

HORTULANUS

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

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MAY 2023

COMING EVENTS

- May 2** KHS 90th Anniversary Meeting. Speaker: John Siemon, Director of Horticulture, RBG
May 12 Eryldene Garden Friday Tours, 17 McIntosh St, Gordon, 10am-12noon
Cost: \$27.78, includes Morning Tea. To book go to their website: eryldene.org.au
May 20/21 Bromeliad Society of Australia, Autumn Show & Sale, Castle Hill Showground.
Sat. 9am-4pm, Sun. 10am- 3pm.
May 26-28 Orchids Out West, Hawkesbury Showground, Clarendon. Fri/Sat 9am-4pm, Sun 9am-2pm.
June 6 KHS Meeting. Speaker: Chelsea Costello, Natural Areas Officer at Ku-ring-gai Council

MEMBER NEWS

A warm welcome to our two new members, Rozelle Joffe and Barbara Connolly. We hope they enjoy their time with the Society.

We have put an updated version of the Society's History on the website (www.khsgardenclub.org.au), just in time for our 90th Anniversary. You will find it under 'Society Info'. It is interesting to read as it gives readers a history not only of the Society but also a glimpse of the life and times in our suburbs in the years leading up to World War II and the years following this. Certainly worth dipping into.

90th Anniversary: By now you should all have received your invitation to the 90th Anniversary celebrations at the May meeting and we look forward very much to seeing you there. The hall will be open for members and guests from 7pm and the meeting will start promptly at 7.30pm. (Those involved with helping with the set up of the hall may come from 5pm onwards). We will need your help with supplying camellia blooms as these will be used to help decorate our tables, especially the one with the cake! As the weather has been exceptionally cool, many camellias have been late in flowering this year, so anything you can do to help with a few blooms would be most appreciated. We are all looking forward to this, our very special meeting.

OUTINGS

The first outing of the year will be to Daffodils at Rydal on Saturday, 9th September. The Society has visited Rydal before but not for quite some years. Those who went on our previous excursion were very impressed with the wonderful displays of daffodils and other early spring flowering plants such as Forsythia. We will follow this a month later with an outing to Wollongong and Berry on the 12th/13th October. We suggest that you put these dates in your diary right away. Further details will be available closer to the two respective dates.

SHOW BENCH

It was a very full Show Bench at the April meeting with the roses and dahlias taking pride of place. Along with these were two very unusual flowers. The first belongs to the Aristolochia (or Dutchman's Pipe) family—Aristolochia gigantea, which grows on a woody vine in one of our member's gardens. It would have to be one of the largest flowers you are ever likely to see and quite attractively coloured and scented. It is a sub-tropical plant from Brazil but relatively easy to grow in Sydney. The second was a Hippeastrum striatifolium, a simple pink-flowering Hippy with a lovely dark-green leaf with a white stripe down the centre—most attractive. This another sub-tropical plant from South America which grows well in our part of the world. In addition there were some very nice vegetables including several well-grown pumpkins. The Decorative section was exceptional with some lovely and very creative exhibits in all three classes.

GARDEN TABLE

This was back in operation again at the April meeting and did some good business. Don't forget that there will not be a Garden Table at the May 90th Anniversary meeting but it will be back again at the June meeting.

RAFFLE

Please note that in place of the raffle at the May meeting there will be three Lucky Door prizes. Pick up your ticket on your way in when you get your name badge and sign in.

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MAIN SPEAKER APRIL:



This was Libby Cameron, a well-travelled tour leader and President of the Mosman Garden Club. Libby has spoken to our Society a number of times before about some of the lovely and interesting places she has travelled to but on this occasion she chose to tell us about some of wonderful gardens to be found in and around Adelaide and also a recent visit to Kangaroo Island after the devastating fires of a couple of years ago. One of the gardens Libby spoke about was the 5-acre garden of Walter and Kay Duncan. Established in 2000 it is predominately a garden full of roses and Walter is a renowned rose grower and propagator. The house which was rebuilt when they bought the property is surrounded by roses and the garden has sections of different colours and varieties of roses. Another lovely garden Libby visited is Al-Ru, a 10-acre garden established by Ruth and Alan Irving in 1979. This is in the Adelaide Hills and the Mediterranean climate is suitable for a wide variety of flowering plants. Bulbs and flowering cherry

predominate in early spring, quickly followed by roses, wisteria, peonies, irises and poppies. In summer the garden gives way to hollyhocks, more roses, day lilies, agapanthus and tall Asiatic lilies. Autumn has the beautiful colour of autumn leaves and the wonderful and profusely-flowering plectranthus. So whatever season you visit there is plenty to enjoy. Unfortunately, the photos from Libby's trip to Kangaroo Island were missing from her presentation but she told us how relieved everyone is at the recovery of the vegetation after the dreadful fire that consumed about half of the island's bush, many animals and some of the houses.



