

# Uki Garden Club

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<http://ukigarden.club/wp/>

## President's Report Gillian Woodward

At last Autumn is here, although with the first week's temperatures you might be confused into thinking it is still Summer! Fortunately, we have had some rain in February and early March – some of us more than others it seems. It just depends which cloud you happen to be under at the right time.

I am amazed that the frangipanis are still blooming – it seems a lot later than usual. The rain has livened up some flowering shrubs too – the *Plumbago auriculata* are full of magnificent blue-mauve flowers at present (pic at right). This is one of my favourite colours – I can see why it is sometimes called 'sky flower'!

A common theme at Food Group gatherings lately has been one of lamenting the long hot dry summer having damaging effects on our veggie patches. It has been a struggle to keep the water up to our gardens and some are deciding not to plant veggies in summer in future. Waiting until the winter vegetable season seems a more viable option in our current climate. Pests, particularly ants, are also proving to be a major problem for our heat and dry-stressed plants.



However on the positive side, my son's persimmon tree has produced a massive crop this season – so to those of you who came to food group this month, I hope you enjoy eating them. As we are currently dog, chook and cow- sitting at his Mt. Burrell home, I helped myself to a box of these delightful fruits (before the bats flew off with too many). Just wait until their skins are really translucent – they are yummy with a squeeze of lemon or lime juice drizzled over!

Our March Garden Gathering on Saturday 30th will be at Amanda Baker's home in Tyalgum. Our host was hoping her garden would be flowering well as it usually is in early Autumn but like everyone else, she says it has been affected by the long hot dry Summer. Still, it will be a beautiful drive out there through the rich green pastures, to visit one of our many Tyalgum gardeners' homes.

In April of course, we have the bus trip – see details on page 15. As the closing date for payments for this trip is drawing close, we need that money in our bank for it to go ahead. So please take action ASAP!

April Food Group will be at a totally new venue on Smiths Creek Road, Stokers Siding, hosted by recently - joined members Jenny and Jim Clark. From what they described to us at the March Food Group meeting, it promises to be a very interesting morning.

Let's hope Autumn does eventually cool down and bring us some more wet days to nurture our thirsty gardens!

Happy reading and best wishes

Gillian



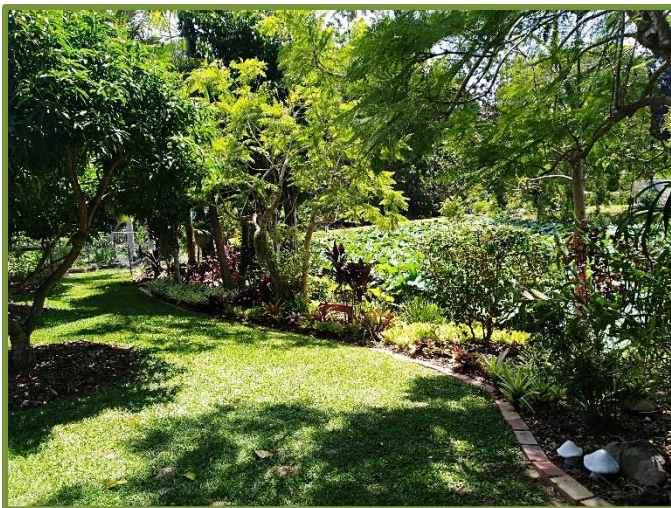
# Titbits from the February Food Group Meeting

Julia Hancock

Underground streams can be both a blessing and a curse. At the first Food Group meeting of the year at the garden of Jackie and Michael Balk the two running through the property ensured that we were able to sit in cool, lush shade.

The oppressive February heat prompted a decision to start the meeting half an hour early but the switch didn't seem to deter any members and there was a huge turnout.

Michael and Jackie have been at Nunderi for three years and they've worked hard to make their garden less hard work. It seems much bigger than its one acre because of the borrowed views from all round the back yard. There are fruit trees in abundance, an expanded veggie patch, a chook palace and ornamental beds.



Looking its best on the morning of our meeting was the dam which was full of exquisite pink lotuses. Although we loved them, Michael said they were in fact a pest and have a tendency to spread everywhere. That, coupled with the fact that when they die down in winter they just appear to be ugly dead twigs, leading Michael to urge us not to plant them! One could try in a pot but a couple of people had attempted that with no success.

