

Uki Garden Club

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President's Report Gillian Woodward

Firstly, to all of you, a big Thank You - for renewing your membership! We do appreciate that it is difficult in these COVID times to keep up with payments, especially when we are unable to meet as a group. The '20 persons per residence' rule still applies unfortunately, with not only the host, but every attendee being fined \$1000 for non-compliance with this law. I am sure you will agree that we cannot risk that situation, so for the moment we continue without our usual gatherings.

Although we are half way through Spring already we haven't seen much of the wet weather that was predicted. It is, however, much greener than at this time last year when we were still in drought. In Murwillumbah the Jacarandas are flowering as are the golden Silky Oaks. Bougainvillea continue to bloom as do many



Mandevilla – winding their way up trellises and arches. It is indeed a very colourful time for gardens in the Tweed.

Unfortunately for some of us, Spring also means hay-fever season. It is extra embarrassing to sneeze at the moment,



as people look very accusingly at me, probably thinking I have COVID-19! My worst enemy at present is the weed Privet, which has been in flower for about

the last 4 weeks. It is particularly abundant on creek and roadsides around Tyalgum. My nose can detect a bush up to 100 metres away, signalling me to immediately breathe through my mouth. It is a super-spreader as I continually find it sprouting in my garden, the seeds being carried from an enormous bush only 2 doors away in my street. I am not sure what can be done about it but I wonder how many people are similarly affected by it or whether it is just me!

Some of you have told me you are missing the swap table, particularly for donating excess vegetable crops. I do hate to hear of people throwing it in the compost (although that is much better than the rubbish bin, of course). Some have put fruit/vegetables/herbs out in front of their house fence, asking people to take it for free, which is one solution. But if you have this problem, you can always take produce to the Tweed Palliative Support Opportunity Shop in Queen Street, Murwillumbah, where it will be snapped up by eager buyers. You will also find great seedlings there for various plants at different times. Our own prolific propagator, Philip Wilson, donates many trays of wonderful plants to the store. (He also works as a Registered Nurse at Wedgetail Retreat Hospice, so knows first-hand how the money raised helps to keep the hospice running).

Recently we have sent well-wishes to two of our very special members who have both had stints in hospital – Dot Francis and Fran O'Hara. We hope that their post-operative recovery process is not too long and they are back into the garden as quickly as possible. Do let a member of the committee know or just email us at ugcnews@gmail.com if you know of members who are unwell or who need assistance that perhaps other members can give.

I look forward to catching up with you all again eventually – even if it is not until 2021! Happy gardening, Gillian

Open Garden at Stokers Siding September 2020



On our Facebook page you may have seen an invitation to attend an Open Garden at Stokers Siding owned by Fran & Denis Cook held on September 19th.

The 15 acre garden is known for its beautiful Wisteria Walkway which is about 35m long and 3m wide and did not fail to impress, as these photos sent in by both Denis and Jackie Balk can attest.

The afternoon also raised money for You Have a Friend and donations totalled \$210 – for which Denis and Fran have sent a big thank you to all who contributed.

L: part of the Walkway

R: Jackie Balk enjoying the Walkway.



L: Fellow club member Penny Riley

Below: Part of the beautiful garden.



On the Road Again – Travellers' Tales

Cape York Trip, July 2020 – Kate & Gary Botham

In July, Gary and I enjoyed a trip to Cape York Peninsula. (Remember those days when you could travel?). It hadn't actually been on our agenda, but with limited options, we thought we would take advantage of there not being many tourists on the road this year...no internationals, no backpackers, no Victorians and no organized tours. It turned out to be a very wise decision...we relished the freedom of being virtually on our own!

