

# Uki Garden Club

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It was wonderful to see so many familiar as well as new faces at the Welcome Back Party! And so great to be able to enjoy fun and friendship again after 12 long months of isolation from our Club gatherings. The hard-working committee put a lot of planning (over six weeks) into organising the event, and judging by the positive feedback received so far, it was well worth the effort.

Hopefully, 2021 will be a much better year for us all, now that we can have up to 50 visitors outside at a private home, under our state's COVID Safety Regulations. Please note that while the numbers are capped at 50, we will need to have you book in via the [trybooking.com](https://trybooking.com) website for all of our Saturday Garden Gatherings – see details on the last page of the newsletter.

The February Gathering is at Tumbulgum Hall on Saturday 27 February. Our speaker should be very entertaining, so book early as we will need to keep numbers under 70. Our first Swap Table will be available at this meeting too, so bring along cuttings, spare plants, fruit or vegetables to share. No need to bring a chair but don't forget to bring items from your garden for "Show and Tell". Remember also, that there can be no sharing of food under COVID rules, so please bring your thermos or cold



drink bottle plus any nibbles you need for morning/afternoon teas at Food Group or Garden Gatherings.

For all Food Group and Garden Gatherings (apart from the upcoming one) also remember to bring your chair, name badge, money for seeds (50 cents a packet), items for the Swap Table (or gold coin if you haven't brought something to exchange) and a few coins for raffles at the Garden Gatherings.

We do have an action-packed program for you, with only the months of October and November host-free so far for Food Group, and August and October for Garden Gatherings. If you would like to offer your garden or suggest a good venue for any of these months, please contact our calendar co-ordinators – Sue Holzknicht for Food Group and Lynn O'Hara for Garden Gatherings. If all goes well, we will be taking a bus trip to the Nerang Botanical Bazaar on July 31st, so mark that in your diaries now as a date to keep free for the future.

We have purchased two new shade tents (in addition to our old two) to help accommodate members being spaced appropriately – our COVID-safe 1.5 metres apart – at our gatherings in home gardens. These will be of assistance where the host's garden does not have enough shady space for up to 50 members/guests. Always bring a hat (and even an umbrella) in the hotter months, as it can be difficult to keep cool.

It has been a rather good summer this year, with not too many hot days over 30 degrees, and certainly plenty of much-needed rain. Humidity, as usual, prevails but without extreme heat as well; I think it is one of the most pleasant summers we've had for a good while. The countryside of the Tweed Valley is spectacularly green and lush – a delight to see, especially when sparkling with raindrops from recent showers.

I do hope that you have been enjoying more time than usual in your beautiful gardens and I look forward to catching up with you on a regular basis in the coming months.

Happy gardening, Gillian



*(Ed: with huge thanks to Penny Riley, Jackie Balk, Sue Holzkecht, Couz'n Lynn O'Hara, Jenny Kidd & Gillian for providing words and pictures for the Welcome Back Party summary and pictorial that follows...)*

The Welcome Back to 2021 Party was a huge success and the committee did a brilliant job. And, there was a lot of organisation to see something run that smoothly in Covid times.

The entertainment was lots of fun and... surprise! Don Capner's table did NOT win the trivia quiz! But Peter Brack's table did.

Sue Holzkecht prepared and presented the quiz. The winning team scored 29/35 possible marks (very good!), the next was 28, and two teams scored 27. Congratulations to the winners, what a lot of smart people we have in our Club!

The Quiz Master Sue said that the one question everyone got wrong was: *Who is the patron saint of gardeners, florists, brides, bridesmaids, horticulturists, brewers and midwives?* Answer: *St Dorothy*. She was a young virgin, martyred for her Christian faith, in 4th Century Caesarea. She is usually depicted with a bouquet or bowl of flowers. It was a testing quiz, and people responded very well.



