



## eNewsletter No. 17 September 2023

### Northern NSW Branch

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

Larger images are available from the editor on request

It's Spring - time for the blossom trees to come out in all their glory and the bees to go crazy. This month we feature one of the best blossom trees suited to small gardens.

***Prunus subhirtella* 'Pendula'** also called **Weeping Higan Cherry** grows 20 to 30 feet tall and spreads 15 to 25 feet in a weeping habit. Leaves stay glossy green throughout the summer and into the fall when they turn a vivid yellow before leaving the tree bare in winter. The Weeping Higan Cherry blooms in the spring, having light pink (almost white) flowers that cover the branches before the leaves emerge.

The branches droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath them. The branches are breakage resistant. The trees require pruning to develop strong structure during young growth. The species is quite robust but the leaves, stems and seeds may be toxic to cats, dogs and horses.

Ref: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prunus\\_subhirtella\\_%27Pendula%27](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prunus_subhirtella_%27Pendula%27)



*Prunus subhirtella* 'Pendula'  
Image: [bunnings.com.au](https://www.bunnings.com.au)

**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)

**From the Chair:**

Hello everyone,

I hope your gardens are growing happily, although the recent frosts in the New England have taken the sparkle from some flowerings and budding. Now for some rain!

My thanks to Graham Wilson for chairing our last NNSW branch meeting. From all accounts, it was a well attended and interesting meeting. Bill's presentation using our holiday photos from Portugal and the UK seemed to hit the mark with the audience. A couple of his images are included in this newsletter for your enjoyment.

We've had lots of hard working groups of pruning volunteers making great strides in the Heritage Rose Garden. Some of the beds were quite wild and overgrown, with most having now been tamed. This is no small task, and the diligence, blood, sweat and tears (in our clothing) of everyone who has been involved has been so much appreciated. The garden will look wonderful when Saumarez Homestead opens again, with new gravel mulch spread and roses ready to flower.

Richard Bird has once again done a fantastic job in planning and organising the gravel mulch delivery and spreading. We are so fortunate to have such an enthusiastic and dedicated 'project manager' in our midst. There is more gravel to be spread, but with busy times once again upon us, the next instalment will take place after we all return from the AGHS Annual Conference in Ipswich.

Lynne and I are off to Melbourne this week to interview candidates for the National Executive Officer position. We had over 30 applications for the position, with astounding skills and experience being demonstrated. We expect our interviews on Thursday to deliver to the Society a well qualified and enthusiastic new NEO. Lisa Nutting will be very hard to replace, and I would like to thank her, on behalf of our Branch, for her hard work and diligence, but most of all for being so approachable and affable.

Kind regards,

Helen

***Helen Oates***

***0408 434016***

**The New England Garden festival** is to be held on November 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> at the Armidale Race Course. AGHS will be having a stall there over the weekend and the organiser of the festival have asked us if we would like to volunteer in the following capacities;

1. Judges for the competitions at the racecourse - bonsai, fairy, dinosaur, succulent, hanging basket gardens - Friday 17<sup>th</sup> Nov late afternoon
2. Welcome and collect entrance fees at open gardens.
3. Selling raffle tickets.

If you would like to volunteer please contact the organiser direct on their website. It will be a fantastic weekend and will showcase New England gardening at its best."

## NEW ENGLAND GARDEN FESTIVAL

The New England Garden Festival is being held on 19 and 19 November 2023 at the Armidale Racecourse.

It will have many garden stalls, workshops, guest speakers, presentations, competitions and open gardens along with festive music and art.

We'd love to see you there!



Open Gardens

As gardeners, we all understand the desire to:

- plant new seeds, seedlings, or plants and nurture their growth
- shape the plants, or improve their overall appearance
- water our plants regularly
- enjoy the fruits of our labour and savour the flavours of homegrown produce
- create new plants from existing ones
- design or rearrange our garden spaces
- continually learn using our natural curiosity across all gardening avenues
- remove weeds from our garden beds, and even those in other gardens
- view gardens, to visit nurseries
- and to gather with like minded, generous and kind hearted people

The New England Garden Festival aims to satisfy many of these yearnings as we bring together gardeners, specialists, professionals and the community for fun and educational activities, along with a great range of retail therapy with a vast array of stall holders.

