

Jubaea



Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens Inc. Newsletter

June 2021 Volume 21 Issue 2

FRIENDS OF
GEELONG
BOTANIC
GARDENS



Newly restored Hitchcock Fountain on a foggy morning in the Gardens

THE HITCHCOCK FOUNTAIN: A CELEBRATION

The Hitchcock Fountain has been rejuvenated, and the Friends are delighted with its new look.

The fountain was moved to the Gardens in 1912 along with the Prisk Urns and the Traill Fountain: no easy feat by bullock wagon, and “except for a little chipping which was repaired by filling with cement, the whole operation was carried out without mishap”. (Reference: Jones, G. *Growing Together*, 1984)

The Hitchcock Fountain was erected in Market Square in 1904. It had been crafted by Otto Waschatz of Richmond, possibly some years earlier: his name is inscribed on the fountain, along with a plaque commemorating the donor, George Hitchcock.

George Michelmore Hitchcock (1831-1912) was born in Barnstaple, Devon. After attending Denmark Hill School he was apprenticed to his uncle George, a London draper. In 1849 the

Hitchcock family, parents William and Mary and brothers Walter and George, migrated in the *Amity Hall* to Geelong with a cargo of merchandise. In June 1850 they established Hitchcock Bros & Co., general dealers, wool-brokers and merchants. William departed for the goldfields in Castlemaine, where he was auctioneer, merchant, proprietor of livery stables and founder of the first local newspaper as well as active Congregational churchman. He was vice-president of the local Friendly Aid Society, chairman of the hospital committee, promoter of schools and chairman of the municipality. William was known in the district as the “Duke of Muckleford”.

George remained in Geelong, where in September 1853 he and his brother Walter joined William Bright & Co., drapers and clothiers, and in January 1877 became sole partners. Under the management of George and later his son Howard (1866-1932),

Continued from page 1

Bright & Hitchcocks became the largest department store in Victoria outside Melbourne.

George became a town councillor in 1875 and a Justice of the Peace in 1891. He was active in the Chamber of Commerce and chaired the council of the Gordon Institute of Technology. In 1859 he married Annie, daughter of John Lowe, a prominent Wesleyan; they had two sons and a daughter. His wife Annie shared his commitment to civil service, and the belief of their fellow parishioners at the Yarra Street Methodist Church, that society could best be changed through hard work, success in business, philanthropy and high personal standards. Annie was described as a woman who was 'dominant, strong-willed, very efficient and with powers of initiative and leadership'. George died at Geelong on 8 May 1912.

The Hitchcock Fountain graced Market Square from 1904 – 1912 and featured in the local news

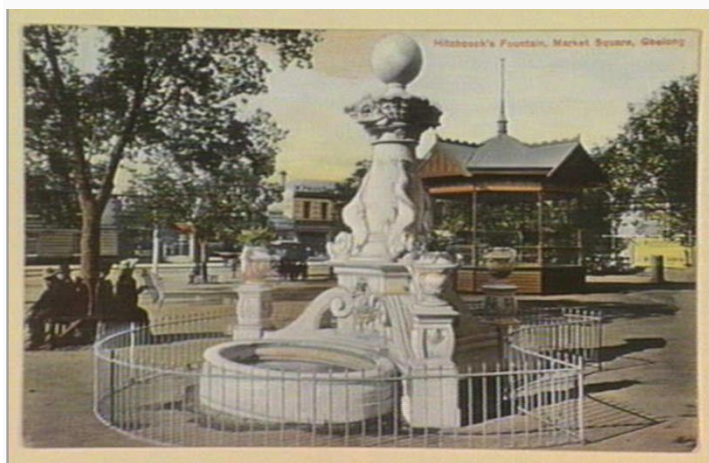


Image from SLV online catalogue

Geelong Advertiser March 1910

MARKET SQUARE SENSATION, THREE WAGGON HORSES BOLT, HITCHCOCK FOUNTAIN WRECKED.

"One of the most sensational runaways ... culminated in a serious smash in the Market Square (when) three young draught horses attached to a hay waggon ... were being driven to town.

