

subTropical Gardening

Ornamental Grasses

More Water Plants

**Longans, Lychees
& Rambutans**

Zucchini & Jicama

Turf Weeds

**local advice for
local gardeners**



GARDEN DESIGN
– sunbird + dreams



BOTANIC GARDENS
– volunteers



FAVOURITES
– flowering plants



CALENDAR
– what to do now

WELCOME....

Lifestyle – the way we live and garden

Summer now approaches and plants are preparing for the upcoming wet humid season of northern Australia with most tropical plants looking their best in the months to come.

Storms, cyclones and possibly even floods may occur. We can all minimise damage in the garden by pruning trees, growing more fine-leaved plants (they appear to tolerate hail damage far better) and cleaning up the garden by removing loose debris and furniture.

This issue we look at how the public engage in gardening with **Joanne Roberts'** article on Friends of Botanic Gardens and **Stephen Flood** looks at philodendrons.

Congratulations are extended to two of our contributors who won awards this month. **Arno King** won the 2011 Horticulturist of the Year for the Kim Walters Choices Project Wesley Hospital Brisbane, featured on p. 32. Occasional contributor **Colin Campbell** is the 2011 Golden Wattle Award recipient – the highest accolade in Australia for a horticulturist. Let's not forget that **subTropical Gardening** magazine won the 2011 Award of Merit – for excellence in horticultural media. The Australian Institute of Horticulture presented these awards in Canberra on 12th November this year.

Don't forget to join us on Facebook and also in the STG Community of our website www.stgmagazine.com.au/community *subTropical Gardening* – a lifetime of local advice. Happy reading!



Paul Plant – Editor

For more updated news about the magazine and what's happening, go to the Editor's Blog page...

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COVER

Sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*)
© Ross Gelling



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sunbird garden

The image shows a multi-level indoor garden. In the foreground, there's a white curved table and several bright orange metal chairs. The garden is filled with various tropical plants, including large green leaves and hanging vines. A wooden deck is visible in the middle ground, and the overall atmosphere is bright and modern.

Nestled behind the beautiful foreshore vegetation of Four Mile Beach, Port Douglas, is a glowing gem of tropical architecture. Garden designer and horticulturist **John Sullivan** takes us through the design of this impressive modern home. Images **Kym Joseph**.

10 FAVOURITES

Flowering pot plants



Claire Bickle MAIH
Horticulturist – Brisbane

Begonia hybrids and species – Cane Begonia
Epidendrum ibaguense – Crucifix Orchid
Eucharis grandiflora – Eucaris Lily
Neomarica caerulea – Blue Walking Iris
Viola tricolor cultivars – Garden Viola

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!



Helen Curran MAIH
Horticulturist – Sydney

Hibiscus rosa-sinensis 'Rosalind' – Rosalind Hibiscus
Mandevilla 'Aloha Regal Ruby' – Regal Ruby Mandevilla
Plumeria pudica – Hammerhead Frangipani
Plumeria rubra 'Denpasar' – Denpasar Frangipani
Plumeria stenophylla – White Magic Frangipani



Ross Gelling
Horticulturist – Townsville

Hippeastrum papilio – Butterfly Amaryllis
Impatiens walleriana – Impatiens
Lobelia trigonocaulis – Forest Lobelia
Phalaenopsis amabilis – Moth Orchid
Tacca leontopetaloides – Native Bat Plant



Joan Dillon MAIH
Horticulturist – Sunshine Coast

Boronia keysii – Key's Boronia
Isopogon anemonifolius – Drumsticks
Phebalium woombye – Phebalium
Philotheca difformis subsp. *smithiana* – Small Leaved Wax Flower
Tripladenia cunninghamii – Bush Lily



Carol Cameron
Horticulturist – Mackay

Begonia Semperflorens Group 'Thousand Wonders' – Bedding Begonias
Begonia x hybrid 'Dragon Wing' – Angel Wing Begonia
Hydrangea macrophylla cultivars – Hydrangea
Petunia hybrids – Petunia
Stevia rebaudiana – Sweet Leaf

ZUCCHINI

By Claire Bickle

Milk Spray...

Many gardeners apply a mixture of 10 parts water to 1 part milk and 1 teaspoon of baking soda to keep plants looking healthy. Badly diseased leaves are removed, then the remaining leaves are sprayed (top and under) every two days until healthy leaves are restored.

In Italy it is called 'Zucchini' and in France 'Courgette' and while we might have once used the French name, Zucchini has definitely become the norm in this country. No matter what you call this vegetable it is one of the easiest summer season vegetables to grow.

