

# Uki Garden Club

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

## President's Report

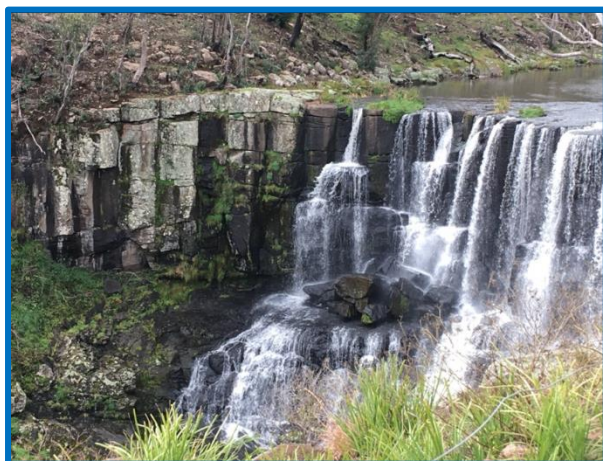
Gillian Woodward

It is hard to believe that already 6 months of the year have passed us by. What a different time it has been for all of us, trying to come to terms with COVID-19 restrictions on all aspects of our daily living. The Tweed Valley has so far been very lucky to remain almost untouched by the virus itself. However, the current Victorian situation reminds us that all it takes is one person to come in contact with it before the whole picture can change in the blink of an eye. Let us hope that NSW can remain relatively unscathed and continue to enjoy a slightly more 'normal' way of life.

Although we are able legally to hold an outdoor meeting of garden club members, finding a venue where we can adequately 'socially distance' remains a challenge. I do not want to invade one of our members' homes with large numbers of people, rather try to find somewhere neutral where we can congregate with our chairs spaced 1.5 metres apart. We are working on a few possibilities, but I think it will be at least August or September before we can meet again in person.

Meanwhile, I imagine many of you are enjoying extra time in your gardens. This winter has not been too cold and the rain seems to keep falling in small but fairly regular amounts.

My recent trip back to Armidale reminded me of just how warm our winters really are here, making me grateful for every morning with positive temperatures. Our landscape, unlike the New England Tablelands area, remains mostly green and lush, not frosted and brown. On the other hand, it was good to see considerable regrowth in the forests that stretch beside the road from Nymboida to Ebor.



But also, sad to see that even the waterfall viewing platform at Ebor Falls did not escape fire damage.

I think that, in some ways, it has been a good thing to have some time to 'stand back and take stock' of how busy our lives have become. Seeing the calendar clear of times and dates of appointments, meetings, functions, etc. has actually enabled many of you to spend more time on pleasurable pursuits like your artworks, creative crafts, reading, volunteering, being active, relaxing and having time with family. Hopefully we can learn lessons about keeping perspective in our 'high tech' lives in the 2020s from this COVID experience. Surely something good has to come out of it!

Keep smiling and of course, keep gardening ... it's so good for your mental and physical health.

Gillian



# All About Bangalow Palms

## (*Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*)

At right - young Bangalow palms and their bright red fruit.

Photo: True Green Nursery



I'm sure like me you have seen many Bangalow Palms in our area as they seem to love our climate and surrounds to grow in. So what follows is a bit more information about this lovely native palm.

The Bangalow Palm is a monocotyledon in the Arecaceae family. It is endemic to Australia and is found naturally occurring from around Mackay, Queensland to the Batemans Bay area of New South Wales. It grows in colonies in wet areas such as stream banks and gullies, in rainforest and other moist forests and in swampy areas. It grows on a variety of soil types and even grows on sand on Fraser Island. In a natural rainforest environment the Bangalow palm is a characteristic species of the critically endangered ecosystem called Lowland Rainforest of Subtropical Australia under Commonwealth legislation.



