

BRAIDWOOD GARDEN CLUB

NEWSLETTER JULY 2018



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<https://braidwoodgardenclub.wordpress.com>

AUGUST Thursday 9th - AGM AND LUNCH

Our AGM is always a highlight of the year, and we hope you are able to come. This year we are meeting again in the cosy dining room at Mona Farm Woolshed and again we have the opportunity to wander through the extensive gardens at Mona prior to the meeting. It was such a great venue last year, why not do it again!

The AGM will be as brief as possible, but nominations are invited for the position of Assistant Treasurer. If anyone has expertise in this area and would like to join our "happy band" on the committee, please step forward! We work hard as a team to organise different garden activities for our members each month and being on the Committee can be very rewarding, and new ideas are always welcome.

Following the AGM a simple lunch of soup and dessert cakes, prepared by the Committee, will be served. Mona is a licensed venue, and wine will be available from the bar at \$5 per glass.

After lunch, Marilyn Carle will demonstrate floral art and she is well qualified for this task. Last November, Marilyn was awarded the Award for Excellence in Floral Art by the Garden Clubs of Australia and has been a qualified florist for 25 years. One of her many past associations has been working at the Governor General's Residence and Parliament House and she will no doubt display her talents for us.

Bookings for the AGM and lunch are now open at Bendigo Bank. The cost is \$10 for members and \$25 for non-members.

For direct deposit, Bendigo Bank BSB 633-000 Acct No 118 346 444 and please add 'AGM Lunch' to the entry.

We will meet at Ryrie Park at 10.30am to carpool or you can also proceed directly to Mona, entering through the gates on the Kings Hwy. On your arrival you may wander the gardens and the AGM will begin at 11.30am, followed by lunch.

Our thanks to the owners of Mona Farm, and to Suzanne Gearing, the general manager, for opening the Mona gardens and woolshed for this event.

Garden Club memberships are due on the day- \$20 annual membership and an extra \$11 if you would like a printed copy of the Newsletter mailed to you.

Report on Irene and Gai Suffolk's Talk and Demonstration on 'Preserving Your Produce', 12th July

We were very lucky to have Irene and Gai Suffolk come and talk to us about the various ways of preserving your fruit and vegetables and presenting them to show standards. Both are very experienced making preserves and since they were girls, have been involved in competitions. Initially they were involved in showing with Rural Youth, and are now on the executive of the Royal Sydney Show Southern District Exhibits and are judges in various sections at local shows.

<https://braidwoodgardenclub.wordpress.com>

The meeting was held largely on the basis of a 'show and tell' of the sisters' extensive collection of produce, interspersed by questions and answers with numerous gems of advice provided.

Irene advised that the key to making good preserved produce is quality and tasty fruit and vegetables at the outset (a sour fruit will still be a sour fruit at the end). The evenness of size, shape and colour of the produce is important, as is the presentation in the jar. By way of example, one jar shown was layers of triangles of carrots nestled between layers of snake beans which took 2 hours to fill!

Gai gave a demonstration of drying fruits using strawberries and advised that it was better to dry slowly. She gave the example of figs which she cut in half, dipped in sugar syrup and dried over 2 days. When she showed them the judge loved them and she scored 100/100.

Other advice given included:

- When filling jars, fill to the top while hot. It should then shrink to the right amount when cool.
- Open your jars before showing to check all is good and reseal.
- Add rind to jars first and then the jelly.
- To get the rind evenly distributed in the jar use a chopstick to stir the marmalade just before it starts to set.
- Normally use a stainless steel pan, although aluminium gives a lighter coloured jam.
- For salt brine use 2 desert spoons of cooking salt per litre of water.
- Cool blanched vegetables with ice cold water to stop cooking.
- Snap freeze fruit and veg in zip lock bags and suck the air out – no need to blanch.

When asked about the difference between jams, conserves, marmalades and jellies, Irene referred to the Royal Sydney Show Southern District Exhibits Schedule (see definitions below).

Their presentation ended with a slide show of the stunning District Exhibits of commercially grown local produce, displayed in pictures, at the Royal Sydney Show where the designs can only be used once in a 10 year period and take up to 10 days to set up

Thanks to the M-Z members we all enjoyed a lovely lunch after the talk. We are especially grateful to Leonie Jolley, Marilyn Carle and Margy Gardner for making their moreish scones to go with Irene and Gai's delicious preserves (lemon butter, apricot, strawberry, lime marmalade, pineapple chutney, banana chutney, tomato relish, and apricot chutney). Finally thanks to Jennie Marston for organising the meeting.



For any queries on preserving fruit and vegetables, contact Irene Suffolk on 0422 263 012.

Photos at <https://braidwoodgardenclub.wordpress.com/photo-gallery/>

Definitions of Jams, Conserves, Marmalades and Jellies

Jams

Colour - Good colour, authentic, resembling fruit used. Dark colouring may be the result of caramelisation.

