

INSPIRE! For all tropical, subtropical and warm climate gardens

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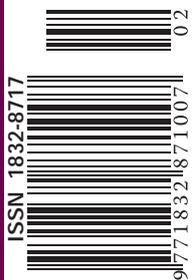
ISSUE 11
QUARTERLY

subTropical Gardening

and landscaping in warm climates



**local advice for
local gardeners**



PLANT FOCUS
– aloes & hoyas



BUSHFOOD
– bunya & riberry



ENVIRONMENTAL
– rainforests



SUBTROPICALIA
COLLECTOR

Feature Articles

- 08 Lillydale – Flower in the Valley
- 14 Aloes
- 26 Colour – Yellow
- 30 The Humble Hoya
- 34 A visit from old friends...
- 62 Fish For Your Pond
- 66 Bunya – Long Story, Short Version
- 70 Bushfood



Down & Dirty with...

- 60 Alan Chenoweth



Environmental Horticulture

- 72 Rainforests of Queensland
- 76 Dry Rainforest Plants – proven tough through the drought



Subtropicalia Produce

- 80 Vegies – More Beans
- 82 Flowers – Edible Flowers
- 84 Fruit – 12 Space Saving Ideas with Fruiting Plants



Suan Bazaar

- 22 {garden marketplace}

Subtropicalia Collector

- 38 Bromeliads
Portea petropolitana var. *extensa*
- 39 Bulbous Group
Murdannia graminea
- 40 Climbers *Solanum wendlandii*
- 41 Creepers & Groundcovers
Lampranthus aurantiacus
- 42 Flowering Trees *Jagera pseudorhus*
- 43 Funky Foliage
Hoffmannia refulgens
- 44 Ginger Group *Costus barbatus*
- 45 Orchids *Dendrobium* sp.
- 46 Palms *Licuala ramsayi*
- 47 Scented Plants
Melia azedarach var. *australasica*
- 48 Succulents *Schlumbergera truncata*
- 49 Tropical Shrubs *Ruttya fruticosa*



Gardening Know-How

- 86 Lawns – A curly issue – controlling lawn beetle larvae
- 90 How to...
 - ...control a suckering agave
 - ...track down that pest
 - ...plant your spring bulbs
 - ...propagate your shrubby aloes



Social Gardeners

- 95 News and Events

Places To Be

- 50 Topical Display Dome
- 51 Kaputar National Park
- 52 Open Gardens



10 Favourites

- 54 Park Trees



REGULARS

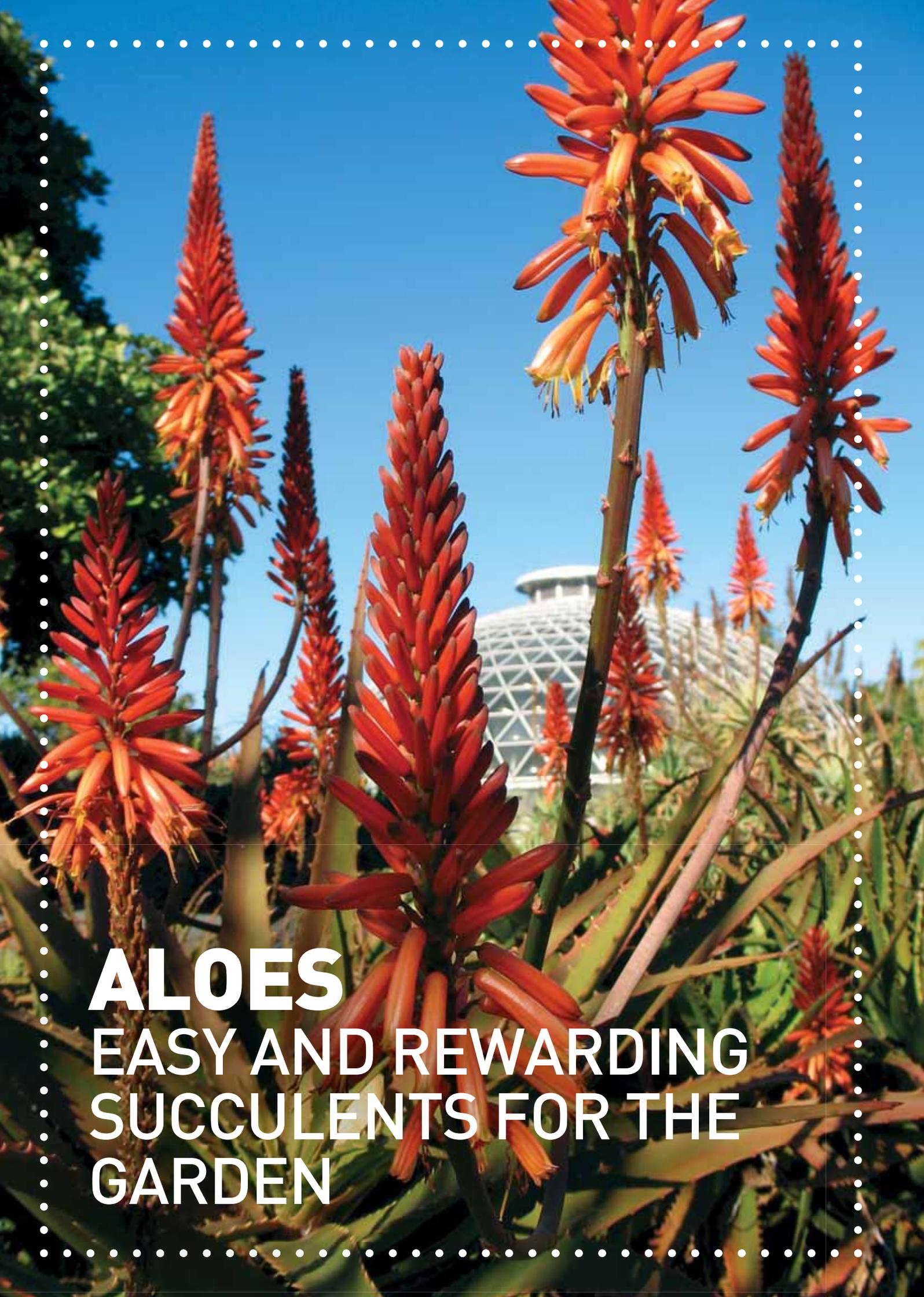
- 3 Welcome
- 6 Letters
- 98 Final Words

