

THE ARMIDALE GARDENER
NEWSLETTER OF THE ARMIDALE GARDEN CLUB
ISSUE No. 579 APRIL 2020

MEETING CANCELLED

Please note that because of government regulations associated with the current coronavirus lockdown, it has been necessary to cancel the April meeting of the Armidale Garden Club as well as the AGM which were to be held on Thursday 23 April 2020.



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GARDENING DURING THE CORONAVIRUS LOCKDOWN



What all gardeners know is that there is no balm to the soul greater than planting seeds.

Illustration by Daniel Salmieri

The following information was extracted from an article published by the ABC on 03 April 2020.

Gardening during the coronavirus crisis? Here are Tom Wyatt's top-5 tasks.

Gardening has a long-held reputation as a salve for stress, anxiety, and depression. This so-called green therapy is on the rise as Australians come to terms with a pandemic and what that means for our immediate and long-term futures. ABC gardening guru Tom Wyatt said he had used gardening as a stress reliever for as long as he could remember.

"I use it for spiritual rejuvenation of the mind," he said.

After spending more than half a century in the industry, Wyatt has accumulated a wealth of knowledge and understanding when it comes to backyard gardens.

Here are his top tips that you can put into action right now:

Tom's top tips:

- Power-up with a prune
- Protect from pests
- Plan your beds
- Plant flowers
- Feed your food

1. Break out the secateurs

Wyatt said autumn is a great time to carry out any minor pruning to shrubs and trees in your established garden.

"The heat has gone out of the atmosphere so you won't get severe sunburn on top of all the branches," he said.

2. Foil the fruit fly

"Autumn is a time when the fruit flies come meandering in, sticky-beaking, marking their territories and stinging the fruit, especially citrus," Wyatt said. He said traps are an effective and less harmful way of dealing with the insects and it is easy to make your own.

The mix:

- 1 litre of water
- 1 cup of urine (yes, urine)
- 3 teaspoons of vanilla essence
- a teaspoon of vegemite and a cup of raw sugar
- Mix in a bucket and leave for five days.

The trap:

- Use a milk bottle or plastic bottle, preferably one with a yellow lid.
"They are attracted to the colour yellow," he said.
- Make a hole in the lid
- Pour mixture into the bottle to a depth of about 2.5 centimetres
- Attach string or fishing line to the bottle so it can be hung upright at the perimeter of a tree, at a rate of about four traps per mature tree
- Change the mixture every 10-15 days.

3. Plan ahead

If you are just starting out in the garden or creating a vegetable patch, Wyatt said it is important to plan out your garden in advance. He said now is a great time to plant Mediterranean vegetables but it was easy to go wrong if you did not do your groundwork and get the soil right.

"Anything that fruits above the ground wants a sweet soil," he said. "Other vegetables like potatoes, sweet potatoes, and turnips and things, they want a sour soil." Wyatt said wise gardeners have separate beds for different types of vegetables.

To increase the sweetness of your soil, Wyatt recommended:

- Apply two clenched handfuls of dolomite per square metre
- Add some blood and bone and then dig it all in

Or to make it more sour:

- Apply one clenched handful of sulphur to a square metre
- Dig it in and in 10 days it will be ready for planting.

4. Petal power

For those gardeners who are more focused on aesthetics than food production Wyatt recommended the addition of flowers.

"They can bring a beautiful harmony to your garden," he said.

Dig in plenty of compost, give it nutrients like blood and bone on a regular basis and you will not have any trouble.

5. Cut costs with DIY compost

Wyatt said composting was one of the most effective and environmentally friendly ways to improve your garden's health.

And now that we are spending more time at home, he said there was no excuse not to give it a try.

To start:

- Get two bins, each about one metre wide
- In the first bin place your daily household food scraps as well as branches, leaves, and other dried green waste.
- Mix well and give it a dressing of blood and bone.

"When you have it filled with all that organic material, which will take some time, then shift it all over to the next bin and start the process again," Wyatt said.

- From the second bin, take the compost as necessary and add it to your garden.