This palm has a solitary stem and reaches a height of up to 30m and a diameter of up to 30cm. It has a prominent crownshaft and arching fronds up to 4.5m long with many leaflets, giving it an attractive feathery appearance. The fronds are a dark glossy green on the upper surface and a lighter green underneath and shed and fall off automatically. The inflorescence carries small lilac flowers on creamy branches; the fruit ripens to bright red with a waxy finish and is attractive to birds. In the warmer parts of its range it flowers and fruits all year round while it flowers in either summer or autumn further down the East Coast. However, it may not flower if the growing season is not warm enough.

*Above - Bangalow palms in the Sub-tropical rainforest mix at Doon Doon*

The leaf bases were used as water carriers by Aboriginal people and the names Piccabeen and Bangalow supposedly come from Aboriginal words for 'water carrier'. The cabbage (the shoot and surrounding young leaves and tissue) is edible and was widely collected by Aboriginal people and early settlers. Aboriginal people also used the stems for weaving.

This species is easily propagated from seed by placing seeds in a plastic bag with compost and giving them humidity and high temperatures; these will germinate in 1 – 3 months and the sprouts can be planted out. It is also available from nurseries. It does have weed potential outside its native range, which is something to be considered.



# And All About African Tulips (*Spathodea campanulata*)



Again – African Tulips are a common sight in our region and I always knew they were a weed. However, what I didn't realise is their negative impact on our native bees. Read on to get the full story...

The African tulip tree (*Spathodea campanulata*), from the family Bignoniaceae, is regarded as a potential environmental weed or "sleeper weed" in northern New South Wales and other parts of northern Australia. (*African Tulip Tree Photo: Amalia Pahlow*)

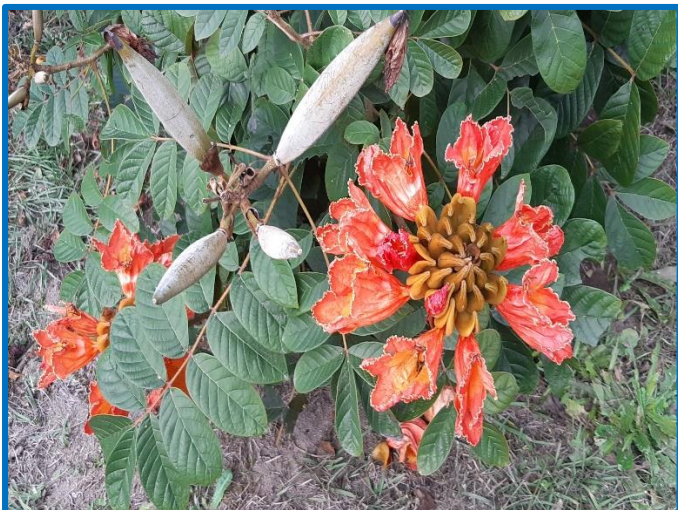
Originally from Africa, this species is also listed in the Global Invasive Species Database (GISD), and is regarded as being among the top 100 of the world's worst invasive alien species. This tree invades abandoned agricultural land, roadsides, waterways, disturbed sites, waste areas, forest margins and disturbed rainforests in tropical and sub-tropical regions. It favours wetter habitats, and is especially common along creeks and gullies.

It is a large upright tree (growing up to 25 m tall) with a spreading crown and a slightly buttressed trunk. The large compound leaves are arranged in pairs along the branches. Its large and very showy flowers (10-12 cm long) are borne in clusters at the tips of the branches: these flowers are orange-red, somewhat tulip-shaped and have yellowish crinkled margins. Its large elongated capsules (up to 30 cm long) resemble pods and split open to release numerous papery seeds. The branches are thick and marked with small whitish-coloured corky spots (i.e. lenticels).

The flower bud is ampule-shaped and contains water. These buds are often used by children who play with its ability to squirt the water. The sap sometimes stains yellow on fingers and clothes. The open flowers are cup-shaped and hold rain and dew. When the nectar in African Tulips ferments it becomes toxic to Australian bees, killing them. Since native bees are an important pollinator of Australian native flora, African Tulips have a terrible impact on Australia native trees. If you look closer in the flowers you will find stingless bees and other insects that are dead and dying as a result of foraging for pollen and nectar.

African Tulips should not be propagated and should be removed completely from the Australian landscape.

