



# ROBINA GARDEN CLUB INC.

Meeting of Thursday  
January 29<sup>th</sup> - 2026  
NEWSLETTER NO. 159

## TODAY

*Welcome back to 2026. We trust all have a good year.*

### GUEST SPEAKER

Narelle and Greg Aizlewood  
Broms / Air Plants

### MONTHLY FEATURE

Fern/s

### CONTINUING MEMBERS ADMIN FEE

The **ADMIN FEE** for 2025 is remaining at \$25 per head for continuing members. It is due either in January or by the end of February. You can pay in cash today (and get your new badge and receipt at the same time) or by Direct Credit. If you've paid by Direct Credit also collect your new badge and receipt today at the front desk.

### NEW MEMBERS JOINING FEE

New members pay a **JOINING FEE** of \$30 which exempts them from the annual admin fee whenever they join. New members need to fill in a Membership Application Form. Payment for them is also in cash or by direct credit as above. Collect an **INDUCTION PACK** as you pay.

### 2026 CALENDAR

Please take a 2026 **CALENDAR** from the front desk. It lists our meeting and home visit dates for the year. Take one each – please leave the rest for absent members to collect when they do return.

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

## SOMETHING DIFFERENT – THE OBEDIENCE PLANT

A plant to keep an eye out for is *Physostegia virginiana* - commonly called either the 'obedient plant' or 'obedience plant' or 'false dragon head'. It is one of two subspecies of flowering plants in the mint family, *Lamiaceae*. It is native to North America where it is found from eastern Canada to northern Mexico. It is not easy to find but is worth looking for at markets and anywhere cottage plants are sold.



The plant is a rhizomatous perennial herb. It has a growth habit similar to an aster and could be mistaken for one when not in flower. For most of the year it is a very low growing and spreading ground cover that clumps up but which would not really attract anyone's attention. Starting around November to December (here on the coast) it begins to send up stiff square stems that can get to almost waist high with 'snapdragon' like flowers grouped around the central stem. The flowers come in white, darker purples and a mauve.

It is called the 'obedience' plant because these flowers when pushed to one side will often stay in that position. Thus, you can push the flowers to the front to maximise its appeal. It is a favourite in floral arrangements for this reason. Its flower spikes are up now and it will flower soon.



This newsletter is being printed by the office of the Honourable LEON REBELLO M.P. Federal Member for McPherson. Contact Leon at – [Leon.Rebello.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Leon.Rebello.MP@aph.gov.au)

*With our Thanks*

# ODDS AND ENDS

## MAIDEN HAIR

We are all very familiar with **MAIDENHAIR FERNS** or **Adiantum**.

We are also familiar with hearing things like - "Look at that maidenhair growing near those stairs. Looks like a weed and mine keeps dying". Often this is because you have the wrong type growing in the wrong spot – or you've just over-watered it which is the most common way to kill them.

One is **Adiantum raddianum** which is usually grown indoors. Also called the **Delta maidenhair** it is native to South America. It has shiny dark leafstalks that resemble human hair – thus the name. In nature it is found on forest floors and along stream banks where it gets bright indirect light rather than sun. It can tolerate temperatures down to 5 °C but requires high humidity (**beware drying air con or too much heating in winter**).



For this type the thing is not to grow it in a room where the climate fluctuates. It is happiest in places where the warmth and humidity stays the same. Sometimes this involves trial and error - you may need to move the plant around the house until you find just the right spot. Too little light will result in poor growth and yellow leaves; too much light and it'll be scorched. Try to find somewhere that gets indirect morning or afternoon sun. Remember keep **moist but never soggy**.

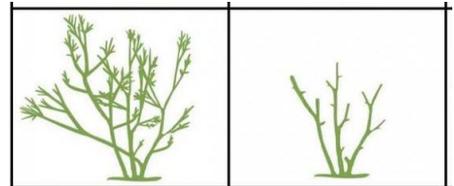


Second, is **Adiantum aethiopicum** which is more suitable to the outdoors. An Aussie native this grows in moist, shady areas often along creeks, in rocky areas and under forest cover. It tolerates more sun – even direct sun. It likes well drained soil but is not fussy about what type of soil. It is the one probably growing wild in the neighbour's fernery or, yes, 'under the stairs'.

