

# 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 2015



*Friendship through Gardening*

### 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.

### What's happening in April.

**13 April (Monday) 2.00pm:** Club meeting: Speaker: Arthur Lathouris: *"Bush Sand to Basalt – Our Gardens in Wentworth Falls and Exeter"*.

**18-19 April (Saturday – Sunday):** Town and country Open Garden Weekend – eight gardens open, including a plant stall at Quindalup. (To raise funds for the Southern Highlands botanic Gardens).

### Theme for the Month: Dahlias



*Dahlias in Monet's garden at Giverny*

### From the President

#### March is really still summer!

Although officially 1 March is the first day of autumn, Dr Tim Entwistle, director of Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens, says in his book, *Sprinter and Sprummer* (2014) that according to the climate and weather patterns, March is really still summer. He says we should switch from four seasons to five in line with our climate and what's happening with our plants and animals. We should, he says, rename and redate them as follows:

**Sprinter, the early spring: August, September**

**Sprummer, the early summer: October, November**

**Summer: December to March**

**Autumn: April, May**

**Winter: June, July**

Indigenous communities across the country have much

more complex systems for describing the seasons, and most of them have five to seven or more seasons. He argues that his five seasons are a compromise between the complex indigenous systems and the ill-fitting European lot. The reality is that for two hundred years Australian farmers and researchers have collected data about when plants are flowering and the graphs clearly indicate spring really begins in August, not September.

Whether you agree or not, March is one of the best months for gardening. This year the effects of all the summer rains have provided lush plants and lawns (and plenty of weeds). It's late summer and the leaves are beginning to turn. The dahlias are looking stunning. I have been delighted with the surprises from planting tubers collected at the dahlia workshop at the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens in 'sprummer'. The yellow dahlias are almost three metres high, towering over the other dahlias and providing endless flowers for the house.



March is when we start planting bulbs (not tulips yet), and I spend a good deal of time searching through the catalogues for those perfect flowers for every spot in the garden. And then, when I've worked out what the cost would be, I have to compromise and delete some of the wish list. Ah well, next year I can plant some again!

Last year we planted daffodils in a sloping area of rather rough grass. Over the summer, *Him Outdoors* has spent time seeding, feeding and trimming the grass so it can now be described more truthfully as a lawn. I'm going to have to negotiate very carefully this month as I really want to plant more daffodils there. What I should have done in the first place was to have planted only early flowering narcissus so that he could mow sooner. He had to admit that when the daffodils were in flower the whole area looked beautiful but he didn't like the untidy appearance after the flowers had gone! We had to fend him off for weeks because some of the daffodils were rather late flowering. The foliage has to be left to die down in order to build up food reserves in the bulbs for next year's flowers (approximately seven weeks after

flowering). I have already chosen the early flowering narcissus I want—but can we afford them as well as the crocuses, hyacinths and all the other ‘must-haves’?

**Tips for planting bulbs:** *Before you start to plant—note that bulbs prefer loam rich in humus so add some compost if your soil isn't friable and dig in some fertiliser if it is at all impoverished.*

Read the instructions from the bulb supplier and make sure you know what depth the bulb should be planted. (You can put in a pinch—half a teaspoon —of a slow-release fertiliser about 5 cm below the base of each bulb.) Firm the soil over the bulbs as you plant each one and water lightly. If it doesn't rain at all over the next period you might need to water but normally in this area we have sufficient rainfall for the bulbs to thrive.

#### **Other garden tips:**

**Move, divide and transplant perennials:** While the soil is still warm, it is a good time to move perennials as the plants prepare for the dormant season. Dig up the clump, divide if necessary, and water the roots well before replanting (soak them in a bucket for an hour). Prepare the holes where you are going to replant by forking over any hard soil so that the roots will be able to penetrate through. Add plenty of organic matter and plant carefully, spreading the roots. Give the plants a light prune.

**Tidy borders:** Remove any dying summer annuals and cut back the fading perennials. Plant hardy bedding plants such as pansy, polyanthus and wallflower. (I know the forget-me-not is popular, but avoid the temptation unless you are strong enough to keep weeding out the offspring for the endless years to come!) Sow winter annual seeds—candytuft, cornflower, larkspur, love-in-a-mist and poppy in any empty spaces.

