



ROBINA GARDEN CLUB INC.

Meeting of Thursday
July 30th - 2026
NEWSLETTER NO. 165

TODAY

GUEST SPEAKER

Brian Heath
Chrysanthemums

MONTHLY FEATURE

Anthurium

WELCOME

Our last Committee Meeting was attended for the first time by newly elected member MARIANNE FRANKS. Today is her first official day as a committee member at a regular meeting. She serves on our main raffle table so if you see her there and did not attend the AGM extend a thanks for her willingness to serve on the committee.

A.G.M. FINANCIAL REPORT

To avoid having to read all the data below during today's Financial Report here is a summary of the financial implications of providing an enhanced 'High Tea' at the AGM last month. The purpose of such events is to return funds to members. The AGM fund is financed by bus trips and we had \$634.90 available (with another \$115 for the rent from the Admin Account). We spent a total of \$800.40 on the event including \$250.40 on food (vs around \$55 average normal meetings) plus \$450 of prizes in the cent auction and \$100 on the Lucky Square. The Lucky Square took in \$200 and the cent auction \$445. This was an amazing amount considering only 68 people attended. Thanks to such generosity the whole event cost (excluding rent) just \$155.40. Not as much back to members as hoped but means 2027 is funded already!

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

PLANT OF THE MONTH - PAPILIO

One of the more spectacular plants that flower around now is

Hippeastrum papilio or the Butterfly Amaryllis (*top right*). This bulb is native to southern Brazil. It is from this plant that most of our modern hybrid hippeastrums (such as the one below right) have been developed. Paplio normally have 2 to 5 blooms at the top of each stem. For those who exhibit them in flower shows the best examples have four equally open blooms that are equally spaced around the stem. When growing in clumps (*bottom*) they look excellent.



The bulb grows at ground level with usually its roughly top third above ground. They like a sunny but well-drained locations protected from hot afternoon sun. In nature they grow as epiphytes or lithophytes so if you grow them in a pot (which they enjoy) a rich airy potting mix with compost or orchid bark is ideal. That epiphytic nature hints that they like a slightly acidic soil (pH of 5.5 to 6.5). Care is relatively simple. Water when the soil is dry rather than keep it too wet or the bulb can rot. Liquid seaweed or a balanced fertiliser when the bulb is 'resting'. Unlike most hybrids they do not have a dormant period without leaves. They tend to keep their leaves all year. They prefer a slightly cooler drier period in late summer to flower best.



They grow in bright indirect light with morning sun and afternoon shade. They clump easily by growing new bulbs that emerge from their side. These, once they develop their own roots, can just be separated out as a new plant. As noted above just keep the top third above soil level and do not over-water or they can rot.



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 1/7/2026

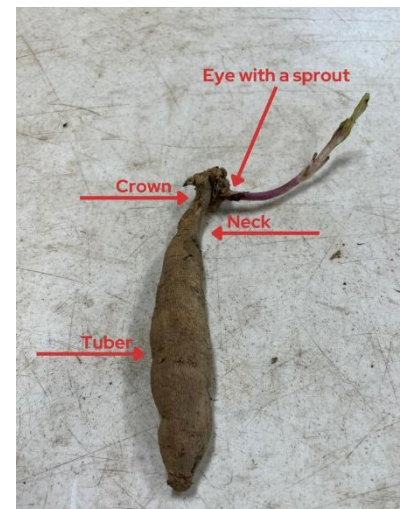
RESERVE	<i>Funds reserved for emergencies</i>	\$2,500.00
ADMINISTRATION	<i>Funded by the Annual Administration Fee.</i>	\$3,556.15
MEMBER'S REWARDS	<i>Afternoon Tea, Prizes, Awards, etc. Funded by the Raffle.</i>	\$1,507.03
AGM LUNCH	<i>Funded by our Bus Trips.</i>	\$479.50
CHRISTMAS PARTY	<i>Funded by our Cuttings and Sales Tables.</i>	\$1,350.78
----- TOTAL CASH FUNDS AVAILABLE -----		\$9,393.46

