

GROWING CAPERS - BRIAN NOONE

Brian Noone studied Horticulture in Adelaide, whilst working for a local council in the early 1980s. He then owned and operated a successful wholesale nursery for 25 years. His 'Cottage Herbs' garden was twice featured on the ABC national Australian Gardening Program. He was a member of the Australian Institute of Horticulture (AIH) for 16 years.

Brian was awarded a Churchill scholarship in 2002 to study the caper industry in Italy, Spain and Morocco. He is a member of the International Plant Propagators Society (IPPS), and the Nursery & Garden Industry SA (NGISA), and presently propagates the Eureka caper. "Caperplants" is a wholesale nursery growing caper plants. It is based in Adelaide and is owned and operated by Brian Noone.

Capparis spinosa, the caper bush, is a perennial plant that bears rounded, fleshy leaves and large white to pinkish-white flowers. THE 'EUREKA' CAPER *Capparis spinosa* *rupestris* 'Eureka' has been registered with IP Australia under the Plant Breeder's Rights (PBR) legislation following many years of research and experimentation.

The 'Eureka' Caper plant is superior because:

- it is a thornless bush
- it produces more capers in weight each time it is harvested
- it begins to shoot and grow earlier in the spring than other bushes
- it continues to flower and leaves stay green longer into the autumn and winter

Capparis spinosa is native to the Mediterranean and has been used as a food and for medicinal purposes since antiquity.

The caper bush requires a semi-arid or arid climate and has developed a series of mechanisms that reduce the impact of high daily temperature, and insufficient soil water during its growing period. The shrub has a high root/shoot ratio and the presence of mycorrhizae serves to maximize the uptake of minerals in poor soils. The seeds germinate without water, preferring the heat of the rocks to prompt germination. Home growers should water their caper bushes for the first two years then stop the watering. Caterpillars of the Caper White Butterfly only eat caper bushes and can quickly strip a bush but it will re-grow.

There are Australian *Capparis* plants with the first being identified by Ellis Rowan the renown botanical illustrator.

Harvesting capers is carried out manually and is very labour intensive and painful as the plants have thorns. India is experimenting with developing caper plantations to provide commercial quantities. In many other countries the capers are harvested from wild bushes.

Preparation of Capers for consumption requires picking the flower buds in the morning before they open then pickling them in a mix of vinegar, water and salt for at least three days. The berries that develop after flowering may also be picked and pickled.

Pickled capers can be added to many savoury dishes to provide extra tang and piquancy. A little goes a long way.

The caper bush also makes an attractive ornamental ground cover as the flowers are fragrant and prolific and they are a low maintenance, drought tolerant and very hardy plant.



Caper bush on a rock face in Sicily taken by Jenny Thomas a few years ago. Now she knows what it is!



STRATHALBYN GARDEN CLUB CALENDAR OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

MEETING DATE	SPEAKER/ACTIVITY	TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION
May 25th	Tony & Trevor	Cut Above special garden tools
June 22nd	AGM	Subs Due \$10
June 22nd	John Zwar	Pt Augusta Arid Botanical Gardens update
July 18th	Neutrog Pickup 9.30 - Noon	Lions Shed Walsh Avenue Strathalbyn
July 27th	Alice McCleary	Unley Gardeners Plant rescue group
August 24th	Paul Depuglia	Neutrog - the latest developments
August 25th & 26th	SA Garden Rally	Cornerstone College Mt Barker + local gardens
September 28th	Jan Forrest	Great Victoria Desert
October 6th	Cavalcade of Gardens	
October 19th	Paech Farm and Highcroft Garden Visit	Car pool, full day trip.
October 25th	Bloom Competition	Best blooms in 4 categories
October 25th	Margaret Jenkins	Water irises



WORLD BEE DAY 20TH MAY

PRESS RELEASE: New York, 20 December 2017 – Today, the United Nations General Assembly adopted by consensus a resolution declaring 20 May as World Bee Day. Every year on this day, the attention of the global public will be drawn to the importance of preserving bees and other pollinators. People will be reminded of the importance of bees for the entire humanity and invited to take concrete action to preserve and protect them. The resolution was co-sponsored by 115 UN Member States, including the USA, Canada, China, the Russian Federation, India, Brazil, Argentina, Australia and all the European Union Member States.

