

# HORTULANUS

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

**AUGUST 2017**

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**Website: [www.khsgardenclub.org.au](http://www.khsgardenclub.org.au)**



**MEETINGS COMMENCE AT 7.30PM  
ST IVES COMMUNITY HALL, MEMORIAL AVE, ST IVES**

## COMING EVENTS

**Aug 1**                    **AUGUST MEETING: Paul Urquhart will speak on 'Travel in Sri Lanka'**  
**Aug 11-13**            **National Orchid Extravaganza, 1 Pellitt Lane, Dural 9-4pm Fri/Sat, 12-4pm Sun**  
**Aug 12/13**            **Eryldene-A Late Winter Garden, 17 McIntosh St, Gordon 10—4pm**  
**Aug 18-20**            **St Ives Orchid Fair, St Ives Showground Fri. & Sat. 9-4pm, Sun. 9-3pm.**  
**Aug 19-27**            **Mt Tomah Botanic Gardens-Daffodil Festival Ph. 4567 3000**  
**Aug 27**                **Bunnings Sausage Sizzle fund-raiser, Bunnings Belrose 8-4pm (See below)**  
**Sept 5**                **SEPTEMBER MEETING: AGM**

## NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

*Notice is hereby given that our Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday, 5 September 2017*

*The purpose of the meeting is:*

- \* To confirm the minutes of the last Annual General Meeting.*
- \* To receive the President's Report.*
- \* To receive and consider the accounts for the year ended 30 June 2017.*
- \* To elect a Public Officer.*
- \* To elect office bearers and committee members.*

*All existing officers and committee members will stand down. Doreen Clark, Christine Rethers, Peter Fisher, Helen Gilkes, Hugh Myers, Ted Shaw and Penny Whipp offer themselves for re-election. Sue Hill has resigned and a nomination has been received from Robyn Brown.*

*Please phone Doreen Clark on 9498 1677 if you need further information*

Hi

It was a cold night for our July meeting but we were lucky there was no rain. Some 64 members and visitors turned out to enjoy themselves with their friends. Our President opened the meeting by welcoming four new members and two visitors. The four new members were presented with their badges, a history of the society and an 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary pen.

## MEMBER NEWS

**Bunnings Sausage Sizzle:** Your Society is still looking for volunteers to help at our annual Bunnings Sausage Sizzle held at the Bunnings Belrose store on Sunday, 27 August. This is a big fund raiser for the Society. The shifts are for 2 hours duration and the Sizzle runs from 8.00am to 4.00pm. It is not a boring job and can be quite amusing at times, bantering with the public. There are 6 helpers required for each shift so now is the time to step up and be counted. Please give your name to Doreen Clark either at the August meeting or phone her on 9498 1677.

A warm welcome from the committee and members to our new members -John Robinson, Jenny Becker and Jennie Richards.

Keith Smith is working up to his largest charity plant sale ever. He would be happy to relieve you of any ceramic or earthenware pots that you no longer need. Give them a scrub up and bring them along to the next meeting. Keith will be happy to collect them from you. If you want to know what will be for sale on 8 October, click the following link to go to their new website. <https://www.thepropagatinggardener.com.au/whats-on-sale>.

**Membership subscriptions** were due on 1st July 2017. \$25 for a single and \$35 for a double. For those who have not already renewed, please fill in the subscription form which is included with this newsletter, making sure that you include your email address so that the newsletter can be sent to you. If you do not have an email address there is provision on the form to put in an email address of a friend or relative who can download and print it for you.

**Hall access:** There is often a problem with the lighting outside the hall. It is suggested that when leaving the hall, members turn right and use the path that leads round towards the back of the hall. Continue on to the left.. This path leads directly to the steps (with a handrail) and the Zebra crossing that goes to the shopping centre parking.

**Plastic cup recycling:** In response to a member's suggestion, we are now going to recycle the tea and coffee cups we use at supper. Please make sure your cup is empty before putting it in the recycling bag near the kitchen.

