

Bowral Garden Club Inc.

(Established in 1963)

Affiliated with Garden Clubs of Australia Inc

ADDRESS: PO BOX 910, BOWRAL NSW 2676

Patrons: Chris & Charlotte Webb OAM

NEWSLETTER JULY 2013



Friendship through Gardening



Hellebores brightening up the winter days

The days are getting longer—not very noticeably—but from this point in winter we can enjoy the prospect of spring. The mean average maximum temperature for July in Bowral is 11.5°C (minimum temperature is only 2°C and better not to be thought about!). Those of us living in Mittagong on the other side of Mt Gibraltar can expect slightly warmer temperatures and those in Moss Vale even colder than Bowral. We begin to wonder why we decided to live here until we think about the beautiful springs and autumns—and hot summers! And we do have more rain than many areas of Australia and many of those who remember the drought conditions affecting so many regions know that every drop of rain is welcome.

Some days in July feel almost balmy when the temperature reaches 14 or 15°C—those are the days when the sun shines and the garden invites us out to get on with all the winter jobs. Even in winter the garden has pockets of colour and the promise of more to come as the spring bulbs push their way out of the cold soil. What keeps us all cheerful are the last flowers on the sasanqua camellias and the first flowers and fat buds on all the other camellias, the soft flowers of the hellebores, the pretty violets, small clusters of sweetly-smelling flowers on the *Daphne*, and the primroses, primulas, and the outrageously coloured pansies, which will flower right through to summer tucked up in their mulch. Some of the acacias are also in flower, with their beautiful yellow and golden fluffy blossom filling the air with sweet scents. Many of the vegetables and herbs cope

with the cold temperatures—it's a time to plant many vegetables—see Chris Webb's column, 'From the Patch', p.3-4.

When it's very cold, you could curl up by the fire and read the latest garden magazines and catalogues. Or on the other hand, put on some extra layers and tackle those jobs that really should be done in winter. And the suggested list starts with rose pruning on page 2-3. Whatever you do, keep warm and stay cheerful!

What's on in July

1 July (Monday) 1.30 pm: Club meeting at Presbyterian Church Hall, Bendooley Street, Bowral. Please bring your photos for the competition to take place in August (see page 2 for details).

Guest speaker will be Angus Stewart, Australia's leading expert on native Australian plants and one of the regular presenters on ABC's *Gardening Australia*. His topic is *Composting and worm farms*.



22 July (Monday) 10.30am: Coffee morning at The Post, Moss Vale.

29 July (Monday) 10.30am: Garden visit and morning tea at Janice Scott's home (15 Kimberley Drive, Bowral).

Theme for the month: Hellebores

What's on in August

5 August (Monday) 1.30pm: Club meeting at the Presbyterian Church Hall, Bendooley Street, Bowral. Guest speaker will be the *Highlife* magazine photographer, Tony Sheffield: *Botanical Southern Highlands*. He will also judge the photo competition. (See details on page 2.)

12 August (Monday) 10.30am: Committee meeting

19 August (Monday) 10.30am: Visit to Clive and Meg Probyn's garden for morning tea and a stroll round the winter garden - 158 Oxley Drive, Mittagong.

26 August (Monday): 10.30am: Meet at Fitzroy Falls Information Centre for coffee and a walk, followed by lunch at Burrawang Pub.

Theme for the month: Daffodils

Bowral Garden Club Fun Photography Competition

Photos to be submitted on 1 July 2013
(Exhibition and Judging will take place on 5 August 2013)

RULES

- Each member of the club may submit one photograph in each of the three following categories:
 - Single flower;
 - Landscape in your garden **or** in a garden you have visited;
 - Visitor(s) to garden.
- The photographs must NOT be framed.
- Maximum size of photo: A5 or (210 x 148mm) or (8.3 x 5.8 ins)

Rose Pruning Demonstration



Members enjoying their coffee



Phil Maher tackling the rose bush

On June 10, thirty members attended the morning's demonstration at "Plants Plus", Braemar, and after partaking of excellent coffee, we were instructed on the best methods of pruning roses. Phil Maher calculated that over the years he must have pruned over 50,000 roses so he is no slouch when wielding the secateurs and loppers.

