

Uki Garden Club

Volume 20/10 November 2020 ugcnews@gmail.com P.O. Box 580 Murwillumbah 2484
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At this time of year we are usually inviting you to our annual Christmas Party. However, the committee met recently and decided that holding a function in 2020 with COVID rules applying was too difficult. We had trouble finding a function centre in which we could accommodate our usual 50+ members, while obeying all the social distancing and food service rules. However, we did come up with a plan for 2021!

Towards the end of January – in fact on **Saturday 30th, 2021** – we plan to hold a “Welcome to 2021 Party” to reunite our valued members. We have made a booking for the Burringbar School of Arts Hall, where we invite you to attend a special afternoon tea (catered by the Garden Club) which will include alcoholic and soft drinks as well as some tasty sweet and savoury treats made by talented local caterers. Entertainment will be provided. If the current COVID rules still prevail, all members must be seated at tables (not permitted to mill around)! It will be a very different experience from our previous activities, but I’m afraid we must draw up a COVID Safety Plan and adhere to it strictly if we are to hold what is termed a “corporate function” for our members. There will be a raffle and Swap Table as usual. More details will be given in our December newsletter, so watch out for these and put the date on next year’s calendar now. Bookings will be required – details on this next month.

As we near the end of the supposedly ‘wet forecast’ 2020 Spring, it seems that Summer is already very well on the way and more rain would be most welcome. The lush green pastures of our Tweed Valley are in marked contrast to our neighbouring Northern Tablelands countryside where I recently visited (see story further on). We are fortunate not to be on water usage restrictions like so many other towns.

Please do keep sending news of either your gardening progress or travelling tales to our hard-working newsletter editor, Fran. The monthly publication will only be as good as you, the members, make it. Your input will make Fran’s job much easier.

Lastly, I’d like to wish our valued members, Phil and Marcella Keegan, a fond goodbye as they leave their beautiful property in Upper Burringbar to resettle in/near Brisbane, closer to family.

(pic at right of Phil and Marcella kindly supplied by Jackie Balk)

Both have served on our committee and have always been willing helpers on many occasions. The Food Group enjoyed a splendid meeting at their home where it was obvious they had put countless hours of hard labour and love into their impressive garden and orchard. It must be difficult for them to say farewell to it, but Marcella has assured me that they will be back to visit us in the future. (We will miss those Op shop knives, Marcella!)



Happy Gardening, stay safe and well

Gillian

Wondrous Waratahs - Penny Riley

"Well, that lives up to its name!" I thought, as I turned around and looked.

I was on a hike out to The Needles in Gibraltar National Park and saw large fiery blooms dotted around several hundred metres away. Having seen the large red flower heads on the sandstone areas of Brisbane Waters National Park in a previous season, I thought immediately of the word *Telopea*. *Telopea* is Greek for "seen from afar". The common name, *Waratah* is an aboriginal word for "beautiful". The waratah is surely an aptly named plant.

I clambered over the granite boulders to get a closer look and thought the blooms looked just a tad pinker than the *Telopea speciosissima* I'd seen on the Hawksbury sandstone country.



On researching it, I realised I was looking at a completely different species. The Gibraltar Range waratah was recognised in 1995. Crisp and Weston also noted the leaf was more coarsely toothed and consequently named the species *Telopea asper*, "asper" meaning rough. It has been given the status of a rare and threatened species and no doubt due to Washpool NP being given World Heritage ranking.



I remembered too, a bloom beside the Cradle Mountain track in Tasmania. It had been called the Tasmanian Waratah but looked nowhere near as majestic as the two NSW species. It has the name of *Telopea truncata* which, when you see the sparser, truncated blooms of the flower, makes great sense (see pic at left). However, when holding a cup full of fresh snow in its clasp it looks sensational.

The Waratah in Gibraltar NP had bounced back beautifully from the fires. I now know Waratahs have an adaptation mechanism which allows them to prosper in extreme conditions. Dormant buds are located on their underground stems (swollen lignotubers) which start to flower shortly after a fire.

