

HORTULANUS

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

SEPTEMBER 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

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

COMING EVENTS

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

- Sept 3 **SEPTEMBER MEETING: AGM followed by Mark Massey, owner of Mother Earth Nursery, Annangrove**
- Sept 7 **Bonsai Society—Exhibition, 9.30-4.30pm Forest Community Arts Centre, 6 Darley Street, Forestville Entry free**
- Sept 7/8 & 14/15 **Illawarra Grevillea Park Open Days 10-4pm Enq. info@grevilleapark.org**
- Sept 7/8 **Australasian Native Orchid Society, Show and Plant Sales, Forestville Memorial Hall, Starkey Street, Forestville Entry: \$4**
- Sept 14/15 **Clivia Show, Thornleigh Community Centre, Phyllis Ave, (next to Bunnings) 9-4pm \$5**
- Sept 16 **KHS Members Open Garden Ramble 1.30—4pm (see below)**
- Sept 28/29 **Rivendell Flower & Garden Show, Entry: \$15 Enq. rivendellflowershow.com.au**
- Sept 28/29 **Plant Lovers Fair, Kariong Mountains High School, Kariong Sat: 8-4pm, Sun: 9-3pm Enq. www.plantloversfair.com.au. Entry—\$14 on the day, \$12 online**
- Sept 28/29 **Gosford Open Gardens, 10 gardens to visit, Enq. gosfordopengardens@gmail.com**
- Oct 1 **OCTOBER MEETING: James Carrick—'All about Trees, Wild and Tame'**
- Oct 13 **Maureene and Keith Smith's Huge Plant Sale, 45 Parkland s Ave, Lane Cove North from 10am**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE AGM

My special thanks to all members who have made the past year a successful one. There are many active contributors and this keeps KHS a vibrant and exciting organisation. I encourage new members to join in the program with enthusiasm and there are many opportunities to be a helper.

Despite some chilly winter winds, meetings have been well attended. Please let me know if there are any topics you would like to hear about. Visitors are amazed by our Showbench. Aubrey Knowles was the winner of the Point Score Competition this year with many outstanding entries every month. The Decorative sections continue to be inspirational with some new competitors entering during the year. We have many expert growers of Australian native plants who exhibit each month. Advice from experienced members is always available.

Our website has been updated and you will find it most attractive when it becomes operational later this year. We are now looking for a volunteer to set up and operate a KHS Face Book page.

I have enjoyed my term as KHS President and I thank everyone who has made it so. It is now time for me to step aside. We are actively seeking nominations.

Doreen Clark

NOTE: The Ku-ring-gai Horticultural Society Inc. will hold its Annual General Meeting on 3 September 2019 at the Community Hall, Memorial Avenue, St Ives. The AGM will commence at 7.30pm, followed by the normal monthly meeting.

Hi

It was a clear and very cold night for our August meeting, a real collars up, bonnets on sort of night but it did not stop 87 members, friends and visitors from coming along to enjoy themselves.

The meeting was opened by the President announcing that the Annual General Meeting of the Ku-ring-gai Horticultural Society will be held at the September meeting. There are several vacant places on the Committee so if you would like to join the Committee, you would be most welcome. Just give your name to the President or Secre-

tary. The term of office is for 12 months.

One Show Bench exhibitor, Cynthia Brydie, who was unable to attend the last Meeting, was given her prize money.

MEMBER NEWS

Membership subscriptions are now overdue and this will be your last newsletter unless we receive your renewal before the next meeting—\$25 for a single and \$35 for a double. A renewal form is included with this newsletter.

OUTINGS

Toowoomba Trip (23-26 September): There has been a cancellation and a double room has become available. One person has come forward (a lady) and she is willing to share this room with another like-minded lady. Please contact Christine urgently if you are interested (9449 6245).

Southern Highlands Trip—Thursday, 24 October 2019: We have now filled this trip but are happy to take names for the waiting list should a place become available. Please contact Ms Helen Gilkes, 20a Normurra Avenue, North Turrumurra - phone 9144 4826, if you are interested.

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 and weeds should be removed. The plant should be named with a label or sticker and a paddle pop stick showing the owner's initials, the plant number and the price should be put in each pot. On the form there are two sections, the first half is your record. The first column will be ticked off by the sales team as the plant is received. The second column is for the number of the plant so each plant will have a number from 1 to 11. The third column is for the plant name – if you don't know the name then a short description. The fifth column is the price you wish to receive for this plant and the sixth column is the price that the plant sold for. On the second half of the form you should repeat this information so that the sales team can keep a record which they use to process your payment. If you want to bring more than 11 plants, then simply use another form but continue the numbering, e.g. the next set of plants will be numbered from 12 up to 22. You will receive your payment at the next meeting. They will hand back the first half of the form to you at the end of the meeting. Please take home any of your unsold plants. Paddle pop sticks and extra forms will be available at the table. Plants will be checked in on arrival at a table outside the hall and the paper work will be signed off.

