

# NEWSLETTER

Registered Address: P.O. Box 1004, Preston, 3072.

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PRESIDENT:  
BILL SAUNDERS

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Information:  
Phone: (03) 9467-3078

E-mail:  
prestongardenclub@hotmail.com

Web Address:  
www.prestongardenclub.org.au

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

**F**riends,  
**Happy 2015.**

I hope that you all enjoyed your Christmas and did not overeat. I hope too that the New Year has started well and continues that way all year.

It will be good to catch up with you at our first meeting of the year on January 28<sup>th</sup> in Preston Shire Hall. We will be able to talk about our gardens and how they are standing up to this unusual summer weather. I have found it much kinder to my plants than last summer, and to me too. I don't mind a few cooler days to get things done.

This month I will do a slide presentation and taking you on a tour of Turkey, the most historically interesting country that I have ever been in. I will show you Istanbul, once known as Byzantium and before that Constantinople. It was once at the centre of the known world, with trade routes passing through it going from East to West, and North and South. I stayed on the European side, within the old Roman wall looking across The Bosphorus, (which connects the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara), to Asia, where two thirds of Turkey is situated. You will see here the Blue Mosque, Topkapi Palace, the

home of the Sultans of the Ottoman Empire and Sancta Sophia (the Pink Mosque), the headquarters of the Christian church for 700 years before they packed up and moved to The Vatican.

Of course, in this, the centenary of ANZAC we will visit ANZAC Cove at Gallipoli, walk on the beach and look up at the cliffs from which came so much gunfire, claiming hundreds of Australian lives. A visit to Lone Pine Cemetery is included.

This is the land too, where the Virgin Mary lived out her life after the crucifixion and we will visit the site of her home, now a small chapel.

I was fascinated to stand by the walls of the City of Troy, which were built 2,500 B.C. It is interesting to know that 9 cities have stood on this same site.

This area was part of the Roman Empire too, and at Ephesus I will show you a typical Roman street still lined with the remains of marble columns, a lavatorium, which is still flushing today after 2,000 years, a library and a market place.

This area of the world is also home to many of the plants that we grow freely in our own gardens down here in Australia today. Among

these are the iris, tulip (the Dutch pinched it from them), oleander and hollyhock. The red field poppy usually linked to Flanders and the killing fields of W.W.1 are abundant here also.

This is an interesting land of modern cities clogged by traffic jams, to ancient villages, where the older shepherds still travel by donkey. I hope that you will enjoy this experience as much as I did.

Cheers, Bill

## AUTUMN BUS TRIP

SUNDAY 12TH APRIL  
Cost - \$ 30.00 Includes entrance fee to gardens.

Morning Tea & Coffee Supplied.  
BYO Lunch & Folding Chair or Stool.

Coach leaving Preston Town Hall Gower St 9.00 Sharp.

1. WOODEND. Morning Tea & Visit to Burkie's Bakery (Yummy Vanilla Slices)

2. FROGMORE GARDENS and NURSERY - Newbury. The creative partnership of Zena Bethell and Jack Marshall have forged the ten acres of garden at Frogmore over the last decade from what was a rundown farm. Together they have made a garden that surprises and delights at each turn, a garden filled to overflowing

with plants which are arranged to dramatic effect throughout the strong design of vistas, hedges and rooms.

The gardens at Frogmore are at their peak in late summer and autumn. During this time visitors will see over 250 metres of herbaceous borders in full light, laid out as a series of rooms, the border garden are at the centre of the autumn display at Frogmore. They are complimented at this time by the prairie garden which is filled with head high grasses and perennials planted in a more relaxed manner and which follow the example of the modernist European and American design. This area has proved popular with gardeners of all persuasions representing as it does a style which is not often seen in Australia. Additionally, as a younger garden of shrubs and woodland surrounding these main gardens mature they will be opened to the public. (Plants can be purchased from the Nursery in 10cm pots.)

**3. BLACKWOOD RIDGE GARDENS & NURSERY-** The garden and nursery is set in the small mountain village of Blackwood Victoria. The retail nursery which is surrounded by gardens will be enjoyed by visitors. The Woodland Garden- The main feature of the 'Woodland Garden' is the great selection of small growing trees grouped into small collections which include Cornus (Dogwood), Prunus (Japanese Cherry) and the mainstay Acer palmatum cultivars (Japanese Maple ) of which there are over 20 cultivars on display, these tree specimens are under planted with a great selection of woodland shrubs, perennials and Rhododendrons.

