

Uki Garden Club

Volume 21/03 March 2021 ugcnews@gmail.com P.O. Box 580 Murwillumbah 2484

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



Here we are in March already with three well-attended meetings behind us (one garden gathering and two food groups)! Not to mention the Welcome Back Party in January! It is such a joy to be able to gather safely again after 12 months without seeing all our gardening friends. And it is wonderful to see so many fresh faces coming along with new questions and ideas to share.

I am sure those who attended Kate Heffernan's talk at Tumbulgum will agree with me that it was extremely interesting. She willingly shared her horticultural knowledge and expertise with us, not only informing us about the history of the Gold Coast Botanical Gardens, but also in answering general gardening questions from the floor. Please do let me know if you have any ideas for good topics/speakers at future Saturday gatherings. There must be many more subjects our members would like to explore, so put your thinking caps on please!

Our swap tables at the Tumbulgum gathering and at both food groups have been bulging with plants and produce again – thank you all for sharing so willingly. Do remember to label your offerings, but if you forget, we will have paddle pop sticks and a marker pen at the swap table for you to do it when you arrive. If you cannot contribute anything, that is perfectly fine. There is always a gold coin donation box there to receive your dollar(s). This money is used to help keep the wonderful seed box full of little seed envelopes, as well as to pay for other meeting costs (hall hire, etc.)

Many thanks to those who have contributed to this newsletter, especially to Kate Botham for her fascinating Tasmanian trip log and Jean Nuttall for introducing us to Calamondin! Also, thanks to our regular contributor and UGC founder, Julia Hancock, as well as to our recipe providers – keep them coming please. Fran is oh so keen to receive your hints, tips, questions and more, to make our monthly newsletter the essential reading that it is!

On that note, all copy for the April newsletter needs to be in before the end of this month, to enable our trusty newsletter editor to get away for a well-earned holiday.

Enjoy the (hopefully) cooler Autumn weather. It is a great time to be out in the garden, especially planting new food crops as well as exotics.

Wishing you all a healthy, Happy Easter season.

Stay well and keep gardening

Gillian

(R: Pink Mandevilla is very showy right now)



February Food Group Report

Julia Hancock

We were delighted to be able to get back to the Food Group on 9 February with a large meeting at Kingscliff Nursery. Our gracious host Judy and her family bought it in 1988, since when they have done an amazing amount of work putting in drainage, paths and display areas. They have also installed a sophisticated water recycling infrastructure and now reuse one third of their water.

A decade ago they purchased some alpacas and now have 33, and let's not forget Sally the dog. They employ a horticulturalist to propagate their native plants but also sell a large variety of exotics. Judy says the home attached to the nursery is "a perfect place to live."

Lots of members attended so there was a good variety of topics.



- Christine's pot-grown lemon is fruiting but not putting on any growth. Why? Plants in pots need regular fertiliser – little and often is the key to success.
- Peter has now got two bee hives: he was lucky enough to capture a swarm and they are producing lots of honey.
- Sheila's old 'Hass' avocado tree has produced a massive quantity of fruit which look ripe but they can't be harvested till April or they will just stay hard and eventually rot in the fruit bowl. Apply boron to keep the fruit on the tree till then.
- Suzanne is a new member who moved to Terranora 3.5 years ago.
- Another new member Wendy moved to a one-acre property three years ago which had been planted with citrus and avocado. She has a tropical apple but so far it hasn't done anything.
- Another new member Karen owns a garden that is 18 months old and is starting to grow vegies this season.
- Jenny advised that she too had a tropical apple which performed in the first year but never since. The general consensus of opinion was that tropical apples don't do well here. She purchased a toad melon at the market, an unusual fruit with dark wrinkly skin and white, sweet, crispy fruit within. She'll save seeds for the Seed box.
- David added that he replaced the apple with a mandarin. Thanks to the effects of La Nina he's having to mow 1.5 times a week.



- Tim's apple also did nothing and his cold climate fruits such as nectarine are struggling but he's had a good crop of figs. Why has his eggplant gone yellow?
- Heather on the other hand has an amazing eggplant which she got from the swap shop. It's been fruiting for 12 months and is still going strong.

L: Peter, Marie, Tim and David enjoying a catch up.