*Below - the tulip like flowers of the African Tulip Tree. Photo: Amalia Pahlow*



(Both of the above articles appeared in the Grassroots Gazette – and have been kindly reproduced with permission from Tweed Landcare Inc <http://tweedlandcare.org.au/>.)



# Aaaah Ya Gotta Laugh

## Calculate your next travel destination

### Instructions

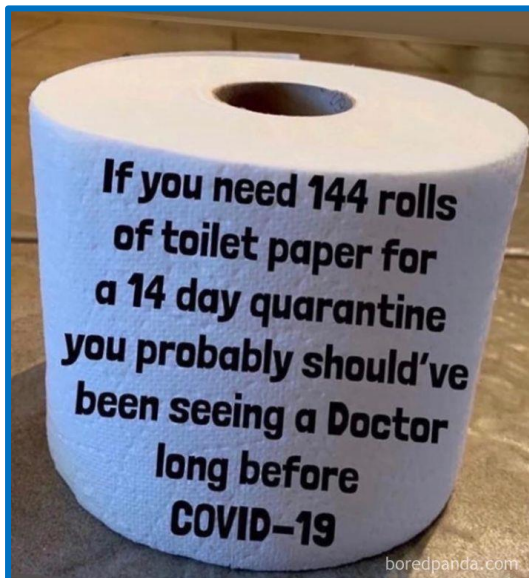
1. Choose a number between 1 and 9
2. Multiply it by 3
3. Add 3
4. Multiply by 3 again
5. Add the two digit number you get together
6. Number you get is where you will be travelling to

### Destination

1. Singapore
2. Spain
3. India
4. Thailand
5. Malaysia
6. Indonesia
7. Brazil
8. England
9. Stay at home
10. Australia
11. Cambodia
12. Vietnam
13. Japan
14. South Korea
15. India
16. Canada
17. Mexico
18. New Zealand



- What's the best way to avoid touching your face? A glass of wine in each hand.
- What do you call panic-buying of sausage and cheese in Germany? The wurst-kase scenario.
- The grocery stores in France look like tornadoes hit them. All that's left is de brie.
- I'll tell you a coronavirus joke now, but you'll have to wait two weeks to see if you got it.
- Finland has closed its borders. You know what that means. No one will be crossing the finish line.
- Did you hear the joke about the germ? Never mind, I don't want to spread it around.



Corona beer changes their name to avoid association with the Coronavirus outbreak



# Onto Greenhills Pastures

Barbara Waters has recently moved into Greenhills Lodge in South Murwillumbah, where she is settling in nicely. After three visits to hospital this year, it was considered necessary for her to have 24 hour care.

Club members Gillian Woodward and Lyn O'Hara assisted Barbara's daughter to empty Barb's unit. They have set aside some gardening tools etc. to be brought to our next Garden Gathering for the swap table.

Barbara welcomes visitors, however you must make an appointment, have had a flu injection, have your temperature taken and be physically well. Barb would love to see you!

*(Ed: Thanks for letting us know Gillian.)*



## Did you know?



Tip from 'Companion Planting in Australia' by Brenda Little.

Banana skins: The skin of the banana is surprisingly rich in calcium, sodium, silica, sulphur, magnesium and phosphates. Tucked under the top-soil around rose bushes or geraniums, it is one of the simplest and quickest ways of providing valuable plant food.

## Cockroachs - 0 : Dot Francis - 1

One of my in-ground worm farms was looking decidedly unhealthy. There were perhaps around 12 – 15 cockroaches running around on top of the worms. At the same time, there were many mites, & it was these mites that turned me off well & truly!

I found a recipe to get rid of cockroaches. It is as follows:

- 1 cup of sugar
- 1 cup of baking soda
- ¼ cup of water

Mix all together. Put some in shallow containers, & place wherever cockroaches are likely to congregate – under fridges, etc.

I put some on an upturned lid, placing it on top of a piece of carpet underlay that I use as a buffer between the lid & worms. Within 3 days, there were only 4 cockroaches, & 2 days later there were none! In addition, all the mites disappeared as well!!

