

HORTULANUS

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

SEPTEMBER 2017

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Website: www.khsgardenclub.org.au



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

**TRADING TABLE at the
October meeting (see below
for further details)**

COMING EVENTS

- Sept 5** **SEPTEMBER MEETING: AGM followed by Sonia Cameron peaking on 'What's New for Spring'**
- Sept 2 & 9** **Illawarra Grevillea Park Open Days 10-4pm Enq. 0424 830 925 (John Elton)**
- Sept 9/10** **Australasian Native Orchid Society—Spring Show, Starkey St, Forestville 9-4pm**
- Sept 15-17** **Sydney Gardening Show, Rosehill Gardens Racecourse, Rosehill 9.30-4.30pm**
Enq. www.gardenshow.com.au
- Sept 23/24** **Plant Lovers Fair, Kariong Mountains High School, Kariong Sat: 8-4pm, Sun: 9-3pm**
Enq. www.plantloversfair.com.au
- Sept 23/24** **Mt Wilson Spring Blossom Festival 10-4pm (8 gardens—\$30 for day pass pre-booked)**
- Sept 27** **KHS Trip to Leura Gardens (see below)**
- Sept 30-Oct. 1** **Clivia Show, Thornleigh Community Centre, Phyllis Ave (next to Bunnings)**
- Sept 30-Oct 8** **Leura Garden Festival. Open from 9.30 am to 4.30 pm. Enq. 0431 095 279**
- Oct 3** **OCTOBER MEETING: Mark Massey will speak to us.**
- Oct 8** **Maureene & Keith Smith's Plant Sale, 45 Parklands Ave, Lane Cove 10-3pm**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT to the AGM

I am delighted to report that KHS has enjoyed another successful year. Our meetings have been well-attended, even on chilly winter nights, and there has been strong support for the Show Bench. Both new and longstanding members find items of interest to display each month and we get to see some remarkable plants. Congratulations to all who enter, and especially to Penny and Nita Whipp, our Show Bench Champions this year.

We thank your elected Committee and their many helpers who have made splendid contributions throughout the year. Special thanks to Sue Hill who will retire from the committee and to Peter Fisher who will retire from the treasurer's position. The Turrumurra Plant Fair and the Bunnings BBQ helped our finances. We have purchased a new computer to show pictures at meetings and our website will soon be updated. Subscriptions are unchanged.

There has been solid support for our outings and trips this year which is a great reward for those who do the organising. Everything considered, we are a very busy Society. While we enjoy our meetings each month, outings and trips provide excellent opportunities to meet other members and share gardening experiences. We will continue with the established program in the coming year.

Finally, a special welcome to all new members. You have arrived in a steady stream this year, possibly attracted by the Anniversary Pen. We do our best to "meet and greet" you and to encourage participation. Please join in.

Doreen Clark

NOTE: The Ku-ring-gai Horticultural Society Inc. will hold its Annual General Meeting on 5 September 2017 at the Community Hall, Memorial Drive, St Ives. The AGM will commence at 7.30pm, followed by the normal monthly meeting.

Hi

It was a cold frosty night for our August Meeting with a light, sneaky sort of wind blowing. However, this did not stop 62 keen members and visitors turning out to enjoy themselves and compare notes with their friends. The Presi-

dent opened the meeting, welcoming our two new members, Peter and Jill Whiteny, and presenting them with their badges, Society history and Anniversary pens.

MEMBER NEWS

Membership subscriptions were due on 1st July 2017. \$25 for a single and \$35 for a double. A renewal form is attached. This will be your last newsletter if you have not renewed.

Members' Open Garden Ramble—Sunday, 8 October

The following members have kindly offered to open their gardens for us to visit. The gardens should be visited in the order indicated, starting at 1.30 pm:

1. Jan and Ken Heydon, 27A Pymble Avenue, Pymble
2. Nita and Penny Whipp, 51 Yarrarra Road, Pymble
3. Doreen Clark, 19 Parkwood Grove, Pymble

All three gardens are within fairly close proximity. Please bring a plate for afternoon tea which will be held in the last garden. (not before 3pm).

