

# WESTERN AUSTRALIAN CHRYSANTHEMUM SOCIETY INCORPORATED



Newsletter



March - April  
2022

## President's Notes

Once again, I welcome you all, fine, upstanding, salt of the earth, horticultural aficionados that you are, to another riveting edition of everyone's favourite journal.

My, haven't we had some hot weather this summer<sup>1</sup>. Many of my plants have been anything but upstanding during the hottest days and some are now looking quite disreputable. I am not sure who or what is to blame. Maybe it is my fault. Perhaps I gave them too much salt of the earth and burned off the roots. Maybe it is the plants fault, due to their origins in more temperate climes. Maybe it is due to anthropogenic global warming or maybe it is just an act of God. Whatever the reason, all I need now is an infestation of chilli thrips to complete my philosophical journey for this financial and chrysanthemum growing year. You will recall that the Editor, back in the days when he was still writing his Notes, wondered out aloud whether or not the ancient Greeks, famous for their interest in philosophy, were any more or less sexist than we are now. I note that Socrates is quoted as saying:

*By all means, marry. If you get a good wife, you will be happy. If you get a bad one, you will be a philosopher.*

Now, I must say that my wife, Lina, has been a real gem and so I should be one of the happiest and carefree men alive. However, I grow chrysanthemums in a somewhat challenging climate and that has made me almost as philosophical as any old lay-about, barefooted Athenian, indifferent to material pleasures, with a flat turned-up nose, bulging eyes and a large belly<sup>2</sup>, and the Editor<sup>3</sup>.

It is a pity that there are not more philosophers around. Unfortunately, they are not much good at getting things done as they question almost everything, including themselves. At the other end of the spectrum are those that are good at getting things done, especially if it is exactly what they want to do. Think of the office sociopath that gets promoted to senior management. Some of them are so good at the job that they make it right to the top and get paid millions a year to make other people's lives a misery. Winners are grinners and winners also write the history after they win. Vlad the Impaler didn't get the name by accident. Many Romanians regard him as one of their finest

<sup>1</sup> always a safe topic for conversation. Summer 2021-2022 – the hottest on record.

<sup>2</sup> Quite unlike the average chrysanthemum grower(?) The Greeks grow "The Garland Chrysanthemum"

<sup>3</sup> God bless his little cotton socks.

leaders. While he was a winner for quite a while, it didn't end so well for Vlad and the histories, written by the victors, do not show him in a such good light. Our modern day Vlad appears to have a keen interest in history. Time alone will tell how he will be recorded in it.

Rest assured that your President (a.k.a El Presidente), philosophically minded author of the history of the WACS, democratically elected with 100% of the votes, in full control of the news feed due to a close relationship with the Editor, unconstrained by any separation of powers being both the President and a judge, and much loved by all, will continue to rule in the best interests of the Society, as I see them to be, and all members that agree with me and isn't that everybody. As there is now no Dahlia Society, perhaps we could incorporate dahlias into our society and put on a May Day show to recreate the glorious spectacle of the 1919 combined chrysanthemum and dahlia Peace Show that was staged after our victory over tyranny and injustice in WW1. After that we could take the now society-less carnations and sweet peas under our influence, as with the 1940-50s Carnation, Sweet Pea and Chrysanthemum Society, and become a society for all seasons, open to all who share our high ideals of whatever might be most advantageous to us at the time, after ratification by a committee of apparatchiks appointed especially for the purpose. Of course, a tribute of some kind would be required, probably in the form of a membership fee and some additional largesse, but loyal members would be amply rewarded by the provision of prize money in proportion to the extent of their adherence to our aims and ideals.

In respect of members, I am always surprised that we do not have a lot more. Perhaps some of the horticulturally minded have taken note of Groucho Marx's remark, *I refuse to join any club that would have me as a member*, and ruled themselves out. That is a shame because if the general interest in growing flowers should further decline we could always morph into a support group for 'Moral Re-Armament', with the orderly unfolding of a chrysanthemum bloom used as a template for a virtuous life. Alternatively, we could get hold of some Edo blooms (Section 11b) and, after a brief period of introspection, go out and paint the town red. Perhaps we could hire a stretched limo and go on a membership drive.

The Garden Clubs' and Societies' Fair in February was cancelled at very late notice due to Covid related concerns. This was not entirely surprising, I suppose, but a little disappointing none the less, especially in view of the time and effort required to get the sale plants ready during the hottest summer ever.

Now that Covid is becoming almost as widespread as red spider mites, we are not sure what impact it will have on our planned activities for the rest of the season. At this stage our first 'open house' advertised for March has been cancelled. Stay tuned for any further announcements that we may be sending out by email or Facebook. We have a few ideas for alternative arrangements for our annual show in May, should a change become necessary, and we will probably make a final decision on how to proceed with that in April.

There are three WACS logos at the top of the first page. The one on the right is the best copy available of the original logo that was drawn by Doth Smith and coloured by Frank Blackwell. As you can see the image quality is poor, which is due to the low resolution file image that we have. The other two images were redrawn by a graphic designer in India<sup>4</sup>, at a very reasonable price, courtesy of our trophy guy, Robert<sup>5</sup>. I think that they have done a good job and the new logos are faithful to the original.

The Show Secretary has kindly sent in a recipe idea for this newsletter that he saw on the internet. There appears to be nothing controversial about it, unlike his previous offering regarding a giant Amazonian moth of his own invention, for which he is still reciting the Confiteor.

