



SNIPPETS

WINTER 2008

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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.

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.

From the President

As gardeners, we are all too well aware how the weather can affect our plans and our gardens. The organizers of the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Expo felt the full fury of Mother Nature on the opening day of their big event when they were forced to close and send their patrons home due to extreme danger caused by the gale force winds. These winds threatened life and limb and some of our own Maleny club members narrowly missed being hit by a falling flagpole. If this sort of drama can happen in Melbourne, something of a similar nature can certainly happen in Maleny so we had all better say our prayers that we have good weather for our Gardening on the Edge. Life on the whole is a bit of a gamble, so let's hope the odds are in our favour and all of us keep working at our potting or cooking or whatever for our big event which is only one month – four weeks – away. I hope you have all committed to some form of assistance either as a worker on the two days or, failing that, doing your bit with cooking and the preparation of plants before the day. Being the good people that you are, I'm sure you are committed to one or the other or both. Cheers Sandy.

CARING FOR CITRUS TREES (Cont.)

By David Hockings

As I stated in a previous article, the citrus varieties – orange, mandarin, lemonade fruit, grapefruit and lemon are the most reliable and rewarding varieties of fruit to grow here on the range. They are less troubled by furred animals and birds than other types of fruit but you will

need to be alert for *citrus bugs and borers*. (I will discuss fertilisers and the several trace element deficiencies affecting citrus another time.)

Citrus trees are budded – which is the most simple form of grafting. A single bud is inserted into the stem of a seedling root stock variety. There are several varieties of rootstock used commercially these days – generally they have some degree of resistance to root rot fungal diseases. However, the once widely used rough lemon (bush lemon) variety is still commonly used

Seedlings are usually budded when they are pencil to finger thickness and usually at 10 to 25 cm above soil level. All shoots below the bud must be removed and once the bud has shot, the top of the seedling is removed so that growth from the inserted bud becomes the tree. The initial stem should be headed at 40 to 50 cm to initiate branching and 3 or 4 strong branches retained to form the frame of the new tree.

Once the basic frame is established, citrus – in contrast to the stone and pome fruits, require *relatively little annual pruning*. The objective with citrus is to develop a large umbrella like form with a canopy of leaves across the top and down to about 30 to 40 cm off the ground. Pruning consists of removal of small twigs in the centre of the tree so that the inside of the tree is fairly open, with a canopy of fruit-bearing twigs and foliage over the top.

Several *scale insects can attack citrus* – mussel scale, circular black scale, red scale and white louse scale but they are successfully treated with White Oil, Pest Oil or Confidor sprays. It is necessary to spray scales twice about 4 weeks apart because the first application will miss the

young insects just about to hatch under the adult scales. Fruit Fly will sometimes sting citrus fruit but the oil in the skin usually kills the eggs so maggots may not develop. Myer Lemon is an exception and is often infested.

The main pests are citrus bugs and borers. There are two types of bugs – *bronze citrus bug*, which has greenish or orange immature stages and *horned citrus bug*, which is green and has cream and black immature stages. These bugs pierce and suck on young shoots and young fruit and their saliva causes shoots to wilt and young fruit to drop off. There are usually not a large number of individual bugs involved but 3 or 4 bugs can remove the entire crop and adult bugs can fly in from nearby neglected trees. They eject a foul smelling fluid, which can stain hands and be very painful in eyes – so avoid it. Try knocking them into a jam tin containing about an inch of water and with some kerosene on the top. You will probably need to collect bugs every second day while they are active.

The *Citrus borer* is more insidious. The adult is a longicorne beetle, mottled grey in colour and about 3 cm long with long antennae back over the body. The eggs are laid at the ends of small twigs, usually at top of the tree. In the first stage about 10 to 15 cm of the tip of a twig will die and the tiny white or cream legless larva or grub will hibernate for a period before moving down and killing the next 40 to 50 cm of branch. At that stage it will again hibernate for a period before moving on into main branches or trunk. Branches tend to break off cleanly just above where it is hibernating. These larvae eventually destroy the whole tree before pupating and hatching into adult beetles for the next generation.

Ideally these borers should be removed in the first stage when only 10 to 15 cm of twig tip is affected. You need to learn to recognise this early stage, which is hard to see, and constantly be on the lookout through the year. Immediately remove the affected twig and if you split it open you will find the tiny legless grub. In the later stages, the grub will be about 8 cm long. If the borer has progressed into thicker branches, you will need to saw into wood without a borer hole, and that can severely decimate a tree...



