



Southern Highlands
Botanic Gardens

OPERCULUM

April 2020

TEDDY BEAR HUNT



At a time of isolation and physical distancing, let alone the thoughts of what the future might look like post Covid19, many of us are finding alternate ways to lift our spirits, socialise and brighten our day. Many innovative ideas demonstrate the strength of the human spirit to overcome and support one another.

Our children find the current environment difficult to understand and parents look for ways to make them feel secure with some sense of their usual family activities.

We felt that we too could help our own community at the Botanic Gardens which remain open daily.

Welcome to the Teddy Bear Hunt!

Scattered amongst the Botanic Gardens are 16 cute (and cuddly) Teddy Bears and friends. All you have to do is find them. Some are more obvious to find than others but that's the challenge!

Bring your friends and family and start counting.

Each week the Teddy Bears and friends will move around the garden so don't expect to find them all in the same place on your return visits.

We hope that this activity will help lighten your day and entertain yourself or younger ones whilst remembering physical distancing.

And you get to see how the gardens are growing and expanding.

Ross Stone

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

What a season! From the disasters of bushfire and drought to the economic, health and social impacts of the current Corona Virus pandemic we have all been impacted.

Every cloud has a silver lining and ours is the support from our volunteers! During the extreme heat, drought and bushfires volunteers turned up regularly to ensure our plants were OK. Even over the Christmas period, when family activities take precedence, our volunteers watered new and young plants in the gardens three times a week.

Now physical distancing measures have been brought in our volunteers have again stepped up to undertake their physical exercise in the gardens by weeding and barrowing mulch.

Consequently, the gardens are looking terrific!

Flowering, flourishing and welcoming so many visitors partaking in passive exercise and the exciting Teddy Bear hunts.

When you visit the gardens be sure to visit the meadow labyrinth designed by Jane Cush. Originally an exhibition for our postponed Earth Hour Sculpture in the Gardens, volunteer Peter Scott has meticulously maintained the labyrinth as an attraction for all visitors to the garden.

Charlotte Webb OAM

LEARNING TO LOVE THE PLANT WORLD: EDUCATION IN THE BOTANIC GARDENS.

As most of you would be aware, one of the core concepts of a botanic gardens includes a focus on education. At SHBG we have begun working to uncover ways we can help nurture and support our local primary school children in the relevant curriculum areas related to the Gardens. There is scope for developing programs related to art, geography, science and mathematics. Activities such as mapping the plants and trees in the Gardens, exploring the special nature of a botanic garden, making art, collecting, discovering the different pollinators of plants and the interconnectedness of nature are just some of the valuable (and fun) learning experiences that can be explored. We have been consulting with local primary schools, especially for years 3-6, and hope to have our programs in place, ready to offer in 2021. There is an opportunity to get involved in being an ambassador for the visiting class groups. We need volunteers with an interest in joining the groups from time to time and helping out with a bit of Garden background.

We are keen to get as many Friends as possible to obtain their Working With Children accreditation. This allows us to safely accept interaction with our younger visitors. Obtaining your Working with Children is easy, free and highly recommended. Apply on line at

<https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/apply-working-children-check>

This will allow you to work as a volunteer with anyone under 18 years of age. It not only helps us to provide a safe environment for both you and our young students but also allows contact with children at any of our events or workshops. We look forward to adding you to our Working With Children database, and enjoying our role as an integral part of the local learning community!

MOVIE UNDER THE STARS



Following the significant impact of last summer's bushfires and the amazing work of our local Rural Fire Services, we hosted "Movie Under the Stars" onsite to raise funds for Wingecarribee Fire Sheds.

The evening featured a boxed dinner provided by Centennial Vineyards Restaurant and the screening of "Hidden Figures" the story of four African American women who helped launch the US space program. Although there were threatening skies – and rain beforehand – the event went ahead and raised \$6000 that has been distributed to all Wingecarribee Brigades.

Thank you everyone for helping make this a success and an opportunity to "give back" to our own heroes during a very dark time.

NEW GRANT TO EXTEND NETWORK OF PATHS

During this down-time with COVID-19, we are pleased that we can proceed with outdoor work in the garden. Work will soon begin on creating a new gravel pathway over one kilometre in length that meanders all over a vast area of the garden that has not been easily accessible until now. The pathway will be wheelchair friendly and will open up the northern section of the garden nearest to Old South Road, creating a new point of interest for visitors to enjoy.

This project is possible because of a NSW Government grant. The loops and bends in the pathway will be dotted with signage to inform the visitor of features they can expect to see when the garden is fully developed. Seating in selected locations, with attractive adjacent landscaping, will direct the view to a new aspect of the garden that has not before been opened up. The timing for this construction will give the locals something to look forward to. A fresh look, together with a new activity to enjoy in the garden will be welcome. By that time we might have more to enjoy with our outdoor activities with the new season bringing a fresh look when they visit the garden for exercise and fresh air.