Another of my tennis playing friends, Paul, presented me with a copy of an article, "Chrysanthemums", that his mother wrote for the Spring 1957 edition of the "Hong Kong Police Magazine". Paul is not that same uncouth fellow that refers to our favourite flowers as chrysanthemum-mum-mum-mums. He is far more cultured and refined, which will come as no surprise when I tell you that his mother was a keen horticulturalist. At the time of writing the article she was the director of the Hong Kong Government House gardens and prior to that she had worked at the Royal Horticultural Society Garden at Wisley. I found the article to be very interesting, especially in respect of the potting medium and fertiliser used to grow the potted plants.

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<sup>4</sup> thereby helping to strengthen our partnership with India in the Quad, a vital bulwark against totalitarian aggression.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Pintabona of Exclusive Trophies, 218 Lord St, Perth (top bloke)

Our resident science 'expert' has once again attempted to lift the veil of darkness, muck and mystery from the true nature of chrysanthemum buds. Perhaps he should pay attention to another old Greek, Aristotle, and his remark:

*The more you know, the more you know you don't know.*

The trouble with our expert, as with many others, is that the more he knows the more he thinks that other people don't know and he therefore feels obliged to enlighten them. He might do well to take note of a recommendation from a far more recent USA sage, Kelly Johnson, who, in 1960, advised his associates to *Keep it simple stupid*. Why make the growing of chrysies seem any more difficult than it needs to be. Nevertheless, as the WACS is a broad church, the Editor has decided to publish his contribution unabridged and unedited. As horticultural experts mostly work in glass houses the reader may judge for themselves the extent of the 'emperor's' new clothes<sup>6</sup>. My guess is that it would be good fortune indeed if he should be found to be standing up in anything more than his socks.

In respect of the more mundane aspects of buds, we should all be seeing plenty of them in our chrysie patches during March. At this stage they will be the darling buds of March, full of the promise of a floral fiesta come May. If they have died in the bud come May then you will surely have suffered the scourge of (shock, horror) chilli thrips (grrrrr).



Thankfully, the Editor has abandoned his notes and this now gives everyone else the opportunity to fill the Newsletter with fascinating anecdotes and facts. This is what the WACS is all about; freedom of assembly, association and speech, inclusiveness and equality, citizenship, consent of the governed, voting rights, freedom from unwarranted governmental deprivation of the right to life and liberty, and minority rights. (a.k.a. democracy)

## Cultural Notes

Having wasted an enormous amount of time and effort in writing a whole lot of tripe for this edition of the Newsletter I have decided to copy these notes from an earlier edition, with some edits. In choosing which Notes to copy I notice that there is an enormous amount of really interesting and useful stuff in prior editions and if you have nothing better to do (how could there possibly be anything better to do) then you may care to review some of them. Our website [chrysanthemumwa.com](http://chrysanthemumwa.com) has newsletters going back to 2014, so what are you waiting for?

You may have seen buds on some of your Exhibition (Sections 1 & 2) and Decorative (Sections 3,4 & 5) plants already. The excitement is palpable! Do not despair if some plants do not show early buds as many cultivars develop their flowers rapidly and so will still be out in time for the show.

It is necessary to "secure the bud" by removing any growths or other buds that form around the central bud. It is better to wait until the unwanted growths are big enough to handle easily so as to avoid damage to the chosen bud or the stem underneath it. How big is big enough probably relates as much to the size of your fingers as it does to the size of the growths.

Remember, however, that if growing Cuts and Sprays you do not want to disbud those and so make sure you put them in a separate area or else mark them with a colourful ribbon at the top of the stem. I have absent mindedly flowered some Yellow Ryskis as disbuds in the past and I can assure you that the resultant blooms were seriously underwhelming.

Small stems and buds will form in many of the leaf axils right down the stem and it is worthwhile removing these as they are produced to force as much vigour into the flowering bud as possible. Trim back the sucker growths at the base of the plant but do not be too harsh as you need these to form the plants for next season.

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<sup>6</sup> The earliest surviving version of Hans Christian Andersen's 1837 tale was first published in 1283 in an Indian collection of stories entitled the "Lilāvātīsāra", by Jinaratna. It is claimed that Andersen read another version of the tale in a German translation of a 1335 Spanish publication "Libro de los ejemplos del conde Lucanor y de Patronio". He wrote, in 1862, of his indebtedness to Prince Don Juan Manuel of Spain for the idea behind his story. So, for 25 years he was a plagiarist and then he wasn't one any more.

An important task is to keep the stems straight by tying them to the supporting stakes at frequent intervals. Some cultivars have an annoying tendency to form buds which are not straight on their stems, which are referred to as cocked buds. This can be mostly corrected by pushing a bit of split cane or pop stick up under the low side of the bud and securing it with a couple of twist ties and then moving it up every day or two as the stem lengthens under the bud until the bud is set.

The number of blooms that should be allowed on each plant (when grown from a September cutting) is generally –

- Two for Exhibitions
- Four for Decoratives, Spiders and Quills
- Six for Anemones and Show Singles
- Three for Cuts of Singles and Sprays

However different cultivars vary in their vigour and some plants will be better grown than others due to a variety of cultural factors in any season and so variations from these numbers should be made from time to time. In particular if one or more stems are obviously thinner than the others then they should be removed as they will seldom produce the best blooms and the strength of the plant might as well be put into the stronger stems. In addition it is little point keeping any dog's leg crooked stems and permanently cocked or asymmetrical buds.

Once the stem stops elongating and the bud has set the plant grows very slowly until mid-bloom stage and so has a minimal requirement for fertiliser. Many growers feel that fertiliser given after calyx split (petal colour show) is actually detrimental to the quality of blooms, especially for Spiders and Quills. As a result it is unwise to use solid fertilisers after early March as they will still be active through this period. However the regular use of a rapid acting liquid fertiliser prior to this stage is necessary to allow maximal development of all the leaves at the top of the stem and to produce a good stem under the bud. Generally a higher potassium fertiliser, as used for fruit and vegetables, is best or else a hydroponic bloom fertiliser (available from hydroponic stores and also garden supply stores such as Bunnings).

