

AUTUMN GARDENS WEEKEND - IT'S HERE AGAIN

It's going to be such an exciting weekend. Some great town and country gardens are a must to visit over the Autumn Gardens Weekend, showing off their brilliant autumn colours and textures. There's a mix of large and smaller gardens, showcasing a variety of mature trees, large ponds, lawns, grasses and art. You will get a real 'wow' and feel an inner glow when you visit each of these beautiful gardens.



Bellagio - this magnificent garden is on the outskirts of East Bowral. A wonderfully mature garden with cypresses around the edge and a very pretty lake with lawns and terraces enticing you to enjoy a lovely walk in a beautiful setting.



Prittlewell – even if you've been before, this is a garden worth another visit because you just can't get enough of it. There is a wonderful lake to walk around, with beautiful sweeping lawns and woodland – a feast for the eyes in a peaceful setting at Fitzroy Falls.



Wilderwood - situated in Burradoo, has a great show of autumn colours with maples, beech, oak, ash and liquidambar, mixed with Australian natives. A beautiful garden in a suburban setting.



Roberton Park - Glenquarry is another feast for the eyes and somewhere to enjoy a lovely long walk. This garden has something of interest in every season. In the autumn, we will see the massed grasses in their late colours in a prairie setting with a serpentine pathway, together with the colours of the oaks,

maples and liquidambar. Don't miss the cricket oval with its own pavilion before wandering through the spectacular liquidambar avenue back up the hill to the house to complete your tour.



Art in the garden can be seen at **Heidi's Garden Art** in Bowral. This town garden is beautifully 'decorated' with the spectacular art of Heidi and Sam. There are olive trees next to a pond of water lilies, fish and a ceramic fountain; out the back there are plum and orange trees in a setting of 'grey' leafed plants and a

silver birch grove underplanted with succulents and snowdrops. Then there is the rose garden and vegetable patch. Not to be missed.

Visit a single garden for \$10 or buy an all-weekend pass to all 5 gardens for \$35. A bargain.

Entrance for school children is free. Visit the website www.shbg.com.au to purchase tickets and more information on this 'not to be missed' weekend event.

Chairman's Column

Rain – finally!

How welcome the rain has been over this past week and how the gardens have responded. It could not have arrived at a better time after our volunteers had just laid 500 sq metres of turf, which is now vibrant green and growing fast. With great excitement we now look forward to planting further trees, the winter woodland and the new native garden. We have been holding the stock in the nursery for some months, just waiting for rain! The rich, mahogany barked Tibetan cherry and the winter flowering Japanese apricot will both showcase how deciduous trees can still be eye catching in the depths of winter. In March we will be planting a 'Lone Pine' donated by John and Gwen MacPherson. The seed for the Lone Pine (*Pinus halepensis*) was originally collected from the last standing pine tree at Gallipoli. Please join us for the planting and dedication ceremony at noon 9 March. This month we will launch a new *Appeal Program* for specific purposes within the Gardens. Our first appeal is to raise sufficient funds to complete the fit-out of the display nursery. Unfortunately, the federal grant we received for this purpose only covered general infrastructure. We have yet to install benches, add signs and a shade structure to improve the conditions for the plants and provide a more welcoming experience for our visitors. Starting early March, students from Bowral High will be involved 'hands on' with our gardens including helping specifically in our nursery and generally as we prepare for our upcoming events. The proposed small education building is currently in the development application stage with Council. Once completed, this building will provide all-weather space for school children and other visiting groups. The proposed visitors centre continues to be developed through the design stage.



Volunteers at *Harper's Mansion* October 2017

How our Volunteers Stack Up

Don't be in any doubt that the SHBG board recognises and greatly appreciates the huge value of our Volunteers and how they make such a valuable contribution to the Garden. We would be absolutely lost without them. Our Volunteers are our most valuable resource.

Recently, a couple of SHBG board members did a rough calculation of the hours worked by Volunteers at, and for, our favourite Garden during events held throughout 2017. We estimated that Volunteers worked over 5,000 hours during 2017. The count is by no means accurate in that it is a vast underestimation. If we employed people to work these hours, it would equate to three people working full time. One 'full time equivalent', or FTE, over a period of a year is calculated at 1728 hours (36 hours per week for 48 weeks).

Volunteers also play a substantial role in the operations of other botanic gardens. Research from the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2000 (yes, it's a bit old) indicates that the six largest botanic gardens in Australia (those in capital cities) have an average of around 330 volunteers each. In a more direct comparison, the 117 smaller Australian botanic gardens have an average of 10 volunteers (on an FTE basis). Thus, our conservative estimate of 3 FTEs stacks up quite well next to these other

gardens, which are more established.

