

Uki Garden Club

Volume 20/03 April 2020 ugcnews@gmail.com P.O. Box 580 Murwillumbah 2484

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



Well here we are into the fourth month of 2020 already, with only two meetings under our belts for the year! What a crazy COVID-19 world we find ourselves living in – locked down in our own homes for how long we have no idea. At least we are allowed to get out in the garden to help us find some relief from cabin fever. Listening to the happy chirping of birds (as I am while writing this now) is always cheery, so let's just make the most of this time to calm down and live mindfully.

The air has an Autumn feel with slightly cooler nights and soon we will return to non-daylight-saving time – April 5th. Working outside does not raise such a sweat so gardening has become a more pleasant pastime. Pruning has taken priority at my place with overflowing green wheelie bins being put out every week. Wasps are still busy unfortunately so watch out for these nasty stinging insects that seem to have made their homes in many a bushy plant.

I encourage all our members to try to keep in touch by phone or email with at least a couple of others in the club. Especially let us be mindful of some of our older folk, for whom garden gatherings and food group meetings form such a major part of their social life. These can be lonely times for those who live alone or who usually rely on various groups to keep connected. With all our meeting and socialising so restricted it can be difficult for some to make it through the day, especially without modern technology at their fingertips. Depression can easily take over so just remember that there is always somebody who may be worse off than you. Spare a thought for them – it only takes a few minutes of your day to make contact.

The Uki Garden Club Facebook page has been quite active lately which is great. There are some beautiful photos of flowers there as well as the usual questions and answers about various plants. Keep up the wonderful contributions – it helps keep the garden conversations going while our gatherings are in recess. Of course there will not be many current travel photos, but Jackie and Michael Balk have been snapping away as they made a hastened return journey home from South Australia this week – see pic at right taken when they visited the town of Perilla. They said there wasn't a herb to be seen but there was an innovative way to use old car tyres.

Maybe it is a time to look out some of your previous years' travel snaps and send them in to us for either the newsletter or Facebook page like Jan & Axel have done.

As I write this monthly report, there are apparently 13 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the Tweed Local Government Area. So while we are not in a dire situation yet, it is a reminder that this is not just a 'City-centred' disease. We must all take care of our own health. Try to keep active, eat healthy foods, drink plenty of water, wash our hands regularly and mix with others as little as practicable.

Cheers for now and please stay well!

Gillian



Instead of Buying Expensive White Oil – Make Your Own

All you need is one cup vegetable oil and ¼ cup washing-up detergent.

Put these into a jar together and give it a good shake to create a mayonnaise type emulsion. Clearly label the jar.

To make the spray – mix one tablespoon emulsion to 1 litre of water – give it a good shake and it is ready for use. It's important to stick with this ratio because too much oil will cause leaf burn.








White Oil, a Horticultural Oil is used for controlling sucking and chewing insects like aphids, scale, mealy bug and citrus leaf miner. It's not a poison, but suffocates the pests - so they can't develop a resistance. It needs to be sprayed on both sides of leaves and stems to work properly. However, avoid using it in very hot weather (over 25°C) or in the middle of a sunny day as you may burn your plants. Mix it well before and during spraying.



Did you know that less than one percent of garden insects are actually pests?

Insects such as hoverflies, ladybirds, lacewings and parasitic wasps help keep the garden healthy by feeding on pests like aphids, mealybugs and sawflies.

Encourage the presence of beneficial insects by growing lots of herbs whose flowers produce pollen and nectar including borage, coriander, dill, fennel, pineapple sage and rocket. Many of these self-seed or can be grown easily from cuttings so spread them around the garden for maximum effect. NB: the 28-spotted ladybird is a baddie! It eats leaves of veggies, and is attracted by the deadly nightshade plant, a common garden weed.

