

# 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)



## JUNE 2022

### COMING EVENTS

- Until 30 May** Gory'u Japanese Garden, 85 Baaners Lane, Little Hartley. Phone first: 0414 933 467  
Entry: \$20.
- Until 14 June** Wildwood Garden, 29 Powells Rd, Bilpin. Friday-Monday 10-4pm Entry: \$10.
- June 1** Eryldene, 17 McIntosh St, Gordon. 10-4pm Enq. [www.eryldene.org.au](http://www.eryldene.org.au)
- 7 June** KHS Monthly Meeting: Speaker—Alicia Powell
- June 25/26** Mingara Orchid Fair, Mingara Recreation Club, Mingara Drive, Tumbi Umbi Sat. 9-5pm,  
Sun. 9-3pm Entry free.
- July 5** KHS Monthly Meeting

### MEMBER NEWS



It is with deep regret that we report the passing of our very valued member, Kate Stanley. Kate will be remembered for her huge enthusiasm and energy for everything she did. She had many interests but chief among them was her love for roses and camellias. She and her husband Paul helped to set up the Upper North Shore and Hills Regional branch of the Rose Society of NSW and ran meetings and shows in the Dural area. She was also an enthusiastic member of KHS, both as a keen contributor to the Show Bench and as an accomplished speaker on roses. She will be greatly missed by us all. Our sincere sympathy has been sent to Paul and the family.

Our June meeting will be very special indeed. It will be a celebration of our connection with our community over nearly 90 years. (Next year we will be celebrating our 90th anniversary). As we reported to you in our October 2021 Hortulanus, KHS and Prof. Waterhouse organised a camellia show in what was then the Soldier's Memorial Hall in Marion Street, Killara, now the Marion Street Theatre. As it so happened, Lady Vivien Leigh, wife of Sir Laurence Olivier, was in Sydney at the time on behalf of the British government to thank Australians for their contribution to the Food for Britain campaign. KHS had raised a considerable amount towards this cause and Vivien Leigh was happy to accept Prof. Waterhouse's invitation to open the camellia show. The rest, as they say, is history. Come along to our June meeting to meet Alicia Powell who has researched this event in great detail and will fill us in on what happened next.

As there will be a number of guests from the community in attendance, we will be making a big effort to make this a very special meeting. We ask you to each bring one or two camellia flowers from your garden (or someone else's if needs be) and if you can, wear something appropriate to the late 1940's. Vivien Leigh was renowned for her fur coats so if any of you have the odd mink coat or stole lying around, feel free to wear it on the evening. Men often sported a flower in their buttonhole and wore a hat such as a trilby or a fedora. It should be a great meeting so we hope as many of you as can will come along. There will even be cake instead of the usual biscuits for supper!

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 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

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.

members of our Society so nothing of what you post is distributed to the public at large. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2273344029640713>.

## **MAY SHOW BENCH**

Camellias made their entry onto the Show Bench this month in quite a big way with a nice class of a grouping of 5 flowers, all looking their very best. However, the roses have not quite given up yet with some very nice blooms in several classes. Hibiscus were still looking fresh and lovely as were the dahlias. The native plant section was full of interesting flowers, among them were two we don't often see—a Correa and a Crowea. Another flower we rarely see was the Eucharis Lily which has a delightful fragrance and looks a little like a white daffodil. There were several exhibits in the Compost class and one exhibitor even provided a recipe for the making of good compost. The Vegie section was a bit light-on which is not surprising considering the huge amount of rain we have been having. However the Decorative section had a number of lovely exhibits from autumn leaves to baskets of flowers and driftwood. As usual, the Pictorial section had some very good pictures.

## **OUTINGS**

Plans are proceeding for our next trip which will probably be in the last week of August when we will visit the Cherry Blossom Festival at Auburn Botanic Gardens as well as several other interesting gardens in South West Sydney. We will probably not set the date until closer to the time as the date when the cherry blossoms will be at their best involves a bit of guesswork. Hopefully we will also have another one-day trip in October but that is still in the planning stage.

## **RAFFLE**



There were a lovely lot of raffle prizes so many thanks go to all those who donated a prize. The Society donated a big cyclamen and members donated a fuchsia, begonia, some books, a pair of gardening gloves as well as a wicker basket and some chocolates. We must give our thanks to our champion seller of raffle tickets, Mohammad, who has been doing a wonderful job for quite a number of years of keeping track of the raffle and the prizes.

## **GARDEN TABLE**

The Garden Table had some interesting plants for sale including some very nice hoyas, all beautifully labelled, some ferns, ajugas, coleus, bulbs, succulents and irises. 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.

## **MAY MAIN SPEAKER**



The main speaker for our May meeting was Meredith Kirton from Easy Care Gardening. Meredith has had a lifetime involved with horticulture, has written seven books on the subject and been a researcher for Gardening Australia. In addition she has taken a number of garden tours and acts as a horticultural consultant. She became involved with Easy Care Gardening fairly recently when her own diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis gave her insight into what it means not to be able to manage your own garden. Fortunately, she is now in remission and felt able to take on this ambassadorial role for Easy Care Gardening.

