

Uki Garden Club Inc.

NEWSLETTER

Volume 11 Number 10 2010

Hello Everybody

Isn't this spring amazing, all this rain, now I know what a Mediterranean spring is like! Our callistemons, hippeastrums and clivias haven't flowered this well for years.



Keep an eye on your citrus trees, as the citrus (stink) bug is earlier this spring. They suck the newly setting fruit making it drop off the tree. An oil spray fortnightly (pest oil or eco oil) will control this problem and protect the tree from leaf miner damage and scale.

Coming up on 6 and 7 November we are displaying at the Uki School's Eco day so please bring along "what gardening means to you" produce, cut flowers, potted plants etc. Display needs to be staged by 9am. If it's more convenient for you please drop stuff off (clearly marked with your name) at Julia Hancock's house (183 Murwillumbah Street, Murwillumbah) the day before, Please come along share your garden experiences with others.

Next meeting is at Fran O'Hara's on 30 October when John Roberts will be addressing the meeting with his talk on tassel fern culture.

See you then for a 2 pm sharp start.

Don Capner

President

Gorgeous geraniums



Garden club member Jayne Parrott showed me a wonderful photograph of a display of geraniums growing on a wall. The scene was typical of courtyards in Spain, especially Cordoba, where whitewashed houses provide a perfect backdrop to the brilliant colours of the geranium and pelargonium family.

Although in the Tweed Valley we don't enjoy a Mediterranean climate, we can still take pleasure in cultivating this diverse and wonderful family of plants. They grow brilliantly in pots or in the soil, providing they get full sun and are in a well-drained spot. Damp roots will cause them to rot off rapidly, and they don't flower well in shade.

Geraniums are easily propagated by cuttings, which is handy because they also need to be pruned regularly to maintain a bushy health, and so each pruning can become a new plant if potted up. They can also be grown by seed, where the results might be a surprise.

The colour range of geraniums and their close cousins pelargoniums are from pure white, to shell pink, vivid crimson and scarlet, through to mauve, dark plum and almost black. They can also be striped or bicoloured.

Foliage types vary too, from pale to dark green, variegated, hairy or shiny leaves and those with zonal markings. Some people don't like the smell of the foliage, and indeed some of the most flamboyantly-flowered varieties have mean little pungent leaves. But there are also types which are deliciously aromatic, smelling of rose petals, lime, lemon, nutmeg and peppermint. The peppermint variety is the only type that can tolerate shade,



but it comes at the expense of flowers, which are pale and insignificant.

As mentioned, geraniums and pelargoniums do well in pots, and the ivy leaf or trailing variety is especially good in hanging baskets. Keep them out of the wind if possible as they dry out rapidly.



To keep them flowering for maximum periods of time, a stimulant such as sulphate of potash or a liquid feed like Miraclegro will boost their blooms. Always deadhead and remove spoilt foliage, as these will instantly detract from the appearance of an otherwise healthy plant.

Geraniums provide a bright splash of colour in many situations. They don't look out of place in a subtropical landscape, but they are most at home in a cottage-style garden. Some colours are so vivid you only need a few plants, while a mass planting of the softer shades can look very effective in a mixed border.

Next autumn the club will be having a geranium swap, so start to bring on your plants on so there will be lots of cuttings to share around.

Membership fees due



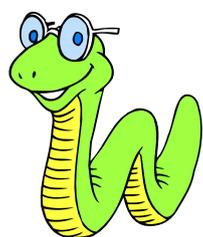
Those members who have not paid for their 2010/11 membership to the Uki Garden Club will no longer receive the newsletter after this edition. A membership form is attached – and please note that even if you have filled out one of these forms in the past, please do so again as your details may have changed in the meantime.

Fran O'Hara, Membership Secretary

****PLEASE PASS THIS ON****

Bad Weather on the Day of a Meeting and wondering if it is on or not?? Well wonder no more. If the weather is looking dodgy on the day of a garden club meeting please check your emails as by 10am there will be a message from one of us on the committee to explain if the meeting is going ahead or not. And for our non-emailable friends – worry not as someone from the committee will give you a call by 10am with the news. I suggest that we add an absolute failsafe - that if you haven't heard by 11.00am on a wet day, take out your garden club phone list and phone a friend. That way no one should fall through the cracks.

