

NEWSLETTER

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WELCOME TO 2021

Welcome members to 2021, must be better than 2020! Positive thinking.

We have some good and bad news unfortunately. Good news, the coronavirus is under control in Australia. Also the weather has been great for the garden. Plants are growing so quickly, healthy and lush.

Now the bad news! All was planned to have our first general meeting this month. Our President received a call today (7th Jan) from Darebin Council advising the hall would not be available for our January meeting. Darebin Councillors will be holding their first Council meeting. Because of the number of people attending needed the hall for safe distancing for Councillors, staff and visitors.

So mark your calendar, our first meeting for 2021 is Wednesday **February 24th.**

The February newsletter will be sent out to all members with any updates and news about the meeting.

Hope we can see you all again very soon.



DRY HYDRANGEA FLOWERS



If you grow hydrangeas and find yourself wishing their beauty could stick around long after they bloom, you'll be happy to hear how easy it is to dry the flowers. Hydrangeas are one of those florals that take almost no effort to preserve, they dry in about two weeks' time and can last for up to a year. You can preserve hydrangeas in several

ways, but the water-drying method helps the flowers retain their colour best and lasts the longest.

When to Dry Hydrangeas

The ideal time to cut hydrangea blooms to dry is toward the end of their growing season, when the larger petals are starting to change colour and develop a papery feel and the tiny flowers are just beginning to open. If you can't really see the tiny flowers on your hydrangea variety, you can rely on the changing colour alone, just keep in mind that it can be a difficult way to judge readiness in some varieties.

The biggest challenge when it comes to drying hydrangeas is knowing the right time to cut the blossoms. If you snip the stems at peak bloom, they'll have too much moisture and won't dry quickly enough to retain their beauty, but cut them too late and they'll just turn brown. Depending on the year, it can be nearly impossible to find ready to cut flowers that have absolutely zero brown spots on them, so remember you can always remove any individual brown flowers either before or after drying.

Instructions

It might sound counterintuitive to dry flowers using water, but allowing hydrangeas to desiccate slowly helps them hold their colour

and shape (even the stems end up sturdier when dried this way).

To prepare your hydrangeas, cut each flower on an angle using a pair of secateurs, leaving a length of stem between 30-45cm attached. Remove all leaves from the stem.

Next, put your fresh cut flowers in a vase; fill it up about halfway with water and place it in a cool spot out of direct sunlight. Be mindful not to overstuff your vase with stems, as hydrangeas dry best when given room to "breathe."

As the days pass, allow the water to evaporate completely from the vase. This process will usually take about two or three weeks, at the end, your hydrangeas should feel dry to the touch and the stems should be able to snap off easily. At this point, they are ready to use.

Another Method for Drying Hydrangeas

There are several other ways you can preserve your hydrangeas. If you prefer, you can air-dry your blooms by hanging the individual stems upside down in a cool, dry location. Air-dried hydrangeas tend to be a bit more brittle than their water-dried counterparts, but they still turn out beautiful.

FLOWERS OR BRACTS?



A Lacecap Hydrangea has a lacy cluster of fertile flowers in the middle and surrounded by a ring of showy bracts.

WHO ARE WE?



GARDENERS!



WHAT DO WE WANT?



ALL THE PLANTS!



WHERE WILL WE PUT THEM?



WE DON'T KNOW!



ORGANIC SPRAYS

POWDERY MILDEW SPRAY



This spray is used to control powdery mildew on roses. Mix 8ml of full cream milk in a litre of water. Spray foliage to point of runoff. Repeat applications are required every 7-10 days.

BLACK SPOT ON ROSES



½ bucket of water, 3 level teaspoons of bicarbonate of soda, a couple of good splashes of fish emulsion. Give it a good mix and spray it on weekly. Don't apply when it's hot.

GARLIC SPRAY



General repellent. Kills aphids. 100g finely chopped garlic 2 tablespoons vegetable oil Combine and allow to stand overnight. Dissolve 30g pure soap in 500ml lukewarm water and add garlic oil mix. Soap makes it stick. Strain and use diluted at 15ml per litre of water.

CHILI SPRAY



Puree 50 chilies with a litre of water. Strain and add liquid soap and one more litre of water. And use as a spray. Be careful when handling this spray as it can be very irritating to humans as well as the ants, aphids and caterpillars you are targeting.

