THANK YOU!!  Due to an unprecedented response from some enthusiastic members, this month we have a really juicy newsletter that’s far more representative of our Club. Thank you to all those ‘hibernators’ and ‘self-isolators’ who got in touch. I'll expect good results next month too, so put your ‘thinking caps’ on. You can't say you don't have enough time! Here's our Up the Garden Path for this month:

Up the Garden Path …… by Karen England

Now that we are stuck at home and the weather is a fair bit kinder I have tossed aside my crochet hook and knitting needles for a spot of well-overdue gardening. I’m still a very basic gardener and have much to learn, especially the plant names. But once I’m out there I love it. I listen to music or podcasts on my trusty old iPod that was one of the best gifts I’ve ever received. I only wish the body was a little more willing and forgiving.

Last week I ordered a load of garden mulch (Cypress as it’s better against the termites) and some premium garden mix, in anticipation of being in lockdown.

This week I've dug out an old rockery garden that unfortunately was mainly clay. As the ground was fairly soft from all the rain I managed to dig out a good depth of the clay and replace it with a premium garden mix. The clay came in useful for filling in the subsidence from where our old septic tanks had been taken out.

I'm hoping I will still be able to pick up a few plants but I've been separating the ones I have and also have some seeds to raise in my little greenhouse.  

(cont. p.2)
Today I did a makeover on the garden bed under our carport and tomorrow I will be repotting and feeding all my hanging baskets over this garden. I have the hoya that I won at our Christmas party hanging there along with a matching one I received for my birthday from a couple of lovely friends.

We often buy each other unusual succulents. I got this curly looking one and what I think could be orchids with the old man’s beard from them too. I still need to finish weeding and mulching my mini orchard and my vegetable garden beds. Melvyn is making me a garden bed around my bird feeder post, hopefully this weekend.

Between the heat and all the knitting and crocheting I’ve been doing for my new grandson Maxwell, my garden was very neglected. Is it classed as exercise if I go to my son’s house and weed their back garden? My reward would be lots of baby Bromeliads and seeing my new grandson at a distance on their very high balcony above. (Any idea what this one is? - right)

All the best from our house to yours
Cheers Karen 🌿🌻🌿

What’s your favourite?

Over these last few weeks, members on our email list have received a challenge to tell me their favourite flower, and to send a photo too if possible. (I had been worried that our newsletter would be too sparse because for some months we will have no minutes to ‘pad out’ our newsletter, and as we are currently meant to be hibernating, the ‘cupboard’ could get quite bare!) So for all of you who receive the newsletter by post – it’s your turn. Just give me a call, and I’ll transcribe it for our June issue.

Thank you to those who have responded to provide inspiration and content, and some funny stories. I have also rung a few people who only receive the newsletter in the post, and I have included their comments.

Elizabeth Teo was the first to reply, sending me a text and some photos. Great work! (See page 3)

My favourite flower is the Lisianthus. They have a wonderful old world charm. (At right) My son’s first attempt at an oil painting was a Lisianthus for me.

Karen England

From Laurie Forth

(Left) This is my Croton plant. With the sun on it, it is like stained glass. I use a cutting from it for my Christmas table decoration then allow it to shoot in water and I give the new plants to friends.

Stay safe everyone. Laurie
From Brian Dunston:

Brian’s favourite is the **dogwood**, a small tree covered with blossom in spring. (Remember our Club visit this time last year?)

Brian and Wendy have dogwoods dotted all over their property. Wendy said that their dahlias were wonderful this year, until the wind took a toll. (Photo courtesy of Wikipedia)

Brian shared a funny story that is quite topical at the moment, with people going crazy stockpiling toilet paper. When the Dunston’s visited Norfolk Island they were told about the ‘toilet paper tree’ that grows there, which has large very soft leaves: if things get desperate, we could all order cuttings, and grow our own toilet paper!

From Helen Potts:

Helen has been enjoying her beautiful roses, or was, at least until the heavy rain and high winds. Now she is content with her **aloes** in pots, which are flowering at the moment. (Right – photo by Wikipedia)

From Cath Delaney:

For no particular reason, I’m nominating my very blue **Louisiana iris** with a bearded friend (right) and a **cactus** (below) that is worth waiting a year for. They need splitting up, so maybe there will be some available later.