Drilling down into where the SHBG Volunteer hours are actually spent, we have separated out some numbers. Plant growing over several months leading up to the Autumn Garden weekend and other plant fair weekends, such as Bluebell weekend, Hydrangea Walk and *Harper's Mansion*, was estimated at 2,600 volunteer hours, equating to 1.5 FTE when calculated on an annual basis.

The running of the actual events - Autumn Garden Weekend and Plant Fair, together with events for the Bluebells, Hydrangea or *Harper's Mansion* - takes around 1,650 Volunteer hours or nearly 1 FTE. These hours include preparation, planning, sorting plants, delivery, labelling, tents being put up and taken down, parking management, ticket sales, cashier duty, etc.

Working bees throughout the year add up to nearly 900 Volunteer hours, or 0.5 FTE, but with a second monthly working bee, these hours are increasing.

There are lots of things we have not counted, including committee meetings, board meetings, talks given by Charlotte to various groups, Council meetings and meetings with other interested groups and the preparation for all these activities. The list goes on²

.....so, a big **THANK YOU** to all our wonderful and valued Volunteers.

ADVERTISEMENT

THE GARDEN NEEDS WATER

Do you know anyone who has a water access licence with DPI and who has a water allocation that exceeds their needs?

This is a serious question. The Garden has a water access licence with a zero water allocation. We also have a licence to drill a bore and are applying for funding that might pay for this work, together with installing an underground water retention tank and pumps that will reticulate the water around the Garden.

But, just as important as drilling a bore, is getting access to water. We need to purchase between 20 and 40 mega litres of water. The aquifer in our location is the Sydney Basin Nepean Groundwater Source in the Location of Nepean Management Zone 1.

If you know of someone who lives in the same locality as our aquifer, who has a water allocation exceeding their needs, who may be willing to sell that excess water allocation to the Garden, we would be happy to negotiate a mutually agreeable price with them to purchase their water.

Please contact either Chris Webb or Lyn Collingridge if you think you can help.

JOIN US TO CELEBRATE EARTH HOUR IN THE GARDEN



If you haven't celebrated Earth Hour before, you soon will have that opportunity.

The Garden will be the host of an Earth Hour event on the evening of Saturday 24 March that will showcase a solar powered art installation – *Vessels of Change*. It is very fitting that such a display is celebrating Earth Hour, where over 170 countries and 7,000 cities switch off their lights for one hour at 8.30pm on Earth Hour each year, to help save the planet. Earth Hour started in Sydney in 2007 and has been gaining traction every year since. The *Vessels of Change* exhibition should be fun for everyone. Artists, Heidi McGeoch and Sam Larwill, will use re-cycled 44 gallon drums to display a city streetscape that you can walk around, with the solar powered lights glowing from the drums. Sound exciting? Well, there's more.

A workshop will be held for kids to make their own solar powered lantern and they can take it home. The evening will be a real family outing. You can bring a picnic, with a rug or seats, together with some warm clothing, and enjoy the evening comfortably.

Call for Volunteers to help with this event - we want to make it very special.

We need Volunteers to assist make the night a real success. We need parking attendants, helpers to sell drinks at the bar and others to cook on the barbecue for the sausage sizzle. The gates will open at 5.45pm and 'go home' time is 9pm. If you can help on the night, we would love to hear from you by contacting info@shbg.com.au or phoning 4861 4899.

SAVING SEED by Jenny Simons

I have been selling seed at the Autumn Weekend to raise money for the Gardens. The seed has been collected mainly by Charlotte Webb and myself with some contributions from other members of The Friends. This is a request for some more Friends to collect seed.

If you are short of time or uncertain of how to clean the seed, you can give it to me in a paper bag (perhaps a paper shopping bag) as it came from the plant; if you have time and you know what to do, give me the seed in a sealed envelope. I need to know the name of the plant - its common name and/or its botanical name and anything else you'd like to tell me, for example if it self-seeds. Please put your name and phone number with the seed; I may have questions for you. A few words about collecting the seed: the main requirement is that it should be fully ripe. If it is a bean, for example, the pod should be crackling crisp. Seed pods of plants should have lost all green colour. In many cases the seed will fall from the seed case as you touch it. If you think you might lose the seed before you can collect it or if it might fall out before you notice it, put a covering of some kind over or around the seed head, tied on. This is essential, for example, to catch poppy seed. If you are not sure what to do, ring me and we can discuss a method.

I collect seed from flowering plants and shrubs and edibles – vegetables and herbs.

