

# SNIPPETS from Here and There



Spring 2017

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The Maleny Garden Club extends a warm invitation to all members and visitors to attend the monthly general meetings held on the last Tuesday of each month, as per program for the year.

## A Note from Marnie.

Well how time has flown, this is my last Snippets note as President after four years in the chair. I have talked a little about my favourite flower, the rose, and as I make new finds will share them with you.

I must take the time in this note to thank everyone for your support of me through the last few months, I tried to keep my journey to myself and family but of course that was a ridiculous way to go.

I have always said that our Club is not just about gardening and it has never been more evident than for me, of late, with the kindness that you have shown always very quietly, but sincerely, and the friendship of all of you has helped me, thank you.

Our Friendship Day was a sociable and very successful day, with many thanks to all of our helpers, and comments from other Clubs which were very positive. We were very fortunate once again to have the Maleny Hospital Auxiliary catering for the event, which they did in true Maleny style.

I look forward to sharing our lunch together under the trees after the Annual General Meeting, after we have given out the donations to each of the organisations chosen to receive the proceeds of the Gardening on the Edge.

Our Club is in it's 65th year and long may it continue for us to learn from one another, share friendships, and enjoy our gardens, what more could you want in retirement.

Yours in the garden,  
.Marnie.

## Quick Quiz:

New Senior's Exam; you only need 4 correct out of 10 questions to pass and keep on receiving your pension...

- 1) How long did the Hundred Years' War last?
- 2) Which country makes Panama hats?
- 3) From which animal do we get cat gut?
- 4) In which month do Russians celebrate the October Revolution?
- 5) What is a camel's hair brush made of?
- 6) The Canary Islands in the Pacific are named after what animal?
- 7) What was King George VI's first name?
- 8) What colour is a purple finch?
- 9) Where are Chinese gooseberries from?
- 10) What is the colour of the black box in a commercial airplane?

Check your answers back page. Remember, you need only 4 correct answers to pass.

## Garden Wit.

The gardening season officially begins on January 1<sup>st</sup> and ends on December 31<sup>st</sup>.

*Marie Huston*

Trees are much like human beings and enjoy each other's company. Only a few love to be alone.

*Jens Jenson*

Some from Ronnie Corbett.

\*Have you ever noticed? Anybody going slower than you is an idiot, and anyone going faster than you is a maniac.

\*My neighbour asked if he could use my lawnmower and I told him of course he could, so long as he didn't take it out of my garden.

\*A juggernaut of onions has shed its load all over the M1. Motorists are advised to find a hard shoulder to cry on.

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### **Some Remarkable Gardens of the British Isles (PART 1)**

Having enjoyed a small ship cruise on the Orion from Hobart to Antarctica and on to New Zealand, Jennifer and I discovered the joy of only unpacking once, so when we saw a gardens and castles cruise on a similarly sized ship around the British Isles we made reservations. Whisky tastings at a couple of distilleries in Scotland was an included attraction! The adventure was offered by Botanica World Discoveries Cruise on the Island Sky which accommodated 70 other guests with whom we had a great time over 11 days.

We sailed from Portsmouth to the Scilly Isles where we donned safety vests for the zodiac ride to shore at Tresco, the second largest island in the archipelago about 48 kilometres off the Cornwall coast, to explore the first garden on our itinerary, Tresco Abbey Garden. After a long but pleasant walk from the jetty, we were greeted at the gate of the property by the head gardener who gave us a brief run-down of what proved to be an astonishing experience as we explored the garden with a knowledgeable guide. Established in the 1830s by Augustus Smith over 6.9 hectares, we were amazed to find across the terraces so many Australian plants – Norfolk Island Pine, eucalyptus, grevillea, wattle, bottlebrush, hakea, banksia and waratah. Warmed by the Gulf Stream, the Isles enjoy a mild winter climate and long hours of summer sunshine. High walls and hedges protect the garden from the Atlantic winds and it contains over 20,000 exotic plants from around the world including strelitzia, echium, passiflora, date palms, cacti, succulents, agapanthus, agave and aloes. The garden is

home to some of the finest examples of sub-tropical flora in the Northern Hemisphere and each pathway, terrace and nook displayed a number of interesting artworks and sculptures.

