

## The Gentle Gardening Guide — Janet Stone

With summer slowly retiring and the promise of cooler autumn weather in the air, a new gardening year begins as old summer stock and growth is cleared away or pruned back, and garden beds are prepared for the coming spring season.

**Set and forget bulbs:** for seasonal colour and variety there is nothing quite as joyful as bulbs – and they're not all high cost and hard work. Many bulbs can be planted once in a



suitable location and left for many years to naturalise. English and Spanish bluebells both grow well in dappled shade in our Mountain climate although the Spanish varieties are more robust. Anemones, chinchinchee, freesias, sparaxis, starflowers, ranunculus and triteleia multiply quickly, and over a few years can fill a wide space. Smaller flowers such as a grape hyacinth and miniature daffodils are best suited to pots for a striking effect or planted under deciduous trees where they spread to form a colourful carpet. Dutch iris, ixias, jonquils, lachenalias and snowflakes can tolerate warmer winter temperatures and will often flower well in full sun with regular watering. Generally bulbs like sunshine for at least half a day while they are growing and flowering but also grow well under deciduous trees, as long as they have good garden soil which drains well.

**Wildflowers:** equally easy care as set-and-forget bulbs are wildflowers sewn in small pockets and through borders, swept across banks and rockeries, or disguising a difficult location. Native wildflowers include cut-leaf and everlasting daisies,



dampiera, fan flowers, flannel flowers, fringed lily, kangaroo paws and lechenaultia to name a few, while other garden wildflowers include buttercups, chamomile, cornflowers, cowslip, daisies, evening

primrose, harebells, heartsease, foxgloves, iris, phlox, polemonium, poppies, primulas and verbascum. Wildflowers are best bought as seedlings from reputable nurseries or as commercially sold seeds to avoid spreading weed varieties that invade and harm the local environment.

**Something different:** adds interest to the garden and new challenges for the gardener. Instead of another citrus tree, grow a persimmon. These versatile trees not only offer prolific harvests of sweet fruit but provide visual interest in a sunny, sheltered position, shade in summer and colourful autumn foliage. Persimmons are fairly undemanding, liking cool winters and average garden soil with good drainage. Their only disadvantage is that the trees need to be netted



once the fruit begins to set as they attract birds, bats and possums. Less work but equally interesting is growing a wide variety of peas. Not just garden, snap, snow or leafless varieties, peas include the Purple-Podded Dutch variety – lovely in a flower garden but also edible, and the Golden-Podded variety – a type of snow pea. Combine growing these coloured peas with a variety of orange, purple, red, white or yellow carrots and beetroot for a truly novel vegetable experience.

**Preparation:** if particular beds will not be planted for a while, dig in pelletised animal manure, mulch with a thick layer of wet straw and let it rot into the ground. Add blood and bone to beds where annuals, perennials and vegetables are to be grown and give trees and shrubs a light dressing of all-purpose fertiliser. Azaleas, camellias and rhododendrons should have some liquid fertiliser now, but no more until after they finish flowering. And remember that when weeding, the best way to make sure you are removing a weed and not a valuable plant is to pull on it. If it comes out of the ground easily, it is a valuable plant.



# TAMBORINE MOUNTAIN GARDEN CLUB INC.

PO Box 63, North Tamborine, 4272 ABN 281 058 436 76 www.tmbotanicgardens.org.au

## NEWSLETTER

Editor: Bernadette Stacey - bernadette1859@gmail.com 0409 759 838

March 2016

### Marvellous Mandevilla

There is a lot to be said about the hardiness, reliability and sheer exuberance of the mandevilla climber. Their spectacular flowers certainly add a lot of colour and glamour to mountain gardens during summer.

The mandevillas are an easy growing evergreen climber. They grow to around 5 metres and can be trained over an arch or trellis to make a screen or focal point in a garden. *Scarlet Pimpernel* and *Red Riding Hood* are smaller varieties, growing to 2 metres, and are suitable for container growing.

Flowering is more profuse in the sun and sparser in the shade. They like thick mulch over the root



system to keep the soil moist and the roots protected. Plants can be pruned after flowering to encourage dense growth. Now is the time to take cuttings with several nodes and strike them in free draining propagation mix.

In my garden I have had great success with *Pretty White* which is clambering over a pergola. It receives very little attention from me, perhaps a handful of pelletised chicken manure once or twice a year is about the most I do. It rewards me with

flowers all through summer and well into autumn. This year I have planted the beautiful pink *Alice du Pont* and it too is beginning to grow well and has had a few flowers. I can't wait for it to look like the one pictured above, which is growing in my neighbourhood. Bernadette Stacey

### Fragrant Rhododendrons

The presentation today deals with a type of Rhododendrons known as "The Maddenias", they number around 30 species and a number of hybrids. In hardiness they lay somewhere in between cold climate Rhododendrons and Vireya Rhododendrons. In most areas of the UK and Europe they have to be grown in conservatories as most are frost tender. They grow best in climates with mild winters like ours on Tamborine Mountain. We are trialling a number of these plants in our garden and so far they are growing successfully. Unfortunately they are not generally available in regular nurseries. Some can from private gardens and small nurseries in Tasmania and the Blue Mountains NSW. Roy



