

# HORTULANUS

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

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## NOVEMBER 2024

### COMING EVENTS

- Oct. 26-Nov. 3** Artisans in the Gardens , Lion Gate Lodge, Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens. Entry free.  
**Nov. 7** KHS Meeting: Speaker will be Piret May, RBG Sydney, horticulturalist. Topic: Natural Pest Management Methods.
- Nov. 16** Rose Society of NSW, Northern Sydney Regional—inaugural meeting, Gordon Library, Meeting Room 1 at 2pm. Speaker will be Mark Massey. Contact: 0409 548 561 or email: [northernsydneyrose@gmail.com](mailto:northernsydneyrose@gmail.com)
- Nov. 23** African Violet Association - Display and Sale, Burwood RSL, Shaftesbury Rd, Burwood from 10am to 2pm Entry: \$5
- Dec. 3** KHS Meeting and Christmas supper: Speaker is Tammy Huynh, Gardening Australia presenter

### MEMBER NEWS

As mentioned in the October *Hortulanus*, the Rose Society of New South Wales is establishing a new regional group to be known as Northern Sydney Regional, catering to those of us who are rose lovers and growing enthusiasts living on the North Shore and Northern Beaches. Three of our own members, Kym Swaby, Penny Whipp and Judith Williamson, have been working hard behind the scenes to make this happen. On Saturday, November 16 there will be a launch event for the new group which you are invited to attend. At our October meeting, Penny Whipp outlined to members some of the benefits of joining this group and explained the exclusive benefits enjoyed by members of the Rose Society including a special membership offer open to foundation members. If you would like more information about the special membership offer or exclusive benefits of Rose Society membership or you would like to register to attend the launch event in November, send an email to [northernsydneyrose@gmail.com](mailto:northernsydneyrose@gmail.com) or phone 0409 548 561.

**Christmas Lunch:** It is with great regret that your Committee has decided to cancel our Christmas lunch at the Terrey Hills Golf and Country Club on 21 November 2024. The main reason is the increased cost and because the Golf Club has significantly changed the format of the lunch by eliminating the drinks on arrival and canapes as well as a bottle of red and white wine on each table. In addition the menu has been changed to rather ordinary dishes. We feel the reduction of \$10 on the overall cost is not sufficient to offset what has been cut from our original arrangement and we feel we will not experience the same rather special occasion as in the past. We are very disappointed.

For those who have already paid for the lunch, so that a refund can be processed, please send your bank account details – name of account, BSB and account number by email to Robyn Brown: [medway2@bigpond.net.au](mailto:medway2@bigpond.net.au).

**Garden Clubs of Australia *Our Gardens* Quarterly Magazine:** Subscriptions to this magazine are now due for 2025. 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 \$20, posted directly to you, for four quarterly editions. Please let Penny Whipp know if you would like to take up a subscription. Payment may be made by direct deposit or cheque. Payments by direct deposit should be made to the KHS bank account. The details of the Society's 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.

Payments by cheque must be made out to Ku-ring-gai Horticultural Society Inc. Any cheques endorsed other than to the Society are not able to be deposited to our account and will be returned to you. Cheques should be posted to Penny Whipp at 46A Cardinal Ave, Beecroft 2119. All renewals or new subscriptions must be deposited or received no later than Friday 8 November 2023. It would be helpful if you could confirm your payment by emailing Penny at [nita1523@bigpond.com](mailto:nita1523@bigpond.com).

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## OUTINGS

### Four-day outing to Bright, Vic. from Tuesday, 29 April to Friday, 2 May 2025.

Arrangements have been completed for a four-day outing to the Bright Autumn Festival to visit open gardens in Bright and surrounds, and to enjoy activities earmarked for enroute stops. KHS members and friends are invited, and invitations will be issued to members of other garden clubs at a later date. We urge our members to let us know as quickly as they can if they want to secure a booking on this trip.

