

# NEWSLETTER

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## NOVEMBER BUS TRIP

Unfortunately the photos of the Ivanhoe bus trip missed the last newsletter.

Eight members of the Preston Garden Club went on a Sunday 6th November bus trip organised by Ivanhoe Garden Club. They thoroughly enjoyed the day especially the tours of Su Laird and Tine Grimston's cherished gardens.



Central Park, Malvern



Tine Grimston's Garden



Lysterfield Lake, Rowville



Su Laird's Garden



Pinewood Nursery, Glen Waverley

## BANANA PLANTATION



I had the pleasure of attending a banana plantation tour near Innisfail Qld. The tour started with a slush through a foot bath to kill any disease and then doning pretty blue plastic slippers to prevent the spread of Panama disease.

We got into the owners 4WD and drove off to the fields where we viewed the workers cutting the bunches. The bunches are covered with bags to prevent damage and markings on the fruit. A coloured string identifies which is to be picked next.



The banana takes approximately 12 weeks to mature and we learnt

about starting new trees and establishing the daughter plants next to the mother plant. The mother takes 12 months to fruit but the daughter only take 9 months.

The fruit begin straight and gradually bend upwards towards the sun. The fruit at the bottom of the bunch are left on the bunch until final picking even if damaged because if they are removed the plant stops sending sap there and the whole bunch suffers.



We were then shown the sorting and packing shed where the fruit is washed and weighed and grading takes place. The rejected fruit is turned into compost. Many good fruit are rejected as supermarkets have strict requirements.



The fruit are stored at 14c and are sold to the buyer in a green state so they can control the ripening

process. A light lunch concluded the tour followed by banana bread home made by the owners. The farm is for sale if there are any buyers. A banana growers life is not an easy one.

Helen Salisbury

### HANGING BASKET

Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show will held this year from 29th March to 2nd April. The Hanging Basket Competition is back again, last time was in 2019. The Club has entered the competition again. The basket is being grown in a secret location, should we say winning basket!!

#### Judging

Each basket must have at least one living plant. Any accessories used must not be bigger than the plant. The hanging basket provided by the Show is the only hanging basket permitted for use. The features that the judges will consider when they assess the entries include:

Balance, Proportion, Plant quality, Maturity Use of Accessories, Innovation and Overall Presentation.

So when you visit the show, look for the basket competition and find our basket.

### NORTHFIELD FIREFLY



Dahlia 'Northfield Firefly'. Yellow with red tips fimbriated cactus.

This Dahlia was bred by Frank Turton, an expert Dahlia grower, exhibitor, show judge and amateur breeder of Dahlias. Member of the Victorian Dahlia Society, also a member of our Garden Club.

Frank and Eunice Turton lived in Research. Northfield was the name of Frank's Dahlia nursery. He would use the prefix "Northfield" in naming his new Dahlias.

Frank and Eunice always supported our Autumn Garden show with their prize winning Dahlia exhibits.

His work will lived on through the new Dahlias he has bred!

### COMPANION PLANTING

Have you heard of companion planting and its benefits? Plants grow together in a natural ecosystem, since they are compatible, and together attract beneficial insects and pollinators, deter unwanted pests, and offer shelter and food for other critters.

Therefore, such mutual growing provides them all the things they need, nutrients, shade, or physical support. Therefore, companion planting in the home garden imitates those symbiotic relationships.

The Three Sisters are the most popular example of the natural growth of plants— corn, beans, and squash. While the corn gives support to the pole beans, it actually feeds much-needed nitrogen to the corn and squash. The squash leaves act as a mulch to keep the ground cool, suppress weeds, and regulate moisture.

Furthermore, according to its principles, tomatoes should not be grown next to cucumbers but will grow ideally next to carrots and basil, as they improve their taste, and will prevent the attacks from pests.

Companion planting is based on the idea that some plants and plant families grow better together. It is easier and better-looking to have your veggies planted in neat rows, but in nature, things are actually not organized in that way. Even though the garden might look a bit messy, it has been confirmed that by imitating the natural biodiversity, plants help each other to grow better.

Yet, two unique sorts of plants might not grow well if they share their root space since the soil may be insufficient in a supplement due to the irregularity of the NPK proportion, so it can be thrown away. They might need certain nutrients in an unsustainable way which can support the spread of diseases.

For instance, if the soil lacks enough calcium, melons, squashes and tomatoes will be prone to blossom end rot.

Moreover, plants like parsley, parsnip, carrots, and dill are known to attract insects like spiders, ladybugs and praying mantises, that will protect tomatoes by feasting on the bugs.

You can also plant your vegetables near flowers, such as Nasturtiums and Marigolds, which attract important pollinators and will thus boost the growth of tomatoes, cucumbers, peas, melons and squashes.

Additionally, some plants simply detest sharing their root space, like peppers and beans, and tomatoes and potatoes. Lettuces do not like to be near broccoli, and peas would rather be far away from your onions.

## SESAME SEED BISCUITS

Ingredients:

- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 cup plain flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup sesame seeds
- 1/2 cup coconut
- 150g butter
- 2 tablespoons golden syrup
- 1/2 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 1 tbl boiling water

Method:

Combine dry ingredients and melt butter and golden syrup. Mix bicarbonate with water, add to butter mixture, and then stir into ingredients.

Place heaped teaspoons of mixture, about 5 cm apart on lightly greased oven trays. Bake in a slow oven for about 20 mins, cool on trays.

## MEMBERS NEWS



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU

December: Bill Chamberlain, Susi Colaiani, Wayne Hurley, Frank Mason, David McNair.

January: Dorothy Berrill, Barbara Duggan, Glenda Edgar, Barbara Lee, Noelene Park.

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 –

**NUMBER**

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

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



## MONTHLY COMPETITION

**January 25th:** Three Tomatoes, Shown with Stalks. (10 Cherry Tomatoes).

**February 22nd:** One Container Marigold, 3-6 stems, One Variety, C.V.A.

## MONTHLY MEETING

**January 25th:** Garden Video.

**February 22nd:** Karen Sutherland - Tomatoes.

## MONTHLY COMPETITION TABLE



The monthly competition tables are available for any member to exhibit something from their own garden, whether its cut flowers, pot plants or vegetables/fruits. Information on each section is listed below.

### Rules.

- 1/ Competition runs every month from January to October.
- 2/ A member can only exhibit a maximum of 3 items in each section.
- 3/ Each month, best exhibit in each section will be awarded 3 points. Second prize will receive 2 points. Any exhibits not winning will receive 1 point.
- 4/ Points will be collated each month and at the November meeting, exhibitor with the highest points in each section will receive a prize. (Must have entered 3 separate months in that section to be eligible).
- 5/ Members are to use the Club supplied green tubes in the cut flower sections.
- 6/ White cards are provided to write your name on, so the Judges will know who is the winner.
- 7/ We encourage exhibitors to write the name of the plant/flower/vegetable.

### The Open Competition Sections for the year will be:

- One Container Cut Flowers, A.N.S.
- One Container Trees, Shrubs or Vines, 3-6 stems.
- One Specimen Bloom, Truss or Spike.
- One Pot/Container of Plant/s.
- One Exhibit of Fruit.
- One Exhibit of Vegetables or One Vase of Herbs.
- An Item of Floral Art.
- Item of the Month. (Every month the newsletter will list the item for current and next month)
- Best Exhibit of the Night.

### DEFINITIONS:

- A.N.S. Means Any Number of Stems.
- C.V.A. Means Colour Variation Allowed.
- N.N.D. Means Not Necessarily Distinct.
- S.S. Means Shown Singly.