# ROBINA GARDEN CLUB INC.

**Meeting of Thursday**
October 29th - 2026
**NEWSLETTER NO. 168**

## TODAY

**GUEST SPEAKER**
*Our Birthday Party so no Guest Speaker.*

**MONTHLY FEATURE**
*Foliage Display*

**OUR BIRTHDAY PARTY**
Today we celebrate the '*are you interested in forming a garden club*' meeting held in 1994 that led to the formation of our Club. We have a Q. and A. today plus will be awarding members with 'long service' badges for 10, 15 and 20 years' service. Plus (thanks to our recent donation) those who have completed 25 years with the club will be getting their **LIFE MEMBERSHIP** credentials. We also have a bigger than usual afternoon tea.

**X-MAS PARTY**
Our Christmas Party for 2026 will once again be a self-catered 3 course meal held here at the Carrara Community Centre on Tuesday the 8th of December starting at 12 p.m. The cost is $30 per member and $40 for non-members. We have no numbers limit so bookings are made as soon as you pay – either by cash today or at the November meeting or by direct credit. If using Direct Credit make sure you name all those being paid for if it is more than one person. We are not taking any bookings for table seating. There will be tables of 6 set out as last year. Our November meeting on the 26th is the last chance to book/pay – and also the last day for a refund if you cancel as the next day we begin ordering food to suit the number of people who've paid.

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

## PLANT OF THE MONTH – WHITE MAY

This recommendation is for another plant that is not normally associated with the Gold Coast. It is ***Spiraea cantoniensis*** commonly known as the Double White May Bush or sometimes the Weeping *(see photo at right)* Bridal May.





It is very much associated with colder climates like Toowoomba and Mount Tamborine. It is a stunning deciduous shrub that has bursts of white flowers every spring – with the double white variety *(at left)* with small white flowers that have a double row of petals clumped at the end of each spray.

It grows to about 2 meters in height and about 2-3 meters wide because of those weeping branches. As noted above it is deciduous in those colder climates though here on the coast some of the leaves, though going bronze in autumn, will hold on. That is to say that it will grow here on the Gold Coast and you see them reasonably often.

If you want one, plant it is in a well-drained humus rich soil in a sunny position. In our hotter climate it tolerates shade especially in the afternoon and will grow in among large shrubs and trees. In dry weather it will need some watering despite being reasonably drought tolerant and like many similar sized shrubs a little seasol type boost helps.



As this photo shows one of its best features is that it prunes very well and you end up in summer with a ball of white as shown here. People plant them in hedge rows that look spectacular when in flower. ***Worth a go in any garden.***



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 1/10/2026 | | |
|---|---|---|
| RESERVE | *Funds reserved for emergencies* | $2,500.00 |
| ADMINISTRATION | *Funded by the Annual Administration Fee.* | $2.235.55 |
| MEMBER'S REWARDS | *Afternoon Tea, Prizes, Awards, etc. Funded by the Raffle.* | $2,540.33 |
| AGM LUNCH | *Funded by our Bus Trips.* | $2,179.50 |
| CHRISTMAS PARTY | *Funded by our Cuttings and Sales Tables.* | $1,570.13 |
| ---------- | TOTAL CASH FUNDS AVAILABLE ---------- | $11,025.51 |

## I'VE GOT ANTS IN MY … POTS!



On our recent bus trip KINGSCLIFFE NURSERY handed out an information sheet that addressed a problem most of us have at some time – namely, how to deal with ants invading our potted plants. Hopefully we would do something about the problem before it reached the levels seen in the photo at right – BUT WHAT TO DO? Some solutions are very obvious, some less successful than some would suggest, others a bit expensive and some just too time consuming or beyond our abilities. Here are a few techniques that are worth using – either singly or in combination.