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.**

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.

GARDEN TABLE

As usual the Garden Table was full of good healthy plants such as Buddleias, Crinum lilies and Convolvulus, all going cheap, When you are potting up some plants, pot a few extras for the Garden Table, it all helps your Society.

No more plastic bags—so please bring bags and/or boxes to carry your plants home in!

SHOW BENCH

The camellias and Australian native plants put on an excellent show. In the orchid section the lovely complex paphiopedilum was bred from a number of different species orchids over many years. The orange/red Scadoxus (Paint Brush lily) looked very unusual and was well worth studying. Our Vegie growers are doing very well with some fine vegetables on show. The Decorative section was excellent with a lot of thought going into the individual exhibits.

We are running short of caps for the camellia exhibits. We use the caps from the top of pressure spray cans. If you have any spare ones, it would be appreciated if you brought them along to the next meeting. The colour does not matter as we can spray them white. Drop them in the camellia cup box on the stage.

RAFFLE

As usual we had some very nice prizes on offer in the raffle. The beautiful potted Hellebore was purchased by your Society from Honeysuckle Nursery, Turrumurra.. Keith Smith donated a book, thank you Keith. The sample bag consisting of Thrive, Power Feed, Eco Sea Weed, and Seasol as well as two very nice Bromeliads were donated by those well known members, Anonymous, thank you Anonymous. These are all good first class prizes so step up and give the man near the door \$2 and he will give you 3 tickets.

MAIN SPEAKER

This was the well-known horticulturalist, Judy Horton. Judy showed a series of photos of some of the many famous



gardens she has visited on her travels. Four of these gardens are now described. Schwetzingen Palace is in the state of Baden-Württemberg and about half way between the cities of Heidelberg and Mannerheim. In the past it was the seat of the Electors Palatine (rulers of an area of the old German Empire). It is now famous for its gardens, laid out between 1758 and 1796 by a French architect. They comprise 72 h of magnificent gardens combine the formal perspective of the great French gardens and the more relaxed style of the 18th century when natural landscapes and artificial monuments, ruins and temples became fashionable. This garden has a beautiful Turkish mosque complete with minarets. It is not used for religious purposes but is purely decorative. A theatre was built which is in regular use today.

The second garden visited was the Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild. It was built between 1905 and 1915 by the Baroness Beatrice de Rothschild and is located on Cap Ferrat in the French Riviera. Its garden is now classified as one of the Notable Gardens of France. The villa is surrounded by seven garden areas, each with a different theme such as the Japanese Garden and the Spanish Garden. In 1935 the Villa was gifted to the French Government.

The third garden was a visit to the Flower Island of Lake Constance (a lake between Germany and Switzerland). This is a tiny island only 45 hectares in an area just off shore from the mainland in Germany. The nearest city is Konstanz about 5km away. This tiny island is home to an extraordinary range of trees and flowering shrubs. It has a palm house as well as a big butterfly house. A 13th Century palace overlooks the whole island. Because of its favourable location and mild climate, many sub-tropical plants and trees thrive here.

The last garden was a visit to the Lost Gardens of Heligan in Cornwall. These very large gardens of over 200 acres were first set out and planted in the 1850's and they flourished for many years. However, with the various changes of owners and the advent of WWI (when many of the gardeners went off to fight in the war) the gardens fell into neglect and brambles and weeds took over. Still, many of the plants like camellias and rhododendrons survived and matured into the 70 camellias and 350 old style rhododendrons we see today. Heligan is still privately owned and the new owners, together with the help of volunteers, cleaned up the gardens in the 1970-1980's. Heligan Gardens are now open for the public to visit and marvel at the amazing size of some of the rhododendrons and mature trees as well as the well-planted borders and vegetable garden.

(Judy showed us many more of the gardens she has visited on several continents including the USA and Canada but we could not possibly describe all of them in the limited space in this newsletter. Ed.)

Main Speaker September: This will be Mark Massey, owner of the Mother Earth Nursery on Annangrove Road, Annangrove. He will tell us all about his new nursery and bring along plants for sale.

MEMBER SPEAKER

Colleen Lukey gave an interesting and well illustrated talk on the trials and tribulations of the first English settlers to New Zealand. Led by Rev Samuel Marsden, (the same man who established Scots Presbyterian Church in Australia), the first missionaries arrived in the Bay of Islands on Christmas Day 1814. Five years later they moved to down the coast and up the river Kerikeri where they were under the patronage of the Maori chief, Hongi Hika..... who demanded guns in return.

The Maori people were excellent gardeners who practiced a shifting agriculture where they gardened an area for 3-4 years and then moved on when the soil was depleted of nutrients. They also irrigated their gardens and signs of irrigation channels can still be found.

Samuel Marsden bought 13,000 acres of land from the Maori which he planned to turn into a farming hub from which he could send produce to his other mission stations.

