

# HORTULANUS

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

President: Evelyn Mason, 7 Deakin Place, East Killara (0412 812 824)  
Secretary and Editor: Christine Rethers, 1 Wolsten Ave, Turramurra 2074 (9449 6245)  
Treasurer: Robyn Brown (0408 295 601)

Website: [www.khsgardenclub.org.au](http://www.khsgardenclub.org.au) Email: [khs.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:khs.secretary@gmail.com)



## AUGUST 2022

### COMING EVENTS

- Aug. 2           **KHS Monthly Meeting**  
Aug. 5           **Eryldene House and Garden, 17 McIntosh St, Gordon. Open 10am-12noon.**  
Aug. 7           **Eryldene House and Garden, 17 McIntosh St, Gordon. Open 11am-2pm**  
                    **(Music in the Garden) Enquiries and bookings: <https://www.eryldene.org.au/events>**  
Aug. 21          **Bath House Garden, 2 Forest Hill Drive, Oakhampton Heights. Open 10am-4pm**  
Sept. 6          **KHS Monthly Meeting**

### NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

*Notice is hereby given that our Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday, 6 September 2022.*

*The purpose of the meeting is:*

- \* *To confirm the minutes of the last Annual General Meeting.*
- \* *To receive the President's Report for 2022.*
- \* *To receive and consider the account for the year ended 30 June 2022*
- \* *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, Nancy Shaw 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

The evening of the July meeting was rather cold and damp but it did not stop an intrepid band of members from venturing out for the meeting. At the August meeting we will be introducing four new members—David Temple-Cole, Robyn Rossiter, Judith Barry and Anne Varrall. Please make them welcome and we hope they will enjoy their membership.

We are still asking for members to volunteer their gardens for a Spring Garden Ramble. Although for new members this sound daunting, it really isn't. We are all gardeners and don't expect an exhibition-type garden. Generally, members who participate quite welcome the idea as it means that they conduct a clean and tidy up which they might otherwise be putting off. 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 4.15pm in the last garden where we will have afternoon tea. The garden owners in the first two gardens will also be able to take part in the afternoon tea in the last garden as the visits are timed, i.e. the first garden is open from 1.30pm to 2.15pm, the second garden from 2.30pm to 3.15pm and the last garden from 3.15pm. 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.

Another way that members can help the Society is by offering to give a short talk on a subject of their choice. This could be a favourite plant or group of plants, an interesting trip they have taken, some aspect of plant care that they have found effective and so on. The members' talks are usually just short, round about 10-15 minutes, and can be accompanied by pictures which we can show using a USB with our laptop and projector. This time, please let Nancy Shaw know if you would like to participate. Her phone number is 9979 3930 or speak to her at a meeting.

The opinions and recommendations published in this newsletter are those of the authors and the Ku-ring-gai Horticultural Society Inc. takes no responsibility for any losses or damages that may be attributed to the use or misuse of any material or opinion in this publication. Its contents are protected by copyright and no part may be reproduced without permission of the authors.

It is membership renewal time again—renewals became due on 1st July. This will only apply to those members who did not pay this time last year. We will send out renewal notices only to these people. 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**. The reason for this is that for much of last year we were not able to hold our normal meetings due to the Covid restrictions that were in force at that time. 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 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, morning tea, lunch and garden entries will be \$75. A booking form is included with your August Hortulanus. Bookings may be made with Helen Gilkes at the August meeting or by mail to 20A Normurra Avenue, North Turramurra 2074. Friends are welcome too. Don't delay in getting your booking in to Helen as we have had to pre-book our entry to the Auburn Botanical Garden and once we have filled our quota, we will have to close the bookings.

## RAFFLE

Again this month there were some lovely raffle prizes, many of them donated anonymously. The Society donated a beautiful Kalanchoe and there was an interesting Begonia as well as a number of lovely gardening books, a bird cage to use as a plant holder, a pair of gardening gloves and some chocolates among other things. Donations to the raffle table are always gratefully accepted.

## GARDEN TABLE

The Garden Table this month had lots of succulents as well as a number of shade-loving plants. In addition there were some crucifix orchids and a number of hoya cuttings. 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.

## MAIN SPEAKER JULY

This was Stuart Read who spoke to us about 'Ten Lessons from Historic Gardens'. Using a number of examples, Stuart talked about these older gardens often being large, even very large, both in the suburbs and in the country. He pointed out that parks are gardens too and there are some lovely parks that have been preserved in country towns like Bathurst and Orange. In these older gardens there are often very large trees and shrubs that have been preserved and provide an historic record of older times. Two examples of large and very well preserved gardens can be found in Melbourne. The Carlton Gardens right in the centre of the city date back to Victorian times and include the Royal Exhibition building and are home to some significant and historic trees. The other is Rippon Lea, another Victorian house and garden set in 14 acres. The original property was subject to numerous parcels of land being sold off over the years until the last owner bequeathed the remaining estate to the Government and it was given to the National Trust to look after. Fortunately, its future now looks secure and we can enjoy the lovely gardens and interesting house. Closer to home, Stuart showed us pictures of *Invergowrie* at Exeter in the Southern Highlands, a pre-WWII house with a garden designed by Paul Sorenson. Sadly its continued existence is in doubt as developers eye its potential. Stuart also cited farms as gardens, with long driveways often planted with old and impressive trees, and the area close to the main house containing a lovely garden.