Christmas Dinner—Friday, 24 November 2017 at the Terrey Hills Golf and Country Club, 116 Booralie Road, Terrey Hills, commencing at 6.30 pm. Cost—\$60 per person. A booking form will be included with the October Hortulanus.

Garden Clubs of Australia—2018 Calendar: The 2018 calendar is now available and Penny Whipp is taking the orders. The cost is \$10 and Penny will be putting in our club order. They should be ready to pick up at the October meeting. The calendar will be at the September meeting to view. If you want to order, please bring your money in an envelope with your name on it and give it to Penny at the next meeting or phone her on 9144 5101.

OUTINGS

Visit to Leura—Wednesday, 27 September

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. This trip is full now but Helen will take your details for a cancellation which we often have if you are prepared to wait.

Visit to the Bathurst Spring Spectacular—Friday, 27 October to 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.

TRADING TABLE

The Trading Table will be operating at the October meeting. Members may bring in plants to sell and 10% of the proceeds will go to the Society with the rest to the member. Traders are reminded of the following requirements: only plants can be sold, all items should be in first class condition, pots should be clean with no soil, roots or stains on the outside of the pot. The plant must be disease- and insect-free with no damaged or dead leaves. Any weeds should be removed. The plant should be named and a paddle pop stick showing the owner's initials, the plant number and the price should be put in each pot. Paddle pop sticks will be available at the table. A book-keeping form, also available at the table, must be filled in. As the wonderful team who run the Garden Table will be looking after the Trading Table, **there will be no Garden Table for the October meeting only.** Plants will be checked in on arrival at a table outside the hall and the paper work will be signed off. The form to be completed is available with this newsletter—just print out a copy, fill it in and bring it with you when you bring in your plants that you want to sell.

SHOW BENCH

Camellias are still doing very well with a fine lot on show. However, they mark easily and do not travel well and some showed signs of this. Natives are doing very well. The orchid section put on a fine show of Dendrobium orchids. The cold weather has not stopped the veggie section putting on a good show. In the 'Men only' section, there was debate as whether one exhibit was real or not.

RAFFLE

We had a fine selection of prizes for our raffle this month. The big and healthy Camellia Fairy Wand was purchased by your Society from Parkers Nursery and the Arthropodium cirratum 'Matapuri Bay' was donated by Anonymous. The A to Z Garden Hints book was donated by Christine Rethers and the book, Two Dogs and a Garden, a history of the well-known Paradise Nursery, was donated by Anonymous. There were several other gardening books also donated by the well-known donor Anonymous, so thank you Anonymous for your generous donations. These are all good prizes but you must have a ticket to be able to pick which one you want. If you give the man at the door \$2, he will be very happy to give you 3 tickets and it all helps your Society.

GARDEN TABLE

As always the Garden Table was loaded with lots of excellent plants for cheap sale. Some of the plants on offer were Bearded Iris, Bromeliads, Pineapple lilies and several big potted Cliveas. For the herb people there was Italian parsley. These are all good healthy plants going cheap. Why not go along and have a look, you will not know what is on offer if you don't have a look. All the money raised goes to your Society.

MAIN SPEAKER



Our main speaker was Paul Urquhart. Paul presented a fine set of photos of his travels through Sri Lanka. This was familiar territory for Paul as he had lived there with his parents in the 1970s. He opened his talk with views of the vast tea plantations stretching for kilometres in the high country of Sri Lanka and moved on to the home of Geoffery Bawa, Sri Lanka's most famous architect. Situated in a beautiful tropical garden with water features, it looks out onto the Indian Ocean. Examples of his work can be found in many places in Sri Lanka. A visit was made to the famous Galle Lighthouse on the Indian Ocean. Built in 1848 by the British, it was destroyed by fire in 1934 and then rebuilt by the British. In 2004 it withstood 30 metre waves of the tsunami. Situated 2000 metres up in the mountains, the city of Kandy is home to many Buddhist temples and ruins dating back to the 8th Century. It was from here that Buddhist monks took their religion to Thailand. While in