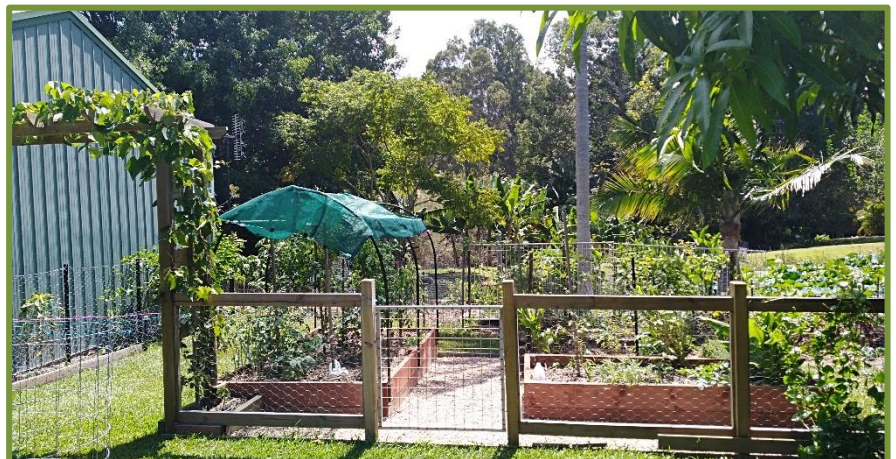
Because of the numbers only those people who had something to say put their hands up to speak, and a range of topics were covered.

⚙ Martin brought along a tomato with a soggy bottom – it's called blossom end rot and it's caused by lack of calcium.

Zucchini get it too. The cure? Dig in dolomite lime before planting or apply powdered milk on and around the plant for an instant pick up (Ed.: see Philip Wilson's tips below and on pages 13-14).

- ⚙ Sue Yarrow only had a one per cent germination rate from her last sowing of Edamame seeds from Green Harvest. When she rang them they immediately replaced the seeds and the second batch is doing well. Her grapevine is fruiting for the first time in 10 years.
- ⚙ Jenny asked why her zucchini were misshapen. Answer: erratic watering.

*(At right - Jackie and Michael's impressive (and neat) veggie patch)*







- ⚙ Peter picked up what he thought were wing beans from the swap table but it turns out they were wrongly labelled and they turned out to be Malabar Spinach (*Basella alba*). Wing beans are perennials whose foliage dies back in winter, to resprout from the tuber in spring. Most parts of the plant are edible, but the beans are best consumed when less than 150mm long.
- ⚙ Jackie has been able to grow a big white champagne/cantaloupe melon for the first time this year. She collected the seeds from fruit served at a wedding in Sydney and it's particularly good. She's grown the best capsicums this year. Her citrus are blighted by brown spots – what are they? Fungal infection. Treat with a fungicide spray.
- ⚙ Peter passed around a branch of citrus whose leaves were infected with tiny white things that look like desiccated coconut. What are they? Scale, and they need to be sprayed with white oil several times to kill each generation as they hatch.



- ⚙ Jackie wanted to know what insect causes leaves to curl inwards. Marie suggested it could be ants while Phil suggested it is caused by the caterpillars of the hibiscus moth.
- ⚙ Hartmut's first attempt at growing tromboncini was a failure as the fruit rotted due to blossom-end rot. He's fixed the problem by sprinkling powdered milk around them and they're now doing well. (see pic a little later on)
- ⚙ Dot is giving away tiger worms. Her self-sown pawpaws are great.

(Pic at left of the impressive Swap Table)

- ⚙ Brigitte asked how to use Epsom Salts. Buy in bulk from Norco and use one cup per 10 litres of water. Spray on the foliage and roots of citrus, birds' nest ferns and gardenias. Application of Epsom salts (Magnesium sulphate) benefits many plants, particularly those in the Solanum family. It boosts chlorophyll production, flowering and fruiting.
- ⚙ Philip is blaming the unusual weather for the fact that only three fruit trees in his extensive orchard look like they're going to produce this year.
- ⚙ Meanwhile Lyn's fig has been loaded. She's worried that she hasn't got many honey bees at the moment. It's the heat. But Lyn is now housing a rogue swarm which she is very happy about.
- ⚙ Kirsteen and Desiree recommended the ABC's recent show on honey bees.
- ⚙ Helen has enjoyed a massive crop of grapes, figs and olives. Conclusion: species that originate in the Mediterranean can cope very well with climate change.
- ⚙ Heather has several one-ton fertilizer sacks (open at both ends) which are useful for all sorts of things if anyone wants them.
- ⚙ Philip donated pomegranate plants grown from seed from Buzz and Bonnie's shrub, and wild peaches grown from the trees growing along the road near his house.
- ⚙ Due to popular demand Philip will resubmit his recipe for nutmeg cake to be printed in a later edition of the newsletter.





*(L: Jackie's bat plant which had 2 flowers open just for the meeting)*

*(Below: The hardworking hosts Jackie & Michael)*



*(Ed: thanks to Jackie for the great pics of the meeting)*

## By George - I think he's got it!

As mentioned above - Hartmut's first attempt at growing tromboncino squash (also called zucchetto) was a failure as the fruit rotted due to blossom-end rot – but it certainly looks like he has fixed the problem now! (Pic kindly sent in by Sue)





# February Garden Gathering

Julia Hancock

The first Garden Gathering of the year was held in the Community Room at Mountain View where Marilyn and Graeme Gough were our gracious hosts.

