



NEWSLETTER

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From The President,

I may be starting to sound like a broken recording, repeating the same phrase monotonously, but the Garden Club does need more volunteers for the committee. In particular someone to take over from Ruth Franck who has done an exceptional job arranging the guest speakers for a number of years.

Ruth has set up the program for the rest of the year and has established a good system for contacting and following up the speakers.

This is not an onerous job as suggestions for suitable speakers with their contact details are always being offered. The main requirement is email access. Ruth's other commitment - Raffle ticket seller and caller - has already been filled.

Also, as Jenny Thomas will be overseas for the May meeting, a substitute secretary to take the minutes is needed for the day.

While our thoughts are on volunteering, I would appreciate having someone to take over the organisation of the annual "Cavalcade of Gardens". The systems are in place and once again it is not an onerous task. Every assistance will be given.

With the recent 'opening rains' gardens will be refreshed and the falling autumn leaves are providing plenty of material for the compost heaps. I get excited when I see the various spring bulbs starting to push through the mulch and I hope that I have treated them well enough last season that they will flower again this year.

Norma Keily

RODNEY HUTCHINSON - ANTS

Rodney Hutchinson has been working as a volunteer with the SA Museum specialising in the identification of the *Myrmecia* genus of ants (commonly known as Bull Dog or Inch ants). With a life-long interest in natural history Rodney has been a member of the Field Naturalists Society of South Australia for many years holding the position of President for a time.

Ants have been around since the Cretaceous Period and are in the majority, having a biomass greater than that of the human race, and are found everywhere except Antarctica. Ants are needed to provide a balance in nature and are more beneficial than not and for that reason no tips on how to get rid of them were provided, although it was suggested that the commercially available ant trap bait stations could be placed along their trails to reduce numbers.

Interesting details about ants include the fact that they need food and moisture to survive; not all ants have stings as some have chemical sprays; species share resources by being active at different times of the day; ant larvae need protein to grow; the ant exoskeleton means that they do not get desiccated in hot dry conditions.

The dangerous *Myrmecia* (Bull ants) have a poisonous sting like a hypodermic needle which can be used multiple times as it has no barbs. This genus is considered a primitive ant which means that it has a particular body structure and way of working. It is a solo hunter gatherer which does not work in a team unlike some ants who lay a chemical trail and release pheromones to guide other



ants to food sources. *Myrmecia* (eg Inch ants) can see exceptionally well as they have 2 compound eyes and well as three ocelli (single lens eyes). These ants are usually found in the moister areas like the Adelaide hills. Dr Brian Heddle of Flinders university is doing research into producing an anti-venom. Sensible precautions should be taken when in ant territory - wear protective clothing and use an insect repellent spray. Avoidance is the best protection and it might be comforting to know that with the big ants there are usually only about 100 ants in the nest.

Jumper ants are part of this genus and although smaller are aggressive in that they jump at the intruder.

Most ants in general are females with males only necessary to mate with and fertilise the female before dying. One mating produces several years worth of eggs. A single queen can live for 30 years. Male ants do not have mandibles as they do not eat but they do have large ocelli to see the female ants and they have wings to make nuptial flights.

Fire ants (*Solonopsis*) are a small ant with a big sting and because of their detrimental affects on the cattle industry they need to be eradicated. Their nests have multiple queens which makes them difficult to control.

STRATHALBYN GARDEN CLUB PROGRAM

MEETING DATE	SPEAKER/ACTIVITY	TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION
April 24th	Troy McKenzie (Leaf Boutique)	Companion planting
April 30th	Visit Anlaby Station	Money to Maria Maxwell
May 22nd	Vince Davey	Neutrog
May 22nd	Launch Neutrog order	For delivery in August
June 26th	AGM	Consider nominating for the committee
June 26th	Graham Morris	Cymbidium Orchids
July 24th	Michael Coulson	CFS Fire ready

ANLABY STATION COME ON THE JOURNEY

Thursday 30th April 2015

Total cost \$55 includes coach trip, garden & house tours and lunch.