A motor car flashed by, and the leader, taking-fright, jumped forward. The strain caused the swingle to snap, and the colt broke into a gallop. Paterson gamely, hung to the reins, but the two ponies of the team had also taken fright, and nullified his efforts to control his charges. As the leader gained pace Paterson was pulled from the waggon, and landed on the backs of the ponies, who then also broke into a gallop. The driver fell on the road, the wheels fortunately missing him.

The clatter of the fast-moving waggon gave a warning signal ahead; and drivers of hansoms on the Malop street stand had barely time to move to the roadside as the three horses and vehicle swept along the middle of the road. Two ladies crossing the road had to run furiously to escape death. The team cleared the centre lamp-post and ... headed for the ornamental square. An elm tree just north of the fountain strangely intervened, and

saved what might have been a serious disaster. The long rope rein caught high on the trunk of the tree, and the waggon .. crashed heavily into the Hitchcock fountain. The left hand horse shot over the spiked fence into the well of the fountain and, striking the southern column, surmounted a flower bowl, smashing it to atoms. The frantic beast wrenched the fountain pipe, and a stream of water shot up over the summit of the architecture. The spiked fence caused (the horse) to become furious, and half a dozen men had a difficult task in releasing it....

The fountain continued to play vigorously while the rescue work was in progress, and amongst the big crowd, .. the common remark was that 'the clearance of the square for shop sites had been commenced in an unpredicted and rather forcible fashion'.

Geelong Botanic Gardens, 1912

The Hitchcock Fountain has long been a highlight of the Gardens. In 1912 it had pride of position just inside the front gates. Over the years, it has been refurbished several times: notably in 1984, with gilded decoration funded by a Victorian Sesquicentennial grant, and in 2001 with funding from the Friends and a Commonwealth Grant.



Catherine Millikan restoring the Hitchcock Fountain

In 2020, the Friends undertook the funding of a major restoration. After detailed research, it was decided that the fountain should be true to its original design, and under conservator Catherine Millikan the fountain has now been restored to its former glory, resplendent in stunning pure white.

In the process, an exciting discovery was made! When the asphalt was cleared away from its base, an original plaque was revealed, in the Art Deco style of its time.

The repaving under the fountain is now complete and the Friends look forward to celebrating its opening. Congratulations to all who contributed to this wonderful restoration.

By Liz Bennetto, FGBG Guide

GARDEN FRIENDS AND NETWORKS

This was originally going to be an update about our Botanic Gardens Open Day. Despite our best intentions, many hours, and the involvement of, a myriad of stakeholders we were bested by another impromptu Covid-19 lockdown. However, being opportunistic, it will be of great benefit to reschedule later in the year when the weather is more favourable and the visitor numbers should be much greater.

Even though the year continues to be interrupted with lockdowns we have still been able to collaborate with other gardens and friend groups to increase and diversify our plant collections: The 21st Century Garden, Camellia Walk, Conservatory and Pacific Rim collections. As a result, we now have many new species being propagated in our nursery.

The Friends of the Brisbane Ranges, Friends of Anglesea and the Friends of Buckley Falls have been the main contributors to the 21st century collection development, generously donating wild provenance plant species and enabling us to continue as a modern Botanic Garden that contributes to conservation and education. Rare species of Camellia and Rhododendron for the Camellia Walk have been primarily sourced from the Royal Botanic Gardens of Melbourne (RBGM) and some excellent private collections

Our Conservatory has just received an exciting new plant species in the form of two corms donated by experts in the field at the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Botanic Gardens. These corms will certainly draw a crowd being none other than the *Amorphophallus titanium*, commonly known as the Corpse Flower. As they will soon be ready for display, I look forward to sharing more about them with you soon.



Corms which will develop into the corpse flower

For the Pacific Rim we are pleased to be starting the understory development. Alistair and Julia Watt, ever supportive ambassadors of the Geelong Botanic Gardens, continue to provide material from their personal collection and the RBGM has also shared their New Caledonia collection with us. These new specimens are as rare and significant as those already planted - increasing the prestige and value of this garden.

