

Wellingtonia

NEWSLETTER Winter 2023

ABN 32 346 573 092 ACN 3465 • PP Number 100020008

From the President's Desk . . .



Much to Celebrate

Autumn proved to be a very rewarding time for the Friends with a rich spread of activities and people stepping forward to contribute. Plant sales did not show the usual sales retraction expected with the seasonal change but the wet wintry weather on the day of

the Woowookarung walk did remind us of the winter conditions ahead.

Autumn brought the awareness that the impact of COVID has changed, and groups came together more positively with a sense that progress can be made without the interruptions and absences we have had to experience. Groups seem more energised and with contented involvement.

On The Wild Side

We have had some new associations that have also been enriching. The biodiversity group were privileged to be taken on a walk through the wetlands with Ballarat Field Naturalist and writer of the Courier nature notes, Roger Thomas, sharing his observations with the group. Vivian Verlaan's description beautifully captures the appeal of our wetlands and helps explain why this new Biodiversity group is so enthusiastic in their interest and involvement.

Five of our members attended the AAFBG annual meeting in Melbourne in May and were part of the networking that helps Botanic Gardens thrive. Our national body provides support and stimulation and our involvement helps bring these benefits locally to our group.

An Invitation from the Ballarat Mechanics Institute

The committee were delighted when Ballarat Mechanics Institute reached out to our committee and organised a pre-launch event of their recently restored Von Mueller specimens. There is a lot of shared history and associations with Ballarat's long standing cultural institutions. Sometime ago the Ballarat Art Gallery shared some items of their collection that would be of special interest for the Friends. One of these items was Richard Crouch's bible that he used at his swearing in as a member of parliament. Crouch was the initiator and benefactor for the Prime Ministers Avenue in BBG and a great art benefactor for the Ballarat Art Gallery. We both share the interest in Crouch. BMI started in 1859, BBG in 1859 and Ballarat Art Gallery in 1884. and so easy to appreciate why there will be many common threads and links.

It is 150 years since Von Mueller gifted his collection of plant specimens to Ballarat Mechanics Institute (BMI). The BMI was awarded a \$170,000 State Living Heritage grant that allowed these and other items in the BMI collection to be treated by the University of Melbourne's Grimwade conservators. Von Mueller is a constant reference when describing early days of Botanic

gardens in Victoria and so a shared interest for BMI and BBG. It was a real pleasure to have such close access and hear from Paula Nicholson, BMI Board and Ellen Becker, Heritage Collections Curator about the steps taken with custodianship of the collection. Friends were alerted to the talks and launch of these treasures during Ballarat Heritage Festival and do hope many of you took up the opportunity. There is a certain amount of awe handling these historic items but their accessibility helps promote thinking about ways to link them to today's world. FBBG are interested in helping with this. Some of the specimens in the collection are now endangered and some are in the Care for the Rare plants at BBG. We can build on this link.



Please note: In this publication some abbreviations are used for simplicity sake:

BBG = Ballarat Botanical Gardens;

FBBG = Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens;

COB = City of Ballarat;

RCHC = Robert Clark Horticultural Centre;

GLB = George Longley Building



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From the President's Desk . . .

Our special thanks to Paula Nicholson and BMI for the opportunity to be involved.

Grand, magical Elms drew the crowds

There was certainly plenty of interest with our Elms focus during May and both Buninyong Friends and Ballarat Friends worked together to promote the activities and share some of the developed resources. Working together on our shared interests is a productive approach for both groups. All the activities were well supported and it was very encouraging for those involved.

Heritage events also gave our different groups the opportunity to work together and consolidate the impact of the Friends work. Hospitality, Events, Publicity, Guides, Botanikids and Botanical artists were all actively involved. These community events all require funding and this is why the work of our Growers is so important in assisting with this. It is easy to be overloaded learning and understanding about the huge range of trees in our botanical gardens but narrowing it down to a particular species as we are doing in the Ballarat Heritage Festival makes it manageable.

Progress with the refit and landscaping of the Fernery crawls along at a frustrating pace. We are expecting more information about the contract and these works by early July. Completion by December this year is still the goal. The Foundation and FBBG work closely together and lobby to progress this as we have both promised funds and like all those involved in the project anxious to get its completion. Mark Schultz reports on the Foundation in this newsletter.

We are still waiting for someone to take on the Membership officer's role but generally we have been encouraged by the increased willingness of members to contribute. Jean Lazell is coming in regularly to help the Admin team and I hear many comments of appreciation by the convenors. The newsletter is working successfully through its transition since Michael Bird

stepped away from its production and it is now liaised by Wendy Taylor. Wendy has been very appreciative of the assistance by Susan Pilbeam. Susan's association and networks within the

Friends makes her a great source for the reports and articles and photos which we are all appreciating. Thanks Susan.

Many will have seen the progress made in recent times with our Friends nursery and there have been plenty of positive comments about the improvement. This will continue during the winter months and hopefully by Spring most will be completed. Our nursery is the business that generates a lot of funds for FBBG and so investment in its infrastructure is very important.

The interior of GLB is also being upgraded to make storage more efficient and secure. Many of our groups require their own space for resources and so we need to juggle the interior arrangements to secure the best fit for our groups. Online storage can reduce what we must store physically but it is only part of the solution. This impetus to change GLB storage arrangements came from the need to secure the history collection and increase its accessibility. Like the nursery upgrade we plan to make headway in the quieter winter months. We anticipate celebrating our progress with a special event in Spring.

Embrace and enjoy the winter season.



WINTER - SPRING EVENTS ... JULY TO DECEMBER 2023

- **New Members Morning Tea Saturday 22 July 2023.**

Invitations have been sent to all new members. Contact the Office if you did not receive one or have missed one of these occasions in the past and would like to attend.

- **New Photography Group first meeting, Wednesday 2 August**

Information about this new group is to be found in this copy of Wellingtonia

- **National Gallery Australia outreach program** to the regions through their travelling Artefact cases. In the Cottage from Sept 11 to 6 October. More details available later.

- **FBBG August Quarterly meeting Thursday 17 August 10am** in RCHC.