The Woodland garden is an interesting mix of form, flowers and texture with surprises at every turn they have incorporated a wide

array of beautiful and rare plants to add interest for the keen gardener and avid collector, such as Enkinathus deflexus with its delicate pink spring bells and vivid red autumn colour, Cornus alba golden green variegated dogwood with red winter stems.

**The Alpine Garden - Cool Climate Rockery-** The Alpine Garden is almost Japanese in its formal style, with a great use made of often underutilised dwarf plants not often seen in Australian gardens. This garden has a selection of very dwarf Japanese Maples, and feature some of the rarer plants held in their stock collection.

The garden will feature a selection of dwarf Alpine style plants between feature rocks. These plants include conifers, Pinus and a selection of rock Rhododendrons, Callunas, Ericas, Japanese Maples and more. The garden will also feature a range of alpine perennials in clusters to give a real alpine feel.

**The Kitchen Garden-** The Kitchen garden features a heritage fruit collection, rustic chook run (with chooks), vegetable & berry plots, and a herb wall.

**Heritage Fruits -** We have a collection of Heritage Apples & Pears which we have started to espalier in our Kitchen garden with 10 varieties of Pears and 22 varieties of apples on display. We are also collecting varieties of Cherries, Figs, Plums, Apricots, Peaches, Blueberries, and more. The garden features seasonal plantings of vegetables and features a herb wall with over 30 varieties of herbs. Blackwood Ridge Nursery Discount on all nursery purchases.

**BOARD COACH AT 4.15 PM AND SETTLE BACK FOR YOUR RELAXING JOURNEY HOME.**

**ARRIVE PRESTON TOWN HALL GOWER STREET APPROX 5.30 PM.**

Due the great interest in this trip. Full payment will guarantee a seat on the bus.

### **JANUARY JOTTINGS**

January if it's hot and dry can be a very busy time in the garden especially if you like to produce varied crops of fruit and vegetables as Hilary and I do.

Firstly the early potatoes are ready to dig and ours are producing the average yield of 9 kgs for every 1 kg seed sown. In order to store the crop for up to 6 months the tubers must be left unwashed and stored in a bag or box which excludes all sunlight. With onions they can be tied in bunches and left to hang in a dry airy place for a similar length of time and should not start into regrowth until into Spring. Of course the white salad and red varieties are not long keepers and are best eaten on summer salads.

I have used the axe on the lemon tree; cutting the 30 year old 'Eureka' down to a metre above ground in order to remove the tangled, gall wasp infested tree to a manageable height. Of course there will be no lemons for a year or so but we have plenty of frozen juice in the freezer.

With the ripening apricot crop we start picking when the birds start pecking and then the ripening process is completed in boxes or spread out on paper indoors. The same process applies to the peaches and tomatoes and allows us to enjoy our stone fruit after freezing or making jams and sauces.

Don't forget to lift the spring flowering bulbs occasionally as they can become crowded and a change of soil is a good idea.

Lastly I shall be buying some leek seedlings to grow to a decent size (6" - 8" at least) in the seedbed before going into a permanent spot in 2-3 months time. Leeks are slow growers but well worth the effort.

Good gardening in 2015  
Geoff May

### **NEW MEMBERS OF 2014**

Welcome new members of 2014. A task for every member is to bring a new person to the club for 2015.

Wendy Baird  
Jean & Jim Begg  
Dorothy Berrill  
Audrey Cole  
Jan Foster  
Margaret Johnson  
Barbara Lee  
Betty Lunny  
Carolyn Scott  
Val Stafford  
Des Westhead  
Billie Young

### **OUR NOVEMBER BUS TRIP**

Naturally with the Minister of Tourism, John, in charge, we always have an excellent day and our November visit to Mont de Lancey was no exception. Of course perfect weather was ordered and perfect weather was delivered.

After several rounds of Bus Bingo we duly arrived at Mont de Lancey to first have our promised morning tea. Mont de Lancey must have known there was a crisis forthcoming in the refreshments department as there were several coffee stalls awaiting our patronage.

Enjoying our coffee gave us time to consider which of all the many activities we could view. The blacksmiths were in action, the attractive young lady farmers were making their horseshoes, who didn't play with the little tops in the wood turners' room, the canvas

waterbag collection and if wanted a taste of the early 20th century, you could wander through the old Sebire family homestead and garden and out through the laundry and kitchen that featured all non labour saving equipment.