Across the world, bees have become vulnerable due to urbanisation and loss of habitat, the overuse of pesticides and modern agricultural practises.

WE CAN HONOUR THE BEE BY:

1. Planting Bee Attracting Plants

Bees are on the hunt for pollen so plan for successive blooms throughout the seasons. Honey bees forage all year, but most native bees take a break mid-winter, when their focus turns to shelter. Bee's favourite colours are blue, purple and yellow.

2. Providing Habitat and Water

While honeybees live in colonies and hives, most bee species nest underground or in natural cavities. A few patches of partially bare, undisturbed soil will help underground nesters, and some branches, dead trees or a 'bee hotel' will work for others. Bees need a source of shallow water.

3. Reducing or eliminating pesticide use

Use organic and natural pest control methods. Try companion planting for a diverse ecosystem.

STRATHALBYN GARDEN CLUB AGM JUNE 22ND

SUBS Due \$10

Additional committee members required to assist with managing the activities of the club.

Nomination forms available from the Treasurer's table.

SHEEP MANURE FOR SALE

\$5/ bag

\$20 collected in a trailer (6X4)

Tania & John Richardson

Woodchester

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CHRYSANTHEMUMS

Evocative of autumn and Mother's Day Chrysanthemums are some of the most popular flowers in the world.

Chrysanthemums have a wealth of meaning associated with them and therefore they are very popular as florist flowers

The flower symbolizes fidelity, optimism, joy and long life.

- A red chrysanthemum conveys love
- A white chrysanthemum symbolizes truth and loyal love
- A yellow chrysanthemum symbolizes slighted love

Chrysanthemum blooms come in a huge variety of shapes and sizes and in a wide range of colours.

Each Chrysanthemum flower head is a cluster of many flowers, composed of a central group of short disk flowers surrounded by rings of longer ray flowers. Chrysanthemums are classified into nine categories according to the type and arrangement of disk and ray flowers - Incurved, Reflexed, Intermediate, Late Flowering Anemones, Singles, Pompons, Sprays, Spiders/Spoons/Quills, Charms and Cascades. For example, the 'reflexed' Chrysanthemum consists of ray flowers that curve downward into an umbrella shape; the 'quill' has tubular ray flowers that radiate from the centre of the head.

FACTS ABOUT CHRYSANTHEMUMS

- Chrysanthemums are tropical flowers. Chrysanthemums were originally grown in the Eurasian region.
- Chrysanthemums belong to the Asteraceae, which is one of the largest families of flowering plants with over 1,000 genera and about 20,000 species.
- The Chrysanthemum was brought to Japan by Buddhist monks in AD 400. Japanese emperors so loved the Chrysanthemum flower that they sat upon Chrysanthemum thrones. Chrysanthemums, kikus in Japanese, were featured on the Imperial Crest of Japan.
- Even today, a number of Japanese cities hold spectacular annual chrysanthemum exhibitions.
- Chrysanthemums are well suited for container garden.
- Chrysanthemum flavoured tea can be used as a relaxant.
- The flowers are long-lasting as cut flowers looking good for up to three weeks in a vase. To get the best from a bunch, change the water regularly and re-cut stems every few days.
- Chrysanthemums can be grown in the ground almost anywhere as well as in pots and even indoors with bright light.



CARE AND MAINTENANCE

Most people acquire a chrysanthemum when they are given a potted plant on Mother's Day. In a pot, a chrysanthemum plant lasts for a few weeks inside. Keep it in a brightly lit position and water when dry. Pick off any dead flowers or discoloured leaves. When flowering has finished, take it outside, cut it back to 15cm and plant it out in your garden.

When choosing a spot, bear in mind that potted chrysanthemums may have been treated with a growth regulator to keep them dwarf and compact, so they are likely to grow much taller in the ground. Even though they can be grown from seed, most chrysanthemums are propagated by cutting or by dividing clumps of an existing plant.

