

NATURELINK

NEWSLETTER OF THE CRANBOURNE FRIENDS ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS VICTORIA INC.

VOLUME 26 :3 | SPRING 2019



Xanthorrhoea australis in front of Xanthorrhoea johnsonii, Photographer, Eril Deighton



CRANBOURNE FRIENDS

ROYAL
BOTANIC GARDENS
VICTORIA

Coming events

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The Iconic Banksia

Would you believe that there is so much more to Banksias than just Snugglepots, Cuddlepies and the Big Bad Banksia Men?

Banksias are icons of the Australian bush and have a very ancient history. Australian plant enthusiasts are frequently excited by the splendour and variation within the *Banksia* genus but may be unsure about different growing requirements. This workshop is the place to be if you are keen to learn more about Banksias.

Over recent times the *Banksia* genus (80 species) has grown, as botanical studies have led to absorption of *Dryandra* species into *Banksia*. Now there are 170 *Banksia* species in the genus. Dr Mike Bayly from Melbourne University will deal with this disruption and any confusion in: **What is Banksia? And why did the big bad Banksia men dispatch Dryandra?**

At the workshop, other presentations on this iconic genus will be given by:

- RBG Victoria's Chief Botanist and Director Plant Sciences and Diversity Prof David Cantrill, world-renowned for his study of Antarctic plant fossils, will discuss Banksia and Banksia-like fossils: the fossil history of this group.
- Trevor Blake, a long-time leader of the Australian Plant Society's Banksia Study Group, is choosing to reveal the best banksias for your garden.
- Rodger Elliot will cover Banksias – Selection and Application for Cultivation, and how to create pleasing landscapes that also suit wildlife.
- Warren Worboys, Curator of Horticulture at Cranbourne Gardens, will deal with the subject of Banksia Nutrition, Pests and Diseases.
- John Thompson will explore Banksia: Indigenous use, discovery, cultivation, inspiration for arts & crafts.
- Carolyn Landon, author of *The Banksia Lady*, will cover the History of Banksia Illustration.



Top: *Banksia blechnifolia*, a fairly reliable groundcover in gardens. Bottom: *Banksia cuneata*, a rare species from south-western Western Australia. Photos: Rodger Elliot

All-day Workshop Sunday 13 October 2019

9:30 for 10:00am start (finishing at about 3:30 pm)

Auditorium

Members \$60
Non-members \$75
Students \$30

Please book via the booking form.

Contact:
Rodger Elliot
rgelliot@optusnet.com.au

or
8774 2483



White Waratah (*Telopea speciosissima*) part of the Waratah collection, Karwarra Botanic Gardens, Kalorama. Photo: Lindy Harris, and courtesy Karwarra.

Drawing and painting a white Waratah

Botanical art workshop with Marta Salamon

Monday to Wednesday, October 14-16, 2019, at the Elliot Centre. Time: 10am – 3pm.

Suitable for beginners and intermediate level.
Materials list will be supplied on enrolment.

Marta is a well-known botanical artist and teacher who has a swag of awards to her name, including the Celia Rosser Medal for Botanical Art. She has exhibited widely and her work is held in collections in Australia and overseas.

Contact Margaret Kitchen, 0413 664 295.

Botanical Illustrators Workshop 14-16 October

Members \$185
Non-members, \$230

Please book via the booking form.

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.

Place the dates in your diaries now

This calendar may be subject to change. There have been some changes to what was listed in earlier *Naturelink* editions. Open House Events are for Friends Members only.

SEPTEMBER

Thursday 12 September:

Open House, Elliot Centre:
Leadbeater's Possum with Sue Bendel

Monday 23 September:

Talk & Gawk: Australian
Mistletoes in the Environment
with Peter Rogers

Sunday 13 October:

All Day Workshop: Banksias

Monday 14 to Wednesday 16 October

Botanical Illustrators Workshop:
White Waratahs with Marta Salamon

Sat 26 – Sun 27 October

Growing Friends Plant Sale

OCTOBER

Sunday 6 October:

Bush BBQ & Wildflower Ramble

Thursday 10 October:

Open House, Elliot Centre
A Plant Collection Trip to
NW Victoria – Elisabeth
Murdoch Scholarship Report
by Broni Swartz (Gardens
Horticulturalist).

NOVEMBER

Thursday 14 November:

Open House, Elliot Centre

Sunday 17 November

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 23 November

Talk: Pollination with Max
Campbell, President Field
Naturalists Club of Victoria.

Growing Friends Plant Sale Spring 2019

Saturday 26 and Sunday 27
October, 10am to 4pm

Plant list available one week
prior to sale -

www.rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au



Veronica arenaria
Photo: Warren Worboys

152 Years of Leadbeater's Possum with Sue Bendel

Sue Bendel, a Cranbourne Friend, will provide us with a presentation on the endangered Leadbeater's Possum, *Gymnobelideus leadbeateri*. The future of this delightful small marsupial is under great pressure after many years of habitat removal.

As a very young child, Sue spent many hours observing the invertebrates under the door mat in front of the bungalow.

At a young age she went on weekly visits to O'Donohue Picnic Ground on Mt Dandenong. There she developed a love of the Mountain Ash and the graceful tree ferns, not knowing that much later in life she would become an active campaigner to protect them. Flexible work hours have allowed her to study horticulture, and more recently to put much time into her passions of protecting the forests of the Central Highlands, and revegetation of Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve to improve the habitat for the Lowland Leadbeater's Possum and the Helmeted Honeyeater.



