

HORTULANUS

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

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NOVEMBER 2026

COMING EVENTS

- Oct.24-Nov.1** Artisans in the Gardens, Lion Gate Lodge, Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens. Entry free.
- Nov. 1** African Violet Association - Display and Sale, Burwood RSL, 96 Shaftesbury Rd, Burwood, from 12 noon to 4pm. Entry: \$5.
- Nov. 3** KHS Meeting: Speaker will be Ian Hook. He will be speaking about bromeliads.
- Nov. 27** KHS Christmas Lunch at the Monash Country Club, 256 Powderworks Road, Ingleside from 12.30pm-2.30pm.
- Dec. 1** KHS Meeting and Christmas supper: Speaker is Mary Fairlie Cuninghame, a floral art demonstrator.

MEMBER NEWS

October has again proved to be one of the busiest months of the whole year for KHS members. We had a well-supported Members' Trading Table, followed by the Members' Garden Ramble to three delightful gardens.

Christmas Lunch: The Society will be holding its Christmas lunch on Friday, 27 November 2026 at the Monash Country Club, 256 Powderworks Road, Ingleside from 12.30pm to 2.30pm. Everyone is invited to attend and the cost will be \$65 per person for a wonderful two-course lunch. A booking form is included with this month's newsletter.

Garden Clubs of Australia Our Gardens Quarterly Magazine: Subscriptions to this magazine are now due for 2027. We strongly recommend the purchase of a subscription as the magazine is very relevant to home gardeners, as most of us are. Most of the articles are written by experienced garden folk like ourselves and cover a very wide range of topics. The cost is only \$25, posted directly to you, for four quarterly editions. Please let Robyn Brown know if you would like to take up a subscription either by email to medway2@bigpond.net.au or at the November meeting. Payment may be made by direct deposit, by cash or by cheque. Payments by direct deposit should be made to the KHS bank account: Account name: Ku-ring-gai Horticultural Society Inc. BSB: 062-173 Account Number: 00900110. When making your deposit, please include your surname and OG in the reference line so we are able to identify you as paid. Cheques should be made out to Ku-ring-gai Horticultural Society Inc. and can be posted to Robyn Brown, P O Box 508, Forestville 2087. All renewals or new subscriptions must be deposited or received no later than Friday, 20 November 2026.

Supper: Jenny Watsford who looks after our suppers is looking for a few more volunteers. Jenny reminds us that if there are enough helpers, you are only needed every two or three months. The job entails arriving by 6.45pm and helping to set up the kitchen and supper table, serving the tea and coffee and tidying up afterwards. Jenny brings the milk and biscuits and is always there to assist. We need two people on duty. It is not an arduous task and a great way to get to know fellow members. Please contact Jenny on 0422 146786 or email to jenny.watsford@gmail.com.

Members' Trading Table: Many thanks to the wonderful helpers on the night. The total sales were \$454 (April \$448). There were 6 (April 8) sellers. There were 120 (April 120) plants for sale of which 50 (April 50) were sold. Commission for KHS was \$45.40. Members who sold plants will receive the proceeds at the November meeting. We plan to hold the next Members' Trading Table at the March 2027 meeting so there is time now to start propagating some new plants to bring along.

MAIN SPEAKER OCTOBER: This was Glenn Smith. Glenn's talk was in two parts. Firstly, he described the work he does which includes a contract to photograph all the plants in the Mt Annan Botanical Garden. This entails taking highly detailed botanical photographs of each plant which he then catalogues. In addition, he organises and escorts groups of amateur photographers on trips to some of the scenic areas of North and Western Australia.

In the second part of his talk, he gave some very helpful guidance on taking photos with a phone camera. He showed us how by just applying a few tweaks to our phone camera settings, we can achieve some remarkable and very desirable effects. We hope to have his notes available soon to pass on to our members.