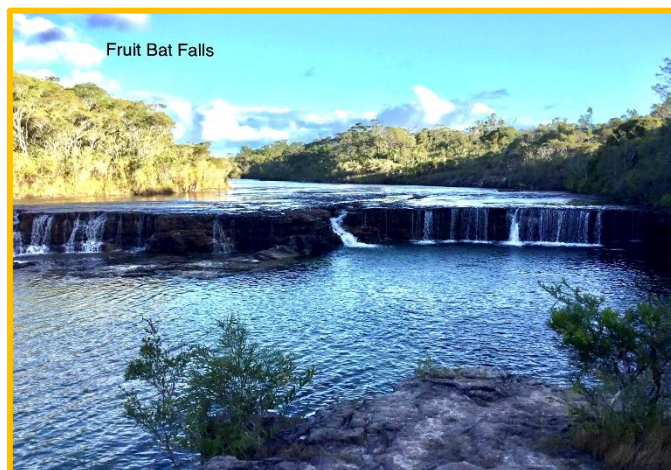


First, we flew to Cairns, then hired a car and drove to Port Douglas for 4 days. While there, we celebrated our wedding anniversary with great friends, who had been in our wedding party 42 years ago, and who now live at Port Douglas. We also had a day trip to The Daintree and Cape Tribulation (see pic above). Then we returned to Cairns, where we hired a 4WD camper, and set off on the 1000km drive to the "Tip". We drove through Lakefield National Park and camped by a billabong, surrounded with wonderful bird calls and total "serenity".

Then it was northwards to Musgrave where the road turns to red dirt, which was largely well-maintained, except for a few hundred kms of corrugations. There are patches of bitumen at fairly regular intervals, maybe every 20 or 30kms, essential for passing if you encounter traffic, as it is nigh on impossible to overtake in the dust.



There are very few detours on that road, but we did deviate and went to Captain Billy's Landing, on the east coast of the Peninsula. We found a beautiful secluded beach and the remains of a long-lost dream of an early cattle export entrepreneur (see pic at left). Back on the main road again, and onto Fruit Bat Falls (see pic below), which is the principal tourist attraction on the trip and would normally be crowded. We had it to ourselves and enjoyed a refreshing swim. The alternative "road", "The Old Telegraph Track" was nearby, and we camped near one of the notorious 4WD river crossings.

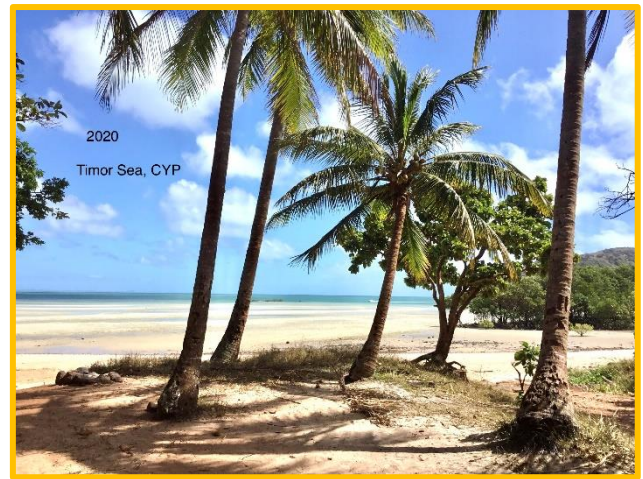


Next day we crossed the Jardine River by ferry and called into the towns of Injinoo and Bamaga, before driving as far north as we could before the short trek, by foot, to the "Tip". It was a surreal feeling to be standing there on the northernmost point in Australia, when just 6 months before we had been standing at John O'Groats, the northernmost point in the UK.

I was surprised to see that there are islands just a short distance across the sea from the "Tip" and how fast the current was flowing through that gap. We stayed at Punsand Bay that night and were witness to a glorious sunset over the Timor Sea (pic at right).

The trip south is via the same road, but we turned to the west at "Bramwell Stn" and went to Weipa and then to the Aboriginal Community of Aurukun, where we met up with my sister, Rachel,

who was in the middle of a 10 week stint of Remote Area Nursing (see pic of us together at left).



