

Uki Garden Club

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



Welcome to Spring in the Tweed! Our first month is turning out to be fairly typical with slightly warmer days and showery rain interspersed at intervals. Good gardening weather that's for sure! Bright Spring colours abound in gardens everywhere. Azaleas and native hibiscus have been putting on a show in my front garden in recent weeks (see photos below)..When out and about on my bike I've seen Phil Wilson's Paulownia trees flowering madly and Jenny Wein's Queensland Waratah in all its beautiful red glory – pic at right.

What a shame it is that we are not holding gatherings in some of your glorious Spring gardensmaybe next year! Until the restrictions on numbers of people visiting private residences or gathering for meetings are lifted from the current 20 to at least 40-50, I'm afraid we can't legally get together as usual in person. We remain hopeful that perhaps by November or December we may be able to meet again. In the meantime many of you have been communicating on Facebook, showing off your favourite garden photos so that is good to see.

It has also been encouraging to see a few new nurseries popping up around town – especially



in these COVID times. Crystal Creek Estate has been open for a few months now (near the corner of Upper Crystal Creek and Numinbah Roads) and last Friday a new one in Wollumbin Street (near the Presbyterian Church) opened its doors. So there is definitely no excuse for us gardeners to be left short of new spring plants – for either



flowers or vegetable seedlings. One really good side-effect of COVID has been that many new people have taken up gardening with a vengeance, because it is one of the best ways to be outside (legally) enjoying fresh air and getting in a bit of exercise. With more time at home it makes absolute sense so let's hope it continues well into the future. Not only will it be good for our planet, but also for our physical and mental health as well.

We hope you enjoy the read this month. Do feel free please to contribute items of interest. Editor Fran has had to dig through the archives for relevant articles to fill this issue. Please help her out for October's newsletter by sending in your garden news. While we are all missing the famous "swap tables" from our previous meetings, we can still share garden tales in place of plants at the moment. Take care and happy gardening. Gillian

Another Wander Around Couz'n Lynn's Garden

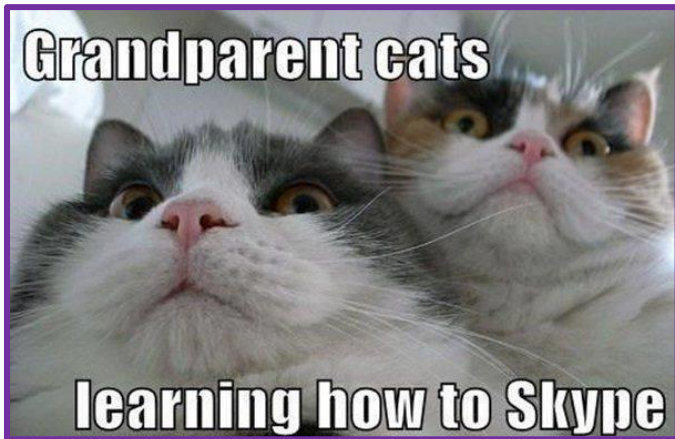
Hi all

Four months on from when we were due to host you all in our garden I thought you might like to see some of the things flowering in our garden that you might enjoy.

Couz'n Lynn xx



*Ed: Thanks so much for sharing these lovely bursts of spring colour
Cuz!*



My doctor has given me three days to give up drinking. I've picked the 5th of June, July 17th and October 9th!!



The Stages of Quarantine



Telling your suitcase there's no vacation this year can be tough. Emotional baggage is the worst.



Bush Stone-curlews are out & about on the Tweed Coast

Spring is in the air and the Bush Stone-curlews are breeding. Last season's chicks are fully grown and have been sent on their way by mum and dad while they concentrate on sitting on new eggs. Chicks are just starting to hatch now and can be on the roads. Be aware and slow down and please be respectful of them.

In NSW, the Bush Stone-curlew is listed as an Endangered species under serious risk of extinction. It is estimated that only 1000 breeding pairs remain in NSW and that numbers are declining. Coordinated efforts are required to ensure the survival of this wonderful species. Bush Stone-curlew are known from only a small number of mainly coastal locations.