There are five species of *Telopea*, all thriving on the east coast of Australia. Another two from the south are *Telopea oreades* and *Telopea mungaensis*, or Munga Waratah, around the Braidwood altitudes.



I had wondered how the spectacular Queensland tree Waratah (*Alloxylon flammeum*), figured in the family of Waratah (pic at left). All was revealed when in an article I saw mentioned the tribe – Embothrieae of plants which commonly had big showy red terminal flowers. The *Alloxylon*, from Eastern Australia & New Caledonia & the Fire tree from Chile, all are within this genus. The origin of these plants is thought to predate the

splitting of Australia, Antarctica & South America over 60 million years ago.

A walk through Washpool NP at any time of the year is worthwhile, as its part of the Gondwanaland rainforests of Australia.

(Ed: thanks so much Penny for sharing this story and lovely pictures)



On the Road Again – Travellers' Tales

Tenterfield – Gillian & John Woodward

Early in November, John and I took a road trip up to Tenterfield where we stayed for four nights, visiting two nearby National Parks.

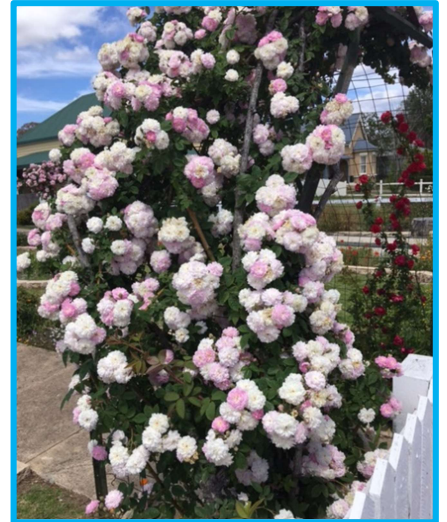


We drove up through Kyogle and Casino and back via Mt. Lindsay Road to Woodenbong, then Summerland Way to Kyogle and home.

Even just walking from our motel to the town centre, I noticed so many beautiful gardens!

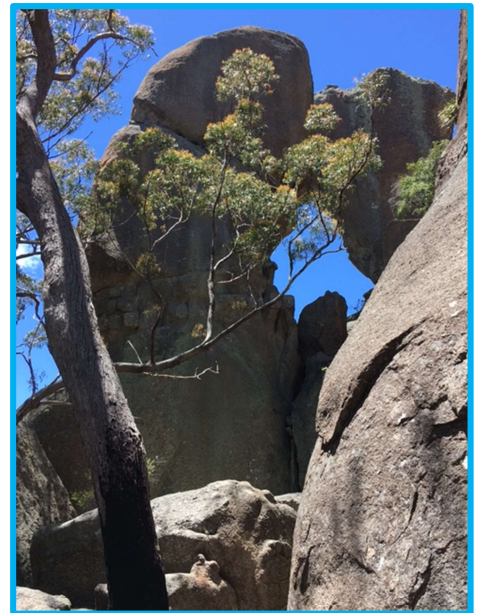
Roses in particular were spectacular –they must enjoy

the cooler climate up there on the tablelands.



We wondered how the National Parks –Girraween and Bald Rock –had fared in the bushfires 12 months ago. Although we saw a lot of charcoal, there were promising signs of regeneration, particularly for eucalypts. Banksias, however, have fared poorly, showing little sign of life.

A few wildflowers did help brighten much of the blackened landscape, mainly daisies and the odd orchid.



At right – also in Tenterfield – a stark reminder of our past colliding with the present.





Passed on from Sue Holzknecht ... thanks Sue!

