

# Wellingtonia

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## NEWSLETTER – SPRING 2021

### FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK:



WELCOME to our spring edition.

The changing Fernery development over time was the focus for our Speakers afternoon on Sunday June 27. Our thanks to **Lorraine Powell, Jock Gilbert, Merrill Shulkes** and our Patron, **Tim Entwisle** for their contributions (see report on page 8).

It was a day emphasising how strong the presence of ferneries has been in the our gardens, and also supporting our resolve to continue to make the Fernery Project a fitting and rich part of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens experience.

As we move forward on this project we have to accept the current reality of the limited funding for more building structures.

Last year the Fernery project was caught up in adverse local politics publicity. But time marches on. The building is now there for all to admire and the focus is now to bring the building to its full potential and to gain positive perceptions of the development.

The Friends will be one of the stakeholders contributing to the City of Ballarat (CoB) consultation process on this. It now seems March/April 2022 is the more likely time for the opening of the building.

Winter is 'grafting time' and I see some commonality in this practice of attempting to make two parts one, with the current challenges for the Fernery project.

Currently we have distinct elements in the fernery precinct – the new building, open space and the old batten building. They are all different and the immediate challenge is to 'graft' the new building space together with the large open area on the western side.

The focus is not just to get the new building open but design work to knit together the two spaces in this precinct needs our attention now. It may be completed in stages but the building and open space need connection through experience, story and design.



Another form of 'grafting' is also underway at the Gatekeeper's Cottage. The Cottage is the home for **BotaniKids** and is now also developing as an **Education and Interpretative Centre** for the Gardens. It is exciting for the Cottage's potential to see recent installations that will increase this function of the cottage (full report pages 6 and 7). The challenge is to have the volunteers on site to help make the Cottage experience part of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens experience for visitors.

Exceptional experiences of intense heat weather in Canada and US were reported during our winter. Our August meeting guest speaker will describe some of the ways CoB is building our resilience to cope with a warmer world with more tree planting across ALL parts of our city.

*"...we have to accept the current reality of the limited funding for more building structures."*

continues page 2...



- GENERAL MEETING - THURSDAY, 19 AUGUST, 10 a.m.
- A BIRD-WATCHING TREAT AT LAKE WENDOUREE AND NORTH GARDENS, Sunday, 12 September at 10 a.m.
- FRIENDS OPEN GARDENS - NOVEMBER 6 and 7, 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. (See accompanying flyer)
- SPRING LUNCHEON - FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19 9.45 a.m. to 3.00 p.m.
- Open **DESIGNER GARDENS** arranged by Rotary. November 20 and 21, 2021

*Patron of the Ballarat Friends:* Prof. Tim Entwisle,  
Director and Chief Executive,  
Royal Botanic Gardens,  
Melbourne.



See what Tim's been up to recently on page 4.

The greening of our suburbs and the importance of trees to reduce the urban heat island effect and CoB's work to try and reduce hot suburbs is definitely of interest to us all who value the role trees play in our lives.

The Friends Committee did not meet in July but there were several smaller specially focused meetings. We are indeed fortunate to have such a large pool of committed committee members contributing to the planning of activities and the wide range of tasks involved in the administration of FBBG.

In this *Wellingtonia* are notices of the many activities planned for Friends to participate in and enjoy in Spring and beyond.

Through the generosity of members and also Garden staff opening their gardens, Friends have six **local garden visits** to look forward to in Spring.

**Ballarat Field Naturalists** are also assisting to provide an interesting Sunday morning on September 12. On the same day the **Friends Nursery** will be open to help with your Spring plant purchases.

The Spring Luncheon day with speakers will be another highlight. That same weekend more gardens will be open in the Ballarat district as part of **Garden Designfest**.

Ballarat Tramway museum is celebrating 50 years of operation on Sunday, September 19, and should be a busy day in the garden precinct.

Our **regular Sunday morning free guided tours** are now underway for Spring and hopefully that Sunday will attract plenty of participants.

We hear quite a bit about the importance of getting kids out into the natural environment and the phenomenon of "nature deficit disorder". I think this applies to all of us and so hope we have more days coming soon that move us on from those grey winter days and we get outside, enjoy the gardens and the joy of spring.

**Terry O'Brien, President**

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** Enclosed with your newsletter is a two-page flyer advertising the gardens that are open in November for members and their friends. You will notice that the addresses are not provided. This is for privacy reasons. Addresses of the six gardens will be sent out by email to Friends two weeks before the event. For those without emails you can pick up the address list two weeks before on Tuesday, October 26 between 1 and 4 p.m. from George Longley Building. **Wendy Taylor, PR/Publicity Convener**

*"You'll never get me up in one of those!" declared the caterpillar to the butterfly.*

## GUIDING in WINTER!

In June seven intrepid Guides braved wet windy conditions in search of Sequoias in the Mollingship region. **Brian Hay** led the way with a detour to his very special vegetable patch at Wattle Flat, complete with green manure beds! Well done Brian, it was a delight.



We found a magnificent *Sempervirens* behind the Mollingship Hall and then a kilometre or two further on a group of four in a private garden. On the return drive to our surprise were several *Sequoia giganteums* bordering a private property. There are more to be discovered in the area, next time on a fine day!

Disappointing uncertain times with lock-downs and restrictions has meant that another excursion for the Guides group in July had to be postponed.

Attention was drawn at a recent Friends Committee meeting to the display board in the Conservatory which has featured **The Tree of the Month**. These displays have been carefully stored and we thank those who prepared the informative posters. They may well appear again.

During the coming months it is hoped that displays pertinent to all that happens in our historical gardens will come from different groups within the Friends. The Guides have posted **'In the Month of August'** highlighting events from the past using notable entries from the timeline in our *Eden of Loveliness* book about the history of the Ballarat Gardens.

The **Botanical Illustrators**, our Friends Art Group, will display samples of their work during the month of September.

The Guides look forward to resuming free guided Sunday morning tours at 11 a.m. in the coming months. **Julie Chandler, Guides Convener**



# EVENTS

● **GENERAL MEETING - THURSDAY, 19 AUGUST, 2021.** CENTRAL WENDOUREE CLUBROOMS - Gregory Street, Wendouree. 10 a.m. - 12.30 p.m. **GUEST SPEAKER - Anthony Marshall**, Vegetation Planning and Management Officer at the City of Ballarat. His topic will be on the *Greening of Ballarat and how the Council is managing the implementation of its Urban Forest Strategy*.

