

SNIPPETS

From here and there



Autumn 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 Mamie

Hello Everyone

I hope that you have enjoyed our meetings under the trees the last few months. We have such lovely surroundings, it is a shame not to take advantage of them.

The Maleny Hospital Auxiliary invited us to attend their AGM where we heard of the success that the hospital is achieving with rehab and patient care. You hear of where the money we have donated is spent and I know that I don't need to convince anyone who has spent time in our hospital, that the care is second to none. We are most fortunate to have this care in such a small and dedicated hospital. The SES also asked that we attend an afternoon tea, to show us their equipment and tell of how they serve our community, and what a dedicated group of people they are.

They work under such difficult circumstances and rely heavily on donations from the public, so they were excited to tell us that our monies went to the purchase of an iPad which is downloaded with all the information they need to make life so much easier when they are called out to all sorts of weather and retrieval events. They can now receive and send information without going back to a base to gather this information.

With the GOE just around the corner, I thank all of you for giving of your time over this weekend, to help raise monies that go back to the community.

We now have a GOE small committee and I must say if we get any smarter with having our heads together in a huddle, we will soon be able to run the country. It is great to have Ian on board and between Ian and Brian, we are very

much on track with our signage looking very dapper this year.

Dot is having a break away in NZ, I think to recharge to help her get to the finish line, four years as Convenor is a long race. We11 done just doesn't say it all. We all appreciate what you have done Dot, thank you.

Our next meeting is at Jill and Harry Rowlands, outside meetings are a very special occasion and I know you will enjoy the visit, try to car pool for this if you can. Yours in gardening,
Marnie.

From My Christmas Cracker

1. Which 19th century British Prime Minister gave his name to a type of tea?
 2. Why did the scarecrow get a promotion?
 3. A father is four times as old as his son. In twenty years time he will be twice as old. How old are they now?
 4. One kilobyte is equal to how many bytes?
- See answers back page

MGC's Toowoomba Adventures.

Pot some local garden lovers, dust them with gro-plus, transplant them into Toowoomba's gardens in Carnival Week, and watch friendships flower! That's what happens when Nancy Baker is in charge. Under her superb organization and Helen's skilful driving, our group of fun-loving floral fanatics explored prize gardens, large and small, stunned by the profusion of colour and the contrasting shapes, styles and textures on display.

Each private garden is different, being the creation of the owners themselves; and one of the joys of a visit was to meet the gardeners and share their dream. Surprises came from places where we just dropped in. We met an 86-year-old lady with her angel garden; a young hairdresser who enlivened her garden with things from her grandmother - dangling jewel droplets from old watering cans and creating toadstools from upturned glass bowls set on slim coloured bottles; and later, in a vast garden, we found a map of Australia in over 2000 violas while a lawn mower powered by a lady's bicycle stood nearby.

We balanced these treats with the main meals found in the park displays of Queens and Laurel Bank. The overall grandeur of their design continues to delight the visitor as a riot of colour bursts from orderly beds. Our adventures also took us inside, to gaze in wonder at the stained glass in the churches and the floral arrangements on display in St Luke's Anglican Church. Our visit to the Japanese garden supplied a tranquil contrast.

Fundamentally, tours like this are more about the travellers than the gardens. As we shared our delight in both the splendour and the quirky touches of the gardens, and munched on the cakes and slices prepared by tour members, our group became a family of hugs and helps and happy smiles. To cap our travels, we were accompanied on our journey home by three rainbows- ethereal reminders of the wonders of nature that we cultivate. Dear reader – see what you missed!

A MGC Traveller

..... **Tips for Gardening Safely.**

Observe the basic rules for safe lifting, namely:

Avoid lifting heavy objects from below knee height, get a firm footing, with your feet a shoulder-width apart:

Bend at the knees and at the hips, using the strong muscles in your legs to lift:

Have a good, firm grip on the load and keep the load close to your body:

Brace your spine and keep your back as straight as possible for the whole lift:

Step around rather than twisting when moving the load and make all movements smoothly. Avoid jerking or quick movements.

Use a wheel barrow to transport heavy items, but don't overfill it! Position the weight over the wheel.

