



**eNewsletter  
No. 35  
July 2025**

## **Northern NSW Branch**

**Newsletters are sent out monthly  
except for December and January**

Larger images are available from the editor on request

### **Mulberry Tree *Morus***

There are 19 species of **mulberries** growing wild and under cultivation in many temperate world regions. The three most common are referred to as white (*M. alba*), red (*M. rubra*), and black (*M. nigra*), originating from the colour of their dormant buds and not necessarily the fruit color, with numerous cultivars. *M. alba* is native to South Asia, but is widely distributed

across Europe, Southern Africa, South America, and North America. It is also the species most preferred by the silkworm. It is regarded as an invasive species in Brazil, the United States and some states of Australia. Mulberries are not closely related to raspberries or blackberries which belong to the Rosaceae family.

Mulberries grow well in most climates except for the hot tropics. They are hardy once established and tolerant of cold conditions and frost. Choose a spot in full sun with well-drained soil and protection from strong winds. Water regularly in the first year, especially during hot, dry weather. Once established, watering frequency can be reduced. Top up the mulch to help retain soil moisture and control weeds. Prune in late winter when the tree is dormant, cutting it back hard to an 'open vase' framework. It can also be trellised to a fence or sturdy support to keep the size manageable and make it easier to harvest. A light prune in summer will also help control excessive growth.

Ref: <https://www.bunnings.com.au>  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morus\\_\(plant\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morus_(plant))



Mulberry fruit

Image: <https://www.bunnings.com.au/diy-advice/garden/planting-and-growing/how-to-grow-a-mulberry-tree?>

### **Join AGHS Northern NSW Branch**

<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/membership/>

Send articles & photos to: Reports/Newsletter Editor Maria Hitchcock  
[maria.hitchcock@gmail.com](mailto:maria.hitchcock@gmail.com)

**REMINDER: Please make your booking for the Winter Speaker Program ASAP  
Details on p. 9**

## From the Chair:

While Spring may still be some way away, aren't the sunny days a joy when they appear? Getting out and about in the garden is so much more enjoyable when it's bright. Just stay out of that wind!

With our AGM coming up on Sunday 28 September, it's time for everyone to start thinking about who will be our next Branch Chair and Deputy Chair as both Graham and I come to the end of our tenure. Nominations will be called soon, so put on your thinking caps, or perhaps you might be prepared to step forward to take up the challenges and rewards of the leadership positions. New ideas and new directions often bring new life to an organisation, so this will be an opportunity to grow our membership and to respond to the needs of our members.

Our Winter Speakers events are attracting a greater number of registrations but still more are needed to make both events a huge success. Have you spread the word to your family and friends who might be interested in joining us? We'd love to have their company on Sunday 3 August to listen to Professor Tim Entwisle speak on 'Evergreen, a life in botanic gardens' and again on Sunday 24 August for our bus trip to *Wanderriby* at Wollomombi and 'A Day with Camellias'. Our presentation by Dr Stephen Utick from the Camellia Arc in the Southern Highlands will be the icing on the cake for this enjoyable day. Both events come with the offer of food, wine and great company, of course.

Developing a successful events program for a diverse group of members can be a challenging process, so before our next meeting at the end of September, may I ask everyone to please have a think about what events and excursions they would like included? Apart from the Constitutional need for at least three committee meetings per year, we can please ourselves as to what else is included. It's up to you!

The NMC meets in Sydney on 12 and 13 July which is just a tad too late for me to include an update in this report, but I'll make sure I do so next month.

Kind regards,  
Helen Oates  
Chair | Northern NSW Branch  
M: 0408 434 016  
E: [helen\\_oates10@hotmail.com](mailto:helen_oates10@hotmail.com)



## Some Observations about French public gardens we visited in May

Text and Images: Bill Oates

This particular trip was not focussed on travelling to famous gardens in France, but rather enjoying the slower lifestyle from one farmhouse over two weeks in the middle of the country. This approach still presented us with some different garden experiences and the opportunity to buy produce from the local village markets.

