



**eNewsletter
No. 28
October 2024**

Northern NSW Branch

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

Larger images are available from the editor on request

Tree peony is the common name for the *Moutan* (*mǔdān*) group of the genus *Paeonia*. It consists of shrubs that have perennial aerial woody stems. Other peonies have stems which die back after the growing season, to emerge again from buds just below the surface early in the following year. Tree peonies have been in culture in China for millennia, and it is likely that hybrids came into being in gardens. They are used in China both for medicine and as an ornamental, particularly the hybrids called *Paeonia x suffruticosa*. These are perennial deciduous shrubs with stems up to 2 m, short thick branches and pale green leaves. Flowers have reddish purple, pink to white petals. Herbaceous peonies are generally slow to grow and have flowers that only last briefly and are fragile under weather conditions such as wind, rain or hot temperatures. Tree peonies in comparison, are long-lived, and the flowers bloom longer in the early spring. They grow best in dappled shade with 3 to 4 hours of sunlight. Generally, the shrub requires very little pruning, but it is advisable to cut off dead branches, and to cut off any sprouts that are suckers from the root stock.

Ref: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paeonia x suffruticosa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paeonia_x_suffruticosa)



Tree Peony 'Hana Kiso'i' (Floral Rivalry)

Image: <https://www.bhg.com/gardening/trees-shrubs-vines/shrubs/tree-peony-varieties/>

Join AGHS Northern NSW Branch

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

Send articles & photos to: Reports/Newsletter Editor Maria Hitchcock
maria.hitchcock@gmail.com

From the Chair:

Hello everyone,

How many weeks did you say it is until Christmas? This year is disappearing so quickly. Luckily there are still many more exciting activities for us to share before Santa comes. Don't forget to save the dates on our calendar at the end of the newsletter. Sandra is doing a fabulous job of coordinating our activities.

Those of you on social media may have noticed that the Heritage Rose Garden at Saumarez Homestead has been closed until further notice. This decision was the result of consultation between our AGHS branch and the National Trust, and has come about because we do not currently have the capacity to undertake the necessary gardening and maintenance. Interested Branch members will be invited to contribute to a discussion and decision about how we wish to proceed with our operation of the garden into the future. A meeting will be called specifically for this purpose, once everyone has returned from the National Conference.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all members who are attending the conference in Bunbury a happy and safe journey, and a most enjoyable conference experience. The program looks so interesting and varied, and the gardens to be visited should be fabulous. I can't wait to hear your stories and see your photos. Unfortunately, Bill and I won't be joining the NNSW group at the conference as I will be undertaking some significant medical treatment very soon. It will be full steam ahead for our conference in Mount Gambier next year, though.

I'm looking forward to catching up with you all soon.

Kind regards,

Helen Oates

Chair | Northern NSW Branch

National Secretary | Australian Garden History Society

Co-Chair | Heritage Rose Garden at Saumarez Homestead Sub-committee

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URGENT!

**We need volunteers to set up and man our stall at the
New England Garden Festival**

Saturday 2nd November

Setting Up/ Morning Shift/ Afternoon Shift

Sunday 3rd November

Morning Shift/ Afternoon Shift/ Taking Down

Can you help?

Please email Helen ASAP helen_oates10@hotmail.com

Local Stories - 14th September 2024

Text and images by Maria Hitchcock

This outing arranged by our new Events Co-ordinator, Dr Sandra Welsman, was a departure from some of our other garden events. This outing took us to some of the familiar places in our town for an in-depth look at the landscape and history of the site.

We started with **Marilyn Pidgeon's garden** in Lynch's Rd. This property was originally part of the old shire and on the stock route in the 1860's. It became a cow paddock for the property Heatherbrae and was eventually carved off as a battle axe block with no access to the road. The owners had an agreement with other neighbours for rights in common to allow access.

The block featured some very large Eucalypts which were finally removed. Cypressess were planted along the fence line but these grew so large they shaded most of the garden. When Marilyn and John moved in they started planting out a European garden and as expected the garden has changed over time. Marilyn wanted to grow plants that were challenging in our climate and her current garden is filled with many difficult to grow varieties, including her Peony collection.

Many of the deciduous trees she planted were put in while the house was being built. One difficulty she had to face was the lack of soil. The block is situated on a rocky ridge line which is very well drained but hard to dig holes in. During drought it was also quite expensive to keep the water up to the growing trees. She kept a sketchbook of the garden as it developed - this gave her a feel for planning each stage and enriching the sections.