From Shirley Seale:

My favourite plant is the **bromeliad** which was moved here four years ago, straight into the branched of the olive tree (right). It has flourished, not like the strelitzia, which has sulked and never flowered since. I also love the purple and yellow **hippeastrum**, given to me as a bulb, put in a pot and forgotten until this year when it bloomed and surprised me. (See left)

From Elizabeth Teo

My favourite tree in my garden is the **Chinese elm**. (Right) It gave so much shade, but alas after drought and rain, half the tree is gone. This is my pretty creeper, a **Flaming Spider Lily**. (Far right)
From Ann Chilman

Two of my favourite herbs are Sweet Basil (French) and Tarragon (Russian) are flourishing and I love using them as flavouring in my cooking.

From Louise Johnson

The plants in my garden deserving a gold star are Zephyranthes candida (rain lily) (see above left). For most of the year it is a tuft of short, grassy foliage, with pretty white flowers in late summer or early autumn. The drought busting rain this year has resulted in an abundance of flowering, making a much more impressive display than usual, and flowering for longer than usual - they are still flowering now.

Small garden larks

by Ann Chilman

During a pre-Christmas trip to Cosco with my daughter, I was foolish enough to ask as we looked at a selection of statues - “Do people really buy those?”

I can now answer - “Yes they do.” I am the living proof. Such a thoughtful family gift!

Unfortunately, while I was on my holiday my angel had a nasty fall. Fortunately, unlike Venus de Milo who has no arms, she at least has one arm, and gazes serenely over my small patch.

Along with this treasure came a large flower (see right) of unknown classification - a sad comment on my gardening skills. However it was no trouble over the hot dry summer - it’s the rain that caused deterioration. Neither does my large black hen (far right) require much attention.

This small garden lark really works. Ann

McGrath’s Hill Florist

Arrangements, Gift baskets, Helium Balloons, Bouquets
Open 364½ Days a Year
8 am to 7 pm Mon - Sat 9 am - 5 pm Sun & Public Hols

All major credit cards accepted over the phone
Local Deliveries (7 Days) Worldwide Deliveries (Interflora)

Paul & Elizabeth Fraser
Peppertree Centre 3A/211 Windsor Road, McGraths Hill 2756

Phone (02) 4577 5863 (www.mcgrathshillflorist.com.au) Email: info@mcgrathshillflorist.com.au
Rainbow Eucalyptus (Eucalyptus deglupta) by Louise Johnson

This stunning tree is native to the moist, humid, tropical forest areas with high rainfall in New Guinea, Indonesia and the Philippine Islands, and is the only eucalyptus that is indigenous to the northern hemisphere. In its native habitat, it will grow to 76m tall, with a trunk diameter of 1.8m. It can grow more than 0.9m in a year. Tiny white flowers bloom at various times during the year, depending on the location.

As the rainbow eucalyptus sheds, it first reveals a bright green inner bark. Over time, this ages into different colours—blue, purple, orange, and maroon. The colourful striations are caused by the fact that the tree doesn't shed all at once. Slowly, over time, different layers fall off, while other exposed areas have already begun aging.

The tree will sometimes emit a smog-like mist of vaporized volatile organic compounds called terpenoids. This mist can have an other-worldly quality in a forest of these trees during the warm summer months. The fragrance of the tree is pleasant with a clean, earthy aroma that is used in perfumes.

Rainbow Eucalyptus are planted as ornamental trees in frost-free climates such as Hawaii, Southern California, Texas and Louisiana. In these places they will not reach the towering heights of their native habitat, growing to 30.5-38m.

The sheer size of this tree makes it unsuitable for the average back yard, and it can cause property damage. Its roots can break footpaths and damage foundations etc. It is best suited to large properties or parks, where it has the space to grow unobstructed, and its magnificence can be more easily appreciated.

In the Philippines it is the dominant species grown for pulpwood, which is used for making white paper.

WARNING – ALL BIRD LOVERS BEWARE!

(With special apologies to Shirley Seale)

From Susan Fennelly (as in recent email to members)
"After listening to our recent guest speaker, Ken Fraser, (where he said make sure you place your water and feeders in a safe place away from predators) imagine our horror when my husband (thankfully I was in Queensland) heard squawking and looked up on our verandah (outside our bedroom) to witness an escaped (or dumped) Centralian carpet python devouring a male king parrot!