As much as it has been our privilege to receive so many fantastic new plant specimens, it has also been our privilege to give, and we have had the opportunity to share some of our advanced trees with other regional Botanic Gardens such as the Warrnambool, Williamstown and Melton Botanic Gardens. We thoroughly enjoyed collaborating with them on site and

showcasing our Geelong gardens. How great it is to see these rare plants find new homes in our botanic garden network - an important step toward securing these species into the future.



Loading Stock from our advanced tree line for Warrnambool Botanic Gardens

Over this last season we have also continued to restore our heritage assets. Works on the original 1860's nursery located next to the sunken house are well underway.

This restoration will soon be incorporated into the existing Vegetable Garden with the removal of a cyclone fence, once again uniting this landscape. The site will be planted out with espalier fruit trees, unusual herbs and heirloom edibles. One of the main features of this garden will be the two bronze art works, generously commissioned by the Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens.

The Australian bronze pieces, an apple and a pear, have been sourced locally from Willie Wildlife Sculptures, who have a long association with Horticulture, featuring in the London Chelsea Flower Show for the past 12 twelve years. The form of these artworks is easily recognisable, instilling a sense of familiarity and connection. Yet their size, exceptionally large, and their properties, bronze and other metals, are inherently foreign to the average piece of fruit. These abstract forms invite the beholder to look at seemingly simple things in a new way. If an apple or a pear can be large, small, green, gold, fleshy, metal, edible or art - then how can other objects in our surroundings be viewed? How many perspectives are there for a tree, a flower, a leaf? We hope our visitors will be inspired to appreciate how the familiar gardens all around them, such as the simple budding of a bright tulip growing from the cold earth or the dormant winter trees, are no less magnificent and bizarre than a pear weighing 100 kilos!



Restoration of the existing vegetable garden

As the beauty of winter sets in, we look forward to the work that accompanies it, and are ever appreciative of all the support we receive. by Ashley Filipovsky, Coordinator, Geelong Botanic Gardens

LEACH-WOOD GARDENS

Where are the Leach-Wood Gardens? I have been asked this question on many occasions and am always delighted to share the secret.

The gardens extend over five acres and are as large as Johnstone Park, but virtually hidden in plain sight, in the heart of a busy suburban area. They are not signposted or overlooked by houses and their extent cannot be appreciated from the roads that form the boundaries. As far as I am aware the Leach-Wood Gardens are not listed as a significant attraction for Geelong and so remain a well-kept secret. I have been visiting the gardens for almost a decade and came to appreciate them even more during the pandemic. Along with my now elderly dog, I've found the gardens to be a true sanctuary.



Leach-Wood Gardens walking path

The Leach-Wood Gardens were officially opened in 1984 in a disused bluestone quarry on the side of Shannon Avenue hill,

south of West Fyans Street. They are named in honour of two former City of Newtown councillors, Mr Harold Leach and Mr G. G. Wood. The steep terrain required an innovative design that was cleverly executed – zig-zagging wide paths with no steps, terraced gardens, manicured lawns at every level, mature trees, many glades and cool shaded areas. These features allow for intimate spaces throughout so that individuals and small groups can experience a sense of privacy and solitude. The gently sloping asphalt paths provide access for a range of users, such as parents with children in pushers and prams, the elderly and the disabled. Young families can allow their children to explore without the fear of nearby traffic or bicycles as the paths are not shared. Seclusion and quiet ambience are the main attractions.

When the gardens were originally established by the City of Newtown they were planted out with annuals. This changed when Newtown was absorbed into the City of Greater Geelong (COGG) in the early 1990s. Today there is a wide variety of planting with mature trees, interesting shrubs underplanted with perennials, giving seasonal variation and colour. The trees, shrubs and garden beds are maintained by one dedicated gardener Robin Coombs, who for years has carried out this herculean task. The lawns are maintained by COGG. Robin has a passion for seeing this special place used and appreciated for its uniqueness. It is only in recent weeks that he has been supported by an additional gardener, although I believe this arrangement might be finishing soon.

As large suburban blocks are being subdivided and trees removed in the name of progress, public gardens and green spaces are more vital than ever for healthy living. Therefore, we must treasure what we have and nurture it for future generations.

