

## **September 2018 Minutes**

### **PAGG President's Notes**

#### **Dear Gardening friends,**

I used to say, find me a river somewhere and I shall be content. I am changing it to 'find me a garden somewhere and I shall be content'.

I can't stop thinking about Prue and Jamie Alison's magnificent garden. It is exactly the type of garden I'm trying to create. Plenty of space to wander. Many old fashioned plants and bulbs, stunning trees and azaleas to die for.

Prue chatted about some trees that came from other family properties, how the grass tree arrived in their back garden after being saved from an eroded gully and I especially loved Jamie's verbal picture of the Alison family's beginnings in the Dungog valley back in the 1800's.

A brilliant morning with so much to look at and obviously a lot of heart and soul has gone into creating such a peaceful garden. I feel extremely enriched from just being there. Janie

### **PAGG Meeting Minutes**

#### **PAGG SEPTEMBER GARDEN MEETING**

18 September 2018 at the home and garden of Prue and Jamie Alison at "Oakdale" just outside Dungog.

Janie welcomed members and guests.

Safety officer Robert Smith encouraged us all to "be aware and take care" as we walk around the garden.

President Janie introduced Prue and Jamie Alison who also welcomed us all and gave us a short history of the Alison family and the first family member who came to Dungog in 1838. "Oakdale" is part of the original selection "Cooreei". Jamie and Prue moved to the early version of their home in 1997 with no garden, no water, very little topsoil, plenty of rock and a soil pH of 5.6! They started to create a garden with cuttings and plants from the original Cooreei garden as well as family and friends. They mulch with spent hay when it is available and use manure from the cattle yards and now have a dam for a garden water supply.

The garden now has an attractive layout with groups of trees established for shade, under-planted with shrubs and perennials, and surrounded by lawn, making a cool and inviting space. A substantial pergola over paving at the rear of the house supports a Wisteria for summer shade and winter sun. Tree species include a Poinciana, which amazingly flowers well, out of its native tropical habitat. Other trees include a Plane Tree, a Leopard Tree which also flowers, a Peppercorn Tree from Prue's childhood home, Eucalyptus and other natives. One special feature is a Xanthorrhoea (grass tree) that Jamie moved from the paddock and that has established very well. So, the garden is a very personal reminder of friends and family, and a testament to time, perseverance and patience.

Janie thanked Prue and Jamie for hosting us and presented them with some Tar 10 products as a token of our appreciation. The lucky door prize was won by Pam Williams.

### **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

#### **Cuttings and seed pods**

A cutting of *Michelia yunnanensis* – a beautifully scented evergreen shrub to 3 m. Prefers a sunny sheltered position, is frost and drought tolerant once established.

A cutting of *Viburnum burkwoodii* – an evergreen, leggy shrub to 3 m with strong perfume.

A seed pod from a Kurrajong – tough evergreen native – seed pod good for Christmas decoration.

A cutting with furry buds from *Alectryon tomentosus* from Wokes' garden at Duninald – from dry and sub-tropical rainforest in Eastern Australia. Mark has seeds (rainforest seeds need to be fresh)

#### **Q and A**

Jann has bush orchids – wants to know if they will grow in the garden... yes, they like semi shade and have a good perfume. Jann also has a single may bush which she recommends.

Mark wants something to grow under trees. Suggestions: Agave attenuata, jade, emu bush. Cautioned not to let soil build up over tree roots as this will gradually kill it (starves roots of oxygen). Lisa Connors has rainforest trees coming up under fig tree? Leave them there? Could try to move them (into pot first) but success not high. Be prepared to lose them.

Lawn advice – keep mower blades higher during summer. The longer leaf blades shade the soil and help to keep weed seeds (such as bindii) from germinating.

BEWARE of using any spray with dicamba etc. for broad-leaf weeds, as it will eventually also kill trees and shrubs. Use glyphosate 1:100 if you must!

N.B. Plane Trees at Maitland courthouse were killed by the chemicals used for cleaning the pavers!

SPRING ROSE NOTES - have been added to Garden Information - many thanks Barbara.

COBBITTY TRIP - 27 October. Only one bus as there were not enough people for a second bus.

CALENDAR – Decision has been made to change this project and to use the photos for notepaper.

Next year photos will be taken of garden detail, at each garden, for note cards.

Next meeting is 16 October 2018 at Bolwarra.

#### OTHER NOTICES AND INFORMATION

Dungog Festival is on over the October long weekend with lots to see and do, especially Sculpture on the Farm and the Garden Ramble. For further information visit: <https://www.dungogfestival.com.au>

DIG Gloucester – 13-14 October celebrates everything about gardening and more. See [www.eventsgloucester.com.au](http://www.eventsgloucester.com.au)

Dungog Hospital Health Committee Dungog Hospital Expo – 25 September from 10am - 2 pm. All invited but contact Annette O'Neill to indicate attendance.

Jenny Creal Minutes Secretary

Photos Lisa Connors