Walter and Kay Duncan's house with some of their signature roses.



A corner of Ruth and Alan Irving's Al-Ru garden

Main speaker June: This will be Chelsea Costello who is the Natural Areas Officer at Ku-ring-gai Council.

MEMBER SPEAKER APRIL:

Bob Ballinger spoke to us about some of the gardens and vegetation that he and his wife Sue saw when they visited Juneau, Alaska. I think that everyone was surprised to see how green it was with the hillslopes covered with trees. The feature of Bob's talk was a standout garden on the outskirts of the city called Mendenhall Gardens. This was filled with trees, shrubs and plants you would not normally associate with a place that is covered in snow for several months of the year. The feature of this garden was the stumpery—here trees that has come to the end of their life had been cut down and the roots of the trees dug out. The stump was then turned upside-down and flowering plants placed in their 'branches'. The effect was quite memorable and certainly very colourful.



Member speaker June: Evelyn Mason, our President, will speak to us about Dahlias.

IN THE VEGIE PATCH IN MAY by Christine Rethers

Keep a close eye on the new plantings in your vegie patch. It is not cold enough yet to deter some of the critters that like to munch on the tender new leaves so be ready with snail and slug bait and Yates Success Ultra. Reading the literature that comes with this product, it appears that you can use it on any leafy plant to control caterpillars, thrips, codling moth, pear & cherry slug and other leaf eating insects. It contains spinetoram, a new generation insecticide derived from beneficial soil bacteria and it has a translaminar action which means that if you spray on the top of the leaf it will be absorbed through to the underside, making it virtually rainproof.

For the more adventurous among you, how about trying out some more unusual vegetables this season. The one I have in mind is celeriac. You are unlikely to find seedlings of celeriac so you will need to grow them from seed in the usual way. When they are big enough to plant out in the garden, put them in a sunny spot with space between each plant of about 20cm and 40cm between rows. It will take about 20 to 25 weeks to develop a bulb big enough to harvest. Those who are not familiar with this plant, it grows a quite big and round base in the ground. The taste is somewhat like celery except it is a root vegetable. It is a very versatile vegetable and once you have peeled off all the knobby bits, it can be used grated in a famous salad called a remoulade. It can be made into a hearty winter soup or mashed like a potato. It is delicious grated into a coleslaw and can be baked in the oven to put round a roast dinner. Give it a go—I guarantee you won't be disappointed.



AN AUTUMN GARDEN by Maureen Smith

We have always strived to have a garden for all seasons, but looking around this morning it is definitely an autumn garden. Lots of lovely red foliage such as Euphorbia cotinifolia, Japanese maple, Alternantheras, Brazilian 'Red Hots' and 'Little Ruby' and Pennisetum 'Purple Fountain Grass'.



Tibouchina and Mandevilla

It is not only these foliage plants that catch the eye. There is an abundance of flowering plants at this time of year. A large purple Tibouchina makes a perfect foil for a rampant, rambling white Mandevilla as it scrambles not only over its arch but any nearby plant that will give it support. Nearby a much quieter purple shade is the Alyogyne huegii, which has continuous but not profuse flowers. This is unlike the white version we have which only flowers intermittently.

These blue/purple tones continue throughout the garden and include Salvia 'Costa Rica'. However, beware, this plant can fast take over a garden bed. Streptocarpus happily growing in the ground or in a hanging basket, both the deep blue variety and the paler Nodding Violet. Rambling through other plants is the lovely Geranium Rozanne. Light blue Plectranthus argentatus and Plectranthus saccatus 'Velvet Elvis' grow happily with and through a pale pink Vireya whilst the deeper-hued Plectranthus 'Anthony Parker' looks striking against the Camellia sasanqua hedge 'Star upon Star' just coming into flower. Ceratostigma (Chinese Plumbago) with its true blue flowers also comes into its own at this time of year.

