

Uki Garden Club Inc.

NEWSLETTER

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President's report

Hello again, another month has past. I know the weather has made gardening hard but we must not weaken. A special thanks to Rosemary and Bruce for hosting last meeting. We still have a few vacancies for next year's calendar – please see Julia for details. Remember no hosts – no meetings. It's your garden club.

It is critical that the meetings BEGIN ON TIME.

Our October meeting begins 2pm sharp. Lisa Harrell is demonstrating different floral art arrangements so we need to supply flowers and greenery.

A reminder to the interested members attending our first workshop which happens on 17 October from 9.30 am to 12 noon. The topic is pruning grevilleas and it will be held at Morning Song 108 Farrants Road, Farrants Hill, (my place) don't forget to bring a cup as we will enjoy a quick cuppa before we start.

OK that's enough said for now see you at Lyn's nice and early and don't forget some flowers, greenery and your pen and pad.

Don Capner

Highlights from September's meeting

Don's Demonstrations

1. Tomato trellis made from wire 1m x 900mm, formed into a cylinder. Don cut out intervening wires to make openings about 20cm square – enough to allow trunks to grow through and for harvesting. He advised taking off the bottom leaves of the plants.
2. Propagating cliveas from seed. Don put a coarse mix in the bottom of the pot for good drainage, using a basic mix on top, loosened with coarse gritty sand. Cliveas rot with too much moisture so the potting mix needs to hold moisture without being a boggy mess. He planted the seeds ½ inch or so from the edge of the pot, spaced 2 inches apart. Seedlings will take 4 to 6 years to flower, but if you plant seeds successively each year you'll soon have lots of flowering plants. Don donated the potted seeds for a raffle prize – won by Kate.

Host's Garden: Rosemary described the development of the garden around the B and B. Parts have been planted with bottle brushes but a big new slope is being planned with the help of Don. Rosemary looks after the pot plants around the three guest rooms.

Guest Speaker: Tanya Filak has just established her business as a Travel Counsellor in Uki. In 2008 she was the top agent in Australia with the international company, Travel Counsellors. She visits clients in their homes and offers a completely personalised service, with competitive pricing. Of interest to the Club was her association with Botanica Garden Tours, which conducts tours of international historic sites, gardens and flower shows, and culinary venues. Tanya showed a DVD made by the founder of Botanica, Judy Vanrenen, set mainly at Diggers Club headquarters in Victoria. She donated several copies of the DVD to the Club, as well as handing out brochures of the current tours on offer from the company.

Sustainable spread

The display at the Caldera sustainability workshop held in October included the following varieties of foodstuffs generously provided by Kevin and Merle Munsie. Strawberry, pawpaw, lemon, tangelo, lime, mulberry, orange, Sebago potato, Dutch Gold potato, sweet potato, asparagus, parsley, dill, mint, five-in-one,

kaffir lime, kale, bayleaf, eschalottes, hartsease, nasturtium, lemon myrtle aniseed myrtle, lettuce, silver beet, bantam eggs, tamarillo, passionfruit, rosemary, Asian lettuce, celery, peas, cabbage, strawberry jam, rhubarb, Broccoli, carrot, beetroot, , bean, chilli, , parsnip, Russian garlic, onion, lemongrass, ginger.

Is there a First Aider in the House?

We are looking for a qualified First Aider to act as medical support for our Friendship Day next year.

We hope that you won't be needed but it would be nice to know that we did have someone who was trained and that we could go to in a medical emergency, should one crop up. If you hold current a current First Aid certificate or similar qualification please let Fran know either at a meeting or via email.

Fran O'Hara

Sad news from Landcare

In New South Wales, 1035 native species, populations and ecological communities are listed as threatened with extinction? In the Murwillumbah area there are 82 animals and 78 plants listed as threatened?

(<http://www.threatenedspecies.environment.nsw.gov.au>)

Friends of Wollumbin Landcare Inc.

Poem of the month

Speak not – whisper not;
Here bloweth thyme and bergamot;
Softly on the evening hour,
Secret herbs their spices shower.
Dark-spiked rosemary and myrrh,
Lean-stalked, purple lavender;
Hides within her bosom, too,
All her sorrows, bitter rue.

From *The Sunken Garden* by Walter de la Mare, 1917

Did you know?

