

# NEWSLETTER

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1934 – 2024 90 Years

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## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of Preston Garden Club Inc. will be held at 7.30pm, on July 24th, 2024, in Preston Shire Hall, corner of High & Gower Streets, Preston.



## AUGUST MEETING

On August 28<sup>th</sup> meeting night our garden club will be 90 years and 1 day old!! WOW!!

A night for members and a few invited guests to get together to celebrate the occasion!

When the club started back in 1934, it was known as Preston Horticultural Society. In January 1969, there was a name change to Preston Garden Club. "Horticultural" sounded too professional, so the thinking was that Garden was more for the home gardener. Many clubs were

renaming themselves to a Garden Club around this time. Then in September 1985, the club became incorporated, adding the "Inc.", at the end of our name.

All members are of course invited to attend our 90<sup>th</sup> birthday evening. For catering, we need to know if you will be there. RSVP before August 16<sup>th</sup>. Email: prestongardenclub@hotmail.com or phone: 0438 467 836

## GARDEN KNIVES

We have sourced Opinel garden knives - which are a well known, quality brand from the French Alps (made for outdoors) with a presence in Australia. They come with a lifetime guarantee.

There are two options:

The **Red Handled Knife** (\$35.95) which we chose in honour of the red in the Club's logo.

and

The **Beech Curved-handled Knife** (\$22.45) which is their classic garden knife.

Each knife will be engraved to commemorate the Preston Garden Club and its 1934 - 2024 history. Both knives are foldable, with a ring locking mechanism to secure the blade into place. The blades measure 8.5cm in length and are stainless steel.



**Red Handled Knife**



**Beech Curved-handled Knife**

Orders and payment can be made at the July and August meeting. If you wish to receive your garden knife for the August meeting, you will need to order by Friday 2nd August. Order by email: tigg@netspace.net.au or speak to Kate at the next meeting.



## MYSTERY GUEST FOR 90TH

We have "Dug Up" a mystery guest, who at 151 years old, will talk about the early days of our club. Note: We have arranged for an ambulance to be on standby outside the hall if needed!!



### RHUBARB BOLTING



For those who have experienced the joy of fresh rhubarb, growing rhubarb in the garden seems like a no brainer. Many people are familiar with the large green leaves and red stems on a rhubarb plant. When the plant produces a rhubarb flower, this can give a gardener pause. The first question is, "Why is my rhubarb flowering?" and the next question is "Should I let my rhubarb flower?"

When a rhubarb flowers, this is called bolting or going to seed. When rhubarb goes to seed, this is perfectly normal. The rhubarb plant is doing what plants are supposed to do and that is to reproduce, but there are some factors that can influence how often you get a flowering rhubarb.

Variety - Some varieties of rhubarb flower more than others. Heirloom

varieties tend to flower more than modern cultivars. Victoria rhubarb, MacDonald rhubarb and Red Crimson rhubarb are some examples of rhubarb varieties that will flower more often.

Maturity - Plants need to reach a certain maturity in order to reproduce through seed. For a rhubarb plant, that maturity comes a few years after it is planted. The older a rhubarb plant is, the more the rhubarb goes to seed.

Heat - Rhubarb plants grow best in cooler temperatures. An unusually warm spring can cause rhubarb to start flowering.

Stress - Stress can also force a rhubarb to flower. Stress can come in the form of a lack of water, pests, fungus, and lack of nutrients or animal damage. Anything that makes the plant feel threatened can cause it to start flowering.

In order to keep rhubarb from bolting, you need to decide why it is flowering. If it is flowering due to variety, you can consider getting a more modern variety that has been bred to flower less often. But, keep in mind that flowering rhubarb is really more of an annoyance and does not ruin the plant. If you have an established rhubarb clump that is several years old, you can consider dividing the clump. This essentially turns back the clock on the plant's maturity and will help reduce rhubarb flowering. If you are expecting a warm spell, consider mulching around the plant to help keep the roots cool. Also, make sure that your rhubarb is as stress free as possible. Watering during dry spells, regular fertilizing and keeping an eye out for and quickly treating pests and disease will greatly reduce the amount of flowering.

