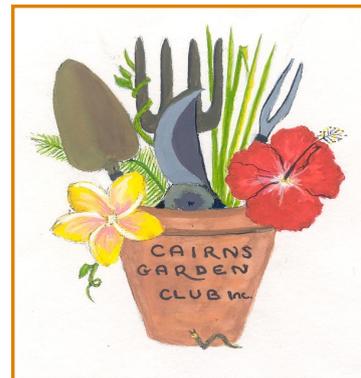


Cairns Garden Club Inc

Newsletter



Volume 10. No 4 December 2014

Edited by Sheena Phillips and Carolyn Emslie

Cairns Regional Council Seniors Garden Competition 2014

The Club has always supported the CRC Garden Competitions and we were pleased to see their re-introduction last year with a competition for senior (over 50) gardeners. This year we continued our support with an encouragement award which was won by John Taffy Lewis of Redlynch; and some of our members attended the presentation of the awards at a morning tea at the Botanic Gardens.

We also decided to revisit the coach tour of the winning gardens which had been so popular in the past. It is gratifying to report that this was a great success with eight excellent gardens visited on the day, and was well supported by both our members and the public.



Morning Tea at the Botanic Gardens with Matthew representing Masters – a major sponsor of the competition

Just a few highlights of the coach tour



Jim Truscott's Jade Vine



Taffy's unusual birdlife

A Garden Glimpse from Carolyn



Our neighbours, Chris and Gayle Wood, live across the road from us and have a lovely garden full of colourful plants and quirky little surprises such as the family of meerkats residing amongst the foliage. As I strolled around one day I noticed their beautiful flowering trumpet vine (*Pyrostegia venusta*) a South American native creeper which puts on a spectacular display of brilliant orange flowers from Winter through to Spring. In their front yard was a grass tree (*Xanthorrhoea*) in flower, the towering stalk covered in tiny white flowers that the leathernecks or friar birds were feasting upon.



I followed a pathway through a colourful bromeliad garden passing Gayle's beautiful swamp orchid along the way. Swamp orchids are one of Australia's largest terrestrial orchids and are now an endangered species due to habitat loss and over-collecting from the wild. They grow to 1 metre high with the erect flower spikes growing to 1.2 metres with a mass display of flowers from late Winter to early Spring. Nestled amongst the heliconias, gingers and cordylines stood their cool, shady deck which Chris had built a few years ago.



A jade vine grows over one part of the deck and the lady's slipper vine (*Thunbergia mysorensis*) a native of India, covered in beautiful maroon and yellow flowers, covers the rest. This makes a lovely cool place to enjoy wine and nibbles with their neighbours on a lazy afternoon.





Warszewiczia coccinea (Double Chaconia) Trinidad Botanic Gardens. National flower of Trinidad and Tobago

Our first trip was a cruise from Fort Lauderdale through some of the southernmost Caribbean islands, stopping here and there down the coast of Brazil to Rio, where we arrived at the time of Carnival. We prefer Rio at other than carnival time – everything was closed as everyone was in the street partying. We watched the parades on TV in our hotel room, as it was too expensive and crowded for us to attend in person.

We visited various botanic gardens but most of the small islands didn't have botanic gardens although the dry islands Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao had very interesting desert type plant life. The Rio de Janeiro Jardim Botanico hadn't changed much since our last visit some years ago except that it was looking a bit neglected in parts..



Orange Delonix regia in Vitoria, Brazil



Pure white frangipani - Plumaria pudica, Curacao,



Orchids in Jardim Botanico Rio de Janeiro



Jambo vermelho in Jardim Botanico, Rio de Janeiro



flowers

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Bev and Mike's next trip was to Cyprus and Israel



Pelargonium in Jerusalem



Black and blue Strelitzia in a private garden in Jerusalem



We enjoyed both countries and are pleased that we made it to Israel before the current trouble started. We also visited Venice which has always been a favourite of ours. Cyprus has some of the most interesting ruins and mosaics that we have seen anywhere. We very much liked Israel. One of its most interesting places, Jerusalem, is a lovely city and considerably greener than we expected. We visited the Jerusalem Botanic Gardens which were fairly well laid out with a good collection of plants, a lake, visitors centre and restaurant. Unfortunately some of the areas needed weeding and a bit of attention but they were working on these problems and plans for the future looked good..