*(Above: The quiz master in action)*

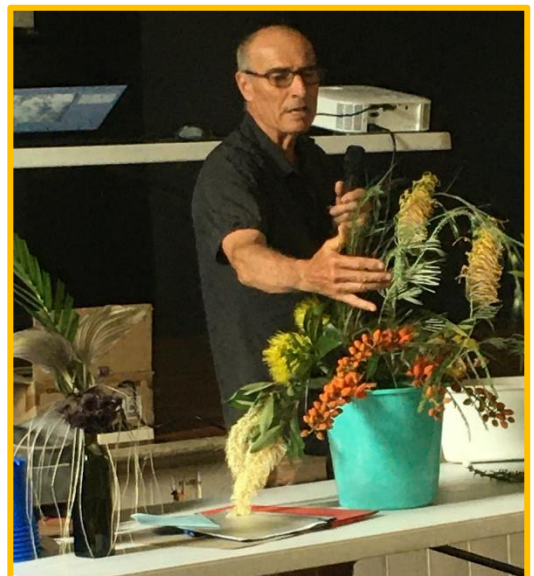


*(L: Thinking hard on the quiz)*

As Sue commented – "I think all learned something new, including me."

We also had a great 'Show and Tell' session. Don Capner spoke informatively about a brilliant collection of plants all gathered from his garden...what colour he has growing.

Jackie Balk brought her white bat plant which you can see to the left in the photo at right.







And – info passed on from Don – the orange flower he is holding in his hand at left is from the tree *Colvillea racemosa*. Generally in February it is in flower up at the Murwillumbah Hospital and you will find it right on the corner as you drive in under of the car park. There is also one in Mullumbimby, just off the main street.

Penny Riley brought a large leaf from a metre high perennial plant so put it to the brains trust who have been missed over 2020. The suggestion was made to try the App PlantSnap, and from there it looks like a Chinese Taro (*Alocasia cucullata*).



Club Vice President Jenny Kidd prepared and presented "Our Gardens" – a beautiful PowerPoint presentation of gardens visited over the years and also some of those planned for visits.

Philip Wilson had a birthday on the day and was given a card (see photo at left of the birthday boy and his great new glasses).

Julia Hancock showed her "Still growing" - a needlepoint masterpiece (pic as below) created from unfinished projects found in Op shops that will form part of a display of COVID works in the Murwillumbah Library later in the year (see a little more on this further on).

Jackie Balk supplied some lovely floral arrangements from her garden and did the table decorations.







*Another of Jackie's stunning creations and the master of the arrangements herself...*



There were lovely sample bags at everyone's table which were very well received, how good was that! And a big surprise. In the paper gift bag was a small peat pot, a copper plant label, a white plastic plant label, a measuring jug, and a packet of seeds donated by the club Seed Box.

The arvo tea was delicious! There were two savoury offerings (sushi and sandwiches) and two sweet ones (chocolate/vanilla gluten free cake as well as a green-tea cheesecake). All were made by local caterers. Judging by the rate at which it all disappeared, most people seem to have enjoyed it!



*The servers dishing out the afternoon tea*







Drinks provided included champagne, Cranberry Juice, Mineral Water and Soda Water – all expertly served responsibly by our very own barman duo -Tim Hunt and David Kidd.

Bunnings donated 2 X \$100 gift vouchers for us to spend on gifts for our meeting. It paid for the little items in the gift bags we put together for everyone and Bunnings will also give us \$20 vouchers each month for us to use in the raffles.

Williams donated a heap of gifts, gloves, garden tools, hats, seeds, fertilizers and many other handy items – see pic at right.



Club Treasurer Helen Loftis was at the door coping with the scanning and crossing off, a very onerous job but she did brilliantly. Jenny Kidd was also there to assist and welcome all the guests.

Hartmut Holzknecht did a brilliant job as parking attendant.

The RAFFLE was terrific as always carefully collected and presented by Couz'n Lynn O'Hara. It was a hamper full of tools, books, plant food, ropes, string, etc, & a beautiful item donated by Sue Holzknecht. Raffle was 1st prize, 2nd prize \$50 Bunnings voucher, 3rd prize was Bee Sanctuary.

