Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens

Campsis

Newsletter of the AFBG No.40 May 2013

In this issue...

…we welcome Kirstenbosch Botanical Garden in Capetown South Africa as an Affiliate Member—it looks to be an absolutely spectacular Garden! See page 15 for another photo. We also welcome Tamborine Mountain Botanic Gardens, Qld. and Lismore Rainforest Botanic Garden (page 16) who only heard about the existence of AFBG at the recent BGANZ meeting in Coffs Harbour. Lismore is also celebrating its 10th birthday, as are Mackay and Melton, while Burnley, like many other Victorian gardens, is at the 150 year mark. We also welcome Brisbane Volunteer Guides with a note by Mary Peden about 25 years guiding at Mt Coot-tha on page 2, and heritage trees at Brisbane City on page 11. And remember the guiding conference coming up in Christchurch, New Zealand – see page 13.

Kirstenbosch Botanic Garden

Photo by Pam Knipe

Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens

Incorporation: AOO26805Z

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Membership

Annual Membership is from 1 April to 31 March. Fees: $30 pa for up to 250 members; $50 pa 251-500 members; $150 pa over 500 members.

Forms available on the website.

Pay by direct transfer to BSB 633-000
A/c No: 1045-71476 Reference no. 00000115 and add your name in optional description.

Cheque or Money Order payable to:
Assoc. of Friends of Botanic Gardens Inc
Post to: The Treasurer, PO Box 983, Geelong, Vic. 3220

Campsis is published twice a year in May and November.
Editor Anne Rawson
email: campsis@friendsanbg.org.au

We welcome your articles and photographs and important calendar events for inclusion

Closing dates are 30 March and 30 September approximately six weeks prior to publication.

ISSN 1320-8578

Welcome Mt Coot-tha guides

'Good Morning! Welcome to the Brisbane Botanic Gardens. My name is Mary and I would like to take you on a walk in our beautiful Gardens.' On alternate Tuesdays for the past 25 years this has been my greeting to visitors as they arrived at the entrance to the Gardens at Mt. Coot-tha.

During World Expo in Brisbane in 1988 Ross McKinnon, Curator of the Brisbane Botanic Gardens at Mt Coot-tha, was impressed with the success of the volunteer program and decided to introduce a similar service to Mt Coot-tha. Having been a volunteer guide at Expo I applied. The 16 successful applicants commenced a six-week training program to refresh our botanical knowledge and became familiar with 52 hectares featuring more than 20,000 plants, representing at least 5000 species from around the world.

I have watched the establishment and growth of the diverse plant collections: the Australian Plant Community, the Japanese Garden, followed by the Bonsai House and the Fern House. Many different weather events have had an impact on the Gardens: in the three year drought we lost many trees and plants (but many were saved using recycled water brought in by tankers); in January this year cyclonic winds and rain brought down at least 30 mature trees.

Being a volunteer guide has enriched my life. I have made wonderful friends with guides from diverse backgrounds who are dedicated to guiding and the Gardens – at least ten guides have served at least 20 years. I have met people from all corners of the globe, from Finland, Russia, Chile, South Africa, China, south-east Asia, and all points in between. Many of our visitors are locals with family or friends from overseas and it is great to enhance their holiday by sharing my love and enthusiasm for the life of the Gardens. Additionally I often learn something new about the plants from our visitors!

As the Gardens celebrate 25 years of volunteer guiding on 4 November, a new group of guides is being trained by Frances Blines and Margot McManus, for graduation in May. They will be enthusiastically welcomed by the Gardens Family.

Mary Peden

From the President

Geraldine Davis

At the last meeting of the AFBG Committee on 18 March, we focussed on a number of items, the first being the 20th anniversary of the Association this year. The November 2013 *Campsis* will be a celebratory edition reflecting on the past, present and future of our network. Please keep this in mind when submitting your articles and photos. The next deadline is 30 September.

The Committee also met via phone in March with the executive of BGANZ to establish a Memorandum of Understanding. This Agreement formally recognises the complementary aims of BGANZ and AFBG and identifies a range of matters that might form the basis of a regular dialogue. These include joint membership, attendance at conferences, regional group liaison, and mutual sharing of resources. We look forward to finalising the MoU and meeting with BGANZ executive on a regular basis.

BGANZ has also been most supportive in considering greater recognition and reference to Friends groups in the BGANZ Tool Kit.

The executive of AFBG has also had considerable discussion via email regarding establishing the appropriate process to accept tax-exempt donations (see the AFBG Secretary's report for your reference which may possibly benefit your own garden or Friends' group.)

Amanda King has tendered her resignation from the General Committee to take effect at the next AGM. The Committee unanimously acknowledge Mandy's significant contribution to AFBG over ten years, in particular her assistance with 12 productions of *Campsis*, getting the website set up, reformatting the Info Kit and generously sharing her experience and considered opinions.

I would encourage all Friends groups to consider the possibility of one of your members making themselves available as a Committee member. (Notice of AGM and a nomination form are included with this issue of *Campsis*.) The tasks are not onerous and meetings are usually limited to three per year, with the option of a teleconference link-up (paid for by AFBG) or attending in person. Representation on the Committee offers the opportunity to contribute directly to the network by sharing personal expertise and the experience of your group.

It is with great pleasure that we welcome new international Friends from South Africa (Kirstenbosch) as affiliate members. As a follow-up to Warwick Wright's visits, Belize BG and Miami Beach Botanic Gardens have also been offered affiliate memberships and we look forward to further correspondence with them. When visiting botanic gardens overseas, you might like to make yourself known to their Friends groups and establish if they belong to the AFBG, or encourage them to visit our website and become affiliate members.

Do keep in mind the two forthcoming major botanic gardens events in New Zealand:

1. The 6th BGANZ and 5th Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) Joint Congress 'Celebrating Success' on 20 – 25 October 2013 in Dunedin. (Go to www.bganz.org.au.)

2. The 13th Australasian Conference of Volunteer Guides in Botanic Gardens 'Guiding for the Future' on 28 October to 1 November 2013 in Christchurch. (Go to http://gardenguides2013.org.nz)

Secretary's report

Annie McGeachy

Exciting news!

In our November 2012 issue I wrote that in an effort to limit future fee increases and to sustain, expand and improve services to members, AFBG committee had forwarded a submission for ongoing funding support. We have just received a reply and I am delighted to announce that the submission was successful! A generous benefactor will provide funding support to the AFBG over the next five years. More details will follow soon.

This is a marvelous start to the AFBG's 20th year for which Committee is considering a special celebratory edition of *Campsis* in November.

Ordinary news

BGANZ/AFBG Executive teleconference was very productive and will likely become a six monthly event. Please note, we are highlighted in BGANZ March issue of *The Botanic Garden*. Look it up on www.bganz.org.au

While considering the Christchurch Guide Conference and our next AFBG Conference at the Gold Coast in 2014, perhaps cast your mind forward a little to 2016, yes that is a long way, but time to muse, and think about whether your Friends group would like to host the Association Conference. This would offer the opportunity for your Friends to show us all the unique qualities of your garden, your region and promote your Friends Group while enjoying the tremendous camaraderie.

Not so exciting news

Some concern, in the minds of Victorian members only, is the requirement to update their Association Rules to comply with the *Associations Reform Act 2012* (Vic) and its Associations Model Rules. However, the compliance date of 26 November 2013 provides some latitude.

Helpful information is available at:

Consumer Affairs (Vic) website lists the new Associations Model Rules and other useful information, including a comparative list of new and old Rule numbers, at: http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/incorporated-associations/model-rules-for-an-incorporated-association.doc

The Public Interest Law Clearing House (pilch) provides a great deal of information, but the most useful I think is the chart comparing the old rules with the new legislated rule requirements which must be included. See http://admin.pilch.org.au/Assets/Files/Rules%20Checklist.pdfch

Important! Pilch have responded to the issues regarding the new Rules and developed a template for a 'Simple Set of Rules' to assist community organisations.

The Model Rules, are extensive in detail, with some clauses expanded, some split into different headings and some new clauses added. Adopting them can save members a great deal of time and angst. However the following three clauses have to be filled in to identify your Association:

1. Association name 2. Purposes 3. Date of financial year.

If an association changes (a) any other clauses in the Model Rules, or (b) includes some of their existing rules into the Model Rules, then the association has made its 'own rules'.

In either event, the usual procedure applies. A special resolution will need to be approved/passed by 75% of the membership in person or by proxy at AGM or Special General Meeting and the details forwarded to Consumer Affairs (Vic) for authorisation.