Mike floating in Dead Sea, Israel

< Left Stachys growing wild in Cyprus

We have joined the Ocean Shores Garden Club. Quite a different experience from Cairns. There are a few things we don't like much about it. There is a \$4 entry fee for each meeting, for which there is a door prize ticket. There is no raffle — the first, second and third for the door tickets are bought by the Club each month. The competition has most of the same categories as Cairns, but members can bring an entry for any category each meeting! Consequently, many categories have only one entry and others have none. Points are awarded for the winners of each category.

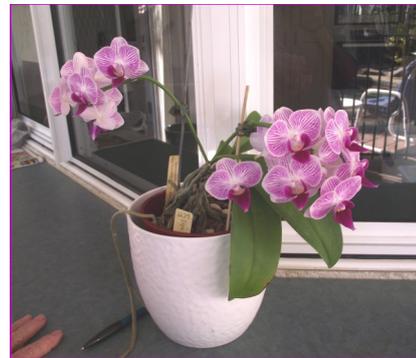
They do have interesting outings to various nurseries and peoples' places and one aspect which we think has a bit of potential is a garden competition. This is run once a year for members' gardens and people living in this post code. It also includes categories such as best flowering shrub, tree, potted plant, succulent etc. etc. The judging is done a day or so after the entries close, the judges visiting each house. Shortly after, there is a function at a local venue (\$10 pasta etc.) where the winners are announced. On the following weekend, a tour to the winning entries is organised. This activity takes place in September, so we probably won't be quite up to scratch this year, there being no category for best weed patch!

Best wishes to everyone

Bev and Mike Vallentine

**General Meeting — Saturday 18 October
in the gardens of John and Averil Cadogan and Shirley Bacon**

It is always a pleasure to visit these attractive and beautifully maintained gardens in Melissa Close and it is no surprise that Averil and John were once again successful in the CRC Seniors Garden competition conducted earlier this year. Averil's fine collection of bromeliads are always a stand out feature but there are many other points of interest in both gardens and Shirley explained the smooth cohesion between them when she said "Whatever Averil and John do, we just copy it!"



We also enjoyed an interesting talk by Maree Roth (assisted by Kurt who suddenly discovered he wasn't so shy after all) on butterflies and moths. These are insects and belong to the leptos family, and feed on the nectar from flowers, so the use of herbicides in the garden will mean fewer butterflies and moths. They had several display cases full of exotic butterflies and moths from South America, Madagascar, New Caledonia, New Guinea and Australia to show. Maree explained that they used to collect and swap these insects with people from overseas.

CAN YOU HELP? Gardeners Wanted for History of Weeds Project

Have you been gardening in North Queensland all your life? Have you taken notice of what weeds have come into your garden, and which garden plants have become weeds? Did you or your family use weeds for food or other purposes, or do you have interesting stories about weeds? If this sounds like you, Jan Wegner from James Cook University would love to hear from you. She is writing a history of North Queensland weeds and wants to hear what gardeners have to say about them.

Jan can be contacted on 4232 1100, or email janice.wegner@jcu.edu.au

Centro: This vine was introduced to the North for cattle pasture in the 1930s. Now it's all over Cairns. Can you remember when it started to invade gardens?



Centro.

Combined Northern Garden Clubs Meeting

On Sunday 26 October we hosted a meeting of the Combined Garden Clubs of Far North Queensland at the RSL Hall at Gordonvale. This was a very well attended with over 100 members from the clubs throughout the northern region enjoying three excellent guest speakers, bush poetry, fine hospitality and friendship. Thanks to our wonderful members who helped in many ways, the event was a great success.



The first speaker was our Patron, Kim Morris whose topic was “Desert Dust & Vegetables.” Kim takes a team of workers to isolated communities in the Northern Territory, the Torres Strait, Western Australia and outback Queensland, and enlists the aid of the indigenous community to build a shade house and set up the growing containers. These are made of PVC pipe and are filled with a growing agent and then the seedlings are planted. Kim and his team have achieved great results by providing functional, useful and practical solutions to working in desert environments. The result is fresh vegetables and a sense of purpose and achievement for the workers involved.

