiness as photographs of family birthdays kept coming up on the laptop screen from 12 November until the 21st when Tony, my grandson-in-law, had another special birthday. Clever Samantha farmed out the surprise party cooking amongst her friends as she knew that 6- and 3-year-old Liam and Alexander couldn't keep the surprise party a secret.

As if all of the above wasn't enough to cope with, my laptop (my substitute lifeline instead of a mobile phone/iPad/any other of those latest gismos) went on the blink—screen froze, wouldn't turn off and wouldn't start up—another panic attack. Read all the "how to operate instructions"—much too technical for a gal of my age—so with my security torch in hand, I ducked down under the desk and checked the power point and all the other connecting bit—there's quite a few of them—little blue lights, etc. AND predictably, yes, I did bang my head as I was crawling backwards from under the desk—but the good news is whatever I did down there worked and my dear little laptop is once again keeping me informed with "things I need to know".

I'm so looking forward to our Christmas luncheon at the Sutton Forest Inn—but if I don't see you there, may I take this opportunity to wish you and all those you love, a most happy Christmas season (and I hope the Chocolate 'n Merlot fairy will come to your place too).

Cheers me Dears,

*Muriel Stuart*



### **Gardening Tips for the Christmas Season (for a harassed gardener)**

One of my favourite gardening books is *My Gardening Year* written by Shirley Stackhouse and her tips on how to prepare your garden before guests arrive at Christmas are enormously helpful—if exhausting:

- Mow the lawn, including the nature strip, a couple of days before Christmas, making sure that the blades are set on high to avoid scalping the lawn and leaving brown patches. (I hope Clive reads this!);
- Water the garden very deeply the day before your guests arrive, then top up the mulches, deadhead the annuals, pull up anything looking suspiciously as though it's on its last legs and make sure the mulch covers any bare patches. (All these jobs take time, so I suggest you start deadheading and mulching every day from now; the only major job to do then is watering the day before! On Christmas Eve I'm usually up to my eyes baking mince-pies, preparing vegetables, icing the Christmas cake and making the Christmas log—but I usually have a few annuals handy to pop into any sad-looking areas for last minute repairs.)
- Shirley suggests that you should plant perfumed flowers round your seating areas including

gardenias and summer-flowering jasmines. (Thank goodness, this is a job you can do well ahead of Christmas.) If your garden is frosty in winter, it's an idea to keep the gardenias in pots so that you can move them to sheltered areas during the winter months.

- Sweep away the cobwebs around the place. We always find that underneath the garden furniture gets embarrassingly cobwebby so a quick clean and spray helps to keep the creepy crawlies from annoying the guests.
- On Christmas Day deep-water all the potted plants, sweep the paths and the entertainment areas. (I'm not sure whether Shirley cooks the Christmas lunch but if she does, she'd have to be up at the crack of dawn to get half these jobs done before she lights the oven!)

A special handy tip: It's not a bad idea to give your guests a large glass of something delicious before they wander round your garden—that way very few of them will ever notice, let alone comment on, the weeds!



**Pests and diseases:** As if you haven't enough to do with Christmas shopping and writing cards (many to people you never see and you're beginning to wish you could just send them an email but they don't have computers)—the caterpillars are leaping about the garden eating your vegetables. Well, they're not exactly leaping but they are causing havoc and need a good dose of something. If you have the time you could remove by hand or, if the letter to Aunt Maud is really urgent, spray with Dipel, derris dust or a low-toxic insecticide.

Our bugbear (if that's an appropriate word to use) is the codling moth, but we had great success last year with corrugated cardboard strapped round the base of the trunks of the apple trees. I've noticed that Clive hasn't yet fastened it on so I hope he reads the newsletter and gets cracking. I'm too busy chasing the two-spotted mite on the rhododendrons, the azaleas and fuchsias with a systemic insecticide and pursuing the snails with caffeine spray and snail pellets. (My father used to bury jam jars with beer low in the soil to attract the snails—they love it and it seems such a happy seasonal thing to do.) If you're renovating your house, collect the sawdust as snails hate it and it is a very useful barrier round your seedlings—if you don't mind the mess.

