

# Uki Garden Club

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



I hope you had a happy and safe Easter, perhaps finding time to spend in your garden at this wonderful time of year. Although we don't see much in the way of colourful Autumn leaves in our sub-tropical region, there are subtle changes in our climate, with those mornings a little crisper, and the sun's rays less penetratingly hot during the day. The extremely wet conditions continued throughout March and into April, making our gardens both happy and in need of more attention, especially weeding and mowing!

Our most recent garden gathering put all of our gazebos to the test – both the 2 new and 2 older ones were erected in Tim's garden, providing a good amount of shade for our 42 attendees. These are available to all of our hosts for either Food Group or Garden Gatherings. They took four of us about 15 minutes to assemble, so if you are hosting and need assistance, just ask a few members to come early on the day to help.

COVID restrictions are changing/relaxing yet again, with more people being able to visit a residence. However, social distancing still applies, as does providing sanitiser, so we must still be aware of this. Our committee meets on April 9<sup>th</sup> to discuss this and other matters relating to our meetings/gatherings, so watch out for the May newsletter which will give you any updates. Also check the website, [www.ukigarden.club](http://www.ukigarden.club), for all latest news and changes to arrangements. The Club calendar for June-August will be made available in the May Newsletter and on the website from early May.

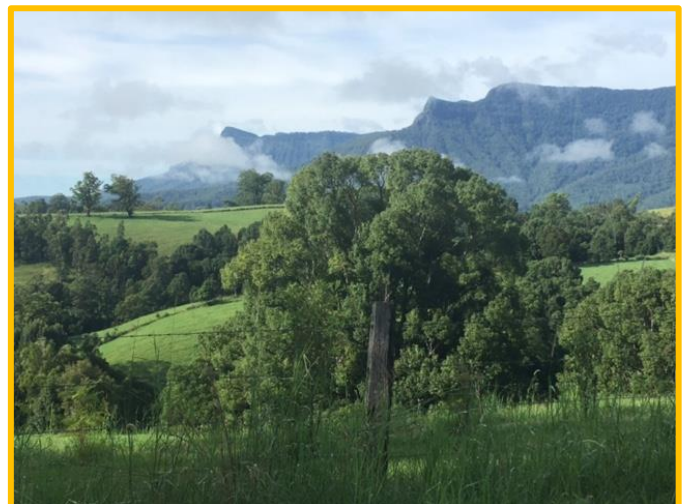
Please let us know if you have any good ideas for speakers at our Saturday gatherings. There must be more topics people would be interested in hearing about. Alternatively, if you would like a workshop on any particular aspect of gardening, do drop us your ideas to [ugcnews@gmail.com](mailto:ugcnews@gmail.com).

Although it is 4 months until our AGM (August), we need to be thinking ahead and considering nominating new committee members. The current team have all (except one, due to ill health) stayed on for a year longer than they were originally elected for (due to our COVID 2020 year and no AGM). If you are interested in stepping up to help run your Club, please let me or a current committee member know. As we only meet 4-5 times a year (for 1.5 hours at most), it is not an onerous job. We share out the various responsibilities that are needed to be done in our own time. It is certainly not a high-pressure commitment! However, to run the club smoothly, it does take a small team of (7) dedicated workers.

Continue to enjoy the cooler weather and keep on gardening!

Gillian

Magnificent view from Tyalgum Creek Rd, Tyalgum





# March Food Group Report

## Julia Hancock

Despite the threat of rain, a small band of hardy gardeners enjoyed a dry and pleasurable meeting at the Hancox's property in the Limpinwood Valley on 9 March.

David told us how he and Bronwyn moved into their 12-acre site 4 years ago and immediately set about regenerating the badly weed-infested block. The Hancoxes are committed to growing organically so they spent many months treating the glyphosate-affected soil with David Gourlay's SoilLife preparations. Their strategy worked well and they grew herbs and seasonal vegetables for local restaurants and cafes, until Covid forced them to pivot their business.



Henceforth they will be concentrating on cultivating long-term crops such as garlic and ginger but still grow enough vegies and herbs for their own needs. "It's really nice knowing 95 per cent of what's on your plate comes from the garden," says David. They are also trialling berry fruits such as mulberry, blackberry, tayberry, jostaberry and loganberry, as well as the native midginberry. All need to be netted against marauding wildlife (see pics below).