There was a great turn out to hear Ken Eldridge (Lifetime member of the Tweed District Orchid Society) continue his talk from last year on orchid culture – what to do and what not to do. His notes are included a little further on.



As usual the Swap Table and afternoon tea tables were overflowing with lovely things to add to our homes and tummies.



And of course there were many useful raffle prizes on offer collected by Couz'n Lynn.



## Q & A

Q: Will my *Cyathea* tree fern regrow from the stump if it is cut off?

A: No, only the cold climate *Dicksonia* tree fern will resprout.

Q: Can I grow rhubarb here?

A: Most people are not able to. Lyn Reid and Jackie Balk are among the exceptions.

Q: How high off the ground should my water feature be placed to stop cane toads taking a bath in it?

A: At least 50cm.

Q: How do I rejuvenate my tatty lavender?

A: Prune it by one third (take cuttings from the prunings). Lavender demands excellent drainage and alkaline soil.

Q: How should I prune my daphne?

A: Lightly after flowering.

Q: What is this white fluffy stuff on my hibiscus?

A: Mealy bug. If the plant is too large to treat with cotton wool dipped in methylated spirits, prune the bush back hard, destroy the prunings and spray the remaining stems with pest oil. This may suffocate the current generation of bugs, but remember they will have laid eggs which will hatch after the spraying, and so the oil will have to be reapplied periodically.

Q: What was Peter Cundall (ABC Gardening Australia) spraying around the base of his fruit trees to stop ants?

A: He didn't say but Fran will research. (see further on for more info!)

## Basic Orchid Culture – Ken Eldridge

Knowing which orchid you are trying to grow is your key to its cultural requirements. Orchids need a balance of light, air, water and food to grow and flower well.

### Light

The ideal situation for an orchid house is facing north with a sloping roof and covering of 50% shade cloth. Without enough light, orchids may produce lush looking growth but no flowers. How much light is enough? The foliage should be somewhat yellow-green with strong upright growths.

### Air

Orchid roots will die if they do not get air. Orchid potting media should be open, with exceptionally good drainage, yet capable of holding sufficient moisture to support the plant's needs. Gentle air movement with northeasterly winds is best. Avoid southerly and westerly winds.



*(Above - Ken with one of his delightful orchids that he brought along to show us)*

### Water

More orchids are killed by incorrect watering than for any other reason. Orchids should be watered just as they dry out. Observation is the key element. How to determine when the mix is getting dry? 1) it will look dry; 2) the pot will feel lighter. A finger pushed in the mix will determine the moisture content. When dry, orchids should be watered copiously, until water runs freely from the drainage holes. Overwatering causes root rot. Watering frequency can be controlled by choice of pots. There are specialist pots available for orchids of all genera. Water in the morning to let the plant dry out before nightfall. Use a watering rose which allows for soft-flow.

### Fertilizer

All orchids perform better when fertilised, typically once a week during the Summer and every two weeks in Autumn and Winter. Dilute fertilizer to half the label's recommended strength for the fertilizer – remember "weakly weekly". Water the plant well before fertilizing. Avoid fertilizers with urea – Aquasol, Thrive, Seasol and Charlie Carp are all recommended.

### Potting Mix

Use the correct mix for your genus. Avoid commercially available mixes in favour of homemade ones containing good quality orchid bark, perlite and charcoal. Keep the mix moist but never wet. Don't overpot! It's better to under-pot than the reverse. Mix should always be fresh. Most plants need repotting every two or three years.

# Pests & Diseases

Alternate months spray with insecticide then fungicide. Avoid toxic substances in favour of Pyrethrum for insects and Mancozeb Plus for fungal problems. Use a cotton bud soaked in metho for minor outbreaks of mealy bug or scale. Virus diseases are common and there is no cure. Remove plant and destroy it. Sterilise all cutting and chopping instruments and only use on one plant before cutting another plant. Soak the tools in a solution of pool algicide (rate of 15 ml per litre). Slugs and snails can be controlled with snail pellets.

Q: Where do I get pots from?

A: Pots and potting mix can be purchased from any orchid nursery. During the first weekend in November the Tweed Orchid Society holds its annual show in the Tweed Civic Centre. There you can buy plants, mix and accessories. You can also purchase online through Port Pots at Port Macquarie (<http://www.orchidpotco.com/>).

Q: What is the ratio of ingredients for a potting mix?

A: 60 per cent bark, 10 percent charcoal, 10 percent coconut fibre, 20 percent perlite, two handfuls of blood and bone or dynamic lifter. Use pieces of polystyrene to "crock" the bottom of the pot.

Q: Is sphagnum moss any good for orchids?

A: It's great for small plants.

Q: My Stanhopea has finished flowering. What should I do?

A: Fertilize it, water it, and watch for scale on the backs of the leaves.

Q: My terrestrial orchid isn't flowering – why?

A: It needs a good feed in Spring and Summer and keep moist all the time.

Q: My Cymbidium doesn't flower – why?