Meet at the railway station 8.30am return 5.30pm (Travel via Kapunda to Hamilton)

REMINDERS:

- Full amount of \$55 per person to Maria Maxwell by April 24th.
- Special dietary requirements notified by April meeting please.
- The journey takes 2 hours each way.
- No eating or drinking on the coach - there will be pit stops but no time for morning or afternoon tea
- Dress for the weather and wear comfortable walking shoes
- Anlaby has a small shop selling woollen items and books about the property.
- **There is no long term parking at the Strathalbyn railway station**

AUTUMN SALVIA SALE

Presented by the Salvia Gardening
Group of the Herb Society of S.A.

Sunday April 26th 2015

8:30 - 12:00 noon

Fullarton Park Centre Grounds

411 Fullarton Road Fullarton

Free admission and parking

Be early for the best choice!

For the Travellers

RENMARK Rose Festival October 16th - 25th 2015 - in and around Renmark.

CANBERRA'S Floriade September 12th - October 11th on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin.

SAROC ORCHID FAIR

SA REGIONAL ORCHID COUNCIL

SATURDAY JUNE 6TH 9AM - 5PM

SUNDAY JUNE 7TH 10:00AM - 4:00PM

TORRENS PARADE GROUND

FREE PARKING ON THE PARADE GROUND

\$3 DONATION INCLUDES

COMPLIMENTARY CUP OF TEA/COFFEE.

DEMONSTRATIONS: COMPETITIONS:

RAFFLES: SALES: ADVICE.

SAUSAGE SIZZLE & DEVONSHIRE TEAS.



We will be Launching our Annual Neutrog order in May with delivery to take place in mid August. Order forms will be the same as in past years and the system will run as in the past.

We are delighted that the Strathalbyn Lions Club have made their facility on Walsh Avenue available for pick up. It has off road access, under cover storage and is secure.

Vince Davey from Neutrog will be our guest speaker in May and will be telling us about their new product.

Start making up your Neutrog wish list and putting \$\$\$ aside.

OPEN GARDENS AUSTRALIA

MAY 9 - 10

WAIROA 142 Mt Barker Road Aldgate.

A captivating Victorian-era garden enclosed in a world of its own by huge conifers and gloriously colouring maples, pin oaks and copper beeches sheltering the many rhododendrons, camellias and hydrangeas that flow across the slope. Vegetable and picking garden. Original stone sculpture and grotto.

Extras include art and craft stalls.

BEECHWOOD 36 Snows Road Stirling (Enter from St Wilfred St.)

A superb historic garden with National Estate and State Heritage listings features fresh spring foliage and a glorious autumn display. Towering trees, expansive lawns, formal rose garden and a significant collection of rhododendron cultivars. Original rock garden and pool; Victorian cast-iron conservatory.



OPEN GARDENS S.A.

The garden selectors have been busy finding gardens to fill the calendar for the 2015/16 inaugural Open Gardens SA season.

So far some 40 garden owners have said they will open their gardens. Details will appear on the website :

<http://opengardensa.org.au> from June. Details will also appear on the Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/opengardensa>.

Some of these gardens have not previously been opened to the general public so there is a treat in store for avid garden lovers; other gardens are perennial favourites and a joy to return to each year.

The garden entrance fees will remain at \$8 but a new concession rate of \$6 will enable garden visitors with an eligible Centrelink card and children Under 18 will continue to be free.

COMPOSTED PIG MANURE

\$7.00 per 27 litre bag

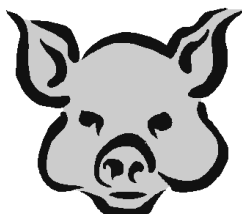
Free delivery in Strathalbyn

Phone 8536 2628

Ros 0428 362 628

Brian 0438 362 628

Practically odourless!



N.B.

