Bowral Garden Club Inc.

(Established in 1963) Affiliated with Garden Clubs of Australia Inc <u>Address: PO Box 910, Bowral NSW 2676</u>

NEWSLETTER MARCH 2013



Friendship through Gardening

Autumn Mists

The changing season seems to bring on a change of mood—gardening is more pleasurable and less frenetic when the cooler days mean that there is no need to worry about plants suffering in the heat. The angle of the sun gradually declines, the shadows get softer, and the colours become more muted but warmer at the same time. Autumn seemed to have come earlier this year with the rains in February.

In March the leaves of trees and shrubs take on their first tints and turn into features in their own right. And what could be more delightful a task than planting bulbs? No wonder that autumn is the favourite season for many gardeners in the Southern Highlands.

If you are thinking of planting trees in winter, now is the time to look out for them in other people's gardens and to check on their autumn colours, shape and size.

Our guest speaker this month is Dr Holly Kerr Forsyth, who has produced a number of beautiful and readable garden books over the last few years. She has written about some of the gardens we love in the Southern Highlands and that makes her visit all the more interesting. Her photography is stunning and we look forward to hear her stories of her travels around Australia and the world.

Golden Anniversary Lunch

If you haven't already booked your seat for the celebration lunch to be held at Milton Park on Monday 15 April, please remember to do so at the March meeting. Payment of \$45 per person is also due, so please pay Catherine Mah at the meeting or contact her (phone number is 4861 7268).



Bob and Noelene Bailey, Kay Fintan, Anne Stegman, Glenys Lilliendal and Elizabeth Meredith at Montrose Berry Farm on Wednesday 6 February (photo Pat Keen)

What's on in March

4 March (Monday) 1.30 pm: Club Meeting at Presbyterian Church Hall, Bendooley Street, Bowral: Dr Holly Kerr Forsyth: *Travels with my camera: it's not all wine and roses.*

11 March (Monday) 10.30 am: Morning tea and garden visit to Noelene and Bob Bailey's garden, 16 Harley Street, Bowral.

18 March (Monday) 10.30 am: Garden visit to 'Chinoiserie', Webb Street, Mittagong

Theme for the month: Sedums



Sedum 'Autumn Joy' at 'Eastdene'

What's on in April

1 April (Easter Monday)

8 April (Monday) 1.30 pm: Club Meeting at Presbyterian Church Hall, Bendooley Street, Bowral: Michael Bligh, the landscape designer: *Creating Colour and Interest for Every Season of the Year*

15 April (Monday) 12 noon: Golden Anniversary buffet lunch at Milton Park. There will be a range of delicious dishes to choose from including: roast pumpkin with honey-slivered almonds, rosemary lamb, roasted vegetables, chicken à la king, beerbattered flathead, French fries, a selection of salads. For dessert there will be a selection of cake slices and whipped cream.

22 April (Monday) 10.30 am: Morning tea and garden visit to Jo Lees' garden, 26 Old South Road, Bowral.

27-28 April (Saturday and Sunday): Town and Country Open Garden Weekend – Seven Gardens open including a plant stall (in support of the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens).

Theme for the month: Autumn leaves

Potting Morning and Propagation Techniques



Marilyn Gleeson demonstrating potting techniques

Every time we have a potting morning we learn more about improving our propagation techniques to ensure better results. On Monday 11 February Marilyn gave us some notes that she had taken from the potting morning held by our Patrons, Charlotte and Chris Webb (with Tony Davis, Maureen Purtell and Les Musgrave), for the Botanic Gardens Plant Stall at Quindalup in April.

Many thanks are due to Marilyn and Keith, who very generously allow us to use their shed for the morning.

The following is a précis of Marilyn's notes (with advice from Charlotte):

Propagating Tips for Summer Cuttings

The success of growing plants from cuttings depends largely on the time of year the cuttings are taken and the type of wood you choose to propagate from. This is something that has to be learned and a good propagating book will help. Tony Davis uses the book, *Royal Horticultural Society Propagation Techniques: Simple Guide for 1000 Garden Plants*, published by the Royal Horticultural Society.

Be sure the plant from which you will take the cuttings has been thoroughly watered the day before you plan to take cuttings. A good spray with Seasol will assist as well.

