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Winter in Review

This winter has yet again been a season of extremes, according to ABC's weather report in regional news. Records have been set in heat, cold and rainfall. On a national level, this has been the 4th warmest winter on record, after 1996, 2009 and 2013. In NSW, winter 2021 was tied for the 10th warmest mean temperatures on record. Although on average it has been a warm winter, many locations also had their coldest winter days on record along with some very early severe frosts.

Although Australia as a whole has experienced 4% below average rainfall, NSW experienced a 65% wetter than average winter, due to a series of cold fronts which arrived

across June, with some areas achieving their highest daily or winter total rainfall on record.

The outlook for spring is forecast to be above average rainfall for the eastern two thirds of Australia, above average fire potential for SE Queensland and Northern NSW, while lower than average for the wetter parts of SE Australia, and above average temperatures for Northern and South Eastern Australia. So overall it looks like a great planting season this spring and summer. Fingers crossed!

[You can read the Bureau of Meteorology's full seasonal summary for NSW's winter here.](#)



Watch the Bureau of Meteorology's Climate and Water Outlook for Spring 2021

Australian Plants for Australian Gardens



Above is a view of a small portion of the gardens we established about 5 years ago at Wilburra Estate in Kangaroo Valley. Native plants not only provide a stunning backdrop for the house it also attracts a myriad of birds to provide movement, interest and bird song.



About 2 years ago we upgraded the boring dam to provide a wonderful and relaxing entertainment area with a magnificent view over the dam through to the stunning escarpments of Kangaroo Valley.

Wilburra Estate is known as one of the premier farm stays in Australia. It is nestled high up on the upper slopes with spectacular views up to stunning rock escarpments and down into beautiful rural views of Kangaroo Valley. It also adjoins stunning, natural blue gum forests. The gardens and water bodies attract birds and wildlife from the adjoining forest for those who wish to admire our unique and wonderful native fauna. For further information about Wilburra go to <http://www.wilburra-at-barrengarry.com.au>



To help keep the water clean in the main dam we created two treatment ponds along with a relaxing walk down to the dam that is used for entertaining and swimming. Water is pumped up from the dam to the first pond using a solar pump. It is then gravity fed to the second pond via a rock lined man made creek and then down into the main dam. As the water trickles over the rocks it's oxygenated and nitrates and phosphates are removed from the water by the sedges that are planted in the watercourse and the ponds

Good design, quality plants, professional planting and exceptional aftercare produces results such as this after 2 years. What was once a boring dam has now been transported into a beautiful and relaxing landscape for the owners and their guests to enjoy. I hope people will be more inspired to use more native plants in their Southern Highland gardens and the broader landscape to enjoy the benefits of nature as well as providing nourishment for and revitalisation of the soul.

Plant of the Month



Banksia Bird Song

A stunning, compact growing Banksia with large flowers that age from golden yellow to a deep orange-red from autumn throughout winter and fine, dense dark green foliage. As the name suggests, this plant is ideal for attracting nectar feeding birds, along with bees and butterflies to the garden. A hybrid of *Banksia spinulosa* "Dwarf" and *Banksia ericifolia* "Golden Girl"

This plant is one of our new favourites for informal hedges that have a wow-factor. Naturally grows to 1-2m metres, but can be pruned after flowering to maintain a more compact habit if desired. This plant is a welcome addition to any garden that has a sunny position in well draining soils. This garden is only a few years old and was designed by our landscape designer for a low maintenance colourful garden that provides much joy to its owners.

Weed of the Month



Arum or Calla Lilly (*Zantedeschia aethiopica*)

Recognisable by the white, funnel shaped lily flower and dark green glossy leaves. Frequently used by the floral industry and in traditional exotic gardens, unfortunately it has become a garden escapee, spreading to natural areas.