- David recommended Natralure (from Norco) as an effective fruit fly bait. Dilute 6:1 with water and spray on a post or something near the fruit tree (not on the tree itself). It acts as a lure for both male and female insects and kills them effectively. It's a low-cost solution to a serious problem.
- David and Jenny Kidd have had a big pruning session on their fruit trees to stimulate regrowth. They've harvested lots of pawpaws and heirloom strawberries.
- Sheila has got a salad garden happening in a raised box.





- Marie and Peter's geraniums have been rotting in the ground because of the rain. They are using neem oil on brown scale, spraying three times a week to destroy successive generations.
- Jean has been taking advantage of the wet to plant ornamentals.
- Sue warned that many trees have an allelopathic effect on anything planted or sitting in pots underneath them, i.e. a substance in their leaves kills the competition beneath.
- Hartmut has established a large vegie area consisting of four beds. He told us that if you plant the bottoms of spring onions they will regrow.
- Don Capner revealed that Searles have changed the recipe of their potting mix, which used to be really good but is now only mediocre. The new mix contains much more clay which clogs up the drainage holes in pots and causes lots of problems. In addition, their former 65 litre bags have shrunk to 55 litres and have increased in price by about \$10. He said that the Quarry Road landscape supplier has a good mix and you can take your own containers or trailer to fill (remember to take your shovel).
- Karen's autumn raspberries look promising.
- Chris has owned land in Barkers Vale for about 40 years but has been absent for most of that time. She returned during Covid to find a weed-infested and overgrown mess. She's now clearing the land and has had water tanks delivered. She plans to keep the planting on a small scale to minimise labour and maintenance.
- Amanda has been doing earthworks to create a proper driveway. She had a problem with hive beetle and had to let the hive die. Happily she has just replaced her hive and has been planting lots of natives and exotics to feed the bees. Her recent pruning activities yielded 10m<sup>2</sup> of woodchip. Says Amanda "you really need to hack into fruit trees, especially figs, and reduce them by one third."
- Julia reported that her garden has never looked better, thanks entirely to the rain which has resulted in the best season she has known in the 25 years she's been in the Tweed Valley. (My satisfaction was short-lived however because when I came back from an extended trip away during the floods – see further on – the rain had reduced everything to a soggy mess - Julia).



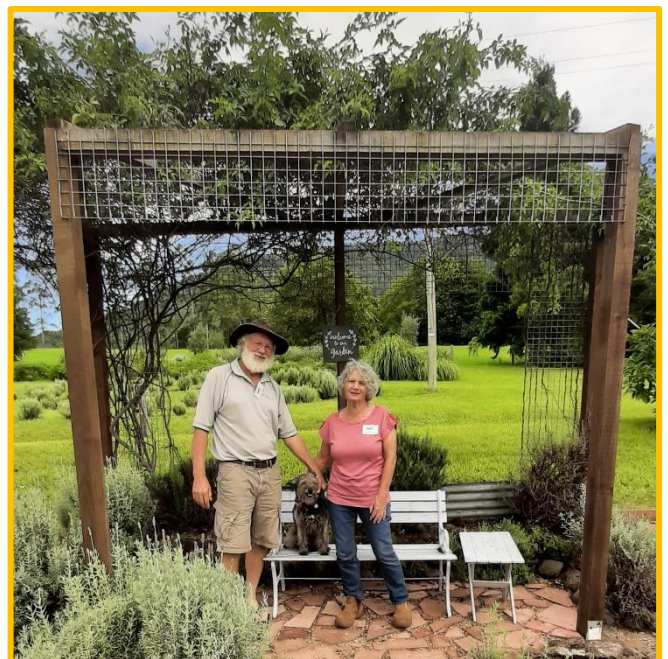
*Above: Lovely circle of lavender*



*Sue enjoying the Hancox's productive garden.*

*R:  
The busy  
hosts  
David &  
Bronwyn  
with Gypsy*

*Below:  
Dot,  
Bronwyn,  
Heather,  
Chris &*



Ed: many thanks to David Kidd & Gillian for the great pics)



# March Garden Gathering

## Jean Nuttall

It started with an uncooperative speaker system which emitted only strangled squeaks, until Gillian declared, "I'll just yell!"

