

NEWSLETTER

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

Registered Number A0006535U

PRESIDENT:
BILL SAUNDERS

ISSUE NO. 182

MARCH 2018



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

APRIL MEETING

Notice - There will be **NO** April meeting due to our meeting night falling on Anzac day. See you all in May.

PICNIC DAY OUT

As we cannot have our April meeting due to it falling on ANZAC day, we will have a picnic day out. Mark this day in your diary Wednesday April 18th. Location is Hawkstowe Park, South Morang.

We have set a time to meet at 11.30am but you can arrive early or later. BYO everything, bring a cut lunch or you can use the free BBQs to cook your lunch on the day. We have invited members from other local garden clubs to join us. If you

have never been to Hawkstowe Park here is your opportunity.

Hawkstowe is a smaller park which is a part of the larger Plenty Gorge Park and consists of the Le Page Homestead Picnic Area and the Red Gum Picnic Area. To get into the park, turn off Plenty Road onto Gordons Road; the park entrance is 100 metres to your left (Melways map 183 H8).

The brick and bluestone Le Page Homestead, as well as the nearby barn and stables, were built during the 1850's by the Le Page family. It was purchased by Parks Victoria in 1986 and they opened the area to the public in 1994 with efforts to preserve the heritage of the buildings. Take a look back in time at the historic Hawkstowe Picnic Area. You'll be impressed by the brick and bluestone Le Page homestead, barn and stables. Maybe the friendly kangaroos will come and visit you.

Park in Lower Carpark

Park your car in the lower car park which gives you access to the picnic facilities and a large grassed area. Entry to the picnic area is at the opposite end of the car park. Two picnic pavilions are located to the left. Each is accessed by a gravel path and has a level concrete floor. The picnic area has toilets, electric barbecues and picnic shelters.

SWEET PEAS

Delicate and sweetly scented, plant Sweet Peas in a sunny spot on St Patrick's Day, the saying goes, for a bumper crop in Spring. Support with trellis, climbing frames or against fence as the tendrills grow thicker. Pick flowers as they appear and more will follow. Sweet Peas are easy to grow and they will yield hundreds of coloured, scented blooms. They will flower in about 12-14 weeks from sowing. There is still time to sow your seeds before the ground gets too cold.

The range of colours and patterns is extensive with plain colours, bi-colours, picotees, and even marbled effects. Shades of pink, blue, red, violet and white. Flowering time varies between the colours thus extending the duration of the display. Ideal as a cut flower with their long stems to provide colour and fragrance indoors.

Sweet Pea seed can be sown directly into the garden. The best times are February, March and April, or follow the Australian tradition and sow your seeds on St. Patrick's Day (March 17th). Choose an open site which gets plenty of direct sunlight but which may be sheltered from strong winds. Raise the bed if the drainage is not good. The tall varieties will need something to climb onto, such as a trellis or wire mesh. There are

dwarf varieties such as Bijou, which will lay on the ground or can be grown in pots or hanging baskets. To give maximum sun run the trellis north and south but if this not possible place it on a sunny fence.

Prepare the soil a couple of weeks before sowing with well rotted compost. Sprinkle about a cup full of lime to every square metre. Make a furrow at the base of the trellis, sow seed about 1cm deep and at least 7cm apart, cover and water in. The seedlings will emerge in about 10-14 days. Germination is often quicker and more uniform if the seed is soaked in water for 24 hours immediately prior to sowing. Do not over water young seedlings, but once the plant is in full growth a good supply of water is needed. Do not overfeed, as this will produce lush green leaves at the expense of flowers. Light feeding once a month will help to produce strong plants or use 3/4 month Osmocote at sowing time. When the seedlings are small they may need some support until they start climbing. Once flower buds appear use a liquid fertiliser such as phostagen to improve the flowering. Pick your flower regularly and enjoy them in the house and give away some to friends.

Sweet peas are true cut and come again plants. Once they start blooming keep on cutting them, once they set seed they think they've done their job and stop producing flowers. If you keep on cutting bunches of flowers you should end up with several months of sweetly-scented bliss. A hint to keep flowers longer, stand stems in deep water for 2-3 hours before arranging in a vase.