SIGNING IN

Members are reminded that it is important to sign the Attendance Register on arrival and when picking up your name badge for the meeting so that our record keeping for insurance purposes is accurate.

Apologies can be recorded with an A in the appropriate column.

Known future apologies can be recorded in the space provided.

LUCKY DOOR PRIZE

Just a reminder that the lucky winner of the door prize has first pick from the raffle table and this can be taken before the raffle draw so there is ample time to make a choice.

FOR THE GARDENING BOOKSHELF

From the Ground Up by Sophie Thomson will be available at the May meeting for \$35 a copy.

Orders should be placed at the April meeting so that they can be delivered on May 22nd.

Fill in an order form at the Treasurer's desk. Pay in May.



GREG THE WORM MAN 0438 808 066

Kilo packs of composting worms

Vermicast for soil improvement

Worm Farms to order

Worm Wee 3 litre & 20 litre containers

Catch me at the Strathalbyn Garden Club meetings!

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.

GARDENING HEALTH

Gardening is a relaxing and enjoyable form of exercise, but it can pose health risks. Consider these suggestions to maintain your health and safety when out in the garden.

DON'T OVERDO IT.

Gardening can cause back pain and overuse injuries.

Safety suggestions include:

- Avoid long gardening sessions.
- Warm up before gardening with slow, sustained stretches and remember to do basic back stretches during your gardening.
- Rotate your tasks to avoid repetitive movements. For example, after 15 minutes of raking, swap to pruning for a while.
- Rest frequently and relax in the shade with a drink of water. (Avoid alcohol).
- Avoid uncomfortable positions.

Bend at the knees and don't strain when lifting heavy objects. If the object is too heavy for you, seek help.

SAFETY TIPS.

- Always wear gardening gloves to protect your hands against cuts, soil, potting mix, insect bites and skin irritants.
- Attend to any cuts, bruises or insect bites immediately.
- Ensure that paths and walkways are flat and non-slip.
- Warm up before gardening and encourage frequent breaks.
- Prevent sun exposure by working in the garden early in the morning or late in the day. Wear a hat and apply sunscreen frequently.
- Wear protective shoes, lightweight comfortable clothes that cover exposed skin, a hat and sun glasses.
- Store garden equipment safely.

HAND SAFETY.

Many gardening injuries involve the hands and fingers.

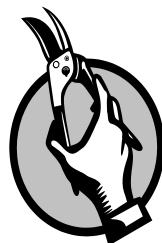
Safety suggestions include:

- Always wear gardening gloves to protect your hands against cuts, soil, insect bites and skin irritants. Leather gloves offer protection against punc-

ture injuries from thorns and bites (insect, snake, spider or rodent).

- Use appropriate tools for digging instead of your fingers (for example, a shovel or hand shovel). Buried objects such as tree roots, glass and metal can injure your hand, wrist or arm while digging.
- Consult with your doctor about keeping your tetanus vaccination up to date. Cuts and puncture injuries carry a risk of tetanus.
- Choose your hand tools to suit you. Avoid buying or using hand tools that feature 'moulded' handles that don't fit your hand. Blisters, calluses and muscle pain can occur if the finger grips on the handle are too small or too large for your hand.
- Keep your hand and wrist in a straight line when you use hand tools. Bending the wrist weakens your grip on the tool, which causes you to exert hand and arm muscles with greater force. This can cause fatigue and soft tissue injury.

Use rubber gloves when working with garden chemicals. Always inspect the rubber gloves for holes or tears before use.



STRENGTH FOR LIFE 50⁺

Great for keeping strong and fit for gardening!

Run by Fleurieu Fitness and Health
in conjunction with COTA SA

The RSL Hall, High Street Strathalbyn
Sessions Tuesday, Wednesday Thursday & Friday

9.30am - 10.30am.