● **'A BIRD-WATCHING TREAT FOR MEMBERS AT THE NORTH GARDENS AND LAKE WENDOUREE, SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 12, 2021** at 10.00 to 11.30 a.m. The President of the Ballarat Field Naturalists Club, John Gregurke and other Club members, will lead us on a walk through the Indigenous gardens at the Gardens, plus North Ballarat Wetlands and fairylands, talking about the plants, birds and wetland species/ecological role of the Wetland.

Members are advised to bring BINOCULARS to help with bird identification! Following our tour we will have morning tea in the Gatekeeper's Cottage.

● **FRIENDS OPEN GARDENS - NOVEMBER 6 and 7, 2021.** 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. Four of our members plus two Gardens staff are opening their own gardens for us to enjoy. As with the most successful April event, three Gardens will be open on each day. Further information on the insert with this newsletter. **NO CHARGE.** Keep these date free to visit these beautiful and unique gardens.

● **SPRING LUNCHEON - FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2021.** 9.45 a.m. to 3.00 p.m.

We are fortunate to have **CAROLYN BLACKMAN**. Carolyn's topic is: *'BIG and SMALL - Why gardens are important on every scale'*. From large gardens and commercial projects to small pocket handkerchief gardens.

We are also very happy to welcome **SIMON RICKARD** back to speak to us as well. His topic this year is *'Creating a beautiful dry garden'*. Please keep this date free to come and listen to great speakers.

**BOOKINGS OPEN ON SEPTEMBER 13. Numbers are limited!**

**TRY BOOKING:** <https://www.trybooking.com/BTLIG>

Following our Luncheon, the next two days (November 20 and 21, 2021) are the open **DESIGNER GARDENS** arranged by **Rotary**. (More at: [gardendesignfest.com.au](http://gardendesignfest.com.au) and on page 9)



● **CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS - THURSDAY EVENING - DECEMBER 2 - 5.30 p.m. to 7.00 p.m.**

## 2022

● **ONE FOR YOUR 2022 Diary! A Friends' visit to Alowyn Gardens in Yarra Glen has been**

**Carolyn Blackman** is a multi gold medal award winning garden designer, competing at Garden shows around Australia and also by invitation to the Singapore Garden festival, International Horticulture Festival (Beijing 2019). Her Australian shows include Sydney, Perth and the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show winning every award possible with the highest scoring exhibit in the 21 year history of the Show. Also visiting China many times to speak at Conferences and represent Australia at the International Horticulture Expo winning a gold award.



Carolyn Blackman

Day to day Carolyn has a Landscape Design Practice with her husband Joby Blackman. She consults on commercial and residential landscape projects all over Australia. Carolyn's career began early at age three gardening with her grandparents in Ballarat. She started an apprenticeship at 14, winning best apprentice in her third year.

Her weekends are spent gardening, getting muddy with the kids and battling blackberries on ten acres of chocolate dirt just out of Ballarat. Carolyn is also active on many Committees including *Encouraging Women in Horticulture* that recognise and promote women in successful careers in horticulture.

**SIMON RICKARD:**

*'Australians often imagine that our hot, dry summers make gardening a burden. In fact, it is a great blessing, as a fifth of the world's flora comes from climates as dry as our own'.* Join Simon as he explains how to select the right plants for our gardens, and learn to love the climate we have.



Simon Rickard

Simon works as a garden communicator, author, workshop presenter, garden tour leader for Botanica World Discoveries and is the principal baroque bassoonist with the Australian Haydn Ensemble. Simon is a passionate gardener and plantsman.

He was head gardener at the Diggers Club gardens, Heronswood and St Erth until 2009, before collaborating with restaurateur Annie Smithers to establish her now-famous kitchen garden.

Somehow, he still finds time for a parallel career in early music, playing historical bassoons with *Pinchgut Opera*, the Australian Haydn Ensemble, and his renaissance consort, *Unholy Rackett*.

**Have you heard of the garlic diet?** You don't lose much weight, but from a distance your friends think you look thinner.

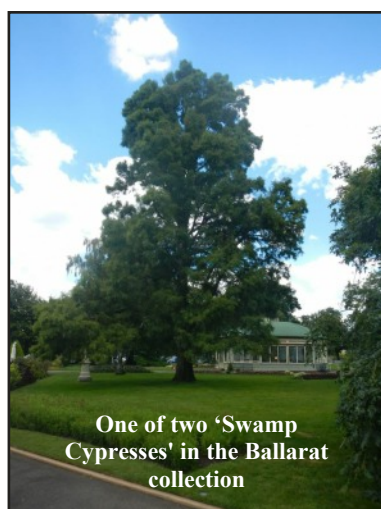
## AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF BOTANIC GARDENS:

*Report by Merrill Shulkes  
AAFBG Management Committee Member  
and FBBG Representative*



We are very pleased to announce that the AAFBG's Botanical Tour of Tasmania is booked out and that several FBBG members are looking forward to the tour taking place in October 2021. A Welcome Pack for all tour participants is currently being prepared by the organizers that will include notes prepared by some of the garden owners. We encourage tour participants to view the websites of the parks and gardens on the itinerary for additional information.

The next AAFBG meeting will be held via Zoom on Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> August. Kate Heffernan will be welcomed as our new President. It is anticipated that the proposed program for the 2022 AAFBG Biennial Conference at Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens near Batemans Bay in NSW (29<sup>th</sup> April – 1<sup>st</sup> May) will be high on the agenda. There will be an opportunity for other Friends groups to make a presentation at the conference and hopefully FBBG takes up the offer.



### WHETHER POND OR JUST SWAMP CYPRESS, IT'S BALD NOW

August 3, 2021



We, like Encyclopedia Britannica, call the Pond Cypress, *Taxodium distichum* variety *imbricarium* (not *imbricatum*). This makes the connection between it and the rather similar Bald (or Swamp) Cypress, *Taxodium distichum* variety *distichum*, clear. Others prefer to treat it as a separate species, called *Taxodium ascendens*, and some don't even recognise it as separate entity.