In 1911 Tom Jones introduced the cordon system of culture to produce blooms of the very highest quality. When the young seedling Sweet Pea has formed several true

leaves, the top is pinched out to induce branching. Of the resultant side shoots, one strong shoot from the base is retained and all other growth is cut away. This shoot is encouraged to grow as a single stem with all side shoots being removed as they form. The tendrils are also removed to prevent fastening onto flower stems, which necessitates supporting the plant by tying it onto a wire trellis. This method of training restricts the number of flower stems but increases the quality.

FRUIT FLY

The Queensland fruit fly (QFF) (*Bactrocera tryoni*) attacks a wide range of fruits and fruiting vegetables. Fruit fly infestation can result in shutdown of production, loss of work, the costs of an eradication program, costs of ongoing insecticide use, restricted access to domestic and export markets. Fruit fly is estimated to cost Australia \$300 million a year in lost markets and damaged produce.

Suspected fruit fly larvae has now been found in an apple growing district in Tasmania, has put biosecurity authorities on alert. Of the 14 species of fruit fly, the Queensland fruit fly and the Mediterranean fruit fly species pose the most risk to Tasmania. By far the most likely way fruit fly is introduced in Tasmania is as maggots or eggs in fruit, or in susceptible vegetables brought into the state by visitors. The distance across Bass Strait is such that mature fruit flies being blown over from the mainland is considered "highly unlikely". Under Tasmanian law anyone with a home garden must report suspected fruit fly infestation.

Authorities are investigating the discovery of larvae on apricots in a backyard near Spreyton in the state's north-west. A member of the

public reported that larvae was found in a sample of their backyard fruit. It follows the discovery recently of fruit fly larvae in two backyard apricot trees on Flinders Island.

Chief plant health manager Mr. Bishop said it was a serious situation for Tasmania which relied on its fruit fly-free status for its lucrative export industry. "For Tasmania, the fruit fly-free status is a really important trading advantage so that's the very reason why we are undertaking these actions and looking to protect that," he said.

Several control measures have begun, including the removal of all susceptible fruit and vegetables from the property and treatment of surrounding soil. The Spreyton area is a major growing site for apples and cherries. Properties within a 200 metre radius are being inspected and traps set up within a 1.5 kilometre radius.

Controlling Queensland fruit fly in home gardens. Queensland fruit fly populations usually increase in spring as temperatures rise, but they can remain active in autumn and winter if warm weather persists and suitable host produce is available. Queensland fruit flies are known to survive cold winters by remaining in the soil and emerge as adults as temperatures increase, when they can fly and mate. The female fruit fly then feeds on a source of protein to produce eggs and searches for a suitable host to sting and deposit her eggs. If she is successful, the eggs hatch into maggots that feed on the ripening fruit, which is inedible. If left uncontrolled, Queensland fruit flies can destroy crops.

Here are the steps you can take to manage this pest. Determine if you have Queensland fruit flies, using pheromone based traps. These traps contain female fruit fly odours,

which attract males, and an insecticide that kills them. These traps indicate if fruit flies are active in your area and when you need to act.

Regularly inspect produce for maggots, which are 5-10 mm long and creamy-white in colour. To check for maggots, cut open ripe fruit because infested fruit may appear in good condition from the outside. Also, check for small puncture marks called stings on fruit skins. Stings show where the female fruit fly has laid her eggs and prematurely ripened fruits.

Trapping - Traps are designed to lure and kill adult fruit flies. Some traps are used to monitor Queensland fruit fly numbers only, indicating if fruit flies are active in your area and when you need to act. These traps are often referred to as male only traps. Other traps control Queensland fruit fly populations by catching females as well as males.

If Queensland fruit flies are in your garden, you will need to actively control these populations with a trap that can catch females as well as males. These fruit fly traps contain a protein which attract females then kills them. Follow the product instructions how set up and place the traps. Fruit fly traps are usually placed in host trees, but they can also be placed around the garden to draw fruit flies away from your produce.

