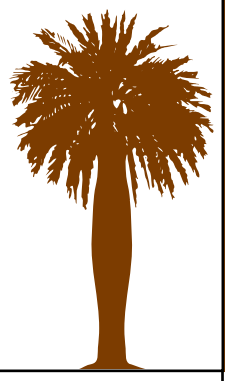


Jubaea

Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens Inc Newsletter

Volume 14 Issue 2

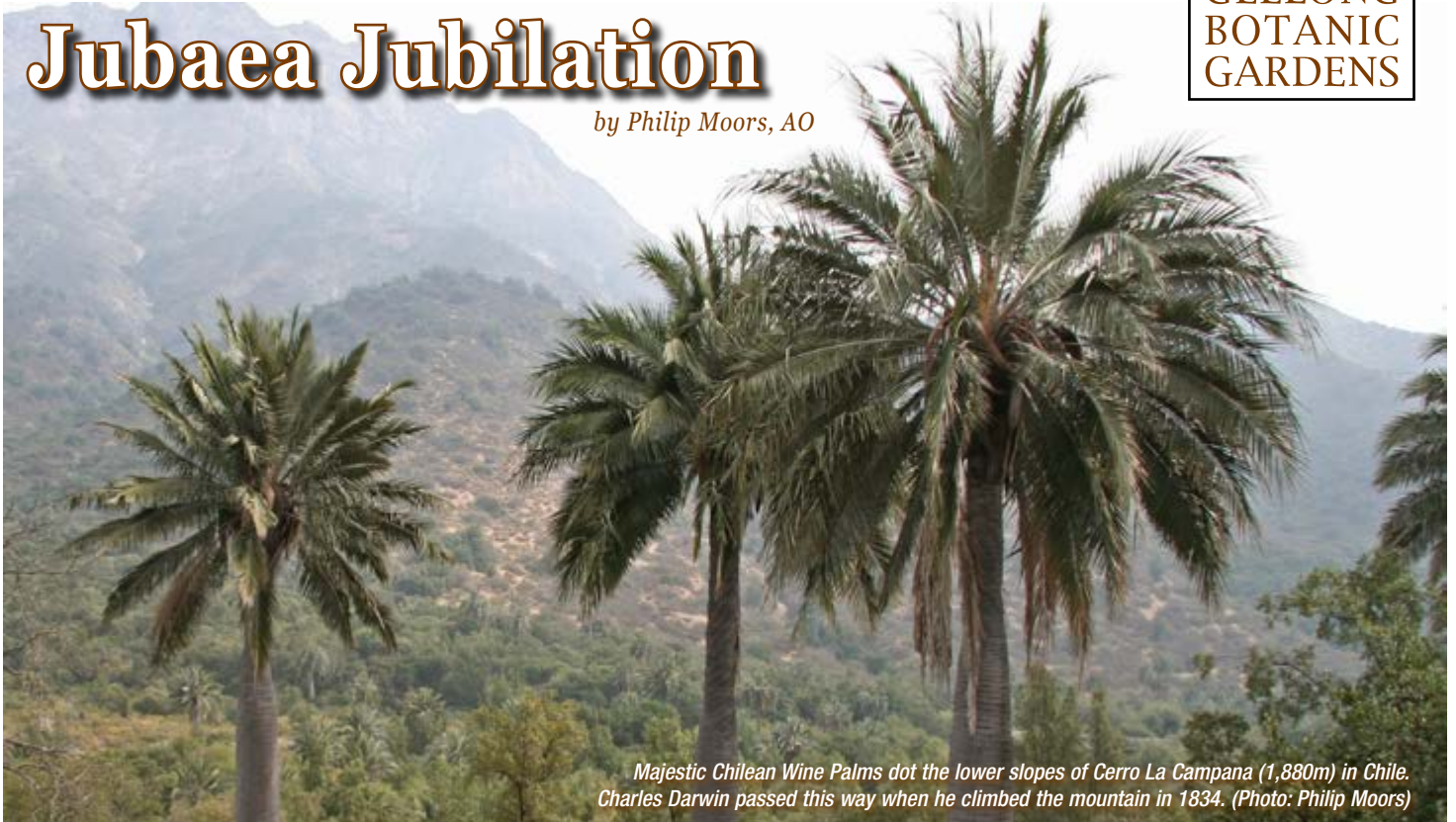
March/April/May 2014



FRIENDS OF
GEELONG
BOTANIC
GARDENS

Jubaea Jubilation

by Philip Moors, AO



Majestic Chilean Wine Palms dot the lower slopes of Cerro La Campana (1,880m) in Chile. Charles Darwin passed this way when he climbed the mountain in 1834. (Photo: Philip Moors)

