

# Naturelink

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS CRANBOURNE, INC.

## Acting Director's report

Ricardo Simao

## Highlights

### *in this issue*

Dandenongs discovery day 6



Aust. Textile Exhibition 7



Kangaroo Paw 3-day workshop 7



Illustrators workshop 12



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## Fire Season

As I sit in the Director's chair writing this report, on the first morning of 2016, I am mindful that there is still an out-of-control 2377 hectare bushfire developing near Lorne. I spare a thought for the battle-weary firefighters, both career and volunteer staff, fighting this fire. A thought, too, for their families, who have had to celebrate Christmas and the New Year without their loved ones.

A considerable amount of resources is invested at Cranbourne Gardens in fire management. We maintain a team of 25 firefighters, firefighting vehicles, equipment and infrastructure, as well as conducting a range of tasks that includes: regular patrols, undertaking vegetation (fuel) management prior to and during the fire season, conducting planned burns, ecological monitoring and assessment. The administration aspect of fire management (planning, policies, procedures, etc.) on a 360 hectare site comes with its challenges, but it is insignificant compared to the task of managing a whole state!

The predicted warmer than average day and night temperatures are likely to continue until autumn, so we remain vigilant for fires during the summer months.

## Staff development

It is great to see Cranbourne Gardens staff taking their career development to a new level. The support of the Maud Gibson Trust and Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne has enabled several Horticultural staff to secure scholarships:

- Ahmed Ashraf – Masters in Urban Horticulture (woody meadow research project and coppicing trials),
- John Arnott – establishing a Victorian conservation collection (feasibility study),
- Nikki May – study trip to NSW/ACT botanic gardens to further develop wild food plant collections at Cranbourne Gardens,
- Charlie Firth – training package: increasing arboricultural skills and capacity.

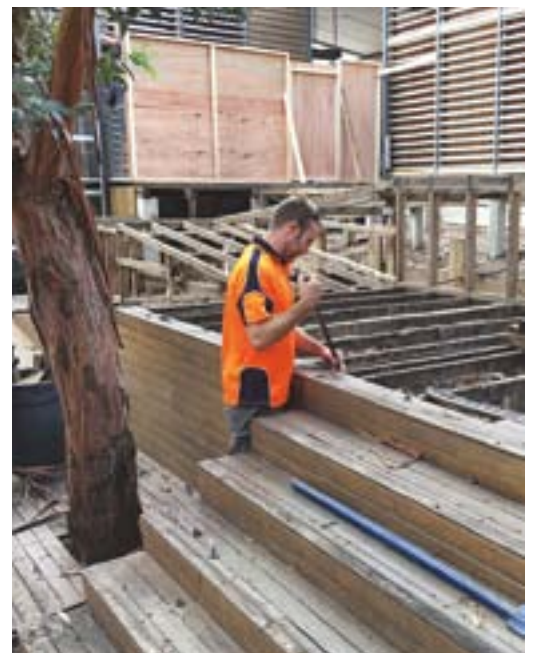
Congratulations to all the recipients. We look forward to hearing about the insights gained from your studies and explorations.



The four recipients of recently awarded scholarships (from left) John Arnott, Charlie Firth, Ahmed Ashraf and Nikki May.  
Photo: Jessica van der Werff

## Repairs and upgrades

Extensive works have been undertaken to repair the deck at the Visitor Centre. The deck timbers had deteriorated considerably and have been replaced with reclaimed ironbark. Where required, the sub-structure has been repaired.



Lance Beale of SOS Contractors removing rotting deck timbers, to be replaced with reclaimed ironbark.



Garden Explorer people movers snug in their new home in the depot, out of the dust and the weather.

## Annual Luncheon

Saturday 7 May  
11.30 for 12.00 lunch

Australian Garden  
Tarnuk Room  
RBGV Cranbourne

\$65 per head



Andrew Laidlaw

Get your booking in quickly to ensure a place at this year's Annual Luncheon.

We are thrilled to have Andrew Laidlaw, Landscape Architect, RBGV, as our guest speaker. Andrew is a qualified landscape architect and horticulturist with over 30 years' experience in the industry. He is well known for his in-depth knowledge of plants, his mastery of design and his unique innovative approach.

His list of projects completed at the RBGV Melbourne speaks for itself – The Perennial Border, the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden, the stunning Guilfoyle's Volcano and the renovation of the Fern Gully. As well, he and his wife Sarah have their own landscape architecture company and are leaving their mark on projects around the state of Victoria.

Andrew's love of plants and nature began in childhood and was inspired by his father's love of the gardens. Childhood memories of playing free in the

Yesterday I was happy to hear from one of the café staff that the air conditioners were blowing an arctic gale, keeping the staff and patrons sheltered from the 40 degree heat outside, indicating that the recently installed geothermal (actually aquathermal!) cooling and heating system is working more efficiently than expected. You can learn more about this low energy system at <<http://www.directenergy.com.au/>>.

And lastly, the new sleeping quarters for the Garden Explorers has been erected in the Depot with some minor works to be finalised before the new shiny vehicles can start occupying this space. I don't need to remind you that these two new units are another example of the help provided by the Friends.

Wishing you a most excellent new year!

bush and connecting with nature has inspired Andrew's lifelong passion to not only work with nature, but to help others learn, enjoy and find their connection with the natural world.

Andrew has been a huge influence through his teaching of landscape design for over 25 years and through his insightful, beautiful designs in public places and private homes, and he is greatly appreciated for his knowledgeable and wise responses to questions on ABC Radio 774 on alternate Saturday mornings.

In addition Andrew is a founding member of Global Gardens of Peace. You will hear much about this program in his address, which he will illustrate with photos.

Of course we are continuing the tradition of a Silent Auction, which will take place in the foyer of the Visitor Centre. Be prepared to invest in a treasure or two!

To book, please fill out the separate insert in this newsletter and mail to Bev Roberts, 41a Alma Terrace, Newport, Vic 3015. Book by 22 April.

## Growing Friends autumn plant sale

Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 March  
10.00am–4.00pm

RBGV Cranbourne, follow signs in carpark

The nursery is open to all members every Thursday from 10.00am to 2.00pm.

Plant list is available 1–2 weeks before the sale.  
See website <<http://www.rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au/>>.

**CASH or CHEQUE ONLY**  
**15% discount for members**



Drawing of *Rhododendron viriosum*  
by John Armstrong

## From the President

### Indra Kurzeme



Indra Kurzeme

We've had a great time editing the newsletter. We hope the new editor enjoys it as much, especially having the last word! [Eds]

## Bookfest 2016

Saturday 11 –  
Monday 13 June  
10am–4pm

Australian Garden  
Auditorium  
RBGV Cranbourne

Welcome to the autumn edition of *Naturelink*. I wrote this piece while looking out over Croajingolong National Park – the special place our family is drawn to every year for our summer holidays.

