



# ROBINA GARDEN CLUB INC.

Meeting of Thursday  
November 27<sup>th</sup> - 2025  
NEWSLETTER NO. 158

## TODAY

### GUEST SPEAKER

Brian Lepzig – Neutrog

### MONTHLY FEATURE

Desert Roses

### CHRISTMAS PARTY

Reminder that our X-Mas Party is on Friday December 12<sup>th</sup> at 12 p.m. here at the Carrara Community Centre. The cost is \$30 for members and \$40 for non-members. It will include a few nibbles with a main course of cold meats and salads buffet style then dessert with tea/coffee. It also includes a free \$10 gift per guest, the usual cent auction and lucky door prizes of Bunnings vouchers. Today (27<sup>th</sup>) is the last chance to pay (or get a refund) by cash or direct credit. If doing direct credit name every person you are paying for clearly.

### HOME VISITS

Reminder that due to the heat we do not have a Home Visit in either December or January.

### FESTIVE SEASON

Today is our last meeting till January 2026. For those who we will not see at the Christmas Party the Executive would like to wish you and yours a ....

*Happy  
X-Mas and  
New Year.*

Unless otherwise stated all items in this newsletter are written by **Trevor Hicks (Editor)**

## COMPANION PLANTING

The next couple of months may not be the best time to plant all the following plants but here is **a very short list of some examples** of companion planting for SE Qld gardens.

**BASIL, LEMON BALM with TOMATOES.** The aroma of the basil helps deter pests like flies, mosquitos and aphids while its nitrogen fixing properties in the soil also benefits the growth of tomato plants. Lemon balm attracts bees and is thus said to enhance flavour and stimulate growth.



**CORN with BEANS and SUNFLOWERS.** Corn plants provide a natural trellis for beans while sunflowers offer ground cover that helps retain moisture in the soil for both.

**MINT and NASTURTIUM with CABBAGE and TOMATOES.** Mint deters pests such as the cabbage white butterfly, ants and fleas. Nasturtium flowers repel aphids and codling moth while the Cabbage White Butterfly will seek out the nasturtium rather than the cabbages or tomatoes thus helping protect them a bit.



**ONIONS with MOST VEGETABLES.** The smell of onion is said to deter pests so plant them with most vegetables **BUT NOT** asparagus, peas, beans or gladioli as onions release various chemical substances that reduce their growth.



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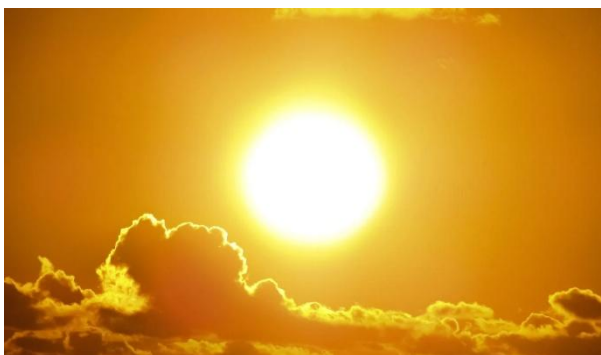
*With our Thanks*

## ODDS AND ENDS

### BEAT THE HEAT

December and January are always a struggle for gardeners here because of the heat. Here are some **'old favourite'/'very obvious but worth reminding ourselves of'** hints and tips to help your garden survive the hot dry conditions to come.

- Water in the morning or late in the afternoon only to minimize evaporation and save water.
- Water deeply by using a drip irrigation system or applying a 'slow soak' model where water goes direct to roots for a longer period of time.
- After hand watering scratch around to see how deep the water actually got. If it is just a few centimeters you have wasted your time and water. **ESPECIALLY TRUE** if ...
- You have topped up your mulch. A thick mulch keeps moist soil moist longer but is not penetrated by normal hosing so deep watering by soaking is essential.
- Use a garden fork to reduce any compaction and thus aerate the soil and allow water to soak down deeper.
- Add compost or 'slow-release' fertilizers to help improve soil health and boost the plants **BUT** ...
- As noted last month do not apply chemical fertilisers on very hot days – can burn plants and will not be taken up.
- Late in the day prune away excess branches and leaves so the plant is not trying to keep too much of itself alive.



