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subTropical **Gardening**

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Children's Gardens
Composting
Living
Christmas Trees
Native Mint
Best Garden
Books 2010

local advice for
local gardeners



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– for wildlife



FEATURE
– buying plants



FRUIT & VEG
– cumquats + beans



CALENDAR
– Nov / Dec / Jan



Children's Gardens

Sow • Grow • Harvest • Eat



10 FAVOURITES PLANTS THAT LOVE THE HEAT

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!



Claire Bickle MAIH
Horticulturist – Brisbane

Brachychiton rupestris – Queensland Bottle Tree
Euphorbia milii – Crown of Thorns
Kalanchoe beharensis – Elephant's Ear Kalanchoe
Lampranthus aureus
(syn. *Mesembryanthemum aureum*) – Pig Face
Pachypodium lamerei – Madagascar Palm



Catherine Hewitt
Horticulturist – Brisbane

Brachychiton rupestris – Queensland Bottle Tree
Eremophila maculata subsp. *brevifolia* – Spotted Emu Bush
Grevillea 'John Evans' – 'John Evans' Grevillea
Melaleuca thymifolia 'Cotton Candy' – Cotton Candy
Ozothamnus diosmifolius – Riceflower



John Sullivan MAIH
Horticulturist – Port Douglas

Tournefortia argentea (syn. *Argusia argentea*) – Tree Heliotrope
Beaucarnea recurvata – Ponytail Tree, Elephant Foot Tree
Cochlospermum gillivraei – Native Kapok Tree
Dioon spinulosum – Mexican Dioon
Pachypodium lamerei – Madagascar Palm



Joan Dillon MAIH
Horticulturist – Sunshine Coast

Acacia aneura – Mulga
Barringtonia calyptata – Cassowary Pine
Eremophila macdonnellii – MacDonnell's Desert Fuchsia
Rhagodia spinescens – Berry Saltbush
Senna artemisioides subsp. *filifolia* – Desert Cassia



Graeme Byrne
Horticulturist – Cairns

Beaucarnea recurvata – Ponytail Palm, Elephant Foot Tree
Bombax ceiba – Red Silk Floss Tree
Brachychiton rupestris – Queensland Bottle Tree
Bromelia balansae – Heart of Fire
Handroanthus chrysanthus subsp. *chrysanthus*
(syn. *Tabebuia chrysantha*) – Yellow Trumpet Flower

CLIMBING VEGETABLES

Every garden needs to have a spot for climbing vegetables. **Arno King** takes a look at some of the hardiest summer garden vegetables that are the most productive per square metre of soil – particularly relevant to today's smaller gardens.

01

One of the most important elements is the provision of a support on which to climb. There are many options and selection should be based on the type of vegetables you intend to grow, the space you have available and your budget.

Many support structures can be highly ornamental, and make the vegetable garden an area of great beauty. Consider using bamboo, timber and old branches rather than some of the less aesthetic options such as chicken wire.



02

Stakes

Simple stakes are often the best way to support smaller climbing, be it a single tomato or a cucumber plant. The range of materials available is endless.

Teepees

Teepees are quick to assemble and can be quite ornamental in the garden. Use three or more garden stakes, bamboo canes, fallen branches dug into the ground at least 200mm and secured at the top with garden string or wire. Supports should be at least 1.8m long and taller for more vigorous plants.

Teepees are especially good for beans, Mexican gherkins and miniature pumpkins.

Frames and Trellis

These are the most popular climbing structures. They are easy to construct and take up little

space. They can also be used as boundary fences to keep out vermin or provide shelter for other vegetables.

They can be constructed from bamboo, timber, or fencing wire. Traditionally garden string was a popular material used vertically between two horizontal timbers. At the end of the season the string could be cut and both plants (often beans) and the string could readily be removed and composted.

These are great supports for beans, cucumbers, luffas, cucumbers, chokos and New Guinea beans.

Horizontal Trellis

Horizontally placed trellis is ideally suited to plants that sprawl. They keep the plants and fruit off the ground to ensure there is air circulation in order to minimise fungal and bacterial problems.

CREEPERS/ GROUNDCOVERS

Botanical

Ficus rotundifolia 'Green Island'

Common

Green Island Fig

Family

Moraceae

Native to Green Island off the Coast of Singapore where it grows among eroded coral rock not far from the sea, *Ficus rotundifolia* 'Green Island' has become a popular landscape plant for beachside gardens, resorts and parks.

It has a naturally spreading form which makes it ideal to treat as a groundcover or prostrate shrub clinging close to the soil, rocks or to cascade over an embankment. It can also be grown as an upright shrub to 1m when pruned.

Leaves are a delightful emerald green colour and more orbicular (roundish) with a blunt tip. As is typical with many *Ficus* plants, stems close to the ground tend to produce adventitious roots and naturally layer themselves as they spread as a ground cover. This also makes propagation easy.

As a groundcover, Green Island Fig creates an attractive green mass of leaves that is a complement to a garden full of colour.



BEST GROWING CONDITIONS

- full sun to part shade
- excellent drainage required
- adapted to a range of soil types but appreciates fertile organically enriched soils
- mulch enhances growth rate.

LANDSCAPE USE

- Mass planted as a groundcover.
- Ideal to cascade over retaining walls or down embankments.
- Bonsai.
- Potted plant for patios and balconies.
- Indoor plant.