

Jubaea



Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens Inc Newsletter
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Jennifer, a member of the regular rose group volunteers, who meet twice a month on Monday mornings

Our Rose Growers originally acted as members of Heritage Roses in Australia Inc., and now all are members of the Friends of GBG. They were responsible for replacing the original plantings of Hybrid Tea roses with Heritage roses.

The beds are now graded according to the “age” of the roses in them, from the highest, with “***Iceberg***” roses which are modern floribundas) to the lowest, (which contain species roses, some very ancient).

The collection contains modern floribundas, David Austin, Alister Clark, Centifolias, Bourbons, Albas, Gallicas, Damasks, Mosses, Rugosas, some recurrent flowering climbers e.g. ***Sombreuil***, and the Species roses.

As these less often seen species roses may be of special interest to, they are;

rosa glauca, r. virginiana, frulingsgold, primula, morletti. swegenzowii, macracarpa, dupontii, floliolosa, willmottiae, spinossissima, farrari, Roxburgii plena, villosa and pomifera duplex.

A Significant Birthday

Our *Jubaea chilensis* is 150 years old!



Our *Jubaea chilensis* in better times

The plant that serves as the emblem of the Friends of the Geelong Botanic Gardens is having a birthday this year. We believe that the *Jubaea chilensis* in the GBG was planted by our original curator Daniel Bunce in 1867 with seed supplied by Baron Ferdinand von Mueller. There is a similar specimen at Cororooke House near Colac planted by the visiting Duke of Edinburgh in the same year.

In fact our *Jubaea* was originally planted inside the area later occupied by the Great Raddenberry Fernery and would have been a feature of that great structure which enclosed the many ferns that were such fashionable garden specimens at that time. The term “pteridomania” was coined by Charles Kingsley to describe the mania experienced by the Victorians for ferns of all kinds. Now for some information about the plant itself.

Jubaea is a genus of palms (family *Arecaceae*) with one species, *Jubaea chilensis*, or *J. spectabilis*, the Chilean wine palm or Chile cocopalme. It is native to southwestern South America, where it is endemic to a small area of central Chile, between 32°S and 35°S in southern Coquimbo, Valparaíso, Santiago, O’Higgins and northern Maule regions. It was long assumed that the extinct palm tree of Easter Island belonged to this genus too, but it is distinct and now placed in its own genus, *Paschalococos*.

The genus was named after Juba II, a Berber king and botanist. The common name refers to the past use of the sap from the trunk of this palm to produce a fermented beverage. The sap is also boiled down into a syrup and sold locally as *miel de palma*.

Although described somewhat disdainfully by Charles Darwin as a ‘very ugly tree’, many consider the Chilean wine palm (*Jubaea chilensis*) to be one of the most impressive palms in the world. In the northern hemisphere, the Chilean wine palm flowers from November to December with fruits ripening from January onwards. The lifespan of this species is not known but there are reports of large specimens in Chile living for several hundred years.

The immense dark-grey trunk of *Jubaea chilensis* grows to a vast height (up to 30 m), with a diameter of 1 m or more, and often has a swollen region though that generally tapers towards the crown. The dense crown supports between 40 and 50 green or blue grey, pinnate leaves, which on dying, fall cleanly to the ground rather than persisting on the stem. Borne amongst the leaves, the large inflorescences hang down and bear both male and female flowers. The spherical fruits are yellow or brown, and, like a mini-coconut, have a nut-like shell with three ‘eyes’ through which the root emerges at germination.