A: It's too hot and humid here for Cymbidiums to flower. They need a cooler climate.

Q: Do you need to fertilize orchids that are attached to trees?

A: Yes. Half a handful of blood and bone around the back of the plant where it is attached to the tree in August. Banana skins are also good.

Q: How do I attach an orchid to a tree?

A: Place a pad of sphagnum moss behind the orchid before tying it onto the tree with panty hose.

Q: When is the best time to repot?

A: After flowering, usually in August/September.

*(Below – Another of Ken's beautiful orchids)*





# Titbits from the March Food Group Meeting

Julia Hancock



An excruciatingly steamy day didn't put off Food Group members who loved visiting Dot Francis' new home in Bray Park on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March.

The Club has followed Dot from her first home in Tyalgum Creek (six acres which she worked tirelessly to regenerate) to Ocean Shores (where she established a thriving veggie patch and sub-tropical oasis) to her new home which she's slowly transforming into a place that's both productive and beautiful.

She's inherited a few native shrubs from the previous owners and has planted more of her own, as well as 20 assorted fruit trees,

including some unusual varieties such as an antioxidant-rich Maqui berry which she got from Forbidden Fruits, Macauleys Lane, Mullumbimby (not open every day).

She installed four in-ground worm farms near a pawpaw which appeared to be struggling, a strategy which is working well. She mulches heavily to deter the weeds and if any do escape she's discovered an organic spray which is very effective. Her latest project is a large raised veggie bed outside her front door. Her garden is surrounded by trees and is consequently a bird's paradise but unfortunately the bush turkeys are giving her hell.

Dot has started a native bee hive – not cheap to set up and unfortunately the first batch died in the sudden heatwave last month. Luckily the bees come with a replacement warranty and the new batch is doing well. Native bees (*Tetragonula carbonaria*) aka sugarbag or bush bees are endemic to the northeast coast of Australia and because of their small size are able to pollinate native flowers which are often too small for honey bees (*Apis mellifera*) to penetrate to extract the pollen. Native bees survive invasions of hive beetles which stray into the nest by mummifying them in a waxy resin/mud mix. Coincidentally when her grandson recently had a lifestyle change he donated his flow hive to Dot. She has yet to assemble it but is looking forward to the experience. A general discussion about beekeeping led onto the following chat.



🌻 New member Sharyn from Tyalgum is living in a caravan with her husband while building a rammed earth home by hand. Getting her priorities in order, she's already established raised beds for her veggies and has grown enough produce to make relish on the camp fire and bottle beetroots. She has plans to espalier fruit trees such as apples, pears, nectarines, peaches and apricots as well as growing ornamental and native flowering plants. All this is made possible by a spring-fed dam and a large pump supplying a huge water tank which they lined with concrete themselves, losing many kilos of body weight in the process. Not a job for the fainthearted.

🌻 Like many of our gardens, Sue and Hartmut's is slowly recovering from the drought, but despite the dry they've managed an excellent crop of rosellas from which they've made lots of jam. They brought along some Malabar chestnut or peanut tree (*Pachira* sp..) which produces edible fruits (better when roasted). They also brought small-leafed tamarind seeds which are ideal trees for small gardens and should be grown more widely as they are on the endangered species list.



- ☼ Jean has decided to plant lots more flowers in her veggie garden. She's heard that planting them in blocks makes it easier for the bees to forage. Green Harvest has packets of bee-attracting flowering plants seeds.

(Pic at right of Dot's garden)

- ☼ Heather brought fruit of the candlenut (*Aleurites moluccanus*) which also produce a nice small tree for the home garden. It's related to the macadamia nut but it's only edible when roasted.
- ☼ Philip has let the wildlife eat most of his fruit and vegies because they are very short of food since the drought hit.
- ☼ Karen told us about Uki's Autumn Equinox event to celebrate the opening of their community garden on 23 March at 5pm. Apart from being a gardener and art gallery curator Karen has another persona – that of 'Karen the Compost Queen'. She will make a guest appearance as part of the Uki festivities but her real passion is going into schools and teaching the kids about growing vegies, making compost and having fun in the garden. She'll be doing this on 26 April at the Murwillumbah Community Garden in Mooball Street if anyone would like to see her perform.  
(Ed note: see Notices section later in the newsletter for more details)



- ☼ David Hancox harvested 100kg of garlic from his last crop, planted on 1 April and picked in November 2018. It's the Giant Russian variety which he says does best in this area and he's saved a large proportion of the crop for replanting this year. Several members also recommended Glen Large garlic available by mail order from Green Harvest.

- ☼ Sue Yarrow said that Angelonia (a perennial plant with attractive purple flowers also known as a summer snapdragon – pic at right) is a great bush bee attractor and is available at Bunnings.

