

Wellingtonia

NEWSLETTER Spring 2023

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From the President's Desk . . .



It wasn't so long ago I ended my piece in the Winter Wellingtonia with "Embrace winter". This year's milder winter has been conducive to getting on with the winter pruning and planning. Now is the time to embrace spring. All seasons have their distinct appeal and interest as we watch nature at work. Essentially embracing the moment is the constant message - a message that

resonates more with some of us as we get older.

The Friends have many Spring activities for our community to embrace and this newsletter celebrates these many activities connecting you to them with articles of interest. While the Nursery upgrade is underway this year it is appropriate to also focus and celebrate the long-term contributions of the leaders in the Growers group and to acknowledge their skill and commitment.

We are used to referring to the gothic cathedral feel of our Sierra Redwoods as you wander through the Wellingtonia avenue on a foggy or misty morning in winter.

Coming into the Gardens on these wintry grey mornings our new Fernery adds another gothic element with its vertical proportions, arches, and asymmetry. There is a connection with this gothic cathedral imagery and its function as a safe space for plant conservation. Both are sanctuaries and provide a sense of wonder and inspiration. We acknowledge the Friends over many years who have helped create the funds that FBBG have contributed to this new building. We now look forward to the landscaping and planting work underway to settle the building in to our gardens. The Begonia Festival next year will certainly have a new star on the scene competing with the Conservatory Begonias.

Our 40th anniversary celebrations in

2022 fostered some thinking about the next 40 years for FBBG. FBBG are encouraged to contribute to discussions for a new Masterplan for BBG. The Masterplan will guide the development of these gardens and is an important opportunity for the Friends to present their perspective on how BBG and FBBG can play a vital role for the Ballarat community in the coming years and be a leading regional Botanical Garden.

At the time I am writing for this newsletter no terms of reference have been communicated to us by COB but is expected shortly. We are not a park and a Botanic Gardens role in education and conservation and biodiversity will need to be emphasised. The gardens have strong appeal for many but what are we doing to make these gardens appeal to all generations and cultures? Is our appeal sufficiently diverse? Are there enough play elements for younger people in this space? Is our interpretative signage sufficient and engaging? Are visitors aware of our collections and their importance? What about some trails of discovery? How are we building in garden resilience? Is it the place to find out about gardening and learn skills? This is some of the pondering that needs to occur. The Friends aim to develop a paper giving their views and we hope you involve yourself in the process.



Gardening is interesting because change is part of it. With the current environmental changes, we face with climate change, resource depletion and declining biodiversity more gardeners are approaching their gardens with a different mindset. Our new biodiversity group is keen to contribute in the wetlands and the group are waiting for all the necessary admin steps involved to get this off the ground. In the meantime the group are doing some community education about biodiversity in home gardens. Attached flyer has all the details. The newsletter also includes a newspaper article reprint showing what one group understands about "wilding the garden". We hope we have a good roll up on Oct 14 as it is a day combining a lot - enjoy a market stroll along the Lake shore, check out the

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



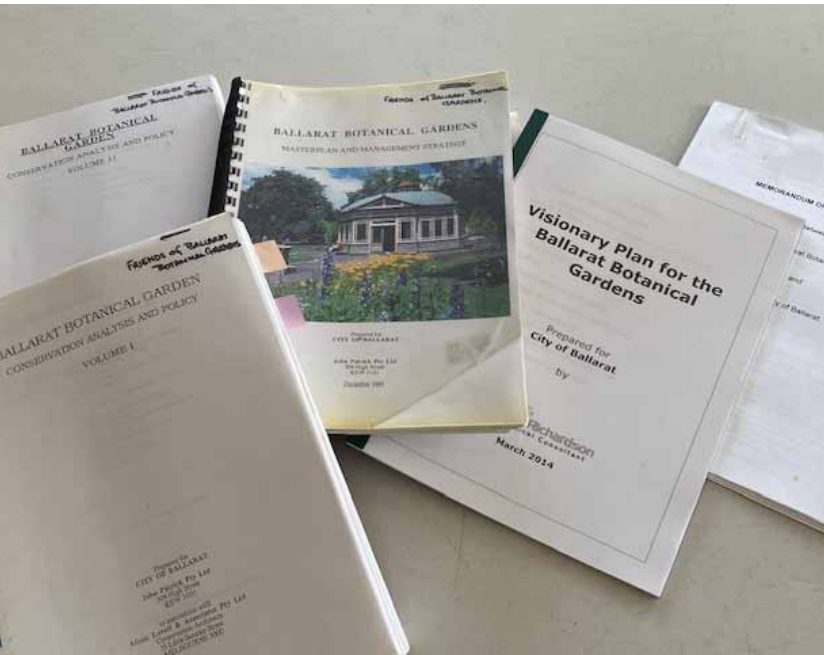
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From the President's Desk . . .



exhibition and happenings at the Cottage, find out more about wilding your garden from the various community groups at their information tables in RCHC and visit the recently renovated Nursery and GLB for special plant sales. It will be an interesting morning and one we invite you to take at your own pace and time between 10.30am -1.30pm .