Met up with Rachel at Aurukun



It was a treat to be able to take her some home-baked goodies and some fresh meat and vegies, which we picked up in Weipa, 2 hours to the north. Rachel loves her work and was pleased to be able to show us around. Aurukun is inland from the Gulf of Carpentaria, but close to an estuary, so fishing is the main pastime. It had been 2 years since I had seen Rachel...the last time being when we caught up with her while she was nursing at Kalkarinji, in the middle of the Tanami Desert in the NT.

After Aurukun, we drove back to the main Peninsula road and headed south to Musgrave again. Then we headed south west through some of our favourite country on the trip...beautiful cattle-grazing stations; savannah scenery; beautiful wetlands and

many major rivers to cross. One of our camp spots on this road was amongst anthills and savannah scrub, 60 km north of Normanton. We enjoyed our Baileys to the accompaniment of hundreds of Lousy Jacks (Apostle Birds) settling in for the night, while watching the sunset. We then drove to Normanton and Karumba on the Gulf. Karumba was the only place we encountered any tourists, but it seemed that every man and his dog had turned up there to go fishing. We were glad to leave and head west to Burketown and on to Gregory and Lawn Hill National Park. There we went canoeing through the gorge and it was a marvellous experience (see pic at right).



Canoeing on the Gorge @ Lawn Hill NP

Fitzroy Island snorkelling...



From there, we returned to Cairns and went over to Fitzroy Island for a couple of days (see pic at left). I loved the bush walks and snorkelling, and yes! I did swim with a turtle! Magical.

For the most part, we were oblivious to any news, but from time to time we caught glimpses so we were aware of things deteriorating in Victoria. As it turned out, we arrived home within hours of the border closure into Qld, so it was pure luck that we had fitted that trip in when we did! We had a wonderful time. (Ed: Thanks so much for sharing your wonderful trip with us Kate!)

Aaah Ya Gotta Laugh

Did I Read That Sign Right?

Toilet out of order. Please use floor below.

In a Laundromat:

Automatic Washing Machines: Please Remove All Your Clothes When The Light Goes Out.

Spotted in a safari park: Elephants, please stay in your car.

Seen during a conference:

For anyone who has children and doesn't know it, there is a day care on the 1st floor.

Headline in newspaper: Panda Mating Fails: Veterinarian Takes Over

In an office:

Would The Person Who Took The Step Ladder Yesterday Please Bring It Back Or Further Steps Will Be Taken.

and

After tea break, staff should empty the teapot and stand upside down on the draining board.

Outside a second-hand shop:

We exchange anything - bicycles, washing machines, etc. Why not bring your wife along and get a wonderful bargain?

With thanks to Sue Holzknecht for sending the above thru.



And a couple of inventive store names...



Members' Recipes

Apple & Sour Cream Slice – Barbara Waters

(Ed: Again trawling through old editions of our newsletters I found this one from 2006 – and I do remember trying it and it was delicious. I have since had it a few times – made by other people but can tell you Barb's recipe is the best!)

Ingredients

For the base:

- 1½ cups self-raising flour
- ¾ cup caster sugar
- 1 cup desiccated coconut
- 125g butter, melted
- 1 tspn vanilla essence

For the top:

- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 300g sour cream
- 2 apples, peeled and coarsely grated by hand or thinly sliced (you can also use a can of tinned apples)
- 2 Tbspn brown sugar
- 1 tspn cinnamon



Method

NB: It will take you about an hour to make.

1. You will need a 25cm square slice tin or similar.
2. Preheat the oven to 160 degrees C.
3. Mix flour, sugar and coconut in mixing bowl. Add the butter and vanilla and mix well until evenly combined. Press firmly into the base of a greased and lined tin and bake for 20 minutes.
4. While the base cooks, prepare the topping by mixing the eggs with the sour cream until smooth.
5. When the base comes from the oven, increase the temperature to 180 degrees C. Let cool.
6. Spread the grated apple (make sure it's not too juicy) evenly over the cooled base, sprinkle with the brown sugar and pour the sour cream mixture over. Sprinkle with cinnamon.
7. Bake for another 20-30 minutes or until the top is set and starting to colour. Allow to cool thoroughly before slicing with a sharp knife into 3-4cm. squares.



