

April 2018 Minutes

President's Notes April

Dear Garden Lovers,

How fortunate are we...that is, Jenny Creal and I, for living so close to a river. More to the point, having ample water for our gardens in desperate times. I think Jenny's serene garden is a classic example of how to get it right! Lawn and shade trees dominate and a perfectly located vegetable garden top it off. Then there is that stunning river at the bottom of the garden and a perfect spot to sit and contemplate life! We had such a wonderful meeting and I am so grateful that Jenny let us wander and enjoy her part of the world.

Last night I confess to turning the outside light on and planting some *Crowea saligna*, just before a 20mm deluge of rain! I have tried *Croweas* before and they died! I love the little pink star shape flowers so much and they flower prolifically through Autumn to Spring so here's hoping I'll have more luck this time... in a very different location. Native bees love this plant and it has a beautifully aromatic aroma. It will grow to 80cm high and 60cm wide and tolerates frost and dry conditions. It's not mad about the hot afternoon sun though.

Next meeting is our AGM. I do hope we can get some members to share in the setting up of morning tea. It seems to have become an integral part of our meetings. Maybe a few members who live fairly close to each other could set up a roster??

Off I go to the garden again to plant a few Lemon Scented Myrtles; *Backhousia citriodora*. Penny says they're a MUST in every garden! Janie

April PAGG meeting minutes

Meeting held at the home of Jenny Creal's at Glen William.

Once again Janie welcomed all, including four visitors.

Jenny gave a report on her beautiful property where she has resided for the past 20 years. The original property was a dairy farm and was settled in the late 1800's. When Jenny arrived, there was very little in the garden, and over time she has established a beautiful garden with some magnificent trees and plants to enhance her peaceful setting on the banks of the river. Extensive work has been done over the years with a grant to clear the river bank of lantana and rubbish, an ongoing problem to compete with the weeds and floods. There is a historical slab shed in the garden which possibly belonged to the original dairy – if only the lovely old walls could talk! River access has allowed the garden to thrive, the lawns to be green and lush during our horrendous spring and summer.

The AGM is to be held at our next meeting which will be in Vacy. All members are invited to stand for committee especially for the following positions which are now available: Treasurer, Minutes Secretary and Morning Tea Convenors. The morning tea provider's job could be split into a few months or a quarterly job, you might like to get a group of 4 together ... please give this some thought.

Liz Jones must be complimented once again on the web site which is up and running at pagardengroup.org that is very easy to access and very helpful. All PAGG information, including the Minutes, Presidents Notes and Photos from each month will now be available on our website.

Chris Pike filled us in on our away day trip that is planned for Saturday 27 October. The destination is historic Cobbitty, near Camden, to visit a well-planned and maintained beautiful garden, hopefully with a 'walk and talk' with the Head Gardener, and finally a visiting into the Teagles private art gallery. The bus will leave Paterson at 7.a.m., stopping at Bolwarra and Morisset and the 'Twin Service Stations' for morning tea. For approximately \$50 per head (TBC), morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea will be provided. We should return to Paterson around 5p.m.

Keep in mind our Garden Ramble planned for April 2019. We hope to have five or six gardens from Paterson to the Upper Allyn to visit. We will keep you all informed.

Q & A with Penny

Barbara Horn provided a beautiful photo of her 10-year-old white crepe myrtle in full flower. Each year she dead heads the first flush of flowers and in February it provides another flush of flowers. Penny approves of dead heading crepe myrtles, not pruning them back, as dead heading and removing the spent flowers may encourage a second flush of blooms, but she advises against cutting back hard as this can destroy the form of the tree.

Penny also answered a range of questions.

There was a discussion about staking trees damaged in the storms and questions about fallen trees being staked back into position.

Unfortunately the damage done to the root system will usually render the tree unsafe for life.

Damaged trees can be staked but remember the tree will never be stable again, as generally the trees roots have been damaged giving the possibility that the tree could and probably will fall again.

A question led to a discussion about exotic pine trees dying during the recent drought.

Penny suggested seeking native pines "Callitris macleayana" which is more tolerant of dry conditions. It must be noted that all trees get borers the secret is to keep the trees healthy.

What would be an appropriate gum tree to plant?

One of the most appropriate gums to plant in our area is the "Spotted Gum", *Corymbia maculata* which is a large local species and is tolerant of heavy soil and dry conditions

What would you suggest for a veggie garden that is being invaded with suckers from She-Oaks which are many metres away?

Penny suggested moving the veggie garden or try a raised garden.

What should we be doing with our gardenias in autumn?

Now is the time to cut back or trim gardenias.

Concern was about woody or no cover on the lower branches of a camellia.

The only answer was maybe growing something under the camellia.

Is there any redemption for hard pruned lavender?

Sorry no, lavenders need leaf on their stems to survive.

Where to shop at a local nursery?

"Riverdene" Gresford, has good stock from tube stock right through to big trees and autumn is the best time to be planting new stock.

Would a Flowering Gum grow in this region?

Generally the grafted western Australian flowering gums prefer a well-drained soil and can be disappointing in our heavier clay soils

What are the best plants to deter mosquitoes?

Janie suggests the best plants to deter mosquitoes include lavender or cat-mint. There are also several plants available to repel mosquitoes such as Lemon Scented Gum but the leaves have to be squashed to release the gum. The lavender and cat-mint can just be grown in your garden, and their smell repels mosquitoes.

April images by John Denman

