

Naturelink

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

Australian Textile Exhibition 2017

28 February to
5 March 2017

Highlights

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South Africa Tour Report 14



Friends of the Royal Botanic
Gardens Cranbourne, Inc.
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Cranbourne Victoria 3977

Inc no. A0025281B
ABN 43 551 008 609

Web address:
rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

Western Australian Wildflowers with John Thomson

Sunday 19
February 2017
2 - 3pm

Australian Garden
Auditorium

Members: \$20
Non-Members \$25
Students \$10

Our sixth AUSTRALIAN TEXTILE EXHIBITION will be held in the Australian Garden Visitor Centre - both upstairs in the Gallery and downstairs in the Auditorium, commencing on Tuesday February 28th and continuing through Sunday March 5th, from 10am to 4pm each day. Entry is FREE.

The Exhibition will again be co-ordinated by Leesa Chandler of Chandlers Cottage and promises to offer another wonderful display of textile crafts, all inspired by our beautiful flora, fauna, landscapes and landmarks.

The exhibition will also feature daily demonstrations by leading textile artists in felting, quilting, embroidery and more, plus a Chandlers Cottage Pop Up shop, beautiful craftwork to buy and loads of inspiration for all. Leesa will also be displaying many "one-offs" of her own pieces, including bags, wall hangings and quilts.

You will be able to purchase a wide range of patterns, kits and products from Chandlers Cottage, plus items made by members of the Friends of RBG Cranbourne 'Botanical Fabricators' group.

The 2017 Exhibition also sees the launch of the Great Australian Bag Challenge which is open to worldwide participation. The major prize has a value of \$1199.00 and includes a Bernina Sewing Machine. Details can be found on the Chandlers Cottage website - www.chandlerscottage.com.

Leesa Chandler has again very kindly donated a lovely quilt that is being raffled



This quilt titled 'Whispering Gums' is the first prize in the Cranbourne Friends Raffle at the Textile Exhibition. Photo: Cass Merrigan.

by the Friends to assist the ongoing development of the Cranbourne Gardens. It is entitled 'Whispering Gums'. You can get a hint of its beauty in the photo here, but to see it will entice you even further. Raffle tickets are \$2.00 each and will be obtainable at the Exhibition, or you can phone 8774 2483 to obtain tickets in advance and avoid missing out. Winning entries will be drawn at 3:30 pm on March 5th.

This will be a wonderful not-to-be-missed opportunity to enjoy an excellent presentation by our own John Thompson. John will be leading the Cranbourne Friend's Western Australian Wildflower Tour to take place over August and September 2017. He is renowned for his innovative and fascinating presentations at our Friends Workshops.

John is a very experienced grower of Australian plants and has visited WA many times where he has relatives near Ongerup in the south. His knowledge of the area and the plants is exceptional and he is also an excellent photographer. What more could you want?

For those people who have booked for the WA Tour, this is an afternoon that you



John Thompson

should attend as it will be a wonderful introduction to some of the areas that will be visited on the tour.

Director's Report

Chris Russell

"Be vewy, vewy quiet... we're hunting wabbits..."

Elmer Fudd had a point. Those 'wabbits' really are pesky. Indeed, I sometimes think that the ingenious Bugs Bunny is within the ranks of the small, but damaging population of rabbits within the Australian Garden, leading the charge to wreak as much havoc as possible in our beautiful garden and foil the efforts of our Horticulture and Land Management team to bring them under control.

So here's the problem. Create a world-class display garden of Australian plants with lots of plant diversity, lots of dense low shrubby foliage to provide cover and protection, on predominantly sandy soils that is easy to dig in, and you have created a veritable 'rabbit resort', complete with 5 star restaurant. Tasty fresh young shoots of all your favourite plant types (and some new ones you've never tasted before!), lovingly cared for by human servants seeing to all plant requirements from irrigation, fertiliser application and regular pruning to promote new growth. It really is bunny heaven!



Do you see the beautiful *Actinodium cunninghamii* and *Lechenaultia biloba*, or the rabbit fence?. Photo: Chris Russell.

Whilst I speak in jest, I am making light of what is an extremely vexing operational challenge for us, and of course many other land managers and garden owners. As the weather warms up as we approach the summer months, so the rabbit numbers increase, both within the Australian Garden and throughout the bushland. The damage to plants is more obvious in the Australian Garden, and in some ways is more difficult to control. If you consider the investment that has gone into each plant within the



Cranbourne staff developed 'Bandicoot gates' to make our fences selectively permeable.

Australian Garden – sourcing propagative material, striking, potting up and potting out in the nursery before being planted out in the garden, you will understand how seriously morale-sapping it is to come back the following morning to find a miserable stub of sticks, gnawed to within an inch of its life. Protection of vulnerable plants through installation of wire or mesh guards, either around individual plants or whole sections of garden, becomes an important part of the arsenal against rabbit damage, but this is not always practical, and is nearly always a significant blight on the visual experience of the garden – visitors come to see amazing plants, not vistas punctuated by fences of wire netting.

The spectacular rise of the European Rabbit in Australia is well documented, with the enormous spread of rabbits throughout Australia generally attributed to Englishman Thomas Austin who, for some nostalgic old country sport, introduced 24 wild rabbits to his Geelong property in 1859. The rest, as they say, is history, with the population rapidly expanding to the billions over following decades. It took only 27 years for them to be recorded in southern Queensland, and to this day they continue to cause significant damage to arid and semi-arid lands across the continent. Their success can be attributed in the main to their spectacular biology, with wild rabbits capable of breeding from 4 months of age, having a gestation period of only 28-30 days, and producing up to five young per litter from five or more litters in a year.

Of course, if this was a simple problem to solve, rabbits would have already been eradicated from Australia, or at least controlled to the point of doing far less damage. At Cranbourne Gardens we apply a multi-faceted and adaptive approach to the problem, which includes the regular methods of spotlight shooting and cage trapping, both of which are only moderately effective. We also have the added complexity of the presence of endangered Southern Brown Bandicoots and native swamp rats within the Australian Garden co-habiting with rabbits, making our challenge to find effective rabbit control measures that do not inadvertently

Director's Report continued..

affect the native animal populations that much harder. As such, poison baiting is very difficult (and rarely used) given the high risk of Bandicoots taking the bait, leading us to explore other approaches.

