

CANBERRA GERANIUM & FUCHSIA SOCIETY INC.**Volume 49 No. 1 - April 2026****ISSN 1441-7928****www.cgfs.org.au**

PRESIDENT	Owen Heness	6254 6332
VICE-PRESIDENT	Jill Fox	6238 1470
	Margaret Roberts	6258 4520 or 0499 593 249
SECRETARY	Irene Brewer	0415 883 406
TREASURER	To be advised	
ASST TREASURER	Michelle Kolber	0427 048 424
JOURNAL EDITOR	Maria Geppert	0409 526 962

COMMITTEE

PUBLIC OFFICER	Ruth Weaver	0403 500 700
PUBLICITY	Janet Johnson	6247 0937
LIBRARY	Janette Gerlach	6238 1154
	Therese Pettit	0422 497 164
	Barbara O'Dwyer	0404 018 315

SOCIETY ADDRESS PO Box 425, Curtin, ACT 2605

EDITORIAL E-MAIL gepp.mar@gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP FEES The membership fees for the year (January – December) are Single \$20.00, Family \$30.00 and International memberships \$30.00. Members who join after 1st November will be credited for the following year.

All financial members of the Society receive a copy of the Journal, which is currently published twice a year. Whilst every effort is made to ensure that the information therein is correct, it is the individual authors who accept the responsibility for the contents of their articles.

Unless otherwise stated, with the exception of January and July, all meetings are held on the first Saturday of each month at 2.00 p.m. in the Woden Valley Uniting Church Hall, 40 Gillies Street, Curtin.

Please remember to wear your name tag so that we can all get to know each other, and you must sign the Attendance Book on arrival to ensure that you are covered by the Public Liability Insurance that the Society pays each year.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to our new members who have joined since our last journal in October – Kit Bonollo, Nikki Bensch and Denise Richards – welcome all!

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT 2026

Owen Heness

Membership of the Society during the past year has been good and participating and this has led to productive meetings in what members learn about all sorts of issues that contribute to growing plants. Our membership has increased during the year and that was reflected in a good number of attendees at all our meetings.

Important to our meetings has been a number of guest speakers. Carol Quashie-Williams spoke to us about pests, diseases and predatory insects in the garden and these creatures know how to get into our pots; they do not just stay in the 'garden'. Richard Buker is well known to many of us and he spoke to a meeting on the issue of getting the garden ready for spring and just how important compost is to the garden. Rainer Rehwinkel spoke to us about geraniums and pelargoniums and not only those in and around Canberra but some he saw in South Africa.

Each meeting has featured an opportunity for members to "Show and Tell" to all present something that they have found beneficial in the cultivation of the plants they grow. We all know just how useful it is to get a 'solution' to the propagation of a plant species. And it doesn't end there, we follow "show and tell" with a "Question and Answer" time during which all members in attendance can ask all sorts of questions relating to what has happened to plants they have propagated or attempted to propagate.

Our society has always been very active in selling geraniums and fuchsias which our members have grown from their stock of plants. This past year we combined with the Horticultural Society for their Spring Show at EPIC on the

weekend of 15th and 16th November and it was a weekend to remember. Plenty of plants and plenty of people leaving plenty to talk about.



Some of our members who helped out over the two days of the plant sale

During previous years we have arranged a 'bus trip' for the membership to visit a garden or a number of gardens outside Canberra. And that has been a most enjoyable day for those who have taken the opportunity to go. This past year that arrangement was changed a little and we joined up with the Belconnen Garden Club and visited the Japanese Gardens at Cowra. Really there is nothing better than expanding your contact numbers.

We also have a library of books and magazines for members to borrow and read. I have been fortunate of late in that I have been given some magazines to take home and read. To my pleasant surprise I have found these interesting. Those I have read have contained a rather interesting account of some local gardens, some gardens interstate and much to my satisfaction a detailed account of a garden in England. Take my advice and get onto the reading roster.

I do thank the members who attend early on each meeting day to set up the room for our meeting and provide afternoon tea. It makes life easier.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS: MAY 2026 – OCTOBER 2026

The Society's monthly meetings are the place to learn how to propagate and grow fuchsia and geranium plants. The Society is made up of knowledgeable, interesting and friendly people who share a deep passion for pelargoniums, geraniums and fuchsias and a desire to learn more about them. So bring along your plants to show, and your questions or stories to share.

