

BRAIDWOOD GARDEN CLUB NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2020

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THURSDAY OCTOBER 8th - VISIT TO 3 MAJORS CREEK GARDENS

Due to the current Covid-19 restrictions, only 20 visitors are allowed at a private property at any given time, regardless of the garden size. The Committee felt the best way to manage this would be to have two separate groups visiting the three Majors Creek gardens which means we regrettably have to limit the total numbers to 40, although this is still more members than would attend a typical garden visit meeting.

Registration:

Even though there is no charge, to implement this, members are required to register by email with the title "Majors Creek Registration" to braidwoodgardenclub@gmail.com giving your name(s) and mobile telephone number(s).

The first 40 people to register will be able to attend, with late registrations placed on a wait list. You will be notified of your status and any changes. Hopefully, the limits will be relaxed shortly and we can respond accordingly.

Remember to renew your membership before registering, if you have not already done so.

If you register and then find you cannot go, please let us know by email so another member can go if we are fully subscribed.

Arrangements:

Meet at Ryrie Park at 10.00am to car pool (for those willing to do so) and be allocated your group and be given directions.

Again, due to the current Covid-19 restrictions, we cannot share food so please BYO morning tea, lunch and chair. Tea and coffee facilities will be provided.

Gardens:

We will be visiting three lovely local gardens in Majors Creek, namely: 'Sherbrook', the property of Chris and Brian James, 'Long Flat' owned by Bob Lane with the garden is managed by Julia Hebbard, and our Fran's Garden.

'Sherbrook' garden began in 1995 by clearing broom & blackberry, with natives planted for a windbreak that struggled in the drought. The garden has grown with gifted, propagated and transplanted contributions despite drought and bush fires & after the recent fires, most gum trees have been removed for safety. Loads of stable manure and soil wetter have helped the plantings of flowering shrubs, perennials, annuals and deciduous trees, plus many "garden art" pieces and vegetable beds established. A much loved home for birds and the owners.

'Long Flat' is peaceful, interesting & impressive with 67 acres of mown lawn & nearer the house, garden beds featuring azaleas, magnolias, roses, spring bulbs, daphne & deciduous trees. Large pots of citrus & covered vegetable gardens are a delight with huge dams providing water for the expansive gardens.

Fran's Garden: A slow developing garden since 2010 & battling wind & drought it has become a 'Topsy' garden, just growing like topsy. An easy garden for Fran to care for.

**To see another's garden may give us a keen perspective
of the richness or poverty of his personality,
of his experiences and associations with life,
and of his spiritual qualities.
*Charles Downing Lay, A Garden Book (1924)***

Report on the Visit to Merribee and Shoalhaven Heads Botanic Garden by Amanda Scott

On 10th September, 26 Garden lovers headed north by bus (along with a small convoy of cars) to Numbaa on the outskirts of Nowra to visit Merribee. The sight of the burnt bushland en route was quite shocking for those who had not ventured this way since the Black Summer fires.



We arrived at Merribee at 10.30 and were greeted by the owners, Lucy and Richard Marshall along with their Head Gardner Andrew Davidson. A stretch of the legs and loo stop followed by a brief stroll around the garden had many of us ooohing and aaahing at the many delights of this 7 acre garden. Our hosts were most gracious and happy to field the myriad of questions that we bombarded them with!



Prior to our more formal tour, we were treated to a delicious morning tea in Mayfield Cottage, a delightful space purpose built for visits such as ours along with the many garden related workshops that they host. Tea, coffee and a choice of cake while we looked out over the Lavender paddock and 'old rose' garden was just beautiful.

Andrew, the Head Gardener, along with John and his trusty bell, managed to drag us away from morning tea for our guided tour. After an introduction and history of the garden we headed down what the owners affectionately call 'George Street', a long avenue of Chinese Elms with extensive gardens either side. We passed a small garden room cleverly created from Bay trees, A Lovers Knot and "Dordogne" gardens. All woven together with Box hedging into an intricate design and containing topiary animal shapes. The work and maintenance involved in this garden is amazing. The gardener responsible for all the hedging, Paul, was also on hand and patiently answered all of our questions.