I Googled it, & apparently every cockroach has their retinue of attendant mites.

Hey Presto, a 'clean' worm farm! I was really chuffed.

Cheers

Dot





# A Sunday Succulent Project – Fran O'Hara



So one wet Sunday a few weeks ago I decided to get onto a project that had been on my 'To Do' list for over 3 years – creating a succulent display from an old bike tyre, some spagnum moss, some old tree guards cut to size and cuttings from some of the many succulents I had accumulated over the years (many with thanks to Swap Table contributions donated by Jan and Rex Thomas).

Didn't take all that long and I have to say I am pretty chuffed with the results. The new display is being moved to the rock wall so I can admire my handiwork from the kitchen window.

## Zesty Zygos (Zygocactus that is)

Zygocactus (*Schlumbergera* spp.) are lovely, easy to grow plants that put on a colourful display from late autumn through winter which will brighten even the duller of days.

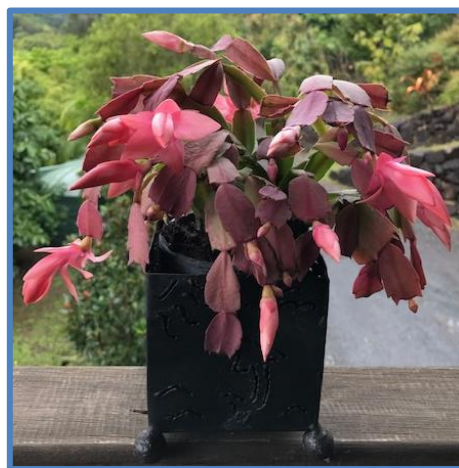
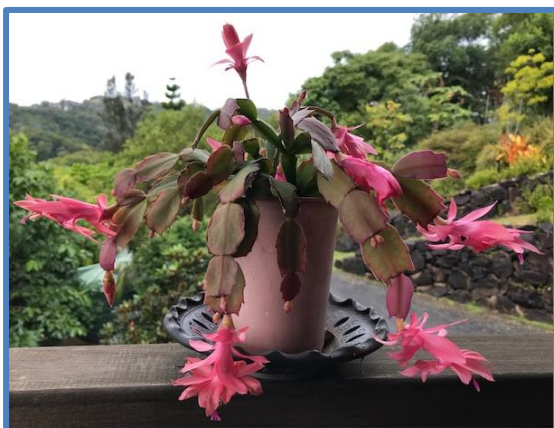
They are sometimes called 'Inch plants' because their segments are about an inch long. They are native to Brazil and thrive in dappled sunlight. Although epiphytic, zygos do not use or need a host plant for nutrients. They are great basket plants when planted in a free-draining mix. Keep them moist and even a little on the dry side.

Zygos are easily propagated from cuttings. Just twist a couple of segments off and plant upright into a pot with well drained soil. You can also just place the cuttings uncovered onto soil and they will form roots where they lie.

I have done this many times and the results speak for themselves.

Go on - give it a go!

Fran



## Members' Recipes

### Pea, Ham & Lemon Soup – Fran O'Hara

It's that time of the year when we all welcome a nice warming soup. I came across this recipe last year in a newsletter from Fat Pig Farm (Matthew Evans) which had the twist of adding lemon at the end. Ever since trying it out it last year this has become my go-to recipe for pea and ham soup. I have always taken the time to make the ham stock as per the directions below as I feel this gives the soup more flavour. However if you are short of time then just follow the second recipe below. Hope you enjoy it too.

#### Ham stock

- 1 ham hock
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 sprigs thyme
- 2 onions
- 2 carrots, washed
- 4 litres water

Put all the ingredients in a large pot, bring to the boil then simmer for at least 2 hours or until the meat pulls easily from the bone. Strain the stock, reserving the stock and hock and discarding all the other bits.