It is one of the cypresses with rusty orange leaves in autumn that are shed in winter, hence the 'baldness'. Pond Cypress is often a smaller tree than the usual Bald Cypress, and with leaves more tightly wrapped and overlapping around the small branches (*imbricate*, despite the misspelling of the botanical name which I gather we should accept).

You can read more of Tim's offerings at: <https://talkingplants.blogspot.com/> Oi just search on line for 'Talking Plants'

## THE BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS FOUNDATION LTD

The BBG Foundation Ltd Board last met in June and business continues under complicated current circumstances in support of our Botanical Gardens.

The primary goals of the Ballarat Botanic Gardens Foundation Ltd are to:

- maintain effective relationships with key stakeholders of the Gardens;
- work collaboratively with key stakeholders to identify specific projects that require community support to ensure viability and realisation;
- undertake activities and initiatives to generate financial and community support to deliver the priority projects;
- create an endowment fund to financially support the development of the Gardens; and
- apply the principles of good governance to meet all compliance and regulatory requirements, ensure the integrity of the Foundation and effectively manage the operations and performance of the organisation.

To achieve these aims the BBGF Board is working with the Friends and the City of Ballarat and at this meeting, a Policy statement was adopted to provide a framework for the ongoing leadership and management of the Foundation

**In relation to the BBGF Apprentice Troy Peddle:** Troy is well and truly settled into his position having completed his three month trial period and has commenced his training plan and study to begin Horticulture Course certificate three. We have had two meetings with Troy who is now in the second phase of this year's rotation. Please make yourselves known to Troy if you have an opportunity. I sincerely thank the benefactors Arthur and Merrill Shulkes for facilitating this initiative.

Exciting progress has been made with the Foundation's contribution to the interpretation area of the Gatekeeper's Cottage. The Microscope has arrived and purpose built table is installed (see photo). The Plant Evolution Timeline has been designed and installed; we are eagerly waiting to share this room with everyone.

**Elizabeth Gilfillan.**



The purpose built table has been installed



## 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS!

For the Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens

The Friends were founded on February 10, 1982 at a meeting in the Trench Room at the Ballarat Town Hall. Monthly meetings commenced with Bob Whitehead as Convenor. From an initial membership of seventeen Founding Members, the FBBG has grown to around 400 members.

An exciting event to mark the Fortieth Anniversary is currently being planned for 2022 by the FBBG Committee.

Further details will be announced later this year.



## A BIRD WATCHING TREAT FOR MEMBERS (AND THEIR FRIENDS)

Join us on Sunday September 12 at 10 am for a **walk and talk** with members of the *Field Naturalists' Club of Ballarat*. **John Gregurke** (Club President) and other Club members will lead us on this tour.

Tour will last approximately one-and-a-half hours finishing with morning tea at the Gatekeeper's Cottage.

To book for this free tour and complimentary morning tea, phone Carole Haines on 0437 462 731 or email [cr\\_haines@bigpond.com](mailto:cr_haines@bigpond.com)

**Bookings are essential. Please RSVP by Thursday 9 September.**

**Family and friends of FBBG members most welcome.**



Bring Binoculars to help with bird identification.

*Someone keeps taking the gates from local gardens. Our neighbours are worried that they'll take a fence.*



### 'Garden Cuttings' by Green Thumb

- It is interesting (in the light of President Terry's trees comments on page 1 and our up-coming guest speaker Anthony Marshall), that *The Age* on August 7 carried a story entitled 'Move to Make Suburbs Greener – and Cooler'. Reference was made to the CoB's recent tender for the planting of 1,352 street trees across Sebastopol.
- Regarding the Fernery Stage 1: The Friends Committee have focused on a set of immediate issues to be addressed.
  - The quality and extent of landscaping around the new building
  - Fitting out the new building and plant selection
  - Interpretative displays linked to collections and history in this area Stay tuned! (The Friends have funds committed to help finance this as does the FBBG Foundation)
- Interestingly enough we don't know what the long term commitment to the Fernery Project is by COB beyond the landscaping and fitting out of the new building. The new building is not complete. It does not provide vision or provision for extension to the rear of the site for overall plan and development.
- Long term there is an issue with the old batten building. Has it been condemned? Can it be renovated? Is a more cost effective solution possible with a simpler roof line to match the new building in some way?
- Another observation from a long-term member of the Friends, "We can not call it a Fernery if we do not have a collection (of ferns)."
- A great deal of thought and time has been put into the possible relocation of the Friends base in the Gardens. Check the dates! Great to see Ballarat Rotary West and FBBG are working together on this.
- A plethora of open gardens coming up for the Friends and their friends.
- Best wishes for a speedy recovery go to long term member of the Ballarat Friends, Susan Rattray, after she was hospitalised recently after a run-in with a car. **Until Next Time; keep your secateurs clean and sharp! Green Thumb**

## PUTTING A FACE TO A NEW BALLARAT FRIENDS COMMITTEE MEMBER:



I moved to Invermay four years ago after spending all my life on our family farming property 'Mt. Widderin' at Skipton, which was noted for its volcanic caves and a lovely three acre English garden. A feature of the garden was a massive English Oak with a

canopy larger than the Ballarat Gardens oaks. Our garden was host to many fundraising musical and open garden days over several decades.

I have always had an interest in supporting the community and served 31 years on our local hospital board. I am a past President of the Ballarat A & P Society (Ballarat Show). Now Diane and I are pleased to assist the Friends members to enhance and showcase the wonderful Ballarat Botanical Gardens.

**Geoff Notman**

(Welcome Geoff, Ed.)

## GROWING FRIENDS: Spot News!

Things have been quiet lately, but we have DAHLIAS for sale. We will be potting them up prior to sale. All are named.

\$10 each. \$9 for members.

**Yvonne Curbach**

## AN EXCITING DEVELOPMENT AT THE GATEKEEPER'S COTTAGE



Above: left to right Raoul Dixon, Fiona Stewart, Beth Dixon, Julie Bradby, David Williams and Julie Chandler



Above: Terry O'Brien and Elizabeth Gilfillan can't disguise their excitement at the recent installation

Internal improvements in the Gatekeeper's Cottage have largely been funded by donations and sourced through the Ballarat Botanical Gardens Foundation. Recent additions to the cottage will increase its role as an Education and Interpretative Centre in the Gardens alongside its BotaniKids role

A donation by Fiona Sharp and David Williams, family of Llewellyn and Dorothy Williams, contributed to *The Evolution of Plants* Display.