Our focus on managing endangered fauna led to a recent innovation of using specially trained dogs (Koolie breed) from Mount Rothwell Conservation and Research Centre to seek out rabbit warrens in the landscapes of the Australian Garden. Mount Rothwell is a privately owned 420 hectare property located in largely remnant habitat some 45 km west of Melbourne (ironically not far from Austin's Winchelsea property), and is managed for the conservation of some of Australia's most threatened fauna species, including the Eastern Barred Bandicoot and Eastern Quoll. Cranbourne Gardens Land Management Technician, David Hunt, brokered an arrangement for one handler and two dogs to spend a day scouring the Australian Garden in exchange for six of the 'Bandicoot gates' developed at Cranbourne. The gates are specifically designed to allow bandicoots to pass but exclude rabbits,

through the simple addition of a hinged flap or door, which bandicoots have the dexterity to lift to enter, but rabbits do not. On their first 'sniff through' the Australian Garden, the dogs uncovered a previously unknown warren which could then be monitored (for bandicoot activity) before being fumigated. It's a small beginning, but looks promising for future use.

Another control method is biological control, which until now has relied on the spread of lethal rabbit-specific viruses such as Myxomatosis and rabbit calicivirus via insect vectors. Calicivirus has been relatively ineffective in cool-wet regions of Australia due to resistance, however a new and more effective strain called RHDV K5 (or RHDV Boost) has been cleared for release in Victoria in autumn 2017, and Cranbourne Gardens has been successful in becoming a release site (for more information see <http://agriculture.vic.gov.au>). This will not solve all of our rabbit problems, but will hopefully be another management tool in our ongoing battle with the pesky wabbit.

From the President

Indra Kurzeme

Dear Friends,

Happy summer days! After a wet winter, spring gardens followed by new growth, my kangaroo paws are enormous. Speaking of kangaroo paws, we hope you enjoyed the Kangaroo Paw Celebration at Cranbourne during the month of November. A wonderful program led by the tireless Gwen and Rodger Elliot. Rodger and Gwen managed to persuade people from all around the country and even overseas to share their expertise and passion for the Haemodraceae plant family. There was strong team of organisers behind them who all pulled together to deliver you three wonderful days at the 'Kangaroo Paws, Bloodroots, Cottonheads and More Symposium'.

Working with the staff of the Cranbourne Gardens, a plethora of activities were delivered including an exhibition, Kangaroo Paw Picnic, guided tours, plant sale, floral art demonstrations, music, a competition and the launch of a new cultivar by Angus Stewart. The passion for Kangaroo Paws is boundless!

This year I spent some time with another passionate group of people, the Botanical Basketmakers. I joined a Lomandra Stitch and Coil Workshop with teacher Heather Turner from Rochester, Victoria. Having never made a basket before I was a little nervous. The six hours with Heather and the group flew by. It was one of the most relaxing days I have spent in a long time. I encourage you to try basket making as it is a wonderful art. All our groups provide

excellent activities including beginner sessions and will welcome you with open arms.

Information about our activities and news can be found on our temporary website at rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au. The site is a work in progress and will change as we adopt the new visual identity. You will find details about when our groups meet and what plants we have for sale, how to book for activities and the latest Friends news. We are also sourcing as many beautiful photographs as possible of the Cranbourne Gardens, including both the Australian Garden and Cranbourne Bushland to illustrate the website.

November marks twenty-five years of the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne, Inc. Twenty five years of an enormous amount of energy and passion that have been spent on assisting the organisation become a world class, award winning botanic garden. Some of you have been with us from the very beginning and have witnessed great progress. None of this would have been possible without the passion and enthusiasm of our members. Thank you and here's to the next twenty five years!

See you in the Gardens

Indra.

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR FOR DEC - MAR 2017

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

JANUARY

- FRI 6 *Nuytsia* Pilgrimage
LATE JAN 4 - 5 Day Alpine Adventure at Mt Hotham

FEBRUARY

- SUN 5 New Year's Brunch in the Fig Forest
SUN 19 Talk: Western Australian Wildflowers by John Thompson

FRI 28

Textile Exhibition begins – continues to Sunday 5 March

MARCH

- THU 9 Open House Culture & Community Day
SUN 12 Visit to Australian Garden by RAW Garden Members
SAT 18 & SUN 19 Growing Friends Plant Sale
SAT 25 Discovery Day: Melbourne Zoo Butterfly House & Royal Park

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR FOR THE REST OF 2017

Place these dates in your 2017 diary now!

APRIL

- SUN 9 Microbats & Night Prowl
SUN 30 Workshop: Other Aussie Trees

MAY

- SAT 6 Annual Luncheon: Date may be subject to change
SUN 21 2018 Activities Planning Day

JUNE

- SAT 3 Bushland Breakfast with Warren Worboys
SAT 17 Workshop: Aussie Succulents & Boabs and Bottle Trees with Attila Kapitany
SUN 25 Talk: Status of Australian Eucalypts: Frank Udovicic

JULY

- SAT 1 Workshop: Useful Australian Plants
SAT 22 & SUN 23 Growing Friends Plant Sale

AUGUST

- TUE 1 - 31 Cranbourne Friends Botanical Illustrators Exhibition
THU 10 Open House: Carolyn Landon talk on Kew Botanic Gardens Exhibition

SUN 13

Talk: Fascination of Pollination; an adjunct of Botanical Illustrators Exhibition

SUN 20

Start of WA Wildflower Tour – finishes 11 Sept

SEPTEMBER

- SAT 16 Basketry Workshop: –'Basket over a Mould'
WED 27 Discovery Day: Inverloch Grandparents Day

OCTOBER

- MON 2 Discovery Day: Whales at Cowes
SUN 8 Discovery Day: Monash University Gardens
SAT 14 & SUN 15 Growing Friends Plant Sale
SUN 29 Workshop: Everything about Australian Birds

NOVEMBER

- SAT 11 or SUN 12 Workshop: Fragrant & Sensory Gardens
SUN 26 Annual General Meeting with Guest Speaker

DECEMBER

- SAT 2 "Would you like to Work with Plants?" – Employment Day

(Some of) What's On at RBGV Cranbourne

For enquiries and bookings phone 5990 2200. For information about more activities at RBGV, see <www.rbg.vic.gov.au>.

