

HORTULANUS

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

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SEPTEMBER 2022

COMING EVENTS

- Sept.2 to Oct. 10** Boongala Native Gardens, 76 Pitt Town Rd, Kenthurst. Fri-Mon. 10am-4pm
Sept. 6 KHS AGM and Monthly Meeting
Sept. 11 KHS Spring Garden Ramble (See below)
Sept. 17/18 Kariong Plant Lovers Fair, Festival Drive, Kariong. Sat. 8-4pm, Sun. 9-3pm Entry \$15
Sept. 24/25 Bromeliad Soc. Show, Castle Hill Showground, Sat. 9-4pm, Sun. 10-3pm Entry free
Oct. 4 KHS Monthly Meeting
Oct. 20 KHS Self-drive Outing to three Hills District private gardens (see below)

MEMBER NEWS

The September meeting will commence with the AGM which should not take very long. The President's and Treasurer's reports are attached to the newsletter for your perusal. This will then be followed by our normal meeting.

We are pleased to announce a **Spring Garden Ramble** will take place on the afternoon of Sunday, 11 September. There will be three lovely spring gardens to visit and the ramble starts at 1.30pm in the garden of Alison Wood, 6 Laurence Avenue, Turramurra. The second garden is that of Christine Rethers, 1 Wolsten Avenue, Turramurra from 2.30pm to 3.15pm and the last garden will be that of Sue and Bob Ballinger, 17 Linden Avenue, Pymble from 3.15pm to 4.15pm. Afternoon tea will be served in the last garden. Please bring a plate to share. As usual, members, their family and friends are all welcome to attend.

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

In these uncertain times and due to great difficulty in booking a coach, your committee has decided to try something a little different for our last outing of the year on Thursday, 20th October to three lovely Hills District private gardens. This outing will be self-drive, with private cars being used to travel to and between the gardens. Our Society will be providing morning tea but you will need to bring your own lunch.

The plan is that we will meet at our first garden in Dural at 9:30am (allow at least 30-45mins driving time from the Northern Suburbs at that time of day) where the garden owner, Tracey Fleischner, will give us a guided tour, followed by our morning tea provided by the Society. At about 11:15am we'll leave there and head for Arcadia, arriving at our second garden, Guestlands, at about 11:30am where our host, Jenny Guest, will welcome us to her extensive Tuscan-inspired garden. Leaving there at 12:15pm or so, it is just a short drive still in Arcadia to our third garden. Esther Ronco has invited us to have our BYO lunch at her home and then enjoy wandering through her garden. All three gardens are very well cared for and are quite large, but for those wanting to see more seasonal plants or get a good dose of retail therapy, a stop at Swane's Nursery in Galston on the way home may just top-off the day.

A booking form for this outing is included with this Hortulanus. It provides addresses for the three gardens and for Swane's Nursery. The cost for this outing will be \$20 per person to cover morning tea, the garden entry to Guestlands and thank-you gifts to Tracey and Esther. Family and friends will be welcome to join the outing and we will attempt to find spare car seats for any members without transport.

A booking form is included with your September Hortulanus. Bookings may be made with Helen Gilkes at the September meeting or by mail to 20A Normurra Avenue, North Turramurra 2074.

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Time Out Tours Garden Trip on 23/24/25 September 2022

A 3-day coach trip has been organised for gardeners to the NSW North Coast and KHS members have been given the opportunity to join this group trip. Four of our members are already booked.

Attached is the itinerary which also provides the details of costs. At this stage there are three motel rooms available and preference will be given to bookings on a twin-share basis. If you are interested, please contact Tracey Fleischner on 0412 223 311 to make your booking and arrange payment. Call as soon as possible as bookings will be taken on a 'first in, best dressed' basis.

RAFFLE

Again this month there were some lovely raffle prizes, many of them donated anonymously. The Society provided a beautiful hellebore in flower and there was a variety of other donated plants and items of gardening interest. Donations to the raffle table are always gratefully accepted.

GARDEN TABLE

The Garden Table this month had a wide selection, with something for everyone and all going very cheaply. You could have chosen between saxifrages, aloes, Queen of the Night cuttings, Stanhopea and Cymbidium orchids, pentas and seeds of the lovely annual, Orlaya. 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 AUGUST



This was Jeremy Critchley, the owner of the Green Gallery wholesale nursery. He gave us a most informative talk about the trials and tribulations of the wholesale nursery business. Jeremy and his mother started the nursery on leased land in Dural in 2007, mainly growing potted flowers to start with, later adding succulents and now a large section of the nursery is devoted to indoor plants. He developed a system of growing on benches rather than on the ground and watering from below which he found works really well. At the moment he estimates that he has 1,600 plants at any one time in the nursery. He travels extensively and imports a great many of the plants he grows through a system of tissue culture and he showed us the various stages plant tissue goes through before it eventually emerges as a plant ready to pot up. The nursery business has gone very Hi-Tec, that is for sure.

