

# NATURELINK

NEWSLETTER OF THE CRANBOURNE FRIENDS ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS VICTORIA INC.

VOLUME 31 :1 | AUTUMN 2024



*Callistemon ptyoides*, Alpine bottlebrush, Mt Baw Baw. See more pictures, page 14.  
Photo: Peter Miller



**Autumn Plant  
Sale 2024  
- Page 3**

**Cranbourne's  
Banksias and Alf  
Salkin - Page 3**

**2024  
Reconciliation  
Plan - Page 7**

**Quiz 15 from  
Charles Young  
- Page 10**

Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, Inc. 1000 Ballarto Road, Cranbourne Victoria 3977  
Inc no. A0025281B, ABN 43 551 008 609 Web address: [www.rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au](http://www.rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au)

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and learn, the peoples of the Kulin (Koolin) Nation, and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and future.



# Upcoming Cranbourne Friends events

## March 2024

- Thursday 14 March - Open House - Otway tour retrospective
- Sunday 17 and Thursday 21 March - Members' tours of Australian Garden with Garden Ambassadors
- Weekend 23/24 March - Growing Friends Plant Sale

## April 2024

- Thursday 11 April - Open House - SBB Bandicoot Conservation
- Sunday 21 April - Propagation Workshop
- Sunday 28 April - Wild Weaving Workshop

## May 2024

- Thursday 9 May - Open House
- 15 - 30 May - Sicily 2024 tour (booked out).

## June 2024

- Thursday 13 June - Open House
- Sunday 30 June - Banksias and Cranbourne Gardens with Alf Salkin - talk and possible tour.

---

## Propagation workshop - Sunday April 21

This is a workshop for Friends Members who want to know a little bit more about how to get plants to grow!

Join Mandy Thomson and Josie Vaganiance as they demonstrate seed raising and cuttings propagation techniques for Australian native plants. In session one, Mandy, Manager of the RBGC Nursery, will demonstrate her expertise in the Gardens nursery and Josie will talk to visitors during session two, at the Growing Friends nursery.

Mandy is passionate about growing and propagating Australian native plants, and has had experience with many facets in the horticultural industry. Heading up the team at Cranbourne Gardens Nursery for the past 8 years is the pinnacle of her 30 year career.

Josie retired from RBGV after a career in horticulture including a long tenure in charge of propagation at RBGV Cranbourne. She now heads the Cuttings team for the Cranbourne Growing Friends.

Josie and Mandy look forward to showing visitors the magic of breaking seed dormancy and techniques for getting the best germination from their native seeds. They will lead discussions and demonstrate collecting propagation materials, preparing them for growing and where to plant them to get good results. They will cover legal guidelines, good plant hygiene and how long you might expect to wait for success.

Participants will go home with punnets of prepared seeds and a pot of cuttings. A range of species and techniques will be covered.

Date of workshop: **Sunday April 21 2024 at 10 am.**

Cost: \$20 (Member price)

Don't miss out! Book into this informative activity below.

<https://cranbournefriends.tidyhq.com/public/schedule/events/>

## EVENTS

Check the monthly *Quicklink* and emails from the Friends for the latest information about these events and others.

OR visit our Event page at:

[cranbournefriends.tidyhq.com/public/schedule/events/](https://cranbournefriends.tidyhq.com/public/schedule/events/)

**Open House** is a free event for Members only, on the second Thursday of the month. Bookings are no longer required. Current members will receive an email with the details of each program.



Josie Vaganiance demonstrating techniques at the 2023 Propagation Workshop, in the Growing Friends nursery.  
Photos: Barbara Jeffrey

## Autumn Plant Sale

The Growing Friends Autumn Plant Sale will be held on Saturday/Sunday 23 and 24 March, 2024 between 10 am and 4 pm.

The Plant Sale will be held at the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, Cranbourne at the northern end of the Australian Garden. Come along and select from a range of small and large plants, many of which you will find growing in the Australian Garden.

Choose from grasses, climbers, border-plants, ground-covers, small & large bushes and trees and plants for wildlife. Prices start from \$3 for grasses and \$5 for small pots. Larger pots \$10 or individually priced. Find out more on page 13.



At this plant sale, numerous *Eremophila* species will be available including this beautiful *Eremophila alternifolia* x *maculata* shrub.

## BANKSIAS and Cranbourne Gardens with Alf Salkin - An exciting and revealing story

Join us for an afternoon talk on **Sunday June 30**, at the Auditorium at Cranbourne Gardens, at 2 pm.

In his presentation Dr Garry Price will explore the significant contributions that Alf Salkin made to botany, conservation and environmental education, including his establishment of the Special Collections Area at Cranbourne Gardens.

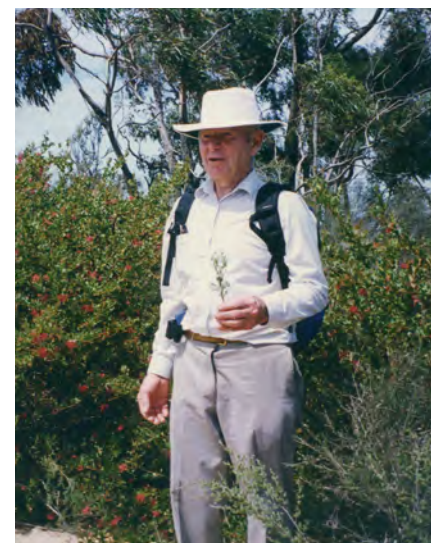
At 10 am, prior to the talk, you may also be able to take a **guided bush walk to the Special Collections Area**.