JANUARY

Twilight Highlights

Journey into the bushland and discover the native animals that emerge at night. Suitable for families with children aged 6+ years.

Wednesday 11 January 2017, 7 to 9pm

\$20 adult, \$18 children/concession

Bookings required on 03 5990 2200

Wonderful Water Bugs and Plants

Look at the waterbugs and plants under a microscope, learn about water plants and test the water conditions. Suitable for all ages.

Every Saturday in January, 11am to 12noon

Meet at Ponding Platform, River Walk

\$8.50 per family (2 Adults/2 Children)

Family Fun Day

Bring along the family to this fun day of activities, games, entertainment and storytelling. Proudly supported by the City of Casey and South East Water in conjunction with the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. Suitable for all ages.

Wednesday 18 January, 2017, 10am to 4pm

Free

FEBRUARY

World Wetlands Day

Celebrate the importance of wetlands on World Wetlands Day by exploring our walking tracks along Wylies Creek Wetlands. Share your experience #rbgvwetlands. Suitable for all ages.

Tuesday 2 February, 2017, 9am to 5pm

Meet on Wylies Creek Track

Free.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

Vacation Care Program: Raintance

Dance through the water cycle at the Australian Garden with music, dance and water play activities.

Suitable for children aged 6 - 12 years.

December/January School Holidays, 10.15am to 12noon.

Meet at the Visitor Centre

\$11.90 per child, adults extra

Bookings required on 03 5990 2200.

(Some of) What's On at RBGV Melbourne

The following events are presented by the Friends of, and the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne.

For enquiries contact the Friends office on 9650 6398 or at <friends@frbgmelb.org.au>.

Book events online, or download a booking form from the FRBGM website at <www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org>.

DECEMBER

Summer Guided Visit to the Growing Friends' Nursery

The Growing Friends' Nursery currently holds a wide selection of suitable material for the home garden. This visit is especially suitable for new members and those who are unfamiliar with the whereabouts and workings of the nursery. Friends' members only.

Friday 9 December 2016

Bookings Essential on 03 9650 6398

Harp in the Gardens: Christmas Day Concert

Resident harpist, Michael Johnson performs this special Christmas Day concert on shady Oak Lawn as a gift to everyone. He will perform original and inspiring music composed in the Melbourne Gardens.

Bring your own rug or low seat.

*Please note: Jardin Tan (Observatory Gate) and the Terrace will be closed on Christmas Day.

Sunday 25 December, 2pm to 3pm, Free

JANUARY

Mindfulness Walk

Walk barefoot through the Gardens and step into the tranquillity of Fern Gully. Enjoy some gentle stretching and mindfulness practice followed by an iced herbal tea.

Thursday 19 January and Saturday 21 January, 2017, 10.30pm to 12noon

\$15 per person

Meet at the Visitor Centre, Observatory Gate

Bookings required on 03 9252 2429

FEBRUARY

Summer Insiders' Walk: A celebration of Chinese New Year

A guided tour of the Southern China Collection to celebrate Chinese New Year which finishes with eating traditional fruit and drinking iced green tea. Friends' members only.

\$20 Friends' Members

Bookings required on 03 9650 6398

Backyard Trees Workshop

Sunday 30 April
2017

Australian Garden
Auditorium

By Chloe Foster

When you look at the horizon and see the beautiful trees, did you know that there are more species than wattles and gums?

Broaden your tree horizons! Learn about many of the other wonderful species of Australian trees that we have and what you could add to your garden.

Once again we will have a varied group of presenters, including Professor David Cantrill, an expert on the evolutionary history of plants and Alistair Watt, a renowned grower of Gymnosperm trees. We will learn about the evolution of these fascinating trees and much more. Our very own Rodger Elliot will speak about Sheoaks and the Daintree Pine, and John Thompson will lead us through the social and cultural uses of our backyard trees.

Stay tuned for more information.



The NSW Christmas Bush *ceratopetalum gummiferum*, that are available for you to grow in your garden. Photo: Chloe Foster.

Discover Day - Behind the Scenes at Melbourne Zoo and Royal Park

Saturday 25 March
2017

By Chloe Foster

Go behind the scenes of Melbourne Zoo's Butterfly House and into the Nursery. See how the invertebrate keepers rear the many species of larvae that metamorphose into beautiful butterflies for one of the Zoo's most popular exhibits. We are fortunate enough to have been given access to go behind the scenes of the butterfly house, and the nursery that grows food for the larvae. Whilst in the precinct we hope to be able to take a walk through the very extensive Royal Park. The remnant grassy woodlands of Royal Park and the beautiful new children's garden on the Old RCH site are on the must-see list!

Wear your walking shoes and be prepared to see a part of our beautiful city that you may have only driven past!

More details to come.



Common Grass Yellow on *xanthostemon* species. Photo: Chloe Foster.



Orchard swallowtail caterpillar eating citrus leaf. Photo: Chloe Foster.



Passiflora cinnabarina in the Zoo's nursery. Photo: Chloe Foster.

Discovery Trip - Summer Wildflowers at Mt Hotham

Late January

By Rodger Elliot

We are planning to have a few days in the Mt Hotham region in late January, to explore the wonderful alpine flowers that abound there over summertime.

The breadth of *Brachyscomes* of variable hues, carpets of cushion plants, clumps of *Craspedias*, the possible opulence of *Olearias*, expanses of *Xerochrysums* from yellow to orange, multi-coloured trunks of snow gums plus the veritable vistas make this part of the world one that should be visited.

The Friends are hoping to procure a ski lodge at Hotham for 4 -5 days during 16 – 29 January 2017. There will be limit of 20 people for this adventure.

At the time of going to press we have not been able to finalise which lodge we will be using as they still have not issued their 2017 prices. We think the cost per night will be in the vicinity of \$60 – 70 per person. Participants will need to bring sleeping gear and food.

