



AAFBG Conference in 2022



Eurobodalla Visitor Centre in July 2020. Photo by Michael Anlezark

Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Garden is returning to life after the Black Summer fire that destroyed most of the Garden. This recovery is only thanks to the heroic efforts of staff, Friends, volunteers and the whole community who have worked to rebuild and regrow what was burnt. And Nature has done her own amazing thing as well.

As a celebration of this resilience and renewal Eurobodalla is hosting the AAFBG Biennial Conference in May 2022. The Friends of Eurobodalla are asking you to think about how you could take part in this conference; by making a 10 minute presentation; a two minute quick fire presentation; a display of your Garden; or anything else you would like to contribute. For further enquiries contact the Conference Convenor, Liz Barraclough, at: AAFBG2022@erbg.org.au.



THRIVING TOGETHER
Resilience and Renewal in a Changing World

SAVE THE DATE

2022 AAFBG Members' Biennial Conference
29 April - 1 May 2022

At the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Garden, Batemans Bay, NSW

Email AAFBG2022@erbg.org.au



Friends of
**EUROBODALLA
REGIONAL
BOTANIC
GARDEN**

Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens

Incorporation: AOO26805Z

Patron: Dr Philip Moors

Office bearers

President: Wayne Harvey, Friends Waite Arboretum

Vice-President: Murray Fletcher Friends Orange BG

Secretary: Position vacant

Treasurer: Position vacant

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Merrill Shulkes, Friends Ballarat BG

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Membership

Annual Subscriptions are due on 1 April

\$50 for up to 250 members

\$150 for 250-500 members \$250 for 500-

1000 members

\$400 for 1000+ members

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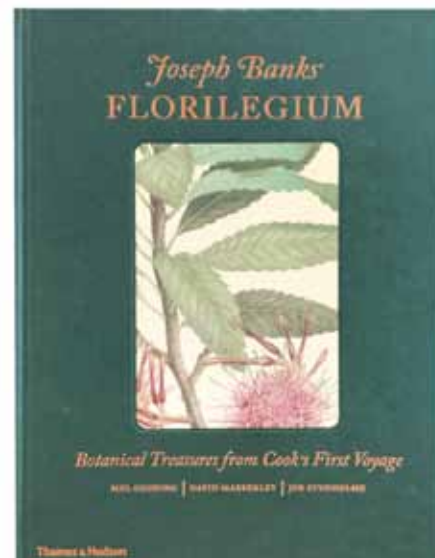
We welcome your articles for inclusion and photographs and important calendar events.

Closing dates are 30 March and 30 September approximately six weeks prior to publication.

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WIN

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From the President

Wayne Harvey



The AAFBG recently held its 28th AGM for the Year April 2019 to March 2020, giving the opportunity to brief our members on our activities during an exceptional year. We were scheduled to participate in the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show to provide our members with the opportunity to promote their own gardens over a five-day period. We were ready, but the declaration of a pandemic just before the opening caused the Melbourne event to be cancelled at short notice. We plan to participate at similar events around the country as part of AAFBG's regular calendar of activities as a way of giving our members a forum for telling others about their own gardens, parks and arboreta.

The biannual AAFBG Conference is another major event where members can come together. The 2020 Conference scheduled for Brisbane was also cancelled at short notice, after a great deal of effort by many people to assemble a program of presentations, tours and events. We were very pleased to receive an offer from the Friends of Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens to host the next conference and were able to use the AGM to announce the 2022 AAFBG Conference is to be held at Eurobodalla on the NSW South Coast. The Eurobodalla Gardens suffered badly during the 2019-20 summer fires and we applaud their resolve to take on the task of hosting a national Conference.

AAFBG launched the Handbury Award during the year, named in honour of Dr Geoffrey Handbury. Awards are made to individuals and organisations to recognise exceptional contributions to a garden, park or arboretum. The inaugural Award recipients were announced at the AGM by our Patron, Dr Philip Moors AO, and are listed on page 6. Nominations from our member organisations for the next round of Handbury Awards will soon be invited.

The combined effects of drought, fires, and a pandemic during the reporting year and now the current recession, require the AAFBG to be alert to ideas and opportunities that might contribute to a strong and sustainable future for the Association. The task of planning for the future falls largely to the Management Committee elected at each AGM. Your new Management Committee covers Friends' groups from NSW, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and the ACT. Some of the tasks for the new Committee will include a revision of the Association's website and continued planning for participation in events aimed at increasing the profile of our members. The AAFBG will, through its Management Committee and its member organisations, have access to another great group of enthusiastic and willing people to help the Association to bring value to its members and to expand its capacity to do even more to advance the objectives of the Association.

