

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 MARCH 2014



Friendship through Gardening

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) has had to be postponed due to lack of rain.

An alternative venue will be announced at our March meeting,

Theme for the month: Sedums and succulents

What's happening in April

7 April (Monday) 10.30am: Morning tea and garden visit to Lois and Doug Morrison's garden, 40 Narellan Road, Moss Vale.

14 April (Monday) 1.30pm: Club Meeting:
Speaker: Myles Baldwin, horticulturist, landscape gardener, writer, curator of the Australian Garden Show in Sydney. His topic is: "Australian Coastal Gardens".

(Easter: Good Friday 18 April- Easter Monday 21 April)

(Anzac Day: Friday 25 April)

26-27 April (Saturday and Sunday): Town and Country Open Gardens Weekend - Eight gardens open, including a plant stall (in aid of the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens).



From the Editor

Thank you to all members who made me feel welcome as your editor and I hope you will continue to support me by forwarding to me any thoughts you believe will be enjoyed by our members, and a warm welcome to all our new members.

What a delightful talk by Paul Kirkpatrick at our meeting on 10 February about Dame Elizabeth Murdoch's garden Cruden Farm and the Australian native gardens at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Cranbourne. His enthusiasm for a garden of Australian natives reminded me of the wonderful talk last year by Graham Ross, and you will understand why later, when he told us of the new garden created in Singapore, which I have had the pleasure of visiting on my stopovers in that city.

I first visited that garden when it was new, and was amazed at the imagination and size of the venture. The first phase of Gardens by the Bay opened in 2011 and the aim of the garden is not only to be the city's premier outdoor recreation space and a national icon, but to be part of the plan to transform Singapore city from a garden city to a city within a garden.

On arrival at the gates, you can take a small train ride around a series of tropical leaf shaped gardens, each with an individual theme representing the different cultures of the city. In these gardens are the super trees, metal structures which are being transformed into vertical gardens, varying from 25 to 50 metres high. They are planted with various epiphytes to offer shading, and include solar cells for lighting the trees in a spectacular show at night. The "trees" collect water for irrigation and fountains, and vents for cooling.

From all areas of the garden are views of the modern city of Singapore, particularly the Marina Sands Hotel, which looks as if a large boat has landed on top of it.

You then alight from the train to enter the first of two enormous glass houses. Water is collected from these and used with that from the super trees for water features and cooling. The larger of the conservatories, is the Flower Dome regulated to 23-25 degrees, and is a welcome relief from the outdoor heat. Represented here are 7 different gardens the first of which on the left is an Australian native garden with plants so beautiful anyone would want such a garden! However, they do not look like this in the bush, it is the gifted Singaporeans who can achieve this splendour. Another impressive garden, is the Mediterranean garden with 300 year old olive trees! The elevated desert garden has cacti and baobab trees, and the lowest area has a changing theme for its garden, I have seen harvest time, and Easter and in May it is a mini floriade of tulips. I found the whole area amazing.

Even more spectacular, and fun, especially when I took my grand- daughter there, is the Cloud Dome, as when you enter the dome you are refreshed by the fine spray from a 35 metre waterfall. This dome has different levels and themes, particularly beautiful is the secret garden with ferns from New Zealand. The cloud mountain is a structure covered with epiphytes and mosses and orchids, and starting from the top you follow an aerial walkway through the tree tops and gradually pass through the varying levels.

As you can see, I have been impressed by these gardens, and as Kay Lawson is going with Graham Ross this year, I hope she will enjoy it as much as I, and will let us know how the gardens have developed over another year.

Carole Scott

The Australian garden



The super trees



The cactus garden



The waterfall and aerial walkway in Cloud Dome



From the President

For the first time last November we netted the two old apple trees. The fruits of our garden are normally left to the birds and mammals—the Satin Bower birds love the raspberries; the rosellas and king parrots devour all the apples, cherries and crab apples; and the possums last year discovered the new dwarf peach tree. But this year, we thought, things would be different. It was only possible to net the apple trees because both had been subjected to an extensive prune and, with the help of ladders and very large nets from Bunnings, Clive and Robert heaved and pulled and sweated, and finally stood back to admire their handy work.