If you are interested in being part of this wonderful time in the Victorian Alps please notify us ASAP by completing the Expression of Interest section on the Booking Form and forwarding it to the Booking Officer, Ros Shepherd.

Plea for Help: Do any members have contacts that we could talk to regarding using a Ski Lodge at Mt Hotham?



Brachyscome rigidula can be a prominent daisy over summer on Mt Hotham and surrounds. Photo: Rodger Elliot



The Alpine Everlasting, *Xerochrysum subundulatum* can produce stunning displays of pale yellow to orange paper daisies over summer. Photo: Rodger Elliot

Brunch in the Forest of Figs (*Ficus hillii*)

Sunday 5 February 2017

By Margaret Clarke

On Sunday February 5 2017, once again we plan to gather for a very pleasant social time at the start of the year in the Forest of Figs, where we will be able to shelter from the sun!

It is "Bring Your Own" food and drinks, however the kiosk will be open and serving coffees from 10 am as well as a small selection of food.

Should it be too wet, too hot or too windy, we shall gather in the Elliot Centre. Should

it be a "Code Red Day" the Gardens will be closed. In case of an "Extreme Fire Danger Warning" all but the Australian Garden will be closed. It will pay to check the RBGV Website before travelling to the Gardens.

So no excuse - come and help us launch the New Year and meet some members - old and new.

Any queries - contact Margaret Clarke on 0419 349 492 or Helen Morrow on 9850 9125

Discovery Night - Advance Notice

Microbats

Sunday 9 April
5pm - 9.30pm

Elliot Centre and
Bushland

Members \$25
Non-Members \$30
Students \$15

By Amy Akers

Chances are that there are microbats that visit your area but you have never noticed them. They are flying mammals that can weigh as little as 3 grams. They enjoy devouring insects once it is dark and rely on echolocation to 'see' and locate their prey. They do this by emitting high-pitched sounds that bounce off surrounding objects, which tells them how far away the objects are.

If you are interested in seeing some for yourself, then you must come along!

The night will begin with the setting up of traps in the bushland at the Cranbourne Botanic Gardens, followed by a talk about microbats in the area. Attendees can then enjoy their dinner (BYO) and mingle with other like-minded people whilst we wait for night to set in and for

the microbats to come out. We will then set out to inspect the traps and identify those bats that have been caught, as well as keeping an eye out for any other wildlife we may see!

If this is something that you are interested in, ensure that you book early as numbers will be limited.





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!

Open House at the Elliot Centre

2nd Thursday of each month

1pm - 4pm

Elliot Centre,
Royal Botanic
Gardens Victoria,
Cranbourne

Contact

Helen Morrow
9850 9125

membership@
rbgfrienscranbourne.
org.au

The Elliot Centre is open to members on the second Thursday of each month. Members are invited to come along to interesting and inspiring presentations and enjoy afternoon tea with other Friends.

Travellers Tales to Sicily was the subject for presentation in July. Alf Reina has proposed a tour to Sicily in 2018, and as a native of the island he is the ideal person to lead the Friends. His presentation took us through Sicily's rich history and culture, from Greek Temples, Norman architecture and Byzantine and Islamic influences. April / May is when wildflowers put on spectacular displays throughout the island and is probably the best time to visit. There are several protected natural parks including Mt Etna, the Madonie and the Nebroli where you will see the largest beech forests in Europe. Twenty Friends joined in for the discussion and afternoon tea, and several people expressed an interest in the tour. Thank you Alf for the great presentation. I look forward to hearing more.

In August, Ann Miller took us "Navigating around the Friends Library". This is a valuable resource available to members for reference. The library is a dedicated room in the Elliot Centre. Books have been collected from those donated for sale at Bookfest. Ann explained the method used for storing the collection and a shelf list is available to assist in finding the publication you need.

The library is available when the Centre is open, such as when in use by the Special Interest Groups (check Naturelink) and at the Open House afternoons. Thank you Ann for meeting with us to explain how to make use of the Library.

In September Ken and Carlene Gosbell took us on a tour of Costa Rica, one of the world's natural hot spots. It is a Central American country with coastlines on the Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean. The terrain is volcanic with seven active volcanoes, and covered in tropical rainforest. Roughly a quarter of the country is protected jungle featuring an incredible variety of birds and other wildlife. A discovery tour to Costa Rica has been suggested for 2019. Thank you Ken and Carlene for taking us on a tour of an area not generally on the tourist trail.

Future Topics for Open House -1pm to 4pm:

December 8 - No special subject, a social afternoon for those who wish to come.

The events are free and afternoon tea is supplied. Members can consult the Friends Reference Library during these times.

The Friends Nursery is open on Thursdays to 2.00pm.

Botanical Fabricators

2nd Tuesday of each month

10am

Elliot Centre

Contact

Gwen Elliot
03 8774 2483

fabricators@
rbgfrienscranbourne.
org.au

2016 has certainly been a busy and exciting year for the Botanical Fabricators group.

Over 200 items were made featuring Kangaroo Paw fabrics, painted fabrics and applique for display and sale at the Kangaroo Paw Celebration in November. Many new ideas and techniques were developed and it was all lots of fun.

We are now gearing up for the sixth AUSTRALIAN TEXTILE EXHIBITION which will be held in the Australian Garden Visitor Centre from Tuesday 28 February 2017 through to Sunday 5 March, opening from 10am to 4pm each day.

This exhibition is co-ordinated by Leesa Chandler of Chandlers Cottage and further details are provided in a separate item in this issue of Naturelink, on Page 1.

New members are always very welcome to join in our friendly monthly get-togethers.



Beautiful bag made by Lee Baker using Leesa Chandler's 'Melba' fabric. One of the wonderful prizes for the Australian Textile Exhibition Raffle!

