



# Operculum

The Southern Highlands Botanic  
Gardens Inc

Newsletter No. 7

May 2011

## **Film Night Special- Russian Ark**

Friends of the SHBG invite you to a special screening on Thursday 26 May 2011 at the Empire Cinema of the acclaimed film 'Russian Ark'—a unique journey through time and Russian history—filmed entirely in St Petersburg at the State Hermitage Museum in one, uninterrupted take. This film is not to be missed!

Time: 5pm for 5.30pm

Cost: \$20 (refreshments are included).

Tickets are available from the Empire Cinema.

## **New Developments**

We are forging ahead with the development of the Botanic Gardens. Work is currently underway officially closing the disused road, consolidating the numerous Lots, which make up the site, designing the car park and the new access off Old South Road. The committee is hard at work developing policies for accepting donations for trees and garden furniture. We have recently joined the umbrella association for botanic gardens BGANZ (Botanic Gardens of Australia and New Zealand) and the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens.

Our first development application has been lodged with Council for a boundary fence and signs to identify the site. We are awaiting approval.

Now the hard work starts raising funds for the design for the Botanic Gardens, the fence and the signs.

Thanks to the Friends' efforts with the Town and Country Weekend, last year's Swing night and some very generous donations from both individuals and garden clubs, we have some funds to put towards these projects. Unfortunately we do not have enough to fund either the design or the fencing entirely. We are now pursuing all avenues of funding, including Government and private grants. Ironically neither design nor fencing has been eligible for funding so far.

Once we have the design of the gardens in place we can commence specific projects, such as the upgrading of the water-course, the children's garden and planting our collections, including Arbutus, Betula, species maples and a Shale Woodland which is identified as one of our Endangered Ecological Communities

For those who may be interested in making a donation to help with funding of these projects we are able to offer tax deductibility for any donation over \$2.

### **Website development**

Not only do we have a website [www.shbg.com.au](http://www.shbg.com.au) to keep you up-to-date, but we are now on Twitter and Facebook. Visit our website and follow the links.



*Charlotte Webb, President*

## ***Town and Country Open Garden Weekend***

In spite of the showers and prospects of further rain, over 1,100 people attended the first Town and Country Gardens Weekend on 16/17 April.

The six gardens were all beautifully prepared and attracted great admiration while the botanical art exhibition at 'Prittlewell' was superb. Patricia Copes has kindly donated one of her original paintings for a raffle. This is on display at the BDCU in Bowral and tickets will be available at the Film Night on 26 May when the raffle will be drawn.



*Ready for action*

Sculptures in Tony and Ann Emmett's garden were of great interest and others integrated into the landscape at Bruce Rosenberg's property, *Yarrawa*, produced some surprises, especially the giant spider in his web. Deidre Hill's *Quindalup* hosted the large plant stall where many bargains were picked up by locals and visitors alike, thanks to Maureen Purtell and Tony Davis and their team of propagators and helpers.

Judy Keast and the Highlands Garden Society Floral Art Group staged an impressive display of floral arrangements in Merryleigh and John Brindley's summerhouse, while Peter and Carol Scott's *Linden Cottage* was much admired for its perennial borders, rare trees and large landscaped pond.

Our thanks to the garden owners, all the gatekeepers and helpers and other friends of the SHBG who contributed to the occasion, which resulted in over \$26,000 being added to the SHBG finances.

*Ted Duncan (Chairman)*

### ***Donations***

Financial support is required for a number of urgent activities including fencing, the design development and landscaping works.

A white form is enclosed for you to complete if you would like to make a donation either as a memorial or just as a gift to the SHBG. All donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible.

### ***Maples***

The oaks, Sorbus, Nyssa and Cotinus and other plants may reach the semi-finals for autumn colour but only the maples reach the finals. To attest to that, millions of people visit Japan, Eastern USA and Canada each 'Fall' to look at the spectacular colours of Japanese, red and sugar maples associated with the changing season. This is also a reason maples in their various forms have become such popular garden plants.

