

# NEWSLETTER

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## FEBRUARY MEETING



Will you be there? Wednesday Feb 23rd.

Forget what we said last month. We are back in the our normal hall (Shire Hall). If the Shire Hall is closed, look for us next door in the City Hall. Are you confused, so are we, haha.



## BRING A CUP

Just a reminder members, if you would like a hot cup of coffee or tea at the end of the monthly meeting, you must bring along your own cup.



## SANTA CRUZ DAHLIAS

World-class flowers are being bred in Santa Cruz, California USA and gaining international attention. Kristine Albrecht's Santa Cruz Dahlias hybrids have been recognized as the best in the U.S. and Canada. Albrecht has been growing and breeding her favourite flowers for 15 years. "I kinda know which ones are good seed parents pollen parents, you get a sense," Albrecht says.



Her flower sense has made Santa Cruz Dahlias a name recognized around the globe. She does it all from a small backyard oasis, tucked away in Santa Cruz. She says her love for dahlias in part

been just down the road at the Santa Cruz County Fair. "I just went and visited the fair, the Monterey Bay Dahlia Society was there. So we lucked out because we have a local society and they just said, hey, you want to learn how to grow them better," Albrecht said. And, she did want to grow them better. Fast forward, and her work has twice earned her the Derril W. Hart Medal from the American Dahlia Society awarding the best cultivar in the U.S. and Canada, twice. In 2014, she won the award for her hybrid, K A's Cloud, and again in 2018 with K A's Khaleesi.



This year, she'll be submitting K A's Papa John for consideration, a flower she named after her father. He died at 51, and is the person Albrecht credits with getting her started in gardening. "I sent this away this year. It could or couldn't win. We'll have to see. It's it seems like it could, but, you know, it's all it's a competition against the other ones that have been sent in that year," she said.



## MAKE A BEE WATERER



Her blooms have gained international recognition from some of the industry's most notable, like Floret Flower Farm's Erin Benzakein, who has featured Albrecht on her website blog. "You know, I think the main way that people learn about my dahlias is on Instagram because I have a fair amount of followers. There's another seed company and someone who does dahlias, called Floret. I don't know if you know her, but she has about a million followers and sometimes she'll put up one of my varieties and then more people will learn about it. I'll get like three thousand new followers in one afternoon sometimes if she does it because she has so many followers," Albrecht said.

Honey bees pollinate 80 percent of the flowering crops, which make one-third of everything we eat. Their loss could affect not only dietary staples like apples, broccoli, strawberries, nuts, asparagus, blueberries, and cucumbers, but might also threaten the beef and dairy industries and cereal crops.

So far, she's introduced 10 hybrids to the market and expects to do the same with eight more next year. Fifty to 100 more are in development. Albrecht is aiming for uncommon colours in the floral industry — right now, breeding for soft mochas, and dark burgundies ideal for bridal work. "I've been breeding mocha-coloured dahlias, those are colours that a lot of the weddings like. I mean, probably the best-known mocha dahlia out there is Café au lait. Those colours haven't been really bred for recently. So I've been trying really hard to breed mocha-coloured ones. And so that was something I'm doing. Last year I was growing, and breeding for burgundy and apricot. I'm trying to go for a brown colour. I don't know if that will happen. There are very popular brown roses out there that are called Coco Loco. I think a brown dahlia might be pretty for wedding work," Albrecht said.

A study conducted at the Cornell University estimated that honeybees pollinate \$14 billion worth of seeds and crops in the U.S. per year, so if they disappear, they could take most of our insect pollinated plants with them, reducing mankind to little more than a water diet.

Santa Cruz Dahlias sells blooms to local florists and the San Francisco Flower Mart, mostly so the flowers don't go to waste as Albrecht works on the perfect crosses. She readily shares her knowledge with detailed tutorials on her website, Instagram page, and her recent book, co-written with her husband, called *Dahlia Breeding and the Farmer Florist and the Home Gardener, A Step by Step Guide to Hybridizing New Dahlia Varieties from Seed*.

One bee beats its wings 10,000 times per minute, visits at least 2,000 flowers daily, carries pollen and helps our food supply. This hard work makes bees thirsty, so they need to have access to safe water sources.

Yet, they often risk drowning in birdbaths or being eaten at rivers and lakes among birds, fish, frogs, and other wildlife, so they decide to fly around and land on us if we are in an outdoor pool.



