

NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT:
BILL SAUNDERS

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Information:
Phone: (03) 9478-0269

E-mail:
prestongardenclub@hotmail.com

Web Address:
www.prestongardenclub.org.au

PRESTON GARDEN CLUB COMMITTEE 2017/2018

President:

Bill Saunders

Vice Presidents:

Robert Strugnell
Wayne Hurley

Secretary:

Des Westhead

Treasurer:

Dawn Walsh

Committee Members:

Pat Kilpatrick
Margaret Trewella
Daksha Singh

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Friends,

Welcome back to Preston Garden Club in 2018.



What a big break we have had this year because of the fact that we could not get access to either the City Hall or the Shire Hall in January due to Australia Day Awards presentations.

Our first meeting will be held on 28th February in the larger Preston City Hall.

The topic for this meeting will be 'Problem Solving', a question and answer night. It has been suggested that we should try to be more down to earth with our speakers and try to get the members more involved in the meetings, so bring along something from your garden to have it identified if need be and to have members ask questions about its growing habits. Our Vice President and learned horticulturist, Robert Strugnell has flown in from China and has a wealth of knowledge to pass on and will be on standby to answer questions, assisted by you, the grower and the computer program Botanica.

The committee is planning a BBQ picnic in April, a social day out. More details as we get closer to the day.

I am looking forward to seeing you all again, and may all your dreams bear fruit in 2018.

Cheers, Bill.

FEBRUARY MEETING

Notice - Our February 28th meeting will be held in the Preston City Hall, it's the big hall next door to where we normal meet.

CONFIDOR

A controversial pesticide allegedly linked to bee deaths will be pulled

from Bunnings' shelves by the end of this year, a spokesman has confirmed. The product Confidor is a class of pesticide which some studies suggest affects bees' navigation and immune systems, resulting in colony death. Bunnings made the decision in November last year to remove the product from its UK and Australian stores amid declining British bee populations, however admitted their decision was based on precautions rather than scientific evidence.



Confidor is a neonicotinoid, a class of pesticides which is absorbed by the plant rather than coating its surface. The chemicals spread to all parts of the plants, and are exposed to bees through pollen.

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) scientists identified a number of risks to bees from neonicotinoids in 2013, however were unable to finalise

risk assessment due to a data gaps. A spokesman for the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) said neonicotinoids registered for use in Australia are safe and effective. "This class of pesticides has been used in Australia since the early 1990s and APVMA continue to monitor potential adverse experiences of the chemicals," the spokesman said.

Agriculture Victoria records show the total number of registered beehives in Victoria remains stable, with good breeding conditions for European honey bee colonies this season.



The news comes as a petition urging Bunnings to pull the pesticide from its shelves reached 25,000 signatures in three days, in what senior campaigner Nick Haines called "highly successful". The hardware giant also plans to remove the pesticide Confidor from its stores in Ireland and New Zealand by the end of 2018, and will stock natural and organic pesticides as a replacement.

COCKTAIL AVOCADOS

A new generation of stoneless avocado entirely edible (skin and all) out in stores in UK.

U.K. food retailer Marks & Spencer (M&S) has begun selling a stoneless avocado, which is reported to be just 5cm-8cm in length and can be sliced or eaten whole. "We've had the mini, the giant, ready sliced and we're now launching the holy grail of

avocados – stoneless," said Charlotte Curtis, a food technology specialist at M&S. "This amazing fruit has been on our radar for a couple of years and we're very excited to have finally been able to get hold of some for our customers to try."



The slimmer fruit is the result of an unpollinated blossom and develops without a seed. It is grown in Spain and currently only available during December. M&S said stoneless avocados were usually sent to Paris, where chefs use them in high-end restaurants, but the retailer had managed to source a limited supply this year. Curtis said she expected them to sell out quickly, adding: "My top tip is to try them deep fried."

BACK TO LIFE



The oldest plant ever to be regenerated has been grown from 32,000 year old seeds. Beating the previous record holder by some 30,000 years.

A Russian team discovered a seed cache of *Silene stenophylla*, a flowering plant native to Siberia, that had been buried by an Ice Age squirrel near the banks of the Kolyma River. Radiocarbon dating confirmed that the seeds were 32,000 years old.

The mature and immature seeds, which had been entirely encased in ice, were unearthed from 38 meters below the permafrost, surrounded by layers that included mammoth, bison, and woolly rhinoceros bones. The mature seeds had been damaged, perhaps by the squirrel itself, to prevent them from germinating in the burrow. But some of the immature seeds retained viable plant material.

The team extracted that tissue from the frozen seeds, placed it in vials, and successfully germinated the plants, according to a new study. The plants, identical to each other but with different flower shapes from modern *S. stenophylla*, grew, flowered and after a year, created seeds of their own.

The new study suggests that permafrost could be a "depository for an ancient gene pool," a place where any number of now extinct species could be found and resurrected, experts say. "Certainly some of the plants that were cultivated in ancient times and have gone extinct or other plants once important to ecosystems which have disappeared would be very useful today if they could be brought back," said Elaine Solowey, a botanist at the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies in Israel.

Solowey resurrected the 2,000-year-old date palm that previously

held the title of oldest regenerated seed. Her palm seed, though, had been buried in a dry, cool area, a far cry from the *S. stenophylla* seeds permafrost environment.

Regenerating seeds that have been frozen at -7 degrees Celsius for so long could have major implications, said Solowey. "Any insight gained on seeds which have been frozen and how to thaw them and sprout them is very valuable," she said.

FICUS HOUSE



Using Ficus plants to make a living house, Biopark on the island of Okinawa, Japan.

You know you need to lose weight when you can't see your flowers.



