

NEWSLETTER

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

Registered Number A0006535U

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ISSUE NO. 202

FEBRUARY 2020



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AUTUMN BUS TRIP

Autumn Bus Trip Sunday 5th April
Castlemaine farmers' market-
brows over 50 market stalls.

Maldon hotel-2 course lunch inc
tea or coffee.

Castlemaine Botanical Gardens
visit garden.

Cost \$40.00 includes coach, 2
course lunch, free bingo & lucky
ticket prizes.

Coach leaving outside Preston
Town Hall, Gower St 9.00 am
sharp.

On the way three or four games of
free Bingo (Prizes to Winners).
WOODEND Short stop if required.

1. CASTLEMAINE FARMERS' MARKET.



The Castlemaine Farmers' Market
has been supporting local farmers
and providing fresh local food.
Over 50 stalls offering the best
produce.

Seasonal Fruit & Vegetables,
Smoked Fish, Local bread and
baked goods from dedicated
bakers, CWA Castlemaine Stall,
Cheese- a range of delicious
cheese, Delicious Ice-cream, Olive
oil from specific varieties, Taste of
the Orient, Wines-Shiraz is famous
in the area, Dips, Soups, Salad
Dressing, Plants, including herbs
and heritage seeds, Hey Presto
Espresso (Drinks), Honey Specific
flavours from a range of local flora,
Goats Milk Products, Chutney, jam
and preserves from local
ingredients, Fresh Coffee, Hot
Chocolate, Live chooks and free
range eggs, Berry Farm fresh or
frozen berries.

2. MALDON HOTEL.



2 Course Lunch includes Tea,
Coffee. (Other drinks can be
purchased at Bar) (Sunday Roast
Lamb Veg, Apple Strudel &
Cream, Tea or Coffee).

3. CASTLEMAINE BOTANICAL GARDENS.



Castlemaine Botanical Gardens are
one of Victoria's oldest regional
botanic gardens. The gardens were
gazetted in February 1860,
believed to be designed by the first
curator, Philip Doran who held this
position for 47 years until his death
in 1913. The impressive gates were
constructed in 1877-78 by local
engineering firm Thomas & Co and
local monumental mason George

Redfearn in 1877-78, a decorative fountain was erected nearby. Lake Augusta was constructed in 1884, in the 1880s, a rustic bridge, conservatory, fernery, shelter shed, rotunda and grotto were added. The tearooms were constructed in 1919 and in 1920 a glasshouse was built.

Many of the original plants were provided by Government Botanist Ferdinand Mueller and Daniel Bunce the curator of the Geelong Botanic Gardens. An English Oak planted in 1863 is one of the oldest commemorative plantings in Victoria. The gardens feature an outstanding collection of mature trees, including many conifers, Elms and Oaks as well as stunning individual specimens of Indian Bean Tree, Peppercorn and Eucalypts.

Board Coach at approx. 4.30 pm arriving back at Preston Town Hall at 5.30 pm.

Full payment is required by the **March** meeting to reserve your seat, see John at the meeting or phone 94581632 or 0402 633 739. Bring a friend and make a gardening day out?

COMPANION PLANTING

Companion planting is all about finding plants that can exist together in a symbiotic fashion, helping one another. Some companion plants help to deter pests, others provide shade and some even help to add nutrients to the soil.

To be successful with companion planting you need to know which plants do well together and which ones don't. Grouping those that get along could just be the key to your garden success. If you want to have the biggest and best tomatoes, consider companion planting.

Here are ten plants that will help your tomatoes taste delicious.



1. Marigolds:

Some gardeners would never consider growing tomatoes without marigolds. These bright and chipper annuals do a mighty wonder when it comes to deterring pests. They do this by producing a substance known as alpha-terthienyl. This substance reduces root-knot nematodes in the soil.

2. Borage:

This annual herb planted with tomatoes helps in a number of ways. It will repel tomato hornworms and cabbage worms. In addition, it will improve tomato health and flavour.

3. Mint:

Mint is an aromatic perennial herb that can become invasive. It is best to plant mint in your garden in pots so that it does not overrun the show. Although we may think that the aroma of mint is lovely, pests really hate it. Planting some mint near your tomato plants will even keep small rodents away.

4. Leaf lettuce:

If you grow leaf lettuce with your tomatoes it will act as a mulch to keep tomato plants cooler. It also helps reduce the chance that disease will spread from the water and soil to the tomato plants.

5. Chives:

This pretty herb not only helps improve the taste of tomatoes but also helps repel aphids and makes a great addition to any tomato salad.

6. Asparagus:

This yummy perennial vegetable produces a chemical that can kill nematodes. Tomatoes contain

solanine, a substance that is toxic to the asparagus beetle. In addition, tomatoes grow tall, creating shade around asparagus plants, thus not allowing weeds to grow.

7. Nasturtiums:

These pretty old-fashioned annual flowers not only add colour and cheer to your garden but also do wonders protecting your tomato plants. They deter whiteflies, squash bugs, beetles, and aphids while keeping fungal disease at bay. Although they are annual, they often reseed making them an even more delightful addition.

8. Garlic:

Planting garlic alongside your tomatoes will help to keep spider mites away. Besides, who doesn't like a little fresh garlic in their tomato salad?

9. Calendula:

Calendula, although often called pot marigold, is an entirely different plant. Both the leaves and blooms of this plant are edible and taste delicious in salads. When planted in between tomato plants, calendula is an effective natural way to control pests that feast on tomato plants. These pretty flowers also look sweet in a salad.