We flew into Lyon (famous for its restaurants) and then drove across to the Indre region. The farmhouse we stayed in was part of a number of buildings on the edge of a ruined castle at Brosse. We enjoyed a farm garden complete with small orchard, hedges and a cottage garden growing culinary herbs.

Our first excursion was to the village of St Benoit du Sault. Visiting the local market, we could choose from local cheeses, vegetables and bakery.

The village was partly walled with a church and monastic buildings intact on the river side.

See image right

We found extensive community gardens beneath the walls with a range of herbs, berries and vegetables being grown by the villagers. Carefully pollarded mulberry trees provided evidence of earlier silk production.



Brosse Garden







St Benoit du Sault

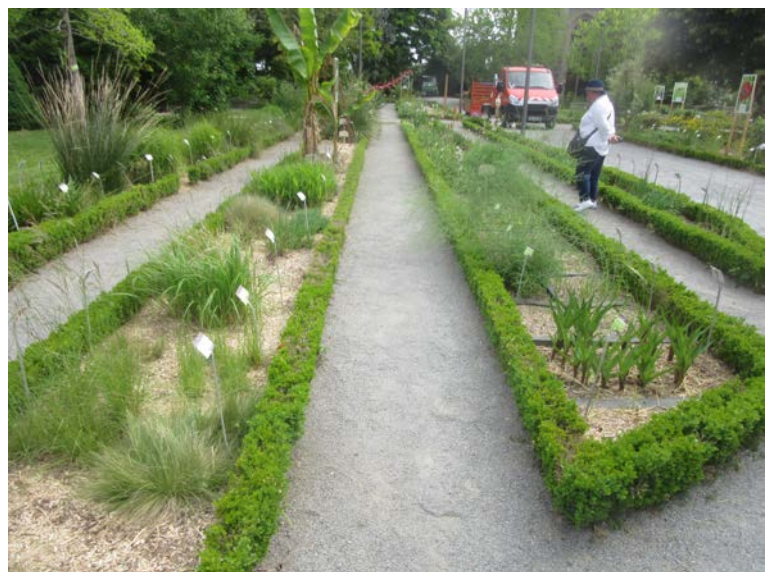


We did make a special trip to visit the nearby Chateau Guillaume. This was the birthplace of my favourite medieval Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine. She was at different times both Queen of France and England as well as the mother of King Richard the Lionheart and King John I of England. The Chateau was closed until summer and I did not find the extensive kitchen gardens for this site until I used Google maps. Castles, Chateaux and monasteries would have extensive kitchen gardens. These are frequently identified in the archival plans of these sites.



There was much more garden joy when we visited Limoges. Here near the cathedral there is a public Botanic Garden with over 1200 carefully identified plant species. There are additional gardens beyond the botanic beds going down to the river.

I questioned why this garden was there, assuming there was a monastic basis that this collection was based on. The French still acknowledge St Fiacre the patron saint of gardeners and have a well documented history of monastic kitchen and medical herb gardens with books from the 13<sup>th</sup> century. But no. Limoges gardens only date from the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the botanic garden planted in 1956. This was a teaching collection.





After visiting a gardeners market and several Chateaux in different states of repair we went to Cluny on our way back to the airport. Here we found a monastic garden again labelled for teaching plant recognition but this time with links to the Order of St Benedict.







Eleanor of Aquitaine

Engraving based on Eleanor of Aquitaine's tomb.

Hulton Archive/Getty Images

<https://www.thoughtco.com/eleanor-of-aquitaine-3529622>

## Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine

**Eleanor of Aquitaine** (c. 1124 – 1 April 1204) was Duchess of Aquitaine from 1137 to 1204, Queen of France from 1137 to 1152 as the wife of King Louis VII, and Queen of England from 1154 to 1189 as the wife of King Henry II. As the reigning duchess of Aquitaine, she ruled jointly with her husbands and two of her sons, the English kings Richard I and John. As the heiress of the House of Poitiers, which controlled much of southwestern France, she was one of the wealthiest and most powerful women in Western Europe during the High Middle Ages.

