

HORTULANUS

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

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JULY 2022

COMING EVENTS

- July 5** KHS Monthly Meeting
July 9/10 Camellia Show, Ravenswood, Henry Street, Gordon. Open Sat. 1.30pm-4.30pm, Sun. 10am—4pm Entry \$5
July 10 Eryldene House and Garden, 17 McIntosh St, Gordon. Open 10am-4pm.
Aug. 2 KHS Monthly Meeting

MEMBER NEWS



Alicia Powell with Julie St Clair and Jeff O'Conor.

the photo with Alicia are two people who were present at that show back in July 1947, needless to say as quite young children.

It was great to see members support this meeting by donning clothes appropriate to the late 1940's, especially the fur coats and stoles that Vivien Leigh liked to wear herself. There are some wonderful photos of our members' outfits later in the newsletter. We would like to hazard a guess and say that many of these furs had not seen to light of day for many, many years. We also enjoyed a splendid supper of coffee, tea and cake!

We are again calling for members to volunteer their gardens for a Spring Garden Ramble. Ideally, there will be three gardens to visit and the suggested date is Sunday, 11 September. The ramble starts at 1.30pm and finishes at around 4pm in the last garden where we will have afternoon tea. If you think that you would like to share your garden with fellow members and are available on the suggested date, please contact Christine on 9449 6245.

It is membership renewal time again—renewals become due on 1st July. However, this year will be a bit different. Last year as we had had so many disruptions to our normal meeting program due to Covid, the committee decided to extend the annual memberships which were payable in July 2020 to cover the 2 years to June 2022 and the collection of renewals was suspended. This means that if you were a member at 30 June 2021 and paid your renewal last year as quite a number did, you are paid up until June 2023. If, however, you did not pay last year, you still had a year's membership free of charge but you will be due to pay this time. When we send your Hortulanus, we will send out renewal notices only to these people and not to those who paid last year or who joined in the last four months of this year. We hope this is not too confusing but basically **if you do not receive a renewal form, you do not have to pay for the coming year.** Please get in touch with the Secretary, Christine, if you have any questions.

Don't forget to have a look at our [Facebook](#) page which continues to have some interesting postings. We now have

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52 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

KHS has organised a coach trip on **Monday, 22 August 2022** to visit the Cherry Blossom Festival in the Auburn Botanic Gardens, the new ultra-modern Flower Power Nursery at Milperra, Camellia Gardens at Caringbah and the Joseph Banks Native Plants Reserve. Morning tea will be in the Garrison Reserve and a picnic lunch will be provided at a location in the area (which will depend on the weather at the time). The cost of the coach and garden entries will be \$75. A booking form is included with your July Hortulanus. Bookings may be made with Helen Gilkes at the July and August meetings or by mail to 20A Normurra Avenue, North Turramurra 2074.

RAFFLE



There were a lovely lot of raffle prizes this month so many thanks to all those who donated a prize. The Society donated a big cyclamen and members donated an orchid, a tibouchina, a bromeliad, a hoyo, some books and some chocolates among other things. Donations to the raffle table are always gratefully accepted.

A special 'thank-you' to Warwick Wilson who stepped in at the last minute as Mohammad who usually does this job was unwell. Don't forget that the tickets are only \$1 each or 3 for \$2 and you can then be in the running for one of these lovely prizes.

GARDEN TABLE

The Garden Table this month had a big bag of iris, some lovely succulents, an orchid, a box full of ajuga, a canna lily plant and some interesting books. Something for everyone and all going very cheaply. Don't forget to check it out each month and you will be sure to find some bargains. Don't forget also to pot up any cuttings you get and bring along any of the extras that you can spare. Note the Garden Table helpers (Vivien Lowther, Patricia Gibson and Alison Wood), all snug and warm in their furs.