## OUTINGS

### Wednesday, 27 September - Leura

On this outing we will be visiting four gardens in the Leura area. We will have a guide with us from the Leura Garden Club and the home owners will be on hand to answer any questions we may have. None of these gardens will be in the Leura Gardens Festival which will be held the following week and we will be the only group at the time of our visit. The cost of this trip is \$70 which will include garden entries and morning tea but not lunch. Time will be given to visit Leura village for browsing the shops and lunch. The booking form is included with this newsletter.

### Friday, 27 October – Monday, 30 October

This four day/three night trip will be to Bathurst for the Bathurst Spring Spectacular. We will visit two lovely gardens on the way there, (Wild Meadows and Hillandale), have two days to look at the Bathurst gardens and then will return via Mayfield Garden and Gairloch Garden on the Monday. The cost of this trip is \$775 with a single supplement of \$165. Accommodation will be in a four-star motel. A booking form is included with this newsletter.

For both of these trips we will be travelling in the safe and comfortable coaches provided by On Course Tours.

*All enquiries and bookings should be directed to Ms Helen Gilkes, 20a Normurra Avenue, North Turrumurra - phone 9144 4826.*

## SHOWBENCH

The Show Bench had some of the best camellia exhibits we have seen for a long time. In the native section the grevilleas have put on a good show. Citrus are doing well with a fine collection of oranges, lemons, limes and cumquats on show. In the Decorative section the cones and pots showed a lot of imagination.

The chief judge, Christine Rethers, gave some hints for new exhibitors. Most importantly, consult your Show Bench booklet for information about the class you are exhibiting in. Then, when placing your exhibit on the bench, stand back and look to see how the exhibit displays. The judges can only judge what they can see, so if part of your exhibit is obscured, it can't be judged properly. With containers, remove dead leaves and flowers as well as any insects or pests. She reminded members that we have two benching stewards on hand, at every meeting, to help members. They are Margaret Watts and Judith Williamson, so don't hesitate to ask them if you have a query.



**Congratulation to all winners of the 2016-17 Show Bench competition.** They are as follows: 1. Nita and Penny Whipp, 2. Ted and Nancy Shaw, 3. Doreen Clark, 4. Brenda Zimmerman, 5. Rosemary Baldwin, 6. Jim and Cynthia Brydie, 7. Aubrey Knowles, 8. Ray Kench, 9. Colleen Lukey, 10. Smila Smithers. The Cultural award went to Nita and Penny Whipp, the Containers award to Doreen Clark, the Small Crops award to Ted and Nancy Shaw, the Decorative award to Brenda Zimmerman and the Pictorial award to Doreen Clark. Evelyn Mason won the Encouragement award.

## RAFFLE

The Blueberry shrub was purchased from Elegant Outdoors Nursery by your Society. The set of travel tags was donated by Anonymous, thank you Anonymous. The three books, Birdscaping your Garden, Flowers and Plants at Home and The Cooks Garden, were all donated by Keith Smith, thank you Keith. The Water Gardens Book was donated by Anonymous, thank you Anonymous. These are all good prizes but you have to give \$2 to the man just inside the door to get 3 tickets.

## GARDEN TABLE

The Garden Table was full, with a wide range of plants. These included a collection of named schlumbergera cuttings, bromeliads, Stokes Asters and some Italian parsley for the kitchen garden. The collection of gardening books would have made a good read on a cold day, while a lonely looking glass vase was looking for a home. Go along and have a look, you don't have to buy, but you never know what you might find.

A box of named varieties of schlumbergera cuttings in plastic bags was passed around to members with the invitation to take a bag and grow the cuttings, with the view to bringing it back next season and seeing who was the most successful grower. The cuttings were supplied by Ray Kench. Thank you Ray.

## MAIN SPEAKER

Our main speaker was Linda Claydon, an expert on Hanging Baskets. Linda was a Bronze Medal winner at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show and she presented a fine set of photos of Hanging Baskets, some put together by her.