If members take no action, nor contact Consumer Affairs (Vic) by 26 November 2013, then the New Model Rules will automatically apply.

If modifying the New Model Rules to specify your Association the following clauses are some of the more obvious that may be helpful for some members.

14. Categories of members

30. AGM (4)(b)(ii) Any additional financials

41(3)(d), 48(1)(d), and 69(4). Signatories

44(e). Committee composition

51(2)(a). Nominations

55. Term of Office

58 or 62. Define your Committee of Management quorum, 'in attendance' person/s

58(3). Office bearer needed?

77. Alteration to Rules-include reference above **

Note: until 26 November 2013, the fee for adopting model rules has been waived and the fee for an association changing its own rules has been reduced to $75.20.

And AFBG is affected too

The AFBG, having originated in Victoria, will also have to comply with the new Act and the updated Rules, approved by 75% of the members in person or by proxy, at the AGM in July. (AFBG Purposes will not be changed) Committee will update the Association Rules very soon and forward a copy to all members, with the Committee resolution to accept the Rules and a proxy form to be returned to AFBG by post or email.

Late, more not so exciting news!

A new Federal body, the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission is being established as overarching body for charities and public funds, to ultimately create only one_reporting and reference body. Existing public funds/charities, deductible gift recipients registered with the ATO are automatically listed on the ACNC register and will have been contacted about new reporting requirements. Any Friends group about to consider setting up a tax-deductible fund will do so through the ACNC website, 'register my charity' and follow the links for application details. Contact: www.acnc.gov.au or phone: 132262 Opening hours: 8am to 7pm weekdays.

Administrative Officer's Report

Ro Noone

Ro at Oaxaca Ethnobotanical Garden, Oaxaca, Mexico

Dear Members

The past six months have flown – so I must have been having fun! You will no doubt have read, via email or on our website, about the numerous events being held by Friends groups around the country, as well as the forthcoming Volunteer Guides Conference and combined BGANZ/BGCI Congress in New Zealand in October. I hope many of you will be able to attend. The articles in this edition provide a great summary of many members' events and issues, which I hope will give you much information and inspiration.

I continue to be in regular contact with Committee members. It helps being only a local call away from the Secretary, Annie McGeachy, and the President, Geraldine Davis, is always quick to respond to messages on her iPhone! The last two Committee meetings (November 2012 and March 2013) have been held in Geelong and via teleconference. This media is proving highly successful and certainly cuts down on travel time and costs. Beverley Windsor from Friends of Gold Coast Regional Botanic Garden (FGCRBG) is keeping us abreast of plans for the next AFBG Conference in August 2014. Watch this space! Neil Morley (FGCRBG) has been on an extended trip in Europe/UK and we look forward to hearing his voice again after Easter.

The Committee have agreed to introduce a new category of membership for overseas Friends groups. Known as 'Affiliate Members', they will have on-line access to our resources and the opportunity to contribute to *Campsis*, however, due to the cost of international transfers, they will not be required to pay subscriptions. So far, affiliate membership has been offered to Friends groups in Christchurch (New Zealand), Kirstenbosch (South Africa), Miami (USA) and Belize (Central America). This broadens the capacity of the Association '*To encourage and support the growth of societies or associations interested in the conservation, development, wellbeing and public appreciation of Botanic Gardens*' and significantly extends readership of our website, where links are provided for you to visit their websites too.

Vallarta Botanical Gardens

Invoices were sent to full members in March for subscriptions covering 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014. Thank you to those who have paid. Please attend to any outstanding subs as soon as you can.

I was lucky to visit a few more botanic gardens in November 2012, but not on home shores. My 23-year-old daughter and I spent three weeks in Mexico where we visited two highly contrasting gardens:

1. *Vallarta Botanical Gardens* is in the hinterland of Puerto Vallarta (pronounced "Pwerto Bayarta"), a popular tourist destination on the Pacific coast. This tropical, highland garden of 20 acres was formed in 2004. Originally, it was ranch property, nearly half of which was overgrazed cattle pasture, the other half, old growth tropical deciduous forest. It features a large restaurant overlooking a lush river valley and an excellent orchid collection. It is a private garden with a Friends Society and eight volunteers. See more at www.vbgardens.org

2. *Oaxaca Ethnobotanical Garden*. The colonial city of Oaxaca (pronounced Wah-hah-kah) lies south-east of Mexico City. This inner-city garden of two hectares showcases arid plants with an emphasis on education. In order to enter, visitors must take a guided tour (available in Spanish or English). It has a herbarium and a seed bank. Started in 1994, it has a Friends Society but only four volunteers. Go to http://www.bgci.org then GardenSearch for more information.

Hopefully, I will visit more of our wonderful Australian gardens in the near future. In the meantime, keep those photos and notices of events coming so I can put them on our website. This provides an opportunity for you to share your ideas and promote your special garden/arboretum/park locally, nationally and internationally.

Why is AFBG Newsletter called *Campsis*?

The late Lawrence Cohn was a founding father of the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens. Lawrence was secretary for 12 years and soon after the formation of AFBG he circulated a newsletter to members. What should the newsletter be called? He suggested **Campsis** derived from *Campsis radicans,* commonly known as the Trumpet Flower. Since then **Campsis** has trumpeted the news from members and the committee of AFBG. Although in some areas *Campsis radicans* could be an environmental weed members can be assured that our **Campsis Newsletter** has done much more good than harm.

Alex Smart

Obituary: Lawrence Cohn

Many Friends, particularly those in Victoria, will remember Lawrence Cohn, founding Secretary of the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens (Vic) Inc. (now known as the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens Inc). Those who knew Lawrence will be saddened to know that he died on 23 December 2012 aged 93.

The AFBG, the Friends' umbrella network, was founded in 1993 at the instigation of the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, enthusiastically supported by the Friends of the Ballarat and Geelong Botanic Gardens, with Lawrence Cohn, Secretary of the Melbourne Friends, being the driving force within the Association until his retirement from the Committee in 2006. He drew up the Statement of Purposes and Rules, handled all the administrative work including incorporation at the direction of the Committee of Management, edited and produced the newsletter *Campsis* and provided advice, expert counsel and support to members. At his urging in 2001, the AFBG became an Australia-wide organisation. Starting with a membership of eight Friends' groups in 1993 the Association has now expanded to 54 members Australia wide, one member in New Zealand and there has also been some recent interest from international gardens.

Lawrence was very well known to many of those who supported botanic gardens through their Friends' groups and he became a friend of whom they were very fond. I was elected to the Committee of the AFBG in 1999 and was soon aware not only of Lawrence's total dedication and commitment but also that his contribution to this organisation was greatly valued.

As Secretary of the Friends of the RBG Melbourne from 1983 to 2001 Lawrence is remembered as being a person with a deceptively austere demeanour, a gentle smile, a wry sense of humour, a marvellous twinkle in his eye and a meticulous approach to everything he did.

Lawrence had a 'second home' at the Melbourne Gardens apart from the Friends; he devoted more than ten years to the Mueller Correspondence Project at the National Herbarium. General Editor of the Project, Professor Rod Home, acknowledges Lawrence's wonderful eye as a proofreader and his enourmous help in tracing shipping details and constructing a biographical register of correspondents.

Lawrence was always highly regarded and respected by his colleagues who valued and appreciated his support and friendship. Many have happy memories of this special man.

Janet Thomson
Immediate Past President, AFBG;
Immediate Past President, Friends, RBG Melbourne

New courtyard wall and plants

Friends of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden (AALBG) Port Augusta, South Australia

After a very hot summer with many days over 40°C and some days up to 48°C, the Garden is now looking very good with the coming of some cooler weather. Of course a few young plants died in the heat but overall many have new growth and are relishing the cooler weather.

A new rammed earth wall funded by the Friends of the AALBG has been built on the northern edge of the courtyard, complementing the first section of wall built with an entrance archway in 1996. A few hundred new plants were planted in the courtyard in mid-February and nearly all have grown well. They are all plants that grow in sand in arid inland Australia and include: acacias, crotalarias, eremophilas, hakeas, triodias, goodenias and swainsonas, to name just a few. As you will note in the photo the triodias are growing very well and little Fairy Wrens flit around, feeding off the low grasses in this newly established area.

Within the courtyard area there has been a swath of annual plants from the arid regions planted out in May 2012, such as *Ptilotus*, *Lotus australis* and many of the daisy species. Thanks to the great work of staff in maintaining the watering system, which has helped these unique arid growing annuals be carried through the hot summer as though they were in a 'good year all the time'! Many of these annuals have given the visitor a great flower display, further complimented by a superb flowering display of Sturt Desert Peas *Swainsona formosa*, a great excitement for photographers and visitors in general. The Sturt Pea was the perfect picture complimented by the red sand of the courtyard.

