

## HELEN YOUNG

TWIG



**My roses have neat, circular holes along the edges but I just cannot find a pest of any type, night or day.**

**Jan Mawson, Urunga, NSW**

This distinctive leaf damage is the work of leaf-cutting bees, which use leaf pieces to make their cigar-shaped nests, tucked into cracks in fences or brickwork. They are important pollinators so the (usually minor) damage should be tolerated.

**Council chopped down our nature strip trees that were interfering with the power lines. What native trees can we plant that won't be too tall?**

**Philip Cunningham, Sydney**

Legally, the nature strip is council land and councils are responsible for new plants, so check what your council's plans are. In practice, many home owners adopt their nature strips and you could plant a bottlebrush (*Callistemon*), a dwarf eucalypt such as the showy 'Summer Red', willow myrtle (*Agonis flexuosa*), lemon-scented tea tree (*Leptospermum petersonii*) or *Acmena* 'Goodbye Sunshine', a small lillypilly.

**My neighbour's large banksia looks fine except that one branch has died. What action is required?**

**Jacoba Evans, Melbourne**

A borer may be responsible; check for holes or sawdust-like material. Borers tend to attack trees weakened by stresses such

as old age, prolonged drought or a change in soil levels near it. Investigate possible causes and try to improve the growing conditions.

**Could we move an established wisteria so we can roof the pergola it covers?**

**Martin Barrett, by email**

It's possible to move your wisteria in winter when it's dormant if you have a new position with a large, strong support where you want a rampant climber. Suckers will likely sprout from the remaining roots; paint these with glyphosate as they emerge in spring. Alternatively, cut the wisteria as hard as you like to install the roof and train the inevitably strong regrowth on cables offset from the fascia board. Keep the wisteria rigorously trained on this. It may take a few years to flower well again.

## Flora



THERE'S a lot more to aloes than therapeutic *Aloe vera*. A new range of hybrids offers stunning flowers, dramatic foliage and sculptural shapes, all in a low-maintenance, bird-attracting

package. *Aloe* 'Erik the Red' is available here from late May, in a world first. It forms a single stem to 2m bearing rosettes of sword-shaped leaves with decorative but soft spines. In winter, blood red, torch-like flowers glow above the statuesque form. Full sun with free-draining, fertile soil is best but it's adaptable to most conditions. It's ideal in garden beds where root space is restricted or as a feature pot plant. [www.aloe-aloe.com.au](http://www.aloe-aloe.com.au).

Send your questions to: Helen Young, PO Box 3098, Willoughby North, NSW 2068, or email [helenyoungtwig@gmail.com](mailto:helenyoungtwig@gmail.com). April's best letter was from Colin Rowley of Melbourne. May's prize is \$100 worth of new hybrid aloes from Aloe-Aloe Horticulture ([www.aloe-aloe.com.au](http://www.aloe-aloe.com.au)).