We then turned off from the main avenue into the Italian Garden which featured more hedging and Italian Cypress and lead through to the Rose Gardens and Bunya Grove beyond. Here we stopped for a while and Andrew discussed the many details of managing such extensive gardens along with rose maintenance, pest control and mulching. The Physic garden was next and featured hedges of Feijoa and Pomegranate and a large Bay topiary that looked like a giant turnip! Olive trees, citrus and a fishpond were also found in this garden. On to an open courtyard with Marquee, adjacent to the barn via a small double avenue of pollarded Crepe Myrtle. Fortunate timing for us as the heavens opened for a brief shower. This small rainy interlude provided more opportunity for us to "grill" Andrew about the garden. Once the showers petered out we progressed past the tennis court to the vegetable garden and had a good discussion on all things vegetable, pest and maintenance.

Further from the vegetable garden was a series of small parterre rooms. A tiered fountain is situated in front of an arched doorway set into a tall hedge. This doorway leads to the Secret Garden, a "room" which had been set up for a wedding. A beautiful intimate space enclosed by tall verdant viburnum hedges. Two large Snow Pears are planted on opposite sides toward the front of the room and a row of pleached Crepe Myrtles ran the length of the back wall. This was my favourite part of the garden. Simple and beautiful.

Finally, to the house garden. A lovely entertaining space with outdoor fireplace and pavilion, hedging, water feature and some lovely mature trees. Magnolias, camellias and a very large Grapefruit tree (of which many of us took home some of its fruit). Back at the starting point we were abuzz with all things Merribee. What an amazing garden with generous owners sharing their creation.



After farewelling Merribee, we headed across the Shoalhaven River to the Shoalhaven Heads Native Botanic Garden. Here we were greeted by Tom Korevaar, one of the gardens volunteers. He generously provided us with hot water so that we could enjoy our lunch with a cup of tea or coffee before venturing into the garden. He chatted amicably until we were ready and was joined by Rob Stewart, a horticulturist and the main driver of this project.



To start we were given an overview of the project. The garden began with the intention of creating a native arboretum by a few neighbours and plant enthusiasts. Trees from the East coast of Australia from Queensland to Tasmania were planted. This expanded to include trees from Western Australia and many bush-tucker plants. Gradually, the garden evolved, and with nearly 300 plant specimens in various stages of growth, it became clear that botanic garden rather than arboretum better described the project. With support from local Government and hard work by dedicated volunteers the garden is now a beautiful setting with meandering pathways and a myriad of birdlife, a resident possum and native bees.



We were able to wander the garden at leisure or follow Rob or Tom to get a deeper insight into the garden. A lovely arbour made from Blackbutt timber marks the entry to the garden and is flanked by the bush-tucker garden, laid out in the shape of a boomerang. Many fascinating edible plants such as Mangosteen, Midgenberry and Quandong are in the garden but the one I found most fascinating was the Davidsons plum which had flowers (and eventually fruit) growing directly from the trunk. Along from here was an Illawarra Flame Tree in which you could see a small nest with baby birds.

Paths wind their way through the garden and make it feel much bigger than its two and a half acres. There are ground covers such as cut leaf daisy, Myrtles, Banksias, Tree Waratahs, Lilly Pillies, Wattles, Flannel Flowers.... the list goes on and on, an absolute feast for the Native Plant lover. Throughout the park are some very impressive trees. A Bottle Tree, Port Jackson Fig, Kurrajong, She Oak and the original Bangalay Gum, just to name a few.

Complementing the garden are some lovely features made by local artisans or donated by local groups. Sculptures, a mosaic and carved indigenous poles along with a sun dial donated by the local Handicrafts group. There is also a Nursery on site and we had the opportunity make some purchases.

An amazing garden and I can't imagine anyone not being impressed by what has been achieved here. They have a fabulous website with a very comprehensive list of plants which I recommend everyone take a look at.

www.shnbotanicgarden.org

A terrific day which showcased two gardens at opposite ends of the spectrum.

Also, thanks must be given to Rhonda, our intrepid bus driver who, after a computer glitch on the bus, showed much ingenuity and got everyone back safely and on time to Braidwood.