MORNING TEA ROSTER

July

Tea: Beth Lawson, Allie Lovett
Food: Jo Bowen, Carmen Blain, Yvonne Boland, Marie Closkey

August

Tea: Meg Maclean, Gillian Macleod
Food: Bev Campbell, Gwen Cosgrove, Ivy Cox, June Crane

September

Tea: Kath Marshall, Meryl Marshall
Food: Kate Crawford, Christine Crocker, Wendy Dixon, Gladys Dobinson

Seasonal Tasks – by Pat Powell



June

1. With the coldest season about to commence, protect plants that could be affected by frost, e.g. strawberries, and delicately foliated plants.
2. Watering prior to the sun's rays touching first thing in the morning or building up a raised edge with mulch bales close to the plants.
3. If you have failed to plant out your spring flowering bulbs, which have been in cool storage (fridge) do so now. It helps to mix bulb fertiliser through the soil before planting.
4. Prepare your soil for bare root roses. After planting to prevent shock, water them in with seaweed tonic at a low strength. This helps any plant which is being transplanted.
5. Hard prune, but not too hard, hydrangeas to a pair of plump buds. This is an ideal time to take cuttings.
6. Plant cabbage, broccoli, peas, lettuce and English spinach for your greens; beetroot, carrots and radish for your root crop.

July

1. Your early azaleas are past their best, but later varieties are starting to flower. Watch for petal blight and spray if necessary. It pays to remove the effected flowers from the bush and the surrounding soil. Avoid overhead watering.
2. Magnolias are about to take the stage. If you have room in an area protected from north west or southern winds, with plenty of sun they are a most worthwhile tree or shrub to grow. As they live for many years and flower during the winter, be selective when choosing a healthy plant.
3. Wage war on chick weed. If it has taken over an area, spray with broad leaf weed spray. Rug up with protective clothes and always wash your hair and skin after spraying.
4. Rid your garden of oxalis as it thrives at this time of the year. The tiny bulbs stay with the parent bulb

in the winter and are easy to remove. Bag and bin. An old screw driver or knife makes an ideal digger.

5. Prepare your garden for spring and summer vegetables and flowers.

August

1. This is the month to prune your roses and shrubs which do not flower in the spring. Not hibiscus until next month.

2. Fertilise recently pruned shrubs or roses with a complete organic fertiliser. Water prior to and after fertilising.

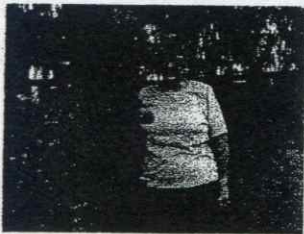
3. Prune passionfruit as they fruit on new growth. If your passionfruit is more than five years old find a fresh position, and prepare the soil for when the plants become available. Passionfruit can be used as an ornamental climber for summer shade. It is worth having two plants at least to supply your needs.

4. A crop of potatoes planted now should be ready for the Christmas Table, when potatoes are very expensive.

5. Before your perennials start to grow is an ideal time to divide and replant.

6. Deepen the blue of your hydrangeas with bluing compound. Lime will turn them pink.

PROFILE OF NORMA McLEOD



(If you have ever driven to the Witta Dump, then you have passed the immaculate, colourful garden of Norma and Keith McLeod. Keith is a fourth generation Australian, but has the appearance of having just emerged from the heather on the hill, and is extremely proud of his charming wife and her achievements.)

To categorize Norma McLeod in a few words is almost impossible.....

Quiet achiever, gifted floral artist, ardent gardener, fabulous cook, maybe kind, modest, gifted, would be a better way to start. So we will let Norma share her life with us in her own words. (With help from her very proud husband Keith, who proffered "bits and pieces" that Norma was too modest to impart.)

Q:- Norma, everyone has a beginning, and a childhood somewhere- so where was yours.

A:- I was born in Cooroy and went to school in Cooroy and Pomona, and like a lot of country children rode my horse to school, and sometimes walked the three miles (5 k's) each way; but I never found it arduous, it

was pleasant.

Q:- And the years when you and Keith were "young marrieds" and raised a family....

A:- We lived at Mitchelton, Brisbane, for several years we owned the garage on the corner of Blackwood and Samford Roads, and ironically were friends with a couple also in business, Jo and Lawrie Tedman, who also retired to Maleny.

Q:- And your fondest memories of holidays with Keith and the children.....

A:- We built our own holiday home at Angourie, on the NSW North Coast. We didn't have a lot of mod cons, we cooked on a kerosene stove, but we all have marvelous memories of fishing, surfing and playing on the Beach.

Q:- And your garden in Brisbane.....

A:- Well, I did not have quite the time that I now have, I always worked. After we sold the garage, I did office work for 12 years for a big retailer in Brisbane, but I always grew flowers and the local florist always came to me for white flowers for bridal bouquets.