Dried herbs are stronger than fresh herbs: if a recipe specifies a quantity of fresh herbs, one-third the quantity of dried herbs will be the equivalent. Fresh herbs are best added towards the end of the cooking, while dried herbs can be added from the beginning.

From *The Australian Garden*, Veronica Burns and Margaret Geddes

Maintain the mangroves

Mangroves play a vital role in our environment and must be protected because they provide habitat and food for fish and other animals; they trap, concentrate and recycle nutrients; they reduce water pollution and improve visual amenity; and they prevent bank erosion. Mangroves are under constant threat from human activities such as cutting them down to improve the view; dumping garden refuse on the shoreline; and polluting the estuarine water. Next time you find yourself amongst a grove of mangroves take time to appreciate their value to the planet.

A bit about Byrill Creek

Byrill Creek provides a very scenic drive between Uki and Tyalgum but it is an area with a lot controversy attached. Tweed Shire Council has been purchasing land at Byrill Creek for a future dam site since 1993 and currently owns about 1131 hectares. Most of this land would be inundated if/when the dam is constructed. In the meantime Council has planted up most of the cleared areas on the land with species of eucalypt planted for the timber industry. Species include *E. saligna* (Sydney Blue Gum), *E. pilularis*

(Blackbutt), *E. cloesiana* (Gympie Messmate), *E. grandis* (Flooded Gum), and *E. dunnii* (Dunn's White Gum). To date 434,000 trees have been planted with harvesting planned to take place within 25-30 years.

BBQ rules

We are about to enter the BBQ season. Therefore it is important to refresh your memory on the etiquette of this sublime outdoor cooking activity. When a man volunteers to do the BBQ the following chain of events are put into motion:

Routine

- (1) The woman buys the food.
- (2) The woman makes the salad, prepares the vegetables, and makes dessert.
- (3) The woman prepares the meat for cooking, places it on a tray along with the necessary cooking utensils and sauces, and takes it to the man who is lounging beside the grill - beer in hand.
- (4) The woman remains outside the compulsory three meter exclusion zone where the exuberance of testosterone and other manly bonding activities can take place without the interference of the woman.

Here comes the important part:

- (5) THE MAN PLACES THE MEAT ON THE GRILL.

More routine

- (6) The woman goes inside to organize the plates and cutlery.
- (7) The woman comes out to tell the man that the meat is looking great. He thanks her and asks if she will bring another beer while he flips the meat

Important again:

- (8) THE MAN TAKES THE MEAT OFF THE GRILL AND HANDS IT TO THE WOMAN.

More routine

- (9) The woman prepares the plates, salad, bread, utensils, napkins, sauces, and brings them to the table.
- (10) After eating, the woman clears the table and does the dishes.

And most important of all:

- (11) Everyone PRAISES the MAN and THANKS HIM for his cooking efforts.
- (12) The man asks the woman how she enjoyed 'her night off' and, upon seeing her annoyed reaction, concludes that there's just no pleasing some women!

Australia's Open Garden Scheme Schedule

17 - 18 October 2009: **Rosh Eden (Australia's Open Garden Scheme)**

Rathdowney. For more information, visit [Australia's Open Garden Scheme Queensland Calendar](#)

18 October 2009 (Sunday): **'Gardens Alive!'**

A Gold Coast City Council event held at the Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens, Rosser Park, Ashmore Rd, Benowa. More details: www.goldcoast.qld.gov.au/botanicgardens/

31 October 2009 (Saturday): **Beautiful Bromeliads in Beerwah**

Marvel at the extensive varieties of Bromeliads in full flower or wander through the serene garden walks and soak up the peaceful atmosphere. Finish your day by viewing an exquisite collection of hand made quilts, and also a photographic and D.V.D. display. Plants are on sale and Refreshments available. "Oaklands Farm", 340 Mawson Road Beerwah. Saturday 31st October, 10am - 4pm. Entry \$5.00.

Images of Uki

Yes, it's on again, this year under the auspices of Ukitopia. The exhibition will be held in the Uki Hall on Saturday 14 6-9pm only (everyone is invited to the launch) and Sunday 15 November, 9am-5pm. In keeping with Uki's transition towards sustainability during 2009, the theme of this year's show is sustainability. For more information contact Kalia on 02 6679 5707, mobile 0408 340 042, email ukitopia@gmail.com.