the Kandy area, a visit was made to the famous Peradeniya Botanical Gardens. These gardens date back to 1799 and are famous for their lush jungle plants and the wide range of native birds that fly freely around. Moving on into central Sri Lanka, a visit was paid to the ruins of the ancient city of Sigiriya that was built on top of the gigantic Lion Rock, a rock rising 200 metres out of the surrounding plain. A pair of huge stone lion claws (a relic of a much larger statue) can be seen at the start of the stairs that lead to a temple on the top of the rock. Sigiriya dates back to the 5th century. Reflections of the rock could be seen in a nearby lake.

Main Speaker September: This will be Sonia Cameron of Cameron's Nursery. Sonia will speak on importing, sourcing and growing rare and unusual perennials. She will have plants for sale, so have a look at them as they could be very interesting and different to the usual run of plants you find in your local nursery.

MEMBER SPEAKER

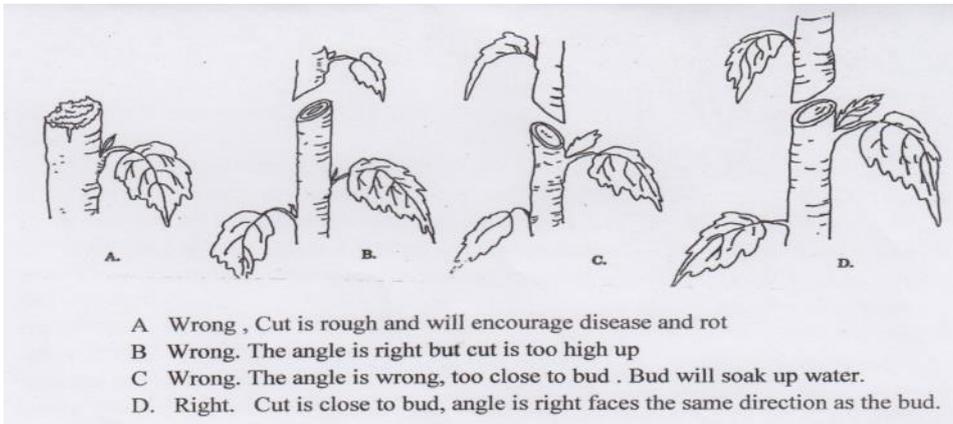
Our member speaker was Christine Erratt. Christine gave a well illustrated talk on the flora of Mt Etna. Rising more than 3000 metres out of the north-eastern plains of Sicily and not far from the city of Catania, Mt Etna is the most active volcano in Europe. It erupts at fairly frequent intervals. The last was in March 2017, just after Christine left the area. When erupting, it emits enormous quantities of ash and molten magma (lava). We were shown slides of vineyards and farms growing citrus, chestnuts and stone fruit on the lower levels of the volcano where the magma had solidified and broken down into usable soil. A photo showing tiny little yellow daisies growing in an old magma flow that had not yet broken down, indicated how tough some plants are. Many of the local roads approaching the volcano are lined with colourful trees and shrubs. A trip was made to the top of the volcano and a view of the inside of the caldera of the volcano showed the poisonous fumes drifting about amongst the ashes. A visit was made to the very old city of Catania and its jacaranda trees in the streets. A view, taken at a street market, showed wide bags of edible seeds along side a vegetable curry stall. Christine's photos finished with a shot of a juicy dish of Sicilian goodies about to be devoured.

Member Speaker—September: No member speaker this month because of the AGM.

PLANT OF THE MONTH—HIBISCUS

Pruning Hibiscus: Why should I prune my Hibiscus? The answer is to get more new wood and more flowers. A vigorous and healthy plant will produce more and better flowers. There is nothing highly technical about pruning, just common sense. The first thing is to check that your pruning tools are sharp. A blunt tool will make a jagged cut and this is an invitation to disease and fungi to come in. All cuts should be clean and smooth. Most secateurs use a shearing action and should only be sharpened from the outside in, never from the inside out.