Chrysanthemums grow best in an open, sunny position, although they can tolerate partial shade, especially if it provides protection from afternoon sun. They tend to prefer well-drained soil that has been improved with the addition of compost and other organic matter. To perform well, they also must be fed regularly with a liquid fertiliser every four to six weeks. At planting, add some organic, slow-release fertiliser such as pelletised chicken manure.

Although they can be grown in the subtropics, chrysanthemums prefer a cool to mild climate and a spot where they are protected from wind. If you are growing them specifically to use for cut flowers, space them 60–75cm apart.

Tip: For a plant with lots of flowers, pinch out the growing tips when plants are about 20cm tall. For bigger flowers, if the plant produces lots of buds, the flowers are smaller, so remove some of these buds and your plant will produce fewer, but larger blooms.

PEST AND DISEASE CONTROL

Earwigs, snails and black aphids are all partial to the flower and need regular control. If you spot caterpillars, such as the small green loopers, spray with a biological insecticide such as Dipel or Success.

Although you can spray for leaf nematode, a problem that causes the lower leaves to brown and die, picking off and disposing of damaged leaves at the first indication of the disease is usually sufficient to stop it spreading.

Treat mildew with an organic-based fungicide, such as wettable sulphur or eco-rose. If mildew proves simply to be an indication of poor air circulation, improving this prevents it reoccurring.

Brown rust may affect leaves so pick these off by hand if the infestation is bad, disposing of them in the rubbish bin. White rust is more troubling and it is best to pull out the whole plant and dispose of it also in the garbage.



STRATHALBYN GARDEN CLUB
MINUTES
General Meeting held at St Andrews Hall
Friday, 27th April 2018

Meeting commenced: At 10am President Norma opened the meeting. Did we realise it was 1/3 way through the year, she asked. Open gardens this weekend, both ours at 775 Old Bull Creek Road and 41 Avenue Road. After this w/e Life will be back to normal. Please switch off mobiles, sign in and record apologies.

Welcome Visitors: Sonja & John Colquhoun, Gail & Rod Lawson, Wendy Harrison, Paula Clarke, Trinette Riechers, Ros Edwards, Sue Leers, Marie-Claire Levi, Brian Noon.

New Members: Nil

Attendance: **100**

Apologies: **14**

Announcements & Correspondence

Car Pool outing to Talinga and Sacred Grove was enjoyed by all who attended. Next outing will be 19th October to Paech Farm and Highgate garden at Harrogate. More details to come.

Neutrog Order - If possible please have your order and payment in by the end of May meeting.

Open Gardens in Strathalbyn weekend of 28th and 29th April. 41 Avenue Road and 775 Old Bull Creek Road.

Garden Clubs of SA Rally - Information on page 4 of the newsletter. Margaret Jenkins added that the Lillium and Bulb Society are involved. It is a two day event. There will be a rare plant sale, great speakers, and travel to different gardens.

Strath neighbourhood Centre - Monthly market will be a week later this month, Thursday 10th May with gifts for Mother's Day – including potted colour and home baked melting moments.

Macclesfield biggest morning tea – 16 May, lots of local plants for sale. Proceeds to Cancer Research.

Roses and Elephant Ears to give away – see Thelma Newman.

MOSH – Christine Elliott is conducting a 4 week course on gardening, also a recycle garden art day.

Minutes of the last meeting: 23rd Mar. 2018 page 5 newsletter **Moved:** J. Dawson **Seconded:** D. Hill.

Business Arising: Nil

Treasurer: All good. It is pleasing to see that the electronic payment is working well.

Member's talk: Helen Fairweather asked the question "what to do with the large plastic bags you buy potting mix etc. in. She didn't think they were recyclable. It was suggested to give them to the people who sell the mushroom compost. Fleurieu Waste via the Council will advise. It was also noted by Greg Cain that these bags are recyclable

Guest Speaker Brian Noone told us the story of growing capers.

Next Meeting Friday 25th May Tony and Trevor – Cut Above garden tools