International Cordyline Society Inc Tropical Foliage Festival

Saturday and Sunday, 15th and 16th November
Saturday, 8.00 am to 4.00 pm
Sunday, 9.00 am to 3.00 pm

**Cleveland Assembly Hall,
Smith Street,
Cleveland, QLD.**

Dennis Hundscheidt – Creating and maintaining a tropical garden

Steven Flood – Soil preparation and maintenance

John Catlan – Caladiums and Cordylines

Len Trevor – Bromeliads

Grant Larkin – Question and answer session on palms.

Free parking; morning teas and lunch for sale.

Question time

- Pip Stainlay's day lily leaves are browning, and Lyn Reid suggested cutting them back. Don explained that red spiders cause browning and like a dry environment, but by cutting leaves back and keeping plants moist, the area for red spiders is reduced. Neem oil, sprayed underneath as well as on top of the leaves, controls red spider.
- Pip also wondered how often to use worm wee, and Sheila Collings said you can't over use it. Don advised using a coarse spray to save blocking the holes, and to use it weak and often.
- Gwen Gillard brought a sample of a bush planted by Bruce Chick, and loved by bees. No one could identify it, and Fran offered to take it and try to identify it from the Hugh and Nan Nicholson books.
- Lyn Reid brought along a branch of akebia, which was admired by everyone. Lyn also told members about the biodynamic vegetable garden at the Uki Steiner School, and talked a bit about biodynamics. She also recommended Glorious Organics, the new organic food shop in the old Bank at Uki.
- Barbara Price asked about the environmental termite control stations she'd seen advertised. Don described how householders can make their own.
- Barbara Thomas asked about pruning Jacarandas. In her experience, pruning isn't good for them – the branches are too leggy and once you start pruning you have to do it constantly. Stella Wilkie pointed out that the roots of a tree determine the size of a tree, and after pruning the tree will grow back to the size if the roots
- Marilyn Gough asked about pink, blue or purple salvias for hot spots. Julia recommended all salvias as being suitable. Visitor Marion spoke about a lady from Brisbane who selected salvias suitable for the climate, and has written books about them.
- Katherine Richards wondered if she could propagate vireya rhododendrons from broken stems. Don explained that this is not a suitable time of year – March would be better – but to try cutting below a node, using rooting powder, and putting in a moist potting mix. Because they grow naturally in leaf mulch, plant them in a similar medium with morning sun.
- Barbara Thomas, following DPI advice, had put 2 kg of Urea on her nectarine, and now wants to know how to resurrect it. Everyone agreed it was far too much for one tree. Don recommended trying to flush it out by watering and in future using manure and potash.
- Jean Nuttall asked about Lemon Marigold, *Tagetes lemmonii*, but no one knew where to obtain one.
- Fran O'Hara asked what vegies to plant now. Annette McFarlane's book "Organic Vegetable Gardening" has a month-by-month planting guide, but suggestions from members included corn, snake beans, eggplant, Asian greens, capsicum, zucchini (use milk spray for leaf mould) and cucumber.

- Barbara Waters had information in deterring scrub turkeys – urinate on their nest, and the male thinks it's another turkey!

Nepenthes know how

August's guest speaker was John Roberts, who spoke about *Nepenthes* – carnivorous plants, or pitcher plants. Here is a summary of his talk.

Nepenthes grow naturally from Madagascar, through Asia, and even in parts of Australia, in poor situations ranging from hot and dry to cool highland conditions. They are vines, and come in all different shapes and sizes – *Rajah* is so large that rats and mice, and even reputedly small monkeys, have been found inside.

The pitcher is an extension of the leaf, not a flower. He'd brought along some samples and pointed out beautiful new growth with new pitchers starting. He emptied out some of the pitchers, which were full of water and gnats, but there are often cockroaches and crickets inside, and John also puts grasshoppers in them. The appearance and textures vary greatly, some with very attractive peristomes around the top, sometimes with wings or fangs, some with glabrous surfaces.

John explained that the lower pitchers were desirable because the tendrils are used to climb. They produce acids and enzymes with an incredibly low PH – 2.5. Insects cannot get out once inside because of the lip

Care and maintenance – The plants mustn't ever dry out or new pitchers are sacrificed. Sphagnum moss is best as a growing medium, with coconut fibre next best. Each year, cut off old growth as well as upper pitchers – it's the lower pitchers that are desirable. Since 90% of all *Nepenthes* are male and flowers are a waste of energy, it's best to cut them off. The quickest way to get new plants is by cuttings. Tie the cuttings together and place in a bottle of water, and within six weeks there will be new growth and root nodules – they are very easy to propagate.

