

Bowral Garden Club Inc.

(Established in 1963)

Affiliated with Garden Clubs of Australia Inc

ADDRESS: PO BOX 910, BOWRAL NSW 2676

Patrons: Chris & Charlotte Webb OAM

NEWSLETTER MAY 2013



Friendship through Gardening



Cyclamen hederifolium (above and below)



The Plant of the Month - Cyclamen

There are 23 species of cyclamen (all native to Europe and the Mediterranean Basin east to Iran, including one from Somalia). The most common cyclamen available in our local nurseries is *C. hederifolium* but you might find *C. purpurascens* and *C. coum*. The leaves of these tuberous perennials appear in autumn with their pretty flowers; they grow throughout winter and spring, and then go dormant through summer. They prefer a well-drained shady spot (under a deciduous tree is perfect) and like rich organic soil and leaf mulch during frosty winters.

**Don't forget that your
Annual Membership Fee is due at the AGM**

What's on in May

6 May (Monday) 1.30 pm: Annual General Meeting followed by a special "Gardeners' Question Time". Please send any questions to the committee or President (megprobyn@bigpond.com).

8 May (Wednesday) 10.30 am: Zone Friendship and Arbour Day (organised by the Robertson Garden Club) – Berrima Remembrance Drive Grove, Old Hume Highway, Berrima.

20 May (Monday) 10.30 am: Visit to Berrima Cottage Nursery, followed by coffee at Magpie Café.

Theme for the month: Cyclamens

What's on in June

3 June (Monday) 1.30 pm: Club meeting. Guest speaker is Stuart Read: *Spanish gardens: shade, shade and a sense of mystery*.

Stuart is the Heritage Officer (Landscape Specialist), NSW Office of Environment & Heritage, Premier's Department.

In 2005 Stuart won an overseas fellowship from the Pratt Foundation/International Specialised Skills Institute to travel through Spain in order to study the management of change in historic and new parks and gardens. In 2010 he led a three-week tour of Spanish gardens for the Members of the Historic Houses Trust of NSW.

10 June (Monday) 10.30 am: Coffee and Pruning demonstration by Phil Maher at Plants Plus, Braemar.

19 June (Wednesday) 10.30 am: Morning tea at Sturt Gallery Café. The café isn't open on Monday or Tuesday so we have switched the date.

Theme for the month: Bulbs

Celebrations at Milton Park



Sandra Regtop, Diana Squires and Margaret Buckland

On 15th April fifty-four members attended the 50th Anniversary Lunch at Milton Park. It was a beautiful day and many members took the opportunity to stroll round the historic garden both before and after lunch. It was a double celebration for Diana Squires, as she celebrated her 90th birthday. The Club gave her a birthday cake and a cyclamen.

The Club also honoured Muriel and gave her 'The Golden Treasure Award' — *In appreciation of her long-standing membership and continuous contribution to the club.*

Photos taken by Lorraine Stott at the Anniversary Lunch, Milton Park (more photos are on the Website)



Muriel Stuart—'The Golden Treasure'—flanked by Meg Probyn (left) and Elizabeth Meredith.



Bob Bailey, Pat Keen, Janice Scott, Anne Stegman and Noelene Bailey



Margaret Woodcock and Wendy Gamble

The Day of the Club meeting

We had a lovely day even though it fell a bit short of what I intended. I started the day with a walk in the mist with the dogs. I walked round the ponds and the site of the Botanic Gardens, inspecting the new shed, and as I walked on under the fir trees I regretted that I hadn't brought plastic bags to collect pine needles for my new strawberry bed. I bumped into friends with and without dogs so we had plenty of chats and sniffs. The sun shone through with the promise of a lovely day.

After breakfast I headed into the garden to pick raspberries and 'deforest' the canes. (I pull out all the canes that grow on one side of the wire during the year and at the end of the season I cut out the old fruiting canes and save the new ones I want to keep. Next year I do the opposite.) Of course, my furry 'friends' came with me, eating their share of the harvest. I grow autumn fruiting raspberries because I have boysenberries before

Christmas and blackberries in January and February, and in this way I have berries for months and the labour of jamming is spread out.

I then moved on to my failure of a three-variety apple tree. I haven't looked after it well this year. It's for this reason that we let the dogs steal, bury, play with and fight over the apples.

