

*Friendship through gardening*

#### NEXT CLUB MEETING

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> April 9.30 for 10am

#### FRIENDSHIP GARDENS

None this month

#### HELPING HANDS WORKING BEE

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> April 9am

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#### BUNDANOON GARDEN CLUB INC

E: [gardenclubbundanoon@gmail.com](mailto:gardenclubbundanoon@gmail.com)

W: [www.bundanoongardenclub.com.au](http://www.bundanoongardenclub.com.au)

A: PO Box 25 Bundanoon 2578

#### Committee

**President:** Phillip (Ted) Ayers

M: 0403 135 873

E: [gardenclubbundanoon.president@gmail.com](mailto:gardenclubbundanoon.president@gmail.com)

**Vice President:** Faye Dillon

**Secretary:** Tessa Spencer

M: 0435 193 353

E: [gardenclubbundanoon.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:gardenclubbundanoon.secretary@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Alison Trotter

#### Newsletter

**Editor:** David Humphrey

E: [dghumphrey@hotmail.com](mailto:dghumphrey@hotmail.com)

T: 4883 6634

**Contributions welcome**

## President's Report

Well, our planned meeting and away-day at Harpers Mansion has unfortunately been postponed till September or October. Our April meeting will be in the hall as usual. The long-range forecast is rain, rain, and more rain. I spoke with Chris Thompson, the head gardener at Harper's Mansion, earlier today (Thursday) when we had a brief respite from the downpour. Chris commented that the grass was knee-high and they were just about to attempt to mow a pathway around the garden. The grounds are so sodden that they can't use a ride-on mower!

Oh well, what to do? We are the lucky ones.

As I gaze out at my garden the fuchsia and wind-flowers are bobbing about in the wind, the Waverley Salvia is coming to an end, while the Roman Red Salvia has just started to pop (it flowers well into June). The real heroes in my garden are the Plectranthus. White, pink, and mauve flowers are springing up everywhere. Snails aren't interested in them, they will flower well into winter and when I cut them back, I can strike them and they will take. With so much shade in our garden these beacons of light sparkle through the wind and rain. Autumn leaves are falling as the Luculia, Camelia and Rhododendron are budding up and the first flowers on our pink Kanzi Azalea have popped.



It might be cold and wet, but it's still a magical time of year.

**Ted Ayers – President.**

# Out & About by Ted



## April Speaker

Our special guest speaker for April is one of our life members Graeme Whisker. Graeme's subject is "all things conifers". Conifers are an excellent family of plants, that are particularly relevant to a cold climate garden. They are ecologically important, even in counties where they are not native. I've seen Graeme's presentation and it's very interesting and we all know that Graeme is an excellent and entertaining speaker.

## Berrima Historical Society

On a recent outing to Berrima, I was very happy to find that the Berrima District Historical Society had its museum open again. We were lucky to meet Bud Townsing who was involved in the curation of the current exhibition "Gardens and Landscapes of the Southern Highlands – Now and Then." It's a very interesting and exciting digital exhibition. There are ten screens displaying over 200 years of landscaping and gardens in the Highlands. Most of the screens have over 50 images of each of the gardens they represent. (Including Carlie and Bruce's garden.)



Bud explained that the exhibition is open on the weekends. If you can't get out and garden, perhaps you might like to drop into the historic museum and have a look. It's well worth it. The museum is just to your right on the Old Hume Highway, on the corner of Bryan St, as you are leaving Berrima to Moss Vale.

## Autumn Gold

The trees are changing colour, the nights are getting cooler and we are truly into my favourite season – Autumn. Time to start collecting leaves to make leaf mulch! Remember my video last year on "how to", we'll post it again. Rick Shepherd from Retford Park is another evangelist for compost.

## Our May Guest Speaker



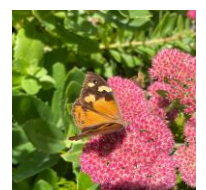
We will have the pleasure of welcoming Dianne van Gaal from Antonia's Irises in Orange to our stage. Dianne and her partner own and run Antonia's Irises, a unique iris farm, brewery, and function centre in the NSW Central West. Their passion for irises has led their plant farm to become one of the most



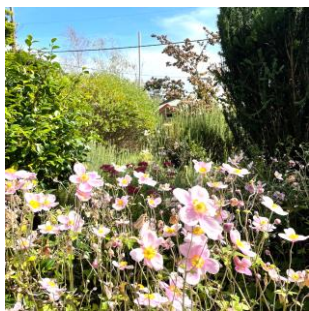
reputable online retailers, specialising in bearded iris. They will be giving us a practical demonstration on how best to separate and pot-on iris, showing us the many cultivars they stock, and sharing information about how to grow and care for these wonderful flowers. There will be rare and exotic iris rhizomes available for purchase on the day.