In addition to the nursery, Jeremy has secured a contract to provide all the plants to the City of Sydney for their numerous planter boxes scattered around the city. He provides the plants and plants out the boxes but says that another company maintains them. They certainly brighten up the city streets and plazas.

Jeremy reported that Sydney's recent big wet period resulted in large losses of plants in the nursery. He also noted that they use beneficial insects inside their greenhouses for pest control and only non-toxic sprays so that all his plants can grow healthily.

Jeremy is now planning to relocate his nursery shortly to a property he has bought at Mangrove Mountain. He brought in a number of his plants for sale and these were eagerly snatched up.

Main Speaker September: Bob Ballinger will present photos of his recent travels with his wife, Sue, from Cairns to Karumba on the Gulf of Carpentaria, along the Savannah Way which crosses the Atherton Tablelands. He will show some of the flora and fauna found on that route and describe the unique geological features of the terrain as well as some of the more unusual tourist attractions.

MEMBER SPEAKER AUGUST: This was Len Riordan. We have all admired the many interesting cacti and succulents Len brings in to the Show Bench and he now showed us how he grows them. Len emphasised that he grows his mainly by trial and error and has learnt over the years what works for him. From the pictures he showed us, he has certainly built up his collection which now contains many interesting and well grown plants.

Member speaker September: We don't usually have a member speaker this month because of the AGM but Ted Shaw will show some photos taken on the recent trip to the Auburn Botanic Gardens Cherry Blossom Festival and the E G Waterhouse Camellia Garden in Caringbah.

IN THE VEGIE PATCH IN SEPTEMBER by Christine Rethers

There is nothing better than harvesting your own tomatoes—they simply taste better than shop-bought ones. It is time to start thinking about where you are going to plant your tomatoes and when. I planted six punnets of seed of two different kinds of tomatoes, a small red variety called Amish Paste and a small yellow variety whose name has long since disappeared. As these are heritage varieties, I save the seed each year. They all came up (!) and have now been potted on into small pots (approximately 100!) so I will be bringing plenty to the Garden Table either this month or next. I will wait now to plant them into the garden until both the weather and the soil temperature warms up. This



will probably be mid to late September. In the meantime, I will prepare the places where they will go by digging in some cow manure with a good sprinkle of dolomite lime. I will then put in my supports, either stakes or a trellis to tie them to. When I plant them, I will bury them up to the first set of proper leaves as they will develop more roots along that extra length of stem. A good watering followed by some mulch of sugarcane or pea straw is all that is needed. Follow this up with liquid fertilising every couple of weeks but be careful not to use a fertiliser high in nitrogen as this will result in leafy plants but few flowers. Finally, plant some bee-loving plants nearby—I like Thai basil as it's flowers are a great bee attractant. French Marigolds are also a good companion plant. With a bit of luck, you will have tomatoes by Christmas. Both the varieties I use do not attract fruit fly. If you have not yet got any plants on the go, the nurseries are starting to get in their tomato plants so you should have plenty to choose from. Remember, the bigger the fruit, the more they attract fruit fly and will need some protection. The best protection I have found is to use fine white netting, making sure that it completely encloses the plants right down to the ground.

Other vegetables to think about are lettuce and cucurbits. Depending on the variety, cucumbers can take up very little room if the variety you choose can be grown on a trellis. Zucchini should be planted on a mound and given at least a metre all round to spread. Pumpkins also need plenty of room to spread out and wander. All these ideally need to be grown in full sun. In our area, I would wait until things warm up a bit more before putting them in—maybe towards the end of September to mid October. You will need to protect young plants from slugs and snails.

14 BENT STREET



Mark Carter and his sister Ruth

As you can imagine with a society that started in 1933, it has a fair bit of history behind it. As you saw with our evening with Vivien Leigh in June which celebrated an event that occurred in 1948, we have similarly had brought to our attention a period in the 1960's when Charles Carter was secretary of the Society and when he and his wife were very active members. A grandson, Mark Carter, got in touch as his grandfather's property at 14 Bent Street, Lindfield is in the process of being sold to developers and he wanted the Society to see the garden with its wonderful collection of camellias before they were all bulldozed. The committee visited the property in late July and were sad to see that it had been let go over the intervening years and that many of the camellias were 3-4 metres high. It is a large garden and also included what would have been a lovely rose garden.