Kingscliff Nursery suggested using normal kitchen washing up type detergent which when used with water around the roots helps not only to keep the roots happy but also stops ants. If the pot is not too large/heavy put 1-2 tablespoons per litre of water in a bucket and submerse the whole pot for at least 15-20 minutes. This flushes out the ants. Rinse the plant thoroughly afterwards then let it drain naturally. If the ant infestation is severe pull the whole plant out, wash the pot with warm water and bleach and wash out the roots of the plant. This will get rid of the ants and their nests. Re-pot the plant with new potting mix. (Avoid doing this when it is too hot).

More dangerous if you have pets or young children around is to put some sort of 'ant bait' surrounding the pot. The ants of course take this into their nest and poison the colony. Use baits containing borax or other slow acting insecticides. Some people put the whole pot onto a 'sticky paper' type trap or use smaller one on sticks in the pot to trap then remove the ants. Not aesthetically the best solution and can be expensive as there are often thousands of ants to 'catch and remove'. This works (especially the use of ant rid type powders) but is messy.







For far more natural deterrents you can try cinnamon on the soil surface or mix with water as you water. It disrupts the ants' sense of smell. Other oils like peppermint, neem oil (made from the seeds and fruits of the neem tree - ***Azadirachta indica***), eucalyptus and citrus are used the same way. Coffee grounds and citrus peels spread around the base of the plant also work in a similar way.







A vinegar solution (about the same strength as above for detergent) also can work. With all these techniques many people advise using more than one method more than once. Constant vigilance and inspection (of the roots as at right) or by lifting the pots is of course the number one need.



# ROBINA GARDEN CLUB INC.

# BENCHING WINNERS SEPTEMBER 2026

We had 49 entries for this month with 3 sections that were `black' meaning they had 3 or less entries. The Orchids, Single Bloom and Cut of Multiple Blooms with 7 entries were the highlights. Among the items that garnered the most interest were a couple of lovely roses and an imaginative Creative Display.

**SEC. 3 - FOLIAGE ONLY PLANT/S (x5)**

***Val Marsden –*** *this unusual version of* ***Peperomia*** *was perfectly displayed up high on a stand.*



**SEC. 1 – HIPPEASTRUM (X2)**

***Trevor Hicks –*** *it is very difficult to time these flowers thus only the 2 entries this year. The collection includes single and doubles.*



**SEC. 5 – BLOOM (x7)**

***Val Steffenson –*** *this very pleasant aromatic rose is* ***'Fragrant Plum'***



**SEC. 4 FLOWERING PLANT (x5)**

***Alex Blewman –*** *just one of Alex's huge collection of* ***Desert Roses.***



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.
Just two more months for entries to go!

**SEC. 10 - DISPLAY (x3)**

***Wendy Clear –*** *this 'chook' is in fact a large watering can cleverly disguised.*



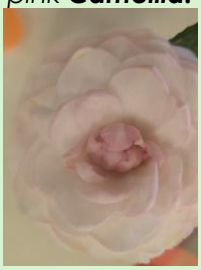
**SEC. 2 – ORCHIDS (x7)**

***Wendy Bruce –*** *This pure white orchid is* ***Coelogue flaccida.***



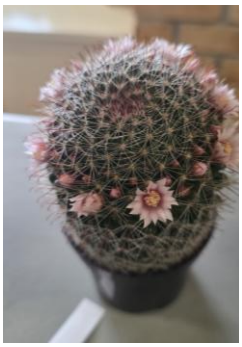
**STEWARD'S PRIZE**

***Marianne Franks –*** *a beautifully formed pale pink* ***Camellia.***



**SEC 9 - SMALL POT (x6)**

***Trevor Hicks –*** *a ring of pale pink flowers lift this cactus.*



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

***Trevor Hicks –*** *a white* ***Foxglove*** *as seen growing in the garden before being cut.*



**SEC. 8 – VASE OF FLOWERS (x5)**

***Trevor Hicks –*** *a mix of salvia, 'blue mist', hydrangeas etc.*



**SEC. 6 - PRODUCE (x2)**

***Jill Barber –*** *another great mix from one of our two 'Vegie Queens'.*



## GETTING POTTED

Before it gets too hot it is worth thinking about re-potting any pot plants that need it. The ageless debate that then occurs is *'into what sort of pot?'*. It is worth just revisiting the advantages and disadvantages of the two main types of pots. (Ignoring metal, wood, brass and glass for now).