Stuart pointed out that nothing is new - "it's all been done before". The Egyptians enjoyed pools and walks, the Romans had fountains, topiary and arbours and the Greeks had sacred groves. In Sydney, the Sydney Domain started life as the private garden of the Governor Lachlan Macquarie family. Even roof gardens have been around for a lot longer than most imagine. An example in Sydney is Feltex House which was built in the 1940's and had a lovely rooftop garden. Stuart showed us examples of Garden Guides from the years between the two World Wars which showed the typical suburban garden in those days as a flower garden in the front, typically looked after by the wife, whereas the 'important' part was the vegetable garden in the back which was looked after by the husband.

Stuart finished his talk by pointing out that there is much to be learnt from the past and to ignore this would be a great folly. If you want to know more, he suggested getting in touch with the Garden History Society: [www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au](http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au).



*The driveway at Elizabeth Murdoch's Cruden Farm, planted in the 1920's*

**Main Speaker August:** This will be Jeremy Critchley who will bring us up to date with what has been happening in his world since the last time he spoke to us. He will be bringing some of his lovely plants to sell to members.

**MEMBER SPEAKER JULY:** This was Ted Shaw who gave a talk on the role of Beneficial Insects in the Garden. His talk highlighted just how many different types of insects there are (over 1 million world-wide of which 60,000 are found in Australia). They account for around 75% of the Earth's animal species. It has been found that only a tiny percentage of these can be called pests. Ted pointed out that beneficial insects are those that are either predatory (eat harmful insects), parasitic (breed in or on harmful insects), pollinators (pollinate our flowers and crops) or recyclers (decompose waste matter). The 'bad guys' are those insects that eat or damage plants or those that eat or kill beneficial insects. Ted listed some of the good guys—lacewings and ladybirds that eat aphids, mealybugs, thrips and whitefly and wasps that clean up caterpillars, spiders and flies. The pollinators are mainly the European honey bees, our many species of native bees and hover flies. The recyclers are the fungus-eating lady beetles, native cockroaches and the humble slater.



To look after all these beneficial insects, Ted suggests that we become familiar with and understand the life cycle of our beneficial insects. In addition he urges us to provide a safe environment for them by avoiding the use of harmful broad spectrum insecticides.



Lacewing



Ladybird



Native wasp



Parasitic wasp



Hoverfly



Native cockroach



Slaters

**Member speaker August:** This will be Len Riordan who will talk about his love for succulents. Len has been bringing some of his impressive collection to exhibit on the Show Bench.

### To pea or not to pea ... that is my quest! by Evelyn Mason



Spring is hardly spring without the heady perfume from sweet peas growing up the back fence. The wallabies don't seem to like them so they usually grow unhindered. For about 6 weeks I have a house full of fragrant sweet peas and keep several other homes stocked with these beauties. BUT it looks like the Spring of 2022 will be a very challenged year.

Now I have to admit – I only learned from reading the Hortulanus recently that newly sprouted sweet peas, well any peas, are a grub's delicacy – but the grubs were not the problem this year. I planted two packets of seeds along the fence line and waited and watched. After a very long time one sprouted! (I also planted sugar snap peas and none of them grew.) I am convinced they have all rotted after all the rain we have had.

Not to be defeated I have adopted a Gardening Australia Costa idea. Recently, I purchased two more packets of seeds and then took all the toilet rolls inside cardboards that I had saved, stuffed the bottoms with old newspaper and then filled the roll with seed raising mix. In went one seed into each toilet roll and then I stood them all up in old empty plastic pots. The whole lot were then placed in a flat tub and watered from the bottom. A very dilapidated glass picture frame was placed on top (my idea of a mini glass house) and the whole lot was put in a sunny protected part of the garden. And hey presto! I have seedlings.

It's early days still and I am hoping that this second generation of seeds makes it into the garden bed at the end of winter and will cope with the transplanting. I will simply dig a hole big enough for the toilet roll to fit into it and hope that the neck of the roll is high enough above the ground to stop those greedy grubs from munching the seedlings when they are planted.

If your sweet peas failed to flourish this year, maybe you can try this rather simplistic method. All success stories will be welcomed.



### IN THE VEGIE PATCH IN AUGUST by Christine Rethers

Hopefully you are all now harvesting your winter vegetables. 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. It is time to start thinking about your summer tomatoes. At this time of the year you can sow seeds, either into a small punnet using a good seed raising mix or you can try using Jiffy pots made out of peat moss and wood fibre or coir (coconut fibre). Just put two seeds in each little pot, put the pots on a plastic tray and then onto a warm sunny windowsill. Keep them damp but not wet and the seeds should come up in a few days. Grow them on in their containers until they are about 10cm tall before planting them in the vegie patch. This will probably be about mid September when both the soil and the days are warmer. Don't forget to put your stakes in first.

