

# HORTULANUS

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

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## SEPTEMBER 2023

### COMING EVENTS

- Sept. 1-Oct. 9 **Boongala Native Gardens, 76 Pitt Town Road, Kenthurst. Fri—Mon. only. 10am - 4pm**
- 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](http://www.gcac2023.com)**
- Sept. 16/17 **Plant Lovers Fair, Karing. Sat. 8am-4pm, Sun. 9am-3pm. Further information: <https://www.plantloversfair.com.au/>**
- Sept. 23 **KHS Garden Ramble and Plant Sale –10am to 3pm (Details below)**
- Sept. 23/24 **Clivia Show, Thornleigh Community Centre, Cnr Phyllis St & Central Ave, Thornleigh. 9am-4pm**
- Sept. 30/Oct. 1 **Bromeliad Society, Autumn Show & Sale, Castle Hill Showground, 129 Showground Rd, Castle Hill. 9am-4pm**
- Oct. 3 **KHS Meeting - Prof. Michelle Leishman ‘Towards Nature—Smart Liveable Cities for the Future’**

### President’s Report

The highlight of the year was our 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. Our guest speaker was the very informative Dr John Siemon, Director of Horticulture and Living Collections from the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust. The list of the Who’s Who of the Ku-ring-gai area attending that evening was extensive. In addition, our Secretary, Christine Rethers, was thanked for her twenty plus years of service. The evening was further enriched by wonderful floral displays presented by a number of very creative members and a delectable array of finger foods and, of course, a 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary cake.

Attendance at our monthly meetings has increased considerably now that Covid has become ‘normalised’ throughout the community. We are getting more and more visitors attending each month with a number of them joining on a regular basis. We had some wonderful speakers, both member presenters and guests. The range of topics was fascinating.

In August 2022 we went to the Auburn Botanic Gardens to see the Cherry Blossom Festival and several gardens in the Sutherland Shire. In October members drove to the Hills District and visited three outstanding gardens in Dural and Arcadia. The monthly Show Bench was awash with colour. However, Aubrey Knowles, the 2022 winner could not be challenged.

But KHS is only as strong as its volunteers. We have a wonderful array of dedicated volunteers undertaking so many tasks. For their support we are blessed. Finally, a special thanks goes to the committee members who have worked so hard this past year. However, we are sad to say goodbye and thank-you to Nancy Shaw who is now stepping down.

*Evelyn Mason*, President.

### MEMBER NEWS

It was another rather cool evening for our August meeting but despite this, 58 members and visitors ventured out to enjoy the activities. We were very pleased to bid a warm welcome to our newest members, Barbara Rose, Christine Ferguson and Kym Swaby. We hope they enjoy their membership of our Society.

The September meeting will commence with the AGM which should not take very long. The full version of the President’s report plus the Treasurer’s reports are attached to the newsletter for your perusal. The AGM will be followed by our normal meeting.

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**Keep Saturday, 23rd September, aside for the Society's Open Garden visits and plant sale,** starting at 10am until 3pm. The three interesting and very different gardens that will be open belong to Alison and Jim Wood, 6 Laurence Avenue, Turrumurra, Smila Smithers, 2 Wolsten Avenue, Turrumurra and Christine and Theo Rethers, 1 Wolsten Avenue, Turrumurra. All three gardens are within very close walking distance so you will only need to park your car once. Plants will be for sale in the Rethers' garden where there will also be a delicious morning tea on offer for \$5 per person. Do take this chance to see three lovely gardens and buy lots of special plants at good prices that you will not see in nurseries and garden centres.

**Christmas Lunch:** This will to be held on Tuesday, 21 November 2023 starting at 12.30pm at the Terrey Hills Golf and Country Club, Booralie Road, Terrey Hills. The cost will be \$75 per person and the lunch will include a glass of wine and some canapes on arrival followed by a choice of two main courses and two desserts. Tea/coffee and petits fours will finish the meal. An invitation to this event will be sent out shortly and this will contain instructions on how to book and pay.