By Robyn McLean, Nursery Volunteer

GEELONG SCHOOL OF BOTANICAL ART NEWS

The planning is now well underway for the biennial GSBA art exhibition 'Inspired by Nature 7', from 9 - 29 November. The exhibition is being held at the Exhibition Gallery at Deakin University, Waterfront Campus and will be open to the public



Tuesdays to Saturdays, 10.00 am - 4.00 pm. Its official opening will be on Saturday 6 November, from 3.00 - 5.00 pm. We are very pleased to announce that the exhibition will be

opened by Penny Whitehead, Deputy Director of Geelong Gallery.

Penny has a personal connection with the School as her mother had been a student at the school for many years, so she will be very familiar with our aspirations of producing art that is both artistically pleasing and botanically accurate.

For people who wished to try their hand at botanical art, or to refresh their skills, we held a two-day workshop for beginners on Saturday 19 June and Sunday 20 June. The tutor for this workshop, Craig Lidgerwood, is a very experienced artist and is also skilled in guiding beginner artists. All students had a fun experience in a very supportive environment.



Artwork by Craig Lidgerwood

The workshops may also have produced new exhibits for 'Inspired by Nature 7'.

Judy Lavery, Coordinator, Geelong School of Botanical Art

PLANT IN FOCUS - *Persoonia juniperina*

Persoonia is a genus of about one hundred species of flowering plants in the family Proteaceae. All are endemic to Australia. These plants are commonly known as Geebungs in NSW and Victoria and Snottygobblers in W.A. 'Geebung' is derived from the Aboriginal name Jibbong referring to the succulent edible fruit which was a traditional food across Australia.



Persoonia juniperina Prickly Geebung. Photo: Natalie Tapson, West Coast of Tasmania, flickr CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Description

The numerous species of *Persoonia* are dwarf to tall shrubs or small trees. All the species have small, yellow bell-shaped flowers, solitary or in small clusters, initially cylindrical, but opening into four equal perianth-segments which are recurved in the upper portion. At maturity the elliptical fruit is yellow or yellow-green and beneath the skin is a small amount of sweet succulent pulp impregnated with fibres from the hard stone. The pulp is edible and easily chewed off but it is said to be like nibbling sweet cotton wool.

Distribution and Habitat

Persoonia is distributed in all states of Australia with greater concentrations in subtropical to temperate regions. *Persoonias* are found from coastal regions to mountains but are generally more common in heathland and sclerophyll forests.

Persoonia juniperina, commonly known as Prickly Geebung, is a species which is represented in Geelong's 21st Century Garden. *Persoonia juniperina* is endemic to south-eastern Australia, and widespread in southern heaths and heathy open forests, especially on coastal sandy soils like those of the Brisbane Ranges, Steiglitz, Anglesea and Airey's Inlet. It is a small erect to spreading bushy shrub with smooth bark, hairy young branches and stiff, prickly foliage.

