

NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Friends,
F Winter!!! Not our favourite season in the garden. But do not despair, for **Spring** is in the air!!!

Just two more weeks or less and 1st September brings the official beginning of Spring; a time of rebirth in the garden – a time to get out there, to get busy and enjoy watching your garden come back to life with a vengeance. Not of course that the garden is not alive all the time, but at the moment we are already enjoying the sights and smells of many spring bulbs, azaleas and camellias, in particular, which have made an early start to paint our gardens with colour.

When the sun comes out get outside and just see what's out there in your garden to cheer you up. You may be surprised!!!

You will not just be surprised, but as the warmth returns you will also be inspired to get your fingers dirty and your garden growing.

Don't dither!!!

Next month we will be handing out our Spring Show 2017 schedule so that you can pamper your special plants and decide on your entries.

That shocked you, didn't it!!!!!!
Cheers, Bill.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Annual subscription fees are due on July 1st every year.

Fees remain at: Single: \$15.00
Family: \$25.00.

Cheques or money orders can be addressed to: Preston Garden Club Inc. P.O. Box 1004, Preston, 3072, or payment made direct to the Treasurer at the next meeting.

HIGH RISE GARDENING



Milan, Italy

CAIRNS BOTANIC GARDENS

I cheated and couldn't wait for winter to end here; I yearned to feel the warmth of sunshine getting right into my bones, so I boarded a plane and took the three and half hour flight to Far North Queensland for one week of days of 28C to thaw out.

Ah! Beautiful!! Even the seawater was warm enough to swim in.

I never visit Cairns without paying a visit the Cairns Botanic Gardens. It is a calming and tranquil place to be and I am always fascinated by the wonderful collection of tropical plants, which are in these gardens. This year I took a self-guided walk in the aboriginal plant use garden, which I found interesting and educational.

The garden information centre staff provided me with a pamphlet to guide me on my way and to locate plants and explain their uses to the local aboriginal people.

I will share a couple of interesting facts from the pamphlet that I found interesting, and bring it to the August meeting to let anyone, who wishes to take home and read.

Cedar Bay Cherry

(*Eugenia reinwardtiana*) The red ovoid fruits of this rainforest shrub were relished by the aboriginal people as they are both edible and sweet.



River Lily

(*Crinum pedunculatum*)

These lilies are very common along tidal streams and river banks where they form dense margins to help trap river silt and stabilize the banks. The leaves were crushed and rubbed on the body to relieve pain from the stings of marine jelly fish. The bulbs were crushed and boiled in water which was used as an antiseptic while the skins of the bulb were used as a dressing for wounds and leprosy.



Palm Lily

(*Cordyline merrillii* – *suttoniae*)

Gets its name from its palm like growth and lily like leaves. It thrives in the rainforest understory and has attractive, bright red berries. The roots were dug up, leached and boiled before eating. An astringent juice was extracted from the roots and used as a contraceptive.



We still have a lot to learn about our own environment from the aborigines, don't we?

Bill.

ROSE PRUNING DAY



On Saturday the 22nd July on a chilly winter's day Des and Wayne went along to a rose pruning day at Hawkstowe Park organised by Mill Park Garden Club. When we arrived, while waiting for members of the Rose society we were treated to morning tea, which consisted of sandwiches and scones and cream and of course tea and coffee.



We all then ventured outside to watch and learn how to prune roses. A hands on pruning of bush roses and climbers followed. A very nice lunch was served enjoyed by everyone during which questions were asked about roses. After lunch it was back to the pruning. On the whole it was very enjoyable day, discussing and interacting with the members of both the Mill Park Garden Club and the Rose Society. It will be a very pretty picture when the roses

are in full bloom on the bushes and the arches in front of the homestead.

Wayne Hurley

GROWING DAHLIAS



When few flowers are blooming through autumn, there's one that will continue to shine on: the dahlia. Once considered old-fashioned, dahlias (*Dahlia* sp.) are making a comeback to the gardening world – it's a wonder they ever left! Their flamboyant blooms burst onto the scene in late summer, lasting well through the autumn months, and come in a spectacular mix of yellows, reds, oranges, pinks and purples.

They're also available in many forms and different sizes, ranging from dwarf 40cm to 1.5-2m giants. You can grow dahlias from seed or tubers – both will happily thrive in a pot or planted in the garden. And, with reasonable care, they will produce a mass of colourful blooms for years to come.

Climate

Dahlias prefer warm areas but can be grown outdoors in all climates. In colder climates, tubers should be planted only when the last frost has passed.

Position

These plants are sun-lovers, so choose a sunny position in the garden where they'll get at least six hours of sunlight. Ensure they are protected from strong winds.

Soil

Dahlias grow best in moist, well-drained soil. Before planting, improve the soil by digging in well-rotted organic matter such as compost, leaf mould and manure.



Planting tubers

The easiest way to grow dahlias is from tubers, which are sold packaged (like bulbs) in late winter and spring. They look great planted en masse, so prepare an area of garden well in advance. And if you have friends with dahlias, maybe you could encourage them to share! The tubers gradually multiply beneath the soil, and if you dig up the plant when it's dormant over winter, you can divide the tuberous roots and replant the divisions. Plant tubers at a depth of 10cm and about 30-90cm apart, using closer spacing for smaller varieties. Ensure the growing tips are facing up. Tall-growing dahlias will need staking, so it's a good idea to put the stake in at planting time, when there's little chance of damaging the tubers.