*(Below: The raffle queen hard at work)*







Brand new member Karen Hanafin won the main prize of the hamper (*pic at left*) with Heather Neal winning 2<sup>nd</sup> prize of a Bunnings \$50 voucher, and Bev Geraghty won 3<sup>rd</sup> prize of the Bee Sanctuary.

Lots of positive feedback was received on the day and afterwards from party-goers – with one taking to the website to convey their thanks – as below:

“Thank you to all the organisers & volunteers for the 30th Jan get together at Burringbar. It was really well done & we both enjoyed ourselves. Wonderful to resume social contact?! The Covid-19 requirements were well-handled too. Thanx again, June & Rodney.”

Well done to all who organised and all who attended – a very fitting way to restart events for the Club after such a long absence.

## Party Happy Snaps

*Here's cheers at being back together!*





*L: The happy barman Tim.*



*R: Our President Gillian working hard.*

## A Little More About the Covid Craft Exhibition

Members of the Uki Garden Club are renowned for their expertise and inventiveness in many media. In July and August 2021 the Murwillumbah library will be the venue for an exhibition entitled "Covid Craft", curated by Julia Hancock and she hopes members will be inspired to participate.

The exhibition is designed to showcase the wonderful and varied things people have occupied their time with during the Covid pandemic. Exhibits will include ceramics, photography, painting, mosaic, crochet, knitting, needlepoint, embroidery, jewellery and textiles. The installation will run from 1 July to 31 August (actual start and finish dates to be confirmed as they usually like to start new shows on a Monday).

If anyone would like to contribute and has not already put their name down to participate, please contact Julia on 02 6672 2506. For practical reasons exhibits are restricted to those that can be hung on walls or displayed in the small glass cabinet near the service desk.

## What have you done with your blue pots from the Welcome Back to 2021 Party?

**Do let us see!**

These were kindly donated by our treasurer, Helen Lofts – all 300+ of them!

I decided that since I can't go to the Italian Alps this year I might as well attempt to bring a bit of Italy here, by planting geraniums in the blue pots to put on my window sill shelf! (see photo at right)

Gillian





# Eggplants , Aubergines & Brinjal – Penny Riley

Those of my generation probably would not remember eggplant being sold in Green Grocer shops. Like zucchini, eggplants were a later introduction to Australian cuisine. Not so throughout the world though.

Eggplants were cultivated in China as early as 600 BC, but they are thought to have originated in India and spread to the Middle East. Following the expansion of the Ottoman Empire, eggplants were grown throughout Europe. Early varieties of eggplant were smaller and white and looked like eggs, which gave rise to the name 'eggplant'.

It is a berry by botanical definition and a member of the nightshade Solanaceae family.

These days there are many varieties, some looking almost ornamental, growing in the garden.



Pictured are a few of the species Mel Darnley has been cultivating this season, a smaller dark purple bushy variety, the Indian eggplant. The brilliantly striped eggplant can also be called the 'graffiti eggplant'.

There are many eggplant recipes from across the globe, Europe to Asia, to take you "travelling" within your own kitchen.

Being incredibly versatile it can be baked, roasted, grilled or sautéed and enjoyed with a

drizzle of olive oil and a quick dash of seasoning or more elaborately prepared for extra deliciousness.



Eggplants grow best in climates with a long warm growing season and thrive in rich composted soils. Compared with other vegetables, eggplant takes a long time to grow, between 100 and 150 days, depending on the variety.

While East Asian people prefer slender elongated varieties, Middle Easterners like the more rotund types, which can be roasted to make Baba ganoush, or the flesh diced to make salads.

