

HORTULANUS

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

AUGUST 2018

President: Doreen Clark, 19 Parkwood Grove, Pymble 2073 (9498 1677)

Secretary: Christine Rethers, 1 Wolsten Ave, Turramurra 2074 (9449 6245)

Treasurer: Robyn Brown (0408 295 601)

Website: www.khsgardenclub.org.au



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

COMING EVENTS

- Aug 7** **AUGUST MEETING:** George Hoad, President of Garden Clubs of Australia, will
 Speak on 'Garden Inspirations'
- Aug 3-5** **National Orchid Extravaganza, 1 Pellitt Lane, Dural 9-4pm Fri/Sat, 12-4pm Sun**
- Aug 5-19** **Harvest by Charlotte Thodey and Friends, Lion Gate Lodge, Royal Botanic Gardens,
 10-4 pm Entry: free**
- Aug 11/12** **Eryldene-A Late Winter Garden, 17 McIntosh St, Gordon 10—4pm**
- Aug 17-19** **St Ives Orchid Fair, St Ives Showground Fri. & Sat. 9-4pm, Sun. 9-3pm.**
- Aug 24 -** **Mt Tomah Botanic Gardens—Daffodil Festival 9.30 am—5.30 pm daily**
- Sept 2** **Enq. Ph. 4567 3000**
- Sept 4** **SEPTEMBER MEETING: AGM**

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that our Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday, 4 September 2018.

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 2018.*

** The committee propose the following resolution: that the existing constitution of the Ku-ring-gai Horticultural Society Inc. be replaced with an updated constitution, a copy of which will be sent to all members electronically at the end of August. An update is needed to bring the Society's constitution in line with the changes to the Associations Act, enacted in 2016.*

** To elect office bearers and committee members.*

All existing officers and committee members will stand down. Doreen Clark, Christine Rethers, Robyn Brown, Peter Fisher, Helen Gilkes, Ted Shaw and Penny Whipp offer themselves for re-election. Additional nominations would be welcomed.

If you wish to offer yourself for nomination or would like more information, please phone Doreen Clark on 9498 1677.

Hi

It was a clear and cold night for our July Meeting and 58 well rugged up members and friends turned out to enjoy themselves and exchange notes. The President opened the meeting by welcoming every one. She then presented the prizes to the top ten Show Bench point score winners for 2017-18. Penny and Nita Whipp came first and were presented with the Clark Shield to hold for the next 12 months. The other nine top point score winners were then presented with their cash prizes. The Encouragement Award for the top first time exhibitor was awarded to Fiona Arnot.

MEMBER NEWS

Membership subscriptions were due on 1st July 2018 - \$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.

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

Canberra, Thursday 27 - Friday 28 September: this is a one night/two day trip. On the first day, we travel to Canberra to visit Tulip Tops, a garden with spectacular plantings of tulips in a delightful garden setting. On the way, we visit Perennial Hill, a wonderful garden developed by Julie and Craig Hulbert where many kinds of plants are displayed in 'garden rooms' to great advantage. Many of these plants can be purchased in their on-site nursery. Overnight we will be accommodated in Queanbeyan. The following morning, we will be hosted by the Canberra Horticultural Society (founded 1929) as we visit several of their members' gardens. On the return journey, we will have lunch at Goulburn and visit the historic Riversdale garden. A great trip seeing new things in familiar territory. The cost will be \$405 per person twin-share with a single supplement of \$70 which covers your accommodation in the 4-star motel, all meals and morning teas plus all garden entries. A booking form is included with this month's Hortulanus. The last day for payment is Friday, 24 August.

Crookwell Garden Festival, Friday 9 to Sunday 11 November: This will be a 3-day/two night trip to visit 8 open gardens in the Crookwell area, including an Edna Walling garden. On the way to Crookwell we will also include a visit to 3 lovely gardens in Bundanoon. We will be staying at the 4-star Goulburn Heritage Motor Inn for the two nights and travel will be provided by On Course Tours. The cost will be in the vicinity of \$580 with a single supplement of \$110. The booking form will be included with the September Hortulanus. For further enquiries, please call Ted Shaw on 9979 3930.

All enquiries about these bookings should be directed to Ms Helen Gilkes, 20a Normurra Avenue, North Turramurra - phone 9144 4826.

SHOW BENCH

Christine Rethers asked the Show Bench judges to take a bow and thanked them and the Show Bench stewards, Margaret Watts and Judith Williamson, for all their efforts over the past year.

Winners of the 2017-18 Show Bench competition are as follows: 1. Nita & Penny Whipp 2. Brenda Zimmerman



From left to right: Cynthia Brydie, Smila Smithers, Rosemary Baldwin, Nancy Shaw, Penny Whipp, Aubrey Knowles, Brenda Zimmerman, Fiona Arnott, Doreen Clark.
Absent: Ron & Christine Erratt and Kate Stanley.