The weather was delightful for the first Garden Gathering to be held at a member's home for twelve months, and equally delightful was Tim Hunt's Burringbar garden – lush and glowing, and well-drained after the recent rains.

Gillian welcomed everyone, with a special greeting for new members and visitors, who had come from Sydney, Melbourne, country Victoria, Germany and Darwin. All expressed their concerns about different kinds of gardening in our sub-tropical conditions.

Gillian also had a special word for members who had been hospitalised or very ill during the past year, and said there was no better way to return to good health than getting into the garden.



Tim then spoke about his garden, which the Club last visited in October, 2019, just after the installation of his extraordinary and beautiful pool. He's been there for four years, and chose the block for its good bones and long views. It was overgrown, but Tim says it was "thrilling" discovering all the lovely hidden surprises. One of his first projects was the installation of his biodiverse freshwater ecosystem pond by Billinudgel Flo Gardens. Since our visit almost 18 months ago the pond, with its reed beds, fish, bacteria – and unfortunately cane toads! – looks entirely natural and settled into its plantings of native and other ornamental plants.

The long views of Tim's block have been extended with the removal of two large clumps of trees, which has let in much more light and views of the Burringbar Range. It's also provided Tim with mountains of mulch! His orchard contains many citrus, which do very well, and he's planted many more fruit trees.

Another lovely feature of the garden is the rainforest walk, and he's lucky enough to have a seasonal creek flowing through part of the block. He swears there isn't much maintenance!







Above: Some of the beautiful gingers and heliconias in Tim's garden



Members had a range of problems and questions to be answered. Tim wondered when to bag banana bunches – the answer is when they start to change colour and the fruit start to turn upwards. He's also had the cycad skipper butterfly and the advice was to spray with neem oil to prevent the caterpillars attacking the cycads.

Amanda (in pic at left) had brought along an African Horned Cucumber, which had grown in her compost – an ugly beast and full of seeds (see article a little further on about this interesting fruit).



Peter had a cutting of a branch for identification – a Pink Euodia, *Melicope elleryana*, a fast-growing rainforest tree with pink flowers along the branches in summer, and much beloved of birds and butterflies. Although this is not applicable in the sub-tropics, the Euodia is the host plant of the Ulysses Blue butterfly from North Queensland.

Tim had a question about his lilly-pilly hedge – he'd trimmed it last November, but it's stopped growing. It was suggested that he wait until spring to see if it shoots again.

Michelle wondered what to do with the pupae that eat her vegetables – and unfortunately the answer was to pick them off individually!

Heather brought along an attractive climbing plant resembling a tiny Hoya, which nobody could identify. This led to a discussion about the best plant ID app – the general consensus was PlantNet.

We were warned about a *Courier Mail* article about unusual, rare cactus plants for sale in Brisbane –see article a little further on for more information.



Couz'n Lynn had as usual organised a great range of prizes for the raffle, and also as usual, the Swap Table was groaning with offerings –stephanotis, brugmansia, purple beauty berry bushes, yellow heliconia, purple sweet potato plants (the potatoes with purple flesh right through!), begonias, chokos, agaves, coleus, Chinese fringe flower, *Baeckea virgata* – and more! Members are reminded that, if they bring contributions to the swap table that aren't taken, could they please take them home with them so that the host isn't left with a lot of unwanted plants!

Gillian explained that the Committee will wait for government decisions about Covid restrictions, but for the moment, they will continue to use TryBooking for Garden Gatherings. Anyone with problems about using TryBooking can contact committee members for assistance. Gillian also urged members to refer to the Garden Club web page where there is a link to TryBooking – and also for other information about Garden Gatherings and Food Group meetings etc. - [www.ukigarden.club](http://www.ukigarden.club).

She also invited suggestions for speakers for future meetings, and sent our best wishes to Sue, who is ill.

Many thanks to Tim for hosting this enjoyable gathering in his beautiful garden!



Left: One of the interesting plants in Tim's luscious garden - Medusa's Hair or Pangolin Plant

At right – Annie, Linda & Ursula showing off their Swap Table finds.



L: The affable host surrounded by happy club members Jenny W, Graham, Sheila, Jenni C and Couz'n Lynn.

R: Jackie and Jan enjoying the Heliconias and a little guava.



Many thanks to Couz'n Lynn and Jackie Balk for their photographic skills on the day.