I am both delighted and proud to be working for you, alongside the more experienced members of the Committee, who are incredibly dedicated and knowledgeable. I feel that I am in very safe hands as the new President. We all share a very strong passion for that other special place, Cranbourne Gardens, and will be working together this year to bring you some wonderful activities and talks. I hope to see you there.

This year I will continue the discussions that Richard Clarke (thank you, Richard, for everything!) started with Chris Russell about future plans for Cranbourne Gardens and how we can support them. Last year the Committee contributed to the Cranbourne Gardens Master Plan 2016–2025, and I hope that you were able to share your thoughts via the website. If you have anything you need raised or concerns you would like to share, please contact me at <[president@](mailto:president@rbgfrienscranbourne.org.au)>

<[rbgfrienscranbourne.org.au](mailto:rbgfrienscranbourne.org.au)> or call me on 0408 002 028.

Last year, Richard organised a meeting with Sally Hirst, President of the Melbourne Friends, which we all found very beneficial. Sally and I plan to keep meeting to see how we can support each other and the work of both Friends groups. The Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is a wonderful place and we feel we should make the most of both gardens and I encourage you to do so also.

Finally, I leave you on a bittersweet note. After nine years of editing *Naturelink*, Susan Funder and Gill Gartlan will be directing their energies elsewhere. This newsletter is one of the best I have ever come across and I look forward to reading it each month. I want to acknowledge the professionalism that Susan and Gill bring to this publication. I witnessed their dedication on last year's trip to the Little Desert. Instead of socialising with the rest of us they secreted themselves away to edit into the night. Thank you both so very much.

See you at the Gardens!

The Cranbourne Friends are currently holding a wide range of pre-loved books and magazines on plants, gardening, horticulture, botany, natural history, other sciences and related subjects. The Friends Library in the Elliot Centre is now operational, and these publications are surplus to our requirements.

An opportunity for all to purchase these publications at bargain prices will be held in the Auditorium of the Australian Garden on the long weekend of Saturday 11, Sunday 12 and Monday 13 June, from 10am to 4pm.

There will also be an opportunity for Friends Members and RBGV staff only to purchase books on two pre-sale days – Friday 3 and Saturday 4 June from 10am to 4pm at the Elliot Centre.

Please bring cash or a cheque, as this method of payment is preferred.

If you would like to offer your assistance at Bookfest 2016 or, if you would like any further information please contact Marjanne Rook at <[marjannerook@iinet.net.au](mailto:marjannerook@iinet.net.au)> or on 9769 7881.



## ACTIVITIES CALENDAR FOR MARCH – JUNE

We hope there will be no changes to the program, but if there are, members will be notified via *Quicklink* and/or email.

### MARCH

**5 Saturday – 14 Monday**

Australian Textile Exhibition, see page 7

**10 Thursday**

Elliot Centre Open House, see below

**19 Saturday – 20 Sunday**

Growing Friends autumn plant sale, see page 2

**21 Monday**

Botanical Illustrators workshop – ‘Painting with gouache on black paper’, with Marta Salamon, see page 12

### APRIL

**13 Wednesday**

Discovery day – Dandenong Ranges, see page 6

**14 Thursday**

Elliot Centre Open House, see below

**18 Monday**

Cruise around Wilsons Promontory, see page 7

### MAY

**7 Saturday**

Annual Luncheon, Tarnuk Room, Cranbourne Gardens, see page 2

**12 Thursday**

Elliot Centre Open House, topic to be advised

### JUNE

**4 Saturday**

Fungi workshop, see page 6

**9 Thursday**

Elliot Centre Open House, topic to be advised

**11 Saturday – 13 Monday**

Bookfest, Cranbourne Gardens Auditorium, see page 3

**19 Sunday**

Afternoon lectures, with Lesley Head and Priya Raygan, topic and venue to be advised

### Open House at the Elliot Centre

2nd Thursday of each month (except January)

1.00–4.0pm

The Elliot Centre is open to members on the second Thursday of each month from 1pm to 4pm. Members are invited to bring some lunch and then at 2pm there is an interesting and inspiring presentation with lots of time for questions and discussion. The event is free, and afternoon tea is supplied. Members are also able to consult the Friends Reference Library during these times.

#### Recent presentations

These Thursday talks are proving to be popular. Our November discussion was led by Margaret Holloway, leader of the Botanical Illustrators, who was ably assisted by Margaret Godlewski. Examples of work in progress were on display, and Margaret H discussed the process of sketching a specimen and the detail required for an accurate illustration. Using a light pad, Margaret G showed how the sketch is traced onto the final clean paper ready for painting. Watercolour paint, applied with fine brushes (size 00), is the preferred medium, but the same process would be used for line drawings or coloured pencils. It was a great discussion. Thank you to both Margarets for showing how these exquisite paintings are done.

In December we went travelling, to live Danishly with Margaret and Richard Clarke. Their daughter and her family are living and working in Denmark, and we followed Margaret and Richard on their trip around the countryside. Richard’s presentation showed the work being done in Denmark to

combat global warming and to reduce their reliance on fossil fuel. It was surprising to see what is possible with enough goodwill. Of course we all found a lot of goodwill when Margaret produced freshly made Danish pastries! It’s not all dry discussion at the Open House. Thank you to Margaret and Richard for taking us to Denmark and for the yummy pastries.

#### Future topics for Open House

**11 February** – The Cranbourne Gardens Herbarium Collection, with Nola Foster

**10 March** – Soils ain’t soils: how to ameliorate your soil for prime growing conditions, with Rodger Elliot

**14 April** – A thing of beauty: basketry using native plants, with Lynne Lochrie

### (Some of) What’s On at RBGV Cranbourne

For enquiries and bookings phone 5990 2200. For information about more activities at RBGV, see <[www.rbgv.vic.gov.au](http://www.rbgv.vic.gov.au)>.

#### National Eucalypt Day: Eucalypts for your home garden

Wednesday 23 March  
All day  
Cranbourne Gardens  
All ages, free

Join Cranbourne Gardens and Bjarne K Dahl Trust in celebrating National Eucalypt Day. Visit the Cranbourne Gardens and explore our new self-guided walk through the Australian Garden – Eucalypts for your home garden. Download a free QR code reader into your mobile device and find out more about these iconic trees as the horticultural team at Cranbourne help you select small gums that will grow well in your home garden.

#### Night Prowl

Thursday 7 April  
7pm–9pm

Meet at the front gate on the corner of Botanic Drive and Ballarto Road, Cranbourne. Families with children aged 6–12 \$17 adult, \$12.80 child/concession. Bookings required.

Journey into the bushland to discover the native animals which emerge at night. Keep an eye out for wombats, wallabies and possums! Bring along a torch and dress appropriately for the weather on the day. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Note: program is subject to cancellation on days of extreme weather.

### (Some of) What’s On at RBGV Melbourne

The following events are presented by the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne. For enquiries contact the Friends office on 9650 6398 or at <[friends@frbgmelb.org.au](mailto:friends@frbgmelb.org.au)>. Book events online, or download a booking form from the FRBGM website at <[www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org](http://www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org)>.