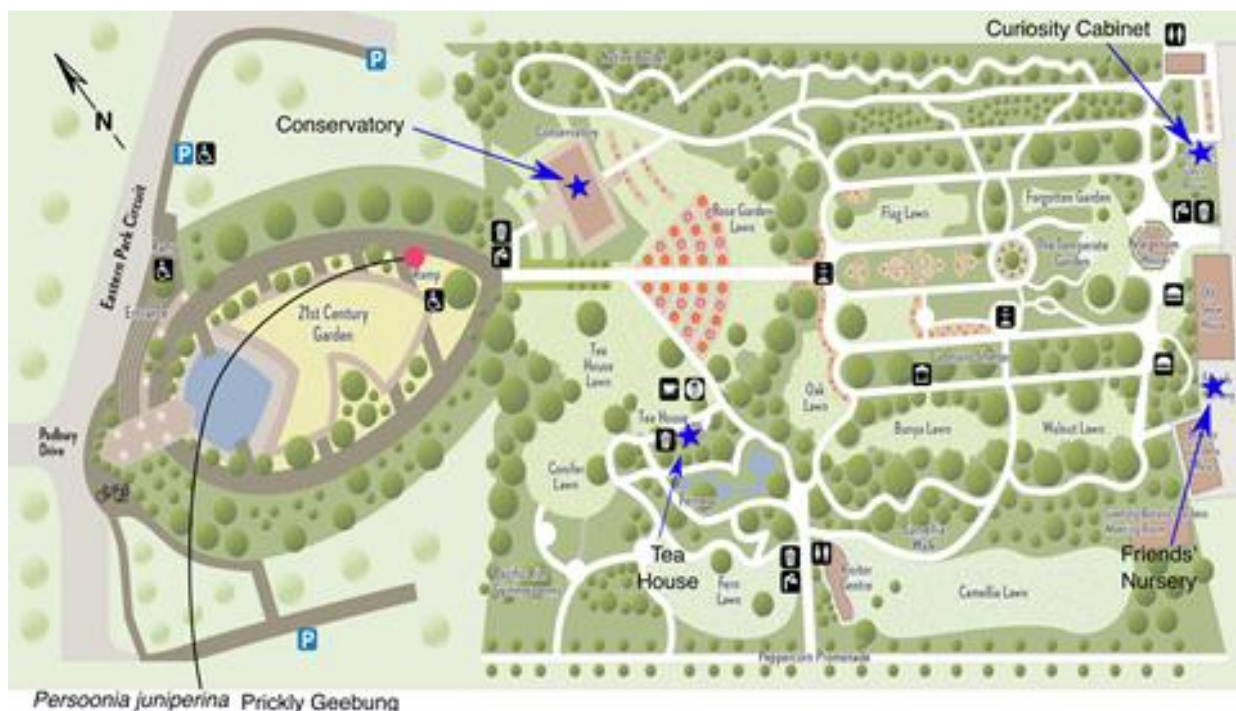
Pollination by native bees

Many of our wild flowers such as *Persoonias* need native bees to survive. Some *Persoonias* are rare and endangered. A variety of native bees, *Leioproctus*, are specialist pollinators of the Geebung flower. Their flattened head and shiny smooth faces assist them to dig deep down into the base of the tiny *Persoonia* flower to drink the nectar. These pollinators are now under threat from bush fires and introduced honey bees.

Traditional Uses

The succulent fruit was a traditional food source. The timber was used for making tools such as axe handles, boomerangs, spear throwers and music sticks. Fishing lines were strengthened by soaking in a solution of the Geebung bark in water. Some species of *Persoonia* were sought after for use in bark pictures due to their flaky bark and because their inner parts had striking tones of purple, red and brown. Medicinally, *Persoonia* was used for treatment of eye disease, chest congestion, colds, sore throats, diarrhoea and skin infections.

Extract from Plant in Focus prepared by Tilly Brunton, FGBG Guide



Persoonia juniperina Prickly Geebung

FGBG ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

As President, it is always a pleasure to share the many and varied events that the Friends are proud to provide for members and the public.

As anticipated, the Visitor Facility has proven to be a wonderful asset for the Gardens, and the Friends have now used it several times since its opening in 2020. After the disappointment of the cancellation of events last year, our members have attended the 2021 events in very good numbers.

In March nearly fifty members and their friends were enthusiastic in their praise for the Pacific Rim Talk and Tour held in the Facility. After light refreshments Alistair Watt presented a slide tour of some of the amazing plants he and his wife Julie have collected over many years from countries of the Pacific Rim.

In April the Friends were delighted to be asked to provide afternoon tea for forty members of the International Dendrology Society, some of whom had travelled from interstate for a three-day tour of the region. Alistair once again led the tour of the Pacific Rim Garden, with afternoon tea served from the facility.

The praise for the Facility and the Friends' hospitality were greatly appreciated, as was the generous donation to the Friends.

The delightful April self-drive tour of Country Dahlias farm, Drol Kar Temple and gardens and Cottage Farm Perennials Nursery attracted forty-nine members and their friends, and in May over forty volunteers were treated to a delicious light luncheon to celebrate National Volunteers Week. The highlight of the afternoon was Ashley Filipovski's presentation of certificates from the Friends, acknowledging with gratitude the number of years of volunteer service. Office Manager Tracey Tilbury created the beautiful and much-admired certificates.

