

NEWSLETTER

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2018/2019

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Annual subscription fees are due on July 1st every year. Now is the time to pay your membership fee.

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

Please make cheques payable to Preston Garden Club Inc, P.O. Box 1004, Preston, 3072.

OR

EFT to BSB No. 033 073 Account No. 231476, Reference (your "surname" = Subs).

OR

Payment made direct to the Treasurer at the meeting.

For more info contact John, phone 94581632 or 0402 633 739.

SPRING BUS TRIP

Those who are going on the bus trip don't forget Sunday 9th September. Coach will leave from outside Preston City Hall in Gower St. at 9.00 am. Dont be late! Street parking or off street parking in the Council car park.

BYO lunch in the Dandenong Ranges Botanic Gardens or you could buy your lunch at the Café 'Vireya'.

If you have not paid yet, do it know, ASAP. Make cheques payable to Preston Garden Club Inc, P.O. Box 1004, Preston, 3072.

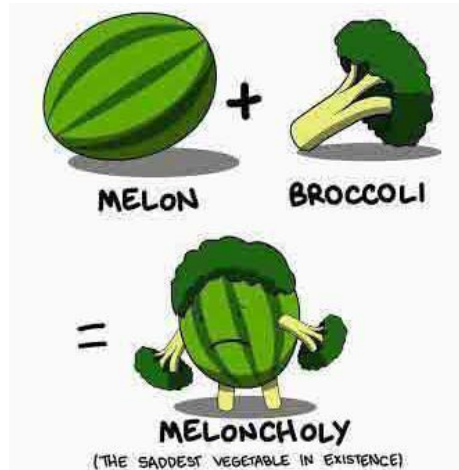
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GEOMETRY OF PLANTS



Aloe polyphylla



Amazon lily pad



Camellia japonica



Dahlia



Hoya pubicalyx

CITRUS GALL WASP

Citrus gall wasp (*Bruchophagus fellis*) has become a large problem for backyard citrus growers. It is a small, 3 mm in length, shiny, black wasp that is native to Australia. It originated in northern parts of Australia where the native finger lime is the normal host plant. However, the Citrus Gall Wasp has also adapted to use our introduced citrus trees as host plants.



Citrus Gall Wasp

It was first recorded as a pest of citrus in Queensland and New South Wales in the 1930s. During the last decade, it has spread to the

Riverina and Sunraysia regions of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and the southern parts of Western Australia.

The citrus gall wasp causes unsightly lumps in citrus trees. This is the tree's reaction to foreign bodies of the wasp larvae, that are incubating in the branch. Traditional thinking is that these galls are stressful to the trees. It is also believed to create weaker branches and lower the productivity of the trees.



Citrus Galls

There are two natural predators of the citrus gall wasp. The wasps *Megastigmus brevivalvus* and *M. trisulcus* insert their eggs directly into the citrus gall wasp egg. There it slowly develops in the host larva, eventually killing it. When well established, these wasps can parasitise more than 90% of gall wasp larvae. Neither of these natural predators has established populations in Melbourne, to make a significant impact on the gall wasp.

Citrus Gall Wasp Life Cycle

The citrus gall wasp has a life cycle that spans one calendar year. The adult wasp emerges from its woody gall in late spring or early summer. The emergence of the wasp is determined by the temperature. Most wasps emerge around the

same time (within 20 days of each other). Warmer springs will see them emerge earlier than cooler springs.

Once the wasp has emerged, it has only 5 to 7 days to mate and then lay up to 100 eggs under the green bark of a citrus tree. The eggs hatch after 2 to 3 weeks and feed within the stem for the next 9 to 10 months. During this time the tree will promote woody growth around the infected area. These galls become visible from about December and will gradually enlarge through autumn and winter. After a short pupation period in spring, the adults emerge from little holes in the galls and the cycle continues.