- Jackie grew green eggplant this year which she recommends - see pic at right. She's also had a good asparagus crop but has resisted picking the thin ones so they come back bigger and better next year.
- Tess has a huge lychee tree with was covered in fruit this year but the bats ate every last one of them. She needs to prune the tree but how? Jackie advised that you prune out the branches clustering in the middle, so the light can get in.
- Susan bought four cucumber plants from Bunnings and had a glut. She's been making cucumber pickle and will provide us with the recipe (see further on in the newsletter). Malabar greens are a good substitute for spinach in the summer.
- Jenny has decided to stop growing snake beans as they attract ants. She harvested 50kg of Russian garlic this year – 12 months' supply.
- Jim has made a hedge of South American cherries along his fence line and they are currently smothered in fruit.
- Martin's 'Blue Lake' beans and eggplant developed rust. He's growing daikon radish in his new vegie bed to break up the soil.
- Jean sang the praises of calamondin. It's often confused with cumquat but is far superior. Known officially as *Citrus maxima*, calamondin is a cross between grape and citrus and bears a round fruit (whereas cumquat is oval). Calamondin jam is heavenly – see article and recipe a little further on in the newsletter.
- Di brought in the casing of a very unusual gold chrysalis (yes, it really looked like pure gold) from a Crow butterfly – see pic at right. She's turned over her vegie patch to growing a variety of pumpkins. Her 'Timor' lettuce is doing well.
- Hartmut is very pleased with his wicking bed, which is very productive.
- Sue was having trouble with blossom end rot on her tromboncini but a dose of lime fixed it. She showed us a beautiful *Bidens* plant growing in a hanging basket. It's a relative of the dreaded Farmer's Friend and similar to the weed, the leaf tips are edible, but the flower looks like a marigold. It is insect-attracting.
- Nellmary needs fertile eggs for her clucky hen. Heather Neill will provide some.
- Dot has recently installed a frog pond. Apart from water chestnuts what food plants can she grow? Hartmut suggested water cress and kangkong (Asian greens). Jenny and Tim recommended water celery and Asian basil.
- Gillian's basil has gone mad so she's been making lots of pesto.
- Everyone had a good gripe about GRASSHOPPERS! Even the little ones can cause havoc in the garden.



R: Tess, Dot and Karen enjoying a shop at the nursery.

(With huge thanks to Jackie Balk and Gillian for the great pics.)





Saturday 27th February 2021

Tumbulgam Community Hall

On a grey and very humid Saturday afternoon, around 65 UGC members gathered at Tumbulgam Hall for our first Garden Gathering since February 2020, due to the restrictions imposed as a result of the spread of the Coronavirus. It was just lovely to see old gardening friends and welcome new ones.

Our President Gillian opened proceedings, welcomed members and we enthusiastically welcomed our guest speaker **Kate Heffernan**, from the **Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens, Rosser Park**.



First, Jenny Kidd welcomed us to the Tumbulgam Hall, and to Tumbulgam Village, a picturesque little settlement at the junction of the Tweed River and the Rous River. The name "Tumbulgam" is from the local language of the Bundjalung people of the Northern Rivers. *Tumbul* means

"small leaf fig tree" and *gum* means "river crossing". Jenny told us that the European settlement dates back 155 years, when it was established as a river port. Many of the gardens in the village are planted with palms and yuccas, which can withstand the regular flooding of the land. Thirty years ago, the local Public School planted a small rainforest in the school grounds which has matured to become an important teaching area for the school children. There is also a "Yarning Circle" in the rainforest where groups of children can go and "have a yarn"! Along the river bank are some very old Poinciana trees which are now becoming quite fragile.



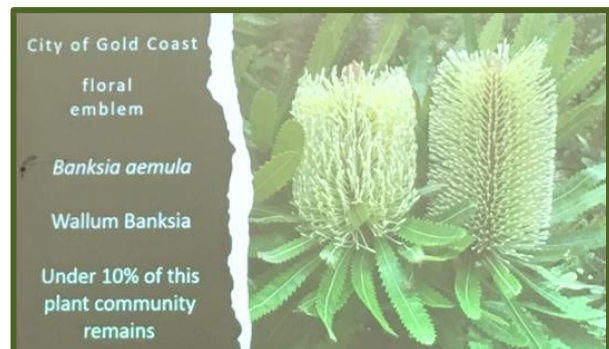
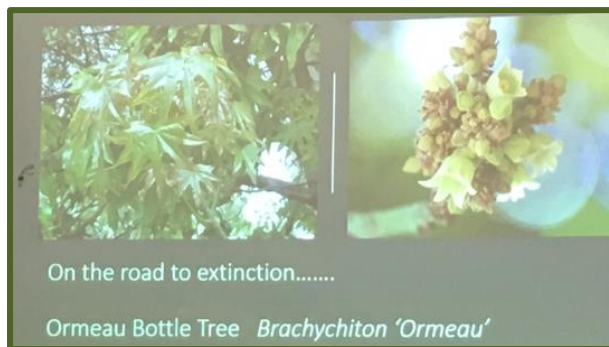
Our guest speaker Kate Heffernan has a strong horticulture and landscape design background and has had experience over four decades of involvement in developing botanical gardens and associated landscapes. Kate is also a teacher, writer, broadcaster and has also led botanical tours in Australia and overseas. Kate has been involved in the **Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens (GCRBG)** since their formal inception and founded the Friends of the GCRBG.