7 BENEFICIAL INSECTS FOR GARDEN PEST CONTROL		
INSECTS	PREYS ON	ATTRACTED BY
 LADYBUGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APHIDS • WHITEFLIES • COLORADO POTATO BEETLES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DILL • DANDELION • FERN-LEAF YELLOW • BASKET OF GOLD
 GROUND BEETLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLUGS • CATERPILLARS • COLORADO POTATO BEETLES • CUTWORMS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVENING PRIMROSE • AMARANTHUS • CLOVER
 MINUTE PIRATE BUGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPIDER MITES • APHIDS • THRIPS • CATERPILLARS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CARAWAY • FENNEL • ALFALFA • SPEARMINT
 GREEN LACEWINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APHIDS • WHITEFLIES • LEAFHOPPERS • MEALYBUGS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DILL • ANGELICA • GOLDEN MARGUERITE • CORIANDER
 APHID MIDGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APHIDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DILL • PLANTS WITH PLENTY OF NECTAR AND POLLEN
 DAMSEL BUGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CATERPILLARS • MITES • APHIDS • CABBAGE WORMS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CARAWAY • PETER PAN GOLDENROD • SPEARMINT • FENNEL
 BRACONID WASPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CATERPILLARS • APHIDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FERN-LEAF YARROW • LEMON BALM • PARSLEY • COMMON YARROW
VISIT ORGANICLESSON.COM FOR THE EXTENDED LIST		



Healthy Herb Teas

On a visit to New Zealand I attended a wonderful exhibition about the health benefits of herb teas, and there was an array of samples for us to try as we enjoyed the show. Here are the highlights.

- ✧ Basil reduces skin aging.
- ✧ Chamomile lowers stress levels.
- ✧ Marigold improves healing in wounds.
- ✧ Yarrow spreads universal love.
- ✧ Elderberry eases arthritis and rheumatoid aches.
- ✧ Fennel seeds relieve mildly elevated blood pressure.
- ✧ Ginger stimulates circulation.
- ✧ Lemon balm improves cognitive function and sharpens the memory.
- ✧ Lemongrass boosts metabolism and immunity.
- ✧ Peppermint alleviates cold and flu symptoms.
- ✧ Rosemary balances the solar plexus, restores lost energy and stimulates self-esteem and courage.
- ✧ Sage improves memory and concentration.



Always consult your doctor before self-medicating.

Holes In Your Sweet Potato Tubers?

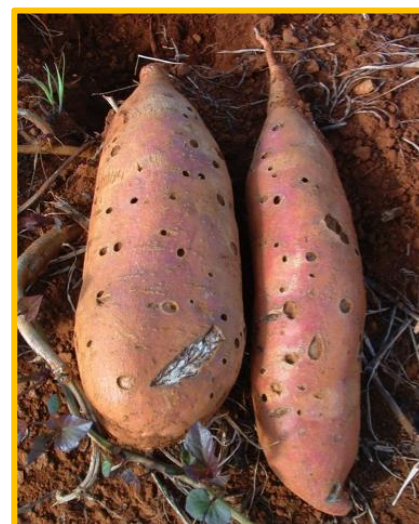
If you've got small holes in your sweet potato tubers they're likely to be wireworm which are click beetle larva.

Most wireworms spend three or four years in the soil, feeding on decaying vegetation and the roots of plants, and often causing damage to agricultural crops such as potato, strawberry, corn, and wheat.

The subterranean habits of wireworms, their ability to quickly locate food by following carbon dioxide gradients produced by plant material in the soil, and their remarkable ability to recover from illness induced by insecticide exposure (sometimes after many months), make it hard to exterminate them once they have begun to attack a crop.

Wireworms can pass easily through the soil on account of their shape and their propensity for following pre-existing burrows, and can travel from plant to plant, thus injuring the roots of multiple plants within a short time. Methods for pest control include crop rotation and clearing the land of insects before sowing.

Organic methods of control include drenching the soil with a dilution of neem oil, or trying to /source some hard-to-locate neem cake, a systemic insecticide which can be dug into the soil like pelletised chicken manure. SoLife on Quarry Road Murwillumbah has neem cake for sale if you want to get some.





In these trying times I thought it a good idea to introduce a new segment in the newsletter to help you smile. Contributions very welcome!