If growing Charms and Cascades do not pinch the stems after early March or else flowering will be delayed past the show date.

Watering should be done in the mornings to make sure that the pots do not dry out during the day which will have an adverse effect on the developing blooms. In addition you do not want water lying around in the evenings which will encourage 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.

Be on the lookout for pests. Black aphids and caterpillars in particular are troublesome. A regular preventative spraying programme is probably advisable as you can be guaranteed that all the usual nasties will attack at some stage and you will have to spray anyway. Confidor is good for most sucking pests. Pyrethrum and synthetic pyrethroids such as Mavrik are useful and will also kill caterpillars. One grower has used a cocktail of chlorpyrifos, Malathion and Kelthane with excellent results for several years but you will probably need to visit an agricultural supply house to obtain them or else order via eBay.

You can guarantee rain, and some strong winds are likely when the plants are coming into bloom. God forbid a hail storm. As a result, some method of protecting the flowers is needed. Some growers have a solid roof over their growing area while others pull plastic sheeting over their shade house before the buds start to show colour. If your set up is less sophisticated then it is still worth protecting your potted plants by bringing them under the cover of a verandah or patio. Remember that a plant in flower is top heavy so some method of stopping the pots from blowing over is also necessary. Stretching a rope between two supports and tying the plants to that is a worthwhile insurance.

## Chilli Thrips: Grrrrrr

Ignore this at your peril. A very detailed article on these little so-and-sos<sup>7</sup> is available on the web at:

[https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener/webinars/rose-series/edis\\_chilli\\_thrips\\_rose\\_thrips.pdf](https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener/webinars/rose-series/edis_chilli_thrips_rose_thrips.pdf)

The article states that chilli thrips are most active at the top of plants whereas spider mites start at the base and work their way up. As chilli thrips feed on many different plants it is wise to treat all wanted plants that are close to your chrysiacs and pull out any that are not wanted. Chilli thrips love hot weather.

If using chemicals then it seems that soil drenches of imidacloprid and foliar sprays of spinetoram are the most effective. Imidacloprid is available as a powder for sprinkle on and water in soil application in the form of David Grays' "Systemic Bug Killer" and Richgro "Bug Killa". Spinetoram can be found in Yates' "Success Ultra Insect Control". Pest oils and potassium fatty acid 'soaps' are useful as broad spectrum insect killers but care needs to be taken not to apply them in hot conditions or at any time close to calyx split as they will deform any petals that they come into contact with.

You are welcome to come up with your own suggestions for a control program. At this stage of the season I would recommend a soil application of imidacloprid at the beginning of March and another dose in early April. Combine this with a foliar spray of spinetoram once buds appear in numbers, certainly before the end of March, and repeat it after 2-3 weeks, paying particular attention to the top of the plant and buds.

If you want to use non-toxic methods then you are welcome to spray insecticidal soaps (eg. Yates' "Nature's Way") and/or pest oils as often as you can be bothered to do it, without causing too much of a build-up of grime on the leaves. Do not spray these if it is hot or the plants are dry.

Serious consideration can also be given to applying a dusting of insecticide powder to the flowering buds once they are secured and maybe again before calyx split. Broad spectrum insecticides are not recommended for chilli thrips as they also kill the natural predators (apparently there are some!). However, if they are only applied as dust to the buds then they can get into all the nooks and crannies while not having an impact on any of the 'good guys' on other parts of the plant.

Maybe I am being overly pessimistic and this may all seem to be too much trouble, and maybe it is.

*But being this is (Chilli thrips), the most powerful (horticultural pest) in the world, and would blow your (bloom) clean off, you've got to ask yourself one question: Do I feel lucky? Well, do ya, (highly respected WACS member)?"*



### chilli thrips

Insecta

Thysanoptera

Thripidae

*Scirtothrips dorsalis*



Grrrrrr

<sup>7</sup> They are about one quarter the size of Western Flower Thrips and four times as bad.

## Recipe Idea – poached egg in the microwave<sup>8</sup>

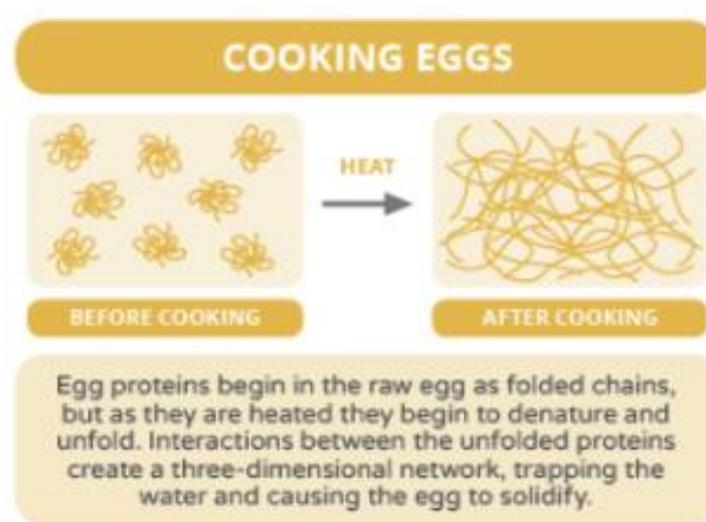
This recipe comes, courtesy of the miracle of the internet, from Katie Lolos (“or Lady Lolos on the ‘gram”) who is a school teacher from Sydney, Australia.