## Working Bee

Our working bee in March has set us up for a productive April. It was great to have new members Ross and Janet came along to help. We mulched and weeded in Nancy Kingsbury Memorial Park, the Gardens of Memories, and the Southern Villages Memorial was given a good clean up in readiness for A.N.Z.A.C Day. Laurel, Cat, Tessa, Steve, Amy, John, Faye, and I were on-hand to help. Our next Working Bee is on 21st April. We need help to finish off the Southern Villages Memorial for the A.N.Z.A.C. Day ceremony. Ideally, we need someone with a ute so we can pick up chip. If you're available, please let me know – [gardenclubbundanoon.president@gmail.com](mailto:gardenclubbundanoon.president@gmail.com) or phone 0403 135 873.







In the Garden of Memories the windflowers need to be cut back as the rain has sadly all but obliterated them, the box hedges need clipping and the roses need to be dead-headed.

Down at Nancy Kingsbury, we have new oak-leaf hydrangeas to be planted in the side bed. This is a wonderful shrub with beautiful autumn colour.



## A.N.Z.A.C. Day 2022

We'll be making and laying a wreath on behalf of the Garden Club at the A.N.Z.A.C. ceremony on the 25th of April. If you'd like to help or make your own, please let me know. [gardenclubbundanoon.president@gmail.com](mailto:gardenclubbundanoon.president@gmail.com) or phone 0403 135 873.



## Too many tomatoes?



We've had so many tomatoes this season we've hardly been able to keep up! Traditional passata has no skin or seeds, but I'm a little lazy and most of my tomatoes are cherry tomatoes or small. I'd be there for a month of Sundays trying to sieve these things out. So, I simply put all the tomatoes in a pot, with ½ cup of water and cook them. The most important thing to do is to just keep stirring. You don't want the tomatoes to catch, nothing spoils the flavour like burnt tomatoes. Once the fruit has completely broken down carefully ladle the hot tomatoes into sterilized bottles (the easiest and quickest way to sterilise the bottles is to run them through the dishwasher on hot). Be careful, the tomatoes will be scaldingly hot. Fill to the very top, seal and then place the hot bottle in a cold water bath. You'll notice air escape. Place on a tea towel. You might hear a "pop" as your cap expands. Place in a cupboard and use as required. Remember, you've added nothing, so when you use it in your cooking add salt, pepper, garlic or basil etc to taste.



**Ted.**

## Friendship Gardens

Thanks to Michelle Waters for hosting our Friendship Gardens last month. She rightly predicted, with the aid of four weather apps on her phone, that on the morning of Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> March there would be a break in the rain, and sure enough the sun shone until the afternoon!



The 'Secret Garden' visit was a casualty of just too much rain. Kathy Finigan invites us back over the long weekend at the beginning of October to see the Alpine phlox in full flight.



There will not be Friendship Gardens this month, and in consultation with the garden hosts for May, with the expected continuation of excessive rainfall, we have decided to cancel and start again in September.

**Carlie and David.**



According to the BOM, La Niña hasn't finished with us yet. As I write this, I have just been emailed that Brigadoon has been postponed, and if the oval is anything like my lawn, I am not at all surprised! With all that is happening in other parts of the world, and indeed with the devastating floods in northern NSW and Queensland, we are so fortunate to be in our relatively safe haven (bush fires notwithstanding) of Bundanoon. Our garden club members have adopted the 'stiff upper lip' approach (excuse my 'pommy' metaphor) and battle on, even still offering to open their slightly battered gardens in friendship.

My veggie garden is still a mess and way behind for the time of year. I have harvested twenty plus butternut pumpkins, and in trying to harden them off have found half going mouldy. To save the seed from my climbing beans I need to pick the pods and dry inside before they rot, and I must dig the balance of my Dutch Cream potatoes before they start to reshoot. Last year our first frost was 13<sup>th</sup> April, but with the cloud cover that should not be a problem this month. With the warmer temperatures it might even be possible to sow some seed if the rain eases, and get the rest of my brassicas, all grown from seed, into the ground.



The garden is a mess!



