

OPERCULUM

August 2017



And the winner is....

Were you there?

If you weren't you really missed something extraordinary. And you will be kicking yourself for missing it because you can't join in the conversation with your friends to say how you saw it all unfold on the day.

Around 100 people gathered in the Annesley Ballroom on the winter morning of 30 June. The sun was shining outside, contrasting with the black background in the Ballroom, created to enhance the display of the five competing architecture designs for the SHBG Visitors' Centre. Everyone milling around was making their best guess as to which one of all those amazing designs actually topped the list as the winner.

Then the crescendo built up... Charlotte Webb made a fabulous speech on where the Garden is going and what a huge step this is on the road to its future, in contrast with our very small steps so far. Annabelle Pegrum, the Board's

adviser on this project, then gave a very impassioned speech on the process that was followed throughout the competition and praised the high quality of all the competitors. Our local member for Wollondilly, Jai Rowell, had the honour of announcing the winner and he was very enthusiastic about the Garden and the huge venture we are now embarking upon.

Then the winning architect, John Wardle, who was so excited at the news of winning, that he flew from Melbourne that morning to be with us for our big moment. He just couldn't keep away and finally got to say a few words about how thrilled he was to be part of our journey on this momentous

From the Chairman

With spring just around the corner our gardens are starting to wake from winter and so are our activities.

In August development in the native area will commence with construction of the southern entry garden featuring basalt stone walls. The granite pathway will be extended to the entrance gate, and new plantings will be undertaken in the winter walk and the native area.

Join us for the unveiling by artist, creator and donor John Olsen AO, OBE of the 2 metre high bronze 'Leaping Frog' in the Foundation Walk nestled under the shade of the Eucalypts.

John Wardle, winner of our architecture competition, will be the after dinner speaker at our biennial Waratopia dinner on 22 September.

With so much happening don't delay visiting our gardens or joining in our activities as we accelerate our development.

Charlotte Webb OAM

adventure.

The young man standing to the side, conspicuous because of his very stylish Melbournian garb, was the bright young architect, James Loder. He was responsible for the major part of the design and was itching to answer all the questions as people gathered

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Clematis

Jenny Simons

Living in the relatively cool climate of the Southern Highlands it is possible for us to grow those glamorous flowers, the clematis. The best known are the large-flowered hybrids, climbers up to about three metres.

They are usually grown in the ground but many will do well in large pots. They mostly flower in October and November and many repeat flower if cut back after the first flush. The hybrids should be planted deeply, five centimetres below the level in the pot,

so that you cover the first few leaf nodes. The roots should be kept cool by planting in the shade if possible or by placing pavers around the root zone with a thick layer of mulch on top. The roots should not dry out and so a watering tube can be provided at the time of planting. This tube should be wide enough to admit a gloved hand to remove the snails that will congregate there. The hybrids will lose their leaves or disappear over winter. When the new shoots appear in early spring they will be attacked by slugs and snails and can even be killed at this time. Snail bait is essential.

Annual pruning takes place at the same time as the roses are pruned. Some hybrids are pruned hard, others less so; keep the label that comes with them for pruning advice. They are gross feeders and require several feeds throughout the growing season. Feed them as often as you feed your roses, using the same food.

Because hybrid clematis are gentle climbers, they can be grown over a shrub rose, which can help shade the roots. Some pretty colour combinations can be achieved. Otherwise use pergolas, climbing frames, trellises, tripods or fences.

To propagate hybrid clematis you must take cuttings, as they will not

with racemes of fragrant white flowers. The cultivar 'Apple Blossom' has blooms that age to pink. The new leaves form directly after flowering and are bronze in colour.

C. montana flowers next. You see this on fences and over sheds. The flowers are white or pink and there

are many cultivars, though these tend to grow less strongly. *Montana* vines need no pruning unless they are exceeding their allotted space.

The *viticella* cultivars are sturdy growers. They bloom once only in late spring and early summer but



flower profusely for a relatively long time. *C. viticella* 'Etoile Violette' is a good example.

An autumn-flowering species is *C. maximowcziana/terniflora*, the Sweet Autumn Clematis. The large bunches of small white flowers smell like hawthorne. This clematis is not a good climber, so needs help, or can be used as a groundcover.

The winter-blooming species are summer-deciduous, for example *C. napaulensis* and *C. cirrhosa balaerica*. These are popular and readily available.

Some species clematis have unusual flower shapes: bell, pompom, rose, urn; however they are harder to come by and many are not available at all in Australia.

While most clematis are climbers, some are shrubs and some are groundcovers. These make unusual additions to the garden and are easy to care for.

In early spring the first species to bloom is the evergreen *C. armandii*

grow true to seed. Some are easy to strike from cuttings; some are really difficult. See below for further details.

One problem with hybrid clematis is the disease called wilt. This strikes one or more of the stems, always unexpectedly, as the plant is otherwise healthy-looking. Wilt is thought to be caused by a soil-borne fungus. Remove the affected stem at ground level and dispose of it. Drench the soil with a fungicide or cross your fingers and hope it won't happen again.

Quite different from the large-flowered hybrids are the species clematis. There are nearly 300 species worldwide, including eight Australian species, of which three are local to our area. The species clematis have smaller blooms, are often vigorous growers – up to 10 metres – and species can be found to bloom in every season of the year.

