



Mediterranean Gardening Margaret River

W E S T E R N A U S T R A L I A

Hi everyone

An update for you on our activities over the winter.

Since May we have all been busy in our own gardens, planting new material, renovating after our lengthy dry spell and perhaps attempting new projects.

Our June meeting scheduled for Augusta moved to Ruth Dowsett's country garden out on Wallis Rd. Despite inclement weather we had a good turn out and everyone enjoyed the wander through the last vestiges of autumn leaves and some beautiful bare branches. Ruth's rose collection is extensive and it was a great chance to introduce people to the joys of and beauty of rose hips. So much variety. Iris unguicularis was flowering in a big clump and the Camellias were just flowering. After my plant profile in the last newsletter on Cotinus species we were delighted to see that Ruth had two of the biggest specimens any of us had ever seen. Only a few leaves remained. Ruth said the red one was Grace as I have. And the other Golden Spirit which has lovely limey green leaves through Spring but probably not as spectacular as Smoke. Looking forward to seeing these beauties in 'Smoke' later in the year.

In fact the general consensus was that we need to repeat our visit here in Spring when I suspect we will be overwhelmed. Ruth says they are very lucky to have a supply of bore water run by a windmill that supplies her with plenty of water. She uses sprinklers, both hand and manual ones so she can monitor it all closely. Of course this all happens early in the morning ahead of the wind and heat and Ruth enjoys this part of the day best. Thanks so much to Ruth and Rod.

Our next meeting was our Cabin Fever workshop at the Duggan Pavillion in Cowaramup on Monday August 13th. The brainchild of Pamela Edwards who felt we had a lot of hidden botanical talents in our group. It took time to plan and winkle these talents out but the day was an outstanding success and no one had time to participate in all the demonstrations that they might have liked so I suspect this will be repeated one day in another form. Plenty of photos were taken but we won't have room for too many.

Propagation with Carole and Del was extremely popular as was the flower arranging tips from Carole's florist daughter Paula. So many useful tips from cutting the different stems to make the flowers last longer in water and how to fill

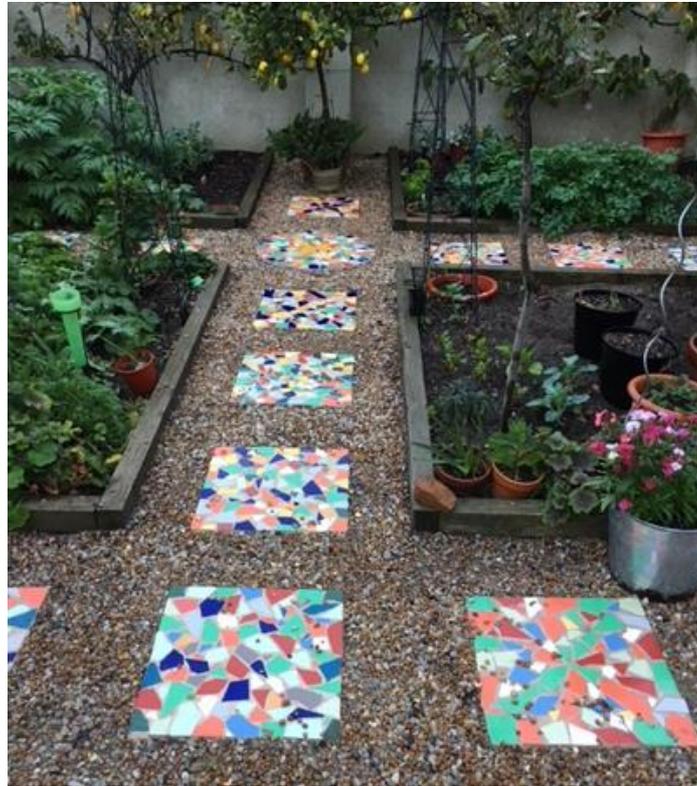
in a vase using minimal flowers. Paula created some stunning pieces, which were then raffled at the end of the session. We then watched her deconstruct one arrangement and turn it into something different. It all looked so easy. I loved the still life arrangements of pieces of wood and moss and fungi etc.

We had botanical art lessons and wreaths created from so many different materials. Then we had the group woven wall hanging which everyone contributed to under the watchful eye of Barb who guided our efforts into something beautifully balanced. I have it at home drying to see what happened next. So many different activities were going on. Baskets and Pauline's amazing wall hanging A great way to spend a winter day and we learnt so much from each other. Thanks to everyone: demonstrators, participants and a special thanks to Bev and Jenny for manning the plant and bookstall.