Alf Salkin was a Melbourne secondary school teacher and keen amateur botanist with a particular interest in growing and classifying *Banksia* species. In 1977 he sought permission to do an experimental planting of 200 *Banksia* species from south eastern Australia at Cranbourne, near what is now the Australian Garden, but was at that time a sand mine. His successful planting was followed by a larger experiment led by the Society for Growing Australian Plants in 1980, when a range of other native plants including *Banksia* species from Western Australia were planted at Cranbourne. These experimental plantings, now held in a Special Collections Area in the Conservation zone, contributed directly to the later development of the Australian Garden.

Our speaker, Dr Garry Price, was a colleague of Alf Salkin's at Monash High School. A secondary teacher for many years, Garry Price was later a Senior Lecturer at La Trobe University, with PhD qualifications from both La Trobe University and University of Melbourne. He is a member of the Director's Circle of the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria.

Date of these events : **Sunday June 30 2024**. Find out more:

<https://cranbournefriends.tidyhq.com/public/schedule/events/>



Top: Garry Price at Alf Salkin's commemorative plaque at Cranbourne Gardens.  
Below, Alf Salkin at the Gardens, 1994.  
Photo: Rodger Elliot



The Cranbourne Friends and the organisers of the new Botanical Weaving workshops would like to say a special thank you to the facilitator of the first two sessions for 2024, Aboriginal artist, Dr Jenine Godwin - Thompson. Jenine is a Yaggerah woman from Meeanjin (Brisbane), now based in Healesville, Victoria.

Her weaving is informed by culture and Country, the development of practical skills and listening to knowledge being shared and passed down from her grandmothers, mother and aunties.

At the Cranbourne Gardens' Elliot Centre, workshop participants will be welcomed into an intimate creative gathering, to learn about the cultural significance of weaving in Australia. Jenine enjoys sharing the 'Wild Weaving' technique that she has developed through her personal practice, inspired by nature and her family and community. Under Jenine's guidance, participants will be given the opportunity to cultivate new weaving skills, and encouraged to create their own unique woven artwork to take home. Possible examples include a wall hanging, the basis of a small basket, earrings or a necklace (or other piece of wearable art).

Jenine describes her style as a basic technique that is easy to learn. 'It is a bit like a blend between knitting and sewing. There is really no right or wrong way.' 'Weaving is all about self expression,' she says. 'I encourage people to develop their own style, explore ideas and individualise things in their own special way - everyone's pieces are unique, limited only by their imagination!'

The weaving workshops provide an opportunity to meet like-minded people, and to chat, learn together and share a creative experience. The aim is for participants to develop some new skills, to enable the further exploration of their creative ideas at home.

Invitations for bookings for the inaugural workshop on Sunday 25 February, and the repeat session on Sunday 28 April, were sent to people who had previously lodged an Expression of Interest. Both February and April workshops are now **booked out**. Please visit the link below if you would like to register on a waiting list for information about the Botanical Weaving group.

<https://cranbournefriends.tidyhq.com/public/schedule/events/>

Alternatively please contact Tess Holderness:

Email: [tessholderness@gmail.com](mailto:tessholderness@gmail.com) or phone: **0412 195 283**.

Please note that the weaving workshops are not just for women (or weavers with some experience) - beginners, men and teens are most welcome! Thank you to RBG Garden Ambassadors/Tour Guides Julie Thompson and Eileen Blake for assisting with the sessions and the development of an ongoing Botanical Weaving group. The support that we have received from the Friends Committee and Event Subcommittee, particularly Rosemary Miller and Mick Robertson, is also much appreciated.



Jenine Godwin-Thompson, beside an artwork that featured in the *Koorie Art Show* of 2022, at the Koorie Heritage Trust. 'Emu Nesting' pays homage to the role of male emus, which hold the nests together and care for the eggs and young. The artwork also represents the important role of men more broadly, as dads, brothers, grandfathers and uncles, which holds their communities together.



Dear Friends

Best wishes to you all for this new year. This Christmas and New Year break has been a busy one with family and friends, but also with plenty of time to soothe the soul and do lots of cathartic decluttering. I hope you have also had a chance for rejuvenation and rest.

Our committee team is back in harness. We hope this year will bring new and interesting Australian plant and garden events and news to keep you informed about the Cranbourne Gardens - the research, upgrades and engagement with the community of plant lovers and seekers of safe, natural spaces.

Late last year I met with Dave Harland, our new CEO, and with the new Board of the RBGV. There is real commitment to supporting the work of the Friends as they realise how a strong support group gives much back to the Gardens. This is of course true of fundraising, but even more importantly we have the opportunity to be ambassadors for the Gardens and their role in educating everyone about our need to conserve and value our plants and planet. Certainly Dave Harland will bring a new impetus to the storytelling that impacts people, stimulates their interest and influences shifts in thinking.

I note that our new RBGV Board Chair, Penny Fowler AM, has just received this Australia Day honour - Member of the Order of Australia - in recognition of her significant service to the community through a range of organisations. Penny has been on the Board of the RBGV since 2014 and has wide and varied commitments through the Arts, Not for Profit and Corporate sectors. Congratulations Penny, your long-term commitment has been well recognised. The Board members are all new, save for Penny and Christine Wyatt. They were interested in the work of the Friends and seemed amazed that we have 700 of you good souls looking to uphold the value of Botanic Gardens and ensuring plants continue to sustain our world.

