



# BELMONT

## FORUM

VENUE FOR OUR ANNUAL SHOW

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### Upcoming Events

#### April

General meeting - Tuesday 8th at 1pm

Rotary Hall, South Perth

Social Visit -

Friday 25th at Ralph & Liz Coombes

13 Bandin Place, Maida Vale Ph: 94543373

#### May

Annual Show at Belmont Forum Shopping Centre - Wed. 7th - Sat. 10th

Set up Tuesday 6th

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# NEWSLETTER of The Western Australian Chrysanthemum Society Inc.



## April 2014

### Presidents Note's



Another Show Season is upon us again. I hope that all your plants are looking healthy and unlike the coming election the blooms are leaning

neither to the right nor to the left. April is a month in the chrysanthemum grower's calendar which can make or break the years work. Hopefully your most promising plants at least are well protected from the rain and wind and have all been receiving a good preventative spray against pests; in particular aphids and caterpillars.

Members who attended the social day at the Moyser's home in March enjoyed a lovely day of good food and company. Our thanks go once again to Colin and Jean for their hospitality. I am looking forward to seeing their blooms and arrangements at the show.

Be sure to mark on your calendar this

month's social visit to Ralph and Liz Coombes' home when there should be some good colour showing in their blooms and rosy cheeks.

The Committee has been very well organised so that we have not needed to meet so far this year as most arrangements have been attended to. Special thanks go to Ian and Leila Blackwell for their efforts.

As this is my last column before the show may I wish you all the best of luck with your blooms and more importantly your health and happiness.

*Keith Robinson*



## Cultural Notes

*An excerpt from a past New Zealand National Chrysanthemum Society Newsletter.*

### STAGING CHRYSANTHEMUMS FOR SHOW

It can be saddening to visit a chrysanthemum show or any other show for that matter and to see exhibits on the benches which should have never been there. By that it is suggested that they (the blooms) should never have been there and benched in that state. Experienced exhibitors and indeed judges at times will see a distinct lack of attention to detail or perhaps it is a lack of understanding as to how a bloom or a vase of blooms should be presented to the judges and just as importantly, to the visiting public, who spend perhaps many hours examining the blooms long after the judges have departed.

Probably the most saddening part of all is that a grower has spent eight or nine months preparing to get blooms to the stage where they are good enough to be entered in a show and blow it all by not showing off the product of their skill to its best advantage on the bench. One can forgive a new grower in the novice classes who is enjoying a totally new experience and who may have little

idea of how to stage a bloom or vase.

After all it doesn't take a genius to understand that a bloom or vase needs to be shown off to the best advantage to give it the best chance of success. Any grower worth their salt should have learned that after just one year and yet year after year we see the most fundamental of mistakes are in Open classes.

The most common examples of this lack of attention to detail and so spoiling any chance of success that are seen are as follows: -

- Blooms staged with bruised or damaged petals
- Blooms staged with old or dying petals
- Blooms benched with aphids
- Blooms staged with clearly visible insect damage
- Blooms either leaning to one side or to the front or back
- Blooms not facing the front
- Blooms benched at the wrong height
- Vases of blooms incorrectly staged for maximum effect
- Misnaming of cultivars

These are just some of the faults fre-

and now, for something completely different....Submitted by Ian Blackwell

### My Grandad is a champion chrysanthemum grower.

Often we comment on the extraordinary co-incidences in life and simply pass them off without much thought. It really comes under the heading of 'synchronicity' which scientists are only now recognising as part of the connectivity of the universe at the quantum level. Now that all sounds very complicated but let me tell you of a recent occasion of synchronicity over the Christmas holiday period.

Andrew, Mandy (Son & daughter in law) & kids were down at Margret River over the holiday break and they're a bunch of surfies so it was not surprising that on a windy day with a big surf they decided to head for the beach at Gnarabup for a swim & a bit of surfing. Andrew prepared his surfboard and went out to where the waves were breaking while Mandy and the kids (Lily & Tom) swam out to a pontoon about 50m off the beach. They were having a ball jumping and diving into the water.

Mandy takes up the story of what happened next.

"After a short while a few other people joined us including a **big man** who was literally covered with tattoos. He was an imposing figure. As he climbed up the ladder onto the pontoon I could see my 6 year old, Thomas, looking at all

the tattoos with fascination. The man took one look at Tom and then challenged him to a bombie competition! After a few rounds of bombies they were sitting next to each other on the pontoon when Tom finally worked up the courage to say "You have a lot of tattoos".