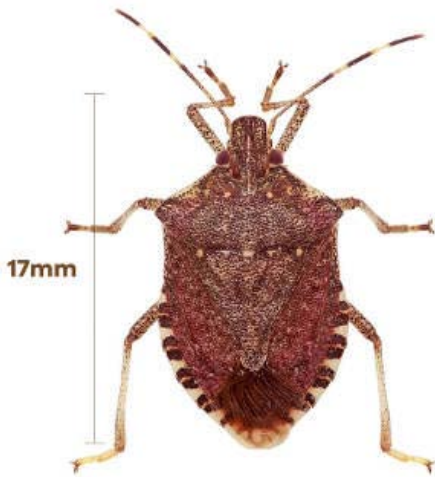
10. Carrots:

Carrots and tomatoes share space well. You can plant carrots when tomatoes are small and they will be ready to harvest by the time that the tomatoes are getting larger and needing more room. If you are short on space, this is a great way to increase your yield.

HANDY HINT

To stop insects such as spiders getting into your gum boots when not being worn, cover the top with pantyhose socks. This keeps everything out.

BAD BUG



We need your help to look out for the brown marmorated stink bug. About one year ago, this exotic pest was found for the first time in Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs, where it had hitchhiked on imported goods.

While our surveillance activities indicated that there were none remaining in these areas, we need your help to ensure none hid during winter.

Keep an eye out around your home, work building, vehicles, machinery, shed and garden for this destructive nuisance pest – especially if you grow fruit or vegetables.

Brown marmorated stink bug is an economically damaging pest that could attack over 300 types of crops and become a real nuisance for households if found in Victoria.

If you think you have found this pest (or any other unusual insect), catch it in a container and call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline phone on 1800084881.
www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/bmsb.

WATERMELON POLLINATION

Most people don't realize that watermelon pollination is not an on/off switch but a progressive act. People think that the bee goes to the flower, and the flower is pollinated. What actually is needed

is many visits by the bees to deliver 1000 grains of pollen, and evenly space it on the three sticky lobes of the female stigma. Each incipient seed needs a grain of pollen to fertilize the germ of the seed, and another grain to fertilize the seed coat. And the flesh of the melon only develops in response to the fertilization of the seeds.



Note that this melon has a pointy end, because the incipient seeds were not fertilized. They are white. The other end is OK, as shown by the mature black seeds.

Not only do the fertilized seeds control the development of the flesh, but also the sweetness. If you split a melon and see that half the seeds are white, you'll know, even before tasting it, that it will not be sweet.

The bees not only create the melon, but they also put the sweetness into it! This is why watermelon growers put honey bee hives into the fields to pollinate the melons. Gardeners may be able to rely on native bees, but there simply aren't enough to pollinate commercial crops.

The bee populations that are adequate for pollination in the spring, when conditions are perfect, are not adequate for the summer, when heat kills pollen and

bees quit working as the thermometer rises.

It takes a lot higher population of bees to get the required number of bee visits early in the morning, on a 35 degree day that it did to work all day on an 29 degree day.

This is also the reason commercial growers quit with cucumbers and summer squash during the hot months. Of course pest and disease problems increase, but also it's just too darn hard to get the crop well pollinated!



The last photo is of really, really bad pollination; likely only one or two bee visits.



CINNAMON TEA CAKE

Everyone deserves a little treat with their morning or afternoon cuppa, and this moist tea cake does the job beautifully.



Ingredients

180g cubed butter, at room temperature
3/4 cup caster sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 eggs
1 1/4 cups (185g) self-raising flour
1/4 cup (40g) plain flour
2 teaspoons Ground Cinnamon
1/2 cup (125ml) milk

Topping

1 tablespoon caster sugar, extra
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 tablespoon melted butter

Method

Step 1

Preheat oven to 170°C. Grease and line a 20cm-round cake pan with baking paper. Beat butter, sugar and vanilla together until pale and creamy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.

Step 2

Sift flours and cinnamon together. Fold in alternately with milk in 2 batches. Spoon into pan and smooth surface. Bake for 1 hour or until skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean.

Step 3

Cool in pan for 15 minutes. Carefully turn out onto a wire rack. Mix extra sugar, cinnamon and melted butter together. Pour over cake and set aside to cool. Serve.

COMING EVENTS

01 March Sunday. Werribee Park Heritage Orchard - Summer Heritage Fruit Tree Festival. The Festival is on again on, 10am – 3pm. This will be a great opportunity to come and have a look at the rare and heritage stone fruit varieties that we have at the Werribee Park Heritage Orchard. You can select your own variety to be grafted or you can purchase pre-grafted trees from our nursery at bargain prices \$15 - \$25. Look out for peaches, nectarines, apricots, plums, plus we will also have apples and cherries available, amongst some other wonderful edible plants. So come on down and explore the beautiful surrounds of Werribee Park Farm with tours of the orchard, tree sales, grafting demonstrations, market stalls, maker demonstrations, live folk music, food stalls and kids activities. It will be a great day out for all the family. Bring a picnic rug and settle in for the day! Free entry. Gold coin donation for parking. Location Werribee Park, Enter via Gate 5, K Road, Werribee South, past Shadow Fax Winery and the polo fields. Enquiries Craig Castree 0411 720 283.

MEMBERS NEWS



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU

February: Pratima Francis and Elisabeth Mercuri.

We wish you all a wonderful celebration.

FIND THE WORD

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

ERROR

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



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



MONTHLY COMPETITION

February 26th:

One Container Marigolds, 3-6 stems, One Variety, C.V.A.

March 25th: One Pot/Container Succulent/s One variety.

MONTHLY MEETING

February 26th: Maria Mitchell - Home garden flower arranging.

March 25th: John Pinniger - Heritage Fruit Society (Petty's Orchard) tasting heritage apples.