Easy Care Gardening is available in the Ryde, Hornsby, Ku-ring-gai and Hunters Hill areas and has been in operation for 33 years. Clients come to them after being assessed by the Government-run My Aged Care and at the moment around 1,000 people are being helped. The gardens are first assessed so that the work can be prioritised then the team of volunteers comes in to clear paths, weed, prune and trim branches and do any other work that is needed. The garden owner in the meantime provides a morning or afternoon tea and the sessions typically last about 3 hours. Volunteers come from all walks of life including corporate teams. Often the teams stay together over a number of years and firm friendships are formed. No previous knowledge of gardening is required and volunteers are given training, insurance is provided and tools made available. Part of Meredith's talk was to encourage people to volunteer which could be for once a week, once a month or whenever a person can manage it. As she said, there is always a waiting list of recipients. If you would like to know more or volunteer to help please go to the website: [www.easycaregardening.org.au](http://www.easycaregardening.org.au).

**Main Speaker June:** This will be Alicia Powell who will speak to us about that memorable day in July 1948 when Vivien Leigh came to open the Society's camellia show.

## **MAY MEMBER SPEAKER**

The member speaker was Bob Ballinger who took us on a pictorial trip to Norfolk Island which he and his wife visited recently. Bob is an excellent photographer and some of the pictures he took were just lovely. He showed us some of the very interesting native plants and many that were familiar as they have been imported to the mainland over the years. Some of the ocean views were spectacular. For anyone who has not been there, it looked very inviting indeed.

**Member Speaker June:** We will not be having a member speaker this month as the extra time will be needed by our main speaker, Alicia Powell.

## IN THE VEGIE PATCH IN JUNE by Christine Rethers

It is not too late to get in some seedlings of spinach, peas, the brassicas such as broccoli and broccolini and lettuce. Some vegies such as carrots and radish are best grown from seed direct into the ground. With all the rain around at the moment make sure you keep the vegie patch well weeded and mulched. These young plants also need feeding so liquid fertiliser once a fortnight should do the trick. There is an abundance of snails around at the moment that like nothing better than to munch on a nice young seedling so keep an eye out for them and if you see them, use some of the safe snail pellets (there are still snail pellets on the market that are very toxic to animals such as dogs).

If you are like me and love new potatoes, now is the time to go looking in the nurseries or nursery catalogue for varieties that you like. It is so hard to find in the shops some of the lovely varieties of potatoes that are available. There are usually only two or three varieties to choose from in the shops. Planting can take place from about June onwards, either in the ground or in planter bags or pots. Remember, they will need hilling up as they grow to extend the crop.



Rhubarb 'Victoria'

This is the time of year to start looking for rhubarb crowns as they can be sent bare-rooted from nurseries during the winter. What's not to like about a lovely rhubarb compote, crumble or jam! From an aesthetic point of view, the red-stemmed rhubarb always appeals more than the green-stemmed variety but flavour wise, there is very little difference. Remember, rhubarb are hungry plants so prepare the planting area well by digging in lots of compost, fertiliser and cow manure. Make sure you have plenty of space for your plants as they grow quite large during the warmer months. When your plants get too big for their spot they can be divided during winter and pieces replanted elsewhere or given away.

## IS HONEY REALLY BEE VOMIT? by Ted Shaw

Yes, you read the question correctly. I'm reading this book that I've bought for my granddaughters aged 12 and 10 who love to tell me things to shock me. They are going to love this book, but they aren't getting it for a while yet until I've finished reading it. You might like to consider it for a birthday present. Anyway, here's the answer to the question extracted from the book "Poo, Spew and Other Gross Things Animals Do!" by Nic Gill and Romane Cristescu.

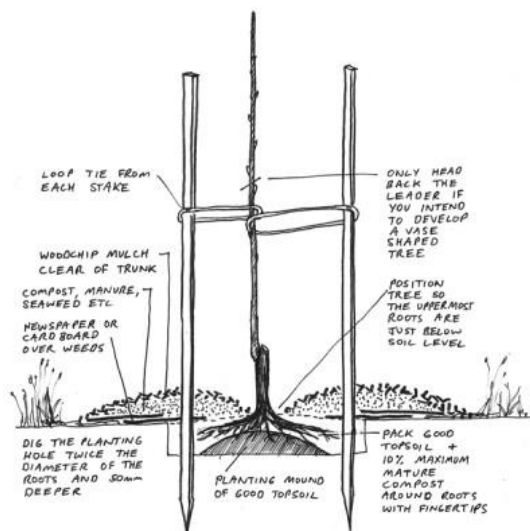
*So, is honey really bee vomit? Well, yes. But no. Bees suck up nectar from flowers through their proboscis. The nectar flows down into a 'honey stomach', or crop (like birds have) which is separate from the stomach that digests the bee's food.*

*In the honey stomach, protein molecules known as enzymes mix with the nectar to begin to form the honey. The bees then spew the mixture back out their mouths into the mouths of other bees, and so on, and so on. Eventually, the last bee spits the honey out and stores it in the honeycomb cells they prepared earlier.*

*So, honey isn't actually vomit because it doesn't come from the bees' food stomachs - although they do spew it out of their mouths! Luckily, it tastes so good that no-one really seems to mind.*



## BARE ROOT PLANTING by Maureene Smith



Winter is the best time for bare root planting as it will give your new acquisition a chance to settle in before the onset of spring growth. Your plant will most likely come in a damp sawdust-filled sack. It needs a good soak before planting, no less than 2 hours but not more than 24. A dilution of seaweed mix and water would be best. If you are not planting for a few days leave it in the sawdust.

