

INSPIRE! For all tropical, subtropical and warm climate gardens



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ISSUE 17  
QUARTERLY

# subTropical Gardening

and landscaping in warm climates

local advice for  
local gardeners



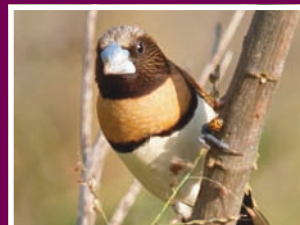
**GARDENS**  
– Port Douglas + Japan



**HOME HARVEST**  
– food

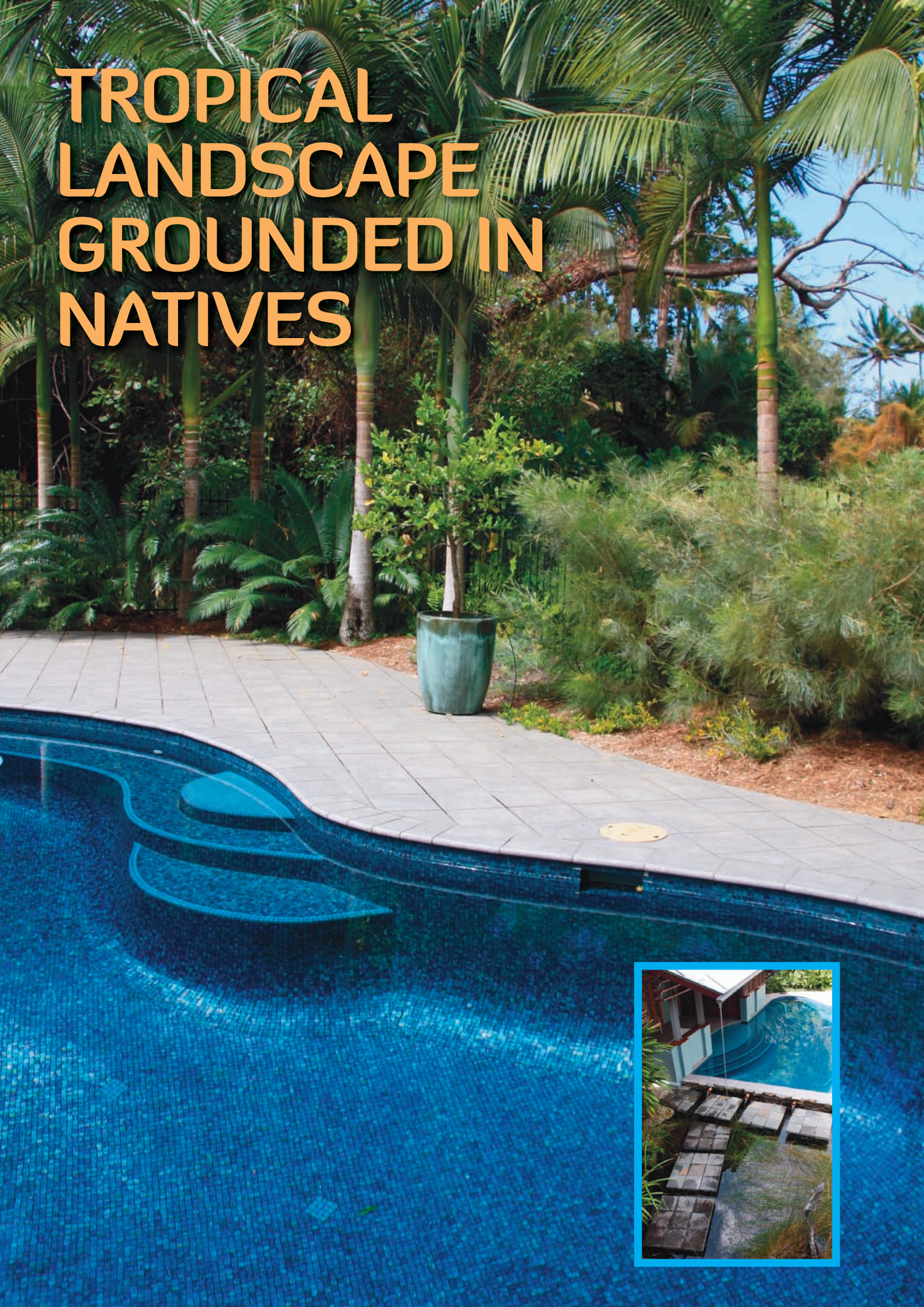


**COLOUR**  
– cordylines + climbers



**NATIVES**  
– plants and finches

# TROPICAL LANDSCAPE GROUNDED IN NATIVES



# 10 FAVOURITES – LOCAL NATIVE PLANTS

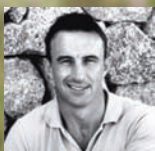
Each issue we ask five qualified horticulturists to list their favourite plant types on a selected theme.

The decision can depend upon many factors such as soil, climate, drought tolerance, aesthetics or just plain personal preference!



