

# Uki Garden Club Inc.

## NEWSLETTER

Volume 11 Number 9 September 2010

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### **President's report for 2009/10**

They say "if you're busy, time just flies by". Well, the 2009/10 year for the Uki Garden Club is already behind us. We have achieved so much for a small club.

Our workshops and guest speakers throughout the year have been very successful, if the numbers attending are anything to go by. We covered topics such as pruning grevilleas and citrus trees; and preparing the vegie garden for the season ahead; and there's more to follow in the new year. The topics from our guest speakers varied greatly from growing nepenthes, gingers and heliconias, to bush regeneration, flower arranging and attracting native frogs to our back yards.



We went on a magical mystery bus tour guided by Fran that kept everyone guessing for the day, thank you Fran.

The Uki Garden Club now has its own logo and banner, thanks to the members who worked on it. A special thanks to Glen Allen for his signwriting expertise and design concept.

Our club staged a display at the annual Casino Plant and Flower Show, but our greatest achievement of the year was hosting the Northern Rivers Garden Clubs Friendship day in May. I have attended all the other Friendship Days in the past and – you know I'm not biased – but ours was the best by far. A big special thank you to all who worked tirelessly on this huge project. Just some of the shining stars on the day were Fran, Jean, Di, Lyn, Kate, Merle, Kevin, Jenny, Marilyn, Graeme, Pam, David, Lorraine, Anne, Beryl, Pip and Alex.

Why is our club doing so well? I put it down to all the hard working and enthusiastic members and a totally dedicated executive. Without this the club would not flourish as it is. Thank you to all.

Looking forward to the year ahead we have more workshops, displays (e.g. at Uki School's Eco Day) and more bus trips planned. Before we know it, next year will be here again.

***Don Capner***  
President

## **Tomatoes**

Don has been germinating his sooper dooper tomato seedlings and they will be ready for collection at the next meeting. Between now and then, prepare your soil, or get your pots and mix organised. They like a rich diet and plenty of moisture.

## **The new executive**

Our sincere thanks go to those people listed below who have volunteered to hold executive positions this year:

President: Don Capner

Vice-President: Fran O'Hara

Treasurer: Lorraine Lintern

Secretary: David Lintern with assistance from Di Morrison

Librarian/Ordinary Member: Kate Botham

Ordinary Member: Barbara Waters

Ordinary Member: Julie Addison

Ordinary Member/Newsletter Assistant: Pamela Payne

Ordinary Member: Marilyn Gough

Although it's not an official post, Julia Hancock has volunteered to continue as Newsletter Editor and will attend the Executive Meetings.

## **Photographic memory**

At the August meeting it was agreed that we would put together an album of photographs taken at Friendship Day. Photographers included Judith, Alex, Marilyn Gough, Lorraine, Perri and Alan. Pamela Payne has volunteered to be the photo editor and has requested that people put their photos on a disc and deliver them to her at 13 Thomas Street, Bray Park (phone 6672 5749) as soon as possible. Please could you reduce the photos in size as much as possible, but keep the originals in the original size just in case. We'll then take them all to be albumised for posterity.

# **W O R K S H O P**

**Professional florist and Uki Garden Club member Lisa Harrell is conducting a workshop on Tuesday 16 November at the home of Lyn Reid, 149 Mitchell Street, Uki from 1pm onwards. The cost per person will be between \$20 to \$40 depending how many people enrol. Bring one vase, greenery and flowers. Bookings essential on 02 6672 2506.**

## Tomato cure



I picked up naturopath Dorothy Hall's wonderful *The Natural Health Book* recently and found the following:

“Some people believe tomatoes are good for rheumatism or arthritis; others are convinced that they have the worst possible effect. So I'll give you the facts and let you make your own decision as to whether tomatoes are for you or not.

