

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 FEBRUARY 2014



Friendship through Gardening

What's happening in February 2014

7-8 February (Saturday-Sunday): Floral Art at the RSL Mittagong: Classes, demonstrations and competitions. For further details and booking, please contact Deidre Hill on 4887 1254 or email: <quindalupnursery@bigpond.com>

10 February (Monday) 1.30 pm: Club Meeting at Uniting Church Hall, Bendooley Street, Bowral: Speaker: Paul Kirkpatrick: *Dame Elisabeth Murdoch's garden at Cruden Farm and the Royal Melbourne Botanic Gardens at Cranbourne.*

17 February (Monday) 2.00 pm: Potting afternoon with Les Musgrave: at the home of Noelene and Bob Bailey, 16 Harley Street, Bowral.

24 February (Monday) 10.30 am.: Coffee then a guided tour round Milton Park garden.

Theme for the month: Dahlias

What's happening in March

10 March (Monday) 1.30 pm: Club Meeting: Guest Speaker: Rick Shepherd, Head Gardener, on Retford Park garden.

17 March (Monday) 8 am: Leave Mittagong RSL for a coach trip to Waterfall Cottage gardens, situated on 3 hectares of rainforest on Sydney's Northern Beaches. Followed by lunch at Waterfront Cafe and General Store, Church Point, which overlooks the beautiful Pittwater harbour.

24 March (Monday) 10.30 am: Garden visit to '*Linden Cottage*', 3 St Clair Street, Bowral (owners Peter and Carol Scott). This beautiful garden has evolved over the years to be picturesque during all four seasons. Featured trees include *Cedrus atlanticus* v *horizontalis*, a massive crabapple, a large ginkgo, nyssas, dogwoods, conifers and numerous Japanese maples. The under-plantings include rhododendrons, azaleas, hydrangeas and other shrubs.

Theme for the month: Sedums and succulents

From the NEW Editor

Our very significant anniversary year concluded with our Christmas party at the Sutton Forest Inn on 2 December attended by 54 members. Thanks to our Committee for organising such an enjoyable party, and I trust we shall produce wonderful yellow squash from our gift of seeds, for all members to express admiration and amazement. And didn't we all enjoy our golden sacs of chocolates? I hope you all spent a merry time at Christmas and New Year, and that 2014 is splendid for everyone.

I am looking forward to editing our newsletter, and, given my limited gardening expertise, which has been

enhanced by membership of our Garden Club, would appreciate contributions on all topics from you. I do especially appreciate first-hand knowledge from our patron Chris Webb of what your "vegie patch" needs each month, as my tiny garden is devoted to pretty plants in the spectrum of blue, white, yellow and pink, a tip from a horticulturist friend of my daughter for a harmonious garden.

However, being ever the researcher, here are some gardening tips for February I have gleaned from various sources.

Water: this month is a good time to add a good soil wetting agent to counteract the effect of the long hot days we have been experiencing.

Disease: remove any diseased leaves and flowers and throw out. Roses could benefit from rose spray.

Trim: hedges if necessary, prune rampant climbers, remove dead material from dahlias and roses and feed for autumn flowers, take cuttings from Fuchsias. Remember to dead head your agapanthus plants, this is very important to prevent spreading the seeds into the surrounding bushland.

Plant: Autumn flowering bulbs, clematis and evergreens, sow winter and spring flowers and order bulb catalogues.

Prepare: ground for spring bulbs.

As mentioned, my garden is tiny, and really only 12 months old. I moved to Bowral from Sydney where my garden was on the banks of the Georges River and contained only plants that could survive in sandy conditions. When I moved into my present home, the little garden was rather bleak, a few grevilleas struggling in the shady conditions, and the remains of a vegetable garden. However, I was now in BOWRAL, and could plan a garden full of pretty, cool-climate plants and BULBS. Heaven! Of course, the straggly grevilleas went, as they were about all I could grow in my Sydney garden, and with the help of my new friend Jimmy the gardener, I set about creating a miniature copy of one of the sections of the walled garden of Hever Castle, which I have loved visiting many times.

It was the home of Anne Bolleyn and frequently visited by King Henry VIII when he was courting the Bolleyn sisters. The first job was to cover the pinewood vegetable patch, which we did with a product, suitably named, Hadrian's Wall. So a small stone terrace was established complete with steps to nowhere, copied from one of my photographs. I was

able to start planting many spring flowering bulbs with great pleasure. I planted "Debbie" camellias as a background, which have bright pink flowers to contrast with the fence I painted a deep grey, and over the following twelve months have under-planted these with Hellebores of various colours. Last summer, I found that, as in Edinburgh, where I had seen the gardens along Princes Street glorious with tuberous begonias, I could grow these flowers which glow like precious gems, as a border, and added more this summer. For a dazzling display which glows all day and evening I would recommend these wonderful plants. I added a plinth and urn for seasonal flowers, and this year, another plinth with a small garden statue of a little boy representing winter. Ah, memories of Hever but for the beautiful stone wall, which, sadly, I am not able to replicate.

Overhanging my garden is a Manchurian pear tree, which is beautiful each season, particularly so in autumn, and provides a shady area I have been able to plant as a small pretty woodland area and I sit in the little conservatory with a cup of tea reflecting on the true Hever garden and enjoying my little copy. My final joy was planting the small garden bed under the living room window with annual flowers which is like having a huge vase of cut flowers indoors.

