

Celebrating and Recruiting Volunteers

Botanic Gardens Week 2026

IDEAS AND TOOLS FOR FRIENDS OF BOTANIC GARDENS



The BGANZ sponsored Botanic Gardens Week 18-24 May 2026 is an ideal opportunity to celebrate the work of the Friends and volunteers in botanic gardens and to recruit new volunteers. This week also happens to be National Volunteer Week which is sponsored by Volunteering Australia. In 2026 the Botanic Garden Week theme celebrates the health and well-being benefits of botanic gardens for all garden visitors. The same goes for volunteers working in the garden.

AAFBG encourages every member to join with their garden management authority to use the BGANZ Media Kit to celebrate Botanic Gardens Week in 2026:

1. To offer activities which highlight how the botanic garden is good for everyone's health.
2. To celebrate what Friends and volunteers do in the garden and to promote volunteering and the health and wellbeing benefits for garden volunteers.

The BGANZ Media Kit has all the key messages, templates for using the Botanic Gardens Week graphics, and a range of guided and self-guided activity ideas.

AAFBG offers additional ideas and tools for making the most of the week to celebrate the work of volunteers and to recruit more. See some ideas overpage. More details and guides are in a new AAFBG Resource: "Attracting and Supporting Members and Volunteers for Friends of Botanic Gardens".



DID YOU KNOW? Volunteering is good for you!

Studies of people volunteering in a range of roles, not just for botanic gardens, have found that volunteering greatly improves mental and physical health. The benefits include reduced mortality and improved physical function in older adults, especially for those who volunteer over 100 hours per year (about 2 hours/week). Volunteering also fosters social connection and helps to reduce stress, especially for younger people and for people of all ages.

Studies by: Australian Institute of Family Studies 2023, US National Institutes for Health 2020.

CELEBRATING AND RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

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Botanic Gardens Week 18-24 May 2026

Gather some good quality photos of your volunteers at work with quotes and stories for use in all of the activities listed below. See the AAFBG Resource for tips on gathering good photos.

Organise a Volunteer Information Stall at the botanic garden – with large photos, volunteer quotes and stories about what volunteers do and the benefits for the community.

INFORMATION STALL CHECKLIST

- Big banner: “Volunteering in the Botanic Garden” above the large photos and stories
- Volunteer role descriptions – including the training and support provided and other benefits
- Easy to find volunteer registration forms and a QR code to a volunteering page on a website.
- Display some show and tell items such as native plants, flowers, learning resources.
- Brief one-line quotes from volunteers are often useful and impactful as well as stories (which are also helpful and encouraging).

Post a series of volunteer stories on your social media pages and website in the lead up to Botanic Gardens Week to highlight volunteer roles and what is being achieved in the botanic garden for the wider benefit of garden visitors. Promote a Volunteer Open Day event using these stories.

Organise a Volunteer Open Day event during Botanic Gardens Week as a special tour of the botanic garden to meet volunteers and see what they do.

VOLUNTEER OPEN DAY CHECKLIST

- Organise a day when volunteers in a variety of roles can work in the garden at the same time and develop a special tour around these activities.
- Advertise the event using flyers, social media and website posts and local media stories.
- Ensure how to register as a member/volunteer information is readily available!

Submit a story to local media about Botanic Gardens Week to promote the Volunteer Open Day special tours and other activities for garden visitors drawn from the BGANZ Media Kit. Include in the story the health and wellbeing benefits of volunteering. Highlight how the Volunteer Open Day offers anyone considering to volunteer the chance to experience the variety of roles on offer.

Organise a special event for your volunteers to celebrate their work and encourage current volunteers to bring their family and friends. The event might include a special activity such as a “Rejuvenation Walk”, “Awe Walk” “Sensory Garden Walk” or “Medicinal Plants Walk” (see the BGANZ Media Kit). Offer refreshments with information easily available on how to volunteer.

MORE RESOURCES

- For more details on these ideas and tools, and on inducting and supporting new volunteers, download the free AAFBG Resource: “Attracting and Supporting Members and Volunteers for Friends of Botanic Gardens” from the AAFBG Website: <https://friendsbotanicgardens.org>
- For BGANZ updates and information on Botanic Gardens Week: <https://www.bganz.org.au/news-events/botanic-gardens-week/>
- For information about National Volunteers Week and other resources on volunteering: <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/get-involved/nationalvolunteerweek/>