



Love Feast – Spring Solstice Dinner

We are delighted to announce the first Spring Solstice dinner will be hosted by the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens at 6.30pm Saturday 22 September.

Like this dinner series, the Gardens are still evolving and we are excited to show you how with a little imagination, some clever lighting, mouth-watering food, interesting areas to explore and acoustic music will transform this space into a palate for our Spring Feast for one night.

What better way to entice you out to a foodie feast as the daffodils bloom amongst the Birch trees? Expect Roman style buffet tables laden with food, Julie on deck as your Cruise Director making sure we all make new friends and presenting some fractured fairy tale touches.

Teena & Stephen Crooks, from Phatt Duck Catering at the Old Bank, are the food aficionados for the night.

This exciting initiative is from Amanda Fry, Founder of Highland Harvest Feasts, who has created a unique set of four annual events to showcase the best of the Highlands region with the changing of each season. We at SHBG are delighted to be involved in this Spring Solstice Dinner - Love Feast and look forward to it being an annual event.

Love Feast tickets are \$145 per person, all inclusive.

Tickets and enquiries at:

<https://wildfoodadventures.com.au/product/lovefeast/>

or by telephone: 02 4877 1742

or email: amanda@wildfoodadventures.com.au.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Can you smell it?

...Spring has arrived!

Over the drab and dreary winter months, when you have been curled up in front of the crackling fire catching up on your pile of garden magazines, the SHBG has been moving full steam ahead. We have engaged our competition winning designers, John Wardle Architects, to complete the first stage of concept plans for the Visitor Centre. Colin Fletcher of Fletcher Douglas Consultants has been working closely with SHBG, Wardle architects and our landscape architects to complete a very detailed business plan to be presented to potential benefactors and government agencies.

We are very pleased to see the business plan anticipates our Gardens will move to a viable business once the Visitor Centre is completed.

We look forward to special 'openings' in November when we celebrate the construction of the new southern entry wall, the native entry garden, the retail nursery setup and new lockers on site. These items have been funded by all three levels of government, along with the IMB. The date for the event is yet to be confirmed.

Please watch your emails.

The gardens themselves continue to develop with lots of planting in the autumn and winter garden.

Most of the new plantings have been grown by the SHBG Plant Growers Group.

We have now planted out the *Sambucus* collection donated by Julie and Craig Hulbert, the Crowe *Camellia* collection and the start of our *Daphne* collection. Our nursery inches ever closer to trading as a retail nursery. Our plants are coming out of winter and hopefully the DA for the retail nursery operation lodged with Council last December will soon be approved.

Charlotte Webb OAM

Mr Daffodil AND Mr Daphne

At our August working bee, Tony Davis (Mr Daffodil/Daphne) brought in a number of *Daphne* blooms to show that *Daphne* varieties and cultivars extend far beyond our normal idea of what is a *Daphne*. He explained how they come in assorted colours, from the standard pink and white to cream and even yellow. Some are deciduous (*Daphne genkwa*), some ground cover (*Daphne cneorum*), others grow up to 3 metres tall (*Daphne bholua*)!

All *Daphne* plants need acidic soil, although there is a common misconception they need to be grown in shade. Several varieties and cultivars not only tolerate sun but actually suffer if planted in shade and will refuse to flower.

Tony brought in some blooms of the recent introductions to the market, 'Perfume Princess' and 'Eternal Fragrance'. Both are exceptional and demand space in any worthy *Daphne* garden. They are sun tolerant and the size and quantity of flowers are outstanding.

