

# Uki Garden Club

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



At last Autumn is here, although some of our March temperatures have been quite as warm as summer! Hopefully we will see an end to the high humidity of January and February. Fortunately, we have had some follow-up rain in February and early March so we are off to a good start for the year. Our Tweed Valley is certainly looking more 'normal' – green and lush with flowing rivers. A delight to see after the months of drought!

It has been a wonderful year for mangoes. I am told it was dry enough in the season when the fruit were setting, so local trees were laden - ours, for the first time in the five years since we moved here. We managed to beat most of the bats to the delicious fruits so had a good feast and saved a few in the freezer as well. I imagine many of you have made green mango chutney so you can enjoy the fruit for even longer.



Unfortunately we had to cancel our first Food Group meeting of the year due to flooding rains. But our first Garden Gathering held at Mountain View was a great success. I think it might be a good idea to continue each February with a slide show – having 2-3 of our Club members who have travelled either overseas or in Australia to show us their pictures of flowers, shrubs or garden shows etc. The venue is excellent for this activity, with a good projector and large screen. Let me know your thoughts on this.

Please be sure to read Jenny Kidd's advice re Coronavirus or COVID -19 on page 3. We may have to make changes to our 2020 calendar depending on how events/regulations unfold over the coming months. Our March garden gathering has already been altered. Look out for email updates or go into our website for latest news.

Our program this year will feature more speakers than usual. Our first one will be Karen Dawson, one of our own members, who is otherwise known as the "compost queen". She will talk at our March Garden Gathering at the Murwillumbah Community Garden, Mooball St. (NB Change of venue). In April we have a speaker on bees. Food Group will also have some speakers/demonstrations so watch out in the newsletter for details.

With the cooler weather I am sure we will all be spending more time in the garden over the next few months. If February's Garden Gathering was anything to go by, there will be plenty of cuttings, seedlings, seeds and plants for you to find on our loaded swap tables. Thank you for the generous donations of these items for all to share. Don't worry if you have nothing to swap, just put a gold coin in the bucket on the swap table and take one of the donated plants.

Several of our Club members or their spouses have suffered illness or hospitalisation in recent times. Our thoughts and best wishes for speedy recovery are with you all.

Happy reading and gardening

Gillian

# Feburary Garden Gathering

## Sue Holzknecht

**Held at Mountain View, Aveo, Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2020**

As usual in February, we were all very thankful for the comfortable meeting room at Aveo Mountain View. Thank you, Marilyn and Graeme Gough, for hosting us in this hot humid month in your lovely space.



Gillian began by welcoming us all, and in particular acknowledging the presence of Stella Wilkie, our oldest UGC member at 104 years of age and a resident of Aveo. Stella has been a stalwart of the Club since its inception more than 20 years ago (*pic of the ever youthful Stella at left*).

On the very full Swap Table (*pic at right*) were some treasures: several Yuzu (special, rare Japanese citrus) trees raised from seed by Philip Wilson, Rocoto, chillies also raised by

Philip, white geranium cuttings, Brazilian spinach, black sapote, Heliconia plants, and many other precious offerings.



Hartmut reminded us that the next few weeks will be good for starting our Winter vegetable garden plantings, for example Brassicas, onions, garlic.

Jan spoke about this year's bus trip, which will be to the Gold Coast Botanical Bazaar, Nerang, on **Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2020**. (See <https://botanicalbazaar.com.au/>). This sounds like an absolute treat for plant lovers. Talk to Jan about booking a seat on the bus.

This Garden Gathering comprised shows of slides taken by members in their travels during 2019. The members were: Dot Francis (presented by Julia Hancock in Dot's absence), focussing on the Chelsea Flower Show 2019; Jan Brooks, who showed pictures from the trip she and Axel took to Germany, Denmark and Sweden last year; and Kate Botham who presented a beautifully produced slide show of her travels around Australia called "The Colours of Australia".

The Chelsea Flower Show, Chelsea Hospital, London, 2019. Pictures by Dot Francis, presented by Julia Hancock. Dots photos were well-chosen and showed the wide variety of displays at the garden show. They included glorious flowering plants, vegetables, sculptures in their garden settings, bonsai and many others. A highlight was a display from the Caribbean country of Grenada. Beautiful, thank you for sharing Dot.



