WELCOME TO BLOG NUMBER 13

RAIN AT LAST HOORAY!

THE ONLY DOWNSIDE IS THAT ALL THOSE WEED SEEDS THAT HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR MOISTURE WILL NOW GERMINATE, US GARDENERS ARE LIKE FARMERS THERE IS ALWAYS SOMETHING TO COMPLAIN ABOUT. I’M ONLY JOKING, I AM DEFINITELY A “GLASS IS HALF FULL” PERSON.

AS PROMISED, ANGELA HAS PROVIDED US ALL WITH A BOTANY LESSON ABOUT THE POTATO FAMILY, AND IN THE NEXT BLOG I WILL GIVE YOU ALL AN X-RATED ARTICLE ABOUT THE MATING HABITS OF ORCHIDS!

JEREMY
ANGELA’S DISSERTATION

SOLANACEAE THE POTATO FAMILY

*Solanum tuberosum*, or potato, has pretty flowers and once the plant is flowering you know it's time to dig up those underground tubers. We have been enjoying the special taste of freshly dug new potatoes, nothing compares. The plant will go on to produce fruit that look like small unripe tomatoes BUT are very poisonous.

*Lycopersicon esculentum*, are tomatoes and are also in the Solanaceae family and their fruit is very definitely edible and you can see how similar the flowers are. Another edible Solanum is aubergine *S.melongena* and also Cape Gooseberry *Physalis alkekengi*. Some people consider chili peppers edible and they too are in this family.

But many of the family are poisonous and narcotic: Tobacco or the *Nicotiana* genus; deadly night-shade *Atropa bella-donna* and many others; -hen bane; thorn apple etc., all of which are very poisonous. Henbane because of its narcotic properties was used to alleviate toothache and a lot of these plants are still used pharmaceutically.

We grow many for their decorative flowers like bedding nicotiana and *Solanum lacinia-tum*, Kangaroo apple which flourishes in our garden and seeds itself freely. One of our most decorative summer flowers, the petunia is yet another member of this family. Most of the family have their origins in mid and S.America and are not winter hardy. Anyone who has had their early potatoes frosted can verify this!

The potato family is very important to mankind.
ROSES GALORE

ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS IT IS AND ALSO IT’S NAME

ICEBERG, SHAME IT HAS NO SCENT
SELFRIDGES, AGAIN NO SCENT BUT A WONDERFUL SHAPE

JOIE DE VIVRE—DELIGHTFUL APPLE SCENT AND A BEAUTIFUL BUD
KIFTSGATE HAS TRAVELLED 4 METRES THIS YEAR AFTER THE WINTER RAINS. YELLOW SUNCHARM IS A STANDARD ROSE WHICH WAS A SURPRISE 40TH ANNIVERSARY GIFT FROM OUR NEIGHBOURS AND IS ALREADY ON IT'S 2ND FLUSH OF BLOOMS. FOR YOUR EYES ONLY IS ONE OF MY NEWLY PLANTED ROSES BY THE FRONT DOOR. HARDY GERBERAS MAKE GREAT PERENNIAL, EASY CARE CONTAINER PLANTS. CREAMY WHITE DUKE OF YORK CLIMBER HAS A CITRUS FRAGRANCE AND DOESN'T MIND SHADE. RECOMMENDED TO ME BY SIMON AT PETER BEALES. THE LOVELY RED RAMBLING ROSIE WAS RAY'S RECOMMENDATION. ALWAYS GOOD TO ASK THE EXPERTS RASPBERRY ROYALE IS FANTASTIC THIS YEAR IN TWO CONTAINERS IN WARM SUNSHINE. THANKS AGAIN TO RAY.
ANOTHER COMPILATION FROM CAROLL, WILDLIFE FRIENDLY, DROUGHT TOLERANT PLANTS INCLUDING OPIUM POPPIES WHICH HAVE SET UP HOME IN HER NEWLY REVAMPED BED BY THE FRONT DOOR!