Minjah homestead, Woolsthorpe

#### Worldwide Wonder: Illustrated talk by Catherine Gallagher and Rita Macheda

Tuesday 8 March  
6.00–7.30pm Mueller Hall, National Herbarium  
Friends members \$20, adult \$25

A glimpse into the foreign collection held in the National Herbarium of Victoria in the Melbourne Gardens. The collection is remarkable for its breadth, spanning all major plant groups and all corners of the earth. Starting with the fascinating history of how this important collection came to Melbourne, curators Catherine Gallagher and Rita Macheda will introduce significant specimens and explain the challenges of documenting approximately 400,000 specimens.

#### The Growing Friends plant sale

Saturday & Sunday 16 & 17 April  
Saturday 10am–4pm  
Sunday 10am–3pm  
Inside E Gate, Birdwood Avenue

The Growing Friends plant sale is an opportunity to buy rare plants propagated from plants at the gardens.

#### Woodlands Walk

Thursday 14 April  
10am–12noon  
Woodland Picnic Area  
Up to 6 years, free  
Bookings via City of Casey on 9705 5200

Celebrate Australian flora, fauna and bush traditions during Nature Play Week on an interactive walk to the Woodlands Picnic Area and playground. Adults and children alike will love the storytelling, literacy, and Nature Play activities. Suitable for children aged 0–6 years, this program is proudly supported by the City of Casey.

#### Nature Play Week

Wednesday 6 April – Sunday 17 April  
9am – 5pm  
Visitor Centre  
All ages, free.

The RBGV and Kids in Nature Network have teamed up to celebrate Nature Play Week with a range of programs for adults and children. Reconnect your kids with nature and the outdoors by ticking off the adventures in the ‘50 things for kids to do’ checklist or borrowing a deck of the brand new ‘Go find it’ cards and heading out into the garden to play. For further information visit <[www.natureplayweek.org.au](http://www.natureplayweek.org.au)>.

#### Three-day workshop by Helen Burrows on colour as an important element of design

Tuesday 19 to Thursday 21 April  
10am–4pm  
Whirling Room Studio, GMT Building  
Friends members \$345,  
non-members \$402  
Bookings essential

#### The Pastoralists’ Garden of Eden: Illustrated talk by Richard Allen

Tuesday 3 May  
6pm to 7.30pm  
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium  
Friends members \$20, adult \$25  
Bookings required

The Western District of Victoria was long praised as ‘a kind of pastoralists’ Garden of Eden’, writes historian Geoffery Blainey in his foreword to Richard Allen’s latest book, *Great properties of country Victoria: The Western District’s golden age*. The wool boom in Victoria lasted long enough for families to amass vast fortunes and use their wealth to build huge homes and spectacular gardens. In his illustrated talk, Richard will describe several of these properties, including Dalvui, Nareen and Mount William.

## Discovery day

### Dandenong Ranges

Wednesday 13 April  
10am–3pm (approx.)

Meet at Piggery Café,  
Burnham Beeches,  
1 Sherbrooke Rd,  
Sherbrooke,  
Melway 75 F1

members \$20  
non-members \$25  
students \$10



Stately mountain ash, *Eucalyptus regnans*, and treeferns in Sherbrooke Forest near Kallista.

We are so fortunate to have the magnificent Dandenong Ranges so close to Melbourne! There are many fascinating natural sites, including the beautiful Sherbrooke Forest, as well as magnificent gardens in the region. On this discovery day we will be exploring a tantalising range of plants in nature and in gardens.

We will start by enjoying refreshments (at your own cost) in the Piggery Café at Burnham Beeches and then wander through the long-established and highly regarded Alfred Nicholas Gardens next to Burnham Beeches.

Then it is off to the adjacent Sherbrooke Forest to stand in awe of the magnificent mountain ash, *Eucalyptus regnans*, as well as getting to know some of the smallest of plants in the forest. We should see one of the world's largest mosses and with a bit of luck observe superb lyrebirds in action with their specially adapted large feet.

Shirley Carn is a wonderful enthusiast for Australian plants and she has created a number of lovely gardens over the last 20 years including some that have been featured on *Gardening Australia*. We are very pleased she has consented to have us visiting her latest project in Monbulk.

At Karwarra Australian Plant Garden in Kalorama we will be taken on a tour by horticulturalist Lindy Harris, who previously worked at the Australian Garden. The two-hectare garden is a hidden jewel that has undergone renovation under Lindy's leadership. The garden features more than 1400 different species of native plants.

There is also a retail plant nursery with very reasonable prices. Established in 1965, Karwarra is one of the few public gardens in Victoria where native plants are used exclusively, giving visitors the opportunity to see how they can be incorporated effectively into a landscaped garden.

BYO lunch and other refreshments you are likely to require.

We hope to see you there!

— Indra Kurzeme & Rodger Elliot



A tall growing selection of kangaroo grass, *Themeda triandra*, just before the entrance at Karwarra Garden

## Workshop

### Fabulous fungi!

Saturday 4 June  
9.30am–4pm

Australian Garden  
Auditorium  
RBGV Cranbourne

members \$60  
non-members \$75  
students \$30

As previously announced, we are very excited to be holding a workshop that is all about the fabulous world of fungi!

Without fungi, many of the plants we love could not exist, and nutrients from plant materials would not be efficiently recycled to be taken up again by other plants and organisms. Fungi are amazing organisms that can span long distances under the ground connected by tiny threads called hyphae, which is collectively called a mycelium. The mushrooms and toadstools that people are most familiar with are actually fruiting bodies that emerge above the ground and are connected to the mycelium. These produce and disperse spores so that a new fungus can grow elsewhere.

Our confirmed speakers for the day include Dr Tom May, a senior mycologist from RBGV; Dr Noushka Reiter, an orchid conservationist and botanist from RBGV; Geoff Lay from the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria; and our very own John Thompson.

Topics will include an overview of fungi, orchid–fungi relationships, fungi of Victoria

and a cultural history of fungi. We have also tentatively booked a speaker to talk about the amazing world of lichens. These talks will be followed by a question-and-answer session with our panel of experts, before taking a walk around the Cranbourne bushland to forage for some fascinating fungi!

We hope to see you there!

— Amy Akers



Toadstools are often referred to as fungi, but did you know that they are only the visible fruiting body of a much larger organism under the ground? Photo: Amy Akers

## Australian Textile Exhibition, 2016

Australian Garden  
Gallery and Auditorium  
Visitor Centre  
RBGV Cranbourne

Saturday 5 – Monday 14  
March  
10am–4pm

Entry is free!

## This is the 5th Anniversary Exhibition of Fabrics, Crafts and Quilting at Cranbourne!

There are over 200 exhibits of patchwork, quilts and other items by some of Australia's leading quilting and textile experts, all coordinated and capably brought together by Leesa Chandler of Chandelers Cottage, Braeside. There will be lots to see and also lots to buy.