“Although tomatoes have a pH reading of 4.24, which is about the level of a medium-acid fruit, they are alkaline in their body reaction and decrease the acid level. Tomatoes have all the minerals except sodium, high quantities of them in a fairly correct balance. They are well supplied with sulphur, silicon and bromine, and there is a trace of cobalt. Sulphur is the 'broom' of the body, sweeping out and cleaning up the debris; silicon is a mineral that can help to correct a calcium metabolism gone awry, as we find in both rheumatism and arthritis; bromine is a glandular system regulator and a stabiliser of emotional patterns and to some extent of hormone levels; and the trace of cobalt acts to destroy random cells wherever they occur. There are small amounts of vitamins A, B and C in tomatoes, and the digestion period is about 2 hours. They are low in calories and therefore low in energy value, so they are not what you call an energy food. But they do contain about half the quantity of protein that is in potatoes, so they have some claim to being a balanced food.

[Now here is the really interesting bit:]

“The acids concerned are citric, mallic and oxalic, and the 'don't-eat-them' people claim that the high acid content cannot but worsen the arthritic picture. The acids in the tomato even add to its usefulness in combating the deterioration that takes place when arthritis and rheumatism have become chronic. Some of the discomfort experienced by arthritis sufferers after eating tomatoes can be attributed to the ‘stirring’ going on in the stiff and crippled joints as the silicon gets to work trying to undo and loosen.

“There are two distinct forms of treatment for chronic arthritis: one is to halt and if possible undo the damage done, and this can be painful; the other is to stabilise the degeneration and give pain and discomfort relievers – without, however, gaining any improvement. If you want to undo arthritic damage and regain mobility in stiff crippled joints, you must be prepared to experience all sorts of elimination processes that may sometimes be really uncomfortable.”

Cheers,

*Barbara Waters*



## Eavesdropping

The following conversation was heard in Sunnyside Mall earlier this month:

First Man: I hate trees.

Second Man: I do too.

First Man: I hate grass too.



## Composting

The September meeting was due to be held at Julia Hancock's place in September and a composting workshop was to be held. Julia apologises that plans have had to be changed, but offers this overview of composting instead. And she hopes that members will wander down to her garden after the meeting in the park on 22 September.

Successful composting revolves around the activity of millions of microbes who break the organic material down into the lovely crumbly black stuff that we put on our gardens. We can help them do their work by using the ADAM and EVE principle, first set out by Peter Rutherford, whose successful Earthworks course was attended by Julia in Sydney in the 1990s.

### **ADAM**

**Aliveness** – a composting system needs lots of different materials to work well and achieve the correct carbon to nitrogen ratio.

**Diversity** – a composting system needs lots of different materials to work well and achieve the correct carbon to nitrogen ratio.

**Aeration** – compost needs plenty of air if it is to work well and smell sweet. The heap can be burned and/or aeration 'chimneys' can be created with slotted agricultural pipe or stakes driven into the centre of the heap, then removed.

**Moisture** – compost is alive and all life needs water. Compost heaps should be about as damp as a well-wrung out sponge. Check moisture content regularly.

### **EVE**

**Energy** – use energy wisely and conserve it whenever you can. Recycle anything that cannot be reused.

**Vitality** – support vitality by increasing biodiversity and using less synthetic fertilisers, herbicides and pesticides.

**Everlasting** – contribute to sustainability by returning fertility to the soil.

Of course, everyone has got their own way of making compost, with varying degrees of success, and largely it boils down to the amount of time and energy we have, and what kind of materials we've got at our disposal. Few of us have the luxury of being able to collect fresh manure, weed-free grass clippings, and yummy organic vegetable scraps. Even less have the space or machinery to create windrows of compost, which is turned by a front-end loader each fortnight and kept at optimum temperature and moisture levels. (Members who attended the field trip to Alstonville last month would have seen a marvellous example of composting on an industrial scale). For us humble householders, here are some tips.

- Aim for a balance of between 25-50% soft, green material such as vegetable kitchen waste and lawn clippings, with the remainder shredded woodier materials such as prunings and the fibrous stems of perennials;
- Shredded paper is good, but not the shiny colourful stuff;
- eggshells are good as they add minerals but crush them up first;
- a small amount of citrus and onion waste can be incorporated;
- as much animal manure can be mixed in as you can get;

- if your compost is smelly, sweeten it with dolomite or lime;
- compost accelerators including comfrey and nettle are great;
- never use meat or fat in the compost;
- mix materials well; the easiest way to do this is by layering them, watering well between each layer as you build them up;
- don't bust a gut trying to turn your compost heap by hand. A far easier way of managing them is to have several heaps or bins on the go at once, and just leave them to fester for a few months. In our climate it happens much quicker than in a cool climate, providing the heaps are moist enough. A dry heap decomposes very slowly.

