

BRAIDWOOD GARDEN CLUB NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2020



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YOUTUBE GARDENING CHANNELS TO INFORM AND ENTERTAIN YOU

With a bit more time on your hands you may have started to watch YouTube gardening channels to inform and entertain you so here are a few suggestions-

You may have your own favourite channels which you like on other gardening topics & if so, please share them by emailing them to braidwoodgardenclub@gmail.com and we will include it in the next newsletter.

- Charles Dowding, a UK commercial no dig, intensive vegetable gardener (plants the follow-on crop before removing the first crop and plants multiple plants together). Full of useful information on no dig, seed growing and growing particular vegetables. Just have to change the timing by 6 months! <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCB1J6siDdmhwah7q0O2WJBq>
- Tony C Smith, an enthusiastic Northern Englishman who is an allotment gardener who also follows no dig. He is a hoot and while not as informative as Charles Dowding is great fun to watch. Also if you are into technology for seed growing he's your man. <https://www.youtube.com/user/StarShipSofa>
- Homesteading Downunder. John Steed is a Tasmanian gardener who has a series of videos on all aspects of gardening. His presentation does not match the likes of Tony Smith but he can be quite informative. <https://www.youtube.com/user/thejohnsteed>
- **John Lord's Secret Garden.** John Lord, owner of Ratoath Garden Centre in county Meath, Ireland. With over 40 years of gardening experience and specialising in perennial plants. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCc1hdKqCEwZqZYNjKitAlaQ/featured>

Keep well everyone and let us know also what things you are doing to keep mentally and physically fit. Best wishes to you all.

GOULBURN GARDEN CLUB FRIENDSHIP DAY March 10, 2020 By Rose De Martin

On Tuesday 10th March, 8 members of the Braidwood Garden Club shared in a wonderful Friendship meeting with the Goulburn Garden Club held at the Workers Club in Goulburn. We arrived at 10am for registration and then straight into a lavish morning tea - and a walk around all the interesting tables set up around the room – before the meeting proper took place.

Well over 200 people attended with many other Garden Clubs being represented from far and wide, including a group from Sydney and one person from the North Coast.

The Guest Speaker on the day was the delightful Trisha Dixon, a well-regarded garden writer, landscape designer, photographer, tour guide, garden historian and gardener. Trisha spoke of the local gardens that she had grown up knowing in the area, and how important they were to her in establishing her love of gardens. She also showed photos and spoke of the glorious gardens that she visits in Australia and around the world that she takes others to...(alas, not so at the moment with all non-essential travel stopped due to the Corona Virus pandemic). Her special love of course are the gardens of Australia, especially how we have adapted to the difficulty of such a huge range of climates, poor soils, lack of water etc. and the struggle to grow in such. (She has her own trials living on a property in the Monaro, with not only drought seemingly ever-present,

[2https://braidwoodgardenclub.wordpress.com](https://braidwoodgardenclub.wordpress.com)

but the hazards of wildlife jumping fences with complete abandon and disregard for the effort and time involved in keeping a garden alive as they contentedly eat their way through it!). Trisha also is a devotee of Edna Walling, a very important early Australian innovative gardener and landscape designer, of which there are a few beautiful gardens designed by her represented in the Goulburn district. Trisha is a really enthusiastic and engaging speaker, and we all felt lucky to have heard her and been part of the Friendship day.

It didn't finish there ... of course we could buy plants and garden tools, talk about plants and gardens to others, and the fires and drought, and check to see if we had won anything in the raffles! No! We all concurred that it was a delightful morning, and left inspired by what we too may be able to achieve in our gardens. Thank you Goulburn Garden Club.

GARDENING IN BUSHFIRE PRONE AREAS

(Part 2) by Bronwyn Johnson

Fire resistant or fire retardant?

The Victorian Country Fire Authority (CFA) urges caution using these terms when talking about plant flammability. When used correctly, they have very specific and quite different meanings and should not be confused.

