

Jubaea

Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens Inc Newsletter
Volume 16 Issue 1 December / January / February 2015/6



FRIENDS OF
GEELONG
BOTANIC
GARDENS



Fernery Fashion History

History of the GBG Fernery areas: 19th Century Gardens and Fern Fever

Fern Fever afflicted the British in the mid 19th Century and the craze for the frond was also felt in Oz. We had close to 400 native ferns on our doorstep. As a result, most of the botanic gardens established in Victoria in the 1850s and 1860s eventually had ferneries and there are records of tree ferns growing in the Melbourne RBG by 1865, such as the Rare skirted tree fern (*Cyathea x marcescens*) a natural hybrid from the Otway Ranges and Tasmania. Geelong's great fernery was built around a pre-existing *Jubaea chilensis* (Chilean Wine Palm) planted in 1867 by the Gardens 1st curator Daniel Bunce (1857 to 1872). This palm outlived the fernery and still

exists today as a National Trust registered significant tree and is the symbol of the Friends of the GBG. Palms were a major feature and most ferneries were open air and latticework. These occasionally tended to dominate the scene and an article about the great Raddenberry fernery in Geelong in the Australasian in 1889 observed it to be more of a palmery than a fernery. It housed, in addition to thousands of ferns, mosses, palms and other appropriate plants, ponds, a fountain and a grotto. The only remaining relic of the fernery that remains today is the rock pillar that was the base of a fountain and is now covered by a climbing fig. This rock pillar marks the central point of the fernery. John Raddenberry, the Garden's 2nd Curator (from

1872 to 1896) oversaw the construction of this huge Fernery in stages commencing in 1885 with the building of the first of three sections of the fernery. It was 120 feet long and 60ft wide and 25 feet high when it was officially opened in October 1885. In 1886 the next octagonal section was added. The fernery was now 220 feet long. In 1887 the third section of fernery was completed. The length now added up to 300 feet. In 1888 a collection of fern pressings was completed for Raddenberry of ferns growing in the Fernery. (This volume is currently being renovated and will be kept in the City's Heritage Centre for posterity). In 1890 Raddenberry removed an ornamental stone from the bluff at Barwon Heads to construct the rockery in the Fernery.

Victorian Fernery Fashions

Some postcards show external views of an enormous arched and gabled latticework structure, others providers of cool and shady interiors where ladies in gloves, straw hats and ankle length skirts accompanied by men in Sunday best suits, overdressed children and babies in wicker prams have retreated from the oppressive summer heat. There was an international craze for ferns. They were popular in Britain in the late 1840s and increasingly so in the 1850s. Thomas Moore's handbooks on ferns inaugurated a passion for fern collecting that lasted until the 1870s. Fern fever reached the colony of Victoria shortly after the gold rush, gathering momentum in the late 1850s when Australian species appeared in the stock lists of Melbourne plant nurseries. Local impetus for making ferneries came from the spectacular natural fern gullies and cool temperate rain forests of SE Australia. eg the Dandenong Ranges to the east of Melbourne, the Macedon Ranges to the north and other places within easy reach of provincial centres like Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Castlemaine and Warrnambool. For the less affluent, the ferneries in Victoria's public gardens provided the next best thing to a holiday at a guest house, to a hill station sojourn or to a walk to a waterfall through a natural fern gully. The widespread construction of impressively grand ferneries was also associated with the exceptional affluence of the 1870s and 1880s in Victoria. Bendigo and Ballarat gold mining and Geelong flourished in its role as the main port serving the wealthy pastoral districts of the Western District. The ferneries were an expression of civic pride, municipal importance and aggressive competitiveness. Like the town hall and the mechanics institute, the fernery appears to have been a necessary amenity for every self respecting town, just as a century later, every town seemed to need an Olympic swimming pool and a caravan park!! In the 1890s the depression depleted municipal coffers. The interwar years saw a decline in the fern as a fashionable subject for both public and domestic gardens. Increased car ownership meant that many

families could go on day trips to visit real fern gullies. By the 1950s most of the large public ferneries had gone. In Geelong in 1896 John Raddenberry retired. In 1912 A lily pool was constructed as a raised pool on the south side of the fernery. In 1945 Part of the Raddenberry fernery was demolished. In 1957 the last wooden section of the fernery at the eastern end was demolished. This was in present area of cactus garden to the geranium house. In 1963 the stone grotto which formed the eastern end to the fernery was demolished.