Your help will be appreciated. Ring me to discuss any aspect of seed collecting. I would particularly welcome seed from unusual plants. When you have some seed, ring me and we can arrange getting it to me.

My address is 89 Osborne Road, Burradoo, on the railway side of Osborne Road. 4861 1767

There will be live music, food and drink available to purchase, such as a sausage sizzle, water station and a licenced bar. Everyone is encouraged to bring their own drinking vessel with them and to be sure to take their rubbish home with them.

The lights will be switched off for Earth Hour between 8.30 and 9.30pm, when the solar powered *Vessels of Change* art exhibition will be seen at its best.

The event is supported by Council and Regional Arts NSW and entry is free, with a gold coin donation being encouraged when coming in the gate, which will open at 5.45pm. The kids' workshop is also free but bookings should be made for attendance and for the kids' workshop.

Bookings can be made at:

<https://vessels-of-change-earth-hour-celebration.evenbrite.com.au>

Vessels of Change will remain on display at the Garden from 24 March for about one month and will be visible through the fence from Kangaloon Road every night when it lights up..

Come along and have some fun!

UPDATE ON PROGRESS AT THE GARDEN

It was so exciting to see all the enthusiastic activity in the Garden at the working bee on Tuesday 13 February. Almost 40 Volunteers turned up - there were lots of helpers laying turf on the newly levelled area outside the front of The Shed, others were scattered around the Garden weeding and many more potting and Judy serving water and morning tea' - it was a very warm day.

A lot has happened at the Garden over the summer months.

We received a small commonwealth government grant in December to establish a retail nursery. Work has begun

already and it will be right next to the existing nursery. This nursery will be open to the public and display and provide for purchase, collectable and hard to find plants. Everyone knows how popular these plants are when available at the Autumn Plant Fair. They sell like hot cakes!

Being able to sell them all year will help provide much-needed revenue for the Garden coffers.

To date, our revenue has been from funds raised by the Friends and Volunteers when they work tirelessly arranging events during the year and from the very uncertain opportunities in applying for competitive grants. These methods of fundraising alone are not sustainable into the future. We need to have a reliable income stream that will help us work towards the development of the Garden in a faster and more certain manner. The nursery is a small step in this direction. But there's a catch. The cost for the fitout of the nursery is not included in the grant we received. So, we still need to raise funds to give the nursery a professional look.

The other noticeable development in the Garden is the extension of the pathway and the levelling of the ground level next to Pioneer Square. That flattened area has now been turfed and irrigated and looks like it has always been there. The cost for the extended pathway and the turf has been met from the Garden's funds.

This work shows real Garden development in a noticeable way.



Helpers at the working bee, laying turf

HELPING WITH CHILDREN

School children will be visiting the garden from March to help out with working bees and other odd jobs. We welcome these community minded young people.

We are calling for Volunteers to help with the children visiting and working at the Garden. If you would like to become involved with these new enthusiastic supporters, you first need to get a **Working With Children Check** which is **free** and register the number with SHBG. It is very easy and straight forward to register. Log on to the website <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/apply-working-children-check> and follow the links to apply. Then you will need to go to the Service NSW office in Mittagong to show your photo ID and your Notification will come through in a couple of hours. Please then forward the number to info@shbg.com.au.

Simple...and thank you.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday, 9 March - Lone Pine Planting -12 noon

Saturday, 24 March - Earth Hour *Vessels of Change*, commencing at 5.45pm

Sat 21 April & Sun 22 April - Autumn Garden Weekend and Plant Fair, commencing 9am

Fri 27 April - Art Exhibition - Bespoke Art, opening 6pm
252 Bong Bong Street. \$20 pp includes wine, cheese & finger food

Sun 27 May - Botanic Gardens Australia & New Zealand, commencing 12 noon.

Sat 27 October & Sun 28 October - Open garden and plant sale at *The Kaya*, Wildes Meadow

Sat 8 December & Sun 9 December - Hydrangea Walk



Working Bees

1st Tuesday of every month
10am - noon

&

2nd Saturday of every month
1pm - 3pm

Wear comfortable clothes, hat & gloves
Enjoy a friendly chat over a cup of tea.
Thank you in advance for your support - it is always appreciated



Opening 6pm Friday 27th April
Bespoke Art Gallery, 252 Bong Bong St (enter from Merrigang St), Bowral.
10% of all sales to be given to SHBG, plus donations made at the exhibition.
Enjoy the wine, cheese and finger food for \$20 at the door. RSVP by email to info@shbg.com.au or phone 4861 4899, to help with the catering.
Hope to see you there.

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