**PLASTIC**. All plastic pots break down when exposed to the sun though black plastic lasts much longer than coloured ones. This is because colour pigments are more prone to UV radiation than black pigment. Plastic pots weigh a lot less so as we age they are much easier to move around. Black plastic however absorbs heat more easily so in hot weather the plant roots can get 'cooked' – requiring more often watering to cool the soil down as well as keeping the soil moist. They are usually also much cheaper. They do lose more heat at night as they are so thin skinned so in our winters the jump from heated up day time soil to cold night soil can damage many types of plants. Aesthetically plastic is not always the best looking as they can appear to be 'cheap'.



**EARTHENWARE**. Aesthetically earthenware (including ceramic coated ones) have a solidness that make them 'look the part' as opposed to the 'fake/tinny/cheap' look of plastic. The sun does not rot them so they last much longer and at night they retain heat more efficiently so over-coming that night/day soil temperature problem. Small basic earthenware pots can be relatively cheap but with any size and especially with any decoration they are more expensive than plastic. More importantly as we age the bigger and heavier they get the more likely it is they will need to go to one spot and stay there. Moving them about to suit the season isn't as easy. Needless to say, they can break – or need to be broken to get an older plant out of them! As the photo above shows mixing and matching different treatments on the pots can look more interesting.

## Environmental Report

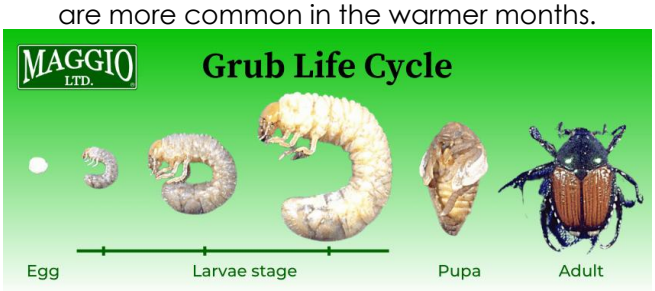
With spring now already heading to summer one of the environmental problems that will affect many of us with lawn areas in our gardens is that of 'lawn grubs'. There are many types of 'grubs' that live underground, not only eating the grass roots but disrupting the ability of grass to uptake water and nutrients. They also can attract predators like birds, turkeys and bandicoots that will damage the lawn trying to get the grubs.



One of the most common 'lawn grubs' are the larvae of the African black beetle *(above)*. These C-shaped pests have a creamy white body with a dark head and are found just below the surface.



Also common is the Curl Grub (which are the larvae of Scarab beetles). These are often larger *(above and below)* and capable of causing rapid damage. They have a thicker curved body and soft white colouring with a brown head and are more common in the warmer months.




For minor infestations you can use natural control methods such as proper watering and fertilisation which helps maintain the lawn. This reduces excessive thatch that the grubs like and encourages natural predators like Kookaburras and the like. If the infestation is larger however you may need to resort to chemical treatments. These are best used when the grubs are actively feeding. Any nursery outlet will have various such treatments. The key with chemical treatments is timing and distribution – attack the grubs where signs of damage is evident so as not to impact beneficial insects/grubs in healthy parts of the lawn and time their use with obvious activity. It is a constant but winnable battle.

# MOUNT TAMBORINE'S SPRINGTIME ON THE MOUNTAIN

Late last month it was the annual 'Springtime on the Mountain' at Mount Tamborine with six gardens open for inspection. All six gardens had points of interest of course though only two were really 'springtime gardens' for those who expected a 'floral display' to mark spring. Most were better described as 'stroll gardens' with large lawn areas and specimen trees rather than beds of flowers. For those who wanted a meticulously presented more formal garden combining lawns, floral beds and excellent landscaping only one was really a 'must see'. This collage of scenes is to give those who couldn't make it just a taste of the day.