There is a very full program of activities provided by the FBBG this Spring . The Growers, Botanikids, Hospitality and Events volunteers with the help of Ann and Kim in the Office can lead and manage these events but we must reach out for extra assistance from our wider membership group with help setting up and supervision for these larger public events. Please respond when these roster invites for help are circulated. Successful and happy organisations require a ready pool of volunteers to help at these peak times. Convenors and others have worked hard to bring these events together and their day is made when hands go up to help at these times .

We look forward to many interesting and enjoyable experiences at BBG this Spring.

 Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens

Wilding Your Garden

How to make your place wildlife friendly!

Ballarat Botanical Gardens
Saturday 14th October 2023
10:30 –1:30pm

Make a Bug Hotel 
Free Family Fun

At the Gatekeeper's Cottage

- Watch our **Artist in Residence** Gina Gould Harwick paint intricate plants and insects
- **Wardian Case Exhibition**
How did plants get moved around the world?

Plant Sales

At the Friends Nursery

- Plant Advice from Specialists 
- Plant Discounts
- Wide range of perennials, shrubs, groundcover and natives 

Grab a plant to bring in the bees birds and insects

Find Out More

At the Robert Clark Centre

- Ballarat Birdlife
- Field Naturalists Club Ballarat
- Ballarat Dark Sky Community
- Ballarat Regional Beekeepers
- Gardens for Wildlife Ballarat
- Australian Plant Society
- COB-Biodiversity Strategies

 **Ask Questions**

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- SPRING EVENTS ... 2023

Wardian Case Exhibition and Artist in Residence Gatekeeper's Cottage, Saturday 14th Oct – Sunday 22nd Oct everyday except Wednesday, 10am to 4.00pm

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.



Wilding Your Garden – Friends Biodiversity Event with Plant Sales Saturday 14 Oct 10.30am -1.30pm, RCHC, Friends Nursery

Want to bring bees, butterflies and other wildlife into your garden? 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. Come and learn from others how you can make these changes in your garden. See the flyer in this newsletter for more details.

Speakers Spring luncheon- Friday November 17, 10.15am – 2.30pm RCHC & Courtyard. Includes Lunch and Morning Tea, Cost \$70 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. Alison will bring inspiration on 'Designing Small Gardens' and Martin will share his experiences in landscaping and his involvement in the Chelsea Flower Show. With lunch and morning tea included you don't want to miss this event. Book now using Trybooking link <https://www.trybooking.com/CKBTJ> or contact the office



Colac Open Garden Tour Saturday 18 November 10am -4pm, Start Colac Botanic Gardens Main Gates, cnr Fyans St & Gellibrand St, Cost \$29

Joint excursion with Friends of Ballarat and Buninyong and (Colac Horticultural and Marvellous Properties Appreciation Society) Colac Botanic Gardens and three other delightful, spacious private gardens in the Colac region. Pack your BYO Picnic Lunch & thermos for brews; drive to Colac, assembling at 10am at the Botanic Gardens main gates.

Tour 1: Receive maps & information for your private gardens visits, then your guided Colac Botanic Gardens tour begins

Tour 2: Plant lovers & collectors, Janet & David have created a large, botanically-rich garden over some 50 yrs at Barongarook West; enjoy your picnic lunch & browse the nursery stall.

Tour 3: Colour has inspired Lyn & Terry in this semi-formal Barongarook rural garden; your CWA Devonshire Tea will be served here.

Tour 4: Meander through Tiff, Mike & Will's evolving rural garden at Elliminyt; imaginative design, creative use of bed & border plants, many aspects of botanic interest

For booking use trybooking reference is <https://www.trybooking.com/CLUGQ> or contact the office



Friends Open Gardens Saturday & Sunday 25, 26 November, 10.30am – 4pm, gold coin donation

Five delightful member's gardens will be open for members and their friends and family. Enjoy a Devonshire tea or light lunch at the McLeod garden. Refer to the flyer insert.

Springfest Ballarat Market – Sunday 26th November

Stalls from Carlton Street to St Aidan's Drive along Lake Wendouree. Visit the Friends market plant stall.