The eldest child of William X, Duke of Aquitaine, and Aénor de Châtelleraut, Eleanor became duchess upon her father's death in 1137. Later that year, she married Louis, son of King Louis VI of France. Shortly afterwards, Eleanor's father-in-law died and her husband became king, making her queen consort. Louis VII and Eleanor had two daughters, Marie and Alix. During the Second Crusade, Eleanor accompanied Louis to the Holy Land. Pope Eugene III rejected an initial request in 1149 for an annulment of the marriage on grounds of consanguinity. In 1152, after fifteen years of marriage, Eleanor had not borne a male heir, and the annulment was granted. Their daughters were declared legitimate, custody was awarded to Louis, and Eleanor's lands were restored to her.

In the same year, Eleanor married Henry, Duke of Normandy. In 1154, following the death of King Stephen of England, Henry and Eleanor became king and queen of England. The couple had five sons and three daughters, but eventually became estranged. Henry imprisoned Eleanor for supporting the 1173 revolt against him by their sons Young Henry, Richard and Geoffrey. She was not released until 1189, when Henry II died and Richard I ascended the throne. As queen dowager, Eleanor acted as regent during Richard's long absences from England and France. On Richard's death in 1199, she successfully campaigned for his younger brother John to succeed him. After continuing turmoil between the French and English kings and the successive loss of the lands she and Henry II had once ruled over, she died in 1204 and was buried in Fontevraud Abbey in France.

Ref: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eleanor\\_of\\_Aquitaine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eleanor_of_Aquitaine)

## Monastery Gardens of France

Monastery gardens in France are known for their historical significance, serene atmosphere, and diverse designs, often blending functional and ornamental elements. These gardens, ranging from medieval-inspired landscapes to Baroque-era layouts, offer visitors a unique glimpse into monastic life and the history of gardening practices.

Some notable examples:

### 1. Jardin du Monastère de Cimiez (Nice)

This garden, inspired by Italian style, is one of the oldest in Nice and features a historic layout with various planting areas, a central well, and a rose garden. Originally a vegetable garden for Franciscan monks, it offers a tranquil space with sea views and is known for its mesclun salad, which the monks are credited with inventing.

### 2. Abbaye de Saint-André (Villeneuve-lès-Avignon)

Located on a hill overlooking the Rhône River, this abbey boasts landscaped gardens with Mediterranean planting, ancient olive trees, and stone-walled terraces. The Baroque gardens provide panoramic views of Avignon and are particularly captivating in autumn.

### 3. Priory of Notre Dame d'Orsan (Maisonnais)

This priory features a medieval-inspired garden with a green cloister, kitchen gardens, an apple orchard, a medicinal plant garden, and a rose garden. The gardens are known for their educational activities, allowing visitors to interact with gardeners and learn about various aspects of gardening.

### 4. Royaumont Abbey & Gardens (near Paris)

These gardens include a conceptual garden with over 160 vegetable varieties and 60 espalier fruit trees, alongside a formal French-style monastic garden. A "garden of 9 squares" showcases a different theme every three years, creating a dynamic and educational space.

### 5. Garden at Daoulas Abbey

This garden, inspired by 14th-century monastery gardens, features over 350 species of medicinal, herbal, and exotic plants and spices. The garden also includes a romantic-style park with open spaces, humid zones, and ponds.

### 6. Monastery Garden Neuzelle

The gardens of the former Cistercian Abbey of Neuzelle date from the Baroque period and are of great historical importance. The restoration of the gardens follows the principle of restoring them to their original baroque fullness, with a variety of plantings, fixtures, and garden elements.

### 7. Montpellier Botanical Garden

This is the oldest botanical garden in France, created to develop health through medicinal plants. The garden has been restored after being devastated during the siege of Montpellier.

These gardens, while diverse in their design and history, share a common thread of tranquility, historical significance, and a connection to the natural world, making them valuable destinations for those interested in French history and gardening.