# About the African Horned Cucumber



(pic from Jackie Balk)

**Scientific Name:** *Cucumis metuliferus*

**Common Names:** Horned cucumber, African horned cucumber, jelly melon, African horned melon, hedged gourd, melano

**Family:** Cucurbitaceae

**Origin:** *Cucumis metuliferus* occurs naturally throughout the tropical and subtropical sub-Saharan regions of Africa, from Senegal to Somalia and South Africa. It has also been recorded in Yemen. In Kenya, New Zealand, France and Israel the fruits of improved cultivars are commercially grown for export. Aside from a few other Cucurbit family members, it's one of the few sources of water available in the Kalahari Desert during the dry season.

**Culinary Uses:** African horned cucumber is a very decorative and colourful fruit with bright green, jelly-like flesh and a spiny, bright orange rind. The flesh has a seedy texture, similar to passion-fruit but with smaller, softer seeds. The flavour of the flesh tastes like a combination of banana and cucumber with the tartness of lime or kiwifruit. Sprinkling sugar, salt or a combination of both over the flesh helps to enhance its flavour. The flesh can be blended in smoothies or added to salads, fruity salsas and cocktails and is sure to be a talking point if prepared for dinner parties (or brought along to Garden Club meetings!). African horned cucumbers can be eaten at any stage of development, just like regular cucumbers, but have maximum flavour when left to fully mature on the vine. African horned cucumbers store well, remaining good for several weeks after harvest.

**Growing Tips:** African horned cucumbers are easy to grow and don't suffer from many pests or diseases. Choose a growing location that receives full sun or light shade. They will grow in poor soils but may only produce one or two fruits, so for maximum fruit harvest plant into rich, fertile soil. The vines can grow huge, up to 2m tall, so be sure to provide a sturdy trellis for them grow up and keep the fruit off the ground. These vines can take over a garden when growing conditions are good so allow for a buffer between them and smaller, easily smothered vegetables. The fruits and vines of African horned cucumber are quite prickly so be sure to wear thick gloves when harvesting fruits or tending the plants. Water regularly for good growth but avoid wetting the leaves to reduce fungal infestation such as powdery mildew. If fruit set is poor it may be because insect pollinators are lacking. African horned cucumbers have separate male and female flowers and can be hand-pollinated just like regular cucumbers to improve fruit set. Don't use a male flower from a regular cucumber or any other type of Cucurbit as African Horned Cucumbers will not cross-pollinate with them.

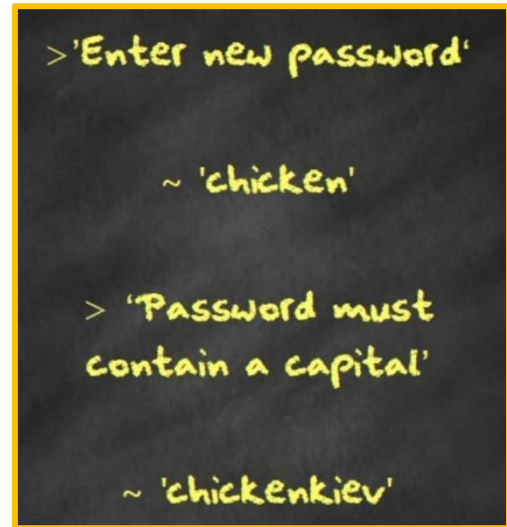
African horned cucumbers can take a long time to start producing fruit, but are highly productive once they get going. Expect to harvest your first ripe fruits about 17 to 19 weeks after sowing the seeds.

(Sources: Brisbane City Council Weed Identification Tool & Succeed Heirlooms)





Turns out it was a marble in the ashtray...



