



The Armidale Gardener

Newsletter of the Armidale Garden Club

Issue # 592 July 2021



Farewelling Friends!!

At our last meeting, it was our (sad) privilege to farewell Ray & Susan Cantrell as they prepare for their return to Queensland and Tambourine Mountain. There were smiles, sighs, hugs ...and a few quiet tears, as we thanked them for their time with us, and bade them safe journeyings.

Ray & Susan have both had a considerable input into our club meetings over the last eight years or so in ways too numerous to count. They have held a variety of responsibilities within the club over these years, and their contribution has been invaluable, both in terms of their horticultural knowledge and infectious enthusiasm! Our monthly display and competition table has

been maintained and enhanced by their contributions of many sorts, and our members have some hard work ahead to fill the gaps that their departure will create!

Some of the less well known varieties that Susan presented were simply educational in their own right, and we are that much the richer for those, though poorer because of their leaving ... but we hope that they will find another Club to be part of, or better still, start a new one where they will reside!

Ray & Susan - **THANK YOU** for all you have done for our Club. We trust that in due course you will make yourselves as invaluable to other new friends, as you have done to your old friends here! We wish you much joy and happiness in your new environment ... *and your NEW GARDEN!!*



Photo credits: Eileen Mitchell

Our JULY meeting will be held on Thursday 22nd July at the Uniting Church Hall in Rusden Street. This meeting will start at 6.30pm, and will be preceded by our annual WINTER SOUP EVENING. Be there to sample some rare delights! Our usual meeting will follow on from the soup tasting!

Also - don't forget the TRADING TABLE - Declan McGrath awaits your amazing contributions for the encouragement of others!!

It's winter pruning time ...!!

Just when you were wanting to relax in front of a nice warm fire it's time to get out there! It's July, and there's work to be done! Now's the time for all that winter pruning to be done, so make sure your secateurs are sharp, shears ready to go, and your pruning saw cleaned and oiled in readiness - to say nothing of your hedge-trimmers!

The purposes of pruning are many ... to shape a plant, and to restrict its size(hedges!); to encourage productive growth - fruiting wood on your fruit trees, and flowering shoots on your roses(!); to remove old growth and dead wood; to stop vertical growth and encourage branching (if you need a hedge to 'thicken up'); thinning out crowded growth, and -very importantly - to remove suckers from root stocks on grafted plants!

FRUIT TREES: this is the best time to prune deciduous fruit trees - keep the tree nice and open with no crossing branches. With apples, reduce the branch to just five or six buds, but leave laterals (side branches) these will develop next year's fruiting spurs. Prune about a quarter of an inch past a bud ... and don't forget to remove mummified fruit - this can harbour disease and pests. Pears fruit on little fruiting spurs like apples - just reduce the terminal buds at the end of branches. Plums need to be pruned to an open shape, to let plenty of light in ... and watch out for those suckers from root stocks!

ROSES: (I can hear those secateurs r'aring to go!!) It's best to equip yourself properly - why not get some long-sleeved welder's gloves to protect your arms - they're great! Your purpose in pruning is firstly to reduce the bush by up to two thirds, and to shape it nicely; to remove dead, diseased or 'woody' growth, and to encourage new growth in the right places. Prune to an outward facing bud, and cut at a 45 deg. angle (to stop moisture settling on a flat surface!). Thin out internal or crossing branches - an open bush will lessen the chance of black spot and mildew occurring. But - just a word of caution ... if your rose is of the type that only flowers once a season in spring - don't prune it now, you'll cut off all its flower growth! Leave it till after it has flowered. [The same applies to other plants like wisteria, too.]

It's a pity to waste all those prunings too - now is the time to try growing more from hardwood cuttings - select stems that at about the thickness of a pencil, with 4-5 leaf nodes on them and see if you are able to grow them on. It's rumoured that red varieties are harder to strike ... but think of all the roses you'd get!!

ORNAMENTAL SHRUBS & HEDGES: Yes, it's time to knock these into shape again, and get rid of that summer growth! Some shrubs like Abelia can get very leggy, and others just get lopsided. Prune away, shape them well ready for spring, but as a rule of thumb - don't cut back to dead wood, leave some green. This is especially the case for lavender bushes, and also for many varieties of cypressus. On the other hand, salvia bushes can be cut back hard, and rosemary, as well. Australian natives usually cope just with a light 'tidy-up' prune, cutting off last year's flowering branches.