Fire resistant describes plant species that will survive being burnt and then regrow, i.e. they are **resistant** to being killed by a bush fire, but not to being burnt. In fact, some may be highly flammable and inappropriate for a garden in a high bush fire risk area.

Fire retardant may also be misunderstood, as it could imply a plant will not easily burn. Given extreme conditions, **all** plants will burn. However it has been shown that under suitable conditions, some are less likely to ignite, or will take longer to ignite. "Retardant" should be understood in this limited sense, rather than implying a plant will not burn or will prevent a fire from progressing.

[The CFA suggests a more useful description for plants would be 'Firewise' and has developed a Plant Selection Key based on a flammability ranking system. Full details of this system may be found in the CFA publication '*Landscaping for Bushfire*', which can be downloaded from the website www.cfa.vic.gov.au.]

Trees

In a garden setting, the dense green canopy provided by deciduous trees such as oak, liquidambar and elm will protect from flying embers. While they may be scorched, these trees rarely ignite quickly and most will recover after the fire, unless the fire conditions are intense and ongoing.

Studies into the "ignitability" (ignition delay time) of Australian plants have indicated that leaf size and moisture are important. Eucalypts have low leaf moisture compared to deciduous trees and more than 4% volatile oil in their leaves. By comparison, deciduous trees have less than 0.1%; and wattles, grevilleas and hakeas have less than 1%.

Characteristics which make plants less flammable include leaves with high salt content, high moisture content, low volatile oil content, and high ash content. Plants with large 'soft' leaves are generally slower to ignite than plants with small, narrow, dry leaves.

Many Australian plants, such as eucalypts and banksias, have developed ways of surviving in an environment where bush fires occur. Fire provides a rich bed of ash which assists the germination of seeds. Some banksias have a subsoil lignotuber from which new stems can sprout, even when the bush above ground has been burned.

If you are considering eucalypts, choose smooth-barked species, which have a lower fire risk because fire cannot travel up the trunk to ignite the canopy of oil-rich leaves. They should not be planted close to buildings: one authority suggests at least twice mature height from the walls of a house. Eucalypts and many other trees will shed leaves, bark or both, which makes good maintenance essential to a tree's suitability for use around homes and outbuildings.

Popular native species such as callistemon (bottlebrush), leptospermum (teatree), melaleuca (paperbark) and prostanthera (mint bush) are all worth planting in appropriate locations. However if planted too close to buildings, the volatility of their leaves could make them more of a fire risk than other species.

Plants

Apart from its natural structure and properties, a plant's flammability is affected by its environment, horticultural management and "life stage" from seedling to old age. An old plant is likely to contain dead wood and require a severe pruning to reduce fire risk.

The importance of good garden maintenance cannot be stressed strongly enough. To increase the effectiveness of plants to act as fire retardants, keep them green and healthy with regular watering. Keep to a regular schedule to prune old growth and remove any build-up of dead leaves. Clear weeds and dead grass away from the base of trees and shrubs, and remove fallen leaves and bark.

Although we cannot rely on plant selection alone to create 'fire-ready' gardens, for at-risk areas it makes sense to choose a selection of plants which may be slower to ignite, especially for planting in key positions near the house. While plants will not completely

block a fire's progress, if they are slower to ignite this could gain time for residents to turn on hoses and sprinklers, summon assistance or leave safely.

Low-growing plants are particularly useful to reduce ember attack, allow time to put out spot fires or slow down the fire perimeter before it reaches buildings. A lush well-watered and trimmed lawn can serve a similar purpose.

Dense, slow-igniting shrubs also protect from ember attack and, in the right conditions, can slow down the fire's movement through the garden. Suitable species could include massed agapanthus, or strappy clumping plants such as liriope, Algerian (winter) iris, dianella, lomandra and others, as long as dead leaves are regularly removed.

A well-watered hedge on the fire-prone side of the house may help reduce radiant heat and the spread of fire. Hardy succulents and groundcovers that are well-watered and leafy will suppress weeds while also helping to slow down the spread of fire along the ground.

Choosing plants

When choosing plants close to the house, look for the following features:

- Broad or fleshy leaves
- Smooth bark
- High moisture content in leaves
- Low volatile oil content.