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Partnerships Manager



Louise James has more than twenty years experience in strategy, marketing, fundraising, business development and communications across both the corporate and not-for-profit sectors. Since 2004 Louise has enjoyed developing and implementing the strategic direction for partnerships and fundraising events for a number of national Australian charities that have included Cancer Council Australia, Red Cross Blood Service, Transplant Australia, Mission Australia, Include a Charity and Rare Cancers Australia.

Louise and her children live locally and she is delighted to take on the new part time role of Partnerships Manager for Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens. Louise brings a wealth of experience with a focus on raising funds to progress the development of the new visitors center and future community programs. Louise is looking forward to playing an active role in helping the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens continue to prosper and be enjoyed by all generations both now and in the future.

What's On

Dates for your diary

Camellia Show 2 September

Uniting Church Hall, Bowral

Home and Garden Show 9-10 September

with a SHBG Plant Fair. Bong Bong Race Course

Tulip Time Festival 12th – 24th September

Corbett Gardens, Bowral.

Orchid & Plant Show 16 September 9.30-4pm

Mittagong RSL

SHBG Biennial Waratopia Dinner September 22

Annesley Ball Room

Guest Speaker - Visitors' Centre winning Architect John Wardle

Blue Bell Walk 30 Sept and 1st October 10am-4pm

Tony & Anne Emmet, 126 Osborne Road, Burradoo

Incorporating a plant sale and an exhibition on the proposed visitors centre. Tony's sculptures will be on sale, with a percentage donated to SHBG. Tony already has 2 sculptures installed at SHBG

Robertson Open Garden Weekend 7 - 8 October

Bundanoon Garden Ramble 21 - 22 October

Harpers Mansion Plant Fair Sunday 29th October

SHBG will have a plant stall and our Chairman Charlotte Webb will be giving a talk on perennials at 10am. **DONT MISS THIS!**

Leaping Frog launch 5 September 11am

Donated by John Olsen

Moidart Peony & Rose 11-12 November

19-21 Eridge Park Rd Burradoo

Christmas Carols & Picnic in the Gardens 10 December

5pm-8.30pm

Lead by Women of Note

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Most are deciduous and shrubs are cut back almost to the ground in early spring.

The propagation of species can be by seed or cutting. The cuttings of hybrids and species can be internodal, that is, a piece of stem, firm but not hard, about four centimetres long, is prepared with the node at the top and the cut made before the next node. The leaves are shortened or partly removed. Use cutting powder or gel and enclose the pot of cuttings in a plastic bag. Keep in a light but shaded place. The month of

December is the ideal month for clematis cuttings. Some strike quickly, some can take up to a year. It is the same with seeds.

For good advice on growing clematis, consult 'Clematis, a Complete Guide' by Bridget Gubbins, the only Australian authority. Note that some of the chemicals she used when the book was published in 1997 are no longer used. There are many U.K. books on clematis and the world authority, Christopher Grey-Wilson, published 'Clematis, the Genus' in 2000. This is a thrilling book for the person besotted with clematis!

Working Bees



1st Tuesday of the Month:

10am – Noon

2nd Saturday of the Month:

1pm - 3pm

Bring comfortable clothes, hat and gloves. Enjoy a friendly chat over a cup of tea.

Thank you in advance for your support.

It is always appreciated

Lyn Collingridge collecting a Certificate of Entitlement for a grant of \$5,550 from Ann Prendergast, General Manager of the Wingecarribee Council, to provide for a fit out of the Shed which will include more cupboards and benchtops, mirrors in the toilets, and a baby change table in the disabled toilet. Work will be completed by September.



SHBG volunteers from L Barry Barford, Judy Barford, Geoff Prosser and Grant Blanchard turned out to promote SHBG at Volwing's annual Big V day at Bradman Oval in April.

In addition to the Big V photo we got some SHBG-specific photos taken and one is attached.

Thanks, Milton Park

Flashback to 2015 and earlier and you'll find SHBG board meetings being held in the offices of Chris and Charlotte Webb.

By late 2015 with board member numbers now at seven it was obvious the board had outgrown the space available.

Very quickly director and Milton Park resident, Peter Rowe, secured an offer from Milton Park management to provide a venue for our monthly board meetings free of charge. We "moved in" in 2016 and each month Milton Park Sales and Marketing Manager, Stephanie Doria, would allocate one of the hotel's Elms rooms.

SHBG chairman Charlotte Webb said the board very much enjoyed conducting its meetings in the tranquil surrounds of one of the Southern Highlands' premier country house hotels, which clearly shared a love of gardens with SHBG.

The board would like to place on record its sincere thanks to the management of Milton Park for their generosity in providing meeting rooms over the past year.

This year we moved on to more central premises in Bowral, which are more convenient for most working board members and the growing number of non-board members required to attend meetings.

SHBG will eventually hold its board meetings in its own splendid visitor centre at the garden site (see lead article, this issue).

And the winner is... from page 1

round the winning design. He explained how the building, tagged the Bowral Conservatory, would respect the principles of the Garden's landscape design.

The Mayor, Ken Halstead, together with councillors

Ian Scandrett and Graham McLaughlin were also among

enthusiastic crowd. The press was there too and you would have seen the coverage in the Southern Highlands News the following week.

Now that the dust has settled, there is so much to do to get this dream to come true. Not the least of which is finding the money!

Lyn Collingridge

Editor@shbg.com.au

**Next Operculum due to be published in November
DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES AND PHOTOS**

October 21 2017