2 May – Monthly Meeting – venue: Curtin

"Show and Tell", Q & A time, raffle, library. Followed by afternoon tea.

6 June – Monthly Meeting – venue: Curtin

"Show and Tell", Q & A time, raffle, library. Followed by afternoon tea.

3 July (Friday) – Xmas in July Luncheon (no meeting on Saturday) – venue: Queanbeyan RSL Bowling Club

The monthly meeting for July is our annual Social Luncheon. Following last year's very enjoyable venue, this year's lunch will again be at the Queanbeyan RSL Bowling Club, located at 1C Yass Road, Queanbeyan East, just down from the big roundabout **from 12 noon till 2 p.m.**

1 August – Monthly Meeting – venue: Curtin

"Show and Tell", Q & A time, raffle, library. Followed by afternoon tea.

5 September – Monthly Meeting – venue: Curtin

"Show and Tell", Q & A time, raffle, library, followed by afternoon tea.

3 October – Monthly Meeting – venue: Curtin

"Show and Tell", Q & A time, raffle, library. Followed by afternoon tea.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Anything you'd like to share? We'd love to hear from you and you have until the 1st of September to send to me so there's plenty of time to think of something – perhaps a photo or a note about what's happening in your garden or somewhere interesting you've been or seen, a recipe, poem or joke?

PRUNING AND TAKING A PELARGONIUM CUTTING

Renate Marcks

February and March are the best times for both pruning and taking cuttings in this area. We prune to shape the plant and to promote new growth and hence, more and better flowers. We cut back to about 1/3 of the plant. If we want new plants, this is the time to strike new plants from the cuttings.

Select your cuttings from strong-growing, short-jointed, healthy plants and then grow them on vigorously. Never take cuttings from a plant which has given any trouble during the growing period. At this time of the year, leave the parent plant a little on the dry side – just as if ready for watering – take your cuttings, making the cut on a slope so that water will not lie there to cause rot, leave the parent plant a day or two in order for the cut ends to heal, you can then water it. A useful tip is to place one drop of methylated spirits on each plant-cut, to prevent entry of disease. Do not put methylated spirit on the base of the cutting or it will not make roots.

Take a good, strong growing tip with 3 or 4 nodes (joints), cut across immediately below a node. Prepare your cutting (approx 10cm) by removing leaves and stipules from the stem, leaving just the two or three top leaves and the growing tip. Place your cuttings, cut cleanly just below a node (joint) in 50-75mm (2-3") pots or 5 to a 125mm pot. Place them in a moistened mix of 1/3 coarse, sharp, washed river sand, peat moss/coir and perlite. Do not let cuttings wilt before planting, do it as soon as possible. Keep the rooting medium just moist but not wet, and water with a seaweed solution from the base to assist rooting and minimise rot.

Keep cuttings in shade for about a week, then expose to semi-shade with plenty of air. Use a seaweed solution at each transplanting to prevent shock to the delicate roots and assist healthy growth. Roots serve three purposes – to start the cuttings into life, to draw up food and water and to anchor the plant. When rooted in 4-6 weeks, move on to 10cm (4") pots.

Note: for Winter flowering take your cuttings in late Spring. Cuttings taken February-early March will be in flower for our November plant sale.

When transplanting into a larger pot, place the original sized pot into the larger pot, fill around with your potting mix, remove the smaller, empty pot and place your plant into this empty space. In this way, the tender, young roots will not be damaged and there will be no set-back.

At this stage, do not use fertiliser on your new cuttings, as the fresh potting mix will supply enough to get them off to a good start. Label the potted-up cuttings – we always think we will remember what we have potted up but it's best to make sure!

Reprinted from the Society's April 2006 Journal



THE GENUS GERANIUM

I came across this article being used as a bookmark in a donated book recently, source and date of publication unknown. It made me think that the more things change, the more they stay the same.

“It is curious how the name of *Geranium* persists in meaning to the man in the street the bedding *geranium* of the Victorian era. For the past fifty years or so every gardening paper has laboured in vain to persuade its readers that the *geranium* of our forebears are really *Pelargoniums*.