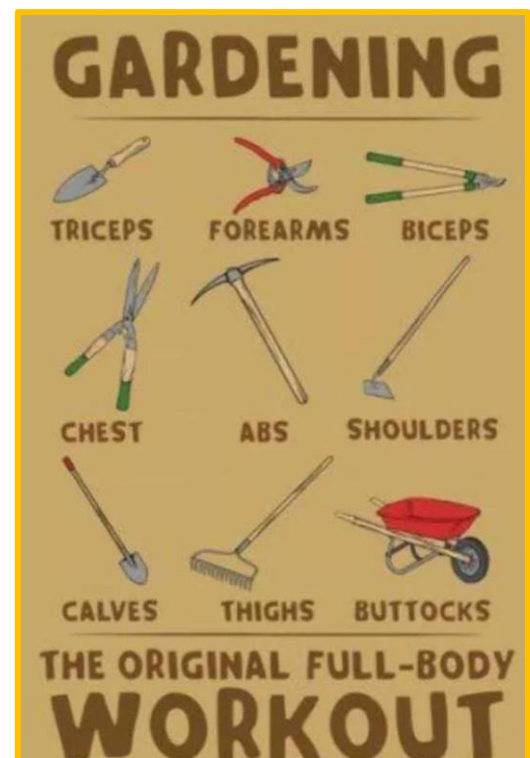
If 4 out of 5 people suffer from diarrhoea, does that mean that 1 out of 5 enjoys it?



'I am' is reportedly the shortest sentence in the English language.

Could it be that 'I do' is the longest?

Why is Hulk such a good gardener? He's got green fingers.





# Marvellous Mushrooms – Fran O'Hara

Whether found fresh in salads, replacing meat between burger buns, or acting as a substitute for leather in shoes and bags – mushrooms are more popular than ever before.

To the ancient Egyptians, mushrooms were symbols of immortality, only to be eaten by pharaohs and their families. So it was quite a fall from grace when in the 1970s most mushrooms consumed in Australia could be found processed and in a can – can you believe that??!!

Commercial mushroom growing in Australia can be traced as far back as 1933 and mushrooms are now Australia's 6<sup>th</sup> most valuable horticultural crop and the third most valuable fresh produce in the veggie section of the supermarket after tomatoes and potatoes.



According to the Australian Mushroom Growers Association (AMGA) – more than 85% of us buy fresh mushrooms regularly with 55% buying them at least once a week (that includes me!).

And whilst mushrooms are grown indoors and are not impacted by seasonal issues that affect other crops, the drought has impacted the availability of straw which is vital for making the compost to grow mushrooms in, and electricity and labour costs have dramatically increased over the past 5 years. Mushroom farming is pretty labour-intensive and requires skilled workers to pick the produce because poor picking will result in a poor product which cannot go to market. Tricky business!

And did you know that there are over 14,000 known species of mushrooms around the world? And while they can differ radically in appearance, taste and growing method there is one thing they all share – mushrooms are really good for you! Moreover, the immunity and health benefits of mushrooms and their capacity to store Vit D have meant they are regarded as a super health food (move over kale and kombucha!). Global studies on the humble mushroom have discovered that they are packed with antioxidants, prebiotics, are high in protein and fibre, loaded with vitamins and minerals and can reduce inflammation and increase gut health.

## Some facts and figures about mushrooms

- Mushrooms are grown in most states of Australia with over 70,000 tonnes grown with a farm gate value of over \$440 million.
- The Sydney Basin, especially the Hawkesbury Valley, is the major production area for mushrooms in NSW, producing around 22,500 tonnes, just behind Victoria's 25,000 tonnes.
- Our Pacific neighbours receive the majority of Australian mushroom exports with 32% sent to Fiji, 15% to Nauru and 12% to PNG.
- 90% of people over the age of 25 either like or love mushrooms – but only half of children do.
- The market for edible fungi is expected to reach US \$69billion (yes, that's correct!) worldwide by 2024.

## Are there any risks to eating mushrooms?

While most varieties of mushrooms are safe for consumption, others such as death cap, false morels and *Conocybe filari* can cause serious health issues or even death. Because of this, extreme caution is advised when foraging.

(References: NSW Farmers Association & Australian Mushroom Growers Association)



# Warning About Buying Cacti On-line

Linda Rees shared an article from a Brisbane newspaper at the March Garden Gathering on the perils of buying plants online – especially cacti– of which an abridged version appears below...

If you're a green thumb or landscape designer, you could be unwittingly harbouring a prickly fugitive in the garden.

While cacti are prized for their unusual and architectural qualities, some of the most popular varieties are illegal, and dangerous if allowed to go wild.

Cacti are increasingly trendy potted plants, given that even a novice gardener would struggle to kill them. They're not native to Australia, but they do thrive in our arid climate.

There are 27 varieties listed as prohibited invasive plants in some states, including [Queensland](#), [New South Wales](#) and [Victoria](#). Prickly pear (*Opuntia* species) is described as particularly destructive in the wild (pic below) and is regularly seen on Facebook Marketplace for sale.



