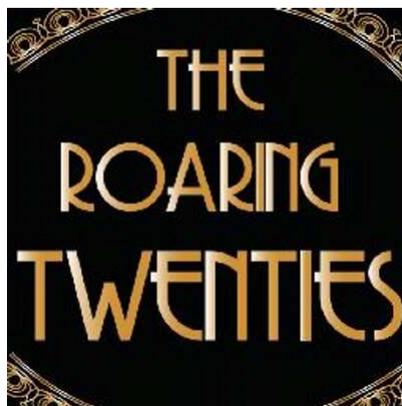


# Western Australian Chrysanthemum Society Incorporated



## Newsletter January – February 2020

### President's Notes

Welcome to the twenties. It doesn't seem that long ago that we were in the noughties. I will try to avoid the urge to become philosophical about it as I know that the Editor will have that aspect covered.

I trust that you are ready to go for the rest of the season and your plants are ready to be stopped. This is a nice balance of Qi between Yin and Yang with which to start the New Year.

From the Society's perspective we will be having a General Meeting as well as participating in the Horticultural Council's Garden Clubs' Fair in February. If you are able to spare some time to help out on the weekend of the Fair or with plants for sale please contact our Secretary, Michael Drake-Brockman, to advise your availability and/or plant numbers.

With the addition of four new members we now have one hundred members of the Society. This is very pleasing. We value all our members, even if we seldom see some of you. Hopefully this newsletter helps to keep us all connected and included.

The planning for our Annual Show is well underway and I am very hopeful that it will be the best that we have had, for the last few years at least. This year will see the introduction of a Perpetual Trophy for Informal Floral Art in memory of Leila Blackwell. In addition there will be a special medal awarded for the best bloom of Japanese origin. Prize money has been allocated for all classes at the show, so have a look at the Show Schedule and start planning. The Schedule is almost completed and will be available at the February meeting and will also be posted to our website, from where it can be printed. I'm excited and I hope that you are too.

### Cultural matters

I hope that your plants are, like those of George Hayman one hundred years ago, "advancing in their regular perfection under the evidence of (your) master production touch". If not, then contact one of our esteemed mentors for assistance.

With any amount of luck your plants are now all settled in their final pots. We have already had some hot days and there are many more to come. Make sure that you do not allow your pot plants to dry out as this, combined with a

scorcher, will do irreparable damage to the plants. On the other hand do not be too heavy handed with the water either, as a persistently sodden compost will prevent the roots from growing and functioning efficiently. It may also lead to root death due to fungal infections in the pots. On very hot days it is a good idea to give the leaves a spray with the hose to produce some evaporative cooling. Many people worry that water on the leaves will lead to sunburn but experience has shown that this seldom occurs.

The plants should be growing rapidly now and the amount of fertiliser can be increased. Chrysanthemums are gross feeders and can tolerate high fertiliser levels that would be toxic to many other plants. That does not mean that they grow best at high fertiliser levels and small and often is the usual advice regardless of whether using solid or liquid fertilisers. Our cultural booklet recommends a high nitrogen fertiliser ("growth" type, e.g. Thrive All Purpose, Blood and Bone) up until mid-January changing to a lower nitrogen fertiliser ("bloom" type, e.g. Thrive Flower & Fruit, Bailey's NPK Blue) thereafter. If you have left enough space in the top of the pot, the application of a couple of centimetres of potting mix to each pot around the end of January is a good idea to encourage the growth of additional surface feeder roots. If your plants are looking a bit yellow then make sure that you are not overwatering. Test the acidity of the potting mix, aiming for pH 6.0 – 6.5. Application of lime will raise the pH and sulphur will lower it. Give the effected plants a spray or two of trace elements (must include iron) and some Epsom Salts (magnesium sulphate) into the pot while attending to the underlying cause of the problem.

