



FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS Inc.

A0032902E



Issue No. 24

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2001

FROM THE PRESIDENT

We have had a busy start to the new year with many new activities taking place in the Gardens. The Gardens are a wonderful venue and it is great to see the Council making the most of them during an especially warm start to summer.

WUNTA - A MUSICAL AFTERNOON IN THE GARDENS - 10 FEBRUARY 2001

We had the most beautiful weather for this Saturday afternoon. The music wafting through the Gardens to the sounds of the Guy Smiley Trio and the McDonald's Youth Band was enjoyed by all who attended. The large crowd of approximately 300 kept the Friends busy with the serving of Devonshire teas from the rotunda being very popular. The Friends raised approx. \$400 on the day which will go towards the restoration of the rotunda. Thank you to all the helpers who served on the day, in difficult conditions, and to those who provided scones, slices etc. A 3YB spontaneous interview during the afternoon promoted our "home cooking" in a very complimentary manner.

Guided walks of the Gardens, conducted by our dedicated group of guides, were very popular during the afternoon, and the YMCA entertained the children with many activities including a great tug-of-war. All in all, a very successful afternoon and many comments were received on the Gardens with a view to using them more as a venue.

RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM GRANT

The Warrnambool City Council and the Friends have been successful in obtaining a grant of \$25,000 from the Victorian Government for restoration works in the Gardens. This will be matched by a contribution of \$23,000 from the Warrnambool City Council and \$2,000 from the Friends. These monies will be used to complete the fencing of the Gardens, install entrance signs defining the Gardens, restoration of gardens beds and replanting of new trees and the final completion of the rotunda. The Committee of the Friends were invited by the Council to meet with The Hon. Steve Bracks, MP, Premier of Victoria, for the announcement of the grant in the Gardens on 15 February.

The above works have been awaiting funding for some time so it was with great pleasure that the grant was received, especially as these works should be completed by our Federation Fair in November.

Hoping you are enjoying the last of summer.

Marie Ziebell 28 February 2001

GROWING FRIENDS

Over summer and the hot weather work has been restricted but we are now back in action, all beds in the growing area are freshly weeded and mulched and our fruit trees have been very prolific. The entrance bed 3A has had the dead bamboo removed and replaced with a White Brugmansia. As our group is still formulating we would like to ask if there are any interested members who would like to go on an "on call list", to be called in times of extra need, if you would like to be involved in this way please call Lorraine Richardson 5565 1217.

Please note that we will be having a plant stall on Sunday 22nd April in conjunction with a Teddy Bears picnic. Any assistance with donations of bulbs and plants or help on the day would be appreciated.

GUIDING FRIENDS

Our perseverance is paying off plus a change of times to the 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month also now advertising FREE walks is proving to be popular.

We have conducted many organised walks and these are also gaining in popularity, some of these being - 35 students who had a wonderful educational walk, Bird Observers who enlightened us on the many species of birds and their habitats, Garden Club who combined a walk with their Christmas party, Wunta when many took advantage of the 3 organised walks, John Vogels M.L.A. who enjoyed a morning walk.

An educational kit is being developed for us, for use within the gardens. So all in all we are very pleased with our progress.

**FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL
BOTANIC GARDENS INC.**

A0032902E

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Our newsletter is published spring, summer, autumn and winter. If you would like to contribute to our publication please forward material to the above address.

Published by:

Marigold Curtis

Mandy King

28th February 2001

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

19TH MARCH Monday - Garden Lecture Series 2001

"Dry Climate Style" with South Africa's Keith Kirsten

The Royal Botanic Gardens Ph/Fax 9592 0825

APRIL Bird walk in the gardens (date to be confirmed)

6TH APRIL Friday - Melbourne International Flower Show

Royal Exhibition Building, Carlton Gardens.

Cole's are running a bus Ph. 5562 4066

22ND APRIL Sunday - Teddy Bears Picnic and Plant

Sale (by the Friends) in the Botanic Gardens.