Acting Secretary's Report

Elizabeth Gilfillan



At the virtual AGM, Acting Secretary, Elizabeth Gilfillan, told the ZOOM gathering that their Association is the supporter of all the work performed in these vital places, our gardens, by many unseen supporters and the volunteers on ground contributing their time and expertise. Following is an edited version of her report to that meeting.

It is now eighteen months since the previous annual general meeting, when we welcomed new President Wayne Harvey. Then a new Administrative Officer, Chantal de Vere, joined us in March and then the pandemic struck. Remaining connected, relevant and viable has kept AAFBG members even busier than usual. Communication between us and for us, more vital than ever before.

Crisis: Eurobodalla Botanic Garden suffered tragic loss in the February bushfires, but the Eurobodalla Friends are now enthusiastically planning the hosting of AAFBG 2022 Conference which we are sure will be greatly supported.

The 2020 conference in Brisbane had to be cancelled after much planning towards what was anticipated to be a marvellous event. Our sincere thanks to Friends of Brisbane and farewell and appreciation to AAFBG Committee member from Brisbane, Annette Irish.

Postponed: the first AAFBG Tour, instigated in 2019 by Treasurer Kathy Wright, a very successful trip to Singapore, was to be followed by a Tasmania trip in spring 2021. Planning for this trip is now on hold until arrangements can be more definite.

Advocacy and Grant funding support are a fundamental role of your Association and we always want to hear from members who require AAFBG endorsement. The latest being for Friends of Warrnambool, Gisborne, Ballarat, Camperdown and Hamilton.

Pleasure: coordinating the inaugural Handbury Awards has been a highlight of the year. This annual award will be a continuing feature of AAFBG purposes to communicate with its members. Congratulations to the worthy recipients. (There is an article in this issue about the winners.)

Farewell to our friend and Treasurer Kathy Wright who is retiring after four years' service to AAFBG, thank you Kathy for your valued contribution.

A brighter future must be the outcome of a difficult and different year. Nothing teaches us more than our gardens, hope, anticipation, trust in renewal, will lead to restored visions and connections in your Botanical Gardens.

After seven years as Secretary this really is my final report, a difficult decision, one of the highlights of my role has been the communication between us. Being part of your peak body committee is a great honour and pleasure and I remain committed to the role of AAFBG. My sincere wishes to everyone as you support your Gardens and communities.

Administration Officer's Report

Chantal de Vere



Our big news is that we had our AGM on line on the 19th of October and now we have some new committee members

AAFBG President, Wayne Harvey welcomed the new committee on the 26th October at the first meeting, Murray Fletcher (VP) Elizabeth Gilfillan, Elizabeth Barraclough, Bob Ducrou, Meridith Shulkes, Jill Brownlee, Judy Blood and Wendy Antoniak. Our committee is represented with members from SA, Qld, NSW, Vic and the ACT.

The AGM went well with many people attending although technology did fail some of our people who were not able to log onto the Zoom meeting. This was really unfortunate as we would have had many more persons on line with us.

The Handbury Awards were announced and presented by Dr Philip Moors our patron. I must admit I was so excited to see people so happy to be acknowledged for the work they do as volunteers. Being able to acknowledge the effort, time and hard work from our members is incredibly heart-warming.

Eurobadalla produced a stunning video for the Eurobadalla conference in 2022 which was shared on line at the meeting. You can watch it online via our web page. Once again the people who are behind the scenes makes us all so proud to see what volunteers do for the Botanic Gardens under such difficult circumstances after the fires, floods and covid year.

Chris Russell of BGANZ gave a power point presentation which was thoroughly engaging about 'Care for the Rare' a collaborative plant conservation project in the botanic gardens. (I was happy the technology worked)

We are all looking forward to having a face to face AGM next year in Adelaide. Let's keep our collective fingers crossed.