Rhododendron veitchianum

**CONTACTS: President** -Margaret Bell 55450797 |**Vice President** - Di Howard 5545 2628

**Secretary** - Robin Pope - 5545 2205 | **Treasurer**– Di Fenton - 5545 0236 | **Springtime Convener** - Margaret Pile - 5545 0869 | **Patron** - Mary Wallace

**April 2016 Meeting**

**Tuesday April 12th at 9:30 AM**

Vonda Youngman Community Centre Main Street, North Tamborine

**Guest Speaker** Des Warnock - healthy plants and soil

**Competition table**

- a flowering native,
- an exotic tree or shrub
- a flowering bulb or corm,
- a vegetable / fruit
- a tropical flower
- an arrangement of perennials
- a sasanqua flower

**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.

**Club membership subscriptions due**

\$40 couple \$25 single. Payments can be made on the website or at the today's meeting.

**What's on today**

Guest speaker: Roy Bilbie - Fragrant Rhododendrons, Plants sales, Raffles, Library



**March garden visit**

Tuesday March 15, 10am BYO morning tea  
Tamborine Mountain Botanic Gardens

**Writer needed**

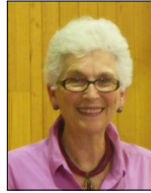
Janet Stone, who writes the monthly Gentle Gardening guide, has resigned from this role. Janet has been a fantastic contributor to this newsletter for two years. Without fail her perfectly formed column arrived each month. Occasionally when I didn't have enough material Janet would dash off an always interesting, additional article. It is people like Janet, working quietly away, who help make this a great gardening club. Now the challenge is on to find a replacement. We need a replacement ASAP so that Janet can move into a different role in the club. It needn't be the same type of column that Janet wrote; you can make it your own. Have we a budding garden blogger ready to share your experience in the garden? If this sounds like you please talk to me at the meeting or email or phone me. Bernadette Stacey



**February garden visit**

It was delightful to be invited into Margaret Pile and Denby Browning's garden in February. It is a credit to them that such an interesting lush garden has been created in four years. The garden is planted with a lively mixture of exotics, natives, fruit trees and other edibles. The hard landscaping features a stream, a pond and a recently added Japanese bridge. Thanks Marg and Denby for inviting us to your small piece of paradise.

**President's Annual Report**



2015 has been another year of achievements and all thanks to you enthusiastic and energetic members. The year began with the good news that our Botanic Gardens Works Manager Eddie Fenton had received the Federal 'Wright Community Contribution Award' in acknowledgement of service to his community. March saw Dawn Hooper receive the Ron Miller Award and we enjoyed another great Fashion Parade. A day bus trip to Rosevale and Killarney in April was a great success and a taste of what was to

follow in November when Goondiwindi, Inverell and Glen Innes offered beautiful gardens and 3 days of camaraderie. In July we were treated to a marvellous concert 'Afternoon Delights' in the beautiful garden of 'Jarnac' another event reflecting dedication and excellent organisation. Springtime on the Mountain, as always, thrilled over 3,000 visitors and is a credit to all involved. It just seems to have a wonderful profile and brings visitors back time and again. Our Christmas lunch was beautifully catered in the lovely setting of Tamborine Vineyards and Winery with entertainment of a very high standard. All who were there had a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon.

All these events were punctuated with enjoyable garden visits, interesting guest speakers and fantastic progress in our Botanic Gardens. At our August meeting in the gardens we were introduced to the new 'Sooty Owl Creekside Walk', now almost complete. This brainchild of Brian Davison is remarkable and a credit to Brian and all the volunteers who have assisted him. If you haven't visited the walk, do yourself a favour and, even better, if you have grandchildren take them through. Our team of volunteers in the Botanic Gardens do an incredible job and they, and Botanic Gardens manager, Roger Lenahan, are to be congratulated. As Roger could tell us, there is much more to running the gardens than the hands on work, hours of tedious planning and reporting has to be done too.

To each and every one of you who go above and beyond for this club at meetings, with Springtime, at the gardens, propagating plants, opening your gardens for garden visits, baking for Fashion Parades and the Biggest Morning Tea, planning wonderful trips and concerts, maintaining our terrific website, keeping the accounts, producing the fantastic newsletters (and writing the wonderful back page), grant writing, arranging speakers, publicity and promotion - the list goes on and on and I daren't mention a name for fear of missing someone, my sincere thanks.

Our committee has been wonderful and worked so well together and it's not always work, we do have lots of laughs too. To the outgoing members, Secretary Robi Pope, Treasurer Di Fenton, Annie Brennan and Bev Kitching, my thanks doesn't seem enough - but you have it, what a team we've been! I'm thrilled to know that Di Howard is taking the reins in April. She flies in from an overseas trip at 6am the morning of the April meeting and is determined to be here to chair the meeting. I hope she is as I'm going away that day! I know Di will enjoy the wonderful support that I did and I wish her well.

It has been a pleasure and an honour to be your President and I finish my 2 years with a sense of enjoyment and satisfaction. Thank you all.—Margaret Bell