THE ERYNGIUM AT THE TOP I BELIEVE IS KNOWN AS MISS WILLMOTT’S GHOST. THERE IS ANOTHER REALLY BEAUTIFUL ERYNGIUM E ALPINA WHICH IS NOW VERY RARE IN THE WILD, AND A SLOVENIAN PENFRIEND OF ANGELA’S REFERRED TO IT SAYING “IT IS AS RARE AS A FAITHFUL HUSBAND!” CHEEKY I THOUGHT
MY BEGONIAS ARE GOING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH—ALL NOW FLOWERING BEAUTIFULLY THE PICOTEE ONE ON THE RIGHT IS GEORGE MCCORMACK WHICH I BOUGHT THIS YEAR AND THE FLOWER IS ABOUT 8 INCHES ACROSS.

NOTE THE ORGANIC ‘PIGEON POO’ GREENHOUSE SHADING,

CACTI AND SUCCULENTS ARE DOING PRETTY WELL TOO

ON THE RIGHT IS A STAPELIA, AND AS YOU CAN IMAGINE FROM THE SINISTER LOOK OF IT, IT IS POLLINATED BY FLIES—A REAL STINKER!
ANGEL’S FISHING RODS, OR DIERAMA PULCHERRIMA. THEY ARE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO PHOTOGRAPH AS SOON AS THERE’S THE SLIGHTEST BREATH OF WIND, THEY FLUTTER ABOUT LIKE CRAZY BUTTERFLIES. THEY SEED FREELY AROUND IN OUR HOT AND DRY FRONT BED, AND BELOW LEFT ANOTHER PLANT LIKING HOT DRY CONDITIONS VERBASCUM ‘LETITIA’, IT KEEPS ONLY ABOUT 6 INCHES TALL—VERY DIFFERENT FROM THE NORMAL ONE RIGHT
THIS TOP CLEMATIS WE BOUGHT AT ONE OF OUR EVENING MEETINGS AND IS FLOWERING REALLY WELL, THE LOWER ONE WAS HERE WHEN WE MOVED IN 13 YEARS AGO AND LOOKS FABULOUS EVERY YEAR
KATHY EELES SENT US THESE PICTURES ASKING FOR IDENTIFICATION, WE’VE NOT SEEN IT BEFORE, BUT AFTER A BIT OF HEAD SCRATCHING WE DECIDED IT WAS LYCHNIS X ARKWRIGHTII “VESUVIUS” IT LOOKS LIKE A SUPERB BORDER PLANT WITH IT’S BRILLIANT ORANGE FLOWERS, AND DARK RED FOLIAGE.

LYCHNIS IS THE FAMILY NAME OF OUR COMMON WILD FLOWER THE CAMPION, ALSO KNOWN AS CATCHFLIES SINCE MANY SPECIES HAVE VERY STICKY STEMS.

ANOTHER ONE FROM KATHY, THIS TIME IT’S A VERONICA, PROBABLY V. LONGIFOLIA.
I DON’T NORMALLY GROW SWEET PEAS, IT IS USUALLY ANGELA’S FORTE, BUT I DECIDED TO GROW SOME UP AT THE ALLOTMENT THIS YEAR, WE ARE PICKING A HUGE BUNCH EVERY DAY AND THE HOUSE IS REDOLENT WITH THEIR PERFUME

ANOTHER PLANT GIVEN TO US WHICH STRUGGLES TO SURVIVE—IT IS WE THINK A COMMON SPOTTED ORCHID ORCHIDS HOWEVER ARE VERY DIFFICULT TO IDENTIFY SO DON’T HOLD US TO IT
TO FINISH THIS WEEK, HOW ABOUT THIS. PATTI GAVE US A PLANT SEVERAL YEARS AGO, AND WE DECIDED TO DIVIDE IT AND PUT HALF OUTSIDE IN A HOT AND SHELTERED SPOT IT HAS NOW SURVIVED 5 YEARS. IT IS STRELITSIA REGINA OR BIRD OF PARADISE FLOWER.