

## **TOPIC : “CALADIUMS, BEGONIAS AND ORCHIDS”**

**GUEST SPEAKER : THEO BENDERS**

**MALENY GARDEN CLUB MEETING : 29 JANUARY 2019 UNDER THE OLD WITTA SCHOOL**

- **CALADIUMS** come from damp rain forests in Cambodia etc. Dormant in Winter but don't need digging up – leave them in pot or garden
- Colour improves when planted out and mature. Very popular in Florida where small ones sell for US\$39 but are only AUD\$8 here
- **Alocasia** – dark green velvet leaves with defined cream veins – from large caladium family
- Caladiums prefer filtered sun. Full sun burns the leaves – not subject to many diseases but can get mites and occasional caterpillars. Mulch well and water twice a week. If in small pots water daily. Fertilise when planting out – Plantacote or Osmocote plus a little Urea. Use Fish Emulsion or similar for weekly or fortnightly watering of pots. New shoots appear in October. Can plant shallow rooted plants such as Violas on top of bulbs for Winter
- **BEGONIAS** are quick growing and will double in size in 3 weeks - nip flower buds out of Rex begonias to retain leaf colour. Best to hand water so any faults, weeds, insects and buds can be seen and removed. Best to divide/propagate in warm weather not in Winter
- **Iron Cross** can be difficult to grow – break off dirty or spent leaves and allow plant to rest a while after which it will reshoot and be stronger than before
- **Parachute Plant** enjoys semi shade – flower shaped like parachute, lasts 3 days, attracts flies. Native to Madagascar and closely related to Frangipani
- **Chirita** has small root system and is related to African Violet. Should flower in Feb/Mar. Good in bathroom and can be planted outside
- **Tassel Fern** is slow growing and attractive – no visible growth in 1<sup>st</sup> year. Generally grows as an epiphyte in Nth Qld – native to Thailand. Be alert for white fly – spray white oil
- **ORCHIDS** like air flow – best hanging in bush house or from tree. Cattleya grows fast all year and flowers for long time. Look out for dendrobium beetle – spray once a month insecticide/fungicide mix. Rotate sprays so insects don't get used to them
- Good growing/propagating weather now for orchids. Pot up in tiny pots with orchid mix or in tree – use wooden skewer for support in pot. First spray once with hormone/fungicide (Auxinone). Give orchids a good drench and let dry out. Spray remains viable for 3 weeks
- When fertilising use in rotation Plantacote, Fish Emulsion, Seaweed and Organic Grow available from Fernland Yandina. Organic Grow is \$80 for 10 litres
- **Fittonia** (nerve plant) is very dense, pretty, likes shade/semi shade, slow grower with little miserable flower to nip off
- Before using coconut coir block be sure to wash 4-5 times to flush out salt

**THEO MAY BE CONTACTED AT HIS STALL AT THE MONTHLY WITTA MARKET.**

**END**