



## MONTHLY MEETING THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 25, 2025

Absolutely no one at our meeting of September 25 was surprised to see an excellent display of spring flowers in all of the four main flower sections of our benching. We had 69 members attend plus three visitors but with ten apologies thanks mainly to a range of medical issues.

The key news item of the meeting was that our **CHRISTMAS PARTY** was confirmed to be on **FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12** at our usual meeting venue of the CARRARA COMMUNITY CENTRE. The Club will be doing the catering.

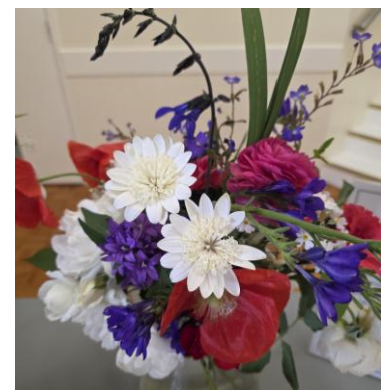
President Denise recognized that some members were disappointed we'd not be having a sit-down formal meal at a venue such as a Bowls or Sports Club but, as stated in previous meetings, the costs for such meals (to the club) is at least \$45 to \$50 for even a basic two course meal. The Executive is convinced we can do a better meal for considerably less. Thus, our cost will be **\$30 per head** (\$40 for non-members) which will be three courses plus tea/coffee, a \$10 free Christmas gifts and numerous lucky door prizes. Bookings by direct credit or cash can be made up to and including our September meeting.

As noted above, a major highlight of the meeting was the various displays of spring flowerings. In the Vase of Flowers section for example there were several standouts as regards spring colour (see at right) beginning with a mix of different colored **clivias**, a mix that includes pink **roses**, **daisies** and **orlaya** (a European annual which has some 11 species), a mix of **statice** and **salvias** with more **orlaya**, a huge display dominated by **cleome** (of which there are some 170 species) and **Queen Anne's Lace** or wild carrot (*Daucus carota*) and finally a mix of cottage garden flowers including **daisies** and **ranuncula** and more **salvia**.



The orchids and our monthly feature of **Hippeastrums** were just as good. Among the best individual hippeastrum entries was an example of one called 'Apple Blossom' – a large pink one with strong stem and (usually) an equal spread of its blooms. Not cheap usually but well worth looking out for.

John William's winning '**Mouse Me**' orchid (a hard cane dendrobium) was also a popular talking point.







Also attracting interest in the benching were Lesley Wilkinson's winning **Petra volubilis** commonly known as 'Purple Wreath' or 'The Sandpaper Vine' because of its rough to the touch leaves. In our climate it is the perfect replacement for Wisteria as it is tough and the flowers hang down as wisteria do. Also noted was Val Marsden's variegated **Plectranthus** (native to southern Africa and Madagascar) of which there are some 85 species.



As for our normal activities the raffle, which had thirteen different prizes this meeting (at left) including several spring flowering plants took \$298.75. A good result considering we had just 69 members at the meeting. The cuttings table took \$60.90 while the Sales Table is yet to be collated because they had such a huge number of plants for sale. That included a good supply of soft cane dendrobiums in bloom.

Among other news was that **Pam Wood** (our Kitchen Convener) has ordered two different cakes for our Birthday Party in October. Long Service Badges will be distributed that day.



## GUEST SPEAKER – ALEX BLEWMAN



Our Guest Speaker for the day was one of our own specialist growers – Alex Blewman who has a huge collection of both desert roses and orchids. We cannot thank Alex enough for the time she spent preparing her talk – especially borrowing our projector for a couple of weeks so she could perfect filming her demonstration, so it was projected onto the 'big screen'. It meant we could see what she was doing with the plants she had brought along to 'work on' during the demonstration.



Alex demonstrated how to re-pot desert roses, how to trim off excess roots and most importantly how easy it is to 'lift' them to create more interesting shapes in their **caudex** – the thick swollen trunk they have. She demonstrated how you can create interesting shapes e.g. how to put a 'hole' through the caudex.



Among special hints was the use of cinnamon to treat and protect 'cuts' on the plant and also of methylated spirits as a tool disinfectant. Many thanks to Alex for her hard work.