Guest speaker will be Patrice O'Shea, Secretary of the Friends of Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens. Patrice has been involved since 2010 in the preservation and sustainable sensitive development of these gardens and the partnerships needed for this development.

- **Wardian Case Exhibition in the Cottage**

Gatekeeper's Cottage, Saturday 14th October – Sunday 22nd October 2023. Open 10.00am to 4.00pm every day except Wednesday 18th October.

The Wardian Case: The Discovery that Revolutionised the Plant World

Learn about the fascinating evolution and remarkable legacy of the Wardian Case. See the Cottage's very own Wardian Case that was commissioned by Julie and Doug Bradby and made by Dave Dubberley. Dave is a local, retired joiner, uncle to our Head Gardener Adam Beggs and one of the Captains of the Lake Wendouree Ferry.

At the same time – Artist in Residence at the Gatekeeper's Cottage, Georgina Gould Hardwick

Gina is the first Artist in Residence at the Gatekeeper's Cottage. Her art reflects her fascination and enthusiasm for botany, ecological relationships and the intriguing life of arthropods, insects and arachnids. Her artworks range from delicate pencil illustrations to traditional handmade prints. Visitors will be able to watch Gina at work in the Cottage and at her easel in the Gardens and Wetlands



- **Plant sales and Biodiversity ideas for gardens Saturday 14 October 10.30am -1.30pm**

The Friends are celebrating recent changes to the Nursery and George Longley Room in the RCHC Courtyard with plant specials and plant advice from Growers and advice from community groups on how to increase biodiversity in your garden space.

A little spring festival. It will also be Farmers Market Day in North Gardens.

- **Spring luncheon Friday November 17 10.15 – 2.30pm in the RCHC and Conservatory.**

The Speakers, Martin Semken of Semken Landscaping and Alison Douglas of Alison Douglas Design are both award winners with their horticultural displays and are particularly well known through their involvement in the Melbourne International Flower and Gardens Show.

- **Excursion Saturday 18 November**

Joint excursion with Friends of Ballarat and Buninyong and CHAMPAS (a local Home and Garden Appreciation Society) to Colac Botanic Gardens and other Colac gardens.

- **Open Gardens for FBBG Saturday 25 November and Sunday 26 November 10.30am – 4pm**

5 member gardens will be open for Friends. More details later.

- **Christmas function Thursday 14 December 5.30 – 8pm in RCHC and courtyard.**

MORE TO GARDENS THAN THE MANICURED

We were so pleased with the publicity in the Ballarat Times edition, 24 March 2023 and thank journalist Edwina Williams for agreeing to us sharing this story to our members.

Thankyou also to Friend, Vivien Verlaan, for this lovely report “ Walk through the Wetlands with Roger Thomas May 2023.”

IMAGINE a botanic garden. Are you picturing a manicured green space in your mind?

Botanical and biodiversity experts are encouraging the community to think outside that box, particularly when it comes to the Ballarat Botanical Gardens. Wilder areas like the North Gardens' wetlands and Fairyland, although not within the formal gated botanic gardens, are a part of them. With a bit of care and appropriate maintenance, these spaces could be key to boosting the biodiversity of an otherwise urban precinct says one expert.

“All gardeners are a little bit scared of letting their garden become untidy,” said Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria director and chief executive Professor Tim Entwisle. *“We always try and have a neat garden because we think that’s what a good garden is, and botanic gardens are a perfect example of that, we want them to be the best garden in town. “But we do need to let go of that occasionally. If parts of our gardens are left to be a little bit wilder, diverse, unruly, and messy, it’s good for the environment, it allows lots of insects, local birds, mammals, and grazing marsupials to come in, and it makes for a much healthier place to live. “It also allows us to experience a different kind of nature, and a different kind of garden. Not all gardens should be unruly, and not all gardens should be neat. That mix is really healthy.”*

Founder of the Heart Gardening Project, and leader of the Melbourne Pollinator Corridor initiative, Emma Cutting, started street gardening in 2016 to bring more biodiversity, and colour, to urban spaces. She said having greenery in built-up areas, beyond the gates of formal botanic gardens, is key to the survival of some important hard-working insects. *“I started looking at barren spaces and thought they should be full of gorgeous gardens, and then I thought, what about our honeybees? Maybe they need some help?”* she said. *“As I delved into that,*



I learnt about our native bees, how they really need our help, and how diverse they are. We have an estimated 2000 species in Australia. “They’re so gorgeous and they’re so important. Let’s design gardens for our native bees.”

RMIT lecturer in landscape architecture Jock Gilbert encourages people to consider the bigger roles botanic gardens can play in regional Australia, how they can be used more often, and in creative ways. He said they’re critical pieces of public infrastructure, and diversity is key to their health and success, in more ways than one. *“There are things we can do within the botanic gardens to create greater diversity, but then there’s much botanic gardens can then do beyond their borders,”* he said. *“Whether that’s through having bits of the botanic garden further out, or finding ways to be out there and bring people back in. “Biodiversity is the term, but it’s diversity more broadly. How can we diversify the sorts of plants we have to get more bees and butterflies? How can we diversify the user group of the gardens, and diversify the Friends group? “How can we take what we’ve been given by our forebears and make that relevant for now and the next 200 years?”*

Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens are aiming to form a working group of volunteers, old and new, that can focus on the less manicured areas of the gardens.

President Terry O’Brien said the North Gardens’ wetlands and Fairyland have “enormous potential.” *“We don’t want to change the manicured, beautiful spaces of the gardens, but we do have other spaces here that can play a part in environmental education,”*

he said. “If you wander round the wetlands, there are old signs that need to be replaced, there are weeds, and so on, so we hope we can become more hands on to improve the area, and we’re encouraging younger people to take part. “There’s potential for us to collect seeds, do interpretive work, collect data. The vision is there.”

WALK THROUGH THE WETLANDS WITH ROGER THOMAS - MAY 2023

Early in May, the Biodiversity group gathered at the Wetlands for a guided walk under the expertise of Roger Thomas. The Wetlands are comprised of 3 ponds and a channel of water collected from Central Highlands Water runoff. The water is filtered through the vegetation and ponds to feed into Lake Wendouree.