This type will also die if the soil gets too dry or soggy but is generally much hardier. It will 'grow wild' in the right spot – so like the indoors try two or three pieces in two or three different spots around the garden to see what works best.

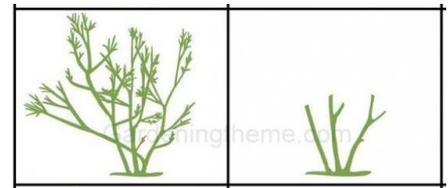
## ROSES

Late next month and into March will see the days start to cool off and one thing to do then, as recommended by the **The Queensland Rose Society** Inc, is to do a light prune of roses (mid-February to mid-march). But, what is a light prune?



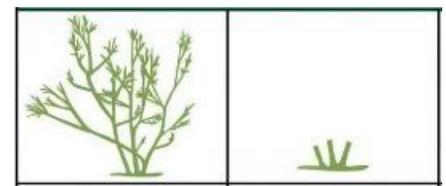
### LIGHT PRUNE

Cut stems to a length of 75-100 cms. This method produces tall, thin stems with smaller flowers but at this time of the year acts as a 're-fresher' and 'thinning out' to help re-vitalise the plant.



### MEDIUM PRUNE

Stems to 45-60 cms long. Suits virtually all types of roses. Takes longer to recover of course.



### HARD PRUNE

The canes down to just 3-4 buds or about 15cms. Used mainly for old roses that need a major rejuvenation or newly planted roses that are under stress.

**In all cases add fertiliser and compost to enrich the soil.**

## FINANCIAL REPORT – AS OF 1/1/2026



RESERVE	<i>Funds reserved for emergencies</i>	\$2,500.00
ADMINISTRATION	<i>Funded by the Annual Administration Fee.</i>	\$2,100.14
MEMBER'S REWARDS	<i>Afternoon Tea, Prizes, Awards, etc. Funded by the Raffles.</i>	\$1,515.83
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>	\$694.18
----- TOTAL CASH FUNDS AVAILABLE -----		\$7,445.05

2025 Income

\$14,955.42

2025 Expenses

\$17,151.68

2025 Surplus

- \$2,196.26



# BENCHING WINNERS NOVEMBER 2025

It was good news for regular benching contributors at our last meeting of 2025 as only 37 entries came in – meaning there were 4 sections of **black** with 3 or less entries and just 6 in the biggest sections. As a result, we had just 7 different winners that month. **SEE WEB-SITE FOR 2026 BENCHING RULES.**

### SEC. 1 – DESERT ROSE (x 4)

**Denise Narramore** – a lovely deep 'reddish' coloured variety.



### SEC. 2 ORCHIDS (x3)

**Laurie Baxter** – this beauty is **Cattleya purpurata va. Carnea**. One of the best we have seen in this section.



### SEC. 3 - FOLIAGE ONLY PLANT/S (x6)

**Trevor Hicks** – A bright pink caladium that grows well in shallower containers.



### SEC. 10

### DECORATIVE DISPLAY (x2)

**Trevor Hicks** – in honour of Christmas.



### SEC. 7 - A CUT (x 6)

**Trevor Hicks** – one of the more compact gladiolus



### STEWARDS PRIZE Maxine

**Cochrane** – chosen for it being rarely seen here – **Rehmannia elata** or Chinese Fox Glove.



Our annual Benching Trophy were awarded at our X-Mas Party. 1<sup>st</sup> = \$50, 2<sup>nd</sup> = \$30 plus 2 x \$10 special Encouragement Awards. 2026 points start in January

### SEC. 5 – A SINGLE BLOOM (x4)

**Trevor Hicks** – one of the smaller Dahlias.



### SEC 9 SMALL POT PLANT (x5)

**Wendy Clear** – a very well grown small caladium.



### SEC. 6 – PRODUCE (x1)

**Anita Fowler** – a great mix of onions, string beans, cucumber and echinacea.



### SEC. 8 – VASE OF FLOWERS (x4)

**Trevor Hicks** – potato vine, pentas, hydrangea, roses and gladioli.



### SEC. 4

### FLOWERING PLANT (x2)

**Lesley Wilkinson** – a great example of a begonia.



Some Bright Ideas



Three ceramic chooks on an old fence. Hard to copy but a very attractive garden feature.