Even to the present day, when I recommend people to plant a drift of that fine *geranium*, *G. grandiflorum* var. *alpinum*, upon a retaining wall or as a group in the front row of the herbaceous border and enlarge upon its beautiful blue colour, they look at me aghast and say ‘Surely *geraniums* are tender, and who has ever heard of a blue one anyway?’

The younger generation scarcely know a *geranium* at all and perhaps, if we can make these future citizens garden-minded, we may yet succeed in teaching a growing public that *geraniums* are hardy plants of many colours and are highly worthwhile plants for the border, the wild garden and the rock garden.”

Excerpt from an old pamphlet, Price 1 shilling

SPRING 2026 FLOWER SHOW DATES FOR THE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF CANBERRA

Spring Bulb and Camellia Show 19-20 September, Fitzroy Pavilion, EPIC

Iris, Rhododendron and Azalea Show 31 October-1 November, Mallee Pavilion, EPIC

Spring Exhibition and Rose Show 14-15 November, The Abbey, Federation Square, Gold Creek

Check the HSOC website for updates:

<https://hsoc.org.au/activities-and-events/#flowershows>

PRUNING FUCHSIAS

Bruce Walker

Fuchsias need to be pruned at the end of their flowering season. They need to be hard-pruned to encourage new growth as they flower on the new wood that will grow after pruning.

When pruning, you should firstly look at the plant and remove any dead or diseased parts, as this can spread to other parts of the plant or even onto other fuchsias.

Your secateurs must be clean and sharp and after pruning each plant, dip your secateurs in household bleach to prevent the spread of diseases. This may seem unnecessary, but it is very important.

Now that all the dead and diseased parts of the plant have been removed, cut the plant back to the edge of the pot or basket, and shape it to the shape you want for the next season.

Pruning is a very important part of fuchsia culture and it must be carried out every year, otherwise you will end up with a plant with old woody branches and very few flowers. Whenever a plant is not doing as well as it should be, it will sometimes respond to being pruned after the set back. An example of this is if a plant was to have dried out and is struggling, it will more than likely recover after being pruned.

Tip Pruning

As a plant grows, the tip of the branch should be tip pruned to encourage more branches to form. By doing this, you will end up with a better looking plant that will have more flowers. When you have tip pruned one branch, two branches will grow from that point, and then as the two new branches grow, they too can be tip pruned, and so on.

Root Pruning

Apart from pruning the top of the fuchsia, you can also prune a plant's roots. This is sometimes needed so that you can use the same pot or hanging basket. Before you root prune a plant, you should first prune the top of the plant as described above.

Once the plant has been top pruned, it can then be removed from the pot or basket and all of the potting mix removed from the plant's roots. An easy way to do this is to hose it off. Now you should look for any dead or diseased roots and remove them, then cut the plant's roots back to about half. By pruning a plant's roots you can use the one pot or hanging basket for many years as long as you prune the roots every year.

The best and only time to root prune is when the plant is dormant in winter or, if you are in the warmer areas of Australia, when the plant has stopped flowering.

After your fuchsia has been root pruned, it should then be potted back into its pot or basket using fresh potting mix, and watered very well. (**Note:** if the forecast is for cold and frosty weather, keep the pots in a frost-free environment until the potting mix has dried off until it is just damp, otherwise the roots will freeze.)

Points to Remember when Pruning

1. Prune after flowering period;
2. Remove dead and diseased wood;
3. Use clean, sharp secateurs;

4. Prune to the edge of the pot or basket;
5. Prune if a plant has had a set-back;
6. Tip prune to encourage a better shaped plant and more flowers; and
7. Root prune if you want to use the same pot or basket.

From "How to Grow Better Fuchsias" Country Lane Wholesale Plants

"Knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it into a fruit salad."

Miles Kington

OPEN GARDENS CANBERRA – AUTUMN 2026

11 and 12 April 2026 - 10am to 4pm

Christine's Garden, 48 Weathers St, Gowrie, ACT

A great favourite returns for its first autumn opening since 2019! Enjoy this very large suburban garden and its amazing variety of plants. Rock walls allow for built up garden beds with improved soil and drainage. English box hedges divide areas including a parterre garden. Large mirrors on the boundary fences create illusions of depth. Deciduous trees provide Autumn colour. Refreshments will be available, and there will be plenty of plants for sale.



