

HORTULANUS

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

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AUGUST 2024

COMING EVENTS

- July 18-Aug. 25** Southern Highlands Botanical Art Exhibition, Retford Park, Old South Rd, Bowral 10-4pm
Aug. 2 Eryldene House and Garden, 17 McIntosh St, Gordon. Open 10am-12noon
Aug. 6 KHS Meeting: The speaker will be Allyson Apte and her topic is Australian native bees
Aug. 11 Eryldene House and Garden, 17 McIntosh St, Gordon. Open 10am-3pm
Aug. 16-18 St. Ives Orchid Fair, St. Ives Showground. Open 9am-4pm (Sun 9am-3pm) Entry: \$8
Aug. 17 Bonsai Society of Sydney—Exhibition at the Community Art Centre, Forestville 9am-3.30pm Enq. Ph: 0434 681 542
Sept. 7/8 Spring Clivia Show and Sales, Phyllis Ave, Thornleigh Sat. 9am-4pm, Sun. 9am- 3pm Entry: \$5
Sept. 17 KHS Meeting and AGM - Speaker: Sandra Marker, her topic is Ikebana
Sept. 21/22 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, 17 September 2024.

The purpose of the meeting is:

- * To confirm the minutes of the last Annual General Meeting.*
- * To receive the President's Report for 2024.*
- * To receive and consider the accounts for the year ended 30 June 2024.*
- * To elect office bearers and committee members.*

All existing officers and committee members will stand down. Evelyn Mason, Ted Shaw, Christine Rethers, Robyn Brown, Helen Gilkes 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 a very cool evening for our July meeting but despite this, 43 members and visitors ventured out to enjoy the activities. We were very pleased to find that our hall was at a very comfortable temperature throughout the evening. **You will see from the above AGM notice that our September meeting is being held two weeks later than usual on Tuesday, 17 September. This is because the Council elections are being held at that time and the hall will be used for that purpose for the first two week in September.**

We are looking for volunteers to help sell raffle tickets. Please let Robyn Brown know at the August meeting or phone her on 0408 295 601 if you would be able to help.

Membership subscriptions were due on 1st July 2024 - \$25 for a single and \$35 for a double. Please complete the attached renewal form and return it with your payment (cash, cheque or direct debit) in an envelope with your name on it to Helen Gilkes at the next meeting or post it to Mrs Robyn Brown, P O Box 508, Forestville 2087. Please take a moment to fill in the subscription form as it is needed to check that we have your details correctly recorded.

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OUTINGS

The next outing of the year is to three lovely gardens at Little Hartley on Wednesday, 16th October 2024. The outing will include morning tea, lunch at one of the gardens and all garden entries and the cost will be \$130. 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 form by mail. You can also book by phoning Helen on 9144 4826. Bookings close on Friday, 27 September 2024. These are three gardens that will be included in the Little Hartley Garden Festival the following weekend and we have been fortunate enough to secure our own private viewing just ahead of the weekend crowds.

Plans are progressing well for the Society's four-day outing to the high country of North-east Victoria from 29th April to 2nd May 2025. We will be staying for two nights in Beechworth and one night in Tumut. If this year is anything to go by, the autumn colour in this area should be spectacular. We will keep you up-to-date and hope to have a booking form available for either the October or November meeting.

RAFFLE

There were some lovely native plants provided by the Society on the raffle table. 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 full of *Haemanthus albiflos* pieces in bloom and some pots of interesting ground covers. Don't forget to check out the Garden Table each month for some real bargains.

GUEST SPEAKER JULY

Our guest speaker was Richie Griffith. He has been growing camellias since the 1980's, was President of the NSW Camellia Research Society for three years and is now their Public Officer. Richie gave us a brief historical rundown on camellias including the fact that the genus was named after Georg Josef Kamel in the 1600's. He was a missionary and a botanist based in the Philippines and Linnaeus named the camellia after him in honour of his botanical work. It is recorded that he never saw a camellia! About 80% of the known species originate in China but they are also found in Japan and Korea. The best known and most widespread species is *C. sinensis* from which tea is derived. Although tea drinking was first recorded in the 6th century BC, the ornamental cultivars have only been around in the past 1,000 years! The first of these reached Britain in the 1700's and were imported into Australia in the early 1800's. It took until after WWI for the camellia to really take off in this country and since then they have continued to be hybridised and new cultivars established.

