

Uki Garden Club



Uki Garden Club Inc.
PO Box 580
Murwillumbah NSW 2484
ugcnews@gmail.com
<http://ukigarden.club/wp/>

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PRESIDENT'S PIECE

It seems just yesterday that I started the Garden Club in Uki but it's coming up to a quarter of a century now. During that time we have got to know some amazing people, both members and visitors alike, which has underlined the motto of the Garden Clubs of Australia "Friendship Through Gardens". I'd like to thank you all for voting me in again as President and I will try to do my best to honour your confidence in me. Over the next twelve months I would welcome your suggestions as to how to make the Club more proactive by introducing workshops, more outings, more show-and-tell and more community outreach. If anyone can think of a guest speaker we haven't already had please let me know. As a speaker myself at other clubs over the years I've discovered that I learn far more about gardening from them than I impart in their allocated 20-minute slot. As the saying goes "it's good to talk."

What else to expect over the next twelve months? One thing I can guarantee is that we will all be grappling with climate change. As I write this it's cold and stormy outside thanks to the lingering La Niña effect while often September brings a burst of hot weather. Good thing gardeners are a philosophical bunch. Julia

MEET OUR COMMITTEE

Julia Hancock – President

Jenny Clark – Vice president

Judi Jones – Treasurer

Gillian Woodward – Secretary

Kate Botham – Ordinary member

Marie Luxford – Ordinary member

Lynn O'Hara – Ordinary member

Our heartfelt thanks to all the above people who enable the smooth operation of the club for another year.

AUGUST GARDEN GATHERING

It's always a pleasure to visit Lynn, Dawn and Yvonne at North Star and at the August meeting they made us very warmly welcome as usual. So many surprises greeted us as we wandered around the park and saw what everyone was doing with their gardens – small means beautiful in that impressive neighbourhood.

Lynn has been in her home for 15 years during which time she has built up a garden from scratch. "I didn't start with a plan, it's just grown," she says. She's got lots of pots and lots of birds including finches, doves and rails. Thanks so much John for chauffeuring those who needed help.



Lynn's garden

Yvonne's garden features one of Don's sculptures and there's always something interesting in flower to catch the eye as well as some great decorative ideas too.



Yvonne's garden

Dawn surprised us by saying they've moved! We found it hard to believe she could leave her beautiful garden and start again, but this is exactly what she will be doing in their new (just been there six weeks) abode, seven doors along. It's a blank canvas apart from the side passage which now houses all their potted treasures and hanging baskets from their last place.



Dawn's new garden

As we walked through the park to visit Lynn, Dawn and Yvonne's gardens we couldn't help but think these three green-thumbed ladies have encouraged all their neighbours to have a go at gardening.

As usual the swap table was groaning and Dot donated a huge bag of cumquats for jam. It was great to once again be able to enjoy afternoon tea after months of COVID restrictions.

DON'S GARDEN GATHERING TALK

As usual, Don produced the goods – a magnificent collection of flowering plants, although in his customarily modest way he said "I just walked around the garden and picked a few flowers". The *Dombeya* 'Winter Joy' lived up to its name and wowed us all (see below) and so did his *Magnolia* 'Felix'. But at this time of the year, it's Don's grevilleas that really stand out. The genus produces all sizes from trees to groundcovers and every size in between. This year the flowers have been extra-full of honey which the regent bower birds have been enjoying. The ones he brought along from his collection included 'Watermelon Ice', 'Honey Barbara', '*G. banksii* 'Alba', 'Pink Parakeet', 'Sandra Gordon', 'Peaches and Cream', 'Blood Orange' and 'Sylvia'. Don has found it difficult to cultivate his normal vast array of everlasting daisies because of the wet and cold. "If you manage to get some seeds just sprinkle them on top of the mix (don't cover them up) as they need sunlight to germinate," says Don. Bees love them. Pinch out tips to encourage bushy growth. Thanks Don, for your inspirational talk.

THE SUPER SAUSAGE TREE

Following on from Michael and Jackie Balk's encounter with a sausage tree in Greenvale, Queensland, Julia brought along a fruit of this amazing tree to the August Garden Gathering, prompting Jenny Wein to submit this to the newsletter.