Friends Christmas function Thursday 14 December RCHC and courtyard, 5.30 – 8pm

Hover you phone camera over the QR code to easily get the trybooking link

NEW LOOK FOR THE NURSERY

Out with the Old - In with the New

As we all now know the concept of relocating the Nursery to an area behind the GateKeepers Cottage, and the construction a new George Longley building has been put on hold pending the outcome of a new Master Plan by the City of Ballarat. As the development of the Master Plan will most likely take several years with no certainty of the outcome, the Committee have decided in the meantime to update the current Nursery and the GLB.

For those who haven't had the opportunity to visit the Nursery during this process, all the old timber benches have been removed from the sales area, and replaced with new galvanised steel purpose designed plant stands. The new stands have created a more open space feeling to the Nursery and have greatly improved access and traffic flow. A significant increase in the volume of plants on display has also been achieved.

If the new Master Plan gives us clearance to relocate, the plant stands can be quite easily moved to the new location.

The roof on the glass house in the Propagation area is badly in need of repair, and a replacement roof is currently being investigated. The purchase of a much needed Shade House for the Propagation area is also currently under discussion. The installation will greatly improve the efficiency of the Propagation process. However, selecting a suitable position and the method of fixing the Shade House to the ground needs to be approved by the City of Ballarat, and is proving to be quite a challenge.

A date of Saturday 14th October has been set for a "Celebratory Open Day" of the nursery to showcase the update.

The opportunity is also being taken to refurbish the George Longley building. New secure storage cupboards have been purchased and installed for the History Group, together with additional general storage cabinets. The computer has also been upgraded and the floor has been sanded and resealed. A request to the City of Ballarat, through Donna, has been made to repaint the building, as it is looking very old and tired. We are yet to be advised of timing but are eager for it to be completed by the 14th October. This will be the first time the building has been painted in its 20 year history.

Robert Selkirk



Three Key members of the very dedicated Growers Group, Yvonne Curbach, Convenor of the Growers, Bruce Holland, Past Treasurer and Sue Rattray, having just loaded up one of the new plant stands in the Nursery.

The Friends welcome the following new members:

Beryl Andersen, Kaye Bennett, Robyn Campbell, Angela Hunt & Adam Dean, Margaret Lenan Ellis, Angela Fennell, Louise Kirk, Peter Marquand, Barbara McQueen, Tayyaba Nasim & Usman Iftikhar, Melissa Morey & Lee Tonks, Jola Piskozub, Anne Marie Power, Marcia & Wayne Spring, Helen & David Stephenson, Helen Weadon, Daphne White

And the following Botanikids families:

Bailey Van Duin Family, Steen Family, Mortimer Family, Navarro Family, Burgoyne Family, White Family, Anderson Family, Sarah Family, Jones Family, Elford Family, Campbell Family, Rubio Family, Dickinson Family, Wilkie Family, Wilson Family, Thomson Family, George Family, Walters Family, Macharia Family

Our Membership is standing at 435 members with 35 mini members

PROGRESS OF THE FBBG NURSERY OVER TIME



Potting area prior to installation of raised plant stands



1993 - Growing Friends Convenor Judith Bailey, Mary Cochrane and BBG Nursery Supervisor, Kevin Monaghetti at work.



View of the nursery with higher plant display benches



September 2023 - Ground resurfaced and new metal plant stands installed



Growers at afternoon tea in the George Longley Building

THE WONDERS OF THE WARDIAN CASE

Book review by Julie Bradby

Dr Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward was a doctor and nature lover and invented the Wardian Case, in the mid-1800s.

Nathaniel had a passion for plants. Some could be eaten, others used for building things and for making medicines. As he was a doctor of medicine, he knew plants could help his patients. He learnt all their scientific names. After his medical studies were completed, he started to experiment with plant growth.