## RESILIENCE IN THE GARDEN by Maureen Smith



Salvia Timboon

We hear a lot about resilience nowadays, but if you want to see resilience in a horticultural form you need look no further than the Salvia family. Do you remember December 2020? Water restrictions were lifted and gardeners heaved a sigh of relief. However, it was time to take stock and look at those plants that had not only survived but thrived during this time of drought. In many gardens Salvias stood out.

Switch to today and again contemplating the garden, the Salvias have survived and thrived. La Nina and all the subsequent rains. What a wonderful plant! They come in all sizes and a multitude of colours with many in predominantly the pink/red shades.

If you need a large shrub for the back of a border you could choose the Salvia madrensis, the Forsythia sage, with its golden yellow flowers. If you want something in purple or blue there is Salvia Amistad, the friendship salvia, with a near black calyx and vibrant purple flowers. For a true blue, Salvia Costa Rica has a dark blue calyx and vibrant blue flower. Alternatively, there are the carmine red flowers of Salvia Timboon or the pale pink of Salvia involucrata Bethellii. They will all grow in full sun or part shade although the Amistad does do better in full sun. From 1.5 to 2 metres tall and about



Salvia madrensis

1 metre wide they do need some space. The benefit of all these is that they are autumn to winter flowerers so can brighten up a dull spot beautifully.



Salvia Costa Rica Blue

If you are looking for something more compact or for a pot there is still a wide choice. Salvia leucantha, Pink Velour and White Velour or the purple/blue Santa Barbara, are good choices. In the red tones there are the Wishes family, the Salvia buchanii hybrids. Wendy's Wish is magenta, Embers Wish is coral, Love and Wishes is deep purple and Kisses and Wishes is a lovely fuchsia pink. For lovers of yellow, Salvia splendens has both cream and deep yellow versions. Their size is approximately 80cm by 80cm and they flower mostly in the warmer months. In this medium

group, Salvia Hot Lips, with its eye catching red and white flowers, was very popular for a while. However, if not regularly trimmed they can grow to a metre or so high.

For a small Salvia, it is hard to go past Salvia greggii, They come in a multitude of colours - purple, white, apricot, pink, yellow, red and many combinations of these. They are small and compact plants that bloom profusely through spring, summer and autumn. Pinching back regularly keeps the flowers coming. They also self-seed so you can have a regular supply of new plants.

Salvias are hardy plants that respond well to pruning. The larger types can take an annual 'boy prune' to almost ground level as can some of the medium size shrubs, the Leucantha for example. The greggii salvias are probably better suited to a more gentle approach, pruning them just enough to keep them in shape and stop them getting leggy. There is a salvia suitable for most gardens and balconies and they are a most rewarding.



Salvia involucrata Bethellii

## YOUR AUGUST GARDEN by Christine Rethers

► By now you should be well on your way to having your roses pruned. There are many ways to do this, often depending on which type of rose you are tackling. Suffice it to say, all types of roses will benefit from a good prune once a year. Leave heirloom roses and Banksia roses until after they flower. Aim to open up the centre of the rose, taking out the very oldest and brown stems at the base. Take out crossing stems as well as any thin and whippy growth. Cut back the main stems to five nodes on the laterals and to ten nodes on those stems coming from the base. You are aiming to develop a vase shape with a nice open centre. There are numerous good YouTube videos to watch on this topic which you can find using Google. Don't feed your roses until the new growth appears in spring.

► Don't delay in getting your rhubarb crowns into a well prepared patch. They can be sourced from a number of on-line nurseries—Lambleys and Diggers (both in Victoria) have some excellent varieties with lovely red stems.

► This is the time to go shopping for a number of plants such as lily and hippeastrum bulbs and dahlia tubers. Again, a Google search will locate some of the main on-line nurseries that sell these or check out your local garden centres. Lilies should be planted 10-20cm deep and 30-40cm apart in well prepared soil. This can be in full sun or part shade. Hippeastrums can be planted in the garden but this time leave at least the neck of the bulb above ground, do not bury it. They are also very happy in pots and appreciate a nice warm and sunny position. Dahlia tubers will benefit from being planted in a well prepared position in full sun. Remember that for tall varieties, put the stake in first and then plant close to it. There are now some very nice low-growing varieties of dahlias but it is perhaps better to wait until they appear in garden centres as pot plants so that you can then see exactly what you are getting. This won't be until well into summer that they will become available.

► Think about some punnets of bedding plants such as primulas, pansies and violas, alyssum and polyantha to brighten up a late winter/early spring garden. Most of these will continue to flower, provided they are dead-headed, until just about Christmas.