

FROM THE PRESIDENT

April has been a busy month as the finishing touches are being made to the Knitted Garden in preparation for its display at the Craft Fair on 6th and 7th May. It has been an enjoyable challenge to display all the lovely creations to their best advantage.

In the garden the millipede invasion has started which means the paths need regular sweeping otherwise the squashed pests stain the concrete. While the recent rains and continued warmth have germinated more weeds and caused the grass to grow.

The coach trip organised by Maria Maxwell for Friday 21st April brought a welcome change to the daily routine and a chance to enjoy the company of Garden Club members away from the demands of Club meetings.

We are fortunate to have so many opportunities to indulge our interest in plants and gardens with people generously opening their gardens for Open Gardens SA, Sophie Thomson sharing her Patch over Easter and the various specialist plant clubs having sales and exhibitions. The lovely Botanic Gardens and parks are free to visit and enjoy before the winter cold drives us all indoors.

Autumn is in full colour in the hills and those of us with deciduous trees will be gathering the bounty of vibrant leaves to add to the compost heap. I hope your 'inner child' takes time to shuffle through the leaf piles first.

Norma Keily

ORCHIDS - GEOFF SPEAR

Four thousand orchid plants in two large shade houses in a suburban back yard grew from the acquisition of just one plant by Geoff Spear. It has developed into a time consuming hobby which has resulted in travelling both interstate and overseas, attendance at many shows and involvement in the South Coast Orchid Club.

Geoff has his orchids up on benches which provide good air flow and keeps them away from ground dwelling pests. A misting watering system has been installed to protect against burn on hot days and only rain water is used. Liquid fertiliser is added to the tank. Shade cloth provides between 50% and 70% protection from the sun.

Flower spikes start setting four months before the flowers open and flowers, once open, may last for up to six weeks. Do not leave the dead flowers on the spike as it weakens the plant. Flower spikes that are growing horizontally may be carefully pulled vertical on a warm day and tied to a green bamboo stake with a twist tie in a figure eight.

To cut flowers spikes cut at an angle after the top flower opens and then re-cut the stem every few days and return to clean water.

FEED & FERTILISE

Don't over feed - little and often is best. Too much fertiliser grows leaves but not flowers.

Slow release granules are best for time poor orchid growers.

Strong roots = strong plants so Seasol with Power Feed is a good fertiliser.

Thrive - use a small teaspoonful in a watering can.

Strike Back for Orchids is excellent and can be used at half strength twice as often.

When re-potting place Neutrog pellets in

the pot at the halfway mark then top up with potting mix. If placed on the surface it just feeds the weeds.

Stop fertilising in cold weather.

Dagger Orchids take up water through the leaves as well as the roots.

Native Dendrobium orchids grow on tree fern off cuts which should be kept damp.

PESTS

Pest Oil and Yates Mavrick are good products for controlling pests on Orchids.

Two spotted mites suck the moisture out of leaves and Spider Mites prefer hot dry conditions. Spray the backs of leaves.

Mealy Bugs can be treated with methylated spirits.

POTTING UP

Tools - knives, scissors, needle nose pliers, mallet and secateurs all kept in a sterilising mix of trisodium phosphate (or similar).

Potting mix - use composted bark not soil.

Break up plants every four years preferably in winter.

Remove from the pot and use a sharp knife to break up roots and divide plants. Feel for natural breaks in the plant mass.

Use three green bulbs with three back bulbs to create

a new plant. Remove dried husks to get rid of earwigs. Trim dead roots as old roots set up for rot. Back bulbs are needed for the plant to feed from until it settles in. Position the back bulb at the edge of the pot. Fill with mix and firm well.

The plants will need full sun after re-potting. Label the plant with name and date of re-pot.

ORCHID FAIR

10TH - 11TH JUNE 10AM - 4PM
TORRENS DRILL HALL, KING WILLIAM ST
DISPLAYS, SALES, REFRESHMENTS, RAFFLES, ADVICE. \$3 ENTRY



Dagger Orchid

STRATHALBYN GARDEN CLUB PROGRAM

MEETING DATE	SPEAKER/ACTIVITY	TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION
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 at the Strath Town Hall
July 28th	Lorraine Thompson	Herbs and succulents
August 25th	Alice McCleary	Unley Gardeners Plant rescue group
August TBA	Neutrog pickup	More details to come

THE AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY'S AUSTRALIAN NATIVE PLANTS SALE

Adelaide Showgrounds Wayville

Saturday 29th - Sunday 30th April 10am - 4pm

Gold Coin Donation Appreciated

Largest Range - All Grown in SA

Books - Free Soil pH Testing - Advice

Demonstrations - Children's Activities

This year, we are featuring a "Festival of Eucalypts" in celebration of Dean Nicolle's new book "Smaller Eucalypts for planting in Australia".