*However - if you don't have time to make the ham stock; you can throw the hock, bay, thyme and 4 litres of water in with the recipe below, then fish the hock and herbs out at the end.*

#### Ingredients

- 2 Tbsp butter or olive oil
- 2 large brown or white onions, peeled and diced
- 1 carrot, peeled and diced
- 2 sticks celery, chopped
- 1 small handful parsley, chopped roughly
- 500g green split peas
- 1 recipe ham stock (see above)
- the meat from the ham hock, diced or shredded
- 1 lemon, sliced into 8 rounds

#### Method

1. Heat the butter in a large saucepan and fry the onions, carrots and celery over a medium flame for about ten minutes until just starting to colour.
2. Add the parsley and cook another minute.
3. Tip in the peas and ham stock and simmer, stirring occasionally, for about 90 minutes or until the peas have fallen apart and the soup is lightly thickened.
4. If it's too thick, add water.
5. Add the meat from the hock and the sliced lemon, and simmer another 5 minutes.
6. Taste for salt and pepper (the ham hock adds its own salt, that's why it's best to wait until the end).
7. Remove the lemon and serve hot with crusty bread on a cold day.



# July Job File – Julia Hancock

- ☼ Be proud of yourself! Treat bindii now instead of saying “I wish I'd done it” when it's too late. Barefooted visitors to your garden will thank you profusely.
- ☼ Don't like pink hydrangeas? Turn them blue by watering them this month with a solution of bluing agent. The sulphur in the agent makes them grow much better and extends the flowering season by bringing them to bloom earlier.
- ☼ Prune roses by removing dead canes completely and trim healthy ones to around 50 per cent of their length. However, banksia roses and those climbers which flower in spring should not be pruned until after they have flowered.
- ☼ Top up the compost around camellias and azaleas to prepare them for warm weather.
- ☼ Prune crepe myrtles if necessary to create a pleasing shape, but avoid cutting them back to ugly stumps.
- ☼ Don't let winter weeds get the upper hand – get in there and pull them out –easy after rain.
- ☼ Cut back large Acalyphas in frost-free areas, otherwise wait until the chance of frost damage is over. See article on the following pages on what exactly these plants are and how easy they are to grow.
- ☼ Plant asparagus crowns in an area of the veggie patch where they can remain undisturbed for many years. Choose a site in dappled shade, dig a trench and fill it with compost and manure and spread the roots on top. Water well, cover lightly with soil and mulch. Harvesting can begin in the second year, but make sure to leave plenty of spears to bulk up the growth of the crowns for subsequent years.
- ☼ Prune kiwi fruit vines to where two or three buds are spaced about 6cm apart.
- ☼ Harvest citrus as they become ripe as overripe fruits attract fruit flies.
- ☼ Whilst you are in your citrus orchard - go on a mummy hunt around your orchard and remove any shrivelled-up remains of infected fruit from last season and mouldy fruit from the current crop. Mummification begins as one of several fungal infestations and it can occur in pretty much any fruit-producing tree, shrub, or vine. There are many reasons for fruit mummification, but the important thing is to remove them quickly and completely. Fruit mummies are breeding grounds for billions of fungal spores that can wreak havoc on your current or next summer's harvest. Bin or burn the mummies.
- ☼ Check for borers at the same time, as even young trees can become infested and lose branches. Practice good tool hygiene by dipping your cutting tool blades into disinfectant after each cut.
- ☼ Feed citrus at the end of the month and water well.
- ☼ Grow some peas - they contain lots of good fibre and are easy to digest. Growing them is easy too and they leave behind lots of useful pea straw once the crop has been harvested.
- ☼ Plant certified seed potatoes and mulch heavily (see article on spud towers next page)





# Spud Towers – Julia Hancock

If you've got an old plastic garbage bin or compost bin and you're keen to grow spuds, but space is tight in the vegie patch, then this no-dig, minimum-fuss option is for you and in a couple of months it will be time to pull loads of potatoes.



Cut the base out of the garbage bin before starting.

Place the bin in a sunny position, lifting it onto bricks or stones to facilitate drainage.

Put about 30cm of manure-enriched fertiliser in next, sprinkle with some control-release fertiliser pellets and place seed potatoes on top. For each potato, expect about 10 potatoes to grow.

