

HORTULANUS

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

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AUGUST 2023

COMING EVENTS

- July 29-Aug. 13** Botanica Art Exhibition, Lion Gate Lodge, Royal Botanic Garden Sydney 10-4pm.
Aug. 1 KHS Monthly Meeting: Nicky Court - Walks on Sandstone Country
Aug. 11 Eryldene House and Garden, 17 McIntosh St, Gordon. Open 10am-12noon.
Aug. 18-20 St. Ives Orchid Fair, St. Ives Showground. Open 9am-4pm (Sun 9am-3pm) Entry: \$8
Sept. 5 KHS Meeting and AGM - Speaker: Helen Lovel from Neutrog.
Sept. 9 KHS Trip to Daffodils at Rydal.
Sept. 10-15 Garden Clubs of Australia Biennial Convention, Toronto. Enq. www.gcac2023.com
Sept. 16/17 Plant Lovers Fair, Kariong. Sat. 8-4pm, Sun. 9-3pm. Further information:
<https://www.plantloversfair.com.au/>

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that our Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday, 5 September 2023.

The purpose of the meeting is:

- * *To confirm the minutes of the last Annual General Meeting.*
- * *To receive the President's Report for 2023.*
- * *To receive and consider the accounts for the year ended 30 June 2023*
- * *To elect office bearers and committee members.*

All existing officers and committee members will stand down. Ted Shaw, Christine Rethers, Robyn Brown, Helen Gilkes, Evelyn Mason, and Jenny Watsford offer themselves for election. Additional nominations would be welcomed.

If you wish to offer yourself for nomination or would like more information, please phone Christine Rethers on 9449 6245.

MEMBER NEWS

It was another rather cool evening for our July meeting but despite this, 55 members and visitors ventured out to enjoy the activities. We were very pleased to bid a warm welcome to our newest member, Georgina Brett.

Membership **subscriptions were due on 1st July 2023** - \$25 for a single and \$35 for a double. Please fill in the subscription form which is included with this newsletter, making sure that you include your email address. Your subscription can be handed in at a meeting or mailed to Helen Gilkes, 20A Normurra Avenue, North Turramurra 2074. You can pay by direct debit, cash or cheque and please remember to include your completed subscription form. This is important as it is needed to check that we have your details correctly recorded.

OUTINGS

The first outing of the year is to 'Daffodils at Rydal' on Saturday, 9th September. The outing will include morning tea, lunch (a sausage or steak sandwich and tea/coffee) and all garden entries and the cost will be \$75. (As there are no food facilities at Rydal, you may wish to bring some extra snacks or drinks). A booking form is included with this newsletter. Helen Gilkes will be taking bookings at the August meeting or you can send her your booking by mail. You can also book by phoning Helen on 9144 4826. Bookings close on Friday, 25 August 2023.

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The trip to the Berry Gardens Festival on the 12th/13th October is now open for bookings. We will be travelling first to Wollongong Botanic Garden for a look around and our morning tea break and then on to Berry to view the first three of the six open gardens with a picnic lunch stop in a local park. We will then move on to our hotel in Nowra for our overnight stay which includes dinner and a hot cooked breakfast. On Friday, we will have time in the morning to explore the village of Berry before heading to the remaining three gardens with a morning tea stop in one of them and lunch at the Berry Bowling Club. We hope to arrive back in Gordon by 5.30pm. Bookings may be made in the usual way with Helen Gilkes at a meeting or by phone or email and payment may be made by cash, cheque or direct deposit. The total cost which includes accommodation, morning teas, lunches and dinner plus garden entries will be \$295 per person with a single supplement of \$75. Bookings close on 30 September but we suggest that you make your booking as early as possible as we have only been able to secure 26 rooms at this popular time of year for this area. If you are willing to share a room, we can take a few more people.

RAFFLE

There were some lovely native plants provided by the Society on the raffle table including a pretty white Hardenbergia. The other raffle prizes were donated by members—thank you to all those anonymous members who bring along some very nice prizes.

GARDEN TABLE

The Garden Table had a number of interesting items on offer including a basket of white Narcissus bulbs, some bags of Orlaya seeds, some pots of interesting ground covers and some wonderful Dahlia tubers, ready for planting. Don't forget to check out the Garden Table each month for some real bargains—have you seen the price of Dahlia tubers offered by some of the nurseries!!

MAIN SPEAKER JULY

This was Judy Horton who gave us a very interesting talk on the history of American gardens and gardeners. Judy introduced us first to two of the earliest garden personalities, John and William Bartram, who in the late 1700's are



John Bartram's garden

best known as collectors and recorders of indigenous plants from New York to Florida. They were also among the first to venture westward across the country, again collecting plants along the way. For his troubles, John Bartram was appointed Royal Botanist by George III in 1765. His original garden has been preserved. George Washington himself was a very keen gardener at his home, Mt Vernon, around this time. He is known for being obsessed with manure! A Tulip Tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) planted by him in 1785 still exists in this garden. Thomas Jefferson, the third American president, was also a keen gardener, especially captivated with growing vegetables at his home, Monticello, in Virginia. In 1803 he commissioned Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to explore the Missouri River and to travel west to the coast. They described and named many new species quite unknown before.