First, he showed us how to sharpen our tools and the necessary safety measures. It was a very enjoyable occasion and we all felt more confident about pruning roses of all shapes and sizes.

It's time to follow Phil's advice and complete your rose pruning.

Make sure your secateurs and any other cutting implement are clean and sharp! The following applies to all roses except climbing roses:

- Cut out stems that are dead, diseased, damaged, crossing or rubbing branches and those that are growing inwards through the centre of the plant. Cut out any spindly stems (those that are the thickness of a pencil or thinner).
- Look for four or five strong main stems that will be the basis for the revitalised plant to ensure an open centre—hopefully at least a couple of them will be water shoots from just above the bulge of the budding union.
- Prune those strong stems, cutting them back to 4-6 buds or 10-15cm above soil level. Cut back the less vigorous stems harder to 2-4 buds. Any suckers (shoots below the bulge of the budding union) should be cut to the ground.

For climbing roses, it is important to train as many main stems as possible horizontally. For the first two or three years after planting, don't cut off the ends of the long stems but prune the side-shoots to 2-3 buds making sure that the stems are properly tied to the support. Once established, the aim is to remove the oldest stems if the rose has produced enough new growth to replace them.

For all roses: Rake up all the prunings and bin them—they often carry fungus spores so don't put them on your compost heap. After pruning, spray the plants with lime sulphur (to control fungus diseases like mildew and black spot), and also spray the soil under the plants. Fertilise the roses with *Seamungus*, which is used for revitalising all plants throughout the year (including natives). It's also ideal for establishing new plants, particularly bare-rooted roses.

Garden Tips

Moving plants: While we are thinking about pruning roses, now is the time to move them if they are not in the best location. The same applies to all deciduous plants. Make sure you prepare the new site—dig in compost and *Seamungus*. Dig the hole about twice the size of the root ball—gently tease the roots and spread them out and cover with soil progressively, firming it down to exclude air spaces, but avoid treading on it – the roots are quite near the surface and can get damaged. It's useful to form a raised ring of soil round the plant to help with watering. Water well and then mulch, making sure that the mulch doesn't make contact with the stem so as not to encourage collar-rot.

Hint on Mulching

Think of Goldilocks when adding mulch to garden beds. Not too thin, otherwise the gold of the sun will reach the soil and weeds will germinate. Not too thick, otherwise it locks out the water. But just right when it's about 5cm deep for most organic mulches.

Rod McMillan, quoted in *Yates Garden Guide*, p. 65

Spraying against pests and diseases: There seem to be so many nasties in the garden waiting to leap on to your precious plants. What with citrus requiring a spray of PestOil for the tissue paper (nymphal) stage of bronze orange bug, deciduous vines requiring red oil (against

the rectangular scale insects), and winter-flowering prunus requiring Bordeaux, copper spray or lime sulphur for peach leaf curl, you will be keeping very busy with your cans. Not even the natives are safe—cup moth infestation can occur in the gum trees and brush box. If you see caterpillars clustering together they should be removed straightaway (wear gloves) and spray low-toxic insecticides on the young plants.

If your azaleas are prone to petal blight, keep them sprayed once the buds start to show colour, using an insecticide such as Bayleton. Re-read last month's article about organic solutions too!

Iris: The bearded iris plants will benefit from bone meal at this time of year. Sprinkle it around the plants and water the plants and surrounding soil. These irises, mostly hybrids of *I. germanica*, don't need a lot of water and are dormant over summer. They like the chill of the winter and the warmth of the summer sun.

Dr Holly Kerr Forsyth in *The Constant Gardener* (p. 111) retells some of the myths surrounding the Iris: *In the Illiad, Homer depicted the iris as a messenger of the gods. Hera, wife of Zeus, an intermediary between heaven and earth, was also responsible for leading the souls of dead women to the Elysian Fields. A Greek tradition, in her honour, is to plant iris alongside the graves of women. The shape of the flower represents the Trinity to Christians; in the Far East, especially Japan, the iris is attendant to ceremony and tradition.*

The iris has been cultivated in Japan for more than a thousand years and some varieties mentioned in Japanese gardening books from the seventeenth century are apparently still in existence. In every temple and traditional garden we visited in May there were irises in flower—mostly *I. laevigata* or *kakitsubata* (rabbit ear iris), which grow in shallow water or marshy areas.