Most growers give their plants a second stop in January. Experienced growers will have their preferred dates for individual cultivars in order to give the highest chance of having them at full bloom for the start of the annual show. The Section 1 and 2 cultivars are usually stopped in the first week of January and the other Sections in the third week of January. Unfortunately those dates will vary a little from one garden to another and often from year to year as well. Keep a record of your stopping dates and if some cultivars bloom early or late then you can adjust your dates for next season. Earlier stopping dates normally produce earlier blooms. Too bad we do not have crystal balls to guide us. As with the first stop, how much to remove is a matter for debate. If in doubt then just take the tip out of some and give some others a hard stop and see for yourself what works best.

If you are growing Spray cultivars (Section 9) or intend to grow some of the smaller flowered cultivars from other Sections in spray form then give serious consideration to flowering them from sucker growth appearing from the soil early in January. Select one or two suckers and cut out the main stem. Run them straight up to bud. They will normally flower at the correct time for the show. Cultivars available to WA members that were bred to flower in spray form are the Ryskis, the Mundials and Discovery.

Once the new shoots form and are seen to be growing properly, reduce their number to how many blooms you want the plant to carry. Many growers will allow an extra stem to grow on the Exhibitions (Sections 1 & 2), Decoratives (Sections 3, 4 & 5) and Fantasies (Section 10) which will be removed once the buds have appeared. This encourages the growth of a bigger root system and provides some insurance against a damaged shoot or malformed bud. Generally, for best chance of success at the show, Exhibition cultivars can carry two blooms, large Decoratives and Fantasies three, smaller Decoratives four, Anemones and Singles can carry six. These numbers are not to be slavishly followed as you will see that some plants are more vigorous than others and so the number of blooms can be adjusted to suit. If you do not intend to show your blooms then allow the plants to carry up to double these numbers.

Hot weather brings all the bugs out in force. Red spider, leaf rolling caterpillars, thrips, aphids; you name it, they get it. Yates Rose Shield is useful against most of the bugs and have a look around your hardware or garden centre for others. Bifenthrin and Baythroid are a couple of newer pyrethroid insecticides that may be worth a try. One grower has used a combination of Malathion, Chlorpyrifos and Kelthane with good results for many years. My local hardware stocks these but Bunnings does not. There are a wide range of pesticides available from agricultural supply stores but the cost is generally prohibitive for hobby growers.

Make sure that you have a stake for each of the laterals as a straight stem is preferred and unsecured stems can break off. Place the stakes far enough apart so that the blooms will not rub together when fully developed. If your pots are in rows then run a string or wire between uprights at either end of the row and tie some of the stakes to it to prevent the pots from blowing over as the plants get taller.

## Answers to the Acrostic Puzzle from the last newsletter.

1. WACS
2. Mount Shasta
3. Nancye Furneaux
4. Louisa Pockett
5. William Stoakes
6. Dorothy Ann
7. Seatons Galaxy
8. Ken May
9. Clive Griffiths
10. Freida Perrett
11. Jack Eastlake
12. Tom Mechen
13. Hawaiian Group
14. Untarnished
15. Refulgent
16. Extraordinary
17. Staggering
18. Immensity
19. Modesty forbids

The famous WACS quote - **“You just love growing chryxies”**

## Editor’s Notes



According to Wikipedia - *The Roaring Twenties refers to the decade of the 1920s in Western society and Western culture. It was a period of economic prosperity with a distinctive cultural edge in the United States and Western Europe... In France, the decade was known as the "années folles" ('crazy years'), emphasizing the era's social, artistic and cultural dynamism. Jazz blossomed, the flapper redefined the modern look for British and American women, and Art Deco peaked.*

You may recall the President’s use of gender neutral language in the January – February 2019 Newsletter. This theme of care and respect for women was also noted a hundred years ago in the 1920s. It seems that women of the day were more at liberty to go out and

have some fun than in earlier times. In fact, women were not only able to go out, dance and socialise, they were even allowed to vote! The Nineteenth Amendment of the USA Constitution allowed women to vote for the first time in 1920. Most women in the UK got the vote in 1918, even though most flappers aged 21 to 30, unlike their male counterparts, could not vote until 1928. Australia was the second country in the world to give women the vote in 1902 and New Zealand started it all off by giving women the vote in 1893. So what has this got to do with chrysanthemums? Well, did you know that Mrs Alpheus Hardy’s name was Susan? Just for the record Lady Frank Clark’s name was Nina, Mrs E. E. Keep’s name was Mary and Lady Knox’s name was Victoria. So now you know.