The tree grows very slowly, as is usual for palm trees. It takes several years until the *Jubaea* starts getting its weight and size. It may take more than 20 years for the plant to get the height of a medium tree. It can reach a height of 25 m (82 ft) with a trunk up to 1.3 m (4.3 ft) in diameter at the base, often thicker higher up, and with smooth bark. The thickest well-documented *Jubaea* was that on the estate of J. Harrison Wright in Riverside, California which was 5’ 6” (1.68 m) thick “at shoulder height”. The largest of several specimens at the Adelaide, South Australia Botanic Garden in 1889 was stated to be six feet (1.52 m) thick at the base. A hollow (but living) *Jubaea* in the Valle de Ocoa in La Campana National Park, Chile is between six and seven feet (between 1.52 and 1.82 m) thick at the base, with no apparent taper in the lower trunk. The 3–5 m (9.8–16.4 ft) leaves are pinnate. The largest individual specimen of indoor plant in the world

A Significant Birthday *cont'd*

is the *Jubaea chilensis* at Kew Gardens, England. It needs mild winters, but will tolerate frosts down to about -15°C (5°F) as well as relatively cool summers, making it one of the hardiest of pinnate-leaved palms; this is because it grows up to 1,400 metres (4,600 ft) above sea level in its natural habitat. In the wild, the tree lives almost exclusively on the steep slopes of ravines.

Historically, the Chilean wine palm was extremely abundant, but several centuries of destructive over-harvesting for the collection of sap have reduced it to just a few significant populations. The remaining populations of the Chilean wine palm are mainly restricted to protected areas. However, efforts are being made by local conservation groups in Chile to reforest areas lying within the Chilean wine palm's former range. Furthermore, the harvesting of palm sap is now limited under Chilean law, and it is hoped that non-destructive harvesting methods will eventually be implemented.

The sap from the Chilean wine palm can be fermented into a palm wine or, as is more common today, concentrated into a sweet syrup (palm honey or miel de palma.) for culinary uses. In order to obtain the sap, the trunks are felled and the crown cut from the apex of the stem. The sap then drains out over a period lasting several months, sometimes yielding more than 300 litres. In addition to production of palm honey, the edible seeds are also harvested and the leaves are used to make baskets. The tree also produces small round fruits that are about 2–3 centimetres (0.79–1.18 in) in diameter. The fruit has a very hard outer shell and whitish meat on the inside, like a miniature coconut. The fresh nuts are commonly sold in the areas where the palms grow during their fruiting season. We hope our *Jubaea* lives on to celebrate many more birthdays. As good botanists looking to the future, the GBG has planted another specimen as part of the succession plan so that in years to come future generations may see two magnificent example of this majestic plant.

".... palms, the loftiest and noblest of all vegetable forms, that to which the prize of beauty has been assigned by the concurrent voice of nations in all ages; for the earliest civilization of mankind belonged to the countries bordering on the region of palms and to parts of Asia where they abound." Alexander von Humboldt, *Physiognomy of Plants*, 1849.

References:

Wikipedia <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jubaea>
Palm & Cycad Society of Australia:
Jubaea chilensis 'The Travels of Jubaea' from the US Pacific Horticulture Society
<http://www.pacifichorticulture.org/articles/the-travels-of-jubaea/>.



Before he retired Jeff Hecker (Hec) planted a replacement which is now growing well beside our *Jubaea*

2016 / 2017 Friends' Committee

President: Allison Martland

Vice Presidents:
Susanna Keith
Anthea Williams

Secretary: Helen Rodd

Treasurer: Judy Fyfe

Committee Members:
Lucy Pope
Gwelda Owen
Lawrie Baker
Judy Lavery

Jenny Happell, OAM



Congratulations to our honorary life member, Jenny Happell, who was awarded an OAM in the recent Australia Day Honours List, 'for services to the community through voluntary roles with horticultural organisations'.

Jenny was one of a small group responsible for the inception of the Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens. Jenny, Jayne Salmon and George Jones, with the full support of the Director of the GBG, Ian Rogers, called a public meeting with a view to establishing a Friends Group. The aims of this Group were to promote the GBG and to assist when able and when required. An early project identified was to train voluntary Guides. This meeting was held at City Hall on 7th November 1985, and there was unanimous agreement to form the Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens. The Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens Newsletter, No. 1 - Summer Autumn 1986, records Jenny as a member of the first Committee (with George Jones President). In a later issue of the Newsletter, her position on the Committee was listed as 'Guides Officer'. She developed the proposed Guides group into a practical working group which had 13 trained members by late 1986, when booked tours of the Gardens began. Jenny was the first person to be awarded Honorary