Seed potatoes can be obtained from Rural Buying and Norco and remember to 'chit' them first by leaving them out in a brightly-lit spot (not in direct sunlight) until small sprouts appear.

Cover them with another 30cm of compost mix and a further 2cm of straw or cane mulch.

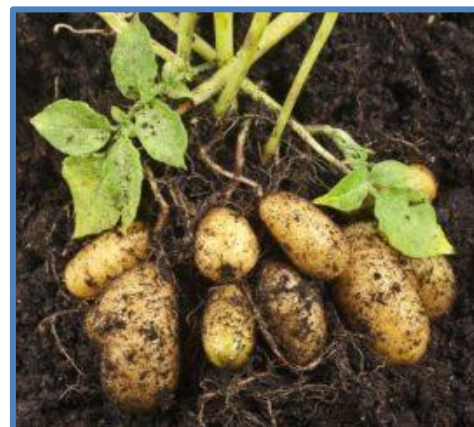
Water regularly - the mulch will sink down once it is damp and settled and green leaf sprouts will start to appear.

At this stage add another layer of seed potatoes and add compost or manure/mulch, taking care to leave the top green leaves exposed so they can photosynthesise.

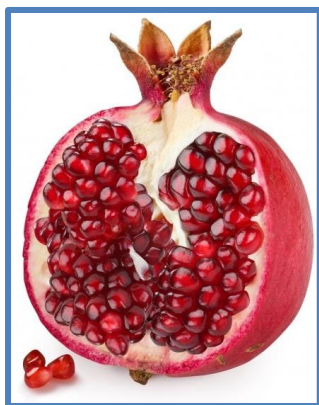
You'll find tubers start to grow from the stem, and the more layers you put into the tower the more spuds you'll get. As the spuds start to sprout and grow, just keep packing more straw in and around the stems so they set tubers and are protected from the light so they don't turn green.

Involve the grandkids at harvest time - they will be amazed at how many spuds there are.

Simply pull off the bin, or knock it over, and watch the spuds tumble out.



## Five facts about Pomegranates



1. The pomegranate originated in Persia and was taken to China about 1008C. Henry VIII planted the first pomegranate in England.
2. One large pomegranate contains up to 800 seeds.
3. An ancient and modern superfood, it is rich in vitamins A, C and E, and iron, with high levels of antioxidants.
4. Because of its seeds, the pomegranate has long been a symbol of fertility.
5. The French for pomegranate - *grenade* - was adopted to describe the hand grenade, for its similar shape, size and internal structure

# What the Heck is an Acalypha?

Well wonder no more! Acalyphas are probably better known as an old-fashioned plant. But their attributes show they are a much underrated and underused plant.

Acalyphas are grown for their wonderful coloured foliage, ranging from autumnal shades of copper, bronze and pink, to dark green, yellows, greens and reddish purples.

These plants belong to the Euphorbiaceae family, and there are more than 400 species in the Acalypha genus ranging from ground covers to large shrubs.

Some to look out for include:

*Acalypha godseffiana* 'Firestorm' – *pic at right*. The leaves have pink margins which make it look attractive. Plant them in a group for an absolutely stunning look.

My favourite is the *Acalypha hispida* – Chenille Plant – *pic as below*.



And another one that is a little cutie is *Acalypha reptans* sometimes sold under the cultivar name 'Summer Love'. It reaches about 30cm and each plant spreads about the same distance. Grow it in a hanging basket or try it cascading over the side of a pot or a low stone wall (*pic at right*).



Propagating Acalyphas is dead easy. Just take a tip cutting, but shorten the leaves so that they don't transpire and breathe out moisture. Don't be too fussy with the leaves, just trim them off. Then dip the end of it into some honey or vegemite and put it into some seed raising mix. Keep it moist and warm, and before long, you'll have a new Acalypha.