We will travel by luxury coach, with a stay of two nights in Beechworth close to Bright and one night in Tumut. We will visit 7 gardens and 2 nurseries, and will have all meals (except for one lunchtime meal during free time in Bright) and garden entries included. The total cost of this trip is \$810 per person plus \$180 for those requiring a room on their own. Refer to the attached trip outline for more details. To book, please complete the attached booking form and pay your \$100 deposit to secure your place on this trip. The trip is open at the moment to Society members, friends and family but we do intend to open the bookings to other clubs in our area in due course. Make sure you secure your place with your deposit as the numbers of travellers we can take is limited. Once we reach this number, the bookings will be closed.

## RAFFLE

This month's raffle consisted of three lovely native plants provided by the Society and sourced for us by Nancy Shaw, a classic gardening book, another plant and some chocolates. Many thanks to all the donors. The cost is only 3 tickets for \$2.

## GARDEN TABLE

The Garden Table will be back in action again at the November meeting but this will be for the last time this year as at the December meeting we will be having our Christmas Supper and a Lucky Door Prize draw. Let's make this month's Garden Table a bumper one.

## MAIN SPEAKER OCTOBER

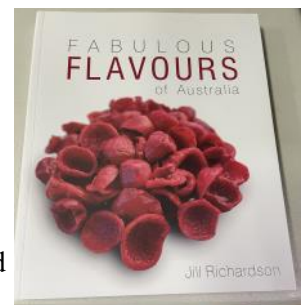


This was Jill Richardson who spoke to us about 'A Taste of the Bush'. Jill's interest in bush food started when she visited a stand at a farmers' market selling products made from native plants. She went on to set up a business promoting bush foods, has had a bush food cooking school and has written a cookery book which features recipes using native produce. Jill brought in some of her produce and her cook book for us to purchase.

Jill described some of the native fruits, berries, leaves and seeds that she has used in her cooking. Her cook book has recipes like Sauteed Prawns with Lemon Myrtle and Wild Lime and Chili, Wattleseed and Rich Chocolate Tart, Spicy Potato Wedges (using Bush Tomato and Native Basil) and Chicken Schnitzel with Quandong and Macadamia filling. Jill had brought along two copies of her cook book (which were quickly snatched up) as well as some of the native ingredients she produces for sale. We were able to have a tasting of some of her dukkha mixes

which we tasted using bread cubes dipped in Tasmanian Mountain Pepper infused macadamia oil and then into the dukkha. Delicious! Jill brought along some of the products she and her husband Denis have available such as Native Pepper Berries, Saltbush, Ground Wattle Seed and other products, all enclosed in nicely sealed packages.

For more details, you can find these on their website: <https://www.atasteofthebush.com.au/contact>.



**Main speaker November:** This will be Piret May who is a horticulturalist at the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney. She will talk about a variety of natural pest management methods. This should be of great interest as we are always trying to cut down on the use of pesticides and herbicides.

## MEMBER SPEAKER October

Ted Shaw spoke to us about the second half of his and Nancy's trip to the USA last year. This time they were on the west coast where they travelled from Los Angeles inland to Arizona then to the Grand Canyon, Las Vegas and finally to San Francisco. The sights in Los Angeles included a tour of the celebrity homes in Belair, Beverly Hills and Hollywood as well as some of downtown LA shopping and government centres. One of the plantings in a public area was a large garden bed of red and yellow Kangaroo Paws! From LA they made their way to Palm Springs, passing through the Mojave Desert. In Scottsdale, Arizona, note the street trees comprise some of the larger varieties of cacti. From there they made



Scottsdale, Arizona



Grand Canyon



Yosemite National Park and Botanical Gardens in San Francisco

their way to Las Vegas, taking in a helicopter ride over the Grand Canyon. The Hoover Dam over the Colorado River was another highlight. Built in the mid-1930's, it provides water to LA and other Californian cities and irrigation for the important food-growing areas of California. On the way to San Francisco they stopped off in the Yosemite National Park, situated high in the Rockies—a truly beautiful place to visit. The last stop was in San Francisco for a few days. The highlights included the Golden Gate Bridge, Alcatraz, Fisherman's Wharf and a visit to Muir Woods which form part of the Sequoia (Redwood) forests stretching right up the coast into Oregon and Washington.

