

Leeches Everywhere

By Julia Hamilton

Due to the prolonged moist and warm weather we've been experiencing, there have been quite a few occasions where we've picked up leeches on our outings. Even our dog will come home with leeches attached between her toes.

Leeches cause unwarranted fear in many people. When they latch onto skin, their bite is almost undetectable and usually painless. They introduce an anticoagulant so that they can feed on the victim's blood. When the leech has engorged itself it falls off.

On rare occasions a leech bite may result in an infection or allergy and warrant medical attention. There is no evidence that jawed leeches transmit disease.

Removal of the leech:

Remain calm, a leech will usually fall off within 20 minutes of attachment without any treatment and is often recommended as it has the minimal chance for infection.

If you feel that you need to remove the leech, the application of salt, salt water or vinegar to the leech will cause it to fall off. A drawback from these approaches is that the leech may regurgitate and possibly lead to an infection.

DO NOT be tempted to pull the leech off as you may tear the skin and lead to ulceration or parts of the leech's jaw may remain embedded, increasing the chances of infection.

Applying heat to the leech (e.g. a hot coal or lit cigarette) is not recommended as it may result in unintentional burns to the patient.

Treatment:

- After the leech has detached, wash the area with soap and water
- Apply pressure if there is bleeding from the bite
- Do not be alarmed by bleeding as it is usually the result of the anti-coagulant
- Apply a cold pack if there is significant pain or swelling
- Resist the urge to scratch the bite, it can increase chance of infection and the size of the wound
- Seek medical attention if bleeding does not stop in a reasonable time or the area becomes infected or if a wound or ulcer develops.

What to watch out for:

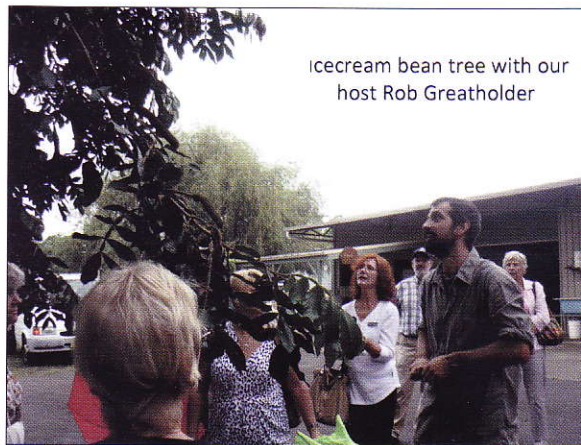
Even if you have had leech bites in the past, watch for the following symptoms as they may indicate a serious allergic or anaphylactic reaction which will require urgent medical attention:

- Red blotches on the skin or an itchy rash over the body
- Swelling in parts of the body away from the bite area, especially the lips and around the eyes
- Feeling faint, light-headed or dizzy
- Breathing difficulties: wheeze, shortness of breath, chest tightness

Contact us: StillCreekLandcare@iinet.net.au, ph: 9653 2056.
Look us up on Facebook or StillCreekLandcare.com.au.



Galston Garden Club



Icecream bean tree with our host Rob Greatholder

Nearly forty members and friends of Galston Garden Club enjoyed visiting two most interesting properties on Wednesday 26th March.

We met at 10am at the home of Ken and Jenny Bradley at Dural. Ken is President of the Garden Clubs of Australia. Jenny is the keen gardener, and Ken claims he married her for her gardening skills so he would have a lovely garden! Jenny's family grew citrus at Kulnura, so there were quite a few different citrus all heavily laden and looking healthy. Crown Land adjoins their property, so Ken is planting a back paddock with local native plants. We ended our 1st garden with a delicious morning tea.

Next stop was Warrah Farm at 20 Harris Road, Dural. The thirty acre property is a school and residence for over 100 intellectually disabled people, some of whom have lived there for over forty years. The farm area is run on bio-dynamic organic principles. Rob Greatholder showed us around the farm area, which is being upgraded. We admired the large vegetable and herb area, the hens, two cows and three alpacas. A tree new to most of us was the Ice Cream Bean Tree (*Inga edulis*). Warrah Farm has a farm shop open to the public Monday to Friday, so many of us bought fruit, vegetables and jams.

After such an interesting morning, it was definitely time for lunch at the Wild Pear Café. As always, it is wonderful to visit different gardens, so many thanks to Diana de Vries and the Social Committee.

The April meeting welcomed our guest speaker Bruce Skeen on the subject of 'Amazing Chrysanthemums'. He stressed that when purchasing check to see if there are any new shoots coming from the soil. If there aren't then the plant will probably kick the bucket after the current flowering season finishes. Unfortunately the large showy varieties we used to see years ago can no longer be imported into the eastern states due to government restrictions and now they can only be viewed at the chrysanthemum show in Perth.

Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 14th May at 8pm at the Galston Community Centre, 37 Arcadia Rd, Galston, where members will be entertained by Mickey Robertson, explaining how she set about making her lovely garden, including an amazing kitchen garden at Glenmore House in the foothills of the Razorback Range near Camden.

We also have a trading table with a variety of plants for sale, and a large selection of books that can be borrowed from our library. **Visitors are always welcome.** For information on any of our activities contact Kate Stanley on 9653 2202 or check out our website - www.galstongardenclub.com.au, or email galstongarden@hotmail.com

**GLENORIE
GROWERS'
MARKET**
All Enquiries
0423 727 826
glenori growers@gmail.com

2014
May
Sunday 25th
June
Sunday 22th