

# 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 2018



*Friendship through Gardening*

### What's on in February.

**12 February (Monday) 2.00pm:** Club Meeting: speaker: Lynn Esdaile: "Christopher Lloyd - gardener, cook"

**19 February (Monday) 10.30am:** Garden visit and morning tea at Perennial Hill, 1 Nero Street Mittagong. Cost \$5.00 per person.

### What's on in March

**12 March (Monday) 2.00pm:** Club Meeting: Speaker: Dr Simon Grant "Growing maples in the SH".

**19 March (Monday) 8.15:** Coach Day Trip to visit "Silky Oaks" Garden at Oakdale with a picnic lunch and tour of Mount Annan Botanic Garden followed by a tour of Thornton Bros Nursery, Thirlmere. Cost \$50 Bookings essential.

### Theme for the month: Hot summer



### From the President

I'm thinking the residents of the Southern Highlands will start relocating because of the heat, not the cold. I'm always surprized by the intensity of the heat, even though every summer we have these hot spells to endure. I guess I'm trying to deny the experience and just remember the perfect highland days.

Though the hydrangeas look barbequed (in spite of being on the south side of the house) and other plants wilt, the weeds manage to grow. Any way I was weeding and came across small stalks popping up haphazardly and decided to leave them and wait and see. I was pleasantly surprized to see what looks like a tiny pink orchid flowers on the stem. And then it happen for a second time with even a smaller red and green orchid flower. No idea if they are a native orchid or if they are considered weeds. Either way they are both welcome to stay. I have included photos if any of you can help to identify the flower.

I have also included a photo of yours truly propagating a succulent to remind you and to encourage you all to propagate for our plant stall that will be held on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October, as part of National Gardening Week 7-13 October, 2018.

We are in the process of confirming the details for the 2018 program, which we will have available for you at the

February meeting and on the Website. I trust you will find it interesting, stimulating and enjoyable.

Have a wonderful year, enjoy all the benefits that come with being out in your garden and I look forward to your participation in the 2018 activities.

Happy gardening

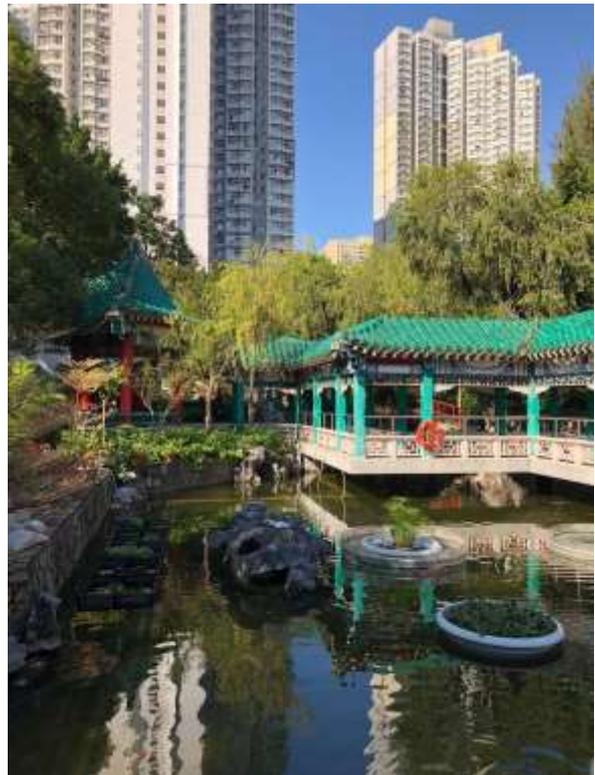


Anne Curvers.

## From the Editor

I left Hong Kong with my granddaughter Beatrix on a cool 20 degree evening to arrive home last Monday to a very hot 40 degree morning. However, my daughter's car is airconditioned and my home is quite adequately insulated and now has all four fans blowing away night and day. I had a seepage system for the back garden so it was a joy to return to everything brightly waiting for me. My kind neighbour had watered the front so the first thing I saw were the vivid tuberous begonias, such happiness. I am sorry for all of you suffering the heat, the warmest day we had was 26 degrees, quite hot really, especially at the Sik Sik Yuen temple on a very special day so filled with incense burning in the very crowded entry. Because I had Bea with me, I went again to the Nan Lian gardens with its cloud pruned trees and bouganvilleas, and to the Chi Lin Nunnery across the road for the Zen garden. Of course Bea did every other fun thing in Hong Kong including Disneyland, and loved her first venture into Asia, and wants to go again with all her family. No matter how wonderful and amazing are the places we visit, it is always wonderful and amazing to come home, even if it means leaving family behind, and to realise how fortunate we are to live in this part of our wonderful country!

