

Chrysnews

March 2018

**Western Australian
Chrysanthemum
Society Inc.**

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Special points of interest:

- New venue for
Presentation Lunch
- Cancellation of Gos-
nells Show
- Upcoming meeting
dates and a Social
Gatherings in
March, April & May
- Show Schedule and
Register on web

President's Notes

The show season will soon be upon us and I hope that your plants are looking good and you are keen to see the results of your labours. I have been experimenting with growth retardant and as the saying goes "I am on a steep learning curve". This is another way of saying that I have ruined a number of otherwise perfectly good plants. However I always grow too many, so now I can pay more attention to the good ones, while sipping from my half full glass of cool aid. The pertinent point here is that even if you only have a few good plants you still have something to look forward to and your friends will have a bumper year of free Mother's Day flowers from the also rans. As I have said before, you only need one bloom for Grand Champion.



Our February meetings were held at the new Ernest Johnson Reserve facility. This is now known as the John McGrath Pavilion. Quoting from the City of South Perth website –

these buildings on EJ Reserve recognise his service and commitment to the local community. Mr McGrath has lived in the City of South Perth for 25 years. Elected into the Western Australian Legislative Assembly as the Member for South Perth in 2005, he was re-elected in the 2008, 2013 and 2017 election.

Early indications are that the pavilion is quite well suited to our needs. Parking is a little easier as well.

Our new Register is now completed. There is an abbreviated "active" register that records only those cultivars known to be still grown which will make it easier to print and carry around. As previously advised there are some changes to the registrations so it is well worth having a read through it. Discussions have now started with interstate associations regarding the transition to a uniform Australian Register.

Images representing each Chrysanthemum Class are scattered through this publication.

In addition, the new Show Schedule for 2018 is available and was circulated to members who attended the February meeting. Please make a special note of the changes to the State A Championship requirements as well as the opportunities afforded by the new WACS Section 2 and Section 9 Championships. We have renamed the old Patron's Trophy as The Clive Griffiths Award in recognition of his forty year tenure as our Patron from 1968-9 to 2007-8. He was also a member of the Western Australian Legislative Council (representing South Perth and adjacent suburbs) for thirty two years from 1965 to 1997 and served as President of the Council for the last twenty years of his term. The Award is for the highest point score from entries in the Specimen Classes.

Copies of the Register and Schedule will be available on our website and FaceBook page shortly and can be printed from there. If anyone does not have access to the internet then let me know and I can send you a "hard copy".

Our new member, Pamela Boardman, and I planted out a bed of chrysanthemums at the National Trust's Samson House in Fremantle during January. Many of the plants were Pockett varieties kindly supplied by Ian Blackwell, some of which were likely grown by the Samson family. Hopefully they will thrive and some good blooms will be produced. Since I have been providing some historical highlights for your reading pleasure you might as well know that Samson House was built for Michael Samson, who was a Lord Mayor of Fremantle and in whose honour Point Samson in the Pilbara was named. The house, on the corner of Ellen and Ord Streets, was completed in 1888, and was designed by Sir Talbot Hobbs. It passed to his son, Frederick Samson, who joined the Fremantle City Council in 1936. He was elected mayor unopposed in 1951 and remained unchallenged in that office until he retired 21 years later in 1972. He was knighted in 1962 and was appointed the first Honorary Freeman of Fremantle in 1969. The Perth suburb of Samson is named after him. (thanks to Wikipedia)

The Society participated in the WA Horticultural Society's Garden Clubs Fair on 24-25th February. This was very successful with good sales of plants. Several members supplied plants which overall were of better quality than last year so we seem to be learning our lessons well. Our printed banner (thanks to Murray and Colleen Ryall and family) added a nice splash of colour to our stand and our two hand embroidered sashes (thanks to Brenda Benn) added a touch of class. Michael Drake-Brockman deserves our gratitude for getting the Society started on this project and for doing most of the organisational work.

Life Member Dot Aitken visited our stand at the plant fair and donated some chrysanthemum booklets which were gratefully received. Amongst Dot's treasure-trove was the "Conference Proceedings of the Fifth International Chrysanthemum Conference" held in Perth from 7-13th May 1990. There is an article written by the late Ted King of the USA entitled "Problems Associated with Hot Climate Culture" in which he mentions his difficulties with the English Section 1 cultivars. Interestingly he found that Lancashire Fold "produced fairly well" at his nursery. Members will recall Ron Atyeo's White Lancashire Fold in his 2017 State A Championship winning set, so this may be a good one for other growers to try, as well as the purple parent if it can be obtained. He also mentions Jessie Habgood, Mark Woolman, Bill Bye, Fred Saunders, Cossack and David Dando as others he had success with. If we can track any of these down it would be good to give them a go.