Have fun, but don't forget to clean your tools properly afterwards with meths, to prevent spreading disease!



This pretty little succulent on the left was probably the smallest entry on our Competition Table last month ... it wasn't much bigger than this pic!!

The pretty little flower on the title page by the header was on the Competition Table too - supplied by Susan Cantrell ... a variety of the polyanthus family perhaps?!



Display & Competition Table for July ...

Display Table Competition Categories – July

1	Flowering narcissus – (1 cut)	6	Flowering non-native tree, shrub or climber (1 cut – max length 60cm)
2	Camellia – (1 cut)	7	Brassica (cabbage, cauliflower, etc) – (1 cut)
3	Container grown plant – foliage effect	8	3 culinary herbs – labelled – one of each
4	Flowering annual or perennial – (1 cut)	9	3 leaves of a non-brassica leafed vegetable – (eg spinach)
5	Flowering native tree, shrub or climber (1 cut – max length 60cm)	10	Any other fruit or vegetable

11 Massed display of a single species



Our very own 'poet-in-residence', Michael Cherry, shared this poem about volunteers with us during our May meeting - and it was requested that it be printed in our Newsletter. Here it is, if just a tad late!
Enjoy!

ANGELS IN DISGUISE

They often go unnoticed,
Not seeking words of praise;
But all are truly wonderful!
They shine in many ways.

When help is sometimes needed
These folk give up their time
To help in each capacity
And do that really fine.

Nothing is too hard to bear;
The smile and hugs are free.
It matters not the circumstance,
They seem true blue to me.

They live in our community,
And all deserve three cheers.
Simply heroes doing great!
We call them **volunteers**.

Michael Cherry 2021

In your JULY Garden

- first job ... check last month's list and make sure you haven't forgotten anything listed there!!
- plant out those bare-rooted roses, ornamentals and fruit trees that you have just bought (or are going to buy!!);
- speaking of pruning - make sure your secateurs, pruners and loppers are clean, sharpened and ... ready for action! It's almost THAT time!
- if it's raining ... make yourself a cuppa, and plan what you are going to plant, when, and where in both your flower garden and vegie patch;
- It's time to prune your hydrangeas, if you have any ... and you can change flower colour by adding lime to the soil to turn them pink, or sulphur or soil acidifier to turn them blue - they need a pH factor of under 5 for this to happen, and require this dressing 2-3 times in their season. If you have white hydrangeas, don't bother - it doesn't work with them!
- you can divide and plant hostas now, but don't forget to protect them from slugs and snails;
- if you've got empty garden beds, now is the time to dig in some good quality manure or compost so that the soil can be well prepared for spring planting;
- and don't forget your vegie patch, prepare your new asparagus bed and plant out with 2 year old crowns; if artichokes are your fancy, put them in now! It's not too late to plant onions seedlings, shallots, spinach, turnips, etc.
- if you didn't manage to sow a row of peas earlier in autumn, you can start some soaked pea seeds off on top of your water heater indoors, and plant them out when they have shot, but protect them from slaters (woodlice) - they love those tender shoots! (...to say nothing of mice!) And if at first you don't succeed, try again in September!
- don't forget your lawns! Now is an ideal time to give them a thorough raking with a spring rake to get rid of the dead thatch in them - before they start growing again!

..... go on, get out there! - there's work to be done!!

From the Editor ...

From the depths of winter, I thought our colour scheme this month might reflect the colour our toes turn with all the frosts that we've been having! ... But these sunny winter days are just great for getting out and keeping warm doing those 101 odd jobs that our gardens always seem to have for us!

An Apology! - In last month's edition, I omitted acknowledgement of David Trenerry and Michael Cherry, both of whom sent in pics of the the visit to Maria Hitchcock's garden - thank you both!

If there is anything you would like to see included in the Newsletter, please don't hesitate to let me know - you can contact me directly by email at

peterthorneycroft@me.com

Peter

Competition results for June ...

