



# *Wentworth Falls Garden Club Inc*

Affiliated with The Garden Clubs of Australia Inc

11 June 2015: Edition No 283

## *From the President ...*

First, a huge and sincere thanks to the two members who have put forward their nominations to become part of the committee. I also had two others who may have considered the possibility; however, they had prior commitments on the day of the committee meetings. This was a fantastic response and we look forward to a quick and efficient AGM next month. There will be no garden clinic or Q & A at that meeting as our time will be limited. Most of the current members have agreed to remain in their positions for another year and will do so happily if they are re-elected.

However, after NINE years on the committee, Lynton Phillips will be stepping down. Happily for us he will continue supporting Sharon with Tours and Functions as well as being our very safe and efficient bus driver for many of our trips. Lynton has another life apart from WFGC! He is a senior instructor/trainer for the adventurous side of the Army, building up resilience with our serving men and women. He does a lot of pre- and post-operational deployment which is proving to be amazingly successful with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. He was recently awarded a rare Chief of Army Commendation for his 49 years of service. Lynton has only a short time left to serve and wants to ensure that this invaluable work is continued by encouraging and training other members to take on his role. He sees this as vital and wants to devote as much time as possible; hence his need to step back from the committee.

I think that under those circumstances we can agree to let him go!

*Celeste*

## **Today's Guest Speaker**

### ***Dominic Wong, Chinoiserie B & B***

In tropical Malaysia, Dominic's mother was a keen gardener, tending to her orchids and flowering plants on a daily basis. Being the youngest child, Dominic tagged along with his mother on her frequent visits to nurseries. She encouraged him to plant things of his own. In their home, Dominic was surrounded by paintings, crockery and porcelain wares. These beautiful things featured a stunning flower. Dominic's mother told him that this flower was a Tree Peony, the Imperial Flower of China and the National Flower of China! Dominic was very impressed. This engendered Dominic's interest in the cultivation of Tree Peonies.

In 1988, following the passing of his parents, Dominic came to Sydney to join his brother. In 1999 Dominic and his partner of 25 years, Chris Styles, purchased a paddock in the Southern Highlands whereupon they built "Chinoiserie", now a Bed and Breakfast, and developed the land. "Chinoiserie" is a French term meaning "Chineseesque" referring to a recurring theme in European artistic styles since the 17th century reflecting Chinese artistic influences.

As the land was a bare canvas, Dominic had a free hand to design his garden. One of his challenges was dealing with the time that trees take to be established. After 15 years, the trees have grown, providing a glorious backdrop to his borders and structure to his garden. The property, just over an acre in size, contains an extensive cottage garden with formal lawns, roses, herbaceous borders, a stream and pond, as well as alpine and potager gardens. "Chinoiserie" is one of the most renowned gardens in the Southern Highlands, famous for its peonies and rare plants.

Dominic's topic today is "***Preparing the Winter Garden for Spring***".