"I thought you might like to pass on some interesting facts about the sausage tree, *Kigelia pinnata*. There is one growing outside the Scout Hall (now Murwillumbah Boxing Hall) in Amwil Park planted in 1962. The original tree was obtained from Reserve Creek school from teacher and friend Perce Chapman, who had obtained it from the Flecker Botanic Gardens, Cairns, Queensland (I believe). I have been trying to get it included in Tweed Shire Council's Significant Tree Register for some years now but "they are too busy for this at the moment". Cheers

Jenny Wein

Kigelia is a genus of flowering plants in the family Bignoniaceae. The genus consists of only one species, *Kigelia africana*, which occurs throughout tropical Africa. The fruit weighs up to 7kg and can reach 60cm long. It resembles a sausage in a casing but is highly toxic. The fresh fruit is prepared for consumption by drying, roasting or fermentation. Extracts of the bark, flower and fruit of *Kigelia africana* have been increasingly used in skincare products due to the high level of antioxidant and anti-inflammatory constituents. The oil is used medically. The hard shell (skin) of the fruit can be hollowed out, cleaned, and made into useful, durable containers of varying sizes. The tree is widely grown as an ornamental tree in tropical regions for its decorative flowers and unusual fruit. Planting sites should be selected carefully, as the falling fruit can cause serious injury to people and damage vehicles parked under the trees.



Kigelia africana fruit

BOTTLE TOPS PLEASE

Kate Botham is still collecting plastic milk bottle tops and plastic bread ties to be recycled into playground equipment and garden furniture.

BLACK TURMERIC

Jackie Balk sang the praises of the black turmeric she is cultivating. It's good for so many health issues that there is not enough room to write about it here. See what Dr Google says instead.



A JEWEL IN CRYSTAL CREEK'S CROWN

Crystal Creek nursery has many gorgeous plants but I am sure many of you have noticed their forest bell creeper, *Tecomanthe dendrophila* syn. *T. venusta* growing in (or should I say outgrowing) a pot near the till. It's flowering at the moment but unfortunately, they don't have plants for sale. On a recent visit my crafty sister (on holiday here from Spain) saw me lusting after it and arranged to have one sent to me by mail order after she'd departed. She had trouble finding a supplier but eventually Westlor Flowers Plant Nursery had them. Find them at 474 Whelan Road, Imbil, QLD 4570, www.weslorflowers.com, westlor@active.net.au, phone 0428 832 582. It was very well packed and arrived in good condition.



Tecomanthe dendrophila

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: When is the right time to fertilise citrus? (Sue H)

A: The sequence is prune when you've picked all the fruit, use a copper sulphate spray to wipe out fungal infection when the weather is still cool; apply a light fertiliser now and then a more generous dose at fruit set. Too much fertiliser when the flowers are still visible will encourage foliage at the expense of fruit.

Thanks Don.

Q: What veggies can be planted now? (Kate B)

A: Provided by Hartmut in alphabetic order: Asian greens; asparagus, beans, beetroot, capsicum/chilli, celery, cucumber, eggplant, herbs, kale, lettuce, pumpkin, radish, rocket, silver beet, spring onion, sweet corn, sweet potato, tomato, zucchini/squash. Thank you Hartmut for your comprehensive list.

Q: Inspired by the marvellous example Don brought into the Garden Gathering, BG asked this question: How tall and what spread does dombeya achieve and where can one purchase them from?

A: *Dombeya cacuminum* (strawberry snowball tree) is a beautiful evergreen tree from Madagascar. It is a narrow upright tree to 50 feet tall with large maple-like leaves and in spring the 30cm wide clusters of coral-red flowers hang at the branch tips. Slightly acid, well-drained soil is required. It is hard to find in garden centres – best to look on the internet for a mail order supplier. If you can find a plant, cuttings can be taken and struck in water. Flower heads can be hung upside down and left to dry like hydrangeas for flower arrangements.



Dombeya cacuminum

Q: What size pots are suitable for growing tomatoes in? (Kate B)

A: 45cm or larger if possible. Use best quality potting mix. Half-fill the pot, plant the seedling, then as the seedling grows top up the potting mix with soil to enable roots to form up the stem, making the plant sturdier. They are very greedy feeders.

Q: What is this creature? It's active in the dark. (Annie)

A: Lice.