**Propagate as you prune:** Prune geraniums if you haven't already done so. Take cuttings of daisies, fuchsias, lavenders and pelargoniums.

**Prune rambling roses and climbers:** Cut back flowered shoots to ground level. Prune flowered shoots of weeping standards back to the main stem.

**Azaleas:** Keep spot-flowering azaleas watered but watch for petal blight. Spray with fungicide if flowers are affected.

**Kitchen Garden:** Sow seeds for early crops—broad bean, cabbage and carrot seeds. Grow year-round lettuce so keep planting little seedlings. Plant autumn herbs such as coriander and rocket—they won't bolt as the weather gets cooler.

**Lawns:** Remove dead grass from the lawns by raking vigorously with a spring rake. Fork deeply over the lawns with a hollow-tined fork (if you have one) and fill the holes with sharp sand or old potting mix—this will improve the drainage. Add sandy loam to level any damaged areas of your lawns and sow grass seed—*Him Outdoors* recommends 'Canberra Mix' — sold at Bowral Co-op. Continue to mow the lawn but make sure you raise the blades for a lighter cut.

Happy gardening!

*Meg Probyn*

## **From the Editor**

In the month I have been home, the begonias have flourished and magnified, beautifully rewarding me with colourful blooms day and evening whatever the weather. A visit from my Sydney grandchildren remedied the barren garden under the dining room window and I have, in soldierly rows, at the rear, cosmos just bursting into fairy-wand-like pink blooms in their feathery foliage, in the middle, pink lisianthus and a blue edge of lobelia. The

fuchsias add another glimpse of colour in the little woodland area and the sedum *Autumn Joy*, grown from pieces discarded by parrots in Bob and Noelene Bailey's garden last year, have turned pink. Even in such a small area as mine, gardening is a constant pleasure. The wet, warm spring has encouraged my camellias to spread and they now almost obliterate the fence, I am looking forward to the blooms within the dense green.

I enjoyed the friendly, relaxed chat about France given by Bernadette, speaker at our last meeting, which gave rise to a chat with Lynne Moore when we both noted the brief reference to the gardens of France we love, the Palace of Versailles and Claude Monet's in Giverny.

I would love to have the space to develop a parterre garden, and have been impressed with Diedre Hill's which is planted with succulents and sedums, perhaps a tiny space somewhere?

*Carole Scott*



## **From the patch**

### **Preparing for Autumn**

With such a wet and cool summer many of our vegetable crops have been less than perfect. Many things have succumbed to Fungi and sucking insects seem to have had a field day on the beans and peas. Generally the lack of heat has meant that many things have simply not grown very well. I am still waiting for the egg plants and capsicums to get going, let alone set fruit!!

Now is a perfect time to assess what is in the patch and how it is performing. We still have plenty of warm days left in autumn so don't worry about eliminating the non-performers, simply replace them with them with new plants. Tidy up straggly plants and remove any diseased leaves. There will be plenty on your zucchini, pumpkins and squash.

### **Weeds**

Now is also a good time to ensure your vegetable garden is weed free. Not just the beds but also between the beds and around the edges. Although it has not been a great season for vegetables it has been a huge season for weeds. Weed germination and growth has been amazing and they will quickly dominate if left unchecked.

Make sure you get the whole vegetable garden weed free and then top up your layer of mulch. Usually you would ensure that you water well before laying the mulch but at the moment this is not so important.

### **What's next?**

It is now a good time to think about and prepare for your Autumn and Winter crops. Give consideration to how you

will fit in crops around existing vegetables which are taking time to grow and ripen. Prepare garden beds for the Winter Brassica's, Broad Beans and Leek and there is still time to plant carrots, beetroot and lettuce.

### Things to plant in March

Now is also the time to plant a large range of vegetables including:-

Beetroot, Broad Beans, Broccoli, Brussel Sprouts, Cabbage, Chicory, Chives, Carrots, Fennel, Kohlrabi, Leek, Lettuce, Mustard Greens, Onions, Parsley, Parsnips, Swedes, Spinach and Turnips

### An Autumn Thought

'No spring nor summer's beauty hath such grace

As I have seen in one Autumnal face.....'