Jan & Axel's trip to Germany, Denmark and Sweden, 2019. The slides started at Axel's aunt's place in Oldendorf, Germany, with glorious rhododendrons and azaleas flowering at the time. In Denmark, they visited the Tivoli Gardens, Jutland, Aarhus and Skogen. In Sweden they visited Gothenburg, the site of one of Europe's largest botanical gardens. Thank you to Jan and Axel for taking us on their trip through these beautiful European private and public gardens.

Kate Botham's very professional slide show "The Colours of Australia" began in Augathella, Western Queensland and continued through Central Australia. The pictures were taken during Kate and her husband's trip through Australia in 2018. The colours were indeed glorious, with the blue skies, red and gold soil, brown and red mountain ranges and rock formations. The magnificent Eucalypts contrasted in their brilliant environments. The desert panoramas were also spectacular. Congratulations, Kate, and thank you for sharing.



## Q & A

Q: Laverne asked what was causing the brown spots on her orchids and other plants.

A: Probably over-or under-watering, or too much rain.

Q: Jan asked for suggestions about what to do with their spoon-drain which roars down their hill during heavy rain, bringing with it all the gravel and soil Axel has carefully wheelbarrowed up there! They have had 46 inches (1,168.4 mm) of rain this year!

A: Maybe build a waterfall, Jan?

Gillian reminded us again that the bus trip will be in early August, on Sunday 2nd. This will serve as the July Garden Gathering, when the AGM would usually be held. Therefore, instead of having the AGM in July, it will be held during the August Garden Gathering, last Saturday in August (29<sup>th</sup> August 2020).

We are still looking for a host for the Food Group Christmas Party to be held on 10<sup>th</sup> November, 2020. Please let Gillian know if your garden would be available for this meeting.

*Below: Some of the attendees to the meeting.*



*R: The delightful hosts Graeme and Marilyn*

*(Ed: thanks to Couzn Lynn for the pics :>)*



## COVID-19 Update for Club Members

Members who have been in contact with someone suspected of having COVID -19 or just returned from one of the designated overseas countries are encouraged to follow the latest NSW Public Health advice. It may mean you will miss a meeting and need to catch up with UGC news through our newsletter.

We will also understand some members with health issues are concerned about the risk in attending gatherings, even ones of our size, and may chose not to attend meetings at this time.

Wise decisions by individuals can help keep us all stay safe as the situation unfolds.

Members are encouraged to stay abreast of and act on the latest public health advice.

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/diseases/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>

Please be aware changes to meeting venues may occur.

Jenny Kidd





# Titbits from the March Food Group

## Julia Hancock



It was wet, wet, wet when we woke up on the morning of the March Food Group meeting, and we were expected to be greeted by a message to say it had been cancelled. But despite the weather we had a good turnout and enjoyed a lovely meeting at David and Bronwyn Hancox's property at Limpinwood. Oh, and don't forget Gypsy the dog who made us all feel very welcome.

David and Bronwyn had abandoned their green leafy vegetable garden over the summer – their only water source is the nearby creek which had run dry. However, they harvested some superb 'Giant Russian' garlic which thrived thanks to an application of beneficial microbes and fertilizer.

Currently they have planted turmeric, which is going very well, as are pineapples. They lost quite a lot of trees in the drought, and now the wet is causing dieback in some others. They have had to prioritise what to keep and what to let go but are starting to think about getting their winter vegies going again. David grows from both seed and plugs, depending which is most suitable.



A common theme of the discussion following David's introduction was how abundant everyone's mangoes had been over the summer, and many people have freezers stuffed full of 'cheeks'. The dry weather has concentrated the flavour of many fruits, such as the aforementioned pineapple, and stone fruits in supermarkets have tasted exceptionally good this year although they're a bit smaller than usual.