Life at Cat Hill Allotments – Richard Stile

Here we are, some many months since my last contribution to your informative newsletter. Still immensely grateful that the allotment has provided a place to go, a purpose to achieve and the ability to interact with others from a safe distance – and I am not alone! Our allotments have never looked so good!

We could not hold our Borough annual plot and site competition this year so we dropped the site element and gave a photographic submission competition a go, with the same 11 judges viewing entries. From the 68 entries from 15 of our local societies we had 2 of our 4 entries in the top 6!



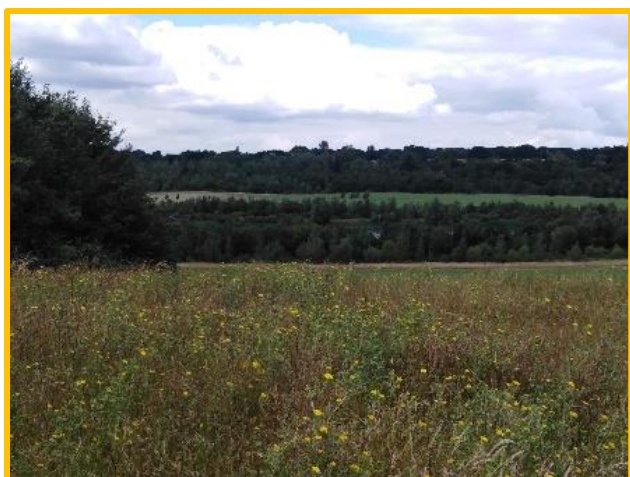
Above: 2nd place.



Above: Highly Commended 6th place

As soon as lockdown eased we visited RHS Hyde Hall, Essex, in just about one of the driest parts of the country. We wanted to see the newly-planted wildflower meadows. Despite the restrictions, it provided a well-needed trip out. RHS pride themselves on the dry gardens, now well-established and only watered when first planted.

The wildflower meadows were what we really wanted to see as we have attempted to plant up an area at the front of our site but failed miserably. So new ideas were wanted for the next attempt. Our own efforts will be scaled down considerably and without the views over the Essex countryside – see pics as below.





More than 400 species thrive in the garden, all originating from low summer rainfall areas including Australia. It was constructed over gabbro boulders and subsoil mounded over rubble and dressed with a high volume of sand and grit to provide the free draining environment.



This year we tried a new squash variety *Cucurbita ficifolia* (Fig-leaf gourd or Shark's fin melon) usually grown widely in Southern and Central America and Asia. Very vigorous and has really taken over much of the area planted to the detriment of our other butternut and *uchiki kuri* varieties.

Hugely prolific number of fruits and of huge size. A mistake for the above reason and also what on earth to do with them! Internet not a lot of help except as in a soup. Any ideas from your readers appreciated?

Carrot Myths Or Facts?

Agamemnon's soldiers in the Trojan Horse munched on carrots to "bind their bowels" so they did not need to nip out to the loo and give the game away!

Caligula is said to have once ordered the whole Roman Senate to eat a banquet only of carrot dishes. He believed in the aphrodisiac powers of carrot and that it would get people in a frisky mood and provide him some entertaining viewing...

Cheers 'til next time

Richard



Gardeners' Gallery

Here are some pictures shared by some of our garden clubbers of things in their gardens – for which I thank them very much.



Here are some photos to share with you all of my beautiful Waratah. It's seven years old and has flowered each year for the last five. However, this year it has been magical It has produced 23 flowers this year.

Enjoy from Nellmary



Is it a bird? Is it a snake ? Is it a dinosaur?
NO ! It's my giant Strelitzia !!!!
Hello to all...from Couz'n LYNN



But wait...there's more!!