Eggplants are a nutrient-dense food, which means that they contain a good amount of vitamins, minerals and fibre in few calories. They are rich in antioxidants, which have been shown to help protect the body from damage caused by harmful substances known as free radicals. Adding eggplants to your diet may also help keep your blood sugar in check, primarily because eggplants are high in fibre that passes through the digestive system intact and at a slow rate. This same fibre promotes a feeling of fullness and satiety, which can help in reducing calorie intake.

Other research suggests that polyphenols or natural plant compounds found in foods like eggplant may reduce sugar absorption and increase insulin secretion, both of which can help lower blood sugar.

*Ed: Thanks Penny and Mel for this great article.*







*Passed on from Penny Riley... thanks Miss Pen!*

## Now That I'm Older...

- Don't be worried about your smartphone or TV spying on you. Your vacuum cleaner has been collecting dirt on you for years.
- If you can't think of a word just say, "I forgot the English word for it." That way people will think you're bilingual instead of an idiot.
- I'm at a place in my life where errands are starting to count as going out.
- I don't always go the extra mile, but when I do it's because I missed my exit.
- At what point can we just start using 2020 as profanity? As in: "That's a load of 2020." or "What in the 2020." or "abso-2020-lutely."
- My goal for 2020 was to lose 10 kilos. Only have 14 to go.
- Ate salad for dinner. Mostly croutons and tomatoes. Really just one big round crouton covered with tomato sauce, and cheese. FINE, it was a pizza... OK, I ate a pizza! Are you happy now?
- I just did a week's worth of cardio after walking into a spider web.
- I don't mean to brag, but I finished my 14-day diet food supply in 3 hours and 20 minutes.
- A recent study has found women who carry a little extra weight live longer than men who mention it.
- Senility has been a smooth transition for me.
- I may not be that funny or athletic or good looking or smart or talented. I forgot where I was going with this.
- A thief broke into my house last night. He started searching for money so I got up and searched with him.
- Some days I think I'll just put an "Out of Order" sticker on my forehead and call it a day.
- Just remember, once you're over the hill you begin to pick up speed.
- It's weird being the same age as old people.
- When I was a kid I wanted to be older... this is not what I expected.
- Life is like a helicopter. I don't know how to operate a helicopter.
- Marriage Counsellor: Your wife says you never buy her flowers. Is that true? Me: To be honest, I never knew she sold flowers.
- Never sing in the shower! Singing leads to dancing, dancing leads to slipping, and slipping leads to paramedics seeing you naked. So remember...Don't sing!
- I see people about my age mountain climbing; I feel good getting my leg through my underwear without losing my balance.
- So if a cow doesn't produce milk, is it a milk dud or an udder failure?
- I'm at that age where my mind still thinks I'm 29, my humour suggests I'm 12, while my body mostly keeps asking if I'm sure I'm not dead yet.
- You don't realize how old you are until you sit on the floor and then try to get back up.
- We all get heavier as we get older, because there's a lot more information in our heads. That's my story and I'm sticking to it.



**"Did you see a large woman on a bike go past here?"**

**Coronacoaster:** Noun" the ups and downs of a pandemic. One day you're loving your bubble, doing work-outs, baking banana bread and going for long walks and the next you're crying, drinking gin for breakfast and missing people you don't even like.



In the absence of a recipe from our members – and given we have heard a lot about eggplants and the benefits of eating them – I found this recipe which was shared by Sue Beckinstal from the Murwillumbah Farmers Market.

## Marinated Eggplant with Tahini and Oregano

Adapted from Yotam Ottolenghi and Sami Tamimi - this dish is as good, if not better, the second day.

