



NEWSLETTER

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FEBRUARY GUEST SPEAKER - GREG RUCKERT

Greg Ruckert introduced himself by confessing that he has always had a passion for plants. At the age of twelve he had 30000 cactus plants in the backyard of his family home and now among many other plants he has 90 cultivars of agapanthus. His philosophy of plant collecting is that if he does not have it he wants it! The loss of good independent plant nurseries is a concern as is the lost generation of gardeners. We were urged to encourage our grandchildren into the garden so that the joy and skills of gardening are not lost. Greg studied botany at University for two years before being told to find a new vocation as his lack of ability in drawing was a handicap.

Aroids, members of the Araceae family of plants, are Greg's major passion and he has quite an extensive collection many of which live in the house until they flower when they are banished to the laundry (where the family cat resides) because of the smell given off by the flowers.

Greg has been on two plant identification trips to the Gaoligong Mountain range in China near the border with Burma. This isolated area was declared a National Nature Reserve in 1983 but environmental degradation and destruction occurs when roads are created in the mountainous terrain and the debris is pushed down the fragile mountainsides. Unfortunately severe restrictions by AQIS

make it very difficult to import newly identified plants into Australia and the strict quarantine processes are guaranteed to kill the specimens.



The flower of the Titan Arum

Anthurium and Zantedeschia are two well-known members of the Araceae family, as are Colocasia esculenta (taro) and Xanthosoma roseum (elephant ear). Among the largest inflorescences in the world is that of the arum *Amorphophallus titanum* (titan arum). The family includes many ornamental plants: Dieffenbachia, Aglaonema, Caladium,

Nephtytis, and Epipremnum, to name a few. In the genus *Cryptocoryne* are many popular aquarium plants. Both *Colocasia esculenta* (Taro) and *Monstera deliciosa* provide food value; the fruit of *M. deliciosa* is called "Mexican breadfruit". *Philodendron* is an important plant in the ecosystems of the rainforests and is often used in home and interior decorating. *Symplocarpus foetidus* (skunk cabbage) is a common North American species. An interesting peculiarity is that this family includes the largest unbranched inflorescence, that of the titan arum, often erroneously called the "largest flower" and the smallest flowering plant and smallest fruit, found in the duckweed, *Wolffia*.

Due to its odor, which is reminiscent of the smell of a decomposing mammal, the titan arum is characterized as a carrion flower, and is also known as the "corpse flower", or "corpse plant" For the same reason, the title "corpse flower" is also attributed to the genus *Rafflesia* which, like the titan arum, grows in the rainforests of Sumatra.

A common thread through Greg's talk was his difficulty in keeping alive these often expensive plants. Too much care appears to be as detrimental as minimal care however his excellent collection of illustrations shows where his money has been spent.

GUEST SPEAKER FOR MARCH

John Yates talking about Carnivorous Plants.
John has travelled in Malaysia, Borneo and the Philippines. John appeared on Gardening Australia on 27th July 2012 with Sophie Thompson.
His interest in carnivorous plants began with a chance

meeting with a Venus fly trap when he was young and has grown into a obsession.
This is the link to the Gardening Australia episode
<http://www.abc.net.au/gardening/stories/s3552232.htm>

STRATHALBYN GARDEN CLUB PROGRAM

MEETING DATE	SPEAKER	TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION
March 22nd	John Yates	Carnivorous plants
April 26th	Ben Simon	Native plants in and around Strathalbyn
May 24th	Prof. Don Bursill	Water for South Australia
	BLOOM COMPETITION	
June 28th	Annual General Meeting	Quiz Morning SUBS DUE
July 26th	Prof. Chris Daniels	Backyard Biodiversity
August 13th - 15th	Pt Augusta Trip	Visit to Arid Lands Botanic Gardens
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.

GLENELLA OPEN GARDEN

Sunday April 7

10am - 4.30 pm

Entry \$8.00 Adults

Morning and Afternoon Tea, sausage sizzle, wine, soft drinks, produce stalls, art, garden sculpture, scarecrows, plant sales & musical entertainment.

Come along and enjoy the day!

Stamps Road, Macclesfield

Follow the yellow OGA Signs from Mt Barker or Macclesfield.

All proceeds to go to The Magdalene Centre.

TEA TREE GULLY DISTRICT GARDEN CLUB

BLOOMING IN BALLARAT

GARDENS, GOLD & HISTORY

8 day/7 night trip

Saturday 14th—21st September 2013

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Great Western Winery
- Diggers St Erth Garden
- Creswick Woollen Mills
- Ballarat Observatory & Museum
- Lambley and Misty Downs Nursery
- Allansford Award Winning Cheese Factory
- Mary Mackillop Penola Centre
- Attendance at the Garden Clubs of Australia AGM

Tour cost \$1187 Twin Share or \$1487 single

All enquiries to Tour Coordinator Jennifer Stainer

Email stainers3@bigpond.com

mobile phone 0417 810 794

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Autumn at last with its cooler mornings, promise of rain and a myriad gardening chores to do.