- add a quarter of a cup of water into a microwave-safe glass
- crack an egg into the water ensuring that the egg is covered with water
- cook the egg on high for 45 seconds in the microwave (cook in extra 15 second blasts if the egg isn’t cooked to your liking)
- once it’s cooked, strain the egg and serve with your dish of choice
- if you’re cooking more than one egg, you should always use fresh cool water (never use the same water twice in the microwave - it will get too hot)



Katie Lolos

As Katie is a teacher she will no doubt be explaining the science of poaching eggs to her students, possibly with the help of the following diagram, also found on the internet.



.... stay tuned for: “Why won’t my hard boiled eggs peel properly?” in the next edition of the Newsletter.

## Breaking News

*Michael Rubin Buys Daughter an 'Army Tank' for Her 16th Birthday: 'Knew How Badly You Wanted a Car'*

*Vlad’s oligarch flunky gifts an ICBM for each of his grandchildren so no one picks on them in the playground.*

*Gordon Ramsay Says Son Oscar, 2, Will Host Hell's Kitchen Season 45: 'Don't Mess It Up Please'*

*Famous TV chef banned from Playschool after directing torrent of profanity laden abuse at Jemima and throwing Little Ted out of the round window.*

*Keith Urban's Daughter Faith Is Following in His Footsteps, Singer Says She 'Has a Great Musical Ear'*

*Musical prodigy turns to post-impressionist painting, cuts off her ear to spite parents.*

*Kim Kardashian adds a full 10cm to already ample booty; angry clients stage sit-in at Brazilian butt lift clinic.*

*Editor devoid of ideas to fill space in newsletter; nets the surf and dredges up a load of rubbish to help save planet.*

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<sup>8</sup> Be sure to check out how to make the perfect boiled egg in a previous edition of the Newsletter.

## We interrupt this Newsletter for an important announcement.

***Nurse, 27, is ANOTHER victim of viral poached egg hack after suffering second-degree burns to her face and arms when water exploded in her face as she opened the microwave.***

*Alice Seymour, 27, from Manchester, has warned against trying the 'microwave poached egg hack' after she was hospitalised with second-degree burns to her face and arms after attempting the popular cooking trick. She had seen the trick of making a poached egg in a microwave online and decided to try it after getting home from a shift. But disaster soon hit when she opened the microwave door and the water exploded in her face, meaning she was rushed to hospital. Alice added, if she hadn't been wearing her glasses she would have been blinded.*

Alice has finished school now so she needs to learn by experience.

*Cooking shelled eggs in a microwave is dangerous because the casing holds in heat. This means that, once you've removed the egg from the microwave, it will carry on cooking itself, and any disruption can cause an explosion. Microwaved yolks are, on average, 12 degrees hotter than microwaved water. Pockets of superheated water in the yolk don't boil immediately because surface tension prevents bubbles forming. But once this is broken, they suddenly boil and release bubbles rapidly, causing what appears to be an explosion.*



Alice Seymour wearing her new "Sun Smart" hat.

## Buds: Everything that you wanted to know

but:

- were afraid to ask,
- didn't know who to ask,
- didn't know what to ask,
- didn't know where to ask
- didn't know when to ask
- didn't know why to ask,
- Didn't know how to ask,
- "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn.", or
- "What a disappointment, I thought you were going to dish the dope on dope." <sup>9</sup>



If you are in the second last group then that is fine, as chrysiies will survive in our climate, as long as you water them in summer. If you don't, then they will die, like almost every other plant in your garden. You know, the Mediterranean climate, the home of "la dolce vita"; who would have known? If you belong to the last group then you are in the wrong place, probably because you're stoned.

The problem in understanding buds is that there are a number of different terms that are used when describing them. Most commonly the terms are somewhat ambiguous in that they are ill defined so that different authors use them to describe different things.

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<sup>9</sup> For dopes? You cannot look up buds or hydroponics on the 'net without finding a multitude of articles on marijuana.

I wrote about buds in the April – May 2018 Newsletter and tried to avoid using a lot of “bud terminology” to make it all easier to understand. I reproduce that here with some alterations.

*There are two situations under which a chrysanthemum will form a bud at the end of a stem. The first occurs during the growing season. When a stem has produced a certain number of leaves it will form a solitary bud at the end and shoots will form below it producing branches that will grow past the bud which will then fail to develop. This is referred to as a “break bud”. A plant left to grow naturally from its stool will always produce a break bud on the end of each stem and usually another on the end of each of the resulting stems later in the season. This is the process whereby the plant produces branches. In the case of Charms they produce frequent break buds which creates the mass of branches which is their characteristic feature.*

*A special case occurs when a break bud forms shortly before the normal flowering season. If the plant is left alone branches will form below the bud and the bud will probably wither away. However, the withering of the bud in this case can be prevented by the manual removal of the shoots which form around it. This is referred to as “securing the bud”. As the production of new branches has been prevented the energy of the plant is then directed into plumping up the bud which will later go on to flower in the proper flowering season. These prematurely produced flowering buds can be referred to as “crown buds”. A crown bud will generally produce a larger flower with more petals than a bud formed in the flowering season as it has had a longer time to develop.*

*The second situation occurs when buds are formed during the flowering season. A cluster of buds will form at the end of each stem and no further main branches will be produced on the stem. These are called “terminal buds” which will go on to produce flowers without the need to “secure the bud”. If a single large flower is wanted at the end of the stem then all but one bud should be removed.*

*With modern growing practices we do not normally see break buds on our show plants because we stop the plants at times which are recommended so as to have the best chance of them forming buds and blooming at the correct time for our show.*

I read an article written by the late Barry Machin who explained things at greater length than my version above and included the following –

*If the present well known terms for flower buds occurring during different stages of the growth of the plant are to be retained it must be remembered that they are all anatomically similar, but that:*

- (a) a “break” bud has been permanently arrested in development,*
- (b) a “crown” bud has been temporarily arrested in development; and*
- (c) a “terminal” bud has not been arrested at any stage of development.*

Put simply, if a bud is surrounded by leaf bearing branches then it is a break bud. When approaching the flowering season, if the surrounding branches of a break bud are removed (securing the bud) then the bud will survive as a flowering crown bud and if the bud is surrounded only by other buds then it is a terminal bud.