"Gardening is not complicated; it's just that you need to do a bit of research first," he said.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Acer freemanii “Autumn Blaze”

(Canadian Maple – a cross between *Acer rubrum* and *A. saccharinum*)

Autumn Blaze is one of those ‘friendly’ trees – not demanding of watering in a drought or needing pruning to shape, reliably colouring well in autumn and best of all - not having overly-invasive roots. It is a medium-large, deciduous shade tree with a well-placed and spaced, ascending (sloping up) branch structure and a well-defined central leader. Bark is greyish-brown becoming furrowed with age.



The 10-15cm long, traditional maple-shaped leaves are rich green all summer, turning lipstick red in autumn – hence the marketing name “Lipstick Maple” used by Flemings Nursery who introduced this wonderful tree into Australia about 30 years ago. Flemings are responsible for introducing several similar maples under the same banner – but in my opinion none hold a candle to ‘Autumn Blaze’. (I even grew it on Tamborine Mt in QLD.)

Growing about 40cm a year, this tree will take about 20 years to reach something approaching maturity (13m x 10m) but will make an impact on the landscape after a decade. It is tolerant of extreme heat

and cold, undemanding of soil – clay, loam, sand, acid/alkaline. I should say though, that I believe ‘Autumn Blaze’ needs a decent *depth* to the soil it is planted in – so not too rocky.

Making a great avenue tree or as a single specimen planting ‘Autumn Blaze’ takes a bit of beating – given that it’s the colour you need in your garden design. There is much about it on the internet – and all agree it is one of the best.

Story: Susan Cantrell



Acer freemanii
“Autumn Blaze”



Acer freemanii
“Autumn Blaze” LEAF

LOOKING GOOD NOW

			
Rosa "Lilac Charm"	Rosa "Eyes 4 You"	Rosa "Blossomtime"	Rosa "Blue 4 You"
			
Kniphofia linearifolia "Sweet Corn"	Alstromeria "Indian Summer"	Salvia buchananii "Love and Wishes"	Rose Hips "Frau Dagmar Hastrupp"
			
Dahlia –with butterfly	Dahlias –Tall/double	Bush pea seedlings	Cauliflower seedlings
			
Iceland poppy seedling	Clematis "Star of India"	Salvia microphylla	Primula vulgaris seedling
			
Crocus goulimyi	Cyclamen hederifolium	Echinacea purpurea	Tea Roses
			
Rosa "Stewart"	Nerine	Dianthus	Dianthus

			
Acer japonicum aconitifolium	Anemone hupehensis "Pink"	Pansy- Viola tricolor var. hortensis	Achillea "Coronation Gold"
			
Nemesia caerulea	Abutilon hybridum	Escallonia ivelyi	Penstemon
			
Fuchsia magellanica riccartonii	Callistemon viminalis "Little John"	Dandelion – important insect food	Taraxacum officinale Dandelion
			
Cerastostigma griffithii	Wahlenbergia stricta	Xerochrysum bracteatum	Liriodendron tulipifera
			
Osteospermum "White Lightning"	Carpinus betulus Topiarised	Kniphofia asphodelaceae "Poco Orange"	Crowea
			
Tea rose	Xerochrysum viscosum	Clematis "Romantika"	Oenothera speciosa

			
Salvia micrphylla	Arbutus unedo	Arbutus unedo- Fruit	Medlar pears
			
Yellow Native Paper Daisy	Malus coronaria Crab apple fruit	Rose hips "Rosa sweginzowii macrocarpa"	Mespilus germanica Medlar pear fruit

Friend or foe – Native Raspberry v Feral Blackberry

On our eight-acre block, every year at this time, there is an important job to be done – removal of seedling Blackberries (*Rubus anglocandicans europeas*) which have germinated from seed dropped by birds. Of course, these introduced declared-weed's seeds are able to germinate practically anywhere so I thought a note in our newsletter was not inappropriate. I have found the best method of removal of these pests in a home backyard setting is to cut the canes at ground level and paint the wound *immediately* with undiluted Glyphosate (Roundup) - taking the usual safety precautions of course (Gloves etc).

As I was methodically going over our block last week tackling this job, paintbrush in hand, another aspect of this job became apparent to me. I found I was also seeing quite a few seedlings and trailing stems of the Native Raspberry (*Rubus parvifolia leucostachys*) – which of course, in the right place, is a plant to be encouraged as wildlife habitat - especially in the wilder parts of the garden or in environmentally sensitive areas.

So – how to tell the difference between these two plants (both in the Rosaceae family) so that only the ferals are destroyed?

