

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 2016



Friendship through Gardening

For your diary: February

Monday 8 February 2.00pm: Club meeting: Speaker: Paul Kirkpatrick- "Le Potage- Encore". Plus a range of garden tools for sale.

Monday 15 February 10.30am: Potting Morning with Les Musgrave at Noelene and Bob Bailey's home: 16 Harley Street, Bowral.

Monday 29 February 10.30am: Morning Tea and garden visit to Jonquil Temple's 16 Applegate Close Mittagong.

For your diary: March

Monday 14 March 2.00pm: Club meeting: Speaker: Dean Wilson- "The Art of Bonsai".

Monday 21 March 10.30am: Garden visit and morning tea at Berrima Public School, a participant in the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program. (Easter Weekend Friday 25th - Monday 28th)

Theme for the month: SUMMER
Sun and shade flowers



From the President

Oh it is so wonderful to hear the rain. The Highlands was looking so brown rather than the lush green we delight in seeing. Our own patch was so dry with brown areas in spite of our watering. So for a while at least I'm let off getting up early to alternate the sprinklers to water the garden and lawns. I have also been driven inside to undertake jobs that had been relegated to the bottom of 'my 'To-Do' list. Given a choice, I'd much prefer to be out in the garden than sitting at the computer or doing household tasks. But the time has come...

This year Pat and I have relished having a quiet Christmas and New Year. The first in a very long time. Though January is going to be our busy month for family get togethers, it has been so enjoyable for us, that after pottering all day and getting some ticks on the board, we sit outside with a glass in hand and enjoy the garden. After five years it is gradually taking shape, still lots to do, but at last there is a tiny sense of achievement. Putting tinsel on the roses deterred the rosellas, so we were able to combine our Christmas decorations with bird repellent and enjoy a display of roses in various shades of pink.

I hope most of you also enjoyed the Festive Season however you chose to spend it. I know for some it can also be a difficult time. I look forward to catching up with you all in the New Year.

And the year is looking interesting. I hope you agree. The committee is in the process of confirming the details for the 2016 program, which we will have available for you at the February meeting and on the Website.

But before launching into this year, Carole has included in this newsletter some photos to remind you of how we ended last year. There are photos from Glenys's garden, which was so delightful with little treasures tucked in amongst the foliage everywhere you turned. There are also photos of the Christmas Lunch which more than 70 members enjoyed.

As you will be aware, we chose at the end of last year to put a temporary hold on new memberships mainly because of logistical issues (not enough chairs, cups etc.) That decision will be reviewed in the first quarter of 2016. To assist with this process, Jan Scott has offered to collate data from the attendance sheets of club meetings and all our other events. I would encourage you to please make sure you sign in with Judith Lewis at the Welcome Desk at our meetings and at any other function you attend. Your cooperation in this matter will be most appreciated.

A few days have passed since I started writing and the sun is out. So back to weeding, watering and mulching so the soil doesn't lose its nutrients. I understand now that the recommendation is a 3-5 cm deep layer of mulch not the previous 10-15cm as it stopped water reaching the soil.

Happy gardening

Anne Curvers

From the Editor

Once again in December, I visited my son and his family in Hong Kong and as I was there for only 3 days as a stopover on my way to Europe they had a full agenda for me to see new, and I must say very interesting, areas.

After being disappointed with the Botanical Gardens last year I was delighted to visit the Nan Lian Garden which is based on the Tang style landscape garden adorned with springs, hillocks, trees, flowers and plants, pavilions, winding paths and bridges. It uses the art of blocking and extension of views and allows multi-levels of views.

In the middle of the lotus pond is a golden wooden pagoda, the Pavilion of Absolut Perfection with two red Zi-Wu bridges, a truly exotic sight. The boys were fascinated by the size of the carp of varying colours in the Blue Pond.

It is not a huge garden but the design leads through differing paths each with tempting views of the garden. The pine trees are all cloud pruned to perfection, as were the flowering bouganvilleas, and everywhere were interspersed large rocks of differing shapes and sizes. It is a symbol of wealth to have large interesting rocks in a Chinese garden.

The garden is across the road from the Chi Lin nunnery with minimalist Zen gardens, There are various shrines the largest of which has a huge golden Buddha. Both the garden and nunnery are well worth a long visit.



I left rather warm Hong Kong and flew to France to visit family in Brittany and Normandy. Here, winter was beginning to be apparent and although I had a wonderful time in the countryside there was not much in the gardens. However, on my walk through medieval Rouen I came upon a tiny courtyard garden, much prized in this beautiful and fascinating museum-like city.



The weather warmed up as we travelled across France, and in gardens in Reims there were hyacinths and daffodils in flower absolutely out of season. AND the White Christmas I had planned to have before I die didn't eventuate, St Moritz was BROWN. The only relief was the parade of women in the town wearing their mink jackets

and Jimmy Choo apres ski boots in sunny, 14 degree warmth.