**Propagating from cuttings:** I hate to tell you this, when you're already stressed about Christmas lunch and whether the cousins, the children and/or the grandchildren will quarrel, but December is one of the best times to take cuttings. When the family members have all decided not to speak to each other, escape into the garden in the early morning and take a few softwood cuttings. All you need is a good quality knife, a good pair of secateurs (and Phil Maher showed us how to sharpen them last June) and a plastic collection bag—and off you go. With tip

cuttings, remove the leaves from the stem where the cut is to be made and make a clean cut at a slight angle just below a node or leaf axil. Pot the cuttings as quickly as possible. Fill the pots with a rooting medium—there's so much to choose from—sand, perlite and vermiculite, peat moss, potting mix, Yates Seed Raising Mix—it's just like making the Christmas pudding—a handful of this and a handful of that and Bob's your uncle. Try a mix of two-parts coarse sand and one-part peat moss or vermiculite. Or try two-parts coarse sand, one-part perlite and one-part vermiculite. Or just use potting mix! Dip the end of the cutting in a hormone 'cutting' powder or gel or some of us have decided that honey works just as well—and it's always in the kitchen cupboard. Water the pot and keep in a shady spot.

**Tomatoes:** Don't forget to prune the side shoots of tomatoes, and stake the tall plants so they don't fall over. Keep feeding the potted plants with slow-release fertiliser or pelletised organic fertiliser. One simple way to do this is to make four holes in the area round the plant's root system with a bamboo stick and put one teaspoon of fertiliser into each of the four holes. (Don't absent-mindedly stir your coffee with the same teaspoon!) You may be picking your tomatoes during the first couple of weeks of December. Once the plants begin to crop, weekly or fortnightly applications of a liquid fertiliser or manure tea will assist fruit production. If the weather suddenly turns hot again, cover the pots with metal foil to reflect the heat and stop the roots being burnt.

**Going away?** If it all gets too much for you, book a holiday somewhere far away where no one knows you. But before you go, make sure your houseplants will survive. Put a plastic garbage bag at the bottom of the bath, lay newspaper over the plastic and place your well-watered pots on top. Turn on the taps until the newspaper is sodden and then turn OFF the taps. Have a lovely holiday!



*The eagle's nest sculpture on Dairy Farm Hill*

### Visit to the Arboretum, Canberra

After the heat of October and early November, it was a welcome relief when the rains came—and on Monday 11 November when we visited Canberra the skies opened. Not surprisingly, no one complained because we all knew that our gardens needed the water as much as Canberra's. After morning tea, we gathered at 11am by the huge windows of the visitors' centre, which overlooks the 620 acres, and

Bob Bailey recited the familiar stanza from Binyon's ode of remembrance:

*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,  
We will remember them.*

With that echoing in our minds we climbed on board our coach again for a tour round the arboretum with the guide and we headed up to Dairy Farm Hill where a number of ceremonial Aleppo Pines (*Pinus halepensis*) have been planted. These pines were propagated from the seed of the Lone Pine tree planted at the Australian War Memorial. We also drove through the area where a forest of Turkish Pine (*Pinus brutia*)—a species native to the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey—were planted specially to commemorate Australian personnel killed in all conflicts.

The winning design for the arboretum was produced by the landscape architects Taylor Cullity Lethlean (TLC), who also designed the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens, so it was especially pleasurable to see how well their design has become reality. Great expanses of newly planted forest areas sweep across the acreage, and the wonderful views to the city and the mountains beyond make it a marvellous place to visit.



### From the Patch

#### Eggplant: *Solanum melongena*

One of summer's great joys is picking the lustrous black or purple or even white and purple striped eggplants from your garden and creating a vast array of delicious gourmet delights.



*Different shapes and sizes of eggplants*

My early experience of eggplants was a little underwhelming as so much effort was made to make them edible with salting and rinsing and so on. However the modern cultivars have really simplified things and you can easily slice or prepare the eggplant in a minute and have yourself a delicious tasty treat.

Eggplants belong to the *Solanaceae* family along with tomatoes, potatoes, chilli and capsicums and are consequently vegetables of the hottest months. They

hate frosts. In fact eggplants do best at temperatures between 21- 32°C.

Plant eggplants in a very sunny position in well-drained soil and ensure they are well watered and mulched. Restricting the water supply will affect fruit set and the ultimate size of the fruit. Start plants off in seedling trays in a glasshouse or growing frame and plant out as seedlings once the threat of frosts has completely passed. Plant in a well prepared soil with a side application of dolomite and fertilizer. Seedlings should be planted about 50cm apart. Avoid excessive root disturbance.

The fruit will ripen in 10-14 weeks depending on the amount of sunshine and heat. There is a certain level of experimentation to determine the right time to harvest but after a few furtive attempts the optimum stage will become apparent.

#### Pests and Diseases

Pests and disease are similar to those which affect tomatoes. Caterpillars, fruit fly, nematodes, slugs and snails can all be controlled by using your regular control methods. They can also be susceptible to a number of fungal attacks particularly powdery mildew and anthracnose if the weather becomes damp.