Composting can be a refined science or a laissez faire event, depending how relaxed you are. Everyone has a different opinion about it so it's best to find your own method that works for you.

There is an excellent book in the garden club's library called *Resurrection in a Bucket: the rich and fertile story of compost* by Margaret Simons which is well worth a read, and tells you all you need to know about making the 'black gold'.

## September jobfile

- If you've grown jonquils or daffodils, now is the time to remove the dead heads to encourage the plant to put all its energy into producing a bigger bulb for next year. An important part of this process is the re-absorption by the bulb of spent foliage, so never be tempted to cut away old leaves until they are absolutely brown and papery.
- Some herbaceous plants can be lifted and divided now, if you didn't do it in autumn. Day lilies, agapanthus and hippeastrums can be split up and replanted immediately in compost-enriched soil.
- Give your asparagus beds a lovely spring feed with liquid manure and water well.
- Give strawberries a dose of sulphate of potash to stimulate flowers and fruit.
- Look out for dahlia seedlings in garden centres – they do phenomenally well here. Also check around last year's plants (if you've overwintered them), to see whether any seedlings have sprung up around the parent.
- Apply blood and bone to your favourite plants (it's a bit expensive to use on the whole garden).
- Citrus are flowering beautifully at the moment but check for scale – a sure sign of their presence is ants running up and down the trunk and stems.



## An Obituary printed in the London Times

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Common Sense, who has been with us for many years. No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape.

He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as:

- Knowing when to come in out of the rain;
- Why the early bird gets the worm;
- Life isn't always fair;
- and maybe it was my fault.



Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies (don't spend more than you can earn) and reliable strategies (adults, not children, are in charge). His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well-intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place. Reports of a 6-year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate; teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after

lunch; and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition.

Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job that they themselves had failed to do in disciplining their unruly children. It declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer sun lotion or an aspirin to a student; but could not inform parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

Common Sense lost the will to live as the churches became businesses; and criminals received better treatment than their victims. Common Sense took a beating when you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home and the burglar could sue you for assault. Common Sense finally gave up the will to live, after a woman failed to realize that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap, and was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

Common Sense was preceded in death, by his parents, Truth and Trust, by his wife, Discretion, by his daughter, Responsibility, and by his son, Reason. He is survived by his four stepbrothers: I Know My Rights; I Want It Now; Someone Else Is To Blame; and I'm A Victim. Not many attended his funeral because so few realized he was gone. If you still remember him, pass this on. If not, join the majority and do nothing.

# Recipe of the Month

## Chocolate and Cumquat Brownie with Sour Cream Ice Cream

### For the brownie

300 gr dark chocolate  
250 gr unsalted butter  
4 eggs  
2 egg yolks

200 gr sugar  
60 gr plain flour, sifted  
40 gr cocoa, sifted  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup glacé cumquat, dried pear, or ginger  
or whatever you like, chopped

Pre-heat oven to 180C. Grease a baking dish (I use a Pyrex 18 x 28cm dish.) Melt the chocolate and butter together in a bowl over a pot of gently simmering water. Once melted make sure the chocolate and butter are completely blended and leave to cool. Beat the eggs and egg yolks together with the sugar until very thick and pale. Stir in the cooled chocolate mixture, then fold in the sifted flour and cocoa. Add the glacé or dried fruit and fold in. Pour the mixture into the greased baking dish and bake in the pre-heated oven for 30 minutes. Reduce the temperature to 160C and cook for another 20 minutes. Check at this stage to estimate how much longer is needed. It will rise up, then sink and crack. The cooking time depends on the shape and material of the cooking dish. Remember it will continue to cook a little after it comes out of the oven. The brownie will be springy in the centre and a spoon inserted into the centre comes away only slightly sticky. Allow to cool.