Carole Scott



Sik Sik Yuen Temple and Nan Lian Gardens Hong Kong

## Garden tips for February

**Snakes alive and other hazards:** The first week of January I was watering (and weeding) in an absentminded sort of way when a red-bellied black snake (*Pseudechis porphyriacus*) suddenly materialized before me. There must be many snakes in the garden but very rarely seen. It brought me up short as I wasn't wearing gloves and I'd been plunging my hands into plants to remove grasses and weeds—so glad it happened as it reminded me to be more careful. I purchased a snake-bite kit from the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens after we had a demonstration on how to deal with bites—a very useful and informative session. Bull ants are my major worry—once a year I step on a nest and suffer from those blighters. Talking about the hazards of gardening, I managed to strain the iliotibial band (ITB) in my left leg. (A thick tendon that runs the length of and connects

*the tensor fascia lata muscle—which starts on the outer side of the hip—to the outer side of the tibia, the major bone in the lower leg.*) That definition is from the web! I was watering a couple of weeks ago and thought I could save time by not walking to the tap to turn it off. Instead I made a dive to grab the whizzer in an attempt to twist it away from me. Three consequences—I damaged my tendon, was completely drenched and I've been paying for physiotherapy ever since

**Bulbs:** The Lambley Nursery bulb catalogue arrived at the beginning of the year. On one very hot day—too hot to be outside—I spent a pleasurable hour deciding on what to order. My first order was for autumn flowering bulbs: *Acis autumnale*, *Colchicum byzantinum* and *Nerine bowdenii*. They will arrive very soon and will require planting in early February. The second order is for the later flowering bulbs and as I weed and wander up and down the paths, I keep watching out for the best spots to plant the winter and spring bulbs. Last year I ordered some 'double' tulips called 'Margarita'—very long early flowering variety with dark pink petals flushed with purple (35cm stems). They were a huge success. I'm tempted to buy more or should I plant some of the taller varieties like 'Pink Impression' or 'the red 'Apeldoorn' which grows to 55cm? I haven't yet decided. Then I have to look through Tesselaar's catalogue and make even more decisions ... It's hard work being an armchair gardener!

**Hydrangeas:** When they have finished flowering, the large plants can be pruned to half-size. Even if you want to leave the hard prune until later in the year, it helps the plant if you remove the dead flowers—though some of you may like their soft hues. Mulch with well-rotted animal manure or sugar cane to protect their fibrous roots, which grow close to the soil surface. Hydrangeas are easy to propagate in spring but I find it a good idea to make a note now of the particular ones that we want to propagate.

The commonly named oak-leaf hydrangea *Quercifolia* displays autumn colour on both foliage and old flowers and is an easy-to-grow shrub that blooms even in deep shade. It flowers on old wood but isn't as sensitive to frost as other varieties. Watch out at the plant sale in April at the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens (SHBG) for varieties.

**Camellias:** During the dry summer we really appreciate our camellias—they always look so shiny green and healthy even when the hot winds are blowing. One particular little camellia caught my eye looking so beautiful down the garden. *C. 'Kinyoba-tsubaki'*—an ancient camellia possibly from the 18th century; the shape of the leaf is like a little goldfish tail. Our plant is so young that it hasn't flowered yet but we know it has deep pink-red single large flowers which open first as a tubular bloom which gradually open flat. I'll be watching out this month for the signs of buds. This particular camellia was again propagated by the SHBG plant growers team.

**Weeding and mulching:** It's so important to keep weeding and mulching this month—even though it seems hopeless when the weeds keep growing. The compost bins are ready for emptying and they provide such lovely mulch. The plants positively smile when they receive a dressing of all that kitchen waste eaten into a fine tilth by the worms.

**Watering and fertilising:** There hasn't been enough rain yet to stop watering this summer but February may surprise us all. There is such a need for a heavy downfall. Fertilise everywhere including the annuals and perennials and vegetables. You will be rewarded.

**Deadheading:** There are several reasons for deadheading regularly—more flowers will be produced and the plants look neater and grow healthier.

Deadheading encourages plants to set even more flower buds. If their flowers are constantly being removed before they go to seed, many plants, although not all, will simply set more. This will extend the length of the blooming season.