Aroma - Should resemble the natural fruit with a slight sweetness, overly sweet bouquet indicates the use of too much sugar. Metallic aroma may indicate reaction to cooking in an aluminium pan.

Consistency - Good set, syrup should bind the fruit pieces. Light set or runny consistency indicates a lack of naturally occurring pectin in fruit used, e.g. berries, melons etc. May also indicate a lack of sugar or acid. Stiff consistency may be the result of overcooking.

Appearance - Small, even pieces of fruit evenly distributed throughout the syrup. Fruit should not rise to the top. Clear syrup, not cloudy.

Also, the surface of jam should be free of froth or bubbles. No evidence of moulds or fermentation, indicating lack of sterilization, inadequate sealing, covering when warm or insufficient cooking. No evidence of crystallisation.

Conserves

By definition, large or whole pieces of fruit evenly suspended in a syrup. The fruit should retain its shape, and not cooked to a pulp as for jams. The syrup should lightly bind the fruit and the ratio of fruit should be greater than the syrup. Conserves are generally sweeter than jams because of a higher ratio of sugar.

Other quality points for Jams apply to Conserves.

Marmalades

Appearance - Thin slices of fruit, shreds or julienne of citrus rind evenly suspended throughout the syrup. Fruit and rind should be consistent in size and shape, whether thin slices or chunky cut. The syrup or gel should be clear and not cloudy.

Colour - Type of marmalade varies. Colour ranges from light to dark depending on the type and mix of citrus fruits, length of cooking and amount of sugar used.

Consistency - Syrup or Jelly should be a firm set, but neither tough nor runny. Sometimes marmalades with julienne citrus rind have a soft gel which is often due to the lack of pectin (present in the rind and pith). Granular texture may indicate a lack of pectin or ripe fruits.

Other quality points for Jams apply to Marmalades.

Jellies

Colour - Should be a rich and well developed but not darkened as this indicates overcooking. Jelly should be transparent and clear, and not cloudy, when held to the light. Good visibility even with darker fruit, e.g. grape or plum.

Consistency - Should be firm. The edges of the jelly should retain their shape when cut with a spoon, holding for several minutes. No evidence of 'weeping'. Rubbery texture indicates inadequate sugar.

Failure to set indicates imbalance of pectin, acid and sugar. If syrupy, a result of not cooking long enough after sugar is added.

Other quality points for Jams apply to Jellies.

Source: [Sydney Royal District Exhibits Competition Schedule 2018](#)

Photos at <https://braidwoodgardenclub.wordpress.com/photo-gallery/>

A HANDY HINT

A recipe for removing stubborn sticky labels from glass jars!! (I know, riveting! This problem has plagued me for ages so I googled it and it works better than eucalyptus oil and is environmentally sound. Yay!)

Remove the paper part of the jar's labels as you wash them by peeling off the excess. Allow them to dry. Make a paste of equal parts bicarb soda and a vegetable oil (light olive oil or canola etc.) and smear this all over the sticky parts.

You can also use an old scourer for stubborn bits, and wash again to remove the oily excess. Ditto with the lids. A good idea is to collect a few jars to do at a time, less waste.

UPCOMING GARDEN CLUB EVENTS

SEPTEMBER Thursday 13th

Visit to Mongarlowe gardens.

OCTOBER Thursday 11th

Bus trip to Bundanoon and Robertson.

NOVEMBER Thursday 8th

Visit to 3 Nerriga Rd Gardens

DECEMBER 13th

Christmas Party

<https://braidwoodgardenclub.wordpress.com>

FROM THE MAILBOX for your information

My Open Garden

Visit the 'My Open Garden' website <http://www.myopengarden.com.au> for information on the latest Open Gardens in NSW.

You might like to visit one of these gardens that are open regularly, or by appointment:

- [Bebeah](#) : Mt Wilson
- [Bundanon Homestead & Garden](#) : Illaroo
- [Campbell Rhododendron Gardens](#) : Blackheath
- [Everglades Historic House & Gardens](#) : Leura
- [Mayfield Garden](#) : Oberon
- [Merribee](#) : Numbaa
- [Perennialle Plants Nursery](#) : Canowindra
- [Secret Garden and Nursery](#) : Richmond
- [Tablelands Trees and Shrubs Garden & Nursery](#) : Cooma

Retford Park Bowral

Gardens Open August Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th 10am-4pm and September Saturday 1st and Sunday 2nd 10am-4pm.

SEPTEMBER 15th – OCTOBER 14th

Floriade

SEPTEMBER Saturday 22nd – OCTOBER Sunday 7th

Sculpture In The Paddock will be held in a rolling 50 acre paddock on Shaw Vineyard Estate, 34 Isabel Drive, Murrumbateman. It is a free event.