Some of the ZOOM AGM

The inaugural Handbury Awards

Dr Geoff Handbury AO



Dr Handbury, who died in November last year aged 94, has been a generous philanthropist to many causes throughout Australia, like hospitals, schools, playgrounds, sporting facilities, health initiatives, public art, bush nursing centres, men's sheds and more, including the AAFBG. In recognition of Geoff Handbury's extraordinary generosity, the committee decided that an annual award be named in his honour for a Friends group or individual that has done meritorious work in their garden or community. Seven nominations were received and seven awards have been made to the following six individuals and one group. The awards were presented by the Association's Patron, Dr Philip Moors, at the AGM.

Dennis Ayliffe from the Australian National Botanic Gardens



For many years Dennis has been one of those volunteers we all treasure; someone capable of turning their hand to pretty well anything required. He has served on the governing body, been a Guide, assisted with running our Summer Sounds concert series and been wise Council to both my predecessor and myself as President. He has served on the Projects Committee which liaises with Garden Management to shape the design and implementation of those many projects which the Friends invest in. At different times he has managed and guided in the Friends' very successful Breakfast with the Birds. This program not only attracts a usually 'booked out' audience, it raises useful funds for the Gardens. Dennis was president of AAFBG and guided it through a difficult time.

Dr Andrew and Mrs Jenny Binns from the Lismore Rainforest Botanic Gardens.



The development of the gardens and its facilities would not have been possible without the generous support of its principal benefactors Dr and Mrs Binns. Commencing in 2013, the Binns have donated \$90,000 to the FLRBG and have indicated they will contribute a further \$10,000 at the end of the current financial year bringing the total to a magnificent contribution of \$100,000. This generosity has financed a wide range of developments within the Gardens including: bitumen paving of wheelchair accessible paths; a tool shed; benches, raised garden beds and toilets. In addition this funding has enabled the Gardens to pay for professional services from planners, surveyors, engineers, electricians, signwriters and plumbers.

Julie Bradby from the Ballarat Botanical Gardens



Julie is a highly qualified children's educationalist and when she joined the Ballarat Friends she set up the 'Coffee and Cake' program to attract pre-schoolers and their Mums to the Gardens. This has become the highly successful Botanikids program which holds events throughout the year which may involve parents, carers, the elderly, disabled people, students from primary to tertiary levels, and day care family groups. The Botanikids' activities at the annual three-day Begonia Festival involve almost 4,000 children. Julie has also built positive relationships with the Ballarat Council; she served for three years on its advisory committee for lakes and gardens. The beautifully restored Gatekeeper's Cottage, that is so welcoming and functional, was refurbished under Julie's leadership. Written curriculum guides for students to study before visiting the lake and Garden Precinct were developed under her leadership and the drive is now to have a Gardens Education Precinct Teacher.

Barry Kemp from the North Coast Regional Botanic Garden



Barry Kemp is the quintessential 'quiet achiever'. He has been an active volunteer and member of the Friends of NCRBG since 1993 and has been involved with developing many of the plant collections and display gardens. From exotics in the South African collection, to the Australian species of NSW, to the North Coast wet and dry heathland species, Barry has undertaken the work of design, curation, propagation, planting and maintenance. His photos record the history of the Gardens and they are available for publicity, talks, workshops or for researchers, students and visitors looking for information. His book, *Wildflowers of the North Coast of New South Wales*, is a valuable tool used by botanists. He mentors new volunteers and helps them work out a weed from a rare plant.

Mandy King from Warrnambool Botanic Gardens



Mandy has been a Friend for 22 years and was Secretary for 21 of them. In that time she compiled a data base and grid reference for all the plants in the Gardens and initiated a tree identification key to enable virtual walks through the Gardens. She championed the labelling of all plants and the installation of an automated watering system. She created a web site for the Gardens that links to the Council and she maintained this site and up-loaded minutes, newsletters and all relevant information on the Gardens. And she used her photographic skills to design cards featuring the Gardens, promotional brochures and a full colour version of the Friends newsletter. She worked to protect and promote the Guilfoyle Garden and spent hundreds of hours meeting the demands of Heritage Victoria in an effort to establish a nature based play area in the Gardens. She was also a committee member of the AAFBG.