The site on which the present GCRBG is situated has a long history of cultivation in the post-contact period. The family of the botanist and second director and designer of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens, William Guilfoyle, had grown sugarcane around 1871 in the area along the Nerang Creek, on land belonging to the Kombumerri people, a clan of the Yugambeh people. Sugar was no longer planted by 1919-1920 and the land was bought by the Rosser family who established a wonderful garden on the site. In 1922 the house and garden were heritage listed.

In mid-1998 a small group of enthusiasts met and formed a steering committee of Friends of the Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens, led by their Founder, Kate. Regular committee meetings followed with the first general meeting in May 1999. Not long after, the Friends presented their first proposal for a Regional Botanic Gardens to the Gold Coast City Council. Rosser Park was selected by Council in late 1999 as the most suitable site based on criteria from international standards. The first planting day was held in 2003.

In 2004, the Friends appointed Gene Rosser, who still lives in the old house, as their Patron. In the 1960s Gene's family had donated 4.5 hectares of the 35 hectares of land to Council that now form Rosser Park.

Friends of the GCRBG proceeded with clearing of the camphor laurels on the site, established “precincts”, walks, and continued planting local indigenous species. Some of these species are vulnerable or endangered, however, and have been looked after by The Friends and examples grown or propagated and where possible returned to local habitat such as nature reserves and public parks. The slides Kate showed us of some of these species now in flower demonstrated the fruits of their labours.



Kate also talked about the wildlife that has been attracted to the Gardens, including Magpie geese which are nesting right now, other birds, insects, amphibians, bats, and fish. The volunteers now number several hundred members, divided into different groups. Some are interest groups who guide tours around the gardens, such as the bird group, bush foods group and many others. Gold Coast City Council now employs 7 permanent staff in the Botanic Gardens.

For photographs and descriptions of the plantings, the wildlife, the precincts, walks, tours and special features see the website of the Friends of the Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens:

<https://friendsgcrbg.org.au/>

and: <https://www.goldcoast.qld.gov.au/thegoldcoast/botanic-gardens-history-27648.html>

Kate then answered questions from members:

1. Philip remarked that in 2013 when UGC members visited the GCRBG, some of the waterways were blocked by the giant invasive waterweed *Salvinia molesta*. Was that still a problem?

Kate answered that it is still a problem in lakes in the Botanic Gardens. There is not enough water flowing into the lakes to fill to the depth. They have had clean water projects, and have also found that the *Azolla* water fern helps keep the *Salvinia* at bay.

2. Jenny asked whether other Botanic gardens in Australia have an organisation of Friends? Kate replied that there are more than 100 Botanic Gardens in Australia and most have Friends organisations. There is an organisation called the **Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens**. Jenny said that when we went to the Mt Tamborine Botanic Gardens we were hosted and guided by a very enthusiastic and active group of Friends of Tamborine Botanic Gardens.

Jenny also informed us that the Tweed Shire Council has set land aside for a Botanic Garden at Eviron, near the tip site. Plans have been drawn up and are available. See: [Tweed Regional Botanical Gardens Project \(2.1mB PDF\)](#).

However, Council seems reluctant to develop the site until the Stotts Island recycling site has been redeveloped. We need to contact councillors and keep reminding them about the need for a Botanic Garden for the region.

Gillian thanked Kate for coming and for her very interesting talk and gave her a gift of a mug hand-painted by our member Jan Brooks, with a scene of Wollumbin (Mt Warning), as a memory of her visit to us.

The meeting then turned to the usual **Q and A** segment. Due to Covid restrictions the Q & A book was not passed around, but questions were asked from the floor.

1. Fran: What flowering bulbs will grow in our warm, humid climate?

Suggestions were Freesias, Jonquils, Hippeastrums, Daylilies, Nerines, Hyacinths, Clivias. Jackie suggested placing bulbs like Daffodils in a refrigerator veggie crisper for a few weeks, then planting in pots. Kate Heffernan suggested contacting **Larsen's Nursery and Warm Climate Bulbs** at Fernvale, near Toowoomba, Queensland, for warm-climate bulbs. Email: larsensbulbs@plant.id.au They are at: 22 Fielding Rd, FERNVALE, Qld, 4306. Ph (07) 5426 7127; Mob: 0412 622 669.

2. Fran asked how to make a *Pandorea jasminoides* she has just planted bush out and cover its support? Kate suggested trimming its branches back to a node and fertilizing it.

3. Di Morrison: My large Cheese tree has many pouches of caterpillars. How will they affect my tree? How can I get rid of them? Kate: It is a climate-related and seasonal issue. Don't try to spray the whole tree. Get advice from a local source about what to apply to the soil around the tree.

4. Tracy: My mandarin tree has dropped all its fruit. Answer: this is due to inconsistent water supply to the tree, alternating dry and rainy weather.

