# **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 APRIL 2016**



Friendship through Gardening

# For your diary: April

**Monday 11 April 2.00pm: Club Meeting:** Speaker: Harvey Howard: "Bee Keeping and the production of honey".

**Monday 18 April 10.30am:** Garden visit to Harvey Howard's to see bees in action. (*Morning tea and garden visit to be confirmed*)

Saturday 23 – Sunday 24 April: SHBG Autumn Gardens Weekend: six gardens open to raise funds for the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens and a Plant Sale- on the SHBG site. Not to be missed!

Monday 25 April: ANZAC Day

# For your diary: May

**Monday 9 May 2.00pm: Club meeting:** Speaker: Deidre Hill: *Floral Art- simple designs for your home.* 

**Monday 23 May 7.45am: Coach Day Trip** to E.G. Waterhouse National Camellia Gardens, Caringbah in The Teahouse. Lunch at Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Art Centre. **Booking is essential** – see form on back page.

## Theme for the month: Autumn tints

Beautiful colours in Noelene and Bob Bailey's garden





## From the absent Editor

I hope you are enjoying the first month of slightly cooler weather and the changing colours here. This month and May are my favourite times of the year, usually cool not cold days and beautiful blue skies.

I am in the northern hemisphere and the days are supposed to be the same cool climate, however, it is early spring, and I hope to show you beautiful gardens and expecially cherry blossons next month.

Enjoy your days. Thank you to all who sent their contributions early. And a big thankyou to Meg Probyn for completing this edition and Anne Curvers for forwarding it to you this month.

Carole Scott

## From the President

I'm writing this blurb early as Carole is going on holidays and she is endeavouring to have the newsletter ready before she leaves. So though this is for the April edition, it is now only early March and I am lamenting that it is still so hot. I'm so looking forward to the cooler weather, as going on past experience, by the end of April we are ready to light the fire. Instead I'm pestering Pat to install an air con. Anyway it is appropriate weather for recalling my visit to Singapore's "Gardens by the Bay" in January.

The time before last when I visited the gardens, I went with my beloved, Pat, and my two eldest grandchildren, and all the three of them wanted was food. So I was dragged along, trying to take it all in and seeing very little of the gardens. This time I was determined to go by myself and spend as long as I wanted. What a treat!

The gardens are a combination of beauty, inventiveness and education. They were created on 101 hectares of reclaimed land at Marina Bay and were opened in 2011.

On entering the gardens you are greeted by eighteen Supertrees, made of metal and concrete. These huge trees reach up to 25-50 metres high and are covered with bromeliads, orchids, ferns, and tropical climbers. I took the elevator up the inside of one of these "trees" to enjoy the view from the 22-metre high skyway which spans two of them. These structures contain photovoltaic cells to harvest solar energy and the whole area is illuminated after sunset with a light and sound show.

There are also two large glasshouses. "Cloud Forest" contains a 35-metre manmade mountain and waterfall and is cool and damp. You take the elevator to the top of the mountain and then walk down through the dome experiencing the vegetation of tropical highlands. My favourite display was at the bottom of the mountain with carnivorous plants interspersed with Lego plants in bright red & yellow. You just had to smile!



Lego with Carnivorous Plants

The other glasshouse is the "Flower Dome" displaying dry climate plants from different regions of the world, such as Africa, Australia, Italy and Spain.

"Gardens by the Bay" are said to be home to 250,000 rare plants. In the complex, The Heritage gardens include Chinese, Malay, Indian & Colonial Gardens reflecting Singapore's main ethnic groups. Also in the complex there is "The World of Plants" displaying some unusual fruits and flowers such as the Canonball Tree (Couroupita guianensis) with large round edible fruit.



The Cannonball Tree

As well there are lakes, children's garden, sculptures, cafes and information bays educating you, not only on the plants but also on the environmentally sustainable infrastructure. These gardens are truly amazing and a delight to visit.

In the month of April, you will have the opportunity to explore some wonderful gardens locally. On  $23^{\rm rd}$  -  $24^{\rm th}$  April six gardens will be open in aid of the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens with a plant stall on the site of the SHBG. Always worth a visit. I am so looking forward to autumn and starting some gardening projects that with a bit of luck I also might finish.