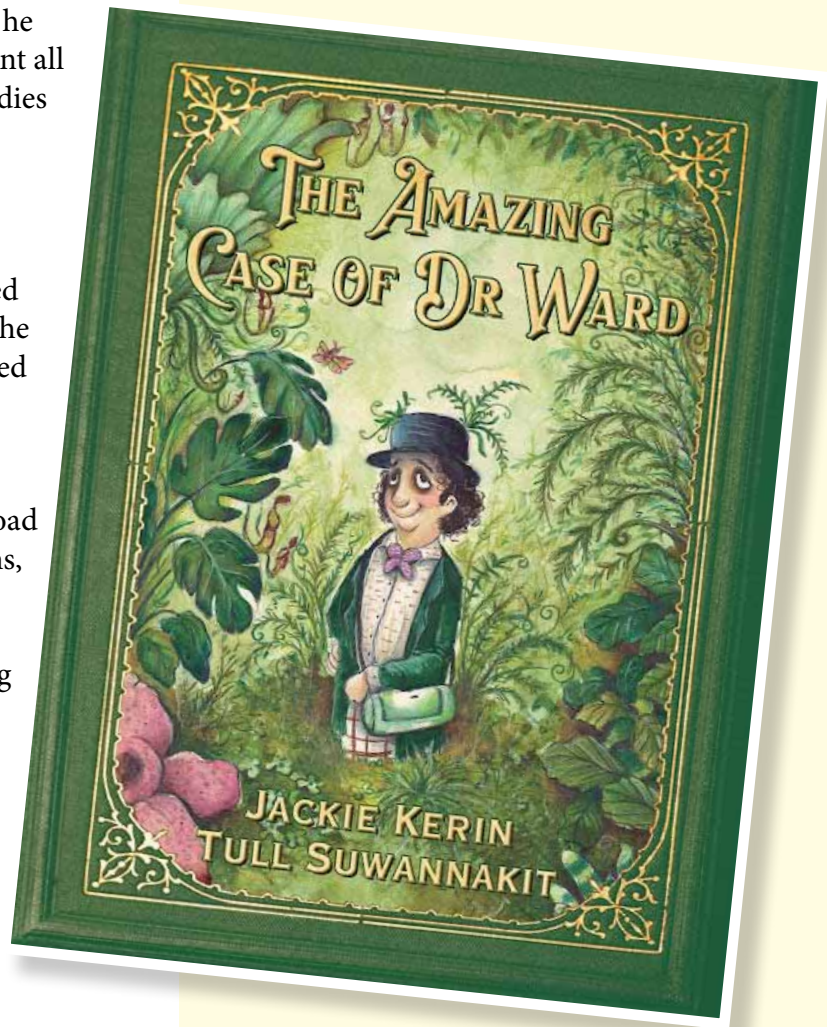
Nathaniel read countless stories about the discovery of unique and exotic plants carried across continents that sadly, didn't survive the journey due to various problems encountered on the high seas.

Inspired by Dr Ward's experiments with enclosed cases, in 1883 a friend shipped a load of glass cases - what we today call terrariums, to Australia to collect plants. Most of them survived the trip back to London and transformed lounge rooms through startling displays of ferns and mosses in ornate Wardian Cases.

This amazing little children's book is a revelation. In the climate we live in today, children want to know more about plants and living things and how to protect them.

Kindly donated to the Gatekeepers Cottage Children Botanical Library by Arthur and Merrill Shulkes, this gorgeous book will inspire children to believe that they too can become someone unique - a scientist or botanist with something to offer the world. A timely publication and perfect addition to any picture book collector's library.

Reference: Kerin, J., (2021). *The Amazing Case of Dr Ward* (Suwannakit. T. Illus.). Ford Street Publishing.



THE MINI MEMBERS OF THE FRIENDS OF THE GARDENS PROGRAM



When the Friends of BBG meet it's obvious there is a specific age group in attendance. These people are wise, lovely people and we cherish and value their support and hard work.

It's also important that the Friends extend their membership to a younger and energetic part of the community with diverse ages and cultures, to truly reflect the changing community of Ballarat.

Botanikids activities held at the Cottage twice weekly have a different age profile reflective of the changing community that is Ballarat now. These wonderful family-minded people encompass different ages and cultures. They value the gardens and what they offer their families every day.

This year the Committee extended the Botanikids term program to include a one-off Mini Member pilot program in an effort to link and formalise the Botanikids community into the Friends. One term's Botanikids fees not only included the family having access to Botanikids activities, but a Family membership for this year and next year. Botanikids members are Mini Members of the Friends.

Younger family inclusion into our membership has been on the agenda of the Committee for many years. Its importance is to not only ensure the future of the Friends as a viable, strong community organisation but also to encourage a longer, more formal link and involvement of the Botanikids families in other Friends activities

Julie Bradby
Convenor Educating Friends and Botanikids



CURATORS REPORT



A beautiful burst of Spring weather has been wonderful here at the gardens, but has meant we have also begun irrigating some four weeks earlier than we usually do, possibly a sign of what may lie ahead this season.

The Fernery Landscape Project is progressing well, with irrigation now being installed, all the plants are ordered, and we eagerly watch the landscapers start to bring it all together.

The Salvia Gardens near the Statue of Wallace have been renovated and will now also feature Peony Roses, Annuals & new towering frames with climbing Clematis

New areas have been returned to lawn in the Sequoiadendron Avenue opposite the Rose cross bed.

The Green Manure crops are thriving & will soon be dug in to introduce organic matter, nutrients and greater water holding ability for our delightful Dahlia Collection.

And our Conservatory will soon undergo replacement of the original blinds, resealing of the floor & vent maintenance resulting in a closure from the 16th October for 6-7 weeks.

