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ISSUE NO. 270  
 APRIL 2026  
 Postal Address: P.O. Box 1004, Preston, 3072.

Committee Message

Dear Members, welcome to the April newsletter. We continue to have lovely warm autumn days. If you bought 'thousands' of bulbs at the Melbourne Flower and Garden Show (as we did) now is the time to prepare and plant them out- see inside for tips. Happy Gardening.

**March meeting**

Last month we had nearly 40 attendees to watch Gerald's passionate presentation on bonsai and it was wonderful to see such a great mix of guests as well as new and established members.

**May speaker and flyers**

Thanks to Heather again for her handiwork in developing flyers to promote our monthly meetings and to all the members who have letterboxed neighbours. There will be bundles of flyers at the registration table for any members interested in letterboxing their neighbours about May's meeting.

**Trivia Night update**

We have locked in our June General meeting for our plant-based trivia night. This will be our main social event for the year, and we encourage members to bring along a friend if they wish, to the event (pending final numbers). The night will cost \$5 per member and invited guests, and there will be plenty of prizes along with hot & cold finger food to enjoy. You can register at the April and May meetings or drop an email to Mia at [prestongardenclub@hotmail.com](mailto:prestongardenclub@hotmail.com) . We will be taking payments as of the May meeting.

**Guest speaker suggestions**

The Committee would like to thank all members who have provided guest speaker suggestions in recent times. Heather and Anita have studiously followed up on these leads and will continue to do so to make sure we have a diverse and interesting group of guest speakers.

Regards,  
 PGC Committee.

Bill Chamberlain	President	Mia Mikin	Secretary
Daksha Singh	Treasurer	Heather Meaklim	Vice - President
Anita Chamberlain	Vice - President	Antoine Enichteyan	Committee member
Carolyn Asquith	Committee member	Rosie Downs	Committee member
Laura Saunders	Committee member	Paul Shortal	Committee member

## Guest Speaker Report

### **April speaker - Darebin Council “The Wildflower Meadow” Project**

Join us this month as Ben and the team from Darebin Council talk us through their “Wildflower Meadow” project. This is a joint initiative with the University of Melbourne at a trial site for the establishment of a wildflower meadow.



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### **March speaker review – Gerald Meade, President, Northern Suburbs Bonsai Club**

Gerald Meade provided an engaging and passionate presentation about the art of Bonsai. Gerald answered members questions and gave away a bonsai to our young member Yuri, who asked insightful questions about pruning and shaping bonsais to help him get started. We all ogled with envy, Gerald's impressive wire holder toolbox set up. The various sized shaping wires can be purchased at a good price (for members) from the bonsai club. Gerald is the President of the [Northern Suburbs Bonsai Club](#) (NSBC) the club meets on the 1st Thursday of each month at the Lalor Library Community Room, 2A May Rd, Lalor.



## Speakers for 2026

- 
- **April**     **Darebin Council** (apology- *Michael Cook - Weeds of Melbourne* )
  - **May**     Pruning Fruit Trees
  - **June**     Plant-based Trivia Night (lots of fun no botanical knowledge required!)
  - **July**     AGM (no speaker)

*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 2026.

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

## Member news

### Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show – Hanging Baskets

Congratulations to Laura Saunders and Sandra DiFrancesco who represented the club at the MIFGS Hanging Basket competition. There were many wonderful baskets on display.





**Happy Birthday!**  
**April- John Aitken, Sarah Borg,**  
**A. Kavita, Hazel McGlone, Bill Saunders**  
**Margaret Trewella, Sandra Di Francesco**

## WORD QUIZ

How did you go with finding the word in the last newsletter?

The word last month was - **DOUBLE**

The word this month has **6 letters**.

What could it be? Look at the four pictures for the clue. Answer in the next newsletter.



**Autumn in Melbourne** is the ideal time to sow flower and vegetable seeds and seedlings. Take advantage now to plant as the soil is warm in your garden.



### Key Gardening Tasks for March

- **Planting Veggies & Herbs:** Artichokes, Asian greens, broad beans, beetroot, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrot, cauliflower, chives, coriander, endive, English spinach, garlic, kale, leek, lettuce, mint, onion, parsley, snow peas, radish, rocket, spring onion and spinach.
- **Flowers & Bulbs:** alyssum, aquilegia, calendula, hollyhock, foxglove, nemesia, snapdragon, sweetpea, pansy, poppy, stock, sweet William, sweet peas, viola and wallflower.