I. laevigata in the Korakuen Garden, Okayama.
Behind is a mound of azaleas.
(photo M. Probyn, 13 May 2013)

Bulbs: If the areas where your bulbs are planted haven't been weeded, this is an urgent task for July. A long-handled hoe is very useful!

Daylilies: If your daylilies (*hemerocallis* species) have been in your garden for some time, the clumps will require splitting up. This gives you lots of new plants for other areas in your garden.

Rhubarb: If your rhubarb plant is older than five years, it probably needs to be lifted and divided. To give the plant a good start for spring, loosen the soil around the plant and fork in compost or animal manure plus a handful of complete fertiliser.

From the Patch:

Asparagus (*Asparagus officinalis*)

Perhaps one of life's great pleasures is eating fresh asparagus with Hollandaise sauce. The reality is however, that it is always much easier to grow the Asparagus than to make Hollandaise sauce!!!

Asparagus is an interesting perennial crop, which has the ability to produce a worthwhile crop for up to 20 – 25 years. Because of its longevity it is necessary to identify a part of your vegetable garden, which can be dedicated to this long-lived crop. An open sunny well-drained position is best.

Buy Asparagus crowns to be planted in winter, as this will hasten the time to have your first crop. Seedling plants take at least 3 years to produce a viable amount of crop so unless you are prepared to wait, crowns are the best option. It is worthwhile mentioning that Asparagus does sulk when it is transplanted or divided so try to avoid disturbing your established plants.

Plant the crowns in a trench about 300mm wide and about 250mm deep. Spread the roots of the crown over a raised mound in the base of the trench so that roots all point downwards at a 45-degree angle. Back fill the trench with a mix of compost and soil and top off with a layer of well-rotted manure. Asparagus is a hungry crop and needs masses of manure.

Once your crop is established, after the first frost of the winter, cut off the remnant foliage, cover the whole bed with a thick layer of manure and top off with good quality mulch. Although quite drought tolerant the mulch will reduce the amount of summer watering.

With your first crop harvest spears when they get beyond pencil thickness. It is beneficial to leave the smaller spears as they will develop foliage which will feed and develop the crown. When harvesting an established crop it is quite a good idea to leave a few spears that will continue to feed the crown while you keep harvesting. Stop harvesting all together in late spring and let the foliage fully develop so that the crowns have time to be fed before winter, ensuring abundant future crops. After three years you can divide the crowns to expand your planting.

Asparagus has very few pest and diseases and in fact the worst problem is probably going to be snails and slugs that love to gnaw on fresh young spears. So simply follow your normal snail control program.

Asparagus Trivia

Asparagus has been cultivated for at least 2500 years and its name is derived from a Greek word for shoot or stalk. The Greeks believed it would cure toothaches and prevent bee stings. Asparagus was considered an aphrodisiac but this was probably because of the Law of Similarity (the shape of the vegetables dictates its properties) than through any real potency.

Asparagus produces a compound, methylmercaptan, which is a sulphur-containing compound which produces 'that smell' when you have eaten too much Asparagus!!

Asparagus Cultivars

There are several Asparagus cultivars including:

'Mary Washington' perhaps the most commonly grown garden cultivar which produces an abundant crop for much of spring;

'Fat Bastard' an F1 hybrid which produces fatter than average spears;

'Purple' a cultivar that produces purple spears, which are generally more tender than green Asparagus;

'Sweet Purple' is a sweet tasting Purple hybrid.

Other things to plant in July

In addition to asparagus, now is also the time to plant a huge number of winter and spring vegetables including:

beetroot, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, chives, fennel, kale, leek, onion, parsley, snow peas, spinach, turnips and swedes.

A Vegetable Thought

'Green fingers are the extension of a verdant heart.'

Russell Page

Chris Webb (Russell Page fan)

Muriel's Musings

I am truly burning the midnight oil because I am currently being interviewed by a very patient gentleman who records for the National Oral History Society: he sets up the state of the art microphones and other bits 'n pieces while I gather up the cats and unceremoniously dump them—one in my bedroom and the other in the guest bedroom—take the phone off the hook, fill the two glasses of water. (I've always thought that the glasses of water in front of people on television was rather "posy" but can now assure you that when you are feeling a little tense the mouth does tend to dry up.)