Much of the vegetation has been planted subsequent to the creation of the ponds with an aim to plantings that are indigenous to Ballarat. In the years since this environment was created it has become home to 18 different types of water birds including swans, coots, swamp hens and black duck. Twenty additional types of water birds have been recorded visiting the area. A further 40 different types of bush birds including kingfishers, owls and currawongs also visit. We all saw an early family of cygnets with their parents feeding on the grasses. While we were there, Roger pointed out a Great White egret. One year, he observed a mother and child flying fox living in one of the trees. He told us the remarkable story of the Japanese (Latham's) snipe which fly 8,000 kilometres without stopping to visit the area in September after nesting in Japan in our Autumn.

Roger informed us that some of the trees and shrubs are native to Ballarat, while other species are native to Victoria and Australia. The swamp gums, blackwoods and river bottle brush are all native

to the area. Banksias and Sweet Bursaria are valuable for sheltering the birds. There are several different types of reeds on the water's edges including the "water ribbons" that are "icecream" for the swans. There is also a very tall reed that though not native to Ballarat, is an Australian native and is thriving in the Wetlands, providing cover for the water birds. Sedge and tussock grasses line the banks, also providing cover for the birds. In addition, the Wetlands support water milfoil, slender knotweed, and duckweed all of which provide food for the birds and other fauna of the area. As well, there is a population of turtles living in the ponds. The Wetlands may look a little unkempt with dead trees scattered all over, both in the water and lying around off the paths. However, these provide perches, homes and food for the birds and other fauna.

In the 22 years since the Wetlands was created, it has become a place of moody, romantic pools, long, lovely, Australian vistas and is filled with the calls and songs of our native birds. It is well worth a visit.

Vivien Verlaan

Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens



UNLOCKING THE TREASURES OF THE FBBG IMAGE COLLECTION

Over the past 18 months, the FBBG History team have been sorting through boxes of documents and images that capture the development and social life of Ballarat's Botanical Gardens over time. Images have been transferred to the History Group computer and are being catalogued onto the Victoria Collections Database. We are also finalising image and collection management policies to help structure our work. This will allow future researchers to find archival resources, information and visual items related to the Gardens precinct more easily.

While we are fortunate to have many intriguing photos in our archives and some donor details, in many instances, limited information about these images is available for us to add to our Vic Collections catalogue entries. Helpful background includes: when photos were taken, who took the photos, people involved and links to historical events. This means further work needs to be done retrospectively, to capture the stories and 'moments' that have shaped the Gardens to the present day. The 2012, 'An Eden of Loveliness' publication is a rich source of pictorial information, but we have many more photos to describe.

There are also hard-copy photos and slides awaiting our attention. With these images, we have even less information. Items will be sorted so that a selection can be digitised and added to the catalogue.

New, secure cupboard space is now in place in the George Longley Building (GLB). This will allow us to store the entire collection which includes objects, newspaper cuttings, documents, maps, plans and images.

More helpers to assist with elements of our work would be wonderful. There is further organising to do, as well as cataloguing and research into the Garden's history via the photographic objects.

The History Group meets from 2.00 - 4.00pm every Thursday afternoon in the GLB. We finish with a cuppa. We have also planned a few excursions, for example, to Buda in Castlemaine. In Spring, we hope to visit the Garden of St Erth in Blackwood. If you'd like to find out more about the History Group please contact: The FBBG Office: info@fbbg.org.au or ph: 53429354. Meanwhile, we'd like to share a couple of photos from the FBBG collection and are hoping that you may be able to supply further background or stories they can tell us. Any leads for follow up are very welcome.

If you have any information about these images or would like to help, please contact: The FBBG Office: info@fbbg.org.au or ph: 53 429 354.

Ingrid Unger and Natalie Radomski
The FBBG History Group



BOTANIKIDS REPORT

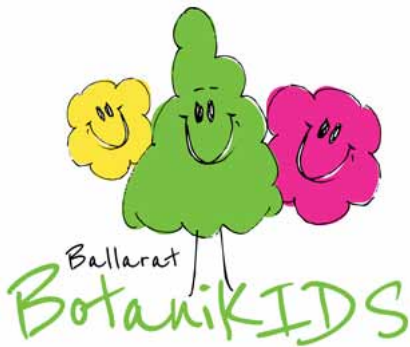


A Child's View of Elm Trees

Susan Pilbeam, our roving Friends reporter, recently spent time with Julie Bradby and the Botanikids team to prepare this special report on the Botanikids Educational Program:

Children love big trees, the taller, the rounder, the more exposed roots, the better. If their families have gardens, these actually would rarely include the 19thC giants, accessible to all, at the Ballarat Botanical Gardens. For the BotaniKids team such trees are a fabulous resource to inspire and teach children about the natural world. Sessions always include a walk and collecting samples of

leaves, bark, flowers etc. for observation and creative projects. The children are encouraged to feel and look closely and are then able to see even more amazing detail with the Digital Microscope. The team collects 'fun facts' about plant use and mythology, as well the usefulness of Elm timber. For example, its seeds can be used in salads, its bark can be chewed and it has medicinal properties. Did you know: The American Indians called it the Council Tree and large trees were always meeting places, for people and spirits. [Blue Gums for our early people]. In Norse mythology, the first woman was made from Elm wood; in Celtic culture the Elm tree is symbolic of strength, stability, rebirth and home to elves. The Ancient Greeks associated them with nymphs and for the Chinese they are good luck.



The BotaniKids team has expanded their activities to include a wider age

range, with an After School Program, which is fully registered and the Loretto (VCAL) Community Program, with students studying Childcare, Hospitality, Information Technology and Parks and Gardens. Julie Bradby and her team continue to inspire upcoming generations with a vital love and knowledge of nature. Plans now are in place to include an aged care facility in our Loreto Community Program too.