Life Membership of the Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens. The citation, signed by Jayne Salmon, President on 27th July 1989 reads: 'Jenny was one of those persons who initially met at the Geelong Town Hall to begin the Friends Group. She brought with her a good knowledge and interest in horticulture, experience in Guiding at the Royal Melbourne Botanic Gardens and an enthusiasm for the promotion and enjoyment of Geelong Botanic Gardens'. This award was made on the occasion of Jenny's move from Geelong to Melbourne. She was thanked for her time training Guides, organising displays, speaking at public meetings and being a good Friend.

Jenny was involved with a project that identified and recorded the extensive and historic camellia collection at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne. Approximately 950 plants were labelled as a result of Jenny's work from 1991. Jenny's work in this field assisted in the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne being named as a Camellia Garden of Excellence by the International Camellia Society. Jenny gave a presentation on camellias to FGBG on 25 August 1997.

Jenny is one of four voluntary Guides at RBG Melbourne who were congratulated by Director and Chief Executive, Professor Tim Entwisle in 2013, when a commemorative tree, *Agathis vitiensis* was planted to mark their collective 120 years of volunteering as Guides. The four women - Jenny Happell, Ruth Harris, Jayne Salmon and Judy Woodfull, started as Voluntary Guides with RGB Melbourne in 1983, only two years after the volunteer program began.

Jenny was a Selector for the Australian Open Garden Scheme between 1997 and 2001. She was a member of the International Dendrology Society from 2002 to 2016.

Jenny remains an interested and active member of FGBG, and visits the Geelong Botanic Gardens regularly.

We are delighted that Jenny has been honoured.

Helen Rodd

Gift Fund

Due to the generosity of so many people, the Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens Gift Fund has increased from \$138,863 to \$139,807 over the last 12 months. In this period, the Gift Fund has also distributed \$11,480:

- \$5000 to the GBG Education Program and
- \$6,480 for the repairs to the Bronze Cranes in the Gardens

Thank you to the following donors:

Kate Kirkhope, Dolores Malloni, Michael Munson, Philip Munson, Hillary Robinson, and several donors who wish to remain anonymous.

Rose Growers – Annual rose care regime



January:

Untie clematis on towers and cut back by approximately one third, then retie. Cut back nepeta. Dead head roses, taking the heads off as though picking a long stem.

February:

Dead head roses. Untie clematis and adjust on the towers (minor trim if necessary)

March:

Dead head roses. Apply Sudden Impact for roses in first week.

April and May:

Continue dead heading roses.

June / July:

Major pruning of roses (except 'once flowering' species) and clematis. Feed each bed with Seamungus as completed. Thin out one quarter of the oldest canes completely from the recurrent flowering climbers on the towers.

August:

Complete pruning and feeding as necessary.

September:

Apply Sudden Impact for roses in the first week. Apply mulch after rains.

October:

Dead head roses during twice monthly group mornings (taking the dead flower heads to the first petiole). We do not dead head the rugose roses that bear handsome hips and do not dead head or prune these hips off. Untie clematis and adjust on the towers (minor trim if necessary)

November:

Prune 'once flowering' roses after flush. Dead head other roses.

December:

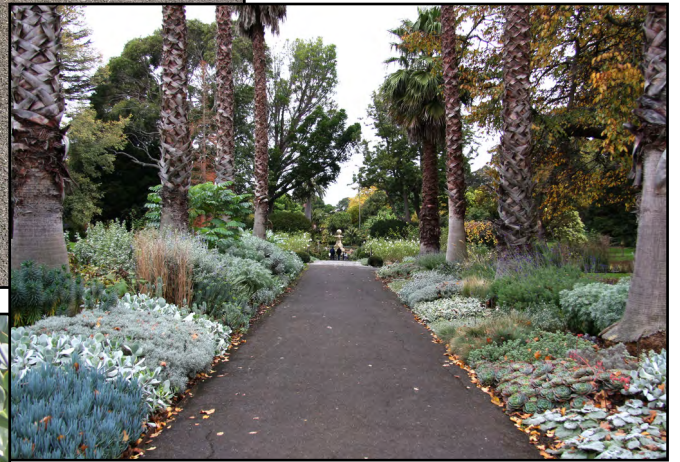
Dead head roses. Feed with Sudden Impact for roses at the end of the month.