I still can't believe people's survival instincts told them to grab toilet paper.	I'm going to stay up on New Year's Eve this year. Not to see the New Year in, but to make sure this one leaves.	If I had only known in March it would be my last time in a restaurant, I would have ordered dessert.
At the store there was a Big X by the register for me to stand on... I've seen too many Road Runner cartoons to fall for that one.	Having some states lock down and some states not lock down is like having a peeing section in a swimming pool.	Until further notice, the days of the week are now called, thisday, thatday, otherday, someday, yesterday, today & nextday.
THEY SAID A MASK AND GLOVES WERE ENOUGH TO GO TO THE GROCERY STORE THEY LIED, EVERYBODY ELSE HAD CLOTHES ON	The dumbest thing I've ever purchased was a 2020 planner.	When Does Season TWO of 2020 Start? I Do Not Like Season ONE.
Keep in mind, even during a pandemic, no matter how much chocolate you eat, your earrings will still fit.	The buttons on my jeans have started social distancing from each other.	I never thought the comment "I wouldn't touch him/her with a 6 foot pole" would become a national policy, but here we are



Deb's Chai Tea, Penny Riley

Penny Riley sent this through following a visit from her sister in law Deb. I can attest to the deliciousness and freshness of this recipe having been fortunate to sample one of the first batches made. Penny served it over ice garnished with fresh spearmint – however, normal mint would do just as well.

How to make:

In 2 Litres simmering water put:

- 5 cm of ginger cut into rounds, skin on
- 20 squashed cardamom pods
- 25 - 30 black peppercorns
- 2 - 3 cinnamon sticks
- about 15 cloves
- 6 star anise .

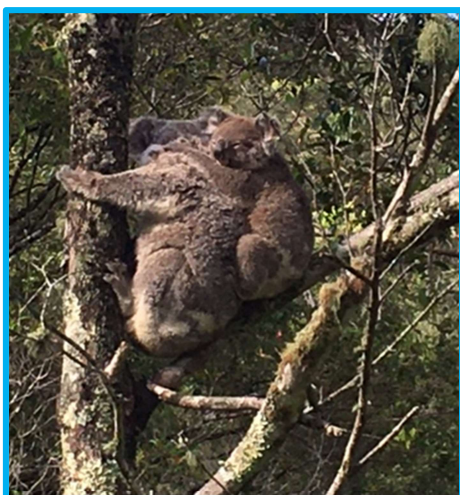
Gently simmer for 40 -45 mins

Strain liquid and bottle. Keep in fridge.

Sweeten with 1/2 teaspoon of honey, drink with milk if desired.

Also try ... lemon peel, orange peel, turmeric

Delicious hot or cold.



And also from Penny (pic at left) some welcome visitors in a tree close to her home



Beauty in the Beast – the Rare Rainforest

Marsupial Frog (*Assa darlingtonii*)

Tweed Shire's small amphibian resident, the marsupial frog *Assa darlingtonii* (the only species in the genus *Assa*) are a challenge to spot as they are similarly coloured to the logs and leaf litter they live under. This small brown frog of about 2.5 cm has no webbing or discs on their digits although their fingers and toes are swollen. They are reddish brown with distinctive darker spots, and most have a dark stripe that runs from the eye to the nostril. They have golden eyes flecked with brown and have a horizontal pupil when constricted. It may call through the day but calling is most intense during dawn and dusk. Its call is a very quiet eh-eh-eh-eh-eh, usually six to ten notes. This frog crawls rather than hops.



Above: The marsupial or hip pocket frog. Photo: Isaac Wishart @gc_hinterland_herper

The female lays her eggs under decomposing logs, leaf litter or a rock where the eggs are guarded by both the male and female for 11 days. The tadpoles do not need water for metamorphosis. When the eggs hatch, little white blind tadpoles wriggle up to the male, and he carries the tadpoles in the pocket on his hip for 70 days until they have morphed. This interesting feature is unique to this particular species, hence the common name "Marsupial Frog".



At left: The male Marsupial Frog carries the tadpoles until they metamorphose. Photo: Springbrook Rescue

Frogs are adaptable and ever so varied. The presence of frogs often indicates a healthy ecosystem, which is just one reason Australia's and the rest of the world's declining frog populations are of great concern. The Marsupial Frog is listed as 'vulnerable' in NSW. There is evidence to suggest logging and land-clearing are the main contributors to this status, as well as weed invasion and the destruction of habitat through

inappropriate fire regimes and stock trampling. Land clearing not only removes habitat but increases salinity to which frogs are intolerant.