PLAYGROUND



We are very excited to see the children's playground taking shape and it won't be long before everyone can enjoy the new addition to the Gardens. Unfortunately, playgrounds are not able to open during the Covid19 lockdown..... but there is going to be a big party once the lockdowns are relaxed when everyone will be invited to the official opening of the playground.

The playground funding was made available from grants funds from My Community Project (NSW Government) following a competitive round of applications that included so many people in the community supporting our proposed playground.

The playground features colourful animals and moving elements for little ones with softfall underneath. Completion is expected by the end of April. When you visit the Garden, you will see firsthand the progress to date.

Unfortunately, it needs to be fenced off until restrictions are lifted but visit us regularly and keep an eye out for the opening.

Thank you everyone. We couldn't have done it without you!

Ross Stone



SHBG's RECOGNITION OF DONORS

SHBG is implementing a formal policy to recognise all the people and corporations who have made a donation to the garden of \$500 or more in a financial year. We appreciate all the donations made by the community and want to acknowledge the generosity and continued support of individuals and corporations. Donors will be recognised as a Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum or Diamond Supporter, depending on the amount donated in any one financial year.

Public recognition of donations received from 2010 will be made with donor names included on an honour board to be included on the SHBG website and in the Annual Report, unless the donor elects not to be recognised.

Those who have made specific-purpose donations, eg for a large project, bench or tree, will be separately recognised by a plaque located on or near that object or item.

Donors will receive an email asking if they would like to be publicly recognised or remain anonymous.

A more detailed explanation of the SHBG policy for recognition of donors can be found on the website at <https://shbg.com.au/support-us/donations/donation-policy/>

EXERCISE VENUE

Have you considered using the Botanic Gardens for your passive exercise? As a change from walking the street or exercising at home, the Gardens are open every day and provide large grassed areas and roadways where you can meander, walk or jog in the surrounds of a beautiful blooming garden, shrubs and established trees.

You can connect to the concrete walkway in the Eastern end of the gardens via Kangaloon Rd and follow that through the planned native garden area into East Bowral. It is a delightful walk that provides a vista at every angle and helps to appreciate the size and growing development of the site This is your garden so come and use for your exercise.

ENDANGERED ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITY TO BE RE- ESTABLISHED

A new native garden is to be established at the eastern end along the cycle path and will commence during the latter part of 2020. This is a project funded by the Federal Government under its Community Environment Program and will have a large volunteer contribution. Plantings will occupy over one acre and will include many species from the endangered ecological community, Southern Highlands Shale Woodlands. Many of the seeds and plants for the project have been supplied by Wingecaribee Shire Council. Special signage will inform and educate passers-by about this native garden and how it will enhance both the flora and fauna in that area.

SHBG ENDEMIC WATTLE (ACACIA SP) COLLECTION.

Earlier this year we had a discussion with Jennifer Slattery, the WSC Bushcare team leader, regarding planting a collection of wattles (*Acacia* sp) which are endemic to the Southern Highlands in the native area of the SHBG. As fortune would have it, Jennifer was able to share with us some of the seed that they had collected locally. Charlotte was then set the task of germinating them, and wattles being wattles they all germinated very well, even seed which was collected in 2006. We now have many pots of baby wattles growing on in the nursery.



Seeds being grown on ready to plant for this project

The collection of wattles include *Acacia decurrens*, *A. longifolia*, *A. mearnsii*, *A. melanoxyton*, *A. rubida*, *A. stricta*, *A. elata*, *A. suaveolens*, *A. dealbata*, *A. linifolia*, *A. elongata*, *A. myrtifolia* and *A. ulicifolia*

Our concept is to plant these wattles in large drifts on the slope between the bike path and the houses in Tannery Row. They will not only provide a stunning seasonal display in late winter to early spring but we will utilise their speedy growth to provide shelter to our next project in this area which is to establish a specimen display of a collection of Australian native conifers. There is always something happening in the SHBG!!

Chris Webb

Jenny Simons & Jeanne Villani have been creating an index of all the garden articles in *Highlife* magazine since it's inception to be used as resource available for anyone wanting to do research on that particular topic.

The collection of issues is almost complete with a few exceptions and we are wondering whether anyone has the following issues they would be prepared to donate to the collection.

Volume 1- issues 3,4,5,6. / Vol. 2 & 3 - all issues missing./ Vol.8 issues 5,6./ Vol.12 issue 2./ Vol. 17 issue1/Vol.18 issue 6
IF YOU ARE PREPARED TO DONATE ANY OF THESE ISSUES PLEASE DROP THEM INTO THE OFFICE AT THE GARDENS



Working Bees
cancelled until further notice

**EVENTS WILL BE
ANNOUNCED JUST AS
SOON AS WE ARE
ALLOWED TO
CONDUCT THEM**

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 admin@SHBG.com.au. for the register

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