Across the lonelier parts of the world's oceans is a scattering of remote islands, some lived on and others not. These places have long fascinated me, and Rapa Nui (Easter Island) in the far southeastern Pacific Ocean is one such island.

In 1992, shortly before taking up my appointment at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, I happened to be reading a book about Rapa Nui. This book discussed the then relatively new discovery that the island was once covered by palm forest. The palms were progressively felled hundreds of years ago by the growing Polynesian population, and no living palms survived to be seen by the first European voyagers. But desiccated 'nuts' from the extinct palms did survive in a few sheltered places, and botanists have been able to determine that the Rapa Nui Palm (*Paschalococos disperta*) was related to and probably resembled the Chilean Wine Palm (*Jubaea chilensis*).

I was intrigued by this tale, and idly wondered what the living relative looked like (not at that point having ever knowingly seen a Chilean Wine Palm). The next week I turned up for my first day at the Melbourne Gardens – and there, to my surprise and delight, close to the National Herbarium, was a fine specimen of a Chilean Wine Palm! It was almost the first plant I saw that morning, and it brought home to me in a personal and unforgettable way how diverse, precious and unexpected are the plantings in our botanic gardens. It wasn't too long before I noticed Chilean Wine Palms in other gardens, including of

course the famous specimen in the Geelong Botanic Gardens which the Friends have taken as our emblem and the title of our newsletter.

Victoria is fortunate to have Australia's best network of botanic gardens, many dating to the mid-19th century. At that time botanic gardens tended to give greater emphasis to plants from other parts of the world than to our native flora. It was then the great era of European botanists discovering, naming and growing new plants – and botanic gardens offered the ideal way to display these discoveries, together with old favourites, for the enjoyment and education of visitors. I expect this, together with the impressive appearance of mature specimens, explains why many Chilean Wine Palms were planted here.

A century and a half later we are the fortunate inheritors of this wonderful array of trees, palms and other plants nurtured by Daniel Bunce and the pioneering managers of Victoria's botanic gardens. Geelong's garden has many such exemplars – the fine Ginkgo, Copper Beech, Black Walnut, Canary Island Laurel, *Dracaena* and *Sequoia* to name a few (plus to be fair some notable Australian species as well!).

The pleasure brought to Geelong's visitors by these plantings has been complemented over the years by new collections and landscape designs, notably the marvellous 21st Century Garden and the *Salvia* and *Pelargonium* Collections. As the Friends will know, these latter two collections celebrate not only the diversity of the two families but, importantly in our own era, seek to aid the conservation of the rarer species. And this is where I believe that botanic gardens everywhere now have the urgent responsibility of utilising their diverse collections

... continued on page 2

for conservation as well as for visitor delight.

Like Geelong Botanic Gardens, regional and capital-city gardens across Australia are contributing to local, national and even global plant conservation initiatives. Botanic Gardens Conservation International, based at Kew Gardens, has provided a framework for world-wide plant conservation projects via the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation 2011-2020: in particular, Target 8 of the strategy aims to have by 2020 at least 75 per cent of threatened plant species represented in ex situ collections such as botanic gardens, preferably in the country of origin, and at least 20 per cent available for recovery and restoration programmes. With the global impacts of climate change, land clearance, overgrazing and urban encroachment, the world's plants are under unprecedented pressure – but at least we supporters and staff of botanic gardens can help mitigate these impacts by using our current and future plant collections in innovative ways for effective plant conservation.

(And to return to Chilean Wine Palms for just a moment: in 2006 I visited La Campana National Park in central Chile and walked amongst towering specimens of these now-rare palms - and imagined what the forest on Rapa Nui might once have looked like!)