You can also make your own traps using an empty soft-drink bottle (with lid). Please note that these traps may attract both pests and beneficial insects. Cut three holes in the empty soft-drink bottle about the size of a 10 cent piece, 10 centimetres from the top. Add the bait mixture: one cup of 100 per cent fruit juice (including pulp) and one tablespoon of cloudy ammonia. Tie a string around the neck of the bottle and hang it from the tree in

the shade, 1.0-1.5 metres off the ground. The mixture can last up to three weeks, but should be changed weekly for best results.

Garden hygiene - It's important to maintain good hygiene in the garden. Follow these steps to protect your produce. Pick and use fruit or vegetables as they ripen, and don't leave them on the plant for fruit flies to attack. Collect and destroy any rotting or unwanted host produce, whether it is on the ground or on the plant, to reduce the risk of fruit fly maggots developing.

Do not put untreated produce in your compost or worm farm as this will aid the Queensland fruit fly life cycle. Also, do not dispose untreated produce directly into your rubbish or green bin, as it may cause a new infestation in another area.

Host fruits on fruit trees often ripen at the same time, producing loads of fruit that must be harvested quickly. If you wish to keep these fruit trees, prune them to a manageable size so you can reach the produce easily. Also reduce the size of the tree so it does not produce more fruit than you need.

Remove any unwanted or neglected host trees on your property and replace them with non-host alternative plants such as local wattles or grevilleas. This will reduce the risk of Queensland fruit fly attacking your produce and also remove potential breeding sites in your area.

Harvest produce early - If possible, plant early-maturing host fruit and vegetables and/or harvest the produce early if it will continue to ripen after it is picked. Harvesting prior to ripening removes fruit from trees before female Queensland fruit flies can lay their eggs. Planting fruits that are harvested in late Spring and early

Summer also removes host material before Queensland fruit flies have had time to build up their populations to damaging numbers.

Use physical barriers to stop female Queensland fruit flies laying eggs in your produce. Cover fruit trees with very fine UV stable mesh netting over a frame, using PVC tubes and stakes as a frame. Alternatively, use an outdoor gazebo with zippers as it is easier to inspect trees and harvest fruit when it ripens. Depending on the produce, you may need to install nets when fruit begins to develop so insects can pollinate flowers early in the season. All nets should be secured around the trunk base or to the ground to protect your crop.

When fruit begins to develop, place bags and sleeves over the fruit you wish to keep. Remove any flowers or developing fruit from the plant that are not covered by the barrier. Secure bags and sleeves to the plant with tie wire, clothes pegs or string. Nets, bags and sleeves can be purchased from nurseries and home garden retailers.

MEMBERS NEWS



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU

March - Hilary May, Catherine McMahon, Carolyn Scott and Robert Strugnell.

April - John Mathie, Hazel McGlone, Joan McNair, Rita Page, Bill Saunders, Margaret Trewella and Pam White.

We wish you all a wonderful celebration.

CONDOLENCES

Our condolences go to out to Sharon Pollard after the death of her mother on Tuesday 6th March. Our thoughts and sympathy are with you at this sad time Sharon.

COMING EVENTS

March 30th Friday - Sunday 15th April. Tesselaar Festival of Flowers incorporating Gardening & Plant Expo. Contact 03 9737 7722. Entry \$25 adults, \$22 Concession, U16 Free. Times 10am-5pm daily. Extensive program of varied and dynamic events throughout the period. Includes the Gardening & Plant Expo on the 14th & 15th April. For full program of events go to www.kabloom.com.au, is about fabulous fields filled with hundreds of thousands of colourful flowering plants plus festival entertainment, fun activities and delicious foods. Location Tesselaar Flower Farm, 357 Monbulk Rd SILVAN (mw 123B5).