My winter project has been to mosaic the paving slabs in my vegetable garden after looking and thinking about them for 10 years. First I had to lift them all and wash and dry them. After that it was undercover on the verandah in the howling winter gales tapping tiles and gluing and grouting. A learning curve of how to do it the easiest way. I just about had it sussed by the end. But that wasn't all, the paths had to be relevelled and pebbles taken out and my garden fork put to plenty of use just shunting a slab this way or that. I was making great progress until I realised I was one short. I had forgotten breaking one in the moving. Of course I had run all the materials tightly and had to stock up again and get another slab. Any way finally the job is completed and the area is a bright abstract distraction from my lack of vegetables. The area is becoming my

propagation spot and I have a fantastic *Geranium maderense* taking over one whole square and smothering the broccoli. I used to grow so much of it in my last garden and this one has been a struggle so there is no way I will pull this up for vegetables. Enough from me, but if you have a garden project would love to hear about it.



This year is apparently the best for about 10 years for the wildflowers in the wheatbelt so if you were thinking of a quick trip seize the moment. Paper daisies everywhere I gather. I am seeing the purple *Hardenbergia* on the roadsides around here and of course the many wattles heralding the beginning of our spectacle which is so totally different to the wheat belt, much more intense and less blowsy I think!

The Chelsea Flower Show 2018

Two of the medal winning gardens at this years Chelsea Flower Show were of particular interest to gardeners living in hot, dry climates. The silver medal Trailfinders garden designed by Jonathan Shaw provided a beautifully crafted snapshot of a South African Wine Estate with Cape Dutch homestead and terracotta terrace leading to cottage garden and vineyard and beyond this, a representation of the wild fynbos, the botanically diverse natural scrubland of the Western and Eastern Cape. Here we find a rich mix of plants including leucodendrons, kniphofias, serrurias, proteas, agapanthus, polygala and leonotis among an evergreen, leathery-leaved Mediterranean type heathland with occasional splashes of bright colour. Charred remains of shrubs in one section represent fire, the essential part of the fynbos life cycle. The ground here is

covered in flowering bulbs such as ixia and ornithogalum. In the cottage garden are cultivated forms of fynbos plants such as *Aristea major*, *Dierama pulcherrimum*, *Tulbaghia violacea* and *Libertia grandiflora*.

The gold medal winning M and G garden designed by Sarah Price also celebrated the Mediterranean landscape. Sarah wanted to create a quiet, warm haven and the sense of a garden that had been there for some time. She has made use of a number of drought tolerant plants for a warming climate.

The form and layout of the garden is created with the use of materials from the earth. Gravel mulch, rammed earth walls and stacked clay roof tiles give the garden a warm patina and frame planting. Whilst modern rammed earth construction is rarely used in the UK, it is a material very familiar in Margaret River where stabilised earth construction for housing has existed since the 1970s, the first trials occurring as a walled courtyard at the Garthowen property. What is exciting in this display garden is the innovative use of these walls to create garden spaces, some walls incorporating trickling streams which flow into a trio of ponds which create a cool feel in an arid landscape. It expands on the idea that a wall, a tree and a seat can make an intimate place to rest.



Standout trees in the garden were a pair of gnarled pomegranates, crepe myrtles and a cork oak. Planting included drought tolerant plants, a tapestry of ground hugging herbs, annual poppies, low shrubs and taller wispy grasses and flowers, and lime green euphorbia. Blue leaved succulent *Senecio serpens* and Canary Island Foxglove *Digitalis isabelliana* provided unusual notes. The colour palette of tangerine against pinks, blues and greens was influenced by the paintings of Claude Monet.



More images of the garden and the full plant list can be found with the following links: <http://docs.mandg.com/docs/CFS-Plant-list.pdf>
<https://www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-chelsea-flower-show/gardens>

Welcome to our new members: Mike and Chris Evans, Rob Giles, Gillian Lilleyman, Carol White, Nirala Hunt. Peggy Sapwell and Nicole (Nic) Giblett.

Our next meeting is a Wildflower Garden

When: Monday September 10th

Where: Shirley Fishers Garden, 208 Yungarra Drive. Dunsborough. The driveway rises steeply from the westerly side of the road. (this runs off Biddle Rd

Time: 2pm Please bring your mug and name badge. A few volunteers for afternoon tea would be great of course...only a few.

We then have a meeting in October rather than the November one scheduled

When: Monday October 8th

Where: Alices Wedding garden

The property is located on the SW corner of Rosa Brook and Arthur Rods, Rosa Brook. The actual address and entry to the garden is 1078 Rosa Brook Rd. The carpark is easily visible from the road (though usually looks like a small grassy paddock). It is next to a large steel shed and cattle yards. There are cattle yards on the opposite side of the road too

Time: 2pm and the usual for afternoon tea please.

Please RSVP by 1 October 2018

Happy gardening