After morning chai, I headed for one of my favourite jobs—weeding the herb patch. The smell as I worked was just glorious. I cut back and dug out the too successful herbs and wrapped them into bundles for the trading table for the club meeting. I left the seed heads on the parsley and basil to self-seed for next year. I did the same with the coriander. The dill has already reproduced itself. Turning my attention to the sage, I realized that although I wanted to cut it back, the bees were enjoying the remains of the flowers so much that I couldn't spoil their pleasure.

That was the morning. It was then a quick change and into the car with the plants, praying that I could park in the hall grounds and not have to lug a basket, a box and my bag from Coles car park, which is risky as it's only two-hour parking. I was lucky—in fact doubly lucky to hear Michael Bligh's talk. Obviously he has a talent for landscape design and talking. After seeing his photographs I thought, 'What am I doing opening my garden to the club?'—and wishing that I had heaps of money to do as I wish in it. But really I don't care. I couldn't live without my garden. That may sound a bit dramatic—it probably is—but that is how important it is to me. Anyway I had a lovely day even though the bees stymied me.

Jo Lees

Autumn crocuses



Crocus goulimyi (Photo M. Probyn)

This pretty crocus has lilac-blue flowers with long slender tubes and rounded segments. Native to Greece, it grows in olive groves. These bulbs (from Hillview Rare Plants Nursery, Hobart) were planted in March and flowered in April—a welcome surprise.

Tip from Ray Bradley

Maiden Hair Fern and **African Violets** will grow lush and plump if you soak crushed eggshells in water for 24 hours (or you can use the water you boiled the eggs in). Pour over the Maiden Hair fern or soak them in the water. Water the African Violets from the bottom so as not to wet the leaves or the crown of the plant.

Visit to Jo Lees' Garden 22 April



The sun eventually shone after a wet weekend and the members turned out in force to visit Jo's lovely garden on Monday 22 April. There is always plenty to talk about—from horticultural issues to general chitchat over morning tea—and everyone enjoyed the opportunity to wander round this very special place.

Thanks to Jo for offering her garden! If anyone would like to invite the club for a friendship visit, please contact the committee to arrange a convenient date.

Muriel's Musings:

Some thoughts on the history of the Club

In the beginning (oops, that opening phrase has already been used), the Bowral Garden Club used to meet at the CWA rooms on the third Friday of the month. The dentist, Peter Davidson, lived in the house next door to the Police station and during the cooler months he would go across to the rooms mid-afternoon and light the Warmray heater, fuelling it up with brown coal briquettes so as to have the rooms cozy and warm for the meeting which was supposed to start at 7.30 pm. However, there was always a last minute rush as our members used to watch Alan Searle's TV gardening program and then the ABC News—can anyone remember the newsreaders Ross Symonds and James Dibble?

In the winter months, our Mittagong members (and there were many of them) had great difficulty with the traffic because then it was pre-freeway days and the cars with skis on roof racks travelling to the snowfields made for a long wait for a break in the traffic if you were turning from a side street—Margaret and Alec Fury once waited for 15 minutes to turn from Braemar St on to the main road.

Once the gathered members were called to order and the meeting was under way and the minutes of the previous meeting were read, those of us in the know would be shaking with silent laughter for Ma Bunter and Betty and Peggy Stokes always vied for the chance to second the motion. Another diversion—Eric Wilcox wore a hearing aide that predictably would go off with an ear splitting whistle at every meeting. He was such an energetic little man and was forever dobbing in his dear patient wife Doris by volunteering—“Doris will take on the cake stall”—and a frosty glance would be exchanged when Doris finally caught Eric's eye.

Gloria and Sydney Davies were wholehearted members—even when they moved to Goulburn they would travel down by train, collect the key to the hall, have their cut lunch, and then set up the chairs for the meeting. Unfortunately Sydney's heart condition finally caused them to cease attending.

Another member who was a constant delight was Joan Radik. (During the war years the Japanese interred Joan and her sister Winifred Penfold, who was the Headmistress of the Cathedral School in Shanghai.) Joan lived in Mittagong and would bring Nance Cooper—another most interesting lady. The trouble with Joan and Nance was that neither of them had a sense of direction and whenever we had visits to gardens or interesting places in the district we had to place 'the girls' in the middle of the convoy and keep an eye on them—we lost them on a visit to Red Cow Farm at Sutton Forest and found them driving back from Exeter!