Deadheading helps plants to conserve energy—by removing dead blooms the plants are able to direct their energy toward improving their general health. Some perennial flowers bloom only once even with deadheading, however cutting back their flower stalks allows all the energy of the plants to be put back into the roots and foliage, allowing them to regain the energy lost to flowering and generally making for hardier plants. So keep a pair of secateurs in your pocket as you walk round the garden and snip.

**Lawn care:** Check for any fungal disease. Try not to mow too low (and this is a reminder for my personal lawnmower), or you'll encourage weeds to grow and the soil to dry out. If your lawn seems to have white tips after you've mown, it's time to give your mower blades a sharpen. The white tips are where the lawn has been ripped rather than cut!

**Vegetables:** This is the time for planting seedlings of broccoli, cabbage, celery, leek and silver beet. As this is a month suitable for sowing seeds, why not try sowing the following seeds direct into your garden beds: beetroot, lettuce, white onion, parsnip and radish. For other seeds you need to sow in containers for transplanting later. Weed and fertilise your vegetable beds, and pick the crops regularly.

Happy gardening!

Meg Probyn

## Muriel's Musings

It's the final day of December 2017 & I haven't put my 2018 calendar up yet, (it's supposed to be unlucky to do so before the 1st of January), but already the month ahead is looking rather busy. As I've told you before I don't make New Year resolutions \_I don't have much luck keeping them & then spend the rest of the year feeling guilty\_ to those of you who did \_ I wish you luck.

Now to get on with the Musings.

When you are getting on & your klunkered knees present a problem entering & exiting cars may I offer a helpful hint or two?? The front seat is less challenging as it gives you more leg room \_ as well as room for your handbag, walking stick, carry all shopping bag & cardigan (just in case\_\_you ARE living in The Highlands & we old hands know how changeable the weather can be). One of my dear Granddaughters once remarked that "little children and Dols (dear old ladies) don't travel light". Once the driver spots a parking spot in the main street it helps if when, they have manoeuvred the car into the allotted parking space that they also do "a country parking" \_ that is to leave at least 18 inches between the car and the kerb, for if the car is right up to the kerb it is almost impossible for Dols to get out of the car without banging the their heads on the inside of the door frame or even more unseemly, rolling out onto the footpath in the 10 metre high divers pike position.

Re-entering the car is not quite so challenging \_ once you have positioned the afore mentioned handbag, walking stick and 1|2 full shopping bag but leaving enough room for your feet. You then turn your back to the car door & execute \_ as the Olympic High Jumpers do \_ a more

sedate version of "the Fosbey Flop" & once you have wriggled yourself into a comfy position you reach for the seat belt & \_by then you are so out of breath that you have to wait for the driver to enter the car and click clack you safely in place. Hopefully I won't reach the stage where I ask "Are we there yet??"

Muriel Stuart

## Book Review

Dr Stephen Buchmann, *The Reason for Flowers: Their History, Culture, Biology, and How They Change Our Lives*  
One of the most delightful book received at Christmas is Dr Stephen Buchmann's *The Reason for Flowers: Their History, Culture, Biology, and How They Change Our Lives*. A noted entomologist, researcher and adjunct professor in the departments of entomology and ecology and evolutionary biology at the University of Arizona, Tucson, he loves buds, bees, beetles and butterflies (even bats). Every page of the book tells a fascinating story and when he was asked by a reviewer to give him ten reasons for flowers he came up with this list (all of which are expanded into fascinating chapters in the book):

1. **Flowers feed the world.** Because pollinated and fertilised blossoms turn into nutritious fruits and seeds, these invaluable foodstuffs keep the world's 7.2 billion people from starvation. These resulting fruits also feed birds, bears and other wildlife.
2. **Tasty and nutritious.** Although the calories from starchy cereals and grain crops feed the world, we enjoy and need the 'nutraceuticals' and antioxidants inside colourful cranberries, blueberries, oranges and apples. They keep us healthy and happy.
3. **Edible flowers.** Some flowers (e.g. roses, some marigolds) are great as edible garnish and foods. Find out which ones can be eaten and what they taste like.
4. **Humans might never have evolved, or survived.** Early hominids certainly recognized that flowers were the harbingers of tasty fruits. Without flowers, perhaps there wouldn't be any people today.
5. **Flowers make us smile.** Give someone a flower(s) and they flash a genuine Duchenne smile. Rutgers psychologist, Dr Jeanette Haviland-Jones, has infused subliminal amounts of rose and gardenia vs. manmade scents into room air. Subjects use more enjoyment words and were more likely to approach or touch a stranger when the floral scents were present. Flowers may counteract the semiochemicals for fear, anger and anxiety that humans seem to constantly be emitting.
6. **200 million red roses!** Americans buy about ten million cut blooms every day. On Valentine's Day that can jump to 200 million cut flowers, especially red roses. Most of these flowers are grown in Columbia and Ecuador then arrive in the bellies of jumbo jets arriving at the Miami airport. (How many are bought in Australia and where do you think they are mostly grown?)
7. **As costly as gold.** Saffron is the world's costliest spice and the subject of countless fake imitations. The spice is the dried styles from crocus blooms. Hand-picking and the fact that this represents such a tiny fraction of the entire plant, make it so costly and precious.
8. **For inspiration and romance.** Flowers have inspired generations of poets, writers and artists. Their myriad shapes, colours and scents enrich our