Fran O'Hara, Vice-President



Charles Darwin on worms

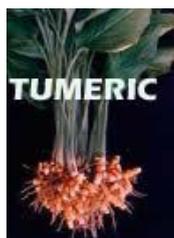
'Worms prepare the ground in an excellent manner for the growth of...plants and for seedlings of all kinds. They periodically expose the mould to the air...They mingle the whole intimately together, like a gardener who prepares fine soil for his choicest plants. In this state it is well fitted to retain moisture and to absorb all soluble substances, as well as for the process of nitrification...The leaves which are dragged into the burrows as food...partly digested, and saturated...are commingled with much earth. This earth forms the dark coloured, rich humus.'

Charles Darwin, *The Formation of Vegetable Mould Through the Action of Worms*, 1881 as quoted in Margaret Simons' *Resurrection in a Bucket*, Allen & Unwin, 2004.

What's the difference between the edible gingers, used so widely in Asian cooking? Read on to find out.

Ginger spice

What's the difference between the edible gingers, used so widely in Asian cooking? Read on to find out.



Turmeric is a mainstay of Indian cooking and has recently been discovered to have significant anti-cancer fighting properties. From a gourmet's point of view it adds a subtle flavour and rich golden colour to meat, chicken, vegetables and fish. Turmeric plants are also said to repel wallabies.

Ginger is widely used in teas, cakes, biscuits, puddings and all sorts of other sweet and savoury dishes. It has many medicinal uses including as a poultice, to aid digestion and nausea, and to help soothe and heal sore throats. The heat generated from mashed ginger penetrates the skin to warm aching muscles, but use cautiously as it can irritate some people's delicate skin. Ginger can be used raw, cooked, pickled, candied, dried and powdered.



Galangal is not often grown in home gardens because it forms a huge clump, but unlike turmeric and ginger it doesn't die down in the winter. It doesn't have quite the zing that ginger brings to dishes, but is a useful spice to have around, perhaps growing in a pot to contain its size.



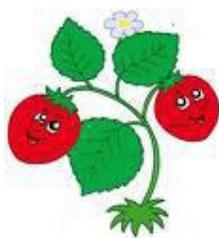
All gingers like rich, compost soil, lots of sun and moisture. Slow release fertiliser will keep the rhizomes growing plump and sweet.

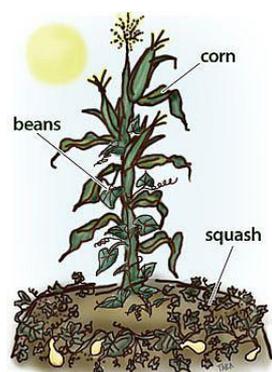
Extending the life of your strawberry crop

Strawberries are one of the most delicious ways to stay young –their anti-oxidants are famous for retarding the effect of old age.

- Although we've had good rain this spring, it's still important to make sure your strawberry plants don't dry out. Carry this through to late summer and autumn as the plant needs moisture to form good growth for next year. If possible, avoid watering from above (a drip irrigation system is ideal) as excess moisture on the leaves and fruit may lead to fungal diseases (although watering in the morning largely eliminates this problem).
- Protect the fruits from predators. To make sure you get to enjoy all those delicious red berries, pick them just before the slugs get them. Using a bulky mulch such as cane tops or straw deters them. Birds also love them so invest in a net – it's a hassle to crawl under the net every time you want to pick them, but if you don't take this precaution there won't be any berries to pick. Rats also enjoy them but the net will fix them too. When working with a net avoid wearing a shirt with buttons on it, as the net invariably gets Feed, feed, feed. Alternate between liquid fertilisers such as kelp or fish emulsion, sulphate of potash and worm juice on a fortnightly basis. The first keeps the fungal diseases at bay, the second promotes strong cell growth on new roots, leaves and fruits, and the third improves the quality of the soil the plants are growing in.
- Remove runners as they appear while the fruits are developing, so prevent the plant from putting all its energy into raising their new babies. At the end of the fruiting season runners can be encouraged to develop and eventually you can snip them off and pot them up for next year.

Strawberries grow better in open ground, but they can also thrive in large containers if good potting mixes are used. You'll get two years out of each plant - in fact they are better the second year – but by the third year they've done their dash, so don't be tempted into trying to trick them into outliving their 'use by' date.





The story of the 'Three Sisters'

In the 1500s when they were colonising the Americas, Europeans found that many of the Indian tribes grew three native vegetables – corn, climbing beans and squash – together, and harvested them to provide the basis of a healthy diet. The Indians called these plants 'The Three Sisters' and, while there are many Indian legends about the origins of this name, science has shown that these three plants, as well as being nutritious, do help each other to grow.

How? Well, for a start, upright corn stalks provide support for climbing beans. And beans, being legumes, use the bacteria on their roots to convert nitrogen from the atmosphere into plant food, thereby fertilising the hungry corn and the squash. Squash does its part by sprawling over the ground and shading the soil, forming a natural mulch that keeps the roots cool and helps hold moisture in the soil.