The Marsupial Frog is also another victim of climate change, as they prefer the high-altitude Gondwanan rainforests of the NSW-QLD border which are undergoing changes in conditions due to higher temperatures, drought and increased fire activity. Frogs are also ectothermic which means they regulate their body temperature through their environment and if this changes rapidly, they will struggle to keep up.

To aid the recovery of the Marsupial Frog as well as our other local frog friends, you can assist in the regeneration of native species by weed removal, contributing to population surveys, keeping up to date with frog recovery plans and joining community groups such as Tweed Landcare to help restore habitat.

References:

- <https://www.ozanimals.com/>
- www.environment.nsw.gov.au
- www.environment.gov.au
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(The above article appeared in the *Grassroots Gazette* – and has been kindly reproduced with permission from Tweed Landcare Inc <http://tweedlandcare.org.au/>.)

Salacious Salvias

Salvias are found in many different countries and often have strongly scented leaves, so it is inevitable that they would be used in many different cultures. The chemically complex volatile oils found in glands in the leaves are the source of their scent and flavour.

The best known and most commonly used is *Salvia officinalis* (pic at right), more usually called “common sage”. This sage is the source of leaves for sage stuffing; it is also used with cheese, and as part of a bouquet garni to flavour stews, soups and casseroles. The leaves are strongly antiseptic and are used medicinally as a tonic for sore throats, to ward off colds and reduce sweating. Sage is high in anti-oxidants and recent research suggests that it might even slow aging and improve memory.

Two particularly nice cultivars are ‘Purpurascens’, which has broad, plum-coloured leaves, and ‘Icterina’, which has green leaves with gold margins. Both can be used in the same way as common sage.

Other edible and useful sages include:

- ☺ White sage or bee sage (*Salvia apiana*). This is a Californian native with grey-white leaves and lavender flowers, the latter being very attractive to bees because they provide abundant nectar. Indigenous Americans used this plant in ceremonies and drank tea made from the leaves to treat congestion and colds. The leaves are also used as a deodorant.



- ☺ Chia (*S. columbariae*) (pic at left). Another Californian native, this annual sage forms small clumps of grey-green leaves with amethyst-blue flowers. The seeds of this sage are highly nutritious. It was sown as a crop by Indigenous Americans and formed an important component of their diet. The seeds also have thirst-quenching properties and are eaten by birds and small mammals.

- ☺ Fruit-scented sage (*S. dorisiana*) comes from Central America and has large, fragrant, soft-green leaves and magenta-pink flowers both of which can be eaten, and the leaves are made into a tea.

- ☺ Pineapple sage (*S. elegans*) has

bright red flowers; both the leaves and flowers can be eaten for their strong pineapple flavour.

- ☺ Greek sage (*S. fruticosa*) leaves are used in the same way as common sage and are made into a tea in Cyprus.
- ☺ Grapefruit sage (*S. gesneriiflora*) (pic at right) flowers are full of nectar with a beautiful sweet flavour so can be eaten straight from the plant.
- ☺ Mexican chia (*S. hispanica*) grows to 1m with purple flowers. It is an annual and its seeds are used in ways similar to *S. columbariae*. It has been cultivated for more than 5000 years and was originally grown by the Aztecs. It is now being grown as a commercial crop in North Western Australia.



- ☺ The leaves of the tough South Africa sage (*S. lanceolata*) have a lemon-pepper flavour and are used to flavour fish.

- ☺ Both leaves and seeds of grape-scented sage (*S. melissodora*) have been used medicinally by the Mexican Tarahumara Indians and the grape-flavoured flowers are edible.

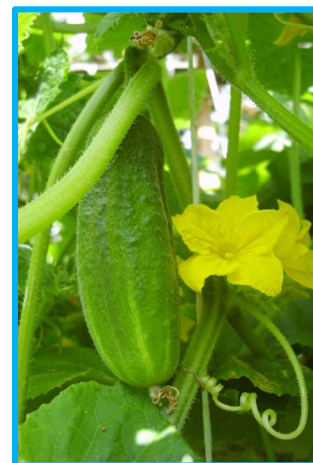
- ☺ *S. miltiorrhiza* comes from China and is often called “red sage” because of its red roots. It has been used medicinally for more than 2000 years.