SUB-DIVIDING DAHLIAS

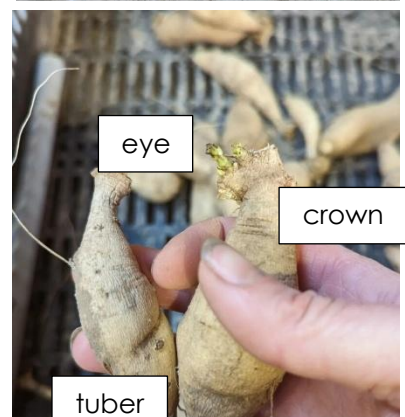
Many of us have Dahlias. Some growers dig them up from May to June and store them in a dry spot such as a shed or garage till it is time to replant. This is done mainly because in winter if the soil becomes too wet they can rot. Here on the Gold Coast many people just leave them in the ground as our soils are not always that heavy or get that wet. If yours are still in the ground carefully dig up – using a garden fork about 30-40 cms from the old stem so as not to damage the tubers. Once you lift the clump you should get something that looks like the photo at right. First step after that is to shake off the old soil and remove any tubers that have obviously died or are obviously diseased.



If you are lucky you will get nice clean healthy clumps like those at left. From here the aim is to subdivide the clumps to get more and more plants. Even better is of course to swap with other gardeners to get different types. The goal is to get a 'cutting' as at right. A new plant will grow only if you have a tuber itself with its '**neck**' joining part of '**the crown**' of the original clump. It is on the crown that you get '**an eye**' from which a new stem and thus a new plant will grow.



Using clean clippers cut most of the old stem away then very carefully cut the '**crown**' into bits. (as at left). You can keep going as long as each tuber has its neck joined to a piece of the '**crown**' with at least one '**eye**'. In the photo at left for example the grower has reduced one clump to about a dozen tubers ready to be planted out as separate plants – always in different spots!



When replanting an entire clump (once it has been 'cleaned up' by removing any dead tubers or roots) in either a pot (as at left) or in the garden plant so that the '**crown**' is just at surface level. Too deep and you run into the rot problem again. Otherwise you should have a crop of new plants.



We had just 31 entries for this month – arguably because a few of our major exhibitors were away. As a result, we had 6 of the 10 sections that were 'black' meaning they had 3 or less entries. Our special AGM monthly feature of 'something else' got a good response with 11 entries. **Thanks to all those people.**

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

Val Marsden – this *Calathea* is obviously popular for its two toned deep pink leaves.



**SEC 9 - SMALL POT
(x3)**

Trevor Hicks – one of the more interesting *Alocasia*.



**SEC. 4
FLOWERING PLANT (x2)**

Christine Lund – Showing how well bougainvillea can be grown in pots.



**SEC. 2 - ORCHIDS
(x2)**

Laurie Baxter – another excellent Vanda from Laurie's huge collection.



SEC. 6 - PRODUCE (x0)

There were no entries this month.

STEWARDS' PRIZE

Roy Bayliss – a vintage 1930's 'bullock bell' used in the Miles District.



SEC. 7 - A CUT (x5)

Maxine Cochran – this is *Malva sylvestris* or the common mallow also called the Marshmallow bush.



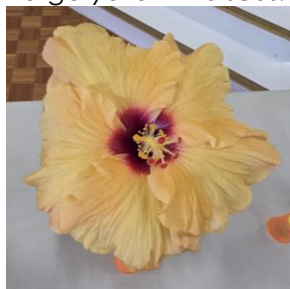
SEC. 10 - DISPLAY (x1)

Trevor Hicks – a display with white hippeastrum blooms

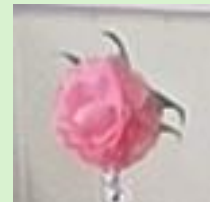


SEC. 5 – BLOOM (x6)

Wendy Bruce – a very large yellow hibiscus.



As there was no entry in the Produce the Stewards awarded **Carmel Illings** an prize for a stunning *Camellia reticulata*.



**SEC. 1 –
SOMETHING
OLD X 11**

Val Marsden – a vintage clock from Ireland brought to

Australia by her family fleeing the potato famine.



SEC. 8 – VASE OF FLOWERS (x3)

Maxine Cochran – a great display with some roses but with salvias as the basis of the group.



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.

Is this a Geranium or Pelargonium?

First, an apology to longer term members. Four versions of this article have appeared since 2011 so for them, all this is very much old news. For others however this constantly asked question is (perhaps?) worth answering once again. In brief ...