5. Christine Ray: There are grubs in the centre of many of my lily and hippeastrum plants, which are eating them out. Answers: Philip: Use Dipel (and see February Newsletter). Marie sprinkles Bicarb soda around the base of plants. Derris dust was also mentioned. Spraying with Neem was also suggested. It stops the caterpillars eating, and they die in a few days.

6. Helen: One branch of her lime tree has yellow leaves and other leaves are striated with yellow. ABC TV "Gardening Australia" on Friday 26th showed Tino repotting a yellowing lime tree. Try Google. It could be an Iron or Magnesium deficiency.

7. Annie: Leaves of her geraniums are dying and falling. Philip says, break off all dead leaves. This happens because of humidity.

Gillian announced that all slots for Garden Gatherings and Food Group meetings for 2021 have been filled, except for November Food group (Christmas Party) and Saturday 8 August for Garden Gatherings. She thanked all those who had kindly offered to host meetings this year, under such different conditions.

Christine Ray reported that she has a friend in the Garden Clubs of Australia, who said the UGC newsletter is held in very high regard by members. Congratulations and many thanks Fran and also Pamela Payne who passed the baton to Fran after many years of hard work!!!



The raffle was drawn and some great prizes were up for grabs, including gloves, an Insect Hotel, Seasol, a book entitled "A Beauty Collected", a good gardening hat, hand tools and an enormous Bromeliad, donated by Dot. Congratulations to all the winners.

(L: Couzn Lynn our Raffle Queen in action)

The Swap Table was very full, with many choice plants, cuttings and fruit on offer. Jackie reminded us to wrap the stems of cuttings in damp kitchen paper, secure with a rubber band, and place in a plastic bag, to ensure their survival. Gillian reminded us all to label everything.



It was just wonderful to see you all, catch up on your news and share our love of gardens and gardening. Special thanks to Kate who opened our eyes to the delights of the GCRBG, just over the border!



L: The hard working Treasurer Helen and committee member Tim ensuring all members and guests were signed in the Covid way!



R: Members sharing the spoils of the Swap Table.



L: David Kidd – the presenters' helper

R: "I'll be the 1st prize winner, RIGHT !!!"

With huge thanks to our photographers Jackie Balk, Couz'n Lynn & Penny Riley.



Snail Sex (yes – you read right!)

When I was on my dog walk the other morning I gazed down and noticed a couple of snails cozying up to each other. If the question of how they “do it” is uppermost on anyone’s mind I can now provide the answer, thanks to Dr Google.

When snails copulate, two penises enter two vaginal tracts. Both snails in a pairing transfer sperm, but whichever snail got in the best shot with the dart has a better chance of ultimately fertilizing eggs. In some species, only one snail fires a love dart, but in others, like the garden snail, both do. After mating, each snail will lay eggs in the soil. The eggs will hatch and a baby snail will be born after 2-4 weeks. While the baby grows and develops it stays in a nest near its parents for about 3 months before it is ready to go off into the world on its own.



Did you know that snails will get really sick if they eat salt or sugar? A beer trap is also not good for their health. Julia Hancock



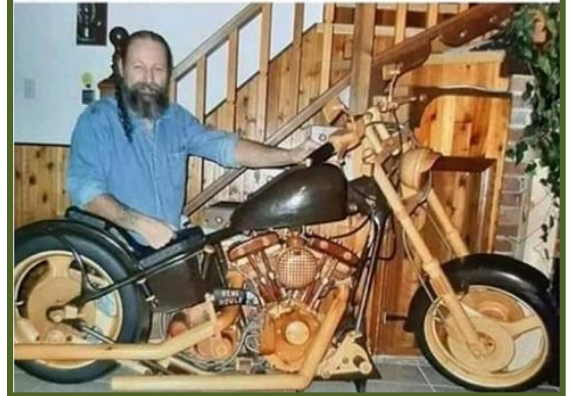
The King of Spain has been quarantined on his private jet.



That means the reign in Spain stays mainly on the plane...

Passed on again from Penny Riley... thanks Miss Pen!

It's got a wooden frame, wooden engine, wooden wheels, and a wooden gas tank. Did he ride it? No, wooden start...



WE ARE FROM TECH SUPPORT

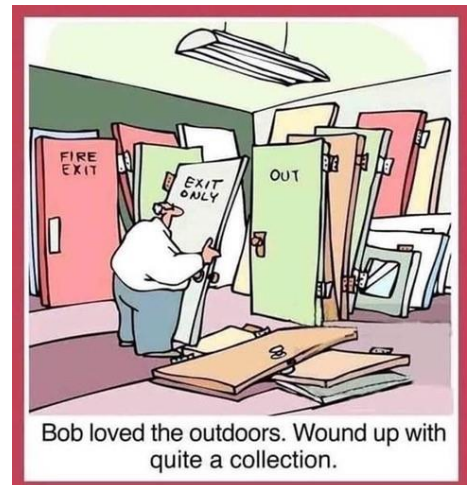


WE ARE HERE TO DELETE YOUR COOKIES

They say every piece of chocolate eaten shortens your life by two minutes.