All went well until the Cox's Orange Pippins started to swell. The birds realised that they could perch on the net and eat the harvest from above. So we were left with a few whole apples deep in the centre and discoloured apple cores all round the surface of the net. Just before Christmas one enterprising rosella discovered a way into the net. It became distressed, which made us equally distressed—so we had to undo most of the fastenings so that the well-stuffed bird could get out.

We dream about building a completely integrated netted tunnel on tall poles—or should we just relax and let the birds enjoy the fruit while we enjoy the gorgeous birds and their acrobatic displays?

Hopefully by the time you read this March newsletter, the heavens will have opened, the dams filled and the gardens will be recovering in soggy conditions. Or is that wishful thinking?

Watering is such a problem during the summer months. The difficulty for gardeners is that they have to tread the line between healthy plants and water

economy. It's neither practical nor sensible to water unwisely. It's important to know something about your garden soil and, in the important job of soaking up water and releasing it to the plants slowly, neither sandy nor clay soil is as successful as soil enriched with organic matter. The answer is to improve your soil by compost and more compost.

It's essential to mulch if you are hoping to maintain your garden through long periods of low rainfall. Mulching is such a satisfying job in the garden because it protects the plants by keeping them cosy and warm in winter and cool in summer: and it reduces evaporation from the soil.

Before you water, try a simple test—push the mulch aside and put your finger into the ground around your plants. It's fine if the top 2 or 3 inches of the soil is dry but what you need to know is whether the soil is below is moist. If it is, don't water. Roots grow towards moisture and although you may feel you're doing the right thing by surface watering, it damages the plants because they start to put out their roots on the surface where the soil is hotter. Try to build a little dam or moat around the plants so that when you water (or hopefully it rains!), the water will collect around the base of the plant and allow it to soak more deeply into the root area.

We have lost a few plants this summer including two young Daphne. It was just too hot a spot where I'd planted them so when I fill that area I'll have to consider plants that prefer full sun. Autumn is a lovely time to plan and plant. The bulbs have been ordered and I look forward to the parcels arriving through the post. Happy gardening!

Meg Probyn

Update on the Bowral tulip

Elizabeth Meredith has received an update of the progress of the new variety of tulip now officially approved by The Netherlands to be named "Bowral".

Elizabeth has been thanked for her suggestion to produce such a plant and we shall be pleased when we can adorn our gardens with this new bulb.

The bulbs have been harvested, and are being processed. The few small sized bulbs are being acclimatised to our southern hemisphere conditions and stock has been planted for the coming season with hopes that the stock numbers will build from these, for supply in 2015.

The Bowral tulip



Garden tips for March

Plant: Autumn is the best time for planting trees and shrubs as they have time to establish before the cold really sets in. Plant aquilegias, cinerarias, cyclamen, polyanthus, primulas, pansies and violas in semi-shaded gardens and pots.

Prune: hydrangeas this month or wait until mid-winter.

Sow: nemesia, sweetpeas, virginia stock (in areas with acid soil, prepare sweetpea beds with lime or dolomite)

From the Patch

Carrot *Daucus carota sp sativus*

Interestingly, our everyday orange carrot is not what carrots looked like in the past. In fact the original wild carrot cousins were predominately purple, white and yellow, more like our very colourful heirloom carrots we find being sold and promoted everywhere.

Carrots aren't difficult to grow, in fact they prefer soil which is not too enriched. Over fertilizing will result in slender forked carrots with huge amounts of top. The main issue with carrots, is achieving uniform germination. Carrot seeds take at least 10 days to germinate and prior to germination it is essential they don't dry out. I have found a useful trick is to place a board over the seeds until they begin to germinate after which I remove the board.