The Friends and nursery staff have also been working hard propagating plants to sell at various fairs and garden shows coming up in the next few months. The AALBG recently held a plant sale in Prospect, an early established suburb of Adelaide, which has a focus on using our native plants in its upgrade of some of its streetscapes.

Through the Friends a $5000 Playford Trust Scholarship has been awarded to Ryan Hayward, a horticultural trainee at the AALBG, to assist with his training expenses. The Trust was established in honour of Sir Thomas Playford, a former Premier of South Australia, and helps students at all levels further their study with more than 30 scholarships given each year. It is supported by the South Australian Government with an annual grant and receives donations and bequests. Ryan is very excited and pleased with his scholarship and is a deserving winner. There will be a formal presentation to Ryan later on in the year with Kate Delaporte, Professor Don Bursill and other members of the Trust coming to the AALBG at Port Augusta for the presentation.

Ryan Hayward

Centenary Chats

Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens Canberra, ACT

From top left: Robyn Archer launching Centenary Chats; the audience; Ian Warden; Walter Burley and Marion Mahony Griffin; Peter Ollerenshaw; *Correa* 'Canberra Bella'; Bonsai Pavilion at National Arboretum Canberra; front cover *First Fleet Artists*; Old Parliament House gardens; Botanical research at ANBG.

On 12 March 1913 Lady Denman, wife of the then Governor-General of Australia, announced that the new federal capital would be called Canberra. One hundred years later, the Centenary is the big story in Canberra, with people all over town working to ensure a memorable year.

The Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG) already run a popular weekly lunchtime talks program, the Thursday Talks, from February to the end of November. About a year ago the organising committee decided that a special series of lunchtime talks, known as the Centenary Chats, would be developed to mark the Canberra Centenary. These Chats are intended to reflect the monthly themes chosen by the Centenary of Canberra to celebrate a different aspect of Canberra. They began on 31 January and will run throughout the year with at least one, and sometimes several, Centenary Chats each month.

Plants are, of course, a key area of interest, often with an historical angle. Ian Warden of the *Canberra Times* gave the first Centenary Chat, speaking on a subject dear to his heart, Marion Mahony Griffin and her love of Australian native plants (and her presumed dislike of Floriade). His Chat was followed by one by Jocelyn Plovits on the National Arboretum Canberra which opened in February to realise Walter Burley Griffin's provision for a 'Continental Arboretum and Eventual Botanical Reserves'. And we have heard about the breeding of *Correa* 'Canberra Bells', the Centenary flower, by Peter Ollerenshaw, plus its depiction in artistic works. There are some beautiful gardens in Canberra, including the Old Parliament House Rose Gardens. So on 27 June volunteer Victoria Jones will talk about the history and design of this garden, planning for which began in the late 1920s.

On 2 May Linda Groom, who recently retired as Curator of Pictures at the National Library of Australia, will discuss botanical illustration in the First Fleet. And on 11 July, Professor Bill Gammage of the Australian National University will discuss the findings of his research on Aboriginal land management as published in his exciting new book, *The Biggest Estate on Earth*.

The ANBG gets a look-in too: on 6 June Friend of the ANBG and retired academic, Don Beer, will consider how a phrase on the winning design for Canberra led to the world's most comprehensive collection of Australian native plants. And on 1 August Dr Judy West, Executive Director of the ANBG, will explore the ANBG's contribution to science.

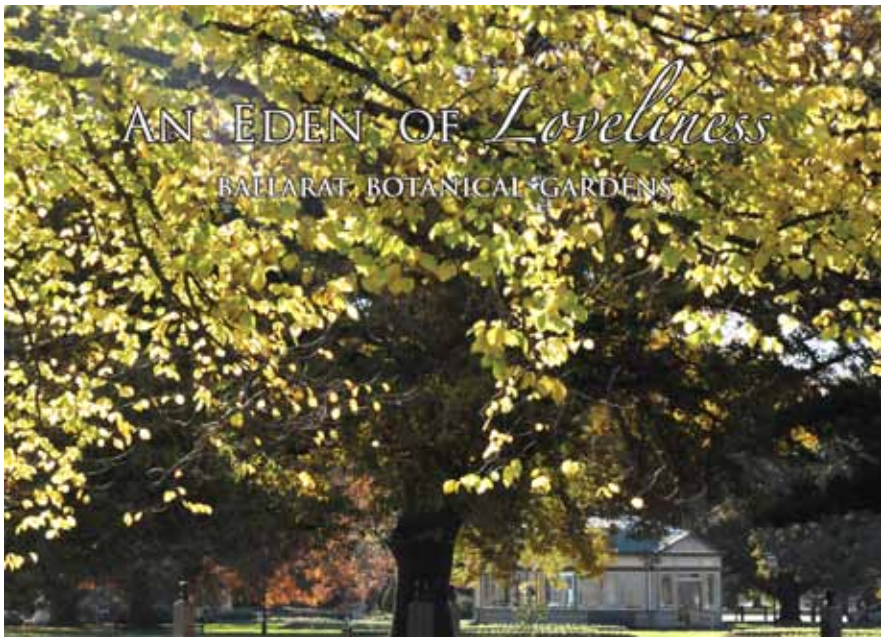
Our committee hopes that by year end we will have made a strong contribution to this important year in the life of our city with a varied and stimulating program.

Any interstate readers of *Campsis* are, of course, welcome to attend the Thursday Talks and Centenary Chats. The full details can be found on the Friends' website at www.friendsanbg.org.au under the Calendar.

Lesley Jackman

An Eden of Loveliness

Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens
Ballarat, Victoria



It was a very social occasion last 22 November as members, Friends and staff came together in the Robert Clark Conservatory to celebrate 30 years of the Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens with the launch of the book, *An Eden of Loveliness: the Ballarat Botanical Gardens, a Pictorial History*. It was published by the FBBG with financial contributions from several generous members and Friends as well as some assistance from the Garden History Society and the City of Ballarat.

Many thousands of volunteer hours researching the archives held at the Public Record of Victoria Ballarat Office by the small FBBG History Group went into the production. (This work is not yet complete). An enormous amount of community support from other associations, societies and individuals was received. Such support cannot be underestimated. The resulting database will continue to provide images and information for future projects and publications.

Guest speaker, Annette Zealley, Director of the Geelong Botanic Gardens, reminded those present of the role Botanic Gardens played and continue to play in bringing science and horticulture to the wider community. Gordon Morrison, Director of the Ballarat Art Gallery, spoke of the tandem path shared by the two major institutes in Ballarat.

The book, launched on the same day as *Rings in Time* by the Albury Botanic Gardens, marks another piece in the information jigsaw. The FBBG hopes many will add it to their shelves.

Significant Tree Register

Volunteer Guides at the Brisbane City Botanic Garden Brisbane, Queensland

The National Trusts of Australia are undertaking a project which will create, maintain and make public, within one national collection, a Register of all trees deemed significant according to selection criteria. The National Trusts Australia Significant Tree Register will feed information into a smart phone application which will enable people to locate significant trees as they travel, and provide information and images of the trees. The app will be a useful tool for educators and researchers and also serve to raise public awareness of trees as part of our living heritage. The National Trusts are interested in nominations of new trees from members of the community. Although many parks, gardens and reserves may be included on State Registers, their individual trees, many of which might fall into listed criteria, may not be included in the current Register. If you are interested in nominating significant trees from your region, please refer to the National Trust website on www.nationaltrust.org.au/ then log on to the relevant state. If it is a Queensland nomination, the process and criteria for nominations may be accessed at www.nationaltrust.org.au/qld/NTQTreeRegister.

As a Brisbane City Botanic Garden Guide, I noticed that, although the gardens were listed by National Trust Queensland, none of the significant trees in these gardens were on the Significant Tree Register. I set out to nominate many of these trees and subsequently created a Google map for the National Trust Queensland website which shows their location, has images and provides information. This map may be accessed on: http://maps.google.com.au/maps/ms?msid=207127039993702570972.0004a83eea78d7b14dcfc&msa=0 Below are some of the Brisbane City Botanic Gardens' significant trees you will find on the Google Map.

Margaret Munro

Araucaria columnaris

In 1868,Queen Victoria's son, Prince Albert. planted two of a proposed avenue of six Cook Pines linking Parliament House and the Brisbane River. Only one of these two trees remains and the avenue was never completed. This is the tallest tree in the gardens at over 35 meters.