20th Century Fernery Fashion - The Fern Glade

Since the early 1980's there has been something of a revival of interest in ferneries, perhaps as a by-product of a more general interest in historic gardens. In the early 1980s under the leadership of Ian Rogers (Parks and Gardens Superintendent from 1981 to 1996) the redevelopment of the Botanic Gardens began and ferns were once again well displayed in the Gardens. This time in a glade that resembled a cool temperate rainforest. In 1982 the Fern Glade was established in the 1959 extension to the Gardens and was named the John Raddenberry Fern Glade. It was an open air fernery and included a collection of ferns from the Otway Ranges. Annette Zealley (current Curator -2007 to 2015) has overseen the installation of a state of the art watering system. A four year project incorporated the construction of a stormwater harvesting dam in the Park, located near the site of the old lake, and laying a network of pipes. This is controlled by a computerised system that directs water according to individual plant needs. This new initiative is securing the irrigation needs for the GBG and Eastern Park for the foreseeable future. In late 2015, the final part of the fern glade's most recent renovation is the installation of an overhead watering system which will spray water in a fine mist over the area assisting to re-create the humidity that nurtured "the ferns of great rarity...in the deep dark and ever-humid glens" that left such a strong impression on Baron Ferdinand von Mueller during his first expedition into the Otways early in March 1874.

Anthea Williams



Australasian Conference of Volunteer Guides in Botanic Gardens, Sydney, September 2015

Five Guides from Geelong Botanic Gardens attended the Guide Conference in Sydney this year:

Liz Bennetto, David Johnson, Sarah King, Annie McGeachy and Jayne Salmon enjoyed a stimulating program, as well as the opportunity to exchange ideas with other guides from all over Australia and New Zealand.

Some of the highlights were:

A Keynote Talk on *Wollemia nobilis* (Wollemi Pine), by Kathy Offord, who was involved in the identification of this rare plant which had been believed extinct for more than a million years. The Wollemi Pine was discovered in September 1994 by Park Ranger, David Noble, as acknowledged in the species name *nobilis*.

Although high hopes were held for producing seedlings by tissue culture, this proved unsuccessful. Plants were ultimately produced from cuttings, and it was 10 years before they were available for purchase.

83 mature trees are known in the wild, but they have no known genetic diversity. They are all within an area smaller than 10 square km. There are seedlings in the wild sites despite the cockatoos eating seed from the cones, but there are no saplings. Some reintroduction is now being done in the wild.

This is the most studied (and published) individual species of plant, with more than 100 scientific papers. The first specimen, planted in RBG Sydney, struggles because of its exposure to sun. It has multiple trunks and is not as attractive as the one in Geelong Botanic Gardens. The Wollemi Pine is an emergent rainforest species and grows best in 50% shade.

Science talks on Figs, Ferns, Cycads, Australian Nuts & Seeds, the role of Science in Botanic Gardens, the Library and its rare historic books and the Herbarium where dried reference plant specimens are kept, including many collected in 1770 by Sir Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander.

Excursion to the Australian Botanic Garden, Mount Annan

Mount Annan is 60 km south-west of Sydney.

An attractive new building, for scientific work and education of school and other groups, has recently been completed. A sloping area has been paved with large cut sandstone rocks interspersed with stone ornaments retrieved from buildings demolished in Sydney, and planted with lichens.

The Plant Bank is situated in new “state-of-the-art” buildings. Separate seed vaults, protected against fire by thick concrete walls, operate at two different temperatures for different types of seed. The seed bank stores the seed of just over 50% of the 5,800 NSW plant species. Australia has 21,171 plant species, excluding Algae.

Species whose seeds don't keep (eg. some tropical species) are preserved by growing on agar with nutrients in glass containers at about 20°C. The process requires strict hygiene.

The 416 ha gardens are the largest in Australia and feature Cumberland Plains Woodland, Dry Forest and Moist Forest. Watering of the rain-forest beds uses high, large area, sprinklers that deliver water at a very low rate, with varying drop sizes, resulting in no run-off. For a relatively young garden (established 1988), many plants are quite advanced.