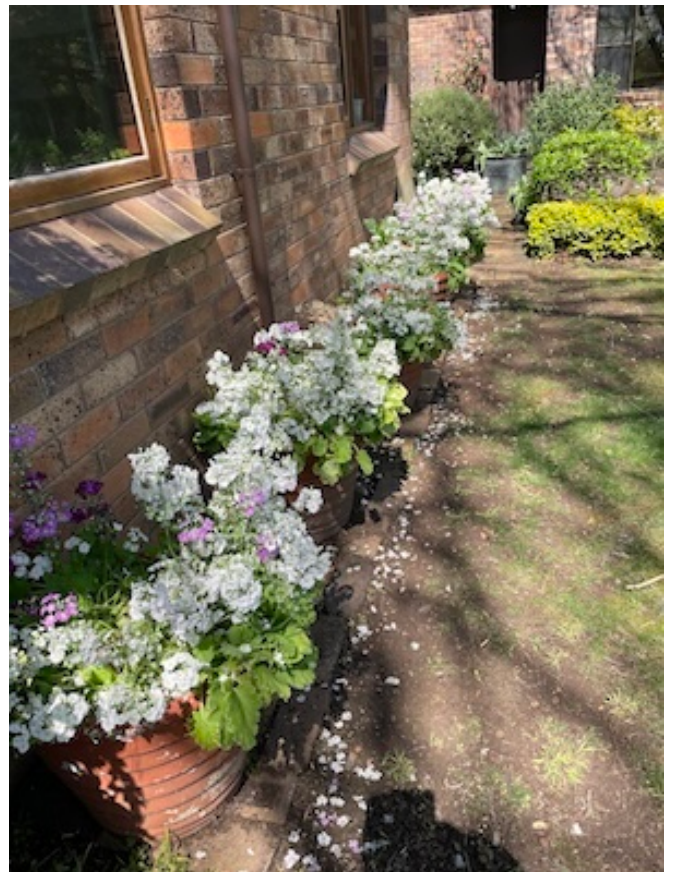
She planned to put bulbs in under the deciduous trees so that the dead leaves would form a natural mulch that breaks down and enriches the soil and gradually building new soil. Nutrients would be brought up from deep below and then deposited on the surface as leaves break down.

Marilyn is a compulsive recorder - she developed a flower calendar and a list of birds and other wildlife that visited the garden. A koala comes through occasionally and she has a Gynea Lily which has flowered once. Possums love eating the Magnolia buds, parrots love roses.

The *Echium candicans* near the entry originally came from Heronswood. It was planted as a seed and self sows. One of the seedlings turned out to be pink. Like other New England gardeners, Marilyn has to cope with wind, frost and hail damage as well as insect pests, too much rain, too little rain - all the challenges of a New England garden.



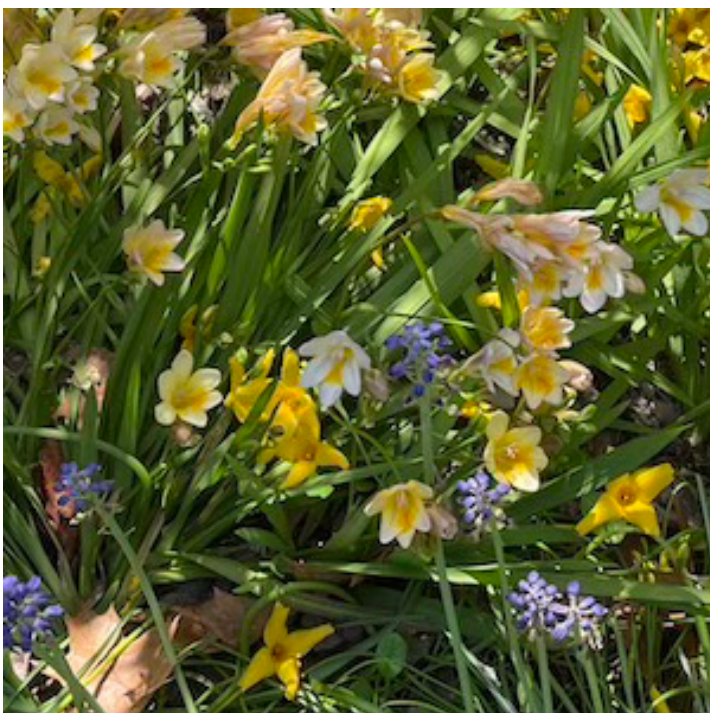
Echium candicans Pride of Madeira belongs to the Borage family. This could be the form 'Heronswood Blue'.



