



# NEWSLETTER

Issue No: 117

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2013

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

I find gardening can be such a distraction. As I was heading back to the house having fed the chooks and alpacas and knowing that I needed to finish this newsletter so that Jackie Chapman had time to print it I was noticing all the tasks that I could be doing.

Of course I enjoy producing the newsletter but on a balmy autumn morning after rain and with autumn leaves to be raked and composted, newly emerging weeds to pull, plants waiting to be put in the garden and any number of shrubs to be trimmed and tidied as well as new camellia flowers to admire it is hard to be in doors hunched over the computer key board.

It is encouraging to see the sheen of green spreading over the paddocks even though closer examination shows that it is more cape-weed than clover. If you scratch the surface of the soil it is still very dry just a centimetre down so it is too early to stop watering and there are still some warm days ahead before we settle in to winter.

Following the disappointment of having to cancel both the three day August trip and the bulk Neutrog purchase Maria Maxwell has started planning for a day trip in August (details page 2) and we are in negotiation with Neutrog to set up a partnership which will allow us to place bulk orders once or twice a year, depending on member demand, in which you may choose to order any items from their product list. This exciting venture should prove to be very beneficial to the club. More details to come.

Norma Keily

## JOHN YATES - CARNIVOROUS PLANTS

The guest speaker at the March meeting was John Yates who had developed a passion for carnivorous plants in his early twenties and now at the age of fifty seven he is still excited by them. Enthusiasm and the desire to see them in their own habitat and perhaps even to identify new species had led to treks up onto Mt Victoria in the Philippines and to Mt Kinabalu in Borneo both dangerous and challenging places to venture. John confessed that he is now no longer fit enough to undertake these adventures and on one trip he was so distracted by the wonderful pitcher plants that he was just a step away from falling over a cliff.

Many of the carnivorous plants which are found in isolated and inhospitable areas are still to be identified and are not able to be imported into Australia due to the strict quarantine regulations.

Australia has almost 200 different species of carnivorous plants and some like the *Cephalotus follicularis* which only grows in a south facing aspect in the Swan River area of W.A. and only eats hard bodied black beetles are very specific in their needs. Western Australia is home to 70% of the world's collection while the tuberous sundew *whittakerii* is local to the Adelaide Hills and the *auriculata* grows in the Onkaparinga Gorge and at Deep Creek. Some of the WA species, eg *Drosera stricticaulis*, require heat stratifica-

tion (ie bush fires) to initiate germination.

The location of the Venezuelan *Heliamphora* or Sun Pitcher can only be reached by helicopter and it grows in brilliant sunshine but low air temperature on high mountain tops.

In his very large greenhouse John has foggers, misters and evaporative air conditioners to provide a suitable environment for his huge collection of carnivorous plants. As it is too difficult to import whole plants into

Australia John is experimenting with tissue culture to propagate them.

Pitcher plants are intriguing as they have a rim and teeth to prevent captured insects from escaping but if the water in the pitcher becomes putrid the plant will die.

*Sarracenia* are found along the eastern seaboard of the US. The insects are attracted by a nectar-like secretion on the lip of pitchers, as well as a combination of

color and scent. Slippery footing at the pitchers' rim, causes insects to fall inside, where they die and are digested by the plant's enzymes as a nutrient source.

Other species are *Drosera* or sun dews, *Pinguicula* or butterworts, *Dionaea* or Venus flytraps, *Utricularia* or bladderworts, *Nepenthes* or tropical pitcher plants. Most of the species require moist living conditions but a few survive in desert, alkaline conditons.

Carnivorous plants can be grown in a terrarium or fish tank with a small fan and fluoro light.



# STRATHALBYN GARDEN CLUB PROGRAM

MEETING DATE	SPEAKER	TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION
April 26th	Ben Simon	Native plants in and around Strathalbyn
May 24th	Prof. Don Bursill	Water for South Australia
May 24th	BLOOM COMPETITION	
June 28th	Annual General Meeting	Vince Davey Neutrog <b>SUBS DUE</b>
July 26th	Prof. Chris Daniels	Backyard Biodiversity
August 16th	COACH TRIP	Neutrog, Monarto & State Flora
August 23rd	Phillipa Lamphee	Geraniums and Pelargoniums
September 7th	Judging for Strath Show	Spring Garden Competition
September 27th	Judy Cross	Angas Plains Wines
October 25th	Troy McKenzie	The Potted Garden
October 25th	BLOOM COMPETITION	
November 22nd	Christmas Lunch	Details to come.