*John Donne 'Elegy IX: The Autumnal'*

*Chris Webb*

### Muriel's Musings

Whoever came up with the saying "real life is what happens when you have made other plans" was spot on. Murphy's law really kicked in last week, The 15yr old Westinghouse refrigerator became incontinent and kept wetting the floor, the computer screen developed a nervous tic and finally went on the blink, I had an appointment at the Liverpool hospital for some "fine tuning" on Thursday ( I'm pathetic when it comes to lifts) so my wonderful daughter-in-law came down from Canberra to accompany me and press all the right buttons to get us to the right floor, but when we arrived at the hospital we found that the Professors suite was on the 2nd floor and we didn't need to take the lift as there was a gleaming white set of stairs located beside the lifts. Alice returned to Canberra on Friday morning and son Graham and friend Eustie arrived on Saturday afternoon with a new, shiny, upside-down latest model refrigerator and a new computer screen.

I had taken the precaution to cook our Saturday night's dinner on Friday night as I had nussed out the logistics of bringing in the new frig and taking out the old one would require manoeuvring them through three doors, so with some help from Kevin from next door, the boys said there wasn't any need for me to be hovering with the dustpan and brush to sweep up the 15 years accumulation of dust from under the old frig. I nearly fainted from shock when I saw all that dust, TG there were no dead mice there, seems the two cats must be earning their keep after all.

All the activity of the past week finally caught up with me last evening and I succumbed to a 3 hour Nana-nap in front of the TV, woke up and went to bed and slept for another 5 hours, so I'm well in credit with the sleep bank now.

Sleep, sleep, nature's sweet wet nurse.

*William Shakespeare*

*Muriel Stuart*

### Kristine's Corner

**Derwentia arenaria** could be forgiven for being a little confused over their "family tree". Related to snapdragons and foxgloves, previously with the Veronica's, moved into the Parhaebe family and eventually blossoming into the Derwentias.

From September to May pale violet blue to deep blue flowers on multi-stemmed long racemes are held above the mid green foliage. The delicate upright sprays grown

alongside Erigeron or white Brachycome daises make for a beautiful long flowering combination. Derwentia arenaria will tolerate most free draining soils, full sun to dappled shade, frost, and are drought tolerant once established. There are two locals D. perfoliata and D. derwentiana, both low growing with graceful arching stems with blue flowers. I take 10cm cuttings from all my Derwentia in late summer, and within 6 weeks they are ready to pot-on or plant in the garden. These three species have blue flowers in common but their leaf form and colour are all different. A popular small plant on the west coast of the USA, it is overlooked in its home town. This easily grown native is perfect for small spaces, pots, exotic/native cottage gardens and rockeries. Not particularly a bird or insect attracting plant but worth a spot in gardens of all sizes for its stunning blue flowers, leaf colour and form.

*Kristine Gow*



*Derwentia Arenaria*

## The March Moon

The foggy Autumn Moon  
Rides at anchor  
High above the silent hedges  
Its softly spreading golden halo  
Criss-crossed by the racing windswept clouds  
Headed southward into darkness.

**Peter Bruce Richardson**

**09.03.14**

It may have been the single malt whisky, but perhaps this particular March evening was the very night after the Mad Hatter's tea party! Was that strange far away sound only the North wind in the hills above Retford Park or possibly the shrill laughter of the March Hare while the Dormouse kept softly snoring beside the empty tea pot. I really can't say, so you will just have to ask Alice.

*Peter B Richardson*

### The Bowral Tulip

Last year during Tulip Time I went to Corbett Gardens to meet Frank Broersen and his daughter Jenny, whose family business has been supplying tulip bulbs to Corbett Gardens for over 40 years. I have been in contact with them since 2012 about the 'Bowral' Tulip.

Broersens are the importers of new varieties of tulip bulbs from The Netherlands.

Frank is 67 years old and his father imported some tulip bulbs from Holland when Frank was 6 years old.

His father planted them in front of their house at Silvan in the Dandenong Ranges of country Victoria where at that time, only one car a week passed their home.

Cars would stop and people would ask if they could buy the tulips so the Broersens family started selling a bunch of 10 tulips for 2/-.