Richie then showed us some of the different types of camellias that are available and gave us some information on their growing requirements. He also gave us a practical demonstration on grafting a camellia. Many varieties of Japonica and Reticulata camellias do better on Sasanqua rootstock.



C. sinensis



Tea plantation



C. nitidissima



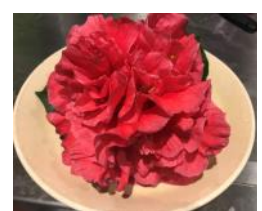
C. williamsii hybrids



C. higo
'Yomata Nishiki'



C. japonica
'Grand Marshal'



C. reticulata
'Glorious Gamble'

Main Speaker August: This will be Allyson Apte who will be speaking to us on native bees. Allyson lives locally in Turramurra and she is involved with Beecology which is a group of citizen scientists devoted to protecting our native pollinators.

MEMBER SPEAKER JULY

Ted Shaw spoke to us about a trip he, his wife Nancy and some family members went on back in May to Uluru. He took us through each day's activities and showed us photos of the magnificent scenery of the area and some of the plants growing there.

Uluru (Ayers Rock) is a massive sandstone monolith in the heart of the Northern Territory's 'Red Centre', with the nearest large town of Alice Springs 450km away. It is a place sacred to indigenous Australians and is thought to have been formed around 550 million years ago. It is within the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park which also includes another 36 red rock domes - The Olgas.

During their five-day stay, Ted and Nancy were able to experience the famous rock both at dawn and at dusk which



Uluru (Ayers Rock)

Camel Farm

high-lighted its magnificence in the otherwise quite flat landscape around it. During their stay, they were able to take a number of walks around the site. Some parts are designated as sacred sites and no photography is permitted there. They also visited the camel farm which was of particular interest to the children.

On the fourth day there, the group travelled to Kings Canyon which was a 300km trip. There they went on the Kathleen Springs walk with more spectacular scenery and more interesting and unusual plants to see. Back in Uluru, on their last day they went on one last sunrise viewing and another lovely walk to the Mutijulu waterhole before their departure back to Sydney. Ted's talk will undoubtedly have inspired those of us who have not yet seen this remarkable part of our country to jump on a plane and get out there.



Some of the interesting plants including Alyogyne, Sturts Desert Pea, Ptilotis, and Eremophylla

Member speaker August: This will be Ted Shaw who will show us some of the interesting places he and Nancy visited on their trip last year to the USA.

IN THE VEGIE PATCH IN AUGUST by Christine Rethers

I am pleased to say that our vegie garden is very productive now, bearing in mind that I can't grow some vegetables like broccoli and cauliflower because they are always decimated by rats. We are harvesting spinach, lettuce, rocket and herbs such as parsley with the carrots, beet-root, snow peas and broad beans still about a month away from being ready. The rhubarb is powering along and we will be picking some soon.

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.

Our tomato seeds on the window sill are now coming up and we will hopefully have some seedlings to share around in about a month or two's time. Keep your winter vegies moving along with applications of a liquid fertiliser once every two weeks. When it comes to harvesting broad beans and peas, pick them young and often so that you keep your plants producing new pods. If you leave them until they are old and going to seed, your plants will give up producing new pods.

WINTER AT THE ADELAIDE BOTANIC GARDENS by Virginia Fischer

If you are a visitor to Adelaide in winter, like I was, I can highly recommend a visit to the Adelaide Botanic Gardens. I was immediately struck by the choice of plants suited to the city's hot, dry summers including tall aloes with large red and yellow flower spikes and interesting cycads such as the South African Bread Palm *Encephalartos altensteinii*. In and near the lake were several beautiful Swamp Cypress *Taxodium distichum* showing their knobbly



Aloes

"Cypress Knees" (aerial roots).

