

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 2015



Friendship through Gardening

What's happening in February.

9 February (Monday) 2.00pm: Club Meeting at Uniting Church Hall, Bendooley Street, Bowral:

Bernadette Penny: 'Scenery and gardens of regional France'.

16 February (Monday) 10.30 am: A potting morning with Les Musgrave at Noelene and Bob Bailey's home: 16 Harley Street, Bowral - including propagating succulents.

What's happening in March.

9 March (Monday) 2.00pm: Club meeting: Speaker: Carolyn Dwyer: *"Days of Wine and Roses—the gardens of the Adelaide Hills, Barossa Valley and Clare Valley"*.

16 March (Monday) 8.00am: Coach day-trip to Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, lunch at Doyles and thence to Vaucluse House.

Theme for the Month: Begonias



Note to members

RE; Payment for day trips, renewals, outings, tours etc.

If you are making cash/cheque payments at meetings, would you please place payment in an envelope stating on front, amount paid, by whom, for which event. This will assist us in processing your receipts and avoid holdups at the desks.

From the President

The garden has never looked so luscious after a very dry November and an extremely wet December. Consequently there are weeds, weeds, weeds and yet more weeds—but when it isn't raining it's such a delight to be out working in the warm, balmy days of summer. It's

time to prune too—the growth on all the shrubs and hedges is very noticeable, especially where we have been changing their shapes. What a good thing that 'Him Outdoors' loves to clip!

Besides all the lovely greens in the garden, the dahlias, salvias and penstemon are providing splashes of bright colours—and surprising us. As well as our own dahlia tubers, I planted a whole range of new ones I collected from a demonstration morning at the Botanic Gardens. I'm not sure I particularly like the rather blowsy large yellow flowers as cut flowers, but they certainly stand out in the border. We planted each of our tubers with a tall strong stake and one of our regular tasks throughout summer and autumn is to check that the stems of the dahlias are sufficiently supported. The flower heads get very heavy—a perfect excuse to cut the blooms for the house. Although they prefer a sunny to light shade position, we have planted some in a more shady area and I am intrigued to find out how well these will flower. They certainly look very healthy and appear to have lots of buds. Dahlias continue to flower until the end of April so we get many months of pleasure from them.

The penstemon originates from the Americas—from Alaska to Guatemala—and the range of species is very large, including tiny plants to rapid growers—they can grow to 4 ft (1.2 m) or more. There are so many new garden varieties available, and they are generally very hardy. The flowers resemble those of the foxgloves (*Digitalis*), and they are part of the same family—*Scrophulariaceae*. There is such a wide selection of colour—from white, pink, lilac, purple to burgundy.

Now is the time to take cuttings from the salvias and penstemons:

Look for non-flowering tip cuttings of about 10-12.5cm (4-5in) long and trim with a sharp knife to just below a leaf node;

Carefully remove the bottom two leaves and trim the top and side leaves by up to one-third to reduce leaf surface area (which also reduces moisture loss);

Dip the cut ends in hormone rooting powder or gel and insert in a 50:50 mixture of compost and perlite (or whatever is your chosen potting medium);

After rooting, they can be left undisturbed over winter or individually potted on;

The rooted cuttings need frost-free conditions during the winter so put in a sheltered spot in your garden or protected in a greenhouse/ shed/ carport.

Over Christmas and New Year we looked after our son's old dog, Jack. He's not so much a Labrador as a polar bear—enormous and lolloping. He usually comes for a holiday every year and enjoys the cooler weather away from Canberra. The problem is his arthritis is getting worse and he finds it an effort to get up and down the steps to the garden. The good thing is once he's in the garden he no longer races over the borders but sedately makes his way along the paths, stopping for a breath up the steep parts. I miss him now he's gone home and I still

find myself checking the floor when I turn round in the kitchen in case I trip over him. Which reminds me about the dangers of falling in the garden. I love my slip-on crocks but they are far from safe footwear. So I try NOT to rush around the garden and I take care where I put my feet. Crocks are not my usual garden wear—I have wonderful boots which make me far safer and much more able to stamp on the dreaded bull ants!

I used to worry if a plant died in the garden but now if a plant looks sickly I've stopped anguishing over its demise—I turf it out—(well, sometimes, I must admit, into a pot to see if it could survive with a bit more TLC). But if you do have to remove an old plant just enjoy the possibilities of replanting in that spot. Christopher Lloyd writes so beautifully about the death of plants in *The Adventurous Gardener*' (page 14-15):

The best gardening is experimental as well as ephemeral, and both conditions suggest that there'll be deaths somewhere along the line, planned as well as unplanned, or sometimes with a sort of partnership between yourself and nature, the 'merciful release' where you've proffered a helping hand Take stock, now and again; don't drift on giving up large areas to plants you're no longer really fond of at all. Deaths can be imposed as well as waited for. You can't always rely on Dame Nature to look your way at the right moment.