Leadbeater's Possum. Photo: A. Smith*

Sue is also a field volunteer for the Helmeted Honeyeater and fills various roles at Healesville Sanctuary. After discovering the *Field Naturalist Club of Victoria* in 1998, she attended a weekend course in 2007 to learn about habitats for Leadbeater's Possum. She has since become passionate about this marsupial.

*The Australian Museum Complete Book of Australian Mammals, Ronald Strahan (ed.). Angus and Robertson, 1983, p. 143

Friends Open House

Thursday 12
September
2019

2 – 3:30pm

Elliot Centre

Contact
Helen
Morrow
9850 9125

[helen@
themorrows.
net.au](mailto:helen@themorrows.net.au)

Mistletoes are extraordinary plants that require other plants as hosts so that they can survive. These plants also rely on very small birds to make sure that they do not become a statistic on listings of extinct plant species.

Mistletoes are evergreen semi-parasitic plants which have root-like growths known as haustoria. Haustoria penetrate the outer layers of branches in order to gain moisture and nutrients from the host plants. Mistletoes are mainly members of the plant families Loranthaceae and Visaceae with the main genera in Australia being *Amyema*, *Lysiana* and *Muellerina*. Common host plants are species of *Acacia*, *Allocasuarina*, *Casuarina* and *Eucalyptus*. The Western Australian Christmas Tree *Nuytsia floribunda* acts differently from the aerial mistletoes, in that its roots attach themselves to roots of other plants to gain nutrients.

Peter Rogers, President of Ringwood Naturalists Club, has become enthralled by these amazing plants over the last 20 years and has travelled throughout Australia to see and photograph mistletoes in the wild. We will be the beneficiaries of his experiences as he provides us with an illustrated talk.

After the talk we will have a wander in the Gardens bushland to see some mistletoes at very close quarters.



Peter Rogers photographing *Amyema miquellii* on Mereenie Loop Rd, Northern Territory. Photo: Alison Rogers

Mistletoes Talk and Gawk

Monday 23 September 2019

1pm - 3.30pm Auditorium

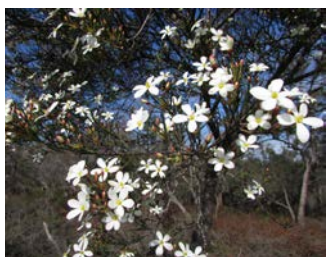
Members \$20
Non-members \$25
Students \$10

Please book via the booking form

Contact:

Rodger Elliot
8774 2483

Bush BBQ and Wildflower Ramble



Top: *Tetratheca ciliata* (Pink Bells), and *Ricinocarpos pinifolius* (Wedding Bush). Photos: Judith Cooke

Are you looking forward to the longer days again? If so, why not come and celebrate the introduction of Daylight Savings with an informal get together of Cranbourne Friends with a BBQ in the [Stringybark BBQ area](#) on Sunday 6th October 2019. Participants should bring their own food and drink, whether it is to barbeque or just to have a picnic.

After lunch, we will set off with Matt Henderson, one of the Cranbourne Garden's enthusiastic Horticulture staff, for a slow ramble through the bushland looking for native plants in flower. Matt went on the tour with the Cranbourne Friends to Mt Hotham earlier this year and also spoke briefly to the group of Friends who toured the Gardens with John Arnott. Matt is very passionate about the Australian flora, and will tell us about the plants that we come across on our ramble.

It is hard to predict what we will see, but what we may find in flower are: *Hibbertia fasciculata* var. *prostrata* (Bundled Guinea-flower), *Leptospermum continentale* (Prickly Tea-tree), *Ricinocarpos pinifolius* (Wedding Bush) and *Tetratheca ciliata* (Pink Bells).

To finish off the afternoon, a cuppa and afternoon refreshments will be provided, to give us all a chance to discuss what we have seen and enjoyed in the bushland.

Bush BBQ and Ramble

Sunday 6th October 2019

11:30am
Stringybark BBQ area
Cranbourne Gardens

BYO food and drinks

Small gold coin donation

Enquiries

Barbara Jeffrey
0408 564 379
bajeffrey@westnet.com.au

A Plant Collection Trip, with Broni Swartz

Broni Swartz is a horticulturalist at the Cranbourne Gardens and a recipient of the Maud Gibson Trust's Elisabeth Murdoch Scholarship. The scholarship enabled Broni to visit arid and semi-arid landscapes and reserves to undertake licensed collection of propagation material for future planting in the Arid Garden, Dry River Bed, Ephemeral Garden, Gibson and Howson Hills, Red Sand Garden, Weird and Wonderful Garden and the Diversity garden.

Broni's trip included visits to:

- Little Desert National Park where she had support from members of the Wimmera Australian Plant Growers Group
- Hattah-Kulkyne National Park
- Bannerton Cemetery, Victoria
- Neds Corner Station, a 30,000 hectare former sheep station which is the largest conservation property in Victoria
- Calperum Station north of Renmark, part of the Riverland Biosphere Reserve
- Wilabalangaloo Nature Trail SA
- Pooginook Conservation Park SA.



Wide spaces of Neds Corner in far north-western Victoria. Photo: Broni Swartz

This illustrated talk by Broni will be fascinating as it includes her ensuing results. It will also show the importance of these scholarships, set up in memory of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, a long-serving member of the Maud Gibson Trust Committee.

