

**NEW!! For all tropical, subtropical and warm climate gardens**

# *sub*Tropical Gardening

*and landscaping in warm climates*

ISSUE 4  
QUARTERLY



**local advice for  
local gardeners**

RRP \$7.95 inc GST



■ **DESIGNER SPACE**  
– inspiration



■ **GREYWATER USE**  
– do's and don'ts



■ **PLACES TO VISIT**  
– parks and gardens



■ **SUBTROPICALIA  
COLLECTOR**

Tropical gardens often require intense management due to their rapid growth.



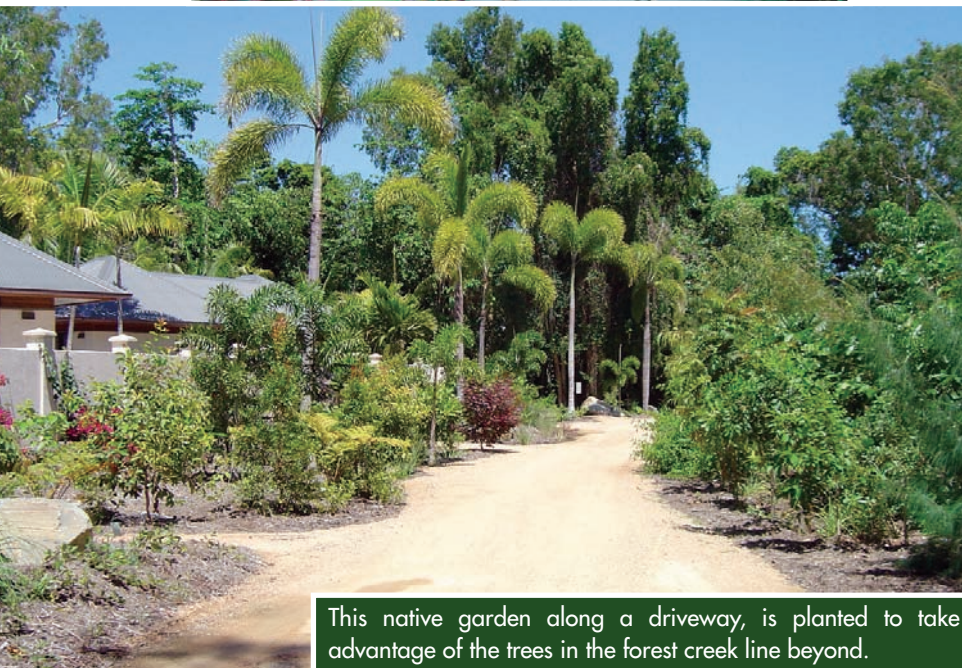
**John Sullivan**

MAIH – Port Douglas  
Horticulturist, Landscaper

One of the greatest joys as a Landscape Designer is delivering appropriate gardens to clients. That is matching a garden's form, intensity and maintenance requirements to the lifestyle of the people who use and look after the garden. The most striking side effect is turning apparent 'non gardeners' into avid gardeners simply by delivering something they visually like but more importantly understand how to manage. This can be done at all levels from those who do all their own gardening to those who employ professionals to do the work for them.

Mediterranean gardens are most forgiving with slow winter growing seasons and reduced growth during drought periods. Not to say that they aren't a challenge, but when one tries to manage a tropical garden and cope with continual growth it presents a whole new set of problems. There are a few tips to follow when starting to design a garden that can make the subsequent management of the garden a lot easier.

A garden can be designed to be in stark contrast to its immediate surroundings, making it stand out. However, using elements from nearby gives the illusion that the landscape beyond belongs to your garden. Using the same trees as the surrounding bushland, or the same shrubs common to the neighbourhood, helps create a harmony with the broader landscape. Often these elements are safe choices for your garden, as you know they are successful in your area.




This native garden along a driveway, is planted to take advantage of the trees in the forest creek line beyond.



A simple stand of Carpentaria palms (*Carpentaria acuminata*) shelter the west face of this residence.



**Arno King**MAIH – Brisbane  
Landscape Architect

Shades of chartreuse and bronze foliage to the south of the cottage.

The Boyds have lived on the 11 acre site since 1990, when they built the original cottage (now guest accommodation). The family home was built a year and a half later as the family grew in size.

Cheryl is the keen gardener and a founder member of the Perennial Poppies, a club devoted to growing perennials in subtropical Queensland. Cheryl has always been fond of gardening and studied horticulture at Lincoln University in New Zealand.

Initially the garden extended around the cottage, but it now covers an area of some 3 acres, surrounding the house, which is located on a level area towards the centre of the site. Forest covers the remaining land and provides the dramatic backdrop to the garden.



View from the cottage through anthuriums and tree ferns.