Take cuttings early in the morning (before 10am) while the moisture level is still high in the plant, and pot them immediately. Choose wood from the healthiest branches. Don't take cuttings from flowering wood. If cuttings have to be transported place in a plastic bag, spray with moisture and seal the bag (make sure it is not left in the sun). If cuttings have been cut and left for some time, submerge them completely in water for a while before potting.

Charlotte Webb uses a 50/50 mixture of vermiculite and perlite to strike cuttings. (This is quite dusty so use a mask and mix with water, which makes it easier to handle—it will absorb quite a lot of water.) They use quite small cuttings and place them close together in seedling trays. Grey and pubescent (hairy) plants should be more widely spaced as they need air circulation.

The cuttings are cut at an angle below a node to allow for greater rooting area (also helps to identify bottom of cutting): then cut straight across the top above a node leaving a small amount of leaves at the top of the cutting. Dip base in hormone powder and plant using a small round tool (Marilyn has a favourite long, fat nail that she uses) to make a planting hole so that the hormone powder won't be wiped off. This also prevents damage to fragile stems as they are placed in the mix. Firm in the mix around the cutting and water the pot immediately to give good stem/media contact.

Keep moist - water each day. After a week give regular applications of Seasol to aid root development. Keep in good indirect light under trees or in a shaded position do not place in sun. Summer perennial cuttings should form roots within two to three weeks. Shrubs and trees will take a little longer.

Once roots have formed (appear through bottom of pot), pot into 1"pots with good quality potting mix (such as Martins Premium) and fertilize with Seasol. Do not allow roots to come into direct contact with any fertilizer as it may cause root burn. Any rooted cuttings or divisions (suitably trimmed) can be potted straight into this potting mix.

Pot on into progressively larger pots as growth continues and very gradually introduce the pots into more sunlight. Fertilize every two weeks with equal parts of Powerfeed and Seasol (watering can). Large pots can be fed with organic life pellets or any slow release fertilizer granules instead.

Pinch out regularly to form a compact and well-shaped plant.

*Note: Method for taking cuttings at different times of year will vary.

Visit to 'Eastdene', Bundanoon



The parterre from the veranda



The lake with 'Monet's' bridge (photos Pat Keen)

It was one of those lovely summer mornings when we drove to Bundanoon to visit Al and Barbara McKay's property on 18 February. The garden is a delight with its formal parterre, Japanese courtyard and clipped hedges, set on a farm of 135 acres. Al's sense of humour is to be found in corners around the garden, including the sword cemented into a block of stone (a test for the men), and the witch's broomstick, hat and boots protruding through a formal hedge. The garden is a special place for grandchildren as well as serious gardeners! Barbara's choice of plants and design of borders reflects her great passion for gardens. We had a lovely morning tea in the conservatory with plenty of conversation. (There are more photos on the website taken by Noelene Bailey.)

Muriel was planting—not musing

Muriel Stuart appeared in the *Southern Highland News* on Wednesday 13 February, wielding a spade as she planted a Wollemi pine in the Centennial Park bush area in Bowral. Two other Club members are also keen supporters of the new Bushcare Group—Pat Keen and Elizabeth Meredith—and they would be delighted if other members of the Club would get involved. The first trees were planted in October last year and prior to that the bush area had been very neglected.

Muriel recalled in the interview (reporter Jen Walker wrote the story) that her memories of the area go back to 1936 when she and her family moved to her present house. 'This area was the most neglected park. I remember when I used to cut through this park, leap over the stream and run through Miss Brennan's cow paddocks on my way home from school. There used to be half a dozen Cottonwood trees that the artists would paint. But then the blackberries, honeysuckle and ivy took over.'

The Wollemi was given to Muriel by her family four Christmasses ago and she made the decision to offer it to the park so that it could grow 'among friends, other natives'. The Wollemi pine (*Wollemia nobilis*) belongs to the 200 million year-old Araucariaceae family. There are only about 100 left in the wild so by planting them in parks and gardens they will be sure of a safe future. Muriel's tree was planted with much love—as she patted the soil round the base she said, 'You behave yourself here. If anyone hurts you, I'll come for them in winter and pull their doona off every night.'

