ROBINA GARDEN CLUB INC.

Meeting of Thursday
September 24th - 2026
NEWSLETTER NO. 167

TODAY

GUEST SPEAKER
Laurie Baxter
Orchids

MONTHLY FEATURE
Hippeastrum/s

BUS TRIP

As noted at the end of last month we had 61 bookings for our 57 seater bus. Cancellations as of 20th of September have that down to 57. In addition, we've had to change one venue – we'll be visiting a re-vamped **BLACK ROCK** Nursery at Tyagarah instead of Enchanted Wood at Ocean Shores. Plus, as noted in an e-mail earlier this month, the Burleigh Tavern now has paid parking ($15 for 4 hours, $25 for over that) so we've had to cancel that as a pick up point. Our only pick-up point will be at 8.00 a.m. at the Carrara Community Centre. Apologies for any inconvenience caused.

OCTOBER MEETING

Our meeting on October 29th is our **BIRTHDAY MEETING** – to celebrate (with cake!) the October 1994 'let's form a garden club' meeting that saw the creation of our club. As is our tradition there will be no Guest Speaker but the benching, cuttings table, raffle and sales tables will be as usual. Also, we will be awarding a couple of special 'prizes'. For that see the announcements on the last page of this newsletter.

DONATING OUR FLOWERS

Arrangements mentioned earlier re donating our flowers to charity has stalled but still in play. Not today.

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

PLANT OF THE MONTH - FOXGLOVES



Today's 'Plant of the Month' is a strange choice as they are usually associated with English 'cottage gardens' – ***Digitalis purpurea*** or the common foxglove. They are native to most of temperate Europe (it is known to survive down to −15 °C) and so even attempting to grow them in a sub-tropical climate like ours seems to be a fool's errand. However, the two photos in this section were both taken about a week ago in our garden.

The native plant is a biennial species that in its first year develops a rosette of leaves before flowering in its second year then dying. It is known to throw seeds however and will come up again next season, thus its popularity in gardens such as those you get in England or here up around Toowoomba or even on Mount Tamborine.



It likes acidic soils and prefers partial sunlight. Its small seeds love disturbed soil which is why it tends to re-grow in cottage style garden beds where people are weeding and disturbing the soil regularly. Those seeds germinate when exposed to light which is another reason they crop up again so readily. Modern hybrids come in white, pink and various mauve tones.

Given all this how have those in these photos grown? The primary answer is that modern hybrids and cultivars are hardier than the common types. Additionally, they tend to be sold in places like Bunnings already advanced to the stage where they already have a flower spike emerging. The secret to our success!!!! All in all, worth a go just for that spectacular flower spike if you are willing to take a leap of faith that they'll re-seed or be accepting when they die.



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

With our Thanks

FINANCIAL REPORT – AS OF 1/9/2026		
RESERVE	*Funds reserved for emergencies*	$2,500.00
ADMINISTRATION	*Funded by the Annual Administration Fee.*	$2,591.96
MEMBER'S REWARDS	*Afternoon Tea, Prizes, Awards, etc. Funded by the Raffle.*	$2,704.03
AGM LUNCH	*Funded by our Bus Trips.*	$2,269.50
CHRISTMAS PARTY	*Funded by our Cuttings and Sales Tables.*	$1,531.13
----------	TOTAL CASH FUNDS AVAILABLE ----------	$11,596.62

STRIKING SALVIA



Though it would be best to wait a month or so for the over-night temperatures to warm up a bit it is nearly time to consider striking **SALVIA** cuttings. The two most obvious methods are to strike them in water or into a loose mix such as one of perlite (90%) and peat moss (10%). In either case the key is to select nice healthy stems i.e. healthy green growth. Older wood works well too but can be a bit problematic.



Cut just above one node (preferably one that has some small leaves) and one below the node below it. Remove all leaves except at the top node. (If you leave too many leaves the cutting expends too much energy on trying to keep those leaves alive instead of growing roots.) If you want a larger cutting a couple of nodes below the first cut usually works too. Cut on an angle so water does not sit on the cut and cause rot. Also remember to cut just below a node – not actually cutting any part of the node but not leaving too much stem or that too will rot underground. Put as many cuttings *(below)* as you want into the striking mix. (Some may not strike and if you get too many then that's a problem of no great consequence!)

