



ROBINA GARDEN CLUB INC.

Meeting of Thursday
August 27th - 2026
NEWSLETTER NO. 166

TODAY

GUEST SPEAKER

Lyn Gamps
African Violets

MONTHLY FEATURE

Begonia

BUS TRIP

For those who did not get our e-mail re our **ORCHIDS+ BUS TRIP** a poster is on the entry desk and the front desks. In brief, it is on **Thursday, October 8** and sees us travel south to Orchid Specialists Laurie Baxter and Val Marsden (where we will have an included morning tea), the Enchanted Wood Nursery at Ocean Shores, the Aura Nursery at Murwillumbah then buying your own lunch in town and finally the Kingscliff Nursery at Cudgen. The cost is \$30. Pay by Direct Credit or by cash today or next meeting. (Poster is also on the web-site if you want to print a personal copy).

NOTE. The bus holds 57 people with 45 needed to see the trip go ahead. Payments must be made by 1/10/26 as next morning we confirm the bus and thus must pay for it. **No refunds are possible after that.** At present (23/8/26) we have 25 x **BOOKINGS** i.e. people who have paid so have a seat on the bus. We have 6 people on the **WAITING LIST** – who will join the bookings once paid. Paid bookings take precedence as usual once we reach the 50's.

The last trip that went ahead with 57 bookings saw eight people cancel after the due date so the eight we had on that waiting list still got a seat – happens every time!?

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

PLANT OF THE MONTH - DAISIES

You'll have seen that the nurseries are now full of '**daisies**'. That word is however a loaded gun. There are over 32,000 known species of daisies, or **Asteraceae**, across more than 1,600 genera. Gerberas for example are a daisy. This brief article will focus on just a couple of the more common types that the majority of people would call 'a daisy'.

AFRICAN DAISY.

A perennial these are good for drier spots.

Two of the better types for here are -



Arctotis types (above) are tender (hate the cold) perennials that reach only about 30-60 cms high. Usually grown in clumps they have a range of very bright colours. The **Osteospermum** (right) have bright colours which are arguably the best of them all. Like other African types they like full sun.



SHASTA DAISY (*Leucanthemum superbum*). If you want big showy flowers (long thick white petals with a bright yellow centre) try these. It is a bushy spreader whose single flowers appear on spikes that can get to 60-120 cms high. They need full sun.

MARGUERITE DAISIES or Paris/Marguerites (*Argyranthemum*) (below) have a wide range of white, yellow or pink flowers.

They are a perennial but here on the coast are best treated as an annual. They are one of the best for ornamental displays.



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 1/8/2026

RESERVE	<i>Funds reserved for emergencies</i>	\$2,500.00
ADMINISTRATION	<i>Funded by the Annual Administration Fee.</i>	\$2,745.93
MEMBER'S REWARDS	<i>Afternoon Tea, Prizes, Awards, etc. Funded by the Raffle.</i>	\$1,570.93
AGM LUNCH	<i>Funded by our Bus Trips.</i>	\$479.50
CHRISTMAS PARTY	<i>Funded by our Cuttings and Sales Tables.</i>	\$1,436.83
----- TOTAL CASH FUNDS AVAILABLE -----		\$8,733.19

GROWING FREESIA

Another plant that is in flower now are **Freesia**. These South African bulbs come from a climate very similar to ours and (like our wattles and eucalypts) in South African can almost become a weed (*as right*) – if you want to use that word to describe one of the loveliest flowering bulbs that many of us have. Planted pointy end up they can soon spread all over your yard.



They are often called 'grandma's freesias' (***Freesia refracta***) because they were so common. In many older gardens they have spread across the whole space in a lovely display – their pleasant perfume adding to that 'old world' charm. Freesia thrives in full sun to part shade in the ground or in a well-drained pot. When first planting loosen the soil and add some organic matter to kick them off. If you get a bulb (and they are for sale now in places like Bunnings – but hurry as they are already in flower in most yards) plant at just about 5 cm with the pointed side facing up and about 5 cm apart.



They look good planted at the base of roses because as low growing plants they don't crowd the roses. Also, like roses, they do not like wet feet and in fact can cope with drier spots. If you have just a few you can lift them next autumn and store in a dark dry spot but most people just leave them in the ground – as long as it doesn't become boggy.

It is no surprise that there are many different types. ***Freesia laxa*** (*at right*) for example is one of the easiest to care for. It has tiny flower in pinks, mauves, white and various shades of those primary colours. ***Freesia grandiflora*** (*below left*) despite its name has a smaller flower in various red tones. Its name is because its flowers can reach about 50 cms high. It is hardy and (as bandicoots and rats love the bulb) apparently tasty. It grows quite easily from seed so spreads quite well. Its flowers make a great vase of flowers for indoors.