The man then proceeded to show Tom all his favourite tattoos - a dragon, a tiger, a picture of his grandparents and a **big chrysanthemum** (tattooed on his thigh). Upon seeing the chrysanthemum Tom piped up with "My Grandad grows chrysanthemums - some of them are bigger than my head!" The man then started telling him about his Grandad growing champion chrysanthemums. His name was Ted (Elms).

The pair of them sat there for about 5 or 10 minutes talking about how well their respective Grandads can (or could) grow chrysanthemums and how many ribbons they had won. They looked so different, yet they had something quite unique in common."

It seems highly improbable that such a chance meeting in a relatively remote location would bring these two together but it did. However that is only the last occasion of synchronicity between our two families. You see Ted & I were both sons of Methodist Ministers who were colleagues within the Methodist Conference of WA. Co-incidence or synchronicity - it has now overlapped four generations.

## Blooms benched at the wrong height

What is really meant by this is that it can completely spoil a display or entry when all of the entries are staged at different heights. It unbalances the whole effect. While we don't have rules that insist on certain heights for classes there are recommended heights.

Obviously your entry should be about the same height as others in the class or in the instance that your entry is the first of the section to be benched it may indeed set the benchmark for other exhibitors. Clearly it makes sense in this instance that you set yours as close to the recommended height for that class as possible.

## Vases of blooms incorrectly staged

This is a very important issue. If an entry doesn't look right, no matter how good the blooms are it loses something and it is quite possible an entry that is well staged although a little inferior will win over an entry that is badly staged. Apart from anything else it seems crazy to go to the effort to grow good blooms only to muck up your chances on the bench with poor staging.

There is no rule which states for example in a five bloom vase there should be an upper bloom at the top with other blooms side by side underneath. If one of the five blooms is slightly bigger with no diminution of quality then it recommends itself to be featured centrally above with the others evenly spaced

underneath. They can be staged quite differently with three up and two underneath or vice versa. If they are staged in this way the top blooms should be in the near upright position with the blooms underneath facing slightly forward, be almost touching each other and be equally distanced relative to the stems of the upper blooms.

All foliage which is interfering with blooms should be removed but do not remove more than is necessary as foliage enhances the look of an entry.

A well presented vase of good blooms is a joy to behold and it is worth taking a bit of trouble to stage them correctly.

## Misnaming of cultivars

It can be 'off putting' to a judge to note the misnaming of cultivars and this is indeed often noted at shows.

If in doubt, seek out an experienced grower for their opinion and immediately remedy the problem. While blooms are not disqualified where incorrect naming is noted, in the case of close competition it can result in the incorrectly named cultivar being downgraded. We are fortunate within our Society to have members and exhibitors whose ability at staging are quite exemplary and you will surely be welcome to seek them out to ask questions related to this aspect of our culture.



quently seen at the shows and which the exhibitor who wants to win (and that includes all of us) should be aware of and be addressing before it is time to leave the hall to the judges.

## Blooms with bruised or damaged petals

This often happens, even to the very best exhibitors. It usually happens somewhere between cutting the bloom and getting it on the show bench. Care is needed firstly when cutting the bloom. Be sure you have a firm hold of the stem when cutting it. Don't be tempted to carry more than one bloom at a time into the area where they are all assembled and packed. This is especially so with large blooms, and always watch the bloom when carrying it into a confined area as many a bloom has been rubbed and damaged on a roof or an upright.

When transporting blooms they are very susceptible to damage. Do everything possible to ensure that the blooms cannot rub together even if the vehicle receives a severe jolt from braking etc. The same care must apply to putting blooms into and taking them out of vehicles and when carrying them into the hall. Even with the greatest of care and attention an occasional bloom will be bruised.

Examine each one carefully before staging it. If there is damage that will be noticed there are two options. Often

it is possible to remove damaged petals so that the gap will not be noticed and do not be afraid to have a go. It is not unknown for anything up to thirty odd petals to be removed and not see where they came from. If the bruising is too bad then there is no option but to

## Breaking news.

Editor falls on his face at the first hurdle. Well, what a turkey!

Oops, I stupidly priced this excellent publication at UK 20 pounds instead of the correct price of UK 10 pounds. At this real price it is a bit less than 20 **dollars** and now at half the original advertised price it is a steal.

So if at first you don't succeed....

## CHRYSANTHEMUMS THE ULTIMATE E-BOOK

I recently purchased this publication on-line from the web site of champion UK grower Ivor Mace.