## STRATHALBYN GARDEN CLUB DAY TRIP



Following the cancellation of our proposed three day coach trip to Pt Augusta it was suggested that we plan a day trip to visit Neutrog, Monarto Zoo and the State Flora at Murray Bridge.

Details are: WHEN Friday 16th August 2013  
 WHO 57 seats available to Garden Club members and their partners and friends  
 HOW MUCH Approximately \$40 which includes the cost of Zoo entry  
 PROGRAM Depart Strathalbyn 8.30am

Visit Neutrog at Kanmantoo to see how their products are made

Visit Monarto Zoo for a guided bus tour

Visit State Flora at Murray Bridge

Arrive back at Strathalbyn by 5.00pm

Lunch is either BYO or purchase at the Monarto Zoo.

Register your interest in attending by the May meeting. Full payment due at the August meeting. Final cost and additional information will be available soon.

## GARAGE SALE

Saturday 17th April from 8.30am

7 Sunter St Strathalbyn

Furniture, pots and plants, garden tools,  
something for everyone!

All proceeds to the local Lions Club.

## GUEST SPEAKER FOR MAY

### PROFESSOR DON BURSILL AM

Professor Don Bursill is an international leader and recognised expert in the field of water management and water quality. He has been at the forefront of the most important developments and decisions regarding potable water in Australia for the past 40 years. Don has always given to the local community. His support and generous advice to volunteer members of the Onkaparinga Estuary Water Quality Group resulted in a \$1 million wetland clean up of storm water entering the Onkaparinga River.

## OPEN GARDENS AUSTRALIA

**\$7.00 ENTRY FEE**

**MOST GARDENS OPEN 10AM—4.30PM**

### MAY

- 4—5 **Niwajiri** 5 Lampert Rd Crafers. Mix of common and rare plants: lovely autumn colour: organic fruit and vegetables. 1ha.
- The Chestnuts** 46 Waverley Ridge Rd Crafers. Sophisticated combination of plants chosen for seasonal effect in a gracious garden dating from the 1870s. Camellias, autumn leaves.
- 11—12 **Wairoa** 142 Mt Barker Rd Aldgate. Victorian era garden, conifers, maples, oaks and copper beeches rhododendrons and camellias. 9 ac
- 18—19 **St Marks College** 46 Pennington Cres North Adelaide. A series of semi formal courtyard gardens. Roses and cottage plantings. Historic Downer House open.
- 25—26 **Beechwood** 36 Snows Rd Stirling. Historic garden with National Estate and State Heritage listing. Formal rose garden, rhododendrons, 10 ac.

## WORKING BEE

Maggie Minchin has agreed to host a visit from the Cottage Garden Group on Saturday 25th May.

It would be a great help to her if we could provide some assistance in her garden a few days before the visit doing some general weeding, trimming and tidying.

A few hours work from an enthusiastic group would achieve a lot in Maggie's lovely garden and it could be fun at the same time. Refreshments will be supplied. Please register your intention to help on the **WORKING BEE SIGN UP FORM** which will be near the kitchen door at morning tea at the April meeting.



## GARDEN CLUB SUBS

At the June AGM the Committee plans to put a motion to the members to increase the annual subscription from \$5 per annum to \$10. The fee has remained the same since 1997 but costs have risen and even at \$10 it is still value for money.

The Treasurer will not be accepting subs renewals until after the Motion has been approved at the AGM.

# N.B.

## NEUTROG SALES

The committee is in negotiations with Neutrog to set up a formal purchase arrangement which will provide more product variety for members. More details to come.

## CAN YOU HELP?

If you have a problem, something to share, need a cutting or seeds or scion wood then the newsletter is a good means of communication. Norma edits the newsletter and will gladly find space for your request. Email [strathalbyngardenclub@gmail.com](mailto:strathalbyngardenclub@gmail.com) or phone 85366276.