28th - 29th APRIL - 10am - 4.30pm "Dalvui". Terang

1898 Guilfoyle garden open, for the Aust. Open Garden Scheme

MAY - Movie (Details to be included in next N/L)

15TH - 17TH JUNE "Bunce, Bunyas & Beyond"

Friends Annual Conference - Geelong Botanic Gardens.

Contact Annie McGeachy 5243 7728

18TH NOVEMBER Federation Fair Details are included

in this newsletter.

RETIREMENT

It is with regret that we received Dawn Smith's resignation as a member of the committee. Dawn has been a valuable member of the committee of the Friends since near its inception, she held the position of secretary from 1989 - 1996 her hard work and knowledge gained will be sorely missed, no doubt we will be calling on her advice.

ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF BOTANIC GARDENS CONFERENCE -

GEELONG BOTANIC GARDENS - 15-17 JUNE 2001

This year the Annual Conference will be hosted by the Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens - for the first time in a few years a little closer to home. The conference coincides with the Geelong Botanic Gardens 150th Anniversary and to celebrate this event an exhibition of Botanic Art will be opened at the Geelong Art Gallery on the evening of Friday 15 June. A stimulating weekend program has been organised and conference speakers include, Brian O'Neill, Director of the Golden Gate National Parks Authority, San Francisco, USA, and Jeff Floyd, Chief Executive, Tourism Victoria. Registration forms are available - contact Mandy King.

FEDERATION FAIR

The Friends are hosting a Federation Fair at the Warrnambool Botanic Gardens on November 18 2001. Our aim for this day is to bring together diverse community groups that may otherwise not have the opportunity to showcase their activities and meet each other. We see this as an opportunity to provide public exposure, create networking, foster greater understanding and improve relations between community groups. We also hope to provide community members of all ages and cultures with the opportunity to contribute. We feel by celebrating Federation with a community Fair lasting friendships will be formed.

Community involvement will be achieved by participation and public attendance. We will do this by developing a day where the public will be involved in viewing the exhibits, enjoying productions such as musical recitals, ballet dancing and intermingling with friends. Entertainment will be provided for all age groups.

Preliminary interest has so far been shown by over 40 community groups including, Field Naturalists, Musical Groups, Schools, Indigenous Groups, Wool and Craft Guild, Pigeon Club, Camera Club and many more.

We see this as an opportunity to showcase our beautiful gardens at the Federation celebration and promote their use for the future benefit of the Warrnambool community.

Groups who have expressed interest have been contacted. Any group who would be interested in participating and has not been contacted please phone:

Billie Rowley 55611583 or Mandy King 55620343

BOTANIC GARDENS OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

In contrast to the Olive Pink gardens of the arid centre Darwin's Botanic Gardens are rich and green. These subtropical gardens spread over 42 hectares of land within two kilometres of the city centre. They are the responsibility of the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory. You can wander through a variety of different habitats including rain forest, wetlands, mangroves and coastal plains. The Gardens have a great collection of palms, many of Australian origin, and a section devoted to cycads. The Cycads (Cycadaceae) are ancient plants, palm like in appearance with a single trunk topped with feathery leaves. They have survived unchanged for 170 million years. They are commonly known as zamia palms or sago palms, but they are not palms. They do not bear flowers to produce seeds; they bear cones. The male plant has a cone at the tip of the trunk while the female plant produces round nuts that droop on soft stalks. The nuts are poisonous and the toxin is not destroyed by cooking. The people of east Arnhem Land treat the kernels by crushing them and soaking and washing the pulp, which is later dried and made into bread for ceremonial occasions. Brochures for several aboriginal plant use trails are available at the Information Centre. These trails are presented as self guided walks with numbered points of interest and fascination information. For instance the Rotten Cheese Fruit (*Morinda citrifolia*) is described as a small tree...the pale oblong fruit produce a strong offensive odour when ripe. One whole fruit is eaten to treat diarrhoea, colds, asthma and sore throats... This is one of the plants of the Monsoon Vine Forest walk. The Riverine and Open Forest walk is half a kilometre long with nineteen points of interest including Carpentaria Palm (*Carpentaria acuminata*). Aboriginal people eat the cabbage, the soft flesh at the growing point. It may be eaten raw, boiled or cooked on hot coals. There is a children's playground under the spreading shade trees. A series of paths bridges and paved areas leads through an evolutionary path from the most ancient to the most recent plant groups. Other features include a display house with orchids, ferns, bromeliads and other exotic plants, a water fountain, and air conditioned Information Centre, so welcome in the heat of the day. The Friends of the Darwin Botanic Gardens first met in 1993. They aim to draw the Gardens and the community closer together. Their activities include presentations on botanical, horticultural and historical themes and participation in working parties. In future they hope to include tour guiding and plant propagation. You see we have much in common. Do visit the gardens if in Darwin, but plan to go in the morning or evening as the 33 degree heat and high humidity are debilitating even in the rain forest and fern gullies.

