

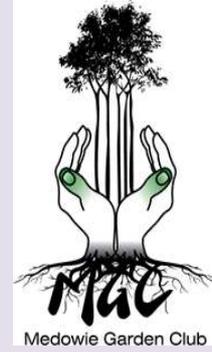
“Through the Garden Gate”

*Newsletter
of the
Meadowie Garden
Club*

April 2020

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Member Count: 51



*Proud Member of
Garden Clubs of Australia*

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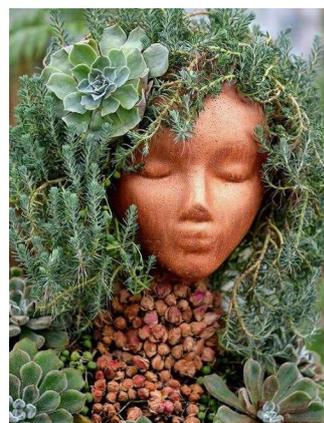
Monthly Meetings

Hi All, by now everyone is aware that our meetings and any previously planned events are off until further notice due to the awful virus.

I hope you are all well and still sane after being "socially isolated" for so long! At least as well as being protected from COVID-19, we also aren't exposed to all the winter flu bugs which start to get around at this time of year.

And, we are getting plenty of opportunity to work on our gardens! Many people, myself included, seem to be getting stuck into starting or renovating productive gardens for fruit and vegetables. Seedlings and even seeds seem to be in short supply at the moment. I have sown some peas, beans, silver beet and beetroot but they were well out of date and so will probably not germinate, I will be on the lookout for fresh seeds or seedlings.

I thought I would still try and put out a monthly newsletter with a few profiles on some unusual plants and some pics of cute or unusual garden plants, objects and ornaments (some from our garden, some scrounged from Google - or members!) which may be of interest to members while you are twiddling your thumbs.



Plants To Vie For

Plant Profile: Canon Ball Tree (Couroupita guianensis)

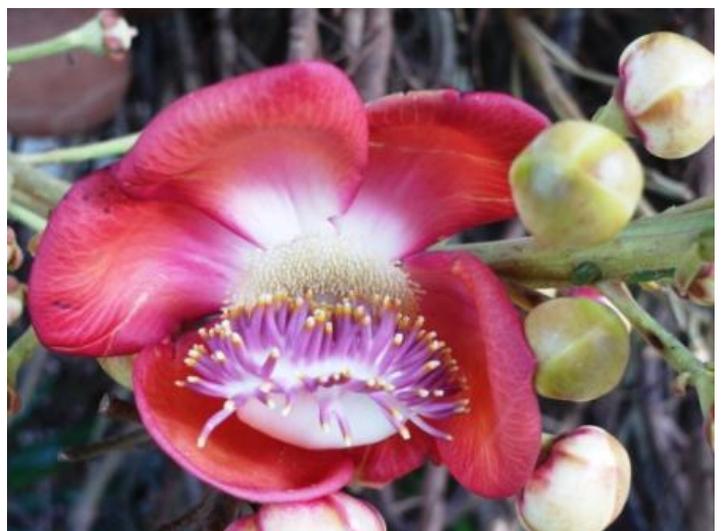


By Scott Mori (extract):

"I still stand in awe each time I see the cannon ball tree, a member of the Brazil nut family. In fact, it is such an astonishing plant that I am nominating it as the most interesting tree on Earth.....I challenge you to nominate a tree, tropical or temperate and from any part of the world, that you feel is more interesting than this marvel of nature".

