

Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens Heritage Happenings

Welcome to Heritage Happenings, proudly presented by the Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens as part of the Ballarat Heritage Festival. Explore the fascinating history, stories, and legacy of our iconic gardens as we celebrate their enduring beauty and heritage during this special citywide celebration of culture and place.

1 Inside the Botanical Studio: A Spot It Adventure

Step into a live recreation of a 19th-century botanist's field tent and test your observation skills with the Spot It! Challenge, a fun and interactive experience for families and sharp-eyed explorers during the Ballarat Heritage Festival 2025.

Nestled inside the Gatekeeper's Cottage, this hands-on installation invites you to explore the canvas tent of a travelling botanical artist. Inside, you'll find pressed flowers, sketchbooks, watercolour palettes, specimen jars, and all the fascinating tools of the trade.

But hidden among the details are eight secret objects waiting to be found. Can you spot the magnifying glass, hidden butterfly, and unfinished drawing?

Pick up your Spot It! game sheet, search the tent, and return for a special artist's stamp when complete!

A perfect activity for curious minds of all ages, blending nature, art, and a touch of adventure.

Free to play – drop in anytime!

Schools, scout groups, family groups of more than 10 will need to book a time info@fbbg.org.au

Dates: 17 May May 20th - 25th

Time: 10am – 4pm

Cost: FREE

Location: Gatekeepers Cottage, Ballarat Botanical Gardens, Gillies Street, Wendouree



More events over the page



2 Entertaining Nature at Ballarat Mechanics' Institute (BMI)

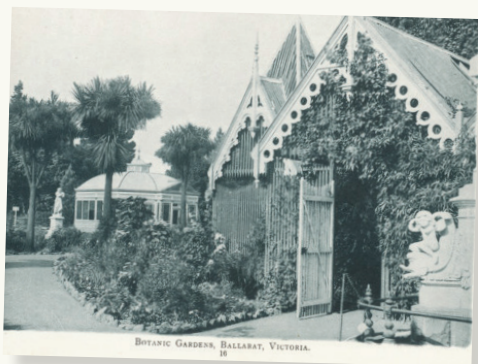
Visit the Ballarat Mechanics Institute during the Ballarat Heritage Festival 2025 and witness botanical art come to life. On both Saturdays of the festival, the Reading Room will host live viewings of The Ballarat Botanical Artists of the Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens at work, offering a unique chance to see the creative process unfold in real time.

Want to dive deeper? Register for the Botanical Drawing Masterclass, where just 12 participants will learn directly from working artists Valerie Richards and Roe Bancroft. Discover the techniques behind composition, measured drawing, and watercolour application in an intimate, heritage setting.

Dates: May 17th 9-11 free
May 24th 11.30-2.30 Masterclass \$60

Bookings: TryBooking

Location: Reading Room, Ballarat Mechanics' Institute, 117 Sturt Street, Ballarat



Fernery image: Victorian Collections
<https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/64cb34beb90a53ba2f04431>

3 Whispers from the Garden

Also at the BMI, in partnership with the Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens, don't miss Whispers from the Garden – a ticketed immersive performance blending live readings, storytelling, and theatrical atmosphere. Journey through letters and legacy from figures like George Longley and Ferdinand von Mueller, revealing the poetic and powerful language of nature.

A celebration of art, history, and the living world, all under one roof.

Dates: 24th May

Time: 10am – 11am

Cost: \$10

Bookings: TryBooking

Location: Reading Room, Ballarat Mechanics' Institute, 117 Sturt Street, Ballarat

4 “George Longley” in Conversation.

As part of Heritage Week, the Guiding group presents a conversation with George Longley, the Ballarat Botanical Gardens first Curator. With Lorraine Powell the Guides will explore Longley's early life, his influences both locally and internationally, his achievements and his legacy. The presentation includes afternoon tea and a guided walk to parts of the gardens that have a strong connection to Longley.

Date: 18th May

Time: 2.00pm

Location: The Robert Clark Horticultural Centre

Cost: \$15.00

Bookings: Via TryBooking



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