



The free monthly newsletter from Pembooke Watergardens Nursery (see subscriber info at end)

## Daylilies in full flower

## Fruit tree basics

## Portable chook pen

In our last newsletter I mentioned how we were waiting for the **daylilies** to burst into flower. Well, they have, and this year's show has been spectacular. The rain came at just the right time, and now the garden and nursery are a blaze of reds, pinks, yellows and orange.



*We have over 400 daylily varieties in the nursery*

With a good season and a range of varieties, daylilies will flower for up to six months, producing new flowers everyday. They grow in almost any soil or climate conditions and clump beautifully. You just can beat a good daylily!

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One of the hardest things to do if you're planting grafted **fruit trees** at this time of year is to pull off all the little fruit and throw them away.

Why? Because it is important to encourage root growth rather than fruit growth while the tree is establishing itself in your garden.

As a rule of thumb you should take off all the baby fruit in the first year and half off in the second year. This will make a huge difference to the long term health and productivity of your tree.

Another worthwhile tip is to remember the 3 'M's of fruit-tree growing - **mulch, moisture** and **manure**. Mulch keeps the ground moist, conditions the soil and helps balance ph levels; moisture because, like us, your tree likes a regular drink (especially just after the trauma of planting) and manure because it needs a good feed about three or four times a year.

If you take these simple steps you should get plenty of fruit on your tree. We'll be giving more tips forthcoming editions.

By the way, we have a big range of fruit trees in the nursery all year round, and we gladly take orders for anything not in stock.

\* \* \* \* \*

After 15 years of high level research and development, savage funding battles and ruthless competition, we've finally unleashed plans for our **Portable Chook Pen Mk. 9** (secret code PCP MK.IX).



*The PCP MK.7. This one has a door on the side (mesh with bamboo stiffeners). Morna reckons that doors at each end work better.*

It all began because many of our women customers' complained that the portable chook tractors built by their husbands were too heavy to move. So we set out to remedy the situation.

Put simply, the base is an oblong of standard 50mm pvc plumbing pipe glued with 90 degree joiners. Holes are drilled down each sides into which are fitted standard heavy-duty 19mm polypipe ribs. Heavy-duty chicken mesh is wired over the whole (light mesh lets the ribs collapse) with second-hand corrugated iron covering one end. Doors can be improvised at each end using rigid steel mesh off-cuts (we use old wire fridge shelves). We also fit poly-pipe covered wire handles at each end for easy pulling.

The PCP MK.IX weighs less than 20 kg and can be pulled easily over any grass surface. My 85 year old mother uses one! In 10 years we've had no fox, goanna or snake problems; they are smart enough not to go under anything that will fall back and trap them.

The big attraction of portable pens is that your birds always have access to green pick and suffer less from dust related respiratory problems. And although the PCP MKIX perhaps doesn't have the aesthetic qualities of the rather twee wood-paneled pens that are commonly advertised, it is much easier to move. Plus, plastic doesn't harbor poultry mites.

Don't forget that if you're on the mid-north coast during January we have our annual summer sale in the nursery. And don't forget to visit our website at [www.pembrokeplantsandpoultry.com.au](http://www.pembrokeplantsandpoultry.com.au) - this link will take you directly there. Or call in if you are going past (there is a map on the website).

We hope you have a merry Christmas and very happy New Year.

Enjoy your garden

Morna and Peter

**PS** Although we've finished selling fertile eggs this year, Morna now has lots of birds for sale after a good hatching season. So check out the website or come and have a look.

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