Yates Notes, October 2009

Cooking and Eating with Di Morrison



cauliflower and broccoli

Cauliflower and broccoli make great salads but need to be combined with strong flavours in a dressing while hot as they can be rather bland. I have wonderful dill and cherry

tomatoes to add to the salad at present but the alternatives are endless. Charring the cauliflower gives it an enhanced taste and look. Julia's purple cauliflower would look great too!

To serve 2-4 people

2 tbsp capers chopped

1tbsp seeded French mustard

2 crushed garlic cloves

2 tbsp wine vinegar

120ml olive oil

1 small cauliflower or equivalent broccoli in florets

1 tbsp chopped dill

20 or so cherry tomatoes

salt and pepper to taste

1. Make the dressing by shaking or whisking the first 4 ingredients with half the olive oil and some pepper and salt to get a rich creamy dressing.

2. Quickly par boil cauliflower or broccoli for 2 minutes or so. Run under cold water to stop cooking. Cool and drain. Add remaining olive oil when dry.

3. Heat a ridged frying pan or the barbeque to a high heat and quickly char vegetable.

4. While hot add the dressing, tomatoes and dill. Taste for seasoning.

Wanted

- Barb Thomas (02 6679 5997) would like bromeliads.

- Kevin Munsie (02 6672 7691) would like half a dozen 2 litre glass wine flagons.
- Julia Hancock (02 6672 2506) lime basil seeds or seedlings.

October jobfile

- Prune back shrubs, both exotic and native, that have finished flowering, such as may bushes, buddleia, philadelphus, rondeletias, may bush, and camellias if necessary. Give them a feed of blood and bone and water well in.
- Plant pinks! No, not the colour, the plant. These are also called dianthus and yes, they do come in pink but they also come in lots of other colours including white and a deep maroon. Some have a fragrance reminiscent of cloves. They are a delightful old-fashioned plant, a relative of the carnation, are easy to grow and flower for months. Some have attractive greyish foliage. Available from nurseries in punnets or seeds.
- The recent heavy rain will have leached a lot of nutrients from the soil, so now is a good time to throw around some fertiliser – any type will do.
- Scale is the main pest of citrus at the moment – implement a fortnightly schedule of spraying with PestOil or a white oil solution to get rid of them before the summer heat brings on a bad case of sooty mould (a by-product of the ant/scale symbiosis).
- Irises have been particularly beautiful this year, which is surprising as they are normally supposed to enjoy having dry rhizomes. Julia has a beautiful mauve/blue one (originally from Lyn Reid) that she can share with anyone who would like a piece).
- Sunflowers provide a wonderful splash of colour to the garden and kids love them. They also supply birds with a huge supply of seed once the flowers have ripened. It's not too late to sow seeds – there are many varieties available, including dwarf and multi-coloured types.
- If your lawn has been soggy for an extended period of time, aerate it with a fork once the rain has stopped. This opens up the structure of the turf and enables air and nutrients to reach the grass roots. Apply a dose of lime to sweeten the soil, as grass prefers a slightly alkaline pH.
- Feed established trees if you think they need it – flowering trees use a lot of energy so may appreciate a boost. If they're growing in a lawn you'll need to feed the fertiliser down to the tree's root zone otherwise the grass will get it all. Push holes down in a circle around the drip-line (the outer perimeter of leaves where the new roots form) and place some slow release pellets in each hole. Water in well.



Titbits from the food group



Di Morrison and Ron hosted the food group meeting in early October and despite the dreadful weather there was a good turn out. Di described their property in detail, describing how they'd established a citrus orchard with the help of sowing green manure crops. Ron warned of the perils of jasmine (*Jasminum officinalis*) which has become a serious problem in their garden. Other topics discussed include:

- Di recommended Green Harvest's reusable bags for ripening fruit – www.greenharvest.com.au.
- Kevin and Merle Munsie are having trouble with cabbages and tomatoes splitting and strawberries rotting because of the 30cm of rain they've had. They had some useful advice about preserving the shelf-life of eggs – don't wash them, because if you do you'll destroy the porous quality of the shell and the eggs will go off. They also warned that the new season of cane mulch may have nutgrass and cuphea weed in it.
- Wallabies are host to leeches.

