

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN CHRYSANTHEMUM SOCIETY INC.



July – August 2022

President's Notes

I hope that you are all getting some rest before we start all over again for the new season. Last season was a bit challenging for some growers but they can be consoled by the knowledge that it was "a lot" challenging for some others. On the other hand some other others had a better than average season.

How can it be so,
that good seasons come and go?
Bug grrrr'd if I know.



Thanks are due to the Editor for this haiku. I imagine that his further contributions to this newsletter will be substantial, at least in quantity.

In keeping with the cooperative spirit and openness that is a feature of the fellowship of WACS the author of this edition's Cultural Notes will also likely have something to say on the subject. However, be warned.

Explanations exist; they have existed for all time; there is always a well-known solution to every human problem — neat, plausible, and wrong.

As with several previous seasons the Show Secretary and I were catastrophising about various possible disasters that might afflict our Annual Show. Fortunately, the show was of fair average quality and quantity. This statement might be interpreted by the unenlightened as "damned by faint praise". However, for the cognoscenti it is simply confirmation that the show was, as is customary, adorned by hundreds of "magnificent floral specimens ... of staggering immensity, glorified by brilliant art shades" which is the defining characteristic of WACS shows.

In an effort to avoid exposing members to unnecessary risk of Covid infection we limited our contact with shopping centre patrons and did not put out the prize cards and sashes. In partial compensation for this, a list of the major

prize winners appears later in this newsletter. Special congratulations are due to Richard Williams and Michael Drake-Brockman who are now both State Champions for the first time.

A highlight of the show for me was the large number of seedling blooms that were exhibited by Ron Seaton. These covered a wide range of Sections from Medium Exhibition through to Charms and Cascades. I am sure that we will be seeing some of them again and again in years to come. A good sign for the future of the Society was the participation of two Novice growers in Jenny Olsen and Stephen Lenghaus. Amongst other highlights was a fine bloom of Louisa Pockett, a cultivar that is now over 110 years old, and Stoakes Toledo, a Spider which we only recently reintroduced to WACS members.

Congratulations are due to our friends in Bendigo for running a successful Australian Championship show and to this year's Australian Champion grower, Graeme Cain, who is a member of the host club and the current President of the Australian Chrysanthemum Council.

The 2023 Australian Championship will be held by WACS in Perth. If that is not enough to get you excited then either you live a very thrilling life or an incredibly dull one. Either way you have to be in it to win it. I am hoping for a big turnout of growers. Remember that you only need five blooms to compete. This year our show was the earliest possible whereas next year it will be the latest possible. That will keep you on your toes and also offer some extra encouragement to those growers who find that their blooms tend to be on the late side.

2022 ANNUAL SHOW – Major Prize Winners

State A Championship: Richard Williams

State B Championship: Michael Drake-Brockman

NCS Silver Medal - Best Exhibit of the Show: State B Championship - Michael Drake-Brockman

NCS Bronze Medal – Grand Champion Bloom: Primrose Mount Shasta – Ron Atyeo

Hawaiian Forrestfield Championship: Ron Seaton

ANZAC Memorial Vase: Ron Seaton

Jack Eastlake Trophy: Ron Seaton

Pockett Championship: Ron Seaton

Wallace Brook Memorial Medal: Noel Blunt

Reverend Frank Blackwell Memorial Trophy – WACS Section 1 Championship: Carl Slusarczyk