Pat Offord from Lismore Rainforest Botanic Gardens



The Lismore Rainforest Botanic Gardens features Australian plants which grow in the wild within a 200 km radius of Lismore. The decisions about what to plant and where to plant has been guided by the curator, Pat Offord, who has been keeping records of what is planted and the area in which it is planted since the first plantings in 2002. Pat was on the steering committee which sought a site for a botanic garden in Lismore and has been a tireless contributor to the Gardens in the years since then. He has managed and advised the committee on all matters related to the record keeping of plant material on the list of endangered species including those provided to the Gardens by other organisations, for example the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Growing Friends at Foundation and Friends of the Botanic Gardens Sydney



The first day for Growing Friends was 22 September 1998, when a small group was allocated a bench in the main nursery's shade house, and it grew from there to extra groups in Sydney and also at the Gardens at Mount Annan and Mount Tomah. Initially plant sales were held as special events at Cottage 5 in the Sydney Gardens but that has grown to a thriving plant sales business that is open to the public on weekdays and Saturdays and on days of special events in the Gardens. Some Growing Friends have years of experience, some have horticultural degrees, others are just keen gardeners, and they work

in the varied roles of propagation, display, maintenance and sale of plants. Over the past 20 years they have contributed \$1.8 million to the three Gardens and have contributed 60% of the 31,000 hours given by all volunteers each year.

An apologetic note from Murray at Orange BG



Customers doing a good job of social distancing at the plant sale

A difficult year for all Friends groups. We didn't submit anything from Orange because we haven't done anything due to the pandemic. Our last contribution was mainly about cancelling our Autumn sale due to the pandemic. We are doing our November plant sale at the moment by spreading it over two weekends and have found it works well to have people booked in so we can ensure there isn't a bun rush at the beginning and people are separated in time and space to ensure social distancing. When they book, they know they will have an hour to browse and so it is much more relaxed for both customers and Friends staffing the sale. We still made as much

income last weekend as on our best sale to date and we still have another two days to go! We should have something to contribute for the next issue.

Murray Fletcher

A feel good story in COVID-19 times

Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens Ballarat, Victoria

What started as a seed of an idea by Elizabeth Gilfillan, back in Victoria's second lockdown period, culminated in a worthwhile, fun public event on Sunday 8 November.

In late August a small group of enthusiastic Friends met via Zoom to talk through the potential of growing seedlings to give away free to Ballarat locals. 'Seeding the Future' was formed.

The idea gained momentum. Our membership of over 380 Friends would be invited to fill in some of their lockdown time to grow vegetable and flower seedlings, using their own seeds, cuttings and recycled containers, in a ten week growing project. Our small organising group were each given a list of Friends to phone and explain the concept as well as chat about the lack of social events, bus trips, face to face meetings etc. that everyone was affected by. The phone around on its own, was a great way to reconnect with our members. This useful contact resulted on over 80 per cent of Friends showing enthusiasm to grow and share.

As well, and a sure way for us to achieve publicity for 'Seeding the Future', the City of Ballarat were running a 'Be Kind Ballarat' initiative. Encouraging locals to be thoughtful to one another; 'Seeding the Future' fitted perfectly with this theme. We noted in general that people were becoming more interested in nature and the outdoors in this COVID time and were spending more time in their gardens and even growing some of their food.

Weekly emails and photos kept the growing group enthused through a couple of months of unpredictable Ballarat spring weather. We even had snow! Publicity took off in October and early November with timed media releases resulting in articles in the *Ballarat Courier*, *Ballarat Times*, social media and radio interviews. No money was spent on advertising; it was the story that appealed!

The 'Seeding the Future' Day arrived with an overwhelming number of plants being ferried in by the Friends to the Northern Pavilion next to the Botanical Gardens. The weather was perfect – blue sky and mild conditions. Bunting and bollards were set up in accordance with COVID safe regulations (following three meetings with the City of Ballarat) and from noon until 3 pm the public were invited to line up orderly (1.5 metres apart!) to take home some seedlings and flowers with compliments from the Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens.



With around 500 people attending it was a very successful day in raising awareness of our Friends organisation, meeting locals interested in learning more about plants and playing a part in 'Be Kind Ballarat!'

Wendy Taylor, Friends Committee member

Queueing to 'buy' free plants



Twenty years of support and advocacy

Friends of Bendigo Botanic Gardens, White Hills Bendigo, Victoria

Year 2020 marks the 20th anniversary of the Friends of Bendigo Botanic Gardens.

During the 1990s, Heritage Victoria and local gardens enthusiasts raised concerns over the poor state of Regional Botanic Gardens. A Public Meeting was held in October 1999 where a motion was carried that: 'We establish The Friends of Bendigo's Botanic Gardens as a community group sponsored by the Council of the City of Greater Bendigo'.