Over the past couple of months I have three times sown carrot seeds, and all have failed to germinate. In the protection of the greenhouse I have lettuce, rocket, radish and spring onions growing. Outdoor tomatoes I am picking and ripening inside on a window sill, and soon will remove the whole plants and hang upside down as explained in the item later in this newsletter. One success – finally some cucumbers in the greenhouse on the one surviving Lebanese specimen that was planted on 2<sup>nd</sup> November! The end of the month is my time for sowing broad beans and sugar snap peas while the soil is still relatively warm, which follows the potatoes in my crop rotation, if I can manage to prepare the bed.

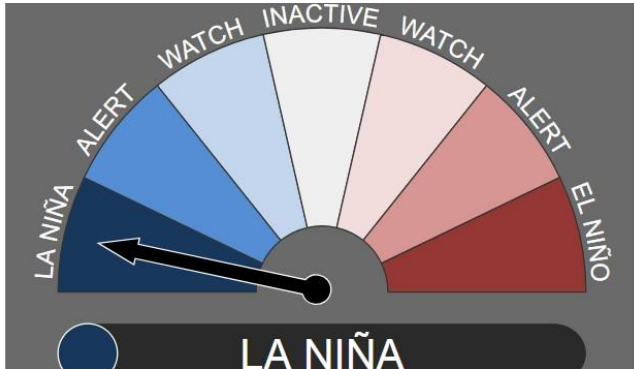
So have I had any successes in 2021-22? Blackberries undoubtably! Strawberries before the rain. Great greenhouse tomatoes. Good harvests of broad beans, sugar snap and snow peas, asparagus, leeks, onions, beetroot, early carrots, potatoes and sweetcorn. The first half of the season showed such promise, but quickly it went down hill in 22.

One reminder when you do begin sowing or planting. The continuous rainfall will have washed out lots of nutrients from your soil, especially from raised beds. So a feed of blood and bone and some slow release organic pelletised manure would be good, with a thick covering of compost or mulch.

You can still plant or sow as last month while the soil is still warm, but again don't let them drown!

# Rain, rain, go away...

*In the first nine days of March the Bundanoon Anglican Church registered 500mm of rainfall! Not much compared to the deluge received in other parts of NSW and in Queensland, but certainly enough to considerably affect our gardens.*



The BOM's latest climate driver update has indicated the rain-bearing La Niña is set to hang around for a while longer yet.

The La Niña passed its peak in January and had been slowly declining but it is now looking like the climate driver could linger until late autumn.

Not good news for those sitting in already sodden catchments.

<https://apple.news/AlpHSZgvzRIOPRQIGocNldQ>

*I have found some websites offering advice, both for rectifying the damage to our gardens, and planning for a repeat occurrence which will, with climate change, unfortunately be inevitable.*



## Costa's tips for restoring your garden after flooding

Costa says there are some garden work required early to stop certain processes that may have begun with waterlogging a key risk.

"[With] waterlogging in the soil, what happens is that the water replaces the oxygen, and the pores of the soil basically get no oxygen, [or] the oxygen gets forced out.

"That affects root growth in the plants; plants in waterlogged soil start to show symptoms, they will start to wilt.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-03-05/how-to-restore-your-garden-after-flooding/100881372>

## Rainproof Gardening & Recovering After Floods



Many parts of Australia have experienced masses of rainfall and wet weather systems in the past few years, which has led to severe flooding events. Though water is essential for all life on Earth, too much of it can be destructive, not only to homes and infrastructure but also plants in the garden.

We have put together some tips that we hope will help you in the garden during these weather extremes.

<https://www.mrfothergills.com.au/pages/post/rainproof-flood-gardening>

### Creating a raised vegetable garden



There are many benefits to having a raised garden bed to grow vegetables. Raised garden beds are easier to maintain, have less weeds, prevent soil compaction and provide **good drainage**.

Raised garden beds can either be constructed from recycled timber, sleepers, corrugated iron, bricks or straw bales. They are also a great way to for beginners to start growing their own vegetables.

<https://www.richgro.com.au/garden-tips/creating-a-raised-vegetable-garden/>

**Editor.**



## Autumn Sowing Guide



Autumn marks the start of the Winter crop sowing season. Before you get busy planting, take the time while the patch is empty to condition your soil by adding some compost or well-rotted manure, and replenish the mulch to keep the soil warm during the cooler months ahead.