We then look forward to reopening with a fabulous new design summer display brimming with Fuchsias, Hydrangeas and Pelargoniums.

Donna Thomas

FOUNDATION UPDATE

The Ballarat Botanical Gardens Foundation exists to raise funds to support the development and preservation of our Botanical Gardens. In this issue of the Wellingtonia, we would like to provide a few examples of how we both facilitate the wishes of donors to the Gardens and provide direct contribution to specific projects.

Specific donor contributions

Arthur and Merrill Shulkes approached the Foundation to facilitate their wish to fund an apprentice gardener at the City of Ballarat. This most generous offer enabled the City to engage an additional resource through the employment of an apprentice through BGT Jobs and Training. The successful applicant, Troy Peddle was a mature age apprentice and a partnership between the Shulkes and the Foundation, with Arthur & Merrill providing the largest part of the funds, enabled the City to give Troy an opportunity to undertake his apprenticeship in the most idyllic of locations in Ballarat. Troy was so successful in his new role he was recruited to take up a more senior position with a neighbouring Council. Without Arthur and Merrill's generous contribution and the Foundation also contributing, Troy would not have been employed and he would not have secured a start in the horticulture sector with a recognised qualification. A great result for all stakeholders in this project.

The Prime Ministers Avenue - B. R. Carlson approached the Foundation with an offer to fund the creation of Prime Minister sculptures in the avenue in our Gardens, a gift of appreciation from a lifetime resident who loves Ballarat with its beautiful botanical gardens and significant monument to our democracy. This most generous bequest was managed and will continue to be managed by the Foundation to ensure the continuation of this most



important and unique asset in our Gardens. The City is most grateful for this bequest and has been publicly acknowledged by the Mayor in a number of recent media outlets. The Foundation was able to negotiate the terms and conditions of this bequest on behalf of the donor and provide a sense of satisfaction that her wishes would be fulfilled into the future.

Fernery Landscaping - The Foundation was able to contribute \$50,000 from its accumulated funds towards the landscaping of the Fernery. Whilst the Friends have made a much larger contribution

to this project, together these funds should ensure that the new landscaping works adds real value to the Fernery and its immediate precinct.

These are just three ways the Foundation is fulfilling its Mission. We are excited that the future will present many more opportunities to create partnerships and generate funds to enhance the value and presentation of our world class Botanical Gardens. If you would like to discuss any matter in relation to the Foundation and how you could work with us, please just give me a call
Mark Schultz - 0419392829 Chairman



“FOTOFRIENDS” A NEW FRIENDS PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

The FotoFriends group aims to support photographers – no matter their expertise – in capturing and understanding the beauty of nature with planned activities with the focus being the BBG.

A previous meeting entailed a visit to the Conservatory to create images of the current wonderful winter display. Macro lenses were used in some cases, to capture the intricate features, texture and surface details in a way often unseen with the naked eye.

The Biodiversity Group asked us to record beneficial insects such as bees, praying mantis, spiders, beetles, and dragonflies, and we managed to capture a few of these illusive creatures. And as advocates of biodiversity - a visit to the wetlands was undertaken to get images of the grasslands, reeds, sedges, tussock grasses and birdlife.

Springtime in the gardens – and the tulips, daffodils and poppies create plenty of opportunity to capture this amazing colourful display.

Members of the Friends who are interested in developing their photography skills in a friendly, relaxed environment, are invited to join the group.

Our next meeting is on Wednesday, 11th October at 3pm at the Conservatory.

For further information email info@fbbg.org.au

Ro Bancroft - facilitator



SPRING IN THE GARDENS



SPRING IN THE GARDENS



ROYAL VISITS AND THE WARDIAN CASE

By Lorraine Powell

Since 1867, the Ballarat Botanical Gardens has received many regal and vice-regal visits.

Not all visits were from Britain. In 1927, there was an Official State Visit to Australia

by Prince Purachatra Jayakara of Siam who was investigating the establishment of railways in Siam. While in Victoria he made a Winter visit to Ballarat with his wife, Princess Prabhavasidhi. So impressed was she with the magnificence of the Fernery, and the collections inside, that on her return home she immediately sent (inside a Wardian case) the rarest of rare Siamese orchids - a blue orchid.

In 1954, HRH Queen Elizabeth II accepted an invitation to open the second Begonia Festival as part of her Official State Visit. During her visit she was heard to comment that she too grew begonias. However, hers were mere saucers whilst ours were dinner plates. The Mayor, the Town Clerk and the gardeners attempted to find a way to provide HRH with some of 'our' plants. Having no Wardian cases to hand, and no way to procure one, the best minds of the day - including those at the CSIRO - were contracted to find a way to safely transport the tubers to the Palace in the unpressurised plane cargo holds. Even freeze drying the tubers was attempted. The tubers failed to survive any test, and eventually Tom Beaumont, Director of Parks and Gardens, wrote to the Town Clerk: 'Send her some from Blackmore and Langdon, that's where we get ours from.'