## GARDENS WANTED!

From time to time I receive phone calls from Garden Clubs and other groups wanting to know if there are gardens in the Strathalbyn area that they could visit on a planned tour. Usually they are planning a few months in advance so there is plenty of time to tidy and tweak. I would like to have a list of gardens available for each season and as most groups are happy to pay a small amount there will be recompense and perhaps an opportunity to sell plants or produce. The Club can arrange a band of gardeners to help with a working bee beforehand. If you are interested let Norma know or register your name on the Sign Up sheet which will be out the front during morning tea.

At the moment there is a group of 25 wanting to visit on Wednesday 29th May and another planning a visit in late October.

## MAY WE VISIT YOUR GARDEN?

Some Club members have expressed an interest in visiting the gardens of other members and as the Club is about sharing gardening knowledge and ideas this would be a helpful activity. Perhaps we could arrange Spring and Autumn visiting days for up to ten volunteer gardens on a day that is mutually suitable. Expressions of interest from members willing to be involved should be directed to Norma. A Volunteer to arrange the activity would be very welcome and suggestions on how to run it would also be welcome.

Register your interest on the Sign Up sheet which will be out the front during morning tea. We already have seven gardens volunteered but more would be even better.

## BLOOM COMPETITION

The autumn bloom competition for the Club is on again at the May 24th meeting. Categories for best bloom, best native bloom and best pot plant. Limit of three entries per person.

# WHICH MANURE?



Here in Strathalbyn we are spoilt for choice with the supply of animal manures for the garden but making the decision as to which is best can be a conundrum.

Manures vary depending on the age (fresh or old), what the animals have been fed, moisture content and the pharmaceutical content.

Manures can be composted before being added to the garden, sheet layered across the garden, dug in or used as a side dressing or even soaked in water to make a liquid manure. Composting will generally destroy the weed seeds and chemicals.

Plant health is dependent greatly on the health of the soil. Chemical fertilizers disregard this fact and use the soil only as a means to supply the growing plant with the nutrients needed for that crop. Little or no soil microorganism activity is needed to achieve this. Organic plant nutrients in natural fertilizers require the soil microorganisms to break down the organic plant nutrients before they are usable by the plants. This action is slower than with chemical fertilizing but the resulting active bacteria life it creates in the soil has far reaching implications. A soil without an active community of the countless microorganisms that are present in an organic rich soil is destined to troublesome nutrient deficiency, disease and pest problems.

**HORSE:** very low levels of nitrogen, phosphorus and potash. Supercharged with beneficial micro-organisms. May contain weed seeds and antibiotics plus ammonia if fresh.

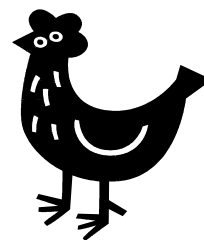
Composting for 8 weeks will destroy the seeds and antibiotics.



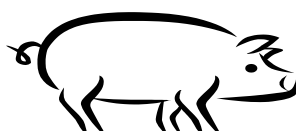
**SHEEP:** More nutrients than horse or cow with some phosphorus and potash. Very high in organic matter and is slow to break down. Contains weed seeds and ammonia if fresh. Excellent in compost providing microbes, organic matter and some nitrogen. Great soil improver and mulch.

**COW:** Low in nitrogen, phosphorus and may have some potash if the cows are fed hay. Reasonable organic matter and can be added directly to soil and potting mix. Will contain weed seeds and ammonia if fresh. Excellent as a mulch around shallow rooted plants.

**CHOOK:** Good source of Nitrogen some phosphorus and a little potash. Usually contains very little organic matter especially if taken from caged birds. May have high salt and ammonia levels if fresh and may have a high pH. Add to compost or dig in 6 weeks before planting. Does break down quickly.



**PIGEON:** Good nitrogen, good for low levels of trace elements but little phosphorus or potash. May have organic matter if taken from deep litter cages. Beware of potential disease pathogens. Could have high levels of ammonia. Good for liquid manure and compost. Ideal under fruit trees and as a soil improver if dug in 6 weeks prior to planting.



**PIG:** Rich in phosphorus and potash. Excellent soil improver. Needs to be well composted. Odourless.

**ALPACA:** Has a fair amount of nitrogen and potassium and about average levels of phosphorus. May contain some weed seeds. When shredded is an excellent soil improver as it contains high levels of organic matter. Can be used straight away. Odourless.