Main Speaker November: This will be Ian Hook, Ian Hook is a prominent Australian bromeliad grower, a collector and a long-time member of the Bromeliad Society of Australia. As well as talking about many of the different types of Bromeliads, Ian will bring along some of his plants which he will have for sale after his talk. **This sale will be for cash only.**

MEMBER SPEAKER OCTOBER: Judith Williamson gave us a very comprehensive talk on how to bench your roses during the months ahead when roses will be our feature plant on the Show Bench. She explained what was expected in each of the five rose classes,



Class 1: An Exhibition Rose is usually a Hybrid Tea rose with a high-centred, elegantly shaped bloom and petals arranged in a regular, symmetrical spiral, circular outline; may have up to 30+ petals. The bloom should be half to three quarters open, 1 stem to be exhibited, no stamens showing, no damage, blemishes or disease.



Class 2: A Full Bloom Rose, no side buds (1 stem). Full Bloom Roses are flowers that are more than $\frac{3}{4}$ open, with their centres and stamens clearly visible. Blooms must be fully open, with fresh stamens and pollen visible.



Class 3: Decorative roses (3 cuts same). These are roses where the blooms are valued for their attractive petal arrangement, often with a rounded, ruffled, quartered or rosette-shaped appearance. Blooms should be well-formed and in good condition.



Class 4: Floribunda roses (3 cuts, same or different). Clusters or trusses of flowers with several blooms opening around the same time on a stem. Usually shorter, producing an abundant, colourful display with small to medium-sized flowers closer to the foliage.



Class 5: Miniature roses (3 cuts). Compact roses with smaller leaves and flowers and the plants are about 20-45cm in height. Select well-formed blooms with clean foliage and good colour.

Judith then gave members some good advice about cutting roses for the house:

- Make sure the soil around your rose plant is not too dry; if so, water deeply 1 or 2 days before cutting flowers
- Cut the flowers preferably in the morning
- Leave them in a 10L bucket filled with water up to the top, for half a day and in the shade
- Add sugar to keep the flowers fresh longer (from $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dissolved in 10L water)
- Add 10 drops of bleach to stop bacteria from breeding
- Breaking or removing thorns from the roses will extend the life of the flowers
- Then put the cut flowers in a vase filled with water up to the top
- Top up the vase with water daily

Your cut flowers will last longer and will fill your home with their beautiful colours and fragrance.

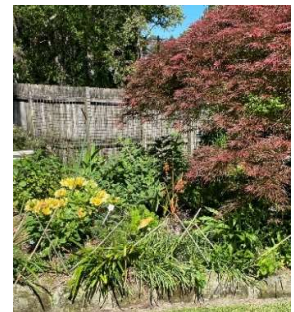
Member Speaker November: This will be Evelyn Mason who will tell us what to do with dahlia tubers.

MEMBERS' GARDEN RAMBLE

We were blessed with fine weather, not too hot or windy. The three gardens were each very different and each a real delight. We started with David and Helen Pratt's garden where the spectacular avenue of roses (*Rosa Knock Out*) greeted us as we came in from the street. David provided us with a history of the property which was owned by his family between 1960 to 1993. Roses, azaleas, camellias and fruit trees were planted at this time. The house changed hands then until 2007 when the Pratt family bought it back and have been living there ever since. David has made many changes to the garden over the years but some of the old camellias still survive and were looking in very good condition.

Next, we moved on to the garden of Patricia and Winton Gibson. Patricia has allocated quite a large part of the back garden to beds full of flowers and vegetables. The garden borders onto a council reserve with some very large eucalypts which provide a lovely back drop. The rest of the garden was full of some real treasures, just waiting to be found.

Our last garden, that of Sue and Bob Ballinger, is one we have visited a few times now and it never fails to delight. It is basically a cottage garden so there is barely an inch a bare earth to be seen. The front garden has some awesome trees and lots of hydrangeas just waiting to come into full bloom. The sunnier back garden is full of colourful roses with irises dotted around in-between. The carport had been set up for our afternoon tea which all those present had contributed to. What a wonderful way to end a delightful afternoon!



David and Helen Pratt's garden

Patricia and Winton's garden



Patricia and Winton's garden

Sue and Bob's garden

IN THE VEGIE PATCH IN NOVEMBER by Christine Rethers

It is not too late to plant some summer vegetables but buy seedlings from the nursery as opposed to sowing seeds at this time of the year as it is getting a bit late for them to mature before we start to go into autumn.