Calls: Bush Stone-curlews are heard more often than they are seen because they tend to remain still for long periods and they have excellent camouflage. Sometimes their calls are the only indication of their presence. At night, Bush Stone-curlews make wailing calls, often when two birds meet at the boundaries of their territories. Males make gurgling sounds to warn females of an



approaching observer. When Bush Stone-curlews are at their nest or with their chicks, they may raise their wings wide and high and hiss loudly in what is known as a threat posture.

L: Bush Stone-curlew with chick. Photo: Tweed Holiday Parks

Behaviour: Most Bush Stone-curlew pairs stay together in the same territory throughout their lives. When not breeding, however, they tend to wander locally. Bush Stone-curlews feed and are active at night (nocturnal). During the day they rest and blend in with the ground by squatting on their feet,

with head out and legs stretched forward under the body. If disturbed, rather than fly off they prefer to crouch or stalk away stealthily and then freeze. This behaviour makes them vulnerable to predators. It's also more important than ever to keep your dogs on a leash at all times in public places, unless in a designated 'off-leash' area.

Council is working with volunteers to keep these birds safe, especially over the current breeding season from August to March.

As part of Council's NSW Environmental Trust funded project aimed at conserving Glossy Black cockatoos and Bush Stone-curlews on the Tweed Coast, Council has a new and updated on-line reporting form for you to report all sightings of Bush Stone-curlews.

This is an easy and fun way that you can help protect these birds. You can add a photo too. Council is recording all locations of individuals and breeding pairs of this threatened species so they can implement work to help protect them and keep an eye on the Tweed population over time.

Please report any sightings of Bush Stone-curlews here on the Council website <https://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/BushStoneCurlew>

If you find any injured birds, please contact Tweed Valley Wildlife Carers (02 6672 4789).

By Emily Clarke, Project Officer- Pest Animal Wildlife Protection, Tweed Shire Council

(This article appeared in the Grassroots Gazette – and has been kindly reproduced with permission from Tweed Landcare Inc <http://tweedlandcare.org.au/>.)



Members' Recipes

Five Minute Orange Cake – Philip Wilson

In the absence of any member recipe contributions this month I looked back through the historical files and found this oldie but delicious goodie contributed by Philip Wilson back in July 2012 and with oranges plentiful at this time I thought it was due for another go-around. Give it a go – I mean – what could possibly go wrong???

Ingredients

- 2 tps soft unsalted butter for greasing pan
- 200g Navel Orange (they have no pips)
- 175g unsalted butter (extra) at room temperature
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup castor sugar
- 2 cups self raising flour
- Double cream to serve

Icing

- 1 cup icing sugar
- 2 tablespoons orange or lemon juice

Method

1. Grease a 22cm round tin with butter
2. Cut unpeeled orange into segments and place in a food processor.
3. Process until finely chopped.
4. Add extra chopped butter, eggs, sugar and flour and process until well combined.
5. Spread mixture into prepared tin.
6. Cook in a moderate oven (180C) for about 45 minutes or until cooked when tested.
7. Stand cake in tin for 5 minutes before turning out on a wire rack to cool.



Combine icing sugar and juice in a jug, stirring until smooth.

Pour icing over cold cake, allow to set.

Serve with double cream.



Zoom Tips & Tricks

With many of us using Zoom these days to meet with friends and family I thought it might be useful to share these tip and tricks.

- ✓ To look your best use head-on natural lighting. Harsh lighting from behind darkens your face, you are harder to see and it can irritate others.
- ✓ To avoid triple chins and nostril shots, make sure your webcam is eye level or higher.
- ✓ Be punctual and check settings ahead of time. To test your settings go to zoom.us/test.
- ✓ To rename yourself e.g. to include your name, hover over your name on participants list, click More, and choose C Rename to change the name others can see.
- ✓ Unless you are speaking, stay on mute. Even if you move away from the computer others can still hear you. Press and hold the spacebar to quickly mute and unmute your mic, right from your keyboard.
- ✓ Untidy or busy backgrounds are distracting as is behaviour like doing other tasks, checking emails, looking at your phone, etc. Make sure you say goodbye or at least wave when leaving the zoom meeting. The host should leave last (just like a real-life party).



About Rosemary

The name comes from the Latin 'ros marinus' – which means 'dew of the sea' and for the life of me I can't see how this shrubby, aromatic plant earned it. Certainly it grows well near the sea but it is also found in the Sahara desert.