Growing Friends

3rd Wednesday &
Every Thursday

Growing Friends
Nursery

Contact

Marjanne Rook
9769 7881

To join or for information
email: [growing.friends@
rbgfriendscranbourne.
org.au](mailto:growing.friends@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au)
or contact Marjanne
Ph 9769 7881 or Don
Ph 9736 2309

ABC Filming at the Growing Friends

We were very fortunate to have the ABC 'Gardening Australia' crew filming some of our volunteers in the Growing Friends Nursery on 10th August as part of a story on Gwen and Rodger Elliot which will go to air in 2017, on a date yet to be announced. It all took quite a while and I am amazed as to how much footage is required – no doubt it will be heavily edited. We will be supplied with a DVD of the outcome.

Plant sales

The winter plant sale was a bit of a cold affair but despite the rain and wind, the customers did come. We made \$11,000 which is just marvellous. Thank you to those members who braved the winter chills.

IT person needed

Unfortunately the Growing Friends IT volunteer Nick is leaving for warmer pastures. He has over the past year created a wonderful plant database which we use for printing our hundreds of different plant labels as well as for queries and reports. We are now looking for a new volunteer who may wish to take on the role of being the Growing Friends IT person on a needs or regular basis.

The plant-labels are produced using the NiceLabelling program. This program uses label templates linked to an Access database for the printing of our labels.

The Access database needs to be maintained by someone with an intermediate, or greater, level of knowledge of the program especially for possible problem solving. NiceLabel can be learnt from on screen tutorials produced by the program developers. If you are interested and/or need more information, please contact growing.friends@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

Special Orders

Any wishes? Perhaps you have seen a plant in the Gardens or want multiple plants for a large area. Contact the Growing Friends with your request and we shall endeavour to grow them or might even have them in stock. Contact details are on this page.



Winter Plant Sale Day, from the left Rodger and Raymond watching the 'real workers' Helen and Di. Photo: Marjanne Rook.

AUTUMN 2017 GROWING FRIENDS PLANT SALE

Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 March, 10am to 4pm both days

at Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, Cranbourne
Cnr Ballarto Road and Botanic Drive, Cranbourne

Cash or cheque please

- See back page for further information -

Friends in Focus

2nd Saturday of the
month

2pm

Contact

James McKee
0411 102 107

[photography@
rbgfriendscranbourne.
org.au](mailto:photography@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au)

Tips on Taking Close up Photographs of Flowers

Typically, it is thought that one needs a lens with a macro function; while this may be beneficial in some circumstances most lenses can be used to take good close up photos. Even compact cameras can take excellent close ups.

It requires a little thought and knowledge of your camera and lens attached. It depends on camera type, Digital Single Lens Reflex or Compact and whether the functions are on the lens or a setting within the camera; the following may be of some assistance. These tips are not set in concrete nor will every one apply to all situations.

- Set your image type to RAW + JPEG.

- Select your photo style to mono (black and white).
- Change viewing of image from viewfinder to LCD display.
- Set lens focusing method to manual and use the image in the LCD display to focus.
- Ideally mount camera on a tripod or monopod for stability.

Where there are windy conditions consider using a flash on the end of the lens or setting the shutter speed to 1/2000th or faster. You could even set both together.

Lastly, be prepared to move the camera towards and out from the subject to achieve the image you want.

Botanical Basketmakers

3rd Saturday of the month

10am - 2pm

Elliot Centre

Contact

Lyn Lochrie
0437 759 610

basketry@
rbgfrienscranbourne.
org.au

Summer is the time of year that Basketmakers enjoy collecting and preparing materials to make into interesting projects over the coming year. Plant growth is at its best length, and still green and supple.

Popular plants for Basketry are *Dianella*, *Lomandra*, *Cumbungi*, *Hardenbergia*, *Cordyline* etc. Members use these to create useful and sculptural items, either for our own use or for display.

We are a small group and would love to see you at our meeting on the third Saturday of the month, when we usually work on our own projects whilst sharing techniques and ideas.

Sometimes we have foraging days; garden walks to identify suitable plants for Basketry, and workshops. If you would like to create



Attendees at a Heather Turner Lomandra Stitch and Coil Workshop. Photo: Lynn Lochrie

beautiful basketry from plants in your garden (or your neighbours with their permission!) come along and visit us, and we can chat over a cuppa.

Botanical Illustrators

1st and 3rd Wednesday

10am - 3pm

Elliot Centre

Contact

Margaret Holloway
0438 985 382

illustrators@
rbgfrienscranbourne.
org.au

Wednesday Botanical Illustrators Group

The Botanical Illustrators group meets regularly in the comfort of the Elliot Centre to enjoy the pursuits of painting, drawing and sharing ideas. We support and encourage each other, hold workshops and talks, and work towards holding exhibitions. We welcome visitors and new members.

Botanical Illustrators Events

Sketchbooks - a presentation by Joan Mason

Wednesday 15 February 2017 in the Elliot Centre, 10am - 12noon. Cost: \$6

Joan Mason will lead a discussion on keeping a travel diary and sketchbook. Joan's travel diaries are full of studies of objects that have taken her interest and are pertinent to the area she visited. She usually uses pen and ink and watercolour, using a compact travel set. Her pages show a wonderful knowledge of composition, often putting together many different objects on the one page.

Those attending are warmly invited to bring along their own sketchbooks for inspiration and encouragement. It is always beneficial to see the different approaches people take to creating a visual diary.

Margaret Holloway will also give an update on the Beckler's Botanical Bounty project,



Maireana lobiflora by Margaret Holloway

for which a group of artists have been collecting and pressing botanical specimens and painting the same plants that Hermann Beckler collected in and around Menindee in 1860 on the Burke and Wills expedition. An exhibition of work from this project will be held at the Ballarat Regional Art Gallery in February 2018.



From the beach at Worthing by Joan Mason.

Friends Library

This is the first of what is planned to be a regular segment in future issues of Naturelink that provides information on books in the Friends Library in the Elliot Centre

By Ann Miller
Honorary Librarian

Floras of Victoria

Floras from all jurisdictions of Australia are held in the Friends Library: Australia as a whole as well as for each State and Territory, plus floras of local areas within each state.