SUBSCRIBE

- 92 Subscription Offers
- 93 Subscription Form

SOURCE GUIDE

- 96 Directory
- 97 Classifieds



ALOES
EASY AND REWARDING
SUCCULENTS FOR THE
GARDEN

BUSHFOOD

Riberry / Small leaf Lillypilly
Syzygium leuhmannii
MYRTACEAE



Image by Paul Hoffmann.



ONE of the most well known of our native bushfood fruits, this tree is popular in parks, streets and gardens in Queensland and New South Wales. Found in the wild from Cooktown in north Queensland to Kempsey in New South Wales it can reach over 20m in its rainforest habitat, but is more commonly seen at no more than 10m.

Small glossy green leaves, with their distinctive raindrop-tips, are first flushed red when they emerge in the growing season after rain. Many people grow this plant for its attractive foliage, in addition to flowers and fruit.

White power-puff blooms appear in late spring and summer, followed by clusters of red pear-shaped fruit from November to January.

Culture

Full sun is best although the plant will tolerate light shade.

Best growth is achieved in deep rich organically enriched soils that are well mulched, however the plant can tolerate a wide range of soils.

Can be grown as a hedge with regular pruning, or as a pot specimen.

Once established it has exhibited good frost tolerance but only mild drought tolerance.

Fertilising is not necessary provided mulch is replenished each year.

Minimal pests and diseases are noted for this plant, unlike with other lillypilly specimens. If sooty mould is a problem use a natural oil-based product.

BUSHFOOD FACTS

Fruit Flavour: somewhat subtle clove flavour.

Use: jam, chutney, tarts, meat sauces and cakes.

EDIBLE FLOWERS

Arno King FAIH

Landscape Architect –Brisbane



T

HERE is nothing more spectacular than garnishing salads, savory or sweet dishes with delicious edible flowers. Most of us are aware that there is a large range of plants with edible flowers, but the various books and magazines seem to list the same flowers – Calendula (*Calendula officinalis* – petals only), Carnation and Dianthus (*Dianthus* spp.), Viola and Pansy (*Viola* spp.), Lavender (*Lavandula* spp. – petals only) and Roses (*Rosa* cultivars – petals only). Coming from cooler climates, these plants often require a little more love or attention in our gardens.

The good news is that there are many hardy plants with edible flowers that thrive in warmer climates. That's to be expected, as we live in the climate zone with the world's greatest biodiversity. You probably already have some in your own garden.

SOME SIMPLE RULES TO FOLLOW:

- Positively identify flowers before eating them. Some look-alikes aren't edible;
- Ensure the plant has been grown organically and hasn't been sprayed or subjected to traffic fumes and dust – this goes for all edibles;
- Pick freshly opened flowers early in the morning when they are cool, plump, crisp and full of flavour and nutrients;
- Gently clean, dry and store in the fridge until needed, avoiding crushing; and
- Be cautious when selecting flowers to eat - many flowers taste bad, some are quite poisonous.