I've done the math.

Seems I died in 1537.



Bob loved the outdoors. Wound up with quite a collection.

It's a five minute walk from my house to the pub. It's a 35 minute walk from the pub to my house.

The difference is staggering.

SHE MET HIM ONLINE...



HE SAID HE LIVED IN A GATED COMMUNITY



In Praise of the Calamondin – Jean Nuttall

You've probably called it a cumquat all your life, as I did until Jackie French advised me otherwise in one of her books in the late 1990s. But the calamondin, though related to the cumquat and resembling it in both the tree and the fruit, is quite different and makes a far superior marmalade – the main reason for growing one or two trees.

The calamondin is believed to be a hybrid between the cumquat (a *Fortunella*) and a mandarin (a *Citrus*). I've seen it variously described as *Citrus madurensis*, x *Citrofortunella microcarpa*, *Citrus x microcarpa*, and *Citrus mitis*. It's native to East and South Asia. In the Philippines it's known as *Calamansi*, and is also used in Malaysian and Indonesian cuisines.



The tree is small, to about three metres, and like other fruit trees, needs good sun to fruit well. My trees fruit during autumn, with occasionally another flush later in the year. The fruit, round and about three cm in diameter, glow like golden jewels against the dark foliage. Calamondin fruit have a loose skin, like a mandarin, and have nine to 10 segments – cumquats have only four to seven segments.

While cumquats, though slightly sour, can be eaten straight off the tree, calamondin fruit are extremely sour, and the skin is fairly bitter. They come into their own in marmalade, and to my mind make the best jam in the world! Cumquat marmalade has an enjoyable citrus flavour, but calamondin brings whole new layers of flavour –almost a spiciness – which make it sublime on toast!

The recipe I use is just a technique really, with no definite measurements – I just adapt it to the amount I fruit I have at hand. I prefer to cut my fruit to elegant shreds, though most recipes – Stephanie Alexander's included – just recommend cutting the fruit into quarters. This slicing is long and painstaking, and you need ABC Radio National, your favourite podcast or audio-book, or your best music, to keep you sane during this tedious task. I can assure you you'll forget the pain in the coming months when you eat the jam daily on your toast.

This "recipe" is from the trusty old "Best Recipes from The Weekly", first published by The Australian Women's Weekly in 1984, though my copy dates from 1994. I use this same technique for every citrus marmalade I make, from bitter orange to lime, and it always works well.



Calamondin Marmalade

Ingredients

- Calamondin fruit
- Water
- Sugar

Method

1. Slice washed fruit, or cut into quarters or eighths.
2. Place seeds in a small basin, cover with water and stand overnight.
3. Place fruit into a large ceramic or glass bowl, cover with water, and stand overnight.
4. Next day, transfer the soaked fruit and its water into a large pot. Strain the seeds through a sieve into the fruit, pressing as much of the jelly-like pectin through as well. Discard the seeds.
5. Bring the fruit to a boil, then reduce the temperature and simmer, covered, for about 40 minutes or until the rind is tender.
6. Place a saucer in the fridge for use in testing the setting point later.
7. Measure the mixture by cupfuls into a larger pot (this is to accommodate the increased volume of the jam as it boils). Make a note of the number of cups so you don't forget when measuring the sugar!
8. For each cup of fruit, measure $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of sugar into a large bowl. If you have a very sweet tooth, you can use 1 cup of sugar per cup of fruit, but the lesser amount allows the flavour of the fruit to shine.
9. Return the pot of fruit to the heat without boiling, and gradually add the sugar, stirring each addition till dissolved before adding the next lot. When all sugar is added, stir well to ensure it is all dissolved, then bring to the boil.
10. Boil as rapidly as possible, around 25 minutes, skimming all the while. A useful tip I once read said the nature of the boil changed from foamy to volcanic when setting point was almost reached. While testing, remove the pot from the heat. Test by placing a small amount on the cold saucer, return it to the fridge for a few minutes, then push with the back of your little finger. If the surface wrinkles, the jam is ready. If it doesn't wrinkle it isn't properly jelled, and the test has to be repeated till the mixture jells.

Another tip I read advised stirring citrus marmalades for five to seven minutes before bottling to ensure an even distribution of peel. You may choose to do this!

Bottle into hot sterilised bottles and place on lids immediately, or when cold, whichever method you prefer.

Enjoy over the coming months – or even years!

R: The fruits of Jean's labour – how good is fresh bread and marmalade?





Cucumber Pickles – Susan Phelan

Here is the easy recipe for excess cucumbers, as requested at the informative Food Group meeting at Kingscliff.

Cucumbers are delicious this way - don't be put off by the amount of sugar in it - most of it ends up in the pickling liquid which you don't drink.