Night Walk

The night walk is one of Botanikids highlights of the year. Twenty families came along on a rainy night to create a Journey Walking Stick with reflective and glow in the dark tape. We wandered in the Gardens with our torches and were so happy to see the Conservatory had been left open for us to enjoy. After checking out our favourite trees and known possum tree we made our way back to the Cottage for a 'fake' campfire with chocolate and biscuits.

Another great night!

It rained the whole time and it didn't matter not one bit!

CURATORS REPORT

It's with great excitement we would like to introduce, our new Garden Collections Officer – Sheree Blood!

Sheree comes to the role with 23 years of experience working in the Ballarat Botanical Gardens Nursery.

Throughout her extensive role & experience, she has been one of main drivers of our indigenous plant conservation programs, nursery accreditation, integrated pest management, and hands on curation of our six documented nursery collections (including very detailed knowledge of both registered Begonia Collections!). Along with Erin, Sheree has also been central to our Tuberous Begonia breeding program which has resulted in several stunning new 'Ballarat' Begonias such as Begonia 'Lady B' and Begonia 'Peter Marquand'.

As Garden Collections Officer, Sheree will be responsible for our plant database, biosecurity, garden explorer, development of interpretation signage, plant collection plans and guiding our conservation work going forward, just to mention a few.

We really look forward to her extending her endless plant passion & energy into this important role!

Please do say Hi when you see her on this side of the nursery fence!

Donna Thomas, Curator, Ballarat Botanic Gardens.



FOUNDATION UPDATE

The new financial year for the Ballarat Botanical Gardens Foundation starts with 2 new board members and some guarded optimism that we can progress 2 key initiatives in our Botanical Gardens.

Firstly, let me introduce our 2 new Board members, namely Peter Heinz and Wayne Spring. Both Peter and Wayne are local professional identities, with Peter, semi-retired now, having a long and successful career in law and Wayne, fully retired, (mostly) having a distinguished career in medicine as a Physician. We welcome both Peter and Wayne to our Board – both bring a love of our city in general and our Gardens in particular to their new roles as Board members of our Foundation and we look forward to their ongoing contribution to our Mission. Complete bios of both Peter and Wayne can be found on our website

The 2 initiatives I refer to will come as no surprise to anyone – the Fernery landscaping and the Gardens Masterplan. The former has been a long drawn-out process, despite the good



will of all parties, however we are now more than hopeful of not being not far off being advised that a contractor has been engaged to complete the landscaping works. We wait with cautious optimism that this is the case.

In relation to the Masterplan, we have been formally advised by the City of Ballarat that funds have been included in the fy24 Gardens operating budget for this Plan to be completed. Both the Foundation and the Friends are key stakeholders in the development of this Masterplan so both organisations must ensure that formal and detailed representations be made in the consultation stage and in the development of key recommendations. We watch this space with again, guarded optimism.



Finally, we would like to remind everyone that donations to the BBGF are tax deductible, if you would like to discuss this or any other matter, please feel free to contact me directly at the Foundation.

Mark Schultz
Chairman
0419 392 829

BOOK REVIEW

EVERGREEN

The botanical life of a plant punk

Tim Entwisle

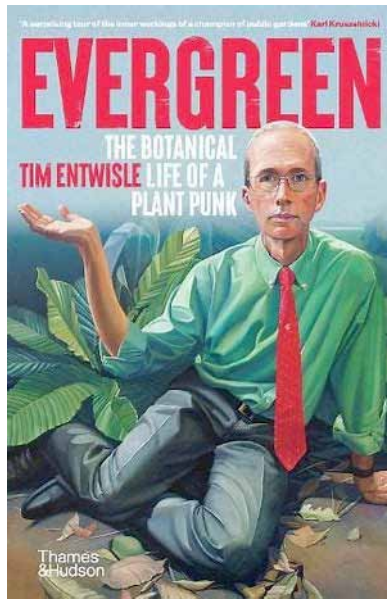
Thames and Hudson 2022

Available online, bookshops and on loan from the George Longley Library.

During Covid our ever energetic Patron penned this engaging memoir. Illustrated and basically chronological, it is, more significantly, divided into themes exploring his professional, personal and philosophical development. Nature, Science, Culture, Words... intertwine in the evolution of his ethos of the changing relevance of botanical gardens and science, in response to climate change, plant extinction, global communication, human health and our sense of community.

Tim Entwisle has led a full and varied life, so far, and he anticipates a wide ranging audience, writing simply and clearly, with short, seemingly self-contained sections, building a broad perspective. His growing up in rural Victoria will have resonance for some and his delving into Melbourne student life and the marvelous mayhem of its music scene in the 70s and 80s, will raise a smile in others. Throughout he parallels his academic-research work and career, with music, literature and cultural interests and family life.

This author has always been interested in communication and was early to embrace radio and print media, then television, internet,



blogs and social media. He ruminates on the joys and pitfalls of his desire to inspire, to discuss and defend his views in public and political realms. Controversies include ‘murdering’ fig trees, dispossessing bats, barring the pope-mobile and inviting festivals, fairies and rock stars into botanic gardens. One understands how Phycology and Taxonomy (his studies of Algae and the classification of plants) could be a satisfying respite.

The appeal of this larger, public life, as a ‘science bureaucrat’, with the power to effect change, lead to Directorships of the Sydney and Melbourne Botanical Gardens, and of Conservation at Kew Gardens and to his important work with Seed Banks and international associations. Along the way we get his views of hundreds of gardens and landscapes, worldwide.

Tim Entwisle is Patron of only six associations, reflecting his interests. We are used to his face and blog in each Wellingtonia and delighted he attends our meetings. His memoir is wide ranging, full of names, places, images and ideas. Lockdowns gave him an opportunity to look back and ahead. How did mucking about in rivers lead to his international advocacy of public gardens and the development of a cohesive view of their interrelation with nature, science and culture? This is a timely work.

Susan Pilbeam

Barbara McQueen in the GLB library

NEW PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

If you enjoy taking photographs and are interested in developing technical skills, you might be interested in joining this new special interest group.