I would also like to recognise that other associates of the Cranbourne Friends received awards, well spotted by our eagle-eyed committee member, Helen Kennedy, with additional comments from Rodger Elliot. It's so handy to have a brains trust:

AM: Dr Brett Summerell (NSW) - Brett accepted an invitation to contribute to the Cranbourne Friends Kangaroo Paw Family Celebration in 2016. On Day One, at the Melbourne Gardens when the daily theme was Botanical, Horticultural & Zoological, Brett gave a presentation on Diseases of Kangaroo Paws and relatives and gave that same presentation with additional information on Day Two at Cranbourne, when the theme for the day was Breeding, Marketing, Design, Cultivation & Diseases.

OAM: Leon Costermans (Vic) - Leon has not only led us on tours of Langwarrin Park, and Studley Park (and other bushland conservation areas) but was involved in a couple of the Cranbourne Friends workshops.

OAM: Margaret Pieroni (WA) - co-author and illustrator of *The Dryandras* (before *Dryandras* became *Banksias*), Margaret was invited by the then leader of the APS *Dryandra* Study Group, Tony Cavanagh, to visit and comment on the Special Collection at Cranbourne (which is mainly *Proteaceae*).

Helen commented that acknowledgements of people associated with the

environment, conservation and the arts featured prominently, an encouraging development! All well-deserved gongs.

Our committees and special interest groups value your input and especially your volunteer time and skills to make the Friends vibrant, engaging and welcoming. If this new year brings a reassessment of your interests and commitments and you have time to fill, the Friends will welcome you. Drop a note to any committee contact and we can chat about skills and interests you have, or want to develop, and see what roles or one-off task might fit you.

We congratulate Tess Holderness on her successful organisation of the Wild Weaving workshops – the February workshop was booked out and we are receiving bookings for the April repeat. We hope that this interest may lead to the establishment of a new regular basketry-weaving group on site.

Charles Young, our star quiz master has provided his 15th quiz, which has yet again eclipsed his previous efforts. Do rise to the challenge – you may be pleasantly surprised at your expertise or at least absorb more botanical knowledge. Thank you Charles, a sterling effort and always appreciated.

Thanks also go to Chris Clarke and Alex Stalder for their very successful guiding of 34 Friends members to enjoy the summer wildflowers on the Baw Baw Plateau and also visit Walhalla in early January. You will read all about this successful local tour in this edition of *Naturelink*.

My last letter to you was drafted on Melbourne Cup Day, and I was bemoaning the slow start to summer and hoping the hot weather wasn't about to hit with a vengeance. My forecasting skills appear to be on par with the BOM! At least our gardens have enjoyed the mild early summer.

Happy gardening and enjoy the gifts that autumn brings.

## Printing and posting of *Naturelink*

The committee has been reviewing costs in all areas of the work of the Friends to ensure efficient use of the funds we raise for the Gardens.

Printing and postage costs have become increasingly expensive, so rather than considering an increase in annual membership dues, we plan to encourage members to read the electronic version of the magazine for preference, to encourage the conserving of funds and people resources. All members with an email address already receive the very cost effective digital edition of *Naturelink* in their inbox.

Members who prefer to continue receiving a printed paper copy of *Naturelink*, will have this option and be invited to contribute a donation to defray necessary printing and postage costs.

This option will be provided within your membership renewal as it falls due from mid year.

**You do not need to act on this now.**





# Acting Executive Director's report | Kevin Alexander

Firstly, let me introduce myself. I'm Kevin Alexander, Manager Infrastructure and Facilities at the Cranbourne Gardens, and I feel privileged to get the opportunity to write this report, as part of my endeavour to adequately fill the huge shoes of Executive Director Chris Russell for a short period of time. As I head into the anniversary of my employment at RBGV, I reflect on how lucky I am to have the opportunity to work with such talented and dedicated individuals, teams, and volunteers: all while being surrounded by the most captivating environs.

As an organisation, we were honoured to present Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's first Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) (2024-2026) in early February at two glorious ceremonies. If I may quote Penny Fowler, RBGV Board Chair and David Harland, Director and Chief Executive '...RBGV's work is motivated by the unifying truth that life is sustained and enriched by plants. Though much of our science and many of our landscapes are steeped in a colonial history, the plant-based and place-based nature of our work presents a valuable opportunity to support Traditional Owners' aspirations for Healing Country...'



Formal Welcome to Country ceremony at the Reconciliation Action Plan launch. Below, Dry Riverbed planting. Photo: Trent Loane

The artwork on the cover of the Innovate RAP is by Samantha Richards, a proud descendant of the Wurundjeri and Dja Dja Wurrung. Her inspiring artwork pays homage to the land: the plants, the waterways, and the landscape itself, using plants found on our site here at Cranbourne, the gum leaves from welcoming people on to Country, the cherry ballart used in smoking ceremonies to acknowledge Ancestors, and the wattle, whose flowers create a bridge between here and the Dreamtime. In the artwork, all of these images are surrounded by white borders to represent the journey of many people: staff, volunteers, visitors and Traditional Owners past, present, and those who will walk this land in the future.