Geraniums and Pelargoniums were until 1789 considered the same 'genus' (called **Geranium**) but since then have been identified as two separate genera in the same family of plants called '**Geraniaceae**'.

PELARGONIUMS have over 200 species that include perennials, succulents and shrubs. Commonly known as *scented geraniums* or *storksbills*, pelargoniums can be recognized by their flower – which has an uneven distribution of petals. (**below right**) They were first brought to Europe from South Africa and have leaves that usually alternate, often on long stalks, and sometimes with light or dark patterns.



GERANIUMS on the other hand have flowers with 5 petals that are all similar. The petals are arranged evenly around the centre. (**above left**) There are over 400 species covering annuals, biennials and perennial plants commonly known as *cranesbills*. They have long broadly circular leaves and are called cranesbills because in some types the fruit capsule springs open from a beak-like column to cast seeds over a wide distance. Being from the eastern Mediterranean region they, like pelargoniums, do not like being waterlogged.

CONCLUSION

The big problem is that 'modern' cultivars and hybrids have produced plants whose flowers have 'double' and even 'triple' petals. Worst, there are 'crosses' that have characteristics of both plants.

This makes identifying which is which even more difficult. In fact, the two plants have always been so similar it is no surprise that most people commonly confuse them. **For hundreds of years** people used the word geranium for what were in fact a pelargonium. **Today for everyday use it probably does not matter which is which unless you want to be pedantic!**

Environmental Report



Most members would have heard about the great '**prickly pear plague**' of the late 1800's to the 1930's. It is one of the world's most infamous examples of environmental vandalism caused by human error. As is often the case the error began innocently when prickly pear, ***Opuntia stricta*** especially, was introduced in 1788 by Governor Phillip who hoped to begin a cochineal dye industry by using insects that fed on that cactus. The resulting red dye was a valuable product (used for example to produce the famous 'red coats' of the British army). It was just one plan to put the new colony on a sound economic base.

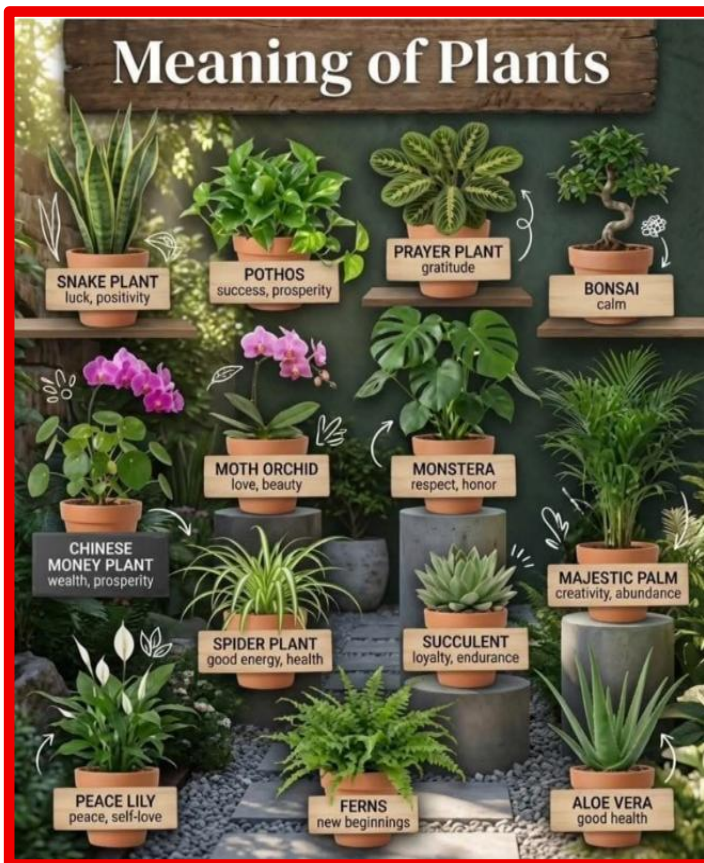
Problem was the cochineal moths died out while the cactus loved our soils and climate. People using it as an ornamental in gardens did not help contain its spread. By the early 1900's the cactus had spread across some 24 million hectares (around 60 million acres) of land. It crowded out native flora and made farming virtually impossible. Queensland and New South Wales climates were especially favourable and they suffered the most. Attempts to destroy it with burning, ploughing/cutting it up and chemicals like arsenic all failed or were too expensive.



