

NEWSLETTER

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Committee Message

Dear Members,

Welcome to the May newsletter, as our days cool and frosts are appearing we farewell Autumn and see in winter. May has been a busy month with the election, celebrations for Mother's Day, late nights watching Eurovision and did you see our Preston Market featured in the ABC's 'The Piano'? and of course, the wonderful Autumn bus trip with our Ivanhoe friends – *report is featured on page 7 of the newsletter.*

Bunnings Sausage Sizzle Saturday 26 April 2025

The club held its first Bunnings Sausage Sizzle on Saturday 26th April. The day started at 7am for our dedicated group of willing volunteers, who worked tirelessly until wrap up at 6pm. Thank you to all the volunteers who worked alongside each other and supported the clubs big fundraising effort for 2025. A shout out to club members: Bill, Antoine, Craig, Sue, Heather, Mia, Wayne, Rosa, Joy, Ali, Laura, Paul, Rosie, Jane, Anita, Daksha and special thanks to our extended family members who also volunteered: Chris, Andrew and Zoe.

On the day we sold 1100 sausages and raised \$2,749.45 (after costs). We all became very familiar with the call for: *2 with and 1 without!* Of course... each served with onions underneath the sausage, not on top! The committee plan to use some of these funds to entice interesting future guest speakers for our general meetings, as speaking fees have increased greatly since covid.

Trading Table policy – effective as of the June General Meeting

The trading table operates at general meetings and is an opportunity for members to bring along plants and homemade produce to share with other club members. Members may donate their items to the club to sell at a nominal rate or may trade them with other members.

Members can sell items for personal profit with 20% commission of all sales to the club. There is a form available to complete on the meeting night available from the registration table.

Tour of Richard's Garden

Club member Richard has very generously invited all members to view his wonderful garden – likely to be early June. If you are interested, please add your name to the list at the May General Meeting, or you can email the club to register your interest.

Name	Committee role	Name	Committee role
Bill Chamberlain	President	Mia Mikin	Secretary
Daksha Singh	Treasurer and Vice-President	Anita Chamberlain	Vice - President
Antoine Enichtayan	Committee member	Heather Meaklim	General member

Guest Speaker Report

April speaker review – Clancy Lester the Bee Man

Last month members were treated to a fascinating presentation by 23-year-old ecologist Clancy Lester - known as "The Bee Man". Clancy started with describing his own personal journey as being "...on a mission to conserve solitary pollinators by building structures in which they can nest and breed." The University of Melbourne graduate and PhD candidate from country Victoria has contributed to building of over 800 bee hotels and educated thousands of school children and people. Clancy is looking to expand his work across Australia. Clancy provided many useful tips for members wanting to create structures to encourage native bees in their gardens.



May Speaker: Ben Smith (Darebin Council) on Rewilding Darebin

Rewilding Darebin is a program to reinvigorate Parks and Open Spaces and increase the bushland character in Darebin by planting indigenous vegetation. Since the program started in 2020, thousands of indigenous trees, shrubs, grasses and groundcovers have been planted throughout the municipality, making significant contributions to local amenity and biodiversity values of each site. Join Ben Smith, Parks Policy and Partnerships Officer from the City of Darebin, to learn more about this award-winning program.

June Speaker – Darlene Wentzel Broadmeadows Garden Club: Garden shows and exhibiting – the BGC experience



Happy Birthday!

Happy Birthday to the following members who are celebrating a birthday in May:

Mattea Brislin, Jadzia Bondrou, Anita Chamberlain, Jack Edgar, Sharon Pollard and Peter Vasilevski.



Preston Garden Club wishes to acknowledge the support of:

Darebin City Council- via its Community Support Grant Program and event management staff for the hall hire each month.

The Office of Nathan Lambert MP- for printing this Newsletter each month.

Bunnings Preston – Sponsorship of the Club's Best Exhibit of the Month prize for 2025.

Darebin Northwest Uniting Church – Provide the venue for our monthly committee meetings.

MEMBERS NEWS

Bunnings Sausage Sizzle 26th April



Upcoming events:

Mon 2, 16, 23, 30 Jun, 7.30pm

Royal Botanic Gardens

*Stellar Nights guided tours of the Observatory

*Lightscape 2025: June 20 to August 10

Sat 7th June 2025, 10:30 am

Winter Fruit Tree Care- free event

54 Raleigh Rd, Maribyrnong VIC

Open Garden Fridays at Eryldene:

This historic house and garden offers open garden Fridays, with the next one scheduled for June 13th, 10am-12:30pm

Saturday 14 June 2025:

[Royal Horticultural Society Victoria 2025 GARDENERS' DAY OUT](#)

at Deakin University Campus, Burwood.

