



C.M.G.C. Newsletter

Vol 4. July 2020 Editor/Designer: Fiona Lynch Mob. 0432 159 412

Dear Members,

How life can change again in the blink of an eye! Just as we were starting to think about how we could safely re-ignite our club activities, we find ourselves back in lockdown.

Yesterday I received the following from the council,

"Due to the State Government announcement Tuesday of the reinstated Stage 3 "Stay at Home" restrictions across metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire, from 11:59pm on Wednesday 8 July, all Boroondara Seniors' Community Groups are asked not to meet until restrictions are lifted."

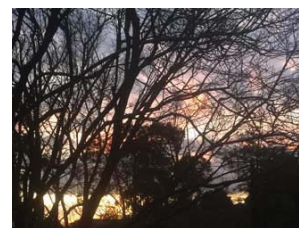
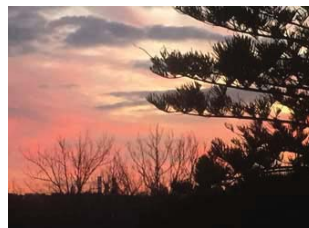
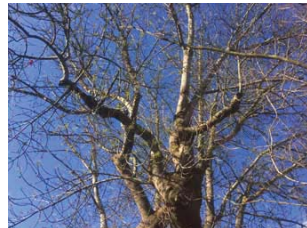
So here we are with our 4th newsletter, so that at least we can feel in touch, even if we cannot meet. Between lockdowns, a small group of the committee did an exploratory "Mini Trip" to the Maranoa Botanical Gardens in Balwyn. With appropriate social distancing, we each brought our own drinks and shared a quick afternoon tea before sauntering around the gardens. It was wonderful to catch up again after the long break. I had hoped to give you a list of places to go to for mini trips, but now that can't happen. So enjoy this newsletter and do keep in touch via email. It gives me great pleasure to hear from you and know what you are up to. I never envisaged my presidency of our club being like this!!

Should you lose your newsletter, or wish to show it to other members or friends, you will now be able to find it on our website www.cmgc.net.au under the heading "News and Trips".

Warmest regards,

Fiona Lynch - CMGC President.

Below: Winter beauty from dawn to dusk.



What members are up to in their gardens.



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Yvonne McBean is picking bright flowers and growing variegated bouganvillea. Pics. 1 & 2.

Terry and Meg Poskitt still have daisies on display. Pic. 3

Peter Digaletos is propagating plants above a bale of warm mulch. Pic. 4

Fiona Lynch is growing ruby chard, garlic, shallots, beetroot and onions. Pic. 5

June Speaker - Ellen Swansson

Keep on growing.....with Boroondara Library Service

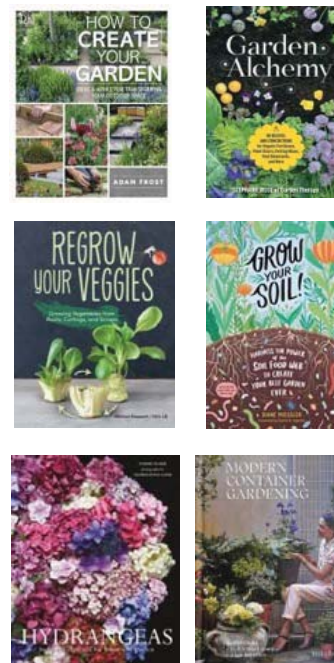
COVID-19 has thrown all our lives into complete disarray, but if there's one thing that has been constant it's our gardens! As a librarian and a keen gardener, I know I found solace in both books and my plants when anxiety around the virus kicked in and we started working and schooling from home.

Though our gardens didn't close, the library did of course, but the good news is that all Boroondara Libraries are now open again, although in a limited capacity. Members can now register for a session to visit one of our branches and pick up some books, magazines, DVDs etc.

For your peace of mind, we have a number of safety measures in place:

- Social distancing rules are in place at all our Library branches.
- Visitors must clean their hands as they enter (we provide the hand sanitiser)
- Professional cleaners are in libraries during opening hours and continually clean amenities, doors, benches, screens, furniture, equipment and technology.

If you are looking for some gardening books to brighten up your day, here are a few titles that we have recently added to our collection:



RHSV Hanging basket competition

As you are all aware The Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show at the Exhibition buildings had to be cancelled in March due to Covid 19. This was a huge blow to all the exhibitors.

The annual hanging basket competition conducted by the RHSV was also a victim, but with some lateral thinking this was able to be salvaged. All entries were displayed online, with members and the public voting for their favourite baskets. We are delighted to announce that our club member Pat won the **Best Specialist Plant or Plant Group** section of the competition with her beautiful basket pictured to the right. Warmest congratulations on your achievement Pat.