The table below shows Tony's comments on the blooms he showed at the working bee - photographs of some of the varieties are on the following page

Daphne species/cultivar	Height (m)	Width (m)	Colour	Flowering Season	Comments
odora	1	1	Pink	Late winter	Excellent cut flower, eastern sun
odora Variegata	1	1	Pink	Late winter	Excellent cut flower, eastern sun
odora Alba	1	1	White	Late winter	Excellent cut flower, eastern sun
odora Alba Variegata	1	1	White	Late winter	Excellent cut flower, semi-shade
bholua	2-3	1	White	May-Sept	Very long flowering. Highly recommended
bholua Jacqueline Postill	2-3	1	Pink	Aug/Sept	Hard to find
burkwoodii	1-1.5	1.5	White/pink	Oct	Covered in flowers for about 3-4 wks. Fine leaf. Highly recommended
cneorum	0.5	1.5	Rose pink	Sept/Oct	Good flower, small leaf. Recommended but hard to find
collina	0.5	1	Deep pink	Oct	Recommended, hard to find
genkwa	0.6	0.6	Lilac	Aug/Sept	Deciduous, flowers well if in full sun
sericea	1	1	Pink/purple	Aug	Semi-deciduous, a bit scruffy but long flowering period
pontica	0.6	0.6	White/yellow	Sept	Will tolerate shade, flowers not obvious but good perfume
Perfume Princess™	2	2	Pink	Aug/Sept	Flowers along stems. Looks like a bigger odora. Highly recommended
Eternal Fragrance™	0.6	1	Pink or white	Any, May-Sept	Very long flowering, small leaves. Highly recommended



Tony Davis & Maureen Purtell
with *Daphne* 'Perfume Princess'



Maureen Purtell
with *Daphne bholua*



Daphne odora



Daphne odora 'Alba'



Daphne bholua



Daphne bholua 'Jacqueline Postill'



Daphne genkwa



Daphne sericea



Daphne 'Perfume Princess'



Daphne 'Eternal Fragrance'



Elvis & his Mum with his amazing birthday cake.



Happy helper, Katherine, putting kites in flying order.



Dylan making his kite



Gemma with her completed kite.



Gemma and Dylan flying their kites.

Kids & Kites

By golly, it was windy. And cold. Bits of clear blue sky and lots of scattng white clouds. But it didn't stop loads of kids and parents from joining us on the Kite Day at the Garden on Sunday, 19th August.

The workshop for kids to build their own kite was full for all four sessions. Kids did their own art work on their kite and the happy helpers put the kite together for them to fly. And fly they did. It was so windy that some of kites got away and parents were chasing them all over the Garden. Face painting was also very popular.

One lucky little boy, Elvis, had his birthday party at the Garden and his mother made an amazing birthday cake that was a colourful train with lots of carriages. Chocolate biscuits made the wheels, paddle-pop sticks made the rail tracks,

the forever favourite Smarties made colourful decoration, together with liquorice sticks and, as soon as Elvis's mum put popcorn on top of the carriages, it disappeared into the mouths of little children. Each carriage was a different brilliant colour. What a lucky little boy.

The BBQ and coffee van were very popular and some families brought a picnic and their own kites. Even though it was very cold and very windy, it was so good to see so many young families out there running around in the open space enjoying themselves.

We love events at the Garden like this and we will have many more of them. There is always a lot of work done by the Volunteers and they step up with bright cheery smiles. It makes for such a successful day.

New Tree for the Garden

This winter an *Acer pseudoplatanus* 'Crimson King', donated by Mittagong Garden Club, was added to the autumn woodland. This is a large growing maple with purple leaves during most of the growing season, turning into vibrant autumn colours. Very eye-catching, making a statement in any garden. It needs lots of room to grow so our spacious gardens are just the place.

Over 30 members of the Mittagong Garden Club, led by President Nancy Wood, celebrated the donation of their tree by inviting each of their members to help 'plant' the tree.



Visitor to the Garden We had a short, but welcome, visit from Stephen Jones, Member for Whitlam, last week. Stephen has always been a great supporter of the Garden and he came to have a quick catch up on how the Garden is going and growing and to visit his beloved Eucalypt. After a short walk around part of the Garden, he took a moment to become acquainted with "Leaping Frog" and gave us a letter of support for a large grant that we are applying for currently. (See separate article on how you can give your support for this grant.)

Stephen also gave us a few tips, inside information and how he can further help us proceed with other grants from the Federal Government.