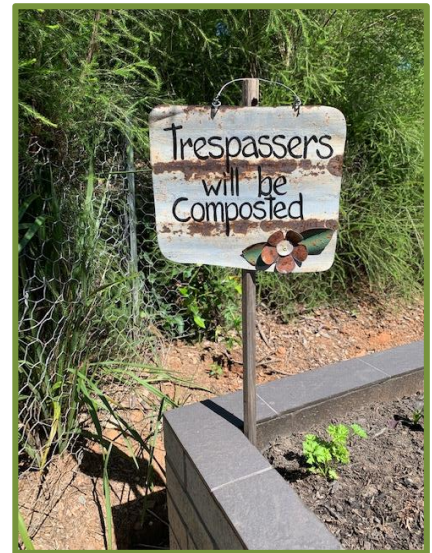


- ☼ Nellmary has been renovating her chook pens and the girls are very happy. She's had a huge crop of avocados despite the drought.
- ☼ Linda has lost 50 per cent of her pineapple crop to rats. The only job she can do in the garden right now is to repot all her containerised plants, including a giant bromeliad which produced six pups.
- ☼ Kyla has battled the heat to produce crops of melons (four different types), zucchini, okra and eggplants, much of which she has been able to sell. She's also made hoop houses and plans to work in the garden full-time from hereon in. She's invited the club to hold its gathering there on 25 May which will be a wonderful event.
- ☼ Martin has also had success in the big dry with good crops of okra, eggplant and capsicums. He now has shade cloth over most of his raised vegie beds.
- ☼ Mark inherited a badly overgrown and neglected garden in Uki but has been working almost around the clock to revitalise it. He's got some good native plants and plans to concentrate on colour and fragrance around the house. Follow his progress at Bunya Bunya House on Facebook.
- ☼ Julia had help digging over her two large veggie terraces last month and applied gypsum first, then lime later before watering and covering with mulch until planting time earlier this month. Putting a handful of chicken pellets into each planting hole she's established broccoli, kale, silverbeet and cabbage seedlings and sown seeds of broad beans, sugarsnap and snow peas to take advantage of the recent rain and in anticipation of cooler autumn temperatures (!).



Pic of the lovely hostess Dot and a telling sign at her veggie patch.

Thanks to Nellmary for the great photos.



## Remedy for Blossom-End Rot on Veggies – Philip Wilson

For those of us who grow some of their own food, seeing the first blooms in our vegetable plot and the anticipation of a home grown harvest to follow can make the hard work put in all worthwhile. However disappointment often follows when the developing fruit start to go brown at one end and appear decidedly distasteful and rotten, often aborting before any sign of ripening.

Plants affected include tomatoes, peppers, all the cucurbits (zucchini, squashes, cucumbers and pumpkins), eggplants and melons.

The water-soaked spot where the rot develops can initially seem related to overwatering or increased humidity, but the real culprit is calcium, or a lack of it, being taken up by the plant itself. Our local soils are acid in nature, and the relatively low calcium level in the ground only exacerbates the problem.

A long term solution is the addition of garden lime, dolomite or gypsum to the beds when preparing soil for planting. During the growing season a quick fix can save an ailing crop, and prevent further fruit losses. Milk, of course, is full of readily available calcium, and a few handfuls of powdered milk sprinkled around the root zone of the affected patient and lightly watered in enables it to take up the element it desperately requires. An added benefit is that any powder hitting the leaves can act as a mildew preventative which can be prevalent over our summer months. I used an out of date tin of Sustagen on our zucchinis at Wedgetail Retreat with excellent results, and I imagine baby formula would be just as effective.



Thanks Philip!



# Controlling Ants & Other Sap Suckers – Jerry Coleby Williams

*(Ed note: couldn't find the info on what Peter Cundall had done so settled for Jerry instead)*

Sap-sucking pests are one of the commonest garden problems. They include creatures like scale, mealy bug and aphid and they cause damage to plants by sucking out their sap - they weaken them and they can often spread diseases like viruses from one plant to another.



It's quite easy to notice scale infestations - but what gardeners often miss are the ants that farm them. The ants do this for a very good reason. These pests exude honeydew - a sweet substance which feeds the ants. By controlling the ants, you can control the sap-suckers far more easily.

I do this by breaking the trail that the ants follow up into the tree. Just put a little bit of masking tape around the trunk and then apply an organic horticultural glue, just to cover the masking tape. The masking tape is just simply a barrier between the glue and the trunk of the tree. I don't want to block any of the breathing pores on the trunk. Now the ants are unable to cross it and if they try, they get stuck.

The only other job you need to do is to control the scale insects up in the tree by spraying with white oil. So by controlling the ants and the pests that they're farming, you can save trees and possibly your garden.

*(Ed note: I went to Bunnings and found a couple of products that you can apply to your trees using the method above)*

## Are You Using the Right Liner For Your Bin?

The community is doing a great job with sorting their waste, however, there is some confusion around what bin liners to use for green bins.

Tarra Martel, Waste Education Officer at Tweed Shire Council says products with this symbol (at right) can go in your green bin.