Hon. Clive Griffiths Award – Most points in specimen classes: Ron Seaton

Ken and Gladys May Trophy – Best formal decorative vase or bowl: Ron Seaton

Leila Blackwell Memorial Trophy – Best informal floral art: Brenda Benn

Allan Aitken Award - Champion Novice: Jenny Olsen

Champion Blooms

Section 1 Primrose Mount Shasta - Ron Atyeo

Section 2 Louisa Pockett - Michael Drake-Brockman

Section 3 Rose Stoakes - Michael Drake-Brockman

Section 4 Flame Symbol - Murray Ryall

Section 5 Joanne Seaton - Ron Seaton

Section 6 Edith Mechen - Michael Drake-Brockman

Section 7 Stoakes Freesia - Michael Drake-Brockman

Section 8 Falls Goldy - Michael Drake-Brockman

Section 9 Ryski - Michael Drake-Brockman

Section 10 Stoakes Toledo - Michael Drake-Brockman

Section 11 Kishi No Aurora - Michael Drake-Brockman

Section 12 Charm Seedling - Ron Seaton

Section 12 Cascade Shin Otome - Ralph Coombes

Pockett Bloom Louisa Pockett - Michael Drake-Brockman

Cultural Notes

How can it be so, that good seasons come and go? I ask myself the same question, but mostly in the bad seasons when all my labours of love are lost. There are a myriad of possible answers to the question and, as the man (H.L. Mencken) said, for every complex problem there's a simple solution, and it's wrong. If there is a simple answer that goes at least part of the way to explaining it then it is likely to be complacency.

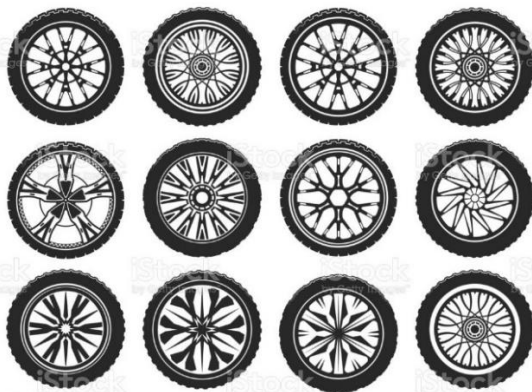
Does the weather really change so much from year to year? Have we ever had a season without insect pests? After 57 years of the existence of the WACS and 128 years since the first dedicated chrysanthemum show in Western Australia is the knowledge of how to grow chrysanthemums in this state so lacking?

Ted Elms wrote a cultural guide for us and revised it twice. He won 29 State Championships and I suspect that one reason for that was that he was probably the only person who followed his advice to the letter. On the other hand, Nell Perrett beat him seven times, so maybe he didn't, or maybe she did as well.



You can only invent the wheel once ...

https://www.chrysanthemumwa.com/uploads/4/1/8/4/4184909/chrysanthemum_culture_booklet.pdf



... but you can make some minor adjustments to improve a wheel's function. So, go ahead, knock yourself out! Unfortunately, that is what most often happens when you try. You know the story – trial and error.

The Editor has discovered this fascinating fact while Googling Wikipedia.

Elm wood is valued for its interlocking grain, and consequent resistance to splitting, with significant uses in wagon wheel hubs ...

This, at least to the editor's contorted mind, confirms the strong linkage between Elms and the wheel.

The Preface to the third edition of the Elms' trilogy provides the following insight regarding complacency.

The chrysanthemum is a very adaptable and extremely responsive plant, consequently growing them to perfection can be a rewarding experience. The extent of this reward will depend on your diligence and attention to detail which will in turn measure the degree of your success.

The following are suggestions from the man himself regarding matters to be considered for the new season.

- *Remember, if you did not succeed and were dissatisfied with your results in the first season you would be about average.*
- *Have you noted any neck splitters so they can be marked for attention in future?*
- *Have you weeded out and burnt any poor or diseased stock?*
- *What new varieties do you require to replace those discarded?*
- *Could you cope with the number you grew this year?*
- *No doubt you will seek the advice of experienced growers to overcome any other problems you encountered during the past season. (a list of mentors appears at the end of this newsletter)*

He gives the following advice for the months of July and August.

