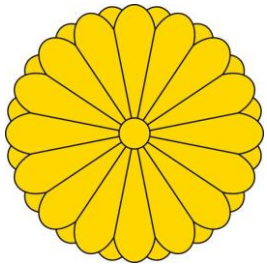


The seasonally awakening like a sparrow farting



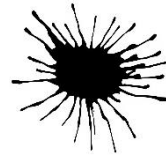
WESTERN AUSTRALIAN



CHRYSANTHEMUM

"the golden flower and queen of the autumn"

SOCIETY



September - October 2023

President's Notes

"Great oaks from little acorns grow." "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

Now is time to end your winter hibernation. With twenty nine degrees being the forecast maximum for the last day of winter there is no excuse to stay rugged up indoors. September is a busy time of the year for WA chrysie growers as propagation starts in earnest. Remember to propagate more plants than you require as that allows you to select the strongest ones for your own use and have plenty of left overs to share with other members at our Distribution Day on Sunday 29th October. In the last newsletter I provided a list of recent additions to the range of good show cultivars. The new Seaton's cultivars mentioned will only be available directly from Ron himself this season, so be sure to contact him if you want any. In addition, he will be releasing a few more 'newbies' this season. Visitors to his home open will have seen most of them and have an idea of those "most likely to succeed". I made a few crosses myself this year and am hoping to flower a few good ones (As if I have not got enough plants already!)

The first official activity for the Society is the W.A. Horticultural Council's Garden Clubs' and Societies' Fair on the weekend of 9-10th September. More on that later. The A.G.M. and September Meeting follows on Tuesday 12th September. All management positions are open to members and every nomination is welcome and encouraged.

If you are looking for some inspiring thoughts to get you in the mood then please revisit September - October newsletters from previous years. I am all out of new ideas at present. See you all soon.

WAHC Plant Fair

The Fair is before the AGM, so please contact Michael Drake-Brockman if you are able to provide some rooted cuttings for sale or are able to help at any time from Friday 8th September to Sunday 10th September setting up and manning our stall. Michael's contact details can be found under Contacts on the last page of this newsletter.

Cultural Notes

I repeat my advice from the last newsletter.

Now is an opportune time to think about how you intend to grow your plants for the coming season. If you think that everything went well last year then you are lying to yourself. If it didn't then now is the time to think about how you can avoid the problems that you ran into.

Remember that we have a mentorship programme in place and a list of mentors is to be found on the last page. Anecdotal evidence is that most mentors were not approached last season. This is a shame as they may start to feel unwanted and unloved. Take pity on them and ask for their help.

In early September there should be some shoots big enough to allow propagation to start. Remove 5-7cm from the tip of the new stem which should snap off easily if it is in the right condition. Mornings are usually the best time to take cuttings as the plants are turgid and the cuttings will be less likely to wilt after plucking them as it is cooler.

Some growers like to bathe their cuttings in a pesticide/fungicide solution before planting them and if you do that then please wear gloves. Commercial seedling and cutting propagation mixes are available and are suitable for potting your cuttings into. I use Osmocote Seed and Cutting Premium Potting Mix which seems to work well. However, any medium that can hold the cutting securely and retain moisture, while at the same time allowing good aeration, is suitable. A 50/50 mix of peat and perlite has been recommended by one expert.

Pot cuttings singly into thumb pots or multiple cuttings into 100mm pots. I continue to take cuttings in batches until the end of September in case the early cuttings fail to root for some reason. Some growers coat the broken ends of their cuttings with rooting powder but other growers have not found that this has helped them.

Cuttings can also be taken from below the soil level with part of the rooted rhizome attached. These are called 'stool cuttings' and are almost certain to survive and grow but commonly they do not produce the highest quality exhibition blooms.

The cuttings should be placed in a well lit area but out of direct sunlight. The mix should be kept well hydrated but not continuously sopping wet. High humidity around the leaves is important. This can be created by frequent misting of the leaves on any warmer sunny day. Some growers like to construct a terrarium like structure to provide a humid environment. A polystyrene vegetable box with a piece of translucent plastic on top is cheap and effective. After the first few days remove the lid overnight to allow a little air movement which reduces the risk of fungal rot.

After about three weeks the cuttings will hopefully be well rooted and if they have been multi-planted then they should be potted up singly into 75-100mm pots with your preferred potting mix. Once again the better quality commercial mixes are suitable. Some growers like to make their own mixes using the John Innes formulas, the recipes for which are freely available on the internet, and they are very good if you can obtain all the ingredients. Allow the cuttings a week or so to grow roots into the new mix and then give them plenty of sun to stop them growing leggy. If any cutting runs straight to bud replace it with another one or cut it down low and hope for a new shoot to emerge.

Some time in October the individual pots will be full of roots and the plants should then be transferred to bigger pots (150mm pots are about right). Hopefully these will be well rooted in time to transfer to their final 250-300mm pots in late November or early December.

Editor's Notes

It is rooting season. For some of us that is one of the best times of the year. Nine months before Mother's Day when our favourite flowers are in full bloom.

After cleaning up the doggie-doo I love nothing more than wandering about the chrysie patch in the mornings examining the stools and selecting the choicest shoots to pluck. Luckily I am not a Buddhist as then I might come back as a chook, or maybe a duck. I am not sure if that would be a step up or a step down from an old coot, which is what I am now.