The exhibition will also feature the international launch of Leesa's new Australian floral range, 'Melba', which includes fabrics and giftware.

Leesa has again very kindly donated a large quilt, which is being raffled by the Friends to assist the ongoing development of RBGV Cranbourne. Tickets are \$2.00 each and are

obtainable at the Exhibition. Winning entries will be drawn on Monday 14 March.

We hope you are able to come, and to visit the Australian Garden in its late summer glory at the same time.



One of the set of four 'Under the Australian Sun' placemats by Carlene Gosbell –third prize in the 2016 Quilt Raffle

## Discovery cruise around Wilsons Promontory

Monday 18 April

Departs Port Welshpool  
at 9am; returns 6pm  
(approx.)

The splendour and harshness  
of the Wilsons Promontory  
Lighthouse site.  
Photo: Wildlife Coast Cruises

Wildlife Coast Cruises will give FRBGC exclusive use of *Kasey Lee* for a full-day cruise around The Prom with a marine biologist on board to field questions and provide commentaries. You may like to check out <www.wildlifecoastcruises.com.au>.

The cruise includes a stop at Refuge Cove for a walk or swim, a cruise around the Prom Lighthouse, up and under the natural feature called Skull Rock and a visit to the Kanowa



Island seal colony. Along the way expect to see seabirds and dolphins.

The cost is \$205 for members and \$230 for

non-members. The cruise includes morning and afternoon teas and lunch. Please use the booking form attached to this *Natureink*.

Some members intend to avoid an early morning trip from Melbourne by staying overnight in local accommodation. It is likely that a coach can pick you up. Please book to suit your own arrangements.

Wildlife Coast Cruises have suggested either of these – prices are examples only.

- Toora Lodge Motel, \$85/double bedroom, <www.tooralodge.com.au> or 5686 2104
- Toora Tourist Park, 2 bedroom cabin from \$102/night, <www.tooratouristpark.com.au> or 5686 2257.

Contact Alex Smart at <smartie38@bigpond.com> or on 9707 5275.

## Advance notice

### Special three-day symposium

## Kangaroo Paw Family (Haemodoraceae) Symposium: 'Bloodroots, cottonheads, kangaroo paws and more'

Thursday 24 – Saturday 26  
November

Venue to be advised

The Cranbourne Friends have great pleasure in announcing a really wonderful opportunity for people to participate in a special occasion later this year that will be undertaken in partnership with the Cranbourne Gardens.

There will be a month-long festival to celebrate the iconic kangaroo paw and its relatives. We may be familiar with kangaroo paws in our own and other gardens, but there is a whole lot more to this fascinating plant family.

As part of this celebration there will be a special three-day symposium on this group of plants which are in the plant family Haemodoraceae. We have been ever so fortunate in having engaged Professor Stephen Hopper AC from Western Australia and Angus Stewart from New South Wales as our feature presenters.

Steve Hopper is regarded as the guru of this plant family. He was previously Director of

Kings Park and Botanic Garden and also the first non-British Director (CEO and Chief Scientist) at Royal Botanic Gardens Kew. Currently he is the Winthrop Professor of Biodiversity at the University of Western Australia. He has written eight books, and has over 200 publications to his name. He is currently writing a book on the kangaroo paw plant family.

Angus Stewart is Australia's premier kangaroo paw breeder with the Bush Gems Range now available throughout the world. Angus has worked full time in the nursery and cut flower industries, as a horticultural consultant and horticulture lecturer. He is also a gardening author and TV presenter on *Gardening Australia*. When on ABC Radio with John Doyle (aka Rampaging Roy Slaven) he was dubbed 'Doctor of the Dirt, Surgeon of the Soil and Professor of the Paddock'. *The Australian native garden* written by Angus in association with AB Bishop was launched at Cranbourne in December 2015.



The density of hairs and vibrant colours make kangaroo paws fascinating subjects for the garden. Photo: Amy Akers

We are in the process of finalising other speakers from Australia and possibly from overseas for the workshop, which will cover a very wide range of topics on the kangaroo paw family.

There will be many other activities connected with this celebration. A special highlight will be the launch of a new kangaroo paw bred by Angus Stewart. The Gardens will be undertaking plantings of kangaroo paws donated by Angus. There will be exhibitions of works by various Cranbourne Friends groups such as Botanical Illustrators,

Botanical Basketmakers and Botanical Fabricators, special tours, plant sales and much, much more.

Please put the dates in your diary now and also let your friends and relatives know the dates too about what promises to be a very special time for the RBCV Cranbourne Gardens!

—Rodger Elliot



Sheath conostylis, *Conostylis vaginata*, produces stilt roots from the spreading stems. It is an ornamental low clumping plant suited to gardens or containers.



*Conostylis setigera* is an ornamental low clumping plant that is excellent for gardens or containers and its lemon-yellow flowers can be profuse.



Grey cottonheads, *Conostylis candicans*, is an ornamental low clumping plant.



Grey cottonheads, *Conostylis candicans*, a more distant view.



The floral emblem of Western Australia, *Anigozanthos manglesii*, in full bloom.

## Staff profile

### Catherine Ashton

Visitor Programs Officer



In March 2009, I started working as a permanent part-time Customer Service Officer at Melbourne Gardens in the Visitor Centre. I was so excited to be working in such a historic and majestic location—with an organisation for which I had worked temporarily as the Herbarium receptionist twelve years beforehand.

In July 2010, my husband, Rodney, and our then seven-year-old son, Ethan, and I moved to Langwarrin South to become live-in caretakers at a National Trust of Australia (Victoria) property, Mulberry Hill—a house museum, the former home of Sir Daryl and Lady (Joan) Lindsay, the birthplace of the iconic Australian novel, *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, and home to many significant early Australian artworks.

I maintained my connection to the Gardens when I was offered casual customer service work. During this period, I juggled our caretaking duties, casual work at the Gardens, night study to complete a Diploma in Conservation and Land Management and I continued to help my husband manage our decorative painting company.

In July 2011, through my studies at Chisholm Institute, I was awarded a four-week Endeavour VET Mobility scholarship

to travel to France and the Netherlands to research sustainability in controlled horticulture environments. This research led to Chisholm Institute Cranbourne conducting trials into the recycling of rockwool-growing mediums into compost.

In July 2012, we bade farewell to Mulberry Hill and this allowed me to fully commit to the role of Visitor Programs Officer at Cranbourne Gardens. One of my initial tasks in this role was to project manage the creation and installation of plant labels in the Australian Garden to coincide with its completion in October 2012.

My role is exceptionally diverse, including developing programs and tours, training staff, delivering seasonal programs, creating and maintaining on-site signage, managing events ranging from Family Days to NAIDOC, and managing projects such as the plant labels and the Dahl Trust-funded *Eucalypts for your home garden*.