Christine's Garden

Opening hours: All gardens open from 10am to 4pm Saturday and Sunday.

Member entry: Garden entry is free for members.

Visitor entry: Garden entry is \$10.00 for visitors 18 years and over. Special pricing may apply to some openings.

Memberships: [Join Open Gardens Canberra](#) for only \$30 and all gardens are free for the membership year (to end June).

And for the coming seasons, here are two articles by Rex on getting the most from your pelargoniums.

PELARGONIUM CARE – AUTUMN AND EARLY WINTER

March and early April is an excellent time to take cuttings and grow them on in preparation of garden plantings in Spring. Many old favourite plants are often lost because we have failed to take cuttings for new plants. In cold regions like Canberra, it would pay to treat our Pelargonium garden plantings as annuals and take cuttings for new plants in early Autumn each year. This practice is successfully carried out in many parts of England and Europe.

Having said that, the following tips are offered for the care of our plants during March, April and May.

1. Pruning can be done as an annual task in early Autumn. Regals have usually finished flowering by February and pruning should then commence. Prune to shape and only do a third of the plant at a time. As soon as new growth appears, prune a further third and so on. This process will lessen the shock to the plant. You can prune back to two-thirds of the plant. The plant (given care) will produce good overall growth prior to winter. Remember to seal all cut stems with methylated spirits or a dab of sulphur to prevent entry of disease. Once the plant has a good overall growth, pinch out all new growth tips. Continue pinching until the end of July. This gives a very compact growth pattern and will produce an abundance of flowers in mid to late Spring.
2. Remember that Fancy-leaved Zonal Pelargoniums are pruned in late Spring and not at this time.

3. Zonal Pelargoniums can be pruned in early or late Autumn, depending on your choice. Carry out in a similar manner to that for pruning the Regals described above. Some Pelargonium enthusiasts grow for flower display and therefore prune in late Autumn. In cold regions such as Canberra, the growing season is short enough without resorting to early pruning. Late Autumn pruning will mean that plants will take a little longer to flower in Spring.
4. Ivy-leaved Pelargoniums are best left till late Autumn to carry out heavy pruning, bearing in mind that many Pelargonium growers progressively tip prune this plant through the growing season. With Ivies that have been given protection from frost, I have pruned as late as May to early June and still have plants flowering in late October to mid November. This method will give you from five to six months of flowering.
5. Continue feeding half strength weekly or full strength fortnightly with a fertiliser high in Potassium. Phostrogen is one, however there are many other brands available from your garden centre.
6. Pests are very prevalent at this time of the year. Plants that are under stress from lack of moisture or nutrient are usually the first plants to be attacked. Inspect plants regularly for evidence of caterpillars and other sap sucking insects.
7. Avoid overhead watering whenever possible as this will quickly damage blooms. Also, regularly remove all dead flowers and leaves as they can form a breeding ground for disease.
8. Make sure you place a name tag in with each cutting at the time of planting.
9. When pruning or taking cuttings, remember to have a small container of Methylated Spirits handy to dip the cutting implement into between each cut made. This will halt the spread of disease.
10. Make sure you are using the correct fertiliser for the particular season, ie, plants not fully grown will need a fertiliser high in Nitrogen, late Spring

through Summer and Autumn high in Potassium, Winter a fertiliser that has a concentration on maintaining a healthy root development – Seasol and Nitrosol are but two which are satisfactory. Read the NPK label on the container and if in doubt seek the advice of a member of the Society or your garden nursery.

Reprinted from the Society's April 2006 Journal

OVERWINTERING OF PELARGONIUMS

Rex Daley

Pelargonium growers unfortunately do not have the luxury of Fuchsia growers, in that there is virtually no dormant growth period during winter. In fact to keep Pelargoniums healthy during this period requires a lot of care.