Fiona and David visited the Gatekeeper's Cottage on their father's 100th birthday on Sunday, June 20, and became acquainted with where the display would be installed. There was little notice because of uncertainty coming out of a lock-down, but Beth and Raoul Dixon, along with Guides Convener Julie Chandler were part of the small group that shared the Friends and Williams stories and links. Julie Bradby entertained us with a grand "cottage" style morning tea.

The display is a timeline. It compacts and impacts the information – a lot of information about our natural world is projected visually and engagingly. As well as that, it is a pleasing art piece.

An internet search will reveal lots of informative plant evolution displays. Many of them are very crowded with detail. We wanted a display that emphasized the connections we make with the plant world in the Ballarat Botanical Gardens.

The Cairns and Singapore Gardens plant evolution displays got us started, shaping our approach. Many of the trees in our gardens are linked to the larger landmass of Gondwana and so we wanted to show the evolution of our landmasses on the display as well.

Elizabeth Gilfillan made contact with Fiona Rice who has recently done the Arid and Sensory Gardens at Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne for the design work. Fiona has done a wonderful job! Elizabeth, Julie Bradby and myself, who worked to develop this project, are tremendously pleased with the result.

We look forward to seeing it used widely as an educational reference point in the Gardens for BotaniKids, school groups, guided tour groups and general visitors.

We also look forward to seeing the design work used on items that the Friends can sell and Julie also has ideas to use some of the artwork as part of the landscaping outside the cottage.

**Terry O'Brien**

DON'T FORGET THE FRIENDS **SPRING LUNCHEON - FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2021. 9.45 A.M. TO 3.00 P.M.**

**NUMBERS ARE LIMITED!**

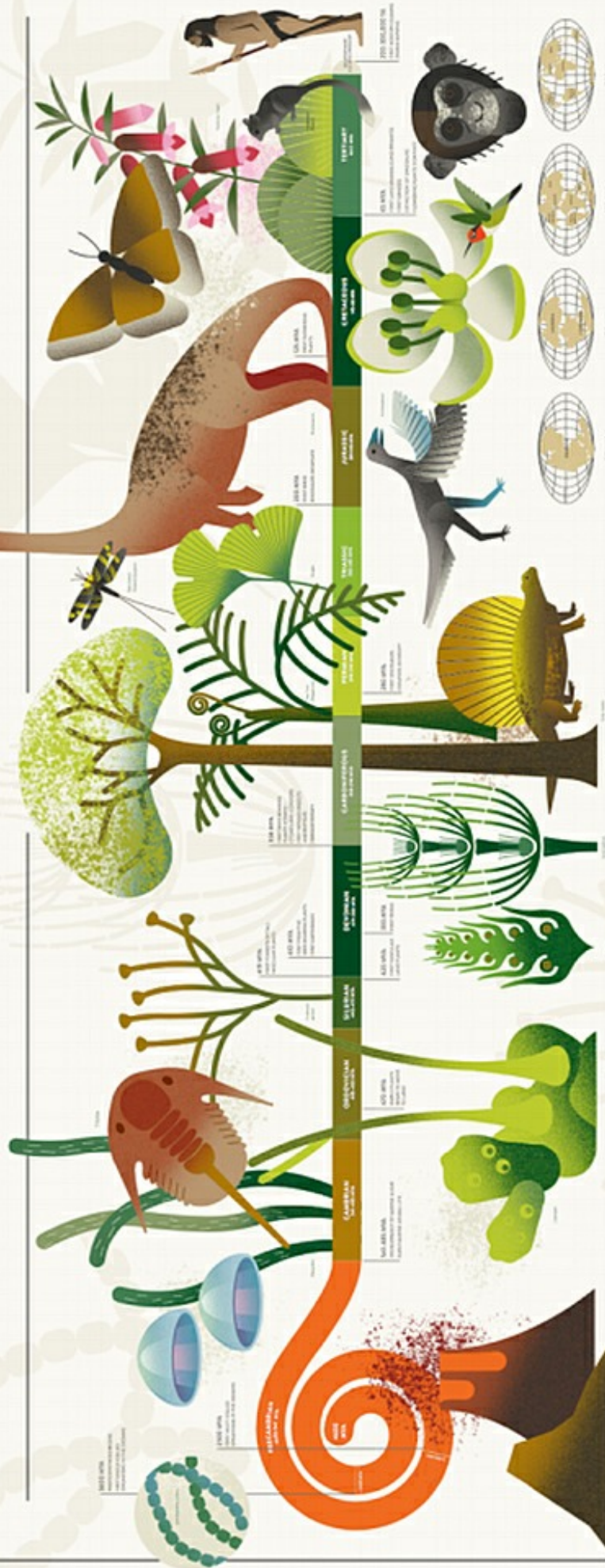
BOOKINGS OPEN ON SEPTEMBER 13.

TRY BOOKING: [HTTPS://WWW.TRYBOOKING.COM/BTLIG](https://www.trybooking.com/BTLIG)

PLANTS - EVOLVING FOR 3500 MILLION YEARS  
HUMANS - EVOLVING FOR 100,000 YEARS  
FROM THE FIRST SIMPLE PHOTOSYNTHETIC BACTERIA,  
TO THE COMPLEX AND DIVERSE FLOWERING PLANTS OF TODAY,  
PLANTS HAVE EVOLVED AND ADAPTED OVER MILLIONS OF YEARS.

# THE EVOLUTION OF PLANTS

THE PROCESS OF EVOLUTION CONTINUES.  
WITHOUT PLANTS AND ANIMALS,  
HUMAN LIFE WILL CEASE TO EXIST.  
OUR ACTIONS DIRECTLY AFFECT OUR  
ABILITY TO SURVIVE.



## LIFELESS TO FIRST LIFE

**PRE-CAMBRIAN**  
4500-540 Ma  
Earth is inhospitable, hot and dry. No life exists until the first simple photosynthetic bacteria appear.