At that time wages were about one pound ten shillings per week. Business picked up and by the time Frank was 9 years old he would pick forty (monetary) pounds worth of tulip flowers in 48 hours.

The wholesale growing business expanded over time and now the family grow their bulbs in Victoria and in Tasmania.

Frank's son is growing the bulbs very successfully in Tasmania. The Netherlands 'cut flower' farmers are now convinced the very best bulbs are grown in Tasmania.

Last year Broersens exported 750,000 bulbs to the 'cut flower' farmers in The Netherlands.

In 1956 Frank's father also imported 'boeren koel' seeds, known in Australia as curly kale.

Frank gave a talk about Tulips in the "Talk Tents" and I took some brief notes:-

- tulip bulbs like a potash soil with a little lime. Can use Ozmocote to fertilize.

- do not place bulbs in the refrigerator before planting

- plant bulbs on Mothers' Day with 4 inches of top soil.

- Corbett Gardens' Head Gardener, Rod McTernon placed 4 inches of mushroom compost on the tulip beds with excellent results. Rod used very little fertilizer thereafter.

- best location - in 70% shade although they will grow in full sun and full shade.

- the Dutch bury their pots into the ground and dig the pots out when the bulbs are flowering for a good result because pots are really too dry and not cool enough for the bulbs.

- no need to dig bulbs up each year - Frank has left bulbs in the ground for 18 years before they died off.

- 'Important Tip' - break the tulip flower head off the stem, just underneath the petals when the flower is beginning to wilt. This will ensure large bulbs next year. Otherwise the plant will focus on the seeds in the flower head and a small bulb will be the result.

*Elizabeth Meredith*

## Ahhh Passion

Passionfruits are not as easy to produce as I thought! Living in Mittagong, and having a north-facing brick wall should have given me a good start. I began by planting a banana passionfruit about four years ago which grew very well, flowered with many lovely pink flowers, however, produced only two fruits over two years. This was too much for me, and given the time and effort in much pruning back, out it came.

Next came a grafted passionfruit vine which grew more slowly but did not fruit in the first year. The second year came with lots of extra shoots with the same leaves as the banana vine, with bright blue flowers and we had fruit. Success! That was 2013.

Life was happy until a broken ankle in October, 2014 and lots of rain in November resulted in plants taking off in all directions while I was resting my ankle. Vines were going up to the gutters, through the camellia hedge and rose bushes, and over the ensuite window. One trim, and more

growth and the arch collapsed under the weight of the vines and squashed the rose bushes.

Please, please let me know if you have any good suggestions.

I do have a suggestion for those who have damaged lawns and gardens because of active pets. I use tree mulch to cover the tracks left by my border collie as she runs around my yard. This lively girl has been hard on lawns and gardens and I have found the mulch sinks into wet soggy soil to stop slips and the dust stays down in the dry.

*Lynne Moore*

Editor's note: I heard a garden expert on Canberra radio saying plant only ungrafted passionfruit.



*Lynne's passionfruit vine*

## Potting Morning and Garden Visit

Les Musgrave Potting Morning 16 February 2015  
at Noelene & Bob Bailey's Home

### **Making the most of plants from the garden centre.**

#### **Divisions**

Agapanthus - When buying a pot of agapanthus at say \$15 take it home and divide it, you may get six or seven plants out of it. Cut with a sharp knife and reduce the size of the roots. Don't put straight into the garden, instead put into premium potting mix and wait for it to be established.

Carpet Gazania likes a hot and dry spot - after four years we sold a few hundred from one plant.

Sedums - pull apart and plant straight into the garden.

#### **Cuttings**

Strike cuttings in propagation mix, water with Seasol then after three weeks, power feed each week with some organic life increasing the size of the pot. For example, a Fuchsia cutting taken seven weeks ago grew into a small plant, within 14 weeks the result is a large healthy flower laden plant.

Salvia cutting - after three weeks 1 foot high in a six inch pot.

