



NEWSLETTER

Editor: Bernadette Stacey - bernadette1859@gmail.com 0409 759 838 **February 2015**



The Gentle Gardening Guide

“A conversation with anyone who loves a garden” Janet Stone

A summer of high humidity, some drenching rain and long hot days, this has been a time to sit back, relax and enjoy the benefits of last year’s gardening efforts, review successes, and plan for the coming seasons.

Rejuvenation: A walk around the garden will reveal what has worked well, and what needs changing. Patchy areas in the lawn may work better under mulch or ground cover, or may need a good aeration and re-sowing. While edging pathways, garden beds and the driveway, decide how neat or informal you want them to be and how much useful access they provide. This will help determine the style of garden you need to suit your current lifestyle, time commitments and displays for the coming seasons. While you clear out spent annuals, empty pots and weed garden beds, consider whether the garden needs more trees and shade areas or fewer; what space is needed for family, friends and pets; which plants need to be removed, relocated or restructured; and what needs to be gifted, given away or traded to make room for the garden design that suits the way you want to use your garden. Take time and prioritise changes, because planning now will bear satisfying results during the rest of the year.



Planning: Basic planning includes structure, texture, colour and seasonal interest, which together determine the year-round look of the garden.

Structure sets the “bones” of the whole garden as well as individual rooms or feature pockets within the garden. High, medium and low structures include trees, shrubs, trellises, pergolas, walls, fences, steps, paths and other built features which set the background for selected plantings. Like

decorating rooms inside the house, the garden needs staging to achieve a pleasing effect – even the cascading abandon of a cottage garden requires considered structure to give it appeal.

Texture provides visual interest through thoughtful placement of various foliage forms (spiky, strappy, slender, plump, fluffy, furry, hard, soft, weeping, geometrical). Combination of varied textures can be used to contrast, highlight, integrate or soften plant groupings and form sculptural features or focal points in the garden.

Colour sets the mood of the garden through selected colour palettes: hot yellow, orange and red add vibrancy and eye-catching highlights; cool pink, blue, mauve, white and grey soothe and lighten while blending into garden boundaries; pastels relax and introduce subtlety; single colour such as cheerful yellow, dramatic red, gentle pink or crisp white; contrasting colours think purple and yellow, cerise and white; and all-green foliage in its wide range of shades, textures and shapes. A colour tableau adds impact to a garden.

Seasonal interest requires knowing what is already in the garden and when it flowers, changes colour, or loses its leaves. This is a year-long task of looking at what is featuring in local gardens and when, then deciding whether including those plants will enhance your garden design, and where they need to be placed to provide seasonal points of interest. Annuals provide convenient seasonal colour while feature plants mature.

Gardening resolution for 2015 to minimise work and maximise impact: Make a map of your garden design, plant locations and sizes. Keep a garden diary which details your garden style and records what is planted, when it is at its best, and any attention required. While this may seem time consuming at first, it provides a good basis for prioritising work and plantings in future years.

WAR OF THE WEEDS

Tradescantia flummensis/albiflora/pallida/zebrina: by any name this is Wandering Jew, a weed which invades our gardens, forests, waterways and agricultural land. It prefers bright shade and nutritious soils, is able to strike from every node and can lie dormant for two growing seasons. If left unattended it can carpet areas up to a metre deep suppressing all other growth. It makes the dog itch and me sneeze.



How do I know this? Because I have googled every possible site, read countless magazines and books, asked endless questions and read labels until my eyes blurred over trying to find a way to eliminate this dreadful weed from my garden.

The official answer is simple – hoe, rake then dig by hand. Black bag the runners and let them rot for 3 or 4 months, or drown them in a barrel of water for 3 to 4 months. Yes, well, after having dug up two trailer loads of runners over a week of really hard slog, then filling and stacking a pile of black bags behind the shed there had to be a better way.



Chooks! Build a pen over the weedy area and let the chooks eat them. Perfect. Six months of pecking and the area looked weed free – until the next growing season when another crop sprouted and spread.

Salads! said the edible weeds man. I don’t care how many gourmet dressings you make, the family knows what you are trying to disguise.