Workshops include:

- ◆ Dean Nicolle: "The Eucalypts- Their Diversity and Ecology"
- ◆ Thelma Vanderpeer: "Pruning natives"
- ◆ Dean Nicolle: "Eucalypts for Gardens- Some Old Favourites & Exciting New Species"
- ◆ Kristen Messenger from "Bugs 'n' Slugs"
- ◆ Kate Delaporte "Gumnuts Galore: a continuing and consuming passion"

Check our website www.australianplantssa.asn.au

closer to the day for changes and updates and a list of plants that we expect to be available.

THE DANGER OF FIG SAP

Phytophotodermatitis is a type of contact dermatitis.

phyto, which means plant

photo, which means sunlight

dermatitis, which is inflammation of the skin.

In this condition, contact with certain plant chemicals can cause skin inflammation when exposed to sunlight.

The symptoms are blister-like patches across the skin, often itchy and irregularly shaped. These patches appear wherever skin is exposed to the plant substance.

Blisters can be followed by dark pigmentation which can last for many weeks.

Some plants that may cause *phytophotodermatitis* include:

- carrots
- celery
- citrus fruits (most commonly limes)
- figs
- wild dill, wild parsley and wild parsnips

Prevention tips

- Wash your hands and other exposed parts of the skin immediately after being outdoors.
- Wear gloves when gardening.



Also beware of *Keratouveitis* caused by the **Euphorbia plant**. The milky sap or latex of *Euphorbia* plant is highly toxic and an irritant to the skin and eye.

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

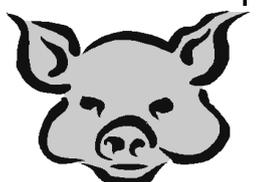
Free delivery in Strathalbyn

Phone 8536 2628

Ros 0428 362 628

Brian 0438 362 628

Practically odourless!



A DAY IN THE HILLS

What better way to spend a fine cool autumn day than with a coach load of friends travelling through the Adelaide Hills.

Jurlique along a short stretch of unsealed road in the depths of the rural hinterland behind Biggs Flat, was the first stop.

The farm was purchased in 2005 so that the business could expand. We were able to appreciate the size and complexity of the farm from the viewing area at the top of the property. The neatly laid out garden plots with their water points, connected by straight wide paths for the farm machinery showed evidence of careful planning.

The bus took us back down the hill past resident kangaroos to the display garden which features all the different herbs and flowers being grown for use in the Jurlique products.

After spending time smelling the roses, lavender and lemon verbena we visited the tank where the biodynamic fertiliser was being aerated through flow form shapes in readiness for spraying out in the late afternoon.

The tour guides explained the various biodynamic principles used, which include planting by the phases of the moon, preparing and spraying the preps 500 and 501, which are made using organic cow manure stuffed into cow horns and buried in a pit for six months.

Before leaving the farm we visited the drying room where racks of flowers slowly dehydrated and the grow tunnels where seeds are sown and seedlings are laboriously transplanted into grow cells.



Flow Forms aerating the liquid fertiliser

The final stop was the shop where the entire range of products is on display and available for purchase and so we bought.



These cute little fellas were happy to eat the greens leftover from lunch.

The drive through to Cleland Wildlife Park is quite tortuous for a coach, situated as it is in the folds of Mt Lofty. The evidence of past bushfires is still apparent in the bush along the roadside.

A pleasant hour or more was spent eating, talking, browsing through the shop and feeding the bettongs.

Once the stragglers were herded on to the coach we headed off to the Mt Lofty Botanic Gardens via Summertown and Uraidla.

It was great to see the number of tourists and families enjoying the gardens and sliding down the steep grassy slopes on sheets of cardboard.

Most of our members stuck to the paths and followed the signs to the rose garden and fern Gully or just sat in the sun and absorbed the ambience.

A lovely day thanks Maria Maxwell and Rufus Coaches.



STRATHALBYN GARDEN CLUB CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

The members of the Committee have been undertaking a review of the Club Constitution and have identified a few areas where it needs to be updated to reflect the changing times.

Copies of the original Constitution with the planned changes will be circulated at the April meeting and members will have until the May meeting to consider the changes.

If you were not able to attend the April meeting and would like a copy of the Constitution with the proposed alterations you may phone Norma 8536 6276 or email strathalbyngardenclub@gmail.com and a copy will be provided.

Voting to make the changes will take place at the May meeting.

STRATH CRAFT FAIR

Saturday 6th May 10am - 5pm

& Sunday 7th May 10am - 4pm

Strathalbyn Town Hall Gold coin entry

Raffles, refreshments, shop for Mother's Day

The Strathalbyn Garden Club Knitted Garden will be on display!

STRATHALBYN GARDEN CLUB AGM & 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION.

Friday 23rd June 10am - 12noon.

Strathalbyn Town Hall

All members are invited.

Part of the celebration will include a morning tea and we are inviting members to contribute a plate. A list will be available at the April meeting for you to register your offer to help.