Infestations date back to the 1920s, when cacti got loose and caused a variety of issues for graziers, including the injury and death of livestock and wildlife.

Other cacti to really look out for:

- Coral Cactus (*Cylindropuntia fulgida*)
- Eve's Pin Cactus (*Austrocylindropuntia subulate*)
- Snake cactus *Cylindropuntia spinosior*)
- Bunny Ears (*Opuntia microdasys*)
- Blind cactus (*Opuntia rufida*)

Problems still exist today and [Biosecurity Queensland](#) is cracking down, seizing 315 illegal plants in the past year.

Fines in some states can range up to \$130,000 and three years jail with backyard growers and online sellers the most common offenders.

People should also be wary of a lot of creeper vines like Cat's claw or Balloon vine which can climb up native trees and strangle them. Watch out too for flowering yellow Oleander which is poisonous to pets and people.

So the advice is to take care when purchasing: be a little bit wary when you do buy them from the markets or the internet and make sure you ask the question "are they potentially illegal to grow?"







## Green Pawpaw Salad – Dot Francis

Heather Neill kindly dropped over a few weeks ago with a green Pawpaw after I'd requested one at the last meeting.

It makes a lovely salad. She asked if I could send in the recipe to share, so here it is.

You will need:

- ½ green Pawpaw (grated or shredded using a mandolin)
- 1½ tablespoons of palm sugar or brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon of fish sauce
- 1 tablespoon of lime juice
- 1 teaspoon of sesame oil
- 1 long chilli (seeds removed) or a red capsicum finely chopped
- 250g of cherry tomatoes halved
- 2 cups of bean sprouts
- Fresh coriander and fresh mint to taste (2 tablespoons of each should be enough)



### Method:

1. Combine the sugar, fish sauce, lime juice, sesame oil and chilli in a bowl, stirring to dissolve the sugar.
2. Place the remaining ingredients in a separate bowl, then pour over the dressing and toss to combine.

You can top your salad with roasted peanuts for added crunch, or prawns or tofu to make it a meal.

Enjoy.

## Elderflower Cordial – Diana Erikson

Pour 3 litres of boiling water over 900gm white sugar in a large mixing bowl, stir and leave to cool.

Add 50gm citric acid, along with 2 sliced lemons, then 25 rinsed elderflower heads.

Cover with a tea towel and stir occasionally over the next 24 hours. Strain through muslin and pour into sterilised glass bottles.







## Hunter Valley Gardens – Julia Hancock

Sheila and I were on a mini-break on the mid-north coast earlier this month, the highlight of which was to be a visit to the Hunter Valley Gardens. Undaunted by the rain and because we'd pre-booked and paid online we decided to undertake the 1.5 hour drive from Nelson Bay to Pokolbin, taking all our wet-weather gear with us. Unbelievably by the time we got there the rain had eased and we had a very pleasant walk around the gardens. It came as no surprise that we were the only ones there and thoroughly enjoyed all that the autumnal garden had to offer.

The area is divided up into various 'theme' gardens such as sunken, storybook, rose, formal, border, Indian, Oriental, Chinese and Italian. There was also an impressive lake walk and waterfall. Despite being established a couple of decades ago, the trees in the garden are already taking on a mantle of maturity and can only improve with time.

Below: Sunken Garden

Indian Garden

Rose Garden



Below: Story Book Garden

Borders Garden

Italian Garden



(pics taken from the Hunter Valley Garden website - <https://www.huntervalleygardens.com.au/attractions/gardens/>)

The following day we got as far as Southwest Rocks when the weather prevented us from going any further for the next five days.

We were lucky enough to stay at the marvellous Rockpool Motel where the owners looked after us with kindness and generosity. We felt blessed to have beds, a kettle and electricity when so many people were either stranded or in emergency evacuation centres.

Nonetheless we were both longing to get home again and finally had an easy drive back to Murwillumbah with cloudless skies and very little traffic. What an adventure!



# How Plants Attract Bees

While honeybees (*Apis mellifera*) might be the best known of the bee species there are thousands of different bees. In Australia alone there are over 2000 native bee species and most of them are solitary bees. Some live in trees, others in the ground and some in colonies. So – how do you attract them to your garden?