Happy gardening!

Anne Curvers

## Garden tips for April

Have you noticed how particularly stunning all the crepe myrtles were this summer? The colours, ranging from white and the palest of pinks to the deepest reds and purples, glowed in the sunlight. That is, everywhere except in our garden. We have three crepe myrtles (Lagerstroemia indica) and none of them has flowered this year. They are all growing reasonably well—we feed them regularly and prune them when necessary—but they lack sunshine. The moral is make sure you choose a spot for your plants where they can really flourish, especially if you want them to flower. They are still an asset to our garden, I reassure myself, because the colour of the leaves in autumn and the shape of the trees

and branches in winter. Our towering eucalyptus canopy is too dominant for us to have much success with smaller trees—except in the front garden. If you are thinking about planting a tree for next year's autumn colours or for spring flowers, now is the time to visit the nurseries and see the trees. You need to find out just how tall and how wide they will grow and then find a spot in your garden.

It's hard to go past the flowering cherries, the Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*), the silver birch (*Betula pendula*) and the ornamental pistachio (*Pistacia chinensis*). If you have heavy clay soils, the nyssa trees do well—*Nyssa sylvatica* grows to about nine metres so it's a suitable tree for a largish suburban garden. Considered to be one of the most beautiful trees in the world, the horizontal branches provide such a stunning shape in contrast with other trees. There are so many trees to choose from and a trip to the nursery will be a treat. This month you can start to prepare an area where you would like to plant a tree or two. Winter planting (June) is usually the ideal time.



Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens nursery area—the plants are being prepared for the sale on 23-24 April 2016

April is not a pruning month so put away your secateurs except for deadheading salvias, dahlias and your other spent perennials. This month is caring for lawns and perennials and planting time.

Lawns: One of the secrets to a lovely, healthy lawn (according to the gardeners at Retford Park) is to fertilise three times a year: 'blood and bone' in spring and autumn, and a complete fertiliser in December. So April is 'blood and bone' time—and after you spread it, the lawn requires a thorough watering. Hopefully rain will fall at exactly the right time for you! It's time to tackle the weeds too but don't be neurotic about a few weeds. The ones I'm bothered about are dandelions and they are soon removed with a sharp knife or an oldfashioned potato-peeler. Clive has already started to sow the bare patches near the house. He raked all the stones off the surface; dug to a depth of about 15cm then raked it again. He didn't spray weed-killer as many of the books suggest, but simply scattered the grass seed (Canberra-mix from Bowral Co-op) and covered it up with a light topping of washed sand. He watered it twice a day on the very hot days. The grass is already growing beautifully. During this month he will be out there sowing more seed, which he broadcasts in different directions so that every square inch will be covered.

**Perennials:** What would we do without the wonderful perennials that pop up every spring? Check to see if they have finished flowering. If they haven't, leave them for

another time, but if they have, remove the dry stems and yellow leaves. If they have started to push themselves up from the middle (crowning) it is probably time to divide them—but if you want to keep a large clump, make sure you plump up the soil around them with extra soil and fertilise them with 'blood and bone'. To divide, dig out the whole clump and cut off three-quarters of the growth. Pull off the rooted offsets from the outside of the plant. These offsets can then be planted in a new area. All these new plants will require watering to get them established if it doesn't rain. Have you noticed your sedums crowning? The clumps get so large that the flowers all fall over. They require dividing and it can be done now or in spring.