### What to plant now

Now is the time to transplant your Brassica seedlings such as **Cabbage, Broccoli** and **Cauliflower** into the garden. These need cool weather to form solid heads, so get them in early to reduce the chance of them bolting and going to seed.

Soup season is coming so why not try growing favourites like **Leek, Onion, Celery, Parsnip** and **Peas** for a truly hearty, homemade/home grown soup... YUM!

We can't leave flowers off the list. There are plenty of flower varieties suitable for the cooler weather. Favourites such as **Lavender, Pansies, Poppies** and **Sweet Peas** are ideal to sow now.

April is a key month in the bulb growing calendar. Spring Flowering Bulbs such as **Anemones, Daffodils, Dutch Iris, Hyacinths, Ranunculi** and **Tulips** are available for planting now so they have time to set root and grow, ready to flower in the Spring.

Don't forget that you can also sow all-year-round favourites such as **Carrots, Radish, Beetroot, Lettuce** and most **herbs** this season too!

<https://www.mrfothergills.com.au>

## Ripening tomatoes upside down

The theory with this technique is that a tomato plant, while alive, sends all its available energy to its fruit. And a pulled-out plant will continue to do that, for a while. Which means more goodness in your green tomatoes, which will ripen in due course with this technique.



The second reason for ripening green tomatoes this way is a practical one – to ripen, the tomatoes need good airflow to avoid going mouldy. And hanging them by their plant, somewhere outside but undercover, is actually a very convenient way to do that.

<https://www.milkwood.net/2015/03/04/hanging-green-tomatoes-upside-down-to-ripen/>

## Lettuce is in short supply due to floods, but growing your own is a cinch



The price of leafy greens, lettuces and some winter vegetables are on the rise, [with produce increasing by up to 75 per cent in some supermarkets](#). Wholesalers say it'll be a while until growers can bounce back.

If you're willing to get your hands dirty and do some growing at home, you can still get a steady supply of the seasonal vegetables, despite them being in short supply right now at the shops or markets.

For a speedy harvest: plant lettuce seedlings from a nursery and packet seeds at the same time. By the time you're ready to harvest those seedlings, the seeds are going to be up and you'll have a second crop coming fairly quickly.

<https://apple.news/AbghMn-VrQ4qDwhxLvRDJhA>

## WARNING - DANGER: a couple of warnings from my own personal experience.

Firstly, **petty spurge**, which is a small bright green weed common in our gardens. It looks innocent but can be very dangerous



Petty spurge, *Euphorbia peplus*, like all members of the Euphorbia family, has a milky white sap which can cause serious damage, even blindness if it comes into contact with eyes. Last year one of the garden club members had a dramatic experience with this sap, I don't know if it was from petty spurge or one of the ornamental euphorbias.

In February of 2020 I had my my own drama. I had been aware of the properties of petty spurge sap as a cure for non melanoma skin cancers and knew of its corrosive nature. In fact, a cream has been developed from this sap to treat these skin conditions.

One day in Sydney, after I had weeded petty spurge growing in paving, I was writing some emails on my phone. This was just after the fires, and after all the smoke of the previous couple of months, my eyes were a bit sore and without thinking, I rubbed one eye. Shortly after, it started watering so I gave it a good rub. Then it really started to hurt. When I went to the bathroom to see what was happening, I realised that I had probably got some sap in my eye. I washed my hands thoroughly and then rinsed my eye which by then was becoming very painful. I rang the Eye Hospital to tell them that I had got this sap in my eye and that I was going to drive myself to the hospital as quickly as possible (through peak hour traffic!!). Luckily I hadn't rubbed both eyes and was able to drive using just one eye. By then the pain was excruciating. At the hospital they saw me immediately and irrigated the eye continuously for 15 minutes.

While I was waiting to see the ophthalmologist, I entertained (and frightened) myself by googling images and stories of eyes which had been treated for euphorbia sap contact. Pretty scary and very sobering.

Fortunately the ophthalmologist found no damage to the cornea. He prescribed antibiotic drops to use for five days.

Even being aware of the dangers, it was so easy to be distracted. The weeding I had been doing was pulling out whole plants, not crushing them - I would have had minimal sap contact with my hand and as far as I was aware my fingers were dry. Even so, that small amount was enough to cause great pain. After this experience I make a point of never touching my eyes when in the garden - and washing my hands thoroughly after working outside even though I have been wearing gloves. Take great care when weeding this common little plant! And pruning any ornamental euphorbias.

My second warning is about a disease which is carried by parrots and other wild birds and can be passed on to domesticated birds such as chickens, as well as pigs, horses and humans.