Ideas from other guides:

There were many, but there is one we are enthusiastically implementing now. FGBG Guides will be running a U3A course to promote interest in Geelong Botanic Gardens in term 1, 2016.

Description:

Geelong Botanic Gardens – a local treasure

Do you know your gardens? Geelong Botanic Gardens is one of the oldest botanic gardens in Australia. Learn about its history, special collections, remarkable trees ... and the people who make it work. Each session includes a guided walk designed to focus on the study topic.

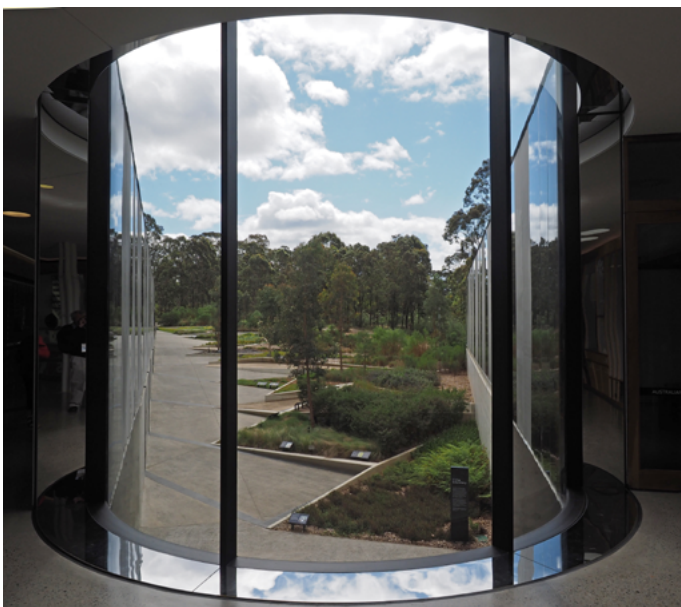
If you are interested in learning more about the GBG, enrol soon. Places are limited. We also look forward to welcoming new faces to the gardens, and perhaps new members for the Friends.

Liz Bennetto and David Johnson

Polished stainless steel entrance tunnel to the RBG Mt Annan Science & Education building

Apology from the editor:

In the last two issues plant names have slipped through incorrectly written. This was my mistake. LT



AAFBG Conference 2016

The Geelong Committee continues with planning for the biennial conference for the Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens, to be held April 29 – May 3 2016. Registration forms are available on our website and from our office. For Geelong Friends, there are a few extra details about registration and the tours:

Reimbursement of some of the registration fee

With the generous grant from Geelong Connected Communities and our Professional Development Policy, we are very pleased that we can offer some reimbursement for conference registration ... but we need to know how many members of Geelong Friends are planning to attend the conference and seek this reimbursement (so that we can determine the level of reimbursement for each person). Please contact the office and register your interest in this offer before December 18. The offer is only for Early Bird Registration and this closes January 31 2016.

Conference Tours

As details for the three conference tours were being finalised, we quickly realised that many of our members would be very interested in them ... and so would our visitors from 'out of town'! An added problem is that each tour has a maximum number, due to the sites and venues. So we decided that priority for the tours is for people registering for the conference who are not Geelong members. Geelong members registering for the conference may request to go on the waiting list, should vacancies be available. More importantly for Geelong members, the Committee intends to offer each of these tours to our membership in 2016 or 2017.

The program is being finalised and we have received profiles from some of our guest speakers; their knowledge and experience is quite incredible and their backgrounds quite diverse - here are some:

How are Urban Landscapes Important to People?

Dave Kendal has been a researcher at the Australian Research Centre for Urban Ecology, a division of the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, since 2011. He has developed an international research profile exploring how people interact with nature, and the ecology of cultivated landscapes.

Something's Happening! Citizen Science in the Brisbane Ranges

Cathy Powers is a member of Friends of Brisbane Ranges and co-leader of its Citizen Science project; her flora photography is published widely. An interest in Australian flora began with terrestrial orchids but flourished after moving to the eastern slopes of the

Brisbane Ranges in 1994; Cathy has been President / Vice-President of the Australian Plants Society Victoria for six years. Now retired from nursing, Cathy pursues an understanding of what nature provides in such a unique place as the Brisbane Ranges. "Understanding where I live, bordering the Brisbane Ranges National Park, gives me inside knowledge to share".