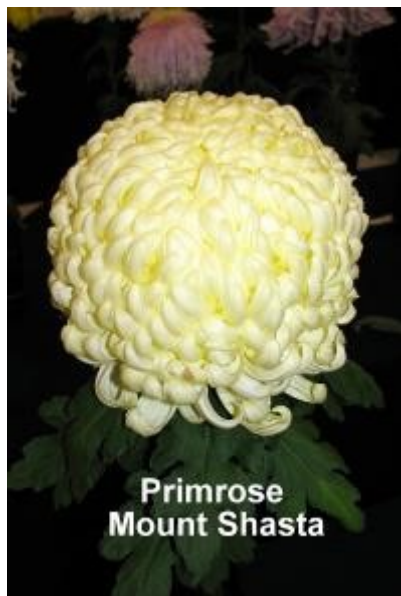
Details of the forthcoming social days in March and April are given on the last page and I look forward to seeing you at one or both. When I last spoke to Michael Drake-Brockman his new shadehouse was well underway and hopefully it will be finished by the time we meet on Sunday 11th March

In a break with recent tradition our annual Presentation Luncheon will be held this year at our new meeting room in the John McGrath Pavilion. Our meal, as well as cutlery and crockery, will be provided by Nosh Catering. Reports are that the food is of a high standard. The Society will once again be subsidising the event and we hope that you can attend to celebrate with our show winners and socialise with other members

Carl Glusarczyk

Breaking News

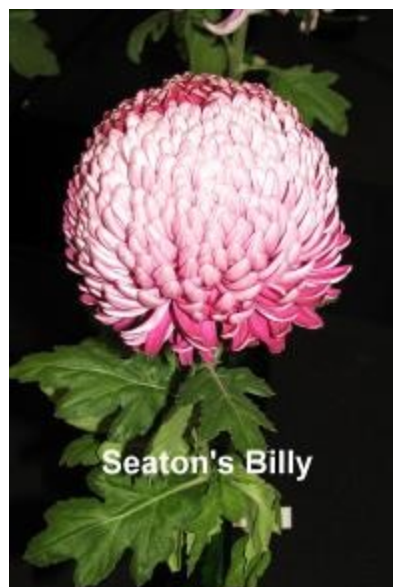
Gosnells Horticultural Society will not be holding an Autumn Show this year. The Society is not folding however and plans are still in place for a spring show as usual. Many members have exhibited at Gosnells in the past and it is disappointing to see it vanish, at least for this year.



Section 1



Section 2



Section 3

Cultural Matters

With the cricket season drawing to a close and AFL just starting, in the WA chrysanthemum world “it’s all happening” and “things can only get bigger and better”.

You will likely 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 buds yet 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 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.

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 shows) 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.

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 otherwise all the usual nasties will attack at some stage and you will have to spray anyway. It is recommended by many sources to use pesticide free methods of pest control as leaves with holes in them taste just as good as those without. However we seek perfection with our exhibition chrysanthemums and we do not make our own chrysanthemum tea. Confidor is good for most sucking pests. Pyrethrum and synthetic pyrethroids such as Mavrik are also 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.



Section 4



Section 5



Section 6

On the Subject of Buds

This is a topic that confused me for quite a while but I think I have it mostly worked out now. If I am wrong then please let me know!

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 in the leaf axils below it producing branches that will grow past the bud which will then wither away. This is referred to as a "break bud". A plant left to grow naturally from its stool will always produce a break bud and usually another on 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. The second situation occurs during the flowering season when a cluster of buds will form at the end of each stem and no further main branches will be produced. These are called "terminal buds" which will go on to produce flowers.

A special case occurs when a break bud forms shortly before the normal flowering season. 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 season. These prematurely produced flowering buds are referred to as "crown buds". A crown bud will generally produce a larger flower with more petals than a terminal bud as it has had a longer time to develop. When the plant has branched only once the crown bud is called a "first crown bud" and when it has branched twice it is called a "second crown bud".

There is no reason why a plant might not have a third or even a fourth crown bud except that the growing season is usually not long enough for that to occur. 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 blooming at the correct time for our show.

After I wrote this I read another of Dot Aitken's donated books in which an article written by the late Barry Machin explained things at greater length than my version above and includes 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 "break" bud has been permanently arrested in development,
a "crown" bud has been temporarily arrested in development; and
a "terminal" bud has not been arrested at any stage of development.*

Put simply, if a late season bud is surrounded by other buds then it is a terminal bud whereas if it is surrounded by leaf bearing branches then it is a crown bud.

You might ask – Why does it matter? I quote from Ted Elms “Chrysanthemum Culture in Western Australia” available on our website.

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.

In addition to the above, some cultivars, such as many Singles, perform best on terminal buds. Exhibition spray cultivars are flowered from the terminal bud cluster where the central bud is removed due to its short stem. All Charms and Cascades flower on terminal buds.

Contacts

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Section 7



Section 8



Section 9

Upcoming Events

Social Day

Sunday 11th March 2018 at 1:30pm

At Michael Drake-Brockman's home – 136 Merrivale Rd Pickering Brook

Committee Meeting

Tuesday 20th March at 12 noon

The Social Room, John McGrath Pavilion
97 Hensman Street South Perth.

General Meeting

Tuesday 10th April 2018 at 12 Noon

The Social Room, John McGrath Pavilion
97 Hensman Street South Perth.

Social Day

Sunday 15th April 2018 at 1:30pm

At Carl and Lina Slusarczyk's home – 6 Regent St West, Mount Lawley

Committee Meeting

Tuesday 17th April 2018 at 12 noon

The Social Room, John McGrath Pavilion
97 Hensman Street South Perth.

WACS Annual Show

Thursday 10th to Saturday 12th May at Hawaiian Forrestfield 20 Strelitzia Ave, Forrestfield
(corner of Hale Road) Set up Tuesday 9th and Wednesday 10th May

WACS Presentation Function

Tuesday 22nd May at 11:30am

The Social Room, John McGrath Pavilion
97 Hensman Street South Perth.



Section 10



Section 12