You might ask – Why does it matter?

An early season flowering bud (= crown bud) will normally produce a larger flower with more petals than a late bud (= terminal bud). If you are growing Large and Medium Exhibition blooms then a bigger flower is a good thing. In addition, some cultivars must be flowered on an early bud in order to fill the centre of the bloom with petals and not show a “daisy eye” centre. Unfortunately, in our climate early buds often lead to stale, old looking blooms due to our hot weather during their prolonged development. Some cultivars, such as many Singles, flower best on terminal buds as there is less chance of having petals in the disc, the petals are wider and the colour is often brighter. Exhibition late spray cultivars are flowered from the terminal bud cluster where the central bud is usually removed due to its shorter pedicel. All Charms and Cascades are flowered on terminal buds.

OK, hopefully, that is all well and good. So, what is the problem in understanding buds? I mentioned that the terminology can be confusing as the terms are not properly defined and so different writers use them differently. For instance:

- **“flowering on the break bud”** – if a cutting is rooted late then it will not form its first bud until close to the flowering season and so it can be flowered on a single stem from the first bud that is formed.
- **“crown bud”** – many writers use this term to describe any bud that is capable of flowering (a mid to late season bud) which forms on the very end of each stem. The central bud of a terminal bud cluster is also called a crown bud by these writers. A break bud that is not capable of flowering (early season) is not included in this use of “crown bud”.
- **“first and second crown buds”** – if the first stem grown by a plant forms a break bud or is manually stopped (pinched) then new stems will form. If the plant flowers on these new stems it is said to have flowered on the “first crown”. If the plant produces a second set of break buds or is stopped for a second time then it will flower on the “second crown”. A plant can be made to flower on a third, or even a fourth or fifth, crown if stopped enough times. In practice the only reason that you are likely to want to do this is if growing a multi-bloom display plant.
- **“run on bud”** – if a break bud forms close to the flowering season then it can be “secured” as a crown bud. However, if the bud is produced too early for the grower’s liking then it can be removed and one stem from just below the bud can be left to grow on and form a new bud, or buds, at the end of the new stem. This new stem will be quite short as it has had little time to grow before the flowering season. A run on bud from a “first crown” bud could be called a “second crown” bud but because the stem is so short it looks more like a continuation of the “first crown” stem and so it is called a “run on first crown”. Similarly you can also run on a “second crown” bud. Be sure to understand that you cannot “run on” a terminal bud because there are no stems below it, only other buds.

You might ask once again – Why does it matter?

Well, now you can understand Ted Elms when he wrote in our WACS cultural booklet:

*Some cultivars bloom best when grown on first crown buds, some on second crown buds, while others will flower on either first or second crown buds. ... In many instances the difference in first and second crown growth has proven to be that the first crown has more and finer petals while the second crown has fewer but broader petals. However, there are some cultivars which can only be grown on a first crown otherwise they will show an open centre revealing a daisy eye.*

.... or can you?

Not entirely, is my guess.

I have described above the general differences between a first and a second crown bud. However, fundamentally, the difference between the two is that a second crown bud has two breaks, or stops, below the bud and a first crown bud has only one. Why should one extra stop make so much difference to the flower produced? The answer is that the extra stop makes little or no difference. When allowed to grow naturally a plant will obviously form a first crown bud before it can form a second crown bud (in which case the first crown bud will then be a second break bud). So, a naturally produced first crown bud is an earlier bud than a natural second crown bud.

How often is a plant left to flower naturally by a keen chrysie grower? Not very often. If you have two plants of the same cultivar and, by adjusting your stopping dates, flower one first crown and the other second crown it is possible to have them form their final flowering buds at the same time. In this case the blooms on both plants will be much the same. The crucial factor that determines the nature of the flower is the time of year that it formed its bud. As a result of its usual production further from the natural flowering time a first crown bud will be exposed to a lower amount of flowering hormones (Flowering Locus T and Constans) and so it will develop for a longer period before it comes into flower. Early buds will therefore have more petals, as there has been more time to produce them and the petals will be narrower as there is proportionally less room on the flower head for them to develop. Later second crown buds will have less petals but they will be broader. Terminal buds will typically have the least number of petals.

It is commonly found that later buds give flowers with stronger colour. This applies mostly to pinks, salmons, bronzes and reds. That is, all flowers with anthocyanin (red) pigments. There are several factors at play with respect to colour. Anthocyanins are more strongly expressed in cold weather and stronger light. Later buds are exposed to

colder weather but less light, so these factors are antagonistic. Presumably cold is a greater promoter of colour than is light intensity. Early buds take longer to open as they have more petals and so they are more susceptible to fading of the colour.

OK, got all that? Well, what about flowering time? What follows is most relevant to 'late flowering' cultivars (May in the southern hemisphere and November in the northern hemisphere) and follows on from some of the ideas presented above.

