

# HORTULANUS

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

AUGUST 2019

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](http://www.khsgardenclub.org.au)



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

## COMING EVENTS

- Aug 6** AUGUST MEETING: Speaker—Judy Horton: ‘Lessons from Great Gardens’  
**Aug 4-18** Wild Things Exhibition, Lion Gate Lodge, Royal Botanic Gardens, 10-4 pm Entry: free  
**Aug 9-11** National Orchid Extravaganza, 1 Pellitt Lane, Dural Fri/Sat 9-4pm, Sun 12-4pm  
**Aug 10/11** Eryldene-A Late Winter Garden, 17 McIntosh St, Gordon 10—4pm  
**Aug 16-18** St Ives Orchid Fair, St Ives Showground Fri. & Sat. 9-4pm, Sun. 9-3pm.  
**Aug 24 - Sept 1** Mt Tomah Botanic Gardens—Daffodil Festival 9.30 am—5.30 pm daily Enq. Ph. 4567 3000  
**Sept 3** SEPTEMBER MEETING: AGM followed by Mark Massey from Mother Earth Nursery

## NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

*Notice is hereby given that our Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday, 3 September 2019.*

*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.*
- \* 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 and Ted Shaw 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 cold and windy night for our July meeting but it did not stop an excellent turn out of 63 well rugged up members and friends from coming along to enjoy themselves. You can't keep good gardeners down, they just turn up their collars.

The President opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. The awards to the winners of the Show Bench point score competition for 2018-19 were then given out. The President's Shield, donated by Patrick Clark, was presented to the overall winner, Aubrey Knowles. Each of the top ten winners were then presented with their monetary prizes and the winners of each of the sections were given a plant and a certificate.

## MEMBER NEWS

Membership subscriptions were due on 1st July 2019 - \$25 for a single and \$35 for a double. Please fill in the subscription form which is included with this newsletter, making sure that you include your email address. Your subscription can be handed in at a meeting or mailed to Helen Gilkes, 20A Normurra Avenue, North Turramurra 2074. No direct debit, only cash or cheque, please, and remember to include your completed subscription form. This is important as it is needed to check that we have your details correctly recorded.

**Bunnings Sausage Sizzle:** The annual Bunnings Sausage Sizzle was held at the Bunnings Belrose store on Sunday, 21 July. This is your Society's big fund raiser for the year and this year we raised \$785, slightly down on previous years which we attribute to the time of year. We usually have our Sausage Sizzle a month or two later. A big 'thank-you to all the wonderful helpers.

## OUTINGS

**Toowoomba Trip (23-26 September):** This trip is fully booked but we are still happy to take names for a waiting list should there be a cancellation.

**Southern Highlands Trip—Thursday, 24 October 2019:** The Society is booked in to visit Retford Park, Red Cow Farm and a visit to the new garden of Jeanne Villani in Bowral. Jeanne was formerly the owner of Waterfall Cottage in Bayview before 'retiring' and moving to the Southern Highlands. The cost will be \$70 which includes morning tea and all garden entries. Lunch will be BYO in Jeanne's garden but the Society will provide some nice slices for afters. Bookings for this outing are now open and a booking form is included with this Hortulanus. *All bookings should be directed to Ms Helen Gilkes, 20a Normurra Avenue, North Turrumurra - phone 9144 4826.*

## SHOW BENCH



**Winners of the Show Bench Competition:** From left to right: Doreen Clark, Ted & Nancy Shaw, Brenda Zimmerman, Bob & Sue Ballinger, Smila Smithers, Aubrey Knowles, Evelyn Mason, Ron & Christine Erratt. **Absent:** Nita & Penny Whipp, Jim & Cynthia Brydie



**Aubrey Knowles  
Winner of the Patrick  
Clark Shield**

We were fortunate to have Daniel Low, president of the Camellia Research Society, with us and he kindly judged the Camellia section. The grevillea were abundant and put on a good show. Surprisingly there were also some lovely roses. The exhibits in the fruit classes were doing well and there were still some fine pumpkins in the Vegie section. The Decorative section was excellent and showed that a lot of thought had gone into the exhibits.

