

subTropical Gardening

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ISSUE 20

QUARTERLY

5th Year

Bat Flowers
Wild Irises
Favourites
QLD Waratah
Organics
Turf

**local advice for
local gardeners**



■ GARDENS
– children's gardens



■ FEATURE
– pelargoniums



■ FRUIT & VEG
– for this climate



■ CALENDAR
– Aug / Sep / Oct

horticultural contributors

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

FAIH – Fellow of Australian Institute of Horticulture
 MAIH – Member of Australian Institute of Horticulture
 AILA – Australian Institute of Landscape Architects
 QAA – Queensland Arboricultural Association

CLAIRE BICKLE
 MAIH
 Brisbane



A qualified Brisbane horticulturist for nearly two decades, Claire has been educating the public in all areas of horticulture through garden centres and now also teaches at TAFE. Claire has a love especially for sustainable horticulture, natives, plus a passion and drive to educate and share this knowledge with the public.

NOEL BURDETTE
 MAIH
 Ipswich



A keen plants man and advocate of the soft landscape style, Noel now explores and pushes the boundaries of gardening in Queensland. A regular contributor to many publications, he firmly stands by his motto of "Aspire to Inspire" strongly believing there is a good gardener in even the best of brown thumbs.

GRAEME BYRNE
 Cairns



A passionate collector of weird and unusual plants with a keen interest in why they do what they do, Graeme has the enviable job of horticulturist at the Cairns Botanic Gardens. He can also be heard on ABC Far North local radio on Saturday mornings.

COLIN CAMPBELL
 FAIH
 Sunshine Coast



Colin is well known for weekend Garden Talk on radio 4BC, articles in numerous gardening magazines and newspapers and on TV. In 2007 he was awarded an Order of Australia Media for services to horticulture. His easy manner and likeable nature makes Colin a favourite amongst gardeners.

CYNTHIA CARSON
 Redlands



Cynthia is an extension horticulturist with extensive experience as an author and advisor – having worked in state departments of agriculture since the mid-80s. Cynthia is currently a lifestyle horticulture specialist with the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Queensland and has a particular interest in turf and native cut flowers.

HARRY CRANE
 FAIH
 Brisbane



Gardening has been a lifetime enjoyment made all the more interesting by looking after several suburban Brisbane gardens. Having an Advanced Certificate of Horticulture has helped to appreciate the intricacies of plant life. When not working in gardens Harry can be found enjoying himself in a game of lawn bowls.

HELEN CURRAN
 MAIH
 Sydney



Trained in New South Wales, Helen has worked in the nursery industry for many years. A love of experimenting with tropical plants in Sydney's colder western suburbs for over 10 years has provided gardeners with a trusted source of information for those in cooler climatic zones.

JOAN DILLON
 MAIH
 Sunshine Coast



An appreciation of our native flora in its natural environment, plus its value in horticulture, has been Joan's life-long passion. She trained as a plant pathologist specialising in diseases of ornamentals, later taught horticulture in the Northern Territory and has been active in community revegetation projects for many years.

MARIAN HAMMOND
 QAA
 Brisbane



Landscape designer, horticultural consultant and arborist, Marian first trained in New South Wales at the Ryde School of Horticulture (1977) and has since spent the last 25 years in South East Queensland. Identification of pests and diseases and the culture of botanical life are Marian's most passionate horticultural interests.

ARNO KING
 FAIH, AILA
 Brisbane



Arno is a registered landscape architect and horticulturist based in Brisbane. His particular interest is planting design in warm climates and the use of appropriate plants in gardens and the broader landscape. A keen gardener, his garden is full of uncommon plant species being trialled for possible use on various projects.

GRANT LARKIN
 Brisbane
 Locally born



and trained, Grant grew up surrounded with foliage plants to develop an interest in jungle-type plants from a very early age and now has a passion for palms, other tropicals but is generally an all-round plant lover. Grant currently works in the retail nursery industry and garden design.

KRISTEN MATHEWS
 Burpengary



A keen plants person interested in growing plants out of their normal climate zone. Kristen has a passion for brugmansias and belongs to a study group that trials salvia in SE Qld. She is a retired Selector with Australia's Open Garden Scheme and holds a certificate in Horticulture and Garden Design.

PAUL PLANT
 FAIH



Ipswich
 Paul was born in Queensland where he gained his horticultural qualification, resulting in a passion for subtropical and tropical gardening. He has taught horticulture, worked in the landscape and nursery sectors, been writing gardening articles since the early 90s and occasionally stands in for Colin Campbell on radio 4BC.