## THE INVASION OF LAND

**CAMBRIAN**  
540-500 Ma  
First marine algae appear - simple multicellular organisms with flagella. They are the first plants to live on land.

## THE AGE OF THE GYMNOSPERMS

**DEVONIAN**  
410-360 Ma  
Land plants evolve rapidly as they move onto land. They are the first plants to live on land.

## THE RISE OF THE FERNS

**SILURIAN**  
440-410 Ma  
First simple land plants appear (mosses). They are the first plants to live on land.

## THE FLOWERING WORLD

**ORDOVICIAN**  
485-444 Ma  
The first simple land plants appear (mosses). They are the first plants to live on land.

## THE TRIASSIC PERIOD

**PERMIAN**  
252-251 Ma  
The climate is hot, leading to the evolution of modern mammals. They are the first mammals to live on land.

## THE JURASSIC PERIOD

**JURASSIC**  
201-145 Ma  
The climate is warm, leading to the evolution of modern mammals. They are the first mammals to live on land.

## THE CRETACEOUS PERIOD

**CRETACEOUS**  
145-66 Ma  
The climate is warm, leading to the evolution of modern mammals. They are the first mammals to live on land.

## THE TERTIARY PERIOD

**TERTIARY**  
66-2 Ma  
The climate is warm, leading to the evolution of modern mammals. They are the first mammals to live on land.

## THE QUATERNARY PERIOD

**QUATERNARY**  
2 Ma - present  
The climate is warm, leading to the evolution of modern mammals. They are the first mammals to live on land.

'The Evolution of Plants' Displayed in the Gatekeeper's Cottage in the North Gardens. It was created by Fiona Rice. The display is a timeline.

# FERNS AND FERNERY JOURNEY

On Sunday afternoon June 27, 40 people were fortunate to attend an afternoon in the Robert Clark Horticultural Centre to hear four speakers outline their personal experiences of ferns, plants, philosophies, history and designs in landscaping and buildings. The speeches given were of such a high calibre that the audience were captivated.

**Lorraine Powell** expressed her love of ferns from childhood, particularly tree ferns. The early 19th century was a great time of discovery and science. Botanists on voyages of discovery would sketch, dry plants and collect seeds. The *Wardian Case* portable greenhouse changed everything. This provided a protected environment for plants whilst in transit aboard ships.

A fascination for ferns evolved, as could be seen in *Prince Albert's Crystal Palace* with palms and ferns featured. Early painters such as **Eugene von Guerard** painted the landscape at Ferntree Gully and thus our tree ferns became famous around the world.

Ballarat caught the enthusiasm of ferns and shelters. A large Camellia House and Fernery was commenced in 1877.

**Jock Gilbert** gave us a talk on landscape architectural design and the ways that the idea of the Botanic Garden arose from theories of beauty and the picturesque. The evolution of painting styles in relation to observed landscapes and environments were reflected in English park and garden designs. Landscapes were established through these principles, featuring the visible features of an area of land, generating feelings of space, through ideas of the sublime, the beautiful and the picturesque. These came together through 'the gardenesque movement' where plants collected from around the world were shown in their natural form – leading to the establishment of grottoes and ferneries for the cultivation of ferns. He quoted **Tim Entwisle** in noting that through visiting botanical gardens, one can expect to become healthy, happy and wise - a lovely theme for the afternoon and a wonderful rationale for a Botanic Garden.

**Merrill Shulkes** showed us some wonderful historic photos of the original Fernery built in the Ballarat Botanical Garden. Part of the structure was a towering centre piece, Gothic in design. The battens gave the outer appearance lightness, so as the building seemed to float. Inside the battens gave light and shade. The ornate wooden designs on the exterior not only added interest, but the decorative barge boards protected the ends of the battens. Extensions to the fernery were added over the years. However after a period of 20

years the battens started to deteriorate. Changes were made until eventually we had a smaller and simpler designed fernery part of which still remains. It is almost completely dismantled due to wooden battens disintegrating, and iron pillars rusting.

Merrill also presented an interesting time line (see below) over a period of many years relating to the process and decisions made until we reached the current Stage 1 of our new fernery. It is in the Gothic Style, very similar to the original fernery.

**Professor Tim Entwisle** of the *Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria* (and our Patron) gave us an outline of their approach with regard to ferns. It is a completely different way of displaying ferns with no building to house them. The ferns are planted and displayed in a gully with a stream running through. The use of water is based on an original similar development to make use of an ephemeral stream which runs into the Yarra and is now part of a water recycling system for the gardens. To protect the plants a board walk was developed. A few unexpected vistas opened up with the development. Spaces were developed, with areas of moss, a sensory garden and a grotto.

Then Tim gave us some examples of ferneries overseas. One is in Scotland that has an old wall which is featured inside the fernery. Then he showed us an enormous fernery in Lisbon. Not an attractive exterior but amazing inside. Parts were an old quarry, and many different levels, with different viewing spaces. During Tim's talk he spoke strongly about the interior of ferneries, and how extra interest could be gained by using parts of the building as a feature; even a view of parts of the Lisbon quarry wall are a feature internally.

All in all it was a great afternoon, and we were fortunate to attend such a wonderful event.

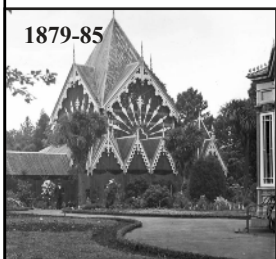
**Beth Dixon, member of the Ballarat Friends**



I have often wondered: *'Do flat-earthars believe that other planets are also flat?'* (Ed.)

## BALLARAT'S FERNERIES -- AN ABBREVIATED TIMELINE

- 1877** Camellia House constructed.
- 1879-85** Major extensions to the east and west of Camellia House culminating in Victorian Gothic Batten Fernery. Ongoing alterations & additions.
- 1907** Replacement of Camellia House and eastern extension.
- 1926** Western extension demolished and replaced. A pergola was added later.
- 1955** Eastern and central section demolished to make way for new Fernery designed by V H Lohse.
- 1994** Masterplan reinforced locational and historic significance of a fernery as an important attraction. Various options for new Fernery considered over next 20 years.
- 2013** Closure of remnant 1955 Fernery and most of fern collection lost.
- 2018** Balance Architecture appointed designers of Fernery Redevelopment. Partial demolition of 1955 Fernery to accommodate New Fernery Entrance.
- 2020-21** Construction of Stage I New Fernery Entrance commenced and completed.