White Phlox in pots make a nice display.



Above: Tree Peony (*Paeonia x suffruticosa*)
Above right: The pond
Right: Quince tree in full bloom



Above: Freesias and bluebells
Right: *Magnolia x soulangeana*

Next stop was the **Museum of Education** in Taylor St. It is a complex of three former school buildings now managed by a local Trust. The first one is Pallamallawa Public School that was first moved to the back of the Old Teachers College where it was used as an Educational History Museum by lecturer Eric Dunlop to show student teachers what school education was like in the past. The bee hive design modelled on English schools was not suited to Australian summers. Teachers training to teach in small schools had lessons in this building. During the 1960s and 70s, many small schools were closed and equipment and materials were donated to this Museum at that time. Our older members remembered the type of desks and ink wells, the blackboard and infants circle painted on the floor.

The second building is an example of a timber portable which appeared in schools after World War 1. It has been recently restored by the Trust thanks to a grant.

The third building in the set is the former Dumaresq Public School originally located on the creek bank downstream from Dumaresq Dam. After the dam wall was built people lobbied for the school to be moved to higher ground where it stayed until the school closed. The first school bus run in NSW took children from neighbouring farms to Dumaresq PS. The school site is now privately owned.

The buildings originally had open verandahs but these were gradually enclosed to provide shelter and more teaching space as numbers increased. Inside one of the buildings is a model of a travelling school carriage pulled by horses. This model was created by one of Eric Dunlop's students. Such travelling schools were used by male teachers who could handle a horse and who would have lodgings at the properties they visited. These travelling schools were later replaced by School of the Air. Another artifact in the building was the original milk can which mixed powdered milk and water to provide children with a daily milk ration. Later small bottles would replace the can.

Ref: From notes supplied by Graham Wilson



Pallamallawa School desks



Caroline Fitzroy with the school milk can



Above; The group at the Museum of Education
Below: The portable school building





Left:
Inside Dumaresq Public School

Single desks with cast iron frames and ink wells.



Signage at the Museum of Education.

Below left: The model of the Travelling School



Old Teachers' College

The former Armidale Teachers' College is a State Heritage listed building constructed in the late 1920s. Formerly the site of the the Armidale Gaol built in 1860s and demolished in the 1920s, the hill is a landmark of the town and features magnificent views over the town and beyond. Some of the gaol bricks were saved for the new construction to save costs. The first students arrived in 1928 but student teachers were not trained here. They were located in a timber portable building located at Armidale Public School and nicknamed 'Siberia'.

This majestic building was designed by J. Dawson, Acting NSW Government architect who based the design on that of Sydney Teachers College. The Country Party lobbied to have it built of the finest material because it would train country students for country service. It would feature strongly in the New State Movement. The gardens were always meant to be a place of beauty - a way of alleviating student homesickness.

The corridors and rooms were filled with those priceless painting from the Hinton collection now preserved at NERAM. Hinton donated over 1000 paintings during the period 1929 - 1948. During World War 2, the 'dungeon' became home to many treasures from Sydney stored there for safekeeping. Armed guards stood at the college doors and the place was nicknamed 'Hush, Hush!' The Hinton paintings themselves were to be moved to pastoral properties in case of invasion by the Japanese. A list was drawn up in readiness by Mrs Newling, wife of the Principal.

The students contributed to the war effort - girls manufactured practice grenades as well as camouflage nets. The college won a government grant to construct spotter planes which would allow residents to identify the various types of military planes. An Honour Roll, put together by Judy Grieve OAM is located on the first floor. The front gates are another war memorial. The Teacher's College was renamed a College of Advanced Education and then amalgamated with the University of New England. The building was mothballed and lost performance rights. Friends of the Teachers' College secured a grant in 1997 in order to reinstate the license. NECOM has now ensured the Building's viability.



The gardens now are a shadow of their former glory. Roses and masses of annuals made a wonderful show in spring and summer. The lawns were always immaculate and students were told to 'keep off the grass'.



Once the Principal's office, the History Room is now a Museum holding artifacts from former times. It is managed by the Friends of the Teachers' College.