So many interesting guest speakers come to mind: Mick Gripper (the former *Sydney Morning Herald* garden competition organiser and judge), Alan Searle, Jim Beaumont (who had the market garden where McDonald's are now in Mittagong), Mr Prinz from Cronulla, who used to show wonderful moving films of overseas gardens—especially of the Burchett gardens in Canada.

Another memorable guest speaker was a lady from Bargo whose speciality was African Violets—she had us roaring with laughter as she described how her collection of African Violets eventually took over every room in her home and how the neighbour across the road let her store the overflow in her house. Mr Balchin, a local camera enthusiast, often delighted us with his colour slides. He accompanied these with appropriate music to set the scene.

It is not possible to name all the members who come to mind—Anna Regan was the driving force to begin the club. I'm not sure of the order but the Presidents I can recall from the past were Hilda Parry, Alf Weeks (my father), Alex Fury, Hazel Kite, June Allen, Norma Bath, Les Souter, Shonagh Moore and if because of brain fade I've missed someone I apologise.

Michael and Janet Huggan were a blessing when they joined and brought their enthusiasm with them. Margaret and Bill Missingham gave us such hospitality when we visited their Trig Station Lane home in Buggaroo Park along the Wombeyan Caves Road. Millie Orford, a quiet little dear but always at the meetings no matter the weather. Who could forget Eve Gwynn who was lost within six-months from diagnosis of Motor neuron disease—such a character—she organized her own wake six weeks before the day so that she could enjoy it too.

Looking back over the 42 years since I paid my 50 cents and joined the Bowral Garden Club on the evening of 26 October 1971, it has been such a sentimental turning of the pages of my memories as I am writing them down. Of course, there are many events and people I haven't written about but I hope I have given you a glimpse of what belonging to this unique gathering of friends on the first Monday of the month means to me. Sharing and caring for the beauties of nature—the simple daisies to the exotic orchids and some rare things and, of course, just an excuse to play in the dirt. I can hardly wait for the next first Monday in the month to acquire some more memories.

Muriel Stuart

A New Garden Interest

Often I've been told: You can either have a good-looking garden or you can have a dog . . .

My garden was doing very well, beautiful flowers, luscious looking vegetables and a carefully manicured patch of grass.

Then we got OTTO . . . a lovable, lively Dalmatian dog. He came from the pound, so his ancestry has not been traced and divulged to us.

Otto and I had something in common: gardening. Soon Otto started rearranging the flowerbeds; then he watered the surviving plants by lifting his leg on everything that was growing over 10 cm high. Eventually only the toughest weeds survived.

Going the way of least resistance I decided to give up growing flowers and concentrate on some attractive conversation pieces in the garden. For years I dreamt of having a water feature with plants, fish and waterlilies, so relaxing . . . but how to keep Otto away from it?—a dog that drinks out of every puddle in the road and splashes or swims in anything slightly bigger.

The answer was half a wine barrel, empty of course—admittedly it's not a pond but it could be very nice. With the help of a friend, I acquired native plants and irises and three little native fishes which were guaranteed to survive a Southern Highlands winter. Unfortunately they are so shy, they hide all the time under the lily pads, not much fun!



After a few days there started to be some life in the pond. Five little black dots swam around the surface. Tadpoles! Now I looked every morning counting up to five and seeing them grow and grow and grow. I got quite attached to the little creatures without giving them names yet.

While the tadpoles grew bigger and bigger, the plants in the pond got smaller and smaller. One morning only

green sticks remained and five little fat tadpoles cruised around on the surface.

As I was told not to put too much fish-food into the water (that produces too much nitrogen), I had apparently kept them on a diet of algae and expensive, organic pond plants.

Now fish-food was dished out and not long after the biggest of the five tadpoles had hind legs. The others followed in the next few days, and not long after that the first front legs appeared and suddenly we had five little frogs getting more and more adventurous every day—much more interesting to watch than these never-to-be-seen-fish, which were only good for eating all the mosquito larvae. (We enjoyed many a mosquito-free barbecue.)

Now Nature has taken its course and one little frog after another hopped out of the pond, and here I am now with the proverbial 'empty nest syndrome', hoping that one day when they have experienced the wide world around them, they will come back to start a new family, and everything will start again.

Lolita Godsell

A gardener is driven to poetry!

