

NEWSLETTER

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PRESTON GARDEN CLUB COMMITTEE

2018/2019

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BUS TRIP

Those who booked for the bus trip full payment is required at the March meeting.

If you have any questions or problems, contact John, phone 94581632 or 0402 633 739.

Most important **Daylight Saving** will finish on **April 7th**. So make sure your clock is set correctly. Otherwise you will arrive too early!!

SHOW VOTE

Just over half of our members took time to vote on whether to continue with the Spring show or not. The votes have been counted, the results are close.

Option 1: To continue with holding the Spring Show = **12 votes**.

Option 2: Cancel the Spring show and hold a garden festival/gala. = **14 votes**.

By only **2 votes**, Spring Show is now cancelled. The committee has a lot of work ahead to plan and prepare a garden festival/gala.

WALL ART





BEGONIA PROPAGATION

Most begonias can be propagated from leaf cuttings. About the only ones that can't are cane or begonias which have to be propagated by division or stem cuttings.

There are several ways to propagate from leaf cuttings but this is a preferred method, because it's quick and easy. This technique uses the whole leaf and is nearly foolproof if you need just a few new plants. Growers who propagate in larger quantities will often cut a leaf into several small sections to produce a dozen or more new plants from each leaf.



Select a healthy leaf, with no obvious damage, pests, or diseases, and snap or cut it off at the petiole just below the leaf blade.



With a sharp knife or scissors, cut out the centre of the leaf around the petiole and across the major leaf veins. But save that cut-out section from the middle! If you want, you can plant that part too. Just bury the cut end of the petiole in potting mix, and otherwise treat as I describe as below.



I find that they aren't terribly picky about the potting mix, as long as it drains well and doesn't stay too wet. If a particular mix seems heavy, add a bit of extra perlite. Curl the leaf into a cone and insert it into a pot with your favourite potting mix, making sure the cut edges are slightly buried, carefully water it in, and allow it to drain for a few minutes.



If the leaves are too big, you can trim them down a bit. Don't forget to label them! Now pop those pots into a plastic bag. In humid greenhouse conditions this isn't necessary, but in the home it helps immensely. Place the bagged pots in a warm spot with bright indirect light. Direct sun for even part of the day will cook them almost instantly. If you see heavy condensation inside the bag, open the top a bit for a day or two and let some of that moisture escape.



The leaf will send out roots within a week or two, and after that will form one or more new plants at the cut end of each major vein. At this point open the bag, or poke a few holes in it, to lower the humidity and help harden off the new plants.



They're ready for potting up as soon as they have two or three leaves of their own, but there's no rush; you can wait until they get too crowded, carefully separate them and plant them individually.



GROWING SWEET PEAS

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 2-3 inches apart and 2-3 inches deep, 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 or thrive to improve the flowering. Pick your flower regularly and enjoy them in the house and give away some to friends Regular picking the flowers encourages the plant to produce more instead of setting seed. 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.

BRAN LOAF

1 cup all bran
1 cup sultanas
1 cup sugar
1 cup milk

Soak these 4 ingredients for 1 hour. Then stir in 1 cup self raising flour. Put into a loaf tin, cook for 1 hour on moderate oven. Slice when cold and serve with butter.

Pat Kilpatrick.

BALLARAT GARDENS

Over the long weekend every year in Ballarat they hold the Begonia Festival. Lots of things happening in the Botanical Gardens. Displays, plant market, entertainment, activities also a street parade. Of course the main feature in the Conservatory are the Tuberous Begonias which Ballarat is famous for. This year some 400 pots of upright Tuberous Begonias are on display in shades of white, yellow, pink, red etc. This Conservatory display will continue until end of April, then will be changed to Chrysanthemums. If you have time take a trip to Ballarat Botanical Gardens.





FIND THE WORD

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

HAIRY

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

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



FEBRUARY MEETING

Our speaker Maria from Ivanhoe Garden Club gave an interesting talk on flower arranging in the home. Using what flowers/foliage you have in the garden. Simple and easy way to bring some of your garden indoors.



MONTHLY COMPETITION

March 27th: One Pot/Container Succulent/s One variety.

April 24th: Bowl of Floating Flowers. No More Than 6 Blooms.

MONTHLY MEETING

March 27th: Janine Kay - Geraniums and Pelargoniums.

April 24th: Ian Banks-Smith - Roses.

MEMBERS NEWS



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU

March - Hilary May, Carolyn Scott and Robert Strugnell.

STAMPS

Still looking to collect postage stamps. Save them and bring along to the next meeting. Thanks in advance.

Robert