Friends Open House

Thursday 10
October 2019
2pm to
3:30pm

Elliot Centre

'Pollination' with Maxwell Campbell

Maxwell Campbell has been a biologist and active naturalist for over 50 years and is currently President of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria.

Pollination biology and its clear relationship to sexual activity made it a difficult subject in Victorian times. The notion that plants might have sex lives was too much; they had always been considered to be beyond immoral doings. Research, and general knowledge, were long delayed by prudery, religious beliefs and ignorance. The invention of the microscope resolved the problem.

Pollination, the process of plant fertilisation, has a long evolutionary history and many plants have developed close, symbiotic relationships with animals to facilitate successful fertilisation and guarantee their continued survival. Many plants have also taken advantage of wind and water to achieve pollination. The evolution of pollination strategies from simple anemophily (wind pollination) to some bizarre and amazing, if not extreme, mutual adaptations will be covered. Once angiosperms appeared circa 140 million years ago (MYBP) the planet and its biota were to change dramatically. The presentation will be supported by numerous macro images of pollinators on flowers.



All photos: Maxwell Campbell, President of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria and speaker at the talk on 23 November

Pollination Afternoon Talk

Saturday 23
November
2019

2 for 2.30pm
start
Auditorium

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

Please book
via the booking
form

Proposed Cranbourne Friends Tours - the latest

Alpine Victoria Summer 2020 - Expressions of Interest

As was reported in the last issue of Naturelink, we had a most successful week at Mt Hotham in January 2019. Another week is foreshadowed for January 2020. **At this point we are looking for Expressions of Interest only** to be submitted via the Booking Form. Further information will be sent out in due course.

Discovery Tour Far North Queensland 30th May to 9th June 2020

In the Steps of Banks, Solander and the First Australians

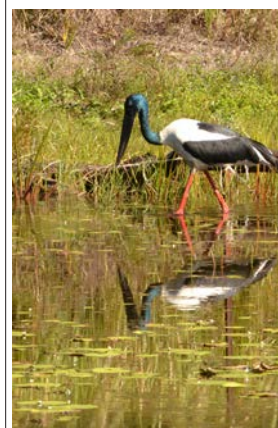
Thanks to those who expressed interest by paying \$100 as part of the levy. There is enough interest for the tour to proceed but for the best deal with Coach Tours of Australia we need 30 participants - a few more. To join the tour please express your interest via the booking form enclosed. For more details refer to p. 16 in *Autumn 2019 NatureLink* or contact Alex Smart smartie38@bigpond.com.

USA National Parks & Gardens of the Rockies & Adjacent Deserts: (Arizona, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado). May & June 2022

The main news regarding this tour is that planning is well underway with magnificent help from Panayoti Kelaidis, Senior Curator and Director of Outreach at the world-renowned Denver Botanic Garden. Jill Burness will be leader of the Tour and Rodger Elliot will be assisting her. Hopefully in the next month or so we may have a cost for the Tour from the travel agent (in San Diego, California). Participants will organise their own transport to Phoenix and from Denver.

We are awaiting costings for the Lord Howe Island Tour in October 2020. There is nothing else to report on **New Caledonia** (possibly 2022 or later), **Tasmania** (2021) or **New Zealand** (2024) for which we need a volunteer coordinator.

- People wishing to participate in any of the Tours must be members of the Cranbourne or Melbourne Friends.
- **To be listed as interested in any Tour, place your name in the relevant space on the Booking Form and send it to the Booking Officer.**
- Cranbourne Friends run these tours as fundraising events. Participants make a donation levy for each tour, with the funds benefiting projects at Cranbourne.



For further information

Contact
Rodger
Elliot

rgelliot@optusnet.com.au

0448 013 892

Use the booking form to express interest in a tour.

Annual General Meeting

You are warmly invited to attend the 28th Annual General Meeting of the Cranbourne Friends, on Sunday November 17th 2019 at 2pm, in the Auditorium.

We are delighted that AB Bishop will be our guest speaker after the formal proceedings. AB is a well-known horticulturalist, conservationist and habitat consultant, who 'lives in the bush' - an environmental living zone which protects native flora and wildlife. She is also a writer, co-authoring *The Australian Native Garden* with our Patron Angus Stewart; *Habitat*, her first solo book, was the best-selling gardening book in 2018.

AB will tell us ***The Incredible Story of the Bulloak Jewel Butterfly***, a tale with many stars, all of which, perhaps unwittingly, play an integral role in the life of one of Australia's most rare and threatened animals. AB is fascinated by the interconnectedness of nature and will take us on a visual journey that demonstrates this concept to a tee and will further inspire us about the natural world!

Do join us, and meet the Committee over afternoon tea following AB's talk.