**Chlamydia psittaci** can cause psittacosis and an atypical pneumonia also called 'parrot fever'. Early in 2020 there was an outbreak of psittacosis in the Blue Mountains that was in the news.

At that time we had chooks who had a run where we scattered seeds. All sorts of wild birds as well as parrots used to visit to help the chooks eat their food. One day in May 2020 I spent about half an hour trying out a variety of implements, sorting out the best way to clean the egg laying box as a newly acquired chook liked to sleep in it and then would lay her eggs amongst her droppings.



About a week later when I was doing a small job in the garden I felt uncharacteristically feeble. My temperature was 39 degrees. First thought was that it was Covid, so I went to the hospital to be tested. Negative. Next thought was perhaps it was malaria as I had been in PNG a few years earlier - so I went to a local clinic to be tested. Also negative. Many other tests were carried out, all negative. Finally I was tested for psittacosis (positive). I had also developed a very small dry cough and an x-Ray confirmed that I had pneumonia. The antibiotics were miraculous - within two hours the fever was gone and though I was quite weak I felt normal again.

Of course, after such an experience I tried to find out everything I could about this disease. It is carried in the feather dust, saliva and faeces of infected birds who often show no symptoms. It is caught by inhaling dust carrying the bacteria, by direct contact with feathers, saliva or faeces and also by beak to mouth contact with pet parrots. It can be caught by mowing lawns where parrots or



cockatoos have been feeding and shedding feathers, saliva and droppings. In one outbreak in Victoria, most of the many victims were male and had no direct contact with parrots but had mowed grass where birds had been. One person died.

When telling people about my experience, mainly to warn of this little known danger, I heard anecdotes of people being hospitalised with this illness, being out of action for months, catching it from a neighbour's sick budgies over the side fence, being undiagnosed for months, catching it from pet birds...

It is a serious illness. As lovely as the wild parrots are - I look at them with different eyes now. We no longer have chooks and the bird feeder is far from the house. We don't have a lawn but if we did I would definitely wear a mask and insist my partner wears one while mowing to minimise the risk of catching this not so rare disease.

***Pam Tippett.***

## The 2022 Committee

A new committee was voted in at the AGM in March. Welcoming new committee members Guy Nelligan and Alison Trotter (Treasurer), your committee is:

Ted Ayers - President

Faye Dillon - Vice President

Tessa Spencer - Secretary

Alison Trotter - Treasurer

Cat Ayers - Membership Secretary

David Humphrey

Carlie Gould

Guy Nelligan

Sincere thanks to Robin Coombes (Past President), Lyn Curry, Dale Hancock and Trish Badami for all the work and contributions to past Bundanoon Garden Club Committees.

The Committee aims to provide a range of garden related activities, information and social events that our growing membership can enjoy. If you have suggestions or comments you can always approach a member of the committee, we look forward to hearing from you.

***Tessa.***

## Why weeing on your plants is good fertiliser, and other DIY options to keep your garden fed



You've spent your hard-earned cash on some fancy new plants, put them in a nice sunny position in your garden and showered them with love and water ... but they aren't thriving.

The cause of your horticultural woes is probably lurking beneath your feet.

"If the soil is lacking in nutrition, structure and organic matter then your plants aren't going to do well," says Paul West, chef and host of River Cottage Australia.

<https://apple.news/AziJkV0pmT3yPXnrVpPrKmg>

## Fruit flies like to live in ripe fruit and bins. Here's how to keep them out of your kitchen



You might have noticed a few more 'vinegar bugs' or 'fruit flies' hanging around your kitchen, with all the recent rain and humidity.

If you're keen to get rid of these tiny flies [without using pesticides](#), environmental scientist Sharron Pfueller has a simple hack to try, along with tips to prevent them from coming back.

<https://apple.news/AftuLYBNhTHCU2w6G8ajDdg>





Peat has been a staple ingredient of composts sold in British garden centres since the 1960s, even though it's not actually that nutritious for plants. The reason why this spongy turf is coveted by gardeners is that it can hold on to both water and air and it's generally free of pests and diseases. This makes peat the perfect environment for seeds to germinate and establish strong roots.

But few realise that the peat compost people buy each spring for their gardens took thousands of years to form. Extracted from bogs, fens and marshes, peat is the partially decomposed remains of ancient plants and animals. Peatlands in Europe contain five times more carbon than forests and disturbing peat for agriculture or harvesting it for compost releases CO<sub>2</sub> to the atmosphere, accelerating climate change.