MAIN SPEAKER JULY: This will be Stuart Read who will speak to us about 'Ten lessons from Historic Gardens'. Stuart trained in Science, Amenity Horticulture and Landscape Architecture in New Zealand. Since 1991 he has specialised in working on Australian and now New South Wales heritage areas. His particular passions are lessons from old gardens, tracing global plant movement and managing cultural landscapes as part of our identity. His talks are very well researched and always interesting.

Member Speaker July: This will be Ted Shaw who will give a talk on the role of Beneficial Insects in the Garden.

IN THE VEGIE PATCH IN JULY by Christine Rethers

Hopefully the vegetables that you planted back in autumn are all growing well now. Don't forget to keep feeding them with a liquid fertiliser to keep them moving—once every 10-14 days would be ideal. You may be already harvesting some like silverbeet and spinach. I am picking some nice radish now and getting ready to plant my next patch of radish seeds. They are so rewarding as they germinate quickly and you can harvest them in 30-45 days after planting the seed.

There are two vegetables that must be planted now in winter—garlic and asparagus. Garlic should be planted into well composted and manured soil that is very free draining (a raised garden bed is advisable if your vegetable patch is prone to getting a bit water-logged). Buy your garlic bulbs from a garden centre not from the supermarket as those in the supermarket often come from overseas and are sprayed with growth-inhibitors. Break off each individual clove and plant it, pointy end up, about 2-3cm deep and 10-15cm apart. Cover with soil and then some sugarcane mulch. Ideally, you should plant them on the shortest day of the year and harvest them on the longest day of the year. Once they are ready to harvest, pull them out and hang them up to let the foliage dry right out. With the price of garlic reaching astronomical heights, it is certainly a crop worth thinking about.

Asparagus can be grown by either sowing seeds or planting 1-year-old crowns (a bare rooted plant). It is definitely a much quicker time to final harvest by planting crowns. Prepare the asparagus plot well with plenty of compost and cow manure. For each crown, dig a hole to a depth of 30cm, with a raised mound in the centre. The mound should be high enough so that when the crown is placed on it the top will lie at soil level. Place each crown on its mound and spread the roots out evenly. Refill the hole, ensuring the centre of the crown is either just below the surface or barely peeking through, and water well. Mulch the surface well with sugar cane or similar. Asparagus cropping requires plenty of patience as under no circumstances should you harvest anything in the first year. It is only in the second

year after planting that you can cut a few stems as they emerge in spring. Each year thereafter you should be able to cut more and more as the plants grow bigger. After you have taken some edible stems for the table, let the rest develop



op their ferny foliage which will grow to about 1m. Eventually towards the end of summer the foliage will yellow and die and the stems can be cut down to the ground where the plant will be dormant until the following spring. Your asparagus patch should keep going for 20 years or more as long as

you remember to feed it well with fertiliser and cow manure each spring and apply mulch to suppress weeds and provide protection from the elements.

MICROGREENS by Maureen Smith

With Iceberg lettuces costing \$10.00 each, perhaps it is time to think of growing your own, salad greens that is, not Iceberg in particular. One of the simplest ways, particularly in winter, is with a few pots of microgreens, easily grown on your kitchen windowsill. You may have seen them for sale at your local fruit and veg market, but though expensive to buy, they are simple, quick and economical to grow yourself.

Microgreens are essentially baby plants harvested just after the first two true leaves have developed. They can add nutrition and taste as well as a visual appeal. Most varieties are rich in minerals and antioxidants. Microgreen growing kits are available at a variety of prices but you can make your own with a plastic tray and some takeaway food containers with several holes in the bottom for drainage. Fill with seed raising mix and thoroughly moisten, spread your seeds over the surface and cover with a thin layer of seed raising mix. Mist to moisten this topsoil and there you have it. Put them on a sunny bright windowsill and depending on your choice of seed, in a matter of days or weeks you have your microgreens. Once harvested they will not grow again so you need to turn the mix over, reseed and go again. We started off with two trays of containers, the second one started 2 weeks after the first, so we now have a regular supply.