Cranbourne Friends AGM

Sunday 17 November 2019 2pm

Auditorium,
Cranbourne Gardens



Global participation

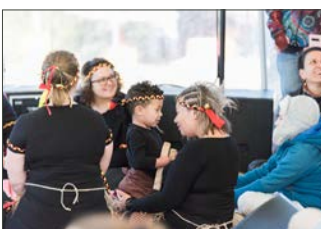
I recently attended the American Public Gardens Association (APGA) Annual Conference in Washington DC, held with the meeting of Botanic Gardens Conservation International's (BGCI) annual International Advisory Council. This meeting concerns key focus areas of BGCI's global agenda, and I was able to give an update on preparations for the [BGCI 7th Global Botanic Gardens Congress](#) (7GBGC) that we are hosting in Melbourne in February 2021, with BGANZ (Botanic Gardens of Australia and New Zealand). To attend these events was a great opportunity to see what is currently resonating in the world of botanic gardens. It's not often an organisation gets to host a global congress and has the chance to set the agenda. One of our aims with 7GBGC is to provide an opportunity for a diversity of voices from within and beyond our botanic gardens community, so as to get fresh perspectives and ideas and identify areas that need to be challenged, so that we can have a bigger impact in creating a more sustainable future. In that sense the APGA Conference theme of 'Thrive Together: Diversity Grows Gardens' gave much to ponder as the program explored equitable access, reciprocity, meaningful participation, and cultural relevance and inclusion to a broad range of communities (among other things). More on how we approach the opportunity closer to the Melbourne event.

Working together with NAIDOC

Closer to home, but still on the 'diversity' theme, we are honoured to have once again hosted an important NAIDOC event at the Australian Garden on Wednesday 10 July. NAIDOC celebrations provide the opportunity to bring together Aboriginal and other Australians with a focus on Indigenous culture, and the importance of improving our understanding, appreciation and learning from the oldest continuing culture on the planet. This year's theme, *Voice. Treaty. Truth. Let's work together for a shared future*, is aligned with the 2019 United Nations International Year of Indigenous Languages. Languages are central to the cultural history, stories and memories of individuals, and entire cultures, and unfortunately the current rate of loss of language diversity is as alarming as the loss of biodiversity. Actively supporting events such as NAIDOC are small but important ways that RBGV can assist along the long journey of reconciliation. It was fantastic to see and experience the diversity of activities on the day, including story telling, music and dance performances, a performance from the [Balee Koolin Bubup Bush Playgroup](#) that regularly meets at the Stringybark Picnic Ground and Indigenous Knowledge tours around the gardens, to name just a few.

Too much of a good thing

For regular visitors to the precious bushland at Cranbourne Gardens, you may have noticed the conspicuous addition of a farm fence running up the northern edge of the track from the main carpark to Trig Point, and beyond. For the past couple of decades we have been tracking changes to the floristic diversity across the site whilst also monitoring the population size of key animal species such as Swamp Wallaby. For an enclosed and relatively small parcel of land, as is Cranbourne Gardens, the ecosystem function can be significantly impacted by a variety of factors such as fire regimen and intensity, changes in rainfall, visitor impacts, and population fluctuations of dominant species. Retaining floral diversity is a delicate balance of a range of things - some that we understand and some that we continue to investigate to better understand. Clearly the wallaby population



NAIDOC photos courtesy
RBGV



Top: Warren Worboys finding plants for the ex situ collections
Bottom: Project team members in Far North Queensland, April 2019.
Photos: courtesy RBGV

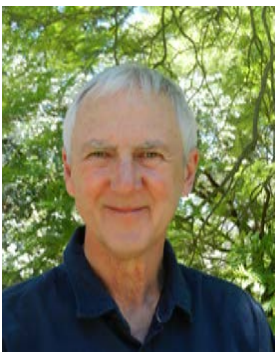
has increased, resulting in over-browsing of certain areas of the site, including the ground-plane flora of the grassy woodland and heathy woodland communities. I clearly remember the riot of colour observable on a spring-time stroll to Trig Point only a decade ago – the oranges, yellows, pinks and purples of flowering *Platylobium*, *Aotus*, *Hibbertia*, *Bossiaea*, *Dillwynia*, *Pultenaea*, *Comesperma*, etc, interspersed through the snowing of white/cream/pink of *Leptospermum myrsinoides* Heath Tea-tree. Now, that is no longer the case, and the impact of wallaby browsing has been robustly evidenced by Dr Terry Coates and our Natural Areas team. The Trig Point fence forms part of an important trial to exclude wallabies from a 50 hectare area to observe what happens when browsing pressure is reduced. There will be other consequences, so we will also monitor other areas of the site.

Conservation collections

Briefly I would like to report back on the collecting trip to Far North Queensland (FNQ) mountain peaks that was mentioned in the last edition of *Naturelink*. This is an important project aimed at establishing ex situ conservation collections in a range of east coast botanic gardens for rare and threatened plants endemic to cloud forest peaks and surrounding regions of FNQ that are highly susceptible to impacts of climate change. Our Curator of Horticulture, Warren Worboys, led our effort with the able assistance of Horticulturists and Herbarium staff. Two trips were undertaken in April and June and resulted in around 100 different genera being collected as either seed, seedling or cutting, with our task now to see what proportion we can propagate and establish in our living collections. A spectacular result for an important collaborative project.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President's report | Roger Watts



It's another cold, grey and damp day as I write this. We've passed the shortest day. The end of the financial year is upon us. But I'm cheered as I look at the results of the past year's activities. It looks like we've broken all records. We've had best ever returns from the Growing Friends' plant sales, over \$70,000, and a continuing run of successful events. In addition, our Special Interest Groups have been running at near capacity. This means that we'll be well placed to support the Gardens if they decide to go ahead with the purchase of a minibus to shuttle visitors from the station to the gardens, a development which has been long awaited by many.