It is best to sow carrots in long rows in deep, well cultivated soil which is free of obstacles such as rocks or clods. Because the seed is so fine it can be beneficial to mix the seed with fine sand or flour which will act as a filler and a marker to indicate where you have sown. Once the seed has germinated, after 2 weeks, prick out the row leaving seedlings which are well separated from one another.

Fertilize with a general organic fertilizer which is not too high in Nitrogen after germination and at 2 weekly intervals and water regularly.

Pests & Diseases

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

Carrot Trivia

The wild carrot population seems to be clearly divided into those from the West and those from the East. Our modern carrot is a result of crossing between these two populations.

Carrots were widely known in ancient times and originated in Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan, but were not introduced into European garden until the middle ages.

The orange colour of our everyday carrot is probably due to breeding in the 17th century by the Dutch, and the resulting popularity of their new varieties.

Carrots are rich in beta carotene which is a powerful antioxidant, which helps in maintaining a healthy skin and prevention of disease. They are rich in alkaline elements which purify and revitalize the blood and in carotenoids which are beneficial to blood sugar regulation. Carrots contain a phyto-nutrient called falcarinol which helps in promoting colon health and a reducing the risk of cancers.

Eight ounces of carrot juice can contain as much as 800% of your daily recommended dosage of vitamin A. Carrot juice is also an excellent source of vitamin C.

Carrot Cultivars

'Atomic Red' A deep red non hybrid variety

'Carrot Lobbericher Yellow' A very old yellow cultivar

'Paris Market' A small round variety

'Purple Dragon' Very old Afghan purple variety

'St Valery' An heirloom 19th century French variety, long and tapering

Top Weight, Western Red and **All Seasons** are also all good modern cultivars

Other things to plant in February

Now is also the time to plant a huge number of Summer vegetables including

Beetroot, Beans, Broccoli, Chives, Carrots, Fennel, Kohlrabi, Leek, Chives, Lettuce, Fennel, Onion, Parsley, Parsnips, Snow Peas, Turnips, Swedes, Peas, Spinach and Chard.

A Vegetable Thought:

'The most noteworthy thing about gardeners is that they are always optimistic, always enterprising, and never satisfied. They always look forward to doing something better than they have ever done before.'

- Vita Sackville-West

Chris Webb

Muriel's Musings

I have had a very testing morning but I stuck to my guns and I won, and am now indulging in some stress therapy with a packet of DOUBLE CHOCOLATEMUD TIM TAMS beside the keyboard, comfort food I call them.

It was so nice to see you all at our meeting on Monday. I hope the New Year has been as happy for you as mine has been so far, except that I did have the unexpected sadness of losing a very dear nephew up at the Gold Coast, who died on the tennis court, smiling and shaking hands at the net with his racket still in hand. Way to go Max but OH, couldn't you have stayed with us a few more years??

My New Year's Eve was spent with family at the Shangri La setting of the "Rathkells Pavillion" which overlooks the Kangaroo River at Upper Kangaroo Valley. The view along the Valley was superb, and in the trees in the tropical garden, there were song birds galore: grey thrushes, black birds and butcher birds. Also there were cicadas who burst into sound (you couldn't call it song) as soon as it was daylight and then once the daylight turned to twilight the cicadas packed it in and the crickets took over the night watch. Russel, (so appropriately named), the beautifully marked Diamond Python would sway from spindly branch to spindly branch as he made his way up into the space between the ceiling and the roof, and, as there must have been dry leaves up there we would hear him going rustle, rustle as he slithered overhead

during the night. Lucky me! I checked to see that there wasn't a manhole in the ceiling of my bedroom otherwise I would have been sitting up all night looking at the ceiling just in case.