Thought you might like to see my newest project...air plants on an old bike wheel !! I bought a roll of coconut fibre, & John helped put it inside the spokes. Then I gathered all the little air plants from around the garden & voila ! It is double-sided & turns around in the breeze. It looks great hanging on our veranda. Hope you all like it...Couz'n Lynn



Thought I'd send you some pics of our garden here in Tomewin.

Loving this superb spring!

Cheers,
Jennifer Sutton



Editor's own purple cauliflower – raised from Diggers Club seedlings bought at Bunnings. Tastes terrific and doesn't change colour when cooked!

Magnificent azalea spotted whilst out on a ride in Upper Burringbar – a magnificent salmon colour – Gillian Woodward



Wedgetail Raised Bed – An Update

Hello everyone

"Spring has sprung, the grass (and weeds) is riz,
I wonder where the weeders is.
The weeders are nowhere to be seen,
Probably hidden by all the tall weeds!"
[with apologies to Anonymous for the adaptations]

I hope UGC members are well and active in their gardens. Spring has sprung by now and the weeds have well and truly taken over in spite of the lack of rain.

Still, gardeners are usually known to be stubborn and will carry on and do what they need to do! I expect that when we meet again as a club there will be many stories, both tall and short, to share!

In this issue there are a number of photos taken by Jackie Balk of the two raised beds that the UGC assisted in creating and planting last year at Wedgetail. We as a club can be rightly proud of its active part in helping to make Wedgetail more self-sufficient in the food needed to help feed Wedgetail's patients. If UGC members are aware of other projects in which UGC through its members can assist, please let Club management know.



It really is pleasing to see from Jackie's photos how prolifically productive these two gardens are at present. I admire also how weed-free the gardens are (not like the current state of Sue and my garden; we will battle on to reduce/remove/replace the current weed infestation!).





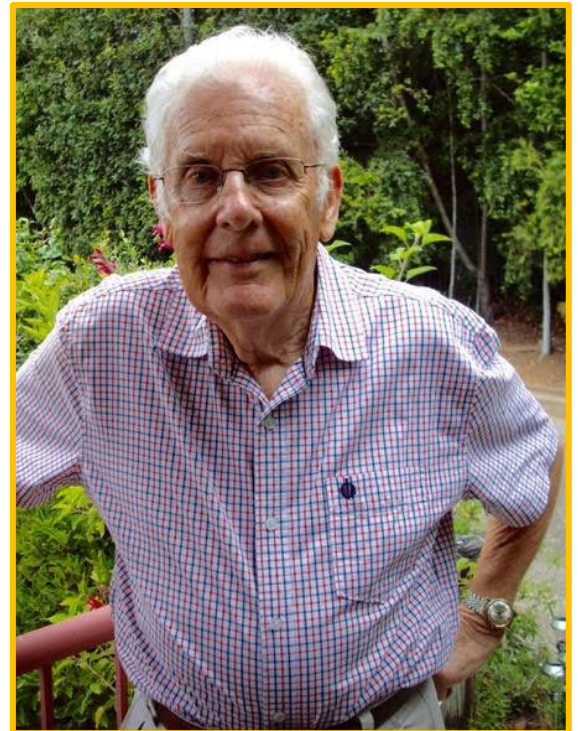
As we move towards the end of the year, let us all hope that we will be able to meet for a Christmas party soon and then enjoy a regular program of meetings during 2021.

Hartmut Holzknacht

(Ed: Huge thanks to Jackie Balk for the pics)

And from their recent newsletter – a couple of familiar faces appeared in an article on the special men who volunteer their time and skills to make Wedgetail the unique and amazing place it is. At right – Graeme Gough who, with his lovely wife Marilyn, tends to the gardens around the complex on a regular basis.

And also from their newsletter...