The active principle in rosemary is its aromatic volatile oil. Its uses range from culinary to medical to beauty care. In the garden it earns its way by repelling mosquitos, and being a friendly companion to sage, both stimulating the herb's growth and strengthening its taste. Rosemary and potatoes do not grow well near each other.



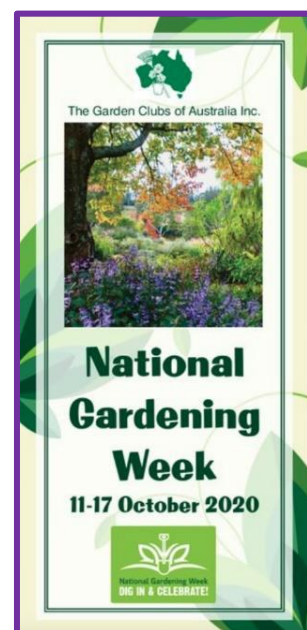
If you are making a separate herb garden, a rosemary hedge kept well-trimmed makes a good border. It also makes a protective edging to the cabbage plot, as cabbage worm butterflies don't like it.

Taken from 'Companion Planting in Australia' by Brenda Little

National Gardening Week

Don't forget National Gardening Week is just around the corner – October 11-17!

You can Dig In & Celebrate your passion for gardening in a hundred different ways! Details on the GCA website <https://gardenclubs.org.au/national-gardening-week>





Talking of stones, which we weren't, thank you all for your support. Quite exciting really, especially as I'm being published in Australia, ooh!

I've thought of something else for the stones as an 'add-on' to the main gardening business. Here's the scenario:

The little kiddies all over the world are encouraged to have a small pet, like a rabbit, hamster, gerbil or whatever. When the poor little creature snuffs it, they're usually buried in the garden, unlike the main family pet such as a cat or dog, who are usually taken to the vet (at vast expense) for proper and dignified disposal. However, the small pet is buried and the child always wants to mark the grave with something, usually two ridiculous lollipop sticks stuck together with an elastic band which lasts about two months and rots. Help is at hand — your pet's name written on a stone to plonk on top of the grave.

(stay with me, it's nearly over)

Here are some ideas for names:-

1. Pet stones
2. Pet headstones
3. Pet pebbles
4. Pet Rocks (spoiler alert...could be copyright on this one)
5. Expets
6. Pet marker
7. Pet memento

Pauline would love to know how I'm gonna ship rocks overseas, the shipping costs will be immense. Any ideas?

She suggests 'inflatable rocks', which could be a problem if when I'm writing on them, they suddenly burst. She has just informed me, as we speak, that I'm a very silly boy, as the material for the rubber will be heavy duty, and the writing will be done when it's deflated (I know the feeling). The customer at the other end will blow up the inflatable stone to bring it back to its former glory. What do you think, seriously?

I really do think it's time to stop.

Keep well & kind regards.

Dermot Gallagher

(PS – thought you might like this recent family pic taken of Pauline, Ria (our daughter) and myself relaxing at home.)



Seed Saving: A Comprehensive Guide – Dot Francis

I began saving seed some 25 years ago, more from financial necessity than anything, when I grew vegies on a small commercial scale to help the budget. Rather than spend a small fortune on buying seed, I began saving my own.

I'm sure I made every mistake there was to be made along the way. The most notable was storing seed in airtight containers & later finding a mouldy mess. Either use paper envelopes or make very sure that the seed is completely dry, & use silica gel.

Make sure you label the seed packets with its name and collection date. You do forget faster than you think, and it's amazing just how many seeds are similar in appearance. Forgetting to write the date of collection can lead to frustration when the crop either does not germinate or does poorly because it's too old.

Envelopes in a cupboard in the garden shed are not safe –I've had mice chew through plywood in their quest to reach seed so make sure conditions are vermin-proof. Ideally, a cool, dry, airy, dark place ensures best results.

All seeds lose viability over time, I suppose you could say they have a built-in "use by" date of sorts. It doesn't matter whether it's vegies, flowers or rainforest trees, & varies according to species. Wattle seed can sit in the back of the cupboard for 10 years & you know it will be fine. On the other end of the scale, the worst I've come across is Angelica, said to be only viable for 2 - 3 days or it won't grow. I do feel rather cranky when I see these seeds being offered for sale, knowing that there's probably 100% chance of them not germinating. Two rainforest trees, Red Kamala & White Booyong will give you a week from collection & that's it.