Some of the things she pointed out. Here in Australia hanging baskets can be grown for 6-10 months of the year, but keep an eye on the temperature, both hot and cold, and if necessary move your baskets to a more suitable place. When making up a basket remember that it will weigh about 4kg and get heavier when watered, so make sure where you are going to hang it will take the weight. If you are going to hang from a bracket on a brick wall use small Dyna bolts not Rawlplugs for your bracket. When attaching to wood or plaster, find a hidden upright by tapping or a by using an electronic detector, they are not expensive, and always use galvanised screws. Use wire or light chains to hold your basket, artificial fibre rope can sometimes be affected by ultra violet rays in the sunlight and weaken and break.

Hanging baskets are generally better if 30cm, or more, in diameter and coconut fibre liners are readily available to fit most baskets. Fill the basket with first class potting mix, mixed with plenty of slow release fertilizer, to a couple of centimetres from the top. A basket should be full of plants and this could mean planting up to 14 plants in one basket. This overcrowding will encourage the plants to spill over and hide the basket as well as growing upwards. The choice of plant can also help this. There is a large variety of plants that can be used in hanging baskets. We were shown photos of violas, fuchsias and pelargoniums to name a few. Hanging baskets of herbs and succulents can also look very attractive. Succulents, in particular, could well withstand the Sydney summer heat. Linda's overriding advice was to fertilize, because of the large amount of plants in a basket the soil can quickly become depleted.

**Main Speaker—August:** Our main speaker will be Paul Urquhart who will speak on Travelling in Sri Lanka. This should be very interesting - we don't hear much about Sri Lanka.

## MEMBER SPEAKERS

Our member speakers were Ted Shaw, Doreen Clark and Richard Cusden who spoke on 'Growing Old Gracefully in the Garden', a subject of keen interest to many members.

Probably the most drastic cure for a garden that you love, but has become too much to look after and maintain, is to move out to a retirement village where you will only have a couple of square metres of garden, or some pot plants. However, if you want to stay put, then switching from annuals to perennials like flowering shrubs that only need a tidy up once a year can help reduce your maintenance problems. Try some bulbs, as a lot of bulbs do not require lifting each year and just pop up again, bloom and die back leaving dead and dry foliage which takes very little effort to clear. Scatter some long term bulb food on the surface and forget them until next year. If you find you need help to get things under control, there are community organisations like Easy Care Gardening who possibly can help.

Richard Cusden spoke on how the Easy Care Gardening organisation operates.

Easy Care Gardening is a not-for-profit, charitable organisation, manned by volunteers and partly funded by the Federal and State governments. It provides subsidised gardening services to enable old and frail people and people with disabilities to remain in homes with gardens they love, but are no longer able to care for properly. Richard is part of a North Shore Group which provides clearing and maintenance services to people in this area at a subsidised rate. The gardens will also be checked from the safety point of view and any unsafe conditions rectified. The organisation relies on volunteers whom Easy Care Gardens recruits and trains. It also provides ongoing training to keep the gardeners up to date.

Gardening is done from Monday to Saturday with Work, Health and Safety regulations in operation at all times. If you wish to volunteer there is no need to be an expert, just active and motivated. A typical day would start with the arrival of 7-8 volunteers at about 8-30am to work and the cost to the garden owner can be as low as \$20 for three hours work, depending on the owner's circumstances

**Member Speaker—August:** This will be Christine Erratt who will speak about the 'Flora of Mt Etna'.



take off a third of those long willow shoots. While you can still get into the tree, spray the trunk and branches with copper oxychloride, lime sulphur or Bordeaux spray. This should kill any pests that have overwintered in the bark or crevices.

► Are you growing a passionfruit vine? If you are, it is now time to tip prune. By tip pruning now, you will encourage the lateral runners to grow and it is the lateral runners that bear the fruit. Passionfruit have a productive life span of about 6 years and then they start to produce less and less fruit. no matter how much fertiliser you put on them. So if your plant's fruit production is slowing down, put in another plant somewhere else so you will still be getting fruit when the other vine stops producing

► Do you have any deciduous fruit trees that need pruning? If you have, now is the time to do it. If you leave it any longer there is a very good chance that you will prune off new growth and not get any fruit in the coming season. Prune off any shoots that have previously fruited. Cut back to where the new shoots are starting to appear and

► With all the foliage gone on deciduous trees, it is a good time to check for borers. Look for little piles of sawdust outside a small hole in the wood. Squirt either methylated spirits or a pyrethrum spray into the hole then plug the hole with wet paper pulp. With the methylated spirits, if the liquid does not kill the borer the fumes will.