The Armidale Garden Club

Competition Results		Month June 2021	
1 Potted succulent		Number of Entries 1	
1 st	B Freeman	Specimen	Unknown
2 Container grown plant - foliage		Number of Entries 1	
1 st	Ingrid Chaku	Specimen	Variegated philodendron
3 Container grown plant - flowering		Number of Entries 0	
1 st	Susan Cantrell	Specimen	
2 nd	Ray Cantrell	Specimen	
3 rd	Susan Cantrell	Specimen	
3 rd	Ray Cantrell	Specimen	
4 Flowering Annual or Perennial (1 cut)		Number of Entries 7	
1 st	Susan Cantrell	Specimen	Primula Vulgaris
2 nd	Ray Cantrell	Specimen	Snapdragon
3 rd	Susan Cantrell	Specimen	Bergenia <u>purpureascens</u>
3 rd	Ray Cantrell	Specimen	Helleborus <u>foetidus</u> (aureus)
5 Flowering native tree shrub or climber, (1 cut max length 60cm)		Number of Entries 0	
6 Flowering non-native tree shrub or climber, (1 cut max length 60cm)		Number of Entries 9	
1 st	Susan Cantrell	Specimen	Heather
2 nd	Ray Cantrell	Specimen	Clematis
3 rd	Susan Cantrell	Specimen	Fuchsia 'Pixie'
3 rd	David Trenerry	Specimen	Corella
7 Brassica (cabbage, cauli etc) (1 cut)		Number of Entries 0	
8 Three culinary herbs - labelled – one of each		Number of Entries 1	
1 st	David Trenerry	Specimen	Coriander, mint, oregano
9 Three leaves of non-brassica leafed vegetable (eg spinach)		Number of Entries 1	
1 st	Susan Cantrell	Specimen	Globe Artichoke
10 Any other fruit or vegetable		Number of Entries 3	
1 st	David Trenerry	Specimen	Red Oak Leaf lettuce
1 st	Declan McGrath	Specimen	Potatoes
2 nd	David Trenerry	Specimen	Kiwi Fruit
11 Massed Display		Number of Entries 0	

Phalaenopsis ... and how to cope with them!

OK, well (it sounds more like a disease!) moth orchids, if you can't pronounce their real name! They are a lovely flower, and ready gift for mothers and wives on their special days; the flowers are long lasting, as are the plants but there is just ONE problem! How do you get them to flower again once you've got them?!



Their reluctance to flower can be very frustrating - they can sit for years without flowering again, unless you are prepared to give them some TLC to induce it to bloom for you!

LIGHT is the most important thing for them. Hot sun will burn their leaves, but too little light will reduce flowering. Dappled shade is best, but if they are grown indoors, a well-lit position would be better. Their leaves should be green, but if the leaves are too dark, they may look healthy, but they are actually in too much shade to promote good flowering. The ideal is to keep them in shade for spring and summer, but move into a bit more light for late summer and autumn. They do not like exposed or windy situations.

WATERING: They are, naturally, epiphytes, that grow on trees. They need a coarse bark mix to grow in, with plenty of drainage. They do not like wet feet! Reduce watering during winter - like us they hate being cold and wet! Water to the roots, rather than into the crown of the plant.

FEEDING: You can begin feeding them immediately after flowering (-during Spring), with a few pellets of Dynamic Lifter every six weeks or so. After Christmas, change to a flower promoting designated liquid feed, applied about once a fortnight. If all goes well, blooms may just happen - you will know when you see the flower spike appearing!

RE-POTTING: like all orchids, they love being in a cramped or crowded pot, this is their natural environment as in the cleft of a tree, so keep them in a small pot, and don't be too generous about space!

REPEAT FLOWERING: once your plant has flowered, you can induce it to flower again by cutting off the old flower spike, leaving 2-3 nodes still of the flowering stem - a new flower spike should grow from the top node!

'The Armidale Gardener' is published monthly by the Armidale Garden Club,
an affiliated group of the Garden Clubs of Australia Inc.

President:	David Trenerry 67712919	Minutes Secretary:	Briony Freeman 0410 104021
Vice President:	(vacant)	Correspondence Secretary:	Dar Brookes 0412 589414
Treasurer:	Rod Aitken 0487 147 673	Newsletter:	Peter Thorneycroft 0438 315419
Trade Table:	Declan McGrath	Publicity:	Dar Brookes 0412 589414

Email: armidalegarden@gmail.com