Inspirational gardens will be opened, along with competition gardens in many categories. All the things that gardeners love to do or see, but can never get enough of!

We hope you have a great weekend!

For more information visit the website:

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

## Gravel Mulch

The Heritage Rose Garden team made a decision several months ago to replace the organic bark chip with a gravel mulch. They were advised to do this in order to cut down on the amount of weeding that was necessary to keep the rose beds in pristine condition.

Richard Bird offers some advice to our volunteers:

I have placed Red Decorative cobbles for the small beds [I/M] in stage 2. They are slightly rounded and about 7/10mm so quite fine. They are currently dusty but rain should enable their pinkish colour to show up. Those that have seen them think that they look quite good. To complete the gravelling of the rose beds [but not the east and west trellises] we should need

5m<sup>3</sup> 7/14mm blue metal for remaining stage 2 x N/O/P & Q B 5/7/9/10 [We have about 9m<sup>3</sup> left so that is why the amount needed is small]

20m<sup>3</sup> 20mm blue metal for Q C 4/5/6/7/8/10 & stage 2 T [x3]

4m<sup>3</sup> white scoria for the outer ring of K in stage 2

Having looked at the east and west trellises I think that the rose garden edge is in need of gravelling but the area behind the trellises and underneath the pines is probably adequately mulched with pine needles to reduce most weed growth. The Ornamental Fruit trees also seem to be self mulching with only minor weed growth that is easily poisoned and probably does not need organic or gravel mulch. Placement of gravel means that a bit is spilt and also gets raked over the steel edges onto the path so that it looks a bit messy at the moment. This will be easily raked and brushed onto the beds on completion. Also when John H is dumping the gravel some gets into the bole of the roses and this may need to be removed but I think that this is cosmetic rather than deleterious for the roses.

When replanting in the gravelled beds please scrape the gravel to one side and dig the hole putting the soil in a bucket. Any soil that goes onto the gravel will look untidy but will [should] eventually wash through into the underlying soil. Loose soil lying on top of the gravel will more easily grow weeds. Whenever working on the beds please lift the dripper hose on top of the gravel. Burying it under gravel or mulch will allow fine root hairs to block the drip apertures. Also do not let the hose get too close to the rose bole as if caught under the stem or roots the growth will crush the dripper pipe and restrict flow to the rest of the bed. Rose boles have already crushed the pipe in many cases and will need to be cut off and rejoined away from the bole. The drippers are designed to give 2L/hour [6L/hour for 1 m of pipe] which is more than adequate near the rose and does not need to be right at the root bole.

## The Pros and Cons of using gravel mulches

### Benefits

Using gravel as mulch can benefit plants whether they are landscaped or planted in a pot. Gravel or stone can also bring a modern look to plants while at the same time increasing property value. When used as mulch, gravel can prevent soil erosion, loss of moisture, and unwanted weeds from around plants. Gravel should be applied 20 cm from around the base of the plant at a depth of 1 – 2 inches. Gravel or rocks should not be packed down as they will settle naturally over time.

Gravel Mulch maintains soil moisture, represses weeds, and gives a finished look to planting beds, and as it is fireproof, it is used around the buildings as a band. The loss of moisture from the soil is one of the abiotic factors that create barren land.



Gravel Mulches can potentially reduce weed infestation, evaporation and enhance the percolation and retention rate of soil. It doesn't wash away in a downpour or any unfavorable climatic condition, and it gives a beautiful look to the areas where it is used. It can also help gardeners by reducing the frequency of plant irrigation. It works as a protector of soil from wind and water erosion by reducing the compaction of soil responsible for the reduction in growth and development of plants by affecting the roots of crops. In addition to this, gravel mulch also maintains the temperature of soil by covering the soil's surface, which is very necessary for the better growth of crops. Burrowing animals such as rabbits may find it hard to dig into the soil if the gravel mulch is of a coarse density.

Inorganic mulches, including scoria, gravel and stone river pebbles, don't break down. They come in a range of colours, are trendy at the moment, and can look effective when used as mulch on pot plants.