Carole Scott

Garden tips for February

February is not the busiest time for us in the garden, though it's when we wander around the paths and identify the plants, which need to be moved—or the spaces where we can plant more bulbs. Bulbs! The very thought of them makes me excited. The catalogues have started to arrive—by post and email—tempting offers from Victoria and Tasmania. What delights await us next month when autumn lures us into the nurseries to plan another area of the garden.

Gardenias: I always forget how lovely the gardenia hedge looks in January. Our variety is *Gardenia augusta* 'Florida'—the most commonly grown species. This year there seem to be more flowers than ever and the perfume is delicious. Apart from all the mulching and fertilising, it seems to have benefitted from the light pruning at the end of winter. Even though it is a semi-tropical plant, the six-inches of snow in July obviously didn't damage it. We are fortunate that our Mittagong garden doesn't normally suffer from frosts. Gardenias generally prefer to be kept in partial shade—but where our hedge gets bright morning sun the plants are bushier and healthier. They like moist well-drained acidic soil with plenty of organic matter.

Hydrangeas: The view from our bedroom window changes quite dramatically with the seasons: in late summer the lush green canopy and the blue and purple hydrangeas dominate the view—the house below our garden is completely obliterated by the hydrangeas and the crabapple tree. The hydrangeas have been superb this year—and we have delighted in the various pink and purple additions to the old blue and white specimens. It is worth checking out the plant stall at the Botanic gardens in the autumn gardens weekend (23-24 April) to see if you can purchase some new plants. Don't be disappointed if the colour of your new plant changes the following year. What was a vibrant pink last year may now become an even more delicious purple—the flower colouring varies according to the acidity of your soil. If your soil is neutral or slightly acid the blue hydrangeas may produce mauve flowers unless you feed them with iron or aluminium salts. The best way to enjoy your hydrangeas is not to worry about the colour, just concentrate on having healthy, beautiful plants. They respond well to feeding and a mulch of organic manure or compost in the winter, a general all-purpose fertiliser in spring and sufficient water in summer keeps them looking beautiful. They soon tell you when they need to be watered.

Weeding and mulching: It's a never-ending job but weeding is very important at this time of year. And to cheer you up, this is the last month until spring when the weeds seem to outpace your special specimens. If you water thoroughly and then mulch to a depth of about 7cm, your efforts will be rewarded. Don't forget to keep the mulch clear of plant stems, especially young seedlings. Choose mulch that will enrich your soil as it breaks down. (If it seems overwhelming, ignore the weeds until next month when you can clear up the remaining straggly weeds to start preparing the borders for new bulbs.)

Watering and fertilising: Hopefully there may be some rainy days during the month but on the dry days make sure you try to water first thing in the morning. A deep

drink twice a week is more beneficial than frequent, short watering. In addition, plants enjoy a feed at this time of year. Seasol or a low environmental impact liquid fertiliser is perfect, especially for the little plants to make an impact just before Christmas.

Deadheading: Make sure you are regularly deadheading flowers such as roses and dahlias. If you encourage your plants to continue to bud through February they will flower for longer, whereas if they are left to go to seed, there is less chance of flowering into the autumn months.

Lawn care: If you fertilised your lawn in spring and December, and it received all the rain in January, and you have only mowed it on a high setting, then your lawn should be looking green and healthy. I have to confess that although the back lawns look very healthy, the front lawn is a mess—too weedy—and we will need to tackle it more scientifically later in the year. It probably needs to be completely scalped, new topsoil added and then reseeded. I'll avert my eyes as I wander down the front path!

Happy gardening!

Meg Probyn

From the Patch

Powdery Mildew - The Scourge of Summer!!

At last the patch was looking productive. After a hit and miss start to summer everything came together. The weather warmed, rain came intermittently and everything responded but then the humidity rose. Zucchini and squash leaves took on a powdery appearance, withered and died. It was here. The Scourge. There are number of practical options you can take to limit Powdery Mildew. Have good air circulation, well spaced plants, limited shade, maximum sunlight, no overhead watering and reduced fertiliser use. Despite all these good options however, the Scourge tends to break through.

What to do then? Luckily, there are a number of organic options which are good for vegetables which won't have us ingesting a cocktail of chemicals.

Baking Soda (sodium bicarbonate) This is possibly the best known organic control methods. Although it would appear that baking soda alone is not all that effective, when combined with horticultural grade or dormant oil and liquid soap, its effectiveness is very good if applied in the early stages or before an outbreak occurs.

