



eNewsletter No. 37 September 2025

Northern NSW Branch

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

Larger images are available from the editor on request

Apricot tree - *Prunus armeniaca*

September in New England is a time of blossoming fruit trees. This includes the Apricot, a desirable fruit which is one of the earlier stone fruits to be harvested in our region. Türkiye is the world's leading producer of Apricots with 21% of market share. Most of this fruit is dried making it easy to transport. The name comes from the Middle French *aubercot* which was amended to *abreckock* in 16th Century England. *P. armeniaca* was widely grown for centuries in Armenia but it is believed to have originated in Central Asia and China.

Apricot trees are generally small in height with a dense spreading canopy. The white to pinkish petals are produced before the leaves and are susceptible to frost. For this reason they may not set fruit in some years in our region due to late frosts. Fruits are similar to a small peach, are yellow to orange in colour with velvety skin, sweet flesh and a single stone.

There are different species of apricots depending on their region of origin. *P. brigantina* is native to Europe. Some of the Chinese species are cultivated for their edible fruit but others are grown for their kernels. They prefer a dryer climate and well-drained soils. They are often grafted onto plum or peach rootstocks. Breeding and hybridisation has taken place to produce cold hardy varieties.

The most popular variety 'Moorpark' is a mid to late flowering variety. They are generally self-pollinating but do attract bees when blossoming.

Ref: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apricot>
<https://www.daleysfruit.com.au>



White flowering Apricot tree *Prunus mume* 'Alboplana'
Image: <https://www.heritagefruittrees.com.au/white-flowering-apricot-prunus-mume-alboplana>

Join AGHS Northern NSW Branch

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

Send articles & photos to: Reports/Newsletter Editor Maria Hitchcock
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From the Chair:

Hello everyone,

Spring is springing in our gardens and neighbourhoods, but it's not quite time to put away the woolly coats just yet. In fact, I don't know when that time might be in the New England.

Our Northern NSW Branch Annual General Meeting is fast approaching. I'm looking forward to your company on Sunday 28 September for our meeting, then afterwards for dinner. You will have received your meeting papers via email earlier this week. Most importantly, have you nominated yourself or another member to fill our vacant committee positions? Your contribution will ensure our branch continues to grow and thrive, and that we are all able to enjoy the great activities and good company our branch is renowned for.

Have you checked your AGHS membership status yet? You must be a current member to nominate another member or to be nominated yourself for a branch position, or to vote during an election if required. It's so easy to forget to renew membership so please go online to www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au to login to check your status or to renew.

The AGHS Annual Conference in Mt Gambier is also rapidly approaching. It's not too late to book to attend if you haven't already done so. We'd love to have the company of as many Northern NSW members as possible for what promises to be a very interesting and enjoyable event. As well as seeing and learning about new landscapes and hearing about the work of the Society nationally, each annual conference provides a great opportunity to renew friendships and enjoy good company.

The 2026 AGHS Annual Conference will be held in Orange NSW from 25 - 28 September next year. The National Management Committee is organising the conference, rather than it being organised by a local branch. I'm the convenor of the conference committee and have a talented and enthusiastic group of organisers to share the planning. Bill and I, and the Wilsons, will be visiting Orange from 14 -21 September this year to look at gardens and venues and to meet some of the local garden owners and service providers. It will be a busy but very enjoyable week.

Kind regards,
Helen Oates
Chair | Northern NSW Branch
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Alister Clark Rose breeder 1864 - 1949

Alister Clark was the son of an immigrant Scottish tenant farmer who did well in Australia, leaving his family with several outback cattle stations, as well as "Glenara", a big property in a valley at Bulla, north of Melbourne. He was educated in Scotland and at Cambridge. He married Edith Mary a New Zealander with a considerable fortune and never worked, giving himself over to the business of being a gentleman: huntsman, polo player, racehorse owner, golfer, photographer — and rose breeder.

He began his rose breeding by ordering roses from Paul & Son in England; later they came from the Nabonnand nursery on the French Riviera. Between 1912 and his death, Clark released about 150 roses, usually through the garden and sporting clubs to which he gave the royalties.

Clark's main aim as a breeder was to produce roses that were hardy in the hot dry climate of southern Australia. To this end he made original use of crosses to *Rosa gigantea*, which produced in the second generation some of the toughest and most freely blooming roses ever bred.

'Lorraine Lee' (1924) 'Nancy Hayward' (1937), 'Black Boy' (1919), 'Lady Huntingfield' (1937 - named after the State Governor's wife) and 'Squatter's Dream' (1923 - named after a racehorse) are roses which have been unknown or underrated outside Australia.