Readers of chrysie growers' guides dealing with spray cultivars will have noticed that different cultivars have different responses to initiation of flowering by 'blacking out' (onset of artificially produced short days). The range of times from blacking out to full bloom is given as between eight and eleven weeks for most cultivars. These times are not absolute as the response time is influenced by other factors, such as light intensity and temperature, so that the response time will vary somewhat in different localities and from year to year. Blacking out is not normally practiced with exhibition cultivars but it is with commercially grown disbuds, which demonstrates that the larger flowered cultivars also have their own response times.

Grower guide readers will also have noticed that stopping dates are often given to have the best chance of having blooms at their peak for various show dates. You might think, that as all cultivars have their own response times after the onset of short days, that they should all flower at their own pre-determined times. Not so.

So, how can we change the flowering time? In suitable climates, blooms can often be obtained earlier by stopping earlier. In this case the stems will, after producing the maximum leaf count on the stem (another variable peculiar to each cultivar), terminate in a break bud. If this break bud is 'secured', by removing the new growths forming below it, it will be converted to a crown bud. This bud will then continue to be stimulated by the small amounts of flowering hormones that caused it to be produced and as natural flowering time approaches the development will accelerate due to increasing amounts of these hormones. What we see then is that while a crown bud will take longer to develop it will flower earlier than a terminal bud due to it being produced earlier.

But wait, there's more. As mentioned earlier, because a crown bud takes longer to develop it will have the opportunity to grow larger and contain more petals. An explanation for this is that, as the tip of a bud is the last part to reach full development, the bud will have more time to fill its tip with petals. As the tip of the bud is the location of the eye this will have more time to fill with petals. As a 'daisy eye' is a fault in double blooms (all blooms except Singles) an earlier stop will also help to prevent or reduce this fault.

So far, so good. In 2010 I got all keen on doing well in the Australian Championship. I wanted the best chance of having blooms at their peak for the show, so I stopped each cultivar over a three week period to try and spread the flowering times. This included some plants that I flowered 'four up' (four blooms) with each of the four stems stopped a week apart. I found that, with nearly all cultivars, all the blooms were at full bloom at about the same time.

What happened? In Perth our summers are hot and dry and early buds will normally produce very poor, small, washed out looking blooms, sorely lacking in freshness, assuming that the buds do not abort altogether. These early buds are crown buds. Our stopping dates in Perth are mainly aimed to produce stems with the maximum leaf count, to increase the likelihood of obtaining a good sized stem and flower, and ending in a terminal bud. These terminal buds will progress directly to flowering in the minimum time possible so that the blooms will retain freshness despite the hot and dry conditions. As a result, varying the stopping dates by a week or three will not make much of a difference to the flowering date as our plants are flowered on terminal buds and, as we have noted, terminal buds flower at a time that correlates to their response time from the onset of short days. The onset of short days hasn't changed much in the last four and a half billion years as it is caused by the earth's spin axis being tilted with respect to its orbital plane. *Astronomers propose that this (tilt) is due to energetic collisions between the 'planetessimals' which eventually coalesced to form the planets, knocking them off the perpendicular orientation they would naturally have.*<sup>1011</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Isn't the internet a fabulous and easily accessed resource, containing almost the entirety of human knowledge?

<sup>11</sup> Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn.

Avid readers of the Newsletter will recall my hard luck story about growing the UK large exhibition cultivar Gigantic. I have tried others, including Elizabeth Shoemith. One UK guide gives a stopping date of May 25<sup>th</sup> for Elizabeth Shoemith for a show at the beginning of November, with the crown bud secured on 8<sup>th</sup> August. Transferring these dates to the southern hemisphere, that would be a November 25<sup>th</sup> stop for an early May show with the bud secured on 8<sup>th</sup> February. In Perth that would be a disaster as the bud would abort. I have tried growing it with a stop a month later, at the end of December, and the buds came at the end of February with the blooms being only two thirds out by early May. The flower quality was fairly poor, which is a further demonstration of the fact that almost everyone in Perth has had little success with any of these UK cultivars.

I hope that this covers most issues and is clear enough to be understandable. If not then feel free to ask some questions at the next General Meeting

## Human Interest Story: more on buds<sup>12</sup>

*Do (you) realise that when cotton buds are flushed (down the toilet), they can end up in the ocean through the sewage system? In Warrnambool, ("Better Buds", a grassroots community initiated campaign run by volunteers) collected more than 23,000 (plastic stemmed) buds off Shelly Beach in the past 28 months. That's a lot of cotton buds for (their) poor marine wildlife to choke on and it is only one beach!*

*Marine plastic pollution is one of the biggest environmental threats to our oceans and we are adding to that problem daily. Throughout the world cotton buds are often listed in the top 5-10 marine debris items most commonly found on the beach. Like plastic drinking straws, cotton buds suck because they harm and kill marine animals.*

*According to the Tangaroa Blue Foundation, an estimated 60% of sanitary (sewage-related) items found on beaches in Australia are cotton bud stems. We love our beaches and we don't want to see them littered with plastic stems and our marine life harmed by our plastic waste.*

**.... stay tuned: the boffins are working on a dog interest "scratch and sniff" feature for the next edition of the Newsletter**

## Important Lesson<sup>13</sup>

*The use of cotton buds inside ears has been condemned worldwide by otolaryngologists. This is due to well documented complications including trauma, impacted ear wax, infection, and retention of the cotton bud. The most common mode of accidental penetrating ear injury in children is cotton-bud induced.*



Bud Holly



Bud Franklin



Bud Tingwell

<sup>12</sup> This is not of interest to other animal species because they cannot read.