## Disadvantages

- Gravel beds depend on chemical sprays for the removal of weeds.
- It traps leaves and other debris compared to organic mulches as it is easy to remove that from the organic mulches. If left unattended, debris will accumulate and pile up on the gravel, making it unattractive. Hence, rake the debris regularly using a metallic rake. Ensure you use the right type of a rake. For instance, use a rake with thin tines that are set close when raking fine gravel. A simple way of removing leaves when they are still dry is using a functional leaf blower.
- Like most inorganic mulch, gravel mulch does not feed soil because it cannot provide nutrients.
- These mulches are preferably used in sparsely planted beds.
- The gravel needs to be scraped to one side or put into a bucket when planting out.

## Armidale Airport

Next time you want to fly out, have a close look at the gardens around the terminal. Council was forced to replace the organic mulch with gravel because of the large number of live cigarette butts being thrown into the gardens.

In bushfire prone areas in Victoria residents are compelled to use stone mulches because of the risk of the mulch burning near homes or smouldering for days.

## References:

<https://flourishingplants.com/using-gravel-as-mulch/>  
<https://nbglandscapes.com.au/10-ideas-landscaping-gravel/>

## Rose Pruning Working Bees

Text and images by Lynne Walker

### Wednesday 16th August

What a great day we had yesterday with the Back Track team and John Hiscox and his trusty dingo which transported the gravel bed by bed effortlessly so ALL the team had to do was rake which they did with great purpose and good humour. They worked so fast they ended up mulching no less than 17 beds in the D quadrant, some in B and some even in Stage Two. We were flat out pruning trying to keep ahead of them, helped enormously by Tom tackling one of the beds full of huge roses with a fantastic trimmer (thanks Oates) and this will be used by Tom to do the Rugosas in Quadrant B which will then be mulched. Moving on now to Quadrant C where we need to prune before the Back Track team return. Still much to do but so much achieved.



Top Left and right: Tom before and after pruning a large rose bush  
Below Left: Finished beds  
Below Right: John Hiscox with the dingo spreading gravel mulch.



**Thursday 24th August.**

Great morning this morning with son Tom and friend Bud and two electric trimmers- the Rugosas are now tamed and look amazing - thanks guys. Meanwhile Helen O worked tirelessly as well. Quadrant C almost completed. The electric trimmers will be in residence and there is also some raking and weeding to be done and the catmint trimmed



Before pruning



After pruning

**Sunday 3rd September.**

We are getting there - so close to finishing with just one maybe two more pruning sessions depending on how many volunteers we have. Huge thanks to Christine and Carolyn Gadd for coming yesterday - thanks to them (and to Helen & Graham and Anne C the week before) - the big trellis between Stages 1 and 2 is almost tamed. As you can see from the barrowloads it was a mighty task. There are a few beds to finish pruning in Stage One and then the Back Track boys and John Hiscox will return to complete the mulching. Thanks to Richard for all his planning, organising mulch and providing detailed report and diagrams as we go.

The mulched beds are looking amazing with all the paths around them sprayed and raked and the roses are sprouting already.







Left: Helen Wilson  
Right: Carolyn and Christine

## Sculpted Pot from the Nymans Garden Sussex

Text and image: Bill Oates

Nymans is a National Trust garden in Sussex of grand proportions boasting the remains of a grand mansion largely destroyed by fire. Whilst only a fraction of the house remains inhabitable, the gardens including many compartments, outbuildings, hedges and statues are beautifully maintained. The original owners were avid collectors of outdoor art. The gardens share the green rural landscape of the region.





## Bill and Helen Oates visit Sintra - Greater Lisbon Portugal

**Sintra** is a town and municipality in the [Greater Lisbon](#) region of Portugal, located on the [Portuguese Riviera](#). Sintra is one of the most urbanized and densely populated municipalities of Portugal. A major [tourist destination](#) famed for its picturesqueness, the municipality has several historic palaces, castles, scenic beaches, parks and gardens. The area includes the [Sintra-Cascais Nature Park](#) through which the [Sintra Mountains](#) run. The historic center of the *Vila de Sintra* is famous for its 19th-century [Romanticist](#) architecture, historic estates and villas, gardens, and royal palaces and castles, such as **Quinta da Regaleira** (pictured right) which resulted in the classification of the town as a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#). Sintra's landmarks include the medieval [Castle of the Moors](#), the romanticist [Pena National Palace](#) and the [Portuguese Renaissance Sintra National Palace](#). Sintra is one of the wealthiest municipalities in both Portugal and the [Iberian Peninsula](#) as a whole. It is home to one of the largest foreign expat communities along the Portuguese Riviera and consistently ranks as one of the best places to live in Portugal.

