



FRIENDS OF Old Parliament House ROSE GARDENS

Issue 9 - August 2015

President's message

Dear Friends,

Winter looks like a quiet time in the garden, but as all of us who tend our own roses know, it takes a lot of work behind the scenes to keep everything in tip-top flowering order. So it is with the Friends and Volunteers whose hard work and advocacy assist the Rose Gardens to bloom throughout the year.

The Friends' year began with our traditional St Valentine's Day drinks in the Gardens. We were blessed with wonderful weather and we heard from Friend and historian Dr John Grey, who spoke to us very entertainingly about his book *Roses, Tennis and Democracy*. Commissioned by the National Capital Authority, John's book is a record of the gardens from their inception to the present day.

He spoke to us about the role the Gardens played in bringing parliamentarians together: tennis was particularly popular despite wrangles with the late Fred Daly over block bookings of the courts, and the gardens also supplied cut flowers for the House in those simpler times. The late William Yates MP kept bees in the garden for some time, once setting off the Parliamentary fire alarms with his smoker. The Gardens also saw romance: one couple were inadvertently locked in after a romantic proposal, and after many years of happy marriage, later sponsored a rose. As the Gardens have grown and their function has changed, they have become a place of enjoyment for all Canberrans and visitors to the national capital, and both the Friends and Volunteers play a crucial role in ensuring that continues to grow.

In May the Friends held a well attended AGM in the Griffin Room. Our thanks to the National Capital Authority and in particular Amanda Hynson, who attended the meeting and made it possible for us to use the building after hours. We welcomed several new additions to the committee, including Lorraine Gentle, Nadene Edwards and Joan Crook.

The committee also expressed its condolences on behalf of the Friends and Volunteers to co-patron Tamie Fraser on the death of her husband, former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser. A great love of gardening was one of the passions they shared during their lives together.

In June the Friends held a winter rose care workshop with Vince Davey from Neutrog, who was generous with both his

time and also his samples. Please see the story on p.3 for further information, along with some invaluable rose care hints from Nadene Edwards, who works alongside Dennis Dempsey, caring for the Gardens to such a high standard. We send our best wishes to Dennis for his speedy recovery after a recent operation, and will miss his enthusiasm and dedication to the roses while he is recovering.

After some discussion, it was decided to postpone plans for a Friends' Melbourne Cup roses tour for this year, but we are planning several events in the next few months including a fireside chat at the end of August and a Melbourne Cup day lunch among the roses at the Pork Barrel cafe in November.

We are also involved in negotiations over some of the important heritage roses currently held by Rustons in South Australia. The nursery is up for sale and the Friends have been contacted by a number of concerned parties. Our particular focus at this stage is on the early 20th century roses that fall outside the parameters of the heritage collections elsewhere, but are a particularly good fit with the origins of the Old Parliament House Rose Gardens. We hope to find space for these under-represented and lesser known species that are nevertheless foundational in Australian rose breeding.

Genevieve Jacobs

President,

Friends of the Old Parliament House Rose Gardens



Jenny Moore, Meg Ward and Libby Osborne at our St Valentine's Day drinks.

Neutrog's Sudden Impact for roses - order now

We are currently organising a bulk order from Neutrog for their Sudden Impact rose fertiliser, and will be able to offer current members only a substantial discount on the retail price. The Friends will order a pallet of "Sudden Impact" in 20 kilo bags. The price will be \$40 per unit (the price in Garden Centres and Bunnings etc. is over \$60 for this size container). The pallet will be delivered to the Old Parliament House Rose Gardens and orders will be collected from there. The delivery will arrive in September/October, in time for spring fertilising.

Please advise us how much Sudden Impact you would like to order, either by emailing aknowler@netspeed.com.au

or phone 6281 1658. Note that this discount is only available to current financial members. If your membership has lapsed, you can find the renewal form on the back of this newsletter.

Sudden Impact for Roses is recommended and endorsed by the Rose Societies of South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and the South West Rose Group of WA along with the National Rose Society of Australia and Heritage Roses in Australia Inc. and used widely in many of Australia's most significant public rose gardens.



Left: Ellnor Grassby and friend enjoy the sunshine of St Valentine's Day.

Right: Friends Vice President Malcolm Beazley with accordionist Tom Kesina.



Left: Vince Davey of Neutrog with Friends committee member Fred Knowler.



Left: Friends and Volunteers enjoy Vince Davey's talk on fertilizing for flowers.

Right: Morning tea following Vince's talk on fertilising roses.



Fertilising for flowers

Vince Davey of Neutrog spoke to the Friends and Volunteers in June about how to fertilise roses effectively.

Neutrog developed Sudden Impact in conjunction with the Rose Society of South Australia and a number of professional rose growers. While not wholly organic, its organic base provides a full range of plant nutrients in a slow release form, whilst the water-soluble nutrients have been added to maximise the performance of each application.

The organic raw materials are conditioned through composting and once completed, the water-soluble nutrients are blended into the organic base before being pasteurised and pelleted.