Among vegies, parsnip is the most notorious for poor germination. The best results are obtained from seed harvested in autumn & sown in spring.



Tips for Saving Your Own Seeds

For anyone beginning, the easiest to start with are lettuce, peas, beans and tomatoes as they are mainly self-pollinating. Choose your seed carefully, selecting the healthiest seed.

Many vegies cross pollinate with others of the same family –see list at end to give indications of distances required.

Pumpkins: Of those which cross-pollinate, in order to get a true-to-type variety the pumpkin family is one of the easier ones to deal with & involves putting "chastity tape" on both male & female flower buds before they open. Use a few males to each female if possible. The female's tape needs to be carefully removed, then reapplied after hand pollination to prevent unwanted cross pollination. The fattest seeds & most mature seeds of selected pumpkins will be close to the centre of the pumpkin. Discard the flat ones as they won't grow. Wash through a sieve & put the seeds on newspaper to dry.

Lettuce: Harvest seed from plants which are slow to bolt, choosing several strong specimens. When half the seeds are ripe, cut the seed head & hang it upside down in a cool, airy place, covered with a paper bag for a few weeks, before rubbing them between your hands into a large shallow bowl. Winnow off the chaff before storing. You can of course sow chaff as well if you like.

Members of the Umbelliferous family, e.g. carrots are treated similarly. The main central heads will have the most vigour, but they can be left in the garden until fairly dry, as the seeds tend to stay put.

Tomatoes are, as you know, often affected with a virus, so choose good specimens early in the season when there's less chance of a virus. To dry, first scoop out the seeds & pulp, & put in a container, covered with water. Leave for 3 - 4 days until it begins to ferment. This both makes it easier to separate out the seeds & kills some disease organisms. Tip the seeds into a sieve & run it under the tap until clean. A piece of shade cloth is ideal for drying them & the seeds can be easily separated from the shade cloth.

For beans & peas - leave to dry on the bush as much as possible, or at least until the pods are dry –the seeds will rattle. Watch out for pods splitting & releasing seeds. Spread seeds out on a flyscreen raised on bricks or similar to allow free airflow & leave to thoroughly dry for several weeks. An old bread tray, if you have one, is also good, or a large shallow box, lined with newspaper. When thoroughly dry, put beans/peas in an airtight container & freeze for 24 hours. This kills all weevil eggs. The seed must be properly dry to do this or the freezing process will damage the seeds.

Brassicas: Leave until pods are quite dry, then cut stalks & hang in a shady place for a few weeks, then treat as for lettuce.

And did you know that there are male seed as well as female, with the female seeds being far more productive? You may have noticed this in beans –the plants which are slow to grow & have a very poor yield will probably be male (sorry guys, no offence, but this is just how it is).

Below is list of viability spans of various seeds.