The first Annual General Meeting was held in March 2000 with Glenys Anthony as president. In 2000 a Deed of Delegation was drawn up with the City of Greater Bendigo; a logo was developed, speakers were arranged, excursions organised, and regular newsletters were distributed.

In 2005 the Friends successfully lobbied Council to repurpose the unoccupied caretakers residence at the White Hills Botanic Gardens as a home base for The Friends as well as a Parks staff resource centre. A Heritage Significance, Assessment and Strategy was completed in 2006. The 150th anniversary of the Gardens in 2007 was marked with a week of celebrations including the official opening and naming of the old caretakers house as the Samuel Gadd Centre. (Samuel Gadd was curator of Bendigo Gardens from 1875 until 1903.)

The following year, 2008, a booklet, *White Hills Botanic Gardens, Bendigo 1857-2007*, and a coloured visitors' brochure were produced. A Master Plan was developed and a steering committee set up. This plan was adopted by Council in 2010. The Garden was now referred to as Bendigo Botanic Gardens, White Hills. Brad Creme was appointed Curator from 2012 to 2017, following twelve years of campaigning and submissions by the Friends. The Friends became Incorporated in 2013.

A key feature of the Master Plan was the proposed significant expansion of the Gardens to be called the Garden for the Future. An initial grant received by the Council in 2014 started the design process and eventually construction started in 2017 and opened with a community day in April 2018. (See *Eucalypt* no.50 May 2018.) In 2015 the first edition of *Dovyalis Newsletter* was launched and a Life membership was awarded to Jane Cleary to officially recognise the work she had done to support the Gardens.

The Friends have several sub-groups including the Growing Friends, previously the Propagation Group; the Botanical Illustration Group formed in 2015; and the Guiding Group. The Friends have made substantial financial contributions to the gardens which total well in excess of \$82,000. We are proud of the wonderful improvements to the gardens in the last twenty years as a result of collaboration between Bendigo City Council and the Friends Group.



Gardening in the Gardens and the Illustrators' workshop.

Planning, demolition, repair, restoration

Friends of the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens Batemans Bay, New South Wales

The intensity of the January bushfires was so great it seemed a miracle that our recently redeveloped Visitor Centre, new cafe and Herbarium could have survived. We lost almost all other structures, thousands of nursery plants and the destruction of our wildlife and bushland was immeasurable. Ironically, the last surviving timber walkway was subsequently washed away by the ensuing flood.

Making the site safe was the priority before it was possible to accept any of the many offers of support from Friends, volunteers and the community. Under our foster a box of plants strategy almost 60 volunteers, and some staff, took over 4000 plants home to nurture. This eased some of the pressure on those of us working on site in the ashes early in January. Huge intestinal fortitude was needed to return each day to deal with a task of such magnitude.

By March 2020, recovery moved on from crisis management to a planning, demolition, repair and restoration phase. Through untiring efforts of Garden staff, a number of volunteers who fell within (COVID restricted) age limits, contractors, Council staff, the Army and volunteers from organisations like BlazeAid, the Garden re-opened on Saturday 4 July 2020.

By September, *Hardenbergia*, *Brachyscome* and flowers were popping up like colourful confetti on our black and green landscape. The flowering spears of grass trees are growing taller every day and our mighty eucalypts continue to regenerate their once giant canopies. Birds are returning like long lost friends.



Our incredible and supportive community returned: going for walks, buying from our shop and eating in our cafe. Since reopening we've welcomed back well over 13,000 visitors which considering COVID 19 and its related restrictions is fantastic. Our new Inspirational Display Gardens are forging ahead and are expected to be completed in the not too distant future.

Feedback is always welcome and interesting and over the last couple of months has been overwhelmingly positive with some feelings consistently repeated: this place is special to them, they appreciate our efforts under the enormity of the recovery and they value what the Garden brings to the community. Our volunteers and Friends continue to do an amazing job under the direction of dedicated staff and our Garden continues to show resilience and to grow and prosper despite the challenges.

All of us who love the Garden are most grateful to a large number of donors – Friends, non-members, individuals and organisations which, like ourselves, are members of the Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens. We look forward to giving AAFBG members the warmest welcome when we host the national conference in 2022. (See front page.)

Michael Anlezark

A gardener's calendar

*Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens
Geelong, Victoria*

Kate Kirkhope Secretary and Allison Martland President
with the new 2021 Gardeners' Calendar.



