

December 2009

Summer  
Newsletter

ECG Newsletters are on our web site: [www.easycaregardening.org.au](http://www.easycaregardening.org.au) . To help ECG save paper, postage and time you can choose to stop receiving printed newsletters. Contact the office via email [ecg2074@easycaregardening.org.au](mailto:ecg2074@easycaregardening.org.au) or phone 9983 1644.

### 2009 Business Achievers Award

Once again the wonderful work done by volunteers and staff at Easy Care Gardening has been recognized. The North Shore Times has awarded ECG the 2009 Business Achievers Award for Community Contribution. To everyone involved 'take a bow'. Well done!

Pictured right: Bruce Taylor and Belinda Harwood from The North Shore Times



### Life Membership of ECG

Peter Icely started as a volunteer with ECG in September 1994. He soon became a member of the management team, later becoming Vice President until September, 2009. His service over these 15 years has been invaluable and made him a fitting recipient for ECG Life Membership.

Pictured left: Peter Icely



### The Garden Clubs of Australia Inc. Doris Killan Award

Congratulations to **Anne Shires** (one of ECG's founding members) who received this year's Doris Killan Award from 44 nominations. The Award was presented during the 2009 Annual General Meeting in Tamworth on 22nd September 2009.

Pictured right: Anne Shires



## Volunteer Profile - Suzanne Saunders

Suzanne Saunders was our nomination for Volunteer of the Year Award. Lovely Suzanne was reluctant to be nominated and only agreed when we told her how good a successful nomination would be for the organisation.

An avid gardener, Suzanne looked for voluntary work that was possible with baby in tow and was pleased to find Easy Care Gardening. Suzanne has been volunteering with Easy Care Gardening now for a remarkable 18 years having joined soon after the birth of her older child. She has shown such dedication over so many years and always with a smile. In addition to her regular gardening work she has helped out in the office and on information and promotional stalls.

As well as her work with Easy Care Gardening Suzanne volunteers for a number of other organisations. She is a Garden Leader one day a fortnight at the historic home 'Tulkiyan' in Gordon. She oversees the work of council gardeners, encouraging them with homemade cakes and ensuring the garden is returned to its former glory. She is also Family Care & Support Coordinator at her daughter's school, ensuring that families are supported with meals and babysitting during times of crisis (sickness, bereavement, etc). But that's not all! She volunteers with Ku-ring-gai Neighbour Aid once a fortnight, has held a variety of positions on the Management Committee of her church for over 13 years and she sews, quilts, makes jam and propagates plants for many, many charity fundraisers. For 10 years she was volunteer Transport Coordinator at Hillview Community Centre and for 5 years she was a volunteer Guide at the Royal Botanic Gardens and for 4 or 5 years she was a volunteer Coordinator on the Walks and Talks Programme at Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Gardens.



Pictured above: Suzanne Saunders

**Summer Break:** Please note in your diary that the Office of ECG will be closed from 3.00 pm on Thursday 24th December, 2009 and will reopen on Monday 4th January, 2010.



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P.O. Box 502 Turrumurra 2074

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Patron: Ms. Jennifer Stackhouse BA(Hons), Dip.Hort



## The Year In Review

We are now well and truly into the period where everything grows, especially weeds! It would be good if we could have a normal summer free of bushfires although the omens do not augur well.

For those who were not at the Annual General Meeting and have not had an opportunity to read the Annual Report for the year ended 30 June, 2009, it is worth repeating some of the comments and statistics incorporated in it.

Despite a world recession it has been business as usual at Easy Care Gardening Inc. In fact it was a year of progress and expansion in all areas. This is satisfying as, with an ageing population, the number of people requiring our assistance continues to grow. Let me give you some highlights:

- The gardening client base has risen to 1156 for ECG and 901 for CALM. Comparable figures last year were 1014 and 709 respectively.
- We now have 380 Volunteers in the gardens and on the lawns, against 286 last year. The number of Corporate and Group teams has also increased from 51 to 62.
- Volunteer hours worked throughout the year totalled 31082 (last year 26162). At a conservative notional rate of pay this equates to \$965,000 (\$839,000). These figures speak for themselves and are a tremendous achievement on the part of all our Volunteers and Staff. To you all I extend a big thank you. If you saw the number of thank you letters we receive each month from grateful clients you would certainly know your time and effort is very much appreciated and well worthwhile.
- We have opened an outreach office at Ryde which is manned on a weekly basis to interview and train potential new volunteers in the area.
- We now enjoy secure parking for all our vehicles.
- We have introduced a direct payments system in conjunction with our bankers and this is proving most successful.
- We have commenced a new category of CALM clients with a view to reducing the large waiting lists and also to assist our efforts to work within the criteria set by Government. It means a reduction in the amount we subsidise the lawn mowing and for this I apologise. Unfortunately, for reasons explained, we have no alternative. It is our aim, except in the cases of hardship, to progressively move our CALM clients into this category.
- Penny Daikiw has left having completed three years on the Management Committee as the Gardening Representative. During this time, she has kept in touch with Team Leaders and reported monthly on the welfare, suggestions for improvements, and problems experienced by our Volunteers. Penny's wise counsel is something we have valued. However, the gardens will continue to benefit from her green fingers. We welcome Maureen Leadingham as the new Gardening Representative on the Committee and we look forward to working with her. Maureen will be known to a number of our Volunteers since she has just completed five years of service working in the gardens. To those who have not met Maureen, please take the opportunity when a chance arises.

