

THE HOBART HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY ROSE, IRIS & FLORAL ART SHOW
SPEECH BY
HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE
KATE WARNER AM, GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
HOBART TOWN HALL. FRIDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2016

Good afternoon everyone. I am delighted to have been asked to be here today to open this 2016 Hobart Horticultural Society Rose, Iris and Floral Art Show.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land—to pay respect to those that have passed before us and to acknowledge today's Tasmanian Aboriginal community who are the custodians of this land.

Being surrounded by such amazing flowers is a reminder of how lucky I am to be surrounded by gorgeous gardens at Government beautifully cared for by the exceptionally talented team of gardeners we have, led by Head Gardener Steve Percival. And at the moment the rose beds are just coming into flower and it is a joy to walk around them and see what has just come out.

Next door to Government House are our beautiful Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens. I visit them almost daily. At the moment I make a beeline for the wonderful bed of bearded irises, which I understand is a joint project of the Botanical Gardens and the Hobart Horticultural Society. And walking into the city I pass the University Rose Garden with its excellent display of roses, so at this time of the year roses and irises are all around me.

I am (or perhaps was) a keen gardener and so I thought today I might share some my personal gardening experiences.

My mother was a keen gardener and we had a beautiful garden in South Hobart. So when I married and moved to Valleyfield, I embraced the idea of having a garden. My first job was to tackle the tall couch grass which had

invaded all the garden beds around the cottage and to clear the paved path. After days of digging out couch I planted some daisies and a few punnets of Sweet William seedlings. The sweet Williams grew vigorously but were mainly magenta and dark red and clashed horribly with the yellow daisies. This combination is best forgotten and I am sure it made Gertrude Jekyll turn in her grave but the memory is preserved in the background of a photograph of my daughter Emily taking her first steps.

Over the next few years we gradually got rid of some twenty or so scraggly radiata pines which had been planted around and between the two houses at Valleyfield. A few treasures beneath had survived, a stunted Magnolia Grandiflora and some old bearded iris. And here, 40 years ago, I created my first large garden bed, with everything I liked from my childhood: forsythia, winter sweet (*chimonanthus praecox*), a pale pink sasanqua camellia, a mollis azalea, pink apple blossom Japonica, a Cecil Brunner and an Iceberg rose.

Thirty years ago or so Dick and I moved to the main house at Valleyfield and I suddenly had a much larger challenge. However, gardening at Valleyfield has two advantages, wonderful soil (mostly) and a river at the bottom of the garden with an endless supply of water. And I should mention the wonderful trees framing the garden, deodars, a funeral cyprus and other unusual conifers, a bunya pine and cabbage trees (*Cordyline australis*) all planted in the 1880s and later additions of silver birches, maples, golden ash and the whole garden bordered by a row of poplars to the east and west, the river to the south and the Lyell Highway and a hawthorn hedge to the north.

If I were take you through the garden, bed by bed we would be here for a very long time! So I will limit myself to our two most ambitious projects – what we call Monet’s garden and the espaliered garden. Our Monet’s garden is a copy of the Grande Allee at Giverny, with six arches spanning an avenue with parallel beds leading to the river with climbing roses over the arches starting with red (*Altissimo*) then pink (*Constance Spry*, *Souvenir de la malmaison* and *Cecil Brunner*) and ending with white (*Lamarque* and *Wedding Day*). The beds themselves have a range of irises, blue Dutch iris and many of my favourite bearded irises in a range of colours, dark blue, pale blue, pink and white. One of the pale blue bearded irises is very special. It

comes from the old Cluan garden at Plenty and was given to mother-in-law because it matched her eyes. Sadly my mother-in law, Mary, died just last Saturday, so the pale blue bearded iris will be always very special to us.

The espaliered garden is a square bordered by sides each of trellised grapes; espaliered Bechtel crab apples; espaliered pears and apple trees and an apple step-over on the fourth side bordering a herbaceous border which includes, more iris. Now our daughter and her family have taken responsibility for Valleyfield and its garden and they have added a vegetable garden and chooks.

It will come as no surprise to you that I enjoy Flower and Garden Shows of all shapes and sizes. I have been lucky enough to go the Chelsea Flower Show and the Hampden Court Palace Flower Show but I also love flower stalls at fairs and markets.

But now – back to this glorious display here. I have enjoyed my tour of inspection escorted by Mary Crowe and look forward to browsing further. It gives me great pleasure in declaring open the 2016 Hobart Horticultural Society Rose, Iris and Floral Art Show open.

Thank you.