Bulbs and Annuals: I like to weed, plant annuals and bulbs—all at the same time. It helps me to remember where I've planted the bulbs and the borders look pretty all winter and then splendid in spring when the bulbs emerge in all their glory. I've bought lots of bulbs already through the post and I've already started to plant. The tulip bulbs will wait until the very end of April or May but all the others I will finish planting this month. If you have an opportunity to buy some of Tony Davis's daffodil bulbs at the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Autumn Nursery (23-24 April) on the SHBG site (corner of Kangaloon and Old South roads) you will be in for a treat. He breeds them especially for our climate, so they are not only stunningly beautiful flowers, but have sturdy stems and don't fall over when the winds blow. I particularly loved 'Miss Rhiannon', named after his granddaughter-but his other bulbs I planted were all gorgeous too. His bulbs are late flowering and last for

This month is a wonderful time for gardeners—it's not as hot so we can be out for longer. When you are feeling a bit tired, you can pretend you're busy by walking around with a rake and leisurely raking up some leaves for your compost and all the while watching to see what is happening. If the slugs and snails are out in force, they need to be dealt with firmly. A caffeine spray can be very effective and is an environmentally friendly method of control. Use strong espresso coffee (2% caffeine content), which makes the plants unpalatable for the snails and slugs.

I hope to see you all at the Southern Highlands Autumn Gardens Weekend—both in the six open gardens and at the SHBG site where the plant sale will delight you all.

Have a lovely autumn gardening time!

Meg Probyn

#### **Muriel's Musings**

The story of little Bee the Bantam and how she came to be part of the menagerie we accumulated when we were living up on Oxley Hill Minnows.

One evening when Neil returned home after spending time at the stables where our horse was spelling, he came into the kitchen with a smile on his face and placed a cardboard box on the table. "Here's a present for you, Bill the farrier can't keep her out of Buster's stable and he is afraid she will be trodden on." I opened the box and up shot a bundle of brown feathers and it bit my hand! It caused me to utter "Oh, you little Bee!"

Actually she was a feisty little brown bantam hen and very broody. Quite an acquisition to go into our hen house to sit on the fertile eggs our hens were laying. She was an excellent mother and raised several settings for us. And then she disappeared and we feared a fox had taken her, until one day she proudly brought her brood of six little Bees from behind the stacks of hay bales in the big barn. We were delighted to see her again, such a feisty little mother as she clucked and scratched and nurtured her little brood. We were less than delighted when most of the little Bees turned out to be little boy bantams, you have no idea how difficult it is to give away little boy bantams to good homes!!!

Thought for the Day

We are not age We are what we do Age is not important

To enjoy and enrich life for yourself and others is!

Muriel Stuart

# **High Meadow**

My garden was called 'High Meadow' and was near Guyra—1,330 metres above sea level—a bit of a challenge. I say 'was' because our neighbours have told me that the new owners have cut down a lot of the trees and put their sheep into the garden!

The fountain (below) was the centre of the Celtic cross plan of the potager—I hadn't turned it off and wrapped it in several layers of bubble wrap before a sudden drop in temperature left this display!! I learned my lesson—cracked the main bowl which was rather expensive to replace!

Maryann Hewitt



The frozen fountain



A lovely wintery scene



From winter to spring at High Meadow

#### **Kristine's Corner**

GREVILLEA iaspicula known commonly as the Wee Jasper grevillea is a recent find in the botany world only discovered in 1980. Listed as critically endangered and endemic to NSW, it is only found near Lake Burrinjuck. Its growth area may possibly have been larger prior to the completion of Burrinjuck Dam in 1928 when the valley was flooded. It has been a recent concept to save endemic plants when major earthworks are undertaken. Even so some of the attempts are much to be desired. Conservation of the species is heavily reliant on private landholders' co-operation. G. iaspicula is on the 'Saving Our Species List', a program to stem the decline of native species.

In autumn to late spring, pendant cream and pink inflorescences, mostly bird pollinated, provide much needed nectar for birds in the bleak winters of the area.

A small to medium shrub to 1.5metres high with smooth oblong mid green leaves. A frost hardy species, it demands good drainage and a trim after peak flowering to maintain a nice shape. *G. iaspicula* is in cultivation but still reasonably hard to source. There will be tube stock available at the Southern Highlands Botanic Garden autumn sale.

If the name weren't already taken by another grevillea, and the choice was up to me, I would have named this species 'strawberries and cream'—which of course brings me to this month's moonshine of choice.

STRAWBERRY CREAM COCKTAIL a great seasonal sip!

In a blender mix 6 strawberries,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cream,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup ice blend 30 seconds. Add gin to taste.