## FERNMANIA

In the period before the industrial revolution, the collection and exhibition of botanical exotica was the province of 'real science', kept at arm's length from the general public. Indeed, when a curious group of locals tried to peer over the fence surrounding Kew Gardens, the response was to raise the height of the fence. However, a newly formed middle class together with scientific breakthroughs gave impetus for people to create their own wonderlands of exotica to demonstrate worldliness and wealth.

In 1840, Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward invented the 'Wardian Case', providing a new tool for horticulturalists, botanists and newly rich private landowners to send out collectors to the far reaches of the world for new and hitherto unseen plants.



Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward

In 1851, the opening of the great cast iron and glass Crystal Palace, brainchild of Prince Albert the Royal Consort, and designer Joseph Paxton, gave literally millions of visitors a taste of the entire British Empire in one view. The Exhibition included hundreds of Wardian cases, with at least two hundred filled with ferns and orchids.

The Crystal Palace remained open into the night thanks to the availability of gas lighting, and its exhibits were

described widely in the press. I imagine George Longley (still at work in the Lowther Castle gardens) would have read avidly of the event and wished he could be there. Perhaps it even gave him an idea of the scale required for a grand Fernery.

Following on from *Tulipmania* and other fads, in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, ferns formed the basis for a sort of new 'mania'.

In 1867 when Prince Albert, the Duke of Edinburgh visited Victoria, artist Nicholas Chevalier was tasked with creating fern motifs to decorate the ladies' gowns for the grand ball held at

Government House in his honor. (Chevalier also accompanied the Royal Party to Ballarat and sketched the Prince at the Highland Games held at the Copenhagen Gardens at the corner of Pleasant and Eyre Streets).

To paraphrase the author Tim Bonyhady in *The Colonial Earth*, 'Scarcely a porch or windowsill was without a fern, living or dead.'



Crystal Palace, 1851

By the end of the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century, people found work denuding the bushscape of Australasia of all manner of fern species. Shipload upon shipload sailed away to feed the rapacious public demand in Britain, Europe and America.

Periodic downturns in the middle of the Gold Rush led Ballarat



Two remnant cast ironwork pieces

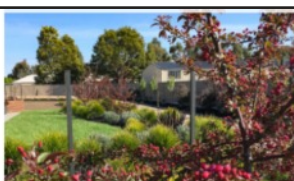
foundries to periodic diversify into domestic castings such as to keep the workforce busy. Patterns including decorative friezes of kangaroo, lyrebird and ferns were used on verandahs, and on all manner of other articles.

Lorraine Powell

*'Those who believe in telekinesis, raise my hand.'* — Kurt Vonnegut.



Anne King, 'Back Lake' - Scotsburn



Janene Byrne, 49 Ibis Gardens Ct



Janene Byrne, 5 Errard St. Nth



Nicky & Darren Barnett, Buninyong



Paal Grant, Buninyong



Paddy Milne, Creswick



Paddy Milne, Moola St.



Paddy Milne, Soldiers Hill

November  
20 and 21

# Garden designfest.

Following our Friends Spring Luncheon, the next two days (November 20-1) are the open **DESIGNER GARDENS**. **Ballarat Rotary West and the FBBG** are working together to host the event. A percentage of the funds raised will be made available for the Fernery project.

You can see the eight gardens for the 'Ballarat Area' by going to the website:

<https://gardendesignfest.com.au/gardens/20-21-gardens/>

Click on any of the images and you will see a selection of photographs showing aspects of the garden.

Each has an entry fee shown. (\$5 or \$8)

**THE FRIENDS WILL BE LOOKING FOR  
VOLUNTEERS ON THESE DAYS!**



## Educating Friends Report – BotaniKids Happenings

It's been a real challenge weaving our way through the maze of lock-downs restrictions and all that entails. We have however managed to hold three very well attended diverse activities within the Gardens all within the Covid guidelines.

In keeping with our theme this year: ***It's All About the Botanicals***, Sara Kittelty donated her time cooked with us in the Gardens on March 21. It was held outdoors making pancakes and then decorating with collected botanicals, such as herbs edible flowers and fruits. Sara donated a cake decorated with her usual flair with flowers. A lucky grandma, who attended with her granddaughter, won the cake. It was a very happy occasion, held in the courtyard of the Robert Clark Horticultural Centre.

Learning about edible flowers and the need for vigilance and safety in foraging for edible plants was the focus of the morning with the children and the adults attending.

School holidays fell within a relaxed restriction phase of the Covid pandemic so we scheduled two very successful events with registrations on Facebook. No charge. 50 attended both sessions.

The first activity was the first Monday of the holidays with a bird seed feeder pine-cone made by the children and a trek through the Wetlands to see if we could spy some birds. We were rewarded by seeing many water-birds. A fantail followed us through the tracks happily showing off its tail to all and sundry.

Our **Night in the Gardens Walk** on July 9 was a different approach and was attended by 20 young families. We explored the Gardens on dusk trying to find some nocturnal animals (alas not sighted) and noticing how different the plants and statues looked in the dark. We returned to the deck for a 'Milo' and marshmallow and some families stayed for a pizza tea.

We continue to plan for more activities later in the year. However, and with regrets, our August family day activity with the Friends of Sovereign Hill, (*Olden Days Games in the Gardens*) will be postponed to an October date at this stage.

Rest assured there are lots of new and exciting nature-learning activities being planned and with some already in the pipeline. When it is safe to proceed; watch this space!

**Julie Bradby**

**“Surely after a milkshake has been shaken, shouldn't it be called a milkshook?”**



## A-MAZING MAZES?

**‘..from the records of John Garner’**

The Ballarat Botanical Gardens were established from native bushland in 1858 and the first maze created in 1862 using *Acacia paradoxa* (now *Acacia armata*).

It was probably the first maze to be introduced into a Botanical garden in Australia and New Zealand. It proved to be a popular attraction but it was cleared in 1881 to make room for a conservatory.

The following year a new maze was built based on the layout of that in the Hampton Court Palace grounds and with a central tower.