- ☼ Desirée is so pleased with her perfect pineapples that she's saving the tops as she harvests them and replanting. Having been evacuated several times during the bushfires she's now starting to plant vegies.
- ☼ Helen has had loads of grapes and has frozen lots of juice.
- ☼ Kirsteen's husband built a fab raised vegie bed which the birds quickly discovered, so he covered it with netting. Lo and behold the peacocks found a way in through the top and not only ate all the vegies but built themselves a nest in one corner. Kirsteen is enjoying a late crop of rosellas and she had good success growing a variety of 'Black Popping'

sweetcorn, seedlings of which came from Ness James' organic seedlings sold through Mitre 10 in Murwillumbah. We tried some for morning tea and it was yummy.

- ☼ Philip scored a seedling of a pink variety of macadamia which is now very rare in the Tweed from Diana Eriksen's rainforest in Murwillumbah. His fruit trees cropped heavily but the big wet has caused the fruit to split and rot. There are lots of birdwing butterflies at Wedgetail.





- ✿ Jeanette and Simone have planted 12 statement trees at the entrance to their property. They are spending much time on the ride-on mower thanks to the heat and rain which has made the grass grow like crazy.
- ✿ Martin also planted statement trees at the entrance to his property at the beginning of summer but sadly they all perished in the drought. He kept some back-up plants in pots which he'll have another go with. He's celebrating success with dragonfruit.
- ✿ Tim was kind enough to host a club meeting last year just after his impressive pool had been installed. He's happy to say only one plant he put in has died.
- ✿ David and Jenny have got heaps of chillies both in the ground and in pots. Their mulberry tree is thoroughly confused by the weather and is producing fruit again – third time this summer.
- ✿ Always inventive, Marie (*pictured in the middle at right with Jenny & Peter*) went to the op shop to buy an old curtain which she converted into little bags for protecting her mangoes from the fruit bats. She has got a dreadful infestation of brown scale on her plants, especially certain varieties of coleus and has had to dig out and destroy the worst affected individuals.
- ✿ Despite letting go of her vegie garden in the summer, Amanda's snake beans have suddenly taken off since the rain. And she's had the best ever crop of avocados and figs. She brought along a sample of an avocado that was suffering from black lesions on its skin. David found out it is due to the Fruit Spotting Bug.
- ✿ . She's getting rid of the grass in the front yard and planting native and tropical plants instead. She's had no honey this year due to low nectar flow since September. Bees have really suffered in the drought.
- ✿ Jenny and Jim have been able to sustain their extensive vegie patch over summer using creek water.
- ✿ Several people complained that bush turkeys were creating havoc in their gardens. Diana tried the 'mirror' deterrent but discovered her turkey (and later silky bantam) couldn't resist admiring themselves for hours in the pair of mirrors Diana had installed. Tim suggested camphor laurel mulch was an effective deterrent.
- ✿ Diana also had a heap of mangoes which she shared with her Thai neighbour. Later the neighbour shared her dehydrated mangoes which Diana loves. Sue advised that it's best to dehydrate them in a proper machine or in the oven, rather than in the sun when they tend to rot in the heat and humidity.
- ✿ Gillian spent the summer productively building up her vegie beds with poo and compost, readying them for planting in autumn. She's had good success with a variety of patio tomatoes. She brought along some red pawpaw seedlings with the good news that they don't need a male to produce fruit.
- ✿ Like many other people Annie has been plagued by tiny fruit flies in her kitchen. She uses a splash of wine in a glass as a trap and when the critters have drowned she tosses them away.



(Ed: thanks to David Kidd for the lovely photos of the meeting & lush Hancox garden)





## Tapénade – Jean Nuttal

(Caper and Black Olive Spread)

### Ingredients

- 1 2/3 cups Greek-style black olives, pitted
- ½ cup capers, rinsed and well-drained
- 5 or 6 anchovy fillets, drained
- few leaves fresh herbs, chopped (e.g. thyme and oregano)
- freshly ground pepper
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 4-5 tablespoons olive oil



### Method

1. Combine the olives, capers and anchovies in a food processor and puree. It does not need to be perfectly smooth.
2. Add herbs, pepper and garlic and process again.
3. Drizzle in olive oil until desired consistency is reached.

Dijon mustard or a drizzle of brandy may also be added to taste.

