

GROWER PROFILE: MEET WAYNE & KRISTIN DELLAWAY

The Dellaways are a husband & wife farming team with a mixed vine property in the Glass House Mountains, nestled in the shadows of Mount Tibrogargan. Along with their passionfruit vines, the couple have a hectare of another South American native – the choko.

Tucked away behind native trees and nestled right at the base of Mount Tibrogargan, you would never know the Dellaway's farm was there were it not for the farm gate stall selling their fresh produce direct to the passers-by, including hundreds of trekkers who flock to their piece of paradise at the weekends to wander the trails in the adjacent National Park.

Wayne and Kristin have been growing passionfruit on trellis at the farm for the last 3 ½ years and they currently have 660 vines, surprisingly all the Pandora variety which is an uncommon choice for the Sunshine Coast. Kristin admits she loves the fragrance of the Pandora when its in full flower, "its such a nice place to be, under the shade of the vines in the middle of summer." Kristin says that the flowers from different varieties of passionfruit have different smells and not just the fruit itself.

The flexibility that you have as a farmer is one of the aspects that the Dellaway family enjoys, and the children benefit from this. Their teenage girls help on the farm at the weekends when they're not tied up with school stuff and homework, and their 4-year-old son is a regular out in the orchard picking fruit or cruising the farm on the tractor with Dad.

What one thing have they learnt about in their growing time that would have been helpful to new growers?

Wayne highlights that a good fertiliser programme would have been very handy to have as a guide to get them started. This is always a challenging area as each grower develops their own favourite products and ways of managing nutrition for their farm, and often sees this as part of their 'secret formula' for success.

Life could have been very different for Wayne. As a young man he was a very talented golfer and had he not signed on for an apprenticeship that took away his free time, he may well have trod the pro-golfer track. Qualifying as a fitter and turner from his apprentice days, Wayne has also worked as an underground coal miner in Glenden - West of Mackay. The difference could not be starker between his mining days spent fully underground and his farming days now spent fully outdoors in the fresh air.

Conventional wisdom says Pandora don't yield well in SEQ? Why choose them?

Wayne chose Pandora as he had ready access to high quality seed from an uncle who grows them in the SEQ area also. Getting the planting timing right has been tricky, and last October the Dellaways

were struck by the same freak hailstorm that wiped out one local growers' whole new planting. Wayne's plants are all on overhead trellis and the plants had already reached the top wire when the hail hit. Luckily, they weren't stripped bare, but the hail damage and the subsequent wet period straight after made it difficult to get out with a decent coating of copper on the cut vines paving the way for disease to creep in. Although the plants fruited from late March onwards, the vigour in the vines just hasn't been there and the plants have been more susceptible to fungal spot diseases this winter.

Just like many other growers with adjacent natural bush and neighbouring Macadamia properties, Wayne struggles with Spotting bugs. Hopefully the guide and identification poster in this edition will help him to monitor the life stages more closely and only spray when absolutely necessary to keep the damaging population numbers down.

Kristin enjoys being a stay-at-home farming Mum, although we all know that the combination of farming and parenthood doesn't leave much time for anything else. I do hear that Kristin is a tremendous cook of all things Italian so we might be angling for a long Italian lunch table invite under the shade of those lovely vines this summer!

