



SHBG

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS BOTANIC GARDENS LTD

OPERCULUM MARCH 2016



*This exquisite white Aquilegia will be available at the plant sale
(photo Charlotte Webb)*

**Next Working Bees – Every Tuesday –
9-10am until the Plant Stall!**



Please come along every Tuesday morning at 9.00am to help us prepare the site for the Autumn Gardens weekend at the end of April. There is so much work to do, ensuring that all the beds look beautiful and the plants watered. The strip photos were taken by Chris Blaxland at the Working Bee on Tuesday 8 March. It was a particularly beautiful day and everyone was very busy—from potting, sorting pots, watering pots, planting, mowing, mulching.



New Editor

After a return to the Gardens after a long break of several weeks, it was wonderful to see all the plants looking so luscious, despite the heat. And there among the hard-working crew I found a new editor for the *Operculum*. I am delighted to announce that Susan Hand has agreed to take on the role. She has now been co-opted on to the committee of Friends and will produce the next *Operculum* in June.

Meg Probyn



John Biffin and Carolyn Dwyer planting the circle of Buxus



Autumn Gardens Weekend Brochures



Hot off the press!

When the brochures arrive, we know the Autumn Gardens Weekend is getting closer! All the garden owners have been regretting they said 'Yes' to us as the summer dragged on without rain. Thunderstorms were forecast but little rain fell. Despite their worries, the gardens will look lovely and all the visitors will be delighted to wander round the properties. The Committee of Friends is very grateful to the owners because without their willingness to be involved, we couldn't raise funds for the SHBG.

The gardens will be open from 10am to 4pm on both Saturday and Sunday 23-24 April. The cost of tickets is as follows:

- * \$40 all-weekend pass entry to all six gardens
- * \$8 single garden visit
- * School children free

Plant sale

For the first time, the plant sale (free entry) will be held on the SHBG site, where marquees will be filled with a selection of plants grown by the SHBG Friends Plant Growers Group. Many of the plants are rare, unusual, or hard to find, and have been selected because they perform well in the Southern Highlands climate. Being already acclimatised, they will thrive the instant they are planted. The plants for sale this year will include everything from trees and shrubs to the tiniest groundcovers. It will be hard to ignore the array of salvias (at least thirty different species) and cultivars or the many beautiful fuchsias in full flower.

Open 9am – 4pm (Saturday & Sunday 23-24 April)

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO:

shbg.com.au/events/autumn-garden-weekend



Pleione (peacock orchid) (photo C. Webb)



Plants for the sale



Lyn Barrett sorting out the plants in the shade house

The Gardens

The following descriptions of the six gardens open this year are extracted from the brochure:

Greenbrier Park – 1171 Old South Road, Mittagong (Owners: Robert & Janet Constable)

This garden was established in 1988 on three hectares of old Australian eucalyptus woodland, overlooking Mittagong with views of the Nattai Valley and the Blue Mountains. The English-style design has been adapted with Australian native shrubs and trees. There's a formal garden with a lake; a native/exotic garden; a creek built in 1994, which joins two ponds, now forms a 'natural' watercourse.

The herbaceous/perennial garden has clematis and rambling roses. There is a wisteria-covered gazebo, a bulb garden surrounded by a *Laurel* and *Camellia sasanqua* hedge. In front of the house is a perennial garden and with expansive lawns. Altogether the streams and ponds, statues, fountains, vistas and a large variety of shrubs and trees result in a beautiful all-season garden.

The Garden House – 62 Burradoo Road, Burradoo (Owners: Tony Davis & Maureen Purtell)

Both the owners are plant-lovers and they have created the sort of garden that everyone loves and secretly envies with a special mix of common and rare plants. From the stone deck at the back of the house the gently sloping site leads down to a pool

where ducks gather. It is a garden that delights and inspires all gardeners with so many fine specimens of *Maple*, *Camellia*, *Daphne* and *Dogwood*.

The borders are beautiful in springtime, too, as they are filled with bulbs. Tony Davis is well known as the Southern Highlands 'Daffodil Man': he has been breeding daffodils for the past thirty years, one of only twenty breeders in Australia. He and Maureen are foundation supporters of the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens and it is especially appropriate that their garden is open this weekend.

Sutton Tops — 2 Greenhills Road, Sutton Forest (Owners: Geoff & Lyn Macbean)

'Sutton Tops' is high on a hill with wonderful expansive views across the rolling green pastures of Sutton Forest. The house sits on ten hectares and the views to the west are towards Berrima and Crookwell; to the north is Mt Gidgebullen; and Moss Vale is to the north-east.

This is a developing garden with beautiful roses and collections of *Lilium*, *Mollis Azalea* and many perennial treasures, carefully sheltered from the prevailing winter westerly winds by strategically planted hedging. An open and expansive garden, it is a delight to stroll round.

Whare-tau — 2 Exeter Road, Exeter (Owners: Dr David & Bernadette Smith)

This 9.5 acre garden surrounding the 1903 Federation brick home contains a diverse array of mature exotic specimen trees, many of which date from the time of the construction of the house. 'Whare-tau' (Maori for 'our home') is a grand country home that is both historically and architecturally significant. The wide curving driveway is lined with a collection of Oaks and Plane trees interspersed with graceful Cedars and Cypress. Following the restoration of the house, the renovation of the garden was tackled next—at that time the new rose garden to the north of the house was established along with the vast double Silver Birch avenue and the fountain garden.