Carole Scott

My garden so far:



The original garden:



A section of the walled garden at Hever Castle:



From the President **Summertime gardening**

Once Christmas and the New Year celebrations are over there is some time to relax and enjoy the warm weather and lovely evenings before the busy schedule of meetings resume. We have some interesting speakers and activities planned for 2014 and although we won't be officially celebrating an anniversary like last year, we will find time for a party. Garden clubs are meant to be fun and that is a tradition that we intend to continue.

Of all the seasons in the Southern Highlands high summer is my least favourite. Although there are some perfect days—particularly mornings—when the sun filters through the trees and the sweet scents from the herbaceous flowers permeate the garden; but often the temperature is either too hot or too cold, it's too wet or too dry and the smell of the dynamic lifter almost knocks you out.

The biggest problem is when it doesn't rain for days and days—the pots have to be watered every day and so do all the garden beds where tender plants won't survive unless there is some water. I envy those people who have an integrated, computerised system, which automatically switches into gear.

On hot days I'm up early (and though I might moan and groan, 6 or 6.30 am is absolutely my favourite time to be in the garden on warm days). We have three garden taps and four hoses, one of which is in fact three of the longest hoses we own clipped together to enable me to water the very bottom of the garden. I start off energetically—almost running down the slope to set the whizzer into position; then running up again to the tap under the house. I dash up to the garage and switch on another hose which waters the north front garden and then turn on the third tap to water the east front and side gardens. Two hours later having been up and down the garden twenty times or more, moving whizzers and doing some hand watering and weeding, the galloping has

become a slow trudge, and I start to think once more about the joys of a proper watering system—which is just what I have been doing before I collapsed on to the computer for some respite!

The flowers and shrubs love the water and so do the weeds. The lawns are looking sorry for themselves because I feel too guilty to waste water on grass; but annoyingly, the grass in the borders flourishes. This month we'll start to prepare for an autumn sowing of lawn seed, keeping the lawns raked and weeded.

Meg Probyn

From the Patch

Florence Fennel (Finocchio) *Foeniculum vulgare var azoricum*

Fennel plants are in the garden centres now. The subtle aniseed flavour of fennel becomes more and more appealing the older one gets. It is quite a sophisticated taste, which accompanies other delicate flavours particularly well. The herb/vegetable fennel shouldn't be confused with the wild variety, which grows as a wayside weed and doesn't develop the white, glistening swollen stem but the really good news is that it is incredibly easy to grow.

Fennel prefers rich well-drained soils and an open sunny position. They do not like heavy compacted soils. If you prefer to plant seeds, sow them directly in late spring when the soil temperature has risen. Sow the seeds 10mm deep in rows 250mm apart. Apply a side dressing of lime or dolomite as they prefer a lightly alkaline soil. Remember that they require regular watering to produce a full glossy bulb.

When the swollen stem achieves approximately a golf ball size, it's the time to begin blanching the bulb to reduce bitterness. This is achieved by placing a piece of cardboard around the stem and then hilling with soil. When the bulb is at least doubled in size, it's time to harvest. Simply cut it off below the soil from its roots. Don't forget you can also collect the seeds, which are used in many dishes by removing the flower head and storing it upside down until the seeds fall out. And of course the leaves can be used in a similar way to dill at any time.

Pests & Diseases

There are few pest and diseases, though snails and slugs may cause some damage. Normal control methods are sufficient.

Fennel Trivia

Etymologically, the word fennel developed from Middle English fenel, fenyl; Anglo-Saxon fenol, finol, from Latin feniculum, fœniculum, diminutive of fenum, fœnum, "hay". In Ancient Greek, fennel was called marathos and is the origin of the place name Marathon (meaning place of fennel), site of the Battle of Marathon in 490 BC. Greek mythology claims Prometheus used the stalk of a fennel plant to steal fire from the gods. In medieval times fennel was used in conjunction with St John's Wort to keep away witchcraft and other evil things. May have originated because fennel can be used as an insect repellent.

Fennel along with other herbs was ordered by Charlemagne to be planted on German farms in 200 AD.

The Anglo Saxons used fennel as a food and medicine and it was considered sacred. The Italians only began using fennel in the Middle Ages when a famine caused a shortage of vegetables. Fennel only became popular in Australia with the influx of Mediterranean migrants in the 1950s

Fennel Cultivars

'Zefa Fino': A Swiss cultivar which resists bolting and has slightly elongated, flatish bulbs

Other things to plant in January

Now is also the time to plant a huge number of summer vegetables including: beetroot, beans, cabbage, cauliflower, chard, broccoli, chives, carrots, kohlrabi, leek, chives, lettuce, onion, parsley, snow peas, turnips, swedes, peas, spinach.

A Vegetable Thought

'In order to live off a garden, you practically have to live in it'.

~Frank McKinney Hubbard

Chris Webb

Vegetable of the Month Recipe: Fennel and Orange Salad:

1 baby fennel bulb, trimmed, fronds reserved

60g mixed lettuce leaves

3 medium oranges, peeled, segmented

Dressing:

1 tablespoon white wine vinegar

1 tablespoon orange juice

2 tablespoons olive oil

Place vinegar, orange juice and oil in a screw-top jar. Season with salt and pepper. Secure lid. Shake to combine.

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.

Management Committee

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	
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