Potassium bicarbonate. It has a similar effect to baking soda, this has the unique advantage of actually eliminating powdery mildew once it's there. Potassium bicarbonate is a contact fungicide which kills the powdery mildew spores quickly. In addition, it's approved for use in organic farming.

Mouthwash. Something of a surprising option but if it can kill bacteria there is a fair chance it can eliminate fungal spores. And that is what research has shown, however, because of its quite caustic nature it can damage new leaves so use carefully.

Vinegar. This has a similar efficacy to mouthwash. The acetic acid of vinegar can control powdery mildew. A mixture of 2-3 tablespoons of common apple cider vinegar, containing 5% acetic acid mixed with 4 litres of water is the right dilution. However, too much vinegar can burn plants but at the same time, higher concentrations (above 5%) are more effective.

Sulphur and Lime/Sulphur. Direct contact by sulphur prevents disease spores from developing. When mixed with hydrated lime, the solution will penetrate leaves for even greater effectiveness. A widely available version of

this combination includes copper sulphate and hydrated lime, known as Bordeaux mix. However, all of these solutions can burn plant tissue and is damaging to microorganisms in the soil and harmful to beneficial insects. It is also considered moderately toxic to mammals and humans. **Use sparingly and with caution if at all.**

Milk. This has become a popular option but why it works is not clear, but it is believed that the naturally occurring compounds in the milk are at work to combat the disease while also boosting the plant's immune system. A weekly dose of one part milk to two parts water is recommended.

Water. Ironically, dry conditions and high humidity are the most favourable conditions for powdery mildew to form. But straight water can be used to wash off fungal spores. Use this method with caution as it can also cause many problems particularly if spores are splashed around and the net result is even more humidity. If you try this option do it early in the day to allow for drying.

Chemical Control. Of course there are a myriad of chemical fungal controls which really aren't suitable for use in vegetables used for consumption. But if saving the plant is essential give them a try.

Vegetable thought

'What good is the warmth of summer, without the cold of winter to give it sweetness'

John Steinbeck

Chris Webb

Kristine's Corner

Will the real **ROSEMARY** please stand up and be picked! AND the winner of the Nursery & Garden Industry Australia award for plant of the year-2015 goes to (drum roll) "Grey Box" a native "rosemary". Considered a great plant for low hedging and minimal water requirements. Native Rosemary is not a WOW plant for colour in either flower or form but few Aussie plants beat it for toughness. Think of those old boots this genus is far tougher. Native rosemary or culinary? I grow both and they like similar growing conditions-full sun, excellent drainage and a good trim after flowering to prevent them from becoming leggy.

In the culinary range I have lemon rosemary, common shrub rosemary and the groundcover variety great for hanging baskets and pots. I use all sparingly in cooking, the pungency demands a small snippet for flavour.

Just to confuse matters, Westringia the native rosemary is actually in the mint family. It is not a WOW plant, the blooms are quite inconspicuous but the bush may be smothered in small flowers. Quantity over number! The genus comes in different sizes, and in all species the leaves are similar, only the shade differs. Found in all states and territories except the Northern Territory it has a wide growing area. I can't recall a species where the flowers differ from white to shades of mauve/purple.

At our April meeting I will have two native varieties available for sale, a small growing species with white flowers, and two tone grey foliage. The second species, 1m x 1m has a combination of limey green and yellowish leaves with mauve flowers. Both are fast growing, frost hardy and drought tolerant once established. Great for that western sun position where nothing else will grow.

Also available will be the three varieties of culinary rosemary. Money raised from the sale of these plants will be donated to Legacy on behalf of our group.

At \$2 a pot excellent value and a great cause.

ROSEMARY GIN FIZZZZ- this month's summer moonshine of choice

Rosemary syrup---dissolve ½ cup sugar, ½ cup water and sprig of rosemary in a saucepan. Cool remove rosemary sprig.

In a shaker mix ¼ cup gin, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, cooled syrup and ice.

Add 1/3 cup club soda. Decorate with sprig rosemary and Westringia flower.

Delish for 5 o'clock sippers!



Kristine Gow

Muriel's Musings

This year I didn't make any New Year Resolutions, I haven't had much success at keeping them in the past and spend the rest of the year with feelings of guilt and disappointment. To those of you who did, I wish you luck. Sorry I didn't make the deadline for my musings for the December Newsletter, my friendly little computer was sent a nasty virus from which it never recovered and wouldn't you know it, at the same time I developed tendonitis in my right thumb and wrist, so I couldn't fall back onto the tried and true way of communicating, handwriting.

My son Graham has lent me one of his laptops, but it has such a case of advanced technology that when I use it, I feel like I'm playing chess against a Grand Master and I'm constantly "Bludy hell what's my next move?"

On medical advice I now partake of a few hours of 'afternoon armchair inertia', or in layman's terms, a relaxing nanna nap.