- ☛ Beans, Soybeans: 3 - 4 yrs. Rarely cross-pollinate (mostly automatic before flowers open)
- ☛ Climbing Beans: Best planted 2m apart to prevent accidental hybridisation.
- ☛ Snakebeans: 3-8yrs.
- ☛ Broad Beans: 2 - 3yrs. Allow several hundred metres between varieties.
- ☛ Beetroot & Silver Beet: 4 - 6yrs. Plant 250 - 500m between varieties. Wind & insect pollinated.
- ☛ Broccoli: up to 5yrs. Plant 2m between varieties.
- ☛ Brussels Sprouts: 4 - 5yrs.
- ☛ Cabbage: 4 - 5yrs
- ☛ Cauliflower: 4yrs. Cabbage family will crosspollinate each other, so stagger flowering times when saving your own.
- ☛ Capsicum & Chilli: up to 5yrs. Basically self-pollinating, but cross-pollination does occur. Planting 200m apart ensures total purity.
- ☛ Carrots: 2 - 3yrs (though I've had some very successful much older seed). 500m needed between varieties.
- ☛ Corn: 2yrs. Plant 500m from other varieties. Save earliest, best developed ears for seed. Leave on plant until the husks are dry & white. Remove husks & hang cobs in an airy place in open weave bag e.g. onion or orange net.
- ☛ Cucumber: 4 -7yrs. Leave to fully ripen on vine. Plant 1/2km between varieties. Rinse seeds well.
- ☛ Eggplant: 5yrs.
- ☛ Lettuce: to 5yrs. Self-pollinating, though small amount of cross-pollination occurs. Plant 2 - 3m apart, with barrier or tall hedge between varieties.
- ☛ Parsnip: 1yr. Best results from autumn harvested seed when sown the next spring. It will cross with other varieties, also wild parsnip.
- ☛ Peas: 3yrs. Self-pollinating but separate from other varieties by a tall hedge.
- ☛ Peanuts: Not much past 1yr. Plant 15m between varieties.
- ☛ Pumpkin: 3 + yrs (My info suggests to 10yrs though I haven't found that myself). Allow a few extra weeks after picking for seeds to mature.
- ☛ Radish: 4yrs. Leave more than one plant to go to seed. Will cross with wild radish.
- ☛ Rockmelon: 5yrs. Will cross with honeydews.
- ☛ Squash, Zucchini: 3 - 10yrs
- ☛ Tomatoes: 4yrs. Mainly self-pollinating, but small amount of crossing will occur if other varieties are close. Minimize with tall growing crop between varieties.
- ☛ Turnips: 4 - 5yrs. Varieties will cross.
- ☛ Watermelons: 5yrs. Plant 400m between crops. Will only cross with other melons, pie melons & citron melons. They're ready to pick when the little tendril next to the fruit turns brown. They will sound hollow when tapped.

Give it a try and lots of luck – I am sure you will find it as rewarding as I do.



September Job File – Julia Hancock

- ☼ Tidy up indoor plants. Remove dead leaves and use a sharp pair of scissors to trim brown patches from strap-like leaves such as dracaenas. Repot any plants that have been in the container for more than three years. Gently hose away the old soil before repotting. Fertilise with a weak liquid seaweed solution and some controlled-release pellets.
- ☼ If you've got a spare patch of cleared land why not scatter some paper daisy seeds over it and see what happens. They are hardy Australian natives which should be able to cope with any weather event in the Tweed apart from weeks of monsoonal rain. Paper daisies make excellent cut flowers which last indefinitely when dried.
- ☼ Prune gardenias now to encourage a shrubbier bush with more flowers. Give plants a good soak and fertilise with weak Seasol or Charlie Carp.
- ☼ Cacti and succulents don't need much food but it is a good idea to give them a snack of liquid fertilizer once or twice a year, say in May and September.
- ☼ Looking for a tough annual to grow this summer? Gomphrena (pic at right) is an absolute stalwart that flowers for months and appears to be completely heat and drought tolerant. It comes in a limited palette of startling purple, pink and white but is a low-growing filler ideal for colonizing the gaps between taller plants such as daylilies, dahlias and salvias.
- ☼ Zinnias are another summer flower that keep on keeping on. They've got an amazing array of colours ranging from lipstick pink to gold to green and magenta and are ideal for flower arrangements. Zinnias grow best from seed and prefer a light sandy soil with plenty of organic fertilizer to keep them powering over the summer. At the end of the season the plants will become spotty with rust and should be pulled out and destroyed rather than composted.
- ☼ Are you on a diet in anticipation of fitting into your cozzie this summer? Try growing some spaghetti squash to use in spag. bol. instead of wheaten pasta. It will need to grow on a wire netting as it can be rampant. To cook, prick with a fork and either bake or steam. To eat, remove seeds and centre pulp and scoop out pasta-like strands of flesh with a fork. Smother with your favourite low-fat pasta sauce or home-made pesto.
- ☼ Growing tomatoes is always a challenge apart from the self-seeding varieties that spring up from the compost. If you want to persist, try growing the sturdy little bush tomato, 'Roma'. It's a pear-shaped Italian variety that's ideal for cooking and preserving but is also sweet enough for salads. Roma is also the best variety for sun drying.
- ☼ Now is a great time to plant a passionfruit vine but to be sure of good quality fruit spend a bit extra and buy a grafted variety. They have shallow but extensive root systems which is why it's important to keep them well-mulched. They are also greedy feeders and citrus food should be applied in spring and autumn, scraping away the mulch and watering well before application. Don't worry if your vine doesn't bear fruit in the first year – it will be putting all its energy into establishing a good flush of growth. Be aware, however, that grafted varieties sometimes shoot from the rootstock. These shoots should be removed immediately by twisting them off, otherwise they'll quickly overcome the grafted plant. Passionfruit have a productive lifespan of only four to five years, so old vines should be removed and replaced on a regular basis.
- ☼ If you only grow one small bed of veggies this spring make it as productive as possible by companion planting. Lettuce plants love to grow with beetroot, carrots, spring onions and radishes. Scatter a few marigold seedlings among them and everyone will be happy.
- ☼ Snake beans (pic at right) are the only variety that grows really well in the worst of the summer heat. They need a strong trellis and regular picking to keep the black-tipped beans coming.
- ☼ If you've got access to plenty of water, sweet corn is an absolute must for the summer veggie garden. Nothing beats the flavour of freshly-picked cobs, in fact they're so good they can be eaten raw. Sow seed in a block and be generous with the fertilizer.
- ☼ If you can't be bothered with growing any other veggies this season, then at least put in some pumpkins. They look after themselves and pumpkin is one of the very best vegetables to incorporate into a daily diet.