lives with beauty. Their sexuality and alluring scents bring romance into our lives.

9. **Most ancient.** The world's earliest known flower is the 8-inch tall fossil (*Achaeofructus*) that grew in China 130-160 million years ago. Turns out that these and other early blooms were puny runts. They wouldn't win best of show ribbons in any flower show.
10. **Flowers in the service of science.** Without Gregor Mendel's crossing experiments with the humble garden pea, we wouldn't have learned about the laws of inheritance when we did.

So, Buchmann says, flowers feed the world, keep us healthy and make us smile. What could be better than that?

Meg Probyn

## FROM OUR VEGGIE PATCH

Bob planted out a couple of new veggies over autumn and along with the summer crop they have been gracing our dinner plates very well. He harvested the garlic and small onions recently and we are now picking spinach, left over from winter, shallots, cucumbers, zucchini, beetroot and tomatoes. The Rhubarb is ready to pick but I am waiting for a cool day to bake, our eldest Granddaughter Isla loves my mini Rhubarb muffins for her morning tea at school. I give her a container of them freshly frozen and her Mum pops one in her lunch box.

The large tomatoes are slow but we have had plenty of Tommy Toe's and two of our Grandchildren just pick them off the tomato bowl and pop them into their mouths, with a mischievous grin at Gran. They love them.

Last week I caramelised several of the small onions, they are very sweet, and we had them with a cold sausage on a roll along with our home grown tomato, beetroot & cucumber. Our lettuce finished a few weeks back and the new seedlings are suffering from the heat and are slow to get going, we may have to plant some more. The beans are also slow this year as well but our neighbours have given us a bag full so we are not without.

I have also lightly fried onion, tomato, garlic & basil and served it on sourdough toast for an easy lunch over the weekend, loads of basil and parsley as well as rocket in the veggie patch.

Below is my recipe for Rhubarb Muffins, kindly given to me by a friend in Mudgee. I found I had to cut down on the sugar; it was too much for me.

### RHUBARB AND SOUR CREAM MUFFINS

360gms brown sugar

60g butter, softened

Zest of ½ an orange

1tsp vanilla essence

2 eggs

500g rhubarb washed and cut into 1 cm pieces

1 green apple, peeled and grated

300g self raising flour

1 tsp baking powder

1 tsp cinnamon

1 carton sour cream

Pre heat oven to 180C. Butter and dust with flour, a 12 hole muffin tin, or muffin wraps.

In a large bowl bream the butter, cinnamon and sugar with an electric hand beater and add the vanilla essence (Doesn't cream very well). Beat in eggs one at a time.

In another bowl, mix the rhubarb, apple, orange zest, sifted flour and baking powder. Fold this into the butter and sugar mixture. Use a large wooden spoon to do this as it takes time to combine. Once combined add the sour

cream and mix really well until the mixture is even and silky.  
Place the mixture in the muffin tin and cook for 30 mins or until a skewer comes out clean.



Noelene Bailey

### BOWRAL GARDEN CLUB INC.

Members please note the minutes of the November meeting were published in the December Newsletter.

#### Social Liaison: Jan Scott

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.

<b>President:</b>	Anne Curvers	4861 3061
<b>Vice-President:</b>	Janice Scott	
<b>Secretary:</b>	Deb Evered	48621407
<b>Membership:</b>	Lorraine Richardson	4862 2677
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Maryann Hewitt	
<b>Newsletter Editor:</b>	Carole Scott	
<b>Public Officer:</b>	Maryann Hewitt	
<b>Committee:</b>	Kristine Gow, Judith Lewis, Catherine Mah, Glenys Lilliendal, Diedre White	

### Visitors to our garden



Photos by Pat Keen

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