The most important flora at a regional level is the *Flora of Melbourne: a guide to the indigenous plants of the greater Melbourne area*, 4th ed., 2014, by Marilyn Bull, with line drawings by George Stolfo. There are 6 major sections: Habitat: Melbourne's indigenous vegetation communities; Soils of Melbourne; Regeneration, revegetation, restoration: Bushland management programmes; Weeds of Melbourne; Localities and reserves; and the major section, some 90% of the 600 page volume covers Indigenous plants of Melbourne. As well as the line drawings there is a colour photograph alongside each plant. Some 60 pages at the end of the volume provide further information: websites, indigenous nurseries and further reading and a list of families and their genera.

The major flora for our State is entitled *Flora of Victoria* edited by D. B. Foreman and N. G. Walsh of which we hold only volume 1: Introduction. A joint venture by the RBG Melbourne and the National Herbarium of Victoria, it was published in 1993 by Inkata Press. With a range of contributors, topics cover prehistory of the flora of Victoria, geology and geomorphology, climate, botanical exploration, soils, use of Victorian plants by Koori people and rare or threatened plants of Victoria. Three subsequent volumes have been published, which we do not hold; volumes 3 and 4 are out of print, status of volume 2 is unknown. We also hold *A census of the vascular plants of Victoria*, 7th ed., 2003 by J. H. Ross & N. G. Walsh. The most recent edition to be published is 8th edition, 2007, which we do not have; it is in print at the Gardens Shop at \$39.95 and would be a nice addition to our Library. If you have a copy and would like to donate it to the library, please let me know.



There are also older floras in the collection: J.H. Willis' two volume set of *A handbook to plants in Victoria*, 1962 and 1972; Jean Galbraith's *Collin's Field guide to the wildflowers of South-east Australia*, 1977 (signed by the author). There are other regional floras which include the Grampians (Rodger Elliot), the Anglesea-Airey's Inlet region, the Otway Plain and ranges, Ros Garnet's *The wildflowers of Wilson's Promontory National Park and The Mornington Peninsula: a field guide to the flora, fauna and walking tracks*.

There has been a change of policy since the spring issue of Naturelink. Rare books and those signed by the author are now kept in the cupboard in the Library, not in the Office, and this information is included in the Library catalogue. For access to these books, phone me on 9818 6012 or email amiller@melbpc.org.au and arrangements for access will be made.

Vale David Kaleski

by Helen Morrow

We are sorry to report that David Kaleski died on 16 September 2016.

David joined the Friends with his wife Thea in the early 1990s. He had a keen interest in Australian plants and the natural environment. He joined the Committee as Treasurer in 1999, and continued in that role until 2006.

David was a keen member of the Committee, he managed the finances of the Friends and was actively involved when Friends donations were made to the Gardens. These included: Interpretations Panels for the Stringy Bark picnic area, BBQs; contributions

were also made towards the Fire Unit and a Germination Cabinet for the Nursery, also contributing towards the purchases of the Eucalyptus and Maud Gibson Rooms.

The Friends highly valued his important contribution; he will be sorely missed by those who knew him.

A service celebrating David's life was held at Albert Park on September 23, and the Friends of RBG Cranbourne were pleased to be able to be represented there.

Elisabeth Murdoch Scholarship Talk

Sunday 31 July 2016

by Rodger Elliot

Sturt Gibbs and Trevor Seppings provided an inspirational and passionate account of their wide-reaching and frantic trip. They strived to learn and gather as much information as they could about natural and cultivated South Australian landscapes as well as their horticultural potential for the Australian Garden at Cranbourne. Another aim of the trip was to provide them with personal and professional development opportunities.

Their itinerary included visits to some of the driest regions of south-eastern South Australia. They met up with the very experienced grower and author Neville Bonney at Carpenter Rocks near Mt Gambier and he pointed them in the direction of Pangerinda Arboretum at Wellington. This visit was certainly an eye-opener for the group as it was an excellent example of what can be done by an enthusiastic and dedicated bunch of volunteers in a low rainfall area. Both Trevor and Sturt were highly impressed and have been back more than once to help as volunteers at this fascinating developing arboretum.

Currency Creek Arboretum north of Victor Harbour is a must for anyone with the slightest interest in Eucalypts as it has the largest collection of Eucalypt species in the world and the Eucalyptophile Trevor Seppings made the most of this visit where he saw many 'eucs' for the first time in the flesh. The very knowledgeable creator Dean Nicolle imparted much valuable information to the visitors.

The visit to the Australian Inland Botanic Garden at Port Augusta also provided inspiration for the possible inclusion of species that could grow well at Cranbourne including the 'Ghost Gum' group.

The audience reaction to Sturt and Trevor's presentation was extremely positive!



Trevor Seppings and Calli Salzmann with Dean Nicolle, Currency Creek Arboretum owner and Eucalyptus specialist. Photo: Sturt Gibbs.



A majestic specimen of *Eucalyptus camaldulensis subspecies minima* at Meningie, South Australia. Photo: Trevor Seppings

Sturt Gibbs, Trevor Seppings and Cali Salzmann were the recipients of an Elisabeth Murdoch Scholarship provided by the Maud Gibson Trust and application is open to Horticultural Staff of both Cranbourne and Melbourne Gardens.

Membership Update

Please contact Helen if you have any membership queries:

Phone: 9850 9125; if you leave a message I will return your call

Email: membership@rbgfriendscanbourne.org.au

Interest in the Australian Garden and the wonderful bushland continues to attract members; this quarter 16 new members joined the Friends. We look forward to meeting all members at our activities and at the regular 'Elliot Centre Open Afternoon' on the 2nd Thursday of each month.

A final reminder to members who have not paid fees for this year. You will find a renewal subscription form in the newsletter. We hope you will continue supporting the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne through the Friends. Hope to hear from you soon.

There are many benefits offered to members of the Friends of Cranbourne Gardens. As well as the familiar RBGV-related discounts and all the workshops, tours and other wonderful activities that are available to you every year, a range of outside businesses and

organisations are now offering discounts on presentation of your membership card. The list of benefits will be sent with your membership card when you renew.

We welcome the following new members:

Susan Albert, Belinda Barnes, Neil Duncan, Ashley Elliott, Miriam Ford, Sheila Hagendorfer, Ian & U'mu Harris, Barbara Long, Peter Mertens, Anne Neilson, Julia Punch, Suzanne Ryan, Margaret Stuart, Christina Swistak, Belinda Wells.