#### Eggplant Trivia

Eggplants were cultivated in China as early as 600BC but probably originated in India.

Eggplants were brought to Europe from South East Asia by Arab traders and avidly taken up by the people living in the Mediterranean. In fact taken with so much enthusiasm that it was said that Turkish women were not ready for marriage until they knew 25 ways to cook eggplants!!

Eggplants were first introduced to Australia in 1850 by the nurseryman John Baptist but were not considered at all popular until the influx of Mediterranean migrants in the 1950s.

#### Eggplant Cultivars

- Listada di Gandia* Purple streaked white
- Lebanese* Long and pale purple
- Long Purple* Asian cultivar
- Casper* White
- Lady Finger* Lebanese style, long, thin & productive
- Blackmail* Large black fruits, sweet flavour

#### Other things to plant in December

Now is also the time to plant a huge number of summer vegetables including: sweet corn, beetroot, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, zucchini, chives, carrots, fennel, leek, chilli, lettuce, Jerusalem artichoke, tomatoes, celeriac, fennel, onion, parsley, snow peas, tomatoes, spinach and chard.

#### A Vegetable Thought

*'A cauliflower is a cabbage with a college education.'*  
Mark Twain

Chris Webb

## Planting Day at Balmoral

The Balmoral Community Hall garden was given a facelift on Saturday 22 November by a small team of Bowral Garden Club members (most of whom also belong to the Highlands Garden Society) and residents of Balmoral. The fire in October had swept right up to the fences of the Hall, burning all the trees on the south side of the area and damaging the tennis court club house on the east. While one team of workers created the garden bed at the front of the Hall, we renovated the old garden bed at the back, pruning the bushes, cutting out dead trees and weeding. Bunnings provided a BBQ (on the back of a trailer) and the two staff members (Cathy and Paul) not only cooked for us and provided cold soft drinks, but also helped digging and planting.



*The BBQ from the back of the trailer*

Bob Bailey and Pat Keen arrived with their vehicles filled with plants donated by the Highlands Garden Society and the Bowral Garden Club and Wariapendi had dropped off a lovely selection of native plants in the morning. Bunnings donated more plants, which the residents had chosen the previous Wednesday, and they also gave a pallet of bags of soil improver. The Wingecarribee Shire Council delivered excellent mulch and a tank of water. Picton Sand and Gravel had donated a huge pile of topsoil and a local egg farmer had donated a trailer-load of chicken manure for the non-native areas. It was a real community effort co-ordinated by Mary Woolfe from Hill Top, who had been so worried about the morale of the Balmoral residents.



*It's all action!*



*Bob Bailey clearing the weeds*

Thanks to the team from BGC—Bob and Noelene Bailey, Pat Keen, Lynne Moore, Mary Mowbray, Clive and Meg Probyn (and their daughter Fiona and partner Brian Rapsey)—it was a rewarding day's work!

## Michael O'Boyle Co-opted on Committee

At the meeting on Monday 18 November it was agreed to co-opt Michael O'Boyle on to the committee. He has accepted the invitation and we are delighted that he will join us next year. Michael knows the intricacies of the Uniting Church Hall and his advice will be very helpful as we settle into the new hall. He stepped into the breach for Michael Launderers at the Trading Table when the latter was away and he will be a great asset to the committee.

## Minutes of General Meeting 4 November 2013

### Presbyterian Church Hall, Bendooley St. Bowral

**Present:** 51 members, 8 new members and 1 visitor.

**Apologies:** Lorraine Stott, Janice Scott, Miriam Denton, Barbara Wilson, Margaret Stuart, Frank Moore, Carole Smith, Pat & Michael O'Boyle.

**President** Meg Probyn opened the meeting at 1.30 pm and welcomed everyone present, especially the eight new members. Meg then introduced our guest speaker, Charlotte Webb OAM, Chairman of the Board of the Southern Highlands Botanical Gardens and Patron of our Garden Club.

Charlotte gave a fascinating presentation about Claude and Isobel Crowe who owned the Berrima Bridge Nursery. Claude arrived in the Highlands in 1937 and his contribution to beautifying the area with his landscaping and supply of plants in parks, churches, Bowral hospital, schools, Bowral Railway, streets, the Remembrance Driveway Berrima and home gardens has been significant. His garden plans often had over 40 trees included. The nursery closed in 1990 after 50 years. Charlotte would often ring Claude whenever she had a question about plants and trees in the district—he was a fountain of information. His copious records, which Charlotte and Chris have been studying, were given to the Historic Houses Trust. Claude had kept every docket for over 50 years. They were thrilled to find a docket

for the trees that Chris' grandfather planted on their property many years before.