Freesia viridis is harder to find as its flowers are green (*above middle*) and a more alien shape that many people do not like. A more decorative type to seek out are ***Freesia corymbosa*** (*above right*) which are the brightly coloured type that florists love. When crossed with the albas they have created the yellow and pink flowers so often used in floral arrangements. Like all the others they have a lovely scent and will form drifts if allowed to self-seed. They have a habit of changing colour when they seed which is why they are used so much in hybridising. Start with a couple and (in time) they'll spread.



We had 62 entries for this month – our best number for this year. As a result, we had just 2 of the 10 sections (our Monthly Feature of Anthuriums and Produce) that were 'black' meaning they had 3 or less entries. The 'Single Bloom' (13 entries) and Orchids (10 entries) were the standout sections on the day.

**SEC. 3 - FOLIAGE ONLY
PLANT/S (x4)**

Trevor Hicks – one of the more unusual Aspidistras – **Aspidistra vingjiangensis** 'Singapore Sling' or the Cast Iron Plant.



**SEC. 1 –
ANTHURIUM (X 3)**

Margaret Lee – a vase of anthuriums including some of the larger blooms.



SEC 9 - SMALL POT (x5)

Trevor Hicks – this brom is **Neophytum** 'Galactic Warrior'.



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

Lesley Wilkinson – a lovely deep pink lacecap **Hydrangea**.



**SEC. 4
FLOWERING PLANT
(x6)**

Val Marsden – a lovely geranium.



SEC. 6 - PRODUCE (x2)

Margaret Lee – a great collection including avocado, lemons, chillis etc. etc.



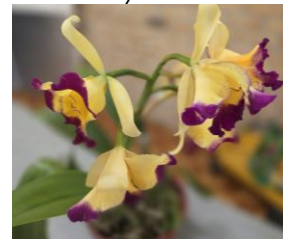
SEC. 5 – BLOOM (x13)

Ian Lee – proof you can grow colder climate **Magnolia** here on the coast.



**SEC. 2 - ORCHIDS
(x 10)**

Val Marsden – this is 'Taiwan Fantasy TY' a hybrid.



Our 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. 10 – DISPLAY (x5)

Marie Sampson – a 'bush scene' type floral display using bark, gum leaves, flowers and mushrooms.



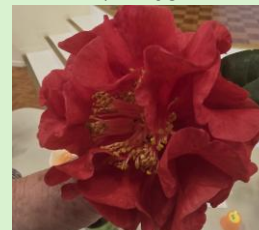
SEC. 8 – VASE OF FLOWERS (x7)

Trevor Hicks – a collection of two different types of lacecap **Hydrangeas**.



STEWARDS PRIZE

Beryl Tucker – a stunning **Camellia Japonica** called **C. M. Wilson**



Striking Christmas Cactus



It was only April 2025 when we last reviewed the Crab's Claw or Christmas Cactus – or ***Schlumbergera*** commonly known as Zygocactus. As noted in our Hints you can 'prune' these plants by nipping off the ends of as many of the 'branches' as you want. Each branch usually then 'splits', doubling the density of the plant and greatly enhancing the number of flowers. This brief article however focuses on what to do with all the 'segments' that you have removed. Plant these to produce more plants.

The key to doing this is to remember these plants are epiphytic. They do not actually need soil to grow in. Thus, to strike them you need a very loose mix.

As you can see in the photos at right the segments are buried very shallow indeed – just into the mix. Most people angle them – some even just lay them flat on the mix with just an edge under the mix.



Just lightly water or they will rot. Over time you'll lose some of the segments but in time you should get new growth as in the photo above left. After they have developed roots you can then shift them to a more permanent location. Remember that to flower they are light sensitive in winter i.e. put in a dark spot away from lights.



Environmental Report

As gardeners one of our arguments is that we enhance the environment. Unfortunately (and it is I admit a tenuous connection) we sometimes accidentally contribute to one of the world's greatest environmental problems – **FATBERGS**.

A 'fatberg' is a build up of insoluble waste in sewerage and waste water pipes. This waste can coalesce into a single 'lump' that then grows larger and larger till it can cause enormous damage. The world's largest recorded example was the **WHITECHAPEL FATBERG** of 2017 in London.

It measured 250 metre long and weighed an estimated 130 tonnes. Like them all it consisted of congealed fat, cooking oil, nappies, wet wipes and other personal hygiene products people had unthinkingly flushed down toilets.

If a fatberg occurs within your yard boundaries it can easily cost you personally \$1000 in plumbing bills. Australia's biggest one was in 2024 in Victoria when a 42 tonne one had to be removed over nine hours. Removing fatbergs is estimated to cost Australian local councils \$25 million a year.