MOLASSES



Molasses makes a good spray for caterpillars and possums. Just dissolve a tablespoon of molasses in a litre of warm water and some liquid soap and spray over the leaves (underside as well).

"Gardening is the art that uses flowers & plants as paint, and the soil and sky as canvas" - Elizabeth Murray



HANGING BASKET

This year at the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show there will not be a Great Victorian Hanging Basket Competition. Covid19 made it impossible to organise and prepare for this event. The RHSV will be planning ahead for a competition at MIFGS in 2022.



CUPCAKE DOG

Just take some cupcakes, using your piping skills and a good imagination and here is the result.



WISTERIA - HYOGO, JAPAN.



EASIEST CARROT CAKE

C'mon - you know there are days when you are just too lazy to bake a cake. This food processor carrot cake recipe should help you out. Moist, delicious and easy to make!



Ingredients:

14 ounces (400g) carrots, roughly chopped
1 cup (120g) pecans
1 cup (175g) brown sugar
½ cup (110g) sugar
1½ cups (225g) all-purpose flour
1 tsp (5 ml) baking powder
1 tsp (5 ml) baking soda
2 tsp (10 ml) ground cinnamon
½ tsp (2 ml) nutmeg
¼ tsp (1 ml) ground cloves
¼ tsp (1 ml) allspice
½ cup (125 ml) vegetable oil
¼ cup (70g) plain yoghurt
2 eggs
2 tsp (10 ml) pure vanilla extract

Optional Icing:

9 ounces (250g) cream cheese, softened
¼ cup (50g) mascarpone
⅓ cup (55g) icing sugar

Method:

Preheat oven to 160°C (325°F).
Pulse the carrot in a food processor until finely chopped.
Add everything else.
Process, until combined.
Scrape down the bowl a couple times.
Pour the mixture into a 9" (22cm) round spring form cake pan.
Bake for 45–60 minutes.
Allow to cool in the pan.

To make the icing, whip the cream cheese and ricotta with a hand blender.

Then add lemon juice, and icing sugar and whip until smooth.
Spread the icing over the cooled cake to serve.
Serves 10–12.

COMING EVENTS

March 6th & 7th, 10am to 4pm.
Ferny Creek Horticultural Society, Plant Collectors Sale & Garden Expo. 100 Hilton Rd Sassafras. Free parking, entry \$5.

March 24th to 28th. The Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show. Royal Exhibition Building & Carlton Gardens.

Wednesday 24th March 9am – 5pm
Thursday 25th March 9am – 5pm
Friday 26th March – 9am – 9pm
Saturday 27th March 9am – 5pm
Sunday 28th March 9am – 5pm

Tickets adults \$30, concession \$26
<http://melbflowershow.com.au/>

MEMBERS NEWS



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU

January: Dorothy Berrill, Barbara Duggan, Glenda Edgar, Lorena Felicetti, Barbara Lee, Desiree Mathie, Val Newland, Noelene Park, Jaswant Singh and Dawn Walsh.

We wish you all a wonderful celebration.

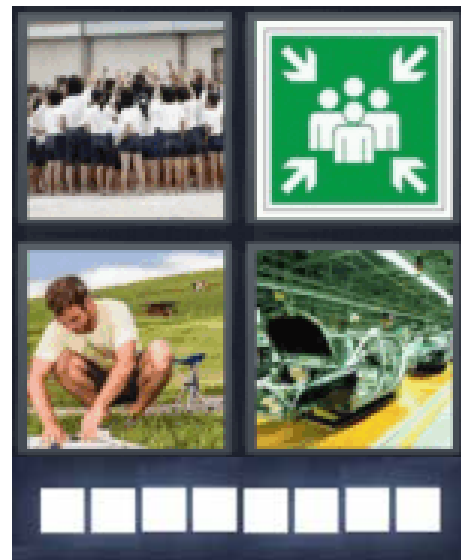
FIND THE WORD

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

DAHLIA

The word this month has 8 letters. What could it be?

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



MONTHLY COMPETITION

February 24th:

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

MONTHLY MEETING

February 24th: Kathleen Tants - Weeds and Pests.

STAMPS

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