

PAGG NOVEMBER

Lochinvar

President's Notes

I don't know how many members came up to me at Jan's garden and said 'This is the perfect garden for me to wander and take home ideas...'; 'My garden is small and I am learning so much from Jan's clever plantings'. I can't tell you how thrilled I was to hear this, as gardens are joyful places no matter what the size, or the difficulties. Thank you to all who travelled to Lochinvar. It was great to get out of my own valley and the lunch we had in the little café in Lochinvar proved to be one of the best you could wish for. Fantastic 1950's décor right down to the 1958 Women's Weekly's on the tables... oh and the sensational homemade ice cream. All in all, a magnificent day. Thanks so much Jan.

Eureka! I have just picked my first tomatoes... Roma... and for the first time in 18 years NO fruit fly! No bugs of any description. I am so thrilled and can only put it down to Jenny Creal's recipe you will find in our 'garden information' section of this website. I have milk bottles with the vegemite, ammonia and water lures hanging near each vine and I top up the mix so that there is a constant few cm in the bottle.

I'll look forward to seeing you all at the Botanic Gardens. Christine, Steve and Rosalie have chosen such a beautiful venue for our Christmas gathering. There are plenty of paths to wander, plenty of plants to photograph and plenty of friends to share lunch with.

Janie

Minutes – Jenny

President Janie welcomed members and guests and thanked Jan for hosting us.

Janie also reminded us to pay our membership subscriptions, as we need to notify our Insurance company of our numbers by December.

Safety officer, Robert cautioned us all to "be aware and take care" even though the garden is relatively flat.

Owner Jan addressed us relating that they moved to Lochinvar 29 years ago when there was a flood which was then followed by a drought for nine years! Jan and her husband have a small property where they keep horses, but sadly for them, closer development from the nearby suburbs of Maitland is starting to encroach on their boundary. The gardens surround the house and include eucalypts for shade around the fence line and a lot of succulents and hardy plants as well as some wonderful examples of exotics, such as some thriving gardenias which were covered with flowers. Jan had collected an amazing caterpillar from the gardenias to show us and she was waiting to see what sort of butterfly it turned into... not to be destroyed but rather, enjoyed! Insects and birds are all encouraged. The gardens have been established by degrees, with a meandering path, collecting plants from here and there, and being mindful of the limited water supply she has at her disposal. They mainly use tank water collected from the house roof and from the sheds, however there is also a grey water dispersal system. In summary, Jan says it is a garden of love and discovery to be enjoyed by themselves, and especially their grandchildren.

One complaint she has is the bindii in the lawn. Penny advised her to keep the lawn a little longer in an effort to thicken it up and to shade the soil, hopefully discouraging the bindii seeds from germinating.

Janie thanked Jan and presented her with some Tar 10 products as a token of our appreciation.

Q&A and INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Black spot on roses. Does spraying encourage a constant cycle? Must pick up leaves as black spot, being a fungus, just spreads spores if left to rot around the bush. Barbara Horn suggests sulphate of potash to keep roses healthy and to keep the root zone cool by applying mulch. A depth of about 7-8cm is recommended but keep it away from direct contact with stem of shrubs etc to avoid collar rot. Barbara also suggests to cut out the whole cane if it is badly affected with black spot – and if necessary to renew bush, then remove everything except 3 healthy, 1 year old canes

Mulch not fertiliser is the key to good soil (Penny) It helps maintain moisture and soil structure, keeps root zone cool, encourages worms and soil organisms which break down organic matter so nutrients are available to plants. Be careful of mulch which is very “woody” as it uses nitrogen when breaking down – so a good idea to put down some nitrogenous fertiliser such as chicken manure etc to replace this. Wet newspaper can be used under mulch, not too thick, and it is best to rip it up so it doesn’t form a barrier. Avoid underfelt because it can cause soil fungus; Jute coffee bags are ok. Also be cautious of woodchips from Camphor Laurel, Privet etc when they are seeding.

Watering – be aware of plants water needs in hot, dry weather as some members have lost trees and shrubs over the last 12 months. Deep watering less frequently, rather than a daily sprinkle, is best to encourage deeper roots and more resilience in plants.

Compost – coffee grounds and crushed eggshells are good in the compost.

Pasture weeds – Purple top is palatable to stock and will decline with competition. Fireweed is another pest that will come and go according to the season.

Poisonous plants – Oleander, Green Cestrum and Crofton weed are all toxic to stock. Other poisonous plants include: Duranta (berries), Tobacco bush, Castor Oil plant, Yesterday Today and Tomorrow (toxic to dogs). Fig leaves, when young, can cause rash. Any plant with white sap can be an irritant.

Giant Reed – is a serious weed growing in large cane-like clumps along riverbanks, wetlands and roadsides. The only effective chemical control is Glyphosate (Roundup) used according to directions and observing safety precautions – either as backpack spraying or “cut and paint stump”. It takes plenty of persistence and also caution to avoid small pieces getting into waterways, as they will take root further downstream.

Robert Smith says timing is crucial on steep river banks to avoid erosion. The rhizomes of Giant reed are effective at holding river banks, so when removed should be replaced as soon as possible, by such things as Lomandra, before any possible flood arrives. The best method is to work from the edges, bit by bit. Maree from Allynbrook has had success with continuously mowing Giant Reed until it “gives up”.

NOTICES

Christmas Party – 11 December 2018 at Hunter Region Botanic Gardens. It is suggested that Members bring a small gift (\$10-20) suitably wrapped. Plants in pots (or anything living) need to be enclosed in cellophane. Whilst lunch will be provided, items for morning tea (with a Christmas theme) are requested please. This is a members only function.

AGM – will be held in March. Volunteers are encouraged to put themselves forward for a position or let President Janie know they are interested.

PAGG GARDEN RAMBLE – 7 April 2019. Preliminary flyers for this were printed and distributed at the Woodville Wander. Money raised at this event will go to community projects in the Paterson/Allyn valley.

Please keep potting up cuttings for the plant stall too.

PIANO RECITAL – with John Lill on 27 April 2019, at St Mary-on-Allyn church.

Photos: Mark and Jan