So, what can we do about this? Mainly simple things like avoid pouring fats, oils and grease down the sink. Instead wipe them up with paper towels, put them in an old supermarket paper bag and then put that in your red bin. Do the same thing for 'wet-wipes' or other sanitary products and any solid food waste as these can start a fatberg. Also be aware that some products labelled 'water soluble' are not in fact 'water soluble'. Which ones? – afraid that involves quite a bit of internet research on their 'made of list'!!!



SPRING INSPIRATION

With Spring virtually upon us this whole page is being devoted just to give some inspirational ideas for planting up larger 'flower pots' to brighten up a corner of your garden/patio. Some are all annuals but most are more permanent.

A tall dark pot with a native grass in a matching shade, contrasting bright green foliage plus some dark coloured petunias and a bright pink geranium.



A fluted pot with a muted mauve colour scheme. A dwarf salvia at the back for height and a heavily pruned pentas on one side – both of which will last, then a purple petunia that can be replaced when it dies for a new look



A large deep brown ceramic pot loaded with several coleus. Note how they have grown over and through each other. To maintain this look you need to constantly tip prune them. They look ugly for a short while but before long are back to this level.



Perhaps too many colours for some. The white petunias are clearly designed to reflect the white pot. The purple verbena and reddish coleus are perhaps too different. (The green vine is not in the pot).



More coleus and once again a grass mixed with bright green and this time with a purple leafed plant. The key here is that the plants hang over the pot and virtually obscure it. The best solution for an older pot that no longer looks so good.



A variation on the techniques used at left. This time the owner isn't trying to totally hide the pot but just to soft its expanse with those long trailing plants. Again we have permanent planting with the lovely fluffy white grass at the back and (once again) coleus. The old favourite petunias are there again so the whole look can be changed next time with different coloured petunias.



For those with the space (and budget) this border 'wall' of colour is a great solution to defining a space. Notice these have a mix of flowers all in closely related colour tones.

CLUB NEWS

1. **74 MEMBERS** attended our July meeting with 12 Apologies and 5 visitors.
2. As of 1/8 we have **118 Financial Members**.
3. We have paid for our 2026-27 **INSURANCE POLICY**. It is a joint one with dozens of other garden clubs through the ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA. No surprise that it has gone up since last year but at \$555.50 still represents good value as it gives us a \$20 million dollar cover with a well proven policy. It covers all official club events including Home Visits and Bus Trips.
4. We have submitted our **OFFICE OF FAIR TRADING ANNUAL REPORT** via the on-line portal. This annual report is a legal document that covers all our income and expenditures for the previous year's accounts. It is done after the AGM and includes all our income and expenditure monthly reports, an assets and liabilities list, an annual financial summary and a report on financial distributions to any club members plus the AGM reports signed by the Chairperson. The cost is \$64.25.
5. Member Laurie Baxter has a portable **LOUD SPEAKER** we are going to trial for a part of today. As older members know all our expensive microphones became useless when the C.C.C. changed its system so we have to rely on that system – which can often go astray as other uses 'adjust' its settings. Our portable system proved totally inadequate for our needs so it is worth giving a different system a little trial.
6. **OCTOBER** is our Birthday Party meeting.
7. At our November meeting we are going to have our yearly **Q AND A** meeting – i.e. a panel of members who will attempt to answer any questions that you have. Public speaking is a 'hell on earth' for many people but if you do have a speciality that would be of interest to others and are willing to explain that interest for 5-10 minutes please see Secretary Val. More on how to submit questions to the Q and A closer to November.

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, 11th September at 10 a.m.

WHERE ? – Bronwyn O'Donnell @ 3 Henley Court in ROBINA.

BRING? – a plate to share, hat, chair.

OUR NEXT GENERAL MEETING

**Thursday 24th of September 2026
@ 12.00 p.m.**

The September Monthly Feature is –

Hippeastrum/s

- Can be one or more hippeastrums in a pot, a vase full of cut hippeastrum flowers or a single hippeastrum bloom in a vase.
- Can be any variety or type of hippeastrum.
- Must be from plants you have owned for at least three months.

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. Gold Coast Succulent and Bromeliad Society Carnival of Flowers Bus Trip. 19/9. See poster on our web-site.
2. Springtime on the Mountains on 25 to 27th of September. Tickets on-line.
3. Bromeliad and Tropical Foliage Show. 26/27 September. Northlakes College.
4. Maleny Garden Club Spring Fair at the Showgrounds on 3rd of October.
5. Begonias and More at the Belmont Shooting Range on 24th of October.
6. 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.



We were asked again about visiting the Tropical Fruit World. A morning walk tour and fruit tasting is \$50 with full tour \$78 (less concessions). Too much for us we're afraid. A private tour is \$1,000.00 for the really keen!

Keep up to date via our web-site at – www.robinagardenclub.org.au

We have no P.O. Box so contact us direct via e-mail at – info@robinagardenclub.org.au
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