However it is not all blue, the pinks and reds are also holding their own. In fact the delicate blue flowers of Clerodendrum ugandense (the Butterfly Bush) struggle against the riot of pinks and reds from the different Salvias such as 'Pineapple Sage', 'Joan' and several of the 'Wishes' family. A profusion of deep pink Japanese windflowers (Japanese Anemone) which are spread by rhizomes, make a lovely show at the moment, but when they have finished flowering some serious thinning out will need to be done before they take over the whole garden. Another plant due a 'boy prune' after flowering is the Clerodendrum Bleeding Heart, but for now we will just enjoy it.



Japanese Anemone

In the shade a number of different Cane Begonias are still flowering, both pink and white flowered and will continue to do so until winter. Also flowering in the shade are purple/pink Miltonia orchids and in a basket the tiny white orchid, Gomesa radicans.

Out on the nature strip we have a variety of Grevilleas, the cream 'Moonlight', 'Peaches and Cream', 'Wattlebird Yellow', 'Strawberry Ice' and "Honey Gem". Consequently, with these and the other flowering plants, we still have bees and native birds to share all this abundance with.



Miltonia bluntii orchid



Cane Begonia



Alyogyne



Alternanthera



Grevillea 'Peaches and Cream'



Ceratostigma willmotianum (Chinese Plumbago)



Streptocarpella (Nodding Violet)

YOUR MAY GARDEN by Maureene Smith and Christine Rethers

- ▶ Autumn is a great time for gardeners. The ground temperature is just right to give new plants a head start and the air temperature makes gardening a pleasure. Which is just as well as there is plenty to do.
- ▶ If you are thinking of planting a bare rooted tree, you could start preparing the spot by digging in plenty of rich organic material where you plan to plant. By the time bare rooted trees are in the nurseries, this will have broken down well and the spot will be ready for the new plant.
- ▶ Now is a good time to divide clumps of perennials such as Daylilies or Cannas. If, after lifting the clump, it is hard to separate, using two garden forks back to back often does the trick. Just working the forks forwards and backwards helps pry those tangled roots apart. You can make the divisions as small or large as you like. When replanting, mix some fertiliser in with the soil to give your new plant a head start.
- ▶ If your garden needs some winter colour, a couple of plants you could put in now would be a *Tagetes lemmonii*, a large shrub with feathery foliage and eye popping yellow daisy like flowers or a *Salvia involucrata*, 'Timboon' a bright red salvia or *Salvia involucrata* 'Pink Icicles', a pretty pale pink salvia. All of these are large shrubs when fully grown so give them some space, maybe towards the back of the border. With large salvias like these, you can make them a bit more compact by cutting a third off them in January. They then have time to branch out and develop new growth before the flowers come in late autumn but they will not grow quickly as tall and rangy.
- ▶ If space is a problem, bulbs are a good option. There is a large variety available and they can be planted in the garden or in pots. There is nothing nicer in spring than a pot full of beautiful tulips, hyacinths or daffodils. Don't forget to give your bulbs a few weeks in the crisper drawer of your fridge. You can plant these any time from now on but plan to have your planting finished by the end of May or early June.
- ▶ Also good for planting in pots (and the garden) at this time are Pansies and Violas, Primulas and Polyanthus. Now is the time to visit your local garden centre and stock up on these beauties. If you are planting in pots, use the best potting mix you can find. The bag should have a label with red ticks on it which means that it has passed a standard of excellence. (Black ticks means that the potting mix is still okay but of a lesser standard of excellence and no ticks ...well, I suggest you leave that where it is!)
- ▶ The leaves of deciduous trees are starting to fall and need raking up and if possible turning into compost. Leaving the leaves, whether on your garden bed or lawn is not a good idea, starving your plants or grass of light. However, if you have a lot of leaves on your lawn you can pick these up with the lawn mower and the advantage of this is that the lawn mower will cut up the leaves and they will therefore break down quicker in your compost heap.



Tagetes lemmonii



Salvia involucrata 'Pink Icicles'



Salvia involucrata 'Timboon'



Happy Mothers Day!



Pots of Pansies