The enthusiasm to get something for nothing, or for not much, is common amongst the members of older generations and a snippet of a choice offering is usually something too good to refuse. Unfortunately for the younger generation most of the things that they are interested in have been shaped by advertising and monetised by skilful purveyors of 'product'. The nature of the product is unimportant other than in its ability to turn a profit.

The younger generations that I refer to are one or two generations after the baby boomers. 'Boomers' are regarded as the 'lotus eaters' generation, unless you were unlucky enough to have been one of the unfortunate few who went to the Vietnam War. We say war but actually it was more of a 'special military action' which is why the veterans were not always welcomed into the RSL on their return. Hence the remark, "hey boomer!", whenever some valuable life lesson is proffered which no longer "suits the dialogue". My grandmother used to say: "You can't put an old head on a young body."

As an aside, she also used to say: "A blind man on a galloping horse wouldn't see it." This was a source of great consternation to me as a child but I sort of get the hang of it now. "Don't sweat the small stuff" would be a simile for our friends who still enjoy "the optimism of youth". However, as wise (older?) heads would know "The devil is in the detail."

I was lucky enough to come across "The Penguin Thesaurus of Quotations" in a Wongan Hills thrift store and I acquired it for not much. I haven't had a chance to properly consult it yet but, rest assured, you are very likely to have the benefit of my readings in newsletters to follow.

*Some for renown, on scraps of learning dote
and think they grow immortal as they quote.*

Edward Young, 1683-1765, from "Love of Fame"

What a good thing Adam had. When he said a good thing he knew nobody had said it before.

Mark Twain, 1835-1910, from "Notebooks"

The only way to avoid this painful future is to nominate for the Newsletter Editor's position at the forthcoming AGM.

My grandmother did not sweat the small stuff as women of her generation did not sweat, they simply perspired or glowed. In addition, in all the time that I knew her, she never rode a horse. She lived through two world wars and the Great Depression. These events would have given plenty of opportunities for 'pause for thought'. At least two consecutive generations of people fought in these world wars and while the term 'PTSD' did not arise until the 1970s, 'shell shock' was well known. Unfortunately, a large proportion of people suffered psychological distress after the world wars and so it was just a normal thing that they had to deal with as best as they could. My father's 'Uncle John' served in the Polish and British armies throughout WW2 and, apologies to the feminists, with his war experiences in mind he had a derisory expression to describe people who were timid or afraid as "pissing under themselves". Perhaps it did not translate well from the original Polish but you get the idea. "Be a good little soldier" was an expression that I recall from childhood. 'Boomers' may have mostly lived the good life but we were brought up by people who mostly had not and so many of their attitudes and habits were passed on. "Save for a rainy day" was good advice. It is the children and grandchildren of boomers who were brought up in lotus land. With global warming there may be fewer rainy days in future which just 'proves the point' of 'be careful what you wish for'.

Watching chrysanthemums grow may be only slightly more interesting than watching grass grow but who does not like a nice neat green lawn. If worst comes to worst you can always cut up the lawn for turves. So, if you are looking for something for nothing, or not much, or just for some cheap thrills, get out amongst your stools and start rooting. Spread some love at our Distribution Day.

Contacts

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Newsletter Editor – Carl Slusarczyk 9272 1356 (H) carl.lina.slu@gmail.com

Forthcoming Meetings & Events

WAHC Garden Clubs' & Societies' Plant Fair 9th & 10th September 2023 South Perth Community Centre

AGM & General Meeting Noon, Tuesday 12th September John McGrath Pavilion, 97 Hensman Street, South Perth.

Distribution Day 1:30 pm Sunday 29th October 2023 John McGrath Pavilion, 97 Hensman Street, South Perth.

General Meeting Noon, Tuesday 14 November 2023 John McGrath Pavilion, 97 Hensman Street, South Perth.

Facebook Page

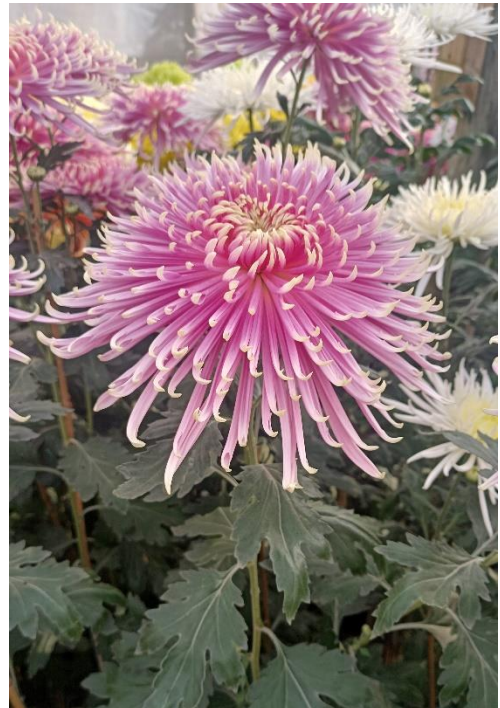
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/chrysanthemumwa/>

Website

www.chrysanthemumwa.com

Mentors

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Ralph Coombes – Maida Vale 9454 3373
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Carl Slusarczyk – Mount Lawley 0480 188 875
Richard Williams – Inglewood 0439 103 500



Seatons Pink Frills