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

It is written by Ivor and Paul Barlow It is a first class reference book covering all aspects of chrysanthem growing. While written from a UK perspective that barely reduces its value as most of the advice has universal application. It is packed with explanatory photos as well as those of popular cultivars which while mostly different from those we grow nevertheless indicates perfection in their type. At UK 10 pounds it is a bargain. You only need the internet and a credit card to obtain a copy.

discard the bloom which of course can be disastrous particularly where an entry in a multi-bloom class is concerned.

### **Blooms with old or dying petals**

You will never win worthwhile prizes with a bloom that is showing signs of going off. If you do, you shouldn't have! Judges love to look under the blooms to discover those tell tale signs so, you will need to be ahead of him. Be sure to carefully examine each bloom for old discoloured or withering petals and pull them out. Do it gently and more often than not you will pull the whole petal out. By pulling too sharply often only breaks the petal making it harder to remove the rest. On no account leave broken petals for the judge to see. At the same time, remove any petals that have been damaged by insects as the judge is sure to see those.

Damping is a topic to put fear into any serious exhibitor. Old petals spotted with brown are usually starting to damp off and some cultivars are more susceptible than others. Carefully pull out the affected ones, and be sure to again check the blooms which have been affected just before judging time as it is surprising how quickly how damping can develop.

If your bloom is past its best - leave it at home or if, after pulling out all those affected and withering petals the bloom is no good then it is no good on the show bench. All exhibitors should make

it a personal resolution never to exhibit blooms with dead, dying or going off petals. This point has been laboured but if you follow this everyone will be happier.

### **Blooms benched with aphids**

No exhibitor can guarantee that his blooms won't have aphids at judging time. Aphids have wings and can fly so one or two could easily land on any bloom in the show. Perhaps the judge will recognise this and won't penalise any exhibit on the strength of just the odd aphid. But, if looking into the centre at the base of the petals, the judge sees a nest of aphids, then that bloom should take no further part in the competition.

We know that aphids are increasingly difficult to get rid of these days but it is perfectly possible and the problem can be dealt with. Once the bloom has started to unfold it is imperative that the aphids be kept at bay for they are capable of multiplying at an alarming rate and when in the blooms, even if they are killed it is almost impossible to get rid of the tell tale signs

Although aphids may be hidden in the heart of blooms, when they are in the hall the inevitable heat starts getting to them and they will come out and sit on the outer petals and make a fool of you. If you have aphids in your blooms, leave them at home.

### **Blooms benched with clearly visible insect damage**

Dealing with this one is really a matter of common sense. When a judge looks at a class, before getting down to detail, he will look for a few things in those first moments, certainly any really good blooms or entries will catch his eye, so too will any poor entries which he can discard right away.

It is a fair bet that most times there will be a number of entries which are fairly similar and it will be the similar ones where his problems will lie and be the hardest to judge. He will be looking for some assistance from the exhibitor and very often the exhibitor will oblige by leaving one or two damaged petals in. It may be that an insect for example has chewed the tip off the tips of some petals when they were developing or a caterpillar has left a hole in a petal or two.

This will give the judge the break he was looking for, the chance to mark an exhibit down. Don't give him the opportunity of making his job easier. Carefully examine each bloom for insect damage and pull any offending petals out and do it carefully and with sensitivity, if you ruin the bloom, you have only yourself to blame.

### **Blooms leaning to one side or another**

A favourite way of judges to examine blooms on the bench apart from picking them up and looking at the underside is

to turn them around, especially vases, through 360 degrees whilst it is sitting there. If a bloom has been staged out of centre it will show.

The main purpose of this is to see how even the bloom is. Very often it will sit on one side of the stem and while it is impossible to correct this type of fault by giving your bloom a turn while fixing it in the vase it is possible to greatly improve your chances.

### **Blooms not facing the front**

This may sound a bit odd for we are supposed to be talking about a bloom which sits on the top of its stem and which doesn't have a front or back. That may be so but virtually every chrysanthemum you may care to look at has a best side and a not so good side. It is believed that most exhibitors automatically and without thinking select the best side of any bloom they are setting up to be at the front. Very often new growers seem unaware of the front and the back and just put the blooms in any old way. It is suggested when setting up either a single bloom or selecting the best spot in a vase to fix the bloom that the exhibitor should also be looking for the best side of the bloom to face the front and hopefully catching the judges eye. Also, when checking the bloom at home do not just plonk it on the show bench without checking it again. It may well have a different front in a different environment.