The genus *Acer* (maples) includes many trees and shrubs with a variety of other attractions with approximately 200 species and sub-species (116 from China alone) and now over one thousand garden cultivars.



*Acer truncatum* – a species from north-east China

Originally all from the Northern Hemisphere (except one from Java), Acers are identified as having leaves in pairs and ‘winged’ seed called samaras. Apart from that there is a variety of leaf forms, bark colour and texture, plant size and shape with many so different as to be unrecognisable as maples by the inexperienced. Some e.g., *Acer fabri*, are even evergreen and though lacking the autumn display, make up for it with colourful new spring growth.



*Acer hersii*

Many maples are grown for their interesting bark. *Acer griseum* with its peeling mahogany coloured bark is always notable. Another group of about twenty species is collectively known as ‘snake-bark’ maple and these trees have smooth green bark with coloured vertical stripes. *Acer capillipes*

from Japan and *Acer hersii* from China are two examples.



*Acer palmatum Linearilobum*

The variety of maple to choose will depend on one’s need. For a large specimen tree: *Acers saccharum*, *cappadocicum*, *platanoides* or *rubrum* are suitable and reliable in autumn. They can tolerate full sun, though *Acer rubrum* may be susceptible to high winds. It does, however, cope with wet ground and some of its newer garden varieties have the most vibrant autumn colour.

For garden beds, many of the species are suitable but unfortunately rarely available. It is here that Japanese maples excel with their variety in plant and leaf shape and spring or autumn colour. Though there are about 30 different maple species from Japan, only the cultivars of *Acer japonicum* and the three sub-species of *Acer palmatum* are considered ‘Japanese Maples’.

Paradoxically, two of these also come from China. There are probably over 400 cultivars now available with the beautiful dissectum group amongst the most sought after culminating each autumn in spectacular fiery shows. Most of these need some sun-protection in hot weather when young but are remarkably resilient after a few years despite their delicate foliage. They will grow

in most soils but there may be some die back in times of stress such as prolonged dry spells.

*Simon Grant*



### **Member profile**

Simon Grant and his wife Mariese have lived in the Southern Highlands for twenty-six years. During this time they have established *Coombe Wood*, a 3.4-hectare garden with roses, bulbs, conifers, azaleas, rhododendrons (including many rare and unusual species). Medical practitioners by trade, they are self-taught gardeners and now propagate most of their plants.

Maples have become a passion over recent years and the collection at Coombe Wood now includes over 75 different species and sub-species and a similar number of different cultivars. Many are very rare and have been raised from seed. Simon has recently had an article published in *The Maple Society Newsletter* describing a technique to break maple seed dormancy developed from his own experience with difficult species.

They are both members of the Southern Highlands Garden Society and the Heritage Rose Society as well as the International Maple Society.

### **Renewal of Membership Due**

If you haven't already paid your Friends membership for June 2011 to June 2012, please complete the enclosed cream form and return it to:

SHBG, PO Box 707, Moss Vale, 2577

Please note, if you joined after 1 April 2011 your membership is paid until June 2012.

### **Invitation to Dinner. . .**

Please make a note in your diary for 20 August 2011. A special dinner is planned at the Centennial Vineyard. More will be revealed soon.

### **Friends of the SHBG Committee**

The committee comprises:

Ted Duncan (Chair)

Graeme Campbell, Ian and Carolyn Dwyer,

Shandra Egan, Judy Keast, Peter Scott,

Noel and Elizabeth Symonds

### **Executive Committee of SHBG**

President: Charlotte Webb

Vice-President: Ross Stone

Secretary: Jacqui Page

Treasurer: Jan Edwards

Members: David Cummins, Martin Laverty,  
Geoff MacBean, David Ross,  
Chris Webb

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### **Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Incorporated**

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