Princess Prabhavasidhi in front of the Claxton monument



HRH Queen Elizabeth II outside the Keel House

WARDIAN CASE QUIZ

1. What is a Wardian Case?
2. Who is the Wardian Case named after?
3. When did the first Wardian Case arrive in Australia?
4. Did the Ballarat Botanical Gardens use Wardian Cases and when?
5. Name 5 plants in the BBG that first arrived in Australia in Wardian Cases?
6. Were Australian plants shipped overseas at the same time as exotics arrived here?
7. Why did the Wardian Case fall out of favour?

Visit the Wardian Case Exhibition at Gatekeepers Cottage to discover the answers and many other interesting facts.

The Discovery that Revolutionised the Plant World and Artist in Residence Gina Gould-Hardwick

Botanical Insect Artist

at _____

Gatekeepers Cottage, Ballarat Botanical Gardens

Saturday 14th to Sunday 22nd October

Open 10.00 am to 4.00 pm every day

(except Wednesday 18th October)



WINTER MEETING

With several groups in abeyance, some members away or hunkered down, the winter meeting generally has less attendees, but no less warmth and interest. President Terry O'Brien welcomed visitors from the Friends of Wombat Hill Gardens, Gardens Curator, Donna Thomas and our newest member, former Curator, Peter Marquand.



Lorraine Powell & Friends of Wombat Hill

Terry was delighted to announce the formation of a new group, the FotoFriends, who will develop their skills by photographing the gardens through the seasons and whose work will be seen on our website.



Terry O'Brien with new member Margaret Lenan Ellis

He encouraged members to contribute to the emerging Masterplan for the gardens and to visit the new fernery landscaping and planting. He then enlightened members as to the link between Ballarat and Falconbridge (NSW), the only other avenue celebrating our Prime Ministers. The Blue Mountains town received a \$2million upgrade to their avenue of commemorative oaks, which was inaugurated in the 1930s. He was also pleased to announce and thank B.R. Carlson for a generous donation, assuring the next four Prime Minister busts. This significant monument was established by Richard Crouch, with the first bronzes installed in 1940.

Over years, the 'new Fernery' has been a source of frustration for many and members were cheered by Donna Thomas' enthusiasm for the project and detailed discussion of work begun and to come. Over 1400 plants, including ferns, miniature Ginkos, fern-like plants and mosses will be planted, in ground, in boxes, plant chandeliers and pyramids. She thanked the Friends for their contribution to this shared project and confirmed it will be formally acknowledged on the site. She welcomed the new Gardens Collection Officer, Sheree Blood, who has 23 years of experience in Begonia breeding.

The Conservatory will be closed 16 October to 4 December to replace blinds, resurface the floor and install the new display.



Patrice O'Shea

Spring is always a busy time for the Friends and Julie Bradby spoke of the exciting collaboration with the National Gallery of Australia, when the Gatekeeper's Cottage will host a Wardian Case display in October, with associated programs, including an Artist in Residence. Upgrades to the Friends Nursery and the George Longley Building will be celebrated on October 14th, coinciding with the Farmers' Market. The new Bio-Diversity Group has invited other environmental groups to attend. In November there will be a (car pool) trip to Colac with the Friends of the Buninyong Botanic Gardens and CHAMPAS, as well as the popular Speakers' Luncheon, Gardenfest and FBBG Open Gardens.

Many members will know the Wombat Hill Gardens in Daylesford and perhaps visited the café and bought a plant. Through delightful photos, extensive research and entertaining anecdotes, our Guest Speaker, Patrice O'Shea, enlightened us about the vital role of the community in its development. In the 1840s public parks were a new idea and like other 'frontier' gold rush towns, the settlers embraced it, keen to relax amongst familiar, European plants. In 1860 this central

volcanic hill, with panoramic views was chosen. All existing trees were cut down and many locals and Ferdinand von Mueller gifted a range of trees for the site. Though a design was commissioned in 1883, the fernery and cascade are its only features.

Like Ballarat, Begonias are collected and large glass houses built in the 1960s and 90s. A friendly rivalry continues. The tower was built in the 1930s as a community works project. The Hepburn Shire has a small rate base, which ultimately lead to neglect and the seeking of other sources to assist in the maintenance and development of the gardens.