Overall Point Score Winner: Penny Whipp with Chief Judge, Christine Rethers.

3. Smila Smithers 4. Aubrey Knowles 5. Ted & Nancy Shaw 6. Jim & Cynthia Brydie 7. Rosemary Baldwin 8. Ron & Christine Erratt 9. Doreen Clark 10. Kate Stanley
Section awards: Containers: Jim & Cynthia Brydie;
Crops: Aubrey Knowles;
Cultural: Nita & Penny Whipp;
Decorative: Brenda Zimmerman;
Pictorial: Ron & Christine Erratt.

Encouragement Award: Fiona Arnott.

Commenting on the July Show Bench, Christine noted that the camellias were especially prolific and very hard to judge. They were all so good that things like tiny blemishes were the only thing that differentiated them. She said that it was one of the best showing the Society had had for quite some time. As this was the first Show Bench of the new point score year, she urged members who had perhaps not exhibited before to give it a go and think about bringing something nice from their garden to the next meeting.

RAFFLE

The fine Spathiphyllum was purchased by your society from the Elegant Outdoor Nursery in Turramurra. It was the variety that could be used as an inside or outside plant. The two healthy iris were donated by that well known donor, Anonymous, so a big 'thank you' to Anonymous. These are all good prizes so why not give it a go; \$2 will get you 3 tickets from the man just inside the door and you never know your luck. All the money goes to you Society.

GARDEN TABLE

The Garden Table was in full operation with lots of goodies on offer. The lemons looked good alongside the Schlumbergera that were in full bloom. Asters, a plant that one does not see much of these days, also looked good. Several bags of lemons and cumquats looked ready for making some jam. These were all going cheap so why not go along and have a look, the ladies looking after the Garden Table are very obliging.

MAIN SPEAKER

Our scheduled speaker on bees could not come as he had lost his voice. Instead we saw an excellent set of photos of

Western Australian wild flowers. These photos were taken in the Frank Hann National Park situated in the far south west corner of Western Australia between the towns of Norseman and Ravensthorpe. Western Australia is renowned worldwide for its wild flowers and the photos lived up to its reputation. The photos included everything from acres of one flower in full bloom such as the blue *Leschenaultia* to a single mauve sun orchid standing tall above its neighbours while not far away a Cowslip orchid with its yellow flowers stood only a few centimetres high. A single 2 metre high *Verticordia* spread a thick canopy of yellow flowers just 15cm from the top with only foliage below. Carnivorous Sundews grew in damp spots while not far away a group of Puff Ball fungi put on a show of their own. A wide range of *Banksia* were shown including *Banksia blechnifolia*, an unusual plant in that the flowers can appear on the end of a root up to half a metre away from the main plant.

Where you have large numbers of flowers you will get lots of the small honey eating families of birds whose calls and songs add a lovely note to the bush and flowers. We were shown photos of some of these birds like the Silver Eye, Sacred Kingfisher, Red Wattle bird and Pardalotes.

Main Speaker—August: Our main speaker will be George Hoad, President of Garden Clubs of Australia (of which we are members) who will speak to us on 'Garden Inspirations'. It sounds rather intriguing. Better come along and have a listen.

MEMBER SPEAKER

There was no Member Speaker and a Questions and Answers session was run instead, chaired by the President, Doreen Clark. Quite a number of interesting questions were posed and various members gave their suggestions as to suitable answers. The questions ranged from when to prune *Dipladenia*, when to repot a camellia and the problem of black sooty mould on camellias.

Member Speaker—August: Margaret Watts will give a talk entitled 'Margaret Davis, an inspirational gardener'.

NEW PRODUCTS

Worm castings have always been a useful addition to any garden as they help to upgrade and feed the soil. However, this usually means you have to have a worm farm and all that that implies. A company called **Big Rio** has started marketing both worm castings and worm liquid. This presents an opportunity for all those gardeners who would like to give it a trial but don't want the work of a worm farm. The products are available at the larger garden centres.

Kahoona has been around for a while now but nobody says what is in it. It is an organic fertiliser – a soil improver that is meant to be used with acid loving plants such as camellias, azaleas and rhododendrons. It has an N-P-K of 6.4-1.96-8-2. This product could be worth a trial to help your plants over the winter.

Neutrog have started marketing their latest soil improver under the name of **Whoflungdung**. Nutrient rich, it is based on old chicken droppings and a 6 months composting period, during which time it is injected with more nutrients. It will suppress weeds and is not water repellent. It is sold in 20 kg bales which will cover 4 to 8 sq. metres, and is relatively cheap so would be worth considering if you are rejuvenating a garden bed. One member of the Society has a trial underway already.

Yates have produced a clip-on-the-hose liquid lawn fertiliser that is suitable for all grasses. It is just called **Yates Lawn Fertiliser** and comes in a 2 litre spray pack that will cover 150 sq. metres. It has an N-P-K of 13-0-4, some iron chelates and a small amount of magnesium in the mix. There is no phosphorus. Lawns at the moment are almost dormant but it won't be long before everything starts to come to life and will be looking for a feed. This product could be worth considering.