As we sat on the front verandah of this old house sipping afternoon tea, we could only imagine how busy and active this garden would have been in its heyday. Shown below are some of the lovely camellia blooms, the names of which have been mostly lost. Charles Carter and his wife apparently won numerous prizes and Mark showed us some of the ribbons they had been awarded.



A cup presented by Mrs Charles Carter for Champion Formal Double Camellia



Some of the ribbons presented by the Society to Charles Carter and his wife, including Champion Camellia, Champion Flower in Show and Champion Miscellaneous Flower.

BEGONIAS - THERE'S ONE TO SUIT EVERYONE by Maureen Smith

Begonias come in an infinite variety and have an infinite number of uses in your garden or your home. They are not a high maintenance plant and well worth considering. The smallest type are what are commonly referred to as bedding begonias, *Begonia semperflorens*. This is a small compact plant with shiny green/bronze leaves which can have red, white or pink flowers. They are great to use for mass planting in a border or container and are sun hardy. They flower for many months of the year. Be warned however, that although considered an annual, they are prolific self-seeders and will pop up anywhere for years to come.

The largest type of begonia is the cane begonia, some of which reach to 3 metres. The cane name comes from their bamboo like stems and their other name, Angels Wings, from the shape of their flowers. The leaves can be plain or spotted, light green to dark green, some with beautiful dark red underneath. In spring and summer they have showy pendant clusters of flowers in a colour range of orange, white, pink or red. They are probably best grown in dappled light but can be successfully used as an indoor plant. Begonias are dotted around the Sydney Botanic Gardens and some lovely examples can be found in the Latitude 23 glasshouse. You can often buy some of these at the Growing Friends' nursery.

Rhizomatous begonias are a very large group with leaves coming from thick rhizomes growing along the surface of the soil. They have pink or white flowers in winter to spring but it is for their wonderful and varied leaves they are prized most. The size, shape and colours they come in is amazing. There are over 700 known species and hundreds of cultivars. Leaves can be green, grey, white, purple, red, brown and all combinations and shades of these. Similarly with the shape and size of the leaves, they can be frilled, round, multi pointed, spiralled, hairy or smooth. They will happily grow outdoors although they may die back a little in winter but they certainly make a great indoor plant.



Rhizomatous Begonias

As with all begonias, do not overwater. Another very showy begonia is the tuberous form. These can have blooms up to 25cm. You can grow them in the ground, in pots or particularly the pendulous form, in a basket. They come in a wide range of colours—white, pink, red, apricot and yellow. Tuberous begonias will go dormant from late autumn and should be kept dry and in the dark until they begin shooting again in spring, ready for their showy display from late summer to autumn. They are really not suitable as an indoor plant. You can bring them in for short periods but like cyclamen they need cool nights to thrive. A final benefit of begonias is that they are easy to propagate, either from leaves or from rhizomes, depending on the type.



Bedding Begonias



Tuberous Begonias



Cane Begonias

YOUR SEPTEMBER GARDEN by Maureene Smith

► Spring is almost here and you can see signs of it. Daffodils, snowflakes and jonquils are already out and the bluebells are not far behind. Many deciduous trees have started budding up and the azaleas are putting out their first flowers.

► Temperatures are still on the low side and on some days even chilly, but there is plenty to do in the garden. Rejuvenate your soil with some good organic fertiliser. Blood and Bone is a good slow release choice that won't break the bank. After fertilising, don't forget to mulch. Use your own compost if you are lucky enough to have plenty in your bins, but if not, use one that will enrich the soil as it breaks down over time.

► Now is the time to divide perennials such as Shasta daisies and Day Lilies. Dig around and lift out the clump and hopefully disentangle the roots before separating. Sometimes it may be necessary to be more forceful and take to the clump with a spade. When you have your divisions, you can plant them in other spots in the garden or even give some to friends for their patch. Water in well using a mixture of water and a seaweed product to help reduce transplant shock.

► It is also a good time to think about sowing some seeds. Some need to be sown in seed raising mix but many will quite happily grow if just scattered around as happens in nature. Cosmos, nigella, alyssum, lobelia and California poppy will all work this way. There are some new varieties of California poppy with a lovely choice of colours.

► When planting, don't forget the bees and make sure you plant something that they will love and seek out in your garden. Perennial basil, particularly the purple one and borage are both excellent bee attractors as well as having a culinary use.

AUBURN BOTANIC GARDENS CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