As you walk around the Australian Gardens you may notice the newly redeveloped Dry Riverbed has taken shape. The gorgeous planting plan, designed by our very own Andrew Laidlaw, Landscape Architect, with assistance from horticulturist Samantha Chong, has been planted and is establishing well, thanks to generous funding from the Cranbourne Friends. A fantastic cross-team effort was held over several days, many of which were impacted by significant precipitation events, that saw Cranbourne Staff, FiGs volunteers and other volunteer members plant over 3100 herbaceous species and grasses. Stay tuned, as 2024 will provide a bolstering of the herbaceous material with swathes of grasses and forbs set to be planted, a very exciting time to be here.



As we are all aware, our time on site here at Cranbourne is often filled with joy and wonder, and we expect the unexpected, however, I do wish to acknowledge that getting to our site has been a challenge recently. I'm pleased to note that the City of Casey roadworks on the South Gippsland Hwy are drawing to a close, and we look forward to enjoying easy access via our Eastern Entrance once the roundabout has been completed. To complement this activity, the work at our Western Entrance is also drawing to a completion, providing all our visitors with a totally sealed entrance directly into our main carpark, complete with predator-proof automatic gates and fauna tunnels to protect our native wildlife. Ensuring our visitors' experience is of the highest quality from the moment they enter our gates, with the aim of creating amazing memories and hopefully encouraging them to complement their life enriched by plants.

# Forest Therapy – what is it and why all the attention?

Dr Kathleen Bagot, Friends member and expert on nature-based wellbeing

In the last few years, articles about Forest Therapy or Forest Bathing have been published in global magazines such as *Time*, *Vogue* and *National Geographic*; newspapers like the *New York Times* and the *Guardian*; and in articles from *Harvard Health* and *Yale Environment*.

But what is it? And why is it getting attention from all these different organisations?

**Forest Therapy** (also known as **Forest Bathing**) is an evidence-based public health practice that can improve your physical and mental health, and overall wellbeing. It has been inspired and developed from the Japanese health practice called '**Shinrin-yoku**' which translates as '**bathing in the forest atmosphere**' or '**immersing into the forest**'. Based on long, cultural connections to the spiritual and health properties of nature, the Japanese government formalised this support program in the early 1980s to address pressures on the workforce. Research showed significant improvements in important health measures, and it is now practised around the world, including here in Australia.

During a Forest Therapy session, a trained guide supports you to slowly wander in nature, drawing on all of your senses to be present, to notice and connect with nature mindfully. Sensory, creative and gentle physical activities are designed to calm busy minds, invite curiosity, and inspire awe and wonder.

Sessions are usually 2-3 hours, and in that time, participants only walk 1-2 kilometres, making it suitable for all fitness levels. Each session concludes with a taste of nature, with the group connecting over a shared tea service.

Many physical and psychological health benefits have been identified and are well-established in the scientific literature.

Forest Therapy guides have received specialised training to follow an internationally-agreed sequence during each session. Their role is to support participants to slow down, immerse into the space and help quieten everyday busy minds, so nature's medicine has the best chance to work. Indeed, nature is the actual therapist. Guides may make suggestions, but you choose what you want to do.

If you're interested in feeling more relaxed and more connected with nature and yourself, Forest Therapy may be right for you. The great irony is that by putting the never-ending to-do lists aside and joining a Forest Therapy session, you may end up being more productive.

Note: There are monthly Forest Therapy sessions at RBG Cranbourne and weekly at RBG Melbourne, presented by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, in collaboration with the Institute of Forest Therapy and the International Nature and Forest Therapy Alliance (INFTA).

## Booking for Forest Therapy:

[rbg.vic.gov.au/cranbourne-gardens/what-s-on-cranbourne/forest-therapy/](http://rbg.vic.gov.au/cranbourne-gardens/what-s-on-cranbourne/forest-therapy/)



Wandering scented Eucalypt trails; Finishing with tastes of nature.  
Photos: Kathleen Bagot



For this edition of *Naturelink* I will feature another of the methods used for the creation of our Mini Suitcase Quilts. In 2022 Bev Williamson created the most recent of our quilts to advertise our group in a novel and very attractive way.

Bev used materials from the Leesa Chandler range featuring gum flowers in both the full flower head and as coordinating pattern of the individual flowers. For the heading *Botanical Fabricators* she chose the green and orange coordinating fabric and backed it with adhesive to stabilise the material.



She calculated the size the letters would need to be when fitted on the black background. The letters were spaced out and attached by hand using a large size blanket stitch. It has been very effective and we use it on displays of other Mini Quilts.

In October 2023 we held a Textile and Art Stall in conjunction with the Growing Friends Plant Sale. Despite poor weather on Sunday forcing us to pack up early, our total sales were \$580.20.

In November our group visited a craft stall held in Tooradin each year. The quality and presentation of this stall is excellent. They sell Christmas decorations, children's toys and dolls plus a range of tableware and personal items. It was a great opportunity for our group to compare how other organisations operate.

In December we held another Textile Stall at Blue Hills Rise Retirement Village for a morning and were able to achieve the excellent result of \$485.