Her family also gave her a fossil of a Wollemi's leaves. (Whenever you visit Muriel be sure to ask her to show you some of her fossils—she's been a collector for many years.) This last month Muriel has not only been gallivanting to family celebrations but has also had a computer on the blink. She'll be back next month with her *Musings*!

Oxalis – the bad and the good and some history!

The last couple of weeks we have been digging up the invasive weed—pink flowering oxalis. It's no good just pulling out the plant because you get the flower and the stem with no bulb attached and those tiny chestnut bulblets are so easy to miss as they roll down into the soil. If you dig deeply under the plant you can capture the whole box and dice and put straight into a plastic bag for the dustbin.

A number of 'friendly' oxalis that are not so insidious and don't have the habit of spreading through your garden are available in nurseries, including ones from South Africa and Chile. The South African Oxalis massoniana features in the March edition of Gardening Australia magazine (p.20). Named after the Scottish plant collector, Francis Masson (1741-1805), it has flowers the colour of terracotta and emerges from its dormant state in autumn to surprise and delight you.

Masson was the first plant collector to be sent by Sir Joseph Banks from Kew Gardens, where he had commenced his career as an under-gardener. He sailed with Captain James Cook on HMS *Resolution*, landing in South Africa in October 1772. For three years he explored and collected, sending back over 500 species of plant to England. The new species included: *Agapanthus inapertus* (drooping agapanthus), *Amaryllis belladonna* (Belladonna Lily), *Zantedeschia aethiopica* (Arum Lily), *Strelitzia reginae* (Bird of Paradise Flower), *Senecio cruenta* (Cineraria), *Protea cynaroides* (King Protea), (Red Hot Poker). In 1796 Masson published his only book: *Stapeliae Novae* on the South African succulents known as 'carrion flowers' – so you can imagine their scent.

Masson found life back at Kew Gardens rather mundane after all his adventures and was delighted when Banks sent him off again-this time to Madeira, Canary Islands, the Azores, and the Antilles. Captured and imprisoned by the French in Grenada, he once more returned to England (this time with a small collection as so many plants were destroyed by a hurricane in St Lucia). But he was restless and the collecting bug had caught him. He botanized in Portugal in 1783 and then was off to South Africa again in 1785 and finally to North America in 1797, escaping from pirates en route. After seven years of collecting in North America he died in Montreal aged 66 on 23 December 1805. His first adventure was his most successful and he never was able to discover and send back as many plants as he had in those three amazing years in South Africa from 1772-75.

Caution—Chemicals

Have you noticed that gardeners are constantly being urged to apply chemical sprays and other preparations against pests and weeds? The message, these days, is that anything unwanted in the garden, animal or vegetable, should be summarily dealt with—but a note of warning, for the cure can be worse than the disease. There is a place for chemicals in the garden but only if they are used with great discretion. Read the labels carefully, ensure that the mixture is not too concentrated, nor applied too heavily or carelessly.

There are many garden plants very sensitive to certain herbicides, such as those used on grass lawns for the control of broad-leafed weeds. So if you intend to spray, beware of trees growing in your lawns or azaleas or other shallow rooted plants that have been planted near-by. Most plants concentrate the majority of their small absorbing roots in the upper 150 mm (6 in.) of soil. It is preferable to hand weed where possible.

When it comes to insects remember that only a small number out of the many thousands of insects that exist in your garden are classified as pests. A considerable number are beneficial to the garden. Predators such as ladybirds, lacewings and hoverflies, and parasites like ichneumons, chalcids and wasps all play a part in controlling the pest population; and mammals, birds, reptiles, spiders, centipedes and mites also prey on insect pests.

Did you notice the large numbers of Soldier Beetles (*Chauliognathus lugubris*) this summer in your gardens? Strange-looking green straight bodies with a yellow band near the black head and a yellow abdomen, they are about 13 mm long and swarm on warm days. They

are really the friends of the gardener as they feed on soft-bodied insects and eat the eggs of many pests. So welcome them in your garden.

While chemical preparations undoubtedly do kill the pests for which they have been formulated, they can so easily harm the gardeners' 'friends' at the same time. Washes used on fruit trees and bushes, for instance, can destroy beneficial insects and mites, and weedkillers persisting in the soil will harm living things below the surface. Any creature that eats insects may be indirectly poisoned by pesticides and it is known that birds have been made infertile. So whenever you reach for the chemical response to a problem, ask yourself: 'Is it essential or can I let Nature follow its own course?"

