

U3A PEGASUS GARDENING GROUP

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

Greetings everyone.

Can we really say that Spring is here?? Apart from this weekend's wet blip, it certainly is warmer and love the longer daylight hours (even before daylight saving arrives). I have started mowing the lawn – hmm, at the moment that is more like mowing the burgeoning clover. The roses are taking off and the fruit trees are starting to flower – just need more bees. The pruning lads have just left (they were late this year) and the fruit trees are looking very tidy. The worst job they had to do (and I was concerned about the prickles) was dig up and move the San Pedro cactus that had grown so tall and was trying to bend around the surfeit. The root ball wasn't that big but the ground was solid. The three of them took turns digging and finally pulled it out with their mini-crane – would definitely recommend their company which I have every year to do the pruning.

SEPTEMBER Meeting

Our September meeting is on the **23rd at 1.30pm** and will be held at the Clubhouse at Streamside Court which is off St John Street, Woolston (just along from New World). There is limited parking in front of the Club but loads out on the street with a short walk up the drive to the clubhouse building. We will be listening to Dirk who will introduce and share the joy of bonsai growing showing some of his specimens. Afternoon tea provided.

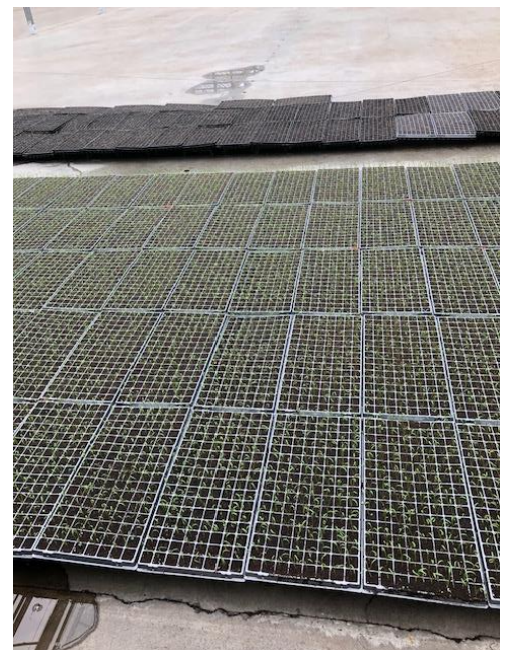
AUGUST Meeting

Our August meeting was a visit to Zealandia Wholesale Plant Nursery in Radcliffe Road. Unfortunately another wet cold day.



However we were under cover for all of the visit due to the enormous heated “glasshouses”. Hi-vis vests and thin material booties were the first order of the day – so we could be seen by forklift drivers and other staff, and the booties so that we would not be bringing in any germs from the outside. We were accompanied by their site manager and taken into areas where the potting mix was made (peat from Dunedin and a variety of fertilisers), where the pots were filled with the mix

and staff inserted plants, where the pots were loaded onto trays and then transported out into the growing areas.



The enterprise covers several acres and they have 5 other growing areas – two more in Christchurch and two in Auckland, producing vegetable, flower and house plants. They have huge biomass boilers that divert waste timber from landfill; make and recycle packaging for about the same cost as buying it; and pride themselves on having a multi-cultural staff. It really was a fascinating visit.

Also of interest was a possibility of terminating group visits because of the real fear of the new tomato disease discovered in Queensland.

Following the visit we adjourned to Black & White coffee shop in Prestons Road for a welcome cup of coffee.



Programme update

October 28 T&C Marg McCarthy 18 Hilltop Lane

November 25 Cedar Park End of Year Lunch We will be asking for numbers in September.

25th November - We will visit Eunice Edgecomb's garden first at 11am and then drive on to Ann's place at Cedar Park. There will be plenty of time to wander around the garden before lunch (finger food) at 1pm and look at the plants for sale - always a good variety. The cost of lunch is \$25 pp.

In December our garden group does not usually hold a meeting, however there is the opportunity to join with Somerfield Garden Club and go to lunch on the 9th at the historic house and garden – Ambrosia House (Strathlachlan) in Doyleston. More details closer to the time.

Gardening tips for September



Today September 1st it is officially Spring.

The last week with days reaching 20 degrees it has certainly felt like we have turned the corner and left the winter doldrums behind. My potted Tete e 'Tete and double yellow daffodils were over in a flash, flowers fading after 4 weeks, now replaced by white Thalia, Toto and incorrectly labelled Mt Hood [Bulbs bought at the Ohoka Farmers Market] Colour is already showing on tulips usually not in flower until Mid-September. I wonder if you are seeing similar signs of early spring flowers in your own gardens.

Everywhere we look we are assailed by colourful camellias, magnificent magnolias and blossom, bursting almost daily. With all this frenzy of nature arriving so to the tasks of spring

Feeding and Fertilizing

As bulbs finish flowering snap off their heads and feed liberally with bulb food. Do not cut down or tie the foliage. It is needed to make food & help store up reserves for next year's display. I put 'finished' potted bulbs at the back of the shed so they can get on with this out of sight, & water occasionally if there no rain until the foliage dies down, then forget them till Autumn when the cycle begins again

Primula and Polyanthus will benefit from a generous sprinkling of dried blood around their base every 3 weeks or so whilst in flower. Though not expensive to buy in the Autumn they are perennial plants so can be potted up from the garden and placed under trees at the end of the season, to come back into flower again the following year without much difficulty

Roses will benefit from an application of Sheep pellets, Sulphate of Potash, Blood and Bone &/or Nitrophoska in various combinations Most of us probably have a successful recipe we follow. The main thing is to have the nutrients in the soil available to the plant at it bursts into life. Fork the application in lightly around the dripline then water unless rain is due

Feed also Fruit Trees and Berry fruit followed by a layer of compost and mulch ensuring that it is kept away from the trunk of the tree

Citrus may be looking a little jaded if they have been touched by the frosts but do not prune back yet until the likelihood of frost is over. Leave this until late October when the danger of lemon tree borer is also passed. If the foliage is yellow, apply Magnesium sulphate [Epsom Salts] to correct for magnesium deficiency. Use citrus fertiliser as recommended, water and mulch

Planting

If not planted in the Autumn, it is time to get any new trees and shrubs in the ground so they can establish before the soil dries out. Perennials can be divided up and moved particularly if the clumps have got old and woody Fresh growth will quickly spring away Reassess the borders and shift any plants as required. Feed, mulch and compost

Vegetable Garden Don't be fooled into rushing in with tender plants. Its still early days for anything but the toughies such as silver beet unless you have hoops and covers, or a glasshouse hold off until at least the next month for most although a late sowing of broadbeans can be made

Happy Gardening

Carolyn Dixon