It was further ‘rejuvenated’ in 1922 but by 1957 it had deteriorated due to age, use, knocking down of hedges and the odd fire. It was therefore removed to be replaced by a children's paddling pool.

Since then there have been several suggestions that a new maze be constructed but this has not occurred. However, **Julie Bradby** had one built for one on the BotaniKids ‘Great Big Gardens Play Day’ a few years ago! It was constructed from hay bales! This was our fourth maze but will be the shortest lived – six hours from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.!



**The second Ballarat maze (above) was planted with boxthorn.**

**DON'T FORGET: GENERAL MEETING - THURSDAY, 19 AUGUST, 2021.**

CENTRAL WENDOUREE BOWLING CLUBROOMS - Gregory Street, Wendouree. 10 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.

**GUEST SPEAKER - Anthony Marshall**, Vegetation Planning and Management Officer at the City of Ballarat



## Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens Nursery

*Specialising in rare groundcovers, perennials, shrubs and succulents*

**Nursery Open:** Tuesday 1-4 pm, and the second Sunday of Month 1-4 pm

**Trolley:** Plants available outside the Conservatory during business hours-  
plants updated daily- Cash honour system

Why not take a look at the plants we have for sale the next time you are enjoying the gardens!  
We have a variety of named dahlias, plus fuchsias, and other hardy long flowering plants.

**Members \$1 discount off each plant!**



### CURATOR'S REPORT

What a wet winter we seem to have had with many more wet days than dry! The lawns have been so wet the team haven't been able to undertake much mowing. The wet weather has also held up on a number of projects such as path repairs and some tidying up around the new fernery building.

Covid restrictions are changing on a regular basis with buildings like the Conservatory and Robert Clark Horticultural Centre closed one week and open the next. The couple of lock-downs we have experienced over the last few weeks certainly gives a taste of what Melbourne has had to endure over a much longer period.

In early September we have the team from **International Conservation Services** on site undertaking repairs on the Stoddart and Thompson collections, this is additional work to annual cleaning which takes place later in the financial year. We will also have on site another team undertaking cleaning and waxing of the garden's bronze collection. I am also currently waiting on a quote to undertake internal cleaning of the windows of the conservatory and another quote for replacing another section of the Gillies Street fence.

**Peter Marquand, Botanical Gardens Curator**



Current display in the Conservatory

'You never see Eastern Barn Owls being amorous in the rain. It's too wet to woo!'

### **WHEN YOU NEED TO PAY US SOME MONEY:**

Please remember to identify **yourself**, when paying into our bank account and **what the payment is for**. A good method is to use your surname and initial/s as your ID.\*

Please **state what the payment is for**, e.g. membership, bus trip, etc.

The Friends' bank details are:  
**BSB 633 000 Acc. No. 125334615**

**\* make sure that you clearly identify yourself when making an electronic payment.**

### **BALLARAT GARDEN DISCOUNTS FOR MEMBERS**

- **Formosa Gardens Nursery** 5% off all stock
- **Grow Master** 5% off plant purchases excl. adv. trees
- **Spot on Pots** 10% off all purchases.

*You will need to show your FBBG membership card*

### **Ballarat Gardens Collections Officer - Begonias**

In the nursery, the team have not long completed the huge task of cleaning, inspecting, & individually bagging around 2300 Begonia tubers.

It's only a short reprieve however, for in approximately eight weeks they will come back out of their winter dormancy, be re-inspected and potted up.

#### **'Care for the Rare' planted:**

The gardens team have recently planted out the 'Care for the Rare' collection into both sides of the western walk. An exciting addition! The Australia garden now features a further 33 species of rare and threatened plants from the greater Ballarat region.

#### **New QR Codes for Garden Explorer**

We now have QR Codes for Garden Explorer! Simply scan & go straight to the Garden Explorer site to look up all your favourite plants, statues & enjoy the gardens anytime of the day, from wherever you are. The QR codes can also be found next to the map on the Conservatory entrance.

Access is also available at: [www.ballarat.gardenexplorer.org](http://www.ballarat.gardenexplorer.org)

#### **Many hands make light work!**



Scan the below  
QR code to launch  
Garden Explorer



**Donna Thomas**

# Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens 2021

Friends of Ballarat Botanic Gardens Inc.

P.O. Box 33W, Ballarat West 3350

Email: [info@fbbg.org.au](mailto:info@fbbg.org.au) Website: <https://fbbg.org.au/>

<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsBBG>

<https://www.facebook.com/ballaratbotaniKIDS/>



**Tel. George Longley Building 03 5342 9354**

## FBBG COMMITTEE

POSITION	NAME
President	Terry O'Brien
Vice President	(vacant)
Past President	Robert Selkirk
Minute Secretary	Natalie Radomski
Treasurer	Kim Nolan
BotaniKids/ Education	Julie Bradby
Events and Speakers	Carole Haines
Foundation Rep.	Terry O'Brien
PR/Promotions	Wendy Taylor
General member	Jock Gilbert
General member	Lorraine Powell
General member	Geoff Notman
General member	(1 vacancy)
AAFBG rep	Merrill Shulkes
Growing Friends	Yvonne Curbach
Guides	Julie Chandler
History	Stephanie de Boer
Hospitality	Doff Kemp
Membership	Warwick Sellens
Newsletter Editor	Michael Bird
Western Bed	Vacant
Ambassadors *	Trish Twaits
Botanical Art *	Val Richards

(\* non-Committee positions)

## FRIENDS COMMITTEE MEETING TIMES 2021

Meetings are held in the George Longley Building subject to Covid-19 regulations (rear of the Robert Clark Horticultural Centre). The BotaniKids/Educating Friends meet in the Gatekeeper's Cottage.

### Committee:

3rd Tuesday of each month at 4 pm.

### Botanical Artists:

Mondays at 10 am during school terms.

### Guiding Friends:

4th Wednesdays at 10 am.

### Growing Friends:

Tuesdays each week 1 pm to 4 pm, and the second Sunday of each month 1 pm to 4 pm. **Plant Sales** at these times AND everyday from the plant trolleys outside the Conservatory.

### BotaniKids /Educating Friends:

As required. No set time or day.

### History Group:

2nd Thursday each month 2.30 pm.