Generally eaten when 10 to 15 cm long. You can eat them when very young with flowers still attached and you can even eat the flowers on their own. Flowers are becoming all the rage in gourmet cuisine, especially stuffed with a delicate herb fetta and deep-fried. Leave the fruit on the plant for too long and you will end up with a monster marrow, which tastes rather woody and bland.

The Facts

The Zucchini (*Cucurbita pepo*) is classed as an annual vegetable, requiring replanting each year.

For the greatest success growing Zucchini in the subtropics, the best time of year to sow seeds is spring and summer. In tropical regions you can grow Zucchini during the drier months of the year; however, they suffer during prolonged wet, warm and humid weather. Zucchini detest the cold along with the other members of the Cucurbitaceae family: squash, cucumbers, marrow, pumpkins, gourds and melons.

Originating in the Americas, the Zucchini, after being brought back from the 'New World', was adopted by many countries for use in their national dishes. Today we find Zucchini in a variety of colours and even different shapes.

Culture

Sow seed or plant seedlings throughout spring and summer or responding to local climatic conditions. Seeds will germinate in 7 to 10 days and plants will start to set fruit in about 6 to 8 weeks. Zucchini are relatively quick growing. Generally their growth habit is less sprawling than other cucurbits with a single plant covering an area of roughly 1 m².

They require adequate amounts of organic matter added to the soil before planting and extra side dressings can be applied throughout the growing season. The soil pH should be roughly around neutral – 6.5-7.5.

Full sun is essential and mulching to retain soil moisture is recommended.

Consistent watering is also very important, especially when fruit is setting and forming. Inconsistent watering at this time will guarantee poor fruit development and possible fruit drop. It will also cause plant stress, leading to susceptibility to pest and disease attack. »

How to hand pollinate flowers...

Male flowers appear on long stalks and they generally outnumber the female flowers which have an obvious embryonic fruit at their base. Pick a male flower and then tear off the petals exposing the pollen bearing anthers and dab the pollen onto the tip of the female flower (the 'stigma').

Zucchini are an excellent source of Folic acid, Niacin, Vitamin A and C.

Recipes

The Native Hibiscus (*Hibiscus heterophyllus*) occurs along the eastern coast of Australia in New South Wales and Queensland. The petals can be used to make jam, drink and syrup. The flavour of the flowers and buds is very mild. Flowers only last for one day but if they are to be used at night, they can be picked as they begin to unfurl in the morning, then

stored in the refrigerator crisper. Removed in the late afternoon, they will open and stay fresh until well into the evening. The flowers make a colourful edible ornament for a salad. Buds can be pickled or boiled as a vegetable; flowers can be stuffed made into fritters or tea. If there are not enough blooms to make jam, syrup or drink, buds can be picked over 2-3 days and stored in the fridge until required.

All Recipes

Petals only from 10 large or 12 smaller hibiscus flowers:

1/4 cup of lemon juice

Detach petals from calyx and discard calyx. Chop petals finely and place in a very deep pyrex bowl.

Cover petals with lemon juice.

STG

Hibiscus Syrup

1 cup of boiling water
1 cup of sugar

Microwave* petals and lemon juice on high for 2 minutes. Place the water and sugar into a heavy-based saucepan and heat until sugar has dissolved. Add petals and lemon juice. Bring mix to the boil. Lower heat and simmer gently until the volume is reduced by a third (about an hour). Remove from heat and strain through a fine sieve to remove petals. Pour into a sterilised jar – will keep for 12 months if refrigerated.

Hibiscus Drink

1/2 cup of boiling water
1/2 cup of sugar

Microwave* petals and lemon juice on high for 2 minutes. Dissolve sugar in boiling water.

Add petals and lemon juice. Place in a 2 litre bottle and fill with cold water. Stir before drinking.

*Times based on 600 watts on high. Adjust times as needed.

Native Hibiscus Jam

1/2 cup of boiling water
2 cups of sugar

Microwave* petals and lemon juice on high for 4 minutes. Add boiling water and sugar and stir well. Cook 2 minutes then stir. Cook another 2 minutes, stir and then cook 2 minutes more and stir. Let cool for one hour.

When cool, cook for 2 minutes then stir. Test whether jam gels by placing a small amount on a cold plate. If needed, continue cooking but no more than 2 minutes at a time. Pour into a sterilised jar.

This recipe produces a rich red spread with the consistency of honey. It has a distinctive flavour and is delicious on toast or scones. Can be used as a glaze or diluted with white vinegar for sauces or marinades.