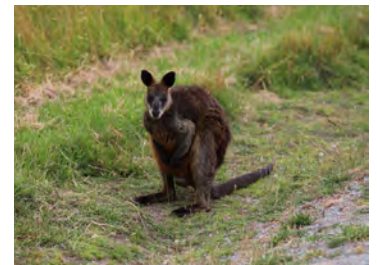
## Membership | Alexandra Stalder

### New Members

This quarter we are pleased to extend a warm welcome to 16 new members. We are excited to have you on board and hope you will enjoy all that your Friends membership has to offer. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or queries.

### Membership Cards

As in recent past years we will again be holding a popular vote of Friends members to choose the image for our 2024/25 membership card. This year's card will celebrate the **Cranbourne Gardens, RBGV bushland**. We encourage members to submit their photos taken in the bushland areas of the gardens including the wetlands, Trig Point, Stringybark Picnic Ground or any of the other wonderful spots you have enjoyed exploring (and photographing!). Each member can submit up to five images, **preferably in landscape format**. A shortlist will be decided by the Friends committee, and then voted on by the membership. Submissions can be emailed to [membership@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au](mailto:membership@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au).



In the bushland, you might see a wallaby waiting for you to take his or her photo, like this one (in the landscape and in landscape format).

As always if you have any membership queries please get in touch. A gentle reminder - the Membership Secretary is unable to take calls during weekdays so **text message** or **email** is preferred when possible.

Email: [membership@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au](mailto:membership@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au)  
Text: 0431 025 733

## Friend Quiz 15 Charles Young

This quiz focusses on plants in genera that are named after people (spoiled for choice!). The 'people' include goddesses, a saint and plants people! You may know the plants, but do you know the 'people'? Enjoy.

**1.** Prominent stamens are a feature of this stunning *Verticordia*. What is this species and what is the origin of the name *Verticordia*?



**2.** This widespread perennial (Blueberry Lily and Blue Flax-lily) features nodding flowers and bright blue berries. What is the scientific name of the plant and the origin of the generic name?



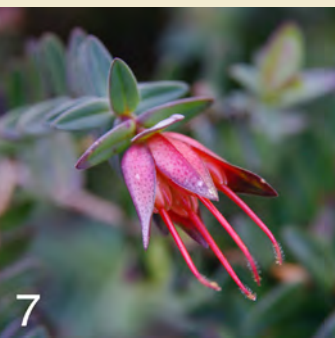
**3.** Blue Banded Bees just love this popular garden Speedwell, a native to northern NSW and Queensland. What is the plant and who is the genus named after?



**4.** This is *Banksia ashbyi*, which is endemic to north west coastal areas of WA. Who is honoured in the binomial – two people, one for you and one for Google!?



**5.** A Melbourne suburb is named after plants in this genus, one named in honour of Italian naturalist and plant collector Francesco Borone. What is the genus/suburb and – unusual question – how did Borone die?



**6.** This is Melbourne botanist and palaeobotanist Dr Isabel Cookson, after whom a genus of spore-bearing plants is named. What is the genus and where are the plants to be found?



**7.** This plant is considered by some to be lemon scented, as reflected in its common (Lemon-scented Myrtle) and scientific names. What is the latter and who is the genus named after?



**8.** These plants inspired the name of a polo club made famous by Banjo Patterson (this species is a dwarf form from Rylstone, NSW). What is this plant and who is honoured in its generic name? And what is the name of the polo club?

Photos by Charles Young, except 6 (Australian War Memorial).

Check your answers on page 16.



## Autumn 2024 FIGS | Christine Kenyon and Bill Jones

The most memorable activity for the group since the last *Naturelink* reached your inbox was assisting with the planting for the Dry River Bed renovation. Mathieu Lascostes made sure FIGs members were invited to help. Thank you, Mathieu.

Over three days several of us spent a day, or two, helping the staff plant about 3,500 gorgeous, colourful, herbaceous plants. It did rain on one day but that did not dampen the enthusiasm for some in the group. This garden will be spectacular when the plants settle and begin to flower. It is to be noted that the Cranbourne Friends supplied the funds for both the plants and the new irrigation system in this garden.

The event for December was a BYO Christmas lunch to share, after the last December day. Wonderful food and conversation! The idea of basking on the Ian Potter Lawn for this lunch was thwarted by the weather. Instead, we retreated to the new annexe next to the Kiosk.

Friends in the Gardens (FIGS) is now a wonderful, happy and friendly group of 12 who help the Horticulture staff in the Australian Garden on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday morning of each month. We meet at the Visitor Centre at 9.15 am and then spend our time in the Gardens until 12.30 pm when the staff go for lunch, and we adjourn to the café for lunch and a chat. We do stop for morning tea and another chat. All tools and safety vests are provided; you just need to bring your enthusiastic self, a drink bottle, sunblock, a hat and gardening gloves.

We are always looking to welcome new members. Contact: email: [figs@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au](mailto:figs@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au)  
Christine Kenyon - 0438 345 589.



These photos show staff and volunteers planting in the Dry River Bed Garden.

Below: Photographer Bill Jones, planting in the rain.

All photos: Bill Jones



## Cranbourne Friends RBGV rules amended

At the 2023 Annual General Meeting the Cranbourne Friends Rules were amended, by special resolution.

Since then the Rules have been updated to reflect the current Consumer Affairs Victoria requirements. This document will go to the next AGM for approval.