I grew up in the bush, a kid from the little fishing spot of Loch Sport, and I feel that at the Gardens, I've returned to a place very close to home. I feel lucky that I have a job that allows me to try to connect people with plants and the natural world around them. I feel as if I have come full circle.

## Recent discovery day

### Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands Discovery Centre and wetlands visit

Jacqui Sheppard organised this most informative and interesting morning to the Wetlands Discovery Centre in late November. A Melbourne Water staff member, Penny, gave a talk about the wetlands showing us various interactive displays and answering our many questions.

The Wetlands are situated on the Carrum Carrum Swamp, which used to cover over 4000 hectares only 200 years ago, but now covers about 260 hectares. It was drained for farming and flood protection using the Patterson Cut, which is part of the Patterson River. As a consequence, the rich bird and plant life has been concentrated into this small area. The wetland is now considered an internationally important Ramsar site, and so is protected for conservation and sustainable use.

The stormwater model. Photo: Mirini Lang



The Centre stands on stilts above the swamp, which is ephemeral. It can be completely dry in summer, but has been known to have water lapping well up the stilts. Its windows provide a panoramic view of the site showing various riparian and aquatic plants as well as an abundance of

birds. There are about 190 species of birds, 20 of which are protected migratory species that come from the northern hemisphere, including the sharp-tailed sandpipers, Latham's snipe, bar-tailed godwits, marsh sandpipers, being the most often seen here.

A field camera that displays on a touch screen in the Centre can be used to zoom in on the birds to allow closer viewing. We enjoyed playing with that! After the talk we walked a short distance to a bird hide just off Edithvale Road, which allowed a closer look at both the plants and birds.

More information on the Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands can be found at <<http://www.melbournewater.com.au/whatwedo/protectrivers/improving-river-health/Pages/Edithvale-Seaford-Wetland.aspx>>.

The dominant plants include *Melaleuca ericifolia* (swamp paperbark), *Eucalyptus ovata* (swamp gum), *Phragmites australis* (common reed), *Triglochin procerum* (water ribbons), *Typha domingensis* (narrow-leaf bullrush) and *T. orientalis* (broad-leaf bullrush). The wetland's close proximity to urban areas means that weeds are a continual management issue. The wetlands vegetation photos show a huge difference in appearance each season.

A stormwater model shows the different ways water moves through the urban and farming landscape to the river. It contrasts more environmentally sustainable practices with conventional urban and farming designs. A demonstration showed water and pollutants (food dye used for demonstration) being absorbed into the soil by plants instead of running straight into the drains and rivers. In urban areas, porous surfaces, which allow water to soak into the ground rather than going into stormwater drains, help to improve the health of our waterways. This includes the farming practices of planting crops along the contour lines of the hills and lining the creeks with vegetation. Wetlands, apart from being a special habitat for flora and fauna, also have an important role in filtering polluted water.

It is well worth a visit. The Discovery Centre is open every Sunday afternoon from 1 to 5pm. Thanks to Jacqui for organising this visit.

—Mirini Lang



There are many birds to see at the Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands at fairly close proximity. Photo: Mirini Lang

## Membership update

### Helen Morrow

The Gardens and the successful Growing Friends plant sales continue to attract members; we have welcomed 25 new members this quarter.

We extend a warm welcome to the following members: Richard Anderson, Julie & Stuart Anstis, Lorrie Batiste, Chris Clarke, Kate Costello, Pat Dale, Diana Farmer, Cyndi Ford, Denise Knaggs, Robert & Kate Last, Laurie Living, Tina Mayling & Ian Parker, Roslyn Parminter, Millie Ross, Marilyn & Theo Rouhard, Steven Tiberi, Virginia Wallace and Nick, Athena, Harry & Stella Kephala.

There is a great activities program planned for this year—workshops, afternoon lectures, some discovery days and more. I hope we can catch up with many of you at some of the activities.

Remember! The Elliot Centre is open to members on the 2nd Thursday of each month from 1.00 to 4.00pm. Friends can consult the reference library during these times; tea and coffee are available; and you can join the interesting talk and discussion, which is advertised in *Naturelink* and *Quicklink*.



## REGULAR MONTHLY ACTIVITIES

The Friends RBG Cranbourne run several regular monthly activities, which are described below. If you are interested in participating in any of these activities, even on an irregular basis, please ring or email the contact person, or just turn up. Don't worry if you don't have specific skills, you will learn on the job, and you will be made most welcome!

### Herbarium Collectors

1st Monday  
9am–2pm  
Elliot Centre  
**Contact**  
Nola Foster  
9583 5731

*We find, photograph and collect specimens of the indigenous plants in the RBGV Cranbourne at each stage of their development and ensure that relevant details – locations, appearance, the substrate they are found on, and habitat – are recorded. These specimens are then dried and mounted for herbarium collections at the RBGV Cranbourne, and the National Herbarium at the RBGV Melbourne.*

The Herbarium Collectors have been concentrating on the fruit of some of our specimens, which are often the hardest to

collect, because of the narrow timeframe. We have also slowly added to the orchid collection, most of which were late to flower this past year. In October, in an area known for *Caladenia pusilla*, we added more pink and white flowered examples, and we also found several excellent *Caleana major*, not previously growing in this spot. Very encouraging.

We have welcomed another photographer to our group, so that we will always have a minimum of two on collecting trips.

### Friends in Focus

2nd Saturday  
Jan–Mar, 9.30–11.30am  
April–Sept, 2–4pm  
Oct–Dec, 9.30–11.30am

Elliot Centre

**Contact**  
James McKee  
9707 2624  
0411 102 107  
photography@  
rbgfrienscranbourne.  
org.au

*We get together to have fun and learn about photography, take photos and enhance and practise our skills in a friendly, social and non-judgmental environment. We range from 'snappers' to serious photographers. Our starting times vary with daylight saving to give the best lighting conditions for taking photographs.*

#### A different view of an image

At our December 2015 meeting, Alex Smart gave us a lesson on the process of digitally editing photographic images. His subject was 'Wildflowers', painted by Celia Rosser in 1963 from flowers collected with Brenda Murray at Marlo, East Gippsland. The original subject was a watercolour painting

that had been framed behind glass. Over time, exposure to sunlight had caused deterioration of the image. Photographing the image through glass had the usual problems of reflections. Alex took us step by step through the process of removing the distortions and straightening the image, resulting in an image that approximated the painting as it would have looked when painted in 1963.

New faces are always welcome, whenever you can make it. If you would like to join the email list, please provide your email address via the photography link on the FRBGC Inc. website. You will receive news about activities via email and *Quicklink*.

### Botanical Basketmakers

3rd Saturday  
10am–2pm  
Elliot Centre

**Contact**  
Lynn Lochrie  
0437 759 610  
basketry@  
rbgfrienscranbourne.  
org.au

*We use native plant materials to create useful or sculptural objects. Our skill levels range from novice to experienced, and we work on our own projects, whilst sharing techniques and ideas, and discussing useful plants. Do come and join us. We welcome all newcomers.*

This February marked our first year since reinstatement of the group in 2015, and our small group has enjoyed many interesting activities together. In January, we had a Foraging Day and picnic lunch in a member's garden, and in February, a workshop on making Hanging Twig Baskets with Pat Dale.