Geelong Regional Growth:- Threats to Flora and Ecosystem Sustainability

Graeme Stockton originally comes from the Grampians but now lives on a small, rural property at Bellbrae on the Surf Coast. He has a science degree in horticulture (1985) and then developed West Coast Indigenous Nursery specialising in local flora of the Bellarine and Torquay regions - servicing local land managers, businesses and community groups wanting to restore local habitat. Graeme is involved with Surfers Appreciating Natural Environment (SANE) and with Jan Juc Coast Action. Graeme worked in Guatemala (1996 – 1999) with communities living in the rainforest. On return, he completed postgraduate study in International Development. In 2007 he founded the Surf Coast Energy Group (SCEG); 200 members focusing on climate change and sustainability issues.

Connecting with Social Media

Professor Tim Entwistle is a scientist, scientific communicator and botanic gardens director. He took up the role of Director and Chief Executive of Royal Botanic Gardens in March 2013, following two years in a senior role at Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, and eight years as Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust in Sydney. Tim writes for a variety of science, nature and garden magazines and maintains an active social media profile (including his popular 'Talkingplants' blog). He is a regular contributor to ABC Radio National, hosting the show Talking Plants over Summer.

Urban Tree Management Strategies for Climate Change

Greg Moore, Senior Research Associate of Burnley College, University of Melbourne was Principal of Burnley from 1988 to 2007, and Head of the School of Resource Management at the University from 2002 to 2007.

With a general interest in horticultural plant science, revegetation and ecology, Greg is particularly interested in arboriculture. He was inaugural president of the International Society of Arboriculture, Australian Chapter, and has been a member of the National Trust's Register of Significant Trees since 1988 and chair since

1996. He has served the Board of Greening Australia (Victoria) 1988-2012 and chaired Treenet since 2005. He is on the board of Sustainable Gardening Australia and is a trustee of Trust for Nature. He has written two books, contributed to three others and has published over 120 scientific papers and articles.

Threatened Flora of Victoria

Neville Walsh, Senior Conservation Botanist at the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, started working at the National Herbarium of Victoria in 1977, initially as a survey botanist, then taxonomist. Work involves the survey and development of recovery strategies for threatened Victorian plants as well as taxonomic research. With Tim Entwisle, he edited the 4-volume Flora of Victoria and, with other RBGV botanists, is working to make it available on-line.

He is a member of the Helmeted Honeyeater Recovery Team, and working groups devoted to the recovery of several threatened plant species.

Neville manages the Victorian Conservation Seedbank (commenced in 2001), focussing on Victoria's threatened species. The bank includes around 1100 species; some of the seed is being used for re-establishment projects. He specialises in the taxonomy and ecology of alpine species.

We will also have news of other speakers and presentations on our website, including John Arnott, Grant Baverstock, Jenny Houlihan, and Annette Zealley; the conference theme Geelong – Regional Relevance: botanic environments and their survival in a time of global warming will certainly be considered in a diversity of contexts.

We are looking forward to hosting this conference and we will be needing help from our members to ensure that it is successful for everyone. The office staff have started a register of people who have offered to help us with the many tasks next year ... preparing conference bags, registration, cooking for tour supplies etc. Please contact the office if you may be able to assist us next year. It's busy and it's lots of fun!

The Geelong Committee

Welcome Autumn with a Garden Visit to Arundel

On the first weekend of Autumn 2016, Arundel will open its gates and welcome visitors through the new Open Gardens Victoria program. This wonderful event offers members an opportunity to join friends and family and enjoy one of Geelong's secret gardens. Your visit will include a view of the kitchen garden with bees and fowl, worm farm, a very serious compost enclosure, orchard walks and flower displays.

Visitors are invited to relax on the picnic lawn or under the verandahs and enjoy the hospitality of the Friends. Coffee, tea and a selection of cakes will be available for purchase. A Friends' plant stall will also be stocked with many proven performers propagated from the planting beds at Arundel.