Macadamia integrifolia

In 1858 trials began of the commercial potential of the Macadamia or Queensland Nut Tree. This tree survives these original plantings and is believed to be the first recorded planting by a Caucasian and the first commercially grown Macadamia Nut tree in the world.

Eucalyptus tereticornis

The existing large Blue Gums (Forest Red Gums) along the river bank are the last remnants of the area's original vegetation, predating convict settlement in 1825. The 'red' and 'blue' in its common names refer to the colour of its wood and its bark. The tree is commonly seen along the Brisbane River but is also found on hills and mountain ridges.

Araucaria bidwillii

This row of Bunya Pines was planted by curator Walter Hill between 1858 and 1867 to skirt the riverside walk to honour the death of a botanist friend, John Carne Bidwell, who is commemorated in the scientific name of these pines. Their characteristic beehive shape has been a recognisable feature of the Brisbane City skyline since these early years and can be seen in photographs from this time

Flowers worth waiting for

Friends of Burnley Gardens
Melbourne, Victoria

They say good things come to those that wait and this is certainly true of the Fire-wheel Tree.

The *Stenocarpus sinuatus*, in Burnley's Rainforest Garden, on the south-west side of the Oak Lawn, was planted in the early 90s (circa 1993) and has only just begun to flower, in any meaningful way, this year. Twenty years is certainly a long wait and requires a lot of patience!

This stunning tree hails from the coastal rainforests of northern New South Wales and its habitat extends up to the Atherton Tablelands in far north Queensland. This Proteaceous tree has the characteristic leaf shape and flower of the Family, with a tall and slender shape (up to 35 metres) that befits its rainforest emergence habitat. The amazingly intricate, bright red flower 'wheels' are easily seen from a distance and put on a fine display in late summer and early autumn, February and March. Burnley's Fire-wheel Tree was planted by Department of Agriculture staff, who worked next door at the now Botanica Corporate site, in memory of a fellow staff member who enjoyed and loved the Gardens.

So take a walk for yourself along the sawdust path in the Rainforest Garden and ponder the longevity and patience of this fine Australian tree.

Celebrating 150 years

Heritage listed Burnley Gardens were officially opened in 1863 and Australia's first school of horticulture was founded on the site in 1891. Burnley is a treasure loved by generations of former students and is a thriving home for horticulturists of the future. A series of one-day symposia, based on research done at the Burnley campus of Melbourne University, will celebrate the 150th birthday of the Gardens.

Edible Landscapes: challenges and opportunities for growing food in cities (Thursday 6 June)
– focusing on edible landscapes in parks, streets, schools and private gardens

Green Roofs and Walls for Sustainable Cities (Tuesday 30 July)
– utilising the expertise and facilities of Burnley's green infrastructure research centre

Contemporary Planting Design (Tuesday 10 September)
– keynote speaker is Professor James Hitchmough from University of Sheffield UK

Garden Landscapes: finding a new way (Tuesday 19 November)
–keynote speaker is Sarah Wain from West Dean Gardens, West Sussex, and former Burnley Gardens Manager

Andrew Smith, Burnley Gardens Co-ordinator

Guiding for the future

Friends of Christchurch Gardens
Christchurch, New Zealand

The forthcoming 13th Australasian Conference of Volunteer Guides in Botanic Gardens has the theme *Guiding for the Future* and we* are keen that the program have a major emphasis on the skills and techniques of guiding. The Conference will be held from Monday 28 October to Friday 1 November 2013(inclusive) in Christchurch, New Zealand. The year was chosen because 2013 is the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens.

The conference will open in the Chateau on the Park Hotel which will be used for registration and the evening functions. The indoor conference sessions will be at the Canterbury Horticultural Society (CHS) building in Hagley Park close to the Christchurch Hospital. And in the afternoons there will be guided walks in the Gardens.

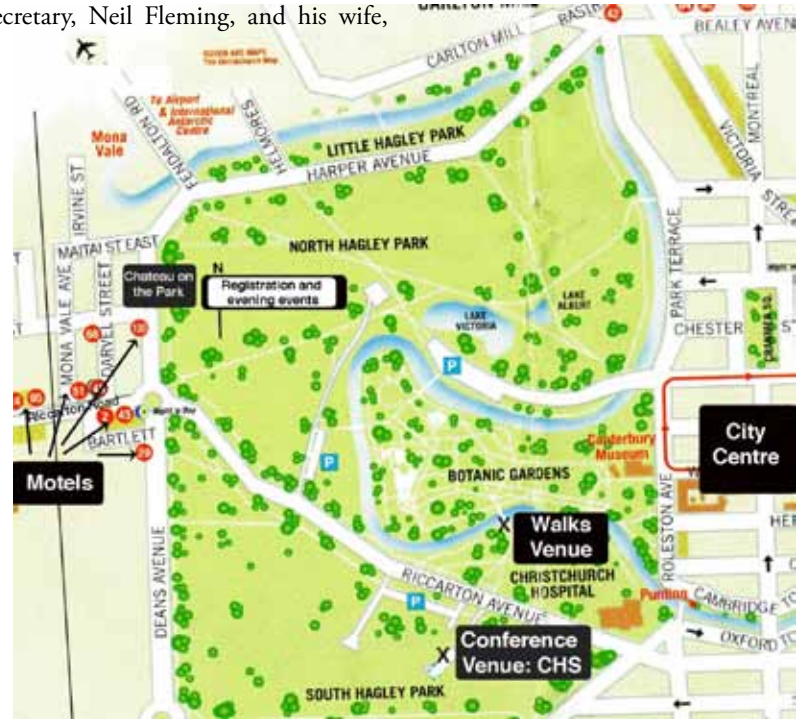
The program is still in draft form but it includes: cocktails on the opening afternoon and dinner on the Thursday night; four keynote speakers; four guided walks in the Botanic Gardens, your choice from a list of twelve walks; two 'breakout sessions' for smaller group discussions; and displays of bonsai, floral photography, botanical art and floral art.

There will be a choice of four daylong tours on Thursday morning: to wineries and gardens in North Canterbury; gardens, geology and French history at Akaroa; Arthurs Pass and the alps; and gardens in Christchurch and environs. And after the conference there is an eight-day tour which has to be booked and paid for separately. You can now book this tour by contacting the organiser and leader, Gail Scrivener, at *Travel To You Ltd* at gail.scrivener@xtra.co.nz. The tour travels through the southern half of the South Island and is an exciting venture packed with garden visits and tourist highlights. It will be limited to one luxury coach with 40 seats.

The planning group is working on the registration form and the online process that will host it. We aim to have it ready to go in mid-to-late April, six months before the conference begins. The website already has a host of other information including accommodation options. Remember to mention the Guides Conference when enquiring about accommodation with those providers who are holding rooms. That information is on the website too. The Conference website is at: http://gardenguides2013.org.au.

Neil Fleming

* Members of the the Planning Committee President, Alan Morgan, Secretary, Neil Fleming, and his wife, Faye Fleming.



Seeds, school kids and birds

Friends of the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens Batemans Bay, New South Wales

'The Nature Coast' is the slogan adopted by our local tourism industry. Hardly surprising, then, that Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens (ERBG) pursues conservation, education and recreation as a three-way mission, and that a significant project absorbing time and energy is the Regional Seed Bank.

We are in the midst of improving the drainage, insulation, power supply and vermin-proofing of the seed bank area. The room when finished will contain new microscopes, an amazing seed cleaning machine and purpose built shelving for storage and seed drying and a walk-in refrigeration unit. A modern facility that will serve the Gardens and the entire region for many years to come is quickly becoming a reality. At the same time we are up-grading our propagation facilities.

The schools program has started up again for the year. Over 450 local schoolchildren will spend a day at ERBG between March and June learning about propagation, seed recognition and biodiversity. This hands-on program, which cannot be taught as effectively in a classroom, reveals to children the importance of plants for sustaining life and it just may be the catalyst for a future botanist, scientist or environmentalist.

The ERBG's bird list runs to over 120 species and you are likely to see honeyeaters, robins, swamphens and finches, plus blue wrens searching for scraps at the café, or the Bassian Thrush hunting for insects in the understorey near the creek lines. The Friends intend to publish a new bird leaflet covering the 30-40 birds most likely to be seen which will satisfy everyone, from birders to general visitors to volunteers. Photos and data are being donated by the Eurobodalla Natural History Society (ENHS) and Friends will sift ERBG records for photos. Crucially important information about the habitat of the birds will be included.