With thanks to Fran Woods for her photography. <https://hope-today.org/pixt/bgc53/index.html>

PLANT DONATIONS FOR THOSE FIRE AND DROUGHT AFFECTED

Further to previous announcements, members are invited to donate cuttings and divided perennials to help those still recovering from the fires and the drought. We have already donated a ute load of plants to the good people of Nerriga and surrounds who were so badly affected by the fires. We will now donate more plants to Araluen and hopefully to the other villages.

If you have any plants to donate, please bring them (labelled please) to:

64a Wilson St, Braidwood (John & Margaret Tuckwell's home) and if no one is at home please leave them inside the front gate.

We will be distributing them after our 8 October meeting.

For further information contact: John Tuckwell on 0408 625 156

UNCOMMON NATIVES - INDIGOFERA AUSTRALIS (Austral Indigo)

By Bronwyn Johnson

This is the first of an occasional series introducing a few native plants which may be unfamiliar to Garden Club members. At one time or another, I've included them in my own garden, both for their beauty and botanical interest. Unfortunately, with fewer specialist nurseries offering a wide range of native plants, some may now be difficult to acquire.

Indigofera australis is a slender shrub of the pea family which appears in many parts of Australia, including the Southern Tablelands. In harsh conditions it becomes straggly; however when cared for in a garden setting, it grows into an attractive plant which is quite eye-catching when in full flower.

Plants are open in form with slender drooping branches, blue-green foliage and dark purplish stems, contrasting yet blending in well with other plants. The flowers range in colour through soft purple, mauve and often pinkish hues, and may open at any time from mid-September, continuing into November in a cool spring. The flowers are a source of nectar and pollen for native insects, including bees and wasps.



After flowering the shrub is hung with green (turning brown) pods which ripen to produce squarish hard seed, usually plentiful. As with many pea species, the seeds are hard and need soaking overnight in hot water before sowing.

Most soils are suitable as long as free from lime. With adequate watering the plants grow quickly after planting out and are relatively hardy, living many years if protected from extreme drought, with suitable mulching and occasional shade from surrounding trees or shrubs.

This shrub makes an interesting addition to any garden. Its natural habit is loosely upright to about two metres high, with flexible arching stems leaning in several directions. It can be pruned lightly for a more compact shape, yet taking care not to inhibit its naturally loose and flexible habit.

Indigofera australis is native to this area, though not common. From time to time I've found a few plants growing in a patch of light forest on my property at Bombay. That area was recently scorched in last November's bush fire which would explain why a large number of *indigofera* seedlings appeared following heavy rain earlier this year. Seeds from previous years, waiting underground, must have received the right amount of heat to break their coating, followed by sufficient moisture to germinate.

Plants in my garden have certainly self-seeded in good years. *Indigofera* will also regrow and sucker from rootstocks and lateral roots after a fire.

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Please pay at the Bendigo Bank - BSB 633 000 - Account Number 118 346 444 & add 'Membership' in the reference. \$20 year plus \$11 if you require a mailed Newsletter.

Braidwood Rural

Braidwood Rural will kindly continue to offer Garden Club members a 10% discount on their garden lines during 2020-21.

The way this will operate in the future, is that the garden club will provide a list of all members to Braidwood Rural without any contact details. When you go to Braidwood Rural you will need to ask for the discount and if you have an account they will link this to your account for future reference. If you do not have an account, they will set up what is called a 'cash account' and you will need to give them your address and telephone number to establish the cash account. It is also understood that in the near future there will be new 2.2m shelving at Braidwood Rural which will significantly increase the number of garden lines they will carry.

OCTOBER 2020 **The 2020 Sydney Spring Garden Competition** will go ahead. Despite the current climate, the organisers can safely administer this competition, giving Sydney gardeners something to get excited about! The competition will be free to enter this year.

<https://www.rasnsww.com.au/globalassets/document-library/rasnsww/competitions/spring-arden/2020springgardenschedule.pdf>

OCTOBER Saturday 17th & Sunday 18th 2020 - The Markdale garden will be open for the 'Festival of Spring' in Crookwell.