There was quite a lot of debris to be cleared up following a storm and the curators are to be admired for the obvious care they administer to such a vast, beautiful, rambling property.

Within the garden are the ruins of a Benedictine Abbey founded in 964AD, although the majority of remains now visible come from the Priory of St Nicholas established by monks from Tavistock Abbey in 1114. Also featured is the Valhalla Collection which is a colourful display of about 30 figureheads and name boards of sailing ships salvaged from the Island's shipwrecks.

The second garden on our itinerary was in South East Ireland. Mount Congreve House, just outside Waterford City in Kilmeaden, was built about 1760. The estate is famous for being the home of one of 'the great gardens of the world' Mount Congreve Gardens. It consists of about 30 hectares of intensively planted woodland garden and a nearly 2 hectare walled garden. The entire collection consists of more than 3,000 different trees and shrubs, more than 2,000 rhododendrons, 600 camelias, 300 acre cultivars, 600 conifers, 250 climbers and 1,500 herbaceous plants. The estate passed from father to son for over 200 years until the death of Ambrose Congreve in 2011 at the age of 104. He left the estate in trust to the Irish State. The garden is internationally recognised for its rare species of plants as well as its plant nurseries. Ambrose won 13 Gold Medals at the Chelsea Garden Show for this garden and it was a pleasure to wander and marvel at its extent and variety of content.

The third garden was at nearby Lismore Castle where its historic gardens are divided into two very different halves. The Upper Garden is a complete example of the 17<sup>th</sup> century walled garden first constructed there by the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Cork in 1605. The outer walls and terraces remain and the plantings have changed to match the tastes of those living within the Castle. A working kitchen garden provides vegetables, fruit and herbs for the Castle kitchens. Interestingly vegetable beds are edged with roses and grass paths which add a

decorative aspect to the functional spaces which were totally engrossing and hard to leave.

The Lower Garden was mostly made in the 19<sup>th</sup> century for the 6<sup>th</sup> Duke of Devonshire. This garden is informal with shrubs, trees and lawns where a relaxed atmosphere encouraged dawdling. Edmund Spencer is said to have written the "Faerie Queen" here in the Yew Avenue which dates from the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Before we returned to the ship we visited the original Waterford Crystal Factory (the commercial operation has moved to Europe) where we viewed each stage of the process creating pieces of art. Wooden moulds and hand tools are still used by master blowers to shape the molten crystal from glowing balls into elegant shapes. In the cutting department, master craftsmen use diamond tipped wheels to cut the crystal. The last two stages involve sculpting and engraving, arguably the most precision based activity in the creation of truly individual pieces. It was a privilege to witness master artisans demonstrating their craft and obviously enjoying it.

A visit would not be complete without a trawl through the retail shop which boasted the largest display of Waterford Crystal in the world at reasonable prices I might add. Of course we indulged!

(Part 2 in next issue)      *Kevin Radbourne.*



"Not tonight. Didn't you get my email?"

## Edible Flowers - Basil.

Among the 150 varieties of basil (*Ocimum basilicum*) identified so far, you will find those with names like cinnamon, lemon or licorice,

each one with a slightly different aroma. Basil, which the ancient Greeks considered the king of herbs, today still ranks among the most-popular culinary herbs. From the minty green varieties to those with dramatically ruffled purple leaves, basil (a member of the mint family) stars in dishes the world over. In India, some basil varieties are even considered sacred and are dedicated to the gods Vishnu and Krishna. In Italy the art of making pesto is held as highly as that of cooking perfect pasta. The French call basil *herbe royale*, or 'royal herb' and use sweet basil to enhance the flavour of soups, stews and salads. The following salad is especially striking when made with alternating slices of red and yellow vine-ripened tomatoes.