The ACT Government's Yarralumla Nursery suggests the following plants suitable for the Canberra climate have 'fire retardant' properties.

Groundcovers

- Ajuga species
- Blechnum penna-marina (Water fern)
- Bulbine bulbosa (Bulbine lily)
- Microlaena stipoides
- Myoporum parvifolium
- Scleranthus biflorus (Cushion bush)
- Selliera radicans (Swamp weed)
- Viola hederacea (Native violet)

Small Plants (to 1.5m)

- Agapanthus species
- Anigozanthos species (Kangaroo Paw)
- Atriplex nummularia (Saltbush)
- Correa alba
- Correa reflexa
- Crowea saligna
- Dianella tasmanica
- Eremophila (Emu bush)
- Hebe species
- Pelargonium species
- Rhagodia spinescens (Creeping saltbush)
- Thelionema grande (syn. Styandra)

Shrubs

- Acacia cultriformis
- Acacia iteaphylla
- Acacia pravissima
- Acacia vestita
- Banksia marginata
- Bursaria lasiophylla
- Camellia cultivars
- Daviesia mimosoides
- Escallonia species

- Grevillea aquifolium
- Grevillea shiressii
- Grevillea victoriae
- Hakea salicifolia
- Hydrangea species
- Solanum linearifolium (Kangaroo apple)
- Laurus nobilis (Bay laurel)
- Magnolia grandiflora
- Melia azedarach var. australasica (White cedar)
- Syringia vulgaris (Lilac)

There are many more suitable plants than those mentioned in this article. Some suggestions from other sources include:

Trees

- Acacia melanoxylon (Blackwood)
- Acacia howitii
- Allocasuarina verticillata (Drooping she-oak)
- Brachychiton populneus (Kurrajong)
- Casuarina cunninghamiana (River she-oak)
- Cercis siliquastrum (Judas tree)
- Arbutus (Strawberry tree)
- Chaenomeles (Flowering quince)
- Citrus
- Escallonia
- Feijoa
- Hakea laurina (Pincushion Hakea)
- Malus (Apple)
- Mulberry
- Nepeta (Catmint)
- Plectranthus
- Prunus
- Pyrus (Ornamental Pear)
- Quercus (Oak)
- Sambucus
- Viburnum

For further guidance on native plants: The Australian Plants Society (Victoria) has produced a comprehensive list of Fire Resistant and Retardant Plants, available to download from apsvic.org.au.

Covid-19 Project No 1: New Native Garden

by John Tuckwell

You may, like me, be using this period of semi-lockdown to progress projects which you have been procrastinating about forever. My first project has been putting in a native plant area within our evolving new garden.

This is located near to the house with the intention that it will be bird attracting and we will be able to see the birds from our bedroom. Previously it was an area where we dumped all that stuff you accumulate and intend to use somewhere, sometime in the garden. So the first task was to relocate all this stuff and it was amazing how much there was.

This was also the location of significant clumps of winter iris which needed to be removed and to speed things up I got in Phil Shoemark with his trusty kanga who made short work of removing the iris (with many locals benefiting from their relocation). He also rotovated the area and all told took him only a couple of hours. Had I done it by hand it would have taken me nearer a week, so a really good and inexpensive investment.



However, a previous owner of our block had put down weed mat and pebbles / gravel over large parts of the garden so I needed to pull up the remaining weed mat and sieve a lot of the soil to remove the pebbles / gravel. (If a weed is a plant in the wrong place, what is a stone in the wrong place called?). The sieved pebbles / gravel were relocated to paths which I had put in the area and so were repurposed.