**Member speaker November:** This will be Evelyn Mason who will show us some of the places she visited on her recent trip to England and Europe.

### 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 vigor. Make sure that the soil is heavily mulched as this will protect the bottom leaves from soil splash and keep in soil moisture. Remember 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 beasties is best done using fine white netting, making sure that it comes down to the ground.



One of the best salad greens for summer is rocket (also known as arugula). It is quick-growing from seed, can take either sun or shade and does not suffer from pests—even slugs and snails stay away! It should be picked young and can be dressed with different types of salad dressing. A classic dressing for rocket uses olive oil and balsamic vinegar with shaved or grated parmesan cheese scattered over.



Male Female

If you have cucurbits (cucumbers, zucchinis and pumpkin) coming into flower, be aware that the male flowers always come first. You will have to wait a bit longer (maybe as much as two to three weeks) until it is warmer for the female flowers to appear (those with a little 'bump' behind them). As many of our city gardens are suffering from a distinct lack of pollinating insects, you may have to do the job yourself. Use a fine paint brush to dip into the centre of a male flower. The yellow pollen from the anther will adhere to the fibres of the brush and you can then transfer this pollen to the female flower by gently rubbing it over the stigma at the centre of the female flower. This should produce fruit but if for some reason it

doesn't take, the female flower will simply fall off.

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 and (my favourite) Thai basil. Just scatter some of these through your vegetables and they should make a difference to the pollination success rate.

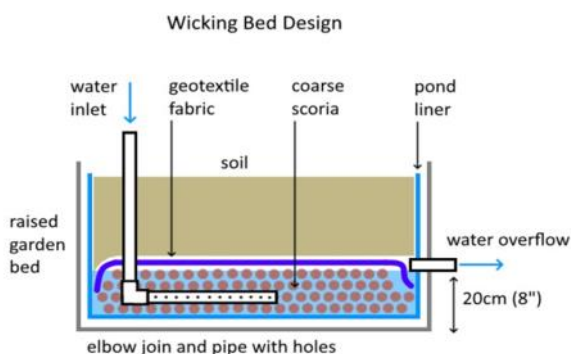
### WICKING BEDS by Maureene Smith

You may have noticed on Gardening Australia how keen Sophie is on wicking beds. Though they take a bit of time and trouble to set up, they are highly water efficient and an excellent way to grow vegetables. They can be used in a garden, a patio or on a balcony, although on an above ground balcony you need to be conscious of the weight.

Choose a container of a suitable size for its location and if it is not watertight you will need to line it with a PVC

pond liner. Your first step is to put in an overflow drainage pipe. If there are heavy rains, you don't want your wicking bed to get waterlogged. The drainage pipe should be at the base of the container so that you can fully drain it if you wish but needs to be right-angled so that you can turn it to prevent drainage under normal wicking conditions. It's now time to prepare the wicking bed. Spread a thin layer of scoria (small particles of volcanic rock) or pea gravel into the container. The particles should be no more than 10mm in diameter. Into this lay your water reservoir.

A simple water reservoir can be made from a length of agricultural pipe attached to a small piece of PVC pipe. This piece of PVC pipe will form the upright of your reservoir and should not contain holes. Make sure the 2 pipes are securely joined together, a hose clip is good for this. Cover the reservoir pipe with another

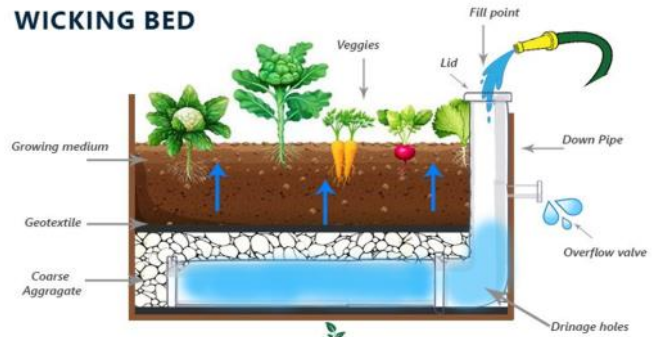




sheet of geotextile fabric to prevent your soil from seeping into the wicking bed. The final step is to add soil, good well composted soil to a height 250-300mm above the scoria level. It is now ready to be filled with plants and water. You will know when there is enough water in the wicking bed by checking the overflow pipe.

