

NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Struth,
it's 2014 already



Friends,

Welcome back to Preston Garden Club in 2014, and what a wonderful year it is shaping up to be. Here before you is your first newsletter for the year, and in a few days- time, on January 22nd we have our first meeting of the year, where you will be able to watch the official video of the 2013 Centenary Chelsea Flower Show in London, where Wes Fleming's display won the Gold Medal for overall Best Exhibit in show for Australia. What a wonderful effort that was by Flemings, and I was fortunate enough to be there to see the display with my own eyes!

Your committee is working hard, with plans to make this year – the year of Preston Garden Club's 80th anniversary one to remember.

An interesting variety of speakers has already been booked for our monthly meetings for the whole year; Robert Strugnell is back from China for a few weeks and is planting up a new hanging basket

for us to enter in the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show again this year. Last year our entry won third prize. This year Robert says that we have to do better.

John Mathie has all the plans in place for a great bus trip on 6th April, and we are busy preparing the show schedule for our show on 22nd March.

If all goes according to plan, Dennis Zietzman from the Dahlia Society has promised to put on a dazzling display of colourful dahlias, which will fill one side of the hall. The rest of us need to do our best to fill the rest of the hall with amazing exhibits, so start pampering your plants now.

All of the above is just the start of the year. Later in the year plans are under way to make our agenda explode with excitement as we celebrate our 80th anniversary on August 27th.

Whatever you do, don't miss out on any of our year of excitement. I look forward to seeing you all again on 22nd. Bill.

JANUARY MEETING

Please note the meeting on the **22nd January** will be held in the **City Hall** due to Australia Day Celebrations in the Shire Hall.

MEMBERS NEWS

Our condolences to Jack Redman and family on the sad passing of Grace on the 14th December.

AUTUMN BUS TRIP SUNDAY

6TH APRIL 2014

COST - \$30.00 includes entrance fee to 2 Gardens. Morning Tea & Coffee supplied.

BYO Lunch & folding chair or stool.

Coach leaving Preston Town Hall-Gower street 9.00AM SHARP.

On way 2 or 3 games of free bingo (prizes to winners)

1. Woodend information Centre. Morning Tea & visit to Bourkies Bakery. (Yummy Vanilla Slices)

2. THE GARDEN OF LIXOURI - Barker's Creek Castlemaine.

Lixouri is reminiscent of a rural property in Greece or Italy. The house and garden look out onto rolling hills and the long established olive grove. The garden is terraced with beautiful stone walls, steps and gravel paths overlooking a tranquil dam fringed with water iris, willow birch and white gums. In front the mud brick house established wisteria, roses and grapevine provide deep shade from the summer sun and an adobe wall with a superb wrought iron gate by Trefor Prest joins the house to the outbuildings.

A wonderful mixture of softly flowering plants and beautiful formal shapes together with skilful blending of exotic Mediterranean and native species compliment the formal structure of the garden. Open to the public at various times during garden festivals, Lixouri is a must visit garden.

BYO Lunch in the Garden.

3. HEDGEHOGS GARDEN - Barker's Creek Castlemaine.

'Hedgehogs' is a 3 acre garden. The garden comprises many diverse areas, from a Mediterranean style walled garden surrounding a pond with Medlar, Robina, Salvias, Phlomis, Roses, Abutilon Exocordia to a native stone garden with granite boulders and native plants and grasses.

One of the features is a wonderful granite pond built by Gordon Ford which is a melody of frogs for many months of the year. One can amble along the gravel path, take in the sculptures, look at the ponds, the stone walls or the small dam or just sit on the rocks or seats placed within the garden. There is a "Secret Garden" surrounding an old Malus Purpurea, many wonderful sculptures within the garden. Also one finds a considerable use of metal works built by the owners, such as gates tables, seating, arbours and archways.

For the rose lover there are old climbing roses as well as a picking bed and corner plantings in the vegetable area. Within the garden there is a wood-fire pizza oven besides an eating area situated just above a new in-ground fenced spa. One section of the garden is devoted to food growing including a large enclosed prolific orchard, an enclosed berry house, a grape and iris walkway, a vegetable area, a walled citrus area with eggplants and peppers, a fig tree and potting shed. Other features in this

designed garden include a Sedum and Coryline bed, besides all this the beautiful stone walls, the many birds give a sense of the beauty of nature.