The morning we packed up and left the place as clean and tidy as we had found it, my dear Grand-daughter Kirsty (aka the Merlot-n-Chocolate fairy), tipped the last ten of the liquor chocolates into my handbag. It was quite a hot drive up and out of the valley and we only stopped at home long enough for me to fill up the cat's bowls again with biscuits and water, and to check the lap top for e-mails (there were 18 of them) before we were on the road again heading for Canberra to an evening garden party to celebrate 5 family birthdays that fell in the first week of January.

Arriving at Canberra, where it was just as hot as the Valley had been, can you picture my amazement when I opened my handbag I found there was a layer of chocolate sauce covering most of the contents. Late that night, when we had cooled my bag down, I was able to pull out a lump of conglomerate consisting of a cheque book, a docket, a hair comb, a nail file, a Bowral Garden Club pen and a \$2 coin.

Returning to Bowral by train the next day, my daughter-in-law, Alice, booked my case in, and I travelled in style with a window seat and an empty seat beside me where I rested my tapestry carryall and walking stick. Alice had asked for someone to help me safely off the train at Bowral, (some of you may remember the 3 train adventures I have written about.) Fortunately this trip was incident free until I found myself safely deposited on the Bowral platform, and the train, after stopping for 30 seconds (that's the time they allow you to exit otherwise they can't keep to their timetable) gave a wimpy toot and took off leaving me, my case, my tapestry carryall and my walking stick and handbag all alone on the platform.

I looked in vain for the button to press for a taxi, but couldn't find one so I went to the ticket office to ask if they would ring for a taxi. There was no one in the office!! I kept calling "Hello, Hello" to no avail.

So now I used my initiative and hid my case and carryall behind the door of the waiting room and took off up the steps to cross the bridge to the other platform. Fortunately, there was a young man coming down the steps and, as he politely smiled and bid me a Good Afternoon, I cheekily asked if he would ring me a taxi to pick me up at the Kirkham Rd exit. He took a seat, and I retrieved my case and carried it half way along towards the exit (still using my initiative). I then put it down and went back for the tapestry carryall which I then put down beside the case, and then took off with the case towards the exit. I had only taken a few steps and there was the young man with my carryall, he took my case and we waited in the shade until the taxi arrived.

The age of chivalry has not quite passed it would seem.

Musing:-

The reason there are no longer Taxi buttons to press at the stations??? VANDALS.

Has anyone given any thought lately to bringing back THE STOCKS???

Muriel Stuart

Lost property

A rather nice umbrella was left at Janice Scott's home on the evening of the Cocktail party last year. If it is yours please contact Anne Stegman who has been looking after it for you.

Cook book

Anne has also suggested as a fundraiser, we compile a cook book containing contributions from our members, so would you send us your favourite recipe to be put in a booklet to share with everyone.

Parking

At our February meeting you may have encountered difficulty parking in the church grounds. The problem seems to have been exacerbated because of the AGM of one of the other clubs in the complex. However, even though this may have been a "one off", it would assist if members could car pool to our meetings.

Golden Anniversary Squash Reminder

All members who were able to nurture the seeds given to us at the Christmas party, are not only congratulated on their efforts, but are reminded to bring to the March meeting the fruits, or should I say vegetables, of their labours. We look forward to seeing the splendid golden crop.

Recipe for Garlicky Squash

Ingredients:

1kg yellow squash, halved

1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil

3 garlic cloves, crushed

4 green shallots, ends trimmed, thinly sliced

Method:

Cook the squash in a large saucepan of boiling water for 4-5 minutes or until just tender. Drain well.

Heat the oil in a large frying pan over medium heat. Add garlic and cook for 30 seconds or until aromatic. Add the squash and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes or until heated through. Add the shallot and cook, stirring, for 1 minute or until combined. Transfer to a bowl to serve.

Potting afternoon at Noelene and Bob Bailey's Home

26 members and visitors gathered in Noelene and Bob's shed for an afternoon of learning and fun.

Les Musgrave showed us how to take cuttings and thus increase our garden stock and importantly provide stock for our plant stall on 25th October.