THE PLAGUE FROM HELL

*One lovely Sunday morning,
with coffee cup in hand,
I strolled into my garden,
where in horror I did stand.*

*Every green and leafy surface,
every ornamental thing,
was thick with heaps of beetles,
yellow body, black of wing.*

*"Twas if some hellish insect plague
had descended in the night,
to swallow up my garden.
A really terrifying sight.*

*"God save me!" I was heard to yell,
"from these things that plague me so!
They'll gobble up my garden,
all the shrubbery, row by row!"*

*"Don't kill them!" said an expert friend,
"they're harmless you should know.
They eat the aphid from the rose
that in your garden grow."*

*"You may be right", I answered back
"except for this I fear.
My roses are in the garden front,
the beetles in the rear!"*

*So weeks go by, the beetles stay.
They're not less but more.
So tomorrow they'll get a helping hand.
It's known as Confidor!*

Lorraine Stott

[Despite knowing that Soldier beetles (*Chauliognathus lugubris*) are really harmless, they aren't very pleasant to live with as they constantly leap on each other, bending down the foliage or creating black heaving lumps on the lawn. So we sympathise with Lorraine's dilemma.]

Protect the Bees

As well as the plagues of soldier beetles around the gardens this summer and autumn, there seem to have been more bees and butterflies than we remember from other years.

So if you are driven to using chemicals of any sort in your garden, spray late in the day when the bees have returned to their hive. And apply any spray very selectively and don't spray all the surrounding flowers.



The bees disappearing inside the flowers of the Banksia serrata (taken by the Editor's handy iPhone!)

Southern Highlands News 18 April 2013



Garden Club President Meg Probyn (front) with Lorraine Stott, Elizabeth Meredith, Phyllis Paananen, Pat Keen, Catherine Mah, Clive Probyn, Eric Paananen, Kay Fintan, Pam Bailey and Ulishka Virag. (Photo by Eliza Winkler)

Gardening Tips

The month of May brings colder nights and the first frosts, but the weather is usually very pleasant for gardening. As the leaves fall off the trees, rake them off the lawns to add to the compost heap or to mulch on garden beds. This is an excellent time to weed—the garden beds remain fairly weed-free through the cooler months. Prepare the beds for later planting of roses.

Tulip planting time is here. Check to see if any of the bulbs have signs of green shoots appearing—if they have, plant immediately. Otherwise you can plant in May or later in June. If you haven't already done so, prepare the ground where you want to plant—R.T.M. Pescott (*Bulbs for Australian Gardens*, p. 90) recommends that

the ground should be dug roughly and deeply to a depth of 8-10 inches and then a heavy dressing of garden lime (about one pound per square yard should be added) and then left for 2 or 3 weeks. Then dig to a depth of six inches, level and rake the soil to a fine tilth and plant the bulbs with the pointy end upwards four to six inches deep.

“...there's a sort of child-like delight in planting a little self-contained package, within which everything required for growth and flowering is stored. Then, months later, out from the dirt comes a thick, robust, pre-formed flower. It has to be one of the closest things to alchemy that we'll ever experience.”

Michael McCoy, *The Gardener*, p. 132.

Camellias: Make sure your camellias receive sufficient watering during their flowering periods. Lack of water causes flowers to brown and fall.

Protect from frost: The weather is starting to get colder so if you are in a frost-prone area, make sure you protect your plants by erecting windbreaks (sacking or plastic) round young trees, or using plenty of cane straw mulch.

Lawns: Aerate, improve drainage and rake the leaves from your new and established lawns. Continue to mow the lawn while it grows but make sure the blades are not set too low. Over-sow warm-season lawns with perennial rye or other cool-season grass seeds for greener winter lawns. The Canberra mix (rye/fescue) is available at Bowral Co-op.

Winter annuals: Plant annuals such as pansy, poppy and primula and make sure they are adequately watered during autumn and winter.

Mt Murray Nursery Reopened

Mt Murray Nursery has relocated and is now open at:

Mt Murray Nursery
Lot 1, Old Dairy Close
Moss Vale 2577

(T) 4869 4111 www.mtmurraynursery.com

Please note: Old Dairy Close is off the Berrima Road just before the recycling depot (the Tip).

Minutes of General Meeting 8 April 2013

Presbyterian Church Hall, Bendooley St. Bowral

Present: 53 members **Visitors:** 2

Apologies: Audrey Hamlyn, Bernice Lichtenstein, Noelene and Bob Bailey, Jan Scott

President Meg Probyn opened the meeting at 1.35pm and after welcoming everyone present, introduced the guest speaker, Michael Bligh, who is one of Australia's leading landscape architects having been involved in the design of over 3,000 gardens throughout Australia.