Chilean Wine Palms in La Campana National Park, Chile.
(Photo: John Hawker)



Philip Moors

Subfossil 'nuts' from the extinct palm on Rapa Nui (Easter Island). The hard endocarp has been gnawed by rats to get at the soft kernel inside (scale in mm). (Photo: Philip Moors)



A grove of Chilean Wine Palms in the Ocoa Valley, La Campana National Park, Chile. (Photo: John Hawker)

Autumn Plant Sales



Come one come all to the FGBG Autumn Plant Sales

- Weekend March 29 & 30 from 10am until 4pm
- Growing Friends' Nursery at the bottom of the Gardens
- Membership cards essential for discounts.
- Park at the rear of the Gardens to load up your bounty.



'Tell a Story' in the Gardens

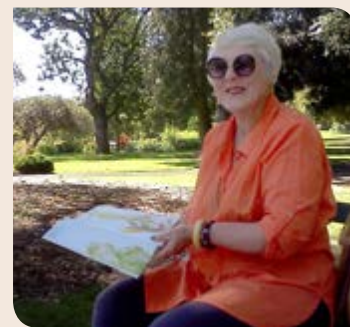
FGBG and GBG are capturing the imagination of children with **StoryTime@GBG** during our summer school holiday program. Volunteer Guides are reading fabulous stories to young families weekdays at 10.30 am.

As this program has been so successful we're setting up an alfresco library to encourage informal storytelling in the Garden. Our visitors can borrow these books while they are in the Gardens. Wouldn't it be great to relax in the shade and read to children while their imagination grows?

We need pre-loved books to create a library for children from pre-school through primary school age. As these books will live most of their lives outside in the garden any book is welcome! Books featuring plants, gardens and nature would be great but not essential.

Donations of books can be brought to the Administration Office at the Geelong Botanic Gardens. We are open 8 am to 4 pm weekdays, Phone 5272 4379 or email botanic@geelongcity.vic.gov.au if you need any more information.
Deadline for books: 28 February 2014.

... from the GBG/FGBG poster 'We need your help to Tell a Story'



Photograph by Jennifer Possingham

The end of Music in the Gardens

Our community enjoyed another successful series of the Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens' Music in the Gardens concerts during the February 2014 season. Though it was often hot in the early evening this year, the musicians played to please, pouring their music out to the delight of families and friends spread out on the green lawn, in the shade of the great Bunya trees. Little ones, some dressed as 'fairies', whirled and twirled to the rhythm, while a few adult enthusiasts reinvented the 'jive'. Picnics were shared and a glass of wine enjoyed.

These concerts have entertained their audiences for some more than fourteen years. They began as much smaller events, and have grown over the years to a capacity crowd in good weather of 800 people. Extended families, couples, singles and friends have gathered in a happy, community-building atmosphere.

It is sad, therefore, that the Friends have had to decide that this is the last concert series we can offer. New legislation has required enormous compliance expenditure. It now costs \$16,000 each year to present these concerts, and the costs are rising. We have also spent many months each year meeting the City of Greater Geelong's detailed paperwork, and satisfying a myriad of permit requirements. Each week, the stage has to be set up and taken down, and the various 'stations' at the gates and in the Gardens have to be erected and removed. This work and continually rising costs have all been the responsibility of the Friends to manage and meet. They have now become unmanageable for a volunteer group.

We would like to thank our fellow community concert lovers, Gardens' staff who have helped with moving equipment, and our extraordinary volunteers without whom there would never have been a single concert. We are, in the end, victims of our own success.



New FGBG Website www.friendsgbg.org.au

Our new Website is up and running, and it's a beauty! Committee members have worked with our staff, Tracey and Sally, and with WordsWorth Communications, who designed and built it, to ensure we have a lively, agile and informative website.

The FGBG Website is a dynamic tool and we encourage members to give us suggestions for any items that could be included. All the FGBG Volunteer groups have helped to create some of the content of our Website and it is really important for this to continue. The FGBG Website belongs to all the members.

In broad terms the FGBG Website is set up to:

- represent the Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens, its work and interests (e.g., articles about GBG plantings, horticultural concerns Victoria wide, or links to relative associations);
- to provide news for Friends and the public;
- to provide links to the GBG website and other associated organisations and relevant regional events;
- to provide a marketing tool, advising Friends and the public of events (such as Plant Sales, Tours, Winter High Tea, Speakers at the GBG Meeting Room, Botanic Art classes and exhibitions, and merchandise).