HOW TO GROW CLIVIAS

Seeds

Clivias have beautiful flowers, and most of you probably noticed the seeds forming after the flowers had faded this season. These seeds will grow bigger throughout the season and start to colour up from late April till August. This is when you know that they are ready to be harvested. After harvesting the seedpods you peel off there/purple/orange or yellow skin and inside you will find the seeds, usually 1- 36 per berry. You can rinse these seeds off in water with a drop of dishwashing liquid to sterilize them.



Now it is time to get your seed trays or garden bed ready for sowing. Make sure the soil is well drained and always in a shady spot as Clivias are bush lilies that love to grow in the shade. Do not grow Clivia seeds too deep, in fact they just need to be halfway in the soil. Keep them moist until you see the first leaf appear from this time you can reduce watering to prevent root or crown rot. After the first year you can transplant your 2-4 leaved seedlings into bigger pots or the garden.

Planting the seedlings

Having patiently waited and treated your little seedlings with a lot of TLC the past year it is time to transplant them. Transplanting them from community seedling trays or pots is important to promote stronger growth and faster flowering. Be careful not to plant these one year old seedlings too deep as this will cause the crown to rot and you will lose your precious seedlings. When planting them in containers be sure the soil is well

drained. After transplanting the seedlings be sure not to overwater them.



Remember they have thick roots to get moisture. In summer you can water once or twice a week depending how hot and dry your climate is. In winter Clivias are resting and too much water will cause rot again. These seedlings can start to be fertilized within 3 months of planting and now you can fertilize every 6 - 8 months until flowering size; that will be in approximately 3 - 5 years.



Dividing

Clivias will start to produce offsets through the walk of time. These clumps can be divided after flowering season.

Remember

Clivias always want to be in a shady spot as afternoon sun will burn the leaves of your plant and your plant will be looking very unappealing. In summer mature plants can be watered more often than in winter. They can be left dry and will survive on rainfall.

MEMBERS NEWS



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU

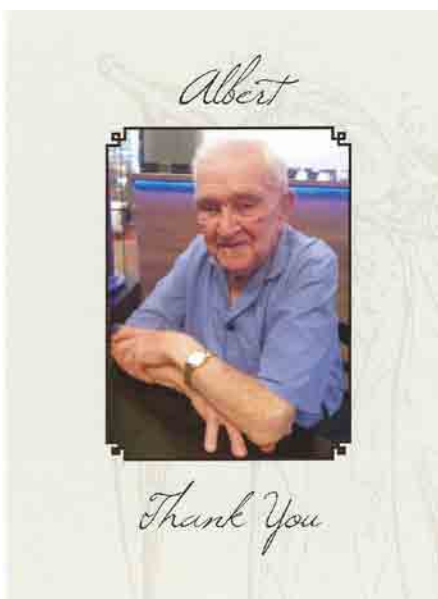
January -

Dorothy Berrill, Glenda Edgar, Barbara Lee, Desiree Mathie, Val Newland.

We wish you all a wonderful celebration.

ALBERT WILLIAM STINTEN

23rd March 1922 – 11th December 2017



Sadly, just before Christmas we learnt of the death of our life member, past president and friend of many, Alby Stinten. He was 95 years old. Alby was president forty years ago. He was easy going, always on for a chat and always ready to assist in any way he could. He gave up driving when he turned eighty, and as he lived in Thomastown was no longer able to come to night meetings, but always came down to our shows by train until a couple of years ago when he would throw a \$20.00 donation into the takings as his effort to help the show make a profit. Alby was devoted to Ethel, his wife of sixty

seven years and after her passing about eighteen months previously he moved from their home into Arcare Hostel for the Aged in Reservoir. Alby and Ethel did not have children, but enjoyed the friendship of many.

R.I.P. Alby.

COMING EVENTS

Saturday, 10th - Sunday, 11th March. Ferny Creek Horticultural Society - Plant Collectors Sale & Garden Expo. Contact enquiries 97551882 or 0421748949 publicity@fchs.org.au. Times 10am-4pm both days. Entry \$5, U14 Free. Rare Plant Sales, Garden tools, Botanical Artist, Wood Turning, Book Sales, Refreshments, light lunches, sausage sizzle, Guided Garden Walks. Free onsite parking. Bus groups welcome (by arrangement 9755 2135). Location 100 Hilton Rd, Sassafra.

Saturday, 17th - Sunday, 18th March. Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria - Autumn Plant Sale. Times 10am-4pm both days. Plant list available one week prior to sale. Contact www.rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au. Location Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria - Cranbourne.

Saturday, 17th - Sunday, 18th March. Sunshine Golden Age Garden Club - 97th Annual Autumn Show. Contact Chris on 0418 543 649. Free Entry. Feature Displays, Dahlias, Roses, Floral Art, Cut Flowers, Potted Plants, Vegetables, Herbs, Fruit, Cookery, Children's Section, Handcraft, Photography. Special display of Garden Items of interest. Plant Sales & Afternoon Tea. Air conditioning & disabled access. Location Glengala (Castley) Community Hall Cnr Simmie St & Glengala Rd, Sunshine. www.sunshinegardenclub.org

MIFGS

The 2018 Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show will be held Wednesday 21st to Sunday 25th March, 2018.

Royal Exhibition Building & Carlton Gardens.

Wednesday 21st March 9am – 5pm
Thursday 22nd March 9am – 5pm
Friday 23rd March – Gardens by Twilight 9am – 9.30pm
Saturday 24th March 9am – 5pm
Sunday 25th March 9am – 5pm

FIND THE WORD

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

PEELED

The word this month has 6 letters. What could it be?

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



MONTHLY COMPETITION

February 28th: One Container Marigold, One Variety, C.V.A. (cut flowers)

MONTHLY MEETING

February 28th: Question and Answer night, bring your garden problems, see if a member can help.