

U3A PEGASUS GARDENING GROUP

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

Greetings to everyone

More unpredictable Spring weather. Besides the wind and rain I had a very crispy frost the other night. I had to drag out the frost cloth again after neatly folding it all up. Have you any bees in your garden?? I had loads of honey and bumbles several weeks ago and now, just when the fruit trees are loaded with blossom, not a body to be seen. I wondered if this was Christchurch-wide or just peculiar to Hoon Hay /Halswell.

OCTOBER Meeting

Our October 27th meeting is a visit to Stoneycrop garden and Rhodo Direct garden in West Melton.

We can arrange car pooling by 9.45 at MPCC. **Please advise Gaynor if you wish to do this!!**

Morning tea is scheduled for 10.15 at Stoneycrop.

People not carpooling will meet the rest of the members at the gate - 8B Barnsley Crescent, West Melton.

Cost is \$10 entry with \$5 for morning tea. Marg needs to know numbers **by Thursday 23rd**.

Numbers to Gaynor via email.

We will leave around 11.30 for Rhodo Direct down the road at 377 Halkett Road where Lisa will also chat to the members and you can visit the garden. No charge for the visit and can buy their rhodos - they have cash and credit facilities.

ADVANCED NOTICE

Our end of year lunch will be held on 24 November at 12.30 at "Ambrosia", Strathlachlan Gardens, Doyleton. The cost is \$45 a head - we will be subsidising the cost by \$10 for financial members thus reducing the cost to \$35 a head. Please check with Priscilla to see if you have paid your \$10 sub.

Strathlachlan requires **final numbers by 14 November**. We will require payment with confirmation with no refunds by that date, please. The bank account details are below and could you please remember to include your name in the reference section.

Please reply to Gaynor with your confirmation.

U3A Garden Group

03-1599-0133823-000

SEPTEMBER Meeting

Our September meeting was held at Streamside Court, St John Street in Woolston. We had a very informative demonstration by Jo McGirr on seed raising.

Jo covered such topics as :

Ensuring you are using viable seed (pop a few into a small punnet of seed raising mix. If they havent come up within 4 days then ditch the lot.)

Make sure you wash your trays before starting (10 parts water to 1 part bleach is a good solution).

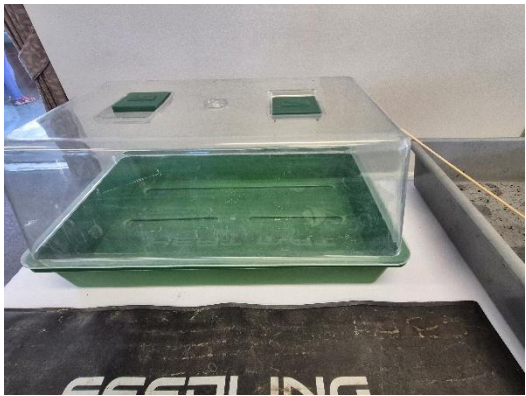
If you are not sowing directly into your garden, don't use garden soil to plant seed into or to plant the pricked out seeds. Soil doesn't drain well and there may be weed seeds you cannot spot.



Use seed raising mix – you do not need fertiliser to start them off but plant out the seedlings into a fine grade potting mix.

Half fill your punnet with the seed raising mix, tamp down, dampen, sow the seeds, top up with a small amount of seed raising mix, dampen again, label (!) and then place in the airing cupboard or in a propagator somewhere warm.

Check every day and spray with water. If they are in a propagator they have warmth and moisture if you forget to water them. It only takes a few days for seeds to sprout under these conditions. They become very leggy very quickly.



Once they have two leaves they are transplantable into a bigger punnet. You can sit them on a sunny windowsill or if you are really serious you can invest in a seed heat mat and pop them on that.



When you are spraying the punnets make sure that the water is warmish – around 18deg.



Once they have big enough for transplanting into a garden, don't forget to harden them off outside on a deck for several days bring them in a night.

You need to protect the seedlings from snails and slugs, also white butterfly and birds. Pellets, hoops and netting will help with this. Christchurch has lots of late frosts so if you are looking at planting cucubits and tomatoes outside it is best to wait for Show Weekend. Save your pill bottles for putting seeds into – keeps them airtight and don't forget to label and date them.

Jo had a number of older propagators and was kind enough to bring them along to give to members.



She also donated the sprouted plants (above) which enabled members to try their hand at pricking them out (on the left) and taking them home. A really productive and educational afternoon.