Because I'm doing this history in chronological order, I have to write it down first—so in the quiet of the night (from midnight until 3am) I write five or six foolscap pages of my memories. Can't believe that three hours of writing becomes only 15 minutes of spoken word. I suggested to William that, "Maybe if I speak slower and slower we could stretch out the minutes?"—but he just glares at me.

This is one of the flashes of memories that I will record later in the interview about the Women's Voluntary Services during WW2:

The senior ladies would work tirelessly during the day in a shop in the main street and in the evenings the younger set would meet there under the guidance of some of the senior ladies, all of whom were experienced sewers and knitters—during the evening they would make pyjamas, socks, balaclavas and scarves. Looking back, we of the younger set were pretty much hopeless. Try as they could to teach us the intricacies of knitting off 36 stitches from each of the three needles with a fourth needle, we always ended up with all the stitches back on two needles. Eventually they gave up on us.

The matrons knew knitting balaclavas was beyond us, but they thought that surely cutting the buttonholes and sewing on the buttons on the pyjama jackets wasn't beyond our capabilities. At the end of the evening we proudly handed in the six completed tops—were the matrons happy??—well, not quite. You see, we had made the buttonholes and buttons on the girly side for buttoning up. We weren't asked to try our hands at knitting scarves, but we figured that was because they wouldn't be needed in Tobruk or New Guinea!!

Dear reader, how was your holiday weekend? Here is an account of mine. Wasn't it O'Flynn who said Murphy was

an optimist?? On Saturday morning the handle on the sliding door came adrift—metal fatigue. Mid-morning a sizeable puddle developed in the middle of the kitchen floor and I traced the source back to the cupboard under the kitchen sink—both shelves and their contents were saturated by a leak from a corroded tap connection. With the help of 4 or 5 towels I mopped up and if I didn't turn the taps on they didn't leak. Hurrying into the laundry with the wet towels, I bent down to pick up the dustpan and brush and as I straightened up I banged the top of my head on the underneath of the clothes dryer—it didn't half hurt.

At 1.30pm two friends made an unexpected visit and the two expected friends coming for afternoon tea arrived at 2 o'clock. By now I had butterflies wondering if the Belgium Teacake would go round at afternoon teatime. But the butterflies subsided when the unexpected visitors looked at their watches and said sorry but we have to go, but we couldn't pass Bowral without calling in. Dear God, I hope my relief didn't show on my face.

Afternoon tea went off quite well—I was praised fulsomely for the excellency of the Teacake, and they must have meant it as they polished it all off. After I had waved my friends farewell, I carried the cups and plates out to the kitchen ONLY to discover another leak—this time the Russell Hobbs electric jug was slowly wetting itself on the bench.

PS have you any ladylike expletives to spare??? I've run out of mine!!

Muriel Stuart



The Village Centre, National Arboretum Canberra

The National Arboretum Canberra

The club is planning an outing on Monday 11 November to Canberra to visit the National Arboretum, where there are 90 forests of rare, endangered and symbolic trees from Australia and around the world. The transformation over the last five years is astonishing—so many trees have been planted (35,000), driveways completed and buildings erected. The Village Centre is a beautiful open space—lovely facilities (café, shop) and stunning panoramic views across Canberra.

The details for the trip have yet to be finalised but the plan is for the bus to leave Bowral at approximately 8am and return at approximately 5.30pm. We'll stop for a coffee at the National Botanic Gardens and then drive to the National Arboretum for lunch. (Cost for the coach trip is \$25 per person.) We revisited the Arboretum recently to check out the facilities and sample lunch—the gourmet duck pie (\$10) was definitely worth the trip. We also met two volunteers and the Curator of the

National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia. An amazing collection—some of the exhibits are on loan and others have been donated. The Curator, Leigh Taafe, has agreed to talk to us about the exhibits. A guide for the Arboretum will be organised too.



Under the plant in the cave formed by the rock are tiny aboriginal figures—this was presented to the Collection on 13 February 2008—the day of the apology to the 'Stolen Generation' in Parliament House

If you are interested in coming on this trip, please book and pay \$25 to secure your seat. The bus will hold 48 so it's first come, first served.

Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Working Party

If you are already a Friend of the SHBG you will be aware that the first working party for 2013 on the site will be held on Friday 26 July commencing at 9am. Please contact Chris Webb (telephone 4861 4899 or email chris@cwebb.com.au) if you would like to join the Friends and help on that day. A short site induction will be held at the beginning of the session for those of you who have not yet been inducted. Application forms to join the Friends are also available at the Bowral Garden Club meetings (or contact Meg by email). (The cost per annum is \$15 per individual and \$25 per household.)

The working bee will involve levelling the area round the Shed, planting trees and hedges. Please don't forget to bring your own garden tools. If you don't feel up to wielding a spade, volunteers will be required to assist with providing some refreshments and a BBQ lunch. Please contact Chris if you would like to be involved.

Gardening and Music

Over the years I have been struck by the number of people who love gardening and music. And there seem to be countless people in the Southern Highlands who fit the bill. This year the Southern Highlands International Piano Competition will be held once more in October—many of you have attended in 2007, 2009, 2011 and this year should be an outstanding event. Clive and I hosted pianists in both 2009 and 2011 but this year unfortunately we are unable to help. Our Russian pianist came joint-second in 2011 and we continue to follow his

career with great interest. A baby grand piano was lent to us for the period of the competition (our own piano not being up to the required standard!) and it was lovely to be outside working in the garden while listening to the music.

Elizabeth Burton has sent us the following as an SOS for hosts:

This year in October the bi-annual Southern Highlands International Piano Competition (SHIPC) will be held for the fourth time. The SHIPC has gained in stature and reputation with every competition; over eighty applications were received this year from twenty countries. Twenty-seven pianists have been accepted. The Artistic Director, Gerard Willems, says the standard is exceptional.

It has been a hallmark of our Competition since its inception that competitors are placed with host families during their stay in the Highlands. It has proved to be a very enriching experience for both hosts and competitors—bonds are formed which remain long after the Competition. It is also quite wonderful to imagine that we have fostered at a very personal level the musical career of a young pianist.

Many previous hosts have already come forward, but several are unable to assist this time due to medical/or health issues. Therefore, more hosts are needed. It is not necessary to own a grand piano, as practice pianos are available.

Should anyone own a grand piano, but feel unable to be a host, it would be greatly appreciated if they could make the piano available for daily practice by a competitor (usually 3-4 hours per day/competitor).

The other area where SHIPC would appreciate assistance is in language skills—in particular Mandarin, Korean, and Japanese. Most of the European competitors have several languages and their English is quite good.

The SHIPC Board is giving two complimentary A-Reserve tickets for the Finals to all hosts. As well, there will be coach transport to Canberra from Bowral free of charge. The hosts receive free entry into all the preliminary sessions—held at Chevalier College, Burradoo. For the first time this year the Finals will be held in Canberra, but this is very much a one-off event; there are moves afoot to upgrade existing facilities in the Highlands, which would allow us to return the Finals to the Highlands.

If you would like further information please contact Elizabeth Burton 4885 1734 or email ElizabethTBurton@bigpond.com

Meg Probyn

Minutes of General Meeting 3 June 2013

Presbyterian Church Hall, Bendooley St. Bowral

Present: 47 members **Visitors:** 6

Apologies: Lolita Godsell, Shonagh and Frank Moore, Jan Scott, Noelene and Bob Bailey, Pat Keen

President Meg Probyn made a small adjustment to the agenda after welcoming everyone to the meeting. She reminded the members about the photo competition:

- It will be held on Monday 5 August;
- Tony Sheffield from Highlife Magazine will speak to us that day and will judge the photos;
- The photos are to be delivered to the next meeting on 1 July 2013 so they can be mounted for display.

- Rules:
 1. The photographs must NOT be framed. (The competition is to be a light-hearted affair – we have no expectation of professional photographs).
 2. Each member of the club may submit one photograph in each of the three following categories:
 - Single flower;
 - Landscape in your garden **or** in a garden you have visited;
 - Visitor(s) to garden.
 3. Maximum size of photo: A5 (210 x 148mm, 8.3 x 5.8 ins)

Meg then introduced the guest speaker, Stuart Read, Heritage Officer (Landscape Specialist), NSW Office of Environment & Heritage, who won an overseas fellowship from the Pratt Foundation/International Specialised Skills Institute to travel through Spain to study the management of change in historic and new parks and gardens. In 2010 he led a three-week tour of Spanish gardens for the Members of the Historic Houses Trust of NSW. His talk was titled: 'Spanish Gardens: shade, shade and a sense of mystery'. He talked about the historic heritage of the landscape and architecture. He told us about the Spanish climate and the challenges gardeners faced there.