Pour into cocktail glass and garnish with  $\frac{1}{4}$  strawberry and grevillea flower.



Kristine Gow

# From the Patch via Meg Broad beans

Chris was going to write about broad beans but, as you can imagine, he's flat out with the shenanigans at the SHBG and he missed the deadline. So your temporary editor has stepped into the breach and since we don't have a vegetable garden per se this will be an interesting (or potentially disastrous) exercise! I love going to other people's gardens to see their veggie patches. Our daughter Fiona and partner Brian, who live ten minutes away in Willow Vale, have created a fascinating area for their culinary plants. The house is built on a sloping rock face and behind that they have managed to find sufficient flat areas for an above ground pool for the children and a wired off area for their vegetables. It's a bit like entering Fort Knox—it's not thieves or rabbits they worry about but large kangaroos hopping over the hill to devour everything. There are variously sized containers overflowing with all sorts of vegetables with the centrepiece being half a large water tank-it's a vegetarian's heaven—from asparagus, tomatoes, chillies, capsicums, pumpkins, peas, carrots—everything grows well.

But to get back to the topic of broad beans, this is the time to think about cool-season vegetables including broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, onions, peas and spinach. Broad beans (*Vicia faba*) are also known as fava beans in Italy and the USA, and are one of the oldest foods recorded. Remains of broad beans have been found in many of the earliest archeological sites in northern Africa and it is interesting to note that they feature in the dishes of many different cuisines today, including those of China, South America and the Middle East.

Broad beans are a tall leafy crop requiring space to grow. They grow best in well-drained soils with a pH around 7 (neutral or slightly acid or alkaline) with lots of organic matter like compost or well-rotted manure dug into the soil. Be careful not to overdo the nitrogen, or you will have excessive leaf growth and few flowers or pods. Some horticulturists recommend that you soak the seeds overnight in dilute seaweed extract (1 tsp to 1L) in order to speed up germination.

Sow into your prepared area at a depth of 5-10cm, with 15-20cm between plants and 70cm between rows. Germination occurs 10-14 days after sowing, but will be slower if you sow later towards winter. Water well directly after sowing, but then desist from watering until after germination has occurred—this will prevent the seeds from rotting.

Hopefully there will be such a heavy crop of broad beans that your plants will need to be staked to stop them collapsing under the weight of the beans. If you don't sow your seeds early enough there is a chance that the flowers will only be formed when the frosty weather is upon us and then they are unlikely to set pods. Once spring arrives, pinch out the tips of the plants to encourage pod set.

Black aphids sometimes attack broad beans (small black insects on the underside of the leaves and shoots). If this happens, *Yates Garden Guide* recommends the use of Natrasoap, Pyrethrum, Bug gun or Folimat.

The sweetly scented flowers herald the beans arrival! Sudden temperature changes and lack of water may delay flowering and fruit set. Planting to harvest is generally about 4 months, but once beans start to appear, you will have at least a couple of months fresh delicious beans. They can be harvested and eaten small, pod and all, or left to mature and just the beans eaten. Many recipes call for the individual beans to be peeled, but this is not necessary if the pods are harvested while the beans are still young and tender. The plant will react by setting a further batch of pods.

When pods are larger, the beans need to be shelled and the skins removed before cooking. Freshly shelled broad beans can be frozen, blanched and then frozen or stored in the fridge for about 5 days.

This is a delicious Italian recipe:

Broad bean, mint and almond pesto

180g double-podded broad beans Juice of ½ lemon 10 fresh mint leaves 2 tablespoons almond meal 3 tablespoons of olive oil 1 teaspoon lemon zest Crusty bread to serve

To double-pod the broad beans, peel the beans then blanch them in boiling water for about 4 minutes (if you have tough old beans, blanch up to 8 minutes). Plunge the blanched beans in iced water so the inner beans retain their bright green colour. Slip the beans out of their second shell and wash. Reserve a few to one side for garnish.