### Things to attend to:

- Plant new citrus and give established citrus a feed.
- Feed lawns and apply an organic weedkiller.
- Rake up Autumn leaves and add to compost with a organic matter such as blood & bone.
- Deadhead and enjoy the last of your roses.
- Prepare soil for new roses. Dig deeply and apply manure and compost.

### PLANTING YOUR BULBS

- **When to Plant:** ideally bulbs should be planted when the first autumn rains start, from mid February to May.
- **Cold Treatment:** Tulip bulbs need to be placed into the crisper of your fridge for 4 weeks before planting. Tulips require this cold treatment as part of their natural development process.
- **Which way do I plant my bulbs?** As a general rule bulbs should be planted twice as deep as their size and the same distance apart, facing the pointed end of the bulb towards the sky. Anemones and ranunculus are an exception, their claws should face downward.
- **Situation:** Bulbs like well-drained soils. If your soil is boggy, raise your garden bed or alternatively plant your bulbs into pots. If planting into pots, remember to keep them well watered. Incorporate well rotted manure into the soil. Bulbs grow best in sunny positions and benefit from mulching. Mulching keeps the bulbs cool and helps conserve water and reduce weeds.
- **Fertilising:** After you have planted your bulbs top dress with blood and bone or specially formulated bulb fertiliser. Give your bulbs a second feed after flowering.

## Monthly General Meetings procedures

### Date and address

- Meeting- Fourth Wednesday of each month (except December)
- Venue- 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

- Sign in: 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 subscription, 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



## Recipe – Banana Cake Thank you to Daksha Singh

### Ingredients:

#### Base:

- 125g softened butter
- 1/2 cup caster sugar
- 1/2 cup pressed brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 ½ cups Plain flour
- 1/2 tsp bicarb soda
- 2 ¼ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ cup milk
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- 3 mashed bananas



### Method

- ❖ Heat oven to 160o Celsius
- ❖ Line 20cm round cake tin with baking paper
- ❖ Cream the butter and sugars and vanilla together until fluffy
- ❖ Add 2 egg and gradually beat in
- ❖ Add sifted flour, baking powder, bicarb and salt. Mix lightly with a wooden spoon.
- ❖ Fold in bananas
- ❖ Spread thinly in a lined lamington tin (25x30)
- ❖ Bake for 40 minutes, or until a skewer comes out clean.
- ❖ Cool on a wire rack.
- ❖ Serve. Enjoy 😊

## Things to do in May and June 2026

- **Gardener's Day Out 2026 is on at Deakin University Campus, Burwood.**  
Saturday, 13th June 2026  
All of the favourite things you like about the day will be there PLUS MORE.  
Three Special Presenters make it a Spectacular Day and the venue and ambiance of the whole event makes it something NOT TO BE MISSED !.

- **Saturday 2 May 2026**

**PLANT SALE**  
at the  
**PENINSULA**  
**COMMUNITY THEATRE**  
91 Wilsons Rd Mornington 3931  
**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2026**  
**10.00am to 3.30pm**

**FREE ENTRY** 🚫

*Professional advice available from the growers*

**Free talks**

Pruning & maintenance  
Propagating plants

**Book Sales**

**Kids Corner**

Australian Plants Society  
Mornington Peninsula Inc.  
mornpenaps@gmail.com

**BENDIGO GOLDFIELD**  
CHRYSANTHEMUM CLUB

**CHRYSANTHEMUM, HORTICULTURE & FLORAL ART SHOW**

2 & 3 MAY 2026 | Laanecoorie Mechanics' Institute  
19 Main Rd, Laanecoorie VIC 3463

SAT 9AM – 4 PM  
SUN 9AM – 3 PM

- plant sale • flowers
- food & drinks

**ENTRY \$5**  
CASH ONLY

More Information: Peter Greenshields 10448 966 6071

**THE GROWING FRIENDS**  
**AUTUMN PLANT SALE**

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 10am - 4pm**  
**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 10am - 3pm**

Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne  
Inside Southern Gate  
Birdwood Avenue  
**Free Entry**

*Carrea reflexa 'Mallacoota Town', Keltys*

## Monthly Competitions wrap up – MARCH 2026

The March General meeting featured over 40 member entries with summer veggies, fruit and item of the month ferns featuring heavily.