The slide show was wonderful. We saw mosques-cum-cathedrals; beautiful courtyards with rows of orange trees watered individually by rills with gates; beautiful patios and sunken gardens. We were reminded of the ever-changing history of Spain from being the bread basket for the Roman Empire through to succeeding conquests by Muslims and Christians, to the present day where we saw the efforts of the government and councils to build open, natural and relevant spaces for today's citizens. After questions from the floor Stuart was thanked by Keith Bailey and presented with a small gift.

Minutes of the meeting 6 May were taken as read and accepted. Moved: Kay Fintan; Seconded: Ulishka Virag.

Correspondence in:

- Three membership renewals;
- Thank you note from Peter Macbeth, Principal of Moss Vale High School, for BGC's donation of \$250;
- Information and an invitation to attend the NSW Camellia Show on 13 & 14 July 2013;
- Confirmation of insurance for BGC Inc through GCA;
- Confirmation that our application to change the objects/ constitution has been registered to take effect from 13 May 2013.

Correspondence out:

- Note of thanks was sent to Cathy and Trish at Berrima Cottage Nursery in appreciation of their warm welcome and generosity during BGC's visit on 20 May 2013;

Treasurers Report:

Pam Bailey (in the absence of Noelene Bailey) moved that the financial record be accepted: Income \$2060.70, Expenditure \$315.15, Balance \$3227.12 in the general account. Savings account: \$2,942. Total funds: \$8,028.47.

Seconded: Lorraine Stott

General Business:

- Meg said how much she had enjoyed working with the out-going committee and that she had high hopes for the new one.
- Most people have renewed their membership.
- New members were welcomed and reminded to pick up their badges.
- The members were told that despite the excellent facilities at the Baptist Church Hall, the committee has decided that we would not move our meetings because the parking facilities aren't adequate.
- The new seating and table arrangements were pointed out with hopes that the screen was now easier for everyone to see and that there would be more space.
- Tulip Time: The committee decided that we would take part in the parade in September. If any members would like to be involved in a small sub-committee, let Meg know. Any ideas for a theme would be welcome.
- Bowral Rose: Sue Kingsford has let us know that the roses will be available soon – we will order a number for members. 20 people indicated that they would prefer bare-rooted roses.
- The trip to Canberra Arboretum: members were encouraged to put their names down.
- Members were reminded about the coffee and pruning demonstration at Braemar Plants Plus with Phil Maher on Monday 10 June.
- Wednesday 19 June Morning tea and gallery visit to Sturt Craft Centre, a warm winter venue.
- Highlands Garden Society Winter Seminar on Saturday 20 July at 10 – 2.15pm. RSVP by 12 July.

Any Other Business:

Muriel Stuart lamented the certain loss of Bowral's one remaining plant nursery, should the Kmart development go ahead on its site. There was general agreement that we should register our opposition to the development to the Council, as the development is inappropriate to Bowral, particularly in that position. Muriel also noted that our water rates had gone up and she speculated that it might be connected to the newly installed water pipe to Goulburn.

Exhibition Lucky Draw: Won by Kay Fintan. **Lucky Door Prize:** Won by Barbara Wilson.

The meeting closed at 3pm for afternoon tea.

The next meeting will be on Monday 1 July when the speaker will be Angus Stewart on the topic of 'Composting and Worm Farms'.

Management Committee

President:	Meg Probyn	4871 3134
Vice-President:	Pam Bailey	4869 5117
Secretary:	Jo Lees	4861 2594
Treasurer:	Noelene Bailey	4862 3741
Public Officer:	Eric Paananen	
Trading table:	Michael Launders	
Seed Box:	Barbara Wilson	

Membership and Front Desk: Pat Keen, Catherine Mah, Lorraine Richardson, Janice Scott and Anne Stegman

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

Website: bowralgardenclub.com