- Gwen Rayner has removed her banana plants and is revegetating her hillside with natives. She had a good crop of finger limes last year.
- Julia Hancock showed a purple cauliflower plant she'd grown. She also spoke of some purple potatoes she'd purchased from Singh's (opposite the railway station) that were delicious. The Munsies warned not to plant them as they become a menace. Any plant with a purple pigment contains a larger concentration of antioxidants than ordinary green varieties.
- Diana Eriksen says that if you sit punnets of seedlings in a little bit of water and seasoil they can stay like that for a couple of weeks, which allows one to procrastinate (this doesn't work for sweet corn). Her citrus look greener than ever, thanks to Don's fertiliser.
- Clive McKechnie has little brown snails invading all his vegetables. Try the beer trap method of killing them. He's grown rhubarb for the first time, with great success. Kevin advised him to shade it from the sun, and provide it with excellent drainage. It can grow well in a tub. Clive's perennial lettuce from Bunnings has been terrific and he's saving seed for the Seed Bank. He asked how to harvest pawpaws early to keep the fruit bats off them. Kevin soaks them in hot water with a bit of bicarbonate of soda added to it, allowing them to steep overnight. Dry off and allow to ripen naturally away from direct sunlight. The bicarb keeps the fungal moulds away.
- Jean Nuttall is growing three different types of kale but everything else has gone to seed. She's got spectacular kangaroo paws and waratahs this year.
- Lorraine Lintern has a forest of tomato plants which have sprung up from their compost.
- Hanna Montebellow's Brazillian cherry is full of fruit.
- It's green bean time and the best dwarf variety for this area is French bean 'Gourmet's Delight'. It produces masses of fruit on a sturdy little bush. Dwarf snake beans are also prolific, although not quite as sweet as the French ones. You'll need to pick them every day as they are prolific.
- Feed passionfruit. They like anything to eat, including pellets, manure (rotted), compost, blood and bone or citrus food. Give them a good soak after fertilising.
- Fertilise field grown tomato plants as they grow every five weeks and ten weeks with Dynamic Lifter, and pot grown plants every fortnight with soluble fertiliser.



The next meeting of the food group will be held on Tuesday 9 November at 9.30am at the home of Heather Neill, 136 North Arm Road, Murwillumbah, phone 02 672 7974. Please bring hat, mug, items for the swap table and something for morning tea.

Recepies from Barbara Thomas



Healthy/Sustainable Choc Mousse (my name for it!)

- 1 med avocado
- 2 sml-med bananas
- 1 or so TBL carob powder
- 1 TBL cocoa
- 1 tspn lemon or lime juice

Whiz all up in the food processor. Yum. Nice with fruit.

Sweet Balls

1/2 cup almonds, 1/4 cup sunflower seeds, 1/2 cup raisins, sultanas or apricots, 1/2 cup tahini, 1/4 cup desiccated coconut, 2 TBL carob powder, 3 TBL natural maple syrup (or honey), extra coconut for rolling.

Place nuts, seeds and dried fruit in food processor and process for one minute until chopped well. Add

tahini, coconut and carob powder. Process for one minute while dripping maple syrup through top hole. The mixture will be sticky. Roll into balls abt 2.5cm thick. Roll in extra coconut. Place in an airtight container in the fridge until set. Keep sweet balls refrigerated.

Bulk seeds

Kevin Munsie has suggested we have a bulk seed buying session next autumn, so we can all stock up on our winter vegies. The topic will be discussed at a future meeting.



Tune to the radio on Friday 29 October
Jean Nuttall has drawn our attention to Radio National's Book Show with Ramona Koval at 10am on Friday 29 October. It will be on the topic of gardening and guest interviewees will be talking about their favourite gardening books and other things horticultural. Should be a real treat.

Murwillumbah Show

Don't forget that the Murwillumbah Show is on 5 and 6 November. Lots to see, including flower arranging, produce, craft and animals. Free entry again this year.

Lismore Friendship Day

We will be organising a bus trip on Sunday 1 May 2011 to the Lismore Garden Club Friendship Day. They will be having displays, stalls, demonstrations, lucky door prizes, raffle prizes and lots more. The Uki Garden Club will be staging a display. This bus trip will replace the ordinary garden club meeting that would have been held on the last Saturday of April, as Easter and Anzac Day usually effect the numbers of people attending.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the Uki Garden Club will be held at 2pm on Saturday 30 October at the home of Fran and Tim O'Hara, 590 Clothiers Creek Road, Clothiers Creek (phone 02 8985 6436). Guest speaker will be John Roberts speaking on tassel ferns. Please bring hat, mug, items for the swap table and something for afternoon tea. Fran has lots of little lettuce seedlings, so if you would like some please bring along a suitable container to put them in.