JOHN SULLIVAN
 MAIH
 Port Douglas



Principal designer of his own business, Hortulus, John has specialised in tropical horticulture for over 20 years. Designing gardens on the principles of identifying a strong sense of the tropics, the environment and the future management of the landscape, John has worked on residential and commercial projects across Australia.

BRUCE TINWORTH
 Ipswich



A retired TAFE Horticulture and Conservation teacher, Bruce's passion is in using local native plants to re-establish wildlife habitat in the urban environment. For voluntary work in horticulture and conservation, Bruce has received numerous awards including joint recipient of the UN International Year of the Volunteer Medal.

ANTON VAN DER SCHANS
 International



Respected landscape architect and renowned plants man, Anton has done extensive work throughout northern Queensland and Asia. He is currently involved with Singapore National Parks in the development of new parklands. Anton's diverse horticultural interests inspire the public to consider alternative species when gardening.

Children's Gardens

nature &
adventure

There are many aspects to creating an enticing and educational outdoor living space for children. Your garden or green space should be an eclectic mix of adventure, productivity and creativity.

Claire Bickle introduces the first of a series of articles to create a lifetime of memories.



We can't grow that here - or can we?

Gardening in Sydney

There are a lot of myths regarding what can and cannot be grown in Sydney. At the top of the list are those plants regarded as being tropical. Sydney horticulturist **Helen Curran** clears the air on this hazy topic.

When thinking about creating a tropical garden in Sydney, we often think of what we would like to grow here but just can't. If only our winter temperatures were a bit higher and our summer temperatures more even...or if we lived in a tropical or subtropical climate; we could grow them. Yet with a changing climate there are many tropical plants that can now be grown in Sydney. Plants that only a decade or so ago would have died here.

The climate has been gradually changing in Sydney. The city

has expanded, with new suburbs being built first to the west and then to the south-west. Recently a large area to the north-west of the city has been developed, changing from open space to housing estates and shopping centres. This urban sprawl, the roads built to service these new suburbs, the motorways traversing throughout the city and the smaller housing blocks with large houses have all contributed to our changing climate – reflective heat, heat banks, pollution – the 'urban heat island' is happening and Sydney is getting hotter.

COMPOSTING - GETTING IT RIGHT

01

By Lockyer Organic Growers Inc.
Images David Grubb

Continuing on from last issue, this article investigates the problems that may occur in the compost heap and the implications for the soil and plants where poor or 'immature' compost is produced. This may often resemble mulch rather than a soil-conditioning compost.

Organic mulch Vs. good compost?

What is the difference between these two items? The particles of a **mulch** are generally large (greater than 16mm). This open structure allows water and air to penetrate readily, although the large particles reduce the microbial activity. Commercial composters separate their mulch product from the compost fines using screens. In home

composting, the soil fauna do the chewing to produce finer particles for the microbes.

Few home gardeners would deliberately set out to create mulch from their compost heap. This usually happens by 'default' through incomplete composting of the raw ingredients (the stock material).

A good soil conditioning **compost** will be made up of dark, water-loving (hydrophilic), fine material with none of the original stock material evident. All the critters, large and small, in the compost will have done their job. This may take up to six months and the final product can be applied to soil or potting mixes with confidence that nothing will go wrong.

02



Note: In home composts the beetle larvae should have become adults and moved on. If not, remove and feed to wildlife or chooks.

FINAL WORDS

By **Colin Campbell**

Just drive around any of Brisbane's older suburbs and take note of the size of the house in relation to the size of the yard and then make the same comparison in one of the newer developed suburbs. In the older suburbs there was room for a vegetable garden and a mango tree that kids could climb and build a tree house in without having to get a council permit to occupy. In the modern suburbs there is hardly room for a shrub or two, let alone a mango tree and a vegetable garden.

Little wonder then that there is concern being expressed at the diminishing habitat for suburban biodiversity and for the lack of easily accessible green spaces for children to play in and where working people can reconnect with nature.

There have been some interesting studies carried out in various parts of the world that indisputably demonstrate a positive link between the mental and psychological health of city dwellers and the provision of well maintained and attractive green spaces in which to relax and exercise. If the population of our cities and towns increases at the rate forecast by politicians and demographers, the provision of quality urban green space for high rise apartment dwellers becomes of paramount importance.

I know that State Government and some Local Governments are talking about creating more and more parkland but I sincerely hope they are also budgeting to continually maintain and improve them.

And finally, on another note, congratulations to *subTropical Gardening* magazine for 5 years of quality information aimed at gardeners in a climate mostly ignored by mainstream media. Long may it continue. **STG**



Image Claire Bickle

**NEXT
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▀ **BUYING PLANTS**

▀ **WATERLILIES**



▀ **FRUIT**