Commerative jewelery to always remember 2020.



I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. It's impossible to put down.

To thrive in life you need three bones:
A wish bone,
a back bone,
and a funny bone.



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auntie acid

One for Jean Nuttall - Two cats swam the English Channel. They were called One Two Three and Un Deux Trois. Which cat won? One Two Three, because Un Deux Trois cat sank.

From Simone Renton:

I'm giving up drinking for a month.
Sorry, that came out wrong.
I'm giving up. Drinking for a month.



From my sister Pauline in the UK:

Just saw a news report about the stresses and strains of self isolation. It reported that people are going crazy from being in lock down!

It was strange, actually, because I had just been talking about this with the microwave and toaster and all of us agreed that things are getting bad.

I didn't mention anything to the washing machine as she always has to put a different spin on everything and certainly not to the fridge as he is acting cold and distant.

In the end the iron calmed me down. She said everything will be fine, which surprised me because she's usually the first one to apply unnecessary pressure and get steamed up over nothing!!! I think she might have been sneaking off to the medicine cabinet.

Some Dad Jokes

A new shop has opened called Moderation. They have everything in there.

The Invisible Man married the Invisible Woman. Their children were nothing to look at.

Did you know that Davy Crockett had three ears? His left ear, his right ear and his wild frontier.

A cartoonist has been found dead. Details are sketchy.

Why don't ants get ill? Because they have antibodies.





From the Facebook Page



What's growing in your garden? Here are some things from mine. Jan Brooks



Edibles coming along nicely - Mark Collison

Right and below: Herb & vegetable garden has had 4 hours attention. Weeded, tilled soil, added compost, then tilled again. Rotated compost in all the compost bins, planted, mulched & thoroughly watered.

Today we added Potatoes, Broad Beans & Purple Climbing Beans.





At left: I'm trialling a Turkish mulberry variety which has been in one family for generations called Kara Dut. Enormous sweet black fruit - Philip Wilson



At right: Wallowing in the sublime scents of Munstead Wood and Duchesse de Brabant. The Duchesse came as a cutting from a late member of the Uki Garden Club, Don Edwards – Jean Nuttall



At left: A beautiful display of colour – Heather Neill.

Below: From Melissa Darnley





Kale, Mushroom & Feta Tart – Fran O'Hara

This is delicious – especially with some roasted veggie chips served on the side.

Ingredients

- 1½ sheets frozen puff pastry, just thawed
- 1 Tbspn olive oil (or oil of your preference)
- 1 leek – thinly sliced
- 2 cloves garlic crushed
- 200 gm sliced mushrooms (ie I used 3 large flat ones)
- 2 sprigs thyme
- ½ bunch kale – main stem removed and then chopped
- 3 eggs
- ½ cup cow milk
- Packet of feta cheese – crumbled
- Pepper to taste



Method

1. Preheat oven to 180C.
2. Line a pie dish with baking paper and shape the puff pastry to fit – set aside.
3. Lightly steam the kale - set aside.
4. Heat the oil in a frying pan, add the leek, garlic and mushroom and cook for 5 to 10 mins until the vegetables soften. Add the thyme and take off the heat. Add the kale to the mix and set aside to cool slightly.
5. Whisk the eggs and milk in a jug with a little pepper.
6. Put the vegetables into the pastry shell and arrange to cover the base evenly. Crumble the feta over the top.
7. Pour over the egg mixture.
8. Bake for 25 – 30 minutes or until the filling is just set.
9. Take out of the oven and set aside for 5 – 10 minutes as filling will be very hot.

Serve and enjoy!

Yummy Throwtogether Dip – Sue Macklin

This was brought to a meeting by Sue Macklin and was delicious.

Ingredients

- Approx 2 cups raw cashews, soaked a few hours, then drained.
- ½ red onion
- 1 medium red capsicum
- Smoked paprika powder – 1 teaspn
- Garlic – 2 cloves
- Lemon juice – ½ lemon to taste
- Salt & pepper to taste
- (& I think I might have also added a couple of dessertspoons of yeast flakes but this is optional)



I just threw these ingredients into blender and blitzed.



