

# **TIPS & GLEANINGS 27**

Kevin Radbourne

## **TOPIC : “BEGONIAS, FERNS & OTHER SPECIALTY PLANTS”**

**GUEST SPEAKER : THEO BEENDERS**

**MALENY GARDEN CLUB MEETING : 28 FEBRUARY, 2017 UNDER THE OLD WITTA SCHOOL TREES**

Theo grew up on a farm in Holland and has stayed in touch with plants. He came to Australia at the age of 22 and has been here for 49 years. After opening Theo's Discount Nursery at Kallangur during the 1974 floods he operated the business for 15 years. He then operated a wholesale nursery for 20 years and now enjoys plants as a hobby.

- Begonias originate in SE Asia. The Iron Cross Begonia comes from Papua New Guinea. If it doesn't grow on a shade house bench try sitting it on the floor
- All Begonias need shade or semi-shade and well drained soil comprised of 80% coconut coir mixed with some perlite, osmocote, blood and bone. They are very easy to grow but don't over water. Fertilise every fortnight – rotate Charlie Carp, Seasol, Fish Emulsion and Potash. Easy to propagate from leaf or division. Seeds can be bought for tuberous and bedding Begonias – sprinkle on top of soil then water
- Agronomos species can tolerate dark and light but need warmth
- Dieffenbachia – indoors or out in shade. Keep dry in Winter
- Calathea tolerate a dark room or in shade
- Micronesia Upside Down Fern easy to grow - will tolerate temperatures of plus 1° to 45°
- Basket Fern is an endangered species native to Glasshouse Mountains – no longer grows in the wild. Grow in hanging basket in full sun
- Hoya – slow growing with miniature pink flowers – native to Northern Australia and New Guinea. Likes to be pot bound to flower and will grow on rock
- Selaginella Fern can sit in water and grow well
- Tassel Ferns are not hard to grow with right potting mix – like orchid mix so water goes right through. Grow well under tree with 80% shade. Easy to propagate by pinning down a kink in another pot. Don't use galvanised or wire baskets as zinc will cause fronds to drop off – use plastic
- Rat Tail Fern – native to Indonesia - good in hanging pot or basket
- Episcia – related to African Violet – does not die back. Good in hanging baskets or as ground cover
- Chirita – also related to African Violet
- Crinkle Leafed Begonia – very hairy
- Stapelia Mobiles – succulent with large 20cm flower – thrives on neglect in full sun
- Alocacia – Horse Head – grows to 1 metre under tree – watch for spider mite in hot weather. OK for indoors
- When spraying fungicide or insecticide do so late afternoon as plants have whole night to refresh. If spraying in morning some spray doesn't evaporate fully and plants burn in heat of day
- Vary use of fungicide as using same one becomes ineffective because fungi get used to it
- Be careful not to use too much propagation hormone as spray because plants will grow too quickly and produce only small flowers. Oxymone \$15 per litre at Fernlands

**CONTACT : Theo has a stall at the monthly Witta Market**

**END**