Friends of ERBG were invited to share a recent meeting of ENHS held at the Gardens. Local residents Sarah and Michael Guppy have been closely observing breeding patterns of native birds on their 20 ha property near Moruya. Over six seasons they located 650 nests, of which half failed to produce young, despite containing eggs. In most cases these empty nests were undamaged. It took infra-red, motion sensing cameras to record 16 acts of predation and seven predators across 52 nests of nine species. No currawongs or ravens showed up, but the usual suspects included a Laughing Kookaburra, Collared Sparrowhawk and Brown Goshawk. Given the reputation of cuckoos, it was not surprising that a Fantail Cuckoo lived up to expectations; an Antechinus also added protein to its diet. And who would have thought that a dear little Sugar Glider would have been so cruel?

But it was the Eastern Whipbird which caused most intake of breath at the meeting. It was not just the fact that a bird thought to be shy should exhibit such malevolence, but the surgical precision with which the whipbird extracted the eggs, leaving the nest pristine, that surprised the audience of over 50 people. As far as Michael knows, no other records of such behaviour exist in Australia.

The Eastern Whipbird with its head in the nest

Welcome to Kirstenbosch

Friends of Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden Capetown, South Africa

Photo by Pam Knipe

Kirstenbosch's Centenary year is going from strength to strength with the volunteers participating to the full. Most of the celebrations can be viewed on the SANBI web site but this article will give you an idea of the activities of the Garden guides.

As part of our contribution to the Centenary celebrations we are leading special themed walks in the garden every Saturday at 10.00 am. The first Saturday of each month in 2013 we are doing a Centenary walk which traces the 100 years since the garden was founded on 1 July 1913. The walks have been very popular and attract a large enthusiastic group.(43 participants last week!) They are advertised to take two hours but always take longer! The other Saturdays we are offering the following themed walks.

1. What's in a Name? The meaning and history of plant naming.
2. Useful plants
3. Plant Adaptation
4. Swinging through the Trees... a forest walk
5. Pride of Scotland ...the Ericas
6. Fynbos
7. The Succulents
8. Restios
9. Proteas
10. Exotic Trees
11. Pollination
12. Edible fynbos.

We are also starting (this month) a walk entitled The Centenarians which deals with 32 plants in Kirstenbosch which all have a 100 year old history with the garden. Many of them have the 1913 accession number and are labelled as CENTENARIAN trees.

Pam Knipe

Ten years celebrated; challenges ahead

Friends of Lismore Rainforest Botanic Gardens
Lismore, New South Wales

We had a very successful tenth anniversary celebration when we marked National Tree Day last August. We planted an extension of the sunny slope with more flowering shrubs, and enjoyed a birthday cake cut by our Friend, Mayor Jenny Dowell, and now we are embarking on our next ten years, and I hope that we will have as much to show by then as we have for our first ten years.

Our first decade involved us in preparing and planting many overgrown areas, and I think we are rightly proud of what has been accomplished. As our Gardens mature, the work we must do changes – weed control, pruning, replacing plants which have not survived – all are part of our program now. We also have to consider removing plants which are growing in the wrong place or which have grown too large for their present position.

Entrance to Lismore Rainforest Botanic Garden.

Useful plants garden where many of the plants are still quite small.

This leads us to an interesting dilemma. We are dedicated to growing plants native to an area of about 200 km around Lismore. So what do we do with plants which are native to this area but which we consider are not appropriate for a Botanic Gardens. In some cases, we can deal easily with the offending plants. The native *Commelina cyanea* with its blue flowers, and the Native Geranium, *Geranium solanderi* with its pink flowers, could both very easily take over all our planting, especially our new areas. We have decided to remove them from our small, susceptible new plants, but to leave them in the older established parts, where they provide effective ground covers.

The pioneer tree species, *Macaranga tanarius,* shows its true nature as a pioneer species, and pops up all over the Gardens, and we have often had to remove a plant where it overgrows or overshadows a vulnerable plant. There are other fine examples of this species. Other plants which have occasionally been removed include many of the native sedges and the Bullrush or Cumbungi *Typha angustifolia*, in damper areas of the Gardens.

But removing larger plants will require serious consideration. In this category come the two Giant Stinging Trees *Dendrocnide excelsa* which have self sown (probably courtesy of the local birds) close beside the path in the Wilson Park Garden. A third tree is to be found nearby, but further from the path, and is not a cause for concern. We did not plant any of these trees, but they are certainly found in the nearby Wilson Park Nature Reserve, close to the Gardens. However, they are growing fast, and promise to be very large and potentially dangerous additions to our Gardens. We feel these trees are a cause for serious concern.

Meanwhile, the work in the Gardens goes on. The Wednesday work group continues to add to the beauty of the Gardens; we still have a 'temporary' nursery cared for by Rose; and we are watching with interest the building of the Environmental Education Centre, which we hope will be a useful addition to the Gardens.

Jan De Nardi

Year long birthday celebrations

Friends of Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens
Mackay, Queensland

Interpretive sign on Lagoons deck. Photo by Robin McWhinney.

Meryl explaining tree growth over ten years. Photo by John Atkinson.

We are celebrating our tenth birthday – all year! Rather than have one large event, we are planning signature events for each month. The first event in February was the unveiling of three new interpretive signs installed on the Lagoon Lookout deck – *Beyond the Green, From Then until Now* and *You are Standing on a Sepal.* These were gifted to the Gardens by the Friends and have proved to be a great success as they welcome visitors on arrival and entice them to discover more and explore. The unveiling was followed by a guided walk to the Eulamere Boardwalk exploring the plants and creatures which live on the edge of the lagoon.

Early in March we held a Friends guided walk in the Gardens – *Then and Now* – with a photographic display showing what the area and bare garden beds looked like before the planting started, compared with lush photos of how it looks today, vastly different and much more attractive. It was amazing to look back through the many images to see how much we've grown in such a comparatively short time. Sometimes it's good to stop and take stock as the incremental changes that occur slowly over time are easily missed.

The first Friends planting bee in March was to have been the start of planting 1,000 Mat Rushes *Lomandra* spp. on the banks of the lagoon in the Meadowlands sector, a hundred plants for each of the ten years. Meadowlands is the newest sector of the Gardens, with the lagoon edge amphitheatre almost completed. Some landscaping of trees and mass swathes of Mat Rush is being undertaken, but most will need to wait till the infrastructure (irrigation etc) is installed later this year or in years to come. Meadowlands is by far the largest area of the Gardens and will house only plants native to the Central Queensland Coast bioregion in which Mackay is situated. The planting bee was postponed as heavy rain made the ground along the lagoon edge too wet. However, planting occurred on 23 March in the Ethno-Botany garden bed instead, adding many more plants with medicinal properties, used by Australia's traditional owners and early settlers, to our living collection.

May will see the unveiling of the Garden's very first children's book, a unique story written and illustrated by three Gardens Friends about our *Bungy Jumping Caterpillars* (the caterpillar of the North Queensland Day Moth that is often seen hanging from the vulnerable plant species Tree Omphalea *Omphalea celata* on their spun silken threads). This will be followed by a special birthday party in the Gardens for ten year olds in June and various other exciting events, big and small, later in the year.

If you are coming to, or passing through Mackay, please contact us. We'd love to show you around our young and very special Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens.

Robin McWhinney, Secretary

Moving towards 10th birthday

Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden
North-west of Melbourne, Victoria

Eucalypt understory and a large bat box. Photos by John Bentley

The Melton Botanic Garden (MBG) has seen many significant achievements during the past year in both the development of the garden and its promotion. Friends of MBG heartily welcomed Jane Edmanson OAM in March 2012 as Patron of the Friends of the Garden.

Also in March Melton hosted the BGANZ Victorian Branch Network meeting where we met 75 participants from botanic gardens around Victoria. We had a morning of presentations, then lunch sponsored by Western Land Services, an FMBG corporate member, followed by a tour of the Garden. This was a great coup for Melton and Friends and will go even further in promoting the MBG.

In April we commenced replacement and new planting of over 120 eucalypts in the Eucalyptus Arboretum while the Gumnuts group and the CVGT Work Experience Activity team planted understory plants including 100 mature flowering eremophilas, donated from a nursery in Heyfield. The indigenous grasslands area was seeded and the CVGT team fenced the area. The Creekers group continued the work along the Ryans Creek Indigenous revegetation section of the garden. With the aid of a $16,000 grant from Melbourne Water, the Lakers group commenced rehabilitation stage 1 with initial weed removal by a contractor followed by Indigenous plantings along the embankment. We have also received a further Melbourne Water grant to continue onto stage 2 during 2013.