The classical facade of the old Teachers' College facing north. it is now home to NECOM and one of the four offices of the State Government Department of Regional NSW. The Armidale Eisteddfod has been held here for many years.

Central Park

Set aside as Reserve No. 8 by Comissioner George MacDonald when he laid out the town of Armidale in 1839, it subsequently was taken over as parkland by Armidale Council in 1874. Eight years later in 1882 Brother Francis Gatti from the Catholic Church was tasked with the job of purchasing trees for the park and in 1887 it was formally proclaimed as a park.

It then became a place for War memorials. The Band Rotunda was opened in 1902 as a memorial to soldiers who fought in the Boer war. The main World War 1 Memorial was opened in 1922. Over the years it has added memorials to soldiers who died in World War 2 and subsequent conflicts which involved Australian forces.





Above: The World War 1 memorial

Right: Ilex cassine (Dahoon Holly)

Below: HMAS Armidale Memorial

Right below: Afghanistan memorial



Tattersalls Hotel

Our final stop was to this refurbished hotel in the Mall. It was one of several hotels once the railway arrived in 1882. In the 1930s it was reconstructed and decorated in the Art Deco style which was recently revived by the Cassidy family. After World War I the consumption of alcohol increased leading to the License Reduction Board. Hotels had to modernise or close. In the process many hotels lost their verandahs. Tattersalls Hotel was one of them

Image: <https://au.hotels.com/>



2024 New England Spring Garden Trail

31 Oct – 6 Nov

The inaugural New England Spring Garden Trail, organised by the New England Garden Festival, will travel across the beautiful New England region in seven days, opening approx. 18+ cold climate gardens to visitors.

Each town will open their 3 gardens between 9am-2pm for one day only.

The exception being Armidale's gardens which are open
from 9.30- 5pm on Sat

9.30 – 2pm on Sun

in line with the 5 other Open Gardens
for the New England Garden Festival.

Dates of the SPRING Garden Trail:

31st Oct - Walcha

1st Nov - Uralla

2/3rd Nov - Armidale

New England Garden Festival

4th Nov - Guyra

5th Nov - Glen Innes

6th Nov - Tenterfield

W: <https://negf.com.au>

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=new%20england%20garden%20festival>

Calendar of Events

Inquiries and ideas - please send to Sandra Welsman (Events Co-ordinator)
sandra.welsman.frontiers@gmail.com Ph. 0411100048

Date	Event	Notes
October 18,19,20	AGHS National Conference Bunbury WA	Bunbury Regional Entertainment Centre Accommodation: Bunbury Hotel + other options Flights: Jetstar direct from Sydney to Busselton Still a few places left. To register go to https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/product/aghs-conference-registration-2024/
November 2nd & 3rd	New England Garden Festival Volunteers needed to man the stall!	Armidale Jockey Club Barney St, Armidale NSW 2350 This Branch will have a tent with display and information aiming to attract new members.
November Sunday 24th	Christmas Function	Petersen's Winery - organised by Helen Wilson Details to follow.
February Friday 7th - Sunday 9th	ON THE ROAD to Tenterfield and Glen Innes	Fri 7th - Tenterfield: 4.30pm Opening of 'Beyond the Lawn' exhibition then 7.00pm group dinner. Sat 8th - Tenterfield: 10.00 visit to Henry Parkes Museum then Ivy Leaf Chapel Garden and buildings for lunch. 3pm drive to Glen Innes. Sun 9th - Glen Innes: 10.00am ANZAC Park with talk by Graham Wilson. 11.30am drive to Waterloo Station 18km west for lunch and garden and buildings tour. Sandra Welsman organising
March Sunday 30th	Branch meeting, speaker/s and dinner.	Venue t.b.a. Helen Oates, Liz Chappell, Marilyn Pidgeon presenting on the AGHS Oral History project.
April Saturday 5th Sunday 6th or Saturday 12th Sunday 13th	Visit Moree Gardens	This trip is being arranged by Fran Webb and the Moree Garden Club. More details to come.
May Sunday 25th	Branch meeting and local speaker.	Details to come
June 29th?	WINTER SPEAKER PROGRAM	Details to come
July 27th?	WINTER SPEAKER PROGRAM	Details to come
August 31st?	WINTER SPEAKER PROGRAM	Details to come
September?	Yulgilbah Trip	Details to come
October 31st - November 2nd	AGHS National Conference	Mount Gambier, South Australia.