Tim Bagshaw (physiotherapist)

..... **Veggie Notes – Asparagus**

Asparagus is a part of the lily family and grows in an underground crown (cluster of fleshy roots). Buying them as crowns is the easiest way and you will be picking spears at least two years earlier than if you grow them from seed.

Asparagus is a temperate plant, but the variety 'Mary Washington' seems to be one of the better ones suited to our subtropical climate.

Choose your plant spot well, as asparagus need full sun, good drainage and loose soil. Then prepare the bed well, as they are a long-term commitment, being productive for 15yrs or more.

If you want to grow them in the ground, dig and till the ground to 30cm and add lots of compost and some pelletised chook manure. Otherwise you can grow them in raised beds or in large containers (at least 50cm diameter container per plant).

If you have a pH testing kit, check that the soil is pH neutral (pH 7). Adjust the pH if it needs to be lime or dolomite (pH too low) or iron chelates (too high).

Plant the crowns 10cm deep with some compost and chicken manure pellets. Spread the roots out like octopus's legs, then cover with 5cm of loose soil. As the shoots grow, cover with another 5cm of soil to ground level.

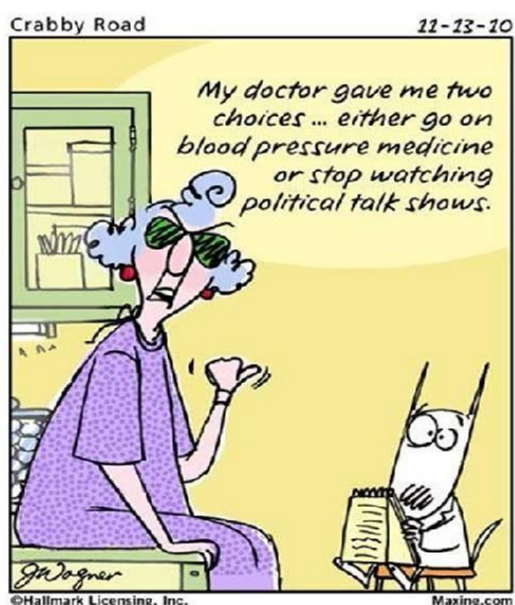
Resist the temptation to harvest any spears in the Spring after planting, and then only lightly harvest the second year. In the 3rd year you'll get 8-12 weeks harvesting. It's good practice to cut them back at the start of Winter then apply a top dressing of manure and compost and finish with mulch.

In Spring new shoots will appear. Let the first couple grow...don't be tempted to pick

them. These will provide energy to the awakening plant. After that, you'll be able to pick fresh spears over Spring and Summer. At the start of Autumn, stop picking and let them grow out into full fronds. These will put energy back into the roots ready for Winter. Asparagus don't like wet feet which can rot the crowns—that's why it is important to have good drainage. If you have lots of snails, take the usual precautions.

The red berries that grow on the fronds can easily be propagated—in fact they'll germinate through the garden without any encouragement. *GCNew, August 2016*

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"A Gardener's Wish"

Don't carry me off in a brass handled coffin with a wreath on my chest. I won't be at rest. There's nothing much worse than a ride in a hearse to a hole in the ground with just strangers around. No! bury me deep in the compost heap or pop me right under a nice floribunda. It's really much wiser to become fertilizer. Then I can grow roses as I decomposes. *Dot Jupp*

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Pearls of Wisdom.

These are in no particular order:

- * A truth told with bad intent beats all the lies you can invent.
- * Never be impulsive. Step away from the situation and try to look from the outside in, not the inside out. Revisit when you are calm and at one with yourself and see the difference; it will shape the person you are becoming.

* Some people will try and tell you that one plus one = three. You know it doesn't and so do they deep down, but they will still try to make you believe they are right. Just let them think they are right and walk away, only shake your head in disbelief when they can't see you doing it. This type of person cannot be reasoned with. Fight the battles worth fighting and just let these ones go as you will never win them. *Anon*

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The Hidden Life of Trees by Peter Wohlleben.

The trees we read about in 'The Hidden Life of Trees' are from the Northern Hemisphere, but rest assured we can draw parallels between their trees, their habits and the conditions they live under and our forests or plantations in tropical, temperate or cold climate conditions here.