Once in the mix give the cuttings a good thorough watering. Keep them warm but away from direct sunlight and wind. Keep moist by watering in the morning (to reduce possibility of water encouraging disease over-night. It keeps the foliage dry most of the time). Roots normally take about 4 weeks to grow but if nights are cooler it can be 8 or even 12 weeks. Another reason to strike a large group is that you will possibly end up sacrificing a couple as you pull them out to see if roots are present. Once roots appear pot up into a larger pot or direct into the garden – but beware too much wind or direct sunlight if cutting doesn't have a really good root system.





If you want to try striking the cuttings in water the above hints hold true. The clear advantage is that you can see when the roots are developed enough to pot them up. Remember with water it should be changed regularly – some say everyday but certainly every 2 or 3 days at most. Place in a light situation but away from direct sunlight or too close to glass windows as radiant heat will raise the water temperature too high.



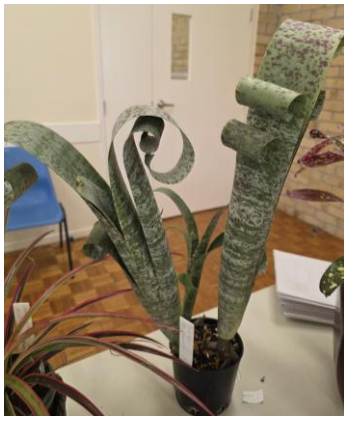
ROBINA GARDEN CLUB INC.

BENCHING WINNERS AUGUST 2026

We had 57 entries in August with just the 1 section (Produce) that was 'black' meaning it had 3 or less entries. The Foliage Plants with 9 entries was the highlight but Flowering Plants, the Cut of Multiple Blooms and the Vase of Flowers all had 7 entries – with the last of those being particularly good.

SEC. 3 - FOLIAGE ONLY PLANT/S (x9)

John Williams – *this curly member of the Brom family's* ***Quesnelia*** *genus is called* ***'Tim Plowmann'.***



SEC 9 - SMALL POT (x4)

Trevor Hicks – *shows that* ***Ornamental Kale*** *like this will grow in quite a small pot.*



SEC. 4 FLOWERING PLANT (x7)

Val Marsden – *This rose, called* ***'Scented Pink'*** *matched its pink pot perfectly.*



SEC. 2 – ORCHIDS (x5)

John Williams – *a fine example of the Aussie native* ***'King Orchid'***



SEC. 6 - PRODUCE (x3)

Anita Fowler – *a mix of large carrots, snow peas, mulberries and cumquats.*



STEWARD'S PRIZE

Janet Thompson – *this beautifully presented* ***Phalaenopsis*** *in a glass base stood out.*



SEC. 10 - DISPLAY (x4)

Marie Sampson – *the addition of real grapes caught a lot of attention.*



SEC. 5 – BLOOM (x6)

Trevor Hicks – *this Camellia Japonica is 'Volunteer'.*



Our Annual Benching Trophy is awarded at our X-Mas Party.
1st = $50, 2nd = $30 + 2 x $10 Encouragement Awards.
Points are awarded each month for 1st and 2nd place.

SEC. 8 – VASE OF FLOWERS (x7)

Maxine Cochran – *another great display from Maxine with roses, orlaya and asters.*



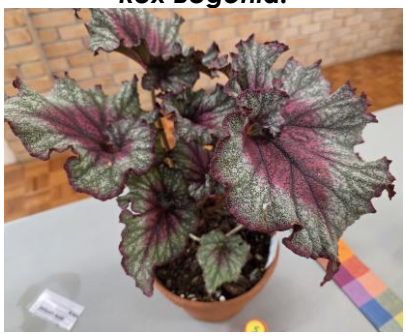
SEC. 7 - A CUT (x 7)

Trevor Hicks – *our first Hippeastrum entry for 2026. One of the earlier flowering ones.*



SEC. 1 – BEGONIA (X5)

Val Marsden – a very well grown ***Rex Begonia.***



Growing Hippeastrums in Pots



September and October on the Gold Coast is very much 'Hippeastrum Month'. Known more commonly in Europe as Amaryllis these bulbs can be planted as late as now if they've not already begun to shoot too much. They like a well-drained soil rich in organic matter and thrive in full sun to part shade so some believe they are not suited to growing in pots. The photo at right alone proves the point that they do not need a huge amount of 'soil' in which to thrive and flower.