When to prune: Pruning time will vary depending on the climate. In warm areas it can be done in late winter while in cool areas it would be better done in late spring. Having decided to prune your hibiscus, first go through the shrub and take out all the dead, diseased and weak wood and also remove any wood that wants to go its own way. Remove any small twigs and branches that cross and are growing inward. This will improve air circulation and reduce the risk of fungal and disease attack. Make the cut at a shallow angle about 6-7mm above an outward-facing



bud. The low end of the cut should face away from the bud. By cutting back this way, the new growth will tend to grow outwards and not into the centre, improving air circulation. The nourishment will go out to these topmost buds and the plant will grow outwards. Never leave a stub above a bud or branch as the stubs will decay and cause trouble. If you wish, you can remove all horizontal branches that are closer than 10cm to the ground. Upright stems can be cut back by about a

third, cut to an outward pointing bud. Dormant young branches will sprout below the cut in a couple of weeks time and this is also time to spread a good organic fertiliser under the plant.

HUGH'S CORNER
WHAT SHOULD I
BE DOING IN
MY GARDEN?



► Are you looking for something to give you a bit of privacy along a side fence? Why not try one of the Jasmines. It does not have to be the common Star Jasmine that you see so much of. They tend to want to do their own thing and go everywhere including over the fence to your neighbours' side where they may not be welcome.

Have a go with some Jasmine nudifolia. It has a yellow flower in the winter when it is deciduous. Alternatively, Jasmine nitidum, the angel wing jasmine, produces a lovely white flower right through the summer. These two will not run riot on you and go everywhere. Get hold of some long steel pickets and drive them into the ground about half a metre from the fence. Be sure all the ribs with holes in them face away from the fence. String some wires for the plants to climb on and plant your Jasmines about 2 metres apart and water in. The flowers will appear in the summer together with a very nice perfume. Jasmine are tough plants and once established only need watering in hot weather.

► Now that your camellias and azaleas have finished flowering, do a bit of preventative maintenance against future fungi and disease attacks by giving the bed a good clean up and get rid of any dead leaves and rubbish. You can also give the foliage a light trim to tidy it up. If your compost heap is ready to go, lay down a layer of compost under the shrubs and **gently** work it into the soil. Remember these are shallow rooted plants. No compost, then give them a feed of one of the specialised fertilisers that has been compounded for these acid loving plants and water in well.

► Keep an eye on the moisture in the soil as spring flowering plants can soak up a lot of water and we have had several long dry periods. Push your finger into the soil and if the soil is cool and damp, all is well but, on the other hand, if it is dry do something about it there and then.

► Turn on your irrigation system and check if all the sprinklers are working. If some are not, find out why. Are the sprinklers blocked or is the line blocked or cut? Check if the input filter is clean and if the solenoid valves are clean and working properly. Check that the timer is working properly and the ON/OFF settings are correct. Remember, with all irrigation systems, dead plants are not the way to find out that something is not working.

► Time to check your citrus trees. You are looking for very small black insects which are the black citrus aphid. Spray them with a pyrethrum-based spray which will kill them very quickly. While you are about it, check for black sooty mould on the older foliage. Black sooty mould is a sign that scale is about, so spray the affected area with either Pest Oil (mineral) or Eco Oil (organic).

► One for the daffodil and jonquil growers. Keep dead-heading them as this will enable the plant to divert more energy into the production of new bulbs for next year.

► Are you thinking of growing some gladiolus this year? Now is the time to get the bulbs into the ground. Dig lots of compost and well rotted cow manure into a well-drained bed that gets full sun and is sheltered from the wind. The bulbs (corms) should be planted 8-10cm down and 15cm apart with the sharp end pointing up. Check your bulbs as you plant them and discard any soft or diseased ones. Water well after planting, then stop watering until leaves start to appear. Then resume watering again, once a week, to keep the soil damp but not wet.



MEN ONLY!
As You Like It

Regards
Hugh