In recognition of Susan, Nina, Mary, Vicki and other women of their times here is a YouTube song for your enjoyment.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AM-b8P1yj9w>

Those of you with strong Flapper sensibilities may prefer this.

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=youtube+cyndi+lauper&qvpt=youtube+cyndi+lauper&view=detail&mid=650FEE3E2754382A28D4650FEE3E2754382A28D4&&FORM=VRDGAR>

Here is a very cheery tune that I think you will enjoy, even though I know that not everyone is interested in opera. Feminists are invited to decide for themselves the level of care and respect for women that it shows.

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

Sorry, no puzzle this time; cancelled due to lack of interest.

In respect of the last newsletter, I also know that not everyone is interested in poetry. So, I have searched the internet for chrysanthemum themed artworks to share with you. Hopefully you are receiving this newsletter electronically, as the quality of the reproductions will be much higher than when printed.

I came across an interesting article entitled “7 Favourite Flowers from Renaissance Manuscripts and Their Christian Symbolism”

<http://blogs.getty.edu/iris/7-favorite-flowers-from-renaissance-manuscripts-and-their-christian-symbolism/>

Alas, no mention of chrysanthemums. This is despite the European Christian tradition of adorning the graves of loved ones with chrysanthemums on All Saints’ or All Souls’ Day.

Careful scrutiny of the blooms in the many renaissance paintings of flower arrangements shows a wide range of species, even a couple of virused tulips in Flemish painter Jan Brueghel the Elder’s “Flowers in a Wooden Vessel”<sup>1</sup> but, again, no chrysanthemums. Anyone looking for chrysanthemums in the flowery lawn of Botticelli’s “Spring” will most definitely be disappointed. However, even if he painted “Autumn” you still would not find any.

The answer to this conundrum is that horticultural type chrysanthemums were first imported to Europe from China in 1789. There followed a good level of interest in them, which was enhanced by further significant importations in 1845 (the Pomponé style Chusan Daisy) and 1859 (large flowered Japanese cultivars).<sup>2</sup>

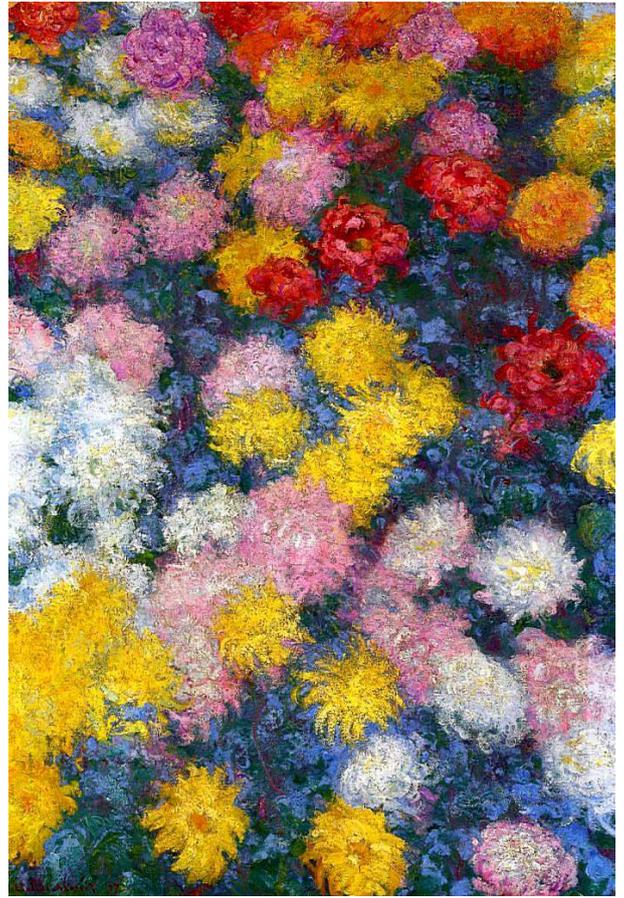
Impressionist painters first came to notice in the 1860s and this coincided with the widespread appreciation and cultivation of chrysanthemums. So it comes as no surprise that several of the impressionists depicted chrysanthemums in their works. Monet produced a number of chrysanthemum paintings. Four of these are shown below.