As a Friend and one of the organisers of events for Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens, I had to think of different ways of raising funds during the current COVID-19 situation. Why not a calendar showing wonderful seasonal aspects of the Gardens and what is looking fantastic there each month? Not only this but also a gardeners' go to place where each month we list handy hints on what to do in our own gardens. We had to think outside the square and adopt some new procedures but with a lot of passion from sub-committee members and dedicated gardeners we did it.

I wanted to create a calendar with some helpful information on what to plant each month and mix it with handy hints from our own experienced gardeners. For example, when to plant and harvest garlic, how to store your lemon harvest and over-sowing your lawn with wildflower seeds – that's one I'd love to try! We had a lot of fun finding and choosing the hints, which was a collaboration of many Friends, from near and far, and for some it was a welcome distraction from COVID-19.

We've been able to keep the price as low as possible with wonderful advertising support, so that as many people as possible can buy one or two or three for friends and family – they make great gifts. It helps us threefold: promotes the Geelong Botanic Gardens, provides income so that we can continue to support the Gardens in various ways and helps us all to remember what a wonderful iconic feature we have in Geelong.

Available on the Friends' website: friendsgbg.org.au for \$15 (\$12 members). Enquiries: ph. 03 5222 6053.

Kate Kirkhope, Secretary and organiser of events.

Making tracks!

Friends of Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Gardens Buderim, Queensland

There's an exciting new project going on here, something that just wouldn't be possible in most botanic gardens. It's a bushland walking track through the 83 ha Botanic Gardens, the 60 ha Tall Gums Environmental Reserve (to the west of the Gardens) and the 27 ha Tanawha Tall Gums Nature Refuge (to the east of the Gardens). When complete, the track should be about 8 km long – we are not sure yet as there's still a lot of bush to be explored.

A start has been made surveying the first stage of the Western Tall Gums Walking Track. The Survey Team (usually about five volunteers) has been busy checking out the most interesting features for the new track. It's actually a good excuse to go bushwalking instead of the usual Tuesday Garden tasks. We've come up with a provisional route which is about 3 km long, though the GPS usually tells us we've covered about 6 km, but that includes side trips, backtracks, wandering off course and getting lost.



Creek crossings are the biggest problem. Mountain Creek runs through the block and there are at least ten watercourses feeding it, all very deep and with very steep banks. With heavy rain, the creek can rise by many metres in a very short time; however, it also drops in height very quickly. We've walked (or rather scrambled) up and down these watercourses looking for suitable crossing points and found very few. We've found some really interesting rock pools and waterfalls which sadly can never be part of the track. It really is mountain goat territory.



The next step was to commission a Flora and Fauna Assessment to determine the flora and fauna present, the ecological values and condition of vegetation on the site and to provide advice about avoiding and/or minimising impacts. This has resulted in some adjustments as one of the creek crossings falls within the ecological community Lowland Rainforest of Subtropical Australia which is listed as Critically Endangered. This means there can't be any interference to the flow of the creek (which varies from raging torrent to puddles) and possible wet boots for walkers. There is also an area of near-threatened

Richmond Birdwing vine, as well as cycads and forest grass trees, to be protected. There is evidence of koala occupation along the track and plenty of suitable eucalypts for them to feed on. Several individuals of the Vulnerable-listed Tusked frog were heard at two of the creek crossings, so these will have to be made with minimum disturbance.

The Friends have received a grant from Sunshine Coast Council to construct Stage 1 of the track over three years. With the route decided and the Flora and Fauna Assessment done, there only remains some procedural and safety issues to be finalised – we're about to start 'making tracks'!

Bob Ducrou

Three new projects at Melton

Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden North-west of Melbourne, Victoria

1. Eastern Australian Dryland Garden

Visitors to the Melton Botanic Garden have noticed changes to the area west of the lake wall. This is the commencement of the development of the Eastern Australian Dryland Garden. The area has been weed sprayed and ripped by council. Landscape plans for this area were drawn up by council landscape architects. The area will feature 11 bioregion beds covering areas from outback Queensland to the Wimmera. The Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Cranbourne provided the bioregion plant lists for us. The Working for Victoria Team of 10 people employed by Melton City Council commences in November. This area will be a major focus of their involvement in the Garden

2. Revegetation Project - South Side of the Small Lake

This project has been funded by a \$20,000 Federal Government Communities Environment Grant. The project title is 'Restoring Nature at the Small Lake'. Challis Enviro, the contractor, has been doing weed control since March. Kelvin, our bobcat contractor, has cut a path through the site and laid a crushed rock base on the path. The area has been tilled by the bobcat and more weed control is being done. Planting will commence in mid-November when we have trained up the Working for Victoria Team. Jane Edmanson, the FMBG patron, has donated a seat for this project. Many thanks to FMBG volunteers Rob and Jenny for installing the seat and to Daryl, Robert and Milan for preparing and concreting the seat pad.