How YOU can help develop the Garden. We are applying for a large grant to pay for substantial developments in the Gardens. The success rate for grants is very low and getting lower as more not-for-profit organisations are all after a piece of the same pie.

But you can help us with this one by going to the website: <https://shbg.com.au/about/survey> reading all about the grant we are seeking and filling in a short survey. It should take no more than 10 minutes of your time.

Please fill in the survey by 14 September. And tell all your friends they can fill it in too. We would love to hear from you and your friends.



Open Garden – Les & Elaine Musgrave

We see what happens at the Botanic Garden through working bees, events etc. But have you wondered about the personal gardens of those who guide us? Meet Les and Elaine Musgrave.

The Musgraves 'retired' (as if) to the Highlands from the lower blue mountains to Wildes Meadow in the Southern Highlands to a garden designed by Chris Webb. Les set about making the garden his own, with offerings from the gardens of amazing cool climate plants to Elaine, a botanical artist of international repute.

Over the past few years Les has settled into *The Kaya*, morphing his surrounds to meet his expectations, including an incredible low water gravel and parterre garden, a feature meadow garden and a stunning array of plants nurtured by a born plantsman.

Les and Elaine will have their garden open on 20/21 October in aid of SHBG. Please come along and support a garden craftsman, a botanical artist and the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens. Entry \$10 per person - pay at the gate.



Charlie's dinner

Holding a fundraising dinner in the middle of July, knowing that the weather would be cold, did not deter loads of people from booking to hear Charlie Albone give a very enthralling talk. We could have sold twice the number of tickets that were available and there was a long waiting list until the event. Charlie entertained over 130 people at the Bendooley Restaurant on a cool Sunday night on 22 July.

The evening started with drinks and canapes in the bar area where guests were treated to the music of Darren Powell.

Once seated in the spacious but cosy room, the night went with a real buzz. Everyone was happy. Graeme Day, from 2ST Radio, welcomed all the guests and set out the night's activities. Charlotte said a few

words to bring everyone up to date on where the Garden development was up to and the need to raise lots of funds to do the serious building of the Visitor Centre and the Garden.

There was plenty of food, all served from share platters on the table followed by a buffet dessert. Wine just kept flowing. Charlie entertained us with his exploits in entering the Chelsea Flower Show in 2016 and again in 2017, when he won a Silver-Gilt Medal on both occasions. He told us of the trials and tribulations of trying to create a garden in three weeks, in a foreign country, with trades people he didn't know, with no connections to suppliers and in the miserable rain. At least they speak the same language in England. He wasn't shy about the mistakes he made and learnt from, saying that the criticism in the first year of his hedge being quite pathetically thin, was corrected in the second year with an overgrown and dense hedge to make people drool over. His slides were gorgeous, as you would expect, and they just kept coming to the delight of everyone. After being invited back, he is now planning his entry for 2019.

The local community businesses stepped up on the night and donated money and prizes for a silent auction, all to help with the development of the Garden. As the night was a fundraising event, all the proceeds went to the Garden's building appeal.

The sponsors were: Yes Your Event Solution, The Bookshop Bowral, Welby Garden Centre, Bowral Signs, The Agency – Ben Olofsen, Mt Murray Nursery and Wilkinson Throsby & Edwards, solicitors.

Those who made significant contributions to the silent auction were: Centennial Vineyards Restaurant, Fish Music, Chef in Your Kitchen – Narelle Blackadder, Original London Black Cab, Antique Barley Twist, The Countryman Bowral, Harry's on Green Lane Bowral, portrait commission by artist John Brain.



Ian welcoming the participants



James demonstrating the art of hedge laying



The tools for the job.

Hedge Laying Workshop

A cold frosty morning couldn't deter the enthusiasm of the twenty participants who gathered for the workshop at Oldbury Farm, Sutton Forest. Oldbury's many kilometres of layed hedges provided the perfect classroom for this ancient art. James Boxall, one of Tasmania's leading hedge layers in conjunction with Ian Carrol, the head gardener at Oldbury, led the workshop.

