HORTULANUS

Official Publication of Ku-ring-gai Horticultural Society Inc.

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JULY 2025

COMING EVENTS

June 28/29 **Mingara Orchid Fair, Mingara Recreation Club, Mingara Drive, Tumbi Umbi. Sat. 9-5pm, Sun. 9-3pm Entry free.**
July 1 **KHS Meeting: Judy Horton will speak about Roses.**
July 5 **Eryldene, 17 McIntosh St, Gordon Open 10-12.30pm Enq. www.eryldene.org.au**
July 12/13 **Camellia Show: Ravenswood School, Gordon. Sat. 1.30pm-4.30pm, Sun. 10am-4pm**
July 13 **Eryldene, 17 McIntosh St, Gordon. Open Day 10am - 3pm. Refreshments available**
Aug 6 **KHS Meeting: Stuart Read will speak on Paul Sorensen - landscape designer.**

MEMBER NEWS

Membership subscriptions are due on 1st July 2024 - $25 for a single and $35 for a double. Please complete the attached renewal form and return it with your payment (cash, cheque or direct debit) in an envelope with your name on it to Helen Gilkes at the next meeting or post it to Mrs Robyn Brown, P O Box 508, Forestville 2087. Please take a moment to fill in the subscription form as it is needed to check that we have your details correctly recorded.

There were 53 members and friends at the June meeting. We enjoyed an interesting talk on Brush Turkeys by Ann Goeth and Stuart Clark showed us some of his photos of the recent KHS trip to Bright.

We are trying to make sure that our meetings start on time (7.30pm) so that we do not end quite so late in the evening. To help with this, the Show Bench judging starts promptly at 7.20pm. The lights will be flicked on and off to remind you that judging is about to start. This means that no more exhibits can be put on the Show Bench and judges should assemble at the front of the hall. Everyone else should leave the Show Bench area so that the judges can have unfettered access to the exhibits. The Show Bench team would be most grateful for your cooperation.

Don't forget to have a look at our Facebook page which continues to have some interesting postings. We now have 53 contributors and it has proved very useful in answering questions such as finding out plant names and helping members with problems with their gardens. Remember that this is a private group and can only be accessed by members of our Society so nothing of what you post is distributed to the public at large. https://www.facebook.com/groups/2273344029640713.

OUTINGS

We have made a booking for a one-day trip to the Bundanoon Garden Ramble on Saturday, 25th October. The booking form and further details will be available with the August newsletter.

The Society's Members Garden Ramble will take place on Sunday, 12th October, starting at 1.30pm and finishing at about 4pm. We will give you all the details closer to the date. Grateful thanks to the members who have volunteered to open their gardens.

SHOW BENCH

Christine again asked for one or two more volunteers to help as judges. The main requirement is to have a good knowledge of the information contained in the Show Bench booklet which all members are sent when they join. We judge mainly by appreciation which means that we are looking for a good example of an exhibit which should be as free as possible from faults such as petal damage and discoloured leaves. In potted plants, we watch out for weeds and any 'beasties' - we don't need those on the Show Bench. We are also looking for a Show Bench steward who will help exhibitors to place their exhibits in the correct classes and generally help with the placements of the exhibits.

It was pleasing to note that members have listened to the advice about taking more care when putting their exhibits on the Show Bench as the judges reported an improvement in the displays. Please remember to remove dead and/or dying flowers and leaves when bringing in your exhibits.

The Show Bench at the June meeting had some very nice exhibits of Schlumbergera plants and pleasingly, they had all been 'groomed' of dead and dying flowers. In the Vegie section, a tray of Jerusalem Artichokes attracted attention. There were a number of exhibits of citrus, all looking very tasty. An exhibit of very nice-looking chillis was unusual at this time of the year as they are not usually a 'happy' plant in our Sydney winters. The Decorative section had several lovely displays of 'Winter Fun with Berries' and 'In the Loop' as well as some 'Driftwood and Camellias' exhibits.

GARDEN TABLE

After my rather scathing comments last month about the lack of plants, the Garden Table was positively groaning with plants at the June meeting. Thank you to all those members who brought in contributions– there were some real bargains to be had. It was rather sad to see that some of you had to take home some of your plants as they did not find a buyer. May we suggest that members provide some indication of what the plant is and if you don't know its botanical name, perhaps an indication of what the flower is like and where in the garden it likes to grow. This should help buyers when deciding what plants to buy.
Don't forget to check out the Garden Table each month where you will often find some of these rarer plants. Some of the ones on the June Garden Table are almost never seen in nurseries these days.