Serve as a spread with toast, French or Turkish bread or crackers, as a dip with raw vegetables, or as a stuffing for hard-boiled eggs.



## Now that's a Shed!



This is our garden shed & we will put a glass bottle window in round opening. Practised corners & experimented with oxides. Form ply is used to make shutters for the rammed earth walls. Pipe clamps are used to stabilise the shutters. As the soil on our property is not suitable for rammed earth we had to source material from a local quarry. 10% cement was added to the material as well as a small amount of waterproofing agent.



We are now confident that we have the necessary skills to start our main house very soon.

Well done Sharyn Herbertson & thanks for sharing your outstanding progress!



# News from our UK Correspondants

It seems churlish to complain about our weather given all your problems, but boy has it been difficult since the turn of the year.

Our whole site at the Cat Hill Allotments has been sodden for almost 2 months and some individual plots remain under water. Even the winter sown onions and garlic are rotting in the ground it is so wet. New raspberry canes we brought, which were delivered in early January, are heeled in in the greenhouse and every attempt to plant out is foiled by the planting hole immediately filling with groundwater. Won't be a good crop this year for sure!

The Atlantic storms that reached us have played havoc with the site infrastructure as polytunnels and cloches relocated themselves elsewhere on the site, leaving the pigeons to decimate many brassica beds.

All in all a difficult start to the season and even our neighbours are blaming us for their properties being flooded by OUR groundwater run-off. Madness!

So we thought we would share a few pics of the latest creations at Wisley. They have "room" spaces based, of course, around plants and flowers. Some amazing ideas making a really spectacular display. They certainly cheered us up. Enjoy.

Richard Stile

Below left to right – Pretty as a Picture, Afternoon Tea Succulents, Bedroom



L: Dining Room table



R: Drinks Trolley



# Annual Orchid Festival at Kew Gardens – Pauline & Dermot Gallagher

(Fran's sister and brother in law – and neighbours of Pat & Richard Stile from Cat Hill Allotments)

Each year Kew Gardens puts on an annual orchid festival and this year's 25th festival celebrated the incredible wildlife and vibrant culture of Indonesia with over 5000 orchids hailing from the archipelago taking the form of flower arches, floral walls and even sculptures of Indonesian wildlife. Something to brighten an otherwise dull day in London guaranteed.

Below are some of the beautiful blooms that formed part of this magnificent display.





# Club Resource List

Did you know that your Club has a number of items that members are welcome to borrow outside of Club meetings?

We have 2 urns, 2 gazebos, numerous folding tables, a pressure cleaner and a portable PA system. If you are interested in borrowing any items – please see one of the committee members to arrange.

## Butterfly Bonanza

Re the yellow butterflies that have been in abundance lately: they breed on cassias (caesalpinias) and I've noticed them crowding around on my *Cassia fistula*. They're called Yellow Migrants, Lemon Migrant, aka *Catopsilia pomona pomona*.

My daughter Anita has discovered why there are so many of those yellow butterflies around this year. Apparently most of their caterpillars are usually eaten by a wasp, but the dry year greatly reduced the number of wasps. Hence a great profusion of butterflies. This came via a contact at Council, where they have an entomologist on staff, so it's probably right.

And we've already had more rain so far this year than fell in the whole of last year!!

Maris Morton



## Orange Berry



Josh Byrne visited a fruit tree nursery south of Perth in the Gardening Australia edition of 6 March. One of the plants mentioned was Orange Berry (*Glycosmis trifoliata*) which Josh said came from northern NSW, getting Uki Garden Club members very excited because he said it's a small native tree which fruits all year round.

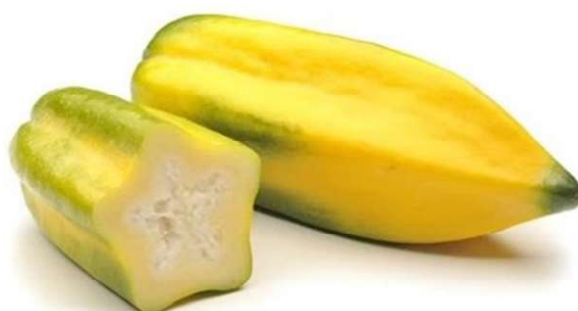
Sounds ideal. Why haven't we heard of it? Where can we get plants from? Further research by Julia on the internet revealed the reason none of us know about it may be because it doesn't actually come from anywhere near the Tweed!

