

Maleny Garden Club Inc.



# SNIPPETS

Summer 2009

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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.

## Laidley Unlimited by Lisa Plucknett

We had a lovely trip to Laidley,  
Nancy Baker was superb;  
Describing all the countryside,  
We hung on every word.

Took off at seven-thirty sharp,  
Even Lisa wasn't late;  
Saw the Kilcoy Yowie in the park  
In a rather naked state.

Saw villages like Harlin  
Tiny towns like Esk;  
The morning bright and brisk  
As Malcolm drove us West.

Cultural Centre was quite cultured  
Though 3k's out of town.  
I said to Kev "Let's hike it"  
But he said "Just calm down".

There were orchids and bromeliads,  
Stalls with potted stuff;  
I was tempted to go "potty"  
But was told "We've got enough".

We sat and had some morning tea,  
Rest our legs - and fill in time;  
Eating for the sake of it,  
My waistline is in decline.

Then Malcolm drove us into town,  
'Twas noon and stinking hot;  
So off we plodded down the street  
But at least no flies to swat.

We had a kind of German lunch,  
Rye bread, wurst and strudel;  
Washed down with cappuccino,  
And a bowl of Chinese noodles.  
(not true, had to rhyme)

We even checked the hardware place,

Though we've got one right here;  
I almost bought a crockery set,  
But Kevin said "Don't dare".

We saw pottery, pickles, paintings,  
Needlework and vintage cars;  
And though I said I wouldn't  
My bag was filled with jars.

Then the boys looked at machinery,  
Girls sat beneath the trees;  
And the weather just got hotter,  
With very little breeze.

Then just to ease the boredom,  
Back to the Hardware Store;  
And bought that blooming crockery set,  
Just had to have one more.

Then finally at three pm.  
Nancy herded us back on board;  
Some looked, some dozed, some chatted;  
And Brian even snored.

We raffled lots of trees and stuff  
To cheer us in the garden;  
And crossed the Brisbane River  
Near that little place called Harlin.

So - we've loitered into Laidley,  
Been through Esk with brisk finesse;  
And thank you to the Bakers  
It was the very best.

## Quick Quiz;

1. What is the Svalbard Global Seed Vault?
2. Carrots weren't originally orange: what colours were they?
3. In order to be considered heirloom, how old does a vegetable variety have to be?

For answers see back page.

**Tea at the Ritz**, is the last delicious morsel of Edwardian London. The light is kind, the cakes are frivolous and the tempo is calm, confident and leisurely. Takers of tea perch on rose-coloured Louis XVI chairs at marble tables, sipping their steaming cups of Darjeeling or Earl Grey while the *belle époque* nymphs look on in Olympian disdain.

The Ritz's stage for afternoon tea is the Palm Court, separated from the ground floor's central gallery by Iconic columns. There are no clocks and although it is just possible to glimpse the flash of Piccadilly's taxis and buses if you look hard in the direction of the swing doors, a strange sense of taking a holiday from time heightens the pleasure of taking tea here. People look more beautiful than they do in real life as this is the most flattering light in Europe, falling mild from the Palm Court's frosted glass ceiling and pink-capped chandeliers.

Lady Diana Cooper remembers the Ritz as the first hotel where young women were allowed to go alone to tea. Romantic novelist Barbara Cartland has described tea at the Ritz in the years after the First World War as a useful institution for the 'also-ran' men: one could meet men without chaperones for lunch with men you were keen on, and tea with the rest. (to be cont'd)

The London Ritz Book of Afternoon Tea

## **Never thought that CUCUMBER can do so much!**

### **The Amazing Cucumber**

This information was in The New York Times  
several weeks ago as part of their  
"Spotlight on the Home"  
series that highlighted creative and fanciful  
ways to solve common problems.

1. Feeling tired in the afternoon, put down the caffeinated soda and pick up a cucumber. Cucumbers are a good source of B Vitamins and Carbohydrates that can provide that quick pick-me-up that can last for hours.
2. Tired of your bathroom mirror fogging up after a shower? Try rubbing a cucumber slice along the mirror, it will eliminate the fog and provide a soothing, spa-like fragrance.
3. Are grubs and slugs ruining your planting beds? Place a few slices in a small pie tin and your garden will be free of pests all season long. The chemicals in the cucumber react with the aluminium to give off a scent undetectable to humans but drive garden pests crazy and make them flee the area.
4. Looking to fight off that afternoon or evening snacking binge? Cucumbers have been used for centuries and often used by European trappers, traders and explorers for quick meals to thwart off starvation.
5. Have an important meeting or job interview and you realise that you don't have enough time to polish your shoes? Rub a freshly cut cucumber over the shoe, its chemicals will provide a quick and durable shine that not only looks great but also repels water.