RAFFLE

There were three very nice plants donated by the Society. Other prizes were donated by members, many thanks to those people for their donations. Your donations are always welcome - something nice that you wouldn't mind winning yourself. $2 gets you three tickets so don't miss out.

GUEST SPEAKER JUNE

This was Dr. Ann Goeth and her talk was entitled 'Living with Brush Turkeys'. Ann tells us that they have lived on our continent for many millions of years. When white settlers arrived, they were hunted extensively for food and their numbers were reduced considerably. In 1974 they became a protected species under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 and the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995. Their resurgence in our suburbs is the result of the reduction of predators such as foxes and the attraction of our bushy gardens. We have inadvertently made it very comfortable for Brush Turkeys to live in our suburbs by providing a habitat they like and bird baths and left-over dog food for them to snack on.
Probably for most people the most annoying thing about Brush Turkeys is that they are mound-builders. They are one of only two species of birds world-wide that do not incubate their eggs but instead rely on the heat generated in the mound of leaves and plant material that they build up to a height of often 1.5m. Mound building is done by the males and begins in about July. He will tend to the mound until the eggs all hatch by about December. He checks the mound daily to make sure the temperature is right and readjusts the mound as required. The female Brush Turkeys inspect the mounds and will only mate with the male if the mound is to her liking. There is usually more than one female turkey involved in this process and many eggs may end up being laid. The chicks will emerge after about 50 days, climbing their way out of the mound unassisted (which can take up to 40 hours), and then they are completely on their own with neither the male nor the female adult turkeys assisting them.

Remembering that these birds are protected, what can we do to discourage them? Ann suggested the following: remove any food and water sources such as dog food or bird food or bird baths, remove or cover any material that the males can use to build their mounds and use gravel as a mulch. She also suggests that we be vigilant when the male first starts to build his mound in July and move him on. A jet of cold water from the hose is very effective as is a motion-activated sprinkler. You can also protect valuable plants with wire cages until the mound building season is over and use plant material that provides thick ground cover such as native lomandra, bromeliads, low-growing grevilleas and the like. The male turkey likes to position his mound in the shade so removing some branches to provide more light will also deter him.
Ann had brought along books she has written on the subject including a particularly charming children's book. These proved popular with members.

Guest Speaker July: This will be horticulturist Judy Horton who spent 22 years working as a garden adviser for Yates where she was responsible for updating six editions of *Yates Garden Guide*. Judy has also been answering garden questions on ABC Radio and other stations. As well as receiving several horticultural industry awards, she also was awarded an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for her contribution to the promotion of gardening. In her retirement, Judy has taken on the role of editor of *Our Gardens*, the Garden Clubs of Australia's quarterly magazine.

MEMBER SPEAKER JUNE: This was Stuart Clark who showed us some of the lovely photos he took on the Society's trip to Bright at the end of April.

We also showed some of the photos that had been entered in the photo competition held on the trip and gave out





prizes to those who were present at the meeting. Prizes also went to all the non-members who entered.

Member Speaker July: This will be Bob Ballinger who will speak to us about his trip to Sweden.

IN THE VEGIE PATCH IN JULY by Christine Rethers

Not much to do in the vegie garden again this month except water it when required and liquid feed once a fortnight. This is a great time to plant out Asian herbs such as coriander, dill and fennel as well as Chinese vegetables such as Bok Choi (Chinese cabbage) and Gai Lan (Chinese broccoli). If you leave it until springtime, they tend to go quickly to seed when the weather warms up.

July is a good month to plant tomato seeds if you want an early crop (and beat the pesky fruit fly). You will need to buy some nice fresh seeds. Fill a seed tray with seed-raising mix (or sieve some potting mix to get some fine mix) and place your seeds one or two at a time with some space between them. You can thin them out later. Cover the seeds very lightly with some of the mix or with vermiculite and spray or water gently. I like to place my seed trays on a tray with about 1cm of water in the bottom so that the mix takes up the water from the bottom. Place your seed trays in a warm position inside, say on a sunny window sill, and keep the trays moist but not wet. The seeds should germinate in about 10 days to 2 weeks. Once the seedlings have got their second set of leaves, you can think about planting out the best of them into individual small pots. By that time, it should be warm enough for them to go outside. Once they have developed sufficiently, say about 10cm high, they can be transplanted into their permanent position. Don't forget that most tomatoes will require staking so have the stakes in place before you plant your seedlings. The area where they will be growing should be prepared beforehand with compost, cow manure and a dusting of garden

The Arthritis Movement

In response to the large number of people who experience arthritis, the effects on mobility, mental health and cost to the community, the Arthritis Movement runs community education seminars, advocates for services and supports research with the aim to prevent, treat and ultimately cure Arthritis.

