

# NEWSLETTER

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Registered Number A0006535U

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ISSUE NO. 149

FEBRUARY 2015



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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

**F**riends,  
Would you believe it!!! I have been sitting back waiting for summer to really hit, when all at once I realised that in a week or so it will be autumn already – and March.

Didn't we just celebrate New Year???? Oh, I see – Robert Strugnell tells me that that was the Chinese, or lunar new year on February 19<sup>th</sup>. The year of the goat!!! I guess that sums me up then, doesn't it? Billy Goat.

All puns aside, this time last year I wrote in my report that "*we had sweated our way through more days of temperatures over 40C this summer (2014) than ever recorded before.*" This summer has been an exceptionally cool one as far as I am concerned, with welcome rains from time to time – much kinder to the garden, and I have no complaints about that.

Last week, on a gloriously pleasant summer's day I visited The Blue Lotus Water Garden in the Yarra Valley near Warburton. It was my first visit there, and I tell you, if you have not been there recently put it on your "must do" list. The garden comprises an area of 14 acres, most of it being ornamental lakes massed in lotus and waterlilies sporting thousands of

colourful blooms. You can get up close to view the collection of flowers via walkways over the water and crossing picturesque Japanese style bridges from island to island. There are splendid tranquil picnic areas set aside where you can take a picnic lunch to enjoy. The garden is open until Easter and if you show your seniors' card you get in for \$13.00 instead of \$17.00, which leaves with you with enough change to buy a cup of coffee at the café.

I am looking forward to paying a visit to the artist Claude Monet's garden, Giverny, north-west of Paris at the end of June and to splash in his lily pond, which he made so famous in his painting. I hope that I won't be disappointed after my visit to Blue Lotus Water Garden.

At this month's meeting you will all be receiving your show schedule for our show on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March. At this meeting also, we will have the pleasure of having Beth Williams from the Rose Society, and also our judge for the Rose Section, come along to answer all your questions about showing roses. Beth volunteered, and suggested this talk as she was very impressed with our roses at our last show and believes that you, our members have the potential to do well with your roses with a little help with how best to present them

on the show bench. Our own Noelene Park, a qualified AHJA show judge has also volunteered to demonstrate the correct way in which to arrange and show cut flowers. This will be a great opportunity for those of us who stand in the make-up room wondering how to make our exhibits sit up and look their best for the judges. I will endeavour to answer any questions you might have about the schedule and anything else you may wish to know about running a show.

In the meantime enjoy the early autumn weather and your garden and talk nicely to your plants, prune them, pamper them and clean both plants and pots up so that they sparkle and do you justice on the show-bench.  
Cheers, Bill.

## FACEBOOK

The Preston Garden Club is now on social media site Facebook Diana Mattea and Cheryl Warner are the Administrators.

Articles will be posted and links to sites on gardening subjects, advertising meetings, shows and other events. We encourage you to check it out if you don't have a computer your family (grandchildren) will help you.

Cheryl Warner

## FEBRUARY IN THE GARDEN

Thankfully January was not as hot as last year but February is an unknown as far as the weather is concerned. As the Lemon tree is now shooting away on one branch I feel confident that before winter there should be signs of real growth which I hope will not be damaged by frost. Incidentally I took the saw to a 30 year old Camellia after flowering and although a slow starter new shoots are appearing on all cut branches.

In between watering and pruning I have thinned 4 rows of carrots from two sowings to give the roots a good chance to reach their full potential. If left unthinned they become crowded out and virtually worthless. As an experiment this season I saved some parsnip seed and although being sown in January the plants were up in 10 days which I have never achieved with bought seed. Parsnips take longer to mature than carrots; 6 months against 4 months but left in the ground or stored make a valuable contribution to winter soups and stews.

Seeds of Winter brassicas, cabbage, broccoli etc have just been sown and should be ready for transplanting in mid March or later and if well watered will make good growth before Winter. Silverbeet and celery plants can also be planted out and make valuable additions to the Winter diet as they are cut-and-come again plants. Keep up the watering as well as picking the salad vegies and all your efforts will be rewarded with a bountiful harvest in Autumn. Happy Gardening  
Geoff May

## AUTUMN BUS TRIP

The latest news on the bus trip, happy to say the bus is full and we have a waiting list. Those who have placed their name to go must pay the full amount now.

John has spoken to Blackwood Ridge Garden & Nursery and they have advised that members on the bus will receive 30% discount on all nursery purchases.

If you cannot go, let John know ASAP, we do have a waiting list. John Mathie phone 94581632.

## CINNAMON SPICE

Cinnamon is the dried inner bark of a tropical evergreen tree. As well as the ground Cinnamon you are likely to have in your spice rack, Cinnamon is available in rolled sticks and in liquid form (extract). I must confess that I wasn't aware of the liquid form until recently. I have used the rolled bundles of Cinnamon sticks in floral art exhibits - it looks great tied with red or green bows and mixed with pine cones etc in Christmas arrangements.

I love Cinnamon pancakes and Cinnamon sugar on banana fritters. - yum.

## OTHER USES:-

Sprinkle a little Cinnamon in morning milky coffee or hot chocolate.

Make Cinnamon sugar combining a 2:1 mixture of Cinnamon to use on Cinnamon toast and on pancakes. Store in airtight container.

Stir a little into marinades for beef, pork or lamb.

Stuff a chicken with chopped apples, Cinnamon, onion and sage.

For a party snack, in a small baking dish, 200g pecans with 3 teaspoons of canola oil, 2 teaspoons Cinnamon and 1 teaspoon sugar. Bake at 180C for 8 to 10 minutes. Allow to cool before serving.

Storing Cinnamon

Store powder or quills (sticks) in an airtight container in a cool dark place. Sticks can potentially last as long as four years. Rub a small portion of Cinnamon on your hand every few months to make sure it smells and tastes strongly. Though

the spice does not spoil, it does lose flavour over time. Grind your own Cinnamon from Cinnamon quills using a spice or coffee grinder for the best flavour.

From Noelene

## COMING EVENTS

**February 28th** 12.30pm-5pm, March 1st 10am-3.30pm. Dahlia Society of Victoria State Dahlia Show. Mt Waverley Community Centre 47 Miller Crescent Mt Waverley (MW 70 E1). Enquiries: Dwight 0419 221 200 or Fran 03 5184 1376

**February 28th** 10am-4pm, March 1st 10am-3.30pm. Melbourne Begonia Society Annual Show for Sun, Shade and Indoors. Wisheart Senior Citizens Centre 964 Nepean Highway Moorabbin. Enquiries: Marilyn 9758 6642

**March 7th - 8th** 10am-4pm. Ferny Creek Horticultural Society Plant Collectors Sale/Garden Expo. Ferny Creek Horticultural Hall Hilton Road, Sassafras (MW 66 E12). Entry \$5.00 Enquiries: 9755 1882.

**March 25th - 29th.** Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show. Melbourne Exhibition Building & Carlton Gardens. Visit the RHSV's Great Victorian Hanging Basket Competition and the inside combined Societies Display. Enquiries: Secretary 5367 6363

**March 28th** 2pm - 6.30pm. Preston Garden Club Autumn Show & Metropolitan Dahlia Society Championship. Preston Town Hall Gower Street, Preston. Entry: Free. Enquiries: Bill 9478 0269

## MONTHLY COMPETITION

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

## MONTHLY MEETING

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