Orchid Walk

Sunday 11
September 2016

by Amy Akers

On Sunday 11 September 2016, a group of 23 people set off from the Visitor Centre for a walk in the bushland at the Cranbourne Gardens to spot some orchids. Despite receiving a rather ordinary weather forecast for the day, we were pleasantly surprised to find that it was a nice sunny morning.

We were very lucky to have Charles Young join us. Charles volunteers regularly at the Orchid Conservation Centre and gladly explained to attendees how to identify whether a plant is an orchid, how they are pollinated, and how they are propagated at the Centre.

Although we didn't see a large number of different species on our walk, we did admire quite a number of Pink Fingers (*Caladenia carnea*) along Trig Track, as well as a number of different species of greenhoods (*Pterostylis* species). These were spotted along Possum Gully Track and the track to the Perched Swamp.

Towards the end of our walk, we had a look around an area in the bushland that is fenced off from wallabies. We found more greenhoods, as well as Pink Bells (*Tetratheca*

ciliata) and Showy Bossiaea (*Bossiaea cinerea*) in full flower. Special thanks goes to Warren Worboys for giving us permission to enter this area.

On our walk back to the Visitor Centre we happened upon an echidna trying to hide in the bushes, which was an added bonus. A large group of us then headed back to the Boon Wurrung Café where we enjoyed a chat over a coffee.



Plenty of Pink Fingers (*Caladenia carnea*) were admired along Trig Track.

Singing the Praises of the Cranbourne Gardens

by Amy Akers

There are many of us who could say that after visiting the Cranbourne Gardens, they have fallen in love with it and consider it a second home. Sharon Start is one of those people. So much so, that she has been inspired to write a song about the birds and plants of the Australian Garden for children.

Sharon became a regular visitor of the Gardens in the mid-90s. She loved going for walks in the bushland and taking photos. She admits that she fell in love with the place for several reasons: its open spaces, the solitude, being able to get close to nature and for its rejuvenating and uplifting effects, especially when taking photos on a sunny day.

Sharon loves the Cranbourne Gardens so much that she visits almost every weekend of the year with her husband and will even visit every day when she is on leave from work. I am sure that there are many of you reading this who know how addictive it is to visit the place!

Working at a nearby primary school in her roles as concert coordinator, choir director and ukulele teacher, she noticed that only about a quarter of her class were aware of the Gardens. She decided to write an educational song about the birds and plants of the Australian Garden and began teaching the children. The song includes wattlebirds, silvereyes, honeyeaters, Eastern Spinebills, banksias, corymbias, grevilleas and kangaroo paws. Stunning photos taken by Sharon and her husband are used alongside the song to teach the children about what these plants and birds look like. The song is designed

so that bird and plant names can be easily interchanged.

She found that by using this singing method the children enjoyed themselves whilst learning about local birdlife, Australian native plants and the Gardens. Since teaching the children the song, one of her students convinced her parents to take her to the Cranbourne Gardens to see the birds and plants herself. How wonderful is that!

Next time you visit the Australian Garden and see the New Holland Honeyeaters darting in and out of the banksias, look around and you might just see Sharon a short distance away with her camera.



Friends Tour of South Africa

16 - 26 September 2016

by Alex Smart

In summary, the tour exceeded the expectations of our 16 travellers with an exciting itinerary drafted by Ros Shepherd and Richard Clarke.

Around Johannesburg we visited some stunning private gardens and the Johannesburg Botanic Gardens which was found to be desperately in need of a sufficient budget to properly maintain the gardens. In contrast the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) provides federal funds for nine National Botanic Gardens (NBG) across the country, five of which we visited. Walter Sisulu NBG was the first SANBI gardens we visited. The formal gardens had a backdrop of mountains. A walk to Witpoortje Waterfalls was our introduction to the South African wildflowers. Although most of South Africa was enduring a sustained drought the fynbos (heathlands) still offered much to excite visitors.

A tour around Pretoria included a visit to the seat of government, the Union Buildings, where a massive 9 metre high statue of Nelson Mandela overlooks parkland.

Next we flew to Cape Town and boarded a coach and headed north to the wildflower region of Namaqualand. On the way we stopped at the West Coast National Park then visited wildflower reserves and a succulent nursery before visiting the Karoo Desert NBG.

Cross country to Montagu and on to Hermanus/ Kleinmond to be confronted with spectacular scenery along the rugged southern coastline. After enjoying a visit to Harold Porter NBG, we walked to the garden and studio of Vicki Thomas, a renowned Botanical Artist, who has paintings in Australian publications.

The 'Cape Floristic Region' is one of the six floral kingdoms of the world. Five nights based at the Cape Town waterfront enabled us to gain an insight into the startling wildflowers.

An enduring memory will be our visit to a Community Garden in a settlement of 1 million people at Khayelitsha, a suburb of Cape Town. There a community group work to train and encourage residents to grow vegetables to improve their health and to create self-esteem. It operates a small not-for-profit business and sells some products to restaurants and individuals in Cape Town. In addition to the FRBGC contribution of ZA Rand 1,000 we passed the hat around our group and raised another ZA Rand 920, a total of \$AU 192.

Stellenbosch Garden is connected with the university and a most dramatically enthusiastic guide showed us *Welwitschia mirabilis*, a remarkable and unique desert plant.

Along the Cape Peninsula a stop at Boulders Beach introduced us to the African Penguin, which is much larger than our penguins and are out showing off in broad daylight. Then



A Hantam Daisy with simulated beetles on the petals. Photo: Alex Smart



The Friends at Hantam National Botanical Garden with Guide Eugene. Photo: Alex Smart.



A spectacular floral display by the Impala Lily, *Adenium multiflorum*. Photo: Alex Smart.

on to Cape Point for a stop, at the Cape of Good Hope. Wow, was it windy: it was the same trade wind that propelled the First Fleet across the Indian Ocean in 1779. An Ostrich with five chicks on the road forced our coach to stop to the delight of our group.

A free day took us to Table Mountain. It was a marvellously fine day and many ladies celebrating Heritage Day were dressed in colourful traditional costumes.