Thus, in Europe it is common to group them as at left. Notice how each pot is quite small to the degree that a single bulb virtually fills the whole pot. Having a group like this means of course when a flower dies you can replace that pot with another from your 'supply' and keep that 'scene' going for weeks. Bigger pots *(below left)* mean you can have different coloured flowers together – in a pot of only about 20-25 cms wide. Of course, these pots need a lot of sun so often are grown outdoors till the actual flower is out. Keep moist but never too wet and 'feed' regularly.

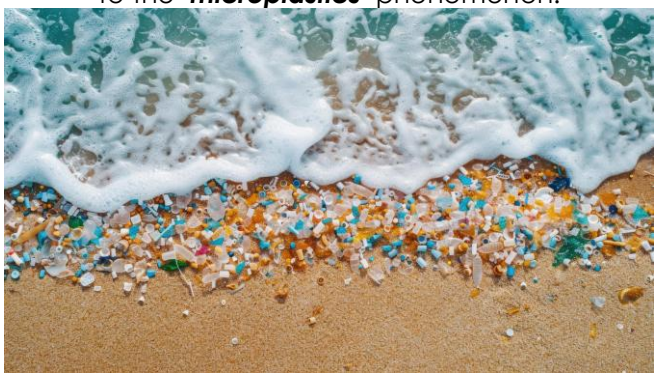


Start with an old clump where a bulb has had 'pups'. Once these 'babies' have a good root system carefully pull apart and replant both into fresh soil mix in different pots. Make sure the bulb is planted with most of it above the soil level. (They will grow below ground level but are more prone to rot).



Environmental Report

Last month during the 'Gardening Hints' section it was mentioned that some slow release fertiliser pellets are covered with a 'polymer' coating. Some polymers are made from natural materials such as rubber or cellulose but others are plastic. It is those derived from plastic that can contribute to the ***'microplastics'*** phenomenon.



Microplastics can cause inflammation, organ damage, reproductive issues and have potential links to cancer. A 'microplastic' is defined as any plastic particle less than 5 mm in size – and the smaller the more dangerous. They have been found in food, water, air and in human tissues such as blood, liver, kidneys, lungs and in the placenta. A Penn State University study ***estimated that adults ingest one credit card per week in microplastics*** via contaminated foods and drinks. Once inside the body these particles can cause inflammation, damage cells and disrupt normal immune and metabolic functions. The smallest types have been found to accumulate in arteries so increasing the rise of heart attacks and strokes. Direct causal links in humans to cancer are still being investigated but clearly 'plastic' floating around the body does not sound desirable!



They get into the air, soil and water and thus into the food chain as larger bits of discarded plastic are broken down by sunlight, acids in the soil, etc. etc. To combat the problem experts advise using reusable water and food containers rather than single use (thus the Australian ban on plastic shopping bags/cutlery), using natural fibres for clothing, installing filters in taps and washing machines to catch microplastics and choosing non-plastic alternatives for things like cutlery, plates, decorative items, etc. etc.

HINTS WHEN CREATING A SUCCULENT/CACTUS GARDEN

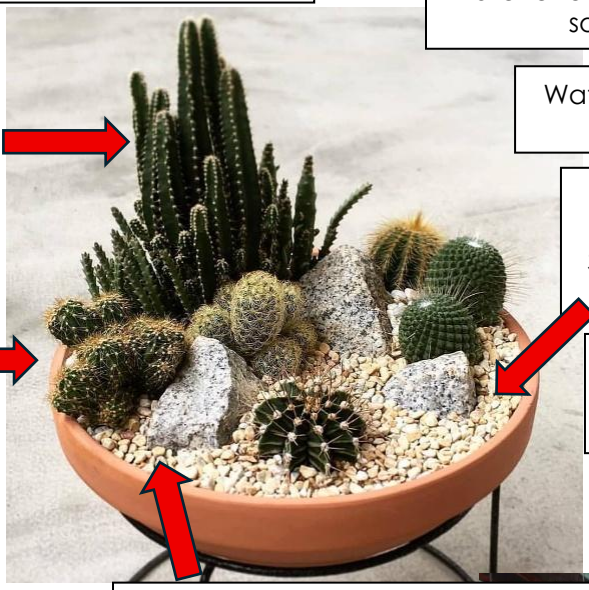
Soil mix – 50% a cacti/succulent mix, 25% coarse river sand and 25% perlite or pumice.