### MEALYBUGS



It is that time of year when plants can get an infestation of **Mealybug**. Mealybugs, members of the **Pseudococcidae** family, are small, pale 'cotton like', soft-bodied, sap-sucking insects (above left). They group together on plants (left) where they use specialised mouth parts to extract sap. They weaken the host plant, secrete honeydew (thus attracting ants who help spread them!) and help promote the growth of sooty mould. Plant leaves will yellow and the plant itself get weaker and weaker.

There are several ways to get rid of them. One D.I.Y. recipe that is worth trying is -

- 70% isopropyl alcohol (rubbing alcohol)
- Cotton swabs for spot treatment or
- Spray mix: 1 part alcohol + 1 part water
- For best effect add 5ml of dish soap per 500ml of the mix – this helps penetration.

You can use the cotton swabs to put undiluted alcohol on the bugs directly and they will die in about 30 seconds or mix the spray as above and spray the entire plant but especially the crevices where they love to hide. Look under leaf joints, under the rim of pots and in the root crown as well as they'll hide there. Repeat every 3 weeks to kill newly hatched crawlers. If you can, wipe away the dead bugs.

**NEEM OIL** spray also works – with 4 table-spoons of the oil combined with two teaspoons of liquid soap in 3.5 litres of water used as above.

### FINANCIAL REPORT – AS OF 1/11/2025



RESERVE	<i>Funds reserved for emergencies</i>	\$2,500.00
ADMINISTRATION	<i>Funded by the Annual Administration Fee.</i>	\$2,481.59
MEMBER'S REWARDS	<i>Afternoon Tea, Prizes, Awards, etc. Funded by the Raffles.</i>	\$1,588.73
AGM LUNCH	<i>Subsidized depending on funds. Funded by Bus Trips.</i>	\$634.90
CHRISTMAS PARTY	<i>Subsidized depending on funds. Funded by Cuttings Table.</i>	\$3,585.78
----- TOTAL CASH FUNDS AVAILABLE -----		\$10,791.00

2024 Income

**\$12,475.26**

2025 Expenses

\$11,325.57

2025 Surplus

\$1,149.69



With 12 entries the Foliage Plants section was a clear standout while with 8 entries in the Creative Display we set a new record for the club post COVID. On the weaker side there were 4 sections of 'black' with 3 or less entries – another record! Once again there were 9 different winners in the 11 sections.

### SEC. 1 – FOLIAGE DISPLAY X 3

**Beryl Tucker** – a lovely colour contrast as well as a variety of leaves.



### SEC. 10

#### DECORATIVE DISPLAY (x8)

**Trevor Hicks** – in honour of Halloween the next day.



### SEC. 4

#### FLOWERING PLANT (x6)

**Denise Narramore** – this Dessert Rose is a hint of our November Monthly Feature.



### SEC. 7 - A CUT (x 7)

**Beryl Tucker** – a particularly deep coloured gladiolus.



### SEC. 5 – A SINGLE BLOOM (x3)

**Trevor Hicks** – This Asiatic Lilly is also an early flowerer.



### SEC. 2

#### ORCHIDS (x7)

**Laurie Baxter** – this **Brassia Rex** orchid is an offshoot of a Grand Champion exhibit.



### SEC. 3 - FOLIAGE ONLY PLANT/S (x12)

**Marianne Franks** – A very good display of Caladiums for so early in their season.



### STEWARDS PRIZE

**Marie Sampson**

– chosen for its lovely use of matched colours.



Our annual Benching Trophy will be awarded at our X-Mas Party.  
1<sup>st</sup> = \$50, 2<sup>nd</sup> = \$30 plus 2 x \$10 special Encouragement Awards.