**6. Just finished a business lunch and realise you don't have gum or mints? Take a slice of cucumber and press it to the roof of your mouth with your tongue for 30 seconds to eliminate bad breath, the photochemical will kill the bacteria in your mouth responsible for causing bad breath.**

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Think About It.

'Bad news Mrs Ward', a doctor tells an elderly lady. 'We sent your husband's test to the lab yesterday but there was another Mr Ward and the results were mixed up. I'm sorry – although both results were awful'.

'What do you mean?' asks the lady.

'One specimen tested positive for dementia and the other for a sexually transmitted disease. We'll test him again but the results won't be back for a month'.

'What do I do then?'

'I suggest that you drop him off in the middle of the bush. If he finds his way home, don't sleep with him'.

Reader's Digest

## **"Arden" The Singing Garden**

During the recent Melba Festival in the Yarra Valley, Jennifer and I visited 'Arden' the former home of poet CJ Dennis at Toolangi, 52km north east of Melbourne. Dennis and his wife Olive (Biddy) Herron owned the 1.5ha property from 1917 until he died in 1938. During their tenure they planted a beautiful garden as a writing sanctuary for 'Den'. The garden has 120 varieties of rhododendron (the tallest of which soars to 16metres), 70 varieties of azalea, liquid amber, conifers, oak, maple, fern, ivy and numerous flowering shrubs. It was here that he wrote 'The Sentimental Bloke', 'The Glugs of Gosh', 'Book for Kids', 'The Singing Garden' among other works. In 1934 the English Poet Laureate John Masefield visited the property to lunch with Dennis and a now magnificent, towering copper beech was planted in Masefield's honour. This tree was the inspiration for 'The Tree' in The Singing Garden Anthology. After his death the property was purchased by film maker FT Thring who left it to his son the actor Frank Thring who immediately sold it in 1965. Frank hated the place as his mother used to send him there during school holidays to keep him away from his fellow larrikins and trouble.

The original 2 storey home built by Dennis and Biddy was destroyed by fire in 1966 when a kerosene fridge exploded and the gardens became neglected. The present owners bought the property in 1969, rebuilt on the site of the original home, established tea rooms and a restaurant and progressively restored the garden which slopes down to the original pond and the Yea River. Happily the property was spared during last

February's bushfires which devastated the surrounding areas.

We spent a delightful afternoon being shown around the garden by the owner who recited and read a number of Dennis works at particular stops on the tour and again during the tea and coffee service where The Glugs of Gosh featured prominently.

CJ Dennis is buried in Melbourne's Box Hill Cemetery where his tombstone is inscribed with an extract from 'The Singing Garden' –

Now is the healing quiet hour that fills  
This gay green world with peace and grateful rest.

*Kevin Radbourne*

### Garden Nursery Sign;

Old gardeners never die, they just spade away.

*Kevin Radbourne*



### Seasonal Tasks – For Summer

1. Fertilise and mulch now for summer to prevent heavy rains??? from leaching the soil.
2. Now is the time to take cuttings of camellias, azaleas and roses. Take half-ripe cuttings and leave for at least three to four months before potting on.
3. Put your houseplants outside where they can rest and recuperate over summer. Water regularly.
4. Weeds can be pests in some climates and not in others. We all know that morning glory and Lantana are declared weeds but did you know that Italian Lavender is a pest in the Mediterranean climates and Cat's Claw creeper is a weed here but not in frosty climates?

\* What to plant for summer;

**Vegies** – Beans, Bokchoy, Capsicum, Cherry tomatoes, Cucumber, Eggplant, Mignonette lettuce, Sweet corn, sSake beans.

**Flowers** – Antirrhinum, Begonia, Celosia, Cosmos, Salvia, Sunflower, Torenia, Zinnia.

*Gail Turner and Diana Faulkoner*

### Recipe

#### Anytime Chocolate Cake

- 125gms melted butter
- 1 cup castor sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup SR flour
- ¼ cup cocoa
- ½ cup milk

Grease 20cm ring pan and cover base with baking paper. Combine all ingredients in a small bowl; beat on low speed until combined. Then beat on medium speed until mixture is smooth and changed in colour. Pour mixture into pan. Bake in moderate oven for about 40 mins.

Stand few minutes before turning on to rack to cool. Ice and decorate with walnuts.

*Susan Myring*

### Top Garden Tip



#### Natural Sprays

**Bicarbonate of Soda.** Is great as a garden spray that stops mould or mildew. Just combine 1 table spoon with a little soap or detergent and 1 cup of water and spray on.