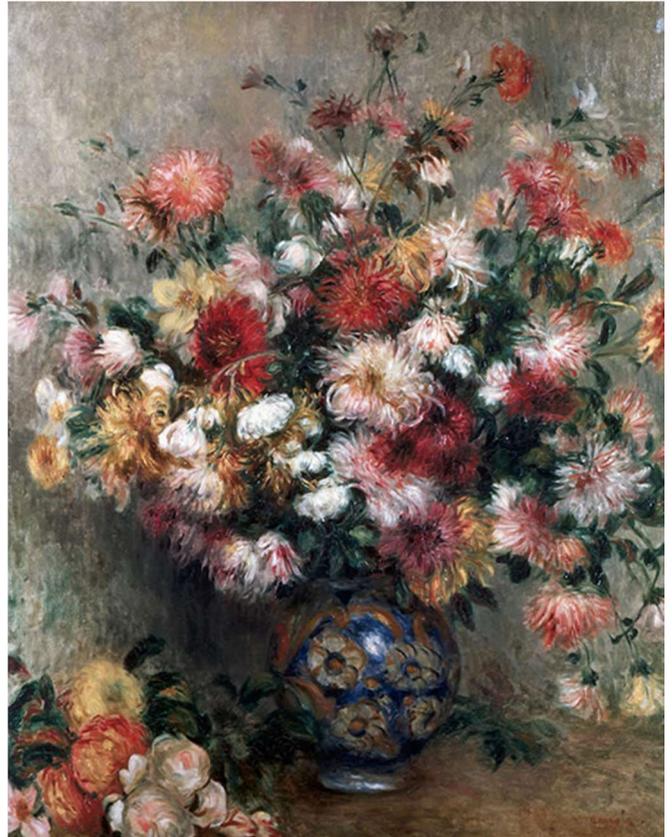
<sup>1</sup> A wooden vessel with a foot in it is a clog.

<sup>2</sup> See F.W. Burbidge *The Chrysanthemum* 1885

<https://ia802607.us.archive.org/20/items/chrysanthemumit01burbgoog/chrysanthemumit01burbgoog.pdf>



Renoir was another artist who had an interest in chrysanthemums.



There were many more, including these artists.



Eugene Cauchois



Gustave Caillebotte



Camille Pissarro



Edgar Degas

Search "Chrysanthemum Impressionist Art" for many more. Some are available in high resolution jpeg that can be printed at a reasonable size and cost. Try Officeworks for an A2 (59 x 42cm) print on quality paper for about \$10.

A later Dutch artist with an interest in chrysanthemums was Piet Mondrian.<sup>3</sup> He is considered by some to be one of the greatest artists of the twentieth century. Here are a couple of his works.



In response to the avalanche of correspondence<sup>4</sup> I have received from literature scholars and book club aficionados regarding the last edition of this newsletter I reproduce, especially for their interest, as well as art historians and critics, the following review of an exhibition which included these works.

*Most of the flowers are delicate, with stems suspended in space amid thin colour, often pale blue. In some of the images of chrysanthemums, big flowers in ripe, healthy bloom barely disturb the surface of the paper. Ripeness is celebrated yet in danger. Particularly in the chrysanthemums, Mondrian could be almost botanical in his exploration of structure and yet ever a Symbolist in his susceptibility to mood and dream.*

This is another of his works and its critique.



*For more than a decade after graduating from art school in 1897, Piet Mondrian created naturalistic drawings and paintings that reflect a succession of stylistic influences including academic realism, Dutch Impressionism, and Symbolism. During this period and intermittently until the mid-1920s Mondrian created more than a hundred pictures of flowers. Reflecting years later on his attraction to the subject, he wrote, "I enjoyed painting flowers, not bouquets, but a single flower at a time, in order that I might better express its plastic structure." The heavy crooked line of Chrysanthemum suggests Mondrian's debt to Post-Impressionism, specifically the work of Vincent van Gogh. In 1909 Mondrian became*

<sup>3</sup> A very interesting chap. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piet\\_Mondrian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piet_Mondrian).