**Members are asked to look out for the white lids of pressure pack containers. These are used for presenting the Camellia exhibits and last month we ran out. The lid must be white and of a reasonable size. Look at what we are using on the Show Bench now and bring in any similar ones you come across.**

## RAFFLE

We had a fine collection of books on gardening and gardens on offer and they were donated by that generous person, Anonymous, thank you Anonymous. The Iris and the Salvia were donated by Christine Rethers, thank you Christine. The fine Pieris was purchased by your Society and came the Elegant Outdoors Nursery in Turrumurra. These are all good prizes and \$2 will buy you three tickets from the man near the door. You never know your luck and all money goes to your Society.

## GARDEN TABLE

There were a lot of plants for sale including two large boxes full of assorted Dahlia tubers going for much less than you would pay for them at a garden centre. There were also boxes of bare-rooted Salvias and Bergenia along with the many other plants, all going cheap. Go along and have a look, you do not have to buy and you don't know what you will find until you have a look.

## MAIN SPEAKER

Our main speakers for July was Megumi Bennett, the well-known Bonsai and Ikebana teacher, and Mary Ann Napper, her biographer. Mary Ann is a journalist who travelled in Japan with Megumi and has written a book on Megumi's life and times from wartime Japan to the present times. The book is called 'Natures Child' and was available at the meeting. Mary Ann then introduced Megumi who explained how she studied Bonsai in Japan under a Bonsai Master and became passionate about Bonsai and Ikebana (a Japanese form of flower arranging). She came to Australia in 1971. In 1986 she graduated from the Ryde School of Horticulture and in 1988 opened a Bonsai Nursery in Terry Hills that many of us have visited. Her current nursery, Hidden Orient, is situated near the Four Seasons Nursery on Forest Way, Belrose. Megumi had brought along four examples of large trees and plants that had been bonsaied. They were a Morton Bay fig only 15cm high, a Port Jackson Fig also only 15cm high, a Wollemi Pine 30cm high and a twisting- turning Grevillea 30cm high. It took very little imagination to see the full grown trees. A demonstration of how to bonsai an Old Man Banksia was then given with remarkable results (see below).



Stage 1



Stage 2



Stage 3



Stage 4



**Main Speaker—August:** This will be the well-known horticultural journalist, Judy Horton, who will speak on ‘Lessons to be learnt from Great Gardens’. This should be well-illustrated so come along and enjoy the talk and the pictures.

## MEMBER SPEAKER

There was no Member Speaker this month but Daniel Low, president of the Camellia Research Society, came along to speak to us about the upcoming Camellia Show at Ravenswood School. He was kind enough to judge the camellia exhibits on our show Bench and commented that our camellia exhibits were of excellent quality especially considering the weather. He noted that camellia flowers are delicate and hard to transport to an exhibition. He gave some advice on the staging of an exhibit, noting that it is desirable to have two leaves on the exhibit, one at 2 o’clock and one at 10 o’clock. Extra buds should be removed.

**Member Speaker—August:** Our Member Speaker will be Colleen Lukey. Colleen will present a talk on Early European Gardens in New Zealand. It should be interesting so don’t miss it.

## SUGAR—SOMETHING WE TAKE FOR GRANTED

The sugar cane of the modern world is *Saccharum officinarum* and its wild parent was probably *Saccharum robustum* which was grown as a crop by local native people in Papua New Guinea. From here it spread out across the Pacific Islands and into Asia and then down into the Mediterranean. Columbus took sugar canes to Hispaniola in 1493 and it was this variety of sugar cane that became the basis of the sugar industry in the New World.

The New World sugar industry was very labour intensive and this gave rise to the slave trade to supply the cheap labour required. By the time that slavery was abolished in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century 15 million slaves had been shipped to the New World to work in the sugar plantations. With no cheap labour, the sugar cane industry began to decline.

Back in Europe Andreas Marrgraf, a German chemist, had found that high grade sugar existed in the plant *Beta vulgaris*, a plant that looked like an enormous beetroot. *Beta vulgaris* could also be grown in a much colder climate than cane sugar. A rival sugar beet industry sprang up in opposition to the sugar cane industry and for a while the new comer took much of the trade away from the sugar cane industry. However scientists then found that certain strains of sugar cane set seed rather than being sterile and having to be grown from cuttings as was current practice. New varieties were bred that were disease resistant and grew well in certain types of soil, water and climatic conditions. These new varieties also grew quicker and smothered the weeds. Cane growers began to master how to use the new steam engines that were being developed and sugar mills were established with steam driven crushers. The boilers could also be fired with crushed cane fibre. Cane sugar again took the lead and today three quarters of the worlds sugar is cane sugar



▶ If you have got a native section in your garden, then there is sure to be a *Banksia* in it. Go and have a look at it as it has probably finished flowering now and needs a tidy up. Prune off any dead twigs and branches. Any seed cones that are over 12 months old can be removed. One or two ‘bad *Banksia* men’ are enough, dozens look untidy.