*Revive.co.nz*

### Top Home Tips

#### Baking Soda

is a cheap white processed substance that is non-toxic and can perform many tasks around the home.

. **Deodorising.** When your kitchen fills with smoke from something you've burnt in the oven or on the stove, place baking soda in containers around the house and the smell will be gone by morning.

. **Restore musty books.** Sprinkle baking soda through the pages, leave for a day and then shake out.

. **Fabric softener.** Use 1/3 less soap powder and make up the difference with baking soda for softer clothes.

*Revive.co.nz*

### 'Spring Unsprung'

*By Lisa Plucknett*

Now Spring is sprung and we've been 'done';  
Swung swiftly into summer;  
A week at most of balmy days,  
It really is a 'bummer'.

Our spring flowers have turned up their toes,  
Poor things just died of thirst;  
But it's far worse for farmers,  
So gardeners musn't curse.

Renunculas, anenomes  
And freesias fading fast,  
The wind and dust just roared in,  
And gave them all a blast.

I couldn't see my neighbour's house,  
Car "iced" with dirt and grit;  
And those with breathing problems  
Were surely feeling sick.

We all got out and washed our cars,  
And polished them with zest;  
And then the wind roared in again  
And acted like a pest.

Again the neighbours faded  
Again we coughed and spluttered;  
And weather men broke records  
"Phenomenal" they muttered.

The sun was like a ball of fire;  
Though sunsets quite unique;  
And August twenty-three-o-nine  
What a day- and what a week.

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### Herb Profile

Herbs do more than make food taste great, they also have medicinal benefits and improve your general wellbeing. Fill empty garden spaces with herbs and enjoy the flavour and fragrance they can bring to your cooking and garden. Some herbs are highly sought after such as **French tarragon**. **French tarragon** has a slightly bitter, sweet licorice flavour. The leaves can be used fresh, dried or preserved in vinegar. Ideally herbs should be planted in autumn. Provide them with shade from the afternoon sun or light shade all day and water regularly. ATG. Issue 48.

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### Staghorns and Elkhorns

The spectacular staghorn fern is an epiphyte or 'air plant' that grows without soil. Native to Australian rainforests, the staghorn *Platycerium superbum* and closely related to elkhorn *Platycerium bifucatum* will grow just about anywhere in filtered light with protection from winds.

**Which is Which?** Staghorns are larger and have a large shield-like frond at the front that curves outward to collect water and organic matter as it falls from above. The smaller elkhorn has multiple rosettes or 'eyes' of foliage that can be easily separated to start new plants. Both plants have similar growing requirements.

**Installing a New Plant.** Staghorns and elkhorns sold in garden centres are commonly attached to a backing board that can then be fixed to a wall or tree trunk.

**Propagation.** Elkhorns are easily propagated from the rosettes that form on the front of the plant. With a sharp kitchen knife or similar implement, carefully remove one of the rosettes and attach it to a hardwood backing board. The plant can then be nailed directly onto the board with flat-headed galvanised nails through 30mm washes. Alternatively, drill holes through the board and

fix the plant, antlers upward, with plastic-coated wire or panty hose. Bind the plant so it is securely fastened at the back of the board. The mountain elkhorn can now be hung in place. Rosettes can easily be attached directly to the side of a tree in a similar fashion. The plant will eventually attach itself to the tree or board after which time the binding can be removed. Staghorns are more difficult to propagate and quality specimens are best purchased from garden centres,

**Ongoing Care.** Staghorns need little maintenance. Those grown on tree trunks can usually fend for themselves. Care should be taken not to over feed or over water them. Those plants in full overhead shelter may need supplementary feeding and watering. Feed by placing organic matter ie banana skins or compost at the back of the plant (near where it meets the backing board). Elkhorns and Staghorns may benefit from watering during very hot, dry periods.

ATG Issue 48

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### From the Editor.

*Thank you all those who contributed to this summer's edition of 'Snippet'. Special thanks go to the following;*

*Lisa Plucknett, Kevin Radbourne, Diane Faulkoner, Gail Turner, Susan Myring.*

*If you have visited a garden or have had an overseas trip that you think we would like to hear about please write a few words to me. Thank you to those who have submitted articles but that are not included in this season's edition. We will endeavour to add them to our next edition.*

#### Answers to Quick Quiz:

1. A vault built into the side of a frozen mountain near the North Pole in which hundreds of thousands of seeds are stored. They should last thousands of years there and be available in case of agricultural disasters.
2. Purple and white
3. Has to be pre- 1950's to be considered heirloom.

*Better Homes and Garden.*

#### **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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#### 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*

