

## The Gentle Gardening Guide Janet Stone



August, and the last of the cold weather: and the last opportunity to finish all those heavy, hot jobs in the garden. Prune dormant plants

now before they waste energy on new growth in unwanted places; divide and replant perennials and bulbs including agapanthus, cannas, daylilies, and red-hot pokers; and rejuvenate soil in flower and vegetable beds for maximum productivity through the spring and summer growing seasons.

**Soil conditioning:** All plants take nutrients and water from soil through their root systems, and thrive best if top-soil has been dug over and rejuvenated at the beginning of each growing season. All soils benefit from adding organic matter such as animal manure, compost, leaf mould, mushroom compost and green manure crops. Improved soil encourages better air supply and build-up of beneficial organisms allowing plant roots to grow deeper into the soil improving crop yields and efficient water storage.

**Compost:** The key to efficient and fast compost production is the carbon-nitrogen ratio of its organic ingredients. High carbon materials include paper, sawdust, wheat straw and wood products, while high nitrogen sources include animal manure, green prunings and grass clippings. *Gardening Down Under* published by the CSIRO suggests 1:1:3 ratios of leaves, sawdust and animal manure to ensure a good carbon-nitrogen balance. My neighbour confides that producing good compost is a practice somewhere between science and magic, and is a hobby in itself if pursued thoroughly – several Garden Club members can give sound advice on this form of alchemy.

**Worms:** By burrowing through the soil, earthworms aerate soil structure providing oxygen for countless micro and macro organisms which in turn provide the environment



for plants to grow. Each day worms digest about half their own weight of soil, concentrating available minerals in worm casts that contain as much as 6 x nitrogen, 7 x phosphorus, 12 x potassium and many minor elements such as calcium, magnesium and sulphur (*Yates Garden Guide*). Earthworms are plentiful on the Mountain but always appreciative of extra organic material in garden soils. Off-mountain, a worm farm may be a good investment.

**Quick fixes:** When time is at a premium, as part of a regular plant feeding regime, or when quick intervention is needed to deal with stressed plants, consider the following solutions:

Powdered and granular fertilisers – for seedlings, particular plants such as azaleas, camellias, rhododendrons, roses, lawns and leafy vegetables;

Water-soluble fertilisers – regular applications of a dilute solution are beneficial for flowering annuals, potted plants, shrubs and vegetables;

Slow-release fertilisers – easy and reliable, these fertilisers are suitable for most plants;

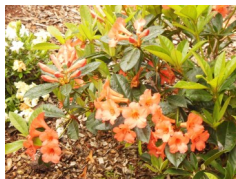
Controlled-release fertilisers – the rate of nutrient release usually depends on soil temperature so plants receive more nutrient during warmer, fast-growth periods;

Organic fertilisers – spread generously over the surface and dug into topsoil these will improve nutrient levels and soil structure of bedding gardens;

Liquid manure – suitable for leafy vegetables and organically grown crops; and

Green manure crops – best for vegetable gardens that are left idle during winter, a crop of wheat, barley, oats, or legumes should be dug thoroughly into the soil when they begin to flower. Keep the soil damp and re-dig after 3 weeks. Vegetables can be planted a month later.

For those who remember the character Arthur Fallowfield in the radio programme *Beyond Our Ken* we all know that "The answer lies in the soil."



# TAMBORINE MOUNTAIN GARDEN CLUB INC.

PO Box 63, North Tamborine, 4272 ABN 281 058 436 76 [www.tmbotanicgardens.org.au](http://www.tmbotanicgardens.org.au)

## NEWSLETTER

Editor: Bernadette Stacey - [bernadette1859@gmail.com](mailto:bernadette1859@gmail.com) 0409 759 838

August 2015

### Company in the garden

One of the great joys of gardening on the mountain is the birdlife which greets me each day. These days I have time to watch and listen to the amazing variety of birds that inhabit my garden and neighbourhood.

Magpies, butcherbirds and kookaburras are constantly at work in the garden, consuming bugs and grubs. They are curious birds who like to be close to the gardening action in case I turn up something edible. Their songs and calls alert me to their presence even when I can't see them.

The array of parrots who visit daily are also a delight. The bullying, louts of our neighbourhood are the rainbow lorikeets. They charge though the sky like P-plated sports car drivers. The magnificent king parrots brighten everyday with their vibrant plumage and garrulous behaviour. The crimson and pale-headed rosellas are also a beautiful addition to my garden.



I leave bright blue things out in the garden in the hope of encouraging a bower bird to take up residence to no avail yet. They do love the seed pods of the big magnolia in the backyard and visit frequently as the pods ripen: then I get to enjoy their crazy chatter.