Visit a Nursery in Woodend on way home depending on time.

Board coach at 4.30pm and settle back for your relaxing journey home.

JANUARY IN THE GARDEN

Now that summer has finally arrived one of the most important tasks is to keep the garden well watered at all times. I like to water trees and larger shrubs and plants by leaving a hose trickle for an hour or two once a week if the weather is hot and dry. For seedlings and small plants a daily water is needed to help get them established.

I find lettuce needs water daily, sometimes twice if the weather is hot. Emerging seeds like carrot, beetroot, parsnip and even seedlings need close attention if the weather is really hot. Mulching is great if one can keep the birds from spreading it and smothering small plants.

I will be sowing more carrots, beetroot, sweet corn, silver beet and French Beans this month to keep up a supply of vegetables well into Autumn and Winter.

Tomatoes will need plenty of tying up to keep the ripening fruit well off the ground later in the season.

Once potatoes have started to turn yellow it is a good idea to start to dig the tubers as leaving in the ground for too long can tempt the potato moth from laying eggs in any exposed tubers. I have also had onions getting sunburnt on a day over 40 degrees celsius so if really hot weather is forecast and the bulbs are mature it is a good idea to

lift the crop and store in a dry airy place.

A little extra work now can mean a very rewarding Autumn and Winter season in the garden.

Enjoy your garden.

Geoff May

NO MORE MOULDY FRUIT

No more mouldy fruit the day after you purchase it. We buy fresh fruit but because we eat a little of each like Banana, Strawberries, Raspberries, Blueberries, Grapes, Cantaloupe, Pineapple & Watermelon, every day the berries start to go bad quickly and end up in the rubbish bin.

Berries are so delicate. Raspberries in particular seem like they can go mouldy before you even get them home from the market. There's nothing more tragic than to look in the fridge the next day and find that fuzzy mould growing on the insides of Raspberries.

Here's a tip on how to prevent them from getting mouldy: Wash them with vinegar. When you get your berries home, prepare a mixture of one part vinegar (white or apple cider probably work best) and ten parts water. Place berries into the mixture and swirl around. Drain, rinse if you want (though mixture is so diluted you can't taste the vinegar,) and place in fridge.

The vinegar kills any mould spores and other bacteria that might be on the surface of the fruit, and voila! Raspberries will last a week or more, and strawberries go almost two weeks without getting mouldy and soft.

So go forth and stock up on those pricey little gems, knowing they'll stay fresh as long as it takes you to eat them.

You're so berry welcome!

MONTHLY MEETINGS 2014 – Topic

January 22nd - 100th Chelsea Flower Show Video - Bill Saunders.

February 26th - General Gardening Products & Use - Glenda, Bunnings Northland.

March 26th - In an English Country Garden - Bill Saunders.

April 23rd - Edible Gardening - Angelo Eliades.

May 28th - Hybrids & Species Hellebores, Growing - Peter Leigh, Post Office Nursery Woodend.

June 25th - The Lost Gardens of Heligan - Robyn Coates.

July 23rd - China - Robert Strugnell.

August 27th - 80th Birthday Celebrations.

September 24th - Humans Impact on Creeks, Rivers & Water Quality - Peter Genfell, Darebin Creek Management.

October 22nd - Wild Life & Nature Gardens - Wayne Long.

November 26th - Christmas Breakup.

MONTHLY COMPETITION 2014 – Item of the Month

January 22nd - Three Tomatoes, Shown with Stalks

February 26th - One Pot/Container Succulent

March 26th - One Container Marigold, One Variety, C.V.A.

April 23rd - One Container of Chrysanthemum, C.V.A.

May 28th - Bowl of Floating Flowers. No More Than 6 Blooms

June 25th - One Own Photograph of Horticultural Interest

July 23rd - Three Camellia Blooms, S.S., N.N.D.

August 27th - No Competition

September 24th - One Container Mixed Cut Flowers – At Least Three Kinds

October 22nd - One Iris

November 26th - No Competition – Presentation of Awards

The Competition Sections for the year will be:

Trees, Shrubs or Vines,
Plant/s Growing in a Container
Vegetables & Herbs

Cut Flowers, Specimen Bloom Truss or Spike,
Fruit
Floral Art – An Item of Floral Art

Best Exhibit of the Night

We owe a big thank you to John & Desiree Mathie who are going to sponsor “The Best Exhibit” each month with a small prize.



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