

# A busy month ahead for all Top Enders

## MAYORAL MATTERS

Darwin Mayor  
**KATRINA FONG LIM**



I LOOK forward to the Darwin Festival every year.

This event is widely recognised as the premier arts festival for the Top End of Australia and the council is excited to continue to offer its support.

The festival is a great coup for our city and we are delighted to annually host this popular event, one that appeals to all corners of our community, with international, national and local performances, exhibitions and events representing the multicultural diversity of our city.

I am looking forward to seeing Civic Park once again transform into a glittery, festive, exciting location that brings our city to life.

August is Seniors Month and the council has put together a program of events to promote active ageing.

The long list of activities aims to get the community

involved in a range of events that develop a positive understanding of ageing.

All events are free for NT Seniors cardholders and every year we see great attendance.

This year's program includes smart device classes, swing dancing, ebooks classes, drama classes, lawn bowls, Happiness with Tai Chi,

photography classes, laughter yoga and a special evening at the Deckchair Cinema.

Bookings are essential for all activities. To download the flyer, visit the website.

Don't forget we are seeking feedback on our Draft Street Food Policy.

This policy will ensure our approach to street food reflects the community's needs as street food grows in popularity and demand.

Council is looking to promote an active, vibrant street food culture in Darwin.

Have your say at [darwin.nt.gov.au/streetfood](http://darwin.nt.gov.au/streetfood)

# Tropical stunner creates vibrant scene

## LET'S GARDEN

with **JENNY WARD**



TROPICAL flowers are some of the most stunning in the floral world, especially when they tick all the boxes for vibrant colour, attractiveness, variety, longevity and beauty.

*Alpinia purpurata*, more commonly known as red ginger, is a familiar sight in tropical gardens, standing erect with long spikes called bracts. The white flower itself is small and insignificant and sits on top of the eye-catching bracts.

Red gingers look great growing side by side with the equally attractive pink ginger, which has the same growing habits.

Native to Malaysia, these two gingers are some of the most commonly grown and have a spreading but clumping growth habit that does not get out of hand too quickly.

They are not excessively rampant or vigorously invasive and can be managed by cutting out the outer rhizomes and transplanting elsewhere.

If you are planting in a garden bed, place toward the centre rather than the edges, to give it room to grow and make an impact as a central feature.

Although they can be grown in sun, red gingers do better in a filtered-light area or

part shade and can reach a height of approximately 2m. Darwin sun can be harsh, and will sometimes give plants a washed-out appearance. I tend to err on the side of at least a little shade for some plants, especially where "full sun" is recommended, as that can mean something quite different in our climate.

The red ginger loves water and will show the effects if not grown in an ideal spot in the garden. They can be grown in large pots or containers, but are truly best suited to growing in the ground for a bigger impact.

They are the perfect cut flower and will last for several days in a vase. Propagation is by severing a section of rhizome from the base of the clumping plant and ensuring you have some of the root system intact.

Alternatively, leave the flower spike on the plant until it starts to die off, at which stage you will see new plantlets sprouting. Cut these off in small clusters and pot in moderate to fine potting mix.

As with all plants, if you grow gingers in suitable conditions where they are well watered, fertilised and mulched, you will be rewarded.

Red gingers look stunning in tropical gardens.

### SPECIAL ADVERTISING PROFILE



## COOLmob

# Stay cool this build-up

"I have lived in Darwin for 15 years and this is the first time I feel cool and comfortable during the wet season in my home" says Mieme, one of the 380 participants already benefiting from Smart Cooling in the Tropics, delivered by The Environment Centre's COOLmob program.

COOLmob's Smart Cooling in the Tropics is a unique and free energy assistance program for low income households in Greater Darwin.

"We're excited that this project is trialling solutions that could support hundreds of Territorians to reduce their energy use and stay cool in the hot and humid tropics", says Project Manager Jessica Steinborner.

"The project is receiving lots of positive

feedback, with participating householders reporting that they are now feeling much cooler and more comfortable in their homes", says Ms Steinborner.

**"If you struggled through this last wet season with your electricity bills, we strongly encourage you to contact us to check your eligibility."**

Over 330 hundred houses have been assessed and provided with solutions including fly-screen cleaning and

replacement, pedestal fans, sealing of poorly installed box air conditioners, shade sails and air conditioner clean and servicing.

"Along with the behaviour change assistance provided by COOLmob, participating householders are combining new knowledge with the complimentary services to stay cool and lower their costs".

If you receive an approved Centrelink payment or have a low income healthcare card, live in Greater Darwin and are not living in public housing, then you may be eligible for the program.

"If you struggled through this last wet season with your electricity bills and the heat, we strongly encourage you to

contact us to check your eligibility."

"With as little as 2 months left to take advantage of this great opportunity we want to hear from you now as have only 100 places remaining."

COOLmob Smart Cooling in the Tropics is a project of the Environment Centre NT, the Territory's peak community environment group. The project is funded by the Australian Government.

Contact the COOLmob energy assessment team to check your eligibility on **8981 3642** or visit us on [www.coolmob.org](http://www.coolmob.org)