With another festive period approaching all too quickly, I will take this opportunity to wish each and everyone a very happy Christmas and may the New Year be one of good health, good cheer and good gardening.

Brian Self  
President  
Easy Care Gardening Inc.

## A Word From Hargraves Nurseryland

- Lawns help to purify and cool the air. An average front lawn offers the same cooling as 2.5 air conditioners.
- Lawns are an important source of plant oxygen exchange. A 15 x 15m turf area will sustain oxygen requirements for a family of four.
- Lawns are a natural filter to protect water quality and the environment.
- Lawns provide noise abatement and glare reduction.
- Lawns provide a safe, high quality, play area for children and pets.
- A well-maintained lawn increases the value of your property.

*Extract From Hargraves Gardening News Spring Edition by Ken Hargraves*



## A few words from our Clients

*"Many thanks to the gardening team who did a wonderful job on my garden. I appreciate it very much".*

E.M, Eastwood

*"I am absolutely thrilled at the hard work done by the volunteers to tidy my garden. My sincere thanks to all".* PB, Brooklyn:

*"Thank you to the lovely people who did a lovely job on my garden".* I & PA, North Ryde:

*"Many thanks to all the gardening team for the wonderful job on my garden. It's much appreciated".*

EMac, Eastwood:

*"Thank you so much to the team for tidying my garden and trimming back the trees who thought that they 'ruled my garden'".* J.H,Epping.

*"Thank you to the team who did so well in my garden".* R.Mack, Turramurra

*"Thank you for the hard work given to my dear old garden. It is such a help to me and greatly appreciated".* J.H. Wahroonga:

*"Thank you to the volunteers who worked on our garden. It has been greatly appreciated".*

L & P W, Cheltenham

*"I just wanted to let you know that the visit I received recently from the team was most effective and they did a fantastic job cutting an old camellia overhanging my gutter".* B & R.T,Wahroonga

## Welcome—NEW VOLUNTEERS

Gardeners	Margaret Owens	Garry Dhu	Office	Teams organised
William Ward	Judith Nicholls	Harry Banfield	Lisa Pears	through United
Clarence Ratnakumar	Jan Janney	Nicholas Coaldrake	Lynette Millican	Way
Francis Ratnakumar	Lesley Low	Jaesook Ko	Yasmin Wong	Pfizer
Camilla Gunn	Susan Bowers	Christopher Jansen	Ally Akbarzadeh	ING
Nina Paine	Anna Howlett	Charles Harrison	Corporate	Management
Georgiana McCullagh	Ann Mills	Fernando Valladares	Westfield Banking Corp	Committee
Jillian Matthews	Dana Luque	John Lloyd	AFS Intercultural Prog	Nivedita Pidaparty
Beverley Paton	Guner Orucu	Alex Nguyen	Medtronic	
Susan Kallas	Carmen Bonny		American Express	
Trishan Cuaso	Scott White		Laing O'Rourke	
Lisa-Claire Hutchinson	Helen Tuckey			
Susie Bardwell	Patrick O'Rourke			
Catherine Spessot	Rowan Bourner			
Penny Tomkinson				

## Helpful Hints

**www.tickalert.org.au** Thank you to Penny Diakiw for letting us know about this web site. With the tick season upon us I'm sure we will find this very helpful.

## Plant of the Season — *Ceratopetalum gummiferum*

This attractive Australian native is frequently cultivated in domestic gardens and is very popular at Christmas for decoration. The white flowers in Spring are followed by bright red calyces providing a very festive appeal. In the wild it usually grown in heath, or moist gullies from Ulladulla to Evans Head. It is also used in the flower industry and is exported to Japan as Festival Bush. Propagation from cuttings from the best flowering plants will ensure the traits so admired in these plants will be passed on.