“And we couldn’t possibly leave out Bazz, the hospice pup who turned 5 on 6th August. Bazz certainly knows how to party and shared the celebrations with fellow party animals Philip, Amanda and Meredith, who made the special crazy canine cake!”

At left - the aforementioned Philip being our very own Philip Wilson as mentioned in Gillian’s President’s Piece.



October Job File – Julia Hancock

- ☺ Sow some zinnias for a dazzle of colour which will last from Christmas to Easter. Do not be tempted to buy zinnia seedlings in punnets - they never do as well as raising them from seed yourself.
- ☺ Get feeding. Just about everything in the garden will benefit from some fertilizer right now. Remember to water well before and after application.
- ☺ Plant tomatoes in straw bales and fertilize with liquid feed once they get going.
- ☺ If you're suffering from an excess of dead palm fronds don't despair as they make an excellent mulch when chopped up into manageable pieces. Check palms for early signs of mealy bugs as you work.
- ☺ Check for privet seedlings as a new crop is now appearing. When they are small they are easy to pull out as their roots spread along the surface of the soil, but once they are mature it is impossible to pull them out – and as Gillian mentioned – they do cause misery to many at this time of year.
- ☺ Tick alert: Ticks are unusually active and toxic this year. Protect yourself head to toe with clothing and if you can bear to, put on some personal insecticide.
- ☺ Feed azaleas and camellias with granular fertilizer and water in well.



- ☺ Apply a blueing agent to hydrangeas during wet weather. This also feeds the plant in its early stages of growth and ensures good blossoming throughout the season. Blueing agent is available in powder form from nurseries and hardware stores but can only be used on pink hydrangeas to turn them blue (it doesn't work on white ones, which always stay white no matter what the pH of the soil).
- ☺ Give gardenias a dose of Epsom salts to boost their general health (one tablespoon to three litres of water per average-sized bush). Don't worry if some leaves are yellowing and fall off as this is a natural

process, however if all the leaves are yellow with prominent green veins this is a sign of magnesium deficiency which the Epsom salts will help.

- ☺ It's warm enough to start growing beans now, but remember that they hate being grown near onions, garlic and shallots. Their best companions are carrots, celery, cucumber and lettuce.
- ☺ Whilst on the subject of companioning, keep all the Solanaceae family together when planting – i.e. eggplant, tomatoes, chillies, capsicums and spuds.
- ☺ Marigolds and parsley grow well with and improve the general health of anything in the flower and vegie garden, so sprinkle around some seeds and watch the goodness grow.
- ☺ Fertilise strawberry plants fortnightly with sulphate of potash to keep the fruits coming. By the way, did you know that a strawberry isn't a berry at all, but the swollen receptacle that houses the plant's seeds?
- ☺ Remove the stalks of spent broad bean crops leaving the roots in the soil and using the tops as a nitrogen-rich mulch.
- ☺ Stake tall dahlias as they begin to grow.
- ☺ Renew faded plant labels.



Did You Know?

Lettuce plants have been cultivated since about 2,500 BC when the ancient Egyptians took a shine to them. 'Cos' lettuce is so named because it was discovered on the Greek island of Kos. The name 'Iceberg' derives from Californian farmers' habit of heaping ice onto the tops of lettuces to keep them cool on the way to market.



Luverley Lichen



It's an interesting fact that lichen monitors changes in air quality and is an indicator of unpolluted air. We're so lucky here in the Tweed to have so much lichen clinging to our trees and rocks. Some people worry when they see it on azaleas, but it never kills them and is something to welcome in the garden. Lichens have many benefits including providing material for birds to make nests out of and pharmaceutically it is used in the manufacture of antibiotics.

Flowers That Even Darwin Can't Explain

The DarthVader

(*Aristolochia salvadorensis*)



Laughing Bumble Bee Orchid

(*Ophrys bomybliflora*)



Happy Alien

(*Calceolaria uniflora*)



(with thanks to Couz'n Lynn for sending these through)

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.