There is no harm in letting your rhubarb flower, but keep in mind that energy the rhubarb plant puts towards making a flower and growing seeds is energy that will

not being directed towards growing leaves. Since rhubarb is grown for the stems, most gardeners choose to remove the flowers as soon as they appear so the plant can focus its energy on leaf growth. Rhubarb flowers can simply be cut from the plant as soon as you see them appear. If your rhubarb produces a flower, this does not affect the stems and leaves. A flowering rhubarb can cause a bit of alarm for a gardener, but now that you know more about why a rhubarb bolts and how to prevent or fix it when it happens, there's nothing to worry about. You can still enjoy the wonderful taste of rhubarb grown fresh in your garden.

### RHUBARB DIVISION



Why is Rhubarb Plant Division Necessary?

Rhubarb leaf stalks and petioles are used primarily in sweet treats. Rhubarb is a vegetable, but due to its high acidity, lends itself nicely to pies, tarts, jams, and other sweets. Rhubarb is a perennial plant that does indeed require very little care and can be relied upon to return each spring.

However, if your plant predates the millennium, it is perhaps time for a little refreshing. Why? The root is old and tough and will foster less than premium stalks. Splitting rhubarb will give new life to the plant. Rhubarb is usually harvested in the cool, early months of spring, however, rhubarb plant division can extend the harvest period into the summer months.

## When to Divide Rhubarb

To renew your rhubarb plant, you will want to dig up the root and divide it. Dividing rhubarb plants should be accomplished in the early spring as soon as the soil warms up enough to work it and prior to the emergence of the tender new shoots.

## How to Divide Rhubarb

Splitting your rhubarb plants isn't rocket science. Simply dig around the root clump, 15cm deep and lift the whole plant from the ground. Divide the root ball into sections containing at least one bud and up to two to three buds with plenty of roots by cutting down through the crown between the buds.

Very old plants will have roots that are as dense as wood, so you may need the assistance of a hatchet. Fear not, this is the only hard part of splitting the plant. Keep in mind that the more buds, the bigger the divided plant will be. You can achieve a larger plant by replanting small root divisions with one bud on them in the same hole.



Plant the new divisions ASAP, otherwise, they begin to dry out, lessening the likelihood of healthy transplants. If, however, you don't have time to finish the job immediately, put the root pieces into a plastic bag and store them in the fridge. Prior to transplanting, soak the refrigerated sections in room temperature water overnight. Select a planting site that is in full sun with a slightly acidic soil pH of 6.5.

If your soil is particularly dense, form a 10-15 cm raised bed to increase drainage prior to planting the new crowns. Amend the soil with 454-907 gms of 12-12-12 fertilizer per 9 sq mts of bedding area, along with compost and a handful of rock phosphate or bone meal per planting hole.

Set the plants 60-90 cm apart in rows 90 cm to 1.5 mts apart. Plant the new crowns 15 cm deep so the buds are just beneath the surface. Tamp around the crowns, water in well, and mulch around the plants with 8 cm of straw.

In the following spring, rake the straw away from the plants and lay down 5-8 cm of composted manure around the plants; do not cover the crown. Add a layer of straw atop the manure. Add another 8 cm of straw as the manure breaks down.

Lastly, if you want to further extend the harvesting season for your rhubarb, be sure to cut the seed stalk from the plant. The making of seeds signals the plant that it's all done for the season. Cutting the seeds will trick the plant into continuing to produce delicious ruby red stalks.

## CLAY POT CLEAN



The ingredient that'll make your clay pots look good as new. To disinfect pots by soaking, make a solution of equal parts white

vinegar and water, and soak the pots for at least 30 minutes. Then, remove the pots from the vinegar solution and allow the pots to dry completely in the sun before filling with fresh potting mix and plants, or storing.