## 1) The colour of the flower

Regardless of the bee species, there are common floral traits that attract most bees. White, yellow, purple or blue are colours that attract bees. Flowers that bees love exude a pleasant but mild aroma. It turns out that all bees search for flowers that produce nectar, pollen or both.

## 2) Ultraviolet (UV) marks

Bees and other pollinating insects see things that we don't see. They can perceive ultraviolet (UV) light. If you look closely at some flowers they have dots and spots that absorb UV light and act like runway lights to guide the insect into where the plant has positioned the nectar.

Some insects can only navigate to flowers with UV markers. However, for bees, white, yellow, purple or blue flowers are signal enough that pollen and nectar exist.

Pollination isn't just for bees.



1. Flies are pollinators. They are often seen on the same flowers as bees as they, too, are attracted to both pollen and nectar. Hoverflies can be particularly mesmerizing as they dart about the flowers alongside their fatter, hairier bee colleagues.

2. Some flowers have evolved to attract beetles as their preferred species. These “beetle buddy” plants tend to have flowers that are flattened like dinner plates. They are often green or murky white but never brightly coloured. If they have an odour that is fruity with hints of decay, chances are that beetles love them.

3. Moths can also be excellent pollinators but we often don't see them on flowers. Their pollination magic happens at night. Moths are usually nocturnal and have co-evolved with plants that flower during the night. Typically moths go for white, red, purple or pink flowers.

4. The showiest of all the pollinators is the butterfly. They are lured by colourful flowers with beautiful contrasting nectar guides. Butterflies are not interested in pollen and they love showy red or purple flowers.

5. Bats are very clever pollinators. The flowers they search for come out at night and may be green, purple or white and loaded with pollen and nectar. Their flowers are positioned outside the foliage zone to make landing for the bats easier in the dark.

6. Birds such as honeyeaters are specifically attracted to various plants and their beaks reach deep down into the flower to the nectar reserves to collect their meal. They too are efficient pollinators. Large red, orange and white flowers bloom on plants with strong stems to hold the weight of the birds.



The most important tip to planting an effective pollinator garden is growing an array of different flowering plants; a full spectrum of flower colours is essential for providing a rich diet for all species that live in the garden.

Plants and pollinators coexist beautifully in nature. Planting a bee-friendly garden that supports pollinators is joyful and very rewarding. Not only will your garden be full of colour, but it will also be full of bees, birds and butterflies.

With much thanks to Helen Loftis for sharing this article from *Australian Farmers*.





## RIP Beryl

It is with great sadness that I announce the death of club member Beryl Vear. Beryl joined the club when she and her daughter Frances moved to a large property in Uki. Both were keen gardeners but Beryl was also a fabulous cook and gifted artist. In recent years she moved to Mountainview where she made new friends and enjoyed more leisure time.

We will all miss her and send our condolences to her family.

Julia Hancock



## Don't Forget this Date for your Diary

Kyogle Garden Club will be 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 and foliage and see what is available to gardeners in our local area. For further information please phone Peter on 66321834 or 0413 423 713 or Doug on 0418 616 388.

## Swap Table Etiquette

The Swap Table is one of the many wonderful benefits of coming to a meeting. Members and guests have the opportunity to collect new and different plants as well as excess fruit and veggies that have been donated by our members.

So this is just a gentle reminder regarding the rules and general etiquette around the items on the Swap Table.

- ✓ Please wait until the meeting has ended before going to the Swap Table (ie don't go before or during the meeting to take items of interest)
- ✓ If you bring something you can take something for free
- ✓ If you don't bring something and see something you would like – please pop some money (gold coin/s is good) into the container on the table
- ✓ Be mindful of others and take only what you need or will use
- ✓ If you bring a plant, please make sure it is labelled
- ✓ Please check at the end of the meeting that your items have gone. If not please take them back home as the host has to deal with them otherwise.