▶ Any fruit trees that have finished fruiting can be pruned now but first stand off and have a look to see if any of the branches are shading a flower bed. Flowers in this bed may need shade during the hot summer weather so you should be very careful what you prune off. Leave enough to shade the bed.

▶ Keep an eye out for aphids as they will be on the march soon. Spray your plants with Eco-oil or Natrasoap which are both organic. That way you won’t give the pest time to get established. Spray both under and over the leaves.

▶ Make up your mind as to what colour you would like your *Hydrangea* to be this year as now is the time to feed them with the right colour changing chemical. Colour changing chemicals are readily available at your garden centre. Generally, the more alkaline the soil, the pinker the flowers, and conversely the more acidic the soil, the bluer the flowers will be.

▶ Pruning your *Hibiscus* in August usually puts you one step in front of the *Erinose* mite which becomes active in September. *Erinose* mite are tiny little black mites that feed on leaves and produce a yellow brown velvety effect first which later turns black and causes the leaf to curl up. Mites will move onto the younger leaves first. Spray with wettable sulphur twice at 14 day intervals.

▶ Have you got a couple of citrus trees down the back? Give them a good watering and come back the next day and check how far the water has penetrated. If it has not got down to the roots, water again. When satisfied, water in a complete fertiliser. This will green up the leaves and will also help with fruit production.

▶ Are you thinking of taking some hardwood cuttings from a favourite shrub for the first time? Now is the time to do it, however be prepared to wait up to 6 months for shoots to appear. Hardwood cuttings take much longer than

softwood cuttings to make roots. They can be potted on when they have produced their first couple of new leaves.

► One for the passionfruit lovers - how long have you had your vine? Six years is usually regarded as the productive life of a passionfruit vine. If yours is more than 4 years old, plant another one nearby. By the time your first vine has started to slow right down, your new vine will be producing fruit for you.

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



**Question?** How do I get rid of a large patch of Oxalis from my lawn? I dig it out and 6 weeks later it is back again and growing well. What can I do to get rid of it permanently?

**Answer:** This is a common problem. The catch with Oxalis is that every tiny root has tiny bulbils attached and when you dig them out the bulbils break off and up comes

a new plant. Spray it with glyphosate but remember that gloves and long sleeves are in order. After about 10 days, the leaves will turn yellow and die. Keep an eye on it for the next week or so in case you missed any. Be aware that any of your lawn that is sprayed with glyphosate will die also.

**Question?** My garden is just a small backyard and I would like to grow a small magnolia along the back fence. Could you suggest a small magnolia that won't take up half the garden?

**Answer:** Magnolia stellata (Star magnolia) would probably fill the bill. It is deciduous, has small white or pink flowers and only grows to about 3 metres so you should have no trouble when you need to prune it. Just to be on the safe side, check the label on your plant for the height before you buy.

**Question?** I have an orange tree that is developing lumps on some of the branches. What is this and how do I get rid of the lumps - they look rather ugly?

**Answer:** This is the Citrus gall wasp at work. It is a very small black wasp that lays its eggs in the soft tissue of young twigs and branches. The galls become obvious in December or January and reach full size May or June. To control this, you need to cut off all the galls by the end of August, before the wasps mature and leave the branch. Either burn them or put them in the rubbish bin.

**Question?** When should I prune my Fuchsias?

**Answer:** Fuchsias only flower on new growth and the main pruning time is in the winter after flowering. Depending on its shape and age you can either take off a lot or only a little. Young plants should only have a small amount removed. A reasonable guide would be to only remove last year's growth - this way you will retain the shape of the plant.

**Question?** I have a large patch of Hellebores that I wish to divide. When is the best time to do it?

**Answer:** Hellebores can be divided and replanted in the spring after they have flowered. Plant them 20-30cm apart. Don't try to grow them from seed as it will take at least three years to produce any flowers. Once they have finished flowering, remove the dead flowers and any dead leaves and divide the clump. Replant into soil to which compost and cow manure have been added. Generally though Hellebores don't like to be fussed over and can sulk if disturbed too much. They do like a good drink in the hot dry weather.



**Decorative:  
Winter Magic**

Regards  
Hugh