



FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS

A0032902E



Issue No. 59

Autumn 2011

NEWSLETTER

www.wbgardens.com.au

THE YEAR SO FAR

Welcome to 2011. That may sound a strange greeting in May, but it is six months since our last newsletter. That doesn't mean we have been inactive over that time. The committee has continued to meet on the third Wednesday of each month at 3.00pm. We now meet in Scoborio's Shed, in the depot area. Here we have a warm comfortable meeting room with access to our computer and other resources. Average attendance of ten from a committee of twelve is great at a time when so many voluntary groups are struggling. Like them, we are an ageing group and would welcome new members with new ideas.

Over the years we have accumulated many valuable resources in the form of books photographs and papers. These are now in Scoborios' Shed and two of our members – Marie Johnstone and Judith Loch- are recording and classifying them.

The guiding friends continue to offer guided walks on the second and fourth Sunday of the month at 2.30. Laurel Myers has been an enthusiastic guide and she has enlisted and trained four new guides to bolster our numbers. Sunday attendances vary. Some days no one comes, but on other occasions we all benefit from the knowledge and stories of our visitors. We had a Melbourne Probus group of 45 members contact us for a tour last March and another group has booked for September. This year again, we took tours as part of the Australia Day celebrations.

We have great plans for the future. Our immediate goal is to improve signage so that visitors to Warrnambool (and sadly some residents) will know we have a significant botanic garden and be able to find their way there. The closure of Cockman Street has resulted in our main entrance becoming a dead end and better signs are needed to inform and direct visitors to the Gardens. Funding is available and we are working with Warrnambool City Council to achieve a good result.

The water wise garden is well established. Our plans are to extend this garden to incorporate the well. This is under the remnant of a galvanised iron shed which has a heritage listing. Its removal has been recommended and we are waiting on response to an application. The area can then be cleared of the debris and rampant plant growth which is all that now remains of the old shed. We hope to erect a replica of the windmill which in the 1880s pumped water from the well. Do any of our readers have information on the old windmill? It may have been a locally constructed mill – possibly by John Esam

In 1880 the Council put in Warrnambool's first Water Supply scheme. They had a well 80 feet deep excavated on Cannon Hill – one of Esams Windmills was placed over the well to lift the water.....At about the same time the Council had similar water supplies installed at Albert Park, the Botanical Gardens and the Cattle Markets (1947 Radio Talks by Henry Worland)

Our well is 50 feet deep, circular and solid. It provides an opportunity to demonstrate the sources, value and romance of water.

Pat Varley President
May 2011

WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS TEAM UPDATE MAY 2011

Mulching of the Lone Pine, Poplar and Elms has recently taken place with only a few more mature trees to be mulched.

Planting of the following annuals has been undertaken:

- Poppies
- Dianthus
- Primula's
- Ornamental Kale

Perennial plantings have also occurred with the following stock planted out:

- Scabiosa columbaria* – Pink Pin Cushion Flower
- Salvia x superba* 'Tanzarin'

The western end of the lake was recently cleared of dead water lilies that had formed a mud island.



That end of the lake is now clear with both the ducks and turtles free to swim laps unimpeded.

A *Cupressus torulosa* (Bhutan Cypress) that was donated by Marigold Curtis has been planted out in a prominent position within the Pinetum. Many thanks to Marigold for the kind donation.

Our smoko hut, aka 'Botanic Hilton', has been refurbished with new kitchen facilities and an air conditioner.

The sandstone propagation hut has also been refurbished with a new roof, new metal shelving and a new fibreglass propagation heat bed.

Anna Pike joined us again for 2 weeks during the school holidays to cover staff leave, which was a great help to Ros.

35 'official' functions have been held within the gardens, including the use of the rotunda, from the beginning of the year. Ros is handling all the bookings and continues to ensure the rotunda is sparkling for any booked events.

Unfortunately, vandalism is still occurring within the gardens with the picket fences being the main targets to date.

If you haven't been to the gardens recently, feel free to come in and say g'day to a team member and see the changing winter face of the gardens first hand.