If you haven't yet renewed, this is a reminder that **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 Turrumurra 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. Unfortunately, if we do not receive your renewal soon, this will be your last Hortulanus. However, if you are not continuing your membership, we would appreciate it if you would let us know so that we do not trouble you further.

**Warning!** We have been advised by a number of members to beware of ticks which are now out and about in our gardens. Before going to work in your garden, think about spraying yourself with a good insect deterrent such as Bushman's Spray. This is available in the main supermarkets and seems to do a better job of protecting you than some of the other sprays such as Aeroguard.

## **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 outlets at Rydal, you may wish to bring some extra snacks or drinks). A booking form is included with this newsletter. Last minute bookings can be made with Helen Gilkes by sending her your booking by email (khs.secretary@gmail.com) or by phoning her on 9144 4826.

**The trip to the Berry Gardens Festival on the 12th/13th October is 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 three lovely native plants provided by the Society on the raffle table as well as a lovely big clump of Dahlia tubers donated by our President. Also on the raffle table were some very interesting books donated by Anonymous. Thank you, one and all who bring along some very nice prizes.

## **GARDEN TABLE**

The Garden Table had a number of interesting items on offer including some pots of well grown ground covers and some wonderful Dahlia tubers, ready for planting. Also, there were some Tree Dahlia cuttings ready to put in the ground and a number of other cuttings ready for potting up. Don't forget to check out the Garden Table each month for some real bargains.

## **MAIN SPEAKER AUGUST**

This was Nicky Court, a landscape designer with a passion for the lovely bush walks available in the Middle Harbour area where she grew up. Nicky described seven of these walks which she illustrated with photos of the areas she has visited. It is truly amazing that so close to a city of 5 million people there are still some wonderfully natural bush walks with lovely views over Middle Harbour.

The first of the walks she described was the Heath Walk at Allambie Heights. The views out over the escarpment



*Epacris (White)*



*Epacris (Pink)*



*Aboriginal Carvings*



*Goanna*

showed a wide area of bush with no signs of habitation. The native vegetation on this walk included the Tea Tree (*Leptospermum*) and Native Fuchsia (*Epacris*), both the pink and the white varieties. Another interesting walk was around the Bantry Bay Rock Carvings. She made the point that there was no protection at all around these carvings and they can be walked on without hindrance. It is easy to see the outline of people, animals and especially fish. On another walk, Nicky showed us a photo of a Goanna in the area where there are a number of Scribbly Gum trees. Nicky then took us on a walk in the Bantry Bay area of the harbour—what a lovely tranquil spot this is. She also

described a walk from Quaker's Hat Bay to The Spit where there are still house boats moored with more lovely harbour views.

Nicky finished her talk with information about her activities as a tour group leader for trips to India and showed us some of the various places she visits with her groups. She has had many years of experience visiting India as she has family and friends living there. Her next trip is 6-23 January 2024 and bookings close on 5 October 2023. She can be contacted on 0412 443 574 or by email to [nicky.le.court@gmail.com](mailto:nicky.le.court@gmail.com).



*Glimpses of the Quaker's Hat Bay to The Spit area*

**Main Speaker September:** This will be Helen Lovell who will be telling us all about the Neutrog Biological Fertiliser organisation. Neutrog is a company in South Australia which supplies all kinds of products for use by gardeners. It is a fascinating story of good old Aussie enterprise which we all benefit from. Helen will also bring along some samples of their products for us to take away and try.

## **MEMBER SPEAKER AUGUST**

Our President, Evelyn Mason, gave the third and last part of her three-part talk on Dahlias. In this talk Evelyn discussed Floriography (the language of flowers) which was very important in the Victorian era when messages were conveyed to friends, family and lovers by way of arrangements of flowers.