### For the ice cream

800 gr sour cream  
6 egg yolks

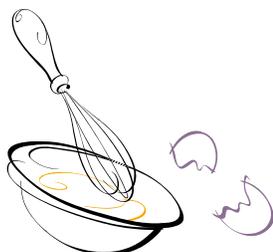
$1\frac{1}{2}$  cups sugar  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup water

Whip the sour cream until soft peaks form. Cover and refrigerate. Dissolve the sugar and water together in a small pot. Cook until the syrup reaches the “soft ball” stage (when a little syrup dropped into a glass of iced water forms a soft ball), or 116C on a sugar thermometer.

Beat the egg yolks in a clean bowl and slowly pour the syrup over the eggs in a steady stream. Continue to whip until the mixture reaches room temperature, and is thick and pale. Fold the egg yolk mixture into the whipped sour cream, pour into a container and freeze. Served to rave reviews at the recent Food Group meeting at Diana Eriksen's! I used cumquats from Rosemary and Ehurle Gillson's tree, which I had glacéed.

[These recipes are from Maggie Beer's *The Cook and the Chef* ABC TV series.]

**Jean Nuttall**





## Titbits from the food group

The food group didn't have its usual meeting this month as there was a trip to Mudbrick Cottage instead. (See reports below). Here are a few things to think about over the coming weeks in the vegie patch.

- Eggplants dislike their roots being disturbed, so when transplanting seedlings take great care. Strengthen the roots with a dose of diluted seaweed solution after planting.
- The weather is warming up fast so it's almost time to start planting cucumbers. Pre-prepare the bed by digging in lots of organic matter, mushroom compost and dolomite to give them the best possible start when you plant the seeds or seedlings.
- Prepare your ground or containers for the tomato seedlings Don's been raising. Make sure containers are big enough as the plants develop huge and greedy roots which need plenty of support, nutrients and moisture. Put the stake in before planting the seedling so you don't damage the roots.
- There are some pretty fancy basil varieties appearing in the shops right now. Not only are they delicious to eat, but they look amazing and are great companion plants too. Nothing beats the original basil (*B. officinalis*) so make sure you have lots of that too. Pesto freezes quite well if you find yourself with a glut.
- Don't go overboard with the number of button squash you plant – each bush produces many fruits every day so even with constant picking it's hard to keep up with them. Also they take up quite a lot of space in the garden, which could be used for other things.
- Capsicums on the other hand produce few fruits and take up little space, so more of those are a good idea. They are so versatile as they can be eaten raw and cooked, there are a million and one recipes to create from them.
- Think about whether you'd like to host the food group meeting next year. It doesn't matter whether your vegie patch is large or small, or even non-existent! Everyone has to start somewhere, and it's always a pleasure to hear people's plans, enjoy their successes and learn from their failures. That's what the garden club is all about, and it's a pretty successful formula!

The next meeting of the food group will be held on Tuesday 12 October at 9.30am at the home of Di Morrison, 98 Hammond Drive, Clothiers Creek (phone 02 6677 7153). Please bring hat, mug, items for the swap table and something for morning tea.

## Visit to Mudbrick Cottage,

Seventeen Members and visitors enjoyed a very interesting morning at the Mudbrick Cottage Herb Nursery at Mudgeeraba on 11 September. A delicious morning tea, with herbal teas and even herbal coffee, was served on arrival, followed by a brief history of the Nursery by our hostess, Sandra.

She and Michael moved to the property 24 years ago, and made the mudbricks one at a time using the existing clay mixed with straw. Inspired by the Pennyroyal Herb Farm in Bundaberg, they decided to sell herbs, and using organic principles developed the business, attending local markets and selling online. They no longer attend markets, unfortunately for us in Murwillumbah!

Sandra then gave a conducted tour of the gardens, explaining the medicinal properties and uses of the various herbs, many of which are rare. Flowers, herbs and vegetables are all grown together delightfully in the rich, heavily mulched beds.

Finally Members took advantage of the wonderful array of herbs on sale, and drove home well satisfied with their purchases.