## ***June Gardening Tips***

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- ❖ Winter flowering azaleas, particularly singles, are more sun tolerant than those that flower later when the sun is hotter and more likely to burn and fade blooms.
  - ❖ Gutters and drains may have become loaded with leaves, twigs and other debris. They should be cleared to avoid blockages. The debris makes good compost.
  - ❖ This is a good time of year to dig drains, put in garden paths and steps, and erect trellises. Trellises can be used as windbreaks, to provide shade and filter sun, as well as providing a structure for climbing plants.
  - ❖ Vegetable patches can be left fallow. Cover in lucerne (Katoomba Produce store has garden lucerne for \$14.50 per bail). Add lime and manure.
  - ❖ We are heading to the shortest day of the year and then it is a downhill run to spring. Now is the time to plant dormant perennials, roses, fruit and nut trees as well as deciduous trees that provide shade in summer, such as maples, crab apples, ornamental pears and dogwoods. Stocks are coming into our local nurseries now. Maple Springs at Little Hartley has a huge range of beautiful maples, including Big Red, which is a medium-sized tree that colours a beautiful deep red as it turns in autumn. The deciduous trees are marvellous for mulch. Trees sold as bare-rooted must not be allowed to dry out. The planting holes need to be prepared ahead of time and roots covered and kept damp until planting.
  - ❖ Plan the location of new plantings with great care. Allow for spreading and do not overcrowd, especially fruit trees that need lots of sun.
  - ❖ Camellias are ideal for shaded gardens. The shiny foliage reflects light rather than absorbing it, as do rhododendrons. When planting, choose a position to avoid direct morning sun in winter as it can burn the wet or frost-touched buds, resulting in flowers that will not open. Camellias are suitable for planting near the house. The roots will not interfere with foundations or drains and they are not likely to grow taller than 6m.
  - ❖ *Camellia sasanqua* makes good hedging in narrow areas – such as space between a driveway and the next door neighbour. Prune and shape after flowering.
  - ❖ This is the perfect time to reorganise your garden because almost any plant can be transferred to a new position, natives being an exception. Other shrubs that do not move easily include daphne, luculia and magnolias.
  - ❖ Gardens, especially the more established ones, need to be regularly thinned out by removing old diseased or unsatisfactory trees and shrubs, as well as overgrown, untidy or straggly specimens that may have lost their vigour and vitality. The garden can be rejuvenated with pruning and/or resiting. One of the reasons to overhaul a garden is where there is excessive competition from aggressively dominant shrubs or trees. Walk through the garden and mark every plant you dislike and dig it up and dispose of it. Then examine where there is competition for space and light. Retain the most attractive and expensive specimens.
  - ❖ Lawns are best left as open as possible because this helps to make even the tiniest lawn look larger. Cutting off sharp corners and developing gentle, flowing curves will also help make a garden appear more spacious and interesting. Any shrubs dotted in the lawn can be removed and transplanted into the shrub garden.
  - ❖ When planting deciduous trees and shrubs be aware that digging into clay at the bottom of a planting hole can be problematic. It can create a kind of well into which water will flow and be retained over a long period. This will rot the roots of young plants. It is worthwhile either planting higher, even into low mounds, or making a

simple drainage channel on one side (down side) of the hole to take away water before it can become a problem.

- ❖ All deciduous trees and most shrubs need to be supported for the first few years so drive wooden stakes into the base of the hole before planting rather than later when you may risk root damage. Use wooden rather than steel stakes which can create all sorts of problems with heat and cold transmission, and they are very hard to remove.
- ❖ The ground is dry and cold. Winds can quickly dry out any remaining moisture. Unexpected high winds can also do a lot of damage. Constant movement of a plant in wind can have a disruptive effect on the root system. Every time new roots try to extend into a new area they become torn again. Constant root damage in roses can be a major cause of suckering. Offending shoots should be removed below the ground. Windrock damage appears as a circular well around the trunk of plants. It means the outer roots have been gradually torn and the tree has lost its stability. In windy districts it is best to place large stones directly on the roots flush against the stem to hold the plant in place. Take some of the foliage off top-heavy plants to decrease wind damage. Some plants can be secured by stakes or, if multi-stemmed, by several stakes. Deep watering plus mulching with leaf litter around shrubs prevents them from drying out too much from the wind.
- ❖ The recent hailstorm caused a lot of damage to gardens in Wentworth Falls. It is best not to trim damaged plants until October as pruning removes the protection given by the damaged growth to frosts, and pruning promotes new growth that will be frost tender.
- ❖ Improve “resting” garden beds by growing a green manure crop such as lupins and digging it in during spring.
- ❖ Deciduous trees can be pruned now. It is easier to see the shape of the tree when it is without leaves.
- ❖ Now is also a good time to do a light tidying up of wisteria. Take all climbing tendrils back to the first pair of side buds. You will not get blooms away from the short lateral spurs. However, if you want to cut an overgrown wisteria hard to keep it in bounds, do not do it now if you want flowers in spring. Hard winter pruning will remove most of the coming spring’s flower buds.
- ❖ White scale is prevalent this time of year. If not controlled, its small hard white encrustations can quickly multiply to completely cover stems and branches. Individual scales are tiny – males are 1mm white flecks while females are twice the size and rounded. Scales are sucking insects that lead to plant weakness and poor performance. Sooty mould grows on the honeydew the scale insects secrete. Treat scales when they’re young and in the crawler stage. Horticultural oil sprays work the best for scale control, but soaps can also be used. These types of products don’t have systemic properties, which means the spray must come in contact with the pest to kill it. Be aware, however, that you can burn leaves with horticultural soaps and oils. These products need to be applied when the air temperature is cool. Make sure your plants are watered well the day before you apply your control and never spray wilted plants. Always follow label instructions and make sure beneficial insects are not present when you spray.