Dahlias symbolise diversity, beauty, commitment and kindness. They are also tied to steadfastness, due to their ability to bloom after many other flowers have died. However, each dahlia colour has a specific meaning. Thus red dahlias are a sign of strength, white dahlias display a sense of innocence, pink dahlias symbolise kindness and beauty, purple dahlias are tied to royalty and respect, green dahlias symbolise big change and new beginnings, yellow dahlias are so cheerful and bring joy and black dahlias (actually burgundy) represent negative feelings.

Finally, the naming of dahlias often represents the breeder. For example Winkie Gladiator, or Winkie Rossella are called after the town in South Australia where John Menzel breeds them and Kiara is the prefix used by John Young in Launceston Tasmania. However, with over 50,000 cultivars there are many flowers that do not have the breeder's prefix!

**Member speaker September:** There will not be a member speaker as we will be holding the Society's AGM.

## **IN THE VEGIE PATCH IN SEPTEMBER by Christine Rethers**

Hopefully, you are all still harvesting your winter vegetables. These will run out of steam by the end of September, ready to be replaced by your summer crops. As they finish, pull them out, chop them up and add them to your compost heap. You can get your soil ready to plant some of the seedlings you have either grown yourself or bought at the garden centre for your summer vegetables such as tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, beans, lettuces and spinach or silverbeet. (If you come on the Society's Open Garden Day on 23 September, Theo Rethers will have some tomato plants ready to go).

Another vegetable you might like to think about is sweet corn. This should be planted straight from seed and sown in a block rather than in a straight line. This is for the purpose of easier pollination. Some people use the corn once it has grown a bit, as supports for pumpkin to ramble through or for climbing beans. The most important thing to do, once your seedlings have gone in, is to keep them moving by liquid feeding them with a product such as Thrive for Flower and Fruit every two weeks. The other important thing is to protect them from all the beasts that are waiting for a good feed. The best protection is fine white netting over your most vulnerable crops and it is easy to make your own insect-proof 'cage' with four stakes and the netting. Just make sure it comes right down to the ground and anchor it there with tent pegs or some large stones.

## **YOUR SEPTEMBER GARDEN by Maureen Smith**

Winter has just about gone but it is not too late for a hard prune of some of those wonderful winter flowering shrubs such as *Tetradenia riparia* (Nutmeg Bush), *Salvias*, *Tagetes lemonii* (Mexican Daisy), *Clerodendrum ugandense* (Butterfly Bush) and the like. Now is the time to get them ready to green up in the coming warmer months. Some of the native shrubs such as *Grevilleas* also enjoy a trim to maintain their bushy growth.

Give your Azaleas and Camellias a feed as they finish flowering. It is best to use a fertiliser especially designed for them but failing that, some good handfuls of cow manure will give them a boost as they are making their spring growth. It is also a good time to trim them if necessary to maintain a well-shaped plant. Camellias start to grow next year's buds shortly after flowering so don't leave any trimming too late or you will be cutting off next season's flowers.

September is a good time to give your lawn some aeration. Using a garden fork is an easy and simple method and whilst aerating your lawn, you are exercising your body as well. It's probably better to wait until October before you give it its spring fertilising though.

Daisies: there are so many varieties, a lot of them from South Africa, so you can find one flowering from now until well into next winter. Think about adding some to your garden. Most of them are waterwise plants so will thrive in what augurs to be a long hot summer. Perennials like *Arctotis* and *Gazania* come in just about every shade you can imagine and both have attractive grey-green foliage. *Osteospermums*, commonly known as the African Daisy, not only have many flower forms but also many varied colours. Some are upright growers whilst others will sprawl and spread. A small less showy daisy is *Erigeron* (Seaside Daisy) which makes an excellent ground cover or a spillover plant for a wall or large pot. However, it does self-seed into any nook or cranny, so if you like a neat and tidy garden, I would give this one a miss. Do look at some of the new Marguerite hybrids which flower profusely and form into attractive rounded bushes.

As always make sure you keep your garden beds well mulched as this saves on the weeds and water.

Happy Gardening!



*Tetradenia riparia* (Nutmeg bush)



*Arctotis*



*Tagetes lemonii*



*Gazania*



*Erigeron*



*Osteospermum*