Claude also kept a diary from 1943 and, when he died in 1999, Isobel continued the daily entries, which also included details about the weather. During the war Claude was involved in the national seed bank project— a two-year supply of vegetable seeds in case of invasion and which also supplied the military with seeds to enable them to feed the troops. Claude was Manager of Anderson's Garden Planning in the city and Killara. He also worked with Paul Sorenson. Anderson's set up a nursery at Berrima and sent Claude to work there. During this time he met Margaret Davis, the founding President of Garden Clubs of Australia and she hired Claude to set up model gardens in miniature for the garden show. Claude married Isabel whom he met at Anderson's. When she studied horticulture she was the first woman to graduate and was top of her class for three years. Later in life Isobel became a keen bird watcher. She and Claude were highly successful in the Highlands. They built large glasshouses, which are still standing today and are in excellent condition. When floods came through their nursery over the years, Claude would mark the door with the flood levels—these marks are still visible. A maple he developed was named "Berrima Bridge"—unfortunately the 'mother' maple at the Berrima Bridge nursery site has just died. Mention was made of the Camden Park camellias where Claude worked and took cuttings. Charlotte has recently propagated these camellias and now Camden Park have bought many of them to refurbish their collection. In June 1999 Claude was awarded an AM and he died a few months later in October.

Charlotte was presented with a gift of appreciation and thanked by Keith Bailey who said "we never realised how much we owed Claude Crowe."

**Minutes** of the general meeting held on 14 October 2013 were accepted as a true record of the meeting. Moved: Anne Stegman Seconded: Bob Bailey

#### Correspondence In:

- Brochures and maps of Five Open Gardens in Sutton Forrest to raise funds for the Southern Highlands Coal Action Group – 30 November & 1 December.
- Berrima District Credit Union advised AGM to be held 14 November 2013.
- Our Gardens quarterly magazine.

#### Treasurer's Report:

Noelene Bailey moved that the financial report be accepted as follows: Balance in cheque account as at 31 October 2013 \$9211.83 plus balance in savings account \$3236.59. Total funds on hand as at 31 October 2013 \$12563.52. Seconded: Ulishka Virag and carried.

#### General Business:

- Thanks to Tim and Beverley Webb for the garden visit and morning tea at Invergowrie.
- Would other people like to offer their place for a garden visit in 2014? Please speak to Meg.

- Invitation to the Cocktail Party on 25 November to be held at Janice and Steve Scott's home, 15 Kimberley Drive, Bowral 4.30 pm to 6.30 pm.
- Trip to Canberra Arboretum November 11—fully booked. Plan for a trip to Parliament House and Floriade in 2014.
- Balmoral Community Hall—Meg will keep us informed of the project being planned in conjunction with Mary Woolfe. We can help by supplying left over plants from our plant stall or from our own gardens and turning up on a date to be confirmed.
- **2 December Christmas Lunch**—list for attendances and choice of meal on the day.
- **Invitation** from Charlotte Webb to attend the Official Opening of the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens 8<sup>th</sup> December by the Governor General. Be seated by 10.45 am. There will be a plant stall so come with your plant donations before 8 am for Chris and Charlotte.

**Trading Table:** Lots of plants for sale, left over from plant stall.

**Lucky Door Draw:** Won by new member Helen Buchanan.

The meeting closed at 2.45 pm followed by a delicious afternoon tea prepared by our Afternoon Tea Hosts.

**Christmas Lunch:** Monday 2 December at 12 noon

**Next General Meeting** Monday 10 February 2014 at 1.30 pm at the new venue, **UNITING CHURCH HALL**, Boolwey Street, Bowral. Guest speaker Paul Kirkpatrick; **Cruden Farm and the Cranbourne Australian Native Botanic Gardens.**

#### Management Committee

<b>President:</b>	Meg Probyn	4871 3134
<b>Vice-President:</b>	Pam Bailey	4869 5117
<b>Secretary:</b>	Lorraine Richardson	4862 2677
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Noelene Bailey	4862 3741
<b>Public Officer:</b>	Eric Paananen	
<b>Trading table:</b>	Michael Lauanders	
<b>Seed Box:</b>	Barbara Wilson	
<b>Membership and Front Desk:</b>	Pat Keen, Catherine Mah, Michael O'Boyle, Janice Scott, Anne Stegman	
<b>Afternoon tea hosts:</b>	Margaret Buckland, Wendy Gamble, Glenys Lilliendal, Doreen Plumridge	

[Website: bowralgardenclub.com](http://www.bowralgardenclub.com)

