



# NEWSLETTER

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Mad March for some means a surfeit of Festival and Fringe activities with a car and horse race added for good measure. My mad March consisted of garden visits.

While in Sydney I was delighted by the flourishing vegetable garden growing in raised garden beds on my son's balcony in Bondi. Perhaps gardening is in the genes.

On the recent long weekend we made visiting the SA Autumn Garden Festival a priority as did many other gardeners judging by the crowds and the number of cars pouring in to the Clare oval. There were many temptations ranging from displays of rusted metal garden sculptures to bulbs, plants and seedlings from many different garden centres and societies plus Kim Syrus and Jane Edmonson giving talks. Coffee and country cooking were an added bonus.

I have also had the privilege on different occasions of walking through a couple of home gardens here in Strathalbyn which is always a delight.

Added to this the ABC Gardening Australia program is back on Saturday evenings and the next ABC Gardeners' Market is only a few weeks away.

The fine autumn weather makes working in the garden a pleasure as I find space to plant all the new acquisitions.

**Norma Keily**

## AMANDA REYNOLDS - GREEN PLATYPUS GARDENS

Green Platypus Gardens based at Macclesfield offers Landscape Design and Garden Education and Amanda Reynolds, a co-owner, began her talk by sharing the joy she takes in being able to spend an entire day in the garden. free from commitments and interruptions.

Based at "Platypus Gully" the site was formerly a bare, weed infested paddock which had been used as a rubbish dump. Amanda likened having a garden to having a wild tiger as a pet, eternal vigilance is required as weeds and garden pests can strike when least expected.

Using the principles of Permaculture Amanda advocated the importance of observation before action, working with nature and the need to establish long term strategies, all coupled with the reminder that gardens are always a work in progress.

Before embarking on creating a vegetable garden be realistic about how much time and effort is needed to become self sufficient and whether that is a desirable goal.

Amanda touched on many elements of gardening including:

- No dig gardens where layers of manure, straw and compost are built up on a base of thick cardboard - useful when soil is poor or when creating raised beds,
- Worms are excellent workers
- Organic matter improves soil structure no matter whether it is clay or sandy soil.
- Bought compost is usually fumigated so it lacks essential organisms so it should be inoculated by treating with Gogo juice or similar. Soil biota creates a beneficial symbiotic relationship between roots, soil fungi

and bacteria.

- Biodiversity encourages beneficial insects to help with pest control as not all insects and caterpillars are detrimental to the garden.
- When creating a garden start close to the house and work outwards, focussing on the achievements and not the work still to be done. Document the progress.
- Manage weeds by identifying them and how they grow then solarize, mulch and smother them and on no account let them go to seed.

Amanda illustrated her talk with photos which documented the development of her garden from the barren paddock to the colourful, healthy potager garden featuring a vibrant mix of flowers, fruit trees, vegetables and herbs.

The website [www.greenplatypusgardens.com](http://www.greenplatypusgardens.com) provides information about the various gardening courses and workshops offered by Amanda as well as seasonal planting lists, Permaculture information and the concepts and philosophies supporting their Garden Design business. To quote *"We design and build gardens that can nurture your spirit; a place of peace, beauty and sanctuary, and connection to the living earth"*.



# STRATHALBYN GARDEN CLUB PROGRAM

MEETING DATE	SPEAKER/ACTIVITY	TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION
March 24th	Geoff Spear	Orchids
March 24th	Knitted Garden	Deadline for contributing knitted flowers
April 21st	Coach Trip	Jurlique & Mt Lofty Botanic Gardens
April 28th	Sharee Kelly	Native flowering plants
May 6th - 7th	Strathalbyn Craft Fair	Knitted Garden On Display Strathalbyn Town Hall
May 26th	Barb Field	Adelaide's Botanic Garden
May 26th	Launch Neutrog Order	Order form & price list attached to the May newsletter
June 23rd	Garden Club AGM	20th Birthday Celebration

## COACH TRIP FRIDAY 21ST APRIL 2017

Pick up at Rufus depot at 8.30 am  
 Pick up at Railway Station at 8.45 am  
 Travel to Jurlique Farm (near Mylor) for tour 10.00 am - 11.30 am  
 Travel to Cleland Wildlife Park  
 Travel to Mount Lofty Botanic Gardens  
 4 pm return to Strathalbyn  
 Strathalbyn Railway Station 5.00 pm  
 Rufus Depot 5.15 pm



At the 24th March meeting you will need to decide whether you will be buying lunch or BYO. Maria will have a list but there is no need to commit to what you might order.