It has taken a large number of people many years to get us to this point, but I'd like to credit the work which has been done by our Treasurer, Karen Russell, who will be leaving the Committee this year. She first joined in 2003 and has been an absolute stalwart in organising our finances and maintaining a thoroughly professional approach to the job ever since. She has kept order throughout a hectic time of change in the banking world and kept us all on track when we haven't followed the proper processes! Karen was largely responsible for the massive job of redrafting the *Rules* in 2016 to bring them in line with changed Government regulations. It will be a huge gap to fill when she moves on, but in the meantime Richard Clarke, a previous past President, is acting as Assistant Treasurer to see us through the transition. **Thank you, Karen, from all the Friends for your years of dedicated work.**



Karen Russell, Friends Treasurer for many years, is retiring.

It's nice to see a good financial result, but as our recent organisational review shows, there's more to supporting the RBGV than just providing funds. Although at the time of writing the media is prioritising EOFY sales, there are stories which seem to get much less prominence, like this which appeared in *The Guardian* on May 15, '[Australia's Biodiversity at Breaking Point](#)'.

The story outlines how 'Increased land-clearing, warming oceans and a drought exacerbated by climate change are taking their toll on our biodiversity.... However, there has been a lack of leadership from state and federal governments in this area, protections and funding have been slashed and emissions continue to rise unabated. Without drastic action, the future of Australia's biodiversity looks bleak.'

The [Vision Statement of the RBGV](#) points out how 'plants give our lives inspiration and meaning'. We prosper and our planet benefits when we understand, appreciate and protect plants for their life-giving qualities. The actions we all take should be based on our knowledge and respect for the environment, plants and the people with whom we share the Earth.

The RBGV's Mission is to 'seek every opportunity to interact with people from all walks of life, in person and online, to increase understanding of the role individuals play to safeguard plant life for people's wellbeing and the planet's future.'

There is much that the Friends can do to further support both of these principles. Following the Organisation review which I've referred to earlier and analysis of the recent survey of members, the Committee has begun drafting a three-year plan which we hope will secure the ongoing success of the Friends Group and its support for the RBGV. In it, whilst confirming the current approach, we will be looking at ways to engage more directly with our local community and develop partnerships with local groups to encourage appropriate planting of native plants and increase the profile of the Cranbourne Friends, which we hope will lead to increased membership and participation. To illustrate, two projects are planned in conjunction with the RBGV:



Caladenia robinsonii
Photo: VicFlora,
courtesy RBGV

The Orchid Program

A Grant application is in place for the Friends to work with the guidance of research scientists from the RBGV in order to hand-pollinate plants of two nationally endangered populations of *Caladenia robinsonii* and *Thelymitra circumsepta*, collect diverse seed for storage, and propagate an ex-situ collection of 200 plants of each species. If it proceeds, this program will utilise the Friends Seed Collectors team.



Thelymitra circumsepta
Photo: VicFlora,
courtesy RBGV

Bandicoots

Secondly, Charlotte Fletcher, the Bandicoot Outreach Officer to the Gardens, is leading a program to encourage new backyard habitats and habitat corridors for the endangered Southern Brown Bandicoot. The Friends are hoping to assist in this important project by contributing to establishment of a biodiversity demonstration garden in the Australian Garden and in the education of the public in the local area.

We hope both these projects will proceed. Work on this plan is ongoing and there is much to do in the coming months. We will endeavour to circulate our ideas as best we can. We welcome your contributions to this process as we look towards the Friends' future. We need people with ideas to assist us on the Committee, but also people who are looking for a way to contribute practically to what is, in many people's view, the most serious issue facing the world today.

We'd love to hear from you.

Getting Victorians on the Bandi-wagon | Charlotte Fletcher



Fifty years ago, residents of South-East Melbourne would often have seen the pointy nose, humped back and stumpy tail of the active Southern Brown Bandicoot, snuffling around searching for bugs and fungi to eat. As Melbourne has grown, suburbs have expanded to the South-East and the now the nationally endangered bandicoots are getting pretty hard to find.



Thanks to removal of habitat, introduced predators like foxes and cats, and big, busy roads isolating populations, our bandicoots are in a bit of trouble. If we don't take some serious action quickly, there's a very real chance we might lose them forever.



The thing is, bandicoots have potential to persist in suburban areas. They're not dependent on a specific species of insect for food, or reliant on a particular type of grass for shelter, and they can reproduce really quickly. They just need low, dense plants to live under, creatures and fungi in the soil to snack on, and freedom from threats like foxes, cats, cars, and the treatment that results from being mistaken for a rat.

At Cranbourne Gardens we are lucky enough to host a population of bandicoots that have been entertaining visitors with their antics for many years. In collaboration with the state environment department, local councils and conservation partners, we're going to spend the next three years getting the citizens of Victoria to hop on board the bandi-wagon. We'll be running activities at local council events, hosting bandicoot events on site, and working closely with residents and schools in new developments to give our adorable ecosystem engineers the best possible chance of survival.

Once people know they have bandicoots in their midst, we can get them involved in practical action and advocacy, and start creating a Bandicoot Boulevard through the suburbs. The growth area around Cranbourne is a perfect place to start, as we welcome new residents and families from all over the globe and introduce them to the wonderful local flora and fauna.

Retaining wildlife within residential areas helps residents to connect with and value their environment, and keeps plants healthy and ecosystems functioning. While the bandicoots are absolutely dependent on low, dense plants for habitat, they return the favour. Just one Southern Brown Bandicoot can turn over 3.9 tonnes of soil in a year, helping spread beneficial fungi, increasing nutrient turnover, and improving water penetration. A charismatic animal like a bandicoot is a great hook to get citizens to start thinking about the broader ecosystem, and help spread our message that life (human, bandicoot or something else entirely) is sustained and enriched by plants.