The updated rules have now been uploaded to the Cranbourne Friends website, on the *About us* page. They can be downloaded from the following link:

<https://rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au/new/wp-content/uploads/CF-RBGV-Rules-updated-CAV-12112023.pdf>



Annual General Meeting 2023

# Friends in Focus | Judith Cooke

## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

The last three months of 2023 were filled with interest and opportunities as we continued to enjoy each other's company while exploring the Garden at Cranbourne, discovering exciting subjects for photography.

The *Cranbourne Lens*, our monthly newsletter, fulfils an important role, keeping members in touch and providing a platform to display our photographs, which exhibit a steady improvement in standard and creativity.

An unusually large attendance of eight members met in October when Alex Smart provided a history of Helmeted Honeyeaters in the Upper Beaconsfield area. This was followed by an anticlockwise walk in the Australian Garden when progress in the Arid Garden was noted, and a number of flowering plants made good subjects for macrophotography, especially the flower spikes on the *Xanthorrhoeas*. Refreshments in the cafe rounded off a successful morning.

We held our second *Show and Tell* for the year at our November meeting. Members brought along a number of photobooks or photo albums as well as laptops and iPads to display some of their favourite images taken in recent months. These illustrated trips within Australia and overseas and a variety of activities including birdwatching, recording habitat regeneration following Black Saturday or spending time with family and friends. It was very satisfying to see the results of members' hard work, skill and knowledge of photography as well as their subjects. The range of images on display was very impressive.

Afterwards, members shared information on *iNaturalist* and how it can be useful to photographers and others for recording and identification of subjects, as well as finding species. It was noted that Cranbourne staff member Ricardo Simao was a regular contributor of images from the Australian Garden and elsewhere.

With a week long forecast of rain, preceded by a day of strong winds and 30+ degrees, our final meeting for the year began with heavily overcast skies and steady drizzle which have quite frequently been the conditions encountered over recent months.

Nevertheless, five intrepid members braved the elements and met at the Elliot Centre. We spent about an hour discussing new camera lenses and other equipment to assist with our photography. We then relocated to the cafe for a coffee before venturing into the Australian Garden, as the wet conditions continued. We spent some time recording the recent new planting in the Dry River Bed. We noted the rapid growth of earlier replanting in the Arid Garden, where the Sturt's Desert Pea in flower was a highlight. We returned to the Visitor Centre via the Eucalypt Walk, where we parted, exchanging good wishes for the festive season.

## Friends in Focus

2nd Saturday of the month, Elliot Centre.

2 pm, April to September (9.30 am Daylight Saving Time)



Sturt's Desert Pea, in Arid Garden. Photo: Amy Akers



Amy Akers photographing Sturt's Desert Pea; New planting in the Dry River Bed; *Xanthorrhoea* in Stringybark Walk. Photos: Judith Cooke



## Autumn Plant Sale

The Autumn Plant Sale will be on **23 and 24 March 2024**, which will be a prime time for planting.

The Growing Friends are now in full swing, weeding and sprucing up the plants for the Autumn Plant Sale. This time we will have a bumper crop of *Eremophila* expertly selected and grown by Christine Strachan, who will be in attendance for advice at the sale on Saturday 23rd March.

Among the numerous *Eremophila* species we will have available are:

- *Eremophila alternifolia* x *maculata*. It is a fast growing, hardy shrub, with deep pink flowers with a spotted throat, and flowering in spring and summer. H 1.8m x W 1.8m. It prefers light/full sun in all soil types. Prune for good shape. Bird attracting.
- *Eremophila glabra* 'Streaky Bay'. This is a hardy groundcover with green-grey foliage and red-orange tubular flowers, flowering mostly in spring and summer. H 0.3-0.5m x W 1.2m. It prefers full sun to part shade in most well drained soils. A light prune is beneficial. Attracts birds.
- *Eremophila nivea* 'Silky Eremophila'. This is an upright shrub with grey-green silky leaves and deep-mauve flowers. H 2.5m x W 2m. It prefers full sun in well-drained soil and flowers in spring. A light prune promotes bushiness. Attracts birds and insects.

The complete plant list will be sent out to members about a week before the sale - it will also be on the Cranbourne Friends website: [rbgfrienscranbourne.org.au](http://rbgfrienscranbourne.org.au)

## Growing Friends required

We need a couple more people who are available on a weekly basis to work in our nursery, especially with the Plant Maintenance team. This involves weeding, feeding, sorting, pruning and detailing plants. Our working day is every Thursday from 9.30 - 10 am to 2 pm or later. Some level of fitness is required as the work requires being able to lift and shift boxes filled with plants. Contact Marjanne by email [growing.friends@rbgfrienscranbourne.org.au](mailto:growing.friends@rbgfrienscranbourne.org.au) for more information.

In addition, we need someone who can work with plants and also record our weekly work data on Excel spreadsheets. Contact Marjanne by email: [growing.friends@rbgfrienscranbourne.org.au](mailto:growing.friends@rbgfrienscranbourne.org.au)

## Nursery open

If you are a Friends Member and can't make it to the Plant Sale, you can visit the Nursery any Thursday between 10 am and 2pm to purchase plants, except Thursday 21 March. We will be busy setting up for the weekend Plant Sale on that day.

## *Araucaria bidwillii*

Do you have a large property and like the idea of a tree that is special, stands out and could even be a heritage tree sometime in the future? If so, you may be interested in the *Araucaria bidwillii*.