In our valley autumn heralds the roar of rutting deer which continues unabated day and night for eight to ten weeks but after a while the sound blends in with all the other country noises and ceases to become annoying.

The bark and leaves have finished falling from the eucalypts and now the European trees are starting to take on their autumn colour before dropping their leaves. The rake and 'leaf lover' will be working overtime and the compost bays will be filled with their efforts.

I am looking forward to planting winter vegetables and harvesting apples even though the early Cox's Orange Pippins and the Royal Galas all cooked on their trees the

Pink Lady and Granny Smith crops are looking good. We are out of Apple Chutney so that is where the first picking of apples will go.

Among the jobs on my to do list is lawn repair as I let the clover take over in spring and all summer I have been annoyed by bare patches in the lawn. My various water features have almost dried out so it will be a good opportunity to remove the build up of leaves and bark which has fallen from the surrounding trees as well as to re-pot and tidy the water plants. It looks like the next few weeks will be busy.

I hope all your gardens have survived the summer and that autumn will bring revival and renewal to everything.

Happy gardening,
Norma Keily

OPEN GARDENS AUSTRALIA

\$7.00 ENTRY FEE

MOST GARDENS OPEN 10AM—4.30PM

APRIL

Sunday 7th:

Glenella, 315 Bugle Range Road Macclesfield.
1850s farmhouse with 40 year old informal garden of sweeping lawns and many botanic treasures.

Sunday 14th:

Kinclaven 56 Waverley Ridge Rd Crafers
120 year old trees and architecture with well considered colour themes and modern garden design solutions in a blend of formal Italianate and more informal styles.

Saturday 27th & Sunday 28th

Pomona Cottage 55 Pomona Road Stirling
English box hedges, stone walls and steps lend definition to an award winning formal garden hosting a dazzling array of flowers and beautiful autumn foliage.

N.B.

SIGNING IN

Members are reminded that it is important to sign the Attendance Register on arrival at the meeting so that our record keeping for insurance purposes is accurate.

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

NEUTROG SALES

Due to lack of orders this purchase has been cancelled. Members who have paid will receive a refund.

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 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. If you are interested let Norma know or register your name on the Sign Up sheet which will be out the front at morning tea.

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.

BEGONIA SOCIETY

in conjunction with

THE FESTIVAL OF FLOWERS

2013 SHOW

Enfield Community Centre

540 Regency Road Enfield

April 20th and 21st

10am—4pm

Plant sales, Devonshire teas, raffle and sausage sizzle.
African violets, Begonias, Bromeliads, Orchids, Pelargoniums, Fuchsias, Ferns, Carnivorous plants, Cacti & Cottage plants.

2013 GIANT FERN SALE

Adelaide High School Auditorium

West Terrace Adelaide

Saturday 27th April

10am—4pm

Interesting and unusual ferns for Adelaide Gardens

Devonshire Teas

Expert growers available for information and advice.

STRATHALBYN GARDEN CLUB COACH TRIP TO PT AUGUSTA ARID LANDS BOTANIC GARDENS Tuesday 13th August - Thursday 15th August 2013

Travelling with Rufus Bus & Coach in a 26 seat coach

Cost Twin Share per person if all coach seats are filled \$445 + spending money (minimum of 20 required)

Single supplement (private room) add \$160 per person

Accommodation at the Standpipe Motor Inn Port Augusta (4 star rating)

Deposit \$100 due March 22nd 2013

Balance \$345 due July 19th 2013

ITINERARY

Tuesday 13th August 2013

Depart Strathalbyn Railway Station car park	8:00am
Travel to Port Wakefield for morning tea	Supplied
Arrive at Port Pirie for lunch	Own cost
Arrive Port Augusta via Highway One	2:45pm
Dinner at 6:00pm (2 course dinner + tea/coffee)	Supplied

Wednesday 14th August 2013

Breakfast from 7:30am (cooked/continental) Supplied

Depart Port Augusta 9:00am

Travel to the Arid Lands Botanic Gardens Garden Tour and Morning Tea included

PM Itinerary to be announced

Dinner 6:00pm (2 courses + tea/coffee) Supplied

Thursday 15th August 2013

Breakfast from 7:30am (cooked/continental) Supplied

Load bags at 8:45am

Depart Port Augusta 9:00am

AM itinerary to be announced

Return to Strathalbyn via Highway one by 4:30pm

Various options for activities on Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning are being considered with the assistance of John Zwar and his contacts in Port Augusta.