The Committee wants feedback from the membership. Please tell us what you think about the new Website and send your comments to admin@friendsgbg.org.au

Clematis in the GBG

Anyone visiting our Geelong Botanic Gardens during the last two months may have seen the hybrid clematis flowering profusely amongst the climbing roses. They are ideal companions for roses. Our clematis plants clamber up amongst them, growing through the handsome welded frames that were made by June Stafford some years ago.

Clematis prefer a cooler climate than we generally offer in the Geelong area, and also heavier soils, which keeps cooler as well. They belong to the ranunculaceae family.

The Western District Heritage Rose Group, who completely look after the rose beds in the GBG, have nourished and mulched the beds so well that the clematis are thriving there too. Clematis jackmani “Perle d’Azur” has exquisite sky-blue flowers usually about 15cm. across, and flower during summer months. There are six blunt ended sepals with deeply channelled mid ribs. The stems are long between the nodes and the slightly crimped leaves are mid-green. I once saw an entire wall of this clematis flowering in Vita Sackville West’s garden at Sissinghurst. I imported this clematis from Jim Fisk’s U.K. Nursery in 1987. It is quite tricky to propagate, so it is marvellous to see three plants doing well in our Gardens. Propagation is by internodal cuttings, as it will not produce true from seed.

The other clematis is in the lowest rose bed amongst the wild roses. It is Ernest Markham. The flowers have six to eight overlapping cardinal red sepals with slightly pointed ends. This variety was named after the head gardener at Gravetye Manor who raised it and gave plants to Jackman’s Nursery in the 1930s.

We used to have a small flowering clematis cirrhosa var. balearica in the Gardens. This clematis is native of the Balearic Islands. It is evergreen and flowers in the winter. It had dark foliage, sometimes called the fern-leafed clematis, and creamy-green nodding flowers are in axillary clusters of one, two or three either side of the stem. Inside the sepals had reddish brown freckles dotted about, and one could see the likeness to other members of the ranunculaceae family, for example, specks inside the hellebore flowers.

Gardens are ever changing and our plant seems to have disappeared!

However, on the outer south fence and behind the conservatory we have an Australian clematis. This is clematis microphylla. It is native of Victoria. Clematis species are found in most states except the Northern Territory. There are eight species native to Australia. Clematis microphylla has small creamy flowers followed by multiple seeds in fluffy profusion. It is sometimes called Old Man’s Beard. The plant is poisonous, although indigenous Australians ate the roots, often roasted and kneaded into a dough. Birds love the fluffy seed heads to make nests.

Bridget Gubbins



...from your Committee



Your Committee has been working hard through the holiday season. It all began in November—while the last issue of *Jubaea* was being printed—with ‘Through the Garden Gates’, a delightful event organised in every detail by our invincible Helena Buxton. Self-drive visits to four beautiful and very different gardens were followed by a sumptuous tea party at Arundel, Helena’s own. These tours are important fundraisers for FGBG, especially since our income source, Music in the Gardens, has concluded after many years. Plant Sales now provide our major income. We hope you will bring friends and family to these sales on the last weekend in March, to scoop up the lovely strong plants our hard working Growing Friends have propagated, and watered constantly throughout a sizzling summer.

Music in the Gardens was expertly managed by Helena, and delivered with the help of many busy volunteers. The mammoth undertaking to offer these four concerts has been exhausting, but it has been pleasing to see many loyal patrons enjoying the concerts year after year. See ‘The end of Music ...’

No doubt, members will have been trawling through our new Website. While there is much refining still to be done, it is already becoming a vehicle for information and enjoyment. Its capacity to link us with relevant organisations, to archive and make accessible large amounts of material, to alert members and the public to news of events, to provide all manner of knowledge and to extend experience, for example through self-guided walks, seems limited only by our imaginations. It is particularly pleasing to have members contributing to the site. Please keep doing so. See ‘New FGBG Website’.

We have all delighted, too in the Summer resurrection of the Teahouse, transformed by Dolores and Rita and their Botanical Art School artists into an attractive venue, showing and selling their extraordinary work for affordable prices.