On the environmental side 30 bat boxes were installed high up in existing trees by Adam and Josh from Powercor. Fifteen of the boxes are larger and very heavy for winter hibernation; the smaller boxes are for summer. Unfortunately we have been advised that it may be two years before we see any bats using the boxes.

The building of the Garden depot shed has been a great achievement, enabling us to have a base with toilets, a small kitchen, an area for working and meetings and storage for equipment and trailers. Two 30,000L water tanks, donated by Melton City Council and connected by Dave Peters the Depot Project Manager, are now collecting rainwater from the shed roof. The depot is now the base from which FMBG volunteers and the two CVGT teams operate from for their work in the Garden. A nursery area with a shade house will be built inside the depot fenced area. This will be for volunteers and the CVGT teams to undertake propagation in 2013. Eventually it is intended to grow as many plants for the Garden as we can, and also to sell to the public.

In December FMBG members and Trudy Martin from Melton City Council met with Chris Cole, then Director of RBG Melbourne Gardens Division, and Michael McNabb, Manager Horticulture RGBM. We hosted a tour of the botanic garden followed by morning tea and a discussion about the group and its working with the community and council.

It was a notable year in 2012 and we look forward to an even bigger year in 2013 as we celebrate 10 years of FMBG and hold an Open Day on Sunday 15 September.

Alan Partridge

The National Arboretum is open!

Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra
Canberra, ACT

The much-awaited Dawn Opening Ceremony was held on 1 February and Mother Nature was unbelievably co-operative. The ceremony began at 5:45 am and a little later the clouds on the eastern horizon were edged in gold. The new visitor centre has full length glass on the eastern facade, so while many distinguished speakers delivered their orations, those of us fortunate enough to attend (200 from the Friends and about 500 in all) were able to watch a wonderful sunrise unfold. Then when the sun broke through, huge flocks of birds rose up from around Parliament House, as if part of the plan.

An Opening Festival was held for the public the following day when around 16,500 people caught free buses to the site and 150 Friends' volunteers helped the event run very smoothly. The weather was windy but this favoured the kite-flying display which operated from the large Amphitheatre, now covered in lush turf and mowed in curved 'stripes'. This made a wonderful backdrop for the colourful 'professional' kites and for many others made by children in the kite tent. Other activities included terrarium-making, guided walks, bus tours, talks, live music, exploring the visitor centre along with its interactive displays, and of course seeing the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia which had just moved from its temporary home in Commonwealth Park. The new bonsai pavilion (adjacent to the visitor centre) is purpose-built and truly magnificent, as are its exhibits. The walk guides were all members of the Friends (some of the 110 that have trained to be Arboretum guides).

The Arboretum has been open to the public everyday since 3 February and will be open all days except Christmas day. So far everyone connected with the project has been amazed by the huge number of visitors, estimated to be around 45,000 for the month of February, including those that came to the Festival.

The record-breaking high temperatures of January stressed some young trees but good rains have seen most recover and maintain steady growth. All the young trees can be irrigated if necessary and because this Arboretum was conceived during a drought, rainwater is conserved wherever possible. Our large dam, which you can see in the above photo, holds 37.2 megalitres and water from the dam can be pumped up to an underground reservoir on Dairy Farmers Hill (where you see mature trees). Another dam is under construction towards the back of the site and many 10,000 litre plastic tanks are located on the edges of forests.

The areas around the zig-zag path are set aside for ceremonial tree plantings and to date 31 trees have been planted there, mostly near the top of the hill.

The Arboretum is still very much a work in progress (and probably always will be to some degree). The few remaining vacant lots are expected to be planted during the remaining months of 2013.

Linda Muldoon, Publications Editor

A savage summer

Friends of North Coast Regional Botanic Garden Coffs Harbour, NSW

This has been a particularly savage summer in Coffs Harbour and environs. Far too much water and high winds have brought about considerable damage and woe to the workers in our Botanic Garden, and it will be many months before we are 'back to normal'. With all the clearing up to do, work on other projects has stalled, which is very frustrating, and a couple of events had to be moved elsewhere, which of course hits the Friends in the wallet!

The first storm was the tropical cyclone that drifted down the east coast from Cairns to Sydney. We had heavy rain and wind, but the Garden escaped with relatively minor damage. Then the big one hit with a vengeance! Tree roots loosened by the rain could not anchor the trees and many simply uprooted, in one case a domino effect of three trees falling together. Ah well, the woodworkers are happy with the spoils of damage, and we will not have to purchase mulch for a while!

Our Garden has become hugely popular as a venue for events. For the first time we celebrated Australia Day in the Garden, with new citizens receiving certificates, and plenty of food and entertainment for our 600 visitors.

Harmony (multicultural) day was a huge success in March. Entertainment from a variety of the 70 plus ethnic groups living in Coffs Harbour, excellent food and plenty of entertainment for the kids. The Friends are involved, both in the planning and the running of most of these events. We always have a sausage sizzle and the cafe is open for business on the day. Then there are donations collected and a raffle of plants propagated by our teams of volunteers. Yes, it is hard work, but also great for camaraderie amongst the Friends, and a certain amount of rivalry to see which section brings in the most bucks! Every cent earned by the Friends goes towards growing and maintaining the Garden and its infrastructure.

We have a busy two months ahead. There is a strong push to finish the Japanese Garden in time for a large contingent from our sister city of Sasebo in Japan to visit in June. The Rotary Clubs of Coffs Harbour and Sawtell have combined to contribute cash and labour towards this venture, and the Men's Shed are rebuilding parts of the bridge over the lake, and the surrounds for the new contemplation room. Truly a community project. Much of this should be finished in time for the Japanese Festival of Children on the first Sunday in May. This is always a big event, attended last year by about 5000 people.

In April, 'Head Space' celebrates Youth Week in the Garden, and they have plenty of entertainment for teenagers. Primarily there will be information tents helping youngsters at risk or with mental health problems. Run by Counsellors, Aboriginal support groups, and teenagers themselves, this will be a valuable community event. Fortunately we have a fairly secluded picnic area with a stage in which to hold this as there are some fairly noisy rock bands coming!

Please visit our newly refurbished website at www.ncrbg.org.au – it is looking splendid!

Eve Colley

Welcome to Director, Tim Entwisle

Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne Melbourne, Victoria

Professor Tim Entwisle took up his appointment as Director and Chief Executive of the Royal Botanic Gardens on 4 March and, with his wife, joined the Friends on his first day at work. His first official RBG engagement – attending a Friends' New Members Welcome 10 days later – signalled a close relationship with us.

As a botany student at Melbourne University, Tim had some holiday jobs at the Gardens. Subsequently he worked at the National Herbarium during the 1990s, co-editing and contributing to *Flora of Victoria*. Sitting well within Tim's scientific background was his growing interest in management, which came to the fore when he moved to Sydney in 1998. As Executive Director of the Botanic Gardens Trust his communication skills were valuable for regular media appearances. (He is also an inveterate blogger and tweeter.)

The next career move was to London where Tim spent two years as Director of Conservation, Living Collections and Estates, at Royal Botanic Gardens Kew. One very interesting responsibility was the Millennium Seed Bank. Now Tim brings all this wonderful experience, together with his infectious enthusiasm, home to Melbourne. He has been warmly welcomed.

The Friends conferred Honorary Life Membership on Dr Philip Moors to mark his retirement as Director. He was also made an Officer (AO) in the Order of Australia in the Australia Day honours list. In April Phil presented to the Friends an illustrated talk about his post-retirement trip to Heard Island.

The allure of Paris gardens attracted a full house for an illustrated talk by Lynsey Poore to the Friends in February – so much so that an unprecedented repeat was presented in March.

Our annual meeting was an occasion for recognition and rewards:

- Voluntary service awards were given for continuous service to the Friends: six for 10 years; two for 15 years; four for 20 years and one for 30 years
- Three Friends Scholarships were awarded to enable RBGM staff to expand their skills
- The recipients of the second Friends Helen McLellan Research Grant will explore the influence on home gardeners of the Australian Garden at RBG Cranbourne.

Photo by Jennifer Marshall

Nature delivered a fantastic Christmas gift to the Gardens with the blooming of the rare *Amorphophallus titanum* (Titan Arum) in the Tropical Glasshouse; it had been tended for seven years by nursery staff. More than 20,000 people queued for up to two and a half hours to view the spectacular short-lived inflorescence (cluster of flowers). Friends were among the many volunteers who helped manage the crowds.