"These are made from natural plant starch, like corn, which will enrich and return back to the soil in 90 days," she said.

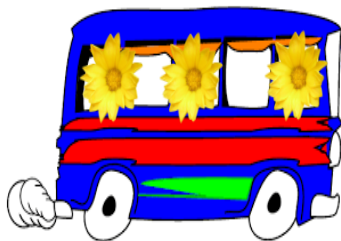
"Some products look like they are environmentally friendly or say that they are 'compostable' but they do not pass this standard," said Ms Martel.



Council is urging people not to place any plastics or biodegradable/degradable products in green bins as this pollutes the beautiful rich compost.

Biodegradable/degradable bags are usually made from plastic or a plant based plastic that could take thousands of years to break away into smaller pieces into the environment.

If you have a question about waste, please email [waste@tweed.nsw.gov.au](mailto:waste@tweed.nsw.gov.au), call 02 6670 2400 or find out more on Council's website.



# Saturday 27th April 2019

## Bus Trip Itinerary

**Start time is 8.30 am: Meet at Knox Park (Parsons Bus)**

- 🚌 Travel to Flo Gardens, Billinudgel where Adam will be talking to us about a variety of things including:
  - Water gardens
  - Aquaponics
  - Local natives
  - Mounting and growing Bromeliads; and
  - Medicinal herbs.
- 🚌 There will be plants for purchase as well as other interesting things.
- 🚌 Morning tea will be provided, just bring your mug.
- 🚌 We then travel down to Ballina and have lunch in the park along the river. You can choose to bring your own or purchase from cafes close by. There is a lovely boardwalk that follows the river.
- 🚌 From there we continue on to Summerland Antiques where you can browse/ buy to your hearts content...or remember all the items you used to have growing up! There is also a nursery alongside that has a variety of plants and a huge array of pots.
- 🚌 We then travel home and should be back about 4.30-ish.
- 🚌 There will be lots of raffles going on while travelling so bring your dollars!

**Money will be due by April Food Group so early payment appreciated.**

**Cost:** \$25 members and \$30 non-members and visitors. Payment can be made at a meeting with cash into the Treasurer's Box (remember to write your name, the amount and April Bus Trip on the envelope) or by EFT as below:

BSB: 722-744 (Southern Cross Credit Union)  
 Account: 90867 (Uki Garden Club Inc)  
 Reference: Surname + BT

Contact: Jan Brooks 02 66722316 if you have any queries.

## Swap Table Etiquette

The Swap Table is one of the wonderful benefits of coming to a meeting. Members and guests have the opportunity to collect new and different plants as well as excess fruit and veggies that have been donated by our members. So this comes as just a gentle reminder regarding the rules and general etiquette around the items on the Swap Table.

- ✓ If you bring something you can take something for free
- ✓ If you don't bring something and see something you would like – please pop some money (gold coin is good) into the container on the table
- ✓ Be mindful of others and take only what you need or will use
- ✓ If you bring a plant – please make sure it is labelled
- ✓ Please check at the end of the meeting that your items have gone. If not please take them back home as the host has to deal with them otherwise.





## Members' Recipes

### Baked Passionfruit Custards – Jenny Kidd

With passionfruit in plentiful supply this recipe is quick and easy and a delicious treat – especially when served with vanilla ice-cream.

#### Ingredients

- ✓ 125ml (1/2 cup) milk
- ✓ 125ml (1/2 cup) thin cream
- ✓ 3 eggs
- ✓ 60g (1/4 cup) caster sugar
- ✓ 125ml (1/2 cup) fresh passionfruit pulp (around 6 passionfruit)

#### Method

1. Preheat oven to 200°C. Whisk the milk, cream, eggs and sugar together in a medium bowl until well combined.
2. Whisk in the passionfruit pulp. Pour the mixture evenly among four 125ml (1/2-cup) ovenproof dishes.
3. Bake in preheated oven for 20 minutes or until just set and light golden on the top.
4. Remove the custards from the oven and set aside for 5 minutes to cool slightly before serving.
5. Enjoy!



### Banana & Orange Cake – Jan Thomas

(This cake was sampled at the meeting hosted by the Carters last year and was truly deeeelicious!)

#### Ingredients

- 125 grams butter, chopped
- 2 teaspoons grated orange rind
- ¾ cup caster sugar
- 2 eggs
- ¼ cup plain flour
- 1½ cups self-raising flour
- ½ teaspoon bicarb soda
- ¼ cup orange juice
- ½ cup sultanas
- ½ cup chopped walnuts
- 1 cup mashed banana (from 2 or 3 over-ripe bananas)



#### Method

1. Grease a 22cm round cake pan, line base and sides of pan with baking paper.
2. Cream butter, rind and sugar in small bowl with electric mixer until light and fluffy, beat in eggs one at a time, beat until combined.
3. Transfer mixture to large bowl, stir in sifted flours and soda with remaining ingredients and stir until smooth.
4. Spread mixture into prepared pan. Bake in moderate oven for about 45 minutes.
5. Stand for 10 minutes before turning on to wire rack to cool. Dust with icing sugar to serve if desired.