Meg Probyn

## **BOWRAL GARDEN CLUB INC.**

Minutes of General Meeting held 14 March 2016

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

**Present**: 59 Members, 9 Visitors

**Apologies:** Jan Scott, Wendy Gamble, Glenys Lilliendal, Kristine Gow, Carole Scott, Cathy Watson, Josie Meincke, Ray Bradley, Kay Fintan, Peta Peter, Frank Moore, Marilyn Gleeson, Trish Browne, Lindsay Orr, Judy Martin.

**President** Anne Curvers opened the meeting at 2 pm and welcomed everyone present including members and visitors. Anne then introduced the members to **Tony McElhinney of Challenge House** and presented him with a cheque for \$500 as a donation to our chosen charity in 2015.

Anne welcomed our guest speaker Dean Wilson who spoke on the "Art of Bonsai". Dean studied at the Ryde School of Horticulture and undertook his apprenticeship at Swane's Nursery at Dural. Since completion of his studies Dean has worked at a number of nurseries including specialised Bonsai Nurseries and travelled to China and Japan to attend exhibitions and to follow his passion for Bonsai. Dean currently works at Gubbins Home Hardware, Moss Vale.

Dean had a selection of his Bonsai plants on display and gave us a pruning demonstration and advised that you start at the top and as you go down the tree, prune less and less. Bonsai need good drainage, good potting mix and to be kept outside. They need to be fertilised regularly with a slow release fertiliser and as the plant ages they need less. The goal is the visual interest and the beauty of age. Clive Probyn thanked Dean for his

very interesting and informative talk on Bonsai and presented him with a gift of appreciation.

**MINUTES** of the February meeting were printed in the March newsletter. Anne moved that the minutes of 8 February 2016 be accepted as a true record of the meeting. Proposed: Bob Bailey. Seconded: Jonquil Temple.

#### Correspondence In:

The Secretary, Lorraine Richardson placed the mail on the notice board as follows:

- SHBG Autumn Gardens Weekend 10am-4pm 23 & 24 April 2016.
- Letter from Garden Clubs of Australia re the State Library of NSW dated 1 March 2016.
- Flyer Garden Cruise to Italy & Croatia
- Highlands Garden Society March Bulletin

#### TREASURER'S REPORT:

Noelene Bailey read the financial report to  $29^{th}$  February 2016 and proposed that it be accepted as follows:

- Balance in cheque account as at end January 2016 \$3,793.29 plus income for February \$135.00 club plant sales.
- Less expenditure for February \$497.10
- Less January cheque presented February \$772.00
- Balance of cheque account as at 29th February 2016 \$2,659.19
- Add balance in savings account No.1 as at 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016 \$5,002.34
- Plus balance in Special savings account for SHBG at 29th February 2016 \$1538.83
- Total funds in hand as at 29th February 2016 \$9,200.36

A full report was placed on the notice board.

Noelene Bailey proposed that the Treasurer's Report be accepted. Seconded by Judith Lewis.

# **GENERAL BUSINESS**

**Sad News** – Michael O'Boyle passed away on 24<sup>th</sup> February and Patricia Harrison passed away on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2016.

**A vote of thanks and appreciation** was given to Noelene & Bob Bailey for hosting the potting morning on 15<sup>th</sup> February and for providing morning tea.

**Also special thanks** to Jonquil Temple for hosting an open garden and morning tea for over 36 people on  $29^{th}$  February. Names were taken for Jonquil's workshop on making water bowls for the garden.

**Berrima School:**  $21^{st}$  March. \$5 payable at the gate - limit of 30 people.

**Bus Trips:** Noelene has organised three wonderful bus trips for us this year. Please book early to avoid disappointment.

The first day trip on 23<sup>rd</sup> May to E. G. Waterhouse National Camellia Gardens, Caringbah (see booking form); the second day trip on 15 August to Glenmore House and Garden, Camden and an overnight trip to the Hunter Valley 5 & 6 September 2016.

**Membership:** The Committee has now agreed to extend the membership to 175 and will review again after the AGM in June.

New Management Committee Members: At the AGM there will be vacant positions on the committee. In the Constitution it reads "an office-bearer ... shall not be elected to hold a particular office for more than 3 years". Ordinary member 4 years. We are looking for someone with accounting or book-keeping skills willing to be treasurer. Our current treasurer will be stepping down and is happy to assist new treasurer. Likewise the positions of president, secretary and editor will, in one year's time, need to have new people.