As nothing remotely amusing happens during the afternoons, it's back to my diaries of years past for the Musings.

In 1980 when we retired, we moved up to a 400 acre property on Oxley Hill and took on a new persona as mature aged Jackeroo and Jilleroo, having care and custody of 79 black Angus cows and their calves, and Jeremy the Santa Gertrudes bull. We were also able to have our race horse on agistment between his race training programs. The following is what I wrote in my diary at that time.

Buster is enjoying his holiday from racing, he is a smart little charmer, gives me a friendly whinney whenever he sees me which ensures him of a steady diet of 'treats' in the form of Lucerne Hay bats, (but not too many he is frisky enough without them) carrots, and apples are his favourites.

One of these days Neil is going to notice there is more pastry than apple in his apple pie and then Buster will have his elevenses and afternoon tea treats rationed.

We acquired another dog, a delightful black and tan sheep dog, sent up from the home farm at Burradoo. She was appropriately named Smiley. I could be wrong, but I think she could count, for whenever men with machinery came onto the property she would take off across the paddock and round up Jeremy and his ladies and bring them up to the cattle yards and then crouch down with a piercing eye to hold them.

That wasn't all Smiley was good at, when I was out and about she was my shadow and she had a certain bark that I interpreted as "Look out Mum, look out Mum" and sure enough there would be a copperhead snake close by.

When we made our final move to "Heathside Cottage" to care for my parents, Smiley came with us and spent her ageing years rounding up the 6 hens from their free-ranging around the garden and putting them safely back in the hen house.

Thought for the day

*Plants are like people, they have their funny little ways,
but with love and understanding, they will reward you
with their friendship.*

Muriel Stuart



Lines in January on the Cherry Tree Walk

***It's Summer- so they say!
Great eels gorge on darting tiny carp
Among the broken snags and stacks of stones
Along the lazy shady creek
Where bands of little persons wearing
sunhats
Tear along the track at breakneck speed
On scooters tricycles and skateboards
Followed by assorted dogs and grandmas
Loudly urging caution from behind—***

***Wild wood ducks stand amazed along the
bank***

***Peter Bruce Richardson
18 January 2016***

The end of 2015





Pavers are selling fast and people wishing to take up this offer should visit the website at shbg.com.au and go to the Donate-A-Paver page.

Charlotte said that donations must close at the end of the month to allow the project to be completed in time for SHBG's annual Autumn Gardens Weekend on 23 & 24 April, when **six magnificent local gardens** will be open to the public and a **plant fair** will be held for the first time in the botanic gardens.

The Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens already have a number of collections in place and hold working bees every month. When further developed the gardens will educate the general public about horticulture and landscaping, plants and biological communities, and raise community awareness about biodiversity and plant conservation. It will also be a centre for study and education for botany and horticulture students, for school aged children with regard to all aspects of the environment and for amateur and professional garden enthusiasts alike.

For further information or interviews contact Chris Webb on 0418 249 490



Garden Chi Lin Nunnery Hong Kong

Donate a paver and be immortalised

Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Ltd is offering Highlands residents and visitors a second opportunity to have their names associated with the gardens forever. Supporters of the gardens can purchase brick pavers at \$50.00 each and have them inscribed with their names or the names of family members. The pavers will be laid in pathways that are being progressively built around the gardens site at East Bowral.

SHBG founders and directors Chris and Charlotte Webb said the first round of paver donations during the sesquicentenary celebrations just over two years ago was very popular. Those pavers were laid in the area known as Pioneer Square and now form a permanent memorial to the opening of the gardens.

Charlotte believes that people donate pavers for many reasons. "They may wish to see their own name immortalised on the site of what will be a significant local attraction, or they may want to give their children or grandchildren a gift in the form of their own inscribed pavers," she said. "Whatever the reason, pavers are the perfect way of expressing your support for the gardens."

Social Liaison: Jan Scott

With the increase in membership it has been difficult to keep up to date with everyone's comings and goings. Please contact Jan Scott at the Welcome Desk or by mobile phone 0418215036 to notify the Club of a member's change of circumstance and welfare. Thank you, Anne.

President:	Anne Curvers	48613061
Vice-President:	Janice Scott	
Secretary/		
Membership:	Lorraine Richardson	48622677
Treasurer:	Noelene Bailey	
Newsletter Editor:	Carole Scott	48624766
Public Officer:	Eric Paananen	
Trading table:	Kristine Gow, Pamela Cornett	
Front Desk:	Judith Lewis, Janice Scott	
Committee:	Catherine Mah, Michael O'Boyle, Michael Launders	
Afternoon tea hosts:	Wendy Gamble, Glenys Lilliendal, Lorraine Gregory, Marian St Leger Moss.	

Website: bowralgardenclub.com