Sun 15th June 2025, 2:45 pm

Organic pest and disease management
182-186 St Georges Rd, Fitzroy

Winter Solstice :

Saturday 21 June 2pm-6pm

*The Garden of St Erth

OR at *CERES- E. Brunswick

Monthly General Meetings procedures:

Date and address

- Fourth Wednesday of each month (except December)
- Preston Shire Hall, 286 Gower Street Preston VIC 3072
- Hall opens **7pm** and meeting commences at **7.30 pm with the guest speaker.**

On arrival

- Members are to sign the attendance book located at the Registration desk.
- Collect your newsletter (if your preference is a hardcopy version).
- Renew your membership, if due, or join the club, if visiting.
- Peruse the information and flyers available for members situated at the registration desk.
- Purchase raffle tickets for the chance to win one of the plant/or other prizes.

Monthly Competition Tables

- There are **eight** competition categories for members to exhibit plants, vegetable and flower arrangements for judging.
- Confirm with the Judging Panel whether you wish to enter as an Open or Novice exhibitor and then enter your plant in the relevant category.
- Entry tags and plant tubes are available for exhibiting in the kitchen.
- Results are announced during General business after the Guest speaker.

Guest speaker

- There is a different guest speaker each month.
- Take a seat and enjoy the presentation.
- Guests and members are welcome to ask question of the speakers.

General Business

- The committee will discuss any general business for the club including correspondence, upcoming events, member updates and gardens.

Supper

- All members and guests are invited to stay for supper.
- The club provides two items each month.
- Members are welcome to bring an item to share for supper.

Meeting closes at 9.30pm



Growing Tips: Citrus is the best and easiest fruit tree to grow in a pot, according to long-time grower Tom Esler.

The fruit tree farmer from Queensland has been selling potted citrus, and passing on his knowledge to eager home gardeners, for the best part of 20 years.

"They can be very productive given the right care," he says. "For example, the right potting mix, the right size pot, the right aspect for sun ... and making sure the plants get enough water."

He says **all citrus varieties will do well in pots**; lemons, limes, cumquats, mandarins and oranges, even finger limes (pictured), which are Australia's native citrus.

It is important to note that dwarf varieties won't supply you the same amount of fruit as a full-sized fruit tree. They also have a life span between 10-15 years, while standards citrus varieties can live up 30-40 years. Importantly, to ensure your citrus tree grows big and healthy (as quickly as possible) remember that they *"are really hungry for nutrients. Pop it out in a full sun position, that's essential for good growth and fruiting."*

Ensure to water it regularly and feed it often. While a slow-release fertiliser, like poultry manure pellets, should be applied every three months.

If you feel your citrus is not growing quickly enough, he recommends giving it some liquid nutrients once every four to six weeks. Be prepared to re-pot your fruit tree to the next size up every 3-4 years.

Best advice is to buy a well grown citrus and put it straight into a larger pot. If you've got a 50-litre pot, add compost, potting mix, and sand, this mix won't slump, and you shouldn't need to repot it regularly.



Emma Dean's Rhubarb Cake Recipe- *recommended by Kate Chmiel*

INGREDIENTS

50 g (1¾ oz) unsalted butter, melted
2 cups raw sugar
2 eggs
½ vanilla pod, seeds removed (or 1 tsp vanilla extract)
2 cups plain (all-purpose) flour
1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)
2 teaspoons cinnamon
500 g (17½ oz) trimmed rhubarb, cut into 1 cm pieces
250 g (9 oz) sour cream
zest and juice of one orange
¼ cup brown sugar



GARNISH

Double cream, to serve.

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F).

Grease a 22 cm (8½ in) round spring-form tin and line with greaseproof paper.

In a large bowl, beat the butter, sugar, eggs and vanilla seeds until thick and creamy.

Sift together the flour, bicarbonate of soda and 1 teaspoon cinnamon and mix into the egg mixture. Mix until combined.

Stir in the rhubarb, sour cream and 2 teaspoons orange zest.

Pour into the prepared cake tin and smooth out.

Combine the brown sugar and cinnamon together and sprinkle over the top.

Bake for 1 hour and 20 minutes, or until a skewer comes out clean. Immediately after you take the cake out of the oven, drizzle the fresh orange juice over the top.

Serve warm or cold with double cream.



WORD QUIZ

How did you go with finding the word in the last newsletter? The word last month was **POTATOES**.

The word this month has **7 letters**.

What could it be? Look at the four pictures for the clue.

Answer in the next newsletter.

Good Read: ['Monarch mother' Ellen Reid reflects on 50 years of butterfly breeding - ABC News](#)

The 82-year-old retired pharmacist has been breeding butterflies from her verdant green gardens for more than 50 years.



Monthly Competitions

The April General meeting featured 47 member entries (*up from 22 this time last year*). The entries included strong numbers in each category with the Specimen Bloom highly contested.

The Item of the Month for April was Chrysanthemums with Kathy taking top spot followed by Anita, Daksha and Robert. Members were also given tips on presenting for Mays item of the month succulents.

Best Exhibit was awarded to Robert's Specimen Bloom – well done Robert!