They, the plants must be:

1. Placed in a frost free situation.
2. Kept on the dry side – watering? If in doubt don't.
3. Keep the soil surface free of dead leaves and flower heads as these will attract mould/fungus, which will be threatening to the health of your plant.
4. Restrict the use of fertilisers to one which is appropriate to the season of winter, Bloom Booster (N. 6.19 – P 14.64 – K 16.8) is but one, which has the very low nitrogen level and the required level of Phosphorus, which enhances good root and cell multiplication. In winter months one application every three weeks is ample. Alternately Seasol can be used.
5. Give the pot plant a quarter turn each week to get an even growth all round on the plant.
6. Mid-April is not too late to take cuttings; they should strike before the onset of real cold weather.
7. May is really too late for pruning and shaping your plant. The best one should attempt at this time, particularly with Zonals, is to push out the

growing tip at the end of each stem. This will ensure that any slow growth which will occur during the almost dormant winter period is reflected in bushing up the plant by having new growth appear lower down the branches. Shaping will thus be much easier to achieve once frosts have finished. The canes of well-established Ivy Leaved Pelargoniums are an exception to the above, provided they are protected from frost. However, you will need to seal each cut with a spray of methylated spirits at the time of cutting to ensure you have sealed the wound from disease.

8. August is always a difficult time for survival of potted plants: winds quickly dry out potting mix, and future watering may just run down the sides of the pot. An unhealthy dry look of the plant and leaves will indicate this. To remedy, completely submerge the pot in a bucket of water and leave until air bubbles cease to appear. Take the pot out and let it drain. At this point mix up some "Weta Soil" in a watering can and slowly water into the soil in the pot; this will open up the soil around the roots which often packs tight with some soil mixes, preventing water penetration.
9. In mid to late August the plant will start to show signs of new growth. At this point a weak weekly application of soluble fertiliser such as "Thrive All Purpose" (which is high in nitrogen, N 27, P 5.5, K 9) will give the plant a good push along in growth. Continue for 3 to 4 weeks and then switch to a fertiliser high in Potassium, "Phostrogen" (N 14, P 4.4, K 22.5) is but one, and continue this on a fortnightly basis for the rest of the growing season.
10. Now is the time to pick out the plants you like to grow on and nurture for display at our November show. To produce a quality plant a good lead-time is always required.

I have always believed that if you do the hard work with your plants in late autumn and winter, they will reward you with a beautiful display of blooms throughout the growing season.

"If the path forward seem unclear, plant something. Care for it. Let the seasons teach you what comes next. "

Lawrence Nault

COMBINED BUS TRIP TO COWRA'S JAPANESE GARDENS

Due to reduced numbers, the Society didn't hold a bus trip last year, but several of our members joined the Belconnen Garden Club excursion to the Japanese Gardens and Cultural Centre in Cowra on Wednesday 15th October. After a short stop at Booroowa for morning tea, we were able to wander through the serene Japanese gardens on a cloudless, warm Spring day and, following lunch at the cafe, returned to Canberra, stopping again to admire the rose gardens outside the Cowra visitors' centre. A very enjoyable day and our thanks go to the Belconnen Garden Club for their kind invitation and their organisation of the day.



The Japanese Gardens at Cowra

FUCHSIA CARE – APRIL – SEPTEMBER

Irene Brewer

APRIL: Tidy plants by removing fallen leaves etc. so that rot does not occur and cause Botrytis. Stop fertilising so that plants harden off for winter. Take cuttings, as fuchsias can produce quite a lot of growth at this time of the year. The tip plus two sets of leaves makes the ideal cutting. Trim off the lower two sets of leaves and put the cutting in a light mixture of perlite and peatmoss or sand and perlite. Don't let them get too wet, especially over winter as they can rot. When you see roots coming through the bottom of the pot, the cutting is ready to be re-potted to the next size. Cuttings can be put into a 1" pot or group cuttings in a 4" pot. Water in the mornings as nights are becoming colder.

MAY: If you have limited space to overwinter your fuchsias in baskets and pots, you can remove about one-third of the foliage. Cut down watering as temperatures drop, keeping the plants moist – do not let them dry out. Roots that become too dry shrivel and the plant dies. It is preferable to water plants in the morning, as watering in the evenings could cause the roots to freeze, especially when temperatures drop to the minus degrees. Cover the soil of baskets and pots with newspaper, coconut fibre or a mulch to keep the roots warm during the winter months. This also applies to fuchsia plants in the garden and helps keep the moisture in and the roots warm.