For good colours you need good light – 60% shade, with good morning sun. A fertiliser suitable for ferns or African Violets is ideal. There can be some fungal problems, so grow in pots with saucers.

Important message from Rod the poo man

The caretaker of the Murwillumbah sale yards, Rod, has asked me to pass on the message that he is no longer in charge of the yards and is therefore no longer the contact person to access the poo. He advised poo-seekers to go there after the monthly cattle sales every second Monday.

Jean Nuttall

Titbits from the food group

A very dry Corymbia, Julia Hancock's home in Uki, provided the venue for the October food group. Despite blistering winds we had a very pleasant meeting, along the following lines.

- Julia opened proceedings by asking for volunteer hosts for next year's meetings – both the ordinary meetings and the food groups. Gaps currently need to be filled for May, July, September (ordinary meetings) and for the food group January, Feb (N.B. this meeting will be held on Sat 13 February for a change as it's a workshop with Don about getting the vegie patch ready for March planting), March, August, October, November and December. If you are able to host a meeting, please speak to Julia.
- Jean Nuttall was still reeling after six carpet snakes visited her garden in four weeks. She is hosting young people from the Help Exchange, a programme similar to the Woofers scheme. They work for a limited amount of hours per day in exchange for food and board. Visit www.helpx.net.
- Jean reminded us that the Casino Garden Club is expecting us to do great things for its March flower show. They are holding competitions very relevant to Uki Garden Club members' skills, i.e. 'old things made new; pot of herbs; floral art (both open and novice categories), so let's think about this over the next few months and try and give them a run for their money.
- Barb Waters spread the word about Deals Direct fold down rainwater tanks. Examples include 400l for \$99.95, and 800l for \$199.99, shipping \$20 extra for large models. "Direct Deals are excellent at

delivering promptly and have a good returns policy.” If you use the subject heading it will take you to the site and you can check it out yourself. Visit newsletter@dealsdirect.com.au.

- Barb Thomas wanted to know what Barb W’s secret was to growing pawpaws. They don’t like a lot of water. They respond to sulphate of potash and boron (1 teaspoon of boron to 4 litres of water), rock dust and trace elements applied in spring.
- Stella Wilkie has lovely parsley, both the curly and flat leafed varieties growing in pots on her balcony.
- Kevin Munsie’s mini pawpaws are doing well. He recommended sowing seed now in trays and planting out before February so they get some good growth on before winter. He brought some seeds in the Seed Bank of the reddish type of pawpaw. Kevin reported that because he has been diligent at building up his soil with mulch he rarely needs to feed his fruit trees other than a handful of chook poo occasionally. He told us about a ‘new and used’ plant nursery in Ballina where the plants are sourced from developers. Other people can donate excess plants and receive a credit note to use in the nursery. Great idea!
- Merle Munsie brought along a delightful ‘show and tell’ – a hybrid hippeastrum called ‘Boysenberry Swirl’ which she bought at Toowoomba Markets. It’s an unusual double variety. Merle also said she’d been given five eggs from Heather Neill and three chicks hatched.
- Heather Neill needs sacks for children to collect cow poo for sale. She brought along a native pepper climbing plant which is good in salads.
- Barb Thomas asked how to make macadamia nut butter. Just blitz the nuts in a food processor. Can one plant passionfruit now? Yes. It’s a bad year for broad beans this year – too hot and dry – but don’t forget that the foliage still makes excellent mulch even if no beans are produced. Are small chook tractors practical – say for two hens? Yes, two square meters of cage is sufficient for two fowl, but the cage needs to be completely enclosed in wire to prevent attack from foxes and snakes. **BARB HAS LOST A PINK/WHITE/GOLD MUG WITH ‘MY SPECIAL FRIEND’ WRITTEN ON IT. IF YOU HAVE IT, PLEASE BRING IT TO THE NEXT MEETING.**
- Ehurle Gillson uses 30% shade cloth over lettuce, beetroot and broccoli, and in very hot weather he doubles it over. This way he can prolong the growing season. He is planting leeks now for next May’s friendship day soup, and planting snake beans now for harvesting in March.
- Chris Garrett can’t keep the water up to his plants. His tomatoes are being plagued by grubs. Jean advised that Green Harvedst make white bags to put over trusses of tomatoes, but any old white paper bag might be a cheaper alternative. His garlic is bad because of too heavy rain events in May. His success story has been carrots, the ‘Early Nancy’ variety. Kevin says ‘Chantenay’ with the red core are good in our soils.
- Hanna Montebello’s mandarin tree is laden with embryo fruit. She harvested 5kg of potatoes this year.
- Dot Francis has great Asian stem lettuce, which looks after itself despite these difficult growing conditions.
- Kevin mentioned that the Gillson’s front garden is looking magnificent at the moment. They have a dwarf lemon tree in a pot on the verandah (Bunnings has them).
- Gloria Sandercock also has dwarf ‘Meyer’ lemon and ‘Washington Navel’ orange that are doing very well. She got hers from Murwillumbah monthly market. Her vegetable garden is beautiful, thanks to abundant rain and cow manure [sigh....Ed]. Her use of half eggshells around her brassicas to deter cabbage white butterflies (they think there are already other butterflies there so don’t lay eggs that later develop into caterpillars) is working really well. Obviously white egg shells are best. She had strange long grubs hatching in her liquid manure, which she quickly strained out and fed to the chooks, only later discovering that they were the caterpillars of the hoverfly, a beneficial insect.
- Ron Morrison has been harvesting pigeon peas, which are companioning his fruit orchard. One can make dahl out of them and they can be used in other dishes where chickpeas are normally used (soak overnight before cooking).
- Di Morrison brought along kohlrabi which is a drought and insect-resistant brassica which is doing really well. She grates it raw and eats it with a sprinkle of lemon juice. She fried green bananas and served them as chips during the Bathurst 1000! Ron loved them.