So watch this space – we'll be needing help from the Cranbourne Friends to spread the message and help get Victorians on the bandi-wagon. If you'd like to know more about the project, or have bandicoot sightings to report, contact Charlotte at charlotte.fletcher@rbg.vic.gov.au.

More information online:

theconversation.com/rockin-the-suburbs-bandicoots-live-among-us-in-melbourne-95423

theconversation.com/losing-australias-diggers-is-hurting-our-ecosystems-18590

Charlotte Fletcher, Southern Brown Bandicoot Outreach Officer, Cranbourne Gardens



Charlotte
Fletcher,
Southern Brown
Bandicoot
Outreach
Officer

I grew up just outside of Auckland NZ, training sheep for school projects, gallivanting around neighbouring dairy farms and exploring disused greenhouses. We moved to suburban Sydney when I started high school, but my parents made sure we still got plenty of Nature in. They sealed my fate by getting a copy of Menkhorst and Knight's *Field Guide to the Mammals of Australia*. Poring over this book introduced me to the strange world of microbats, and I got addicted to fauna.

After an undergraduate thesis focusing on bat roosting ecology, I did a short and eye-opening stint as a spotter/catcher on a mine site, grabbing the fleeing animals to relocate as they left trees knocked down by bulldozers. Figuring there must be a way to make a bigger impact on conservation issues, I enrolled in a Master of Science Communication at Questacon in Canberra. We travelled Australia presenting science shows, workshops and exhibitions in regional and rural towns, and I got to see a whole lot of new birds along the way.

I've always thought you can make the most impact by getting in early and making sure kids retain their enthusiasm for science throughout their schooling and into adulthood. Coordinating science activities for teenagers at the University of Sydney gave me a great opportunity to try to help them see not just the opportunities that science presents, but appreciate some of the entertainment it can provide as well. I still think it's hugely important to help teenagers focus outside themselves for a second, and to convince them to keep their options open.

Six years at the Australian National Maritime Museum in every visitor-facing casual role available (including Front of House, retail, kids' crafts, 'bubble mermaid' and 'science pirate') got me hooked on cultural institutions. The opportunity to facilitate people engaging with the amazing collections that museums, galleries, zoos and gardens hold is an immense privilege.

When I saw the ad for this bandicoot community engagement job I genuinely laughed out loud. A science outreach job focusing on misunderstood fauna impacted by urban growth, based at a wonderful cultural institution? Every skill and the knowledge I have acquired over the last ten years is relevant here and I am excited to see what we can do.

Moonlit Sanctuary Evening Tour - report

REPORT



On a mild Autumn night, 32 Cranbourne Friends, family and companions met at Moonlit Sanctuary, Pearcedale, for an evening tour of this award winning wildlife sanctuary. Everyone enjoyed this excursion, whatever their age.



We met Pug – the jungle python, who is fed only once per month with a couple of rats. He was taken out of his cage for photos to be taken. A few very brave children wanted to hold Pug or have him around their necks.

A highlight of the tour was being allowed to enter the squirrel and yellow-bellied gliders enclosure and to feed the gliders with homemade nectar. These species are endangered in Victoria and a breeding program is in place to try and increase their numbers.

Photos: Alexandra
Stalder

Regular monthly activities

If interested in joining in one of the group activities, please contact the person listed. You don't need specific skills and you will be made most welcome!

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Growing Friends

It is wonderful that Spring is on its way - we will have many plants in flower ready for the [October 26 and 27 Plant Sale](#). Lately people have been asking for small Eucalypts and thus we are planning to have a few species of small Eucalypts and perhaps a few bigger ones available in the future.



Eucalyptus caesia flower



Grevillea rivularis 'Carrington Cross' is available at the plant sale.

At a Cranbourne Friends workshop on Eucalypts a few years ago, I learnt that there are hundreds of Australian endemic species and that the plant was named by a French botanist Charles-Louis L'Héritier de Brutelle in 1788 who coined the generic name from the Greek roots eu and calyptos, meaning 'well' and 'cov-ered', in reference to the cap or lid of the flower bud - see photo.

And do you know that there is a liqueur made with eucalyptus leaves? I didn't but read on for an anecdote from *50 Plants that Changed the Course of History* by Bill Laws.

In 1869 Ferdinand von Mueller, the first Director of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens, actively promoted the potential benefits of the Eucalyptus tree and sent seeds around the world including to Melbourne's Roman Catholic Archbishop J.A Gould.

At that time, it was thought that the Eucalyptus could 'cure' malaria and so Gould sent the seeds on to a group of French Trappist monks who had been battling what was then called 'swamp fever' at Tre Fontane in Rome. After trying many times to establish the seedlings by clearing shrubs and draining swamps, it seemed that success was achieved and the fever was finally banished. It was only later concluded that it was not the Eucalyptus tree, but the loss of the swamps that had defeated malaria. Later the industrious monks created and sold the eucalyptus-flavoured liqueur Eucalittino. It is still available!

Spring Plant Sale
Saturday 26th
Sunday 27th
October in the
Gardens

Growing Friends
every Thursday
9.30am - 2.30pm
at our Nursery

Contact:
growing.friends@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

Marjanne
0431 607796

Nursery open to members:
Thursdays
10am - 2pm



Botanical Illustrators

Drawing and painting a Lily Pilly - May, 2019

Dianne Emery, a distinguished artist, has been teaching Botanical Illustration at RBGV Melbourne for many years. We were delighted to attend her Lily Pilly workshop at Cranbourne.