We still have two *Araucaria bidwillii*, just 50-60cm tall at present. This is a fast-growing, large tree, 30-50m tall, with a diameter of 1.5 m, with a dark-brown, furrowed trunk. It can be grown in a large pot for a few years.

Contact: Marjanne Rook

[growing.friends@rbgfrienscranbourne.org.au](mailto:growing.friends@rbgfrienscranbourne.org.au)



*Eremophila alternifolia* x *maculata*; *Eremophila glabra* 'Streaky Bay'; *Eremophila nivea*.

From Thursday 11 to Monday 15 January 2024, we spent five glorious days exploring the wildflowers and scenic landscape in the high country at Mt Baw Baw. This was a self-drive tour that included 34 members of the Cranbourne Friends. It was a follow-up to similar trips (in previous years) to Falls Creek and Mt Hotham.

We stayed in two lodges at the Mt Baw Baw Village and our expert guides were Alexandra Stalder and Chris Clarke. The fresh air, bird calls and walks along the alpine tracks were a perfect balm to the festive season. The wildflowers were just gorgeous. There were literally masses of trigger plants (*Stylidium armeria* subsp. *armeria*) and greenhood orchids (*Pterostylis monticola* and *Pterostylis decurva*). During the weekend, everyone helped with the identification of a huge range of plants. The search for new species was a constant source of wonder, including the identification of a couple of rare and endangered specimens: *Veronica nivea* (Snow Speedwell) and *Psychrophila introloba* (Alpine March Marigold).

When we arrived on Thursday afternoon, we were able to visit the Baw Baw Dingo Resource Centre, in a series of small groups. We were given an informative talk and patted (yes, patted) one of the dingoes. That evening, after our barbecue, Chris Clarke provided an illustrated talk about the plants that we were likely to find on our walks. On Friday, we drove to the Mt St Gwinear carpark and walked along a grassy track with arching snowgums overhead and the sound of running water to the side. An intrepid group walked from the Mt Baw Baw Village to the Mt St Gwinear summit (about 16kms return), ably led by Mick Robertson.

On Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings, we dined at the Village Central Restaurant with pre-dinner drinks and nibbles on the deck. While sipping on 'whatever you preferred', there was a spectacular view of the mountain range on the horizon.

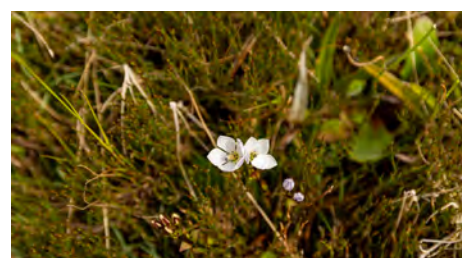
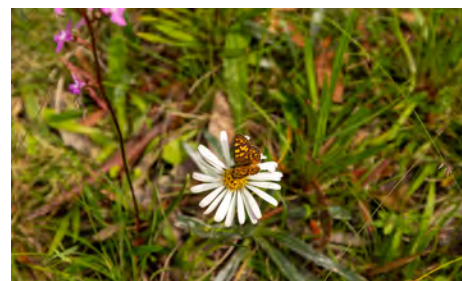
On the Saturday morning, we enjoyed a couple of walks in and around the Mt Baw Baw Village to forage for more alpine flora. Alex Stalder had issued each of us with a name tag, and on the back of the name tag was the name of a plant. *Spot the Plant* became a challenge and a focus - usually resolved with the assistance of others. Bog plants, open woodland plants, grassy meadows and rocky outcrops were all available throughout the weekend.

Sunday was our Walhalla day. We drove to Walhalla and, would you believe it, we came across a film set for a film with Liam Neeson. A portion of the main street had been converted into a Nepalese village with colourful banners across the street and bright pink, plastic bougainvillea along the side walk. A timber fronted hotel had been painted jade green - a free paint job for the owner. Filming was scheduled to commence the next day.



Top: A field of trigger plants and snow daisies at Mt Baw Baw; Saturday evening on the deck of the local restaurant. Photos: Jill Burness

Below: Correa Brown butterfly, (*Oreixenica corrae*). Bottom: Mueller's Snow gentian (*Gentianella muelleriana*). Photos: Peter Miller





Our official agenda included a mid-morning train ride on the Walhalla Goldfields Railway. This historic steam engine travels along a steep gorge with a river below. It was a very scenic journey with quite a few tourists on board. In the afternoon, we had a guided tour of the Walhalla Long Tunnel Extended Gold Mine that travels deep into the mountainside. The working conditions for the miners were rugged, and it took 16 years for the site to start earning a profit for the investors. It was an interesting step back in time.

On Sunday evening, Chris Clarke provided us with an excellent tutorial on 'How to navigate iNaturalist'. The projection gear was set up by Tim Morrow, and we had the benefit of his expert meteorological forecast for the next day, including a dissertation on the meaning of 'mizzle'.

On Monday morning, we packed our cars and cleaned the lodges. Our lodge leader, Prue Wright, got everyone organised with the minimum of fuss. We followed her direction implicitly because she had solved the problem of 'no hot water' on our first morning at the lodge. As we departed the Mt Baw Baw Village, arrangements were made for a couple of stops on the way home. This included a short stop on the Mt Baw Baw Tourist Rd, as well as a brief visit to the Noojee Trestle Bridge and the Toorong Falls.