► How are your azaleas going? They should be coming into their winter flush of flowers. Winter blooming varieties are not as prone to petal blight as those that bloom in the humid atmosphere of spring. As petal blight can still occur, keep an eye on your flowers. Pull off any diseased flowers and put them in the garbage bin, not the compost. Spray the plants with a fungicide such as Mancozeb Plus. If you don't spray, there could be a build up of fungi ready to attack when the warmer weather arrives with your spring flowers. Even though the weather is cold now, keep an eye on the water. Regular watering is what azaleas need to keep putting out flowers. Just damp is what you should aim for; too wet and you will rot the roots. Azaleas need a well-drained, acidic soil with lots of compost dug in.

► Have you got a damp patch in your lawn that regularly produces a patch of moss no matter how often you pull it out. Water it with a solution of iron sulphate, but don't get any of the iron sulphate on concrete as it will leave a rusty stain. A more permanent solution is to improve the drainage. Lift up the patch of turf and put down a layer of fly ash or coke ash about 4-5cm thick. This will improve the drainage in that area. Replace the piece of lawn and firm it down. At first there will be a small bump in your lawn but it will disappear after a while. Just be careful you don't scalp it the first few times with the mower.

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



**Question** I have a bougainvillea that has been in the ground for 7-8 years, but over the last couple of years the flowers have had very little colour. The shrub's foliage is good, healthy and growing well. What is going on with the flowers and how can I get some colour back into them?

**Answer** The usual cause of pale flowers and lush foliage is too much nitrogen in the fertiliser you are using.

Switch your fertiliser to one for flower and fruit. To flower well, bougainvillea like about 6 hours of sunshine a day. Check any nearby shrubs and trees and see if any of them have grown and started to throw shade onto to your bougainvillea. Check the pH of your soil; it should be on the acid side. If it is alkaline, dig in some iron chelates and while you are about it, make sure the soil drains properly. Although they are tropical plants, they don't like wet feet.

**Question** I would like to grow some mangoes. Can I use the seed from fruit that I can buy in the supermarket?

**Answer** Yes, you can use the seeds from the supermarket fruit but be careful which mango you chose. Some do not produce fruit that is true to the parent. Look for Kensington Pride, the old Bowen mango. The seed of this mango will produce fruit that is true to the parent.

**Question** We have a Stephanotis vine and it flowered a month ago. Now I have what look like green seed pods hanging off it. If they are seed pods, when will I be able to collect the seed?

**Answer** Stephanotis floribunda seed pods take several months to mature. First, they will turn yellow and then split open, revealing a mass of fine fluffy seed. These can float away on the wind and if you are near bushland, become a weed. If you wish to collect the seed, take what you want and get rid of the rest in the garbage bin.

**Question** How long do Kiwi fruit take to bear fruit? I planted a male and female plant two years ago, but so far no fruit.

**Answer** Kiwi fruit usually take three years to bear their first fruit on the female plant. Sometimes a lot of the first crop will fall off, but not to worry, this is normal behaviour. Kiwi fruit produce their best crops after they are about 5 years old. One male kiwi fruit can pollinate up to 6 female plants. When fertilising, use a fertiliser with plenty of nitrogen in it.



**Question** Our Washington navel orange tree is showing signs of rot on the trunk, down near the ground. What do I do to get rid of it?

**Answer** Put a sheet of plastic on the ground around the tree trunk and with either a sharp knife or a chisel and hammer, cut away any rotting or diseased material, right down to good wood. Catch the cuttings on the plastic sheet as they are loaded with fungi. Make up a paste of copper hydroxide, or copper oxychloride, and water and work it into all the cracks and crevices with a brush. Keep an eye on it as you might have to repeat the process in a month's time.

Regards  
Hugh

'Cones and Pods'