### SEC 9 SMALL POT PLANT (x8)

**Wendy Clear** – a beautifully shaped Tillandsia specimen.



### SEC. 8 – VASE OF FLOWERS (x3)

**Maxine Cochrane** – Queen Anne's Lace with purple Cleome are the base of this display.



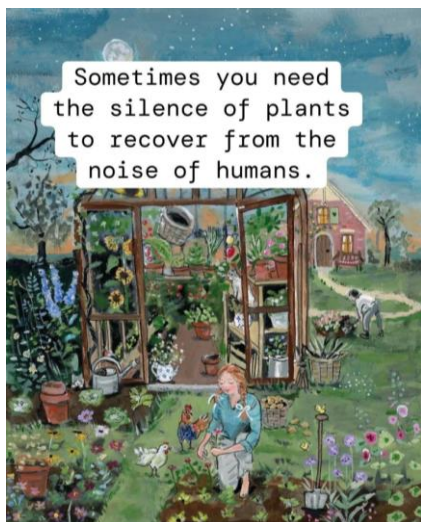
### SEC. 6 – PRODUCE (x1)

**Jill Barber** – our Produce Queen Jill does it again with carrots, spinach, lettuce and beans.





## Light Relief... ???



How do you know when a gardener is lying? They are in a nursery "just looking".



I have been accused of being OCD because in my veggie patch I have planted my herbs alphabetically. I've even been asked how I find the time. An obvious answer of course - "Easy, Thyme is right between the Tarragon and Turmeric"



## Paint versus Blood

During this month the bulb at right has been flowering. Quite a few people have been calling it the 'Paintbrush Lily' but others call it the 'Blood Lily'. In fact, if you do a google search you will also see many sources using either or both these names. This is mainly due to just false popular incorrect naming and to changes over time.



Technically this bulb should be called the 'Blood Lily' – though be aware that several species get called 'blood lily' just to confuse us all. It is now known as **Scadoxus multiflorus** but was at times in the past known as *Haemanthus multiflorus*. They are easy to care for and require little care and attention. They prefer loam, sandy soil (especially sandy in pots) that is moist but well-drained with bright indirect/partial sunshine. They die off for winter when watering should be avoided or the bulb will rot. Increase watering in early summer for flowering now. They are most easily propagated by removing off-sets but wait for two seasons so the off-set is strong enough.



(One apocryphal story is that the famous El Alamein fountain (above) in Kings Cross was inspired by the 'blood lily' but at the time of its design it was likened to a thistle or dandelion instead).



As noted above, it is not uncommon for people to call the 'Blood Lily' a 'Paintbrush Lily'. The 'Paintbrush lily' is in fact a plant called **Haemanthus coccineus**. It comes in both a white version and the more common 'red' with bright yellow tips. The flowers appear on bare stems with no foliage. The plant is a bulb that is dormant in winter till the flowers appear with the leaves following after that – almost the same as the 'blood lily' (thus one reason the two have become confused). Again, do not water these in winter and keep in a well-drained soil. They too prefer a bright position but not full sun. They also can best be propagated by sub-division about every 5 to 6 years – again, too soon and the off-sets are not mature enough. Again, this is best done during winter when they are dormant.

Perhaps the most important thing to note is that both of these plants grow well here on the coast – BUT DO NOT OVER-WATER.



## YU-TSUI-EN

Next year one possibility for our first bus trip of the year is to go again to the Mount Coot-tha Botanic Gardens where the Queensland Council of Garden Clubs will be having their 'Plant and Floral Fair' on 10-11 of April that will include displays and plant sales. If that eventuates it would be mad not to visit "**YU-TSUI-EN**" – the Japanese Garden that is within the grounds. Opened in 1989 the name is in gold calligraphy on the welcome gate with a dedication by then Japanese PM Noboru Takeshita.



The garden was the last garden designed by the late **Kenzo Ogata**, one of Japan's leading traditional garden design proponents. It is based on traditional Japanese garden design elements of '**tsuki-yama-chisen**' or 'mountain-pond-stream' but with an added twist of using Australian native trees, shrubs and flowers. The skeleton of the garden was the pond and garden that was part of the Japanese Pavilion at Brisbane's World Expo 88. These were moved to the site to become part of the larger design. When completed it was opened in 1989 by then Lord May Sallyanne Atkinson.



The 'mountain-pond-stream' theme is seen not just in the pond itself but in things like the stone '**tsukabai**' or water bowl that features prominently. This particular 'tsukabai' is now some 140 years old and is used "*to provide running water needed in the purification ritual that occurs before a tea ceremony*". (Every August an annual Japanese Cultural Festival that includes a tea ceremony, Japanese calligraph and ikebana is held at the garden). Also obvious is the 'mountain' of stones that are the base for a typical small waterfall and which suggest "*endurance and the eternal passing of time*".