As the tour is on a working farm, for your comfort and safety we ask all tour guests to wear

- Closed toe, flat shoes, sneakers or boots
- Full length pants, trousers or jeans

### Walking access

- The terrain varies with gravel and dirt pathways and some steep gradients.
- The length of walking on the tour is 600m.

**No refunds for late cancellation.**

## STRATHALBYN GARDEN CLUB GARDEN MARKET DAY

### FRIDAY 22ND SEPTEMBER 2017

- \* To be run as part of the September meeting
- \* Club members may book table space to sell: Seedlings, well grown cuttings, fresh garden produce, seeds, bulbs, potted plants. Cottage garden plants are popular.
- \* There will be a small charge or commission fee for table space (yet to be determined).
- \* The meeting procedure may be re-arranged to allow more browsing and buying time.
- \* More details will be available as plans are refined but now is the time to start taking cuttings and collecting seeds.
- \* All items to be sold should be clearly labelled with plant name and growing information and free from pests and diseases.



### 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!

### PAYMENTS TO THE TREASURER

- Provide correct money in an envelope with your name and contact details on the front.
- Receipts will be available at the following meeting.
- Keep all receipts as proof of payment.

### SHEEP MANURE for Sale

\$5 / bag (delivered to Strath)

\$5/ 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.

### COMPOSTED PIG MANURE

\$9.00 per 27 litre bag

Free delivery in Strathalbyn

Phone 8536 2628

Ros 0428 362 628

Brian 0438 362 628

Practically odourless!



## THE KNITTED GARDEN -

### TIME TO FINISH THE LAST ROW AND CAST OFF

Our Knitted Garden is to go on display at the Craft Fair which is held annually in the Strathalbyn Town Hall during the first weekend in May which this year will be 6th and 7th.

It will be the 30th year of the Craft Fair and an occasion to be celebrated.

It is time to start handing in all your knitted/crocheted creations so that they can be incorporated into "The Garden".

Flowers, leaves, snails, paving stones, butterflies, fruit and vegetables, in fact anything remotely garden oriented is welcome.

Items not delivered to the March meeting may be left at the Strath Neighbourhood Centre at 1 High Street or delivered to any member of the committee or contact Norma 8536 6276 for pick-up.

During April the garden will be created so contact Norma 8536 6276 with offers of help.

Plan to invite all your family, friends and neighbours to visit the garden at the Craft Fair in the Strathalbyn Town Hall on the weekend of May 6th and 7th.

The photo opposite is the frame displayed at our February meeting but the completed garden will be bigger, brighter and even more creative.



## SHARING THE BOUNTY

This has been a bountiful year for garden produce.

Tomatoes and zucchini in particular have fruited prolifically but what to do with the excess?

The neighbours might take some once your own fridge, freezer and pantry are stocked up, and family and friends might also welcome a basket or two unless they are green fingered as well.

The trading table or raffle table also welcomes donations but too many bags of tomatoes or zucchinis can cause problems.

### **What to do?**

Unfortunately the hospital and nursing home cannot accept fresh produce. Chickens can only eat so much and it is not a good idea to leave too much in their yard as it encourages the mice which might bring the snakes.

If you live in a high traffic area a table out the front of your house with a "Please Take" sign might work.

Making excess into jams and pickles requires expenditure on other ingredients, plus time, energy and jars. It seems wasteful to compost or put the excess in the green bin.

Deciding to grow less in future might be a good plan but that does

not solve the current problem of too much produce.

Fortunately Andrew Barker has already addressed this problem by setting up "Grow Free".

"Grow Free" is a fairly recent concept established locally to encourage the sharing of excess garden produce, seeds and seedlings and potted plants as well as gardening knowledge.

"Grow Free" carts, often made from discarded baby change tables, can be seen outside the Strath Neighbourhood Centre, Argus House and possibly the Visitor Centre (there may be more). Often they are stocked with an inviting range of garden goodies, there may be a bucket of

fresh water waiting for flowers or freshly harvested herbs. All this abundance is free for the taking or to swap if you have something to contribute as well.

On the Grow Free Facebook page there was mention of a possible collaboration with Glenbarr for the use of garden space and meeting rooms for growing learning and sharing.