### Ingredients

- 3 medium Japanese eggplants ( or any eggplant really)
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 birdseye chilli, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh coriander
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped oregano
- 1/2 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice, divided
- 3 cloves garlic, divided
- 2/3 cup tahini
- Freshly cracked black pepper and salt



### Method

1. Preheat the oven to 220 C°. Trim the stalk end off the eggplants, then cut each eggplant in half widthwise. Cut the fat lower pieces lengthwise in half and then cut each half into 3 wedges. Do the same with the thinner pieces, but cut each half into 2 wedges.
2. Place the eggplant pieces on a large baking sheet. Brush all sides with plenty of olive oil and season generously with salt and pepper. Roast the eggplant for 15 to 18 minutes, until they are golden brown and totally soft inside.
3. Meanwhile, make the marinade by whisking together the chilli, herbs, 3 tablespoons lemon juice, 4 tablespoons olive oil, 1 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon black pepper in a medium mixing bowl until smooth. Add a crushed garlic clove.
4. As soon as the eggplants come out of the oven, add them to the marinade, gently tossing to coat completely. Leave them to marinate at room temperature for at least 2 hours before serving.
5. While the eggplant marinates, make the tahini sauce by whisking together the tahini, 2/3 cup water, 5 tablespoons lemon juice, 2 minced garlic cloves, and 1/2 teaspoon salt until smooth. (This can also be done in the blender).
6. To serve, arrange the eggplant wedges on a plate then drizzle with the tahini sauce.

You can store them covered in the fridge for up to 2 days at this stage, but make sure you don't serve the eggplant cold; if refrigerating take them out of the fridge and serve at room temperature.





## Gardens Still Needed Please!

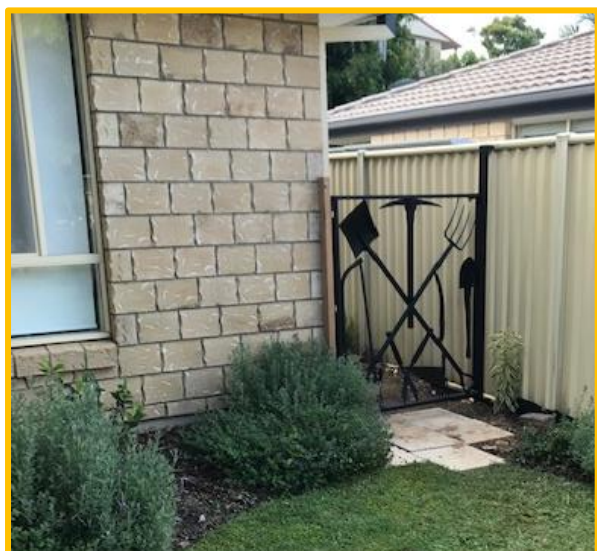
We are still looking for hosts for the October and November meetings for Food Group, and August and October for Garden Gatherings.

Food Group meetings are held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month starting 9.30 am and Garden Gatherings are held on the last Saturday of the month starting at 2.00 pm.

If you would like to offer your garden or suggest a good venue for any of these months, please contact our calendar co-ordinators as below:

Food Group Meetings: Sue Holzkecht      0448 880 239      [sue.holzkecht@gmail.com](mailto:sue.holzkecht@gmail.com)

Garden Gatherings: Lynn O'Hara      0408 053 303      [lohboh1@bigpond.com](mailto:lohboh1@bigpond.com)



This gate belongs to Karen Hanafin who won the raffle. She works at the Wedgetail Palliative Support Op Shop in Clifford's Lane with Gillian each Tuesday. She has collected old tools and bits from Op shops and had this gate made up by a welder friend. How very clever!



## Did You Know?

Cumin seeds are the dried fruits of *Cuminum cyminum*, a relative of the parsley family. Unlike parsley, however, it is impossible to grow in the Tweed Valley, but seeds can be purchased from health food stores and supermarkets. They should be dry fried in a pan before use, as should cumin powder, to bring out their flavour. Cumin is most often associated with Indian food, but it gives a fantastic lift to tomato soup and roast lamb.



# Looking for a safe way to control caterpillars on your leafy crops?

Dipel is a caterpillar killer that only affects caterpillars in the moth and butterfly family i.e. those critters that chew up ones Brassicas (cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts and rocket). It is based on *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki*, which is an insecticide derived from beneficial bacteria found in soil, on plant surfaces and also in insects. It specifically targets caterpillars and is safe for beneficial insects such as ladybirds and bees. It is certified for use in organic gardens by Australian Certified Organic (ACO).



