

This newsletter together with our other publications will be placed on our website at www.chrysanthemumwa.com

Editor:

Carl Slusarczyk
6 Regent St West
Mount Lawley 6050
(08) 9272135
carl.lina.slu@gmail.com

Secretary:

Frank Blackwell
35 Tamarisk Dve
Halls Head WA 6210
(08) 9534 8238
l_blackwell@bigpondcom

Treasurer:

Ian Blackwell
5 Roberts Road
Kelmscott WA 6111
(08) 9390 2608
ianjb@westnet.com.au

Newsletter Circulation:

Ralph Foster
32 Waltham Road
Armadale WA 6112
(08) 9497 2420
rrfoster@iinet.net.au

Forrestfield Forum & Marketplace

THE FRIENDLY FOOTHILLS

Your Centre Of Convenience

Forthcoming Events

April

- General Meeting** Tuesday 14th at 12 noon
Rotary Hall, South Perth
- Committee Meeting** Tuesday 21st at 12 noon
Rotary Hall, South Perth

May

- Australian Championship entries**
Friday 1st (Phone 95348238 - before 6pm)
- WACS entries Sunday 3rd**
(Phone 9534 8238 - between 3pm - 7.00pm)
- Show set up Monday 4th from 5.30pm**
- Staging of exhibits Tuesday 5th**
- Judging Wednesday 6th from 9.30am**
- Official opening at 11am Thursday 7th**
- Bus tour departs 9.30am Friday 8th**
(from the show venue.)
- Sale of blooms 4pm Saturday 9th**
- Presentation dinner Tuesday 19th**
RAAFA Centre 11.30am for 12 noon

WACS Subscriptions

\$10 p.a. single, \$15 p.a. double

Please send to Treasurer

NEWSLETTER of The Western Australian Chrysanthemum Society Inc.



APRIL 2015

Presidents Note's



The growing season is approaching its climax and hopefully you are all looking forward to a good show of blooms. Of course if your good show of blooms should translate into a good quantity of show blooms then that will be a great bonus for the society as well. Some of you may be looking at your plants and thinking that the season has not been so kind. However it is often the case that the blooms turn out better than we imagine. Even if size is a bit down, the form may be better and as these two characters carry similar weight it can be a great leveller. Regardless of the merits of our blooms we have also had much enjoyment through the season due to our friendly social interactions with other members. The home opens at the Coombes' and Shillings' have been amongst the highlights so far and I thank them once again for their great hospitality. We were holding our breaths for

a while with the change of ownership of our show venue. The new owners of the Forrestfield Forum and Marketplace are the Hawaiian Group. Their representative has confirmed that the "show must go on", although with a slightly different concept. We will now be staging the bulk of the show in one of the unoccupied shops with perhaps up to a third of the display in the shopping centre aisles. We will have direct access to the shop from the street, which also has its own tap and sink, so setting up may be a little easier. The Australian Championship exhibits will still be outside Woolworths, in the busier part of the centre, so the patrons will have a little teaser to come and see the rest of the show. We greatly appreciate the efforts of our Show Secretary, Leila Blackwell, in negotiating the best possible outcome that was available. As for the future, I am sure that the owners will not be guaranteeing to keep the shop vacant for our use next year so we will need to review our options once again. I wish you all the best of luck for the show and good health and happiness.

Keith Robinson

Cultural Notes

April and May should be the highlight of the year for chrysanthemum growers as these are the months when we finally see the fruits of our labour. Unfortunately it can also be a stressful time as things can go badly wrong.

Blooms which are not straight on their stems can be prevented by making sure that the developing buds are kept horizontal. This can be achieved by pushing a length of split cane or similar up under the low side of the bud and securing it with a peg or tie. Each day the cane is repositioned as the stem under the bud elongates until no further growth occurs and the stem hardens.

Hopefully you have somewhere under cover to protect your blooms from rain and, god forbid, hail. When growing in the ground was popular the best blooms were often protected by driving four stakes into the ground around the plant and placing a large box on top to shield the blooms. Another means of protection is with bagging of blooms which is an option widely practised by growers of early chrysanthemums in the UK. See 'Exhibition Blooms-Bloom Protection' at www.chrysanthemums.info

Plants in pots are prone to blow over as they grow taller and become top heavy as the blooms enlarge. A useful method of prevention is by tying the stakes to a wire or strong string

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stretched taut between two uprights such as star pickets.

Fertilising at this time of the year is a matter of debate. Conventional wisdom says don't do it as some burning of the floret tips may result, which is especially noted with the thin petalled spiders and quills, the blooms may be more susceptible to damping due to softer growth and if soluble fertiliser is used irregularly then some lumpiness of the blooms may result. Growers using solid fertilisers through the year will likely have some residual nutrient in the pots and a well grown plant will have a good store of NPK and trace elements already built up in the plant tissues. The alternate view is that while nutrient requirements may reduce and fertilisers should be withheld or reduced when growth slows down from around the time that the buds are secured until the petals start to elongate, thereafter, due to the rapidly expanding flowers, the



Firewheel

plant can utilise fertiliser and if provided then that will result in larger blooms. As with most things, conventional wisdom is the safer option and most growers in WA adhere to it. The situation for growers using fully hydroponic methods may be different, but they don't need me to tell them what to do! Check out the hydroponics pages at www.chrysanthemums.info

Watering should be done in the morning to make sure that the pots do not dry out during the day which will have an adverse effect on the developing blooms and also to reduce humidity in the evenings which will discourage damping of the blooms or fungal problems on the leaves. If flowering under a low solid roof some of the especially tall cultivars may have their blooms close to the roof which, due to the trapping of humid air, will make them susceptible to fungal spotting. This problem can be reduced by making sure that the tallest plants are placed under the highest part of the roof. If there is still not much free air above then a layer of fine absorbent fabric can be placed between the roof and the blooms to protect against dew settling on the blooms.

Insect pests of all varieties can cause havoc. Caterpillars are usually not seen until bits of flowers and leaves are missing. The odd lower floret can be plucked out but damage to the leaves is final and the quality of foliage is also taken into account when judging blooms. A

preventative spray is worthwhile. The most troublesome pest is usually aphids. Once they have a foothold they are difficult to eradicate. Confidor is a good preventative and remedy. It is systemic but it is unwise to rely on a single foliar application. A soil drench may be more effective but is expensive for a large collection. I have, in desperation, sprayed it directly onto blooms that were almost fully out with no apparent ill effects but it is better not to allow the situation to become so desperate by earlier action. It is wise to check other garden plants as they are often the source of the infestation. If there is a hibiscus or lemon tree nearby then they should definitely be sprayed as well. I had both and cut them down. Unfortunately we cannot control what our neighbours grow.

I wish you all the best for what I hope will be a great season of plenty.

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Flame symbol