Senescence is an issue and support was gained from the Living Heritage Fund. Large and old trees have also obscured the views. One giant was removed and milled to create a decorated shelter and made into guitars. (Featured on Gardening Australia)

The Friends of Wombat Hill was formed in 1995, undertaking a wide range of hands-on and fundraising events. This small but dedicated group cleared, planted, publicized and raised over \$600,000 in ten years! Key projects were the renovation of the fernery and cascade, new shelters, sculptures and the ongoing development of the old cistern. They run lectures, open gardens, plant sales and more. The 2023 Taylor and Sangster Lecture: 'Gardening in Public and Private Spaces' (November 2nd)

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

Susan Pilbeam

IN THE KNOW

It was lovely to visit the Friends Nursery last week and see it full of colour with pink and red blooming cyclamens. And such a bargain to buy as a gift or to brighten up the kitchen!

Chatting with Yvonne I learnt the plants were directly from the Conservatory. Our Nursery has a good relationship with the Gardens staff and excess plants are given to us either to sell as is, or with the case of Begonias, supplied in seedling form to be grown up for the Begonia Festival.

Kevin Moneghetti, a commercial begonia grower will also be supplying plants to us soon, to be nurtured for the March Festival. So let your family and friends know that come Ballarat Begonia Festival 2024, the Friends Nursery will once again be able to cater for the demand for flowering begonias!

The very modern and interesting image below, is of a young couple walking into the Gardens and is featured on the front of a recent Ballarat Tourism glossy magazine, inserted in the Sunday Age. What great exposure for Ballarat and the Gardens, showing just how important our Gardens are as a tourism drawcard.

Ballarat Tourism provide a range of professional images for use in promoting Ballarat and surrounds with over 30 images of our Gardens in their current portfolio.

(The photo here was taken by local photographer Matt Dunne.)

Wendy Taylor



Kim Nolan and Natalie Radomski

AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF BOTANIC GARDENS (AAFBG)

Now that spring is officially here, participants on the AAFBG's Botanical Tour of the Gardens of Southern Highlands can begin to look forward to an exceptional experience informed by expert local knowledge. Elizabeth Gilfillan worked closely with her contacts, including landscape designers and heritage consultants Charlotte and Chris Webb of Bowral, to ensure that we visit an interesting mix of larger estates and more intimate private gardens and gain an appreciation of the rich history of gardening in this beautiful area. Among the many other attractions is a guided wildflower walk at Fitzroy Falls National Park and a visit to a spring-themed vase and flower show at Sturt Gallery, Mittagong.

The tour is bookended by visits to RBG Sydney and Australian Botanic Garden Mt Annan, two of the three gardens cared for by Botanic Gardens of Sydney. While staying at Bowral we will visit Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens that are entirely volunteer run. At all three gardens we will interact with their Friends groups.



AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF BOTANIC GARDENS (AAFBG)



Planning continues for 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

If you would like to submit an article and/or photos for publication in the October issue of *Eucalypt* please send to magazine@friendsbotanicgardens.org by September 30th. Topics need not be about Ballarat Botanical Gardens but should relate to some aspect of botanic gardens, for example a special event or visit to another regional or city botanic gardens. The suggested limit is 450 words. Our former editor Anne Rawson has retired after many years of outstanding service and WordsWorth communicating will publish the next issue.

After three years as the Friends AAFBG representative, I will be stepping down at the next FBBG AGM in February 2024. The AAFBG and FBBG have a long and close involvement that I hope will be continued by one of our members taking over from me. For information about the role, I can be contacted through the Friends Office on info@fbbg.org.au or on (03) 5342 9354. For the August edition of *e-ucalypt News* go to www.friendsbotanicgardens.org



Report by Merrill Shulkes Committee Member

Reprint of article in July 7 2023 edition of Ballarat Times. With kind agreement from journalist Edwina Williams.

NEWS

Welcome the wild to urban life

EDWINA WILLIAMS

MEMBERS of the Ballarat Gardens for Wildlife movement are encouraging people to act less like a millstone around nature and be more of a keystone.

When a beaver, for example, builds a dam, many organisms can live because of that activity, and volunteer committee member Rob Amor said Ballarat residents could live differently to support the wild species that surround them.

"Humans are responsible for massive ecological disruption, and

the current extinction crisis," he said. "We need to make our cities more friendly places for other organisms.

"Gardens for Wildlife is trying to look at ways that we can make our gardens more wildlife friendly so we can support biodiversity, and we can enhance it.

"In the past, there's been a western attitude that nature is there to serve us. Our movement is a shift in our connection with nature, so we embed ourselves in it and are more sustainable.

"As a culture, we need to shift our thinking to recognise we're

part of the environment, and not rulers of it."