Orange Berry (*Glycosmis trifoliata*) is a shrub or small tree that can be found in the coastal regions of Queensland and the Northern Territory. It is a member of the citrus family (Rutaceae) and grows between 2m and 8m tall, however, in cultivation, it generally grows no more than about 4m in height. Scented, white flowers occur throughout the warmer months of the year, and these are very attractive to butterflies, bees and other pollinators. These are followed by semi-transparent, pink fruit which is edible when ripe. Due to the long flowering period, Orange Berry can bear both flowers and fruit at the same time.

If you can beat the birds to them, the fruit is quite tasty, and has a flavour that has been described as "sweet with resinous overtones". It apparently makes a jam that tastes like candied honey."

Babaco (*B. x pentagona*) from Equador (pic at right) is also a favourite because it has no seeds and has a pineapple/citrus flavour. Philip Wilson grows it. Finger limes got a big rap for being a great bush tucker plant.

Thanks Julia for letting us know!





# March Job File – Julia Hancock

- ⚙ March is a great time to prepare your beds for planting. Time and effort spent now results in bumper food and flower crops in the season to come.
- ⚙ Try sowing 'scatterseeds' such as alyssum, nigella, gypsophila and viola. Veggie scatter seeds include rocket, Asian veggies and lettuce.
- ⚙ Silverbeet, ruby chard and yellow-stemmed chard can all go in now—plenty of organic matter in the soil will make the leaves and stems strong and healthy. Water in the morning to avoid fungal problems while the weather is still warm.
- ⚙ Look for seedlings of poppies, primulas and pansies as they come into the nurseries. Although seedlings are a little more expensive than seeds one is usually guaranteed a satisfactory result. Don't forget the marigolds as they are great companion plants to everything in the garden.
- ⚙ Keep an eye on nutgrass – it can spread like wildfire in the hot, wet weather.
- ⚙ Overgrown geraniums (pelargoniums) that have become top-heavy and leggy are liable to fall over in strong winds. Pruning makes them more stable and provides the opportunity of getting rid of spotty, rusty growth.
- ⚙ In recent years sweet peas have been tricky to grow here, although several Murwillumbah people grow prize-winning specimens. If you adore them, try growing them in their own pot, either the tall varieties with a wigwam to support them, or the dwarf 'Bijou' variety which will happily cascade out of their container. Seeds are much more reliable than seedlings.
- ⚙ Did you know that comfrey leaves are richer in nitrogen and potash than farmyard manure? Leaves can be chopped up and mixed in with compost or make a tea to dilute and water into soil.
- ⚙ Now is the perfect time to dry some herbs, as they reach the very peak of their potency. The traditional *bouquet garni* from the Provence region of southern France includes lavender flowers, and the dried leaves of marjoram, oregano, thyme, rosemary, basil and sage. Crumble them all together, place in a jar and store in a cool, dark place. Use them in this winter's soups, stews and casseroles.



## Gardening after the heavy rain

- ⚙ After a heavy rain, check the roots around your trees and plants to make sure the rain hasn't washed away top soil, exposing roots. Recover any that have and put down a thick layer of mulch to protect the soil and what lies beneath.
- ⚙ Keep an eye out for pooling water. Even if you have good drainage — and most of us don't — the ground can become saturated in heavy or prolonged rains, causing water to pool around plants. Those puddles can cause root and stem rot. Dig small drainage tunnels as needed.
- ⚙ If you have plants in pots, check that they haven't become waterlogged. You'll need to tip them over to remove the water, then check that the drainage holes are open, allowing the water to move through and out.
- ⚙ It's easy to ignore your compost pile, but if you've got a good batch cooking, you don't want it to drown. Turn often and keep it covered to prevent it from getting too wet.

## Did you know?

Bees don't like zucchini's, therefore it's better to hand pollinate for the best fruit set. They don't have a problem with other cucurbit flowers.