We've had so much pleasure over the last few months removing a bank of agapanthus and replanting the area with woodland plants—from Moidart Nursery and from the plant sales at the SHBG. (If you don't know about the working bees every first Tuesdays of the month at the site of the SHBG, you won't know that there are usually some wonderful plant bargains to be had at the same time.)

Finally, I remember more wise words of Christopher Lloyd (page 13) every time we develop a new area of the garden and extend the borders:

Of course it can happen that your garden has become too big for you and that your health does not enable you to get on top of the situation. In that case a change in your life style must be faced. But you shouldn't anticipate trouble. As long as you are happy in the present it is better not to look ahead. The future, once we reach middle age, always seems daunting and it'll never take the course you expect it to anyway. Live for the here and now, if here and now seem good.

Meg Probyn

From the Editor

I have just returned from a pleasant winter visit to Hong Kong, to come home to almost the same weather, sunny and warm, although as we progress into January, it is warming up here. I was happy to come home to my beautiful tuberous begonias bursting into flower, not much else happening in my little patch as I knew I would not be here to water my usual annuals under the dining window. This can be easily remedied, as there are many summer annuals available to take me through the remains of the summer.

Hong Kong was new to me, I did not expect the steep hills and jungle which I saw a lot of as my son lives in the New Territories in Clearwater Bay. Hong Kong was decorated with pointsettias, mainly red, set off by white and this theme was repeated everywhere, including Macau. Macau is amazing, the old town charming with the ripple mosaic square like in Lisbon, and tiny winding cobbled streets, however, it would appear the casinos are becoming the main attraction for mainland Chinese. These are huge, one, the Venetian, has a small canal (clear

blue water) with gondolas and singing gondoliers, winding through old houses of Venice under a permanently clear blue sky!

I did go to the botanic gardens, truly disappointing, a small park with several cages of monkeys. I understand the country is really governed by land developers who think park areas are a waste of space. There is one small area set aside for a bamboo garden with various bamboos. The best kept gardens in Hong Kong were on the approach to Disneyland, where the gardens resembled those of Singapore. I had a wonderful time with my family in Hong Kong, however, for what it is worth, my travel tip for a stop-over on a long flight to Europe is chose Singapore, where there are gardens, gardens and more gardens.

I think you all realise we live in one of the very best garden areas of the world, and I look forward to seeing some of your gardens during this year.

Carole Scott



The Hong Kong Botanical Gardens



The Bamboo Garden Hong Kong Botanical Gardens



In a garden at the Peak, amazing, even magic!

Muriel's Musings

Well 2015 is up and running, I don't know about you, but I really enjoyed the past year, apart from my November heart attack, but my December 89th birthday party made up for that.

I won't bore you with details of my unplanned trip down to the Liverpool Cardiac Care unit and the angiogram, even down there I had a few comical moments.

So instead I will turn back the clock to November 15 years ago and relate a letter I sent to our eldest son.

"Dear Bruce, just a quick gathering of thoughts while I have my kick starter cup of coffee. It looks like a "just made for gardening day" from where I'm sitting. The air could be a little fresh, the trees are swaying in the breeze and up in the sky there is confusion. The high clouds, of the storm variety, are moving in from the north- west, and the lower fluffy ones below are scurrying across from the south- west.

After the garden lecture and garden stroll at Kennerton Green yesterday I'm all fired up and ready to garden. Will have to eeny-meeny weather to mow the lawns, finish digging the new vegie garden, or pull a couple of barrow loads of weeds out.

Did I tell you that Maxine and 6 friends have formed a stock market syndicate? They have taken out an ABN and registered themselves as the "FBI", Fast Bucks Investments, knowing our Maxine their board meetings will be a hoot.

I had a stop and go time in the garden, finished digging the vegie garden (we wired off the bottom half of the chicken run), the only way to stop the rabbits, possums and parrots. A very strong wind blew up some very threatening storm clouds and enough rain to send me in doors so I've called it a day. Neil has lit the fire for our comfort and has expressed a fancy for a "not too fiery curry" for our dinner this evening.

There's been an interview with J K Rowling about the forthcoming Harry Potter movie, believe she is committed to writing 3 more books, 3 publishers knocked back her first manuscript how sick must they feel now?? A bit like the bloke who said the Beatles would never catch on.

I had better leave off writing, that wee small voice in my head is telling me that in a moment Neil is going to ask "what's for afternoon tea?" and unless I get busy PDQ the answer will be "not very much".

The postman has just delivered the first of our English mail, a calendar of Kentish scenes from dear Bernice, she never forgets us, and now I'm going to feel guilty for the rest of the day as I haven't sent her Christmas Greetings card yet Damn!"

Well I hope my letter to Bruce painted a word picture of times passed, it left me a little teary, so I'm off now to play some of my comfort music, Paverotti, Dame Joan Sutherland & Marilyn Horn.

*Music is what
Feelings
Sound like.*

Muriel Stuart

Kristine's Corner

Bulbine bulbosa.....give a local a go!