A plan of the first garden at the Kerikeri mission station still exists. Among the first crops planted were wheat, barley, oats, vegetables of many kinds and over 50 fruit trees. Medicinal herbs were planted including sage which was used to ward off the Plague. One of the William pears still lives after 200 years. The missionaries were hopeful that after the first harvest they would be able to feed 200 people.

In 1839 two bee hives were brought to New Zealand by one of the missionaries sisters. Prior to this, pollination of English plants had to be done by hand. The English bees quickly reproduced and took over the pollination of plants and provided honey.

Kauri trees are native to New Zealand and with the coming of the white man Dieback disease has been introduced and large numbers of trees have died. We were shown a Quarantine grid that had been set up at the entrance and exit of the forest walking track so that walkers can clean their boots on entering and exiting the forest.

Member Speaker September: No member speaker this month—we will be holding our AGM.

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



► Now that the weather is starting to warm up, weeds like Winter Grass will start to go to seed. Winter Grass is easy enough to pull out so out with it before it starts to spread their seed or you could have a real problem. Take a hand weeder when you go for a wander around your garden and get rid of any weeds you see. Many flat weeds like Oxalis

lie too low to be cut with the lawn mower so carefully dig them out, taking care not to leave any roots and bulbs behind. Long handled weeding forks are available at your hardware store if you can't get down. Weeds like Onion Weed and Mullumbimby Couch should not be dug out, you are better off poisoning them with a couple of sprays with

Glyphosate. With Onion Weed you will be sure to leave some very small bulbils behind and Mullumbimby couch sends out underground runners that pop up a metre or so away long after the parent plant has gone, so unfortunately it may take some time to get rid of them completely.

► When was the last time you checked your compost heap? Give it a good turn over and if it is nice and damp, water it with a watering can of warm water that has had couple of large dollops of molasses dissolved in it. The molasses will speed up the decomposition. If there are air pipes in your compost heap, make sure the holes are open to let the air into the middle of the heap. This will speed up the decomposition. Be careful not to let you heap become too wet or it will not decompose well and will start to smell.

► One for the vegie growers. If you have planted out a bed of young seedlings or a bed of seeds that have just popped up, keep a close eye on them as snails and slugs don't mind the cold weather. Scatter some sawdust around the outside of the bed to keep them at bay. If you use snail killer pellets around the area, make sure you use the one that is based on EDTA or iron chelates, not one that is based on metaldehyde. While you are at it, poke your finger into the soil and check that the water has gone down to the root area and not just under the surface. If it is just under the surface, the roots will come back to the surface area and get burnt on hot days. That is something you don't want to happen.

► Are you thinking of trying your hand with gladiolus this year? Now is the time to get started with the planting. You will need a well-drained bed in full sun and out of the wind. Dig in lots of well-rotted compost. Corms can be planted 8-10cm deep and about 15cm apart. Small corms should be planted in another bed, 2-3 cm deep and the same apart. Unless you have a lot of patience do not try planting gladiolus seeds. You will have to wait three years for flowers. When watering, just damp is what you want, too much water and you will rot the corms.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



Question? As seaweed solution is not a fertiliser, what is its effect on the soil in the medium to long term if it is used regularly? Can it be used with other additives?

Answer: Seaweed solution promotes growth by stimulating the plant's hormones rather than providing nutrients as a fertiliser does. It also unlocks nutrients from the soil that

would not normally be available to the plant. PowerFeed is a fertiliser with an NPK of 12-1.4-7 and is made by the makers of Seasol. It can be mixed with a seaweed solution and used at the same time.

Question? How do I get rid of Ivy? I have it all over a side passage wall and cannot get at the roots.

Answer: Ivy is hard to get rid of. First get rid of all the Ivy you can get at. Gloves, long sleeves and a dust mask should be used as Ivy can cause skin and breathing problems. Cut the main stems off near the ground and immediately paint the surface of the stump with straight glyphosate, don't give the stump time to seal itself. When the new growth appears, mix up a brew of glyphosate with a few drops of dish washing detergent in it (Ivy leaves have a waxy surface). Spray two or three times at 4-5 day intervals. It will take time to kill the Ivy - they are tough plants.

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 as 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 tissue of soft 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? I have just moved into a new house and the back yard is all churned up with lots of clay on the surface. What do I do to break up the clay so I can lay out a lawn or garden?

Answer: First break up the lumps with a hoe, rake it and go over it again, breaking up any lumps you have missed. Once you have got your area reasonably level, scatter lots of gypsum or dolomite (it will last longer) over the surface and water in well. Once the soil has broken up, improve the level of the soil then scatter over a Complete Lawn Fertiliser and water in well. These are just the very basic steps to improving your soil and your future garden. How well you do it will determine what sort of garden you will have.



'Twisting into Spring'

Regards
Hugh