



**Dear Gardeners,**

## **Greetings for 2020!**

The start of a new year and indeed a new decade is usually cause for great celebration and optimism but both seem sadly lacking this year.



The persistent drought shows no sign of abating, having impacted many parts of our country for years, and coupled with record hot temperatures, this has created a most challenging time for us gardeners. And now bushfires are ravaging our country – every state and the major territories have been affected by this unprecedented fire season.

Each day the reports on radio, TV and social media are worse than the last – will this fire emergency ever end?

I experienced first-hand the distress and trauma the bushfires have brought to our communities. My own village of Killabakh on the Mid North Coast of NSW lost 9 homes on that 'Catastrophic Tuesday', November 9. I was one of the lucky ones with the 'firies' backburning the fire front away from my house and garden. Several other GCA Committee members have also been impacted by the fires and the associated blanketing smoke but luckily no damage.

I have no doubt that the same cannot be said for many of our affiliate members, friends and neighbours. I know several gardeners in my own region who have lost a lifetime's work.

I, along with the members of the GCA Committee, express our sadness, concern and solidarity with GCA affiliates and gardeners across the country. Watching our gardens die a slow death due to the drought is one thing but to witness your garden be consumed by flame in a matter of minutes must be truly heartbreaking.

At our committee meeting in early February we will be discussing the bushfire crisis and looking at ways we can assist.

Over the years, I have witnessed the **resilience, optimism and passion** that we gardeners possess. This crisis will pass, the fires will be extinguished, it will rain



again and the searing temperatures will wane. Together, as a gardening community, we will work to rebuild our gardens, our communities and reflect upon the GCA motto of **‘Friendship through Gardens’!**

**I sincerely wish everyone a safe and fulfilling 2020, and fingers crossed for some of that wet stuff soon!**

**George Hoad**  
GCA President  
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