April Results

Category	1 st place
Cut flowers	Kate Chmiel Novice – Di McKenzie
Specimen Bloom, Truss or Spike	Robert Strugnell
Plants in a container	Robert Strugnell
The Odd One	Bill Chamberlain Novice – Kate Aplin
Vegetables	Sarah Borg
Fruit and Herbs	Anita Chamberlain
Floral Art	Kate Chmiel
Item of the month – Chrysanthemum	Kathy Zannini
Best Exhibit – sponsored by Bunnings	Robert Strugnell



Photos from April's Monthly Competitions



June Item of the Month – Ferns

- Plants must be clean with healthy new growth and disease free.
- Plant should be circular unless habit dictates other wise
- All old fronds should be trimmed right back to ground level
- Spore patterns should always be checked as some could be mistaken for black aphids
- Ferns should not appear to be over or under potted
- All containers must be clean including the saucers under the pots and baskets.



Ivanhoe Garden Club's Autumn Bus trip

Sunday 13th April saw a posse of intrepid garden club members join in the Ivanhoe Garden Club's Autumn Bus Trip. The day started with a tour of the recently established Artful Meadow Nursery in Lyonville for morning tea. The site included many wonderful seedlings, plants and sculptures as well as stunning gardens including beds of blooming saffron crocus flowers.

Next stop was Wombat Botanic Gardens in Daylesford where we stopped for lunch. The Begonia display was a highlight as were the many majestic trees within the gardens.

Our trip concluded with a tour of "Claire's garden" – a private garden in Creswick. Claire and Clive have built a garden to cope with local weather conditions 'hot and dry'. Their garden is predominantly deciduous, as this opens it to the rain in winter and gives a canopy of shade for the summer. Claire's passion for collecting plants was evident, with many perennials, hydrangea, heuchera, hosta, hellebores, and clematis making up their lovely garden.



Meet Preston Garden clubber - Kate Chmiel

Tell us your gardening story.

Being in the garden connects me to everything alive and it's where I spend most of my spare time. I studied botany and horticulture at uni and think plants are beautiful and endlessly interesting. My mum and grandmother were also keen gardeners, and they are probably where it all began for me.

How long have you been a member of the Preston Garden Club?

Since September 2024.

How did you find out about the club?

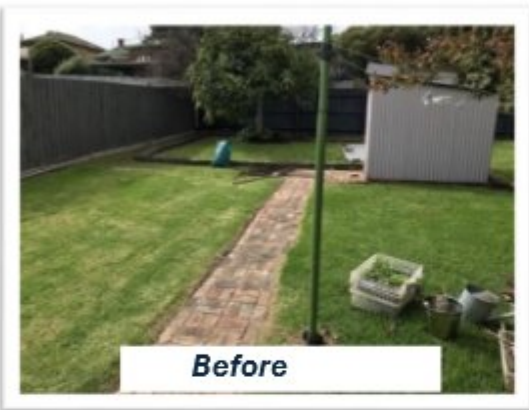
I saw a billboard for a spring fair in 2023 and it took me a while to follow up. I wish I'd joined sooner!

Any particular gardening interests?

I've grown flowers and food crops for nearly 25 years. I have an enduring interest in natives and indigenous revegetation too. I love composting almost as much as growing things.

Favourite things about the Preston Garden Club?

The community of friendly people with a shared passion is delightful. Thanks to all for the warm welcome.



Before

Tell us about your garden or plants.

Since 2020 I've lived in Preston on a sloping block with a western aspect that makes hot summer days a bit of a challenge. When we moved in, the whole garden was little more than grass and tanbark: a blank canvas. Since then, my partner Andrew transformed the nature strip into a wild native grassland. Our front yard is now a dense mix of natives, exotics, perennials and annuals in a red, yellow, orange and acid green colour scheme. I planted a Queensland bottle tree, Boston ivy and a tupelo to cool the house, a feijoa, a smoke bush, seasonal scarlet tulips and much more. Out back we've progressively whittled away the lawn to install a fruit orchard, a Japanese elm, a vegie patch, flowering shrubs, herbs and many sentimental plants like a lemon-scented tea tree and a kōwhai in memory of a Kiwi friend. I also grow flowers for my non-profit floristry enterprise (@chaosblumen on Instagram). My wild garden is full of life including many small birds and invertebrates (I especially love the spiders, dragonflies and mantids) and we've spotted frogs and three species of lizard.



After



@chaosblumen

Favourite plant and why? I don't have just one, but I do love *Pachystegia insignis*, the Marlborough rock daisy.

If space and cost were not an issue, what sort of garden would you choose?

A much bigger one! I never have enough room for all the things I'd like to grow. I would love a couple of acres to plant a forest and expand my flower farm.

Favourite season? Spring. So full of potential with all the warm days to come.

What advice would you give to anyone looking to create their own garden?

Be realistic about how much time you will spend looking after it and don't bite off more than you can chew. It's better to have a small plot that you're proud of than a whole yard that makes you feel overwhelmed. Otherwise, just grow what you love.