

Cairns Garden Club Inc Newsletter



Volume 11. No 1 April 2015

Edited by Sheena Phillips and Carolyn Emslie

Saturday 21 February—General Meeting Bella Vista Hall



At our first meeting for the year our guest speaker, Gary Morton, gave us an update on the efforts of the team from Biosecurity Queensland to eradicate electric ants from the Cairns area. These 'tramp ants' from South America are very small and difficult to see, ginger/red in colour and are very adaptive to different environments. They nest in pot plants, under rocks, between timber, in leaf litter and under dead wood. They feed on insects, fruit and small vertebrates and farm aphids and scale to get the sugary liquid from them. Electric Ants are outdoor ants which have multiple queens enabling them to quickly form new colonies and become very invasive.



Cairns is the only area in Australia which has Electric Ants, ninety percent of infestation occurs from the movement of pot plants in the Cairns area and the program is keen to check as many gardens as possible.

Call 132523 to arrange an inspection of your property.

To conclude the presentation, Ofira, a very slim and agile Labrador, one of three dogs who work in the program, demonstrated how efficiently she was able to sniff out Electric Ants.



A Garden Glimpse – Gloria's Garden

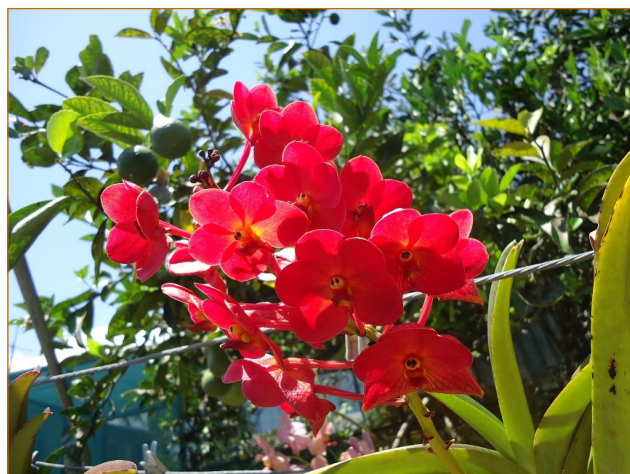
from Carolyn

On the second Saturday of each month we hold our Committee meetings at Gloria's house in Hannam St, Westcourt. As you walk into her yard you see a lovely display of hanging baskets. Over the years Gloria has received many awards for these from the Cairns Show.



Gloria is successful at growing succulents and has an unusual one (a favorite of mine) which is native to South Africa called "Flapjack" (*Kalanchoe Thyrsiflora*) which thrives in bright sunlight and sandy soil with good drainage.

At the back of her house is a shade house full of orchids and she had some beautiful flowering Vanda orchids hanging on her clothesline that day. She said they needed full sun and to be watered every day. As I walked down the side of her house I saw beautifully colored caladiums, a maroon and yellow day lily, a white hippeastrum and a bright yellow double hibiscus on display.



Continued >

Continued

Tucked away in the back corner under a shade tree was a lovely collection of variegated foliage plants including the Kris Plant (*Alocasia sanderriana*) with its impressively shaped and patterned leaves. These plants love moisture, shade and high humidity and are endemic to the Philippines.



Taking pride of place on her front table, Gloria has a beautiful *Ledebouria*, a genus of African bulbous perennial herbs in the Asparagus family. Gloria has a lovely garden to explore, full of brightly flowering shrubs, gorgeous orchids, distinctively patterned foliage plants and lush hanging baskets.

**Saturday 21 March – General Meeting
Bella Vista Community Centre**

Weed Alert! At this meeting our guest speaker made us aware that not all weeds are ugly, some are actually very handsome plants which have originally been introduced to Australia as ornamentals.

Kim Badcock, Community Engagement Officer of the Tropical Weed Eradication Program of Bio Security Queensland gave us a very interesting presentation on some of the weeds currently of concern to the department.



***Climédia Hirta* or Koster's Curse**

This plant has the potential to do millions of dollars of damage to primary production as it can completely take over an area, and doing irreversible damage to wildlife habitats, and threatening native species' with extinction.

Early detection is difficult and it is a prolific fruiter and reproduces all year round.

Continued>

PATRON: Kim Morris
PRESIDENT: Travis Teske
4056 1761
VICE PRESIDENT:
Fran Lindsay
0407 695 891
SECRETARY (Minutes):
Carolyn Emslie
4056 6501
SECRETARY (Correspondence):
Fran Lindsay
TREASURER: Susan Bennetts
4033 7885
COMMITTEE:
Gloria Melvin
4051 6774
Sheena Phillips
4039 2447
Joy Laird
4056 2358
Lennette Townson
4056 1562
LIBRARIAN:
Averil Cadogan
4059 0600
PUBLICITY
Susan Bennetts

Mail: PO Box 503
Cairns Qld 4870

Internet:
www.cairnsgardenclub.org.au
eMmail: Fran Lindsay
frantastic10@bigpond.com

**“Gardens are not
made by singing
'Oh, how beautiful!'
and sitting in the
shade.”**

Rudyard Kipling

Weed Alert! - Continued



Limnocharis flava Originally imported as an ornamental aquatic plant, this culprit can be found between Townsville and Wonga Beach. It has the ability to colonise shallow wetlands and displace native plants and animals.



Miconia calvenscens This plant favours high rainfall areas and grows to a large tree in thick stands, shading out native plants. It causes irreversible damage to wildlife habitats, and threatens native species with extinction. The large leaves and shallow root system cause erosion and landslips on hill slopes.



Mikania micrantha This vine spreads rapidly and produces 10,000 seeds per plant which are dispersed by wind. It poses a serious threat to the World Heritage listed rainforests of North Queensland.

Any suspected infestations of these weeds should be reported to Biosecurity Queensland on 132523