(Other winning baskets in the 2020 Hanging Basket Competition can be viewed on- <http://rhsv.org.au/>)



Coping with the Oxalis invasion -

by Fiona Lynch



When the rains came earlier this year, so did the weeds, especially oxalis. Growing from bulbs deep under the soil, it's particularly difficult to get rid of, especially if you have dogs and don't want to use highly toxic sprays.

Slasher is an organic spray recommended by Diggers. Or, if you prefer a homemade non-toxic weed killer, fill a small spray bottle with white vinegar and add one or two squirts of dish detergent. Gently shake, then spray the mixture directly on the base of the oxalis clusters. This works even better on a warm/hot day, if you can find one!

Pulling the oxalis out before it dies back and replenishes the bulbs is a good idea if you can do it in this wet, cold weather. You should also do this before it flowers. As you can see from these shots, I have failed dismally. We cleared all our beds of cooch grass for planting, but the rain and oxalis beat us to it before the planting happened.

Oh the joys of gardening!



Gardening jobs for July/August

by Fiona Lynch

Planting

The colder wetter months in Melbourne are a great time to grow veggies, and now is an excellent time to plant! You can consider cabbage, asian greens like mizuna, tatsoi or pak choi, lettuce, rocket, spinach, carrots, celery, cauliflower, spring onions, leek, onions, radish, turnips, swedes, peas and snow peas. The beauty of planting now is that they don't need constant watering.

If you planted garlic earlier, now is the time to feed it with a liquid fertiliser, but not a seaweed solution that might give too much nitrogen.

Pruning and tidying

Deadwood can be cut off at any time of the year, but it may be easier to see now. If you're not sure, scrape away at some of the bark on the questionable branches and see if there is any green showing under. If not, it is deadwood and should be pruned out. You can also do some renovation/shaping pruning on most of the deciduous fruit trees (but not the apricot nor cherries).

Compost

Continue to make compost and remember that most food scraps can be composted, as long as you add an equal amount of green waste. Quality compost is brilliant for top-dressing fruit trees later in August.

Harvest and preservation

Now is the time to harvest and preserve the abundance of citrus fruit that has blessed us this year. Marmalades, citrus butters and the like make wonderful gifts and taste wonderful.

Caring for cyclamen -

by Fiona Lynch



One of the things I do love about winter is that it is cyclamen season. They come in such a variety of sizes, colours and shapes and can instantly brighten up a space or room.

However, I am frequently asked by friends how to keep them alive for months on end and how to get them flowering again the following year.

The simple answer is to treat them rough and tough.

One of the first things I was told about the care of a cyclamen plant was that like a cat, it needs to go out at night. Ha ha, does anyone still put their cat out??

Well even if you don't, your cyclamen do prefer the cold night air to an overheated room. I am blessed with huge glass windows at the front of my house and so I place my plants outside on a table where I can see them at all times. If I am entertaining, I will bring one in for display and when the guests have left, out it goes again and I rotate them.

The most common problem is overwatering. These plants only need water once a week in winter, and sometimes not even that often. I water when I see the flowers droop.

Your cyclamen will reach the end of its season when the leaves turn yellow and the flowers wilt and die down. Don't cut them off, let them die down completely to replenish the bulb. Then I take my pots and lie them sideways in a shady place like a fernery. I don't water them or even look at them till the start of autumn, when I stand them up again and gently water. Shoots of leaves will soon appear and hopefully you will get a second or third season out of your cyclamen. If you are lucky, the flowers will drop seeds at the end of flowering and you may even see tiny new plants appearing in your pot. That's exciting! Good luck with these beautiful plants.

Passing Shots - In the pink!

photos by: multiple contributors



A couple of doors down is a weeping cherry (not pictured) which to my surprise is covered in blossom. Then Roseanne sent me a picture of the same (above) in Canterbury, which led me to looking at all the vivid pink flowers and foliage on show at the moment. So I put out a request for pink flower photos and what a varied feast came back. I hope that you enjoy this month's passing shots of pink.

A Botanical Musicale!

by: Trevor Faragher

When Barcelona's Liceu opera opened on Monday 22 June for its first concert since mid-March when performances of Wagner's Lohengrin had to be cancelled because of COVID-19, it did so to a full live house — of **PLANTS!**

The Gran Teatre del Liceu filled its 2,292 seats with plants for a performance by the Uceli Quartet, which serenaded its leafy audience with Giacomo Puccini's Crisantemi. The plants came from local nurseries and were donated to 2,292 health care professionals, specifically at the Hospital Clínic of Barcelona, in recognition of the work of health care providers, who have served "on the toughest front in a battle unprecedented for our generations."



What a wonderful image this is for plant lovers all over the world. A special thanks to Trevor for making me aware of this concert and being able to share this lovely story with you.

With events like this happening it restores and soothes the soul and gives us hope.