Finally a day at the internationally renowned Kirstenbosch NBG which is set against the eastern slopes of Table Mountain. Founded in 1913, it was the first botanic garden in the world to undertake the preservation and cultivation of indigenous flora. At 528 ha Kirstenbosch is 50% larger than RBGC and includes large cultivated garden beds and indigenous bushland running to the surrounding mountains. Displays embrace plants from Proteaceae and Cycads down to herbs and bulbs. A multi-storied conservatory displays succulents and other plants from the deserts. A garden ranked among the top five botanic gardens in the world provided a truly wonderful visit to the conclusion of our tour.

Wonthaggi Heathlands Discovery Day

by Marj and Norm
Seaton

It blew a bit. It rained a bit (during lunch). It blew some more. About 23 intrepid discoverers however were not daunted.

We met our leaders, Terri Allen and Jenny Rejske (also a Friend), both avid environmentalists, at Guide Park for morning tea before carpooling and being led to the heathlands to start our walk.

The heathlands are now recognised as the Wonthaggi Heathland Nature Conservation Reserve, established in 1997, after having previously been grazed, had pine plantations established (1928) then removed from 1992 onwards.

Unlike much of Victoria, Wonthaggi had received less than its average rainfall for the year, but the heathlands still had many flowers for us to view. *Bossiaea*, *Stackhousia*, *Aotus*, *Chamaescilla* (Blues star or blue squill), two *Patersonia*, *Hibbertia sericea*, *Hibbertia prostrata*, some *Leptospermum myrsinoides*, coastal manna gum, *Austrostipa* species, *Drosera* species and a splendid variety of orchids – spider, greenhoods, red beaks, etc. The main shrubs were *Allocasuarinas* and *Acacias*. Coastal tea-tree (*Leptospermum laevigatum*) has been the problem child for the volunteers here. After a major burn a few years ago, thousands of seedlings have sprouted and are now a metre or so high, crowding out the understory plants. At least two groups of local volunteers are trying to remove them by hand but it is a huge job. Ecological burns are also being used to address this issue.

The area is home to echidnas, grey kangaroos, wallabies, wombats, antechinus, several snakes and especially the southern brown bandicoot. We saw evidence of some of these from the holes dug in the sandy tracks and edges, but no sign of the actual animals. Bird life was minimal, probably because of the strong winds.

Lunch was at the East Mine site of the Wonthaggi coal mine where we could shelter from the blustery conditions or get a coffee from the café. We considered cancelling the afternoon's activity but we were a hardy lot and decided to push on.

We drove to the old Rifle Range nearby to be bathed in sunshine. Once a vast paperbark swamp, this area too had seen cattle grazing before being established as a rifle range. From 1997, the rifle range was cleared and the land eventually became part of Parks Victoria property. In 2005, the land was ripped by three different methods and direct seeding undertaken and in 2006, two wetlands were excavated. Many volunteers at community planting days worked at planting and weeding so that the area now looks quite mature.

Direct seeding has been a tremendous success. Tall stands of eucalypts (swamp gum, narrow leaf peppermint, coastal manna), woolly tea tree (*Leptospermum*



Diuris orientis was relatively common on our walk.



Our excellent guide for the day Terri Allen with the Friends at the Wonthaggi Heathlands Nature Reserve.



A camouflaged Alf Reina photographing the highly endangered *Caladenia orientalis* orchids in protective wire cages.

lanigerum), a variety of wattles, *Allocasuarina* species and *Bursaria spinosa* were evident. Some *Viminaria juncea* and *Ozothamnus ferrugineus* too were obviously in the mix.

We walked to the back of the Butts to ascend a set of steps for an overview of the area before wending our way back to our cars and from there, home.

Both of the areas we visited are open to the public and, together with other reserves in the area, would make a very enjoyable escape for a day. The nearby Baxter wetlands would cater very well for the birdwatcher. The Bass Coast Shire Council has several brochures available for the area.



Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne Inc.

www.rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

GROWING FRIENDS AUTUMN PLANT SALE



Rhododendron viriosum Drawing John Armstrong

Saturday 18 & Sunday 19 March 2017

10 am – 4 pm both days

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria – Cranbourne

www.rbg.vic.gov.au

Cnr Ballarto Road/Botanic Drive Cranbourne

Cash or Cheque please

Plantlist will be available on the website 1 week prior to the sale

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A Wintry Spring Plant Sale by Marjanne Rook

Despite a chilly weather forecast, some members were still keen to buy plants and quickly filled some boxes, trying to beat the promised bad weather. The rain, hail, wind and a thunderstorm did arrive and decided to hit us all at once. Plant shopping expeditions were cut short as we attempted to shelter under the veranda.

It was better weather on the Sunday and all in all we sold \$10,000 worth of plants. We now have many gorgeous plants left including some lovely advanced and bushy Callistemon 'Kings Park Special'. As a member of the Cranbourne Friends, you can visit our nursery any Thursday between 10.00 and 3.30 pm and check out our marvellous stock. You may even consider buying some plants as Christmas gifts or you can arrange for a Gift Voucher by emailing growing.friends@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au.

NAIDOC Artwork by Wendy Smart

During NAIDOC Week in July, RBGC organised for children visiting the Gardens to paint calico squares as part of the celebrations for Koolin-ik ba Kirrip-buluk (Family and Friends). The children were encouraged to paint the calico squares using lots of colour and any symbols that were of interest.

The result was 64 brightly coloured squares, many with Aboriginal symbols. Gardens staff member Catherine Ashton, who organised the activity, and other staff suggested to the Botanical Fabricators Group that it would be fabulous if they could create quilts from the squares, for future displays.

Four quilts, each of 16 squares, were created by Wendy Smart, Lee Baker and Jan Penpraze with Aboriginal print materials to complete the quilts. The first two were displayed at an Indigenous Literary Day in the local Library on 8th September.



Wendy Smart (l) and Lee Baker (r) holding quilts made from calico squares painted by the Aboriginal students at the NAIDOC Celebrations held in the Australian Garden. Photo: Alex Smart.

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The committee meets on the second Thursday of the month at 6pm.