The slow growth of natural forests in Germany, produce long-living, dense textured trees. These old trees grow from seeds produced and nurtured by their parent trees taking hundreds of years to mature, then, in turn become parents themselves. As parents they nurture their offspring as well as other trees less fortunate than themselves. What a community!!

This is done underground by transferring sugars and other carbohydrates through root systems, which with beneficial fungi form a web of growth in the soil.

We learn that trees planted out of their natural habitat, be it climate, specimen trees, street, park, garden trees and those highly sort after trees planted by Kings, Princes and other aristocrats in their gardens and park lands tend to have relatively short and unsatisfactory life-spans.

The author has given us an easy to comprehend study of all aspects of trees in the forests discovered by modern science. The trees, soil, air, wind, water, tree trunks, leaves and branches living and dead are all examined in the most fascinating way. There are reasons why we should have forests for the planet's sake.

Hopefully, one day we will learn to understand the language trees use in order for us to communicate with one another. A researcher from Western Australia has contributed his findings as to how root systems communicate.

Reading this book has given me a greater understanding of the trees I inherited and/or planted and those growing in Mary Cairncross Park.

contributed by Pat Powell

CHELSEA PHYSIC GARDEN

Whenever Jennifer and I visit particular friends in London they take us to interesting and unusual places. One time our destination was an amazing garden often referred to as London's Secret Garden, being tucked away beside the Thames River in Chelsea and surrounded by a very high masonry wall.

Established in 1673 as the Apothecaries Garden to train apprentices in the identification and use of medicinal plants, its location's proximity to the river allowed them to moor their barge, collect plants in surrounding areas with the river's warm air currents contributing to the Garden's unique microclimate. River access also allowed plants arriving from around the world to be introduced to the British Isles via the Garden whose primary benefactor was Sir Hans Sloane (1660 – 1707). As a trainee physician he studied in the Garden. He also advised Charles III on founding Kew Gardens. A marble statue of Sir Hans was commissioned by the Company of Apothecaries for the Physic Garden where it stood for over two hundred years. It was moved to the British Museum in 1985 and replaced by a replica. Another replica stands in the centre of Sloane Square.

The Garden played a key role in introducing the rubber industry to Malaysia and cotton to the Southern USA. The most significant impact was the establishment of the tea industry in India with seedlings transported from China by Robert Fortune, one of the Garden's notable Curators. By the end of the 19th century the Apothecaries decided they could no longer retain the Garden even though Sir Hans leased it to them for just £5 a year in perpetuity. The City Parochial Foundation managed the site until 1983 when it became a registered charity and its gates were opened to the public for the first time.

The Garden continues to play a significant role in education and retains its medicinal plant display- one of the largest in the world, together with extensive ethnobotanic and conservation plant collections. As one of London's oldest botanic gardens containing a unique living collection of around 5000 different edible, useful, medicinal and historical plants within its sheltering walls, it

really is a celebration of the beauty and importance of plants. We were delighted to find the Australian connection in recognising plants from home where Sir Joseph Banks (1743 -1820) gathered seeds and plants when he voyaged to Australia on the Endeavour with Captain James Cook in 1770, Banksia trees being named in his honour. On another voyage in 1772, Sir Joseph collected Icelandic lava which was used along with carved stones from the Tower of London in construction of the Garden's Pond Rockery – the oldest planted structure of its type in Europe.

The Physic Garden is a hidden gem and a peaceful green oasis where the noise of bustling Chelsea is only very faintly heard. After a long and relaxing stroll among fascinating plants and flowers and beehives we enjoyed a deliciously fresh lunch comprised of Garden produce in its award winning Cafe followed by a good browse through the Book and Gift shop.

Kevin Radbourne

Editor's Note.

It is hard to believe that we are into March already and the year has only just started. For those who are planning a trip away, or if you have recently returned, I, and the rest of us, would love to hear about your exploits.

In the meantime, a special thank you to the following for their contribution to this edition of Snippets; Pat Powell, Kevin Radbourne, Tim Bagshaw, Dot Jupp and last but not least, Marnie Trass.

Answers to My Christmas Cracker.
1. Earl Grey
2. Because he was outstanding in his field.
3. The father is 40 and the son is 10.
4. 1024 bytes

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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