**To make his propagation mix, Les uses washed river sand and premium potting mix 50/50.**

**Don't leave in propagation mix too long, transfer to premium potting mix which has nutrients.**

Seasol for root development

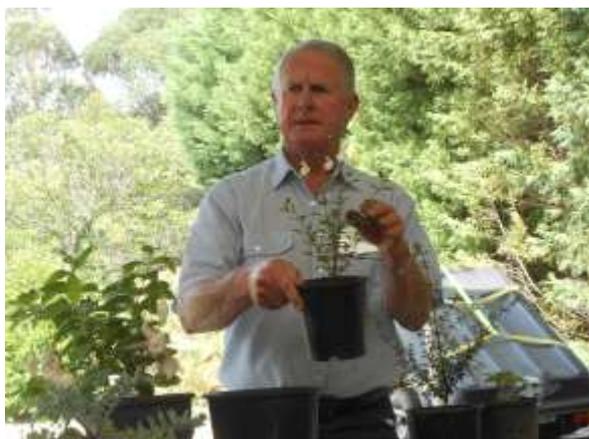
Powerfeed for growth and flowers, it force feeds the plants

Some other plants easy to grow from cuttings and time of year: Hydrangea - December/January: Philadelphia - January - need hard wood cutting: Camellia - January Dahlias - November only - grow easily, need node and stem around 8": Karume Azalea - November/January - take small cutting (length of your finger) with heel and just a few leaves and little slice at the bottom.

#### **Growing from Seed**

The Horn Poppy - lasts 3-4 years, yellow cream flower, grey leaves, dry conditions, sun.

*Notes above from Les Musgrave*



*Les Musgrave*



*The Baileys' Garden*

## **BOWRAL GARDEN CLUB INC**

### **Minutes of General Meeting 9 February 2015**

#### **Uniting Church Hall, Bendooley Street Bowral**

**Present:** 73 Members, 9 visitors.

**Apologies:** Uliska Virag, Judith Lewis, Suellen Hall, Carole Smith, Pat Keen, Elizabeth Meredith, Bernice Lichtenstein, Eric Paananen, Gwen Bullard, Marika Schmidthoffer, Patricia Buckland.

**President** Meg Probyn opened the meeting at 2.00pm and welcomed everyone present, especially new members and visitors and introduced our guest speaker, Bernadette Penny.

Bernadette is an expert in travelling in France and runs a company called *Beyond Tourism Travel*. She specialises in taking small groups to Paris and Regional France where they stay in quality hotels or apartment accommodation and enjoy her organised program, including sightseeing, learning about the history of the area, sampling the food and wine, visiting local farms and getting imbued in the art and culture of the region.

Bernadette has always had a keen interest in France partly for family reasons. Although she is not French, her mother's family lives in France after settling there in the early 1900's. When she was in her early forties she studied for a degree in French at Macquarie University and found herself involved in a university exchange to the Sorbonne in Paris where she studied art history in 2004. This was a life changing experience and living in Paris she got to know France as an insider.

She decided to develop a business taking people to France on holidays and showing them something of the country which she had always loved. She has been taking small

groups to France since 2007 and lives in France four months of the year.

We were treated to a number of slides depicting the beautiful country landscapes, wonderful old French buildings and stunning gardens. On the history side, do not miss the garden by André La Nôtre, one of the greatest French landscape architects, his masterpiece being the gardens of Versailles for King Louis XIV. It was André La Nôtre who perfected the art of Topary. The French love the outdoors and take every opportunity to go out into the countryside or nearby parks to have a picnic, to enjoy the outdoor street cafés and to eat, and drink coffee (actually they love herbal teas too!). Bernadette invited us to join one of her tours and experience France with her ([www.bttravel.com.au](http://www.bttravel.com.au)).

Keith Bailey gave a vote of thanks (in French) and presented our guest with a bottle of wine.

**Minutes** of the general meeting held on 10 November 2014 appeared in the December newsletter and were also sent to those of you with emails last week and have again been circulated this afternoon. Motion: that the minutes of 10 November, 2014 be accepted as a true record of the meeting. Proposed: Margaret Buckland and Seconded: Mary Mowbray.

**Correspondence In:** All mail is placed on the notice board at each meeting.

Flyer from Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens—Plant and Bulb Sale, Tuesday 3 March 2015.