The Friends Photographic Group aims to bring together people interested in photography of natural phenomena, to share their experiences and:

- update photographers’ skills with lectures, workshops or outings
- hold regular show & tell opportunities
- contribute to the FBBG’s overall stock of native flora photographs
- improve community awareness of native flora and fauna
- be actively involved in photographing important events, statues and buildings within the Gardens
- contribute to the Friends fund-raising

The group is open to suggestions. Here are a few ideas to discuss:

The group could meet monthly to either photograph a specific element or event within the gardens, such as a particular plant

species or collection, buildings, autumn colours, or to practise certain photographic techniques such as composition, macro photography and/or black and white images.

Develop a program of monthly photographic themes that aim to respond to members’ interests and expand their photographic and botanic knowledge.

Perhaps with a view to a possible exhibition with photographs produced by members help to raise funds in support of the Botanic Gardens through the production and sale of cards, and other merchandise available through the shop.

If you are interested in joining the FBBG photography group, come along to our first meeting at the George Longley Building on Wednesday 2nd August at 4pm.

For more information contact info@fbbg.org.au Ro Bancroft

GROWING DAHLIAS - ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

Salmon Joy, Freckles, Candy, Cornflake, Cafe au Lait... Can you imagine that a dahlia could whet your appetite? These are just a few of the tempting varieties to be found in the Gardens' dahlia collection.

*Dahlias originated in Mexico and Central America, where they were cultivated by the Aztecs for food and medicinal purposes. They were brought to Spain in the late eighteenth century and named for Anders Dahl, a Swedish botanist and student of Linnaeus. They are placed in the Genus Dahlia, within the Asteraceae family, which also includes daisies, chrysanthemums and sunflowers. The original flowers were single but by 1800, European gardeners were already experimenting with hybrids. Today there are flowers of every colour (except true blue) and many forms, including water lily, anemone, collarette, pom pom, decorative, cactus, ball and fimbriated forms.

*Dahlias have been grown at the Ballarat Botanical Gardens since the 1940s, although interrupted for a time by the ten year millennium drought. The display was originally in the south-west corner of the gardens but when the collection was renewed in 2016, it was moved to its current location.

Recently, some of the guides enjoyed meeting up with Glen Fisher, the gardener leading the team tasked with maintaining the Gardens' dahlia collection and presenting the much-loved annual display. He spoke about the work that goes on, largely behind the scenes, to achieve this.



The original collection was bigger than today's but there are now more varieties in a smaller, more manageable collection. In the display garden this year, there were 222 plants from 120 varieties. The blooms deserve their star billing, but some varieties, such as Bishop of Llandaff, have striking foliage also.

As the dahlias in the display garden begin to die down, the flowers are trimmed off, allowing the plants to divert more energy to storage in the tubers. When the first frosts have turned the foliage black, the plants are cut back, leaving some of the stalk intact. Each clump of tubers is carefully lifted and cleaned, usually by late June. They are then placed in trays on a layer of potting mix to prevent them drying out as they lie dormant for the winter months.

In September-October, it is time to take cuttings. Each clump is centred around the stalk of the plant. Around the base of the old stem, above the cluster of tubers, is the collar. This is where the eyes form, from which new leaf shoots will eventually develop. They can be a bit tricky to see at this stage and may just show as small bumps. The tubers are attached to the collar by a neck. The tubers' role is to store nourishment for the new growth. They do not develop eyes.

Each clump can yield up to three or four new plants. Glen described this process as a bit like cutting a cake. It is essential that each piece includes a portion of the collar containing one or two eyes, and that this is attached to a single tuber. Glen notes that home gardeners may have a different approach to propagating, but this method has been chosen as it results in just one or two strong stems and promotes flower production.

Enough plants are potted up to furnish the display bed, with a few extras- just in case. They are placed on a heat mat to give them a kick start for spring.

GROWING DAHLIAS



Meanwhile, preparations are proceeding in the Gardens. After the tubers are lifted, a green manure crop is planted in the empty beds and oak leaves from the Gardens are applied as mulch. Growth is cut down in September-October and dug in with some fertiliser. The support stakes for the new dahlias are installed ahead of planting.

The 'Ballarat Rule' is applied- planting starts after Melbourne Cup Day. The shoots are now about 20cm high. Once they are settled into place, liquid fertiliser is applied periodically until the flowers are coming into bud. The gardens have made a change to the watering system used. Overhead sprinklers have been replaced by a drip irrigation system, which prevents damage to the flowers and stops the surrounding lawns getting quite so muddy.

The dahlias will bloom reliably from January to April, to the delight of many, and then the cycle will begin again for Glen and his team. Many thanks to them all.

This story thanks to FBBG member, MaMiriam Tonkin



ENDURING ELMS

Part of the collaboration between the Friends of Ballarat and Buninyong Botanic Gardens was the Enduring Elms tour, lead by Lorraine Powell. Participants were given an excellent handout, with descriptions and illustrations of six types of Elm and a map of Buninyong showing the location of over 60 Elm trees in public parks and the WW1 Avenues of Honour. There are many more in private gardens and self-sown. The oldest were planted in the 19thC, the one in the grounds of Buninyong Primary School, large enough to shelter the entire school during Covid.

Lorraine discussed the tree's features, the ongoing issues of Elm identification, how Elm Leaf Beetle is being treated and the devastating effect of Dutch Elm Disease in the Northern Hemisphere, emphasizing the importance of Australian collections. The group appreciated the size, form and varieties represented in the Buninyong Botanic Gardens and the autumn vistas of Inglis St, with its Silver and Dutch Elms.