The Arthritis Community Wellness Program aims to equip participants with practical tools to manage pain and enhance quality of life, by exploring strategies in exercise, nutrition, and mental health – all designed to help support living well with arthritis.

The informative sessions are co-facilitated with local community organisations, ensuring each event is tailored to meet participants' needs, provide opportunities to have questions answered and gather feedback as to service requirements in arthritis care.

The organisation also provides online and hard copy resource materials, exercise classes, peer support and support groups and pain packs.

(Image and summarised data from The Arthritis Movement website: https://www.arthritis.org.au/ . Email: info@arthritis.org.au *Phone:* 1300 275 826 *)*

IT'S ROSE PRUNING TIME!

For **bush roses**, there are three key rules of thumb:

- Cut back all stems to knee height - this can of course vary according to the size of the plant, but the general rule is to cut back two thirds of the plant.
- Cut out dead wood and also old wood. It's young wood that produces flowers.
- Shape to size.

Pruning a **standard rose** is not much different to pruning a bush rose:

- Cut out any old branches above the graft to open the centre
- Remove old and dead, twiggy or weak material close to the graft, and any crossing branches
- Cut back the remaining branches by about a third and maintain a rounded framework.

Pruning **climbing roses** can be perplexing, given that the rule of thumb of pruning two thirds of the plant can have serious consequences for a climber. In essence, pruning a climbing rose is less about cutting and more about training - you get to decide how it will grow.

- Cut back any canes that are in the way and can't be trained back onto the trellis or structure. In effect you are preparing the plant to prune.
- Remove any deadwood, old wood, diseased or crossing canes. It's essential to start at the base and work your way up with cutting back the spindly canes. This will open the plant up. Never remove the young, strong canes.

Now, take a moment to imagine how you would like the rose to look. Basically, main canes form the structure of the plant and lateral canes produce the blooms. Main canes should be trained from the base to the top, allowing the lateral canes to grow horizontally from the base. Look at the number of main canes – there can be many – and decide which ones can be removed, leaving as many as required to fill in the area.
Cut out the surplus lateral canes, spacing horizontal canes 30-40 cm apart, if possible, secured by twine or material that doesn't cut into rose canes.

Be sure to clean up all the debris from beneath the rose you've pruned to avoid any potential diseases during the growing season.

(Courtesy of Wagner's Rose Nursery, Kalangadoo, South Australia)

YOUR JULY GARDEN by Christine Rethers

What a great time of the year this is to get a lot of those once-a-year jobs done in the garden. Many of your clumping perennials will benefit from being lifted and divided and then replanted into a garden bed which has been revived with cow manure and fertiliser, all nicely dug in. Don't forget to water in your new planting with a seaweed solution which will ensure these plants will get away quickly once the warmer weather comes along.

Irises especially should be dug up every 3-4 years. The oldest rhizomes can be discarded as they will not produce flowers again and the newer rhizomes can be replanted into nicely refreshed soil which has had a small amount of lime dug in. Remember, when replanting, that the rhizome will elongate so make sure they are pointing in the direction you want them to go.

Rhubarb grows from a woody rhizome which can be purchased from garden centres or on-line at this time of the year. When you plant these rhizomes in soil which you have enriched with fertilisers and cow manure, make sure the top of the rhizome is just at soil level (don't bury it). It will start growing as soon as we get into the warmer months. One rule with rhubarb (if you want your plant to thrive) is not to pick any leaves in the first year of growth and only a few leaves in the second year. After that it will be big enough and strong enough for you to harvest leaves for most of the spring and early summer. Pull the leaves off the outside of the plant, don't cut them off.

Most bulbs in the garden will flower between July and August and as the flowers finish, deadhead them. Make sure you fertilise the plants several times during their growing season to ensure you will get flowers next year. It is important also to let their leaves die down naturally, don't cut them off as they are needed to feed the bulb for next year.

Winter grass in lawns is a real nuisance. The seeds are often brought in by lawn-mowers that haven't been cleaned between jobs. Quite honestly, the best way to get rid of this is to hand weed it. It is not difficult as it is an annual weed and does not have well established roots. I find the hand weeding quite a pleasant and satisfying job. Don't forget to get to this job before the winter grass sets seed - *'one year's seeding leads to seven year's weeding'!*