Maria Maxwell is co-ordinating the tour and is happy to answer questions. Our Treasurer Mary Golden will take your deposits and the balance of your payment.

The final cost may be higher when the itinerary is finalised and depending on the number of coach seats filled. Non Garden Club friends are welcome to join us.



SHREDDED ALPACA MANURE

\$3 per bag

An excellent soil conditioner and fertiliser.

775 Old Bull Creek Road,
Strathalbyn.

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.

AUTUMN GARDEN TASKS

STRAWBERRIES

Strawberries planted now will produce fruit in October and November. Prepare the bed by digging in some aged poultry manure or compost. You can buy strawberries in pots or punnets but always use plants that are certified free of virus diseases. Try to buy plants that are already producing runners and encourage these to put down roots so you get more for the price. Space the runners at about 30cm apart, and apply a mulch to help prevent weeds and keep the fruit clean. When the flowers start to appear feed with a liquid fertiliser every few weeks. Strawberries will fruit well for about three years - replace them with new plants in the autumn of the third year.

ZYGOCACTUS

Feed zygocactus with phosphorus based low nitrogen fertiliser to encourage more and better flowers.

CYMBIDIUM ORCHIDS

Insert thin stakes into cymbidium pots to support the developing flower spikes. Apply snail bait to the top of the pot to prevent slugs and snails from eating the flower buds. During autumn and winter orchids can be moved out of the shade and grown in full sun until spring. Bring flowering orchids inside the house for a week or so to get the most enjoyment from their beautiful display.

AUTUMN LEAVES

It is said that if you catch a falling autumn leaf before it hits the ground you will have one month of good luck. So if you catch 12 of them you'll have a whole year of good luck and the luckiest leaf of all is the last leaf to fall from any tree.

The only problem with autumn leaves is what do you do with them once they've fallen to the ground. It is a chore to rake them up so why not use the lawn mower and mow them up. The catcher in the lawn mower will collect all the leaves and they will be chopped into smaller pieces by the lawn mower ready to be used for mulch. Chopped autumn leaves make great mulch and are an excellent fertiliser for the garden because they are 0.3% to 3% nitrogen which will feed the vegie garden or flower bed. The chopped leaves will also break down faster in the compost.

BULBS

Plant spring bulbs now. Chill tulips, hyacinths and Dutch iris then plant in late Autumn when the soil is cooler.

BEARDED IRIS

Cut back Bearded Iris to allow sun to reach the rhizomes as this will encourage more flowers next season.

PERENNIALS

Prune twiggy and diseased growth from pelargoniums and salvias but allow dahlias to die back naturally don't cut them back.

MAKE COMPOST

Composting is a method of speeding up the decomposition of organic materials. Micro-organisms (ie bacteria and fungi) in the compost heap use carbon and nitrogen to make protein. During this process heat is produced and this speeds up the decomposition. To work properly, compost heaps should contain organic materials (such as leaves, animal manures and grass clippings), micro-organisms, moisture and oxygen. It is also important to turn the heap frequently.



EASY COMPOSTING

Ingredients:

Autumn leaves, Lawn clippings, Fertiliser or manure, Vegie scraps, Water

Method:

Start your heap with a layer of leaves about 100-150mm (4"-6") thick. Cover that with a thinner layer of grass clippings (50-100mm or 2-4"), and then sprinkle on some animal manure, or fertiliser. If you have any kitchen scraps add those too.

Continue adding layers until all your organic materials are used up. The ideal size for a compost heap is around 1.5m (5') high. Lightly water the heap after you add every layer or every second layer.

If you are worried about the leaves blowing around, sprinkle some soil on top of the final layer. You do not want to exclude air by covering the heap so add just enough soil to weigh the heap down.

Wait for about a month and then turn the heap over once every week or 10 days. The compost should be ready to use in about 8 weeks. The process can take up to 8 months if the heap is not turned.

Some organic material (for example food scraps, animal manures and lawn clippings) is high in nitrogen, while some is high in carbon (for example sawdust, straw, leaves and paper). For best results, carbon and nitrogen should be added in roughly the same ratio as the micro-organisms use it up, which is approximately 30:1 Don't worry too much about trying to balance the carbon and nitrogen exactly. The best approach in a home gardening situation is to add a variety of ingredients to the compost heap and never add too much of one thing.

LAWN CARE

Spread a balanced Autumn lawn fertiliser to encourage strong root growth, more stems and more leaves. Thick, healthy grass leaves no room for weeds. Reseed bare patches after scarifying and removing excess thatch.

SWEET PEAS

Plant the seeds in rich, deep, well drained, damp soil. Full sun with a strong trellis for climbing plants. Pre soak the seeds but do not water after planting.

ENJOY AUTUMN!