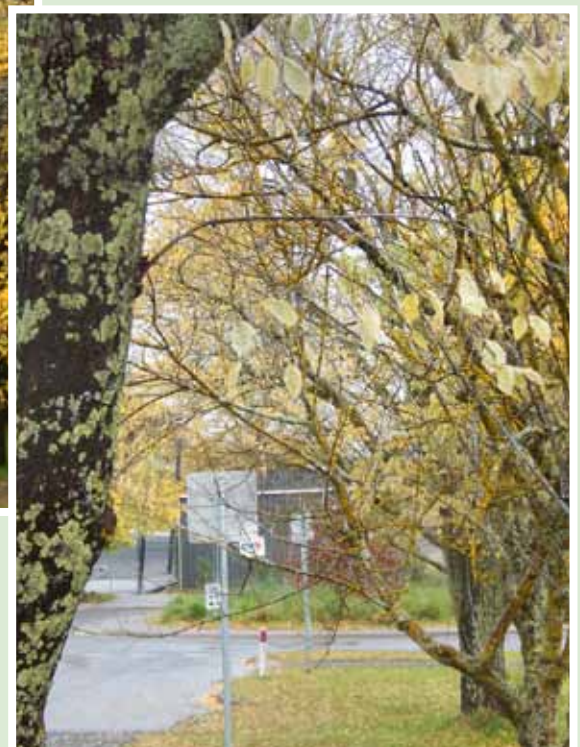
Susan Pilbeam



Lorraine Powell addresses the walking tour



Inglis St Dutch Elms



Inglis St Silver Elms

THE WIDE WORLD OF THE ELM

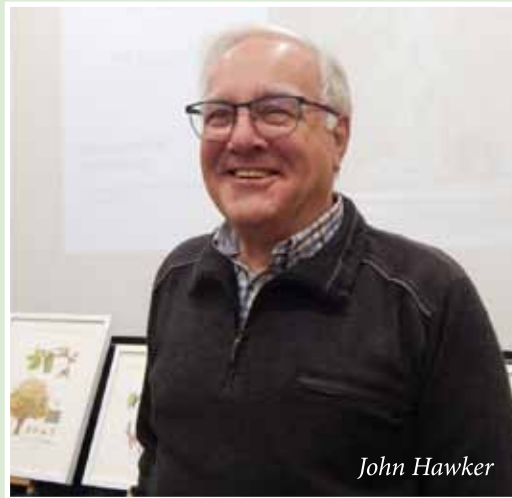
John Hawker is Horticulturalist whose work with Heritage Victoria includes the registry of Significant Trees, their care and maintenance. He has undertaken studies of the Ballarat and Buninyong Botanical Gardens and is Patron of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens Foundation. Last year he spoke to us about the Oak, this year the Elm. Among his publications is Elms in Australia.

Elms are hardy, quick growing and diverse, generally a large tree (20m high); some are as small as a meter and others as large as 40m, with a wide range in leaf size, colour and texture. They have beautiful, structural forms and spreading canopies and small leafed varieties have become popular as Bonsai.

Fossil *Ulmus* leaves date to the Paleocene. There are 30-40 species, the ambiguity due to the ease of hybridization. Elms are long lived, up to 300 years in the UK, less in Australia and their wood is dense and resistant to decay. The 'promiscuous' Elm has spread through Europe, America and Asia. Australia has examples from all over the world, as well as grafted varieties.

Elms are described as foundation trees in the cultured landscape of South East Australia, where there are many fine collections. These are increasingly significant because of the death of over 40 million Elms in the Northern Hemisphere since the 1990s, due to Dutch Elm Disease and Elm Leaf Beetle.

The history of the Elm in Australia begins in 1803 and by the 1850s they were being used as street trees, providing much



John Hawker



Elm Distribution Map

appreciated summer shade and beautiful autumn colour. In Melbourne, Victoria Parade, Royal Parade and other major thoroughfares were planted with Elms in the late 19th and early 20thC, as well as public and private gardens. Fine examples are the Fitzroy Gardens avenue (1859) and the highland areas of Mount Macedon, Kyneton, Malmsbury and Ballarat, with collections going back over 150 years.

John's exhaustive knowledge included a discussion of commemorative Elms, such as the W.G. Grace Elm at the Eastern Oval (1874) and all the Memorial Avenues, including Ballarat, Bacchus March and Kingston. He ended by outlining the preventative treatment of Elms and the breeding of strains resistant to the deadly fungal infection (DED) and the leaf devouring beetle.

Roger Permezel, President of the Friends of the Buninyong Botanic Gardens, then welcomed members of the Friends of the Elms and spoke about their work over 30 years. Formed in 1990, their aim was to develop a coordinated response to the threat of Dutch Elm Disease and the Elm Leaf Beetle in Australia. Through advocacy and education they appealed to scientists, politicians, garden lovers, the media etc., highlighting the world significance of Australia's Elms. Their action was timely and their legacy immense.

The speakers were followed by thanks to members of the Botanic Art, Guiding, History, Exhibitions, BotaniKids and the Catering groups, whose coordinated effort made the focus on the Elms so successful. Informal discussions continued over a delicious afternoon tea.

Susan Pilbeam



Brian Hay and Donna Thomas



Four members of Friends of the Elms

ILLUSTRATING ELMS... AND MUCH MORE

The FBBG Botanic Art Group really did get 'up close and personal' with Elms for the Ballarat Heritage Festival exhibition. Lorraine Powell (FBBG History Group) invited the artists to illustrate some of the Elms of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens to accompany an informative display in the Statuary Pavillion. Elms have been planted in the gardens since the 1870s, so an excellent focus for festival activities by the FBBG and Friends of the Buninyong Botanic Gardens.

The Art Group toured the gardens and each chose a different Elm to research, observe through the seasons and scientifically illustrate. This exhaustive process includes detailed observation, drawing, photographing and collecting samples, to then show the whole tree and all its facets and phases of growth, such as leaves, bark, seeds, flowers, even roots. These illustrations were printed onto the large panels and accompanied by detailed information about each tree.

Having a shared focus is interesting for the artists, for all have different approaches and use a range of materials and techniques. Whether using watercolour or acrylic paint, graphite or polychrome pencils, each artwork takes more than 20 hours and several drafts. As well as studying the plant, aesthetic choices are made regarding composition and tonal information such as colour, light, shade and creating dimensionality.



During the process the members discuss and learn from each other and from the work of historical and contemporary botanical artists.