Water

When planting in spring, water generously at first, then only lightly until the plant reaches about 15cm high.

Fertiliser

When the plants are about 30cm tall, apply a general all-purpose fertiliser. Spread it in a circle around the plant, then fork it in and water thoroughly. When buds appear, give liquid feeds of soluble fertiliser every 10-14 days to promote large blooms and longer flowering.

Pruning

As dahlias grow, pinch out the growing tips to encourage bushy growth. Regularly cut flowers to promote flowering – they make great cut flowers to display in vases.

Post-flowering

After flowering has finished, leave plants to die down. If your soil doesn't remain wet or cold for too long over winter, leave tubers in the ground and they will re-shoot the following year. For colder climates, you'll need to lift and store the tubers. Or, if your dahlia is in a pot, leave it to die back naturally and pop the pot in a shady spot or, in frosty areas, in a garden shed. Replant tubers once the weather warms up, in late winter to mid-spring.

BEE-ATTRACTING PLANTS



Want more Bees in the garden? These are Bee attracting plants.

Daisy family - Asteraceae
Mint Family - Lamiaceae
Rosemary - *Rosmarinus officinalis*
Pineapple Sage - *Salvia elegans*
Lavender - *Lavandula* cultivars
Basil - *Ocimum* cultivars
Carrot family - Apiaceae

Bees prefer yellow and blue flowers, so factor these into your plant selection.

AIR LAYERING

Popping cuttings in a pot is a common way of striking new plants. Another way to propagate is

'air layering', where a shrub or tree stem is stimulated to develop its own roots.

Here's how

Step 1 Select a healthy tip of foliage on a stem of last season's growth (we used a magnolia). Using sharp secateurs, make a cut halfway through on an angle. Dust wound with a little rooting hormone powder.



Step 2 Insert a small piece of matchstick into wound to keep it open.



Step 3 Wrap a generous wad of damp sphagnum moss around wound. Enclose moss in plastic wrap to keep it in place. Secure at both ends with soft ties.



Step 4 Leave in place for 2-4 months for plant to initiate roots at wound site. Check after about 2 months, by carefully unwrapping plastic so you can see. When roots have developed, cut branch from parent plant, remove plastic wrap, leave moss in place, then plant into a pot.

CONTRIBUTE TO OUR NEWSLETTER

Friends,

If you have any articles, recipes, events, jokes, poems that you would like included in our newsletter please email me at prestongardenclub@hotmail.com or see me at our next general meeting.

Cheryl Warner on behalf of our Editor Robert Strugnell.

MEMBERS NEWS



**Happy birthday to you!
Happy birthday to you!**

Wendy Baird, Betty Lunny, Jan Foster & Joy Snell

Best wishes for your special day.

COMING EVENTS

August 19 Saturday - Tuesday 29 August. Camellias Victoria and Waverley Garden Club. Camellia & Garden Show 2017. Mt Waverley Community Centre, 47 Miller Crescent, Mt Waverley. Entry fee: \$5 Adults, Children FREE. Iconic Camellia & Garden Show. Largest Camellia Show in Victoria. Enjoy 100's of varieties of Camellias, receive expert advice on growing them and purchase plants for the home garden. Featuring the Victorian Camellia Championships & Floral Art Winter and General Garden exhibits championships. Enquiries: Linda 0412914388 or Sandra 9893 3247.

August 25, 26 & 27 - 9.00am - 4.00pm. The Orchid Societies Council of Victoria, 24th Annual Melbourne Orchid Spectacular. KCC Park, Skye (Melways 128 J12) ENTRY: Adults \$10, Children U15 Free. Enquiries: 0413 599 368

September 14 Thursday - Tuesday, 10 October. Tesselaar Tulip Festival, Celebration of Colour. Tesselaar Tulip Farm, 357 Monbulk Road, SILVAN. Enquiries: 9737 7722

September 16 Saturday, 9 - 4pm. Sunday, 17 - 10 - 4pm. Orchid Show - North East Melbourne Orchid Society. Bulleen Heights School, Manningham Road Campus, 221 Manningham Road, LOWER TEMPLESTOWE (MW 32 J9). Orchids on show and for sale. ENTRY: \$4.00 Adults. Enquiries: Michael Coker on 0417 334 232

September 23 & 24 - 10.00am - 4.00pm. Yea Garden Expo. Yea Racecourse, Racecourse Rd. Yea. Native & flowering plants, garden sculptures, garden tools & machinery, books, trees, free plant creche and lots more. ENTRY: \$5

Adults, Kids free. Enquiries: Contact Jim 0438 119 429.

October 28th Saturday 2.00pm - 6.00pm. Preston Garden Club Spring Show. Preston City Hall, Cnr Gower & High Streets Preston. Plant Trading Table, Devonshire Teas. ENTRY: FREE. Enquiries: Bill Saunders 9478 0269

FIND THE WORD

Well, how did you go with finding the word last month? The word is –

BOOK

Again you have 12 letters to choose from. The word this month has 5 letters. What could it be?

Look at the four pictures for the clue. Answer next month.



MONTHLY COMPETITION

September 27th: One Container Mixed Cut Flowers – At Least Three Kinds

MONTHLY MEETING

September 27th: Gardens in Japan - Des Westhead