The Arum spectacle is over, but there's a surprising new attraction in the Bamboo Forest of the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden: a 630 kg, 1.6 metre elephant! It was one of 50 sculptures displayed around Melbourne to celebrate the Zoo's 150th anniversary, and was purchased by the Foundation to focus on the situation of endangered species.

Heather Ironmonger

Go with the times!

Friends of Stony Range Regional Botanic Garden
Dee Why, NSW

Our regional Botanic Garden that grows and displays native flora and in particular local sandstone flora, at the seaside Sydney suburb of Dee Why has been host to a most modern type of 'treasure hunt' organised by imaginative youngsters. It seems to have been going on since April 2008 under our very eyes, without us discovering it until now.

Using their electronic phones, i-what nots and GPS position finders participants are encouraged to find a cleverly camouflaged ice cream box in which they find a notebook, a pen, and some small toys. They note their find in the notebook, then take one of the toys and add another of their own for the next searchers to find. Returning it they then go on to their next hunt elsewhere.

The box is covered with rough mock sandstone cement finish to match the sandstone rocks that feature in Stony Range, and under which it is hidden from casual visitors. We were delighted to find it by chance and we encourage such imaginative use of new fangled electronics that we older volunteers often tend to scoff at.

We have since discovered that this game is called 'geocaching' and that it is a worldwide endeavor. We are also very happy that Stony Range has been chosen as a venue for this exciting game that gets people outside in Nature having fun while sharpening their wits. Look it up in Google typing in 'geocaching', and find out where these 'treasures' are hidden in Australia.

Part of Stony Range is a little steep, it having been a road base quarry in its early days, more then 50 years ago. A new 'Sensory Track' on the lower level section has just been finished which is also accessible for wheel-chairs. It also has a cool rainforest section that includes a 'bush tucker' area and a thriving nursery where we grow our own plants from seed or cuttings. Our plants are also for general sale here on Tuesday mornings and Saturday afternoons, when the volunteers do their maintenance work.

Being situated in the middle of suburbia it is an ideal area for busy people to get an idea what the Australian bush is all about. There is a shaded picnic ground with free barbeque facilities and water, and also a small area with a stage where modest functions can be booked.

When in Sydney you must try and visit our Garden, it will be well worth your while. It is on the main high-way toward the Northern peninsula and Palm Beach. Admission is free and it is open during daylight hours every day except Christmas day and New Years' day. Look us up on Google typing in 'Stony Range'.

Andre Porteners

We need more members!

Friends of Tamworth Regional Botanic Garden
Tamworth, New South Wales

It looks like 2013 must be the year of membership development for the Friends of Tamworth Regional Botanic Garden. We have a small number of members who regularly attend working bees and events, and some who maintain financial memberships only, however, dwindling numbers of members continues to be an issue and was one of the items discussed at our first committee meeting of the year. It is becoming a struggle to fill positions at the annual general meeting, with current members usually agreeing to continue in their positions to maintain a committee. The AFBG information kit contains some very helpful suggestions, so we will be consulting that for some ideas.

The laser engraving machine purchased in 2011 has proved very successful. We are now producing our own durable coloured plant labels, mounted on steel spikes, which are being installed progressively throughout the garden beds. It has also been used to produce basic signs for use throughout the gardens and by other groups in Victoria Park. As the operators become more proficient, we will be able to proceed to more detailed designs for other applications. Unfortunately, the cost of insurance for the machine was prohibitive given our limited budget. Consequently, it will be moved from its current location in our kiosk to one of the more secure administration buildings within the garden complex as soon as possible.

The Threatened Species program being undertaken jointly by the Friends and the Tamworth Australian Plants Society continues. An autumn working bee has been scheduled when more plants which have been propagated locally will be put in. Original plantings have shown good growth. Weed control is an ongoing necessity.

Our major project for this year will be what we have called 'The Asian Garden Project'. Funds to start with have been received from a generous private donation of $10,000, plus $4,000 grant money from the local council along with additional funds committed by the council. A local company operating a zeolite mine has also donated zeolite slabs to be used for pathways. It will involve landscaping around our dam and its hillsides with selected asian conifers that can cope with the climatic conditions here. Unfortunately the dam which was sealed nearly two years ago so that the area could be developed, has been leaking which has led to delays whilst solutions to the problem are pondered. However, we are still able to build an oriental inspired gazebo overlooking the area and commence some planting on surrounding areas until this issue is resolved. Council horticultural staff are in the process of drawing up a design plan for planting up the remaining 'vacant' areas within the Garden. This will be a long term guide for future use. The Friends agree this is an important requirement to avoid unsuitable species being planted, without consultation to a plan of any sort.

Current problems include loss of our nursery stock due mainly to drying out, pretty much all the time and not just during hot weather. As we purchase most of these as tube stock for potting on, it is a major cost to us. Council staff are to erect a shade cloth roof over our plant tables, and ensure that automatic watering systems are not interfered with. Meanwhile, we have to keep most of our plants in a shade house. Availability of members to assist with our three half-day plant sales per month at the garden nursery compound is stretched, but it continues to be a regular source of income.

We plan to hold our next Open Day in conjunction with the Model Engineers miniature train running day (adjacent to the Botanic Garden) and holding it on a Sunday seemed to result in more visitors and increased sales last time, so we will be doing this again. Competition with other events, poor publicity, and unfavourable weather for gardening are some of the things we seem to be up against, but we continue to raise funds which enable us to contribute to the development of the Botanic Garden.

Christine Reeves

There's magic under the Golden Elm

Friends of the Williamstown Botanic Gardens
Williamstown, Victoria

Special things happen under the Golden Elm in the Williamstown Botanic Gardens. On the last Friday of the month, picnic rugs and prams start appearing on the lawn. There's laughter and chatter as parents greet each other, their children sit under the boughs of the Golden Elm waiting with eager faces for a special treat. Will there be teddy bears, giant frogs or a singing ant?

'Storytime under the Elm' program was initiated by the Friends in partnership with Hobsons Bay Libraries, and has attracted an enormous response from parents and children from across the region. In its third season, it is now on the 'must-do' list of parents—at least 250 parents and children attending in the warmer months.

Each session begins with a children's book read aloud by Anja Lee, who developed the Storytime concept and has been a keen driver for this event. Then everyone joins in fun songs played by Russell Barrett also from the libraries. Afterwards, children participate in a gentle craft activity with the help of the Friends Group. Each Storytime is planned with themes relevant to nature. Of course there's the 'The Hungry Caterpillar', a 'Teddy Bears' Picnic', 'Kookaburra (sits in the old gum tree)' and even the classic dreamtime story of 'Tiddilik' (the thirsty frog) which is very appropriate to our refurbished ornamental lake. Tiddilik must have laughed recently!

Using rhymes and songs, our storyteller always reminds the children (and their parents) to respect the Gardens by staying on the paths, leaving flowers for others to enjoy and taking rubbish home. The Friends have produced a 'Code of Conduct for Children' in the Gardens which emphasises these important aspects in positive language.

The Friends are keen to see 'Storytime' continue and a grant from Council has allowed us to buy cushions, folding tables and a first aid kit. Hobsons Bay Libraries are now taking outdoor story times to Altona and Laverton for 2012-13.

Of course any activity conducted in a botanic garden must be low impact as well as spreading the enjoyment of the garden to all the community. Below are some quotes that confirm we are ticking the boxes:

> '... A very busy morning in the gardens and everyone smiling!! Lovely feedback from parents so we have a WINNER! Gentle on the garden, short time frame, little effort from all (especially garden staff)...we love it! ...' Shelley Wood, Curator Williamstown Botanic Gardens.
>
> '... It has been fantastic to see this event develop and flourish and you should all be very proud of what you achieved. It is great to see the Gardens being used in this manner and to get a turnout like you achieved recently is fantastic to see and proves that it is all worthwhile... ' Ian Brown, Manager Parks, Hobsons Bay City Council.

Special things happen under the Golden Elm. It reaches out to everyone from its prominent position in Williamstown Botanic Gardens with grace, beauty and something else ... maybe magic?

Paint Out in the Park

Friends of Wilson Botanic Park
Berwick, Victoria

From left: People's Choice Winner, Tony Purcell at work on his painting; participating artist enjoying a lunch break – sausages in rolls with coleslaw and a drink were provided for participants by the Friends; Cr Mick Moreland, Mayor Cr Amanda Stapledon and participating artist with her work.