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



ground level and check the bark and trunk for anything that does not look quite right. If a piece of bark looks a bit loose, prise it off with a knife or a screwdriver and check for rot or borer holes. Small areas of rot can be scraped off with a sharp-edged tool. Paint the area with copper oxychloride or Bordeaux mix. You might have to do it a couple of times. Should you find large borer holes then squirt some methylated spirits up into the hole and seal the hole with some silicon. If the metho does not kill the grub the fumes will. Sawdust is a sign of an active borer or grub at work. Treat the surrounding soil with phosphorous acid. It is available as Yates Anti Rot—PhosAcid. Treat the soil out along the drip line as that is where the fine roots that take up fertiliser and water are located.

► Have you a eucalyptus in your garden? Take a look up into the foliage and see if you can see what looks like a bunch of fine aerial roots hanging down. If you see some then there is a possibility that your eucalyptus is under attack by mistletoe and it could eventually kill your tree. Cut it off as close to the trunk as you can. Mistletoe is a parasite that grows from a sticky seed dropped by a bird. It is starting to appear more often these days and could kill any plant or tree it lodges on.

► August is usually the worst month of the year weather wise and deciduous trees and shrubs will have shed their leaves and are looking pretty miserable so take the opportunity to have a good inspection of the trunks and branches. You are looking for signs of rot in any form. Start at

- ▶ Many of your spring flowering plants and shrubs will be starting to stir so give them a good drink of a general purpose liquid fertiliser to help them on their way.
- ▶ Have a look in the less visited parts of your garden and check for weeds like milk weed, winter grass and onion weed as they don't mind the cold. Milk weed and winter grass put out lots of seed but are easy to pull out of the ground. Onion weed, however, is another story. If you spray with glyphosate you will kill the main bulb but not the little bulbils. They will appear next year and you should spray them before they set seed.
- ▶ Hydrangeas will be starting to stir soon so give them a good feed with a slow release fertiliser and water in well. If you wish to intensify the colours now is the time to do it. The colour intensifying chemicals are readily available at any good garden centre. There are two different types available, either for pink or for blue flowers, so just pick the one you want and follow the directions. Further applications will have to be made in September and October.
- ▶ Are you having trouble with oxalis in your lawn? There are two main varieties of oxalis. The creeping oxalis which has a fine clover like leaf and a tap root can with a little bit of care be dug out and that is the end of it. The other variety, oxalis latifolia, with the common name of Pink Shamrock or Fish-tailed oxalis, is different as it has lots of tiny bulbils like an onion weed so you need to kill it by spraying with glyphosate which will also kill the bulbils. A point to remember is that oxalis like acid soil so by spreading some dolomite around, you will push the pH to the alkaline side and the oxalis won't like it at all.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



Question? I have put quite a lot of violets in to cover the bare area underneath a shrub. They grew okay and put out a nice green cover but I did not get any flowers. What is going on? I have given them a good feed of fertiliser.

Answer: Your violets are not getting enough sunlight. Violets do best in winter when they get full sunshine

but like some shade in the summer. Depending on what your shrub is, you could give them a prune by taking off some foliage from underneath them to let in more light. Also check your fertiliser and see if it is a high nitrogen type as if it is, then all the goodness has gone into the foliage and not the flowers. Cut back on the nitrogen and use one that has more potassium in it.

Question? I would like to grow a Brown Boronia. How long do they last and what sort of soil should I put it in?

Answer: Unfortunately Brown Boronia only live about 2 years or 3 if you are lucky. However, while it is in your garden the delightful perfume will be worth the short life. You will need a deep sandy loam with perfect drainage. Plant in a cool area where the plants won't dry out or get burnt by the sun.

Question? Are Hellebores hard to grow? I have been admiring some in a garden centre and would like to try my hand with them.

Answer: Hellebores are a perennial and like a cool shady place with lots of good rich damp soil that is well drained. Make up your mind before you do anything where you are going to plant them because once established they do not like to be moved. In the summer put a good layer of mulch around them to stop them drying out and in about February give them a good feed with cow manure.

Question? I have several large cacti that have been in big pots for several years. I have never fertilised them. When should I fertilise them and what should I use?

Answer: Probably the best way to fertilise a cactus is to use one of the slow release fertilisers that have been compounded specially for cacti. Read the label - it should have trace elements in it but be low in nitrogen as you are not after lush foliage. As cacti are dormant during the winter, the fertiliser should be applied during the spring to help the plants during the growing season. A slow release one that lasts 6 months should do the job nicely. Don't feed the cacti when they are dormant as it could damage the plant. Slow release fertilisers like Osmocote and Nutricote only release their fertiliser when temperatures start to rise. As an alternative, use some organic pellets but only very lightly.



Winter Arrangement in an Urn

*Regards
Hugh*