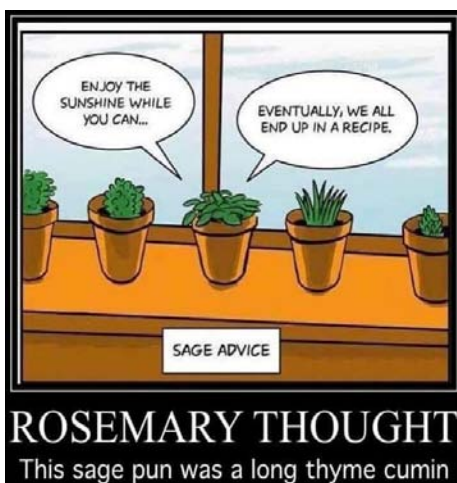
Adult wasps normally do not move very far, but can be transported longer distances on prevailing winds or by movement of infested branches or trees. They usually re-infect the same tree, or another one nearby.

One organic treatment method is showing promise. It involves spraying calcined kaolin clay (Surround®) twice during the citrus gall wasp emergence period. Also spraying with eco oil or similar affects the ability of the wasps to successfully implant their eggs on the trees. This disrupts the egg laying and has shown to reduce gall occurrence significantly.

Citrus Galls caused by the Citrus Gall Wasp are traditionally pruned out in June or July to prevent reinfection in spring. Avoid pruning out the gall wasps in winter. Doing so unbalances the tree so that it has a larger root system area than foliage area. This causes the tree to try to restore the balance by growing vigorously in spring. The vigorous spring growth results in a flush of new foliage that the gall wasp prefers. Yearly

pruning regimes, such as this perpetuates the cycle. The “Prune in June” program is likely to result in a downward spiral of the tree over the course of several years until you are left with nothing but a stick. Most fruit trees are covered in fruit (and possibly blossom) in winter, so it is another good reason not to “Prune in June”.

Avoid heavily fertilizing trees in winter or spring. This also results in a flush of new growth that the gall wasp prefers and perpetuates the cycle. Unfortunately, citrus trees are heavy feeders and require a lot of nitrogen rich nutrients. Without these heavy feeds, the leaves will go yellow and they may not be as productive as heavily fed trees. In some cases, wait until December to feed your citrus trees and this has meant that they have remained uninfected by the gall wasps. Feeding citrus trees in February or March can result in a second flush of new growth that is preferred by the Citrus Leaf Miner. This means that to avoid pests the only time to feed citrus in Melbourne is Late December and all of January. This is probably not enough for supporting productive healthy citrus trees. So there is a conundrum for the Melbourne based citrus grower. It seems we can have a well-fed productive tree, or an underfed, yellowing, pest-free tree, but not both!



EDIBLE SKIN BANANAS

A Japanese company has created a banana that you do not need to peel before eating. The Mongee banana (pronounced 'mon-gay' and meaning 'amazing') has an edible skin which is said to taste like a vegetable and have a lettuce-like texture. It has been a labour of love for 68-year-old Setsuzo Tanaka from Okayama Prefecture who has spent the past 40 years perfecting the technique for growing them.

Banana seedlings are frozen, then thawed and replanted, which his company, D&T Farm, calls the "freeze-thaw awakening" method. The process makes the plants grow rapidly, cutting the typical two-year cultivation process down to six months. The bananas mature quickly, leading to thin, pliable and edible skins.



Mongee bananas were developed from the Gros Michel variety, which was probably what your grandparents or great grandparents ate as children. It was the main variety in global circulation from the early 1900s until the 1950s, when plantations in Central America were wiped out by fusarium wilt which became more commonly known as Panama disease.

Setsuzo Tanaka's desire to cultivate tropical Gros Michel bananas in the cold climate of Japan was driven by his own memories of eating them as a child when they were classed as a luxury food. He developed it as a hobby. The reason why banana peel can be eaten is Gros Michel varieties are

relatively thin-skinned, compared with imported bananas to Japan.

The fruit itself is extremely sweet, with sugar content recently measured at 25.8 grams per 100 grams. In comparison, Cavendish bananas, which are today's main commercial variety, have about 18 grams of sugar per 100 grams. Banana peel can contain vitamin B6 and magnesium and is rich in tryptophan and there is also potassium, polyphenol, but there are many water soluble vitamins, zinc in particular.

The bananas are now being sold at a Japanese department store for \$7 each, expensive because it is grown from seed with only about 10 pieces of fruit available each week. The company has plans for expansion, initially throughout Japan, where 99 per cent of bananas are currently imported.

GROWING DISOCACTUS

Disocactus is a genus of epiphytic cacti in the tribe Hylocereeae found in Central America, the Caribbean and northern South America. It should not be confused with Discocactus, which is a different genus.

