



Wentworth Falls Garden Club Inc
Affiliated with The Garden Clubs of Australia Inc

8 October 2015: Edition No 287

From the President ...

Good morning everyone! Janine reminded me that it is time to dead-head the hellebores if I don't want them to self-seed. I cut down a huge number right to the base of the stems and they were just too gorgeous to put into the compost so they fill a huge vase in the house! The muted greens and mauves are so lovely.

It's all about visiting gardens this month, and the wonderful Festival is in full swing. I know many of us volunteer our services towards this hugely successful fund-raiser. I have been lucky enough to wander through four different gardens myself during the month and whilst all of them were different, all four had something that I adored. We also have a ramble on today to two gardens that don't belong to members so this is always a special privilege.

We are sending around three rosters calling for help for next year. They will be circulated today and next month. Kindly put your name down if you are willing to come in and set-up and pull-down the hall for a meeting; if you are willing to contribute something yummy towards morning tea; or if you are happy to help serve the refreshments. Nominate a month and then let us know if it isn't going to be possible closer to the time. I know I keep saying it, but this Club runs so well because of the huge number of you who participate and help out.

Enjoy wandering through some gardens this month, even if one of them is your own.

Celeste

Bill Grattan from Bay Tree Nursery

We are very pleased to have Bill Grattan, one of our favourite speakers, here today. Bill's topic today is "*Small Perennial Treasures*".

Bill has lived in the mountains for well over 30 years and runs Bay Tree Nursery at Mount Victoria which he opened several years ago now. Previously, Bill owned and ran Hartley Valley and Leura Country Gardens Nurseries. His love of plants goes way back to his days at All Saints College in Bathurst.

Bill qualified as a Horticulturist and obtained a Post Graduate Certificate in Landscape Design and an Assistant Diploma in Natural Resource Management at Ryde School of Horticulture. He has worked in many interesting and famous gardens, among them Taronga Zoo and Kirribilli House, to name just two. Bill is very dedicated to his trade and specialises in the more unusual varieties of trees and perennials. For Bill it is literally a full time job. He works six days a week and buys his plants on the seventh day! To obtain the variety and the unusual, for which Bill is well known, he purchases his stock from a range of places, including Sydney, Victoria and the Southern Highlands.

Robyn Bible's Feeding Regime for Pelargoniums and Geraniums:

Equal quantities of:

1. Dolomite
2. Potash
3. Osmocote for garden beds
4. Mix together and give one teaspoon of the mix per plant three times per year.



October Gardening Tips

October is the time to plant, fertilise, mulch and water well. The weather is mild enough to work comfortably in the garden for longer periods of time. Work done now will pay noticeable dividends later. Jobs from last month continue. Priority should be given to pulling out grasses and weeds around the base of plants. These grasses and weeds rob plants of water and nutrients that would have otherwise been available to grow and flourish.

- Plant perennial petunias for long-lasting garden colour.
- Yellowing of older gardenia leaves is a sign of short-term magnesium deficiency. Water with a weak solution of Epsom Salts.
- Spread snail bait amongst vulnerable plants, especially during damp weather.
- Lift bulbs after foliage has died down.
- As spring-flowering annuals finish, clean up beds, fertilise, and build up soil for summer plantings.
- Divide and repot cymbidium orchids into good quality orchid mix.
- Feed potted plants with organic plant food. Top up potted plants with additional fresh potting mix if the original mix has slumped.
- Apply soil wetter around established plants and shrubs.
- Seeds to sow: phlox, ageratum, dahlia, impatiens, capsicums, cucumbers, tomatoes.
- Shrubs that have finished flowering should be fertilised and lightly shaped. Watch out for and treat pests such as aphids, mites, and fungus such as petal blight.
- Tidy up geraniums, pelargoniums, fuchsias and hibiscus by trimming back. Use secateurs or hedge shears to remove around a third of the old woody growth to encourage fresh new growth and lots of summer flowers.
- Follow pruning with an application of manure, blood and bone and potash to encourage plenty of new growth and prolific flowering. Lay organic mulch around the base of garden plants to keep from drying out.
- It's not too late to tidy up ornamental grasses, which flower profusely or turn bronze in winter, such as purple pennisetum, miscanthus and carex. These can be pruned back any time from early winter to early spring. The simplest method here is to bunch the grass into a 'pony tail' using some stretchy tape pulled in tightly around the base and then lop the tops off almost to ground level, using shears, a sharp knife or even a chain saw. The grass responds well with new shoots arising

from the base of the plant. The tops can be shredded with the lawn mower and added to the compost, or spread on the ground as hay mulch.