Much easier to copy is this idea from Beryl Tucker. It's a common metal plaque but with a tillandsia (air plant, just needs some water) to liven it up.



If you're colour hungry what about colouring the pots to add to the flower's colours.

"My garden is my most beautiful masterpiece" – **Claude Monet**. If you have been there, it is a very easy statement to agree with. It is really beautiful.

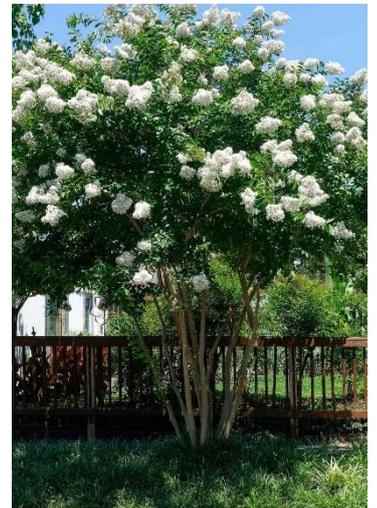
Plant of the Month – The Crepe Myrtle



The shocking heat we have had recently has seen a lot of people seeking plants that will cope with hot dry conditions yet still look 'luxuriant'. A good choice is **Lagerstroemia** or **crepe myrtle** or **Pride of India**. There are around 50 species native to India, south east Asia, northern Australia and Oceania. The two most common species are **Lagerstroemia indica** which ranges from just 1 to 10 metres high. Second is **Lagerstroemia fauriei** which is often hybridized with indica. It usually grows taller with arching branches so is popular in larger gardens and parks.

Flowering now, their fluffy flowers (in mauve, white, various pinks and burgundy) have been great this season because they tolerate dry weather very well but thicken nicely when we've had rain as recently. They are attractive also because they are deciduous – even here on the coast they turn a deep red/yellow colour in autumn. They are thus an all year round tree – bright green producing lots of shade in spring, flowers in summer, autumn colour then attractive stems in the winter to let the sun in. (Obvious suggestion – plant on a western side of the house so you get sun in winter when it has no leaves but then a sun block in the heat of summer when the quite dense leaves are back)

The other big advantage is that most are relatively small trees – with a central trunk that divides often at ground level. (see at right). If they get too big they can be pruned quite severely over winter and will bounce back – in fact they are better for a prune as they develop a thicker canopy with more flowers. Their biggest advantage is their resilience – nothing much bothers them. Their modest size means they are a great specimen tree for most medium to even small gardens. We have a 1000 square metre block with 7 larger ones and two 'dwarf' varieties – which do not appear to be that much smaller despite their labels.



Amidst the over 50 species look for **Natchez** which has white flowers (above) and an attractive mottled bark. It gets to about 7 to 8 metres.

**Coral Magic** has coral pink flowers and reaches only to about 3-5 metres. Smaller is **Hopi** which has bright pink flowers and gets to only about 2-3 metres tall. Like all the other varieties these all have blooms for a reasonably long period, are resistant to pests and require little to no maintenance. A newer variety is the **Black Diamond** series which have dark almost black leaves. (Below right). We tried one but it failed – might be as a hybrid it needs better soil and wetter conditions - ????



One warning – if you are digging around and cut the roots the severed root not attached to the tree can often re-grow as a separate plant. Just remove each one as it emerges to control it.



# AGAPANTHUS

Towards the end of last year, we saw one of the most popular of garden plants flowering – namely, the **AGAPANTHUS** or Lily of the Nile. This member of the *Amaryllidaceae* family is a single species within the *Agapanthoideae* subfamily known for its use as a colourful border and bedding plant. Despite its name it is a native of South Africa which comes in blue, purple, pink and white varieties. The flowers of course are borne on tall stalks which is partly why they are so visually striking.

Selective breeding over many decades has produced a wide variety of varieties. Among some of the best to look out for are –



**ALBUS** – showy white from mid to late summer. Mix with blues.



**ANGELA**

This one blooms in mid-summer. It looks great grown with pink flowers.



**BLACK PANTHA**

Flowers all through spring and summer and lasts as a cut flower.



**BLUE YONDER** – loved for its dark blue stripe on a lighter base.



**EVER TWILIGHT** – one of many new varieties with a dark base and white tips.



**QUEEN MUM**

One of the largest. Also, with a dark base it flowers late - to middle of January.