One of the earliest landscape gardeners was Beatrice Farrand who designed, over a career spanning five decades, 110 gardens up and down the east coast. Her best known work was Dumbarton Oaks in Washington DC in the 1920's.



Dumbarton Oaks

Coming into the 20th century, Judy touched on two outstanding gardens in Pennsylvania, Longwood and Chanticleer. Both were established by very wealthy families who owned quite large estates. These gardens continue to be maintained and are open to the public.



Longwood



Chanticleer

On the West Coast, Judy described the Huntington Botanical Gardens in San Marino, California, established by a wealthy railroad magnate in 1903. This includes 16 themed gardens covering over 200 acres and is open to the public. At San Simeon, also in California, William Randolph Hearst, a very wealthy newspaper man, built Hearst Castle which has 165 rooms and 127 acres of gardens! Also on the West Coast but this time in Canada, Judy took us to the Buchart Gardens in Vancouver. This garden started life as a quarry for Portland cement in 1888 and was owned by a wealthy businessman, Robert Buchart and Jenny, his wife. When the quarry was exhausted, Jennie set about



Buchart Garden

turning the disused quarry into this overly sunken garden. The work was finished in 1921 and in 1939 they gave the garden to their grandson. He continued to maintain and develop it until his death in 1997. The family still owns it and it remains open to the public to this day.

Main Speaker August: This will be Nicky Court who works full time as a landscape designer for Landsberg Garden Design, as well as looking after her own clients for special projects. She grew up on Middle Harbour and loves bushwalking and plants. She also takes tours to India, focussing on Indian gardens, landscape, architecture, culture and textiles. She been visiting India for 30 years and has family connections there.

MEMBER SPEAKER JULY



Our President, Evelyn Mason, gave the second of her three-part talk on Dahlias. In this talk she showed a video of a Dahlia grower preparing her tubers for over-wintering. She first cleaned off and trimmed the large bunches of tubers by cutting each bunch into sections with two or three tubers, making sure that each individual tuber has an 'eye'. This is found near the neck of the tuber and is the growth point for the new plant which will emerge in spring. Evelyn pointed out that in Sydney we do not need to lift our Dahlia plants in winter as the main reason for doing this is to protect them from frost. However, after a while in the same spot, the Dahlia plant will have developed numerous tubers, each of which will have a flowering stem, and the plant will become too big to stake properly and look after. When this happens, it is time to lift the whole plant and divide up the tubers into groups of two or three. To over-winter the tubers put them in a single layer in a box with sand or sawdust. Keep an eye on them so that they do not dry up and shrivel too much. A light misting will help with this. The best planting time is not until late September through to November and the plant should be in flower approximately two months later.

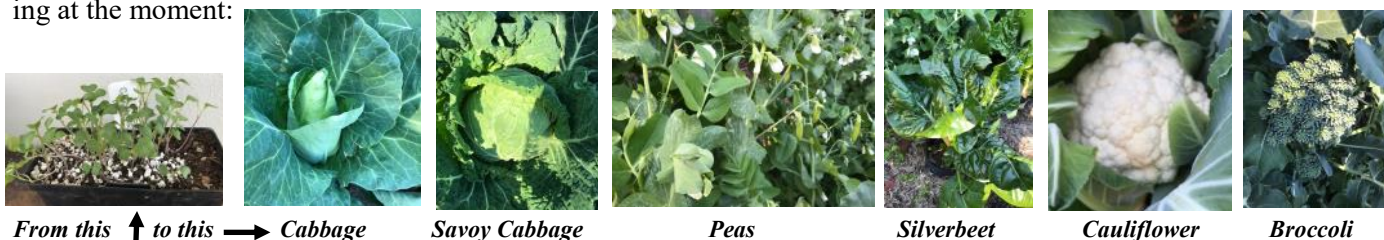


Dahlia tubers

Member speaker August: Evelyn will finish her talk on this fascinating plant. She has done so much research!

IN THE VEGIE PATCH IN AUGUST by Christine Rethers

Hopefully you are all now harvesting your winter vegetables. If you are anything like our Vice-president, Ted Shaw, you will be enjoying a bumper crop. Last year, Ted showed us how to do it. In March he planted seeds of various vegetables which were later planted out in his vegie patch. This year he did the same and this is what he is harvesting at the moment:



From this ↑ to this → Cabbage Savoy Cabbage Peas Silverbeet Cauliflower Broccoli

Notice that Ted's vegetables are remarkably free from pest and insect damage, especially the caterpillars of the Cabbage White Butterfly. Ted grows a lot of his vegetables in a specially constructed garden bed which is completely covered with wire netting. I am sure this will deter critters like rats and possum from attacks. It may even deter the butterflies.