Put in a sunny spot – at least 6 hours a day full sun.

Water enough to wet soil but only when soil is completely dry.

Water every 10-14 days in summer and 4-6 weeks in winter.

Create focal points e.g. taller at back and lower at front.



Mix species with both succulents and cacti of different shapes/colours /types. Include spikes/no spike types. This could use a 'grey' one or a spineless succulent.

Mimic a real desert with rocks, gravel and/or old timber. Smaller gravel or stone chips is better as they don't overwhelm the plants.

Include at least one taller type as a focal point. Not too tall however or the balance is out.

Be creative. Use old broken pots to create a lively scene. Notice this is just one old broken pot planted up.

Odd number groups look more natural and help with airflow.



Plant slightly above soil level to prevent rot then backfill gently.

Don't overcrowd when planting – check final size of each plant first. Barrell cactus can get very large indeed so these four alone are going to end up problematic.

Remove dead plants or parts a.s.a.p. to prevent disease spread.





Leave space between plants for best airflow and so each can be seen for best impact. Note here how each plant is clearly visible due to a little space.

Ensure excellent drainage – most pots need extra holes added.

i.e. Don't over-do it – here too many different types/colours/shapes over-crowds all and it looks unnatural.

CLUB NEWS

1. **77 MEMBERS** attended our July meeting with 10 Apologies and 5 visitors. In addition, 3 new members joined the club. Welcome to each and every one of them.
2. As of 1/9 we have **121 Financial Members**.
3. We are investigating the cost of a new '**HANDS FREE**' microphone. Many guest speakers need to be 'hands free' and our one from years ago no longer 'talks' to the Community Centre system. Our current microphones belong to the Community Centre as they need to be on their 'wave-length'. We are hoping to get one that does not need 'wi-fi'/'wave-length'.
4. Very much to our surprise (and especially to the Treasurer's surprise on checking our bank account one night) the Club has been given a **$1,000 DONATION.** Given to us anonymously and with no strings attached by a long term member it was a thank-you from them to the club for the enjoyment they have gained by being a club member. At our last Executive Meeting we decided that this largesse should not be used just in one lump and should be used to sponsor, honour and thank other members for the simple act of just being a member. Thus, beginning at our Birthday Party in October, we'll be giving out four **MEMBERS AWARDS** (a refund of the $25 Annual Admin Fee) to lucky members who attend. That Award will then become an annual event for 10 years. *(2036 - Beware everyone else - expect a not so subtle hint to all re a possible new donation).*
5. In addition, to honour that kind donation we are going to alter our criteria for **LIFE MEMBERSHIP.** When our first member of 30 years standing reached that milestone last year we decided that would be a good time to award Life Membership. Thanks to the above donation we are now making Life Membership applicable ***after 25 years***. *(And, let's face it, very very few people will ever 'keep up the faith' for 25 years. They truly deserve some recognition if they do!!!)*

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

COMING UP NEXT MONTH

NEXT HOME VISIT

Part of our Orchids+ Bus Trip.

OUR NEXT GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 29th of October 2026
@ 12.00 p.m.

The October Monthly Feature is –

Foliage Display

- A collection of different types of foliage from your own garden.
- Can be presented in any way you wish – in a vase, on a tray, etc. etc.
- The leaves can be manipulated to enhance their presentation e.g. stapled into shape, trimmed, polished with milk, etc. etc.

THINGS TO DO AND SEE

Full details in the brochures on our web-site under ***WHAT'S ON NOW*** *then* ***THINGS TO DO AND SEE****.*

1. *Springtime on the Mountains on 25 to 27th of September. Tickets on-line.*
2. *Bromeliad and Tropical Foliage Show. 26/27 September. Northlakes College.*
3. *Maleny Garden Club Spring Fair at the Showgrounds on 3rd of October.*
4. *Begonias and More at the Belmont Shooting Range on 24th of October.*
5. *The Tropic Plant Spectacular at the Mt. Coot-tha Auditorium 21/11.*

Suggestion Box



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

It was suggested that members of the same family be limited to 2 entries total per benching section instead of 2 per person per section as present and that all entries be restricted to only 1 per section for all members. The Executive decided that all financial members should have the same rights irrespective of personal relationships so can keep 2 entries per person per section. To keep the display as 'full'/'varied' as possible we are also keeping the 2 entries each rule.