Acalyphas are not prone to any diseases and are troubled by few pests. But the large succulent leaves are attractive to chewing insects such as grasshoppers. Control these pests by spraying a mixture of molasses and water. The stickiness keeps the insects away, or alternatively use a safe insecticide like pyrethrum.

Acalyphas are tropical and subtropical plants, and so they need a warm, frost-free location, preferably sheltered from the wind. They like humus-rich soil, and keep them well fed to ensure the foliage is lovely and lush. As well as a complete fertiliser in spring, add about a hundred grams of sulphate of potash in spring and autumn to help bring out the foliage colour even more.



Acalyphas are versatile plants. Use them in pots, as mass planting and they also work well as a screening or hedging plant. The brightly coloured foliage of Acalyphas gives a tropical feel to any warm climate garden.

(with thanks to an old Gardening Australia fact sheet from 2008)







## Membership Renewals Due

It is still that time of year when we ask you to renew your membership to the Uki Garden Club. Subscriptions are due and can be paid up until the end of September without missing out on your newsletter.

Our membership fees remain unchanged from the \$20 per person or couple for 12 months. On the next page is a copy of the membership renewal form.

### If your details have not changed:

1. Pay by EFT/direct debit with text **Mem** (short for membership) - your **surname** (otherwise we won't know it is from you);  
OR
2. If you prefer to pay by cheque please send it to our PO Box No. 580, Murwillumbah 2484.

Our Club bank deposit details are as follows:

Bank:	Southern Cross Credit Union	BSB	722-744
Account name:	Uki Garden Club Inc	Account No	100017935

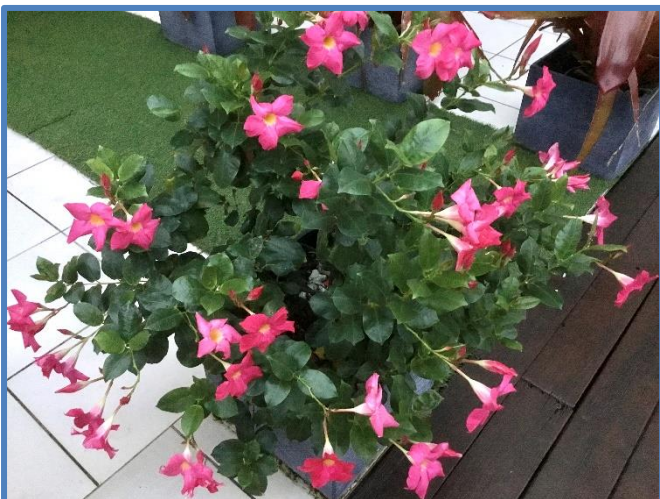
### If your details have changed:

1. Complete the attached form, scan and send it to [ugcnews@gmail.com](mailto:ugcnews@gmail.com) and complete EFT/direct debit as above; OR
2. Complete the form and send it with your payment to our PO Box - details also as above.

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

We really want to hear from you – please please please send us your hints, tips, recipes, bragging photos to [ugcnews@gmail.com](mailto:ugcnews@gmail.com)

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



## Last Word

A lovely burst of colour...

Dipladenia on my pool deck – Kate Botham

## Uki Garden Club Inc Membership Form

### 1) Member Type Please tick appropriate box as below.

☐ **New**

Please complete **all** the details below.

☐ **Renewing**

Please fill out any details that have changed and make sure you complete sections 4 - 6.

☐ \$20 for emailed newsletters

☐ \$25 for posted newsletters

### 2) Member Information

First name:

Last name:

First name:

Last name:

### 3) Contact Details

Address:

Suburb:

State:

P/code:

Phone (Home):

Phone (Mobile):

Email:

### 4) Agreement to Share Contact Details

My contact details may be shared with other club members

☐

YES

☐

NO

### 5) Payment Type Please indicate payment method

☐ Cash

☐ Direct Debit

Bank: Southern Cross Credit Union BSB 722-744

Account name: Uki Garden Club Inc Account No 100017935

### 6) Signature

*I agree to be bound by the rules and constitution of the association.*

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Office Use Only

Date Processed \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Receipt No \_\_\_\_\_