March 31st Saturday - Sunday 1st April. Mornington Peninsula Bonsai Society - 39th Annual Easter Show. Contact Bruce on 0439 377 996 or Jillian on 0407 361 989. Times Sat 9am-5pm, Sun 10am-4pm. Entry Adults \$5, Pens/Conc \$4, Children with an Adult - Free. Magnificent display of Bonsai. Demonstrations of shaping & repotting each day. A well stocked trading table of bondai requisites for sale including pots, tools, wire, hooks, etc. Trained & semi-trained Bonsai & Nursery Stock. EFTPOS available. Location Balcombe Grammer, 389 Nepean Hwy, Mt MARTHA (MW REF 151 C1-2).

April 14th Saturday. Brighton Floral Art Group - Festival of Flowers 2018. Contact Jane Scott-Price on 9533 5128. Entry \$5/ 15 years & under Free. Time 1pm-4pm. Exhibition of floral art. Plants and other products for sale. Devonshire Tea. Location St

Leonards Uniting Church Hall, cnr New St & Wolsey Grove
BRIGHTON.

April 21st Saturday - Sunday 22nd Ferny Creek Horticultural Society - Autumn Show. Contact Enquiries 03 9755 1882 or 0421 748 949 or publicity@fchs.org.au. Times Sat 12 noon - 4pm, Sun 10am - 4pm. Entry \$5 , U14 Free. Hydrangeas, Autumn Foliage, proteas, Autumn Flowering Bulbs. Officially judged fantastic flower displays. Guided walks of the 4 hectare garden. Sales of rare plants and cut flowers. Members photographic display. Refreshments, light luncheons , sausage sizzle. Ample free parking. Bus/coaches welcome. Location Hilton Rd, SASSAFRAS.

April 28th Saturday – Sunday 29th. Melbourne Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, Growing Friends 2018 Autumn Plant Sale. Contact further information phone, 96506398 or email, friends@frbgmelb.org.au. Times Sat 10am-4pm, Sun 10am-3pm Entry Free. Visit website week prior to sale for plant listing. Plants sourced mostly from stock generally within the botanic gardens. Location Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, enter the Gardens through Gate E on Birdwood Ave.

May 5th Saturday – Sunday 6th. Chrysanthemum Society of Victoria - Annual Exhibition. Contact 03 98985458. Times Sat 1pm-4pm, Sun 12m-4pm. Entry \$4. Proudly presenting the Society's Annual Exhibition. Plants for sale. Presentation of awards and trophies on Sunday at 3pm. Location Burwood Heights Uniting Church Hall, Cnr Burwood Hwy & Blackburn Rd BURWOOD (mw 61k7).

May 19th Saturday and Sunday 20th. Open Garden. 105 Gumtree Road, Research 3095. 10.00am -

4.30pm. Entry price \$8 (U18 free). Students \$5. Nioka is an unusual and fascinating garden of many and varied succulents, recapturing the owner Jack Latti's South African heritage. Entering the property there is a bed of natives along the fence line followed by a large bed of agaves and aloes; on the other side is the propagation area.

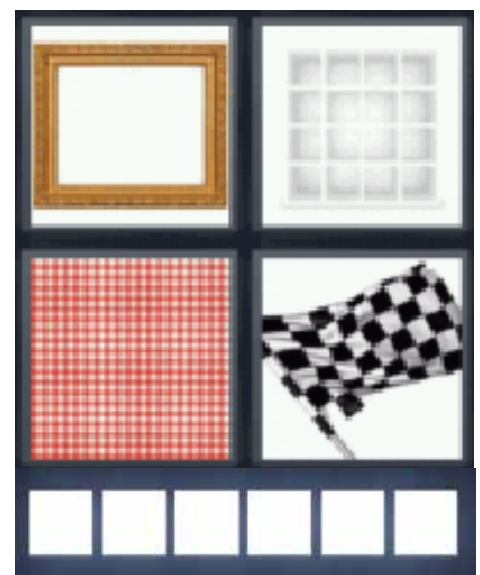
FIND THE WORD

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

PIRATE

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

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



MONTHLY COMPETITION

March 28th: One Pot/Container Succulent/s One variety.

May 23rd: One Container of Chrysanthemum, C.V.A. (cut flowers).

MONTHLY MEETING

March 28th: Glenda - Bunnings Northland Garden Department.

May 23rd: Gardens National Trust England DVD.