During the third quarter of the 18th century and practically all of the 19th century, foreign travellers and Portuguese aristocrats, fired by [Romanticism](#), rediscovered the magic of Sintra, especially in its exotic landscapes and climate.

By the beginning of the 20th century, Sintra was recognized as a summer resort visited by aristocrats and millionaires. Among these, [Carvalho Monteiro](#), owner of a considerable fortune constructed near the main town, on an estate he bought from the Baroness of Regaleira, a [luxurious revivalist palacette](#), based on a Neo-Manueline architecture.

From the second half of the 19th century into the first decades of the 20th century, Sintra also became a privileged place for artists: musicians such as [Viana da Mota](#); composers such as [Alfredo Keil](#), painters like [João Cristino da Silva](#), writers such as [Eça de Queirós](#) or [Ramalho Ortigão](#), all these people lived, worked or got inspiration from Sintra's landscapes.

Since 1966, the Sintra Mountains have been affected by fires that have destroyed a major part of the original forest, which has been substituted by acacia and other fast-growing exotic species.



Ref: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sintra>

## Our Cultural History

In recent years academics and indigenous activists have been working solidly on trying to revive some of Australia's hundreds of indigenous languages. Some will never be recovered. Others have fully developed dictionaries and complex grammar rules. This is a wonderful development which was obviously initiated by some sound policy decisions in past years backed up by some serious funding. Language can tell us a lot about the past history of an area. First Nations peoples had defined territories with names for various locations based on landmarks or the totem animal prevalent in that area. Those names were often adopted by European settlers and officials then formalised by the Geographical Names Board. For example: an old colonial map for our area has noted the Anaiwan word **Tuembandian** for Mount Duval (contributed by Dr John Atchison OAM). I have also seen it spelt **Duembandian** - the **t** and **d** are often interchanged. The Anaiwan name has been recommended to Council for a dual naming program. Here are several other place names.

<b>Barwon River</b>	<i>baawan</i>	Gamilaraay		SoW
<b>Beardy River</b>	<i>nundah</i>	Ngarrabul	river/creek	SoW
<b>Bellbrook</b>	<i>wupu</i>	Dhanggati		SoW
<b>Bellingen</b>	<i>baligin</i>	Gumbaynggirr	Quoll	G D
<b>Boggabilla</b>	<i>bagaybila</i>	Gamilaraay		SoW
<b>Bundarra</b>	<i>bandaarraa</i> <i>bundar-rah</i>	Gamilaraay Jukumbal		SoW
<b>Coonabarabaran</b>	<i>gunabarabin</i>	Gamilaraay		SoW
<b>Guy Fawkes Mt</b>	<i>birrindaani</i>	Gumbaynggirr		G D
<b>Dorrigo</b>	<i>dandarrga</i>	Gumbaynggirr	Stringybark	G D
<b>Kalang River</b>	<i>galang</i>	Gumbaynggirr	White Beech	G D
<b>Glen Innes</b>	<i>kindaitchain</i>	Ngarrabul	place of stone	SoW
<b>Guyra</b>	<i>gayaarr</i> <i>ill-goel</i>	Banbai Nganyaywana	Suphur Crested Cockatoo fish can be caught	G D SoW
<b>Gwydir River</b>	<i>guwayda</i>	Gamilaraay		SoW
<b>Macksville</b>	<i>dhiliwirr</i>	Dhanggati		SoW
<b>Tingha</b>	<i>tiengah</i>	Nganyaywana	flat/level ground	SoW

### References:

SoW *Speaking our Way* Compiled by Bernadette Duncan & Harry White (Northern Tablelands Local Land Services 2015)

GD *Gumbaynggirr Dictionary and Learner's Grammar* Steve Morelli, MuurrbayAboriginal Language & Culture Co-operative 2nd Ed. 2015