Although once again National Botanic Gardens Day activities, to be celebrated in May, were cancelled due to COVID restrictions, the Friends and Geelong Botanic Gardens anticipate rescheduling in Spring, for what will be another very successful event on the Friends' calendar.

By Allison Martland - President FGBG

GUEST SPEAKER EVENING 'HISTORY OF THE WARDIAN CASE'

With Dr Luke Keogh

Tuesday 20 July, 5.30 pm supper, 6.15 pm start

Large Meeting Room at the rear of Geelong Botanic Gardens

Luke will be speaking on the history of the Wardian Case, the invention which revolutionised horticulture around the world. His research and the story are available in his book 'The Wardian Case', which will be available for sale on the evening.

"Roses, jasmine, fuchsia, chrysanthemums, and rhododendrons bloom in gardens across the world, and yet many of the most common varieties have roots in Asia. How is this global flowering possible? In 1829, surgeon and amateur naturalist Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward placed soil, dried leaves, and the pupa of a sphinx moth into a sealed glass bottle, intending to observe the moth hatch. But when a fern and meadow grass sprouted from the soil, he accidentally discovered that plants enclosed in glass containers could survive for long periods without watering. After four years of experimentation in his London home, Ward created traveling glazed cases that would be able to transport plants around the world. Following a test run from London to Sydney, Ward was proven correct: the Wardian case was born, and the botanical makeup of the world's flora was forever changed."

Cost: \$15 Members and \$20 Non-members. Bookings essential by Friday 16 July.



Wardian Case



Gwen Anderson

WINTER COOKING CLASS and LUNCH with GWEN ANDERSON

Thursday 5 August, 11.00 am @ Gwen's Home (details upon booking)

Join passionate baker and cook Gwen Anderson in her large kitchen just made for group cooking. Pick up some culinary tips and stay to eat the delicious results. The menu for the day consists of Osso Bucco, Rosemary Chicken, Lamb with prunes and honey and-Chilli Con Carne. **Maximum 20 people.**

Gwen provides written copies of recipes for participants to try at home.

Cost: \$30 Members and \$35 Non-members. Bookings essential by Friday 18 June.

WINTER LUNCH WITH SPECIAL GUEST 'LYNSEY POORE'

Thursday 26 August, 12.00 noon to 3.00 pm

TRUFFLE DUCK AT FYANSFORD

Enjoy a fabulous two course lunch at Truffle Duck with drinks at bar prices, special Winter Lunch Raffle and Guest Speaker Lynsey Poore speaking on **THE PHYSIC GARDEN AT CHELSEA.**

Cost: \$75 Members and \$85 Non-members.

Bookings essential by Friday 23 July.



The Physic Garden at Chelsea



Justin Buckley

FGBG ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday 30 August, 5.30pm AGM

Followed by Supper and Guest Speaker Justin Buckley

We are very excited to present AGM guest speaker Justin Buckley, Victorian National Trust Gardens Manager, who will be talking about National Trust Gardens and the GBG. AGM will be held in the Large Meeting Room at the rear of the GBG. Because the Special Resolution voted on at last year's AGM must be resubmitted, a quorum 35 financial members will need to be present, to vote on a Special Resolution to allow electronic applications for new members. All members will be welcome. Free Event. RSVP essential by Wednesday 25 August.

SELF-DRIVE TOUR AND PICNIC 'HISTORIC HOMES AND GARDENS'

Thursday 16 September

Join us at the amazing School of Lost Arts (Chesterfield), Barwon Grange and The Heights, for a fascinating day which includes morning tea.

10am - 11.30. "Chesterfield", Newtown

Dr Mary Jane Walker and her husband have restored the historic home and gardens to their glory, respecting the style and tradition of the times. This visit includes an introduction by Mary Jane and visit to the fabulous Studio of Lost Arts on the property. Morning Tea is included.

12.00 - 1.30. "The Heights", Newtown

The largest prefabricated house in Victoria - made to order in Germany and assembled in 1855 for Charles Ibbotson. Explore this unique property, its stables, water tower, boom's cottage and dovecote all in original condition. BYO Picnic Lunch to enjoy at The Heights. Tea/Coffee provided.