The elegant Palm House was built in 1877 and shipped to Australia from Germany in prefabricated sections. It is one of only a few left in the world. Inside is an astonishing collection of plants from Madagascar, such as *Alluaudia procera* and *Didierea trollii* – all of which seemed to be completely covered in vicious spines.

Nearby is the Amazon Waterlily Pavilion built in 2007 to replace the original 1868 building. Inside is the amazing *Victoria amazonica*, the Amazon waterlily. In its native South America, the leaves of this plant can grow to nearly three metres across. The beautiful perfumed white flower blooms in the centre of the plant and changes from white to pink as it ages. The new glasshouse reflects the structure of the plant's leaf. Inside the glasshouse, the waterlily grows in the original pond, purpose-built in 1868.



Bread Palm



Palm House

Another highlight of the gardens is the Santos Museum of Economic Botany which showcases the many ways in which people use plants. This building dates from 1881 - a time when Sir Joseph Banks of Kew Gardens and other plant collectors established a network of such museums around the world. The museum in the Adelaide Botanic Gardens is the only one of its kind left. Inside is a fascinating collection of artefacts showing the practical uses of plants around the world as, for example, for food, medicine, clothing,

furniture, tools, dyes and paper.

With so much to see, I wasn't able to view the newer Bicentennial Conservatory built in 1989 to display rainforest plants. It is the largest single span glasshouse in the Southern Hemisphere. I will be sure to visit it on my next trip to Adelaide.



Victoria amazonica

YOUR AUGUST GARDEN by Maureen Smith

By now the worst of winter is over and we can look forward to some warmer sunny days just right for the garden. Take a walk around and see all those indications that spring is on the way. *Dendrobium speciosum*, the Sydney rock orchid, is budding up and will soon be in full flower. *Tetradenia riparia*, commonly called the Nutmeg tree, is already in full flower displaying its fluffy pale mauve blooms. If you have one of these, it needs to be cut back hard when the flowers finish as it can quickly become very straggly. Daffodils and jonquils are in bud or flowering and the bluebells have pushed their bright green leaves through the soil, though it will still be a few weeks before their flowers will appear.

Hard as it can be, this walk around the garden can also show some plants that have basically reached their use by date and should be replaced by a new or perhaps different plant. Some plants that look tired can also be rejuvenated by division and replanting.

The leaves of many deciduous trees that have fallen are often slow to break down if left on the ground and are better swept up and composted. If you have garden beds under these trees, it's good to scatter fertiliser pellets directly onto the bare soil before mulching again.

Removing flower heads of natives, such as grevilleas, as they finish should ensure a good showing in the future, as does cutting back native grasses hard if you haven't already done so. They will then burst forth with lovely new growth in the spring. Another pruning job is for the winter-flowering salvias. As they finish flowering cut them back hard to the ground but wait until you can see the new shoots forming. *Salvia elegans* ('Pineapple Sage'), *S. leucantha*, *S. Van Houttei* and *S. Timboon* all benefit from this treatment.

As your camellias finish flowering, it's a good time for trimming and shaping, before the buds of next season's flowers appear. With camellias, you can cut back really hard if you need to, to reduce height or width.

If you have not already done so, it is time to prune hydrangeas. The best way to do this is to take any stems that flowered last season down to the first pair of large buds. Those stems that didn't bloom should be left as they will carry flowers this coming summer. Take out any really old thick stems as they have run out of oomph. Take out also any very thin and spindly stems. It is then a good idea to spread around some pelleted fertiliser and mulch as by the end of the month the new foliage will start to emerge and they will be on their way again.

Happy gardening!



Tetradenia riparia
The Nutmeg Bush



Salvia Timboon



Salvia elegans
Pineapple Sage