## THE BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS FOUNDATION LTD

The Foundation's overriding purpose is to raise funds to provide a strong, sustainable financial basis to support the Ballarat Botanical Gardens.

In addition we aim at advancing the natural environment in the Botanical Gardens and, in so doing, advancing and preserving the heritage of the Gardens as a horticultural museum.

Ballarat Botanical Gardens Foundation Ltd.

Banking direct deposit. BSB 633 000. Account No. 165027434

Website: [www.BallaratBotanicalGardensFoundation.com.au](http://www.BallaratBotanicalGardensFoundation.com.au)



## A CALL TO ALL HISTORY LOVERS

Whether you are interested in: -

- writing history or the oral variety
- digitisation and/or archiving
- giving presentations or creating poster displays
- research or, simply facts and dates about the Ballarat Botanical Gardens!

**We hope you will consider joining the Friends' History Group soon!**



*This Newsletter is distributed with the financial assistance of the City of Ballarat.*



Julie Chandler, Terry O'Brien, Tim Entwisle, Merrill Shulkes, Raoul Dixon, Lorraine Powell, Peter Marquand, Donna Thomas and Michael Bird all provided photos.

**Disclaimer:** The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens. The Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens does not accept responsibility for statements made or opinions expressed, although every effort will be made to publish reliable and accurate information.

**Contributions for Summer Wellingtonia 2021 are due by early December please.** Michael Bird, Editor.

**Editorial Committee:** Terry O'Brien, Merrill Shulkes, Wendy Taylor and Michael Bird.



# Open Gardens

*Exclusively for Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens Members*

*Saturday and Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> November 2021*

**We are pleased to announce the second series of our 'Friends' gardens open to Friends of Ballarat Botanical Garden members and their families and friends.**

There are six unique suburban gardens showcasing their Spring colour. This is a great way for Friends to enjoy these private gardens, celebrate our Ballarat gardens and glean ideas.

**Entry to all six gardens is free of charge.**

## Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2021

**10am to 4pm.**



### 1. Robert & Christine Selkirk's Garden

The garden is composed of two blocks of land, one being the old grass tennis court and the other the house block. This extensive space has provided the opportunity to create three separate lawn zones. Fronting the house is a circular lawn surrounded by Camelias and Hydrangeas with a central bed of roses. A significant 100 year old oak tree is a major feature accompanied by Silver Birches lining the driveway.

A 20-metre long stringy bark pergola is draped with wisteria turning into a tunnel of purple when the Wisteria is in flower. The original garden dates back to the 1920s with additional plants to create year round interest. Raised and walled vegetable gardens at

the rear and a recent addition of a Trompe l'oeil creates more interest.

### 2. Merrill & Arthur Shulkes' Garden

A very old, formal garden (including a fenced practice cricket pitch!) has been transformed by Merrill and Arthur into a productive and colourful space. A local landscape designer employed in 2018 has introduced a new pergola, wicking beds and varied paving, plus an imaginative design featuring Portuguese Laurel hedging, espaliered fruit trees, vegetables and many plants to ensure seasonal appeal and attract bees and birds.



### 3. Carole & Robert Haines' Garden

A thoughtfully planned garden with many "rooms" to create much interest and enjoyment. Features include a walled garden, raised beds and a two tiered pond. A garden room and deck are surrounded by a small waterfall spilling into a creek. There are camellias, azaleas, ferns and maples in this area. Beyond is a Japanese inspired garden containing a collection of hostas adjacent to the herb, vegetable and citrus garden. There is also a fernery with favourite plants in hanging baskets.

Unusual and rare plants are a feature of this garden, including a stunning set of four pleached Garrya. Too many plants to list here but available as a handout on the day.

(Note: garden contains water – supervision of children required)



**PLEASE NOTE:** "Due to privacy reasons and that the open gardens are some three months away, addresses have been withheld. They will be sent out by email to Friends two weeks before the event. For those without email you can pick up the address list two weeks before on Tuesday, October 26 between 1 and 4 p.m. from the George Longley Building."

## Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2021

10am to 4pm.

### 1. Glen Fisher's Garden

This garden was established ten years ago starting from scratch. In the front garden plantings for privacy and shade from the hot sun was important. Three Himalayan Birches were underplanted with Pachysandra and rock cyclamen. Mt Fuji cherry blossoms at the front gate and two Eucalyptus Silver Princess give interest and great flowers in Spring to attract birds.

The back yard consists of a small vegetable patch with dwarf fruit trees. A small garden by the deck and a lawn area softens the rear yard. A green wall down the north side of the house consists of virginia creeper, large stag horns and star jasmine.



### 2. Carman & Brett Knight's Garden

The owners purchased the property ten years ago after falling in love with the six mature trees set in a generous north facing back yard. Both the house and garden were in need of significant renovation and reinvigoration!

The front garden features a large robinia tree, privet and portuguese laurel hedging and a row of ornamental pear trees. The garden is dominated by perennial flowering plants and ornamental grasses planted in a naturalistic style.

The backyard features a mature desert ash, oak and horse chestnut trees with interconnecting canopies providing shade for the home throughout summer. Paths wind between the trees and formal hedging to a raised rear garden featuring a partierre style vegetable garden, fruit trees, pergola and swimming pool. (Note: garden contains water – supervision of children required)

### 3. Peter Marquand's Garden

Set on a 1500 square metre block, the structural elements of the garden were done when the house was built, 20 years ago. Peter has lived here for ten years and has added many plants (many for sentimental reasons). The back garden is on three levels. The lower level is largely paved and is home to over 100 potted plants including bamboos, citrus, maples and daphne. In the lower level a row of recently planted pears screens the neighbours.

The middle garden, up a number of steps, is bordered by a viburnum tinus hedge, a row of cypresses and a bed of roses, iris and perennials. The upper garden includes a lookout pavilion and is heavily planted with mainly natives. The front garden is dominated by a pair of Mediterranean cypresses and each side of the path there are beds of roses, grasses, penstemons, salvias and other perennials.



We hope you can visit these unique gardens in Spring and join in celebrating our love of gardens!

**Contact: Carole Haines (0437 462 731) and Wendy Taylor (0407 554 306)**

**All COVID requirements at the time will be adhered to**