The Cleared Site

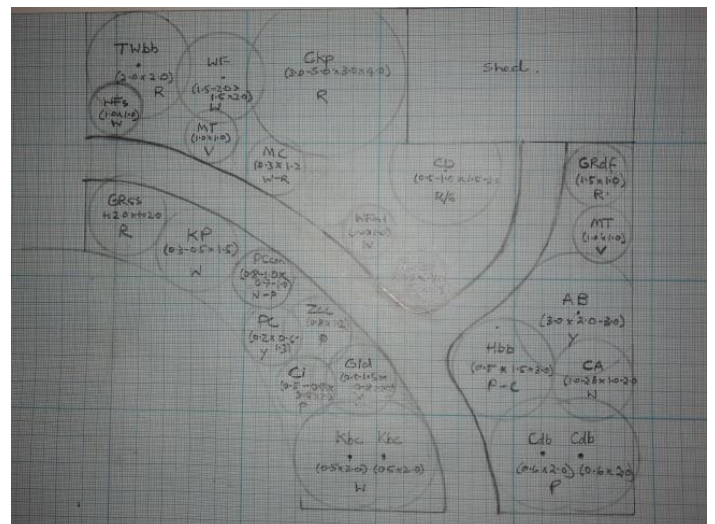


From then on it was easy. I covered the area with Eucalyptus mulch and a selection of natives were planted which were mainly sourced from Bunyip Jungle and Cool Country Natives in Pialligo with some purchased on our last garden club trip to Yass.

Sieved pebbles and gravel



Finished native garden



The Garden Plan

The plantings to date include:

Code	Name	Cultivar	Size	Colour	Flowering
	Family	Genus	/ Common name	height spread	Period
AB	Acacia	boormanii	Snowy River Wattle	3.0 2.0-3.0	Golden yellow Spr
Bmm	Banksia		Mini Marg	0.5-1.3 1.0-1.2	Yellow Spr-Win
CA	Correa	alba		1.0-2.0 1.0-2.0	White Starry Spr-win
CD	Correa	decumbens		0.5-1.0 1.5	Red bells with green tips Aut-Win
Cdb	Correa		Dusky Bells	0.6 2.0	Dusky pink bells Aut-Win
Ci	Correa		Isabell	0.5-0.7 0.5-1.0	Pink Aut-Win
Ckp	Callistemon		Kings Park Special	3.0-5.0 3.0-4.0	Bright red Sep-Nov
CVbj	Callistemon	viminilis	Better John	0.6-1.2 0.6-0.9	Bright red Spr
Gld	Grevillea		Lemon Daze	0.8-1.5 0.8-1.5	Yellow Spr-Win
GRdf	Grevillea	rhyolitica	Deua Flame	1.5 1.0	Brilliant red flower All year
GRss	Grevillea	rosmarinifolia	Scarlet sprite	2.0 2.0	Red, Pink All year
Hbb	Hakea		Burrenderry Beauty	0.5 1.5-3	reddish pink and cream Aut-Win
Kbc	Kunzea	badjaensis	Badja Carpet	0.5 2.0	Fluffy white Dec-Mar
KP	Kunzea	pomifera		0.3-0.5 1.5	White fluffy flowers Spr
MT	Melaleuca	thymifolia	Thyme Honey		
			Murtle	1.0 1.0	Violet Spr-Aut
			Fringed Heath		White, flushed pink or
MC	Micromyrtus	ciliata	Myrtle	0.3 1.5	red Win-Spr
PC	Persoonia	chamaepity	Creeping Geebung	0.6-0.2 1.3	Yellow Sum-Aut
PCcm	Prostanthera	cuneata	Cool Mint	0.8-1 0.7-1	White, Purple Sum-Aut
TWbb	Telopea	Warratah	Braidwood Brilliant	2.0 2.0	Red Sum
WF	Westringia	Fruiticosa		1.5-2.0 1.5-2.0	White Spr-Sum
WFml	Westringia	Fruiticosa	Morning Light	1.0 1.0	White Spr-win
WFs	Westringia	Fruiticosa	Smokey	1.0 1.0	White Win-Spr
Zcc	Zieria		Pink Crystals	0.8 1.2	Pink Win-Spr

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## MY VEGETABLE GARDEN by Jennie Marston

One of my aims when we moved to Braidwood and our new block was to have a very productive vegetable garden and orchard that fed us through fresh food and preserves. However despite hundreds of hours watching and listening to garden programs and reading heaps of gardening books I am still not a knowledgeable gardener. I love gardening and visiting gardens and am in awe of so many fantastic member gardens and vegetable patches.

