



ELA AND JARRAH PARSONS.

entering into this prize. I wish all of you, whether or not you win a prize tonight, all the very, very best of your continuing journey as artists.

If any of you would like to come and talk to me about your particular work, it would be really lovely to talk to you now that I've looked at your work which I did on Tuesday. I spent a really delightful morning here at BRAG. I will say though, that there was no heating — I just made a decision in five seconds flat [laughs]. No, not at all! I spent a lot of time looking at your work, pondering and thinking about what is was you were trying to achieve.

I hope that you feel that I have honoured the contribution that you have all made. It's never at all easy to choose, even in three categories; it's never easy to choose between works of work, which all show skill and which are also, I

realised, in such diverse media. I've done my best. There are always people who miss out. I would just like to say that if you don't get a prize tonight, please, please don't be disheartened. There are more artists in the world who haven't got prizes than who have.

I think that you should just continue on.
You should just say to yourself,
"She obviously knows nothing."

I'm delighted that you all feel such a passion for the visual arts, which is what I have. It's really the thing that's directed my whole life. I don't think I know really anything about anything else. As I get older, my knowledge in other areas just recedes. The visual arts kind of takes up my whole world.

If any of you are getting to the end of Year 11, please also come and talk to me and consider applying for the National Summer Arts Scholarship.

I don't think that we have ever had a student from Braidwood. I don't think we've ever even had a student who's applied from Braidwood. Let's make January 2018 the exception where we have a student from here in Canberra for a week. It's only an hour and a half away.

(If you are interested in applying, talk to someone at BRAG.)

Without further ado, I really think that I need to tell you who are winning the major prizes today. As well, I would really like to acknowledge the invaluable help that has been provided to me by Janetta and also by Maggie. Maggie was here on Tuesday and we had quite a few discussions. She made sure she didn't give me any information. I kept fishing around for things but she was just like resolute.

Again, congratulations to your community and all of the artists here. Thank you very, very much to all the sponsors and for your generosity. Thank you. ■



Preparing and maintaining soil in your spring garden

The first two months of winter were very cold and dry and this often leads to a hot dry spring. If the weather in the first weeks of August are any indication, then a warm spring seems likely. Already the soil temperature is heating up which means it is time to start preparation for the spring and summer garden.

Soil preparation is the key to any successful garden. Strong healthy soil with accessible nutrients means strong healthy plants. Organic in the dictionary comes from having the characteristics of a living organism. In general terms we understand organic as meaning gardening without chemicals. That is, we use additives and inputs that have originated from or are by-products of living matter. Gardening organically also means treating the soil as if it were alive. That is, something needing food, water, shelter and proper mineral content to ensure its health.

When doing some background reading I came across the term soil husbandry. In exploring this term further I came across a lot of references from the mid 1800s and beyond. It is apparent that soil husbandry has had a long tradition within agricultural soil science. In modern times it appears that the focus is primarily around preventing soil erosion and degradation; however, in its more traditional sense soil husbandry seeks to sustain the agricultural soil resource though general care and management: by sustaining, feeding and maintaining soil health.

Whether you are a practitioner or proponent of organic based agriculture or a practitioner of industrial agriculture it still all begins and ends with the soil. The major difference in these two forms of agriculture is the thinking and understanding behind them. Industrial agriculture is based on the premise

WYNLEN'S GARDEN IN



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that natural systems are inadequate and need to be replaced with human systems. I.e. inorganic fertilisers are superior as they are outside of the natural system. On the other hand organic agriculture sees that the

systems of the natural world, rather than being inadequate, offer patterns worth following.

Compost is one of the most important additions to the garden and fits with the 'organic' view of soil health. Compost is an excellent source of organic matter and nutrients. It contains all the major plant nutrients, nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, as well as all the minor nutrients that plants need. Furthermore, it releases these nutrients slowly, thus minimising runoff and leaching. Compost is made from organic materials that have been broken down into a dark, crumbly substance known as humus. If you do not have your own supply of quality compost, there are other alternatives.

We are very fortunate that all the green waste collected in our region is being converted into compost. Simone Dalkara is the compost maker and runs the Landtasia compost facility. It is the only organically certified green waste facility in NSW (and possibly Australia) and her compost is full of nutrients and microbiology.

While there are whole books written on the subject of soil and a large range of organic inputs to use on soil, the following is a simple regime for home gardeners in preparing and maintaining the kitchen garden:

- Compost** — 2 buckets for each 1 sq. metre section
- Blood & Bone** — 200g per square metre
- Dynamic Lifter** (or similar) — 100g per square metre
- Dolomite or lime** — 1 handful per square metre
- Sheep or any pelleted animal manure** (this is the only type of animal manure that is not hot and can be directly applied to the garden — 1 bucket (10 litre) per square metre)
- A Seaweed based Fertiliser** — This could be a liquid fertiliser or mineralised.

This formulae is one of the most valued by the gardeners who attend our popular day workshop 'All Season Cool Climate Vegetable Growing' www.wynlenhouse.com/workshops

I write weekly on the Village Farmer blog at:

<http://www.wynlenhouse.com/the-village-farmer-a-blog> published on a Monday evening.

Happy gardening ...

Bronwyn Richards,
Principal gardener, Wynlen House