If you want a much larger list go to - [29 of the Best Agapanthus Varieties for Your Garden](https://gardenerspath.com/plants/flowers/best-agapanthus-cultivars/) or <https://gardenerspath.com/plants/flowers/best-agapanthus-cultivars/>).

With the costs of plants going through the roof the best way now to get as many varieties as possible is to swap something with somebody who has a clump of your desired type. They do clump so subdivision is pretty easy. **HOWEVER – do this when they are dormant in late winter or early spring.** It was just last year that the Newsletter discussed subdividing clumping plants like this so just the basic this time. That is – dig up a clump, remove most of the dirt, split apart by hand or with a clean saw or scissors, trim off most of the leaves then swap with other people or plant around your yard.



As suggested above they are best used as a bedding plant. Most people plant them in a line at the front of garden beds. When the flower spikes come up and flower they put on a great display. Once the dead flowers are removed the thick dark green foliage acts as a great 'border'. Longer stem varieties like Queen Mum and some of the dark blues are great in the middle of a raked planting. The stems of these are virtually hidden but the actual flower provides a splash of colour. Mass planting of white or dark blue are especially effective – though a splash of white in amidst the blue also works.

## CLUB NEWS

1. **93 MEMBERS** attended our Christmas Party of 99 (97 had booked plus 2 extras).
2. As of 1/1/26 we had **119 financial MEMBERS** to start our new year. On average we lose around 20-30 members each year who do not re-new their membership. A similar number join each year to keep our total membership roughly the same. (Our highest ever total was 157 before COVID. We know other clubs that `died' due to COVID so we have done reasonably well to keep going).
3. For those who are statistically minded the following is a summary of our **CHRISTMAS PARTY** Income and Expenditures.

### INCOME (major items only)

2024 Surplus =	\$ 313.36
2025 Cuttings and Sales Tables =	\$ 1,301.65
Payments to Attend X-Mas Party =	\$ 3,170.00
Cent Auction Ticket Sales =	\$ 715.00
Lucky Square Sales =	\$ 298.00
<b>TOTAL (inc. other incidentals) =</b>	<b>\$ 5,938.01</b>

### EXPENDITURES (major items only)

Cent Auction/Lucky Square Prizes =	\$ 750.00
Free Give-Aways =	\$ 1,633.12
(i.e. Gifts, Lucky Seat Vouchers, Lucky Door)	
Food =	\$2,322.32
Staging =	\$ 540.59
(i.e. rent, bon bons, bowls, cutlery ...)	
<b>TOTAL (inc. other incidentals) =</b>	<b>\$5,243.83</b>

**SURPLUS** to go into account for 2026 = **\$ 694.18**  
(PS – Food/Staging = \$30.78 per person attending)

4. Our **2026 BENCHING RULES** are on display every meeting. If you want a personal copy go to our web-site then print the file.
5. We have begun initial planning for our first **BUS TRIP** of 2026. *At present* the proposal is to go to the annual Queensland Council of Garden Clubs **PLANT AND FLORAL FAIR** at Mt. Coot-tha. The fair is on Friday, April 10 and Saturday April 11. Details next month.
6. For those who missed this news last time, we now have a small **STORAGE CUPBOARD** under the first bay window on the right as you enter. Small but already full of `stuff'.

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



## COMING UP NEXT MONTH

### NEXT HOME VISIT

**When ?** Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> of February at 10 a.m.  
**Where ?** The Stratton's Garden at 3 Macallan St. MERRIMAC.

BRING – a plate to share, hat, chair.

### OUR NEXT GENERAL MEETING

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> of February 2026**  
**@ 12.00 p.m.**

**GUEST SPEAKER –** Wayne Lyons. Stags/Elks

### FEBRUARY BENCHING MONTHLY FEATURE –

#### Coleus

- A collection of coleus cuttings displayed as you wish in a vase or container of any type or
- be a `pot' of Coleus plants.
- Can be one type only or a collection of different types of Coleus.
- Must be from plants you have been growing for a least three months.

### 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.

## Suggestion Box

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



A reminder they do need to be signed – though that information is never released it is necessary as many times our feedback needs to be private and directed to that specific `suggestor'.

## Looking For -



We are getting only rare requests but will keep this service operating. Request forms are with the Secretary at the front desk.

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.