**Invitation:** If any of the above positions are of interest to members who would like to be on the Committee you are invited to a "morning tea" at 10.30 am on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> April at the home of our president Anne Curvers to find out "what it's all about" and to meet the current Committee, please phone Anne on 4861 3061 or email anne.curvers@outlook.com.au.

Working Parties: Members and new members may be interested in joining a working party which is a great way to meet and help spread the workload. For instance, at the next meeting, please give your name to coordinator of the Tulip Time Parade float, Eric Paananen, if you wish to help. It is great fun. Volunteers are always welcome at the Christmas in July function, the Plant Stall in October, Open Gardens and very importantly, Afternoon Tea at our monthly meetings. Please contact Anne.

**TRADING TABLE:** Pam Cornett advised members had been very generous and had given jars of homemade jam and lots of plants. ALSO for sale, garden tools made by Bob Bailey. Anne thanked everyone who had brought items for the trading table.

**SHOW & TELL:** Anne thanked Noelene Bailey for the lovely vase of flowers and for yet another magnificent deep red hibiscus. Noelene advised that the name of the flower much admired at her potting morning was *Leycesteria formosa* or Himalayan Honeysuckle.

Lucky door prize was won by Sue Ann Miller

**Next Meeting:** Monday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at 2.00 pm – Uniting Church Hall, Bendooley Street, Bowral.

**Guest speaker: Harvey Howard –** "Beekeeping and the production of honey".

Harvey's garden visit on  $18^{\text{th}}$  April yet to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 3.15 pm.

#### VALE PATRICIA HARRISON

We are very sad to report the loss of our member Patricia Harrison. We extend our deepest sympathy to her family.

# 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 041 821 5036 to notify the Club of a member's change of circumstance and welfare. Thank you,

Anne.

**President:** Anne Curvers 4861 3061

Vice-President: Janice Scott

Secretary/Membership:

Lorraine Richardson 4862 2677

Treasurer: Noelene Bailey

**Newsletter Editor:** Carole Scott 4862 4766

Public Officer: Eric Paananen

Trading table: Kristine Gow, Pamela Cornett
Front Desk: Judith Lewis, Janice Scott
Committee: Catherine Mah, Michael Launders
Afternoon tea hosts: Wendy Gamble, Glenys Lilliendal
Larraine Gregory, Marian St Leger Moss

Website: bowralgardenclub.com

## **BOOKING FORM**

BOWRAL GARDEN CLUB TOUR TO E.G. WATERHOUSE
NATIONAL CAMELLIA GARDENS,

PLUS HAZELHURST REGIONAL GALLERY AND ART CENTRE



The club is organising a tour to the above venues on Monday  $23^{\rm rd}$  May, departing from Mittagong RSL at 8:30am.

We request you be there to board the coach at approximately 8:15am. The cost will be \$45 per person, which includes the cost of the coach, morning tea at the Camellia Gardens and lunch at the Cronulla RSL Club.

The afternoon will be spent at Hazelhurst Gallery where we will have a guided tour of the "Doug Moran Portrait" exhibition, following which you will be free to view the gallery, wander in the garden, or purchase your afternoon tea at the cafe.

If you are interested in joining us on this tour, please contact the Treasurer, Noelene Bailey, by email or phone:

Email: noelenebailey@bigpond.com

Phone: 4862 3741, Mob: 0412 807 156

Payments may be made by direct debit: BDVCU (Cuscal Ltd) BSB: 802.101 Account number: 57038

or by cheque to The Treasurer P.O. Box 910, Bowral, 2576

I WISH TO ATTEND THE BOWRAL GARDEN CLUB TOUR TO E.G. WATERHOUSE NATIONAL CAMELLIA GARDENS, PLUS HAZELHURST REGIONAL GALLERY AND ART CENTRE ON MONDAY 23RD MAY.

NAME/S	
PHONE NUMBER	
PAYMENT	