The UK government plans to ban peat use among amateur gardeners by 2024. It had originally hoped garden centres in England would voluntarily stop selling peat-based products by 2020. But peat is a cheap resource and swapping it for compost made from alternatives makes little financial sense for these companies without binding regulation. As a result, peat still accounts for around 35% of all compost sales – an increase of 9% in 2020 alone.

With the proposed ban and a pledge to restore 35,000 hectares of peatland across the country by the year after, retailers can no longer delay the transition to peat-free compost. Happily, for green-fingered consumers, evidence suggests more ecologically benign compost can still keep gardens blooming beautifully.

[Peat compost to be banned – luckily, green alternatives are just as good for your garden \(theconversation.com\)](#)

## 7 Peat Moss Alternatives That Are Better For The Planet

You may have heard that using peat moss in the garden is bad for the environment. But how can it be? Peat moss has been used in gardens everywhere since the 1940s. It's been the go-to amendment for many growers to help lighten soil and aid in water retention and drainage. While peat moss provides very few nutrients, it does supply beneficial bacteria and is a natural fungicide for your garden plants. But while this is all great for the grower, it's not so great for the planet.

Despite its benefits in the garden, the growing and harvesting practices of peat moss have come under scrutiny as environmentally unsound practices, deeming it an unsustainable option for gardeners.

Peatlands store nearly a third of all the world's soil carbon. Once harvested, the harmful carbon dioxide is released back into the environment. And while peat moss is technically renewable, the rate of growth is extremely slow, taking centuries to fully develop. It is being harvested faster than we could ever grow it, essentially making it non-renewable.



Additionally, peat bogs provide a unique ecosystem, which supports numerous insects, birds, and plants. Scientists consider peat bogs to be as fragile and important as the rainforests. Thus, exploiting this valuable flora is a valid cause for concern.

Luckily, there are better, more sustainable, and locally sourced alternatives you can use to amend your soil.

### Peat Moss Alternatives

#### Coconut Coir

Coconut coir is made from the fibers between the shell and outer covering of coconuts.

#### Wood-Based Materials

Wood-based materials have been added to commercial potting mixes for decades as a way to improve water retention and add organic matter.

#### Compost

Compost is chock-full of beneficial microbes and nutrients and is commonly referred to as "black gold."

#### Pine Needles

Pine needles make a readily available and renewable peat moss alternative.

#### Rice Hulls

Thin and nearly weightless, they help lighten the soil, improve drainage and aeration, and aid in water absorption.

#### Leaf Mold

Organic gardeners know the value of leaf mold.

#### Composted Manure

This renewable and organic resource helps to increase soil carbon and improves beneficial microbes in your soil, improving plant growth.

[7 Peat Moss Alternatives That Are Better For The Planet - Farmers' Almanac \(farmersalmanac.com\)](#)

# For peat's sake



The Brits are getting serious about peat. Or rather, the lack of it. The UK Government, faced with the prospect of “peak peat”, has set up a [peat task force](#) to try to find a way to get home gardeners and the gardening industry to stop using the stuff. Peat holds water and maintains its structure and is a valued ingredient in growing mediums. Because it is naturally acidic it is also favoured by growers of acid-loving plants such as blueberries and azaleas.

However, the mining of peat comes at a great [environmental cost](#). Peat is made up of organisms such as sphagnum moss that, because they are in low-oxygen wetlands or bogs, decay very slowly. In the right conditions, peat will eventually turn into coal.

Peat bogs can be home to rare wildlife, play an important role in the water cycle by filtering water and preventing floods, and happen to store an estimated [one-third of the world's carbon](#).

When drained for agriculture or mined for peat, the wetlands, exposed to oxygen, start [releasing methane and carbon dioxide](#) like there's no tomorrow (which there may not be, if we're not careful).

Here in Australia, peat moss continues to be harvested in Tasmania, and to a lesser degree in Victoria, the ACT and NSW (where the [Wingecarribee](#) peatland collapsed in 1998 after being mined for peat for more than three decades).

Fortunately for gardeners, there's no need to use peat moss. The [Botanic Gardens Trust](#) gets by without it so I'm sure the rest of us can.

There is an excellent substitute for peat moss in the form of [coir peat](#) (also known as coco-peat). It's a byproduct of the coconut industry in Asia, made from coconut husk, and can be bought in handy-sized blocks that are easily rehydrated.