The group of around ten, has a wide spectrum of abilities, experience and interests, with a love of plants in common. The need to closely observe lends a peaceful and meditative aspect to the weekly sessions, with all enjoying the social interaction as well. The group runs occasional intensive workshops with visiting artists and stages exhibitions. Illustrating rare and endangered plants of the Ballarat area is an ongoing project and the theme of their recent exhibition at the Robert Clark Horticultural Centre. This work links with the Care for the Rare (a Victorian Botanic Gardens initiative) supported by Curator Donna Thomas. She is also encouraging the group to focus on illustrating the BBG Begonia Collection and to exhibit as part of the 2024 Begonia Festival. The FBBG Botanic Art Group has developed over many years and its focus on local

plants makes it an increasingly significant asset to Ballarat and our wider community.



FBBG Botanic Art Group meets on Monday mornings at the Robert Clark Horticultural Centre.

Susan Pilbeam

FBBG GUIDES REPORT - MARCH 2023

For the Guides it's always worth having a project and an opportunity to work together and it's then affirming to have had a crowd of 50 brave the cold wind on Saturday to join a tour of the Elms in our Ballarat Botanic Gardens. Thankyou to the Guides, Wendy, Sue, Brian, Terry, Jane & Miriam and to the visitors for supporting our Heritage Weekend events. We learned that if the base of the leaf at the petiole (stem) is asymmetrical it's indicative of an Elm. We learned that "the mountains of green papery blossom" in our gutters in Spring are Samaras, the fruit carrying the seed of the Elm. We learned that former curator Tom Beaumont and apprentice Thomas Toop in 1920's grafted two into one to form our much visited Camperdown Elm - The Wedding Tree- We learned that our Exeter Elm is one of the largest Exeter Elms in the World and last but not least in Australia we have the Elm Leaf Beetle and the Elm Bark Beetle which can certainly harm our Elm trees but we don't have Dutch Elm Disease. On Sunday an audience of 70 enjoyed John Hawker's enlightening presentation, *The Wide World of the Elm* and we've discovered at his suggestion that our Van Houtte Elm is in fact a Golden Wych Elm, *Ulmus glabra Lutescens*. All of the above was indeed complimented by the Exhibition in the Statuary Pavilion which included the artwork of the Illustrators of Botanical Art. Thanks Lorraine Powell & Ro Bancroft.

The free Sunday morning tours have concluded for May and will resume in September.

We welcome Maria Grigg to our Guides Group and sadly farewell Warwick Sellens. Warwick has been a reliable, generous and witty member of the Guiding group for many years and we'll miss him. Our best wishes go to Warwick & Julie as they move to Queensland to live near family.

We thank Ann Brech & Kim who take the many enquiries for booked tours and June Lazell who bundles the brochures for handing out to the booked guided tours. Thankyou to Jane Monro for liaising with the visiting Groups. Thanks to the volunteer Guides, Sandi, Michael, Brian, Warwick, Wendy, Terry, Miriam, Sue, Robert & Jane, ever willing to be available. There were four booked guided tours early in May, among them visitors from Torquay and Queensland.

*Julie Chandler
Guides Convenor*

IN THE KNOW

The Tupelo!

Happened to hear our Patron, Tim Entwisle talking about autumn colours on Saturday morning ABC Melbourne Radio a few weeks back.

Tim said he had recently planted one of his favourite deciduous trees, the Tupelo in his garden, and how beautiful it was in autumn.

Googling the Tupelo, found it was from the genus *Nyssa* and used the website ballarat.gardenexplorer.org to locate this tree in our BBG. What fun in the Gardens with my phone and aerial map pin pointing the Tupelo's whereabouts! With over 9,000 plants documented by the BBG, it was a much easier search with this handy, interactive tool.

Found the tree with a plaque to commemorate the visiting US Marines in 1943.

First time I've used this device but won't be the last!

Congratulations to one of our BBG apprentice horticulturists Jaelyn Gordon was one of an all female team to take out the 2023 prize for the winner of the Open Garden Victoria design at the recent Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show. The winning garden was called "A Place for Us" and focused on sustainability, biodiversity and local materials.

Elms Wrap Up

The Elm events as part of the Ballarat Heritage Festival was a huge success!

A massive group of 56 took the Elm Tour, some 80 people attended the John Hawker Elm talk and around 10 people attended the Buninyong Botanical Gardens Elm Tour.

A Call to Members

You will notice a lovely piece written on the Wetlands in this Wellingtonia. It is from from one of the Friends, Vivien Verlaan. So please, if you have a story on a recent open garden, a visit to a Botanical Gardens or a plant or tree you have discovered, write about it so we can share with the Friends!

Tapping to Lift our Nursery Sales!

During April over \$1,100 was recorded on the new electronic sales outlet in the Conservatory.

A great start and with more signage to give customers an option apart from cash, sales are sure to climb!

Making it a Must See

Hopefully Wellingtonia readers read the congratulatory "Letters to the Editor" in the Courier, 20 May.

Written by environmentalist Hedley Thomson, the long letter praised the Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens initiative in highlighting the North Gardens Wetlands and their plans to reinvigorate the area.

AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF BOTANIC GARDENS (AAFBG)

The success of the 2023 AGM and 30th Anniversary Celebrations on Friday 5th May far exceeded expectations. Hosted by the Melbourne Friends at Mueller Hall, around 50 delegates representing 18 different Friends organizations from around Australia, came together to reflect on the achievements of the last 30 years. Past Office Bearers were acknowledged for their foresight in setting up the organization and others for ensuring its continuation. Our retiring Patron, Dr Philip Moors AO was farewelled and our new Patron, Dr Judy West AO, was welcomed. All AAFBG Officers and Management Committee members were re-elected, with the positions of Vice President and Treasurer unfilled at the time of the meeting. Six notable Handbury Awards were made for significant individual and group contributions to their Friends organizations and the Friends of RBGV Cranbourne were successful in both categories. The Friends of Sale Botanic Gardens were nominated for their Handbury Award by the Wellington Council, to recognize the pivotal role they have played in making the Gardens a valuable community asset. AAFBG Achievement Certificates were presented to 13 Friends organizations who are celebrating their 10th, 20th, 30th, 40th and 45th anniversaries this year. The May edition of Eucalypt will publish the names of the Management Committee and the award winners. Following the lunch break, RBGM Guides Lynsey Poore and Mali Wilson took delegates on informative walks to the Arid Garden and to the Sensory Garden, Ornamental Lake and Long Island.