- ☼ Sow some broad beans. Not only are they delicious to eat but they make a fantastic green manure when bean production is over. Simply chop the plant off at the base, leaving the nitrogen-rich root in the ground to rot. The upper parts of the plant can be scattered as mulch. Broad beans are really only nice when they are taken out of their jackets, a fiddly job but one that is well worth doing to enjoy the beans at their best during their relatively short season.
- ☼ Lettuce can all go in now. Grow a few different types to have an interesting salad mix, and don't forget that radicchio and French sorrel make delicious additions too.
- ☼ Autumn is the time for transplanting and after all the rain we've had this year it should be an easy job to shift those shrubs and perennials which are in the wrong spot. A week or so before moving, trim back any excess foliage and remove any dead branches. The less leaf surface on the bush the less transpiration and evaporation will occur. On the day of transplanting, prepare the hole that the plant will be using by loosening the earth around and scattering some fertilizer into the hole and surrounding area. Water in well. When digging up the plant, tidy up any damaged roots, but try to keep the rootball as intact as possible. It is also important to keep the rootball moist during the transplant. Nestle the plant into its new hole, backfill with the fertilizer-enriched soil, and water in well. Apply mulch around the surface of the root zone to keep it cool and moist.
- ☼ Lawn Army worms can be a real menace in wet seasons (pic at right). There are commercial insecticides available specifically for this problem. However, if you don't want to use poisons and are prepared to live with a messy lawn for a few months, it will eventually regrow when the weather dries up and the warm spring sun stimulates growth.
- ☼ Deadhead roses to encourage them to bloom throughout April.
- ☼ If your soil is still soggy and heavy after the big wet, improve drainage by digging in some gypsum and compost. This will help open it up and allow air to get into the structure. If you've got a particularly boggy spot in the garden, plant moisture loving species such as melaleuca, bottlebrush and casuarinas.
- ☼ Tibouchinas tend to get top-heavy in the middle years of their life, and during wet weather the weight of water on the foliage can sometimes cause branches to split off. Avoid this becoming a problem by pruning your Tibouchinas immediately after flowering. They can tolerate a severe haircut, and will reshoot better than ever as a result.
- ☼ If you love sweet peas but can't be bothered with the drama of growing the taller varieties which need lots of staking and training, why not grow the dwarf varieties in a pot? The flowers will produce the same colour and perfume and are suitable for picking. Seeds to look out for include 'Bijoi', 'Pixie Princess' and 'Cupid'. Sweet peas require lots of sun and appreciate a fortnightly application of liquid fertilizer to perform at their best.
- ☼ If you like silverbeet but yearn for something more colourful in the vegie patch, buy some rainbow chard (pic above). Punnets of mixed varieties of chard are available and can be grown exactly as silverbeet. Chard can be harvested a few leaves at a time to prolong the life of the plant. It's packed with minerals and vitamins and is delicious raw or steamed.



Do you know the beginnings of the Swap Table?

Back in September 1998 it was suggested by a member that the Club set up a trading table at each meeting to enable members to swap cuttings, fruit, vegetable and other bits and pieces for a nominal sum. All proceeds from any sales go to the Club to fund future projects.

Amazing Ancient Amazon Composting

On the ABC a long while ago there was a fascinating programme about the black earth (*terra preta*) found in the Amazon rainforest. Thousands of years ago early civilisations apparently discovered a way of making the relatively infertile soil of the Amazon basin into something that is referred to today as 'black gold'. Instead of using today's slash-and-burn methods to clear fields of vegetation to enable the cultivation of crops, the early settlers of this area used a slash-and-char method. They made charcoal in low-intensity smouldering fires covered with dirt and straw which was then scattered on the earth with fantastic results. Building up the earth around their settlements in this way they gradually created a super-fertile soil that tripled the yield of their crops. Contemporary archaeologists studying the Amazon are astonished at the scale of this human endeavour and have uncovered literally hundreds of sites capable of supporting millions of people. The recipe for *terra preta* is currently being scientifically analysed in the hope that it will assist in the restoration of badly degraded soils elsewhere in the world. A beneficial side effect of the *terra preta* technology is that it can reduce environmental pollution by decreasing the amount of fertilizer needed, because the char helps retain nitrogen in the soil as well as higher levels of plant-available phosphorus, calcium, sulphur and organic matter. Also, the black soil does not get depleted, as other soils do, after repeated use. Sadly, in the Amazon basin now, farmers are selling their valuable black soil as they can earn more from that than from the crops they grow in it.