## HOMEMADE APPLE PIE



Total time 2 hrs and 30 mins  
Serves 8

### Ingredients:

#### For the filling

1kg Cooking apples  
140g caster sugar  
½ tsp cinnamon  
3 tbsp flour

#### For the pastry:

225g butter, room temperature  
50g caster sugar, plus extra  
2 eggs  
350g plain flour  
softly whipped cream, to serve

Method:

#### STEP 1

Put a layer of paper towels on a large baking sheet. Quarter, core, peel and slice the apples about 5mm thick and lay evenly on the baking sheet. Put paper towels on top and set aside while you make and chill the pastry.

#### STEP 2

For the pastry, beat the butter and sugar in a large bowl until just mixed. Break in a whole egg and a yolk (keep the white for glazing later). Beat together for just under 1 min – it will look a bit like scrambled egg. Now work in the flour with a wooden spoon, a third at a time, until it's beginning to clump up, then finish gathering it together with your hands. Gently work the dough into a ball, wrap in cling film, and chill for 45 mins. Now mix the 140g/5oz sugar, the cinnamon and flour for the filling in a bowl that is large enough to take the apples later.

#### STEP 3

After the pastry has chilled, heat the oven to 190C/fan 170C/gas. Lightly beat the egg white with a fork. Cut off a third of the pastry and keep it wrapped while you roll out the rest, and use this to line a pie tin – 20-22cm round and 4cm deep – leaving a slight overhang. Roll the remaining third to a circle about 28cm in diameter. Pat the apples dry with kitchen paper, and tip them into the bowl with the cinnamon-sugar mix. Give a quick mix with your hands and immediately pile high into the pastry-lined tin.

#### STEP 4

Brush a little water around the pastry rim and lay the pastry lid over the apples pressing the edges together to seal. Trim the edge with a sharp knife and make 5 little slashes on top of the lid for the steam to escape. (Can be frozen at this stage.) Brush it all with the egg

white and sprinkle with caster sugar. Bake for 40-45 mins, until golden, then remove and let it sit for 5-10 mins. Sprinkle with more sugar and serve while still warm from the oven with softly whipped cream.



### MEMBERS NEWS



#### HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU

**July:** Kathy Zanini. Lori-Anne Sharp.

We wish you all a wonderful celebration.

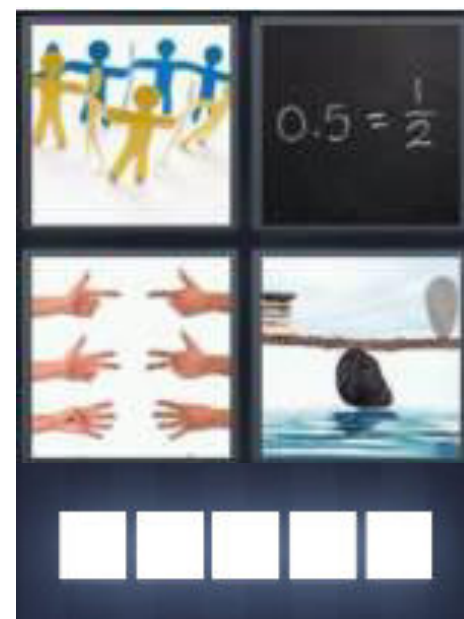
### FIND THE WORD

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

## **BLOOD**

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

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



### MONTHLY COMPETITION

**July 24<sup>th</sup>:** A Floral Arrangement Using Flowers and Foliage (Own vase/dish).

**August** competition is cancelled due to our 90th celebrations.

### MONTHLY MEETING

7.30pm start (New Start Time)

**July 24<sup>th</sup>:** Annual General Meeting, plus a garden video.

**August 28<sup>th</sup>:** Preston Garden Club Inc. 90 years old!!