Hope to see you soon.
John, Ros and Mark

WHERE HAVE ALL THE BIG TREES GONE?

This thought was prompted by the recent removal of a huge Monterey Cypress from the area southwest of the rotunda.

This tree planted in the Scoborio era had grown to a massive size – twenty prep children holding hands, could just encircle the trunk. Like many of the Monterey pines and cypress planted in the 1870s it was near the end of its life and deemed to be dangerous.

A row of trees on the western boundary of the Friendly Society oval has also been removed this month – the victims of age.

Many of our iconic Norfolk Pines are more than 100 years old. With care they should be good for another 100 years, but the ravages of birds above and traffic below is taking toll.

We cannot immediately replace big trees with big trees, but need a long term plan to ensure our urban landscape has space for plants to grow beyond the reach of secateurs and hedge clippers and clear of power lines.



WILDLIFE IN THE GARDENS.

Have a closer look at the old Monterey Cypress described above. It has been skilfully felled by contractors, and either mulched or sawn into giant blocks. Over its lifetime it has sheltered many colonies of bees. Now the latest occupants, having been evicted from their home are hovering around the remnants of exposed honey comb that was once deep in the groves and crevasses of the tree.

Another resident made homeless, was a small possum that relocated when the branches fell.

During March the Gardens were revisited by a colony of bats which, for a short time made camp in the Indian Bean tree to the south west of the pond. By April they appeared to have moved into the elms, and a flock of sulphur crested cockatoos had moved onto their previous patch

In Spring the pond was a hive of activity. Fluffy ducklings are always popular and one of our guides reported a family (mum and the kids) being ushered along Cockman Street by a solicitous visitor. Did they grow to maturity? A fox was roaming the Gardens about this time.

Also in Spring, a pair of White faced Heron (Blue Crane) raised four chicks in the Lone Pine.

Now well into the football season, the crows and the magpies are in competition.

Waring tribes, refugees, squatters, guerrillas, evictees, and the homeless; it's wild world out there.
PV10/5/11

Spring Garden Day

The Friends will again hold their Annual Spring Garden Day Sunday, September 18th

This is the time to start to pot up herbs and plants for sale. It is also the season for jams jellies and pickles, which sell well on our produce stall. Can you suggest any other novelties or crafts.

Donations can be left with John at the depot, or contact any committee member.

Celebrations

A celebration on December 3rd 2011 launched the reinstated cannon. The event was hosted jointly by The Friends and Warrnambool City Council. Len Byron on behalf of the Triton Woodworkers presented The Friends with a cannon ball and key carved from the same Monterey cypress that formed the slide for the cannon. Pat Varley thanked all who had contributed to the return of the gun to the Gardens and the Mayor, Cr. Neoh, launched the cannon to the popping of balloons and the shouts of children as once more they climbed on board.

In April, as part of the celebrations for Heritage Week, we enjoyed "Coffee by the Cannon" - morning tea and talks about our cannon. The barrel was cast in 1813. It was brought to Warrnambool to help defend the Western Ports in the 1870s. The reinstatement of the cannon on its new slide and carriage in 2010 marked the centenary of its placement in the Gardens. Truly a part of our heritage

BATS OR GREY NOMADS

Early in 2003 about 70 Flying Foxes took up residence in the Canary Island Palm near the cannon. By July that year their number had increased to between 300 and 400. Eventually they moved on. There have been other visits of small groups since then, most recently in March this year. A small colony took up residence in the Indian Bean Tree before relocating in the nearby elms. What follows is the report provided by Paul Gray, Environmental Officer in 2003

The Warrnambool Botanical Gardens is presently [2003] hosting a small group of Grey-headed Flying-Foxes (*Pteropus poliocephalus*), GHFF. It is not known at this stage how long these animals will stay in the Warrnambool area. Due to winter climate at this south-western limit of their range and limited food resources in this area, a build up of large numbers is not expected.