<https://www.sculptureinthepaddock.com.au>

OCTOBER Saturday 13th & Sunday 14th

Robertson Open Gardens

Stroll through 7 beautiful gardens ranging from smaller town gardens to larger country gardens. 10-4pm. \$20 for all 7 gardens or \$5 for a single garden. <https://robertsonopengardens.weebly.com>

OCTOBER Thursday 18th – Sunday 21st

Berry Garden Festival Gardens open 10am – 4pm daily \$20 for all 8 gardens or \$5 for individual gardens.

www.berrygardens.org.au

OCTOBER Saturday 27th & Sunday 28th

Bundanoon Garden Ramble

Eight stunning private gardens will open from 9.30am to 4.30pm. There will be market stalls at the Soldiers' Memorial Hall and refreshments provided by the Lions Club will be available in one of the open gardens. \$20 for all 8 gardens (valid for both days) or \$5 for a single garden entry. Free shuttle bus between gardens.

<http://www.bundanoongardenramble.org.au>

NOVEMBER Saturday 10th

Orange Open Gardens 10am-5pm

Explore stunning gardens of Orange and support Orange Public School. 8 gardens for \$25 or \$5 per garden. Kids free. orangeopengardens@gmail.com Phone 0437602228

NOVEMBER Saturday 10th & Sunday 11th

<https://braidwoodgardenclub.wordpress.com>

Crookwell Garden Festival There will be 8 gardens open, both in and out of town showcasing a variety of garden styles and cool climate plantings. A garden lovers market on Saturday from 9-2pm at the Crookwell Public School in Denison St.

www.crookwellgardenfestival.com

IN MY GARDEN by Rosemary De Martin

DRY TIMES...

In my last 'In My Garden', I wrote that we had bought our property over ten years ago... it was in 2007 and in the middle of a drought. (Why do they seem to come around so often?) Back then there was little or no water on the place – puddles of green sludge for dams – and we're back to that again! (We fortunately have a wonderful bore.)

The most obvious thing I that I have noticed in this dry time is how incredibly stressed the larger trees have become. We weren't able to see through the branches of the trees on our back wind break or up through to the sky in the two large Cupressus at the front. Now the whole architectural splendour is on view, which is lovely but telling. The trees have offloaded so much leafage due to lack of water. Similarly, in the paddocks, wattles and old 'diseased' trees have given up entirely and are falling over or dropping large limbs.

The grassed areas in the garden are mostly native grasses so have actually held up quite well, though they'll never be a lawn in the "Sir Walter" sense. With these weeks of frosts, the introduced grasses really show up their lack of resilience and burn off quite quickly.... and the carpet of fallen pine needles need to be mowed over so as not to smother the grass.

Watering in dry times I find problematic...too much and the plants will rely on it, too little and they die. So, I water when it occurs to me that it is needed. That said, I always have bowls of water in the garden for the birds that call this place home. Now that it's winter and the deciduous trees are naked, we tend to get fewer little birds around the house as they move off to the creek zone. I do occasionally put out some wild bird seed for the parrots and larger birds. However I am currently waging war with the Choughs and Blackbirds who seem to prefer my garden mulch on the outside of the garden as they scabble in the soil for tidbits.

Our soil is problematic too. It is hydrophobic, sandy, rocky granite with very little humus, so needs all the help it can get. I constantly have a dry compost on the go, and a worm farm and a big pile of brought in chook poo and sawdust mix to age further, and also a pile of small wood chips as a mulch and soil improver.

Of course the drought didn't start this year...last year the rainfall was 300mm less than the year before! (That's a whole foot less in the old Imperial measurement). And again we are already well down in precipitation than this time last year. As a result of that and late frosts last year and huge winds, the fruit trees were spectacularly lacklustre. This also applies to my vegetable gardens which require a lot of work to make them more productive – lack of water and feeding.

While droughts are thoroughly depressing, it is always amazing how well some plants do in adversity. Cheers for the roses, and practically anything self-sown (except weeds, which are really the top opportunists!)

LOOKING FORWARD TO DECENT RAINS!

PLANT OF THE MONTH

by Kate Chinnick



Euonymus japonicus

- Native of Korea, China and Japan
- Hardy evergreen shrub growing to 3.5m
- Pale green flowers carried on flattened cymes in summer
- Round pink or red fruits in winter holding white seeds with orange ribs
- Prefers a fertile soil in a sunny position or part shade
- Has oval tough green or variegated leaves
- “Tricolour” has yellow foliage tinted pink and green
- Good shrub for hedges, can be trimmed
- Propagate by using nodal cuttings in early summer to autumn

What to do in the garden for August

- Prune and spray Roses later this month
- Plant new bare rooted Roses (soak in seaweed solution before planting)
- Plant summer and autumn flowering bulbs
- Winter flowering shrubs can be pruned now
- Prune and feed Daphne after flowering
- Prune Crepe Myrtle, which flowers on new wood
- Cut ornamental grass clumps to the ground
- Perennials may be divided as the weather warms up
- Prune Jasmines and summer flowering Clematis
- Prune Hydrangeas to two strong buds
- Spray Peaches and nectarines for leaf curl
- Plant Onion seedlings, Asparagus crowns & Spinach seedlings
- Check herbs for dividing and replanting
- Prepare vegetable beds for spring planting