Everyone who has ever visited any traditionally designed Japanese garden will of course look for and find the key elements of stone, water, paths (all combined beautifully at left) and carefully sculptured vegetation. Like all such gardens the main path follows a curved route. In this case it is an S shape. This is always to add an element of mystery to such gardens as visitors walk around every corner to find a new view and new element of some kind – be it different plants, lanterns, bridges or decorative stone emplacements. Those lucky enough to have seen the best Japanese gardens in Japan itself will attest to the fact that this one matches them in every way.





## CLUB NEWS

1. **84 MEMBERS** attended our September meeting with 5 visitors and 10 apologies.
2. As of 1/11 we had **119 financial MEMBERS** with several of our visitors planning to join in 2026. (We let such prospective members delay joining so they do not have to pay the \$25 annual Admin Fee for 2025 then have to do that again just a month or so later in January of 2026.)
3. **DRATS!** Last newsletter said we had an end of year balance of \$724.90 in the AGM Account after settling all the last bus trip accounts. An unrelated bill cut that back to **\$634.90**. Still a good basis to fund the 2026 AGM Lunch.
4. As notified at the last general meeting in 2026 we are upgrading the **HOME VISIT HONORARIUM** from \$20 to **\$50**. Garden owners are not expected to present a perfect garden but all do take a lot of time and effort to present their gardens at their best. The \$20 thank-you has existed for at least the last decade. It is well past time to recognize those efforts more.
5. Our last **BUS TRIP** was a joint effort with the Blue Pacific Garden Club who at that stage had no one organizing bus trips. They now have such a volunteer and have offered to 'return the favour' by organizing the next joint bus trip – probably to the Qld Council of Garden Club's '**Plant and Floral Fair**' at Mt. Coot-tha on 10-11 of April. Negotiations are at a very early stage. We'll keep you informed of developments.
6. Our **ADMIN FEE** for 2026 is not yet due. The amount and payment details will be out in January. DO NOT PAY ANYTHING YET!
7. Our **2026 DOCUMENTS** are still being prepared. The **2026 CALENDAR OF EVENTS** will be published first on the web-site in late December with a paper copy available at our first meeting of 2026 in January. Same for our **2026 BENCHING RULES** that will incorporate a number of small changes mentioned during the year via idea from our Suggestion Box. Our **2026 INDUCTION PACK** for new members will be ready then.

Any direct debits to  
Bank of Queensland  
BSB 124-394  
Acc. No. 10368149  
**Name yourself clearly!**



## COMING UP NEXT MONTH

### NEXT HOME VISIT

As it is always too hot, we do not have Home Visits in December or January.

### OUR NEXT GENERAL MEETING

**Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> of January 2026**  
**@ 12.00 p.m.**

**GUEST SPEAKER –** *Staghorns and Elks.*

### JANUARY BENCHING MONTHLY FEATURE –

#### Fern/s

- A fern/s of any type in any type of container e.g. in a pot, on a piece of wood, in an old shoe, etc.
- Must be from your own garden and have been owned by you for at least three months.
- Bring your own stand/stool if it is a hanging pot and needs to be put up.

### THINGS TO DO AND SEE

Gardening related events we've been sent information about. Full details of costs, location etc. on our web-site under the **LATEST NEWS** then **LATEST NOTICE** section.

1. 14<sup>th</sup> of Feb. Aspley Orchid Society Summer Show.
2. 26<sup>th</sup> of March. Native Plants Market.

## Suggestion Box

Suggestion Box slips are at the front desk with the Secretary.



After our Long Service Badges presentation it was suggested we add a 30 year badge as we actually have a member who has been in the club that long. Executive has agreed to consider this suggestion in 2026.

## Looking For -



Pauline Luxford is seeking someone to help her with garden work. If you have some-one suitable please call Pauline on 0412 259 004

Keep up to date via our web-site at – [www.robinagardenclub.org.au](http://www.robinagardenclub.org.au)  
We have no P.O. Box so contact us direct via e-mail at – [info@robinagardenclub.org.au](mailto:info@robinagardenclub.org.au)  
President Denise @ 0412 668 193. Secretary Val @ 0416 222 539. Treasurer Trevor @ 0434 251 858.