The Grey-headed Flying-fox is the largest of Australia's flying-foxes weighing up to one kilogram with a wingspan of up to one metre. They have a wide collar of golden-orange fur and leg fur that extends to the ankles. They have large eyes, which are highly adapted for day and night vision and particularly suited to recognising colours at night. Colour recognition is very important when searching for food.

They are nomadic animals; their movement patterns and local distribution are determined by variations in climate and the flowering and fruiting patterns of their preferred native food plants. Flying-Foxes prefer blossom, nectar, and fruit of native plants, particularly eucalypts, tea-trees, grevilleas, figs and lilly-pillys. They are intelligent, social and nocturnal animals roosting together in groups, known as camps, during the day, while feeding individually or in small groups at night. Flying-Foxes play a major role in the regeneration of native forests and by pollinating and dispersing seeds as they feed. Through this role they provide habitat for other flora and fauna species and add value for other forest uses such as hardwood timber, honey and native plant industries.

Grey-headed Flying-fox numbers and distribution in Australia have changed markedly since European settlement. Large areas of natural habitat and food supply have been lost in New South Wales and Queensland due to land clearing. Human culling, when animals have resorted to feeding in orchards has also reduced numbers.

The Grey-headed Flying-fox is listed as threatened under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and has been recommended for listing as threatened under the Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988. Nationally they are potentially at risk of extinction due to the significant decline in numbers as a result of loss of their prime feeding habitat and secluded campsites. This potential risk is compounded due to a slow reproductive rate (one young per year), the relatively long time for males to become sexually mature (30 months), an average life span of 4 years and a high rate of infant mortality.

The Warrnambool population does not pose a threat to humans, however as is the case with all wild animals they are best enjoyed from a distance and not harassed or handled. It is unknown if these animals were part of the Melbourne population or have moved down from NSW due to the effect on native trees from the drought. Warrnambool City Council and the Department of Sustainability and Environment are working together monitoring numbers and reviewing all management options.



Advance Notice
Mark this in your diary

Annual General Meeting

Thursday July 21

12.00 – 2.00

Conference Centre Level 3

South west Institute of TAFE

Timor Street Warrnambool

Note that the meeting is on a THURSDAY

A light lunch will be provided.

Trevor Bullen has agreed to be our guest speaker.

SWTAFE have again donated the venue.

We thank them both.

More details to follow.

We look forward to a good attendance.

**FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL
BOTANIC GARDENS Inc.**

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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.

Membership: Payable at/or by the AGM

July 2011

GUIDED WALKS

Guided walks are conducted by our volunteer guides every Second and Fourth Sunday of the month commencing at 2.30pm, weather permitting

Walks can be organised on request

Walks proceed from the main entrance gate in Cockman Street

DATE TO REMEMBER

AGM

Thursday 21st July 2011

Venue

TAFE

Guest speaker Trevor Bullen

We will send out invitations and other details relating to the AGM next month

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Visit the National library of Melbourne and see the Eugene von Guerard exhibition until 7th August 2011

view on

<http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/whats-on/exhibitions/exhibitions/eugene-von-guerard>

or

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/photos/2011/05/04/3207167.htm>

MORNING IN THE GARDENS WITH JOHN

The committee have been running a morning in the Gardens with John over the last couple of years. We are finding that people are unable to physically help within the gardens so we are going to revise this morning.

Next month we will start a morning in which we will have guest speakers, morning teas and walks around the gardens. If you would like to attend the first of these on the first Wednesday of the month, this will be 1st June, we will have morning tea and an educational and enjoyable walk around the gardens.

We will endeavour to get you a program of events to you in the near future.

WEBSITE

The Association of Friends of Botanic Garden have a new web site. It is in its infancy but please have a look

<http://www.friendsbotanicgardens.org/>

Other sites of interest are

Up coming event Chelsea Garden Show 24th to 28th May 2011. <http://www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-chelsea-flower-show/2011>

BGANZ <http://www.bganz.org.au/>

Garden Garden History Society

<http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/>.

Australian Plant Society <http://anpsa.org.au/>

National Trust of Australia <http://www.nationaltrust.org.au/>

Melbourne Botanic Garden

<http://theaustraliangarden.wordpress.com/>