Ingredients

- 4 Lebanese cucumbers (I peel half the skin away)
- 3 teaspoons salt
- 4 teaspoons vinegar
- 6 tablespoons sugar
- a dash of pepper
- a generous dash of sesame oil
- chili, finely sliced



Step 1 - Mix all ingredients except for the cucumber in a medium sized bowl together. Don't worry, it will be thick and syrupy but the cucumbers have a lot of liquid.

Step 2 - Peel the cucumbers and slice in half lengthways. Slice into 6cms/1.5 inch batons and place in the bowl. Mix everything together with a spoon to combine and coat the cucumber. Allow to stand for 15 minutes by which time the cucumber liquid will combine with the seasoning. Place in fridge overnight by which time there will be a lot of liquid and then transfer to sterile jars.

(Source - *Not Quite Nigella*)

Thanks Susan!



Gardens Still Needed Please

We are still looking for hosts for the November meeting for Food Group, and August for Garden Gatherings.

If you would like to offer your garden or suggest a good venue for any of these months, please contact our calendar co-ordinators as below:

Food Group Meetings: Sue Holzknecht 0448 880 239 sue.holzknecht@gmail.com

Garden Gatherings: Lynn O'Hara 0408 053 303 lohboh1@bigpond.com

Super Seed Box

Hartmut is the keeper of the Club Seed Box and at the Food Group meeting advised us that “a productive garden needs three things:

- 1) a healthy rich soil with lots of microbes;
- 2) good seed;
- 3) water.

The Club seed box is your friend because the seeds come from plants that are acclimatised to this area and are grown by local gardeners. There is a very good range in the box at the moment including vegies, fruits, herbs, flowering natives and a packet costs just 50c”.

Thank you very, very much for looking after the seed box so well, Hartmut.

Julia Hancock



Magnificent Moths



We recently saw this interesting fellow. We thought it was a lovely butterfly. Turns out it's an Australian moth. A Joseph's Coat day moth (*Agarista agricola*) and they have spectacular caterpillars too - black, white and orange. Never seen one before this one but other members might have observed them. Spectacular!

Even though we've seen these before, here's another moth *Pingasa chlora*, the white looper moth found in countries to our north and in Australia. They are well camouflaged on tree bark and rest very flat to cast no shadow so as to be very difficult to see - unless they rest on a glass door!!! Caterpillars can be a nuisance to some shrubs.

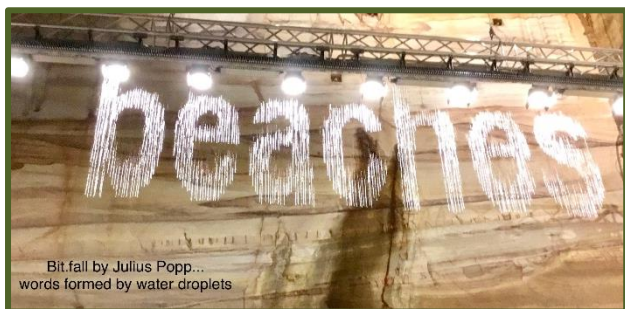
Kirsteen Hornick





Tasmania – Kate Botham

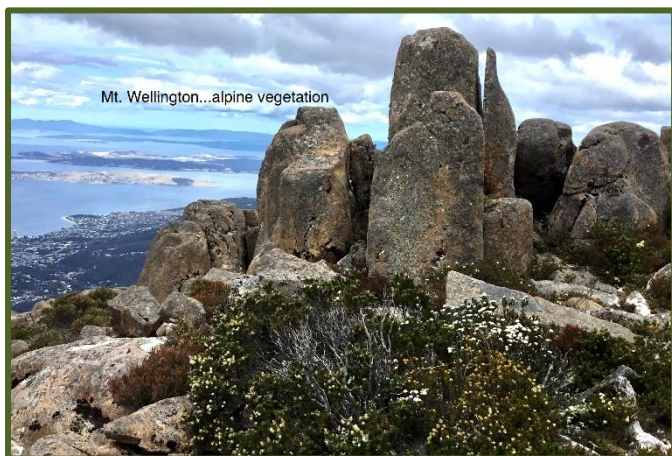
On Christmas Day, Gary and I flew to Hobart to begin a lovely little holiday in Tasmania. We stayed in Hobart for 6 nights, and from there we did day trips as well as visited the wonderful Mona. Our BnB was in an old 1840s pub, right in historic Battery Point, at Arthur's Circle. The gardens in these small terrace houses were outstanding, with roses blooming and looking so healthy and vigorous. In fact, the roses throughout Tassie were a joy to see, often tumbling over fences and down roadside embankments. While in Hobart, we visited Mona and we were entranced by the wonderful exhibits.



L: This exhibit was among my favourites...words formed by falling droplets of water, changing every second, so it took quite a while to get the timing right to capture a photo! But the thing I liked best was the environmentally friendly nature of the whole enterprise...there was not a plastic bottle or take-away container in sight.