It has no withholding period so fruits, vegies and salad ingredients can be eaten any time after spraying (always wash first, though). Dipel takes effect immediately it is eaten by a caterpillar so it should be applied as soon as caterpillars and their damage become visible.

The downside of Dipel is that it needs to be reapplied on a regular basis for two reasons: moths and butterflies keep on laying eggs periodically, and rain and irrigation tend to wash the solution off the foliage.

## The Right Diet – (for plants that is)

Feeding plants gives us gardeners a warm fuzzy feeling, and we always feel virtuous after we've done it. But are we killing them with kindness? Do we give them indigestion with inappropriate food?

Here are some simple tips to take the frustration out of fertilisation.

- ✓ A regular and appropriate feed, rather than an occasional heavy binge, is best for our plants.
- ✓ Use slow release pellets for pots and hanging baskets. Repeat at 3, 6 or 9-monthly intervals depending on the life of the product used. If growing annuals in baskets, see below.
- ✓ Use soluble fertiliser for annual flowers and vegies that have a short lifespan. These quick-growing plants need a fortnightly feed to keep them productive and pretty.
- ✓ Use pelletised poultry manure around trees and shrubs. Twice a year is enough, and make sure to water it well in.
- ✓ Use a proprietary brand rose food for roses as directed and water well. Apply a nice mulch of well-rotted animal manure in spring and autumn.
- ✓ Use citrus food and mulch for citrus trees and apply as for roses (above).
- ✓ Use hose-on products that weed and feed the lawn simultaneously. Give an annual dressing of lime in areas with acid soil. This is best done during wet weather but can be carried out at any time of the year.
- ✓ Fertilise in the morning when plants are at their most receptive.





# 20 Best Shrubs for the Sub-tropical Garden – Julia Hancock

We're getting close to the optimum planting time for trees and shrubs. If you haven't already got these, why not give them a go?

1. Allamanda - flowers its head off for months, and is one of the few climbers that does not go berserk in this climate. Yellow is the most popular colour, but sunset-peach and mauvey-pink are also good.
2. Banksias - I wonder whether, when Banks first saw these beauties, that he realised how useful they would become in gardens around Australia. The low-growing varieties are great for colonising steep banks in sunny spots. The *B.integrifolia* is worth growing simply for its silvery leaves. The flowers are great for floral arrangements if you can bear to pick them.
3. Barleria (pic at right) is a good low-growing shrub that is covered in purple flowers in the autumn. The leaves are deliciously fragrant and it is easy to grow from cuttings (often it layers itself!).
4. Callistemon - love those bottlebrushes - so many to choose from and all gorgeous and easy to grow.
5. Camellias look so delicate and dainty when they are in flower, but in fact they are as tough as old boots. They make good pot specimens if you're good at watering. And they love our acid soils.
6. Cordylines - can't beat them for ease of propagation: simply cut off a stem and pop it into the ground. There are many different types of Cordylines and most of them have spectacular foliage. The native Cordyline (*C. rubra*) bears trusses of lovely red berries and is an ideal understorey plant.
7. Brugmansia (formerly called Datura) - like them or loathe them, you can't say that they are not spectacular. We can grow the white, pink and apricot varieties, but of course the ones we all want are the scarlet and purple flowering types that we read about in magazines.
8. Dracaena - almost as easy to propagate as the Cordyline, except you need to stick the stem in a bucket of water until it forms roots before planting. Exciting stripey leaves make this an attractive addition to the subtropical scene.
9. Euphorbia (pic at right) - the common Poinsettia flowers obligingly when little else does, and it copes well with shade. It dies down in the warm months to leave space for summer-flowering shrubs. Look out for dwarf varieties and those with pink, lime green or cream flowers.
10. Gardenia - few shrubs are as reliable as this. It is heat and drought tolerant, needs little feeding and pruning, and seldom gets attacked by insects providing it is growing in the right position. The downside is that the wallabies love them, so they may need a cage at your place.
11. Graptophyllum (pic below right) - a great native that grows in a tall, thin column, making it ideal for small spaces. It's called the holly fuchsia because of its prickly leaves and tubular red flowers.
12. Grevilleas - just go to Don and Sandra Capner's garden to discover how extraordinarily lovely they are. Of course, they need Don's expertise in pruning, but even novice gardeners can quickly acquire this skill. Buy one today.