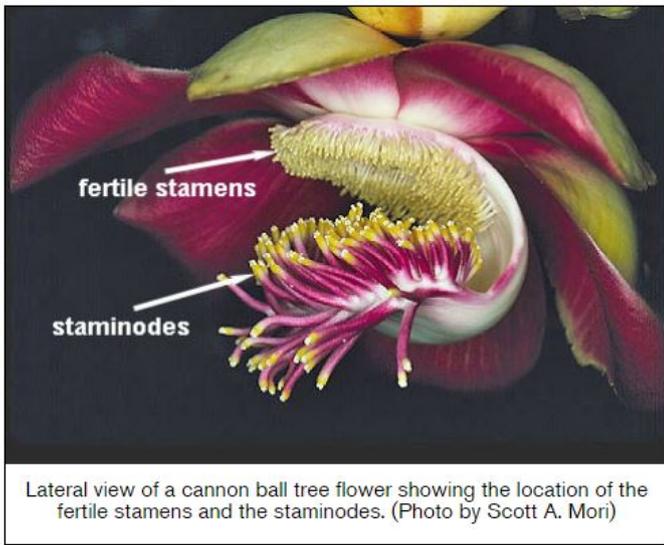
"Unfortunately, because the cannon ball tree can only grow outside of its natural habitat when cultivated in subtropical and tropical botanical gardens, it cannot be found at the New York Botanic Gardens. However, if you have a chance to visit the Miami area, you can appreciate it in cultivation at the Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden in Coral Gables". [This is where we saw and photographed this amazing tree - Rick]

"The cannon ball tree is grown in gardens because the flowers, arranged on long stalks projecting from the trunk, are large, beautiful, pleasantly aromatic, and unlike any other flower a newcomer to the tropics has ever seen. Even the fruits are a botanical curiosity because they mimic the shape and size of cannon balls, but, in contrast to the flowers, they release a fetid aroma at maturity when they hit the ground and break open".



"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds that you sow." ~ Robert Louis Stevenson

"Flowers of the cannon ball tree are without nectar, but bees are rewarded for visiting them with a special kind of pollen. The pleasant aroma attracts the pollinators to the flowers and the yellow colour at the apex of the staminodes directs bees to the sterile pollen. Especially female carpenter bees, that gather the sterile pollen to feed their larvae. While they are collecting sterile pollen, fertile pollen is deposited on their heads and backs, where it is subsequently rubbed onto the stigmas of the next flowers visited, thereby effecting cross-pollination – the first step in the production of seeds".



Scott A. Mori has been studying New World rain forests for The New York Botanical Garden for over 35 years. He has witnessed an unrelenting reduction in the extent of the tropical forests he studies and as a result is dedicated to teaching others about this species rich ecosystem.



A couple of pics from our garden...please send some of your pics (taken anywhere) to publish!



Plants To Vie For

Plant Profile: Wax Plant or Porcelain Flower (Hoya Species & Hybrids)



I was attracted to Hoya back in the seventies because of their fascinating and very unusual flower shapes and colour combinations and also their leaf shape, colour and texture. The flowers are quite variable in size, shape and colour across varieties but all have a similar basic structure. As their common name suggests, flowers can appear to be crafted from porcelain and are often grouped in circular or globe shaped umbels.

Hoya growth habit can vary from twining/climbing through hanging/pendant to bushy or shrub-like. Most varieties are well suited to growing in hanging pots or baskets. Most Hoya don't mind being a little root-bound, as they are used to growing epiphytically, so don't need re-potting often. A fairly free-draining mix is best as they do not like to have water-logged roots. I have found that a good orchid mix seems to be best.

They can be allowed to dry out somewhat between watering as their leaves and stems retain quite a lot of moisture, as can be seen when pruning, when a thick, sticky sap may appear. Many varieties of Hoya flower repeatedly from a branching spur and a rough looking "peduncle". Don't cut these off as the quantity of future flowers would be greatly reduced.



Hoya pauciflora



Hoya bella



Hoya carnosa



Hoya pubicalyx Philippine Black



Hoya pubicalyx Hawaiian Purple



Hoya macgillivrayi



Hoya 'Shooting Star'



Flowering Spur and Peduncle

"I have never had so many good ideas, day after day, as when I worked in the garden."~

John Erskine

Cheers, Rick