

# SNIPPETS

From here and there



## Spring 2018

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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.

### Note from Editor

What a welcome relief it was when the rain arrived. We lost a few plants over the dry period, but it is remarkable how other plants recovered. Spring is certainly with us, such a pleasure to see the new growth. Spring has also brought the bandicoots and hares back to the garden, we are supposed to be a "Garden for Wildlife" so we much learn to live with them, bricks around new plantings and an electric fence around the vegies.

We are enjoying a visit from my son and wife with their four children from Perth. They love the range and cannot get over how beautiful the area is, they have particularly enjoyed the walking tracks and our little local zoo, how lucky are we to live here.

We are heading off to Portugal on 10<sup>th</sup> September to meet up with old friends from Perth for a river cruise on the Douro followed by a week in Madrid. We are looking forward to enjoying the history and architecture of the region. There are a number of beautiful gardens to visit in that area, many still with their Moorish influences. It is always a pleasure to visit any garden and it will provide a refreshing delight in between cathedrals and galleries. I will be away

for the AGM this year and will leave you in Marnie's capable hands. The AGM sees the completion of my year as President, there has been so much enjoyment with you fellow gardeners, see you all in October.

Happy Gardening from Dot

### Quick Quiz;

- 1 What kind of weapon is a falchion?
2. Where would you find the world's most ancient forest?
- 3 Which actress said, "Fasten your seat belts. It's going to be a bumpy night," in *All About Eve*?
4. Which kind of bulbs was once exchanged as a form of currency? Answers on back page

### **Some Remarkable Gardens of the British Isles** (part 3)

Continuing our journey we sailed back across the Irish Sea to visit Garden 9 in County Down, Northern Ireland. Situated on the eastern shore of Strangford Lough, Mount Stewart is an 18<sup>th</sup> century house and garden, the home of the Vane-Tempest-Stewart family, Marquesses of Londonderry. The 380ha estate was given to the National Trust in 1957. When we visited, the mansion house was undergoing extensive renovation and refurbishment so we could only view a few rooms. However the garden was well

tended and reflected a rich tapestry of design and planting artistry that was the hallmark of Edith, Lady Londonderry in the 1920's. The mild climate of Strangford Lough allowed astonishing levels of planting experimentation. The formal areas had a strong Mediterranean feel and resembled an Italian villa landscape; the wooded areas supported a range of plants – yet again – from all corners of the world.

The warm, damp climate with high light levels and long growing days allow tender plants to flourish – we found tree ferns, fruiting kiwis, acacias and olives, all growing happily together with more traditional roses, lavenders and tulips. The 'garden rooms' around the mansion house were full of contrast and colour but are regarded there, in gardening terms, as relatively 'young' having been created in the 1920's. The wildness and beauty of Strangford Lough forms a dramatic backdrop to the clipped hedges, topiary and quirky statuary – including gryphons, dinosaurs, dodos and orang-utans (wonderful for children) and the carefully constructed colour schemes in the borders and beds. The artistically planted formal gardens are close to the mansion, as if they are meant to be experienced as extensions of the mansion's rooms, all surrounded and sheltered by more natural woodland planting dating back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The lake, dug out in 1846, was home to a flock of pink flamingos in the 1930's and has since been adopted by breeding swans – of which we saw several pairs – moorhens and a population of noisy, ever hungry ducks.

On to Garden 10, we sailed into the Sound of Jura to the small Isle of Gigha whereon we visited Achamore House Gardens. The House is a grand baronial mansion built in 1884 by Captain James Scarlett, set in the midst of 50 acres of magnificent Achamore Gardens which were chiefly created by Col. Sir James Horlick during his ownership of Gigha from 1944 to 1972. The gardens are famed worldwide for the rhododendrons as well as their many rare species of trees and other shrubs. Gigha has one

of the warmest climates in Scotland and many sub-tropical plants grow well there.

The main areas of woodland to the north and south of the house were planted by the Scarletts to provide shelter from the strong winds, salt and spray and for game cover. When Col. Horlick acquired the estate in 1944 he wished to grow his tender rhododendrons. He achieved this by cutting small clearings in the Ponticum (hardy, evergreen, common rhododendrons) and trees. By 1970 the garden was full and regarded as magnificent. The gardens offer a dazzling variation in settings, being sub-divided into over 15 differing areas. Gigha lies at the extremity of the Gulf Stream so has a very temperate climate. Plants and shrubs which are very rare on the West Coast of Scotland prosper there, especially rhododendrons. The walled gardens provide a sheltered habitat for not only rare and unusual plants and trees, but also peacocks, and greenhouses provide an ideal environment for propagation. In 2002 the island was purchased in an historic buy-out by the inhabitants of Gigha to whom the gardens are now entrusted continuing to provide a wonderful backdrop to the House.

(Part 4 next issue)

*Kevin Radbourne*



## Power and the Passion. Passionflower?

Despite their torrid appearance, there's nothing salacious about the passion that named these tropical beauties!

They were named by Spanish Jesuit missionaries who discovered them in the jungles of South America and were amazed to observe in one blossom, so many reminders of the Passion or suffering of Christ.

The five petals and five sepals were said to symbolise the 10 apostles who remained faithful to the end of Jesus' life.

The corona was said to represent either a crown of thorns or a halo and the five stamens- Christ's five wounds,

The plants climbing tendrils were said to represent the cords or scourges, and the handsome palmate leaves to remind us of the hands of Christ's tormentors.

The plants were later named as Passiflora.