**Claire Bickle** MAIH  
Horticulturist – Brisbane

*Acacia fimbriata* – Brisbane Wattle,  
Fringed Wattle  
*Corchorus cunninghamii* – Native Jute,  
Brisbane Buttercup  
*Hovea acutifolia* – Purple Pea Bush,  
Pointed-leaved Hovea  
*Proiphys cunninghamii* – Brisbane Lily  
*Pultenaea villosa* – Hairy Bush Pea



**John Sullivan** MAIH  
Horticulturist – Port Douglas

*Dillenia alata* – Red Beach Tree  
*Haemodorum coccineum* – Blood Lily  
*Livistona muelleri* – Native Silver Fan Palm  
*Melaleuca dealbata* – Blue-leaved paper bark,  
Silver-leaved Paperbark  
*Nymphaea violacea* – Native Water Lily



**Daniel Cole** MAIH  
Horticulturist – Byron Bay

*Canavalia rosea* – Coastal Jack Bean  
*Carpobrotus glaucescens* – Coastal Pigface  
*Ficinia nodosa* – Knobby Club Rush  
*Gahnia sieberiana* – Red Fruited Saw Sedge  
*Lepironia articulata* – Grey Rush



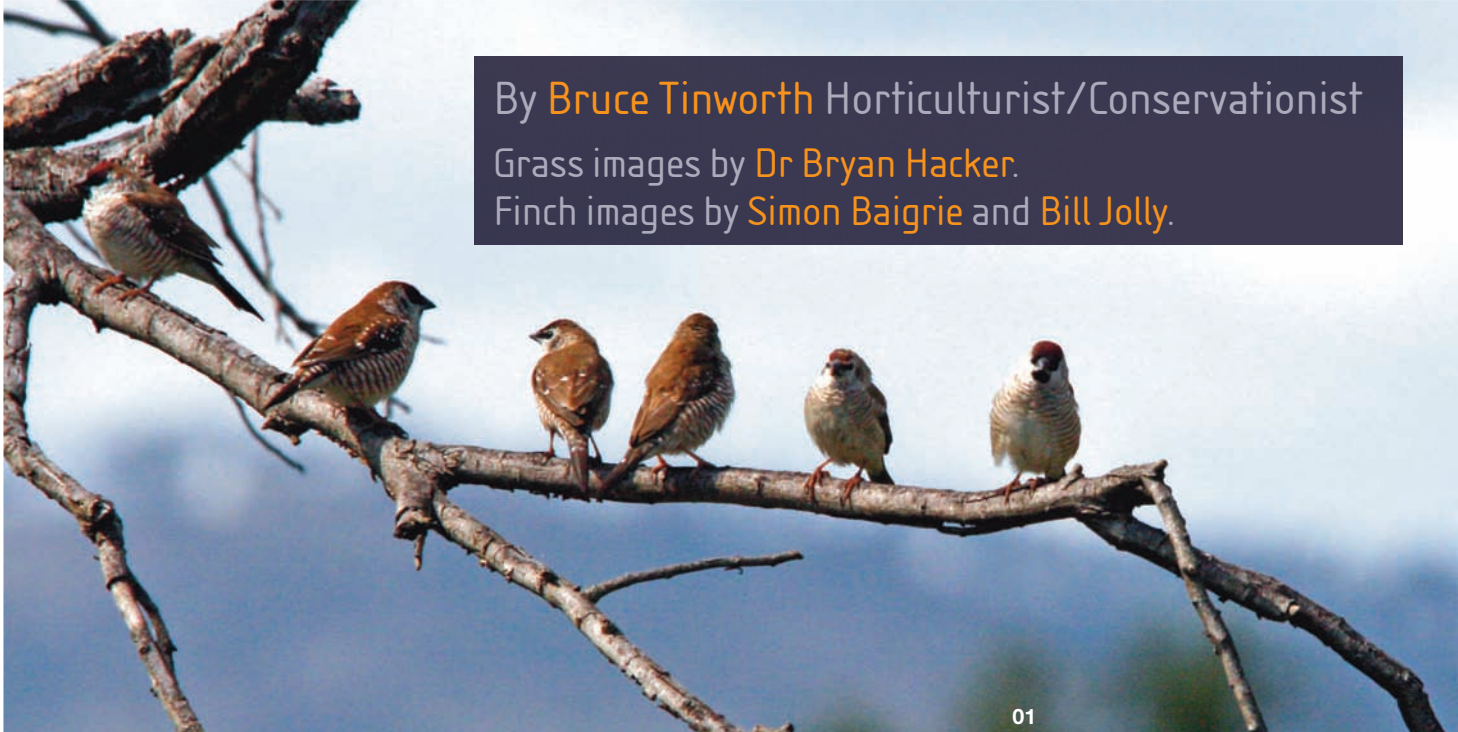
**Joan Dillon** MAIH  
Horticulturist – Sunshine Coast

*Burchardia umbellata* – Milk Maids  
*Melaleuca pachyphylla* (syn. *Callistemon pachyphyllus*)  
– Wallum Bottlebrush  
*Persoonia virgata* – Wallum Geebung  
*Petalostigma triloculare* – Quinine Bush,  
Long-leaved Bitter Bark  
*Xanthorrhoea fulva* – Wallum Grass Tree



**Paul Plant** MAIH  
Horticulturist – Brisbane

*Chrysocephalum apiculatum* – Yellow Buttons  
*Eustrephus latifolius* – Wombat Berry  
*Murdannia graminea* – Slug Herb  
*Ozothamnus diosmifolius* – Sago Flower, Pill Flower  
*Xanthorrhoea johnsonii* – Forest Grass Tree



By **Bruce Tinworth** Horticulturist/Conservationist  
 Grass images by **Dr Bryan Hacker**.  
 Finch images by **Simon Baigrie** and **Bill Jolly**.