Mr Amor said ways in which people can have more of that keystone species mindset is to put the local indigenous plants in the ground, and in ponds, have logs in home gardens, as well as installing nesting boxes and bee hotels.

"It's important that the plant makeup is diverse, with groundcover,



Fury Island: Common brushtail possums can be regular visitors to gardens in the region. Photos: FILE



Installing nesting boxes and insect hotels can be simple ways to support the natural environment at home.

shrubs and an overstory which mirrors what happens in a forest," Mr Amor said.

"Ground cover, logs, and leaf litter can look untidy but it's better for nature, lower maintenance, and uses less water.

"By using local plants, you make the urban area porous, in a way, to wildlife around it. Put plants in the urban areas that honeyeaters like, and they'll move in, and integrate.

"We have to be careful how we do that, because we don't want koalas and kangaroos down Sturt Street, but we can do birds, invertebrates, reptiles, and frogs, and a lot of the larger birds, like cockatoos."

Federation University and Birdlife Australia have resources online that people can refer to if they would like to purchase, or make, and then install an appropriate nesting box.

"Boxes need to be suitable for the species you're targeting, the entrance hole needs to be the right size, and the depth needs to be adequate for their nesting," Mr Amor said.

"They do need to be two or three

metres off the ground, or maybe higher for those with larger trees, away from predators.

"But not everyone can get up a tree. You can mount them on a pole, or throw a rope up a tree and haul the box up, or you can hire an arborist or a handy person."

Bee hotels can be as simple as a block of wood with a lot of holes in it, and generally attract spiders, mud wasps, and some solitary native bees will use them."

Mr Amor also said wildlife-welcoming communities encourage people to have a greater connection to, and understanding of, the natural world.

"Isolation from the environment can mean we're blind to the fate of a lot of other creatures in forests, when things happen to those forests," he said.

Gardens for Wildlife volunteers offer a free service, visiting the homes of people who express interest in the movement. They aim to support a transition to more native species-friendly green spaces.

A VISIT TO CAIRNS BOTANICAL GARDENS

by Sandie de Groot

In the depths of Ballarat's Winter when the deciduous trees in our Botanical Gardens are bare and showing off their sculptured forms and there is a chill in the air we were fortunate to spend some time in Outback Queensland. At the end of our tour we had a few days in Cairns which gave us the opportunity to visit the Botanical Gardens where lush tropical vegetation abounded. Such a contrast to our gardens.

In 1888 Eugene Fitzalan a botanical collector established a nursery near the present site of the Cairns Botanical Gardens and opened his gardens to the public.

In 1958 the North Queensland Naturalist Club formed a Native Botanical Preservation Society to construct a Botanical Garden which was built and in 1971 named the Flecker Botanical Gardens in honor of Hugo Flecker founder of the North Queensland Naturalist Club. In 2007 the Botanic Reserves including Flecker Garden, Centenary Lakes, Rainforest Boardwalk and the Tanks Arts Centre was rebranded as the Cairns Botanical Gardens. The gardens play an important role in the conservation of rare and threatened plant species.



The
Watkins
Munro

Martin Conservatory was built in 2015 to safely house and exhibit some of the gardens most valuable and tender plants and a collection of local butterflies. In the conservatory was a hanging basket lined with coconut fibre and attached were about 20 chrysalis from which were emerging butterflies. They sat motionless with feelers still attached to chrysalis soaking up the sunshine I presume until they suddenly spread their wings and were gone. I did think I may capture this on a photo but the butterfly was faster than my finger but it did hold me entranced watching and waiting.

The conservatory houses aroids, bromeliads including tillandsias, carnivorous plants, cyclads, ferns, palms, and tassel ferns and orchids. The building is modelled on the Cairns Regional Council logo – the leaf of the Licuala Palm.

After wandering through various parts of the gardens we were in need of coffee and sustenance. Set in the gardens in a serene



tranquil setting is the Botanic Gardens Restaurant/Cafe where a variety of food and beverages were served. If in Cairns certainly take the time to visit and see plants that thrive in tropical conditions. They are close to the city centre and easily accessible by public bus.

FRIENDS GROUPS CONVENORS

Admin: Office Manager Kim Nolan
Ambassadors: Trish Twaites
Biodiversity group: Terry O'Brien
Botanical Artists: Valerie Richards and Ro Bancroft
Botanikids / Education: Julie Bradby
Catering: Heather Boyd
Events: Carole Haines
Fotofriends: Ro Bancroft
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: Vacant

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

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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
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Botanical Art:	Ro Bancroft
BBG Foundation Rep.	Terry O'Brien



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



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 Contributions for the Summer Wellingtonia 2024 are due by Friday 15th December.