Ref: <https://www.google.com/search?client=opera&q=Monastery+gardens+of+France&sourceid=opera&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>



## 2025 Winter Speaker Program

### Sunday 3 August 2025 'Evergreen: A life in Botanic Gardens' - Professor Tim Entwisle

Tim Entwisle is Patron of the Australian Garden History Society. Tim has been director of Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney and NSW Government Botanist, a director at Kew, London and recently retired as chief executive of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria with focus on planning for the gardens under climate change. Tim is a skilled communicator. He is a radio and TV presenter and author of 'Evergreen: The Botanical Life of a Plant Punk' 2022.

In August, Tim will also outline his forthcoming book on dispelling plant and garden myths

#### 'The Sceptical Botanist - Separating Fact from Fiction'.

Tim Entwisle's Oral History interview is to be found [here on the AGHS website](#).

**When: Sunday 3 August 2025.** 3pm start, please arrive around 2.45pm.

**Where: The Armidale Playhouse** 309 Beardy St Armidale.

**Cost: \$45 per person** including a friendly glass of wine and light snacks after the talk.

**Please book online for 3 August using this link:** <https://www.trybooking.com/DARUF>.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Sunday 24 August

'A Day with Camellias' - Dr Stephen Utick

- bus trip to 'Wanderriby' featuring a camellia collection and back

Stephen Utick will present on Camellia Ark Australia and the significance of camellias to garden history. Stephen is a renowned camellia expert and co-founder of Camellia Ark. He speaks internationally on this project which aims to conserve Australia's rarest Camellias. Stephen is Vice President of the International Camellia Society and Visiting Curator of Theaceae at the Royal Sydney Botanic Gardens.

Stephen Utick's Oral History interview is to be found [here on the AGHS website](#).

On the Sunday morning, we will convene 9.40am at The Armidale School to board buses to Wollomombi to visit Nan and Roy Robertson's magnificent garden 'Wanderriby' with stunning trees, perennials and flowering shrubs including over 200 camellias with blooms of splendid size and colour. A light lunch with tea and coffee will be provided. Then we head back to the Hoskins Centre by 2.40pm for Stephen's presentation.

**When: Sunday 24 August 2025.** Meet at 9.40am for bus trip or 2.45pm for our speaker.

**Where:** The Armidale School, Gate 7, Chapel St for bus trip. Then later, TAS Hoskins Centre for the presentation.

**Cost: Full day is \$115 per person** for return bus, light lunch, speaker and a glass of wine and snacks after the talk.

Please note, **travel to this garden is by bus only as part of the day package.**

**Or, \$45 per person** just for Stephen's talk at the Hoskins Centre and refreshments.

Please book online using these links:

For full 'Day with Camellias' on 24 August use: <https://www.trybooking.com/DASBI>

For just Stephen Utick's presentation on 24 August use: <https://www.trybooking.com/DASBV>

#### A note from Events Co-ordinator Sandra Welsman

Please book as soon as you read this newsletter.

We know that people like to leave things to the last minute.

We do need your bookings now for transport and catering arrangements



## ***Beyond the Garden Fence:***

### ***Looking at gardens and the wider cultural landscape***

#### **45th AGHS Conference, 31 October - 2 November 2025**

Optional Day: Monday 3 November  
Pre Conference tour: 28 and 29 October  
**Mt Gambier, South Australia**

Mount Gambier offers a fascinating landscape situated on a limestone plain, honeycombed with underground channels, caves and sinkholes. The limestone volcanoes erupted about 4000 years ago, creating a unique patchwork of soils that support beautiful gardens, vineyards, pine forests and farms of all kinds. The Boandik people have lived here for thousands of years fishing the productive wetlands and hunting the drier plains. Early explorers recognised the rich grasslands and came with their animals to settle and change the landscape forever. We will visit many geological features, some historic houses and cottages, a museum, several vineyards and an orchard as well as gardens great and small. We will also investigate where all the green waste goes. The Program on Friday and Saturday includes presentations with excursions in the afternoon. Sunday is a full day excursion and Monday's tour to Naracoorte Caves is booked out but members are invited to join us in a day of touring.