(And it's no new-fangled thing. According to the UK [Wildlife Trust](#) it was commonly used before peat moss became popular in the 1950s).

The main problem with coir is how to pronounce it (I have settled on “koy-er” but am not very comfortable with that; maybe I should start saying “coco-peat” instead).

Some people say its outer crust dries out while coir underneath stays wet, which can lead to overwatering, so I suppose that's something to watch out for. Otherwise, I reckon it's great stuff: it holds moisture and leaves room for air too.

You can use coir as a substitute for peat moss in potting, propagating and seed-raising mixes. For a seed-raising mix, try [Phil Dudman's recipe](#). Alternatively, I've mixed coir, sand and sieved compost in roughly equal quantities and done all right. Water with seaweed as the seedlings grow. If you want to acidify soil, say for blueberries, add powdered sulphur, compost and/or pine needles. And for peat's sake, say no to peat.

By: [Simon Webster](#)

[For peat's sake | Organic Gardener Magazine Australia](#)

## Understanding Organic Compost

Many consumers are unaware of the guidelines surrounding the use of the term organic, and nearly everyone is confused when it comes to what constitutes organic.

The best way to tell if a product is organic is to look for a well-known accreditation stamp on the label. There are six certification authorities in Australia such as NASAA and Australian Certified Organic, and products sold in this country must be certified by one of these organisations in order to use the term ‘certified organic’ on their packaging.



If a product claims to be “certified organic” it must be certified with one of the six certification authorities. In fact, it is illegal to make this claim without backing it up.

<https://www.agsolutions.net.au/single-post/2018/03/22/understanding-organic-compost>



# Seasonal Kitchen

**GLUTNEY** – the chutney you can make from your end of season glut crops!



Tomato season is coming to an end. Don't waste any unripe fruit. Green tomatoes are an excellent basic ingredient for chutney, and they will love to make friends

with all the surplus vegetables that have eluded harvest over the last few wet weeks. We had some enormous yellow courgettes that went straight into the preserving pot. We made a rookie error with our last batch of chutney, and now know that plastic coated lids are essential – vinegar reacts to metal lids in a most unpleasant manner.

Make your own pickling spice, the taste is much better. Some dry bay leaves and mustard seed can also be added.

## For the spice bag:

1 thumb-sized nugget of fresh or dried ginger, roughly chopped  
12 cloves  
12 black peppercorns  
1 (generous) tsp coriander seeds  
A few blades of mace

## Ingredients: (Makes about 10 x 340g jars)

1kg overgrown courgettes or marrows, unpeeled if small, peeled if huge, cut into 1cm dice  
500g onions, peeled and diced  
1kg red or green tomatoes, scalded, skinned and roughly chopped  
1kg cooking or eating apples, peeled and diced. Windfalls are fine.  
500g sultanas or raisins  
500g light brown sugar  
750ml white wine (or cider) vinegar  
1–3 tsp dried chili flakes  
1 tsp salt  
1 tsp ground ginger

Put the vegetables and fresh fruit into a large, heavy-based pan with the sultanas and sugar. Make the wine vinegar up to 1 litre with water and add to the pan with the chili flakes and salt.

Make up the spice bag by tying all the spices together in a square of muslin. Add the spice bag to the pan, pushing it into the middle.

Heat the mixture gently, stirring occasionally until the sugar has dissolved, then slowly bring to the boil. Simmer, uncovered, for 2-3 hours, stirring



regularly to ensure it does not burn on the bottom of the pan. The chutney is ready when it is rich, thick and reduced. To test, drag a wooden spoon through the mixture: it should part to form a channel and reveal the base of the pan. If it starts to dry out before this stage is reached, add a little boiling water. Allow to cool slightly.

Pot the chutney while still warm in sterilised jars. Seal with plastic-coated screw-top lids (essential to stop the vinegar interacting with the metal). Leave to mature for at least 2 weeks – ideally 2 months – before using.

Recipe by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall.

**Cat.**

## From our Treasurer

Hello Everyone

Here is the Financials for March.

### BGC Opening Balance 21st MARCH 2022

<b>Rediaccess Account was</b>	<b>\$ 13598.78</b>
Income was:	\$ 1304.70
Expenditure was:	\$ 660.47
<b>Balance as at 20/3/22</b>	<b>\$14,243.01</b>

Add: Petty Cash	\$ 135.00
Add: Trade Table Float:	\$ 45.00

### Funds held as at 20th March 2022 \$ 14,423.01

Alison Trotter is our new Treasurer. An Old Nurse - like me - our money in safe hands!!!  
Stay well and looking forward to seeing you at Harpers Mansion for April Meeting.