The Pop Up Gallery brought new life to the Gardens over holidays.

Your Committee hosted visits from our Patron, Dr Philip Moors, and from ABC Gardening Australia’s Costa Georgiadis, both of whom spent more time than they had expected, and enjoyed the Gardens immensely. A number of social events are listed on the last page of *Jubaea*, for entry in our diaries. You will notice that our Monday evening speaking program is being offered on the last Monday of the month, where there is no clash with other events. There are also workshops and tours. We hope you will come and enjoy them all.

Our FGBG Members’ Handbook has been written to introduce new members to the Gardens and to the Friends, and to set out induction parameters for all volunteers. Please take a little time to read it through. The compliance process for volunteers will be greatly simplified by obtaining from our office and signing a copy of the form at the end of the Handbook. Find it on the Website under ‘members’, and scroll down.

Work is progressing on the Ladies’ Kiosk restoration, with preliminary research completed, engineering and architectural drawings produced, and grant application writing well under way. Annie McGeachy is working hard to bring the project to fruition. It will make a handsome addition to the Eastern Park precinct now the water catchment dam has been completed. Your Committee is also hoping to contribute to new interpretative signage and plant labelling in the GBG, working with the Director.

Those of us who receive this issue of *Jubaea* via email, or who have found it on our new Website, will have noticed a colourful difference. While it needs some adjustment, we hope you like it. The pictures are such a joy in colour.

Costa at the GBG



Costa Georgiadis visited the GBG on Saturday February 15 for the Sustainable Living Festival, meeting Friends and visitors, and being introduced to the GBG. We walked him slowly through the 21st Century Garden, Silver Border, Rose Garden and Perennial Border, to the Ginko, then to the vegetable patch, and around to the Pop Up Gallery (where he bought a personally meaningful painting, the double Delight Rose, from Dolores). He was great fun, and very keen to study and photograph plants, feel the weight of pumpkins, and to hear about the history of major plantings in the Gardens.

We hope he will return, and have encouraged him to focus some programs on regional gardens.

Gardens of Paris

Monday March 31

Lynsey is a well-travelled voluntary guide at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, and an excellent speaker.

Paris is a well known for its many elegant gardens, parks and squares within its 'Peripherique'. While living in Paris in the autumn I visited many of these and endeavoured to photograph as many as I could. Autumn in Paris also coincided with the 'Fete des Jardins' where public and private gardens were opened to the public.

The plan was to start with the oldest historic gardens such as the Jardin des Plantes 1626, the Jardin des Tuileries 1664 and the Jardin du Luxembourg 1625, then progress through the ages to the gardens that have been created in the last couple of decades, for example, the Jardin Atlantique.

Finally venturing further afield the gardens of Malmaison, the Bagatelle Gardens in the Bois de Boulogne and the Parc de Floral de Paris within the Bois de Vincennes were also visited.



Illustrated talk by Lynsey Poore

The Therapeutic Garden:

gardens in healthcare settings can be more than just pleasant greenery

Illustrated talk by Steven Wells

Monday May 26

Steven is the 2012 ABC Gardening Australia 'Gardener of the Year', who has successfully combined his nursing and horticulture careers to be working as a nurse, a horticultural therapist and the gardens project officer at Austin Health.

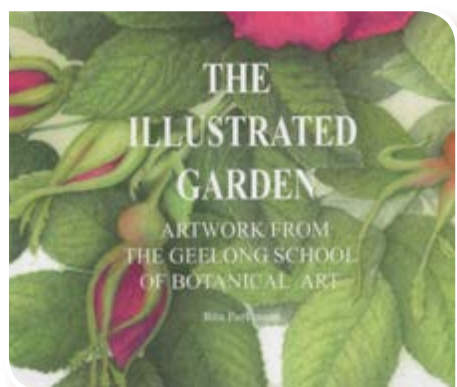
Gardens are enjoyable to look at, and when they are designed and integrated effectively within hospitals they can provide significantly more benefit than just nice greenery. They can offer opportunities for respite, healing and recovery for patients, visitors and staff, and provide many more benefits for Austin Health.