If you are growing broad beans, don't be discouraged if you don't see flowers yet even though the plants themselves may be close to a metre high. The flowers will come when the weather warms up later in August. The beans form quite quickly after that but it is best to pick them while they are still young. The broad bean flowers need bees for pollination so think about planting some flowers near them that will help to attract bees. One of the best, I have found, is the Thai basil. It grows quite tall and flowers just about all the year round. It always has a crowd of bees round it.

If you like lovely new potatoes, now is the time to plant your seed potatoes. They should be sourced from a nursery or garden centre and be certified as being free of disease. Please don't use potatoes you bought from the supermarket as they are field-grown and you cannot be sure they are disease-free even though they may look alright. I have tried growing them in grow-bags but did not have much success. However, other Society members have used grow-bags with great success so it is worth a try. Any number of different bags are available on the internet and they are not very expensive. Alternatively, you can of course grow them in your vegie garden but it is recommended not to plant them where you have recently (within the last year) grown tomatoes. Both plants are from the Solanaceae (Deadly Nightshade) family and can transmit disease from one to the other. Both can suffer from a soil-borne fungal diseases (Fusarium and Verticillium wilt). Capsicum and Eggplant are in the same family and should likewise not be grown in the same plot for two years running. Use the plot instead for green leafy vegetables such as Spinach or Lettuce.

Tip: Don't plant your potatoes until they have 'chitted' - produced the beginnings of new growth from 'eyes'. This will give you a crop several weeks earlier.



YOUR AUGUST GARDEN by Maureen Smith

Although it is officially winter, it makes you wonder whether the four seasons that are decreed really reflect our weather patterns. Already there are signs of spring with Snowflakes and Snowdrops starting to flower. Daffodils are coming out and the first signs of Bluebells are appearing. As long as they haven't suffered the ravages of possums, the blowsy pink cups of some Magnolia blossoms have also started to appear.

However, things are slower in the garden and perhaps now is a good time for reflection and decisions as to whether to change a few things.

Does your garden lack colour at this time of year? It's too late for this August, but you could consider clearing up a space to plant Azaleas. Planting now would give you some sizeable bushes with their beautiful bright colours for next year. Can you find a spot for some winter flowering Salvias? They are mostly of the large variety but can be kept in shape with summer pruning. They come in a variety of colours and you can find one to suit all conditions - sun, shade or part shade. *Salvia Timboon* is a deep red variety and thrives in the sun whilst *Salvia Fallax* with its blue flowers loves the part shade.

Another profuse and showy winter bloomer is the *Dichroa*, often known as the evergreen *Hydrangea*. It has large blue hydrangea-like heads of flowers offset by a light green foliage.

You don't have to wait for next winter to appreciate any changes you make. You can make other alterations that will give almost immediate reward. Just the thing for this time of year is to establish an area of hot- coloured flowering plants. By this I mean the oranges, yellows and reds. These 'hot colours' are quite polarising in the garden, but planted judiciously amongst the greys and greens of shrubbery, they can really lift a dull corner. *Browallia*, which I always thought only came in blue, has a lovely orange/yellow form, *Streptosolen jamesonii*. Often called the 'Marmalade bush', it has lovely trumpet-like flowers. Similar colours can be seen in *Lobelia laxiflora*, another shrub most commonly seen in a blue form. Along this orange, red and yellow theme are the *Abutilons*. They come in all these colours and flower profusely over a long period. They do have a drawback, however. They can suffer from the Hibiscus beetle which, though not affecting the flowers, makes the leaves look quite scruffy. Pyrethrum spray seems to keep them down if you don't mind having to spray. They are also attacked by the leaf-roll caterpillar in late summer but Yates' Success Ultra will help with this.

Another thought for change is to introduce epiphytic plants to your garden if you haven't already done so. Epiphytes are any plants that grow on another plant (usually trees) and derive their nutrients from any decaying matter such as old leaves and bird droppings that comes their way. If anything was easy care, it's the epiphytes. With the trees and large shrubs in your garden either bare or carrying less leaves, it's easier to find and access the spots for these. *Bromeliads*, *Zygocactus* (*Schlumbergera*), *Ferns*, *Hoyas* and *Orchids* all do well growing in or on trees.

Bromeliad bilbergia looks great in a tree fork and *Dendrobiums* of all varieties will grow either on the trunk or in a fork. Initially, they need to be carefully attached until their own roots have a firm grip. I use budding tape as it is clear and hardly noticeable. An occasional watering if the weather has been particularly dry is all the attention they need. It is such a joy to suddenly look up and see them flowering.



Browallia—Streptosolen jamesonii



Salvia Timboon



Soft Cane Dendrobium



Snowdrops



*Abutilon - Three-in-one
Yellow, White and Red*



Bromeliad bilbergia



Dendrobium kingianum



Dichroa