Cheers all.

**Trish Badami.**

## MEMBERSHIP SUBS

Membership subs were due in March. Our annual fee remains stable at \$25. Please pay via direct deposit:  
Bank Details: BSB: 802-101 - A/c:100061636  
*Please include your Surname and MFees in the description.*

Or at the next meeting, visit Cat at the Membership Desk, where cash or card can be used. A \$1 fee is applied to card payments.

*No payment due from members who joined since July 2021.*

If you're a new member, you can also print and fill in your Membership Form and drop to Alison Ayers at the Membership Desk at our next meeting. Click this link to find out more:

<https://www.bundanoongardenclub.com.au/membership>

# 2022 Autumn Open Garden & Plant Fair



Coming up in about 4-5 weeks time the following events are due to open:

- [Private Gardens of Monaro - Private Tour](#)  
[Dates](#) : Cooma : \* Wed, 20 Apr 2022



- [Southern Highlands Open Gardens and Plant Fair](#) : Bowral : \* Sat, 23 Apr 2022

\* Note: May open for one or more days. Please check the listing.

Also you might like to visit one of these gardens that are open regularly, or by appointment:

- [Campbell Rhododendron Gardens](#) : Blackheath
- [Everglades Historic House & Gardens](#) : Leura
- [Gory'u Japanese Gardens](#) : Little Hartley
- [Harpers Mansion National Trust \(NSW\)](#) : Berrima
- [Merribee](#) : Numbaa
- [Perenniale Plants Nursery](#) : Canowindra
- [Retford Park - National Trust of Australia \(NSW\)](#) : Bowral
- [Secret Garden and Nursery](#) : Richmond
- [Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens](#) : Bowral
- [Tablelands Trees and Shrubs Garden & Nursery](#) : Cooma
- [Wildwood Garden](#) : Bilpin

Click on the link(s) provided to get the full details about open days and times. Events are shown here because they are within about 300kms of your postcode area. Please double check our listing, and an events own website if available, prior to going to make sure that it is open when you are planning a visit.

We hope you have a chance to enjoy one or more of these gardens/events.



**Saturday 23 April @ 9:00 am  
until Sunday 24 April @ 4:00 pm**

5 private open gardens & plant fair.

\$10 Entry for each garden or plant fair.

\$40 entry to all gardens and plant fair.

For more information visit  
[shbg.com.au/open-gardens-plant-fair](http://shbg.com.au/open-gardens-plant-fair)

[or purchase your ticket here](#)

## Gardening In Climate Change



Even in the past couple of years Australia has experienced major fluctuations in climate. From raging bushfires and drought to record downpours and floods. The only constant with this climate is that it will continue to change. It is important to keep this in mind when gardening and accept that each year we will face new obstacles.

[Gardening In Climate Change | Mr Fothergill's - Latest Help & Advice \(mrfothergills.com.au\)](#)



## Seven ways to deal with extra slugs and snails in your garden after heavy rain



If you've noticed more slugs and snails gliding around your garden lately, Dieter Hochuli, a professor of ecology at the University of Sydney, says it's because the rain is ideal for them.

"Their real danger time is when it's dry," he explains.

"And they've probably been concentrated a little bit too recently following the localised flooding and pooling of water."

"There's that phrase, 'It's great weather for ducks'. Well, this is brilliant weather for slugs and snails."

None of the experts are fans of using commercial snail baits or insecticides to address the problem because of the risks these pose to other wildlife.

Instead, they recommend trying what's called **"cultural control"** first.

"This is just going out at night with a torch and plucking them off," Professor Hochuli says.

"Snails and slugs are often quite cryptic during the day, but at night they'll be chomping away and you can grab them."

<https://apple.news/A4YnQWs1pSP2toj-ES85UQQ>

or if "cultural control" doesn't grab you....



## How to tell if an avocado is ripe



Peel off the cap and look at the colour underneath. If it is green or yellow, that means the avocado is ripe and ready to eat.

If there is a bit of brown in there, then that means there is probably brown inside your avocado, meaning it is over-ripe.

If the cap doesn't come off easily, that means the avocado is under-ripe and not ready for consumption.

## Retford Park inspiration...



Good ideas from the Head Gardener Rick Shepherd come to Bundanoon.

**Maria Marks.**