Lyn Lang and Lyn Gadd

Our Silver Border Then and Now



The Silver Border was planted to celebrate the Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens 25th Anniversary in 2011



It is now one of the many highlights of our gardens and the Groiwing Friends regularly propogate plants for sale in the nursery every Wednesday and at our three plant sales in Autumn, Winter and Spring



What's on

March, April, May and June

MARCH

AUTUMN WEEKEND PLANT SALE

Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 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.

BIG PLAY DAY @ GEELONG BOTANIC GARDENS

Wednesday 29 March, 10.00 am to 1.00 pm.

Come for the Big Play Day - free fun filled community event for families and preschool children. Alternative parking will be available for volunteers on this day.

APRIL

BUS TRIP TO SHEPPARTON

Thursday 6 April, full day trip.

Join the Friends on a visit to the Friends of the Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton and their fascinating new water wise garden, along with a visit to Noorilim Estate, a magnificently preserved heritage listed Victorian stately home and garden. See website for more details. Bookings and payment at the Friends' Office.

Noorilim Estate



APRIL

BOTANIC ART WORKSHOP FOR 'BEGINNERS' with John Pastoriza-Pinol

Saturday 8 April and Sunday 9 April 2017, 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.

DISCOVERY WALK – 'VITAL VEGGIES – HEALTHY HERBS'

Sunday 9 April, 2.00 pm. Gold Coin Donation.

How can we grow our own food? Join this group tour of the vegetable and herb gardens for a discussion of plant selection and sustainable gardening techniques. Meet your volunteer guide at the front gates.

DISCOVERY TABLE in the Gardens

Sunday 16 April, 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.

'ECHOES OF THE PAST' – REOPENING OF THE LADIES KIOSK

Sunday 23 April, 10.45 am to 3.00 pm

The Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens will be hosting a free community event in Eastern Park, Geelong, to celebrate the refurbishment of the historic 'Ladies Kiosk'. The event will host activities such as National Trust Heritage games, musical entertainment including a jazz band and ukulele band, period costume competition, guided walk. Special guest MC Colin Mockett. Bring a BYO picnic, drinks, rug and chairs.



What's on

March, April, May and June

MAY

NATIONAL VOLUNTEERS WEEK LUNCHEON

Wednesday 10 May

All Friends' volunteers are invited to an informal luncheon, featuring a special botanic demonstration that will delight our members. More details coming soon.

DISCOVERY WALK – 'EASTERN PARK'

Sunday 14 May, 2.00 pm. Gold Coin Donation.

Find out about the historic pathways of Eastern Park. Appreciate the magnificent trees - many of which have Heritage listing - the views and the exciting rejuvenation of our Eastern Park.

DISCOVERY TABLE in the Gardens

Sunday 21 May, 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.

GUEST SPEAKER 'MARDI TOWNSEND'

Monday 29 May, 5.30 pm for 6.00 pm start

Associate Professor Mardi Townsend will give an illustrated talk on the therapeutic value of gardens and her extensive experience in this field.

JUNE

DISCOVERY TABLE in the Gardens

Sunday 18 June, 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.

DISCOVERY WALK

'CONSERVATORY CUISINE - COCONUT + VANILLA + CHOCOLATE = LAMINGTONS'

Sunday 25 June, 2.00 pm. Gold Coin Donation.

Join your guide for a visit to our newly refurbished conservatory at the GBG and discover how a mix of 'hothouse' plants originally from faraway lands came together to inspire a classic Australian treat.



The Geelong Botanic Gardens have a number of *Araucaria bidwillii* that are dropping nuts at the moment.

This *Bunya* cone is exposing its inner core and the large nuts, which Aboriginal people enjoyed eating.

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

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