One of our day trips included a drive to Cockle Creek, where the road ends at South

Cape NP. From there we walked about 20km (round trip) to reach the southernmost point in Australia. It was exciting to be there, when only 6 months before we had been standing at the northernmost point on the tip of Cape York.



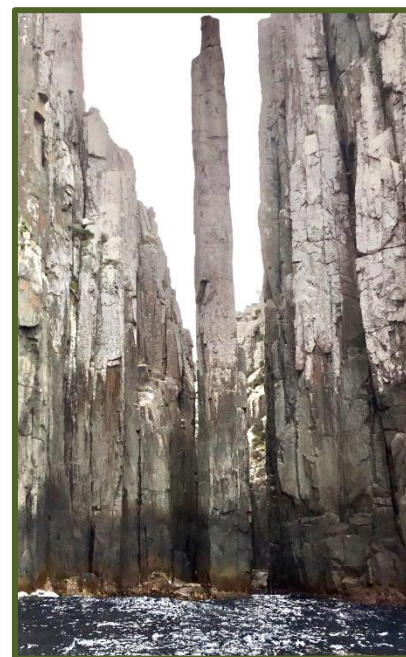
We also visited Lake Pedder and the Gordon Dam, and Mt. Wellington. It was interesting to see the different types of vegetation at both places.



R: We went on a jet boat cruise around the Tasman Peninsula to see the mighty sea cliffs...these were a highlight for me, especially "The Totem Pole".



After leaving Hobart, we drove along the east coast to Freycinet NP, and walked up to the Wineglass Bay lookout. It was New Year's Day...a wonderful way to start off the New Year



Then we drove north to see the Bay of Fires and settled into our next BnB in an old converted dairy, about 30km north of Launceston. From here we did day trips to Scottsdale, Derby, the central districts and the Highland Lakes. We were amazed to see how some little towns, like Derby, and Maydena, near Mt. Field NP have been completely revitalised by the introduction of major mountain bike parks...great to see so many young people out enjoying themselves.

We loved the many crops of medicinal opium, seemingly growing everywhere in the central and northern districts. Opium seems to be the second biggest agricultural enterprise after dairying.

After walking through the Cataract Gorge at Launceston, we drove west through Sheffield, the town of murals...to Railton, the town of topiary to Penguin on Bass Strait. We stayed in a gorgeous old cottage in the most beautiful rose garden in the Leven Valley...perhaps our favourite BnB set in the rich agricultural district of Gunns Plains, about 40km south of Penguin. Each room was decorated with vases of roses.

From here we drove through beautiful farming country and small communities to Cradle Mt. NP, where we walked around the lovely Dove Lake.



Cradle Mt. was the only place we struck a lot of tourists, but as soon as we started to walk, the crowd dispersed and we enjoyed a lovely peaceful 6km walk, all the time marvelling at the stunning scenery.

While at the Gunns Plains cottage, we went to Stanley and the Nut; the west coast to Arthur's Creek, and through the the Tarkine. Again we were amazed to see opium crops right to the edge of Bass Strait.

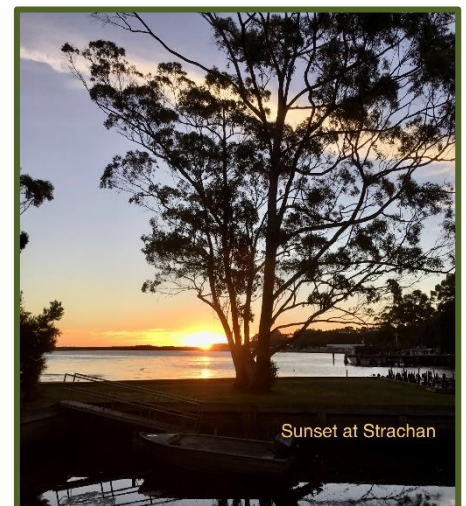
We also went to see the remarkable Leven Canyon and the fabulous 'Kaydale Gardens' near Nietta. I had seen these gardens featured on BH&G and couldn't believe they were on our doorstep while staying at

Gunns Plains. We spent a wonderful morning wandering around the gardens, and later, Amarlie served us morning tea while showing us videos of the garden in all the different seasons. This was definitely a highlight for me, and I have taken enough pictures to present a slideshow for the UGC at a future meeting. We had the garden to ourselves and enjoyed the beautiful peaceful surroundings.

Next we drove to Strachan, calling in to Savage River and Zeehan on the way. We stayed in a tiny "miner's cottage" in a heritage village on Lettes Bay, just out of



Strachan. It was our last stop, and a perfect place to relax and reflect on our wonderful time in Tassie. It was perfectly peaceful, where the only action was the ducks wandering up to our verandah from the waterfront. We went into Strachan each night for dinner and enjoyed the most amazing sunset each night...not too shabby whilst enjoying fresh oysters and crayfish.