Then on Saturday & Sunday October 24-25 from 10-3pm Entry \$5 Bookings required

<https://www.myopengarden.com.au/openGarden.jsp?e=3&m=65409&id=2557>

FEBRUARY 2021 Friday 19 & Saturday 20

Floral Design Competition and Demonstrations at Mittagong R.S.L. Club

<https://nswfloralartassociation.org.au>

My Open Gardens

There are many gardens open during the coming months so log on to the website to plan your visits.

<https://www.myopengarden.com.au/openGarden.jsp>

Retford Park, Bowral, is open on the first weekend of each month.

In Spring there's a riot of colour with peonies, arum lilies, dogwood, clematis, rhododendrons, flowering cherries and tulips; and in Summer, the vast arboretum is the perfect shady place for a picnic.

Nurseries nearby

- The Potting Shed - Bowral - 0419 154 860
- Mittagong Garden Centre - Mittagong - (02) 4872 3900
- Wariapendi Farm Nursery - Colo Vale - (02) 4889 4327
- Welby Garden Centre - Welby - (02) 4872 1244

Downward Facing Thorns

Rose experts love to tell you that roses don't have thorns, they have prickles. Thorns are extensions of a branch whilst prickles are a modification of the outer layer of a stem, prickles are detachable, and thorns aren't! And therefore, my lemon tree has thorns, but my roses don't (pictured below). But all the same so many quotes have been written about roses having thorns that we still like to call them thorns, out of earshot of the rose experts and botanists.

I have been catching up on my reading and came across an interesting fact in an American Rose Magazine that rose thorns usually point downwards. So, I ran out to the garden to check and whilst some seemed to point straight out many times have you got your clothing caught on rose bushes? from the branch, most of them did indeed point

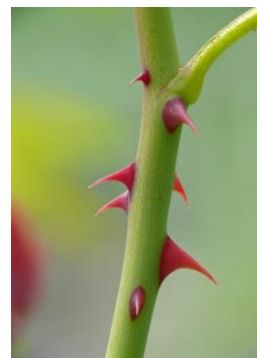
downwards. And this has some very interesting implications. How My usual reflex action when I get caught is to pull upwards to become unstuck. I now see that if I actually pull the fabric down instead of up it comes easily off the thorn undamaged. I hope this tip helps some of you gardeners who have told mestories of how you have had to strip off layers of clothing just to get out of a rose bed! Also, when we are pruning or deadheading roses if you approach the rose from above you will rarely get stuck on a thorn. When removing your arm from a rosebush do so in a downward and outward direction. And always remember to wear gloves which protect the back of your hands because if you are weeding under the rose bushes you want to avoid all of those downward facing thorns. Also, try to pull your weeds out towards you rather than pulling upwards.

<http://nsw.rose.org.au/illawarra-region.html> May '20 edition

Extract from the Garden Clubs of Australia Inc. Newsletter No. 5



Lemon Thorn



Rose Prickles

THE PLANT OF THE MONTH

By Kate Chinnick



Melianthus minor

(Touch Me Not, Honey
Flower)

- Native to South Africa
- Sprawling shrub growing 1.8m tall
- Prized for its luxuriant blue/green foliage
- Spikes of brownish red flowers appear in spring & summer
- If pruned back hard in early spring, fresh leaves grow out
- Flowers will be lessened if pruned
- Leaves have a strong unpleasant smell when bruised
- Grow in full sun or part shade
- Propagate from cuttings in summer
- Marginally frost hardy & protect from cold winds

What to do in the garden for October:

- Prune flowering shrubs as they finish flowering
- Azaleas should be clipped back & any dead growth removed
- Choose new Azaleas & Rhododendrons while in flower
- Roses will respond to fertilizer
- Check Roses for fungal problems & mulch to retain moisture
- Nip out Sweet Pea shoots as they reach top of supports
- Gladiolus corms can be planted at two weekly intervals (90 to 100 days to flower)
- Dead head annuals and bulbs (don't remove foliage)
- Feed all bulbs with a high potash fertilizer
- Plant Pea and Bean seeds and erect supports
- Plant out Lettuce, Cabbage etc.