Curator's Cottage

The Curator's Cottage was built in 1870, consisting of four rooms with front and back verandahs. Extensions to the cottage were carried out in 1906 to accommodate William Donald's larger family. A new kitchen, wash house and an additional bedroom were constructed and the former kitchen converted to a bedroom.

The cottage exterior has remained intact with the 1906 additions being well integrated with the original structure. Its design displays a floor plan and recessed verandah protecting the front entrance, similar to the curators' cottages at Melbourne [1851] and Hamilton [1882]. The cottages at Warrnambool and Hamilton feature decorative window treatments on the projecting front gable.

For some fifty four years the cottage had none of the facilities we now take for granted; the lack of which prompted William Donald to write on January 21st 1924 "I wish to bring up for your consideration the need for a proper bathroom in the cottage. I may mention that I had to buy and install at my own expense the bath that is here, but it is leaking so I cannot use it, besides, the place where the bath is at present is not suitable as a bathroom and I would appreciate the convenience of a proper bathroom and washhouse. There is a copper built in, but no washing troughs and if these were put in it would add greatly to the comfort of the household". The gardens and surrounds however, have seen major alterations which have affected the original relationship with the gardens. On summer afternoons the Donald girls served afternoon tea from the summer house in the cottage garden. Mrs Donald was noted for her fruit cake and scones.

Reported by a former curator's wife, the cottage has a friendly ghost who plays the piano of an evening. From 1870 to 1989 the cottage was home to all six curators - it is now leased to a Council staff member.

Future options for the Curator's Cottage, taken from our Conservation and Management Plan, are:

- Resource Centre - tea rooms, gallery, meeting room for twenty people, library, kitchen etc.
Also plant courtyard at the back for botanic role development.
- Refurbishment for senior Council staff.

Marie Johnstone

BIRD WATCH

Sighted recently in the gardens were four White - Faced Herons which had been hatched last year high up in one of the pine trees, these handsome young birds were perched on a branch on the edge of the lake. This points out the importance of maintaining our tall trees, particularly the conifers for nesting and feeding. Like the Black Duck they seem happy to cohabit with introduced species. Several pairs of Sacred King Fisher can also be seen happily living in our gardens.

Marigold Curtis

THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE VOLUNTEER 2001

The Friends of the Warrnambool Botanic Gardens are just one of many volunteer groups in Warrnambool. A community relies on volunteers to add a further dimension to the paid services provided by local organisations and in fact some services would not be provided were it not for the help of volunteers.

To be a volunteer gives the satisfaction of being involved in your community and sharing ideals and enthusiasm with your fellow volunteers. It guarantees the upholding of standards and ensures apathy does not become commonplace be it regarding human services or the living environment.

I would like to congratulate all our volunteers in the Friends of Warrnambool Botanic Gardens on their fine work and thank them for giving generously of their time and support. Their continued involvement will ensure the succession of our beautiful botanic garden as a "special place" for relaxation and education for future generations.

"TO GIVE OF YOURSELF - IS A GIFT INDEED"

Marie Ziebell
28 February 2001