1.45 - 3.00 "Barwon Grange", Newtown

The only surviving example of the many fashionable river front residences built along the Barwon River during the 1850s and 60s for the wealthy of Geelong. The Gothic Revival house's unique features are still to be seen and enjoyed. Built for the merchant and banker Jonathon Porter O'Brien and his wife Ann, the house was filled with mahogany furniture, Bohemian glass, Dresden china and other collectables.

\$30 members and \$35 non-members. Bookings essential by Monday 13 September. Addresses and event information on payment.



Chesterfield historic home and garden



Sweets and savouries fit for royalty

SENIORS' WEEK MORNING TEA and GUIDED WALK

October

Following the delicious success of our 2019 Seniors' Week Morning Tea, which was followed by a tour of the Gardens with our accomplished guide pointing out both historic and botanic features, we have scheduled another welcome event for October, date to be confirmed closer to the time. Free for all seniors, both members and the public.

DIARY DATES AT A GLANCE



JUBAEA SUBMISSIONS for the next Edition are due by 6 September 2021.
All articles including high resolution photos (jpeg files) can be sent to the FGBG Office

THEMED GUIDED WALKS:

JULY THEMED GUIDED WALK 'THE FIRST AUSTRALIANS'

Sunday 11 JULY, 2.00 pm

Geelong Botanic Gardens is on Wadawurrung land. Learn about our first people: their lifestyle, conservation of resources and traditional use of plants for food, medicine, weapons, transport, musical instruments, and religious ceremonies. Find out what happened to the Wadawurrung when Europeans arrived here. Meet your Guide at the front steps of the GBG. Gold coin donation.

AUGUST THEMED GUIDED WALK 'RARE AND ENDANGERED PLANTS'

Sunday 8 August, 2.00 pm

Over the last 200 years many species of plants and animals have become extinct. During today's walk we will look at a selection of threatened species grown here in the Geelong Botanic Gardens and learn the important role Botanic Gardens play in plant conservation. Meet your Guide at the front steps of the GBG. Gold coin donation.

SEPTEMBER THEMED GUIDED WALK 'WATTLES'

Sunday 12 September, 2.00 pm

National Wattle Day is on 1st September, celebrating the beginning of spring and our unity as a nation. Wattles have survived drought and bushfires, and provided food, medicine, and timber for all Australians. Australia's national flower is the Golden Wattle, and many wattles make excellent garden plants. Meet your Guide at the front steps of the GBG. Gold coin donation.

EVENTS:

GUEST SPEAKER EVENING 'HISTORY OF THE WARDIAN CASE'

With Dr Luke Keogh

Tuesday **20 July**, 5.30 pm supper, 6.15 pm start

WINTER COOKING CLASS and LUNCH with GWEN ANDERSON

Thursday **5 August**, 11.00 am @ Gwen's House (details upon booking)

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Monday **30 August**, 5.30 pm AGM

Followed by Supper and Guest Speaker Justin Buckley 'National Trust Gardens'.

SELF-DRIVE TOUR AND PICNIC 'HISTORIC HOMES AND GARDENS'

Thursday **16 September**, 10.00 am start Chesterfield, followed by The Heights and Barwon Grange.

YET TO BE CONFIRMED:

Movie Night

Basket Weaving

Seniors Week Event

*Full details for all events listed are on Pages 6 and 7

THE GIFT FUND

The Gift Fund currently has \$423,916.78. Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens Gift Fund is registered with the Australian Taxation Office to receive donations made to the Friends, which are tax-deductible. This Fund may only be used to support special projects and programs within, and initiated by, Geelong Botanic Gardens. It may not be used to support the Friends or Friends activities. The Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens are very appreciative of your generous donations to the Gift Fund and would like to thank you.

FGBG Patron: Dr Philip Moors

FGBG Committee: Allison Martland - President, Judy Lavery – Vice President, Denise Feldman – Vice President, Jane Laidlaw - Treasurer, Kate Kirkhope – Secretary, Tilly Brunton, Jan Cheyne, Peggy Muntz, Barrie Satchell.

Editorial Team: Luanne Thornton, Liz Bennetto, Judy Fyfe, Tracey Tilbury, Allison Martland, Peggy Muntz, Margaret Gork.

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