When discussing the difference between organic and inorganic fertilisers, Vince made the point that inorganic fertiliser should be applied during growing seasons only because of its inability to penetrate soil at other times.

Organic fertiliser can be applied throughout the year because of its capacity to break down. If you choose to use an inorganic fertiliser in growth and flowering periods, boost your soil health at other times with an organic product such as the seaweed based soil tonics or pellets. Seaweed fertilisers are also suitable for natives, although a

product is currently in development that meets their specific phosphorus needs.

The suggested fertiliser regime of September and February for roses is perfectly effective, but Vince recommended smaller and more frequent applications for those who have particular soil health issues. Application rates run at about 100g per bush for established roses, and for container roses 5g per 150mm size pot then at 5g per 25mm pot size increase.

Vince suggested that gardeners should apply fertiliser evenly to pre-soaked soil around the drip line of the plant and water. Keep fertiliser at least 20cm away from base of plant and avoid contact with foliage or flowers. Apply after signs of new season growth and thereafter every eight to ten weeks throughout the growing season. Diluted products should be applied more frequently and should not be stored for more than a week after mixing.

Adequate fertilisation can also provide protection against pests, diseases, heat stress and frost. Vince said that "Like humans and flowers, plants require regular feeding throughout the year – at least once in each season."

The fertilising regime is not limited to roses: Vince said that rose specific fertilisers are also suitable for most flowering plants without particular high acid needs

Celebrating Volunteers

The **National Capital Authority** and the **Friends** joined in celebrating ten years of dedicated service from a number of Volunteers with a morning tea held recently at the National Capital exhibition. Congratulations to these wonderful workers, whose contribution is so significant for the wellbeing of the Gardens. These Volunteers are as follows:

Rex Hazelwood Garden

Laraine Cassin (retired recently), Jeannette Clarke, Rex Goode, Graham Harvey (to retire shortly), Victoria Jones, Jean Meulen (retired recently), Pamela Swaffield (to retire shortly), Margaret Weir, Ren Willard. Other Rex Hazelwood garden long-term volunteers who have retired in recent times include Catherine Perry and Barbara Scott.

Broinowski Garden

Joan Braithwaite, Meg Ward

Ladies' Garden Friday

Ann Knowler, Fred Knowler, Sue Murray, Chris Small

Ladies' Garden Monday

Veronica Ayers, Lorraine Gentle, Cynthia Kimlin, Carol Newman

Macarthur Garden

Gwen Souter
Other Macarthur garden long-term volunteers who have retired in recent times include Joyce van Leewin and Alma Jones.

Rose care for winter gardens

Nadene Edwards who cares for the Old Parliament House Rose Gardens with Citywide shares her tips on basic maintenance in the winter rose garden.

Winter is upon us and for rose enthusiasts it means it is almost pruning time. Mid July to the end of August is the best time to prune roses in Canberra and the surrounding region. It is time to sharpen those secateurs and loppers and make sure everything is in good working order. It is very important to maintain your equipment. Blunt tools, like secateurs and loppers lead to bad cuts, opening the rose up to diseases like canker and dieback. Before every session of pruning it is essential to sharpen your tools.

Another essential task is to spray your equipment with a 50% methylated spirits and 50% water solution. This solution is used in the OPH and National Rose Gardens to prevent the

spread of pest and diseases. Spray your tools between each rose and between each cut when you cut into dead or diseased wood.

When pruning your roses one of the easiest ways to remember what to do is prune to the four D's. Remove: diseased wood; dead wood; damaged wood; and diagonal wood (or crossing wood). Once your roses are pruned make sure every leaf is removed to stop reinfection of black spot and other fungal diseases. Last but not least spray your roses with Lime Sulphur which is available at your hardware stores and nurseries. Spraying lime sulphur will stop the overwintering pest and diseases.



Greeting cards

A range of beautifully photographed cards made by gifted photographer Margaret Weir.

Includes close detail and landscape shots of the Gardens. They are available either as individual cards at \$4 each or at \$15 for five plus \$3 for postage and packaging.

Membership

If you would like to become a member of the Friends, please complete this form and post to:

Friends of the Old Parliament House Rose Gardens
PO Box 213
CURTIN ACT 2605

Membership category (please tick)

Single (\$35) ☐

Family (\$40) ☐

Concession (\$30)* ☐

**Pension card holders or full time students*

Concession Card number _____

Contact details

Name _____

Address _____

Post code _____

Telephone _____

Payment (Please tick)

Cheque ☐ Direct deposit ☐

For payment by direct deposit:

BSB: 082 902

Account number: 16770 7016

Account name: Friends of Old Parliament House Rose Gardens

Place your order

I wish to order (Please tick)

There's Something About a Rose ☐ \$15

Sunshine and Roses CD ☐ \$15

Greetings cards ☐ \$4 each or \$15 for five

Number of copies _____

Total amount _____

Contact details

Name _____

Address _____

Post code _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Payment (Please tick)

Cheque ☐ Direct deposit ☐

For payment by direct deposit:

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All proceeds go to support the work of the Friends.