Les taught us to take small cuttings of soft wood, no more than 4 inches, during the months from December to March. Cut the leaves and remove any flowers from each cutting. At this stage you may use hormone powder or gel on the end of your cutting.

He said he prefers to plant several cuttings into a pot less than 6 inches, of 50/50 river sand/ potting soil. Keep the pots in shade, in a bush house or under a tree and water. After 4 days start watering with Seasol and then Powerfeed.

When the cuttings have struck, he demonstrated how to transfer the cuttings on to pots taking care not to break the roots of the small plants. Members were able to learn how to do this with Les's helping hand.

At this stage move the pots to shade for a few days, then into sun for the sun-loving plants.

For large pots Les uses 50/50 garden soil and potting mix with Wettasoil granules.

Les took us around Noelene and Bob's garden showing us how to take cuttings from different plants.

I imagine many of those present went home and started pottering about potting in their gardens, I did having learnt much and had fun while doing so.

Thank you Les for an inspiring afternoon.



Tour to Bilpin and Mount Tomah

The Southern Highlands Garden Society has arranged a tour to Bilpin and Mount Tomah from Wednesday 30 April to Thursday 1 May 2014. Members are invited to join this tour and, if interested, should contact Ray Bradley for details at (T) 4861 4090 or (E) rbb1945@bigpond.com.

Cost of the tour is \$275 per person (single supplement \$60) which includes all admission charges, meals and accommodation.

BOWRAL GARDEN CLUB INC

Minutes of General Meeting 10 February 2014

Uniting Church Hall, Bendooley Street Bowral

Present: 58 members and 13 visitors.

Apologies: Mary Mowbray, Lorna Thirup, Valerie Davey, Pam Bailey.

President Meg Probyn opened the meeting at 1.30 pm and welcomed everyone present especially new members and guests. She then introduced the guest speaker, Paul Kirkpatrick, and his wife Frances, from *Estate Gardening*.

Paul's presentation took us on a wonderful journey through the late Dame Elisabeth Murdoch's beautiful garden at Cruden Farm. Though the garden was initially created by Edna Walling, it was Dame Elisabeth, an extraordinary gardener in her own right, who put her stamp on the design and ambience of the garden. Many of the trees were planted by her, including the 130 lemon-scented gum trees along the driveway and the massive oak tree, originally planted by her as an acorn. She worked in her garden for 84 years and in later years travelled around it in a golf buggy. Always wanting to improve her garden, she sent Michael, her head gardener, on three separate study tours to Europe to gather information. On the third trip she joined him and together they drove round to visit many gardens in Britain.

Dame Elisabeth decided to open Cruden Farm to the public and on the first day 25,000 came to visit. She was very surprised at the interest and, to accommodate future visitors, she established car parking areas and other facilities. On one of his visits, her son Rupert took her up in his helicopter to view her garden from the air. Looking down from the sky she realised there were gardens in the front and sides but nothing at the back. To remedy this, she created a huge pond and surrounded it with gardens. Seats are for those who love to look into their gardens, said Paul. Dame Elisabeth died on 5th December 2012 and left us with an inspirational garden to enjoy.

Paul then entertained us with a presentation on the Royal Botanic Gardens at Cranbourne, which is an Australian native garden set on over 900 acres. Touring the gardens is an extraordinary journey from the arid interior, the red centre, to the rivers that flow to the coastal regions. The landscaping is inspirational and includes many Xanthorrhoea (grass trees/black boys) which are over 400 years-old.

Paul introduced us to his expansive range of professional quality made garden tools, some made locally and others from Germany and the USA. Tools and other products can be viewed on www.estategardening.com.au or contact paul@estategardening.com.au or phone (02) 4236 0023.

In appreciation, Keith Bailey presented Paul with a gift on behalf of the club.