Would you like to make interesting items using plants from your garden, but don't know what plants are suitable? Come along to one of our meetings and we can chat about how to get started.



Cumbungi prepared for drying prior to being made into a hat and Cumbungi Hat (lavender hatband) made by Lynn Lochrie. Photo: Lynn Lochrie

### Growing Friends

#### Marjanne Rook

3rd Wednesday  
Every Thursday

Growing Friends Nursery

**Contacts**  
Marjanne Rook  
9769 7881  
growing.friends@  
rbgfrienscranbourne.org.  
au



Plants supplied by the Growing Friends for a wedding held in the Tarnuk Room

*We propagate a great variety of Australian native plants that have been sourced from the Gardens, and have great fun doing it. The plants are used for educational purposes as giveaways, and for raising funds for selected projects for the Gardens.*

#### Jean Galliot's passing

Towards the end of last November, the Growing Friends lost one of its oldest members, Jean Galliot. Not only one of the oldest in age, which was 92, but also as a Growing Friend. She started with the Growing Friends many years ago, before there was a nursery. Two nurseries later, she very much looked forward to having our current nursery ready to move into. As this was taking some time, she would say, in her forthright manner, that she wouldn't live long enough to see the day. But she did! From time to time she would comment that it was such a spacious and comfortable place in which she was happy to work. And work she did!

Jean was a keen gardener, enthusiastic propagator of plants, and much-loved by her friends. At the Growing Friends get-together on Wednesday 18 November she was busy putting in cuttings, which she always loved to do. As usual, she brought along a container of her delicious home-made Anzac biscuits for everyone to share.

She attended a working bee at the CRISP Indigenous Nursery in Ringwood on the following Friday, then was at meetings of the Australian Plant Society's Maroondah Group that evening and an end-of-year break-up on the Sunday afternoon at Maranoa Gardens, Balwyn. On the Monday she drove to the hairdresser in Heathmont, then returned home for her evening meal before going to bed and falling into a sleep from which she did not awaken.

Jean's many friends all feel privileged to have known her and our lives are very much richer for the times we have been able to share together.

We miss Jean – not for her biscuits, not for her work, but for herself.

– with Gwen Elliot

The Growing Friends Nursery is open to members of the Friends every Thursday (but not Thursday 17 March) from 10.00am to 3.00pm or later by arrangement—check with Marjanne.

### Botanical Fabricators

2nd Tuesday  
10am  
Elliot Centre

*We work with fabric crafts (hand sewing, machine sewing and embroidery) using materials or designs featuring and highlighting the beauty of Australian native plants. We also host exhibitions and provide items for prizes and gifts for Friends activities.*

### Growing Friends plants in Boon Wurrung Café

From March 2015 we commenced a plant-hire arrangement with the café. This involves a weekly change-over of plants so they look fresh and don't suffer too much by being indoors for long. Everyone is delighted with this arrangement with many positive comments from both customers and staff. In addition some 'special' orders have come our way, as last Christmas we received an order, via the café, from a customer for 40 plants to be used as Xmas gifts for her guests at a dinner held at the café one Saturday night.

We supplied the plants with special pots – all beautifully wrapped with a small cake of soap by staff from the Gardens Shop. A lovely and useful gift as every plant supplied can be grown in a pot, so even a person with the smallest of gardens or a balcony can derive pleasure from it, and a nice soap is always welcome! Customer and guests were delighted.

Also we have received an order to supply plants to be used as a bonbonniere for wedding guests next November. An interesting idea.

#### Autumn plant sale

At our autumn plant sale (see ad on page 2) we will have some new plants of which *Anigozanthos* 'Triple Treat', *Brachychiton rupestris*, *Clematis gentianoides*, *Grevillea* 'Apricot Glow' are just a few. Also there will be a variety of leptospermums and acacias. A list of plants for sale will be on the Friends website and the Gardens website one week prior to the sale.

Because members can come to our nursery on any Thursday, we no longer have a special plant sale day for members. However, as we move the plants and benches out to the plant sale venue on Thursday 17 March, please do not come on that Thursday; you can come on Wednesday 16 March instead.

#### Special orders

Any wishes? Perhaps a plant you have seen in the Gardens or multiple plants for a large area. Please contact the Growing Friends by email or phone with your request and we shall endeavour to grow them or may even have them in stock. Contact details are on this page. People do contact us with requests, and recently we had plants going out to Horsham and soon some 80 plants will go out to Ararat.

See page 7 for information regarding the Fabricators forthcoming Australian Textile Exhibition.

## Botanical Illustrators

1st and 3rd Wednesday  
10am–3pm

Elliot Centre

### Contact

Margaret Holloway  
0438 985 382  
illustrators@  
rbgfrienscranbourne.  
org.au

We are a small, friendly group of artists of varying experience, who meet to paint and draw together (without tuition). This allows us to share ideas, information and give each other encouragement and support. We hold exhibitions at various galleries.

### Wednesday group

The Botanical Illustrators group continues to enjoy working together in the comfortable Elliot Centre. We are working towards future exhibitions. The group provides an encouraging atmosphere for artists of a wide range of experience with the sharing of information and ideas. Joining the group sets aside time to paint which, too often, gets pushed aside by our everyday activities. Anyone interested in joining our group is welcome to visit us to see if it would be suitable for them.

### Recent demonstration & workshop on art papers and materials

This was an exciting and informative workshop with much sampling of materials, interspersed with much hilarity. Andrew explained the manufacturing process and the

qualities, advantages and disadvantages of a wide variety of materials and papers. He covered the best uses for the papers, paints and inks, which we tried out. Sample products were available for purchase at sale prices and items ordered at the end of the session were available for collection at the next fortnightly Illustrators' session.

### Recent talk on brachychitons by Jean Dennis

Jean Dennis has painted all the known brachychiton species. Finding the plants was a challenge that took nine years and then a total of 13 years was required to complete the paintings. Jean explained how she came to fall in love with these plants and told us stories of her adventures while looking for specimens. She delighted us with her witty anecdotes of life in the botanical field and showed us samples of her beautiful work as well as plant specimens and some of the inventive paraphernalia she used to assist her. We are most grateful to Jean for her generosity in coming to speak to us and share her experiences.

## Seed Collectors

We meet on an ad hoc basis

### Contact

Richenda Harrison  
9885 2744  
0438 852 744  
seed.collectors@  
rbgfrienscranbourne.  
org.au

We gather and process seed from the bushland for the RBGV Cranbourne seed stock. The seed collected is used by the Growing Friends Nursery and by the Gardens for regeneration of the bushland.