Most vegetables such as tomatoes, beans, cucumbers, eggplant and pumpkin will require a nice bright and sunny position but lettuce, rocket, spinach and most herbs can handle a shadier spot.

When it comes to tomatoes, make sure you are using a fertiliser suitable for flowers and fruit. Fertilisers with a lot of nitrogen in them will tend to produce a lot of leafy growth rather than flowers so these fertilisers are better suited to leafy vegetables. You can start now taking out lateral growths (growths off the main stem in a leaf axil) as these rarely produce fruit and rob the main plant of vigour. Make sure that the soil is heavily mulched as this will protect the bottom leaves from soil splash and keep in soil moisture. Re-member to use stakes for tall growing plants and tie them on as the plant grows. Regular liquid feeds (say every two weeks) and removal of any

yellowing leaves should keep your plants growing well. Protection from fruit fly and other beasts is best done using fine white netting, making sure that it comes down to the ground.

One way of ensuring a good supply of bees in the vegie garden is to use companion planting. This means planting flowering plants like marigolds, borage, calendula, cosmos, lavender, tagetes, nasturtiums and (my favourite) Thai basil. Just scatter some of these through your vegetables and they should make a difference to the pollination success rate. On top of that, some of these are natural pest controllers and they also serve to camouflage the edible crops you are trying to grow.

You have a vacant spot in the vegie garden and need something to fill it - have you thought about growing sweet potatoes? These are easy to grow in our climate and



dieticians tell us that the sweet potato is a very healthy food to eat. So how do we go about this? Well, surprisingly we grow them using their shoots rather than the tubers themselves. Sit the tuber in a jar or bowl of water until it sends up shoots. When those shoots are 15-20cm tall, cut them off. These are your 'slips' and they are what you plant in the garden. Each tuber can produce 10-15 slips and each slip can produce 3-4 tubers. Plant the slips in spring and space them 30cm apart with 75cm between rows. These should grow quite vigorously so they need a bit of space around them. The tubers will be ready to lift about 120 days after planting or when the leaves



start to yellow.

YOUR GARDEN IN NOVEMBER by Christine Rethers

Jobs in the garden come thick and fast as the weather warms up. If you are growing hellebores, make sure you cut off the stems that have flowered otherwise, before you know it, you will have many, many seedlings coming up which will not flower true to the parent plant.

We are coming up to hydrangea-flowering time so make sure you keep them well watered with a good layer of mulch around them to keep the roots protected from the hot sun. They do need some sun to flower well but at the same time, too much sun will scorch them and spoil the flowers. Keep an eye on your plants and throw a sheet over them when it gets too hot. The nurseries will be full of flowering hydrangeas before long and it seems each year there are new varieties available to tempt us.



The leaves of your winter-flowering bulbs will be close to dying off now but resist the temptation to cut them off. They are still needed to help produce nice fat bulbs that will flower well next year. If you were to cut open a bulb now you will probably find a nascent flower right down in the centre. When the last of the leaves have died off, you have the choice of digging up the bulbs and storing them in a cool and dry spot (hanging up in a net bag is ideal) until next autumn or leaving them in the ground (but just don't forget where they are).

Now is the time when your dahlias should be starting to appear. Make sure that you have stakes ready for the tall ones as a windy day could easily break off the young stems if they are not well secured.



Most cymbidium orchids have finished flowering now so cut off the flowering stems and check to see if your orchid pot still has room for next year's pseudobulbs. If the pseudobulbs are right hard up against the edge of the pot, it is time to repot your orchid or even to divide it up. If you are repotting, choose a pot one size larger and simply take out the plant, put it in the bigger pot and fill in the space with new orchid bark. Debco has a good mix that is readily available at your garden centre. Remember, if you decide to divide up your cymbidium orchid, always leave one or two of the old pseudobulbs on the piece you are repotting as these will continue to feed the new emerging pseudobulbs.

Your azaleas and camellias will appreciate a good feed at this time of the year with a suitable fertiliser and they will thank you for it with beautiful flowers next year.