From Strachan, it was back to Hobart. We visited Queenstown, and had lunch at Lake St. Clair on the way. All in all, we drove 6000km...not a bad effort when you consider that 2/3 of the State is wilderness and inaccessible.

We will definitely go back...it is a beautiful part of the world.



- ✿ Take geranium and pelargonium cuttings now. Simply select a healthy shoot from as low down on the bush as possible and snip off to a length of approximately 10-15cm. Remove lower leaves and insert into gritty compost.
- ✿ If you've got bare patches in the lawn, ruffle up the surface, spike the patch to the depth of a fork's tine, water well, sprinkle with grass seed and tamp down. Keep moist and covered with bird netting until germination then water as required.
- ✿ Clip conifers and check old specimens for signs of borer.
- ✿ If you've got a patch of bare, unproductive soil consider growing a green manure. Pop into Williams, Norco or Rural Buying and see what they've got.
- ✿ Agapanthus can become serious weeds if their seeds are allowed to ripen and disperse. Cut off the stems with the unripe seed heads still on them, pick off the seeds and dry the stems. Spray paint them and use them in funky flower arrangements.
- ✿ Apply a foliar fertiliser to Azaleas, Camellias, Vireyas and Gardenias.
- ✿ Give each of your rose bushes a tablespoon of sulphate of potash
- ✿ Prune Hydrangea stems that flowered last summer.
- ✿ Although it seems a crime to do so, reduce clusters of Camellia buds to one per stem - the single remaining bud will develop into a much more spectacular flower.
- ✿ There is no need to pull out capsicums when they have finished fruiting. They will last another year if they are protected from winter frosts. Water and mulch them well and make a shelter for them out of bracken fern leaves if you are in a frost prone area.
- ✿ Dig in' de dolomite - dolomite is the quiet achiever of the veggie patch. Its lovely, gentle action means it is sometimes passed over in favour of lime, but since they both come from the same source this isn't quite as scandalous as it sounds.



Kyogle Garden Club are holding their annual flower & foliage display on Friday 16th & Saturday 17th April 2021.

Timing is 8am to 4pm both days.

It will be held in St Brigids School Hall – Wyangarie St, Kyogle. Entrance fee is \$2 plus raffles.

Many stalls will have plants and other garden products on display and for sale. Phil Dudman will make a guest appearance on Saturday 17th @ 10:30am. Morning tea will be available for purchase.

Come along and enjoy the wonderful display of local plants including seasonal flowers & foliage & see what is available to gardeners in our local area.

For further information please ph Peter on 66321834 or 0413 423 713 or Doug on 0418 616 388.



March Garden Gathering

Saturday 27th March 2021 – 2pm

In the garden of Tim Hunt at 96 Hunter Street, Burringbar, Ph: 0413 868 218

Please wear sturdy shoes as the ground is uneven.

Directions on how to get there: Go along Tweed Valley Way, south from Murwillumbah, past the sign to turn into Broadway, turn right into Hunter Street. There is ample parking on the road.

As this is a COVID-safe event we ask you to please book through this link: <https://www.trybooking.com/BPGTM>.

Bookings are open now and close on Friday 26th March 2021.

April Food Group

Tuesday 13th April at the home of Simone Renton – 9.30am start time

139 Chowan Creek Rd, Chowan Creek, 0418 525 553

Directions on how to get there: •Come to Uki and turn into Rowlands Creek Road which passes between the UKI Cafe and the UKI school. Follow this road for about 3 kms. On the right there is a sign that shows Mullumbimby. DO NOT TURN RIGHT!

Rowlands Creek Road swings off to the right. Chowan Creek Road will be the one straight ahead of you. Please continue 1.39 kilometres. Turn left into a road named Irvine lane.

Cross over the concrete bridge and take the second turn-off (driveway) on the right. If you pass a line of letter boxes on your left, just past the sign Irvine lane, you have gone too far.

As Simone will be preparing some vegan, vegetarian and gluten free treats for us, for catering no.s RSVPs are needed so please book through this link: <https://www.trybooking.com/BPSFJ>

Bookings are open now and close on Sunday 11th April 2021.

Visitors are welcome to both events, however they must be registered on the trybooking site in their own name please.

You will be sent a confirmation email and ticket. As numbers will be limited to 50 people attending each event if you find you are unable to attend after RSVPing – please return your ticket.

If you are unable to book online – please either speak with a friend or phone Jenny Kidd on 0431 989 477 or Gillian on 0457 872 040 and they will help you through the online booking process.

For both meetings members are asked to bring the following:

- ☺ Name badge
- ☺ Your chair, hat & water
- ☺ Your own thermos of tea or coffee
- ☺ Swap table items
- ☺ Any gardening questions

For Food Group – please also bring to this meeting plates, bowls, cutlery, cups,

For Garden Gathering – please also bring to this meeting your own afternoon tea including drinks and food, and small change for raffles.

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