These days with the Cranbourne Friends are a reminder of our good fortune. The sound of the bush is distinctly Australian, and the air is so refreshingly clean. Our thanks to Alexandra Stalder for organising the trip, and to Chris Clarke for his assistance. It was a wonderful couple of days in the company of kindred spirits. I hope we can do something similar in 2025.



Top: *Stylidium ameria*, subsp. *ameria*, the Trigger plant, abounded at Baw Baw, while in wetter swampy areas there were many plants including Swamp Sun Orchid, *Thelymitra cyanea*.  
Photos: Peter Miller

---

## Dr Jim Willis | Christine Kenyon

Recently, driving along Beach Road, Brighton, I noticed a sign for the *Dr Jim Willis Reserve*. The reserve hosts Fairy Wrens, six Skink species, historical dunes, and an Aboriginal midden. The sand dune vegetation is noted as being important for beach health.

Dr James Hamlyn Willis (1910 – 1995) was a botanist, forester and very highly gifted field naturalist. Interested in plants since a young boy, he studied at the Victorian School of Forestry, Creswick (1930). In 1940 he completed a Science degree at the University of Melbourne. He worked for the Victorian Forests Commission and, in 1937 was seconded to the National Herbarium of Victoria, Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, where he helped revive the Herbarium's research program. In 1945 he was appointed the Herbarium Botanist, then Acting Director of the Gardens and Acting Government Botanist. He retired from this position in 1972.



*A Handbook to Plants in Victoria*, published in two volumes in 1962 and 1972, was the standard reference for Victorian flora for three decades, for which he received a doctorate from the University of Melbourne. He prepared regional and local floristic lists, including the *Cranbourne Gardens annex flora*. He authored over 880 publications and described 64 new plant species alone or jointly.

Bayside City Council established the 1km long Dr Jim Willis Reserve (also known as the Brighton Dunes), adjacent to the Brighton Foreshore Reserve, where his flora census had helped protect the important, remnant, indigenous bushland.

## Answers to Friend Quiz 15 on page 10

A1. This is *Verticordia staminosa*. Verticordia is an epithet of the Roman goddess Venus: Venus Verticordia or “Venus the turner of hearts,” from L. *verto* “to turn” and *cor(dium)* “hearts.” While Verticordias turn many a heart (to admiration, love or desire) the name simply indicates their family, *Myrtaceae*, Myrtle (*Myrtus communis*) being the sacred tree of Venus.

A2. This is *Dianella revoluta*. Dianella is the diminutive form of Diana, the Roman goddess of the hunt. The original species (*Dianella des bois*, “Diana’s little plant of the woods”) was found in a French woodland, hence the connection with hunting.

A3. This is *Veronica arenaria*. Veronica is an ancient name for plants identified (for unknown reasons) with Saint Veronica. She offered her veil to Jesus as he was carrying the cross and his image was miraculously captured on it when he wiped his brow.

A4. The generic name honours the English botanist Sir Joseph Banks; the specific epithet Edwin Ashby, an Adelaide property developer who established a garden at ‘Wittunga’ (Wittunga Garden, well worth a visit!). Ashby was one of the collectors of the type species.

A5. The genus is *Boronia*, as is the suburb. Borone died, aged 25, in an accidental fall when, in his sleep, he mistook a high window for one that opened onto a terrace. *B. heterophylla* ‘Pixie’ is pictured.

A6. The genus is *Cooksonia*, the oldest plant known to possess a stem and vascular tissue. It can only be found in the fossil record (even extinct organisms have Linnaean binomials)!

A7. This is *Darwinia citriodora*. Rodger Elliot notes that the Austrian botanist Stephan F. L. Endlicher originally used the name *Genetyllis citriodora* Endl. and George Bentham later placed it in *Darwinia*. The genus *Darwinia* was named in honour of English physician Erasmus Darwin, the grandfather of evolutionary biologist Charles Darwin.

A8. This is *Persoonia chamaepitys* (Rylstone form); the genus was named after Dutch botanist Christiaan Persoon. The collective common name, Geebung, comes from the Wiradjuri name

### Cranbourne Friends Committee

**President:** Erin Cosgriff 0419 518 621  
president@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

**Secretary:** Jennifer Potten 0409 436 181  
secretary@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

**Vice President:** Rosemary Miller 0422 893 745  
vicepresident@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

**Treasurer:** Wendy Herauville 0407 525 136  
treasurer@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

**Membership Secretary:** Alexandra Stalder  
0431 025 733 (preferably text rather than call)  
membership@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

**RBGV Representative:** Chris Russell 5990 2200

#### General Committee:

Jill Burness 0402 477 590  
Helen Kennedy 0419 125 800  
Kim McKee 0431 031 672  
Alexandra Stalder 0431 025 733

**Booking Officer:**  
Ros Shepherd 5932 5611  
bookings@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

**Events Subcommittee:**  
Mick Robertson (Convenor)  
events@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

Tony Anderson  
Wendy Herauville  
Rosemary Miller  
Tim Morrow  
Nicky Zanen  
Louise Anderson  
Tanya Johnson  
Helen Morrow  
Ros Shepherd

**Naturelink Editor:**  
Rosemary Miller 0422 893 745  
editor@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

**Quicklink Editor:**  
Alexandra Stalder 0431 025 733

**Social Media Convenor:**  
Tanya Johnson 0418 418 641  
socialm@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

The General Committee meets on the third Tuesday of the month (except January).