13. *Ixora* (pic at right) has to be included in this list because of its reliability. It comes in the familiar deep salmon pink, as well as pink, butter yellow and peach cultivars. Looks great with gardenias and needs the same growing conditions.



14. *Justicia* (pic at left) is on this list because of the orange variety that is such a useful



groundcover/small shrub. They call it orange sage despite the fact that it has nothing to do with the *Salvia* family. Other *Justicias* are quite different in leaf and flower type, the most popular being *J. carnea*, the Brazilian plume that has wonderful pink or white blooms.

15. Lillipillies come in so many varieties that it's worth going to a flash nursery just to see what hybridists are up to these days. Select one

that has been developed to repel annoying psyllids that mar the foliage of many species

16. *Megaskepasma* (pic at right) has the wow factor when it is in full flower in autumn. It's a marvellous shrub that performs reliably each year. It doesn't like frost, but will probably grow back from the base if it has been frozen.



17. Pentas, the flower-arranger's friend and stop-gap in so many beds and borders. It's great for attracting insects because its red, white, pink, mauve and purple flowers are full of nectar.

18. *Rhododendron*!?! No, not the ones that grow in the Himalayas, but the



*Vireya* variety (pic at left) that can be persuaded to perform in these climes. They are worth persisting with, because their trusses of flowers are out of this world.

19. *Tibouchina* - forever linked with Alstonville, but originally from South America. The dwarf -Jules is an excellent plant for the front of shrub borders and for growing on banks, where it will cascade in a purple haze for many weeks over summer/autumn.

20. *Xanthorrhoea* - OK it's not a shrub but the grass tree can be treated as one. They provide a perfect punctuation mark in a subtropical garden, especially when they bear their giant seed spikes. Birds and bees think they're tops.