Q:- Did you have time for any of the clever crafty things that you do here in Maleny?

A:- Well, I always loved fancy work and smocking, and sewed all the clothes for the children, and I continued to make children's clothes when I came here to live. For many years, I made a batch of warm nightwear and tracksuits to send to my grandchildren in Scotland.

Q:- Many of us have enjoyed your beautifully decorated cakes. How long have you been doing that?

A:- Well, I'd do quite a lot of cakes in Brisbane. At one time, we belonged to a Boat Club (Of which we are now Life Members) and there were 75 members, so Keith and I decided it would be nice if, for Christmas, they each received a small decorated Christmas cake, so that year, as well as all the cakes for the family, I made one for each member of the Club.

Q:- As a long standing member of the Maleny Garden Club, what are some of your fondest memories.

A:- I adored the two shows that we put on each year in the Community centre, the Autumn Show, and the Spring Festival. Along with other members of the Floral Art Section of the Club, we spent hours planning the floral carpets, and then more hours on our knees, crawling around the floor, creating the carpet, but it gave us all a wonderful sense of achievement, and I think a lot of us miss doing the carpets.

Q:- Tell us about your garden here in Maleny.

A:- We started from scratch here in 1993, there was nothing here at all. In our acre we have an orchard, with citrus, plums, figs, custard apples, and pawpaws,

and a vegetable garden in the back. Of course, we don't have town water, but we have a very adequate bore. I love colour in the front, so I always have flowering trees, lots of camellias, and annuals, stocks, pansies, snapdragons and bulbs, and I find it quite easy to grow tulips, as long as they are in pots, and put in the right position.

Q:- Do you have a special supplier for your seedlings.

A:- I find it worthwhile to go a little further. Keith and I like to take a drive into the country, and get our seedlings from say, Walshes in Toowoomba, Pohlmanns in Gatton, or a little closer to home, Caboolture markets.

Q:- Is there anything special about living out here at Witta?

A:- Well, we love our own garden, but we are also most fortunate in that, we have a small "secret park" on our back boundary. It has a lake in it and there is an abundance of bird life, and we have a couple of whip birds in the bottom of our garden, which not everybody has.

Q:- As a gardener of many years, how do you see the future of garden clubs?

A:- We will always need garden Clubs, there is always something new to learn, it is a wonderful venue for making new friendships, and the great thing about ours is our "Sip'n'Snip. Segment. We need to be able to visit each others' gardens in a relaxed atmosphere....

Footnote:- We left the McLeod home, overawed by the accomplishments of this gracious lady. We had feasted on delicious muffins, been inspired by her many talents, and to be honest, we felt we had only scratched the surface. Norma is indeed an asset to the Garden Club and to the country home she now calls home - the girl from Cooroy has truly gone full circle.

(As told to Lisa)

Gardens in Melbourne by Margaret Harper

In mid February, we flew to Melbourne to visit Cruden Farm, the garden of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch. The signature of this garden is the avenue of lemon scented gums, lining the driveway in a gentle curve from the main road to the house. The property has been in the Murdoch family for 80 years and an enormous camphor laurel is the only survivor from the original garden. In the walled garden, where a sculpture of a Dancing Brolga

stands above the gate, a variety of perennials, including salvias, delphiniums and dahlias make a colourful display. In one corner is a peaceful spot to sit and enjoy the vista.

The picking garden, enclosed by a hedge, contains many beautiful roses, delphiniums and dahlias. The standard honeysuckles were an interesting feature. White perennial borders, where Japanese windflowers were waving in profusion led toward the house. A large lake, surrounded by a variety of oaks, is home to birdlife. The reflections of the autumn colours in the lake must provide a stunning sight.

From here, we visited the Royal Botanic Gardens, Cranbourne, only recently created and not yet completed. It is unique, as it uses only Australian plants and has been designed to show the existence between people, plants and the land. There are themed areas, such as the Eucalypt Walk and all plants are clearly labelled with Genus, common name, family, distribution and growing requirements.

No visit to Melbourne would be complete without a visit to Cloudehill Garden and Nursery at Olinda in the Dandenongs. The garden was laid out in the 1920s and 30s, so there are many mature cool climate trees, including maples, beeches and rhododendrons. The sloping site has been terraced with rock walls and you are led along gravel pathways, down steps through garden rooms, enclosed with walls and hedges. There are the most wonderful herbaceous borders, with a mixture of grasses and colourful perennials, from the hot colours to the softer tones. Large urns have been used as focal points, enticing the visitor to explore further. At the bottom of the formal garden is the woodland

[Editors' note: Margaret returned to Melbourne to visit the Bolobek Plant Fair in Macedon, her charming description of which will be included in the next issue of Snippets.]

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