**Registration:** <https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1352302>

**Conference Brochure:** <https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/2025AGHS-Conference-brochure.pdf>

#### **Conference Venue**

The conference is being held at [The Barn](#), 7-8 kms from Mt Gambier town. The Barn also offers accommodation and is the venue for the conference dinner. AGHS has booked all the rooms which are priced from \$145.00 per night to \$350.00 per night (5 persons). You should have received a notification from AGHS National Office with details of all the rooms. Bookings for accommodation are **open now. It is advisable you book as soon as possible. Make sure you ring this number and tell them you are with the AGHS.**

**08 8726 9999** or **0418 851 471** to make a booking.

The email address is [info@barn.com.au](mailto:info@barn.com.au)

**Flights:** Rex and Qantas fly from Melbourne and Adelaide to Mt Gambier. Rex has a daily flight to and from Melbourne. Check their websites for details.

**Train/Coach** from Southern Cross Station, Melbourne. Train to Ballarat, then coach to Mount Gambier (travel time about 6-7 hours). Self-drive takes ~ 5 hours. A bus will be available, at a cost, to transport delegates from Adelaide to Mt Gambier on **Thursday 30 November**, and from Mt Gambier back to Adelaide on **Tuesday 4 November**. This is a direct trip with a stop for lunch, not an AGHS tour. There will be an opportunity to indicate your intention to use this service when the booking form becomes available on Thursday 1 May.

Alternatively, there is a less direct **Stateline bus** from Adelaide to Mt Gambier return.

#### **Mt Gambier to The Barn (and back)**

A shuttle bus will transport delegates who don't have their own transport between The Barn and Mt Gambier accommodation venues. If you will have a car during the conference, you may wish to carpool. When registrations open on 1 May, please indicate if you will have a car.



## Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Notes
<b>August</b> Sunday 3rd  Book now!	<i>'Evergreen, a life in botanic gardens'</i> 3pm Speaker: Tim Entwisle 4.30 pm drinks and light snacks Members' dinner to follow.	<b>WINTER SPEAKER PROGRAM</b> Guest speaker: Professor Tim Entwisle (AGHS patron) See previous page for bookings. The Armidale Playhouse 309 Beardy St. Armidale Cost: \$45 or \$50 per person.
<b>August</b> Sunday 24th  Book now!	<b>'A Day with Camellias'</b> <b>Bus only event.</b> 9.40 Arrive at Tas. 10.00 Bus leaves TAS 11.00 Garden Visit 12.30 Lunch 1.30 Bus departs 2.30 Arrive back at TAS 3.00 Speaker: Dr Utick 4.30 Drinks Dinner to follow	Visit to Nan and Roy Robertson's magnificent garden 'Wanderriby' at Wollomombi. This is one of the regions finest camellia showcase gardens Dr Utick will join us to discuss the camellias in the garden <b>WINTER SPEAKER PROGRAM</b> Guest speaker: Dr Stephen Utick of Camellia Ark TAS Hoskins Centre Drinks and nibbles to follow with dinner. Cost: \$115.00 (bus, lunch, speaker, drinks) Or - \$45.00 (speaker, drinks) Dinner: Separate See previous page for bookings.
<b>September</b> Sunday 28th	3.15 Committee Meeting 4.00 NNSW Branch Annual General Meeting Dinner to follow.	Details to come
<b>October 31st - November 2nd</b>  Book now!	AGHS National Conference Beyond the Garden Fence The Barn, Mount Gambier, S.A.	Bookings are now open. Optional Day tour Monday 3rd November Pre and post tours will be available The theme this year is <i>Beyond the Garden Fence</i> which means that we will be looking not only at beautiful gardens, but at the geology of the area and at land uses. See previous page for details.
<b>November</b> Sunday 30th	NNSW Annual Festive Lunch	Peterson's Winery Palmerston
<b>May 2026?</b>	<i>'On the Road to Grafton via Ramornie'</i> to be confirmed	Possibly a coach trip, Saturday morning Armidale to GI to Ramornie Station, lunch, afternoon to Grafton. Stay locally 1-2 motels. Sun morning Heritage tour with Schaeffer House, return Armidale via Ebor.