Tweed Landcare has organised Dr Rob Kooyman to present **Fire in the Gondwana Rainforest!** at 6 pm Thursday 26 March 2020 at the Tweed Regional Museum in Murwillumbah.

Could millions of years of evolution vanish in a cloud of smoke? What happened with the fires at Mt Nardi? Find out from a conservation scientist with decades of experience in local and global rainforests! The event is \$10 per person plus booking fee. Wine and cheese will be served on arrival. Please book online here <https://www.trybooking.com/BIPZU>. Enquiries phone 6670 2199 or [landcarecoordinator@tweedlandcare.org.au](mailto:landcarecoordinator@tweedlandcare.org.au)



### **Bribie Island Orchid Society Inc. - Easter Orchid & Foliage Show**

Friday 10th April 2020 – 8.30am - 4pm & Saturday 11th April 2020 – 8.30am - 2.00pm

The Orchid House & Indoor Bowls Club, Entrance 3 – 156A First Ave, Bongaree Bribie Island Q4507

Admission \$5.00 includes Morning/Afternoon Tea



Vendors Attending: Windemere Orchids MnS Orchids, Orchidaceous Supplies, Redfox Orchids, Darryl Banks Orchids, Orchid Mania, African Violets, Outdoor plant sales, Plant Sales Craft and Cakes, Sausage Sizzle Market Stalls

Please note: EFTPOS will only be available at some vendors. B.I.O.S. does not offer EFTPOS at plant sales or craft stall.

**Contact:** Teresa Watson, Secretary, 0407782290, [bribieorc@gmail.com](mailto:bribieorc@gmail.com)



**The Bromeliad Society of QLD invites you to their 2020 Autumn show – the Bromeliad & Tropicals Show & Sales.**

**Dates & times** - Saturday 18th April at 8 am to 4 pm & Sunday 19th April at 9 am to 1 pm

**Location** - Genesis Christian College, Sports Hall, 12 Youngs Crossing Road, Bray Park QLD 4500. Plenty of free parking available onsite.

Cost - \$4 per person, includes entry into the Lucky Door Prize of \$100 worth of plants. Free entry for children under 15 years old.

There will be a variety of plants for sale including bromeliads, tropicals, indoor plants, orchids, hoyas, begonias, succulents and many more. Please bring your own boxes and bags.

**Kyogle Garden Club Inc Flower & Foliage Display to be held Friday 17th & Saturday 18th April 2020, 8am to 4pm both days.**

**Where:** Kyogle Memorial Institute – Summerland Way, Kyogle

**Entrance Fee:** \$2

Many stalls will have plants and other garden products on display and for sale. We will have guest speakers who will cover many popular garden subjects such as growing orchids. We will also have Phil Dudman from ABC Good Gardening giving talks on Saturday at 11am.

For further information please call Peter on 6632 1834 or 0413 423 713 or Doug on 0418 616 388.





## March Garden Gathering

**NB: Please note change of venue**

**Saturday 28th March, 2pm start time**

Our host is the Murwillumbah Community Gardens at Mooball St, Murwillumbah.

There will be a presentation by Karen the Compost Queen.

**Directions on how to get there:** Going south along Murwillumbah St, turn right into Mooball St after Mount St Pats, or if coming from the east along Queensland Road, go past the Showground and turn right into Mooball St.

There is ample parking on the road.

## April Food Group Meeting

**Tuesday 14th April, 9.30am start time**

In the garden of Rex & Jan Thomas

23 The Grove, Nunderi

02 6672 1336 or 0412 797 917

**Directions on how to get there:**

Travelling from Murwillumbah to Condong, turn right onto Clothiers Creek Rd and travel along for about 4 kms, then left into Norths Lane, then 1st right into The Grove. Plenty of parking on roadway and in driveways.

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

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

Thanks to our contributors – we couldn't do it without you!

See your name in print by sending us your hints, tips, recipes, travel stories, bragging photos to [ugcnews@gmail.com](mailto:ugcnews@gmail.com)

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



*Ed: Found in the bottom paddock as I was busy mowing the other weekend...totally oblivious to me and the mower enjoying a little patch of sun.*