Dianne guided us through the stages of illustrating the elements of the plant and arranging our compositions with clarity, and energised us with her sense of joy in working with Nature's beauty. Participants worked variously in watercolour and coloured pencil and all felt satisfied with their efforts.

1st and 3rd
Wednesday of
the month,
10am to 3pm,
in the Elliot
Centre

Contact:
Margaret
Kitchen
0413 664 295

illustrators@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

See [page 2](#) for our Waratah workshop.

Six members attended our April meeting, following the end of Daylight Saving, in pleasant autumn conditions. We spent an enjoyable afternoon in the Australian Garden, photographing the newly planted circles in the Red Sand Garden, flowering species in the Dry River Bed, and the activity at the Botanica site at the Ian Potter Lakeside Precinct on its final day.

In May we held our first Show and Tell for 2019, when four members enjoyed photographic presentations showing some of the projects and activities others had been working on during the year.

At our June meeting, six members set out into the Bushland along Wylies Track searching for fungi on a perfect winter's day. Recent rains had softened the ground and some species were appearing, but most were still quite small. Beyond the Stringybark Picnic Ground we came across a wallaby nibbling on leaves of *Eucalyptus viminalis*; it remained nearby long enough for us to get a number of photographs.



Top: Freshly emerged fungi in the Bushland. Bottom: Wallaby eating leaves of *Eucalyptus viminalis*. Photos: Judith Cooke

2nd Saturday of the month, Elliot Centre

Times:
2pm
April to September (Eastern Standard time)

9.30am
October to March (Daylight Saving time)

Friends in the Gardens (FiGs)

If you would like to have the opportunity to assist the Horticulture Staff with their extra jobs in the Australian Garden then come and join our friendly group on the 4th Wednesday of each month. We meet in the Staff Administration tea room at 9.45 am and help in the Gardens until 12.30 pm.

The group is small and we welcome new members with open arms. Contact Christine Kenyon, email cekenyon@bigpond.com or phone 0438 345 589.



Caleb, Ralph Henger, Edie Patterson, Christine Kenyon cleaning the Home Garden. Photo: Christine Kenyon

Fourth Wednesday of the month, 9.45am

Botanical Fabricators

If you are interested in sewing, come along and join our friendly Fabricators group. We create textile items that reflect Australian Flora and Fauna. No special sewing skills are necessary, as we can give advice, and all suggestions for new projects are welcome.

Our group is looking at options to hold stalls for our work, including at Friends activities and perhaps other district markets.



Winning bag (with wooden handles) by Lou White, Botanical Bag Exhibition May 2019. Photo: Gwen Elliot

2nd Tuesday of the month, 10am.

Contact:
Wendy Smart,
9707 5275

wvsmart08@bigpond.com

Botanical Basketmakers

Join us for a cuppa, great company, and learn how to weave with native Australian plants. Creations are only limited by one's imagination!

All ages are welcome and no previous experience required.



Lamp shade made by Donna Aitken, woven with *Pittosporum undulatum*.

3rd Saturday of the month, 10am-3pm

Contact:
Maree Hart,
rbgfriends@cranbourne.org.au

Annual Lunch 2019

The Cranbourne Friends Annual Lunch held on 4th May brought members together for a relaxing and delicious lunch, an engaging speaker in Dean Stewart, a Silent Auction and Raffle.

Dean, a proud and passionate Wemba Wemba-Wergaia Aboriginal man of Victoria with over 20 years' experience in cultural tourism, education, and conservation and interpretation programs, challenged us to look at our environment and land in a new light and from an Aboriginal perspective. He also outlined the significant potential of developing Aboriginal foods in Australia, tastes of which were incorporated into the lunch menu.

Director of the RBGV, Prof. Tim Entwisle, outlined the very exciting year that the RBGV was experiencing and projects that were underway or being considered, including possible purchase of a minibus to provide a public transport link to the Cranbourne Gardens (with our support). Watch this space!



Top, Annual Lunch 2019, Middle (L-R) Guest speaker Dean Stewart, Alex Smart reads out a message from Roger Watts, President.
Photos: Judith Cooke.

Membership update

Welcome to New Members

This quarter we are pleased to welcome 19 new members: Norma Garlick, Peter Garlick, Sophia Sutherland, Roger Preece, Jenni Tye, Sue Roberts, Rosemary Breyley, Sue Appleby, Vanda Cummins, Tina Denham, Sandra Denyar, Paul Sierakowski, Jenny Sierakowski, Liam Sierakowski, Geraldine Quirke, Lauren Webb, Leanne Reid, Neralie Thorp, Dan Gleeson. We hope you are enjoying your new membership and all that it has to offer.

Membership Renewals

Membership subscriptions for the 2019/20 Membership Year were due July 1. Thank you to all those that have renewed already; if you haven't yet received your membership card, it is on its way. If you still need to renew, please complete the form that was sent out with last Naturelink, or download the form from the Friends website.

For a bit of fun this year, we held a vote of Friends members to choose the image that would appear on the 2018/19 membership card. The winner was a beautifully composed picture by Judith Cooke of the *Xanthorrhoea johnsonii* and *Xanthorrhoea australis* in the Eucalypt Walk at the Australian Garden (see right).



This is also a great time of year to join the Friends and get a full year of membership. If you know someone that is thinking of joining us, please direct them to our website, or our membership forms, available from the Cranbourne Gardens Visitor Centre.