Endemic to Australia it isn't as the name suggests a bulb, but forms its leaves from a corm. One of its common names is yellow onion weed but in this case the botanic name is even preferable. The yellow 6 petal star flowers

are borne on long erect stems with succulent green strap like leaves. The individual flowers open for one day only and flowers continue opening daily along the stem for weeks. Unlike some "bulbs" they do not need to be lifted, separated or fertilized but perform to the same standard every year. This local species is great also for larger properties where a colourful woodland effect is required as it seeds readily and flowers for months requiring no special care and even tolerates clay and shale. I find there is no need to propagate them as they pop up in the garden and transplant easily. I have a Bulbine growing in a side pocket of a strawberry pot, the yellow/lime contrasting beautifully with the terracotta colour. Provided they are given good drainage, full sun or dappled shade and a drink in extended dry spells you will be rewarded with their cheery yellow flowers during the hottest months.



Kristine Gow

USA: No Garden of Eden

We thank Peter Richardson for sharing this article from the NSW Law Society Journal.

An American woman has spent five days in prison after committing the heinous crime of refusing to mow her lawn.

The Times UK reports that Karen Holloway was slapped with the five-day sentence after failing to keep her garden in accordance with local laws.

In Lenoir City, Tennessee, residents are required to ensure their gardens have "clear edges" and neatly cut grass. Holloway had apparently already been given a citation for her less-than-satisfactory lawn, but she flagrantly failed to tend to her patch. A judge thus decided the best course of action was a little jail time.

Holloway reacted not by mowing her lawn, but suggesting that authorities would be better served dealing with real criminals. However, after 10 years of trying to get Holloway to clip the green, the judge disagreed, raising concerns about hygiene and public safety.

Following an appeal the sentence was trimmed to just six hours, with Holloway duly serving her time.

This isn't the first time garden etiquette has landed someone in court. In 2010, Georgia resident Linda Gasses attempted to argue that the requirement to mow her lawn under local laws was akin to slavery. She lost and was fined \$150 after refusing to cut her grass. She went on to argue that the law was unconstitutional and equal to "involuntary servitude", thus in breach of the 13th Amendment of the Us Constitution. The Supreme Court

of Georgia disagreed, citing public health, safety and welfare as at risk from "unsightly lawns that harbour rodents and other pests".

AGGIE AGGRO

When reading the article in our last Newsletter about our much loved Agapanthus, I appreciate the potential of damage to our ecosystems – although as a bushwalker, my head is in the trees trying to spot koalas, or on the ground around me trying to spot that pesky Agapanthus – all to no avail, never to be seen.

My summer has been spent removing some of the greatest nuisances in my garden, namely the white Centranthus, the pretty lime green and yellow Euphorbia, Forget-me-nots, and even worse, Lythrum. One other problem plant is a small lily with yellow markings on its leaves. On a few occasions I've removed a baby agapanthus nestled beneath its mother.

We were warned when supplied with our fabulous green bins there were to be no aggies. Well, I asked at the tip just what do we do with them – I got just a wink and a nod.

I grew up in a rural area with no water, electricity or phone – a fire prone and undeveloped area. Rows of Agapanthus saved our house, cow shed, pig pens, ducks and chooks, and my father's workshop. It was the first plant in by many new settlers.

Have I had an Agapanthus growing in my house gutters? Well, I've had small Chinese elms thriving in lovely moist moss in the gutters, and just what did the gutter cleaning man find the other day? Wait for it, a Tomato plant! Now that is a garden pest! Oh, I note one hollyhock is reaching the gutter - now that would be a sight to behold, a hollyhock seeds and grows in the gutter.

Mary Mowbray

Editor's note; My mother lived in the Blue Mountains, renowned for bush fires, and was told camellia hedges edged with agapanthus, would assist in inhibiting fire.



Mary's Hollyhocks

Tour March 2015

The tour will begin at 8.00am, pickup at RSL Mittagong. First stop will be the Sydney Botanic Gardens for morning tea, BYO or there is a cafe in the park. We will then proceed to Doyle's at Watson Bay for a fish and chips lunch, or for those who would prefer to bring your own picnic, there is a park and the beach where you could sit. Tea, coffee, soft drinks, wine and beer are available at Doyle's. From there we proceed to Vauclose House where we will have a tour of the house and garden, returning to Mittagong at approximately 5.00pm.

The cost of the tour is \$45 (including one piece of fish & chips lunch) and \$37 for BYO lunch. If a second piece of fish is desired, there will be an additional charge of \$5.50. If you wish to pay before the February meeting you can either send a cheque to The Treasurer, BGC, PO Box 910, Bowral 2576 or do a direct deposit into the bank account. BDCU, BSB: 802 101, Account #: 57038. Please advise me by email or phone if you make a direct deposit, my email address is: noelenebailey@bigpond.com.

Noelene Bailey

BOWRAL GARDEN CLUB INC

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Website: bowralgardenclub.com



*Entry to the Hong Kong Botanical Gardens
In memory
Of the Chinese who died loyal
To the Allied Cause in the wars
Of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945*