Enjoy a Garden Tour with Helena Buxton, 11.00 am and 2.00 pm daily.

If you would like to volunteer to help the Friends at this event, please contact the Friends' Office for further information.

Profits from this event are donated to the Friends of the Geelong Botanic Gardens.

Arundel,
478 Ryrie Street, EAST GEELONG
Melways 452 G 6
Parking: Philpott or Humble Streets
Saturday and Sunday 5 and 6 March 2016
10.00 am to 4.30 pm Entry \$8.00

Photo from Arundel Open Day



Friends' Christmas Drinks

Friday 4th December

Our celebrations at the end of this year coincided with an exhibition by our Botanic Artists working with Dolores Sk-Malloni. The works included pictures painted at a gold leaf workshop earlier in the year and available for purchase. There were also beautiful cards, gift packs and prints for sale. Great for different presents with Christmads looming.

It was also an occasion to celebrate again our 30th Anniversary of the Friends, who met for the first time in November 1985. A cake was made especially for the evening.



Anniversary Cake

Allison Martland (President Friends and John Clutterbuck, one of the original members of the Friends cutting the 30th Anniversary Cake



Part of the group of members attending



Gifts for sale on the night and during the weekend to follow

FGBG Activities during Autumn 2016

March April

MARCH

2016

OPEN GARDENS VICTORIA – VISIT ARUNDEL Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 March, 10.00 am – 4.30 pm. \$8 entry

As part of the new Open Gardens Victoria program, your visit to Arundel will include a view of the kitchen garden with bees and fowl, worm farm, a very serious compost enclosure, orchard walks and flower displays. More details at www.opengardensvictoria.org.au and www.friendsgbg.org.au closer to the time.

DISCOVERYWALK – ‘NEW LIFE FOR GARDENS and PARK’

Sunday 13 March, 2.00 pm.

Gold Coin Donation.

Discover how Geelong Botanic Gardens has reduced its dependence on our scarce drinking water. You will see features in the gardens, hidden in plain sight, that conserve water and then go to see how storm-water is collected and treated. You will be introduced to the new indigenous plantings surrounding the stormwater dam. Meet your volunteer guide at the front gates.

AUTUMN WEEKEND PLANT SALE

Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 March, 10.00 am to 4.00 pm.

Featuring a wide selection of Australian plants, colourful perennials, hardy shrubs, pelargoniums and salvias, sourced from the Geelong Botanic Gardens. The Friends' Nursery and car park is located at the rear of the Gardens.

Lorraine Preston

21/10/1926 – 8/10/2015



The Friends were very sorry to hear of the recent death of Lorraine, an inaugural member of the Friends and one of the original members of the Committee. Our sympathy goes to her husband, Robert, who continues the family commitment to the Friends.

APRIL

2016

DISCOVERY WALK – ‘A TAPESTRY OF TREES’ Sunday 10 April, 2.00 pm. Gold Coin Donation.

Geelong Botanic Gardens is noted for the splendid collection of grand and unusual C 19 trees from all over the world, with many classified by the National Trust. Join your guide for a little geography, and a few stories, while you look up and admire the varied textured trunks and fabulous foliage.

Meet your volunteer guide at the front gates.

CONFERENCE of the AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF BOTANIC GARDENS

GEELONG - REGIONAL RELEVANCE: *Botanic Environments and their Survival in a Time of Global Warming*

Friday 29 April to Tuesday 3 May.

The Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens will host this biennial conference at the Geelong Conference Centre. It is designed to celebrate the Geelong Region with many associated activities. Visit the Friends' website for more details

DISCOVERY TABLE in the Gardens

Third Sunday of each month, 1.00 – 3.00 pm

Meet the Friends' Guides for interesting information and direction to key plants and seasonal change. Copies of the Self-guided Walks and information sheets are available at the Discovery Table and the Teahouse.

Projects within the Geelong Botanic Gardens currently being funded by the Friends.

The Ladies Kiosk

Work on the rotunda in Eastern Park is currently underway.

Cabman's Shelter

This project has been completed and will be followed by work on the Customs House

Conservatory

This building restoration has been in progress for quite a long time now, but there is light at the end of the tunnel and it will be completed in 2016

Are you the one?