<sup>4</sup> As a matter of fact I have received no correspondence at all. However, it doesn't snow in Perth, so what can you expect.

*interested in theosophy, a type of philosophical mysticism that seeks to disclose the concealed essences of reality. "I too find flowers beautiful in their exterior beauty," he wrote a few years later, "yet there is hidden within a deeper beauty."*

Presumably Mondrian in his chrysanthemum paintings, rendered in ethereal blue tones, aims to portray this mysticism and hidden inner beauty as there are, of course, no blue chrysanthemums.<sup>5</sup> Well, I'll be, apparently there are blue chrysanthemums.<sup>6</sup> True blue and not dyed, as these two 2017 articles describe.

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/researchers-produce-blue-mums-first-time-180964231/>

<https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/07/26/539044757/photos-japanese-scientists-turn-chrysanthemums-true-blue>



As esteemed members of the fairest Society of them all, I know that you too, like Piet Mondrian, not only find flowers beautiful in their exterior beauty but also appreciate their deeper beauty, hidden within. Just remember that there are no points for inner beauty in the judging manual and hidden aphids will be found and points deducted.



Sir Her-Bert Greenfly and Lady Greenfly (partly obscured).

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<sup>5</sup> Note the presence of some blue flowers in Edgar Degas' painting "Woman with Chrysanthemums". Presumably this is because he was an impressionist, or maybe he slipped in some asters and hoped that nobody would notice.

<sup>6</sup> A horse is a horse, of course, of course,  
And no one can talk to a horse of course  
That is, of course, unless the horse is the famous Mr. Ed.

## Mentors

Ian Blackwell – Kelmscott 9390 2608  
Ralph Coombes – Maida Vale 9454 3373  
Michael Drake-Brockman – Pickering Brook 9293 7650  
Ralph Foster – Armadale 9497 2420  
Carl Slusarczyk – Mount Lawley 9272 1356  
Richard Williams – Inglewood 0439 103 500

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## Contacts

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Secretary – Michael Drake-Brockman 9293 7650 (H) [michaeldb@inet.net.au](mailto:michaeldb@inet.net.au)  
Newsletter Editor – Carl Slusarczyk 9272 1356 (H) [carl.lina.slu@gmail.com](mailto:carl.lina.slu@gmail.com)

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## Forthcoming Events

WACS General Meeting – Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020, John McGrath Pavilion at 12 noon. Entry from Hensman Rd, South Perth.

WACS Committee Meeting – Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> February, 7 Turner Grove, Lesmurdie. 10 am.

WAHC Garden Clubs' Fair – Saturday 22 February 2020 – 8.30am to 4pm and Sunday 23 February 2020 – 9am to 3pm South Perth Community Centre. Corner of South Terrace and Sandgate Street, South Perth.

Social Day – 1 pm Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2020 at Carl and Lina Slusarczyk's home, 6 Regent St West Mount Lawley.

Social day – 1 pm Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2020 at Michael and Judy Drake-Brockman's home, 136 Merrivale Rd, Pickering Brook.

WACS General Meeting – Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2020, John McGrath Pavilion at 12 noon. Entry from Hensman Rd, South Perth.

Gosnell's Horticultural Society Autumn Show – Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> & Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2020.  
Addie Mills Centre, 2 Astley Street, Gosnells.

WACS Annual Show incorporating the Australian Championship – 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> May 2020, Hawaiian Forrestfield Shopping Centre, 20 Strelitzia Ave Forrestfield. Official Opening 11am Friday 8<sup>th</sup> at 11 am.

Presentation Luncheon – Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2020, John McGrath Pavilion. 11.30 am for meal at 12 noon.  
Entry from Hensman Rd, South Perth.

## Website

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

## Facebook Page

Western Australian Chrysanthemum Society

[www.facebook.com/groups/chrysanthemumwa/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/chrysanthemumwa/)