He called a snake catcher who, after half an hour of wrestling a very aggressive snake, managed to only get bitten a couple of times before loading him in a box. Needless to say the birds haven’t been fed from the feeder lately!"

Sue Robertson sent her story in reply:

Must be that time of the year! Took my dogs down to the back paddock to pick up fallen branches and sticks. Was just making my way over to a rather black looking stick when I realised it was a 3 ft long Red Belly Black snake, head raised and waiting!

Managed to call the dogs away before they saw it and it slithered off into the neighbour’s property. First (and hopefully last) snake I’ve seen this season. Broke the land speed record getting back to the house yard!
• Ruth Knight (our co-ordinator) is ‘chafing at the bit’ to get going with the Open Day as soon as is possible. She is patiently looking after her ‘orphans’ until the time arrives.
• John Jones is doing well at Rivera, Richmond (Hi John!). His wife Chesne tells me he is enjoying catching up with us when he receives the newsletter each month.
• NEXT MONTH’S MTGC ISSUE will be an international one, with columns by Betty Noordhuis and Sue Robertson. Don’t forget to email me your favourite flower or plant (or phone it in). I’ll pop it in next time!

**A message from Garden Club President, Ann Chilman**

Hi! Fellow members and ‘internees’ - how fortunate we are to have a garden at this time! All that hard work is making a rewarding escape oasis (or are you thinking of all the work needing to be done?).

I hope that you and your families are safe and well, that you are suitably occupied and entertained, and not too stressed.

I look forward to the time when life returns to “normal” and we are able to resume our usual activities and social interaction.

My best regards to you all, Ann

---

**From the editor:** Life has changed so quickly hasn’t it! But I’m pretty sure all of you are pretty good at soldiering on and are resilient, and resourceful in finding plenty of things to do. I for one have been planting out 95% of my Open Day plants, and consequently my garden is looking lush and abundant for a change. Unfortunately the cow manure I’ve been spreading everywhere is very potent, and I’m looking forward to that dissipating!

I’m still hoping for some more ‘Favourites’, either by mail, text or email, so don’t be shy. See what people can do when they make the effort! Hope you enjoy the shared stories. Please keep them coming.

Enclosed with our posted newsletters (or emailed to those who have email) is a list of members and phone numbers. If you’re comfortable, why not ring some unfamiliar names and say hello? Many people in our Club live on their own and it’s a great time to extend the hand of friendship and make connection with fellow gardener lovers. Sit down with the phone and a cuppa and call it afternoon tea at the Garden Club! We have lots of new faces that would appreciate it I’m sure!

*All best wishes from the Committee and from me*

---

**Garden Club Calendar**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7th May</td>
<td>Suspended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th June</td>
<td>Suspended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29th June</td>
<td>Tuesday – Outing to ‘Rondian’, Blaxlands Ridge – suspended</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Normal meeting time - 2.00 p.m. in the Tebbutt Room in the Deerubbin Centre, Windsor Central Library*  
*Visit our website [http://macquarietownsgardenclub.wordpress.com](http://macquarietownsgardenclub.wordpress.com)*

**Office Bearers & Committee Members for 2019-2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Ann Chilman</td>
<td>4588 8651</td>
<td><a href="mailto:annchilman@hotmail.com">annchilman@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Louise Johnson</td>
<td>4588 5717</td>
<td><a href="mailto:stephenandlouise@bigpond.com">stephenandlouise@bigpond.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary / Editor</td>
<td>Jill Storrie</td>
<td>4575 3858</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ardlui3@bigpond.net.au">ardlui3@bigpond.net.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Helen Potts</td>
<td>4577 9950</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>Kay Brand</td>
<td>4572 5787</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pat Berry</td>
<td>4573 1532</td>
<td><a href="mailto:patriciaberry1@bigpond.com">patriciaberry1@bigpond.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Karen England</td>
<td>4576 5368</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ruffreds@gmail.com">ruffreds@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ruth Knight</td>
<td>4571 1718</td>
<td><a href="mailto:curlyrichmond@bigpond.com">curlyrichmond@bigpond.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Afternoon Tea Convenor - Malcolm Tidman*