Minutes of the general meeting held on 4th November 2013 were accepted. Moved: Jan Scott: Seconded: Helen Buchanan

Correspondence In:

The Committee decided that in future the Secretary won't read out the list of all the incoming correspondence: instead it will be displayed on the notice board. The Secretary drew the attention of members to an invitation from the Goulburn City of Roses Committee who are holding their 21st Annual Rose Festival on Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th March 2014 to be held at the Goulburn Soldiers Club, Market Street, Goulburn. For the record, the incoming mail is listed below.

- The Garden Clubs of Australia Inc. notification of postal address & registration information.
- Highlands Garden Society Bulletin for January - see www.highlandsgardensociety.org.au
- *Our Gardens* - The Garden Clubs of Australia quarterly magazine - available at March meeting from our secretary.
- 9th Collectors' Plant Fair at Clarendon, April 12 & 13 2014 Hawkesbury Race Club, 1 Racecourse Road, Clarendon (between Richmond & Windsor) www.collectorsplantfair.com
- Wildwood Garden, 29 Powells Road, Bilpin - Open Garden - Autumn 21 March - 8 June 2014. For the camellia season and Spring and Summer Season see www.wildwoodgarden.com.au or phone Wayne Tapping (02) 4567 2194.
- Bathurst Gardens on Show 25 & 26 October 2014 see www.bathurstspringspectacular.com or phone (02) 63314117
- Blooming Tasmania see www.bloomingtasmania.com

Correspondence Out: Nil

Treasurer's Report

Noelene Bailey moved that the financial report be accepted as follows: Balance in cheque account as at 31 December 2013 \$6,879.38 plus balance in savings account \$3,467.32: Total funds on hand as at 31 January 2014 \$10,294.85. Seconded: Marilyn Gleeson and carried.

General Business:

- **Program for 2014** - for collection or check our website.
- **Potting afternoon** on Monday 17 February at Noelene and Bob Bailey's home, 16 Harley Street, Bowral. Les Musgrave has kindly agreed to run this event. Please bring a bucket, secateurs and plant material such as penstemon, dianthus, geranium, salvia, etc.
- **Milton Park Coffee and Guided Tour** - Monday 24 February. Please book and pay \$18 on the day. We need to know the numbers who will be attending. Phone Noelene Bailey 48623741
- **17 March - Coach trip to Waterfall Cottage Gardens** - Lunch at Waterfront Café and General Store, Church Point. Please book and pay \$45. Phone Noelene Bailey 48623741

Trading Table: Michael Launders reported that more plants were required for the March meeting and that there were jam, garden knee pads, gloves and some magazines for sale.

Lucky Door Draw: Drawn by Paul Kirkpatrick and won by Lorraine Gregory.

The meeting closed at 2.27pm followed by a delicious afternoon tea prepared by our Afternoon Tea Hosts.

Next Meeting: Monday 10 March at 1.30 pm – Uniting Church Hall, Bendooley Street, Bowral.

Guest speaker will be **Rick Sheppard**, the Head Gardener at Retford Park and the title of his talk is “Retford Park: Making a great garden a sustainable garden”.

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

From the gifted pen of Pam Ayres

*Quiet please! Kindly don't impede my concentration,
 I'm sitting in the garden thinking thoughts of
 propagation,
 Of sowing and of nurturing, the fruits my work will
 bear,
 And the place won't know what's hit it . . .
 Once I get up from my chair.*

*I'm at the planning stages now, if you should need to
 ask
 And if I'm looking weary, it's the rigours of the task
 While the creation of a garden is a strain, as you can
 guess
 So if my eyes should close, it isn't sleep of course, it's
 stress.*

*Oh, the mower I will cherish, and the tools I will oil
 The dark, nutritious compost I will stroke into the soil
 My sacrifice, devotion and heroic aftercare
 Will leave you green with envy
 Once I get up from my chair.*

*My garden – what a showpiece!
 There'll be pilgrims come to stare*



Sedum Autumn Joy in Meg Probyn's garden