Baby broccoli

What to plant? The variety is infinite and although you can buy microgreen seed packets, you can use just regular seeds and experiment until you find your favourites. For a mild flavour you could use carrot, broccoli, chard or kale. For those who don't like kale, the flavour of the kale microgreen is more like lettuce than mature kale. For a more robust flavour with a little spicy kick, you could try cress, rocket, mustard or radish. But don't limit yourself, basically any green vegetable can be grown as a microgreen. Pea shoots and beetroot have a lovely earthy flavour, and wheatgrass which is very fashionable, can be blended into a smoothie. To harvest just cut above the soil level, rinse gently in cold water and use them in your salads or sandwiches. Delicious and good for you.

Two things to note – don't use seeds that have been coated with a fungicide and don't mix seeds in a single punnet as they germinate and grow at different rates. Stick to one variety per punnet.



Ready to harvest

PRUNING SALVIAS

The three main types of salvias found in Sydney gardens are *Salvia nemorosa*, *Salvia greggii/microphylla* and *Salvia leucantha*. For pruning, each is treated differently.

For the **Salvia nemorosa**, these can be cut to the ground twice a year in early January and May/June. The reason for doing this is to get two flushes of flowers instead of just one. However, if you are happy with just the main flowering in early summer you can let them flower right through summer. They can get a bit straggly towards the end of summer so you can prune them a bit earlier in say April/May to tidy up the bed they are in.

For **Salvia greggii and microphylla** (the lower growing salvias that have become very popular in recent years), the best way to handle these is to prune off about one-third in early autumn. You can shape them into nice neat balls to take them through winter looking tidy. The pruning can be done with hedge shears so no particular care needs to be taken. They will shoot away again as soon as the warm weather comes and they should be in full flower again by Christmas. For **Salvia leucantha** and its hybrids, these should be cut right to the ground in autumn as soon as you see the new growth emerging. The plants can then be fertilised and left to grow on slowly during the winter months. Growth will increase as the weather warms up and they should be in flower soon after Christmas here in Sydney.



Salvia nemorosa



Salvia greggii



Salvia microphylla



Salvia leucantha

YOUR JULY GARDEN by Maureene Smith

▶ With the beautiful sunny days we have been having it is quite a pleasure to be out in the garden, not too early in the morning though. There are always chores to be done and now is a good time to spray your citrus to reduce the numbers of the bronze orange bugs before they hatch. This sap-sucking insect loves your lemon and lime trees as well as other citrus. Spraying with Eco oil now, when the nymphs have not yet hatched, can smother them. Spraying with eco oil has the benefit of smothering scale as well.

▶ Australian natives can be a good source of winter colour in your garden and many beautiful hybrids have been developed over the years. Some excellent winter flowerers are Crowea, a small variety that looks great along the edge of a pathway or in a pot. Crowea Low Dome and Crowea Green Cape, both with pink flowers, are two good cultivars. Another hardy plant not to miss is the Flame Pea, *Chorizema cordatum*. A slender delicate shrub with bright orange, pink and yellow flowers. This will grow best in light shade. Prune out old woody stems and protect from frost.

▶ Another great flowerer is *Eremophila maculata*, the Emu bush, with its abundant scarlet flowers all over - a nicely shaped rounded bush. Another one of my favourites is *Philotheca myoporoides*, used to be called *Eriostemon* - why do they keep changing the names! This aromatic long-leaf Wax Flower with its white star-like flowers is very versatile, doing well in sun or shade, pot or garden. *Eriostemon Winter Rouge* is a pretty hybrid.

▶ Perennial herbs such as Lemon verbena, Marjoram or Rosemary could benefit from a trim to maintain their shape but just don't cut back too far. Cutting into old wood can damage or kill your plant. Dill and Coriander are good to plant now as both are inclined to bolt in warmer months and don't forget Nasturtium. Get a variegated leaf variety and you have leaves for your salad and a pretty addition to your garden or balcony.



Variegated Nasturtium



Eriostemon



Crowea



Eggs of Bronze Orange Bug

Some more photos from our June meeting