## Weed of the Season - Onion Weed

Onion weed has a green strappy leaf which grows on a white bulb and has a distinct onion smell when crushed. It has white flowers on a long stem which form seeds in the summer. Onion weed is very difficult to eradicate. It spreads two ways; seeds are dispersed from the flowering head, and bulblets breaking off the main plant bulb. Persistence and going back to the same area and dealing with regrowth again and again and year after year is the key. Firstly, break off and dispose the flowering head before doing anything to prevent further seed spread. Don't pull the plant out as the bulblets will break off and more plants will be created. Paint the strappy leaves with glyphosate Roundup) and allow to die in situ. Organic gardeners who prefer not to use chemicals can cover the plant with black plastic until it is white and ill from the inability to photosynthesise, and then uncover on a hot day so that it burns to death.



## Around the Pathways Summer 2009

### SPECIAL PLANT CLEARANCE

On **Thursday 3rd December** from 9.30 am to 12.30pm, Volunteers will be given the opportunity to acquire plants from our Propagating location in order to cull supplies before the end of the year. *No charge, however donations will be gratefully accepted.*

Location: 28 Britannia Street, Pennant Hills—4th double gate on the right after the roundabout. Look for the coloured balloons.

### Thank You & Merry Christmas

Thank you to all our volunteers for all your help in promoting Easy Care Gardening throughout this year. We hope you all have a very safe and Happy Christmas.

### New Years Resolution

If you know of anyone that has a new years resolution to get more involved in the community, please ask them to call Easy Care Gardening on 9983 1644, as we are always in need of new gardening volunteers.



### The new Water Wise Rules from Sydney Water are:

- All hand held hoses must now have a trigger nozzle.
- Watering with hand held hoses (with a trigger nozzle), irrigation systems and sprinklers is allowed before 10 am and after 4 pm on any day – to avoid the heat of the day.
- No hosing of hard surfaces such as paths and drive ways. Washing vehicles is allowed.

Fire hoses may be used for fire fighting activities only.

Sydney Water encourages the community to use their common sense when applying the Water Wise Rules.

For example;

- Wash your car on the lawn wherever possible. This will not only water and fertilise your lawn but will also avoid storm water pollution.
- Avoid any form of outdoor hosing between 10 am and 4 pm to avoid the heat of the day, when evaporation is high.
- Use a broom to clean up leaves, grass clippings, dirt, dust or general litter on paths or driveways instead of hosing.

Water Wise Rules have been introduced as dam storage levels have been around 60% for the past year. However, continuing to be water wise makes good sense.

AWARDED BY	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
<b>EDEN GARDENS</b> 301 Lane Cove Road, Ryde, Ph: 9491 9900	Michael Crane	Peter Stanmore	Stephanie McInerney
<b>HARGRAVES NURSERYLAND</b> 630 Old Northern Road, Dural, Ph: 9651 1833	John Coady	Michael Jones	Mark O'Neill
<b>PARKERS NURSERY</b> 45 Tennyson Avenue, Turramurra, Ph: 9487 3888	Andrew Fraser	Paul Sinclair	John Quigley

## Peter Whitehead Appreciation Award

Easy Care Gardening sends our warmest wishes and congratulations to **Silvano Lucietto**

This award is kindly sponsored each quarter by **The Monthly Chronicle** to show special appreciation to a volunteer.

### Pruning by Jo McGahey

Many plants benefit from some judicious pruning but one should always remember that each plant has its own specific growth habit which should be first considered.

In early summer, there is little in the average suburban garden needing serious pruning. A light tidy up of some climbers, e.g. jasmines, dead-heading of bush or standard roses and perhaps a little haircut for the daisies is always good idea but any serious pruning of shrubs, most trees and roses (with the exception of the spring flowering climbing roses) is usually carried out in late summer, autumn, mid winter and late spring. But, regardless of what or when any plant is pruned (unless espaliering, hedging or topiary is the aim of the game) a plant's natural shape should always be the guide to a good result.

It should also be noted that plant hygiene is most important. Tools should be kept sharp and cleaned and disinfected before moving to the next plant. Diseased material should not be composted.

If climbing roses were not pruned in late spring, immediately after flowering, they may be pruned now. If growing on a fence or flat trellis, they may be tied down lightly, arching in the direction they are required to grow. This method encourages more blooms next season. If the rose is over a gate, pergola or portico more specific tying and training may be required. Water shoots on roses should not be pruned.

There is a school of thought that says the cutting back of many plants may even be done by a quick swipe across the shrub with a hedge cutter and some even promote pruning by chainsaw. I must admit, sometimes this is quite surprisingly successful. But this method can result in dieback for some plants, so a careful assessment of the plant should always be done first and pruning to an outward pointing bud or node is still not a bad rule of thumb.