This home grown idea might be the answer to our problem - keep an eye out for the carts.





# FORESTBROOK ESTATE GUMERACHA - OPEN GARDEN 18TH MARCH

The Sampson Flat Bushfire swept through this property on January 2015 destroying all but the house, sheds and parts of the garden. The Strathalbyn Garden Club propagated and grew a couple of trailer loads of plants to help bushfire affected gardeners rebuild their gardens so it was appropriate to visit this open garden with that thought in mind.

The owners, Manfred and Merri Eckert moved to the 46 acre property in 2008 and began creating a garden to enhance the homestead. Standard roses, Euonymous and Syzygium hedges, hellebores and a weeping cherry tree were used to good effect and these mostly survived the fire. At the back of the house a large fig tree provides welcome shade to an entertaining area.

The fire resistant properties were considered when making plant choices. so agapanthus were a natural addition to the list. Water for the garden is provided by a high flow bore and eight rain water tanks. There is also a water lily covered dam in their valley.

The destruction of a garden by the forces of nature provides the opportunity, for an optimistic gardener, to re-structure and redesign the garden. Fortunately it appeared that the soil had not been destroyed by the heat of the fire so replanting could begin anew.

Some of the damaged trees were left where they fell to provide protection for new plants, to stabilise the slopes and to act as borders for new garden beds. Other trees have been sawn into stepping stones while some, though cut down to stumps have started to regenerate.

Colourful cannas abound, along with daisies, Queen Ann's lace, dahlias and salvias in the Monet style garden while across the newly created 'winter creek' a tropical rain forest features ferns, palms and lilly pillys.

In the paddocks the resilience of the Australian bush is evident by the regrowth of native grasses and the fresh foliage on the blackened trunks of the eucalypts. Bees are in abundance on the flowers and the birds have returned to the trees.

This garden is an inspirational example of the values of optimism and hard work.



The vege patch re-created in recycled galv roofing sheets and timber and growing a fine crop of tomatoes, corn and strawberries.



A burnt out log left in place on the slope to protect the new plantings.



Tree stumps are starting to put out shoots after two years!



The covered orchard with espaliered trees is already bearing fruit. Constructed using galv piping and bird netting with ring lock mesh on the sides and a door at either end.



# WENDY WHITELEY'S SECRET GARDEN

## LAVENDER BAY, SYDNEY

Created on a disused strip of railway land on the edge of Sydney Harbour, Wendy Whiteley's garden is a testament to her determination and gardening skill.

Once an unsightly dump in the exclusive suburb of Lavender Bay the steeply sloping site is now a lushly planted haven for visitors and local fauna.

Twenty or more years of work creating paths, removing rubbish and propagating and planting appropriate plants has created an award winning garden which has been the subject of many documentaries, magazine articles and at least one magnificently illustrated coffee table book.

The garden abounds with secluded nooks where tables and chairs and shade umbrellas invite visitors to sit. Birds and insects provide background music while the changing patterns of light through the leaves and the distant views of the city skyline, harbour bridge and passing parade of sea craft provide visual stimulation.

Nestled among the many ferns, clivias, bamboos, palms and colourful crotons, shaded by the majestic Moreton Bay figs and elegant Brugmansia are artfully arranged collections of the junk rescued from the dump. Statues and sculptures, birdbaths and trophies add to the visual interest of the garden.

Tucked away at the bottom of the slope is a work area and potting shed where the volunteers and paid staff propagate, compost and plan. The steep slope and lack of access by road makes working in the garden very labour intensive. Paths are circuitous as they wind across the slopes and reaching into the garden beds to trim or weed must require a degree of agility and good balance. Despite these drawbacks the garden is beautifully maintained.

Many of the locals live in high rise apartments so access to such a welcoming and tranquil space must be a balm to the soul and a haven from the bustle of daily life in a big city. It is often the venue for weddings and picnics.

My visit to the garden took place on a warm, very wet day in early March and as we were caught at the bottom of the hill by a typical Sydney downpour we took shelter under one of the many umbrellas. Untroubled by our presence the kookaburra continued to fossick for food as we sat nearby watching the stormwater pouring over the garden beds and down the paths.

As the rain cleared the different aromas of the damp soil, warm citrus trees, mouldering mulch and wet leaves filled the air along with the sounds of the insects and birds and the distant traffic noises. Magic!

