

TOPIC: PLANTS & FLOWERS GROWN ON OUR SITE

GUEST SPEAKER: LODI & YUCCA PAMEIJER

MALENY GARDEN CLUB MEETING: 24 FEBRUARY 2015

In 1996 Lodi and Yucca purchased 8 acres (3.4h) at 360 Curramore Road Curramore which was an avocado and dairy farm. They have since planted NSW Christmas Bush, Leucospermum, Banksia and Kangaroo Paws which were exported to Japan for 10 years under their business name 'Top of the Range Flowers'.

Kangaroo Paw :

- Native to Western Australia
- Prefers sandy soil with good drainage
- Harvesting – with 30 stems per plant, measure, cut to size, strip leaves to remove insects
- Sit in water in cut down wheelie bin holding 200 stems in bunches
- Will last 10 – 14 days once picked and will keep shape when dried out
- Pulsed, fumigated and cooled for shipment twice per week
- Grow in full sun – some selections in shade house
- Prune to 50mm high straight after flowering – ideally Nov
- Need more water during spiking and flowering

New South Wales Christmas Bush :

- Native to NSW
- Glossy dark green leaves and dark red flowers Nov – Dec
- 7 – 14 days vase life
- Farm grown for 100 years
- Cultivated in large plantations since 1990's on eastern seaboard from Gympie to Nth Vic
- Grow in full sun, well drained soil and good nutrition
- Prune straight after flowering before New Year
- Annual growth cycle – Summer harvest and prune; Autumn early stage growth; Winter early bud set and late stem growth; Spring mature buds and flowering
- Stems are harvested when 97% of flowers are deep red
- Watered in shed for deep hydration
- Placed in cold room in buckets of water with Chrysal RVB

Leucospermum (Pincushion)

- Native to South Africa
- Flowers in June and has excellent storage and vase life
- To ensure maximum flower quality and vase life, important to maintain cut flowers in cool conditions 5 - 8°C until they reach consumer
- Use Chrysal RVB in vase and spray flowers to hydrate
- To keep vase clean add flower food or 1tsp bleach
- Cut 2cm off ends, change water every 2 days and add flower food
- Plants in larger pots establish better – nurture soil before and after planting

Lodi and Yucca promote and practise –

ENERGY SUSTAINABILITY utilising solar panels which generated 6200KWH in 12 months;

WATER SUSTAINABILITY using drip lines, measuring soil moisture to 90cm deep with Enviroscans, assessing plant available moisture with the SID (Scheduling Irrigation Diary) tool;

SOIL SUSTAINABILITY using the Biological Farming Approach – nitrogen from the air, mulch and other organic material, foliar spray of nutrients, grass cover between rows to manage erosion, applications of amendments to soil based on result of soil test eg if need magnesium mix up a batch of Epsom salts, Tree Trays to protect trees, allow water access to roots and prevent over heating of soil (trays are squares of firm perforated plastic fitting round the tree trunk and slightly raised above the soil by short legs – available only commercially at this stage);

BIOLOGICAL AGRICULTURE learned from Nutri-Tech Solutions (NTS), build biology in the soil, build resistance in the plants, only add elements that are deficient, observe plants and do leaf testing at lab, healthy soil grows healthy plants, use magnesium, lime and boron;

DEFENCE FROM PESTS building strength in plant cells, pests only attack weak plants, psyllids attack and curl leaves; damaged plants are not able to photosynthesize efficiently. Phytophthora attacks the root system and causes the 'drop dead syndrome'. Lodi mixes and uses a spray of 200ml glysophate and 200ml fulvic acid.

HEALTHY PLANTS PRODUCE HEALTHY FOOD AND FLOWERS AND HEALTHY FOOD AND FLOWERS PRODUCE HEALTHY HUMANS.

For further information the website for TOP OF THE RANGE FLOWERS is -
<www.topoftherangeflowers.com.au>