Bees use water for: Cooling in the heat of summer, as they spread a thin film of water atop sealed brood (baby bee cells) or on the rims of cells with larvae and eggs. The workers inside the hive then fan vigorously, setting up air flow which evaporates the water and cools the interior of the hive.

## Controlling Humidity

Digestion and metabolization of food

Larvae Food – Nurse bees feed the developing larvae, and they need large amounts of pollen, nectar, and water for the hypopharyngeal glands to produce the jelly used to feed the larvae.

Diluting stored honey that has crystallized or if they are fed dried sugar crystals

Therefore, make sure you hydrate the bees and help their work, but do not add honey or sugar to the water. This practice seriously endangers bees, as if the bee gets sugar from the water, it will keep returning to it instead of pollinating flowers, and soon, other bees will learn this source too. Then hundreds of bees will store the sugar water in their hive along with honey, essentially watering down the honey. Honey can contain spores of a bacteria which can be deadly to bees.



However, we can simply help them, by taking a pan or bowl, adding marbles or pebbles and pouring water in it. In this way, they can safely land and drink it.

## THE BEES KNEES

The Bees Knees – A Catchy Phrase for a Time.

People love to use catchy phrases. If the phrase rhymes and seems silly, that's even better. The term bees knees seems to just roll off the tongue without a lot of effort.

When did this term come into use? Do we know who was the first person to use it? Sadly, no. None

one knows who was the first to utter the phrase.

But, we do know that this term came into common use in the 1920's in the United States.

For a brief time period, the use of silly slang terms became popular. This period also brought us such remembered phrases as : ant's pants and cat's pajamas.

What Does the Phrase "Bees Knees" Mean?

Bees knees referred to something that was extraordinary or excellent beyond compare. To have this term expressed about you was a compliment of the highest sort.



## CONSERVATORY VISIT

We had a beautiful day for a visit to see the Hydrangeas/Fuchsia display at the Fitzroy Gardens Conservatory.



We meet around lunch time and secured some seating in the shade of a huge oak tree next to the conservatory. Everyone hopped into their picnic lunches and we all discussed what we had been up to since the last time we had met. Due to COVID this amounted to "not much". Members were happy to

greet friendly faces that they had missed for a long time.



After we had soothed our hungry stomachs we proceeded into the Conservatory to view the magnificent blooming hydrangeas. Such beauty and a sea of different colours ranged from pale green to pinks, purples and blues. These were complimented by nicotine plants, fish bone and maiden hair ferns, palms, salvias and grey foliage of the Senecio. Hanging baskets over flowing with Impatiens. We're a real showplace.

Unfortunately the Fuchsia's have been slow this year and were not ready for display when we were there. A visit later in the calendar when the Fuchsia's would be at their best is recommended for any Fuchsia lovers.



After the viewing some of us topped up with rum balls and a cuppa then it was time to head home. I think I was not the only one who had thoroughly enjoyed the visit. The display was lovely but it was also great to catch up with friends after such a long time apart. Hopefully we will visit other displays during the year and perhaps next time we can go during the week when parking is a lot easier.

Helen Salisbury

## CARAMILK CHUNK COOKIES



Ingredients:  
 125gms butter (room temperature)  
 1/4 cup brown sugar  
 1 tspn vanilla extract  
 3 tablespoons condensed milk  
 3/4 cup self raising flour  
 3/4 cup desiccated coconut  
 1 & 1/2 blocks of Cadbury Caramilk chocolate (chopped into chunks)

Method:  
 Preheat oven to 160 degrees C fan forced and line baking tray  
 Cream wet ingredients and brown sugar until fluffy  
 Mix in dry ingredients with spoon  
 Roll into 3cm balls and flatten with fork  
 Bake for approx 18 minutes or until golden.

## MEMBERS NEWS



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU

**February:** Pratima Francis & Daksha Singh.

We wish you all a wonderful celebration.

## COMING EVENTS

The Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show will be held Wednesday **30th March to Sunday 3rd April.**

Royal Exhibition Building & Carlton Gardens.

<http://melbflowershow.com.au/>

## FIND THE WORD

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

## **OVERKILL**

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

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



## MONTHLY COMPETITION

**February 23rd:** One Container Marigolds, 3-6 stems, One Variety, C.V.A.

**March 23rd:** One Pot/Container Succulent/s One variety.

## MONTHLY MEETING

**February 23rd:** Chris Clarke - Victorian Alpine Flora.

**March 23rd:** Andrew from Warringal Orchid Club.