\$7.00 per session

Each participant must have an initial assessment to design an individual program to suit their specific needs. (Cost \$25)

For more information

Or to book an individual assessment

Contact Paul Holdsworth 8536 2204

Glenys Thompson - April 2015



A Gardening Journey

Among my earliest memories of gardens are the rows of bright gerberas along the drive at the front of Grandma's house, while around the back there was a profusion of nasturtiums, thick moss on the red brick path (great for making into fairy's pillows) and a big old apricot tree that was laden every year with large juicy fruit.

My grandmother fed this tree with Epsom salts and also drove large rusty nails into the trunk 'to give it iron.'

I'm not sure about the science of either of these approaches but you certainly couldn't argue with the results!

My other Grandmother had a much more restrained and ordered garden, but we kids delighted in picking big bunches of King violets to make into posies, and stepping into the cool greenness of her fern house, complete with maidenhair, hares' foot, holly and sword ferns.

The veggie garden was highly productive and I was always intrigued by those magical purple beans that turned green when Gran cooked them.

Along the back fence there was a luxuriant green choko vine, laden with fruit. Gran kept trying to find ways to serve up these rather tasteless vegetables because she could never bear to waste anything and also 'they are a vegetable and we should be thankful for them!'

Our veggie garden at home was dominated each summer with stands of sweet corn (Dad's favourite) as well as melons, tomatoes, beans (both broad and green varieties).

Dad leaned towards an organic garden, and experimented at various times with chooks and ducks. One year, when I was in my early teens, I grew everlasting daisies, and spent hours wiring and drying them by the hundreds. Goodness only knows what I thought I was going to do with them all!

On moving to the 'big smoke' for uni, I kept on with

a passion for growing things, by always having a pot-plant or two on my bedroom window sill, a habit which continued when as a working girl I moved into a flat with a friend.

Marriage bought about another move – this time into a little single fronted cottage in Adelaide's south. The pocket-handkerchief sized front lawn had a circular flower bed, which was a mass of brightly coloured portulaca.

At the end of summer, I pulled out the straggling plants, and scattered seed of something else (I can't remember what – possibly pansies), anyway what came up was – portulacas. I took some soil from that plot around into the back yard to top up a bed, and up came – portulacas. Despite that, portulacas are still one of my summer favourites.

Along with children came a move to a larger house and time for the garden had to compete with the multitudinous tasks of work and family life, but we grew some veggies and planted some natives in the front yard.

It was rather daunting to look over the fence into the empty block next door, which was a retired market-gardener's property. What he grew there was amazing, and made our little efforts seem paltry by comparison.

A couple of moves later saw us arrive in Whyalla, where we were to spend the next 27 years. Learning to garden on red sand was a challenge, and it was heart-breaking to lose plants every summer due to the hot desiccating north winds.

I had always been interested in Australian natives, and that passion was stimulated by my wonderful father-in-law who was a gardener by trade and a member of the Society for Growing Australian Plants for many years.

At his suggestion I tried growing a couple of Eremophilas and I was delighted to find that they thrived in our exposed hot front yard. So I began to plant more and more of them and was intrigued by the many sizes, forms and colours in this one species. We gave up growing vegetables in Whyalla – keeping them shaded and watered in summer was just too hard.

Two years ago we made the decision to move to Strathalbyn, and bought ourselves a wonderful garden with a nice house attached. I am delighted to have the chance to grow a much wider variety of plants, and enjoy watching all our feathered visitors but am finding the clay soil a bit of a challenge!

We also had to work out how to deal with the marauding possums who suddenly developed a taste for young apricot leaves and chose to denude our tree week after week.

Being able to visit so many lovely gardens, through the Open Garden scheme and this garden club has been both an inspiration and a delight; the pleasure has been multiplied by being able to make these visits in the company of my wonderful sister.

I am firmly of the opinion that a garden is never completed – there is always something that can be changed or improved. So with the help of the Gardener's Assistant (aka the hubby) we are making a few minor alterations and are even flirting again with a little vegetable plot.

So we look forward to many years of enjoyment, pottering around in our little patch of greenery – although it would be much nicer if we only had some rain...