Best Exhibit was awarded to Antoine's excellent Fern exhibit.



## May Item of the Month – Succulents (One Pot/Container)

### Key Aspects of Judging Succulents

Visible pests automatically disqualify any exhibit.

**General Growth, Spine or Leaf Formation**

Covered with compact, lush growth, some specimens can have a waxy appearance.

**Condition**

Spines, hair, leaves, and flowers (if present) should be clean, and undamaged by handling, disease or pests.

**Form**

Plants should be true to variety.

**Balance**

Plants should be in the centre of the container.

Columnar plants should be upright. Branches and offsets should be evenly distributed around the plant.

**Maturity**

As different species mature at different sizes, size is not necessarily an indication of maturity.

**Presentation**

Surface dressing – Plants must be surfaced dressed with a complimentary material such as gravel or small pebbles. The surface material must not dominate.

Container – Container should be suitable for the plant. Plants should not be over or under potted. Container should not dominate. Plants should not be named.

**Flowering**

Succulents – Flowers and buds should be considered for all general plants



## Meet Preston Garden clubber – Daksha Singh



### ***Tell us your gardening story:***

I grew up in India and come from a family where both my paternal and maternal grandparents owned farmland where they grew variety of crops including grains, fruits and vegetables. As a child I remember going to the village during the school holidays eating very tasty and juicy mangoes. I was lucky that my parents bought a house with land just like typical Australian suburban block where we had fruit trees and flowers in our yard.

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

I have been a member of the Preston Garden Club for almost 23 years. I have served as a committee member before covid for several years, then rejoined again as a committee member and after one year took on the role of Vice President and a Treasurer of the club for one year now, I am

currently serving as Treasurer of the club.

### ***How did you find out about the club?***

One day I was passing by the Grower Street Town Hall and saw the sign of Preston Garden Club Show out of curiosity I walked in the hall. I was so happy to see displays of beautiful roses, green lush indoor plants and collection of home-grown vegetables and floral arts on display by members and I joined up.

### ***Favourite things about the Preston Garden Club?***

Members of the club are so helpful they go out of their way to help and share the knowledge about gardening. I have learnt so many tips and tricks particularly from senior members for which I am always grateful for their advice.



### ***Any particular gardening interests?***

I like a variety of plants, but I have special interests in growing vegetables and all kinds of colourful flowers including variety of flowering bulbs.

### ***Tell us about your garden or plants.***

I have lots of flowers in my garden standard roses, miniature roses and ground covers, herbs, cosmos and climbing beans of Indian variety which are not easily available

### ***Favourite plant and why?***

Cosmos- they are so stunning when in full bloom and when the wind is blowing it is pleasant to watch cosmos swaying from side to side. They grow very tall so apart from flowers they got mixture of soft and hard stems, when they become dry, I break stems and dispose them into my compost bin, plus I get lots of seeds from the plants to grow more cosmos.

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

I would love to have a farm with a house on it so that I can grow lots of fruit trees and vegetables which I can donate to needy people or donate to charitable organisations

### ***Favourite season?***

Spring and Summer because I can grow vegetables which needs lots of sun.

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

If you can plan your garden before planting out any kind of plants, you will be able to get best produce and results. It will also save you time not needing to lift and move the plants after they are well established as all plants have different requirements for the type of soil, sun and water to grow.



PRESTON GARDEN CLUB INC  
PROUDLY PRESENTS



**Wednesday, 24 June 2026**  
**From 6.30pm**

Join us for our main social event for 2026  
Lots of Prizes and Hot finger food provided

**COST \$5 FOR MEMBERS & INVITED GUESTS**

**RSVP**

- Register at the April or May meetings or  
email [prestongardenclub@hotmail](mailto:prestongardenclub@hotmail)

**PRESTON SHIRE HALL**  
**286 GOWER STREET, PRESTON VIC 3072**