

## TOPIC: “LOCAL PLANTS FOR LOCAL CONDITIONS”

GUEST SPEAKER : **SPENCER SHAW** – FOREST HEART NURSERY

MALENY GARDEN CLUB MEETING : 26 July, 2016

Spencer is President of the Chamber of Commerce and has lived in Maleny for 24 years. With his wife Karen he sells native plants at their nursery in Coral Street. He loves talking to garden clubs. Invited to address Pelican Point Garden Club 16 years ago he arranged to deliver a ‘Powerpoint’ presentation. On arrival he found that the ‘power point’ was on the wall with no provision for projection from his computer. He had worked on his presentation for weeks and had to improvise asking the audience to imagine what he talked about in the blank space on the wall.

Spencer is an old English word from ‘dispenser’ and Shaw means woodland or small forest. He was born 46 years ago in Rochedale, Yorkshire where cotton mills etc were the prime source of employment. He moved to Australia by sea in the 1970’s arriving in Adelaide to find no kangaroos in the streets. He lived in ‘Little Greece’ noted for its food. In early 1980 he moved to Bribie Island, discovered the natural world of land and sea life, and developed a passion for ecosystems.

Around 99-2000 he set up a rainforest seed collection business to sell seeds to nurseries and established Brush Turkey Enterprises. To find seeds from 40m high canopies you have to scratch around in leaf litter. Brush turkeys are relics of dinosaur birds laying eggs in purpose made mounds and love garden situations set up by us. Spencer admires brush turkeys.

- Biodiversity in the Maleny area is up there with the best
- In the area west to Chinchilla, north to Bundaberg, east to the coast and south to the border there are 3,500 species of native plants
- There are 1,600 in the area bounded by Noosa to Caloundra and west to the range
- There was no glacial activity here which has benefitted the area
- There is a need to appreciate as Australians the extent and wealth of biodiversity
- There are 91 rare plant species on the south coast, 700 vertebrate fauna species and 68 endangered fauna species
- To the south coast and particularly in the Blackall Range, biodiversity is holding on
- Mary Cairncross Reserve is an island and its contents will change or disappear in the next 100 years if the area is not extended by gardeners planting native species in their gardens
- Need to plan wisely where to plant trees in relation to the built environment
- Spencer merged from seed collection business to eco and biodiversity business
- Grows exotic fruit trees and variety of native plants – bush foods, vines and ground covers which are very popular
- Having a good grasp of soil type in your garden determines which plants are suited e.g. avocados don’t like heavy soils – need light free draining and deep soils
- Some coastal and western plants will grow on the Blackall Range as there are micro-climates all over the range
- Wind can be detrimental to successful growth – windbreaks are needed for protection
- Phosphorus is lacking in Australia’s old soils. Maleny soil is young at 250 million years
- Basalt is from lava and sandstone is pushed up from the ocean
- Be careful with fertilisers on native plants as they are sensitive

- Brush turkeys, bandicoots, echidnas, hares and wallabies nip at the base of small trees which then fall over
- Spencer sells native plants in small tubes and in mega tubes which allow for better conditioned plants
- Bamboo Grass looks great in clumps from Yarraman – attracts small finches
- Glasshouse Mountain Tea Tree grows in pure rock – not suitable for Maleny
- Paper Daisies are fantastic quick growers in plain red soil
- Camomile Daisy performs in all weather and pops up in between pavers
- Leptospermum species do not like root disturbance – plant out when small
- Mt Emu sheoke has red tassel flowers – good for tough spots
- Hibiscus on top of Mt Ninderry grow as low straggly shrubs in poor soil
- There are 6 types of Banksia
- Native Hop is good for tough areas – has copper/orangey fruit – favourite food of emus which have aromatic pats, the size of teacup saucers, full of seeds
- Kangaroo Apple is inedible – seed spread by birds – has purple flower
- Bower of Beauty Vine will grow in thin layer of humus on rock – good ground cover
- Hovea has a mass of purple flowers
- Finger Limes fruit within 2 – 3 years – nesting habitat for small native birds
- Butterflies love the nectar from the massed green flowers of Phyllanthus Microcladus
- Mt Coochin Grevillea is very attractive
- Local Native Violets have small mauvish/purple flowers
- Native Celery is like flat leaved parsley
- Coastal Pigface likes full sun – has large plum fruit
- Kidney Weed is sought after for vertical wall landscaping
- Plumbago Ground Cover likes shade and attracts butterflies
- Native Jasmine flowers are white with pink buds - fragrant

END

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT OR VISIT SPENCER AND KAREN SHAW AT :

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