*Jean Nuttall*



## More on Mudbrick

A swell time was had by all. I think we totalled about 16/17 bods. It was a beautiful day, just the right temperature for a lovely little visit. Sandra and Michael Nanka built their mudbrick home some years ago from the very soil we stood on. An inspiration. Sandra greeted us with her yummy herbal tea and the most delicious little vegetable muffins accompanied with scrummy herb butter – yum yum! I'm sure everyone would agree.

While we were indulging, Sandra gave a short history of how they started their little industry. Then we all wandered through her well laid out herb mandala which was segmented into groups, such as tall leafy kale and similar greens; sages; thyme; etc. (An inspiration, I for one, would like to duplicate in the very near future.)

Sandra is a Naturopath and Herbalist and her knowledge of medicinal herbs was astounding of which she generously informed us as we wandered along. Lemon verbena is great for cold sores and should be taken (as a tea) at the beginning of the cold season to ward off the nasty symptoms of flu. Bitter greens are for digestion. Radium weed - rub the white sap on cancer spots (on small areas at a time). It will kill off the area leaving a scab for a while before healthy pink skin appears. Lots and lots more info about each herb as we walked through the garden.

She also had a gorgeous mini native bee hive hiding behind one of her lilli pilli trees (for pollination).



The time went so very quickly, I'm sure there were more questions we would like to have asked. I think we were a bit reluctant to depart.

A cute little quote which was printed on my serviette from *The Renewal of her Spirit*: "I most often find that happiness is right where I planted it." (Grow joy.) How true – I always feel a great joy after planting, don't you.?

Cheers and grow much joy.

**Lorraine Lintern**

## **Sinus Cure**

About 15 or so years ago I had quite horrendous blocked sinus problems. The medical fraternity had me lined up for surgery which didn't thrill me one bit. I found this recipe in a book on Ayurvedic medicine, gave it a go and cured the problem once and for all. I was taking Echinacea at the same time and it may have been that combination that let me avoid the surgeon's chopping block .

Ever since, if I feel any cold type symptoms building I go straight for the sniff treatment.



## **AYURVEDIC INHALANT FOR BLOCKED SINUS**

- 5 parts eucalyptus oil
- 5 parts citronella oil
- 5 parts menthol crystals
- 2 parts aniseed oil
- 2 parts natural camphor (not synthetic)
- 1 part lavender oil

I use level teaspoons as the measure  
mix in a small glass jar, shake well and the crystals will dissolve in the oils. this batch will last one person about a year.  
use up to 6 drops in hot water and inhale through the nose. be prepared – it is very strong *David Lintern*

## **Camellia care**

Haven't the camellias been glorious this year? Now that they're almost over it's a good time to do some general maintenance around your bushes. Move aside last year's mulch, water the soil, apply a specific camellia food, water again and put new mulch down. Theoretically camellias seldom need pruning except to keep them to a certain size. But a light haircut will give them a fresh start for the season. It's also a good opportunity to thin out crowded or over-crossing branches, and to take out any dead material.



## **CREATING A BUSHLAND FRIENDLY BACKYARD**

You can help protect our local bushland from your own backyard. The way that we live and how we maintain our gardens can have a significant impact on the health of native bushland.

Here are some simple tips on how you can create a bushland friendly backyard.

### **Choose native plants suitable for your location**

Native plants that are suitable for your area will grow well, be hardy and provide local fauna requirements. Planting local native plants helps provide habitat, food and shelter for our wildlife neighbours.

Look at the type of native plants that are growing in bushland near you for ideas on what will grow well in your garden. You can also consult your local native plant nursery, Council or

Landcare organisation for advice on selecting suitable plants for your location.

### **Avoid or remove plants that will spread into bushland**

Wind, water, birds, animals, humans and machinery disperse plant seeds. If you choose to plant

exotic species, make sure they aren't noxious or environmental weeds.

Be aware of how seed from your garden can spread into and bushland.

Pruning flower heads

from exotic plants after flowering and before seed set will prevent their spread beyond your

garden fence. For information on noxious and environmental weeds plants contact Far North

Coast Weeds or your local Landcare organisation.