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01 | Plumheaded Finch Image Bill Jolly

**T**

he Sunday lunch barbecue is cooling and the kids, sweaty from chasing the dogs and bored with adult conversation, have all headed inside seeking electronic stimulation. The weather, sport, politics and the state of the lawn, have all been discussed at length (usually in that order), when someone downs the last of the Chardonnay and proclaims, "I haven't noticed any little birds around here like there used to be...why is that?" to which nobody offers an answer, so return their conversation to more important re-runs of the weather, sport, politics, and the state of the lawn.

In days past, few gardens were far from a patch of scrub

and most backyards supported a corner of untended vegetation. The scrub, with its moist gullies and thorny bushes, has long since been developed into prime real estate. The gullies were filled in to protect the children and the grassland bordering the scrub is now routinely tortured into swathes of manicured turf. Those who can still remember the flocks of grass finches frequenting their garden will attest to the delight of their gregarious nature and constant tittering.

These wild bird populations now faced with the increasing pressure of habitat destruction have no options other than to adapt, migrate or die. An issue reflected in the damning statistic which documents Australia's post-

European settlement [and urban sprawl] as having the highest rates of extinctions in the world. With the support of landholders and gardeners, this trend to extinction does not have to reach its present conclusion.

There are six species of native grass finch still supported by those ever diminishing patches of urban and rural grasslands across South East Queensland. Comparison of distribution records over the past 200 years indicate that some species originally recorded from west of the Great Dividing Range are increasingly being recorded much further to the east; unwitting participants in anthropogenic loss of habitat and climate change.

Finch, Gouldian  
 Image Simon Baigrie



Branched Wiregrass  
 (*Aristida ramosa*)



Hairy Speargrass  
 (*Austrostipa densiflora*)  
 Corkscrew Grass  
 (*Austrostipa setacea*)



Redleg Grass  
 (*Bothriochloa macra*)



Windmill Grass  
 (*Chloris truncata*)

# CHOKOS

Continuing our celebrating of iconic vegetables as part of Queensland's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, **Arno King** investigates the vegetable once found in every garden – the humble Choko.

Once upon a time, long ago, a strange plant from a mysterious land appeared in a garden. This plant grew and grew. It grew over fences, up trees, along the ground and it smothered everything in its path. This plant had a hypnotic power and the people came under its spell. They planted it everywhere, in every garden or park or waste piece of land. And they ate its fruit – a flavourless, slimy fruit. They ate it in every meal, as a vegetable, as a dessert, in cakes, in pies and in pickles. They forced it upon their family and their children; they gave fruit to their friends and their neighbours. In turn these children grew up and they forced it upon their own children.

Then one day the spell was broken. The children retaliated and swore they would never eat the fruit again. They disposed of the fruit and they dug the plants out and burned them. But some plants remained...

Time passed and people thought they were free – but then the fruit started to appear again – in fancy restaurants, in cafes or sold as an exotic expensive vegetable in greengrocers. The young people suspected nothing, but the older people knew...

THE CURSE OF THE CHOKO HAD RETURNED!

# FINAL WORDS

By Noel Burdette

I raise a flag for all those persecuted species of plants out there that have proven time and time again that neither drought nor flooding rains can hold them back from doing what they do best...grow.

Yes, have I been told “don’t plant that, it’ll take over your garden”, as cuttings are handed to me with trembling hands. My reaction is to simply smile and quietly hope that when this so-called garden pest does manage to grow, then being able to enjoy its natural form is one of the simple joys a gardener can experience.

Eradicating seeding plants with a simple flick of the wrist is easy...if you’ve got the heart for it. In dry times, plants that multiply quickly will naturally seem to curb their appetite for entire suburbs and remain in their allocated space without the need for war declaration papers.

Wouldn’t you rather a large patch of colourful blooms instead of cobbles’ pegs filling up that precious space? So what if it is a little on the wild side? It’s only natural after all. A garden that not only holds aesthetics for our senses but also supports and encourages the fragile ecosystems and fauna that frequent our backyards can only be a good thing I’m sure.

Let the seeders sow, and while you’re at it, get yourself a good pair of sneakers to help you keep up with the runners in your garden. After all, some exercise in the backyard never hurt anyone. **STC**



## TROPICAL COLOUR



## PLACES

## COMPOSTING



## FANTASY GARDENS

NEXT  
ISSUE  
FEB 2010