Image: DaffSeek



Soon after World War I, Clark's experiments with *Rosa gigantea* slowed down. He turned to creating what are essentially hybrid teas in a wide variety of forms: low shrubs ('Mab Grimwade'), high bushes ('Editor Stewart'), rampant climbers ('Mrs Richard Turnbull'), pillar roses ('Princeps'), roses for hedges ('Sunny South'), ramblers ('Gladstone') and dwarves ('Borderer'). He set out to make as many crosses as possible at "Glenara" and seeing what came up. His grounds became "a vast nursery for the propagation of roses and daffodils." Roses should be tested in the climate they were meant for, he said. And he insisted that a seedling (like a yearling) takes three years to show what it can do.

Image: <https://monumentaaustralia.org.au>

Twenty years after his death in 1949 Alister Clark remained the most important Australian rose breeder. A. S. Thomas was the Australian registrar of roses and president of the National Rose Society of Victoria. The 1967 edition of his *Better Roses* prints a list of eighty "highly prized cultivars" from Australia and New Zealand. Twenty of them are roses by Alister Clark. Apart from Franz Riethmuller with seven listings, no other breeder rates more than two.

'Lorraine Lee,' 'Nancy Hayward' and 'Black Boy' have never left the nursery catalogues. Other Clark roses went out of fashion after his death. Still others were lost or never released. But many have been revived since the 1990s by such enthusiasts as the writer Susan Irvine and the nurseryman John Nieuwesteeg. A heading in Charles Quest-Ritson's authoritative *Climbing Roses of the World* says simply "Alister Clark: The Great Australian Rose Breeder."

Ref: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alister_Clark#cite_note-15



Image: Eric Timewell

Mab Grimwade Hybrid Tea.

Souvenir de Gustave Prat × *Mrs. Martin*

Introduced in Australia by Hazlewood Bros. Pty. Ltd. in 1937.

Yellow blend. Rich orange, coppery buds.
Salmon pink flushed orange. Strong fragrance.
Large, double (17-25 petals) bloom form. Blooms in flushes throughout the season.

Very disease resistant.

Spring Pruning: Remove old canes and dead or diseased wood and cut back canes that cross. In warmer climates, cut back the remaining canes by about one-third. In colder areas, you'll probably find you'll have to prune a little more than that.

Proceeds from the sale of 'Mab Grimwade' were donated to the National Rose Society of Victoria.

Lady Mabel Louise Grimwade CBE (1887 - 1973) was a Victorian philanthropist.

Ref: <https://www.helpmefind.com/gardening/l.php?l=2.33417>



Image: Eric Timewell

Lady Huntingfield Hybrid Tea Pernetiana

Busybody × *Aspirant Marcel Rouyer*

Introduced in Australia by [Hazlewood Bros. Pty. Ltd.](#) in 1937

Golden-yellow. Deep apricot, ageing pale flesh.
Strong fragrance. 35 to 50 petals. Average diameter 10cm.
Large bloom form. Blooms in flushes throughout the season.

Height: 100 to 200cm. Width: 125 to 220cm.
Prefers dry climates and warmer sites.

Profits from the sale of this rose were donated to the National Rose Society of Victoria.

Alister Clark wrote in 1938 "Aspirant Marcel Rouyer, the pollen parent of Lady Huntingfield" and yet he registered the pollen parent as "unknown" and never corrected it.

Ref: <https://www.helpmefind.com/gardening/l.php?l=2.19118>

Most of Clark's roses are named after and for women he knew, more often than not from landed families ('Cicely Lascelles,' 'Kitty Kininmonth'). Most women in his own family and all wives of Victorian Governors and Australian Governors-General had roses named for them. Lady Gowrie already had one, so hers had to be called 'Zara Hore-Ruthven.' Very few men received roses, all of them rose people in one way or another. Far more are devoted to racehorses: 'Squatter's Dream,' 'Tonner's Fancy,' 'Flying Colours' and so on. Trailing the field are descriptive titles: 'Sunny South,' 'Borderer' and 'Daydream.' 'Scorcher' and 'Billy Boiler' were slang for a hot day.

Ref: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alister_Clark#cite_note-15



Image: <https://rossroses.com.au/product/cicily-lascelles>

Cicely Lascelles Orange-pink Climbing

Frau Oberhofgärtner Singer × *Scorcher*

Introduced in Australia by Hazlewood Bros. Pty. Ltd. in 1937.

Pink shaded salmon. Average diameter 12cm. Large, semi-double (9-16 petals) bloom form. Blooms in flushes throughout the season.

Height: 230 to 500cm. Width: 150 to 180cm.

Proceeds from the sale of this rose were donated to the National Rose Society of Victoria.

Ref: <https://www.helpmefind.com/gardening/l.php?l=2.27243>



Image: Eric Timewell

Kitty Kininmonth Hybrid *Gigantea* Climbing

Unnamed Seedling × *Rosa gigantea* Collett ex Crépin

Introduced in Australia by E. & W. Hackett Ltd. in 1922 as 'Kitty Kininmonth'.