Thank you



# April Job File – Julia Hancock

- ☼ Check the stems of plants and trunks of trees to make sure heavy rain hasn't left a soggy mass of mulch pressing up against them. Move it away to avoid the trunk rotting.
- ☼ Cornflowers (pic at right) make a pretty display in the spring and are good for cutting for the indoor arrangements too. They like a slightly alkaline soil, so sprinkle some lime dolomite into the soil as you're preparing the bed, and scatter the seeds where they are to grow.
- ☼ Cut back flowers and stems that have broken under the weight of too much wet foliage. Snip off dead flowers from dahlias, hydrangeas and zinnias.
- ☼ Trim off dead leaves around Cymbidium orchids and begin feeding them to boost their winter flowering display.
- ☼ If your clay soil is impossible to dig after all this rain, apply some gypsum and let it be absorbed for a few days before working the bed over.
- ☼ There is a good selection of pansies, violas and calendulas in garden centres now. All make excellent companion plants at the front of borders and in amongst vegetables for a splash of colour.
- ☼ Is your lawn looking sad? Sprinkle it with some lime (a great job to do when it's raining because it needs to be watered in well) and follow that up a couple of weeks later with some liquid fertilizer. Growth rates have finally started to slow for the season, but if you feed your tired lawn now it will bounce back nice and healthy when the weather warms up again.
- ☼ Scrub slime and moss off paths to make them safe to walk on.
- ☼ Keep gutters free of leaves as they start to fall in Autumn.
- ☼ White wax scale is a problem on ornamental shrubs at the moment (pic at right). Pick it off by hand or spray with white oil to stop the spread. It's farmed by ants so sprinkle some ant removing powder (available at hardware stores) around the base of the affected plant to repel them (don't do this if you've got pets).



## Did You Know?



Eating bananas, garlic and drinking green tea can have significant health benefits.

Apparently the serotonin in bananas can alleviate symptoms of depression and reduce high blood pressure by 10 per cent.

Eating garlic (especially when mixed with ginger) improves circulation and reduces the risk of a range of cancers.



The antioxidants in green tea are said to inhibit cancer growth and can be effective in reducing cholesterol.







## April Garden Gathering

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**Please note: 1.30pm arrival for 2pm start please**

Hosted by Couz'n Lynn O'Hara and John McDougall  
Northstar Resort, 1 Tweed Coast Road, Hastings Point.

Couz'n Lynn has arranged for Chris Lopez to speak on "Adding Decorative Edible Plants to Your Garden". Members will also be able walk to three (3) different gardens within Northstar after the meeting.

As numbers are limited to 44 for this event due to the size of the gathering place we ask you to please book through this link:

<https://www.trybooking.com/BQLNA>

Bookings are open now and close on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> April at 5pm.

QR code registration is also required by Northstar at the hall, so please bring your mobile phone and try to arrive early – 1.30 p.m. – so we can start the gathering at 2:00 p.m.

Members are strongly encouraged to car pool (due to limited spaces). There is limited parking available in the carpark at the front, or along some sections of Tweed Coast Road. There is also limited parking inside the complex next to the residents' swimming pool in the visitors' car park, and a few more down the street near the green waste. and park in the front visitor's car park on Tweed Coast Rd.

Couz'n Lynn has organised to ferry members from the front car park down to the Cavenbah Hall where the meeting will be held for members unable to walk to the hall carrying their swap table items etc.

Members do NOT need to bring chairs.

## May Food Group

**Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> May at the home of Hartmut and Sue Holzkecht – 9.30am start time**

**12 Waranga Crescent, Burringbar, 0448 880 239**

**Directions on how to get there:** From Murwillumbah, travel south along Tweed Valley Way. Pass the signs pointing right to Burringbar and Broadway, pass the Cheese Factory on the right, keep going across the bridge over Burringbar Creek. Travel about 100 metres, turn right into Hunter Street and then turn right into Waranga Crescent. Number 12 is the 3<sup>rd</sup> property on the right. Please park on both sides of the road.

For the May Food Group - please book through this link: <https://www.trybooking.com/BQLNA>

Bookings are open now and close on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> May at 5pm.

**Please Note:** 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. 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 the April Garden Gathering and May Food Group, there will still be no shared food. However, members are encouraged to bring their own refreshments for after the formal meeting time.

**For both meetings members are asked to bring the following:**

- ☺ Name badge
- ☺ Hat & water
- ☺ Swap table items
- ☺ Any gardening questions

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

**For Food Group** – please also bring your chair and thermos and food for morning tea.

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

Huge, huge, huge thanks to all the contributors to this newsletter.

As always, all of your contributions are welcome and we would love to hear what you've all been up to. Send your hints, tips, recipes, travel stories, bragging photos to us at [ugcnews@gmail.com](mailto:ugcnews@gmail.com)

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



Beautiful bat plant in the garden of friends of ours.