Following are lists of some commonly eaten flowers. Many have been part of the human diet since time immemorial. Some flowers have tasty petals but the lower petals or base of the flower may be bitter or fibrous and are best removed. Some flowers require a light steaming or cooking. I have endeavored to note this below.

Vegetables and herbs

Chives and Garlic Chives
(*Allium schoenoprasum* and *A. tuberosum*)
Borage (*Borago officinalis*)
Pumpkin/Squash/Zucchini (*Cucurbita* spp.)
– great deep fried or stuffed and deep fried
Jerusalem Artichoke (*Helianthus tuberosus*)
Rosella (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*)
Poor Man's Bean (*Lablab purpureus*)
Loofah (*Luffa* spp.)
Velvet bean (*Mucuna pruriens*)
Green Bean (*Phaseolus vulgaris*)
Raddish (*Raphanus sativus*)
Lowland Pitpit (*Saccharum edule*) and Highland Pitpit (*Setaria palmifolia*) – flower buds when enclosed in sheaths popular in PNG/Pacific Islands
Pineapple Sage (*Salvia elegans*)
Sage (*Salvia officinalis*)
Toothache Plant, Para Cress (*Spilanthes acmella*)
Snake Bean (*Vigna unguiculata* ssp. *sesquipedalis*)
Rice Bean (*Vigna umbellata*)
Scented Geraniums (*Pelargonium* spp.)
Native violet (*Viola hederacea* now called *Viola banksii*)



12 SPACE SAVING IDEAS WITH FRUITING PLANTS

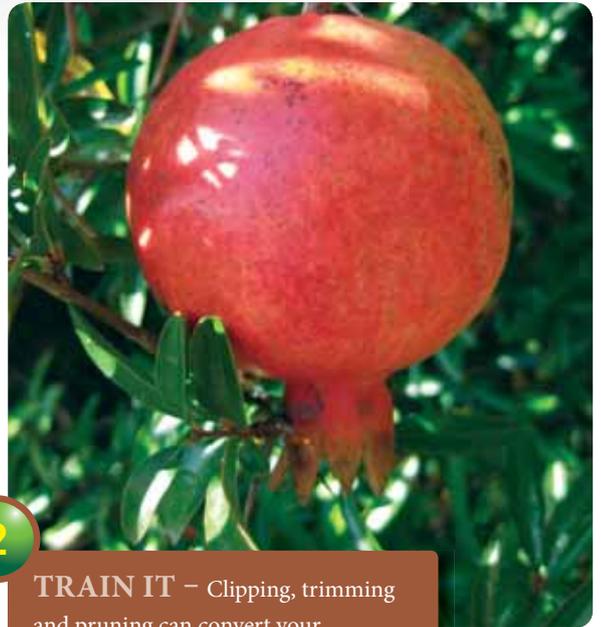
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HEDGE IT – Think outside the box...use your fruiting plants to make boundaries and hedges to frame your garden and highlight other landscape features. Practical and aesthetic. Try the native lillypillies, acerola, Natal Plum (*Carissa macrocarpa*) and coffee.



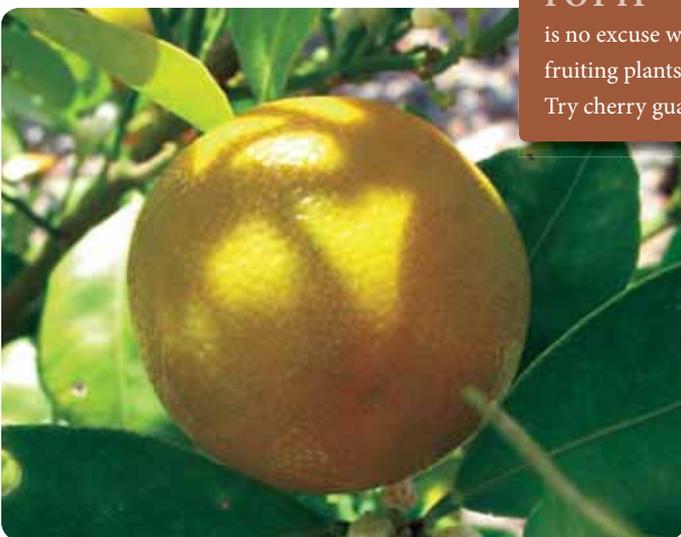
2

TRAIN IT – Clipping, trimming and pruning can convert your wayward fruit tree into a whimsical topiary or space saving box. Try guava, the native riberry, olives, jaboticaba and Pomegranate (*Punica pranatum*).



3

POT IT – Lack of good soil is no excuse when it comes to fruiting plants. Grow them in pots. Try cherry guavas and citrus.



4

GO UP – When ground space is short, grow fruiting climbers up a trellis, wire or over an arbour. What you get is shade and fruit without sacrificing land area. Try passionfruit, grapes and beans.