Species of Disocactus grow in tropical regions either on trees as epiphytes or on rocks as lithophytes. They have two distinct growth habits. Species such as *D. phyllanthoides* have stems which are round at the base but then become flattened and leaf-like. Other species, such as *D. flagelliformis* have stems which are round throughout their length.

Many of the cultivated plants known as *Epiphyllum* hybrids or just *Epiphyllums* are derived from crosses between species of *Disocactus* (rather than *Epiphyllum*) and other genera in the *Hylocereeae*.



Growing Conditions

Light: Like all cacti, give them lots of direct sunlight, especially during the summer.

Water: During the growing period the plants need frequent watering; from October to March and waterings should be rather abundant, so that the soil becomes completely soaked, but let dry between watering. Keep relatively dry in winter or when night temperatures remain below 10° C.

Soil: Well-drained soil is best, and most Disocactus perform well in a soil that contains some organic material.

Propagation

Disocactus can be reproduced both by seeds and cuttings.

Grower's Tips

Disocactus should be grown in a rich but still well draining soil. They should be watered regularly and fertilized as well. This is essential for good growth and flowering. Disocactus dislike extreme heat and cold, so they are best green-housed during the depth of winter and heat of summer in hot dry climates.

They also prefer shade to sun, and like a little extra humidity in the air. Flowering in spring and summer the flower colour varies from white, yellow red or purple depending on species.

MEMBERS NEWS

Don't forget to bring your cup to the meetings.

Welcome to two new members who joined recently, Brendan from Eltham and Lorena from Alphington.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU

August: Betty Lunny, Joy Snell and Brendan Mathews.

For those members who have an email address, we can send you the monthly newsletter by this method. The big benefit is you will always receive the Newsletter days before the meeting night. If you want to opt out from the printed copy, just send an email with your name to: prestongardenclub@hotmail.com

COMING EVENTS

Thursday, 30 August - Sunday, 9 September. Kyneton Daffodil & Arts Festival 2018 - Great Program of Events over several days and nights. "Come Dancing With The Daffodils." Come and Stay and Enjoy a Great Country Event. Dancing With Daffodils. Contact more info on 03 5422 2282 or at www.kynetondaffodilarts.org.au

Saturday, 8 - Sunday, 9. September Ferny Creek Horticultural Society & Camellias Victoria - Spring Show & National Camellia Show Times Sat 12.30 noon - 4.30pm, Sun 10am-4pm, Entry \$5, U14 free

Features Daffodils, Early Spring Bulbs & Perennials, Officially judged fantastic flower displays. The National Camellia Show. Guided walks of the 4 hectare garden. Sales of rare plants & cut flowers. Members' photographic display. Refreshments, light luncheons, sausage sizzle. Ample free parking. Bus groups welcome. Location 100 Hilton Rd, SASSAFRAS (MW 66 E 12). Contact Enquiries 9755 1882/0421 748 949 or publicity@fchs.org.au.

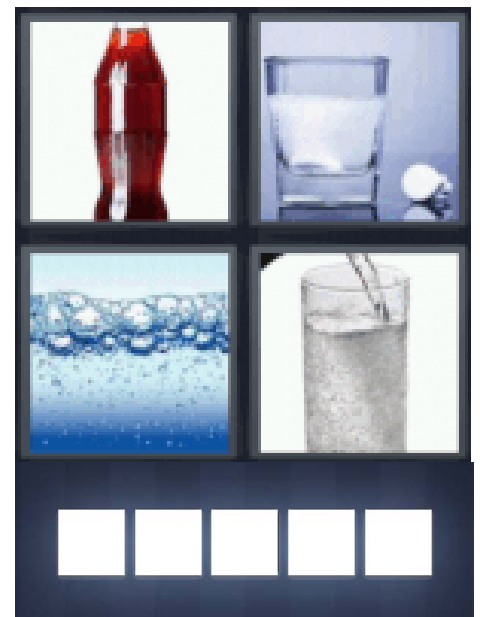
FIND THE WORD

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

BUNCH

The word this month has 5 letters. What could it be?

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



MONTHLY COMPETITION

September 26th: One Container Mixed Cut Flowers – At Least Three Kinds.

MONTHLY MEETING

September 26th: Unfortunately last minute change.