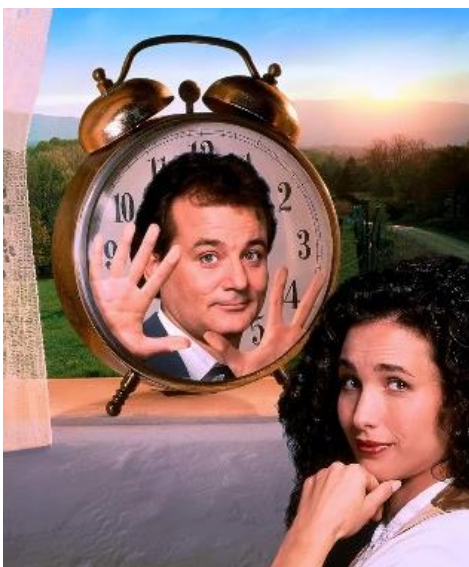
After blooming has finished, covering materials and stakes must be removed and stored for next season and old stalks cut right back to rest your stools. ... Keep weeds away from resting stools. ... During the winter months snails, slugs and caterpillars can cause extensive damage if allowed to go unchecked and you must remain constantly vigilant if these pests are to be properly controlled.

Cuttings can be successfully struck from July to late October but the exhibitor should commence striking at a convenient time as close to 1st September as possible and the propagation notes which follow are based on this premise.

Around 7th August the suckers should be cut back leaving only those which are showing through the soil or just starting to develop. The stool should then be covered with good garden soil and lightly dressed with a complete fertiliser to encourage the development of new and healthy suckers for propagation. About 21st August spray with a systemic fungicide to eliminate any fungus disease such as rust which can quickly take hold of your cutting nursery if allowed to develop.

Spray with either a residual spray, such as Malathion (or Tau-fluvalinate = Mavrik), or a systemic spray (eg. imidacloprid = Confidor, Richgro Bug Killa) to eradicate aphids and other pests about a week before setting out, as they can damage and hinder the development of your cuttings. A good watering of the stool the day before selection will ensure that cuttings are nice and fresh when taken.

Breaking News: Groundhog Day is February 2nd. If there were groundhogs in Perth it would be August 2nd.



However, there aren't any and if there were then maybe Punxsutawney Phil would not hibernate because it does not get below freezing here. Anyway, who cares? On the 2nd of August there are four more weeks of winter to come because spring starts on the 1st of September here.

In the Nyoongar calendar the closest to spring is Djilba, which is referred to by others as the "first spring" and corresponds roughly to August-September.

Djilba is a transitional time of the year, with some very cold and clear days combining with warmer, rainy and windy days mixing with the occasional sunny day or two.

This is the start of the massive flowering explosion that happens in the South West. This starts with the yellow flowering plants such as the Acacias. Also, colours that are around at this time of year are creams, combined with some vivid and striking blues.

Traditionally, the main food sources included many of the land based grazing animals as in the season before. These included the Yongar (kangaroo), the Waitj (emu) and the Koomal (possum - including the small and dirty quenda).

As the days start to warm up, we start to see and hear the first of the new borns with their proud parent out and about providing them food, guiding them through foraging tasks and protecting their family units from much bigger animals, including people.



The woodland birds will still be nest bound, hence the swooping protective behaviour of the Koolbardi (Magpie) starts to ramp up and if watched closely, so to do the Djidi Djidi (Willy Wag Tails) and the Chuck-a-luck (Wattle Birds) to name a couple of others.

As the season progresses and the temperatures continue to rise, we'll start to see the flower stalks of the Balgas (Grass Trees) emerging in preparation for the coming Kambarang season ("second spring").

Editor's Notes

The juxtaposition of the possibility of a nuclear cataclysm in Europe and widespread famine in the developing world due to the Russian special operation, TikTok, quantum computing, Instagram, space exploration, Married at First Sight, the CERN particle accelerator, the Kardashians, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera and the fact that almost nobody bothers to read these Notes has piqued my interest in the search for intelligent life in other places.



According to Wikipedia, in 1961 –

Francis Drake proposed his famous equation for calculating the number of extra-terrestrial civilizations in our galaxy that we would be able to communicate with at any given time.