Contact

Alexandra Stalder

membership@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

0431 025 733

Walk and Gawk in Cranbourne Gardens with John Arnott – 13 May 2019

This Walk and Gawk in the Cranbourne Gardens gave us an insight into developments in the Master Plan and other improvements at the Gardens.

Updates on design/development processes in the Ian Potter Lakeside precinct, Stringybark garden and the Arid garden were followed by a tour of part of the Forest Garden with horticulturalist Matt Henderson; subspecies of *Eucalyptus pauciflora* (Snow gum) and other species collected from the Grampians, Mt Hotham and other sub-alpine areas, are being planted in groups.

A problem that has emerged is *Armillaria luteobubalina*, a soil-borne fungus that causes root rot and wood decay of a wide variety of plants. This destructive fungus progresses slowly but is very difficult to eradicate. The Gardens are investigating how other Australian gardens deal with the fungus, and applying health and nutrition to support plants against the fungus.

Australian plants as weeds with Geoff Carr - 28 April 2019

Geoff Carr, Senior Botanist at Ecology Australia, estimates there are over 1300 environmental weed taxa (species, subspecies, varieties and hybrids) in Victoria and these plants are threatening flora, fauna and ecosystems.

Traditionally Victoria has focussed on the dangers of noxious weeds and exotic species, like Boneseed, but this lecture revealed that many of the problem plants in Victoria are Australian natives:

- *Banksia integrifolia* (Coast Banksia) and *Leptospermum laevigatum* (Coastal Tea-tree), from Port Phillip Bay, have spread along western Victoria's coastlines.
- Melaleucas are invading the protected saltmarshes in the Point Wilson area.
- *Pittosporum undulatum* (Sweet Pittosporum) is likely to replace most of the existing Dandenong Ranges vegetation within 30 years.
- *Acacia longifolia* subsp. *sophorae* (Coastal Wattle) is widespread in the Grampians.

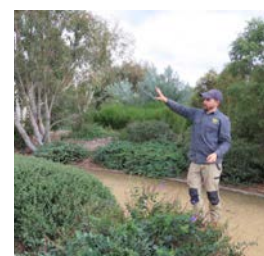
Several outer suburban councils have received significant funding through the Peri-urban Weed Management Partnerships.

Riverkeepers supporting Melbourne's waterways, with Andrew Kelly and John Forrester – 23 June

Yarra and Werribee Riverkeepers represent the interests of the rivers and river creatures, aiming to achieve 'drinkable, fishable, swimmable water'. Both are affiliated with the international Waterkeepers Alliance. Andrew Kelly is the [Yarra Riverkeeper](#), and John Forrester is the [Werribee Riverkeeper](#). They work together and also with the Port Phillip Bay Keeper.

In 2017, landmark legislation passed through the Victorian Parliament to protect the Yarra River for future generations. Despite the passing of this act, continual vigilance by environmentalists and friends is needed to ensure that controls and policies are actually applied in practice.

Riverkeepers work with schools to educate students about the river, environment and sustainability, and conduct blitzes with the community to remove waste from the rivers and find sources of pollution.



Matt Henderson explaining the plan for the Forest Garden.
Photo: Judith Cooke



South Gippsland landscapes tour

The Cranbourne Friends 'Inverloch Tour' focussed initially on the impact of the re-alignment of the highway through the Black Spur Creek Wetlands. Dr Paul Kucera's introduction to archaeological work at the Black Spur at Koonwarra followed; it shows that the Black Spur was a 'border location' of interacting cultural groups, with Indigenous stone tools found near colonial artefacts like buttons and a 19th century snake buckle.

The Great Southern Rail Trail was explored on foot, in company with ecologist and environmental consultant, Tania Brooker. Evening speakers were Dallas Wyatt of Birdlife Bass Coast, on the impact of revegetation on the presence of various birds, and Prof Ros Gleadow, who made Eucalyptus, Sweet Pittosporum and climate change interesting and entertaining.

On the Sunday, visits to two well-established Australian plant gardens were followed by a trip to see a housing development designed for sustainable living.



Inverloch Tour participants; below, Wollemia nobilis (the Wollemi pine).



Planning Day - report

In early June a brainstorming session was held to consider a wide range of suggestions for events for the 2020 Cranbourne Friends calendar. Thank you to all who forwarded suggestions or attended the planning meeting.

All present voted on the best events to attract both members and the wider community. A draft calendar is being formulated and we hope there will be an event to suit everyone. We anticipate publishing it in Summer *Naturelink*.

ANPSA 2019 Conference - Blooming Biodiversity Albany, WA,

The Wildflower Society of Western Australia is hosting the [2019 Blooming Biodiversity Conference](#) in Albany, Western Australia from 29 September to 4 October. **Blooming Biodiversity** will celebrate the unique flora of the global biodiversity hotspot of the South West region of Western Australia.

The five-day Conference will feature expert speakers on flora in botany, science, history and art, in-conference excursions to iconic locations, and more.

Visit the [Conference website](#) for more details.

NEWS

Contact for
ANPSA
conference

Nicky Zanen
0401 975 191

Cranbourne Friends Committee

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Vice President: Rosemary Miller	0422 893 745
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RBGV Representative: Chris Russell	5990 2200

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Social Media Convenor: Amy Akers	0423 513 281
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The General Committee meets on the second Thursday of the month (except January) at 5.30pm.