Carmine-pink, golden-yellow stamens. Moderate fragrance. 20 to 25 petals. Average diameter 12cm. Large, semi-double (9-16 petals), borne mostly solitary, cupped bloom form. Occasional repeat later in the season.

Few or no prickles/thorns.

Height: 300 to 450cm. Width: 300cm.

Some difference of opinion about Parentage.

'Kitty Kininmonth was only 26 when she died, six weeks after giving birth to her first child... hard times in the 20's... at an even younger age, she drove a field ambulance in the first World War'. (Fran Cleland)



Image: <https://rossroses.com.au/product/zara-hore-ruthven>

Zara Hore-Ruthven Hybrid Tea. 1932

Madame Abel Chatenay × *Scorcher*

Pink. Strong fragrance. Large bloom form.

Blooms in flushes throughout the season.

Armed with thorns / prickles.

Proceeds from the sale of this rose were donated to the National Rose Society of South Australia

Ref: <https://www.helpmefind.com/gardening/l.php?l=2.26945>

Zara Hore-Ruthven, Countess of Gowrie (*née* Zara Eileen Pollok; 20 January 1879 – 19 July 1965) was the wife of the 1st Earl of Gowrie, Governor of South Australia 1928–34, Governor of NSW 1935–36 and the longest serving Governor-General of Australia 1936–44. She was renowned for her work in promoting the welfare of children in Australia, and the Lady Gowrie Child Centres were named in her honour.

Ref: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zara_Hore-Ruthven,_Countess_of_Gowrie



Image: <https://rossroses.com.au/product/squatters-dream>

Squatter's Dream 1922 Hybrid *Gigantea* Shrub.

seedling of Rosa gigantea Collett ex Crépin
Introduced in Australia by Hazlewood Bros. Pty. Ltd.

Yellow. Rich yellow buds, paler flowers, fading..
Moderate tea fragrance.
Medium, single to semi-double, cupped, open bloom form. Occasional repeat later in the season.
Short, bushy.

Height: 75 to 200cm.

'Squatter's Dream' was a second generation *R. gigantea* cross.

Ref: <https://www.helpmefind.com/gardening/l.php?l=2.18031>



Image: Eric Timewell

Tonner's Fancy Hybrid *Gigantea* Climber 1927

Seedling of Rosa gigantea Collett ex Crépin × Unnamed Seedling

Cream, light pink center, pink flecks, ages to white. Moderate fragrance. Large, full (26-40 petals), borne mostly solitary, globular bloom form.
Once-blooming spring or summer.
Vigorous.

There appears to be more than one version of 'Tonner's Fancy' in Australian commerce:
"Thelangerin Tennis Court Rose" is nearly white, a much neater flower almost of classical form.
Glenara 'Tonner's Fancy' – the leaves are smaller than "Thelangerin Tennis Court Rose".

Ref: <https://www.helpmefind.com/gardening/l.php?l=2.26622>



Image: Eric Timewell

Flying Colours Hybrid *Gigantea* Climber. 1922

seedling of Rosa gigantea Collett ex Crépin
Introduced in Australia by [Hazlewood Bros. Pty. Ltd.](#) in 1922.

Large-Flowered. Deep pink to cherry-red.
Mild fragrance. Average diameter 12cm.
Very large, single (4-8 petals) bloom form.
Once-blooming spring or summer.
Glossy, light green foliage.
Vigorous.

Ref: <https://www.helpmefind.com/gardening/l.php?l=2.17988>

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 has now extended bookings to allow more members to participate.

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

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
September Sunday 28th	Committee Meeting Annual General Meeting Dinner to follow All welcome	3.15 Committee Meeting 4.00 NSW Branch Annual General Meeting U3A Rooms, Cnr Barney and Markham Streets, Armidale Agenda Minutes have been emailed out to members.
October Sunday 26th 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.	WINTER SPEAKER PROGRAM Guest speaker: Professor Tim Entwisle (AGHS patron) See see below for bookings. The Armidale Playhouse 309 Beardsley St. Armidale Cost: \$45 or \$50 per person.
October 31st - November 2nd 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.
November Sunday 30th	NNSW Annual Festive Lunch	Peterson's Winery Palmerston
May 2026?	'On the Road to Grafton via Ramornie' 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.
August 2026	'A Day with Camellias'	Visit to Nan and Roy Robertson's magnificent garden 'Wanderriby' at Wollomombi.
September 25th - 28th 2026	AGHS Annual Conference	Civic Theatre, Orange NSW

Sunday 26th October 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 October, Tim will also outline his forthcoming book on dispelling plant and garden myths
'The Sceptical Botanist - Separating Fact from Fiction'.

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

When: Sunday 26 October 2025. 3pm start, please arrive around 2.45pm.

Where: The Armidale Playhouse 309 Beardsley St Armidale.

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

Please book online for 26 October using this link: <https://www.trybooking.com/DARUF>.