### **Don't extend your backyard into bushland**

It is illegal to clear bushland areas or to extend your backyard into bushland by planting, building

fences, erecting buildings or dumping rubbish. Unauthorised tree pruning, poisoning and

vandalism are also offences. Fines apply to offenders, and the local Council and National Parks

and Wildlife Service have the power to require removal of offending items from bushland and

issue substantial fines.

### **Manage garden waste**

Garden waste can include mulch, branches and lopped material, lawn clippings, tree trunks and

stumps, leaves and unwanted and dead plants. Dumping of garden waste in native bushland can

damage fauna and flora habitats by introducing diseases and environmental weeds and by providing a refuge for vermin; dumping also increases the risk of bushfires. Consider reusing garden waste. For example, you may be able to shred leafy or soft plant parts to produce raw mulch, add it to your compost or use smaller branches as mulch; care needs to be taken not to utilise noxious or environmental weed propagules in mulch. Take advantage of green waste collections offered by Council or transport green waste to a refuse disposal facility.

When transporting garden waste, ensure that the load is covered.

### **Choose plants that don't require too much watering**

By choosing native plants that are suitable to your local area you can reduce the need for extra watering. Using mulch in your garden can reduce evaporation from the soil by up to 80%. If you do water your garden, the ideal time is in the early morning or in the evening.

### **Use friendly pesticides and fertilisers**

Pesticides and fertilisers can be toxic to native animals, your pets and even your children. They also have the potential to poison native plant species in surrounding bushland. Excess fertilisers that runoff from your garden can increase weed growth in bushland and watercourses. Try using compost and organic fertilisers such as manure as they provide low cost nutrients for your garden.

### **Don't feed native fauna**

Providing artificial food poses a major health issue to native birds and can encourage feral birds such as Indian Mynas into your garden. The plants in your garden can provide natural food for native birds and animals and can also attract insects that in turn provide food for local wildlife.

Try to mimic natural habitats by planting a range of native trees, shrubs and grasses that will provide flowers, nectar, fruit and seed.

### **Be a responsible pet owner**

Domestic pets can share the environment with native animals if managed responsibly. Keep your cat indoors at night when many native animals are active and within your garden during the day; domestic cats may range up to 1km from home. Keep your dog on a leash when in public and restrict uncontrolled access to bushland areas. De-sex your pets to prevent unwanted litters,

interaction with feral animals, to reduce fighting and territoriality and limit feral populations that prey on native animals.

### **Reduce fire hazards**

You can help local fire fighting agencies to reduce bush fire risks and hazards by ensuring that

your garden is maintained in a low fuel state. Never dump green garden waste into bushland as

it can increase the risk of fire; rather recycle or dispose of waste through a green waste

collection or at an appropriate waste disposal facility. Regularly clear gutters of organic litter,

trim back overhanging trees or shrubs and store flammable materials (e.g. wood pile) away from

your house. If an alternative water supply is available (e.g. swimming pool or designated supply)

put a Static Water Supply (SWS) sticker on your letterbox.

**Remember that the bushland belongs to everyone and we all have a role to play in protecting these natural places.**

### **For more information visit:**

Tweed Landcare Inc. at <http://www.tweedlandcare.org.au/>

Tweed Byron Bush Futures Project at

<http://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/BushFutures/default.aspx>;

Far North Coast Weeds at <http://www.fncw.nsw.gov.au/>

### **Next meeting**

The next meeting of the Uki Garden Club will be held at 2pm on Saturday 25 September in the Memorial Park in Murwillumbah Street, (between Banner Street and Wentworth Street) Murwillumbah. Diana Eriksen has kindly volunteered to set up the urn on her front verandah. After the meeting, those who wish to are welcome to walk down to Julia's house at Number 183 to have a look at her sustainable garden. John Roberts will be giving a talk on tassel ferns (rescheduled from the August meeting). Please note that you will need to bring chairs as there aren't any in the park. Please also bring hat, mug, items for the swap table and something for afternoon tea.

# *Happy Gardening*