Steven will share his passion for the "dream big, start small" philosophy that has resulted in the development of the horticultural therapy program and the creation of numerous garden projects across Austin Health, and show how these are helping to positively change people's experience of hospitals.



Botanical Art School News

2013 was a great year for our students. Of course we concentrated as always on developing all the fundamental skills of botanical art, but we also explored new areas. One was Algae (seaweed), and this produced some fascinating images. We also looked at the Gardens' unique collection of South African species, Pelargoniums. 2013 was the year of our biennial exhibition, 'Inspired by Nature', held at the Wintergarden, and we published our first digital book, *The Illustrated Garden: Works from the Geelong Botanical Gardens School of Art*. It was a great success and was sold out early in 2014.



Our major focus for 2014 will be on the trees of our marvellous Gardens, where there are many heritage trees and some superb examples of others, such as huge bananas. (The banana is actually a herb, like gingers or strelitzias, and whose trunk is supported by its leaf base.) Then there are the wonderful bottle trees at the entrance to the 21 C garden, and an amazing twisted Tea tree. Studies will include familiar descriptive botanical paintings, but also images of the 'whole tree', involving design skills, exploring some different media, and perhaps a group project.

I am really looking forward to seeing what the students will produce during the year. We are optimistic that they may provide the subject matter of our next book.

Workshops for 2014 will include:

April 26/27—Making Linocuts images of trees

July 5/6—Basic Scraperboard technique

Nov 21/22/23—Christmas Exhibition 'Vessels' at the GBG Meeting Room

Memories of the Friends' Teahouse 1992 - 2012

For nearly twenty years, the Friends' Teahouse was the scene of camaraderie, service to the public, unexpected problem solving, and much more. Its major success was the work of its sixty-two volunteers. We came from many different backgrounds and with different interests: single, married, women and men, some lovers of gardening, others who enjoyed meeting the public, or, having a strong community spirit wanted to assist in the success of the Botanic Gardens.

It began with serving tea and scones from a thermos and a bridge table, then from a tent, until the Friends and the City pooled funds to build the iconic Teahouse. Soon we were also dealing with seven busloads of visitors each week. Accidents and incidents seemed to be especially prevalent on weekends, when we were on our own and had to cope with visitors falling out of wheel chairs, and slipping on steps, having heart attacks (no ambulance access), with falling tree branches, and general public queries; it was all quite challenging.

After the addition of the 21st Century Garden in 2002, the Teahouse volunteers adapted, but it was evident that we did not have the capacity to meet visitors' new expectations. Health regulations, requiring a commercial kitchen and food handling certification, made the simple volunteering more complicated and unprofitable. The decision was made in 2012 to close the Teahouse and hand it over the City of Greater Geelong, who are responsible for the Gardens. It was a sad moment, the end of an era. Many of us had given more than ten years of service. We celebrated our achievement bravely (as shown in the group photograph), with morning tea on the lawn outside our little Teahouse. Many of us continue our friendships, meeting regularly for dinners and other social occasions.

It has been said that the Teahouse provided a 'soul' for Geelong Botanic Gardens: a meeting place for Friends, community, and visitors from all over the world, sharing our hospitality in a place of laughter and memories.

Jan Perry, Phyllis Unsworth, Sandra Camm, Sue Keith

Photograph by Gail Thomas



Vale Valerie Buller

Friends will be sad to learn of the recent death of Honorary Life Member Valerie Buller. Valerie and her late husband, George, were inaugural members of FGBG. They made an outstanding contribution to our organisation through their work with the Voluntary Guides and the Teahouse. We sincerely thank them for their contribution.

Pop Up delight!



Pop Up Gallery open Fridays Saturdays and Sundays over summer: another generous contribution of volunteers' time and effort to the community.

Special FGBG Autumn Activities: March • April • May

Register your address to receive our detailed monthly 'What's On' bulletin via email, or collect your copy directly from our FGBG office. Please check our Website www.friendsgbg.org.au for more details of events. All monies raised through these events are used in support of the Friends and their work in support of Geelong Botanic Gardens.

MARCH 2014

Sunday March 2: *Discovery Table*

Meet FGBG Guides at the Discovery Table on the first Sunday of every month for interesting information and direction to key plants and seasonal change.