However all is not peace and love with the birds in my garden. The noisy miners are constantly chasing off other small birds that I would like to encourage. Worst of all is the scrub turkey that is very aggressive to my lovely chickens leaving them traumatised with bloody combs. He has recently tried to build a mound on top of my fruit trees. I had no intention of letting him build it there so there was an epic battle of wills. I tried everything, mirrors, sprinklers, strategically placed objects, pruning branches to let more sunlight in, chicken wire and trip wires. The garden looked like a bomb went off in it. Nothing worked until I called in a bloke with a trap. When that turkey was gone another one turned up: back to the drawing board.

Despite the presence aggressive noisy miners and scrub turkeys I delight in my avian friends. Learning more about their behaviour adds to the rich tapestry of a gardening life here on our lovely mountain.



### What's on today

Lunch, tour of the gardens, lucky door prize, plants sales from the Potty Potters.

**CONTACTS:** President - Margaret Bell 5545 0797 | Vice President - Di Howard 5545 2628

Secretary - Robin Pope - 5545 2205 | Treasurer - Di Fenton - 5545 026 | Springtime Convener - Margaret Pile - 5545 0869 | Patron - Mary Wallace

## September 2015 Meeting

### Tuesday September 8th at 9:30 AM

Vonda Youngman Community Centre Main Street, North Tamborine

**Guest Speaker** Laurie Baxter, President of the Logan and District Orchid Society. -

An introduction to growing orchids

### Competition table

A flowering native

An exotic tree or shrub

A collection of 6 flowers- bulb, corm, tuber

A vegetable / fruit

A bunch of sweet peas

A Tussie-Mussie

A raceme of wisteria

### Specimen table

Bring along a specimen; unusual, interesting, beautiful, unknown. Include a question if you like.

### Question and answer segment

Get the answers you need to all your gardening questions. Use your experience to help with someone else's problems.

### September morning tea

Anne Neary & Elsa Rasmussen



## From the President

I don't know about everyone else, but I don't want winter to go yet and these warm days are heralding spring already. We still have lots of magnolias in full bloom but many of the deciduous shrubs and trees are already showing their new leaves so I think spring is almost sprung!

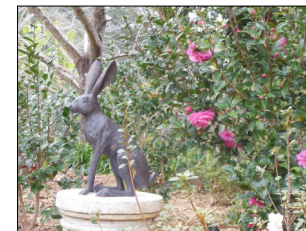


When my three year old grand-daughter was with us last week and requested a visit to the "Tanic Gardens" it was wonderful to see so many visitors enjoying the fruits of the Volunteers labours. Everything is looking magnificent, from the weed-free lake, all gardens and lawn areas to the fantastic new chainsaw sculpture and newly re-surfaced roads/pathways. My congratulations and thanks to all Volunteers. I do hope there is a good attendance at the August meeting in the gardens so that all members can be inspired and maybe enrol as new Volunteers!

'Springtime' is looming and I know Margaret Pile is working hard preparing for the big three day event. Margaret will be handing out rosters and badges at today's meeting so please ensure that you see her and get your copy. The Springtime telephone number is 0458 102 344 if you have any queries. If you have not yet volunteered for anything, you can always leave your details with Margaret and go on a 'reserves' list. - **Margaret**

## July garden visit

This month, again, we started with wet weather; nevertheless, there were a few brief moments where we were able to walk around Bernadette and Peter's beautiful garden. The work in this one acre garden has been going on for four years, and is a real credit for all their hard work. My thanks to both of you. - Glenda Sullivan



Remember - Come rain, hail or shine - the monthly garden visits must go on.

### August garden visit

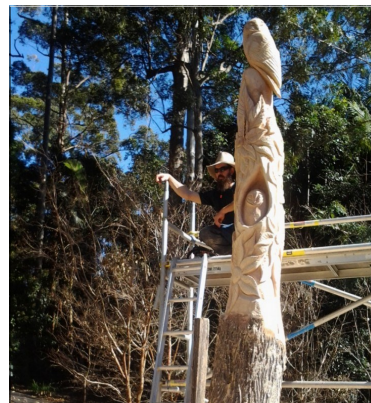
Tuesday 18th August 10am

JASMIN ORGANICS (tour of garden & manufacturing facility)

Organic Skincare

197 Long Road,

Tamborine Mt. (opposite Tamborine Mountain Nursery)



### Chainsaw sculpture at the gardens

Recently chainsaw sculptor Matt Bird turned this old silky oak tree into a beautiful sculpture owl sculpture. It is certainly worth a trip to the gardens to view this amazingly skilful work of art. This piece is a worthy addition to our botanic gardens.

Matt will also be giving demonstrations at the showgrounds during the Springtime on the Mountain festival. Go along and watch him create beautiful pieces

### July meeting

Now that spring is nearly here hopefully Anne Neary won't require her beany and rugs for our September meeting. July **was** cold in the big hall.



### Upcoming Events

Wondai Garden Expo 26 & 27 September 2015

Penny Hegarty tours for 2016

Twin Towns and District Garden Club Inc Flower & Garden Expo 12 September 2015