**WORM CASTINGS:** Worm castings are their own compost; they are 50% organic material with many trace elements. They are not a bulk manure so are best used in the plant nursery for young seedling and such. If you have access to abundance they make an excellent soil conditioner. Soaked in water the liquid manure is a great resource in all areas of the garden.

**RABBIT:** (Bunny berries) High in nitrogen, phosphorus and potash as well as trace elements and micronutrients. An excellent soil conditioner and can be used without composting.

## SHREDDED ALPACA MANURE

\$3 per bag

An excellent soil conditioner and fertiliser.

775 Old Bull Creek Road,  
Strathalbyn.  
Norma 85366276

## SHEEP MANURE for Sale

\$5 / bag (delivered to Strath)  
\$4 / bag (collected from farm)  
\$20 / collected in trailer, i.e. 6'4'

Tania & John Richardson  
Woodchester  
85375011

We're happy to make your garden  
happy! Spread the word.

# Rod and Julie Wilson - April 2013



Rod and I both grew up in the Lower North of South Australia, our main town being Owen.

Rod's parents owned a farm south of Owen, near the railway siding named Stockyard Creek and my parents lived on a farm north of Owen, near another small siding named Woods - both are now nonexistent, except for a few ruins.

Rod attended the Brabba Primary School and my school was at Woods, both one teacher schools of about fifteen pupils.

After our primary years, we both attended Adelaide colleges as boarders for four years.

On leaving school I went straight into a nursing career, so my gardening interest was on hold until we married in 1959.

Rod started working with his father on the farm, a career which lasted over fifty years until we retired to Goolwa in 2005 - Rod still goes back to help with the seeding and harvest.

My parents were keen gardeners, growing natives, roses, fruit trees and vegetables.

I remember my father cutting down a large water tank and filling it with soil and I grew numerous vegetables in it.

I remember being very proud to be able to help supply vegies for our family of six.

My love of gardening probably began in the 1940s, when as a child I would visit my grandparents who lived on a farm alongside the Macaw Creek at Riverton.

They were good gardeners and had an orchard fully enclosed to keep the numerous birds at bay.

Grandpa would take us through the gate and we could pick a week's supply of fruit of every kind to take home.

This area had many large trees surrounding the house and creek, home to many beautiful parrots and other birds, so the enclosed orchard was the only way to live with a garden and the bird life.

Just recently, our son, who now runs our farm, built a 40m x 20m enclosed area covering dozens of trees including many unusual fruit and nut trees and we are now eating the results of his plantings.

Once again this was the only way to have the fruit and birds as well. We are pleased David and his family are showing an interest in gardening.

When Rod and I were married we moved into the Wilson farm house - the garden was very neglected at this time, but with youthful energy, we began planting many natives, roses, shrubs, annuals and lawns.

Three children arrived over the next five years so life was very busy and full, running a mixed farming enterprise as well as milking cows, feeding calves, pet lambs and running a poultry shed.

In 1987, when our eldest son married, we moved into a home in Owen. Over the years we added to the already developed garden, planting more roses and shrubs.

We had a very full fern house, growing varieties of ferns, orchids, fuchsias and camellias.

In 2002 we were surprised to receive the KESAB 'Best Garden' award for Owen - during these years we were active members of the Balaklava SGAP group and the Balaklava Garden Club - we hope to attend the 20th birthday celebrations of the club next year.

In 2005 we moved to our present home in Goolwa, much smaller, with thirsty sandy soil - we have always made good compost, not so necessary up north where the soil was better, but important at Goolwa.

It has taken a few years to improve the soil, with heaps of our compost and pig compost from Strathalbyn and now the roses and other plants are loving it - we are also learning to grow tougher plants.

Rod and I still enjoy gardening together and I love my Princess Lilies, Day Lilies and recently acquired Big Red Geraniums which I hope to propagate soon to put on the wonderful garden club raffle table.

These days we live a busy life, but we always enjoy our monthly visits to the Strathalbyn Garden Club, where we are meeting up with old friends, making new friends and learning from excellent speakers and members with a similar interest in gardening.



## 26th Strath Craft Fair

Saturday 4th (10-5) and Sunday 5th (10-4) May

**Strathalbyn Town Hall - Supporting Aged Care**

• Devonshire Teas • Light Lunches • Raffles • Gold Coin Entry