Wilson Botanic Park in Berwick was for years a quarry. Many of the local roads were constructed using its bluestone. Quarrying ceased in the 1970s and the late George Wilson made a gift of two massive holes in the ground and the surrounding land, somewhere around 97 acres, to the people of Berwick to be made into a park, to be kept in perpetuity. The council acquired further adjacent land and George's vision of a botanic park began to take shape. A group of Friends was formed to support the council in its endeavours. There have been a few hiccups but with dogged determination by those who supported the dream Wilson Botanic Park is today a beautiful addition to the City of Casey.

After 23 years the Friends of Wilson Botanic Park continue to promote the Park and support the council where ever possible. It is an active group, the committee meeting monthly with a working bee on the third Saturday of the month, several fundraisers and a number of social events. The frienships forged as a result of working together are invaluable to us.

The busy time for the Friends is spring and summer usually starting with a fashion parade (a major fund raiser) where local traders show men's and women's clothing; several dinners and picnics; and this year, for the first time, a Paint Out in the Park. It was held on 26 January and was a great success. The weather cleared to a lovely day and 24 artists set up their easels in the park. Lunch was served and prizes were awarded at afternoon tea—$500 first prize to Wendy Lindrea and $200 Peoples' Choice to Tony Pucell. We are hoping to make this an annual event as it was such a positive experience and enjoyed by everyone. This year, too, the council is organising a performance of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* over six nights. We have our fingers crossed for good weather.

Wilson Botanic Park is very much a work in progress but on looking back at videos made in its early days one can appreciate the development that has taken place. When spending time there, either for organised events or just walking the dog along the many paths, many of us feel that it is truly the jewel in Casey's crown. If you get a chance pay us a visit. If you live locally come and join the group. You won't be disappointed.

Lynne MacDonald, President

From left: participating artist, Cr Mick Moreland, Kay Moreland, Mayor Cr Amanda Stapledon and Cr Susan Serey meeting the artists; paintings displayed for judging; winner of the $500 first prize Wendy Lindrea (L) with her entry and Linda Oesler, another participating artist.

Members of Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens Inc

ACT

Australian National Botanic Gardens, Friends of. GPO Box 1777, Canberra ACT 2601.
National Arboretum Canberra, Friends of. PO Box 48, Campbell ACT 2612.

New South Wales

Albury Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 1056, Albury NSW 2640.
Botanic Gardens Sydney, Foundation and Friends of. Cottage 6, Mrs Macquaries Road, Sydney NSW 2000. Burrendong Arboretum, PO Box 465, Wellington NSW 2820.
Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 1068, Batemans Bay NSW 2536.
Lismore Rainforest Botanic Garden, Friends of. PO Box 1327, Lismore NSW 2480.
Moama Echuca Botanic Gardens. PO Box 545, Moama NSW 2731.
North Coast Regional Botanic Garden, Friends of. PO Box 648, Coffs Harbour NSW 2450.
Orange Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 17, Orange NSW 2800.
Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 707, Bowral NSW 2577.
Stony Range Regional Botanic Garden, Advisory Committee. 369 Pittwater Rd, Dee Why NSW 2099.
Tamworth Regional Botanic Garden, Friends of. PO Box 1393, Tamworth NSW 2340.

Northern Territory

Darwin Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 36435, Winnellie NT 0821.

Queensland

Brisbane Botanic Gardens Volunteer Guides. Mt Coot-tha Botanic Gardens, Mt Coot-tha Road, Toowong QLD 4066. Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 5653, Gold Coast Mail Centre, QLD 9726.
Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens. Friends Association. PO Box 6850, Mackay Mail Centre QLD 4741.
Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 445, Buderim, QLD 4556.
Peacehaven Botanic Park, Friends of. 30 Sunray Drive, Highfields QLD 4352.
Tamborine Mountain Botanic Gardens, Forsythia Drive, Eagle Heights, QLD 4272

South Australia

Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden, Friends of. PO Box 2040, Port Augusta SA 5700.
Botanic Gardens of Adelaide, Friends of. North Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000.

Tasmania

Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, Friends of. C/o RTBG, Domain Road, Hobart TAS 7008.
Tasmanian Arboretum, PO Box 370, Devonport TAS 7310.

Victoria

Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton, Friends of. PO Box 6912, Shepparton VIC 3632.
Australian Inland Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 2809, Mildura VIC 3502.
Ballarat Botanical Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 33W, Ballarat West VIC 3350.
Benalla Botanical Gardens & Riverine Parkland, Friends of. PO Box 589, Benalla VIC 3672.
Bendigo Botanic Garden, Friends of. PO Box 117, Strathdale VIC 3550.
Buninyong Botanic Gardens, Friends of. 102 Cornish St, Buninyong Vic 3357.
Burnley Gardens, Friends of. C/o Burnley College, 500 Yarra Boulevard, Richmond VIC 3121.
Castlemaine Botanical Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 391, Castlemaine VIC 3450.
Colac Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 403, Colac, VIC 3250.
Geelong Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 235, Geelong VIC 3220.
George Pentland Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 490, Frankston, VIC 3199.
George Tindale Memorial Garden, Friends of. 2/92 Main St, Upwey VIC 3158.
Gisborne Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 564, Gisborne VIC 3437.
Grampians Flora Botanic Gardens Group. C/o M. Sietsma, 146 Grampians Rd, Halls Gap VIC 3381.
Hamilton Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 43, Hamilton VIC 3300.
Karwarra Australian Plant Garden, Friends of. Mt Dandenong Tourist Rd, Kalorama VIC 3766.
Kyneton Botanical Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 47, Kyneton VIC 3444.
Malmsbury Botanic Gardens & Environs, Friends of. PO Box 116, Malmsbury VIC 3446.
Melton Botanic Gardens, Friends of. C/o PO Box 2381, Melton South VIC 3338.
Port Fairy Botanical Gardens, Friends of. 115 Regent St, Port Fairy VIC 3284.
Queen Mary Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 146, St Arnaud VIC 3478.
Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne, Friends of. 1000 Bullarto Rd. Cranbourne VIC 3977.
Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, Friends of. Gate Lodge, 100 Birdwood Avenue, Melbourne VIC 3004.

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Sale Botanical Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 506, Sale VIC 3850.
St Kilda Botanical Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 1089, Elwood LPO VIC 3184.
Warrnambool Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 1190, Warrnambool VIC 3280.
Williamstown Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 826, Williamstown VIC 3016.
Wilson Botanic Park, Friends of. PO Box 412, Berwick VIC 3806.
Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 267, Daylesford VIC 3460.

Western Australia

Kings Park, Friends of KPBG. Fraser Ave. Kings Park, West Perth WA 6005.

Affiliate Members

Christchurch Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 2553, Christchurch 8140 New Zealand.
Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden, Friends of. Wynberg NU (2), Cape Town 7800 South Africa.

Calendar of events

Fascination of Plants Day, 18 May 2013. Join BGANZ and celebrate Fascination of Plants Day by photographing a plant that is special or important. Go to www.bganz.org.au

Australian Plants Society National Conference Saturday 10 to Friday 16 August at Sunshine Coast, Queensland. For details see: http://anpsa.org.au/whatson.html

Australasian Native Orchid Society 7th National Show and Conference, 21 –25 August, Brisbane.

Garden History 34th annual National Conference 17 – 21 October, Arnidale, NSW.

6th Biennial BGANZ Congress and 5th BGCI Global Botanic Gardens Congress, a joint event on Sunday 20 - Friday 25 October 2013 at Dunedin, NZ. Go to www.bganz.org.au and www.bgci.org for details

Australasian Voluntary Guides in Botanic Gardens Conference on Monday 28 October to Friday 1 November at Christchurch, New Zealand.

For all regional BGANZ events, go to:
www.bganz.org.au

The Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens. The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens Committee. Neither the Association Committee nor the Association members accepts responsibility for statement or opinions expressed, although every effort will be made to publish reliable information.

Websites worth visiting

Visit our website:
<www. friendsbotanicgardens.org>

Contact website editor to list your events or add garden photos to the members' gallery:
<info@WordsWorthcommunicating.com>

BGANZ on line Newsletter – *The Botanic Garden*
www.bganz.org.au/newsletter

Botanic Gardens Conservation International
http://bgci.org/resources/news

Garden Plant Conservation Association of Australia
www.gpcaa.com

Weeds Australia
www.weeds.org.au

Australian Native Plants Society
http://asgap.org.au

Significant Tree Registers – there are a number of State and local registers
Search: Significant Trees

Australian Open Garden Scheme:
www.opengarden.org.au

Fungimap:
www.rbg.vic.gov.au/fungimap/home

Plants for the Planet:
www.plantsfortheplanet.com