Our meetings are irregular, as the peak time for the group is November to March. Most of the 2–3 hour sessions are on Thursdays, and involve a range of activities: reconnaissance, collection and processing, and documentation.

We have enjoyed monthly sessions with Di Clark or Broni Swartz up to Christmas

2015, but after discussing the future with Di it is clear that with more recent reductions in staffing it is impossible for them to work with us for the time being.

Therefore, sadly, the group will now be in recess until later in the year, but we hope to resume next season. We would like to thank Di and Broni for their friendship, help and enthusiasm and look forward with great pleasure to working with them at a later date.

## Botanical Illustrators event

### Painting with gouache on black paper workshop by Marta Salamon

Monday 21 March  
10am–3pm

Elliot Centre

members \$75  
non-members \$90

Marta Salamon's painting of *Hakea laurina* (Image courtesy of the artist)

This workshop will focus upon completing a small painting of fruits from native trees or bushes such as the hakeas and eucalypts. These may appear uninteresting when painted upon a white background, but a



black background can make even the duller pale browns and greys look glamorous.

The aim is to complete a small painting using a mixture of gouache and watercolour paints, incorporating the black of the paper so that it is clear that the paint has been applied to a dark surface.

Marta Salamon is an experienced botanical artist and teacher and has previously held workshops with our group. She has produced a considerable number of paintings of Australian native flora, and her work is represented in collections in Australia and overseas.

For information, contact Margaret Holloway on 0438 985 382 or at <illustrators@rbgfrienscranbourne.org.au>.

## Annual General Meeting report



A smiling Jill Burness heading off after being presented with her Cranbourne Friends Honorary Life Membership after the Annual General Meeting.

In November we had our Annual Meeting, attended by many of the Friends. Mandatory reports were presented as usual. Of particular interest was the financial report recording a very successful year. A surplus of \$78,000 was generated during the year with the main sources of funds coming from the plant sales (\$39,000) and activities/lectures (\$41,000). Coupled with funds raised from activities in previous years, it enabled the Friends to donate \$210,000 to the Gardens for the leasing of two new Garden Explorers, to provide a large possum-proof netting for the Gardens Nursery and to upgrade the access arrangements to the Orchid Conservation Program.

Having served the statutory three-year term as president, Richard Clarke retired from the position, which was filled by Indra Kurzeme. Two new committee members were elected: Barbara Jeffrey and Barrie Gallacher. Their extensive experience will make them valuable members of the Friends Committee.

## Annual visit to the nuytsia



Brilliant orange flowers of the Western Australian Christmas tree, *Nuytsia floribunda*, in the Australian Garden on Howson Hill. Photo: Judith Cooke

Friends members admiring the nuytsia



Recently Friends of Cranbourne Gardens made their now annual pilgrimage to see the *Nuytsia floribunda* tree on Howson Hill during the flowering period. Showing the lovely deep orange blooms at the top of the tree, it was not in heavy florescence.

This tree is now on the Significant Tree list for Victoria – not so much for the flowers but its growing habit. Being part of the mistletoe family it is hemi-parasitic and must have a host plant. It attaches to the roots of the host by a haustorial collar. The collar surrounds the roots of the host plant with suction-like attachments that then penetrate the root to extract nutrients. When asked about fertilisers, Warren Worboys advised that it would make no difference to the nuytsia, only to the surrounding plants.

Some 30 years ago Warren obtained seeds of the nuytsia to propagate. He was successful in raising many seedlings, but by the second year most had died. This has been the experience of many who have tried to

propagate them. Three seedlings were planted on Howson Hill at Cranbourne, but only one survived. Despite research it is still not known what the host plant is. In Western Australia trees are found from Esperance to north of Perth and often in grasslands, where the host plants are not obvious.

During the process of having the nuytsia placed on the Significant

Two botanical paintings were presented to Chris Russell by John Armstrong (on behalf of Kay Craig and himself) to form part of the ongoing Cranbourne Collection and for safekeeping in the Botanical Collection at the Melbourne Gardens.

A well-kept secret of the Committee was revealed when it was announced that Jill Burness would be awarded Honorary Life Membership of the Friends. Jill has made tremendous contributions to the Friends in her joint role of being a 'Friend', while also being the staff representative over a period of ten years. The award was met with acclamation!

The afternoon was brought to a close by the guest speaker, Millie Ross, Senior Researcher for the ABC program *Gardening Australia*, who spoke on 'Thrifty gardening with Millie'. Millie has her own inimitable way of speaking, and enthused everyone with her challenge to cure 'plant blindness' and she stressed the importance of plants and nature for our continued existence.

Tree Register, checks were made for other trees in Victoria. It was a surprise to people at Cranbourne Gardens to find that a tree existed at Longford, Gippsland, and there are reports of another two trees on Mornington Peninsula at unknown locations.

Alex Smart and Warren visited the tree at Longford late December 2015 and found a well grown tree, not as tall as the Cranbourne one, but with a great mass of orange flowers. It has been grown by James and Annette Frew of Australian Wildflower Nursery, who specialise in cut-flower species. The nuytsia has been so successful for them they have provided restaurants with nuytsia blooms as table decorations. It could have been expected that the cooler and wetter conditions at Longford would have affected the nuytsia more than the conditions at Cranbourne.

John Armstrong was present at the 2016 walk. Several of his botanical drawings are in the Cranbourne Collection, which is the State Collection of botanical drawings of plants found at Cranbourne. He was pleased to relate as part of his role in preparing drawings for each issue of *Naturelink* in the past, he drew the nuytsia tree the first time it flowered, more than ten years ago.

No visit to the Gardens can be complete without noticing other spectacular plants, and this time it was the *Corymbia ficifolia* (syn. *Eucalyptus ficifolia*). The row planted along the eastern boundary of the Australia Garden was in full bloom, from pale pink to orange and deep red. A wonderful display.

The group then enjoyed a coffee together to reflect on the Garden experience.

– Wendy Smart

## Update of the FRBGC tour of South Africa

14–27 September 2016



The tree-like succulent *Aloe dichotoma* with a spectacular under-planting of colourful daisies.

Twenty bookings have been received to date for this tour. All of the single supplements have been filled, but some double or twin-share places are still available. Below is some pertinent information:

- Botanica's costs for the land content are \$6850 for double or twin-share accommodation.
- FRBGC's levy is \$250 per person payable to Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne Inc. This levy is partly a fund-raising initiative for FRBGC, and it provides a buffer for incidental costs that will arise during the tour, e.g. donations to Friends groups in South Africa when they provide guides or other assistance.
- Final payment is due 100 days before the travel date, i.e. no later than 6 June 2016.

- Return airfares are approximately \$2500 per person. Botanica can arrange bookings if required, or you can use your own travel agent.
- Optional post-tour extensions can be organised by Botanica or you can make your own arrangements.
- Travel insurance is at your own cost.

For booking forms, brochures or further information, contact Botanica: Melissa Frawley, Groups Tour Consultant, on (03) 8526 2138, or at <melissa.frawley@apptouring.com.au>.