JUNE/JULY: Your fuchsias should now show signs of "winter rest". They would have shed their foliage, so remove all leaves that have dropped. This will help to get rid of all the pests, eggs and fungus spores that may be hibernating on them. If pot plants or baskets are in an exposed area prone to frosts, move to a more sheltered area against walls and under cover. If this is not possible, drape marix cloth over the plants to prevent frost from settling on them. Keep plants barely moist but do not let them completely dry out.

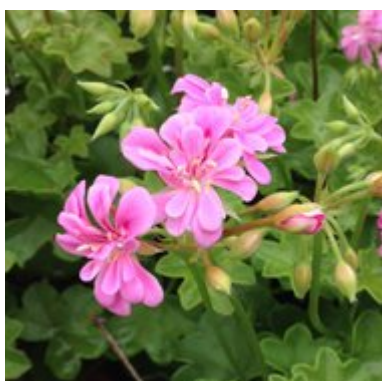
AUGUST: Keep the surface of the plants free from debris. Lightly water to keep moist but not overly wet. As temperatures rise some plants can produce early shoots. Do not be tempted to prune until you are sure that the plants

cannot be damaged from late frosts. Overhead spraying of plants will soften old wood and encourage sprouting of new shoots. When pruning, make sure the plants are given a good shaping, especially in pots and baskets. If plants shoot from the base of the plant, the old wood can be cut back quite hard.

SEPTEMBER: As plants continue to produce new growth it is time to introduce a light fertiliser with higher nitrogen content to encourage new growth. It is important to start pinching out the plant early to encourage a bushy growth. When 2 to 3 sets of leaves form, pinch out the growing tip. Even if the plants start to produce flowers early, cut these off and keep pinching out growing tips until the plant has a desired shape. Then it can be left to produce flowers. Once flowers form, introduce a fertiliser that is higher in potassium to increase flowering. For an instant bushy pot plant or basket, plant out 3 to 4 small plants in the one container, placing plants more into the centre, as the roots will grow out to the sides of the container.

“Sometimes you need the silence of plants to recover from the noise of humans.”

PELARGONIUM ‘SUGAR BABY’



‘Sugar Baby’ was hybridised in the eastern US in the 1960s. It is a dwarf ivy leaved pelargonium with 1½ inch (4cm) leaves. Florets are cotton candy pink, but a darker pink sport is also available as ‘Rose Pink Sugar Baby’. It is not a pink form of ‘Gay Baby’. The two are quite different in appearance and do not cross with one another or produce sports of the other kind.

‘Sugar Baby’ flowers from Spring to Autumn and is a lovely specimen plant for a pot or hanging basket, with flowers hanging over the edge of the pot and strong evergreen foliage year round.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Our financial records have been audited and the report lodged with the relevant department. Following is the statement of income and expenditure for the year.

CANBERRA GERANIUM & FUCHSIA SOCIETY INC.

STATEMENT OF INCOME & EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

INCOME	2025	2024
Bus Trip	630.00	2410.00
Commission received on Plant Sales	65.15	-
Donations	60.03	-
Donations of Plants for Plant Sale	2522.35	-
Interest	223.98	230.78
Membership	800.00	750.00
Raffle	650.00	609.00
Total Income	<u>4,951.51</u>	<u>\$3,999.78</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Bank Charges	14.33	-
Bus Trip	630.00	2875.00
Donation	-	500.00
Flowers for Member	-	99.98
Gifts for Speakers	24.95	86.18
Garden Clubs of Australia – Membership	90.00	85.00
Garden Clubs of Australia – Magazine	20.00	15.00
Garden Clubs of Australia – Insurance	175.19	167.65
Hall Rental	856.00	800.00
Maintenance of Web Site	351.77	-
Purchase Computer Remote	35.60	-
Purchase Name Tags	-	35.97
Purchase P.A. System	-	95.95
Post Office Box Rental	159.00	154.00
Printing of Constitution	64.90	-
Printing of Flyers	102.85	-
Printing of Journal	317.90	299.20
Stationery	-	36.97
Workshop Expenses	35.00	10.90
Total Expenditure	<u>\$2,877.49</u>	<u>\$5,361.80</u>
<u>NET PROFIT/LOSS FOR THE YEAR</u>	<u>\$2,074.02</u>	<u>-\$1,362.02</u>