Fertilising: About four weeks after planting, spread 100g of a 5:6: 5 NPK or similar fertiliser evenly around the planting site and mix into soil. The addition of well-rotted animal manure or compost is also beneficial before planting.

Passionfruit are gross feeders and will need a top up – a complete fertiliser – at regular intervals.

Growth Requirements: Passionfruit grow best in soil with a pH above 6.0 (in other words, just slightly acidic soils are best). Buy and plant your passionfruit in March so that it can be established before the cooler months in Winter (*although up on the Sunshine Coast we seldom get winters as in NSW and Victoria, so planting later in the year is quite safe*). Training the Vine:

I grow passionfruit vines on my back wire fence, allowing the new plant to grow to a height of 30cm before bending the top of the lead shoot to the right. I then train the next vertical shoot toward the left along a wire.

A third vertical shoot quickly emerge, which then grows to a height of 50cm before it too is bent to the right and the next to the left. These lateral shoots then form the whole framework for my passionfruit vine, growing along the fence wires, consuming an area that is with pruning, 20m in diameter.

Pruning: I prune my passionfruit only to keep it within the 20m diameter boundary.

Pests: The great thing about passionfruit vines is you can plant them and forget about them.

I never spray mine with insecticide sprays and very rarely apply fertiliser, and still they persist in producing bucketloads of fruit that should be harvested from the ground and not picked. Once they have fallen, you can guarantee the fruit is ripe.

The main crop for most passionfruit grown in Queensland is between November and December, with a winter crop in May and June.  
*R.McKinnon, March 18, 2001 The Sunday Mail*

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## ***Boatload of Au Pairs Spotted off the Coast of Australia***



Australia is at risk of being swamped by au pairs after a boatload of them was spotted in the Indian Ocean off the coast of Australia.

The boat was intercepted by Border Force and taken to Christmas Island, where they immediately started singing wholesome Christmas Carols and organised a Kris Kringle for the locals.

The surge in au pair arrivals has coincided with revelations that former Immigration Minister Peter Dutton is soft on nanny arrivals.

But critics say Australia is at risk of becoming a nanny state. They fear the au pairs will overwhelm Australia's already stretched infrastructure.

"These French au pairs are teaching our kids different customs, different languages. Next they'll be trying to introduce our kids to French cinema. I mean – do we really want a whole generation of wankers?"

Pauline Hanson also slammed the surge in au pair arrivals. "I've heard reports that they're forcing our kids to eat a wider range of soft cheeses," Ms Hanson said, "I sorry, but what's wrong with Kraft Singles?"

Facing mounting pressure, Prime Minister Scott Morrison vowed to crack down on the latest boat arrivals, saying the real problem was the au pair smugglers.

Officials said the boat appeared to be organised by a notorious smuggler Fran Drescher, who they say is known to authorities.

Locals on Christmas Island say the arrivals are not welcome. "We resent having to eat all our vegetables before we can have dessert each night."

*Ian Grice*

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### **The Wonga Pigeon (*Leucosarcia melanoleuca*).**

The Wonga Pigeon is found along the east coast of Australia, from south-eastern Queensland to Gippsland, Victoria. It can be found dense coastal forests, rainforests and scrubs. It is often seen in clearings near forests such as picnic areas, walking tracks, carparks and roadsides, as well as gardens that have bird feeders. On the Sunshine Coast the birds can be found mainly in the Conondale and Blackall Ranges.

The Wonga Pigeon, or Wonga Wonga, is a large, plump, ground dwelling pigeon with a small head, short, broad wings and a long tail. It is mainly grey above, has a pale face, a distinctive white V on the breast and white lower parts boldly marked with dark grey spots. The eyes are dark red-brown with a pink eye-ring and the area between the bill and the eye is black, the bill, feet and legs are deep pink to red. The Wonga pigeon is a shy bird, except in areas where it has become used to humans, if disturbed it will take off with loud flapping of its wings.

This pigeon varies between 35cm to 40 cm with an average weight of 250g, many were shot "for the pot and" and eaten in the past consequently their numbers

dwindled, and together with their destruction by cats and other predators, loss of habitat due to development, they are extinct in some former areas of habitation. The Wonga Pigeon has a loud monotonous 'woop woop' call which can be heard up to 2 km away and can continue for hours on end.

The parent birds are monogamous and pair off for the breeding season which is from September to February usually 2 eggs in the nest which is usually high off the ground, and is a saucer-shaped platform of twigs and sticks, lined with small twigs, vine tendrils and other soft plant materials. The incubation and nestling period both being approximately of 18 days duration. The male bird shares in the feeding of the young birds both birds regurgitating a "milk" from the walls of their crop into the nestlings open beaks.

Reference: Sunshine Coast Bush Hands Winter 2015 and Bird Life Australia.

*Peter Owens*

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#### Answers to Quick Quiz

1. A sword
- 2 Daintree Forest north of Cairns.
3. Bette Davis (as Margo Channing.)
4. Tulips.

**Editor: Thank you to the following members who contributed to this spring's edition of Snippets; Kevin Radbourne, Ian Grice and Peter Owens.**

**I try to avoid religious and political based articles but please forgive me here, I simply had to include the article on page 3.**

**Contributions are always gratefully received especially if you are prepared to share your travel experiences.**

**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.

**All contributions to:** Margaret Owens email: [margaret.owens@bigpond.com](mailto:margaret.owens@bigpond.com)

**Disclaimer** Articles contributed to this newsletter are published as a service to members and do not necessarily reflect the opinion or policy of the club.