1. Both have prickly, trailing stems – however the declared Blackberry is much MORE thorny – on both stems and underside of leaves. Also its thorns are CURVED whereas the Native Raspberry's are straight.
2. Both plants have 2cm wide, five-petalled flowers – however the declared Blackberry's are WHITE whereas the Native Raspberry's are pink.
3. Both have 3cm wide fruits born in clusters – but the declared Blackberry's when ripe are BLACK and quite acidic to taste, whereas the Native Raspberry's when ripe are orange-red and sweet to taste.
4. Leaves – the declared Blackberry has much larger and flatter (15cm) leaves of a VERY DARK GREEN, composed of FIVE leaflets, whereas the Native Raspberry has small, rugosed (wrinkly) (8cm) lettuce-green leaves composed of three leaflets. Also – the declared Blackberry's leaves have much larger prickles running down the back midrib of each leaflet than does our Native Raspberry.

With the current restrictions on our lives due to Coronavirus, most of us probably have a bit more time to do these essential jobs around our homes this year. One positive to come out of it all!

Story: Susan Cantrell



Native Raspberry fruit



Native Raspberry leaves



Blackberry Leaves



Blackberry fruit



Native Raspberry flowers

Native Raspberry
stem- thornsBlackberry
stem - thorns

Blackberry flowers

THIS MONTH – THE GARDEN IN APRIL

Please consider these gardening chores taking into account Armidale's current water restrictions. The suggested lists of tasks were compiled assuming more normal seasonal conditions.

APRIL

- 1 Plant sweet peas in protected areas, preferably in containers, to plant out when shot; otherwise leave them until May-June.
- 2 Cut back most perennials, leaving some cover until late winter to protect the crowns from frost. Reduce winter-flowering iris foliage to 20cm.
- 3 Do NOT cut back dahlias until the foliage dies right back.
- 4 Cover chrysanthemums against frost if desired.
- 5 After rain, top-dress lawns with sulphate of ammonia or a complete general fertiliser and water in thoroughly.
- 6 This is the best month to renovate or plant a new lawn – preferably the first week in April.
- 7 Plant out asparagus, rhubarb, strawberry runners or new plants. Strawberries should be planted with weed-mat or mulch. Plant early varieties of onions.
- 8 Sow seeds of hardy annuals such as iceland poppies, pinks, bellis perennis, wallflower, cornflower, hollyhock, lobelia, pansy, stock, sweet william, etc, for spring flowering.
- 9 Rake up autumn leaves for composting.
- 10 Complete plantings of spring-flowering bulbs.

LOOKING AHEAD – THE GARDEN IN MAY

MAY

- 1 Plan requirements and order roses, shrubs and fruit trees as required.
- 2 The first week in May is ideal for all situations to plant out spring- and early-flowering plants: violas, poppies, pansies, bellis perennis, pinks, carnations, sweet william, etc.
- 3 Divide old clumps of day lilies, iris, shasta daisies, phlox and other clumping perennials – watch for snails and slugs, etc.
- 4 Lift dahlias, label named varieties and store in moist sand or sawdust.

- 5 Plant out azaleas, camellias, rhododendrons, lily of the valley and summer-flowering lilioms. Potted plants such as camellias may be planted out in September-October.
- 6 Apply well-rotted manure and dig in around shrub and perennial borders.
- 7 Lift and store gladioli if desired.
- 8 Start sowing peas and winter lettuce varieties.
- 9 Potatoes can be dug up and stored now or left in good soil with drainage until September-October.
- 10 Set up compost heap with autumn leaves and lawn clippings; sprinkle layers with blood and bone and soil.

CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME

During the current period of social isolation, it is important that we maintain contact with likeminded people. So if you have anything at all to say about gardening in general or your own garden and plants in particular, your contributions would be most welcome. Share your thoughts with your friends by emailing the editors at raymond.cantrell@bigpond.com with either a brief comment on a topic of your choice or a detailed article on your favorite plant for inclusion in your garden club newsletter. A prize may be awarded to the editor for selecting the best contribution each month. So be in it to help him win it!

And finally, this Month's Gardening Tip:



When these things grow up, we're in real trouble!

Editors' Note: One of this newsletter's editors (not saying which one) concurs with this sentiment, particularly in relation to the spinach.

HAPPY GARDENING!