# contemporary entrance

**TIMELESS STONE & CLEAN LINES  
COMPLEMENT THIS DESIGN**

Defined by the simplicity of stone, water and plants that complement the home, this entrance invites and welcomes visitors with a guard of two heavenly fragrant frangipanis blanketed with a carpet of orange-red *Clivia* and a subtle lily pilli hedge.

Privacy screening is created with the seductively scented *Magnolia* 'Little Gem' that harmonises well with the house due to its two-toned leaves.

Sand-blasted gold granite, specially cut in China was used in the front entrance, driveway, all pathways and stepping stones.

Star jasmine (*Trachelospermum*) has been restrained on vertical stainless steel cables reflecting the power and strength of the residence itself.

The main feature of this garden is the amazing water feature that runs the entire length of the lap pool, 21 metres in length. To create such a structure three 316 stainless steel reservoirs were custom made and installed to evenly distribute the water over this distance.

Bookleaf slate panels were selected to create the effect of water cascading down natural stone – over 21 metres in length at 2.4 metres high – an awesome visual impact in any domestic garden.

Subtle garden lighting has been placed for evening ambience with feature LED lighting placed in the driveway paving and entry ponds.

An additional rooftop garden was created that consisted of five rectangular planter boxers, all 6x1 metres in size. Lush green fronds of the cycads contrast well with black pebble.



# Palms

## *Bismarckia nobilis*

Family: ARECACEAE

Common Name: bismarck palm

The spectacular silver bismarck palm with its large almost rounded silver coloured fan leaves originates from the Island of Madagascar (off the east coast of Africa). This palm even continues to impress non-gardeners by its bold architecture and colour.

Now grown throughout the tropical and subtropical world for its sheer size and colour, this palm is sought after for large modern gardens and parkland landscaping.

The bismarck palm has a single trunk which in cultivation can attain a height of 10-15m with a diameter of 40-50cm over many years. Each fan leaf has a diameter of 3m with a 2.5m petiole. The colour of the foliage is the main attraction of this palm, as the foliage has a very dominant silver/grey/white to almost blue colour that contrasts well with surrounding vegetation.

It has a moderate growth rate, but can also be quite fast in optimum conditions, although it still takes many years to attain significant height. This palm is not suited to small gardens and should be allowed the space to grow to its glory - not crammed in with other large trees or palms.

This palm is extremely drought tolerant once established and can tolerate moderate frost. It grows beautifully in inland areas as long as there is enough heat during the day. The species also has a green leafed form which is far less cold tolerant and not as spectacular as the grey leaf form. To determine the difference as a seedling the silver form has pinkish/purple new leaves.



Guest Contributor

Grant Larkin

MAIH – Brisbane  
Horticulturist



### Best growing conditions:

- full sun
- not fussy with soil but must be very well drained
- regular water and fertiliser will give faster lush growth
- frost tolerant
- extremely drought hardy once established.

### Landscape use

Feature plant for large gardens and parks.

Can be grown in large and heavy pots but is best planted in the ground before it gets too big.

Grows best in exposed locations.

Can be used with other grey leaved plants to create a grey garden.



# Getting the most out of fertilisers



Colin Campbell

FAIH – Sunshine Coast  
Horticulturist

One of the sad truths of gardening is that hardly anyone actually reads or understands the directions for use that are clearly set out on garden fertiliser, insecticide, fungicide and herbicide packaging. If they did, when it comes to fertilisers specifically, they would discover that usually quite close to the directions, is printed the fertiliser analysis.

The reason we apply fertiliser is to supply the plants with a range of nutrients that will help them grow better and to ensure that optimum yields of fruit, vegetables or flowers are obtained. In order to achieve these results all the nutrients that the plant needs must be available in a form acceptable to the plant.

Plants need at least 16 chemical elements for optimum growth, but, fortunately for us, the ones required in the greatest quantity are obtained from the air and are usually quite readily available. These are carbon, oxygen and hydrogen. The next most important essential elements are nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potassium (K), followed by the secondary nutrients calcium (Ca), magnesium (Mg) and sulphur (S).

The last group of nutrients are referred to as the trace or minor elements because they are the ones that plants require only traces of. Even though the quantity of these nutrients is relatively minor, their importance to the plant should never be underestimated. The nutrients listed as minor or trace are zinc, copper, boron, molybdenum, manganese, iron, and, to a much lesser degree, chlorine.

Carbon, hydrogen and oxygen are the elements that the plant needs in greatest quantity, enabling it to carry out all the metabolic processes necessary for growth and reproduction. As well as requiring oxygen, it also, as a result of photosynthesis, produces oxygen for our use.

The major nutrients of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium are the building blocks of plant growth

- nitrogen being responsible for green leafy growth, phosphorus for root development and flower initiation, as well as issues relating to the reproductive parts of the plant. Potassium plays an important role in providing the plant with stronger cells, thereby imparting a measure of disease resistance and vigour, whilst also improving the quality and colour of flowers and fruit.



Foliage plants prefer a fertiliser higher in nitrogen.