To beat the cactus scientists turned to biological controls – namely the ***Cactoblastis cactorum***, a moth from Argentina, whose larvae ate the insides of the cactus. The first moths were released in 1926. By the middle of the 1930's some 80% of infested land in Queensland and 50-60% in NSW was free. Today not all the cactus has totally disappeared as it survives in small clumps isolated from any moths, but it is no longer a threat. Let's not mention the cane toad!!! Another well intentioned idea that also turned to disaster!!!

EMPTYING MY JUNK FOLDER

Knowing I edit the newsletters people send me odds and ends they think might be of use – of which quite a few have been turned into articles. For this edition here are some bits and pieces just for fun and for general information.



Got any old stilettos that are past it? This solution has been around for ages. Works just as well with old work boots or wellington boots. Succulents work well but so will small annuals.



Two more natural recipes that might be worth a trial.



5:12 📶 🔋
DIY Garden & Homestead Remedies · Join
 No Lô Vê · 3 d · 🌐

To prepare a large batch of natural weed killer, combine the following ingredients:

- 1 gallon of white vinegar
- 1 small cup of salt
- 1 tablespoon of washing-up liquid

Mix thoroughly until the salt is dissolved. Pour the solution into a spray bottle for easy application. Spray directly onto unwanted weeds, taking care to avoid contact with plants you wish to keep.



CLUB NEWS

1. **68 MEMBERS** attended our AGM meeting.
2. As of 1/7 we have **118 Financial Members**.
3. No final planning yet completed on our next **BUS TRIP**. (Diesel cost uncertainty is not helping!). We will have an itinerary complete in early August with payments at either the August or September meetings for a trip in the first half of October.
4. Some of you will know of a group called '**COMMUNITY BLOOMS**'. They are a group of volunteers who go to various garden clubs and at the end of the meeting collect **unwanted** flowers from the benching. These they take and turn into vases of flowers or flower arrangements to take to people in hospital and/or nursing homes / hospices. They have asked if we would like to be involved. Executive said OK. If they arrive we'll let you know and **anyone who wants to donate** their benching is welcome to. **There is no obligation to do so obviously**.
5. Our hall managers GRAHAM WILKINSON and WAYNE STRATTON have asked that we again **THANK** the small group of people who stay back at the end of each meeting to help with clearing up the hall. It is very much appreciated. With all of us keen to just get home that is some commitment.
6. As mentioned last month we had a bus trip suggestion to go to the **TOOWOOMBA CARNIVAL OF FLOWERS**. We decided against it because of the time involved. The Gold Coast Succulent and Bromeliad Society is going there however for those who might really want to go. It is a 6.30 a.m. start and a 5.00 p.m. back home. Call ROZ on 0424 031 462 or DIANE on 0494 181 700 to make a booking. It is \$35 and they leave from Tugun Community Centre at 6.30 a.m. or the Helensvale Community Centre at 7.30 a.m. They intend to visit Queens Park, Laurel Bank Park, the Japanese Garden, the Picnic Point Lookout and a couple of the prize winning gardens. A brochure is on the desk with the handouts. Take one only if interested. They may help us out later - ??!!

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, 14th August at 10 a.m.

WHERE ? – Kathy Watts @ 99 Teasdale
Driver at NERANG.

(This is an acreage garden).

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

OUR NEXT GENERAL MEETING

**Thursday 27th of August 2026
@ 12.00 p.m.**

The August Monthly Feature is –

Begonia

- A Begonia of any type growing in/on any type of container or pot. Plant and its 'offshoots' can be as large as you like provided it is one type.
- With or without a flower.
- Must have been owned by you 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. Botanical Bazaar at Country Paradise Parklands. Saturday 1st August.
2. Springtime on the Mountains on 25 to 27th of September. Tickets on-line.
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.



As noted earlier our plan to return funds to members via the 'High Tea' at the AGM did not go fully to plan. More than a couple of people have already suggested that for 2027 the lesson is we can afford to add more (more expensive to provide) sandwiches. We plan to do that and try to hit the sweet spot between 'High Tea' and 'Light Lunch'.

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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