Has anyone in the garden club had experience of using charcoal as a soil additive?

Did you know?

Garlic (*Allium sativum*) is a strong antibacterial agent and its juice was used in both world wars to disinfect wounds. Garlic contains more than 30 active compounds with medicinal benefits.



Preservative for cut flowers

- ⊗ ¼ - 1 tsp household bleach
- ⊗ 1 tsp white vinegar
- ⊗ 2 tsps sugar
- ⊗ 1 litre water

Make up a fresh batch whenever you arrange a vase of flowers. Make sure to keep the arrangement away from direct sunlight and remove any foliage from below the water line to stop it rotting.

Did you also know?

Figs (*Ficus carica*) are not only good to eat, they're good for us.

They are fat and cholesterol free, low in sodium and high in fibre, minerals and polyphenols (which may reduce the risk of cancer). Fig jam and figs poached in either balsamic vinegar or port wine are especially yummy.



Seeds Available from the UGC Seed Box

Due to the shortage of seeds and seedlings in the shops, we are making the seeds from the Uki Garden Club Seed Box available to members free of charge.

However in return, members are asked to save seeds from their crops of Club seeds and keep them to return to Hartmut so we can ensure the long term sustainability and viability of the seed box.

Hartmut has carefully catalogued the available seeds and the list follows.



PLEASE NOTE:

- ☼ Please email Hartmut to order your packets of seeds - hartmutholzkecht215@gmail.com
- ☼ Seeds are available via email ONLY – no phone calls please.
- ☼ Orders will be filled on a first in, first served basis
- ☼ There will be a maximum 2 packets per member. In your email please indicate your name, full postal address and please list up to 5 preferences in order of priority in case your first or second or third choices are not available.
- ☼ Hartmut will send them to you in the mail.
- ☼ If you have excess seeds please send or deliver to Sue and Hartmut for redistribution to club members. Email Hartmut to arrange.
- ☼ List will be updated each Newsletter edition

List of seeds available from UGC Seed Box - April, 2020

Plant	Date	Provider	Any details	No. of packets in stock
Vegetables				
Red Amaranth	11/2019	JH	Sow in spring in full sun. This is a cereal crop which is rich in protein and minerals	3
Beans, climbing or bush	08/2019	FO	Sow in April, in garden beds. Full sun.	2
Beans – Pioneer	2020	Williams	Flat, stringless bush bean	20
Beans – Simba	2020	Williams	Round stringless bush bean	20
Beans – Blue Lake	2020	Williams	Green, stringless climbing bean	20
Broccoli	11/2019	JH	Sow in April in full sun, in rich soil	3
Capsicum	3/2019	BW		3
Capsicum, Red mini	2/2019	JB		1
Carrot, 'Top Weight'	Use by 8/2020	Yates	Plant in sunny well-drained position. Cover and moisten, thin after 4 weeks	4
Chilli, 'Big Jim'	?	?		2
Sweetcorn, 'Bi colour'	5/2019	PW		1
Daikon Radish	10/2019	JH	Sow any time, full sun	3
Kale, 'Tuscan'	6/2019	JH	Sow in winter in sunny position	1
Kale, 'Tuscan'	10/2019	JH	Sow in autumn in full sun	4
Lettuce, Asian Stem	3/2018	PW	Notation: 'Chook Food'!	3
Lettuce, 'Lambs Tongue'	12/2019	JH		2