Part of the 30th Anniversary Celebrations was a highly anticipated visit to RBGV Cranbourne and Cruden Farm, Langwarrin on Thursday 4th May. The Cranbourne Friends welcomed us to a very special morning tea followed by walking tours of the Gardens that were expertly led by RBGV Cranbourne Guides Eva Kowal and Barrie Gallacher. At Cruden Farm we were accompanied by several members of the Cruden Farm team and given a very personal insight into the development of the garden by Michael Morrison who worked closely with the late Dame Elizabeth Murdoch for over 40 years.

The next AGM on Sunday, 25 August, 2024 will be part of the 2024 AAFBG Biennial Conference at Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Gardens from 23-25 August. Keep informed of conference updates including optional tours by referring to www.friendsbotanicgardens.org

The AAFBG Botanical Tour from 29 October–4 November 2023 to select gardens in the Southern Highlands of NSW is close to being filled. For the itinerary and bookings see Jon Baines Tours www.jonbainestours.com.au or Phone 03 9343 6367



For the latest edition of Eucalypt magazine and the monthly e-ucalypt News go to www.friendsbotanicgardens.org

Report by Merrill Shulkes Committee Member and FBBG representative



AUTUMN MEETING

Vice President Julie Bradby welcomed 'friendly' Friends and guests to our Autumn Meeting, which focused on what can be achieved by volunteers with vision. She congratulated the various FBBG Groups and the Friends of the Buninyong Botanic Gardens, who have collaborated on the Ballarat Heritage Festival program celebrating Elms, with an exhibition, talks, walks and activities for all ages. The Ballarat and Buninyong Friends will also be sharing a trip to gardens in Colac. Lorraine Powell thanked the many people who contributed to 'Elms up close and personal' exhibition. The new Biodiversity Group had an inspirational wetlands walk with local legend, Roger Thomas.

Chris Charleson introduced Guest Speaker Jeff Roots, of the Friends of Canadian Corridor, recognizing his vision, determination and positivity. These and his vital skills in dealing with Local Government, Community Groups and people of all ages and interests, have lead, over time, to the establishment of a new Regional Park in Ballarat, Woowookarung, meaning a place of plenty. (As seen on Gardening Australia).

The Canadian Corridor was a forest linking Ballarat East and Buninyong, but was cleared by 1860 for mining. By the 1960s it was a proposed as an industrial site, then for suburban development and became a Blue Gum plantation. When harvested in 2010, 600mm of topsoil was removed and the site designated as having no relevant bio-diversity. The photos were shocking. In 2012 the Friends of Canadian Corridor was founded with the aim of establishing a Multi-use Forest Park. In 2014, prior to the State Election, all politicians were lobbied and Daniel Andrews formally supported the creation of a



forest park. The corridor is 1100 hectares, of which 40% is privately owned. Government responsibility is through Parks Victoria, with 82 Community Groups and over 1000 Friends involved. The Friends Education Program includes brochures, maps, a facebook page and newsletter, Spikey News. Every year 300 more trees are planted, as well as understory plantings. In a decade the area is completely changed and now a vital regional Bio-link.

In 2018 Anne Tudor (Australian Senior of the Year), proposed a Disability and Dementia Trail and some doctors now give 'Green Scripts' recommending it. More trails have been developed, such as Grass Tree, Wildflower and Mining Heritage walks, story trails, with QR codes for kids and the new Bunny Rail Trail, for walkers and cyclists, supported by the Bendigo Bank. As well as the old railway, there are 30 kms of Mining Races and Sluices within the park. A Citizen Science Koala Count is part of a national research project involving Federation University, as is the monitoring and control of Phytophthora (Cinnamon Fungus). Discoveries of all sorts are being made, as well as people of all ages enjoying a forest park that is, for many, very close to home. An inspirational success story of community action.

Woowookarung Regional Park
(parks.vic.gov.au)
Friends of Canadian Corridor and
Woowookarung Area (focc.asn.au) (including
Spikey News)

Susan Pilbeam





FRIENDS GROUPS CONVENORS

Admin: Office Manager Kim Nolan
Ambassadors: Trish Twaits
Biodiversity group: Terry O'Brien
Botanical Artists: Valerie Richards and Ro Bancroft
Botanikids / Education: Julie Bradby
Catering: Heather Boyd
Events: Carole Haines
Guiding: Julie Chandler
Growers/Nursery: Yvonne Curbach
History: Natalie Radomski
Exhibitions/Library: Contact Lorraine Powell
Plant Trolley: Manager Sue Rattray
Wellingtonia Liaison & Publicity for Major Events: Wendy Taylor
Membership: Membership Officer Warwick Sellens

Involvement in our groups brings rewarding social benefits and support for our organisation. Please contact Ann in the office if you would like more information about becoming involved: 03 5342 9354
 Most groups meet in the George Longley Building.

COMMITTEE 2023

President:	Terry O'Brien
Vice President:	Julie Bradby
Treasurer:	Kim Nolan
Minute Secretary:	Natalie Radomski
General Committee:	Jock Gilbert, Geoff Notman, Anna Beasley, Karen McLean
Nominated Committee Positions:	
Immediate Past President:	Robert Selkirk
Growing Friends:	Yvonne Curbach
BotaniKids/Education:	Julie Bradby
Exhibitions/Library:	Lorraine Powell
Guides:	Julie Chandler
History:	Natalie Radomski
Hospitality/Ambassadors:	Heather Boyd
Events:	Carole Haines
Membership:	Warwick Sellens
AAFBG Rep	Merrill Shulkes
Botanical Art:	Ro Bancroft
BBG Foundation Rep.	Terry O'Brien



The Friends are proud to recognise our Corporate Members for 2022-3



This Newsletter is distributed with the financial assistance of the City of Ballarat. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance provided by Ballarat MailWorks, 521 Dowling Street, Wendouree



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 the Spring Wellingtonia 2023 are due by Friday 15 September please.