We established a rather large area for my vegetable garden very early on. The soil is very sandy and low in nutrients. Admittedly, I did not prepare the soil well, despite years of watching Peter Cundell throw masses of fertilizers etc onto his gardens. Over the past 4 years I have been very productive each summer with corn, cucumber, lettuce, spinach, zucchini, beans and tomatoes, in fact in 2018/2019 I had 40kg and we are still

eating frozen tomatoes in casseroles and tomato pickles. I also managed capsicum that year for the first time.

The first year I tried winter vegetables too with little success. Since then I haven't bothered over winter as we have often been away during that time. I sometimes put in left-over legumes as a manure crop.

In the early stages of our isolation, with more time from not going on our annual trip or babysitting, and not knowing what was going to happen and if we were going to get fresh food, like many others we decided to try a winter crop. Unfortunately with a series of different things over summer I hadn't even started my summer planting. This meant heaps of weeds! Michael suggested that while we were about it we should really revamp the garden, put in edging to stop weeds creeping in, improve the watering system and add nutrients.

I weeded and weeded, Michael built boxes around the original beds, I added a lot of old manure (more for hummus) and blood and bone. I now have 12 beds using a 4 bed rotation. I have kept a record over the years to try and maintain this rotation for soil health. I have planted cabbage, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, pak choi, 3 types of spinach/silverbeet, lettuce, rocket, carrots, beetroot, parsnip, leeks and onions. I have also staggered the planting so that everything will not be ready at the same time although I realise there will still be a lot of produce maturing at the same time if I am successful.

I have given the garden a lot of TLC over the past six weeks. The manure has helped the soil absorb the water much better than usual, I water immediately after planting and always Seasol all my new plants throughout the garden the day after planting. I have been fertilizing as prescribed and watering regularly. I also have structures that double for covering plants when young and becoming established and also for tying up plants as required.

My successes so far: we are already eating rocket and baby spinach. In digging the garden I discovered 2 old silverbeet and they have sprung back and we can eat from them soon, and my rhubarb that has fed us for years that I thought had died over summer has sprung back to life fantastically. This year I tried parsnip and bought seeds on tape; nothing has come up! And yesterday I saw one white cabbage moth! How did that happen in the middle of nowhere?

I also found a lot of tomato plants around my compost and couldn't waste them. I am experimenting with them in pots in my potting shed which we have insulated better: curtains and bubble wrap on the windows and some spare insulation in the roof. I am also trying to keep the soil warm by sitting them off the cold floor. There are already some flowers and I open the shed during the day so bees can hopefully come in. I'll see how they go and let you know.

So I now go out every morning, pull open the potting shed curtains, pull out any new weeds and talk tenderly to my plants to "grow, grow, grow"!



# THE PLANT OF THE MONTH

By Kate Chinnick



## Perovskia (Little Spires)

- Native to mostly Western Asia and Himalayas
- Hardy deciduous sub-shrub
- Has grey/white stems and aromatic grey leaves
- Grows to 1–1.5m high and forms large clumps
- Flower heads to 30-45 cm in lavender, blue
- Easily grown in well drained soil in full sun
- Flowers from late summer to early autumn
- Good cut flower and border plant
- Propagate from seed or cuttings from non- flowering stems

### What to do in the garden for May

- Evergreen shrubs can still be moved
- Spring flowering Camelias can be disbudded for larger flowers
- Tulips and Dutch Iris can be planted now
- Pinch back spring flowering annuals to strengthen growth
- Tidy Hellebores & apply a complete fertilizer + dolomite lime
- Monitor vegetable crops for pests and weeds
- Seedlings of Asian vegetables can be sown till mid May
- Prepare beds for Onion seedlings in late winter
- Plant new Strawberry plants
- Tie up sweet Pea plants
- Rake up fallen leaves and compost
- Try not to buy plastic wrapped early Roses as the frosts will burn them