## Handy Helpers – Philip Wilson

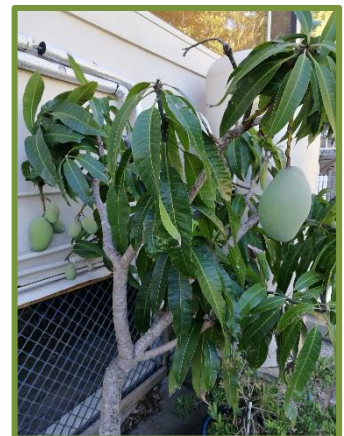


A few of us helping Judy Stanhope getting on top of her garden with a recent gardening bee.



## Boastworthy Mangoes Grown in Sydney

Thought you might like to include these photos of our daughter's mango crop (Jenai) in Dundas Valley Sydney in the next newsletter!! Cheers Sue Yarrow





# Curious Cucumbers!



With cucumbers in abundance at this time of the year here's a few interesting ideas that appeared in a *New York Times* article some time ago. We can't vouch for the veracity of this but you might want to give it a try!

1. Cucumbers contain most of the vitamins you need every day: just one cucumber contains Vitamin B1, Vitamin B2, Vitamin B3, Vitamin B5, Vitamin B6, Folic Acid, Vitamin C, Calcium, Iron, Magnesium, Phosphorus, Potassium and Zinc.
2. Feeling tired in the afternoon? Put down the caffeinated soft drink and pick up a cucumber instead.
3. Tired of your bathroom mirror fogging up after a shower? Try rubbing a cucumber slice along the mirror; it will eliminate the fog and provide a soothing, spa-like fragrance.
4. Are grubs and slugs ruining your planting beds? Place a few slices in a small aluminium pie tin and your garden will be free of pests all season long. The chemicals in the cucumber react with the aluminium to give off a scent undetectable to humans but drive garden pests crazy and make them flee the area.
5. Looking for a fast and easy way to remove cellulite before going out or to the pool? Try rubbing a slice or two of cucumbers along your problem area for a few minutes; the phytochemicals in the cucumber cause the collagen in your skin to tighten, firming up the outer layer and reducing the visibility of cellulite. Works great on wrinkles too!!!
6. Want to avoid a hangover or terrible headache? Eat a few cucumber slices before going to bed and wake up refreshed and headache-free. Cucumbers contain B vitamins and electrolytes to replenish essential nutrients the body has lost, keeping everything in equilibrium, and avoiding both a hangover and a headache!!
7. Looking to fight off that afternoon or evening snacking binge? Cucumbers have been used for centuries and often used by European trappers, traders and explorers for quick meals to stave off starvation.
8. Have an important meeting or job interview and you realize that you don't have enough time to polish your shoes? Rub a freshly cut cucumber over the shoe: its chemicals will provide a quick and durable shine that not only looks great but also repels water.
9. Out of WD 40 and need to fix a squeaky hinge? Take a cucumber slice and rub it along the problematic hinge, and voila, the squeak is gone!
10. Stressed out and don't have time for a massage, facial or visit to the spa? Cut up an entire cucumber and place it in a pot of boiling water; the chemicals and nutrients from the cucumber will react with the boiling water and be released in the steam, creating a soothing, relaxing aroma that has been shown to reduce stress in new mothers and students during final exams.
11. Just finished a business lunch and realize you don't have gum or mints? Take a slice of cucumber and press it to the roof of your mouth with your tongue for 30 seconds to eliminate bad breath: the phytochemicals will kill the bacteria in your mouth responsible for causing bad breath.
12. Looking for a 'green' way to clean your taps, sinks or stainless steel? Take a slice of cucumber and rub it on the surface you want to clean: not only will it remove years of tarnish and bring back the shine, but it won't leave streaks and won't harm your fingers or fingernails while you clean..
13. Using a pen and made a mistake? Take the outside of the cucumber and slowly use it to erase the pen writing. This also works great on crayons and markers that the kids have used to decorate the walls!!

# March Job File – Julia Hancock

- ⚙ Prune climbers especially wisteria.
- ⚙ Late summer can be a bad time for fungal infections on roses, flowers and veggies. Keep plants disease-resistant by fertilising with a soluble fertiliser; water in the mornings only and clear away neighbouring foliage that's growing over the affected plants.
- ⚙ Vegies to plant include: cabbage, Chinese cabbage, cauliflowers, carrots, rocket, broccoli.
- ⚙ Plant sage next to carrots to prevent white fly, and dill around cabbage, cauliflower and broccoli to repel cabbage white butterflies.
- ⚙ If you're thinking of planting bulbs, put them in the refrigerator now before planting out in late March.
- ⚙ Check citrus for white scale and black scale. Spray with PestOil or Natrasoap (available from Green Harvest) which removes sooty mould really well.