Plant	Date	Provider	Any details	No. of packets in stock
Lettuce, 'Green Leafy'	12/2018-2/2019	JH		2
Lettuce, Frilly Leaf	?	PH		1
Luffa	2019	HN		4
Mustard Greens	2019	DF		2
Parsnip	2018	JB		1
Peas – Massey Gem	2020	Williams	Standard, quick maturing, dwarf bush type 60-75cm, pods 3.5-5cm	20
Snow Peas – Oregon	2020	Williams	Dwarf plants to 90cm producing flat, light green, edible pods growing to 10cm.	20
Squash, Appalachian Yellow	2019	?	Notation: 'Trombone Bush'	4
Herbs				
Sacred Basil	9/2019	JH	Sow in spring in full sun	2
Thai Basil	2/2019	JH	Sow in spring in a sunny position. Snip off spent flowers regularly to promote bushy growth	5
Calendula	6/2019	JH	Pot marigold. Sow in winter/spring in full sun	3
Coriander	9/2019	KH	Sow anytime	3
Dill	11/2019	JH	Sow in ground in full sun in autumn for spring planting. Use fresh leaves, roots or seeds in cooking	4
Fennel	2018	JH		1
Motherwort	2019	HN	[Ask Dr. Google!]	3
Perilla (Japanese 'Shiso')	2019	JB	salad leaf	3
Fruit				
Capsicum	2018	BW		2
Capsicum	6/2019	KH		3
Capsicum	2019	K		3
Cayenne. Pepper	2019	KH		1
Chilli	2019	K	?	2
Ghost Chilli	2018/19	K	Red fruit. Very hot	2
Ghost Chilli	6/2019	JH	Creamy white, large round chilli. Very hot. Sow in spring in full sun	2
Red Chilli	6/2019	JH	Heat factor #5. About 4 cm long. Sow in spring in full sun	3
Orange Chilli	6/2019	JH	Medium heat, 3 cm long. Sow in spring in full sun	6
Mouse melons	?	KH	Seeds dried on kitchen paper. Climber.	3
Orange papaw	3/2019	BW		3

Plant	Date	Provider	Any details	No. of packets in stock
Mini passionfruit	2019	K		1
Flowers, Natives, Other				
Asarina arclayana	1/2018	JH	Modest twining climber with purple trumpet-shaped flowers. Prune lightly to promote new growth	4
Dietes Grandiflora		JH	White variety. Useful grass for hot areas.	1
Melicope elleryana (Pink Euodia)	2019	DF	Tall tree	2
Coreopsis	11/2018	BW	Yellow daisy flower, low bush, full sun	3
Tree Dahlia	7/2019	JH	Tall perennial with mauve daisy flowers. Sow in spring. Plant in summer in full sun. Flowers in autumn.	3
Helichrysum - Paper Daisy	11/2018	JH	Scatter on prepared soil in full sun in late winter	3
Scarlet Hippeastrum	12/2019	JH	Sow in autumn in punnets. Plant out in full sun when bulbs have formed	3
Water Iris	5/2018	SH	Blue or mauve; sow in pots. Keep wet.	1
Purple Iris	11/2019	JH	Perennial. Full sun. Sow in autumn and plant out when seedlings are sturdy	1
Leopard Lily (Iris domestica)	3/2019	DF	Sow in pots; keep moist. Transplant when seedlings are sturdy. Full sun.	4
Ornamental Passionfruit	2019	DF	Pink/red/white. Robust climber.	2
Oriental Poppies	6/2019	JH	Sow direct onto the soil in winter and in full sun	2
Queen Anne's Lace ['Ammi Majus']	11/2018	JH	Scatter on prepared soil in late winter in full sun. Major attractant of beneficial insects	4
Black Sunflower Seeds	2019	MB	From chickenfeed but planted ones all came up normally!	4
Zephyranthes (storm lilies)	2018	SH	Pink flowers, sow in situ	1

That's all Folks for This Month...

We really want to hear from you over this trying time – please please please send us your hints, tips, recipes, travel stories, bragging photos to ugcnews@gmail.com

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

Yes, they are still open for your business!