It causes environmental damage by choking waterways and outcompeting native plants. It is highly toxic to humans, livestock and domestic pets. All parts of the plant, but especially the flower are poisonous, due to the presence of a mineral called Calcium oxalate. Consumption of the plant can cause:

- skin irritation
- irritation, burning and swelling of the mouth and throat leading to breathing issues
- nausea, vomiting and stomach pain
- shock and exhaustion
- death

Arum lily are often found in moist areas, such as waterways and creeks, wetlands, and bushland. They spread easily from both seed and plant parts. New plants can sprout from roots or root fragments, either in contaminated soil or by water.

References: Department of Primary Industries, NSW Weed Wise. *Arum Lily (Zantedeschia aethiopica)*. <https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/ArumLily>



Wattle Day



The above photo is the stunning *Acacia vestita* that is a small wattle growing to about 2.5-3m tall suitable for well-drained sunny positions in home gardens or on the farm. The plant is also spectacular when not in flower as its weeping, triangular shaped, blue-green foliage provides great screening as well as contrast. It is also long lived and an excellent fire retardant plant.

The iconic green and gold of our Acacias (commonly known as Wattle) are a sign that winter is nearly over and spring is on the door step. Celebrated on September 1 (since 1910) Wattle Day is a time to celebrate our unique continent, its land, and its people. There are over 1350 species of Acacia worldwide with nearly 1000 of them found in Australia.

With such an incredible variety of Acacias, there is one to be found flowering every day of the year, however the majority of our distinctive species have their flowering time at the end of winter and into early spring, which is why we celebrate Wattle Day when we do.

Wattles often get maligned as they are falsely accused as the cause of hay fever symptoms in early spring. However the poor wattle is innocent, as its pollen grains are too heavy to be carried along by the wind more than a few metres. The real culprits are grass pollens and pine trees, whose flowering cycles are much less visible. Black wattles (of which there are three) are also the cause of many people having a bias against this genus, as they are well known for the quick growth, short life span and their ability to fall on fences. They are however a great pioneer plant as well as excellent firewood trees due to their high carbon content and BTU rating (British Thermal Units). There are many wattles that are long lived, some living to over 400 years old (see more below about the stunning Blackwood tree).

There is a wattle suitable for every garden, whether you are after a quick growing screen, a feature tree, a stunning ornamental shrub or even a groundcover. Below are some of our favourites.

Acacia fimbriata Dwarf - a medium sized shrub with soft foliage and fabulous floral display

Acacia Little Nugget - an extremely hardy small shrub with triangular foliage and stunning floral display

Acacia Honey Bun - a small shrub with vibrant green, soft foliage

Acacia covenyi Blue Bush - a small tree with blue green foliage

Acacia vestita - a small tree with weeping foliage and bright yellow flowers

Acacia melanoxylon - a fast growing, long lived, medium-sized tree with a variety of uses (see more below)



Some interesting facts about Acacias

- Many species don't have true leaves when mature. They instead have modified flattened stems called Phyllodes.
- The flowers don't have petals. The fluffy yellow bits are the stamens.
- The flowers are arranged in inflorescences - either globular heads or cylindrical spikes. There can be over 130 individual flowers in an inflorescence.
- They have atmospheric nitrogen fixing properties
- The seeds of some wattles can be eaten

- To germinate some Acacia seeds, they need to be treated with boiling water (to mimic a bushfire) or scarified



Acacia melanoxylon, commonly known as Blackwood, is a local wattle species which lives to be over 400 years old. It has immense landscape benefits planted either as a single tree with its broad oak-like canopy, which is ideal for shade and shelter for livestock or as a feature in the landscape; incorporated into windbreaks, for its quick growing and hardy nature; or grown in woodlots for its high quality timber used in furniture. The timber has been used extensively in Old Parliament House for panelling and doors. It is also fire resistant, so they are a useful tree to be planted in more fire-prone areas, where other more flammable species are unsuitable.

Winter & Spring Colour





The above two photos are currently flowering in our gardens at Wariapendi. If you too want to create a low-maintenance garden that provides colour from late winter all the way through to the end of spring, native plants are the obvious choice. Come to our nursery and be inspired by the wonderful world of native plants or engage our landscape designer so you too can have a beautiful garden in which to enjoy the benefits of nature.

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