Desirable but Dangerous Dieffenbachias (also known as Dumb Canes)

Dieffenbachia is a genus of tropical flowering plants in the family Araceae and is native to the New World Tropics from Mexico and the West Indies south to Argentina. These plants make very attractive house plants and are commonly seen in garden centres.

However, it is important to note that the leaves, if chewed or eaten, can cause temporary swelling of the tongue and throat, leading to a temporary loss of speech, hence the common plant name “dumb cane”. So always use gloves when handling these plants. One of our garden club members some time ago inadvertently handled some cuttings of her dumb cane (*Dieffenbachia* spp.) without gloves and almost immediately showed symptoms of severe poisoning. These included swollen, red and blistered hands, headache and nausea. You have been warned!



Bonzer Bromeliads

We're all looking for the ideal, low-maintenance plant, and many of us have discovered that bromeliads fit the bill admirably. There are several different types including the edible pineapple, the Neoregelias with their colourful central bracts (picture at left below), the Guzmanias with stunning flowers (pic in the middle below), the nodding Billbergias (pic at right below) and the old man's beard or Spanish moss that hangs from old trees.



Bromeliads are happiest growing in frost-free areas in dappled shade. Good drainage is essential. Many types are epiphytic and can be tied onto tree branches with a pair of old nylon tights. They also grow very well in pots, and this is recommended if you've splashed out on something really special. They prefer to have their roots crowded into a smaller pot rather so don't be too generous with the space you allow them.

The easiest way to feed broms is with a liquid orchid fertiliser. Dilute well and apply regularly during the plant's growing season onto the soil or potting medium. **Do not let fertiliser get into the central well.**

After flowering, most broms produce pups and the central mother plant dies. Pups can be removed and replanted when they are about one third the size of their mother. The mother should be discarded!

This is your last newsletter if you haven't renewed!

If you are yet to renew and don't want to miss out on your monthly newsletter do it now! Our membership fees remain unchanged from the \$20 per person or couple for 12 months. Details on how to pay have been in the last 3 newsletters.



Want to get your hands on the Garden Clubs of Australia 2021 Calendar?



The Garden Clubs of Australia Inc. (GCA), in conjunction with Bartel Calendars, are pleased to present the 2021 annual pictorial calendar featuring a wonderful variety of Australian gardens taken by affiliate members. The 2021 calendar includes an annual wall planner to record all your important planting and harvesting dates. It's a perfect gift for friends and family – especially for those living overseas. To order simply fill in the order form below.

ORDER FORM

POST TO: Bartel Calendars, PO Box 456, Mascot, NSW 1460 or email: sales@bartelldc.com.au

I would like to purchase ____ calendars @ \$8.00 each incl. GST & postage.

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Garden Trip to Coffs Harbour in October – anyone interested?

Local Kingscliff travel company Japan Holidays Pty Ltd and I have put together a lovely 6-day round trip garden tour starting October 8th to visit gardens in Coffs Harbour, and country gardens near Glen Innes region and Tenterfield. I'd love to share our brochure with members. It can be found on www.japanholidays.com.au/new-england-garden-tour or feel free to contact me. Thank you, Kate Heffernan

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