DO WHAT WE CAN, SUMMER WILL HAVE ITS FLIES. RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803-1882)

Nature's Way

What about using the old-fashioned and relatively harmless remedies for dealing with pests and diseases?

- Snails and slugs don't like travelling over scratchy things such as crushed eggshells, sandpaper, cinders, wood ashes, and these work well as a barrier. It doesn't kill them but slows them down.
- All sorts of insect pests can be deterred from attacking vegetables if you prepare half a bucket of sand with paraffin and spread on each side of the rows.
- A great deal can be done to prevent blackspot on roses by simply picking off and burning affected foliage as soon as it appears.
- Summer pruning of fruit trees helps to keep aphids away.
- Snails and slugs can be trapped with beer or yeast and honey. Boil some yeast and honey in water. Bury a dish up to the rim in your garden and fill it with this mixture. Alternately fill a dish with beer. Slugs cannot resist a bowl of ale sunk into the ground, thus meeting a cheery, beery end.

Lawns

Autumn is a good time to work on improving your lawn. Remove dead grass from lawns by raking vigorously with a spring rake. Then fork deeply over the lawn—if you have a hollow-tined fork, even better. The idea of this aeration is to loosen up compacted soil under a lawn and to improve drainage. The hollow-tined aerators remove small cores of soil leaving holes in your lawn and cores of soil on top of your lawn. The spiked aerators leave holes in the ground by pushing the soil down and to the side. Established lawns can benefit from fertilising this month. If you intend to sow seed, plant offsets or put down instant-turf, start preparing the area immediately:

- Rake off all the stones and rubbish on the area;
- Use a rotary hoe or dig to a depth of 15 cm and then rake smooth;
- Water and allow any weeds to come up (may take a couple of weeks);
- Spray the weeds with a herbicide containing glyphosate and wait another couple of weeks. OR alternately hand weed;
- Re-rake the surface until the soil is fine and smooth.

Would you like some seeds?



Barbara and the seed box (photos Dean Wilson)

When Barbara Wilson told us that her old friend Robin Sanders was going to make a new seed box for the Club we were delighted. An accomplished carpenter, he has not only produced a very handsome box, but one which displays the seed packages clearly and, importantly for Barbara, is easy to transport.

The seeds are free for members and there are lots to choose from including: broad beans, parsley, cabbage, coriander, marjoram, beetroot, snow peas, hellebores, honesty, apples, snapdragon, angelica, bay leaf, nasturtium, clematis.

If you have seeds to donate or if you want to use some of the seeds, please talk to Barbara at the next meeting and she will be delighted to help you. Please bring any spare seeds you have for her to place in the box. Thanks to Barbara for keeping the box and its seeds for the Club. We hope you will find time at the next meeting to peruse the collection.

Garden Tips

Leaves: should be collected from lawns and paths and used for the compost heap for future mulch. If you can use a shredder or a rotary mower for the leaves then this will assist them to break down faster.

Geraniums: prune hard if you have not already done so and prepare cuttings for your garden or for the plant stall in October.

Stake: dahlias, chrysanthemums and Easter daisies and deadhead every day.

Pear and Cherry Slug (Caliroa cerasi): This insect is very dark green and slimy in appearance and feeds on the upper surface of the leaves until only a network of veins is left. When the larvae have eaten enough they drop to the ground and dig down into the earth where they later pupate. The adults push to the surface and fly to the leaves, where the female lays her eggs and the slug-like larvae hatch out. When they have finished gourmandising on our beautiful trees, the larvae may be 10 mm long! They attack cherries and pears and also hawthorns, crabapples, apples, quinces and plums. (See Judy McMaugh, What Garden Pest or Disease Is That? p.192). The organic way to control them is by hosing them off the leaves. (This hasn't worked in our garden but if you have had success with this method, please let us know.) Another organic way is to tape the tree near the surface of the soil and paste a horticultural glue over the band to prevent them climbing back up. We have had some success with codling moth on the apple trees by fastening cardboard bands around the base of the trees. If you have hens and you can fence them in around the trees over winter, this apparently can help decimate the unwanted population. The chemical way is to spray the leaves with carbaryl. There are two generations of this pest a year: the first larvae appear in early summer and then the second generation, which is usually more of a pest than the first, appears later. Tino Carnevale on ABC's Gardening Australia said in 2011 that he had tried all the organic methods of control but that he's now resorting to Bacillus thuringiensis (B.t). (It is considered non-toxic to mammals, fish, honeybees, beneficial insects - but will it work?)