For the boys, there were dozens of steam engines chugging away, the girls could admire the lovely embroidery on the clothes of the earlier generations. If you loved old Clydesdale horses, then you could spend the afternoon watching them cutting and raking the hay and marvel at the Heath Robinson hay grabbing jaws and haybaler in action.

As there was a full program for our day we hurried back to the coach at the appointed time to next visit the Kookaberry Strawberry Farm. Surely, the strawberries we saw here on the farm has been fed on steroids? They were king sized! The taste testing meant that a large number of punnets of fruit arrived back in the coach (along with jars of the prize winning jam).

There was just time to call in at the Mt Evelyn nursery on the way home. This nursery does have a very good range of plants and gifts and some purchases were made. We were most surprised to find that it was our turn to get a gift! The nursery very nicely presented us with a Camellia plant each as we were leaving. A lovely gesture to finish an excellent day. Many appreciative thanks to John for organising yet another great Preston Garden Club trip.

Hilary May

### **COMING EVENTS**

Feb 28th 10am - 4pm & March 1st. 10am - 3pm. Melbourne Begonia Society Annual Show. Begonias for Sun, Shade & Indoors. Wisheart Senior Citizens Centre, 964 Nepean Hwy. Moorabin Enquiries: Marilyn 9758 6642.

February 28th - 12.30pm - 5pm,  
March 1st - 10am - 3.30pm. Dahlia Society of Victoria State Dahlia Show. Mt Waverley Community Centre, 47 Miller Crescent, Mount Waverley (MW 70 E1). Enquiries: Dwight 0419 221 200 or Fran 5184 1376



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU  
for December/January**

Wayne Hurley  
David McNair  
Margaret Wilson  
Jim Begg  
Dorothy Berrill  
Carmen De Silva  
Glenda Edgar  
Barbara Lee  
Desiree Mathie  
Val Newland  
Noelene Park

We hope you enjoy your special day. Best wishes from us all.

### **MONTHLY COMPETITION**

February 25th - One Pot/Container Succulent

### **MONTHLY MEETING**

February 25th - Workshop for Novice Exhibitors, Noelene Park & Beth William Rose Assoc. Bring a pot plants, flowers, roses etc for hands on training.

### **STAMPS**

Looking for more stamps. Some members have been collecting stamps for Robert to take back to China. He will be at the January and February meetings so if you can bring those stamps along to either meeting.

## **MONTHLY MEETINGS 2015 – Topic**

**January 28th** Travel Through Turkey. Ancient land & flora, History & People - Bill Saunders

**February 25th** Workshop for Novice Exhibitors - Noelene Park & Beth William

**March 25th** Maintenance of Garden Tools, Mowers etc - Vince Formica

**April 22nd** Melton Botanic Garden Development - John Bentley

**May 27th** History of Gardening in Victoria - Don Rickerby  
Container Growing for the Show Bench - Jennifer Rickerby

**June 24th** Garden Lighting, Installation & Maintenance - Matt Lane

**July 22nd** China - Robert Strugnell

**August 26th** Camellias, all aspects - Camellia Society

**September 23rd** Waterfalls of Victoria, find, identify, list 250 - Ray Barber

**October 28th** Clivias, all aspects - Erika Spruy

**November 25th** Christmas Breakup

## **MONTHLY COMPETITION 2015 – Item of the Month**

**January 28th** Three Tomatoes, Shown with Stalks

**February 25th** One Container Marigold, One Variety, C.V.A

**March 25th** One Pot/Container Succulent/s One variety

**April 22nd** One Container of Chrysanthemum, C.V.A.

**May 27th** Bowl of Floating Flowers. No More Than 6 Blooms

**June 24th** Container Grown – Fern

**July 22nd** Floral Art Arrangement in a Novelty Container

**August 26th** Three Camellia Blooms, S.S., N.N.D.

**September 23rd** One Container Mixed Cut Flowers – At Least Three Kinds

**October 28th** One Iris

**November 25th** No Competition – Presentation of Awards

### ***The Open Competition Sections for the year will be:***

Trees, Shrubs or Vines

Cut Flowers

Specimen Bloom, Truss or Spike

Plant/s Growing in a Container

Fruit

Vegetables & Herbs

Floral Art – An Item of Floral Art

Best Exhibit of the Night