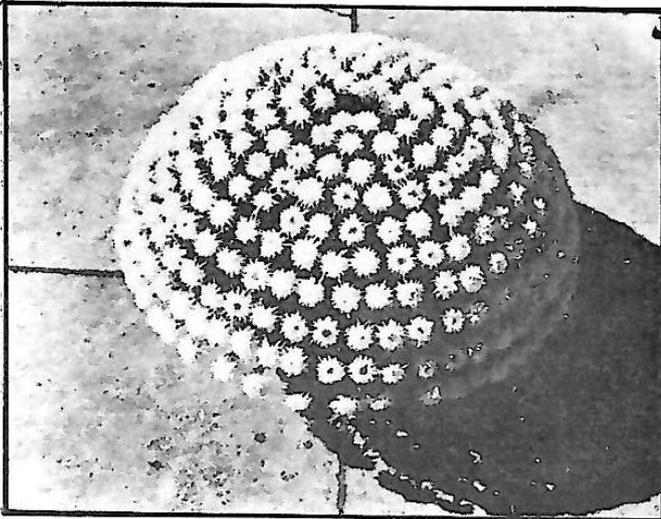
<sup>13</sup> attention Katie Lolas and Alice Seymour

# ✓ CHRYSANTHEMUMS

by

Cynthia Bashall

Many people have admired the "hanging bamboo" chrysanthemums which have been on display at Government House during the past few weeks. When I say 'admired' I do not necessarily mean that everyone thought these huge pots of nearly three hundred and fifty flowers to one plant, were beautiful; but that they are incredible and a sample of patience and skill. I have seen many visitors peering under the canopy of flowers to see if it really was only a single stem that held the huge umbrella of symetrically arranged blossoms.



There must be many secret and traditional ways of growing these large pots; however, I will try and describe how those on display at Government House were grown.

Strong cuttings are taken in January; a clammy paste is made of water and powdered canton mud. This paste is made into balls (about the size of a marble) round the base of each cuttings, these are then placed in a pan of sand or red soil. About the end of February there should be sufficient growth to pot up each plant into 6" Chinese pots using small nuts of canton mud.

Chrysanthemums thrive in a rich soil but they must also have very good drainage;

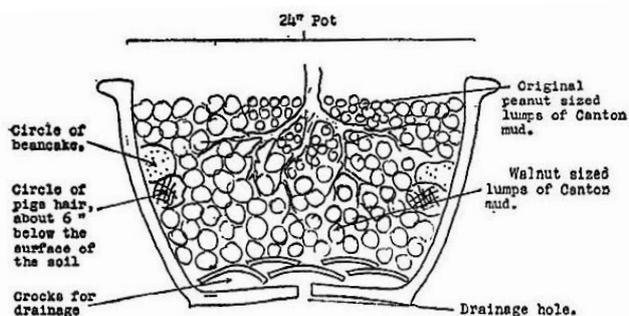
Canton mud is ideal for both requirements. This mud is usually bought in large lumps and broken down into smaller pieces, those the size of walnuts being used for the third and fourth or last stage. Peanut-sized pieces are used for the second stage and the dust for the first or cutting stage, both of which I have already described.

April is the best time for potting out into 12" Chinese pots, this is what I have called the third stage. The plants should have quite a large root system by now and will require more nourishment. The diagram shows how the fertiliser is introduced into the pot during the process of potting. Immediate nourishment is provided by broken up bean-cake, but the long term feeding is obtained by pigs hair which rots very slowly thereby providing a continual supply of nourishment. In June the plants should be potted again, this time into their final pots which they are to flower in—usually 24" Chinese type pots. This is the fourth or final stage and the pot content is exactly repeated as for the third stage.

Beancake and pigshair are generally used inside the pots as a fertiliser, but a liquid fertiliser can be and often is used. Beancake water is the most popular, at a strength of 1:3 and watered in about three times a week, but only if the plant needs it; indication being the shades of yellowing of the leaves. If the leaves are a healthy dark green no liquid fertiliser is needed.

As Canton mud is so efficient in keeping the flower pot well drained, it is natural to assume that the soil will dry out extremely quickly. This is counteracted by a good watering early each morning, followed by, three or four times each day, what is best described as a brisk but fairly heavy spray over the whole plant.

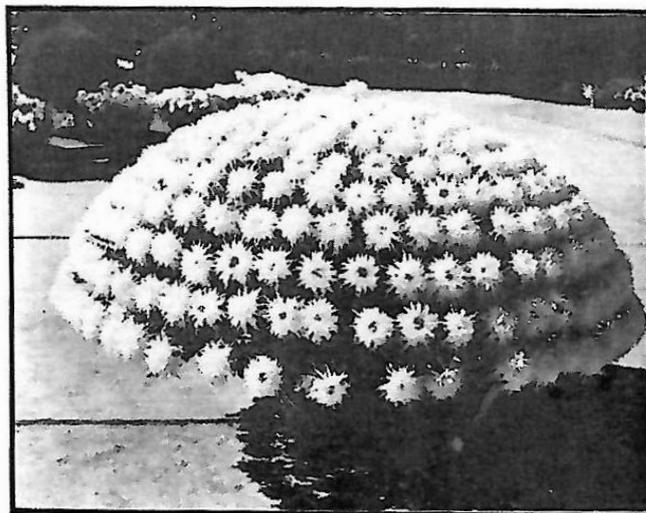
So far all this has dealt with the roots of the plant and has been fairly straight forward; however this is not so with the growing stems above. One main stem is nursed, this having previously been selected as being especially strong. All the smaller



growths are then removed. When approximately ten inches long this stem is "stopped" by pinching out the growing shoot or tip—this should leave about four or five buds. These are allowed to grow to 3-4 inches before these too are stopped thus again leaving four or five buds. This is repeated again and again until there is a huge mass of between three hundred and four hundred stems. These stems are carefully tended and staked until the buds form, swell and finally break into flower. Now nimble fingers get to work; all the stakes are taken out and the whole plant is "collapsed"; four large stakes are driven into the pots well away from the main stem. These stakes support a wooden frame which holds firm concentric circles of wire, across these wires the new bamboo stakes are tied, each being already tied to a flower stem and the