Roses: Fertilise the roses to help new wood harden and protect late developing shoots, and top-dress with a handful of sulphate of potash.

Perennials: Early Autumn, when the soil is still warm, is a good time to move, divide or transplant perennials. Water the plant with Seasol during the week before moving, and when you have dug up the plant, soak it in a bucket of water for an hour before replanting. Make sure you have dug a large enough hole and have prepared the soil with plenty of organic matter.

When planting, one of the likeliest faults is that the hole made will be too small for the plant going into it. Some gardeners will try to get round this by twirling the plant around so that its roots are forced in with a spiral twist. But if the roots are spread out naturally, the plant has a much securer purchase on the ground and is less likely to get rocked by wind and lifted by frost. Others push the centre of the plant into the hole and fill in quickly, while a conveniently glazed vision ignores the root tips that are left waving about in mid-air. The motto is to fit the hole to the plant, not the plant to the hole.

Christopher Lloyd, *The Well-Tempered Garden* (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1970) p. 9-10.

Bulbs and spring-flowering annuals to plant: Now is the time to plant bulbs and all those irresistible annuals for lovely displays from winter to spring. (There's always an exception and tulips should be planted at the end of May or beginning of June.) It is quite useful to use annuals to mark out where you have planted special bulbs—yellow crocuses and purple pansies make a striking combination and you will know exactly where you have put them. It's so easy to forget where the snowdrops are, so a circle of primroses or dianthus may aid your memory!

There is so much advice about the depth one should plant bulbs but the rule of thumb is for large bulbs plant 12-15 cm deep and 10-15 cm apart and for small bulbs plant 5 cm deep and space 5-10 cm apart. It's up to the gardener to know his/her soil. If it is clay and very heavy then bulbs would probably prefer to be planted closer to the surface where they won't get waterlogged and rot. So plant deeply on light soils but shallowly on heavy.

Apple and rhubarb streusel (Adapted from

Australian Women's Weekly, Crumbles and Bakes, p.40

Base 100g butter softened 110g (½ cup) castor sugar½ 1 egg yolk 100g (⅔ cup) plain flour 35g (¼ cup) self-raising flour 1 tablespoon custard powder

Fruit

440g (4 cups) coarsely chopped rhubarb 2 large green apples (400g), sliced thinly 2 tablespoons honey 1½ teaspoons finely grated orange rind

Streusel

75g (½ cup) plain flour 35g (¼ cup) self-raising flour 75g (⅓ cup) packed brown sugar ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon 80g butter, chopped

- 1. Pre-heat oven to 180°C/160°C fan-forced. Line 20cm x 30cm lamington pan with baking paper, extending paper 5cm over long sides
- 2. Make streusel. Blend or process flours, sugar and cinnamon until combined. Add butter, process until ingredients just come together. Enclose in plastic wrap: freeze streusel about 1 hour or until firm.
- 3. Beat butter, sugar and egg yolk in small bowl with electric mixture until light and fluffy. Stir in combined sifted flours and custard powder. Press mixture into pan. Bake uncovered about 20 minutes or until base is browned lightly. Cool slice 15 minutes.
- Increase oven temperature to 200°C/180°C fanforced.
- 5. Cook rhubarb, apple, honey and orange rind in medium saucepan, stirring occasionally, about 6 minutes or until apples are just tender; cool 15 minutes. Spread over cool slice base; coarsely grate the streusel over fruit.
- 6. Bake, uncovered, in oven about 15 minutes. Cool in pan before cutting into slices. Serve with thick cream or custard, if desired.

Makes 15 slices.

Minutes of General Meeting 4 February 2013

Presbyterian Church Hall, Bendooley St. Bowral

Present: 45 members Visitors: 5

Apologies: M. Mowbray, J. Braithwaite, L. Thirrup, E. & P. Paananen, R. & N. Bailey

President Meg Probyn opened the meeting at 1.35pm and expressed great pleasure in welcoming all to the first meeting of the new year and especially welcomed the new members and visitors.