**Sources:**

*Working Manual for Gardeners* by Jane Edmanson

*Gardening Year* by Shirley Stackhouse

*Seasonal Tasks for the Practical Australian Gardener* by Peter Cundall

*The Year-Round Gardener* by Stirling Macoboy

<http://www.yates.com.au/problem-solver/problems/scale-insects/>

<http://www.learn2grow.com/problemsolvers/insectsanimals/insectdamagecontrol/scale.aspx>

<http://flowerpower.com.au/information/garden-diary/may-gardening-diary/>

## Karen Handicott's Black Spot Prevention Method

After pruning I spray the roses with lime sulphur, as per the Ausgro bottle. I do this at least 1 to 2 weeks before turning the soil for composting etc. The Ausgro recommendation is for treatment of two-spotted mite and powdery mildew, but I was also recommended to use it after pruning for black spot prevention and for treating the soil at the end of the season. The directions on the bottle say: "Winter; 20mls/litre water; Spring, Summer and Autumn; 10mls/litre water." I have done this for two seasons now.

As well as using this formula, I keep my roses healthy with *Impact for Roses* during the growing season. It works here for me. As part of my mid-season care, and as necessary as pruning, I remove any leaves that go yellow or have a spot on them (the only time I had to do it this year was after the long session of rain we had in summer) and keep the lower inside leaves fairly thin to aid airflow.

### Club Tours and Functions

Friday 3 September 2015	<b>"Hidden Valleys"</b> Nola's Garden and the historic St Paul's Anglican Church (in Cobbitty). Camden Valley Inn for lunch. Cost \$50. <i>Names can only be taken with payment. Thank you.</i>	Departure TBA
Friday 22 and Saturday 23 April 2016	<b>"50 Shades of Orange"</b> Overnight trip to Duntryleague, Orange. <i>Names can only be taken with payment for accommodation. Thank you.</i>	Departure TBA

### Next Meeting

9 July

#### Annual General Meeting

#### Guest speakers:

**Marnie and Pat O'Mara**, Members of Slow Food Blue Mountains: **"Living the Good Life - Home Grown on a Suburban Block"**

#### Hall Set-up

**Martin Vaughan**

#### Morning Tea Duty

**Karen Handicott**

#### Bring a Plate

**Karen Handicott**

### Club Information

All members and visitors are asked to sign in upon arrival.

Members are asked to wear their club name badges to all club meetings, tours and functions. To take part in club functions and tours you must be a bona-fide club member.

General Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month, from January to November, at the Wentworth Falls School of Arts Theatre, Adele Ave (cnr Great Western Hwy), Wentworth Falls. Meetings commence at 9.45 am and finish around noon. The Library and Plant Stall are open before the meeting and at morning tea. \$5 entry fee.

Joining fee is \$30. Thereafter annual subscription is \$20.

**For Club Welfare matters, contact Celeste:  
Phone 4784 2321**

#### PLEASE NOTE

**The Annual General Meeting will be included at our next meeting on Thursday 9 July. The minutes of the previous AGM for 2014 are on the club's website, listed under General Meetings/May 2014.**

Club Secretary: Gai Horrocks.  
email: ghorrocks@iprimus.com.au  
Wentworth Falls Garden Club, PO Box 37  
Wentworth Falls NSW 2782  
Website: www.wentworthfallsgardenclub.com