Q: My peach fruit is rotten in the middle – why? (Tim H).

A: Could be a fungal disease or fruit fly. Clean up the tree at bud-swell, removing excess branches and spray with an antifungal copper sulphate spray. Thanks Don.

SEEDS PLEASE

Hartmut is doing a magnificent job with the seed box but he needs your help! When donating seeds, please label them with your name, the species and the date they were collected. Please also clean up any rubbish around the seeds such as twigs, stems and dead leaves, to facilitate packaging for the seed box. By request, Hartmut is writing an article about weeds for a future issue of the UGC newsletter.

UPDATE FROM GLEN INNES

Many of us remember the inspiring talk Lynn O'Hara's son Sean, and son-in-law CJ gave when we last visited North Star, Hastings Point. At the Garden Gathering Lynn read out an email describing their activities since they relocated to Glen Innes. "The move to a farm just south of Glen Innes went very well and we arrived at the end of December with a van load of trees and cuttings and spent the last part of summer getting them in the ground...We've constructed a huge 6mx6m greenhouse on the paddock, although cold, windy weather made progress difficult. The first frost came late this winter, towards the end of May...Some plants didn't make it, some of them did, but it's been trial and error to see what can be done. Cold-sensitive plants were covered with mulch for the winter while others like moringa had to have a cage filled with leaves surrounding it, then a layer of frost cloth. The same technique has been used for the bananas. We are growing a lot of plants from the brassica family (kale, collard greens, cauliflower and broccoli). Once it warms up, we will plant seeds that enjoy a temperate climate – superfoods though often overlooked as weeds! These are things like lambs' quarters, goosefoot and orach. Warmer climate seedlings such as capsicum, chilli, tomatoes and eggplant have been germinated in the greenhouse and will be planted later in spring."

CJ and Sean have generously offered to come down to the coast and give another talk to the garden club, where CJ will discuss what they are growing in more detail and share seeds and cuttings with us. Can't wait!



Submitted by Lynn O'Hara from the internet.

TITBITS FROM THE FOOD GROUP

Peter and Marie's garden at Dallis Park is an absolute inspiration and the Food Group was lucky enough to visit it on a perfect spring morning on 13 September. Marie purchased the 1.5 acre property 32 years ago and with Peter's help has transformed a camphor-infested plot into a garden full of colour and interest. The slope at the back was unworkable until Peter terraced it, enabling Marie to fill the beds up with shade-loving specimens. Unfortunately, the February flood came half way up the bank and washed away all their plants, so Peter is now replacing them with species that can tolerate occasional inundation. It was lovely to see ex-members Phil and Marcella (formerly from 6.5 acres at Burringbar) and hear about their new property in Cleveland (760m2 block). Marcella made us all envious when she declared "I have no weeds". Other items discussed included:

- Trish and Alan advised that it's well worth buying in some good soil if yours is poor. Alan is reorientating his bee hive to follow the seasons and path of the sun.
- Wendy and John are downsizing from their large Terranora property but still staying in the area. They generously donated a compost bin and corkscrew turning gadget to go with it.
- Sue Yarrow is hoping for a good crop of mangoes this year.
- Dot brought in her amazing new battery-operated pruning saw to show us.
- Jean is thrilled that her herbs have bounced back after their recent drenching.
- Gillian went on holidays recently and during her absence bush turkeys totally destroyed her entire raised vegie gardens.
- Julia advised that fertiliser might be in short supply in future as Putin has cut off the gas line to Europe where a lot of it is made. Apparently, the process of creating nitrogenous fertiliser uses up lots of gas, so production has now ceased.

A NARROW ESCAPE

Julia did something really stupid in her garden recently and fell off a 1.2m wall as she was looking at a 2m brown snake on the terrace below. She counts herself lucky that she is still alive because not only did the snake slither off without biting her, but the large crack she heard was only her wrist snapping, not her neck. She got herself off to hospital and is now looking forward to having the splint removed at the end of October. Thanks to everyone who has helped her recover and get on with her one-handed life.