You will see in the diagram that the overflow pipe is not at the base of the container. It is better to be at the base so that you can completely drain it if necessary. If it is right-angled, it can be turned to stop drainage.

## WICKING BED



## YOUR NOVEMBER GARDEN by Maureene Smith

November: the soil and temperature are warming up yet it is still cool enough for energetic gardening, if you have the will. It's a wonderful time to plant or pull weeds. It is said that weeding relieves stress so that's a positive slant on that chore!

We are forecast to have excess rain and higher temperatures this summer so we need to prepare for that. Checking mulch levels and looking at our potted plants, both indoors and out. If needed, this is a good time to repot some of your pot plants and sort out shady positions to protect them when the summer sun comes.

If you do have shady positions, there are plenty of plants suitable to grow there, either in the ground or in pots. There are many varieties of Begonias and Plectranthus that are good for shade as is Impatiens. A few white Impatiens plants can lift a shady spot enormously. If it is just ground cover you need, Ajugas or Lysimachia do a great job.

It has been a wonderful year for Callistemons, but as those beautiful bottlebrushes fade, cut them off just below the flowerhead and you will encourage new flowers next year and also keep your bush in shape. You can also deadhead any roses that are past their peak and most will reflower. Now is also a good time to prune your climbing roses back to the laterals as they finish flowering.

Spring is a good time for feeding, with an appropriate fertiliser, any acid-loving plants such as camellias, azaleas and daphne. Roses would also appreciate a feed. There is now an iron chelate fertiliser that promises to intensify the colour of your soon to-redden-up Christmas Bush.

If you lifted any dahlia tubers last autumn, now is the time to replant them or alternatively buy some new ones. They make such a vibrant show in a garden and come in a multitude of shapes, sizes and foliage colour. They will also grow well in pots, but make sure the pot you choose is large enough. Other great plantings, both container and garden, at this time are Petunias and Calibrachos as they both handle the summer sun so well and come in a beautiful variety of colours.

Don't forget to keep an eye on your citrus trees. Two problems will most likely become apparent now—the Citrus Leaf Miner and the Bronze Orange Bug. The Citrus Leaf Miner will become apparent when the new young leaves become twisted and distorted with tunnels running through them. The actual pest is the larvae of a moth and is very difficult to get rid of. The best solution is to spray the leaves, both on top and underside, with Eco Oil which will deter the moth from laying its eggs on the leaf. The Bronze Orange Bug is a sap-sucking insect that will target the new shoots of your citrus and leave them limp and wilted. Again, spraying with Eco Oil will deter this insect and stop it from attacking the new young leaves. However, this spraying needs to be done about every two weeks to be effective, more often if the weather is wet. Failure to treat these two problems will result in loss of fruit to harvest the following autumn/winter. Take care to protect your eyes when going near the Bug.



### Some handy hints ....Slug and Snail Deterrents:



If slugs and snails are a problem, try some of these non-toxic deterrents:

**Chalk:** Crushing and spreading chalk around the seedlings forms a barrier against snails.

**Cinnamon:** Snails hate the intense smell of cinnamon. Mix with chalk for greater effectiveness.

**Eggshells:** Sprinkling crushed eggshells around plants creates a natural barrier.

**Coffee grounds:** Snails hate the smell of coffee and caffeine is toxic to them. In addition, coffee is a good fertilizer.

**Wood ash:** Snails and slugs avoid dusty materials like wood ash.

**Beer trap:** Placing a pot of beer flush with the ground attracts snails, allowing them to be collected and eliminated.

**Summary:** Natural methods such as chalk, cinnamon, eggshells, coffee grounds, wood ash, and beer traps are effective in keeping away snails in the garden.