- Julia received information in the mail later that day on Yates new heirloom tomato variety. In one packet there are eight different varieties, so it's a lucky dip but you should get a good mix of old-fashioned types full of colour, flavour and interest. [I wonder if they are open-pollinated? Ed]

The next food group meeting will be held on Tuesday 10 November at 9.30am at the home of Kevin and Merle Munsie's, 34 Baromi Road (off Brooks's Road), Kynumboon, phone 02 6672 7691. The topic is 'How to do the 100 mile Christmas', a group discussion on reducing the Christmas carbon footprint. Please bring hat, chair, mug, something for morning tea, plants and produce and good carbon-reducing ideas.

Seeds please

KEVIN MUNSIE HAS ASKED FOR DONATIONS OF SEED FOR FRIENDSHIP DAY. HE WILL BE SETTING UP A DISPLAY AND ALSO SELLING SEEDS AND VEGIE SEEDLINGS. ALSO PLEASE SAVE PUNNETS SO HE CAN PROPAGATE AS MANY AS POSSIBLE.

Friendship day food

Di Morrison took the opportunity of the food group meeting to remind everyone to start planning what they are going to grow for the meals we're serving at the event. She aims to source 99% of everything we use from members of the garden club. Examples of things we need are:

- Toppings for slices for morning tea: homemade/grown jams, nuts, fruit purees etc. to put on a biscuit-type base.
- Soup ingredients: we're serving runny soups that can be drunk from mugs – pumpkin and leek and potato. So not only do we need the veg but also quantities of good vegetable stock would also be welcome. And garlic.
- Sandwich fillings: examples are egg and lettuce/cress; curd cheese and chutney/tomato; grated beetroot, carrot; alfalfa sprouts; spring onions; avocado and pesto.

Things that can be done in advance include: blanching and freezing vegetables; drying parsley and other herbs; preparing and freezing stock; preparing and freezing fruit for slices; making jam and chutney. Nearer the time we can start stockpiling eggs, planting lots of lettuce, making pesto and nut butters. Di is looking for serious commitments from members by FEBRUARY so she can compile a master-menu and list of who's supplying what. We aim to limit food miles to practically zero to compliment the talk by our Guest Speaker.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the Uki Garden Club will be held on Saturday 31 October at 2pm at the home of Lyn Reid, 149 Mitchell Street (cnr Grants Road) Uki, phone 02 6679 5238. Guest speaker will be garden club member Lisa Harrell who will be giving a flower arranging demonstration. PLEASE BRING ALONG FLOWERS AND FOLIAGE FOR LISA TO USE. The plant swap is cottage garden perennials and annuals. Please bring hat, chair, mug, something for arvo tea, plants and produce. Please note that parking is limited so carpooling is highly recommended.