After an initial familiarisation of hedge laying history and styles, the workshop headed out for an exploration of the Oldbury hedges and a brief practical display of laying a hedge. Terms such as pleachers, binders, double brush, Midland, billhook were used widely and frequently. We slowly began to understand some of the finer points.

After lunch we were given a hands on opportunity to tackle a hedge being re-layed under the watchful eyes of James and Ian, a fascinating and daunting challenge. This day proved to be a unique experience for everyone attending and we all appreciated the enthusiasm and knowledge shared by James and Ian for this ancient art. How many new layed hedges will appear across the district? Watch this space!!!

Chris Webb



The new Nursery working bees

What fun we had in August at the first working bee which focussed just on the nursery.

So much fun that we slipped in an extra nursery working bee the next week! We just assumed winter was finished and treated all our nursery plants accordingly by cutting back, trimming, pruning, nipping, feeding, potting up etc.

Well - we were rewarded! Winter didn't finish, actually it was harder than before we cut back, even down to minus 5 celsius. BUT!! How we nurtured the plants at that working bee allowed them to withstand the cold and start growing.

As our nursery moves to retail operation, it will become a major focus of the gardens to present our plants to visitors of the Gardens as an absolute **'MUST TAKE HOME'** item. We will eventually propagate from plants that are growing in the Gardens, but in the meantime, just plants suitable for the Southern Highlands.

The nursery will become a major income stream throughout the year, whether on site or in garden openings in aid of SHBG. As we grow we will become **THE 'Go To'** place for plants suitable for our climate, which features all four seasons. If you would like to join us in presenting plants ready for sale at all times of the year, please come along to our Nursery working bees on the 3rd Wednesday afternoon of the month, 2-4pm. We may even recruit you to the sales team!

Note from Charlotte

In case anyone is interested - here is a close up picture of the 4 purple leaf plums currently in flower in Lion's Park in Bowral and along Bowral Street. I have added their names under each flower. The double flowered *Prunus blireana* and the single *Prunus cerasifera* 'Nigra' are both quite common, easy to find and often used as street trees in the district. *Prunus Wrightii* is only occasionally available, but the double pale pink *Prunus* 'Moseri' is hard to find. The street tree planting, including the corner cherry which flowers later are possibly a street tree planting by Claude Crowe of Berrima Bridge Nursery.



Prunus cerasifera nigra, *Prunus Wrightii*, *Prunus x blireana* 'Moseri', *Prunus x blireana*



Prunus x blireana,

Prunus Wrightii, *Prunus x blireana* 'Moseri'

HELPING WITH CHILDREN

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 will need to get a **Working With Children Check** which is **free** and then register the number with SHBG.

It is easy 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 go to the Service NSW office in Mittagong to show your photo ID and your Notification will come through in a couple of hours.

Forward the approval number and your date of birth to info@SHBG.com.au. for the register

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 22nd September
Love Feast – Spring Solstice Dinner
in the Gardens

\$145 per person all inclusive

Tickets and enquiries at:

<https://wildfoodadventures.com.au/highland-harvest-feasts/>

Sat/Sun 20/21st October

Open garden & plant sale - 10am - 4pm

The Kaya, 68 Cleary's Lane, Wildes Meadow
Entry \$10 in aid of SHBG - pay at the gate.

Saturday 8th December

Christmas Picnic & Hydrangea Sale
5 - 7pm in the Gardens



Working Bees

1st Tuesday of every month
10am - noon

Wear comfortable clothes, hat & gloves
Enjoy a friendly chat over a cup of tea.

Nursery Working Bee
3rd Wednesday of every month
2pm - 4pm

Thank you in advance for your support - it is always appreciated

Southern Highlands
Botanic Gardens Ltd
PO Box 707
Moss Vale, NSW 2577 Australia

1 Old South Road
Bowral NSW 2576
Telephone: 02 4861 4899

Next Operculum due to be
published in December.
Deadline for articles & photographs
1st November

Editor@shbg.com.au
Newsletter collated by Jeanne Villani
4862 5136