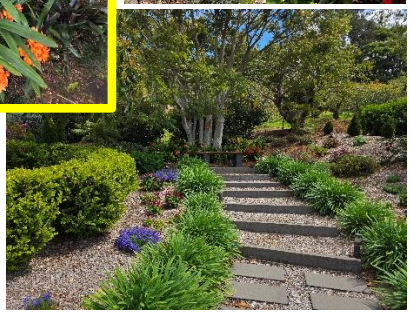




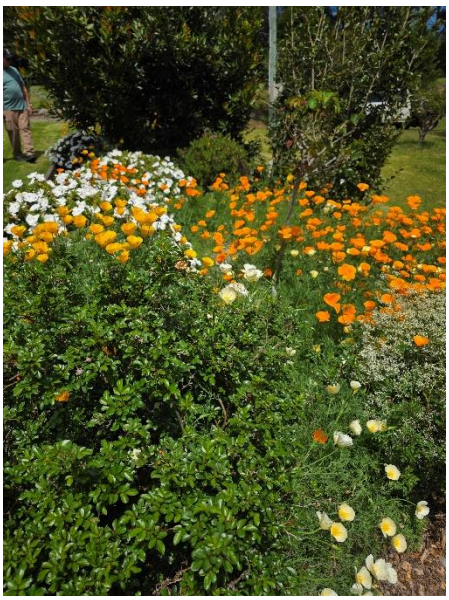
















# CLUB NEWS

1. **67 MEMBERS** attended our September meeting with 10 Apologies and 4 visitors.
2. As of 1/10 we have **122 Financial Members**.
3. As notified earlier we are currently pricing a portable no-hands **SPEAKER** system. There are a lot of different types available at lots of outlets so it will take some trial and error to try and get one that works (wi-fi free) here in the Community Centre.
4. As last year, people have again asked why we are having a **SELF-CATERED** Christmas Party and not a formal sit down event at an outside venue. Same reasons as in 2025. Every venue we've priced has a 'room booking' fee of $4-500 (on average so $5 per head) plus a two course meal from $45 to $60 a head (with tea/coffee often another $2.50). Why so dear? Because we ask for a meal to be plated for around 100 people at the same time. RSL, Football, Sports and other clubs do handle 100 people but not all at once – to do that they need to hire extra staff and often extra chefs. Thus, the extra costs. Also, they all offer just 1 to 2 different meals – with no real variety and no guarantee of quality. Plus, they often out-source the catering and we've seen several times that has not gone well!!! We feel that for just $30 we can provide as good a meal with much greater variety for about half the cost.
5. We've been asked why we have asked people to bring their own cutlery/plates to the X-Mas Party. First is that solid plates are easier to use. Mainly however it is just a small cost saving measure. We will have paper plates and wood cutlery available of course but **'BRING YOUR OWN'** just serves as a small contribution to the environment.
6. We bank with the **BANK OF QUEENSLAND** who have just notified us that starting now they will not be paying interest on any account belonging to non-profits such as us. Our interest is only about $1 a month but still!! Executive will decide at its next meeting what our response will be.

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, 13th of November.
**WHERE –** Roy and Lloy Bayliss
12 Hastings Crescent
CARRARA.
**BRING** - A plate to share, hat and chair.

### OUR NEXT GENERAL MEETING

***Thursday 26th of November 2026***
***@ 12.00 p.m.***

The November Monthly Feature is –

**Desert Rose**

- A desert rose in a pot or a cutting from one of your yard plants.
- Can be judged on the flowers or on the `caudex' – that water holding `bulge' at the bottom of the plant.
- Can be any size pot or cutting.
- Leaves cannot be manipulated e.g. polished, waxed, 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. *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.*



This month the suggestion comes more in the form of some advice. Several members have admired GAY BAVINTON'S lavender plants. Gay has said that if you want to try lavender make sure it is French (or Fringed) Lavender or ***Lavandula dentata.*** Other varieties (such as English) are much much harder to grow. The French one is more suited to our location.