## February Job File – Julia Hancock

- ✿ Gentle deadheading and light tip pruning is all that is required at the moment in the way of tidying up errant plants. Heavier pruning can be done once the weather cools down.
- ✿ Feed roses, give them a good drink and check for bugs. Prune climbing roses –the ones that bear all their flowers during one single spring display.
- ✿ Pick vegies on a daily basis if necessary, as overgrown monsters are not pleasant to eat.
- ✿ Pick bunches of dahlias and zinnias for indoors, to encourage them to keep on flowering. Boost their productivity with a fortnightly dose of soluble fertilizer.
- ✿ Check for regrowth on compartmentalised weeds. Let me explain. Have you ever sprayed a weed and wondered why it doesn't die? The answer is that the top bit has died, but only down to the nodal division. New growth will happen from below that division in the young compartment. The various compartments don't communicate with each other, so the poison doesn't spread down into the new growth. It is a clever way to ensure survival of the species. The best way to remove compartmentalised weeds is to excavate back to the beginning of the plant and dig the whole thing out, taking care to remove all the roots. Never compost them – always throw them in the garbage bin OR make weed tea from them.
- ✿ Feed citrus trees during rainy weather.
- ✿ Keep grass away from the trunks of fruit trees, smothering it with wet newspaper to kill it and keeping the paper in place with mulch (keep the mulch away from the tree trunks too).
- ✿ Nerines (pic at right) are great for cutting and provide a wonderful splash of colour in the late summer garden. The bulbs are large and prefer to be planted so they are only half covered, however in areas of heavy frost they should be buried to a depth of 6cm. Choose a sunny, well-drained position where they won't be crowded out by other plants. They don't need much fertiliser but it is essential to mulch them. Once planted they may sulk for a couple of years before producing their first spikes of flowers, but thereafter they are happy growing in the same clump for many years.
- ✿ Trim away old foliage from summer annuals that are fading and pull out those that have reached the end of their life, to make way for spring flowering seedlings.
- ✿ Lightly prune evergreen shrubs but don't be too enthusiastic. Leave some canopy on the plants to protect the growth further down from frost burn. If necessary, do a bigger pruning job in spring when the frosts are over.
- ✿ Sasanqua camellias are about to burst into bloom, so give them a good dose of camellia food. Use the same fertilizer for azaleas to give them a better chance of flowering well later in the year.
- ✿ Do not be tempted by buying all those lovely spring-flowering bulbs we're seeing in the catalogues at the moment. Very few of them will survive our climate here. Jonquils and freesias are the only cool climate bulbs that flower, and they are a joy once they establish good clumps. Grow them in well drained, sunny positions where they can be left undisturbed for a number of years.
- ✿ Paths are slippery after all the recent rain, so take care in yours and other people's gardens.
- ✿ When did you last clean out your worm farm? It's a good idea to give them fresh bedding once a year, and now is a good time to do it.
- ✿ Clean out your bromeliad bed and pot up pups from your favourite varieties.
- ✿ Lift jonquil bulbs and place them in the fridge (an egg carton makes a good home for them) before planting them out again in late March. N.B. Planting your bulbs in large pots and sinking these into position in the garden makes this an easy job.
- ✿ If your cycads are looking yellowish, fertilise them with Dynamic lifter.





## February Garden Gathering

**Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2021 – 2pm**

**Tumbulgum Hall, Riverside Drive, Tumbulgum.**

Guest speaker - Kate Heffernan who has horticulture and landscape industry experience in a range of disciplines over 4 decades, in particular the development of Botanic Garden plant collections and landscapes, supporting infrastructure and policies, community engagement and building external and internal partnerships. Kate has also spent many years teaching, writing and broadcasting for the horticulture media and planning and escorting garden tours in Australia and overseas.

### **How do I book?**

As this is a COVID-safe event we ask you to please book through this link: <https://www.trybooking.com/BOEEQ>

Bookings are open now and close on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021. **Visitors are welcome, however they must be registered on the trybooking site.** You will be sent a confirmation email and ticket. If you find you are unable to attend after RSVPing – please return your ticket.

If you are unable to book online – please either speak with a friend or phone Jenny Kidd on 0431 989 477 and she will help you through the online booking process.

### **Members are asked to bring the following:**

- Name badge
- Your own afternoon tea including drinks and food (no sharing due to COVID restrictions)
- Small change for raffles
- Swap table items
- Any gardening questions

## March Food Group

**Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March at the home of Bronwyn and David Hancox – 9.30am start time**

**327 Limpinwood Valley Road, Limpinwood, 0429 845 884**

### **Directions on how to get there:**

The way to Limpinwood can be either via Chillingham, turn left onto Zara Rd, continue for approx 6 mins, turn right into Limpinwood Valley Rd, drive 3.2 kms. OR via Tyalgum. Coming from Murwillumbah turn right at Tyalgum onto Limpinwood Rd, continue 5-6 mins, turn left onto Limpinwood Valley Rd. Follow instructions as above.

Plenty of parking onsite. For this meeting please bring along your name badge, cup, chair, a hat, your own morning tea, and any produce or plants for the Swap Table.

## That's all Folks for This Month...

Huge, huge, huge thanks to all the contributors to this newsletter.

As always, all of your contributions are welcome and we would love to hear what you've all been up to. Send your hints, tips, recipes, travel stories, bragging photos to us at [ugcnews@gmail.com](mailto:ugcnews@gmail.com)

And thanks as always to our printer – Sandra & Alan Guthrie at Poster Paradise, Murwillumbah.