We are looking for a member who has desktop publishing skills and would like to help with the production of Jubaea. Experience with Adobe In Design or similar.

Jubaea is published quarterly.

Please contact the Friends' office if you would like to help.

Special FGBG Summer Activities

December January February

DECEMBER 2015

WEEKLY PLANT SALES – OPEN OVER SUMMER HOLIDAYS

The Friends' Plant Nursery is open every Wednesday 9.30 am to 12.30 pm showcasing a wide selection of plants sourced from the Geelong Botanic Gardens. Located at the rear of the GBG.

OFFICE CLOSURE OVER CHRISTMAS

The Friends' Office will close for Christmas on Friday 18 December 2015 at 3.00 pm and reopen on Monday 4 January 2016 at 10.00 am.

JANUARY 2016

BOTANIC ART WORKSHOP FOR 'BEGINNERS' Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 January 2016, 9.30 am to 4.30 pm

Students will learn the basics of botanical art including drawing to composition, painting techniques and introduction to colour theory. There are no prerequisites to enrol in this class; just an eagerness to learn and a sense of adventure.

Secure your place before Friday 18 December

DISCOVERY WALK – 'PERENNIAL BORDER at its BEST'

Sunday 10 January, 2.00 pm. Gold Coin Donation.

Summer brings this wonderfully designed kaleidoscope of contrasting foliage, textures and blended colours to its peak. The Friends' expert perennial gardeners will be on hand, so bring your camera and borrow some ideas to take home. Meet your volunteer guide at the front gates.

BOTANIC ART WORKSHOP 'EXPLORING CREATIVE PERSPECTIVES'

Friday – Sunday, 15, 16 and 17 January 2016, 9.30 am to 4.30 pm

Students can expect an Intensive three days of comparative studies of flowers or leaves. The objective will be a study of a subject based on grids and geometry. Suitable for beginners to more advanced students. The finished study will be a colourful and pleasing artwork.

Jubaea is published by the Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens, Inc. Eastern Park, Geelong. PO Box 235, GEELONG 3220

Email: info@friendsgbg.org.au Website: www.friendsgbg.org.au Friends' Office hours: 10 am - 1.00 pm weekdays

Friends' phone: (03) 5222 6053 Geelong Botanic Gardens Office: (03) 5272 4379

President: Allison Martland Vice President: Susanna Keith Secretary: Luanne Thornton Treasurer: Judy Fyfe

© Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens, Inc 2013. The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens or those of the Geelong Botanic Gardens. Neither the Friends, nor the Geelong Botanic Gardens accept responsibility for statements made or opinions expressed, although every effort will be made to publish reliable information.

Editorial Team: Luanne Thornton, Helen Rodd, Liz Bennetto, Meralyn Roberts.

FEBRUARY 2016

DISCOVERY WALK – 'SPECIAL COLLECTIONS: PELARGONIUMS & SALVIAS'

Sunday 14 February, 2.00 pm.

Gold Coin Donation.

Geelong Botanic Gardens hold prized collections of colourful pelargoniums and dependable salvias for all occasions, including many rare species. Discover why these tough and adaptable plants are so easy to manage and perfect for the home garden. The Friends' Nursery will also be open; a selection of these plants will be for sale. Meet your volunteer guide at the front gates.

DISCOVERY TABLE in the Gardens

Sunday 21 February, 1.00 – 3.00 pm

Meet the Friends' Guides for interesting information and direction to key plants and seasonal change. Copies of the Self-guided Walks and information sheets are available at the Discovery Table and the Teahouse.

BUS TOUR TO HEIDE

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Late February, check the website shortly for details www.friendsgbg.org.au

Join the Friends on a bus tour with like-minded people to the Heide Museum of Modern Art which began its life in 1934 as the home of Melbourne couple John and Sunday Reed and has since evolved into one of Australia's most important cultural institutions.

REMINDER

CONFERENCE DATES:

31 January 2016 – Early bird Registration closes

15 April 2016 – Registration closes

Submissions for the Jubaea Winter issue are welcome by 1 March 2016

All articles, including high resolution jpg pictures can be sent to the office at

info@friendsgbg.org.au