The equation is expressed mathematically as $N = R^ \times fp \times ne \times fl \times fi \times fc \times L$, where:*

N is the number of ETIs that we might be able to communicate with

R is the average rate of star formation in our galaxy*

fp is the number of stars that have a system of planets

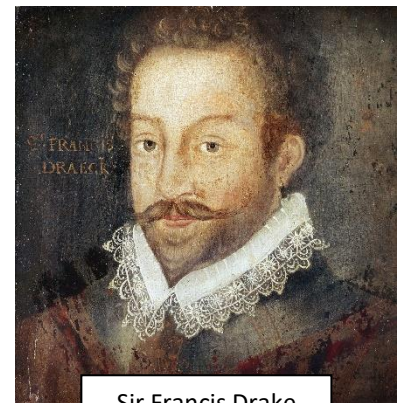
ne is the number of planets that will be able to support life

fl is the number of planets that will develop life

fi is the number of planets that will develop sentient (aka. intelligent) life

fc is the number of civilizations that will develop advanced technologies

L is the length of time that these civilizations will have to transmit radio or other communications signals into space



Sir Francis Drake
1540 -1596
(not the same guy)

It seems to me that in this search we are likely to fail. This is because, due to the existence of the means for our own self destruction and the strong propensity for wholly unsuitable people to assume positions of power, L is likely to be such a small quantity, in cosmological scales, that, regardless of the magnitude of the other multipliers (astronomers estimate there are about 100 billion stars in the Milky Way), $N < 1$.

Philosophical question for the day. Who is the clever monkey? The naked ape, or the emperor with no clothes?

In view of the wide variety of musical recommendations proffered in my earlier Notes attesting, somewhat reluctantly, to the existence of intelligent life here on Earth, you might question the need to ask the question and, indeed, whether it is necessary to answer the question in light of the further question

Stop Press

President has finally had enough: silences peoples' democratically elected Editor and in so doing shuts down free and open journalism in the WACS. Releases the following extract from his letter addressed to the Editor explaining his actions:

**SOMEWHERE, SOMEBODY OUT
THERE IS THINKING OF YOU,
AND THE TREMENDOUS
IMPACT YOU MADE ON THEIR
LIFE.**

**IT'S NOT ME...
I THINK YOU'RE AN IDIOT.**

Mentors

Ian Blackwell – Kelmscott 0424 432 608
Ralph Coombes – Maida Vale 9454 3373
Michael Drake-Brockman – Pickering Brook 9293 7650
Carl Slusarczyk – Mount Lawley 9272 1356
Richard Williams – Inglewood 0439 103 500

Chrysanthemum Culture in Western Australia

... a booklet written by Ted Elms. (not new but the wheel can only be invented once)

https://www.chrysanthemumwa.com/uploads/4/1/8/4/4184909/chrysantemum_culture_booklet.pdf

Contacts

President – Carl Slusarczyk 9272 1356 (H)	carl.lina.slu@gmail.com
Treasurer – Colleen Ryall 9291 9257 (H) 0400 089 223 (M)	colleenryall@westnet.com.au
Secretary – Michael Drake-Brockman 9293 7650 (H)	michaeldb@iinet.net.au
Newsletter Editor – Carl Slusarczyk 9272 1356 (H)	carl.lina.slu@gmail.com

Forthcoming Events

Garden Clubs' & Societies' Plant Fair	Saturday 10 th and Sunday 11 th September South Perth Community Centre
AGM and General Meeting	Tuesday 13 September 12:00 noon John McGrath Pavilion Social Room
Distribution Day	Sunday 23 October 1:30 pm John McGrath Pavilion Social Room

Website

www.chrysanthemumwa.com

Facebook Page

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



Here is a Ukrainian woman performing a composition by a Russian man accompanied by a German orchestra, comprised of men and women of diverse ages and backgrounds, performed in a Dutch concert hall having some of the finest acoustics of any building ever constructed, all attesting to the existence of intelligent life on Earth.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=rEGOihjqO9w

Intelligent life exists outside of Europe and our favourite female Mexican singer has added this, more reserved offering, to the available evidence.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPK1rSza6Is>