From Club Member Linda Brannian



Glossy Black-Cockatoo Birding Day, October 31, 2010

Tweed Bird Observers have been working with the Tweed Shire Council to bring the Glossy Black-Cockatoo Birding Day to Tweed Shire, and is assisting Tanya Fountain, TSC Bushland Officer, with recruitment of volunteers.

Glossy Black-Cockatoo, *Calyptorhynchus lathami*, is one of the more threatened species of cockatoo in Australia and is listed as Vulnerable under New South Wales and Queensland legislation. With the assistance of volunteers, the Glossy Black-Cockatoo Birding Day will enable researchers to build a picture of the numbers, distribution and social structure of the birds.

Your participation is invited ...

- You may give as little or as much time on the day (dawn to dusk). Simply record the time of your bird watching efforts along with your results.
- Non-compulsory workshops will be held by Tweed Shire Council prior to the Birding Day to inform volunteers about Glossy Black-Cockatoo identification, survey procedures, and identification of feed trees. We can also help you with that directly or preview at http://www.glossyblack.org.au/gbcday_registration.html
- Select an area you are interested in surveying from the attached list of locations where birds have been seen historically. A pdf map can also be provided showing sighting locations throughout the Tweed.
- Alternatively you may elect to survey your own property if you have Glossies or their feed trees. If you know of an area used by Glossies not on the list please help us add it to the list.
- We can also help you team up with fellow surveyors on the day.
- Reply to Tanya Fountain of the TSC direct (see attached flyer) or contact Linda Brannian at Tweed Bird Observers to be added to the volunteer database, and to receive pre-survey information, survey data forms, and a detailed map of your chosen survey location.

Please call me if you have any questions or reply to this email with your interest.

Regards

Linda Brannian

Tweed Bird Observers

02 6672 3006

tweedbirds@bigpond.com

Here is a stock list for seedlings from Farmers Choice Organics. Please phone Barbara Thomas (6679 5997) with your orders. They will be delivered for you to collect at the October meeting. Cost to UGC members: \$2.75/punnet, which is a discount of \$1.25 on retail at Fresh Wholefoods in M'bah.

Asian Greens

Bok Choy
Red Bok Choy
Tatsoi

Beans

Blue Lake (bush)
Butter Bean (climbing)

Beetroot

Detroit
Bull's blood

Capsicum

Californian Wonder (bell) next week
Corno Di Toro (tapered) next week

Cucumber

Lebanese
Green Gem

Eggplant

Black Beauty next week
Little finger next week

Kale

Tuscan

Leafy Greens

Mizuna
Red mustard
Rocket

Lettuce

Crisp Head Type

Great Lakes (Iceburg) Winter only

Loose leaf type

Royal Oak Leaf
Green Salad Bowl
Red Salad Bowl
Purple Oakleaf

Lettuce Mix

A mix of 8 different salad types of lettuce in one punnet.

Butterhead Type

Green Mignonette
Marvel of Four Seasons (Red)

Cos Type

Cosette
Freckles
Cos Verde

Okra

Burgundy 2 weeks
Clemsons Spineless 3 weeks

Pumpkin

Red kuri

Silverbeet/Chard

Fordhook Giant
Perpetual
Ruby Chard

Tomato

Black Russian
Grosse Lisse
Thai Pink Egg
Tommy Toe
Cherry Fox

Watermelon

Sugarbaby
Stars and Moon

Zucchini

Black Beauty next week
Yellow Crookneck

Herbs (punnets)

Basil sweet Genovese next week
Basil Lime next week
Basil Thai next week
Coriander
Italian Parsley
Parsley Triple Curl

Uki Garden Club Inc *Membership Application Form 2010/11*

New Member

- \$20 for emailed newsletters
 \$25 for posted newsletters

Renewing Member

- \$20 for emailed newsletters
 \$25 for posted newsletters

Your details are important to us. Please complete and return this form with payment or payment confirmation details completed as below to:

Uki Garden Club Inc

PO Box 3208
Uki NSW 2484

Please make cheques/postal orders payable to Uki Garden Club Inc.

Direct Deposit

Bank: Southern Cross Credit Union
Account name: Uki Garden Club Inc
BSB: 802 185
Account number: 90867

Payment details

Date paid: _____

Receipt no: _____

Member Information

Title _____ First Name _____ Surname _____

Title _____ First Name _____ Surname _____

Postal Address

Street _____

Town _____ State _____ Post Code _____

Home Address

Street _____

Town _____ State _____ Post Code _____

Phone Number _____ Or _____

Email _____

Office use only

Date joined _____ Date renewed _____

Receipt no. _____

Happy Gardening