- ⚙ Want to propagate a special azalea? Try layering! Simply choose a low, flexible branch, make a shallow 2cm long slice along the bottom of the stem, just taking off the outer bark; and gently peg the branch down with a stone or wire staple before covering with soil and watering. Leave until early Spring before checking for roots. If roots have formed, sever the rooted cutting from the parent plant and pot up.
- ⚙ Prepare trenches for sweet peas, by excavating a spade's depth of soil, filling the trench with rotted manure and some granular fertilizer, and water well before replacing the soil. Leave for a month before planting.

- ⚙ Snowpeas can be planted in March for an early crop. Chit the seeds by allowing them to germinate between damp layers of kitchen paper before planting out.
- ⚙ Have you been struggling to keep up with the mowing? The upside of all the hard work with the Rover is the abundance of grass clippings we've all been stockpiling. If you're worried about what effect they may have on the garden beds, pre-prepare them before spreading them out. To pre-prepare, mix them with some leaves, dynamic lifter (or any other poo you can get your hands on) and of course, some male urine, which is a much under-rated commodity for the home garden – can't think why because it's free! Leave the pile to fester for a couple of weeks, then use as a mulch round citrus, roses, gardenias, hibiscus and other shrubs (not natives though).



- ⚙ Perennials will need tidying up before Easter, but before you undertake a big pruning session, go around the garden and take cuttings of your favourite Salvias, Barlerias, Brugmansias, Ruellias, Justicias and any other soft-wooded herbaceous perennials. You'll find that those varieties whose branches touch the ground may well have sprouted roots (dwarf Tibouchina, some varieties of Rondeletia, gardenias and Plectranthus are famous for this) and the rooted branch can easily be severed from the parent and potted up for growing on and planting in the Spring. This is an ideal way to get a headstart with semi-mature plants. Most people agree these days that some kind of rooting compound is a good investment for a reliable strike rate, but many of us still prefer to use honey as a growth stimulant. Watering with seaweed fertilizer also helps encourage good hair-root formation.





## More on the Composting Queen



The performance on March 23 is at the Uki Community Garden Equinox celebration at 5pm. It is open to all and will be fun for everyone.

On April 26 Karen will be at Murwillumbah Community Garden at 9.30 and is aimed at primary school age, attending St Pat's holiday care programme. This is a closed session, but it will be helpful for both community gardens for us all to know what they're doing.

## On Notice for Water Restrictions

Clarrie Hall Dam is now below 90 per cent capacity. If significant rain is not received in the next eight weeks, restrictions will be put in place. The sale and movement of water outside the shire is now banned.

Check out where levels are here:

<https://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/WaterAndWastewater>

(Thanks to Kim Stephan – Project Officer, Tweed Landcare)

### Current Service Interruptions and Alerts

Current storage  
Clarrie Hall Dam

**92%**

Current water level  
**60.88m AHD**

12 March 2019

Full capacity water level  
61.5m AHD

Current water  
restrictions



### Residential Water Use

Litres per person per day

Target 160L

Current 177L



**Rainfall in the Tweed**

## items Wanted

Clarification – the items that were listed in last month's newsletter as Jenny Wein having are actually what she is **wanting** – can you help out??

- *Acanthus mollis* (Monk's Hood)
- *Luculia* (Phillip has brought specimens of these beautiful pale pink flowers to GC in the past)
- Red *Brugmansia* cuttings of pale pink and two versions of yellow/cream
- White Violets

If you have any of these plants please catch up with Jenny at a meeting or via the [ugcnews@gmail.com](mailto:ugcnews@gmail.com) and we will pass it on.

# Upcoming Meetings



## Food Group Meeting Tuesday April 9th Back to the usual 9.30am start

Hosts are new members Jenny & James Clark.

They live at 942 Smiths Creek Rd, Stokers Siding.

Ph: 02 66779490

### Directions from Murwillumbah:

- 1) Turn right at the railway station/ information centre roundabout in Murwillumbah, head to Stokers Siding on Tweed Valley Way.
- 2) Turn right on Stokers Road, continue until you see Smiths Creek Road at Stokers Siding on the left.
- 3) Turn and continue for about 1k, property is on left (942 on mailbox).
- 4) Parking only at front gate and grassed footpath on side of road please.

## Garden Gathering Saturday 30th March at 2.00 pm

Host is Amanda Baker.

Amanda lives at 7 Wollumbin Street, Tyalgum.

Ph: 0407 656 400

For both meetings please bring along your cup, chair, a hat, plate to share, and any produce or plants for the swap table.

## That's all Folks...

Well that's it for this month. Thanks to all the contributors for another bumper newsletter.

Keep sending your hints, tips, recipes, travel stories, bragging photos to us at [ugcnew@gmail.com](mailto:ugcnew@gmail.com)

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