So, what unwanted things do I have in equal proportions to this hated weed: junk mail, newspapers and lawn clippings. Eureka! I lay the junk mail and newspapers over the mat of weeds, with a good sized overhang, then spread the clippings over the top. Same process repeated over the next few months and I have a perfectly good mulch garden on which I can create a pot plant garden with all my little seedlings and cuttings nestling into the vacant nooks. Underneath this little patch of heaven those weedy runners are slowly turning white, gasping for sun and well on their way to oblivion.



Landcare’s advice to my strategy is “Good luck!!” Janet Stone

CONTACTS: President - Margaret Bell 5545 0797 | Vice President - David Somerville 5545 3347
Secretary - Robin Pope - 5545 2205 | Treasurer- Margaret Pile - 5545 0869
Springtime Convener - | Patron - Mary Wallace

March 2015 Meeting

Tuesday 11th at 9:30 AM

Vonda Youngman Community Centre Main Street, North Tamborine

Guest Speaker

Lawrie Smith AM, Landscape Architect and Botanic Gardens Master Planner. Lawrie is an old friend of our club and Botanic Gardens having helped us in the past with plans and our big submission for funding to the SRRC. Lawrie designed the Roma Street Parklands, Mackay and Cairns Botanic Gardens to name just a few.

Competition table

A flowering native
An exotic tree or shrub
A flowering bulb or corm
A vegetable / fruit
perfumed leaves – one cut
An hibiscus
A rose

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.

March Morning Tea Roster

Lyn Jones & Bernadette Holzberger

The Library

Have a browse through the great selection of books on a wide variety of topics.

The Potty Potters Plant Stall

Great plants suitable for our mountain gardens at great prices.

What's on today.

Bev Kitching's "Great Gardening Quiz"

Next Garden Visit

Rhonda Laarhoven's garden
2 Beechmont Ave
Eagle Heights

Chillies

I am enjoying a plentiful crop of these fiery hot Amigo Habanero chillies this month. They certainly add a powerful hit of heat to salads and sauces. I have also used them in a chilli spray (20 crushed chillies, 2 litres of water and some pure soap flakes) to successfully rid my citrus trees of aphids. I love the look of the shiny orange fruit contrasted against the beautiful green foliage. What a great little plant.



From the President

What happy gardeners we all must be, with all the amazing rain we have had. Haven't our gardens responded wonderfully?

I do hope everyone has enjoyed a healthy and happy festive season and are now ready to face 2015! Your committee's aim is to see you all enjoying club activities and involvement.

The holiday period brought us both sad and good news. The sad news was the passing of Bill Haseler, Life Member of our Club and highly respected past member. Bill was a club stalwart in the early days of the development of the Botanic Gardens being one of the first volunteers. Later he was very instrumental in the planning and running of the gardens and as Curator. He was Club President in 1992 and 1993. Unfortunately I was unable to attend Bill's funeral but I have written to his wife Betty on behalf of the Club and Botanic Gardens

The good news came in the form of a special award for Eddie Fenton, Honorary Works Manager of our Botanic Gardens. Eddie has worked tirelessly for the gardens and the club for many years and it was wonderful to see his dedication acknowledged. The award is so well deserved and I know I am not alone with those thoughts. Congratulations Eddie, **2014 Wright Community Contribution Award** recipient.

Our first activity for 2015 will be the annual Fashion Parade on 17th March at Di Howard's home, 28 Ben Nevis Street. There will be a nominal \$5.00 charge which includes a Devonshire Morning Tea. Last year's event was a great success, mark your diaries and come along for a fun morning.

Our March meeting is the AGM, anyone wishing to nominate for the committee may obtain a nomination form from Secretary Robi. The form needs to be lodged with her no later than 14 days prior (23rd February).

The AGM brings with it the time for payment of membership subscriptions. These have increased this year to \$40 per couple and \$25 per single a necessity to cover club costs such as hall hire, insurance, library books, morning teas etc. We may be in need of some volunteers for various jobs at monthly meetings so please give these some consideration when they are up for discussion.

My best wishes to you all for a terrific 2015. **Margaret**