A magnificent dendrobium takes pride of place on Marie and Peter's front lawn



Colourful foliage



The vegie patch



The amazing epiphytes

SUGAR CANE MULCH

Several people had things to say about the supply and use of sugar cane mulch. Jenny advised that the bales had gone up to \$6 and some people were buying up truckloads and taking them to Queensland to sell on at a vast profit. Trish asked that if anyone sees bales for sale could they please put it on the Garden Club's facebook page. Julia said the cane is being cut when its still wet, making the bales very heavy. Hartmut said the cane is sprayed with nasties so is not suitable for organic gardens. Helen warned about breathing in fungal spores and dust when spreading the cane mulch. The cane that was flooded has also been contaminated by polluted water so don't use it on your edibles.

Alternatives? Julia finds lemongrass very good and the plants respond well to a haircut when the leaves start to brown off. 'Chop and drop' is a good time- and labour-saving method of covering the bare earth with organic matter. Don't bother composting autumn leaves – just spread them straight on the ground. They will last till the end of summer before rotting down completely. Daylily foliage can be trimmed down to a 30cm fan shape now and the cut leaves spread around the rootzone of the plant.

GET WELL SOON ANNE

Long-time member Anne Pryke has recently suffered a mini-stroke (TIA), but is now back home for her recovery. We all wish her a speedy return to good health.

PARK ACTIVE

When Diana Eriksen heard about Julia's fall, she advised her to attend the balance, agility and coordination training for seniors lead by Suzi Thomas. Sessions are held every Wednesday at 9am at Knox Park netball courts and cost \$5. Diana says one only needs to go a couple of times then do the exercises at home thereafter.

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Dear readers, you'll notice the newsletter has shrunk! This is because the new editor (me) doesn't have Fran's amazing computer skills. However, I am still wanting your contributions so please send your hints, tips, recipes, stories and bragging photos to me at hancock_julia@hotmail.com

TOO MUCH KALE?

Sounds like a contradiction in terms but several people are wondering how they can use their kale. Try this – it's absolutely delicious!

RIBOLLITA (TUSCAN BEAN SOUP)



- 2 tablespoons good olive oil
 - 1/2 cup chopped bacon
 - 2 cups diced onions 4 – 6 cloves garlic- rough chopped
 - 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
 - 2 teaspoons salt, plus more to taste
 - 1 tablespoon sugar
 - 1 jar pasta sauce with tomatoes and herbs
 - 4 cups kale, finely shredded
 - Splash balsamic vinegar
 - 6 cups chicken or veggie stock
 - 2 cans cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
 - 1/2 cup chopped fresh Italian parsley leaves
1. Heat oil over medium heat. Add onions and bacon and sauté for 6-8 minutes.
 2. Lower heat to med-low and add the garlic, salt, sugar and pepper and cook another 7- 9 minutes, until vegetables are tender.
 3. Add the tomatoes and kale, and a splash of balsamic vinegar, and continue sauteing and stirring occasionally for 7-8 minutes.
 4. Add the stock and beans. Bring to soup to boil, turn heat down and simmer for 15 minutes.
 5. Stir in fresh Italian parsley. Adjust salt if necessary.

**And thanks, as always, to our printer – Sandra Guthrie at Poster Paradise,
Murwillumbah**

SCHEDULE FOR FOOD GROUP MEETINGS 2022

MONTH DATE TIME	HOST NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE NUMBER
October Tuesday 11 9.30am	Aura Nursery	Wollumbin Street Murwillumbah	Jenny Clark 02 6677 9490
November Tuesday 8 9.30am	Budd Park	Alma Street Murwillumbah	Julia Hancock 02 6672 2506

SCHEDULE FOR GARDEN GATHERINGS 2022

MONTH DATE TIME	HOST NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE NUMBER
September Saturday 24 2pm	Jackie and Michael Balk	81 The Grove Nunderi	0431 945 636
October Saturday 29 2pm	Tess Thompson	20 Blackwoods Road Nobbys Creek	02 6679 1051
November Saturday 26 5pm XMAS PARTY	Don and Sandra Capner	Morning Song 108 Farrants Road Farrants Hill Condong	02 6677 7244 0421 696 567

Hint: If you need to look up where the next garden club event is, simply go to our website, www.ukigarden.club. There you will find on the front page, all of the upcoming events. Simply click on an event to see all the details, including a map of the location. Couldn't be quicker and easier! GW