- ☺ *S. microphylla* (pic at left) is called “myrtle of the mountains” in its native Mexico, but it is also known as “blackcurrant sage”. It is drunk as a refreshing tea with a blackcurrant flavour.



November Job File – Julia Hancock

- ☼ Mulch around your deciduous trees (maple, Cotinus, Sapium, White Cedar (*Melia*)) to protect their roots from summer heat.
- ☼ Do a pre-Xmas chop of straggly petunias to encourage them to rejuvenate. Simply bunch them up and cut off the growth to half-way down the stems. Fertilise with a soluble product. Deadheading them helps to prolong their lives.
- ☼ Still got weeds in your lawn? It's not too late to use a 'weed 'n' feed' spray-on product but do remember not to compost the clippings from the first cut after spraying
- ☼ Clean your house windows before Christmas so it's a pleasure for people to look out of them onto your lovely garden during the holidays.
- ☼ Think about ways to make gardening easier for yourself during 2021 so that by the time the weather cools off in autumn you've got a plan of action to carry out before next spring.
- ☼ Do an audit of the tool shed so anything that is broken or not used any more can be taken to the dump or the tip shop. You'll be amazed just how much junk one can live without!
- ☼ Now is a great time to get cucumbers in and here are a few tips to help you get a bumper crop:
 - Cucumber seeds will only germinate in warm soil with good drainage. Prepare well ahead by creating a mound full of rich compost and soil with some granulated vegie food mixed in. Water well.
 - Plant at least three seeds on top of the mound, culling all but the best when they germinate. This may seem wasteful, but it will save money in the long run, and produce a much better crop.
 - Cucumbers always grow better from seed sown in the earth than from seedlings grown in a punnet and transplanted.
 - Protect young seedlings from bandicoots and brush turkeys by building a stout wire cage around the mound and roofing it with a net.
 - Cucumbers must be pollinated. If they are not setting fruit it means the bees are not doing their job and human intervention is required. Simply take a paintbrush or cotton bud and push it into the pollen in the male flower and transfer it into the centre of the female flower (both sexes grow on the same plant).
 - Water the roots of the plant, not the foliage. Damp foliage encourages powdery mildew and other unpleasantness. Water them in the morning.
 - Scatter some seeds of Borage (pic at right) around to attract pollinating bees.
 - The more you pick, the more you get!



Magnificent Miscanthus

Perennial grasses have been trendy for a while now and no wonder as they are both beautiful and drought tolerant. *Miscanthus sinensis* comes in a variety of forms, all with attractively marked leaves. Most produce delicate seed heads in late summer. Miscanthus can be grown on relatively poor soil, in sun or semi-shade and once the clump is established it requires very little maintenance. Old clumps can be divided in late spring, but make sure there has been good rain during the days before digging, so the clump comes up more easily. Replant divisions immediately and keep well-watered until established. If desired, untidy clumps can be pruned to shape.

Whenever working with ornamental grasses be sure to wear gloves because scary things like to curl up in them and some of their leaves are sharp and/or serrated.



Berry Good Bush Tucker

We've all become aware of the wonderful health benefits of blueberries, but now Australian scientists have confirmed that wild fruits grown in the outback have been shown to contain five times the level of health-boosting antioxidants as blueberries. Fruits such as Tasmanian pepperberry, Ribberries, Burdekin plum, Brush cherry, Molucca raspberries and Finger limes are all rich in nutrients. Even better news is that many of these berries grow well here in the Tweed and species such as Riberry (*Syzygium luehmanii*) (pic at right) look very attractive in the home garden.



More Flowers That Even Darwin Can't Explain

Swaddled Babies

(*Anguloa uniflora*)



Dove Orchid or Holy Ghost Orchid

(*Peristeria elata*)



Flying Duck Orchid

(*Caleana major*)



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

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.