

"Through the Garden Gate"

*Newsletter
of the
Medowie Garden
Club*

March 2020

Established March 2009

Member Count: 51



*Proud Member of
Garden Clubs of Australia*

President: Warwick (Rick) Porter

Secretary: Chris Voigt

Treasurer: Fran Easter

Editor: Warwick (Rick) Porter Ph: 49281120, 0411117867, email wandgporter@yahoo.com

Monthly Meeting

This month's meeting was at the lovely home of Margaret Bailey. It was attended by 19 members, including one new member Gai Fawcett, with 11 apologies. Thank you for providing an excellent venue for our meeting Margaret, and welcome aboard Gai, we hope you have a great time with us! The club bank balance was \$5585.

The next meeting will be on Saturday 4th April and will be hosted by Chris and Geoff Voigt at 12 Jaywood Close Medowie. Lots of great items on the trading table which were snapped up this month. Thank you and please keep them coming!

Going, Going...

Another Auction of 2 plants was held this month with a beaut Coleus in a self-watering pot (original cutting from Ross Tynan - Thank you Ross). This went to Margaret for \$10 which was a real bargain. The pot was one I bought for a few dollars at a bargain shop and converted to self-watering in about 10 minutes and makes Coleus much easier to care for. I will demo this at the next meeting for anyone who is interested.

The second plant was a large Chinese Rain Bell plant with several spikes of flowers already apparent (cuttings kindly from previous club member Kiri Lees). This one went for \$20 and I am sure will look great in Chris and Geoff's garden. More at the plant sale.

See the plant profile below for more info.



Forget-me-Not.....Upcoming Events



Medowie Club Events

Event / Date&Time	Location/Travel	Equip/Catering	Contact
April Meeting: Saturday 4th April 12:30pm	Chris & Geoff Voigt 12 Jaywood Close Medowie	Chair, Cup & Food Plate	Chris 4982 9025
Living Edge Nursery Tuesday 21st April. Lots of rare and unusual plants.	Car pool from Bull & Bush leaving at 8:30am. Cost is only \$8 per member.	Tea & Coffee provided, bring a plate for morning tea.	Chris 4982 9025
Autumn Plant Sale Saturday 2nd May 8am - 1pm. Set-up at 7am	Medowie Community Hall Car Park - It's On! Please have lots of quality plants available for this great day. Please advise me of the plants you will have so I can get labels made up.	Tea & Coffee and BBQ provided.	Chris 4982 9025
May Meeting: Saturday 9th May 12:30pm	Jean Lawrence 55 Kula Rd, Medowie.	Chair, Cup & Food Plate	Jean 4982 8537
Bath House Garden Tour and Morning Tea Monday 11 th May	Car pool from the B&B leaving at 9am to arrive before 10am. Price per member is \$10 after club subsidy of \$20.	Morning tea included.	Chris 4982 9025
June Meeting: Saturday 6th June 12:30pm	Ann Tomlinson 32 Tallow wood Dr, Medowie.	Chair, Cup & Food Plate	Ann 4982 8870
Possible bus trip to Bowral Rare Plants nursery in June.	Please advise expressions of interest to Chris.		Chris 4982 9025
Overnight car pool to Bathurst for the Bathurst Spring Spectacular 24th, 25th October.	6 gardens around 5 heritage homes, all with music by Mitchell Conservatorium of Music. \$15 per person. Also a Plant & Garden Expo at a local park (Sat only).	Accommodation will need to be booked soon. Notify interest to Chris.	Chris 4982 9025

Plants To Vie For

Plant Profile: Chinese Rain Bell
(*Strobilanthes cusia* Syn *flaccidus*)



Chinese Rain Bell is a fairly fast growing shrub to 2-2.5 metres tall. It has large, bright green, heavily veined leaves which can be up to 30cm long, and long spikes of many soft pinkish-purple flowers like little trumpets. It flowers in April, through to July.

It is a very versatile plant, growing well in sunny spots but preferring to grow in at least part shade. It is one of the few shrubs that will grow and flower very successfully under large trees. The ideal spot would be in semi-shade, protected from the harsh afternoon sun that will bleach the colour from the foliage as well as the flowers.



It is not particularly fussy about soil or moisture, although extreme conditions will cause it to wilt, shed leaves and become a bit sparse.

The bushy habit of Chinese Rain Bell makes it a great screen, even in quite shaded positions where other screening plants like lilly pillies might struggle, and the beautiful pink flowers are a bonus when not much else may be in flower. It does need a bit of room to look its best, so is not ideal in a very narrow position.

These spectacular flowers can attract bees, butterflies and birds, a boon to our garden wildlife.

This is an easy plant to look after. Enrich the soil with organic matter before planting, and keep it moist while it settles in. Fertilise with a complete organic plant food a couple of times a year, and prune after flowering.

Suitable companions include some of the many *Plectranthus* species, which also flower in autumn; shrubby *Begonia*, which continue to flower from summer into late autumn; or some of the silvery-leaved *Billbergia* cultivars which form a good clump in shaded spots.

I have successfully struck some cuttings from mine and hope to make them available to members and plant sales.

Thanks to iGarden for some information

Garden Snaps

Val Karwalski sent in a pic of a beaut Dahlia flower in her garden. Val bought tubers at our last Plant Sale and thought they had died. This recent rain has revived lots of dormant plants (and unfortunately not all the plants I am getting are welcome!). Thank you for the pic Val!

Dahlia tubers can be quite reliable performers, shooting up from dormancy with our autumn rains, as long as they are in a spot which doesn't retain too much water which can cause them to rot.



Not having any garden pics from other members at the moment, here is one from our recent family trip to Hawaii. This is *Crinum augustum*, closely related to our own native *Crinum* or Swamp Lily with green leaves & white flowers. This bulb is commonly called "Queen Emma" after the last Queen of Hawaii.

These are planted widely in the beach side resorts on Maui and really complement the other tropical-feel plantings of gingers and giant bird of paradise, (*Strelitzia Nicolai*) and handle the salt laden winds. Please send in any pics you would like to share!



"Every garden is unique with a multitude of choices of soils, plants and themes. Finding your garden theme is as easy as seeing what brings a smile to your face" ~ Teresa Watkins

Cheers, Rick