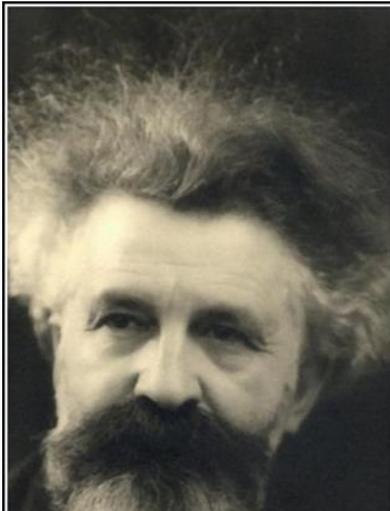
split end of each stake holding gently but firmly the stem at the base of the flower head. An intricate weaving effect of the stems is produced to enable the flowers to be laid symmetrically.

From this it can be imagined that a pot of "hanging bamboo" chrysanthemum takes almost a year to produce, but the final glory is so satisfying that to a fine craftsman the continual daily, and sometimes hourly, attention is well worth while.



(Photographs by courtesy of the South China Morning Post).

**Editor's Notes:** You can't keep a good man down.<sup>14</sup>



A word is a bud attempting to become a twig. How can one not dream while writing? It is the pen which dreams. The blank page gives the right to dream.

— Gaston Bachelard —

**AZ QUOTES**

Anybody want to take over the job?

<sup>14</sup> This is not sexist language as one of the basic complaints of feminism is that in our patriarchal society you can keep a good woman down.

## Musical suggestions

Following on from the suggestion in the last edition's Notes -

Whistling Dixie <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNtMpPFM7M0>

... and, unlike the previous number, this one, featuring everyone's favourite Mexican singer, is well worth listening to –

Natalia Lafourcade with La Oreja de Van Gogh <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1d8mLCULOqs>

You may recall from discussion in a 2019 edition of the Newsletter that a referendum was to be held in Chile to approve the drafting of a new constitution to replace the previous one enacted by the government of Augusto Pinochet. According to Wikipedia:

*Pinochet assumed power in Chile following a United States backed coup d'état on 11 September 1973 that overthrew the democratically elected socialist Unidad Popular government of President Salvador Allende and ended civilian rule. The support of the United States was crucial to the coup and the consolidation of power afterward.*<sup>15</sup>

The referendum was postponed due to the Coronavirus pandemic. It was subsequently held in 2020 and approved with overwhelming support. The drafting of a new constitution was commenced during 2021 and it will be put to a vote in 2022. Meanwhile elections for a new President took place in December 2021. The winner was the left wing candidate, Gabriel Boric, who installed fourteen women in his twenty-four member cabinet. One of these women is Defence Minister Maya Fernandez, a granddaughter of former socialist President Salvador Allende.

*Boric's pledges during the election campaign to enact major reforms to Chile's market-led economic model, rattled investors, though he has moderated his tone since, boosting Chile's markets and currency.*

... and reduced the chances of yet another United States backed coup d'état.

As you know I like to have some continuity between editions and it is also an excuse for recommending this all female rendition of "Que Se Sepa Nuestro Amor" (Let Our Love Be Known) featuring your favourite feminist Chilean singer, Mon Laferte. Avid readers will recall that Mon is a staunch opponent of the old Chilean regime and no doubt these events will be of great satisfaction to her.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W2k7CqTAHU>



Norma Monserrat  
Bustamante Laferte  
a.k.a. Mon Laferte



<sup>15</sup> The USA is not to be too harshly criticised as they espouse equality and so support or overthrow both elected governments and dictatorships, whereas Russia only supports dictatorships and overthrows elected governments; and the USA paid good money for Alaska, Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska and large portions of North Dakota and South Dakota; the area of Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado east of the Continental Divide; the portions of Minnesota and Louisiana west of the Mississippi River; the northeastern section of New Mexico; and northern portions of Texas. Don't ask about California, Arizona, Nevada, Colorado, Utah and Hawaii. Greenland is not currently available for purchase but capitalist oligarchs are not all that worried because it will not be too long before they can start selling ice to Eskimos.

## Mentors

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**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. (do not overlook mature advice)

<https://www.chrysanthemumwa.com/chrysanthemum-culture-wa.html>

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## Forthcoming Events

**All events are subject to change depending on the situation with Covid. We will endeavour to notify members of any changes by email but please also check for notifications on our Facebook page.**

<b>Social Day</b>	Sunday 10 April 1:30 pm Michael and Judy Drake-Brockman's home 136 Merrivale Rd, Pickering Brook
<b>General Meeting</b>	Tuesday 12 April 2022 John McGrath Pavilion Social Room 12:00 Noon
<b>Annual Flower Show</b>	Thursday 5th to Saturday 7th May 2022 Hawaiian Forrestfield Shopping Centre
<b>Awards Luncheon</b>	Tuesday 24 May 2022 John McGrath Pavilion Social Room 11:30am for 12:00
<b>AGM and General Meeting</b>	Tuesday 13 September 2022 John McGrath Pavilion Social Room 12:00 noon
<b>Distribution Day</b>	Sunday 23 October 2022 John McGrath Pavilion Social Room 1:30 pm

## Website

[www.chrysanthemumwa.com](http://www.chrysanthemumwa.com)

## Facebook Page

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