Retford Park Open Garden

Sat 28<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2015 10.0am-4.00pm

1325 Old South Road, Bowral

\$10 entry (U18 free)-money raised for Bowral District

Arts Society: Sculpture Walk, Baby emus, Tea & scones

served by Mittagong CWA

Info: [opengarden.org.au](http://opengarden.org.au)

Southern Highlands Garden Society —February bulletin.

Garden Clubs of Australia —Summer Quarterly magazine.

Bundanoon Garden Club —Garden Seminar 9am – 4pm

Saturday 13 June 2015 (\$30) Speakers - Sabrina Hahn,

John Siemon, Stuart Read – Elaine Musgrave – Botanical

Art exhibition and sale – garden tools, garden ornaments

and plants for sale – contact Suzy Molyneux (02) 4883

6073 [www.bundanoon.nsw.au](http://www.bundanoon.nsw.au)

Thank you card from Ray Bradley

Invitation to Goulburn Rose Festival March 14-15 at

Goulburn Soldiers Club, 15 Market Street, Goulburn.

**Correspondence Out:** Various emails re organising trips and speakers.

#### **Treasurer's Report:**

Noelene read the financial report and moved that it be accepted as follows: Balance in cheque account as at 31 January 2015 - \$7666.72 plus balance in savings account - \$4222.90 plus SHBG savings account \$1516.94 – total funds on hand @ 31 January 2015 - \$13406.56. Seconded – Anne Curvers.

#### **General Business**

##### **Committee Changes:**

Our thanks to two members who have accepted our invitation to join the committee - Marian St Leger Moss who will help with afternoon teas and Kristine Gow who will help with the Trading Table.

##### **Bus Trips:**

There are only three seats left on the bus trip to the Royal Botanic Gardens and Vaucluse House with lunch at Doyles on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March.

We are also planning another bus trip and overnight stay on 29-30 October 2015 to see the wonderful Mayfield Gardens at Oberon. We would be grateful if members would contact Anne Curvers (4861 3061) to indicate if

you are interested in this tour. Noelene Bailey has already done a lot of preliminary planning with Ray Bradley's help. The full cost will be advertised in a newsletter shortly.

**Trading Table:** Meg thanked everyone who had brought plants along for the trading table which was laden with pots and plants. Thanks to Shonagh Moore for her special jam. Michael Launders will be away until July and Kristine Gow is stepping in to manage the trading table.

**Show & Tell:** There was an array of beautiful flowers and a basket of garlic grown by Margie Stuart.

**Lucky door prize** won by Frank Moore

**Show and tell prize** won by Beverley Webb

**Q&A Time:** Meg opened the floor for Q&A Time which was very lively. Meg reminded everyone that the heads of the agapanthus, which is classified as a noxious weed in Wingecarribee, must be removed and placed in the red bin — NOT in the green bin.

The meeting closed at 3.15 pm.

**Next Meeting:** Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2015 at 2.00 pm – Uniting Church Hall, Bendooley Street, Bowral.

**Guest speaker:** Carolyn Dwyer *“Days of Wine and Roses – the gardens of the Adelaide Hills, Barossa Valley and Clare Valley”*.

### Pictures from our February Meeting



### Below, Garden of the Palace of Versailles



*Detail of above garden, showing use of common plants.*

### BOWRAL GARDEN CLUB INC

|                                   |   |             |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------------|
| <b>President:</b>                 | Meg Probyn  | (4871 3134) |
| <b>Vice-President:</b>            | Anne Curvers  | (4861 3061) |
| <b>Secretary:</b>                 | Lorraine Richardson   | (4862 2677) |
| <b>Treasurer:</b>                 | Noelene Bailey  | (4862 3741) |
| <b>Newsletter Editor:</b>         | Carole Scott  | (4862 4766) |
| <b>Public Officer:</b>            | Eric Paananen   |             |
| <b>Trading table:</b>             | Michael Launders Kristine Gow   |             |
| <b>Seed Box:</b>                  | Pamela Cornett  |             |
| <b>Membership and Front Desk:</b> | Pat Keen, Catherine Mah,<br>Michael O'Boyle, Janice Scott.                  |             |
| <b>Afternoon tea hosts:</b>       | Wendy Gamble, Glenys Lilliendal,<br>Lorraine Gregory, Marian St Leger Moss. |             |

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