Michael's presentation, titled "Creating Colour and Interest for Every Season of the Year", challenged us all to create gardens which look good all year round based on:

1. structure, especially as the garden relates to the architect of the house;
2. plantings in terms of contrast of colour, form and texture;
3. architectural elements such as furniture and sculptures.

Michael's informative and humorous talk was accompanied with excellent photographs to inspire us to create "landscape paintings" in our own gardens. As an additional incentive, Michael closed with the proverb: "If you want to be happy for a day get drunk; If you want to be happy for a week kill a pig; If you want to be happy for a month get married; If you want to be happy for ever, make a garden."



Michael Bligh with Muriel Stuart at the meeting

Michael offered members a one-hour consultation for \$180, plus \$90 travel fee.

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

Minutes of the February 4th meeting were taken as read and accepted. Moved: Margaret Buckland. Seconded: Lorraine Stott

Correspondence in :

- Flyers: Bundanoon Garden Ramble, Robertson Gardens and the Biennial GCA Convention at Ballarat 15th-18th September.
- GCA Insurance Premium Notice & Information.
- Highlands Garden Bulletin.
- Cheque for luncheon
- Email regarding trees for the Berrima Remembrance Grove.
- Nominations for GCA Awards.

Correspondence out:

Letter of Appreciation sent to Bob and Noelene Bailey

Treasurer's Report:

Pam Bailey moved that the records for March 2013 show: Income \$1,982; Expenditure \$289; Balance \$6,489 in the general account. Savings account: \$2,942. Total: \$9,437 (\$7,597 after paying for catering).

Seconded: Clive Probyn

General Business:

- Membership Renewal – subscriptions for May 2013 – April 2014 are due. Pat Keen has organized envelopes with the renewal slip inside for existing members. A reminder that payment is required prior to standing for election or voting.
- Election of the Committee will take place at the Annual General Meeting on 6th May. Nomination forms available at the meeting for those who hadn't received one via email.
- The Committee met last Wednesday to discuss which charities to support this year. They decided to give \$250 to the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens, \$250 to Moss Vale High School for their agricultural program and \$100 to the Centennial Bushcare group for a tree. In addition we will be buying a tree for the Berrima Remembrance Grove (\$100) and we have been invited to take part in a picnic and planting of trees on 8th May. Marilyn Gleeson is buying the tree and taking rosemary cuttings to plant around the plaques. Please contact Marilyn if able to donate rosemary cuttings.
- Catherine Mah is taking the final bookings and payments for the Golden Anniversary Lunch on 15th

April at Milton House and Ulishka Virag is selling tickets for the raffle, which will be drawn on the day. In addition we will be celebrating Diana Squires 90th birthday.

- A reminder to everyone to please donate \$2 in lieu of a food contribution for the afternoon teas held after the meetings.
- Please see Ulishka Virag if interested in a trip to the Canberra Arboretum on November 11th.
- "Coombe Wood", an 8-acre property of Simon and Mariese Grant at 226 Range Road Mittagong has replaced "Bellagio" for the Town and Country Open Gardens Weekend.
- "Gardeners' Question Time" will replace the talk on the History of the Club at the AGM. Members are requested to write down their questions and if possible give to Meg (email or telephone) prior to the meeting.
- Pamphlet on Environmental Weeds in the Southern Highlands distributed.
- Meg appealed to members to write articles for the May and June newsletters and to forward them to her ASAP as she is going on holidays between the meetings.
- Constitution Changes. Meg Probyn moved that the revised constitution of the Club that had been circulated to members and tabled at the March meeting be adopted. Carried unanimously

Show and Tell:

The theme for the month was Autumn Leaves, which were on display plus some late flowering dahlias.

Exhibition Lucky Draw: won by Lorraine Stott

Lucky Door Prize: won by Kay Lawson

The meeting closed at 3.15pm for afternoon tea. The next meeting will be the Annual General Meeting on Monday 6th May at 1.30pm.

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

Advance Notice

Bowral Garden Club members have been invited to participate in the Highlands Garden Society Winter Seminar on Saturday 20 July 2013 at the Uniting Church Hall (corner of Boolwey and Benbooley Streets, Bowral). Entry \$25 including morning tea. To reserve a place, contact Ray Bradley (4861 4090). Forms will be available at the AGM 6 May 2013.