The FRBGC contact is Alex Smart, 7 Ann St, Beaconsfield, Vic. 3807, on 9707 5275, or at <smartie38@bigpond.com>.



Spectacular scenery from Cape Point at Cape of Good Hope.

### BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

#### JOIN THE FRIENDS AND RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING BENEFITS:

- our quarterly newsletter *Naturelink*
- *QuickLink* eNews
- discount rates for both Melbourne and Cranbourne Friends activities
- access to Friends-only activities
- 15% discount on plant sales at RBGV Cranbourne
- access to Friends-only plant sales

- 10% discount at the Boon Wurrung Café
- 10% discount at the Gardens Shop (Melbourne and Cranbourne).

You can get an application form from the website <<http://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/support/support-groups/friends-of-rbg/cranbourne>>, the Visitor Centre at RBGV Cranbourne, or Helen Morrow, Membership Secretary on 9850 9125, or at <membership@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au>.

### The Friends of RBG Cranbourne Committee

<b>President:</b> Indra Kurzeme	0408 002 028	<b>Christine Kenyon</b>	9589 2154
<b>Secretary:</b> Helen Kennedy	9560 0185	<b>James McKee</b>	9707 2624
<b>Vice President:</b> Helen Morrow	9850 9125	<b>Bev Roberts</b>	9391 3393
<b>Immediate Past President:</b> Richard Clarke	5974 1750	<b>Marjanne Rook</b>	9769 7881
<b>Treasurer:</b> Karen Russell	9878 4857	<b>Naturelink Editors</b>	
<b>Membership Secretary:</b> Helen Morrow	9850 9125	<b>Susan Funder</b>	
<b>RBGC Representative:</b> Chris Russell	5990 2200	<b>naturelink@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au</b>	0409 864 237
<b>General Committee</b>		<b>Gill Gartlan</b>	
<b>Amy Akers</b>	0423 513 281	<b>naturelink@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au</b>	5281 7569
<b>Margaret Clarke</b>	5974 1750	<b>Quicklink Editor</b>	
<b>Rodger Elliot</b>	8774 2483	<b>Chloe Foster</b>	9725 3569
<b>Chloe Foster</b>	9725 3569	<b>Social Media Convenor</b>	
<b>Barrie Gallacher</b>	9857 7378	<b>Amy Akers</b>	0423 513 281
<b>Barbara Jeffery</b>	5998 5410	<b>The committee meets on the second Thursday of the month at 6pm.</b>	

## The Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Orchid Conservation Program ... the year that has been

With bright eyes and enthusiasm we look forward to the adventures of the year ahead, but at the same time it is worth reflecting on the achievements of 2015.

Last year was full of changes, with the Orchid Conservation Program moving from Horsham to the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. This was no small undertaking, with the building of a laboratory and nursery space at Cranbourne Gardens taking a full year, finally finishing in December 2015. This was all fun and excitement thanks to the many donations from individuals and organisations that funded the refurbishment and endless help from staff and volunteers to complete the works.

With the lab machines all finally going ping, the newly trained laboratory volunteers (Prof Peter Wallace, Eve Almond, Mike Wicks and Assoc Prof Charles Young) and I set about growing federally threatened orchids from across South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales for eventual re-introduction. The task involves collecting tissue from the field in winter for isolation in the laboratory of mycorrhizal fungi for each species. The mycorrhizal fungi is critical for orchid seed germination. In order to germinate the orchid seedlings we combine the mycorrhizal fungi with seed (that we have previously hand-pollinated and collected in the field) in petri dishes in the laboratory. We replate these to larger flasks after about three months and pot the resulting seedlings into the shade house when they are 5–6 months old. We successfully grew 16 federally threatened species over the course of the year.

On a cold winter's morning in July, with the frost crunching under our feet, the team (including volunteers from the Australasian Native Orchid Society Vic Branch) set out for two weeks of orchid re-introductions. The days were long, but rewarding, as we set about the task of re-introducing seven threatened species into their natural

habitats—the culmination of many years of work.

Each re-introduction involved many partner organisations, including the Australian Network for Plant Conservation, National Parks, DELWP, Wimmera CMA, Alcoa/Portland Aluminium, Trust for Nature and community groups. Each re-introduction requires matching habitat, an understanding of threats and ecology, and careful comparison with naturally occurring sites. Each species was re-introduced to permanently protected land, either a National Park, Flora and Fauna reserve, or privately owned property covenanted with Trust for Nature. The ultimate aim of the re-introductions is to reduce the risk of extinction of these endangered species by creating self-sustaining populations. Each re-introduction involves weed and rabbit works, caging, fencing and watering as required and a monumental effort by enthusiastic staff from several agencies and volunteers.

While all the re-introductions this year were particularly exciting, several stand out. These include the re-introduction of over 400 plants of the candy spider-orchid, *Caladenia versicolor*, and that of the coloured spider-orchid, *Caladenia colorata*, pictured over the page in full flower at the re-introduction site, which set seed despite being in the wild for just a few short months. In total, just shy of 1800 plants were re-introduced over the two weeks, each carefully tagged and caged. Monitoring in spring revealed that five of these re-introductions flowered and two species had already set seed, despite the dry conditions. We are excited about how readily the plants have taken to their environment, as we had not expected to see seed set for several years.

With Marc Freestone, our new and enthusiastic Orchid Conservation Officer, now on board we look forward to the year ahead.

—Noushka Reiter



Volunteers from the Australasian Native Orchid Society re-introducing orchids.



Flowering re-introduced *Caladenia colorata*.  
Photo: Dr Ryan Phillips



Discovery tour

**Western Australia wildflowers tour**

Possibly Spring 2017

**We are still calling for expressions of interest**

We are continuing to work on a draft tour itinerary. For those people who missed out on reading about the tour in previous issues of *Naturelink* it is envisaged that we will be mainly visiting south of an imaginary line

from Perth to Kalgoorlie. It will possibly include Kalgoorlie, Norseman, Esperance region (Cape le Grand and Cape Arid National Parks), Ravensthorpe and surrounds (such as the magnificent Fitzgerald River National Park), Hyden, Lake King, Stirling Range and Porongurups, Albany, Walpole, Pemberton, Augusta and Cape Leeuwin and Margaret River.



We are still seeking expressions of interest from people who would be seriously interested in going on such a tour. At this stage we cannot provide a precise cost, but similar tours range from about \$5000 to \$6000. It is envisaged that the cost could be lower.

There are a few pictures here to stimulate your interest!

If interested please put your name in the allocated space on the attached Booking Form and send it to our Booking Officer.

Contact Rodger Elliot on 8774 2483.

Thistle Cove in the Cape le Grand National Park east of Esperance



A splendid natural garden at the Corrigin Nature Reserve, southern WA.



Looking west from Hamersley Drive towards the Middle Barren Range in the Fitzgerald River National Park.