Select the best position for your plant, bearing in mind the potential size, height and width, the amount of sun it will need and its canopy size.

When you are ready to plant, dig a hole wider than the size of the bare roots - twice as wide is a good rule of thumb but no deeper than the pot or container it comes in. You might like to follow the late Peter Cundall's advice and dig a square hole which he advocated to prevent root girdling (just growing round and round and not spreading out). If you are planting roses, you will have done some soil preparation first, digging in some compost and blood and bone at least a month before planting to give the soil time to settle in.

Once the hole is dug, fill it full of water and let this drain away. This helps to avoid transplant shock. For young trees, drive in two stakes slightly off centre to the tree. Mix some organic matter into the soil you dig out. Before planting, inspect the roots and trim off any damaged or ragged pieces. Mound some of this soil mix back into the bottom of the hole and spread the roots carefully over this mound. Make sure you plant it exactly at the same level it was previously when in the ground.

Now backfill the hole and gently wiggle to ensure your roots have good contact with the soil. Tie the stem to the stakes using a loose but firm figure of eight. It's important to keep an eye on this tie and remove it as soon as the tree is firmly established. Now water in well using water with a dilute amount of seaweed mix, again to assist with possible transplant shock.

Next comes the prune. It may seem severe but you will improve your tree in the long run if you give it a good prune now. Remove any dead or broken branches and cut the rest back by about 1/3 to 1/2 at a node. Slant the cut downwards from where there is a bud. Don't fertilize until you see the new leaves emerge.

## **YOUR JUNE GARDEN by Maureene Smith**

► Now is a good time to take a wander round the garden and find those spots that looked wonderful in spring and summer, but are now looking a bit dull and drab with winter here. Think about adding a pop of colour to brighten them up. Salvia Timboon is just in bud and will flower red/pink profusely through winter. It is a large shrub and probably needs to be at the back of a border but it is not a spreader and keeps a tidy shape. Tagetes, sometimes known as Mexican Marigold, is another bright splash of colour to cheer a winter garden. Again, this is a large shrub and sprawls a bit but can be kept in its place with a good prune. Although slow growing, a camellia japonica could make a nice feature shrub and there are many beautiful pink/red colours to choose from. On a balcony or in the garden a pot of cyclamen will give you flowers throughout the colder months. They love the chill of winter.

► June and July are good months to prune your roses and apply a fungicide (lime sulphur) to combat white scale, powdery mildew and other diseases that may overwinter. Need advice on pruning? There are some wonderful step by step Youtube videos on pruning, whatever type of rose you have. Just put 'Pruning Climbing or Shrub or Standard etc. roses Youtube' into your search engine. Of course, now is also a good time to introduce new roses or other flowering/fruited shrubs and trees. (See the previous article on bare root planting).

► Garden maintenance is always needed. There is less watering and weeding but other chores can take their place. Keeping your paving mould free is an essential for safety. A water-blaster is a relatively easy way to do this or use a chemical such as Wet and Forget. Leaves are still dropping and can be collected for composting or mulching. To help them break down larger leaves, run over them with the lawn mower. This certainly helps with those tough leaves like frangipani and magnolia.

► When you have collected all the leaves, they can be composted in a compost bin or put in a bag and left in a cool part of the garden to break down. This could take quite a while but definitely worthwhile the effort. The lovely leaf mold that results is as good as any fertiliser that you can buy and an excellent soil conditioner.



Camellia



Salvia Timboon



Tagetes



Cyclamen



### ***YOU TOO CAN HAVE COMPOST LIKE THIS—MY RECIPE FOR THIS COMPOST***

**Ingredients:** (Note—assume that you have two bins in rotation)

Miscellaneous plant material such as grass clippings and prunings but **not** weeds

Handful of blood and bone per wheelbarrow

Forkful of older material from your other bin (to ensure transfer of worms)

Forkful of cow, sheep or similar manure

Other fertiliser determined by experience and anticipated location of eventual distribution

**Method:** Mulch the plant material in mulcher or by spreading it on the driveway and running the mower over it

Mix blood and bone, manure and other fertiliser as you put the mulch in a compost bin

Keep moist and turn regularly

Wait patiently until fermented

Spread on the garden

*(Courtesy of Bob Ballinger—many thanks! Ed)*