Meg then introduced Chris and Charlotte Webb, Patrons of the Club, who have their roots in the gardening history of the area as well as an established garden design business and involvement in many community projects, the SHBG development being the main one.

Chris then presented a talk on 'Anglo-Italian Gardens of Florence' that they visited last year. The majority of these gardens were developed in the early 1900s when wealthy English and Americans began buying derelict villas and restoring them to their former glory. The gardens had originally been established in the Renaissance when the idea of a garden for pleasure rather than for production was first considered. Cecil Pinsent, who originally trained as an architect, constructed gardens that were all about design, with less attention given to the plants themselves. Masses of clipped and ordered hedges are a prominent feature. Pinsent's influence spread over many areas of Tuscany and he was the first to introduce the idea of pergolas using clipped oaks to provide shaded areas. Chris illustrated his talk with magnificent photos.



Meg, Chris and Charlotte Webb

Keith Bailey thanked Chris on behalf of the club and presented him with a small gift.

 $\ensuremath{\text{Minutes}}$ of the November 5^{th} meeting were taken as read and accepted.

Moved: Ulishka Virag: Seconded: Margaret Buckland

Correspondence in:

- Flyers: Friends of SHBG, Lavender Farm, Clivia Nursery and Goulburn Rose Show.
- Information: GCA Photo Competition, GCA Annual Report and Meeting Minutes, Our Gardens Magazine.
- Invitation from Roberson Garden Club to attend a Zone Friendship Day

Correspondence out:

Appreciation to Robin Sanders: TonyDavis & Maureen Purtell; and Sue Kingsford.

Treasurer's Report:

Pam Bailey moved that the records for November /December show: Income: \$1029.20; Expenditure: \$1108; Balance: \$4806.42 in the general account. Savings account: \$2770.35. **Total:** \$7576.67

Seconded: Glenys Lilliendal

General Business:

- Potting morning next Monday at M. Gleeson's. For first timers it is a fun morning so please bring plant material to propagate, gloves and secateurs. Also small pots are needed with some 7" and 8" pots.
- SHBG have a plant stall as part of the Open Gardens weekend in April and are looking for plants and bulbs to sell. Please let Meg know if you have any.
- Wednesday 6 February berry picking at Montrose (10.30am).
- A new rose being developed by Sue Kingsford and another grower in Queensland will be named "Bowral's Rose". It will have reference to our club anniversary on the label and 50 plants will be available for sale.
- 15th April will be the club Anniversary Lunch at Milton Park. Cost will be \$45.00 with subsidy coming from club funds. Names can be given to C. Mah today and money to be paid at the March meeting.
- The committee has looked at a revision of the constitution in line with new Government regulations. This revision will be presented at the March meeting and a vote on changes will take place at the April meeting.

Show and Tell:

Dahlias were the flower of the month but many members were disappointed in their plants this year. Ulishka Virag displayed a beautiful pink example much to the envy of others.

M. Woodcock had a beautiful magnolia from an evergreen tree, "Little Gem."

Lucky Door Prize: Drawn by Meg Probyn and won by Muriel Stuart

The meeting closed at 2.45pm for afternoon tea. The next general meeting will be on Monday 4th March 2013.

Management and General Committee		
President & Editor: Meg Probyn		4871 3134
Vice-President:	Elizabeth Meredith	4862 4566
Secretary:	Kay Fintan	4861 2594
Treasurer:	Pam Bailey	4869 5117
Meet & Greet:	Janice Scott	4861 7101
Membership:	Pat Keen	4861 5815
Program:	Ulishka Virag	4872 2243
Public Officer:	Eric Paananen	4862 1570
Publicity:	Lorraine Stott	4869 4797
Seed Bank:	Barbara Wilson	4869 3925
Social Secretary:	Catherine Mah	4861 7268
Trading Table:	Marilyn Gleeson	4869 3881
Afternoon tea hosts: Glenys Lilliendal		4861 2849
	Margaret Buckland	4862 5963
	Wendy Gamble	4862 2766
	Doreen Plumridge	4868 3517

Website: bowralgardenclub.com