Wednesdays 11.00 am & Sundays 2.00 pm: *Regular Guided walks*

Take a guided walk, or enjoy making your own discoveries with a knowledgeable Guide. Come solo or bring a party of interested friends.

Tuesday March 11 Speaker: (Geelong Field Naturalists Club, first speaker in 2014 for Wider Geelong Flora lecture series)

Ben Zeeman 'Vegetation changes at the Ocean Grove Nature Reserve'

7.00 pm for 7.30 pm at GBG Meeting Room

Ben's doctoral dissertation focussed on the effects of fire and herbivores on the species and structure of the vegetation over forty years.

March 29 & 30 weekend: *Plant Sales*

10.00 am—4.00 pm at FGBG Nursery

Bring your garden to life with beautiful strong plants propagated from our own Botanic Gardens. Excellent value! Shoppers may use the car park at the bottom of the Gardens.

Monday March 31 Speaker: Lynsey Poore (RBG) 'Gardens of Paris'

5.30 for 6.00pm at GBG Meeting Room

Lynsey will delight the senses, taking us on a visual tour of some of the world's most extraordinarily beautiful gardens. \$5 per member with membership card, \$10 non-member. Don't miss out!

APRIL 2014

Sunday April 6: *Discovery Table*

Meet FGBG Guides at the Discovery Table on the first Sunday of every month for interesting information and direction to key plants and seasonal change.

Wednesdays 11.00 am & Sundays 2.00 pm: *Regular Guided walks*

Take a guided walk, or enjoy making your own discoveries with a knowledgeable Guide. Come solo or bring interested friends.

April 26/27 Botanic Art: a full weekend workshop at GBG Meeting Room

'Making linocut images of trees' is a workshop based upon the trees of the Geelong Botanic Gardens introducing an entirely different approach to arboreal representation.

See our website for the hours and cost of the workshop.

Bookings at the FGBG office

Monday April 28: *Bus Tour to Mt Macedon*

Visit Dicksonia Rare Plants Nursery, including the house garden, and the spectacular Duneira heritage garden in all its autumn glory.

Meet at the Gate 3 Carpark at 8.30 am and bring a picnic lunch for this all day adventure.

Price will be available soon on our Website.

Bookings at the FGBG office

MAY 2014

Sunday May 5: *Discovery Table*

Meet with FGBG Guides at the Discovery Table on the first Sunday of every month for interesting information and direction to key plants and seasonal change.

Wednesdays 11.00 am & Sundays 2.00 pm: *Regular Guided walks*

Take a guided walk, or enjoy making your own discoveries with a knowledgeable Guide. Come solo or bring a party of interested friends.

Wednesday May 7: *Propagation Workshop 1.30 to 3.00 pm*

Have fun acquiring new 'hands on' skills at the Growing Friends' Propagation Workshop. This will begin with a walk through the Gardens learning how to select appropriate plants and take cuttings correctly, followed by a practical session in the Friends' Nursery, learning how to pot out and care for brand new plants.

Meet at the Friends' Nursery at the bottom of the Gardens.

See the FGBG Website for details (clothing, secateurs etc.). Adults only \$10 per person.

Bookings and further details from the FGBG office.

Monday 26 May Speaker: Steven Wells 'The Therapeutic Garden; gardens in healthcare settings as more than nice greenery'

5.30 for 6.00pm at GBG Meeting Room

Steven is the 2012 ABC Gardening Australia 'Gardener of the Year', who has successfully combined his nursing and horticultural careers, working as a nurse, a horticultural therapist, and the gardens project office at Austin Health.

See how his work changes the hospital experience.

\$5 per member with membership card, \$10 non-member.

FUTURE PLANNING FOR OUR DIARIES:

Tuesday June 10 Speaker: Neil Macumber, 'Western Australian Wildflowers'

Sunday June 22: *Winter High Tea at Truffleduck with Dr Philip Moors*

July 5/6: *Botanic Art Weekend Workshop, Basic Scraperboard technique*

July 26/27 weekend: *Winter Plant Sales*

Monday July 28 Speaker: Michael McCoy, 'The Gardener'



Jubaea is published by the Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens, Inc. Eastern Park, Geelong. PO Box 325, Geelong 3220.

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