### Red and Yellow Tomatoes with Basil Blossoms.

- 2 large red tomatoes, sliced
- 2 large yellow tomatoes, sliced
- 250 g mozzarella cheese, thinly sliced
- 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 2 shallots, very thinly minced
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 8 basil leaves, finely shredded
- 1 tbsp basil blossoms

On a pretty serving platter, alternate red and yellow tomato slices with mozzarella slices. In a bowl, mix the olive oil, balsamic vinegar, shallots, salt and pepper. Pour the dressing over the tomatoes. Sprinkle with shredded basil leaves and blossoms.

Serve at room temperature. Serves 4.

(Morse, K. (1995), *Edible Flowers*. Ten Speed Press, California).

### Red

Red is a colour associated with fire, hence heat. However in our sub-tropical climate the intensity of the sun's rays diminishes the bright colour enough to be acceptable and not too hot-looking. In many cases this is very attractive.

During our cool months, a splash of any shade of red, with the foil of green, adds brightness and interest in our landscape. If your garden is all Australian plants your choice is broad, with many grevillia to choose from plus the showy calistemons, sometimes with repeat flowering of both. Many natives have beautiful flushes, such as with the waterhousia that has the showiest brilliant red foliage in late winter. The luechmanni and

francisii flush several times a year. The stems of some natives are red, as is their fruit. Should you favour exotic shrubs or creepers the calyx of poinsettia, bougainvillea and Brazilian Cloak brighten up our winter for months. Ardesia red berries that miss our weeding deliberately or by accident add colour to an otherwise dull shaded area. Always cut the berries off before the birds find them.

Succulents often have a subtle splash or edge of red and the begonias have lovely red leaves as well as flowers.

Red leaves will supply a continuous display of foliage adding interest when all else turns to green or brown. Red leaves include cordylines, bromeliads, nandina plus the lovely red of irasine, which is magic with the sun shining through the leaves. So position irasine with care; it is an easy to grow and easy to confine plant.

The Europeans have their window boxes of geraniums, as we have learned with our pots of Big Red.

Even magnolias have been developed with deep red flowers, and who could forget red azaleas for winter and hibiscus for summer. The range of annuals and roses featuring red is endless. I am sure that you have your favourites be they tiny red dianthus to splashy red salvia and roses.

Next time you harvest large or small tomatoes, red onions, rhubarb or any other red produce you see in the green grocers such as apples, cherries or the blush on pears, consider how lovely they are.

Before declaring “no red in my garden!” or even “very little”, take another look!

*Pat Powell, August 2017.*

#### Advice for Chaps.

\*Never go to a doctor whose office plants have died. (Anon)

\*If you can smile when everything is going wrong - you have found someone else to pin it on. (Anon)

\* If you live to be one hundred, you’ve got it made, very few people die past that age. (George Burns).

\*I advise you to go on living solely to enrage those who are paying your annuities. It is the only pleasure I have left. (Voltaire).

\*Courage is being scared to death - but saddling up anyway. (John Wayne).

\*They lied - hard work has killed lots of people. (Anon)

#### ANSWERS TO THE QUIZ

- 1) How long did the Hundred Years War last? **116 years**
- 2) Which country makes Panama hats? **Ecuador**
- 3) From which animal do we get cat gut? **Sheep and Horses**
- 4) In which month do Russians celebrate the October Revolution? **November**
- 5) What is a camel's hair brush made of? **Squirrel fur**
- 6) The Canary Islands in the Pacific are named after what animal? **Dogs**
- 7) What was King George VI's first name? **Albert**
- 8) What colour is a purple finch? **Crimson**
- 9) Where are Chinese gooseberries from? **New Zealand**
- 10) What is the colour of the black box in a commercial airplane? **Orange (of course)**

## What do you mean, you failed?

## Me, too!

*Editor's Note; Many thanks to those who contributed to this Spring's Snippets. They are: Pat Powell, Kevin Radbourne, and Marnie Trass, May I say a special thank you to Marnie, our outgoing president, for her competent leadership these last 4 years. We now look forward to working with our incoming president.*

**The Club's Objectives are:** – To further knowledge and enjoyment of horticulture. – To raise awareness in the club and community of local environment and to encourage planting of local indigenous species. – To enjoy social interaction between members of this and similar clubs.

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