Of particular historical interest is the elevated corn-drying shed, which has become a curiosity in the garden and is believed to date from the time of the Badgerys, the original landholders in Exeter. Also of interest are the original stables and the original gardener's cottage, which required complete restoration.

Eastdene — 38-40 Church Street, Bundanoon (Owners: Dr Al & Barbara McKay)

The stately Edwardian 'Eastdene' (circa 1894), surrounded by a beautiful garden, is considered by many to be the very epitome of a traditional Southern Highlands country property. An avenue of huge Monterey cypress leads to the house—the long gravelled drive bordered by laurel and camellia hedging and under-planted with agapanthus.

The 55 hectares of garden, lake and rolling pastures include vistas of extensive eucalypt forest in Morton National Park. Close to the house is a lovely four-part

formal parterre with ponds, fountains and pebble-mulched beds surrounded by box hedges. The plantings illustrate the changing seasons, with autumn one of the loveliest times of the year—so many shades of gold, red and yellow created by the Japanese maples and a vast array of deciduous trees from oaks, rowans, limes, apples and pears. The lake is a particular delight with a summerhouse and Monet-style bridge.

Arden — 5 Amos Lane, Bundanoon (Owners: David and Suzy Dowsett)

The entrance to 'Arden' is near the top of a winding country lane. The two-acre garden, formerly part of a larger estate, has had only two previous owners and there have been two major planting sprees, in the 1930s and 1970s. Trees and bulbs abound. There are some truly magnificent specimens, including a beautiful variegated tulip tree, and maples, magnolias, ash, dogwoods, nyssas, liquidambars, Himalayan cedars, not to mention the 40 metre high Radiata pines that protect the garden from the west and provide a benign micro-climate enabling a wide variety of plants on the rich volcanic soil.

The owners are experimenting with native plants in a wild area at the front gate. Providing small birds with protection from predators is always a consideration. Uninteresting shrubs are gradually being replaced with botanical beauties.

The Opening of the Amenity Block: 8 April

The official opening of the Amenity Block and the IMB Store Room and the unveiling of the donated inscribed paving will take place on Friday 8 April at 2pm. Jai Rowell MP, the Member for Wollondilly will perform the official opening.

Please make sure you have sent in your acceptance for this event. The response for the pavers has been excellent with 135 bricks ordered.

The Webb family is well-represented among the pavers (see below). Chris Webb's sister who lives in New York has become the family historian. She decided to organise bricks not only for herself, but also for the first Webbs who came to Australia in the nineteenth century and their descendants.

The Webb Square

By Chris Webb (Jenny Ambrozek's little brother)

Living in New York for nearly 26 years has not diminished Jenny Ambrozek's (née Webb) enthusiasm for her family history and the importance of her family's roots in the Southern Highlands. When the opportunity arose to donate inscribed pavers in our SHBG Inscribed Paver program, she took this as the perfect chance to acknowledge her Southern Highlands-based family heritage. Jenny has sponsored a number of pavers, which broadly outline her family lineage in the Southern Highlands.

The first of Jenny's ancestors to arrive in Australia were David and Caroline Webb from Farleigh in Kent who arrived on the 'Woodbridge' in 1838 with their ten children. After initially settling at East Creek they

then moved to Mittagong in 1842 where in due course they acquired land and began dairying.

The family of ten children grew and married and Jenny's great-grandfather Fredrick and his wife Louisa moved to Manchester Square in the 1880s to their property 'Wynella'. Fredrick was a well-known bridge builder and was responsible for building many of the bridges along the tramline to Joadja. Fredrick's son Claude and his wife Elsie were Jenny's grandparents and lived on the neighbouring property at Manchester Square, 'Lynwood'. Claude was a timber miller and gathered timber in the area from Manchester Square to Meryla Valley (now part of Moreton National Park).

Claude and Elsie also had a large family with seven children and all of these offspring are represented in the donated pavers. Claude's youngest son Alan married Ida Starkey (a local girl from Avoca) and moved onto the family farm 'Wynella'. Alan and Ida had five children, Jenny Ambrozek being the second of these.

Jenny's enthusiasm for the paver program has encouraged a number of other relatives to donate pavers, so much so, that the Webb pavers in Webb Square will represent seven generations of David and Caroline Webb's family.



Michael, the tiler, cementing the floor in the Amenity Block

BGANZ Day

BGANZ (Botanic Gardens of Australia and New Zealand Inc) will be holding the inaugural National Botanic Gardens Open Day on 29 May 2016. SHBG will be joining in the celebrations and we are planning to have children's activities on the site as well as a plant stall.



Les Musgrave, Lyn Barrett and John Biffin



Susan Hand (the new Operculum Editor) and Judy Keast

NEXT YEAR 2017:

The Autumn Gardens Weekend and Plant Sale will be held on Saturday 22nd and Sunday 23rd April 2017.

If you would be willing to open your garden in autumn 2017, please contact Chris Webb (4861 4899).

The Board of SHBG:

Chairman: Charlotte Webb OAM

Company Secretary: Barry Barford

Members: Grant Blanchard

Chris Blaxland, Lyn Collingridge,
Peter Rowe, Chris Webb

Committee of Friends of SHBG

Chair: Chris Webb (4861 4899)

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Lyn Barrett, Chris Blaxland, Ian Dwyer,
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