Next came Steve Jackson who told us about “Amazing Plants” and had many to show in the excellent presentation illustrating his talk. He is particularly interested in carnivorous plants and the fascinating relationship they have with some insects and mammals. The Pygmy Sundew, the Trigger Plant and the Rainbow Plant, all found in Western Australia, have a symbiotic relationship with the capsid bug and rely on this bug for nutrition. Some tropical plants like the Jade Vine and the Cannonball Tree project sonar to attract bats to pollinate them, and the *Amorphophallus titanum* from Sumatra which has a flower spike up to 3.2m high heats to 36degrees Celsius in the evening, sending out a strong smell to attract insects to pollinate it.

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Dr Janice Wegner from JCU then spoke on “The History of Cairns Weeds”, and the many ways in which they were introduced — some by accident and some on purpose in the belief that they were useful plants for pasture or other purposes. She then discussed a large number of weeds particular to Cairns and the surrounding area, such as Madagascar Periwinkle, Sensitive Weed and Guinea Grass. Janice's talk was very interesting and gave some insight into many of the weeds we have growing in our gardens today. We need to be aware of what we plant and also very careful of how we dispose of weeds.

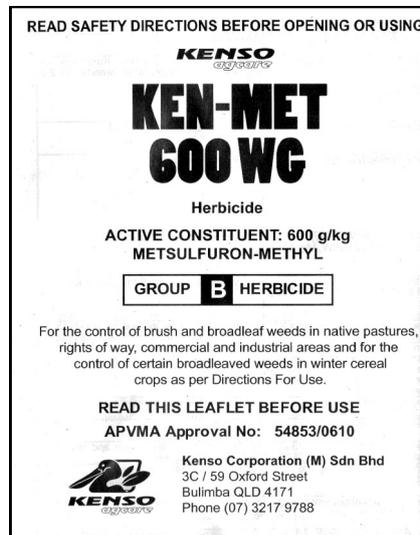


Show & Tell

Singapore Daisy



At a recent meeting and following discussion on weeds, the question was asked — how to get rid of Singapore Daisy? Travis says that this product which he purchased from CRT at Gordonvale did the job.



<Left Sue's Orchid

Sue Bennetts had this beautiful orchid flowering in her garden when Carolyn visited. It is *Phal. schilleriana* and is one of three plants, all the same type, all of which flower profusely. She finds they grow and flower best when attached to trees in her garden.

Christmas Celebrations

PATRON: Kim Morris
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VICE PRESIDENT:
Fran Lindsay
SECRETARY (Minutes):
Carolyn Emslie
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SECRETARY (Correspondence):
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TREASURER: Susan Bennetts
4033 7885
COMMITTEE:
Gloria Melvin
4051 6774
Sheena Phillips
4039 2447
Joy Laird
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Our meeting on 15 November at the Bella Vista Community Centre was, as usual, a fun afternoon to celebrate Christmas, with a photo show of Carolyn's trip to the Melbourne Flower Show, some games and amusements devised by Fran, Secret Santa, and of course the afternoon tea! As usual the table was loaded with goodies brought along by our many good cooks.

The Christmas Hamper Raffle was won by Gloria Melvin's daughter Cheryl Iron and the second prize went to Barbara Power. Thanks to all members who sold tickets and donated items for the hamper.



Another very important part of the afternoon was the awarding of the Esme Holsinger Perpetual Trophy for the winner of the monthly competition. Congratulations to Travis who won the trophy for the third time showing great consistency and edging out some close competition from other keen members.

We then celebrated again with a Christmas Luncheon at the Cruising Yacht Squadron on Saturday 6 December. bringing our activities for this year to an end.



We wish all our members and good friends a very joyous Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year .

Our meetings will re-commence on Saturday 21 February at the Bella Vista Community Centre on Loridan Drive, Brinsmead; and we will meet for an informal lunch at Cazaly's on Friday 30 January at 12 noon.