- The lawn has started growing and will require more frequent mowing. Mow to keep down annual weeds and to stop them from seeding. Mow at a higher setting. Closer cuts will scalp and leave shaven spots which will become vulnerable to drying out and to weeds. Weed and feed if your lawn is of suitable type.

Growing Tips for Tomatoes

- Choose a spot that has not grown tomatoes for at least five years. Do not plant tomatoes into soil too rich in nitrogen from the addition of blood and bone or animal manures otherwise the tomato plants will produce masses of leaves at the expense of flowers and fruit. When the tomatoes eventually appear it is late in the season and they can remain green for many weeks.
- Nitrogen is the nutrient most responsible for growing lush, vibrant leaves and stems. Nitrogen encourages leaf growth, which is why fertilisers with a higher ratio of nitrogen (the first of the three numbers listed on the packaging of fertilisers) are an optimum choice for lawns and grasses. Too much nitrogen keeps the plants contented without the pressure to reproduce.
- Water in the plant well after planting and distribute a thin layer of mulch (2-3cm deep) around the plants. Use lucerne hay, sugar cane mulch, pea straw or some other coarse organic matter.
- Once the plant grows and lots of thick lush foliage appears, remove some of the thick foliage. Start with the lower leaves to reveal a main stem, but keep the top growth to provide sun protection for future fruit. It will provide good airflow and help to prevent disease as well as urging the plant to reproduce.
- Tomatoes are heavy feeders. A month after planting, start regular feeding. Use a soluble fertiliser formulated for flowers and fruit and apply it at the rate stated on the pack. Start feeding once every three weeks. Sea kelp is a suitable potassium-rich fertiliser. You can also help blossoms stay around when they do appear by spraying them directly with a diluted mixture of Epsom Salts and water – about 1 teaspoon to 1 quart of water. As the weather gets hotter and you water more often, increase feeding to once a fortnight.
- Tomatoes need a steady supply of water over summer, so don't let plants go thirsty for a few days. This will affect or even harm the quality of fruit. Keep up a steady water supply at all times.
- Caterpillars will eat holes in leaves and green fruit, and fruit fly will lay eggs into ripening fruit. White flies and aphids suck sap from foliage and transmit plant diseases. Both caterpillars and fruit fly can be controlled using organic methods which do not leave chemical residues on crops. For caterpillars, buy either Dipel or Yates Success. For fruit fly, use Yates Natures Way Fruit Fly Killer or Eco-Naturalure. For aphids and whitefly: low toxicity pyrethrum sprays will do.
- There's a huge choice available in tomatoes, so read the label carefully and be guided by the staff at the garden centres. In general, though, there are two main types of tomato plants:
Tall-growing varieties: these reach 2m or more and require the support of one or more stakes.
Bush types: these reach waist or knee height and do not need the support of a stake. In the bush class there are also dwarf forms.

Sources

The Year Round Gardener by Stirling Macoboy

The Practical Gardener by Peter Cundall

<http://www.hgtvgardens.com/tomatoes/late-bloomer-why-wont-my-tomatoes-get-with-the-production>

<http://www.tomatodirt.com/tomato-fertilizer-kinds.html>

<http://www.yates.com.au/tomatoes#XpRgQwZRvktmoldq.97>

<http://www.burkesbackyard.com.au/fact-sheets/in-the-garden/herbs-fruit-and-vegetables/tomato-growing-tips/#.VgHmKM7-Mu0>

<http://www.hortico.com.au/garden-diary/#october-diary>

Club Tours and Functions

Thursday 8 October after General Meeting	“Cherrydell” Garden Ramble directly after meeting until 1.30pm. Address to be advised on the day.	12 noon till 1.30pm
Friday 16 October	“Up the Country” This includes visiting the beautiful Mayfield Gardens and the Gairloch Garden. Lunch and morning tea included. Cost \$45. <i>Waiting list.</i>	Departure 8.45am
Thursday 12 November after General Meeting	Garden Ramble in Wentworth Falls directly after the meeting. Address to be advised on the day.	12 noon till 1.30pm
Friday 13 November	Glenmore House 1840’s sandstone cottage and garden at Camden. Lunch provided (morning tea not included). Cost is \$36. <i>Waiting list.</i>	Departure 10am
Thursday 3 December	Christmas Lunch at Wentworth Falls Country Club. (Note: not our usual Thursday meeting date.) Cost is \$35 per member. Members are welcome to bring along a guest: Cost \$40.	12 noon

Next Meeting

12 November

Guest speaker:

Judy Horton

Hall set-up

Ronah and Vic Tuite

Morning tea duty

Bernadette Heckford and Janka Orelova

Bring-a-plate

Bernadette Heckford

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 Lea Nelson: Ph 4784 1101.

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