3. Landcare Grant Revegetation - Lake South

The Lakers group continue planting around the lake with a focus on completing the 1 km of indigenous plantings around the Lake. The Landcare Grant Project of \$10,000 covers the south east areas of the lake. Planting was on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions for three months with only essential weeding allowed, so some Lakers have been weeding, weeding, weeding and weeding! Planting recommenced late October. Part of the Landcare Grant includes the small hill (well we call it a hill in flat Melton), near the south east corner of the lake. There is a good viewing area at the top. Volunteers Rob and Jenny are constructing a small table and bench seats using recycled timber for the top of the hill. The hill top has a crushed rock base and paths to it that we will cover with a path topping when the planting is complete. Working with the adjacent industrial development we are creating a second larger hill in the area with clean fill from the development being delivered and shaped for free. This project also improves the habitat for Latham's Snipe which visit the Garden from September to February each year.

When these projects are complete the Garden will be 90 per cent completed as per the master plan. We will then just need to add the Botanic Garden and Environmental Centre with café.

John Bentley

Discovering Trove treasures

Friends of Williamstown Botanic Garden Williamstown, Victoria

For 160 years the Williamstown Botanic Gardens have held a special place in the hearts of local people, and in this long lockdown season its green spaces have been an important place of solace and refuge.

A small team of Friends has been working during ISO on correcting newspaper articles on the Williamstown Botanic Gardens in Trove, the on-line database hosted by the National Library of Australia. It is hoped that the corrected articles will help in future garden research.



Williamstown Botanic Gardens 13 December 1922. Picture courtesy State Library of Victoria

The newspaper archives are rich pickings for those interested in garden history. Many articles cover mayoral garden parties held in the early years of the 20th century. A piece in the *Williamstown Chronicle* in 1911 described ‘an extremely picturesque scene, with a background of pines, magnificent grass carpets, and exotics everywhere dotting the surroundings’. Mayoral garden parties were lavish affairs with marquees and a dance floor, entertainment and catering for up to 3000 guests. The ladies’ finery was much noted.

The newspaper writers showered praise on the gardens. A 1918 article in the *Herald* described ‘horticultural features, ribbon borders, massive beds, and roomy well-furnished lawns’. The water lily lake was judged ‘as neat a piece of landscaping designing as can be seen anywhere’. All in all, the garden was ‘a floral scene of exquisite beauty’.

The newspaper writers showered

From the 1860s sightseers crowded the Williamstown Line train at weekends, disembarking at Williamstown Beach Station for a day at the Botanic Gardens and the beach. Visitors strolled the paths, admired the fragrantly scented roses and massed floral displays, and picnicked on the grass.

Community activities have always taken place in the Williamstown Botanic Gardens. In 1918 the Newport Railway workshops hosted a gala to raise funds for wounded soldiers’ organisations. (The gala took place on the adjacent garden reserve, gazetted in 1865 as a Pleasure Ground because the Botanic Gardens were too small to cope with increased visitors.) A band competition was held in the Gardens in 1942. A press release in 1943 advertised a sports day organised by the Eureka League, and in the same year the local press promoted a Pleasant Sunday Afternoon, with community hymn singing lead by the Salvation Army.

The last word goes to 16-year-old Daisy Anderson from Elsternwick. In March 1920 the *Weekly Times* published Daisy’s letter about her recent holiday in Williamstown. She reported spending ‘many a pleasant day’ with her girlfriends in the Botanic Gardens. They are ‘laid out beautifully’, she wrote. ‘I really cannot tell you how nice it all looks... Now that school has started again we must wait for the Easter holidays till we have another good time.’ Daisy delighted in her visits to the Williamstown Botanic Gardens, like generations before and since.

Jill Hocking

Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens Inc

The AAFBG has 63 active member organisations, representing around 18,000 volunteers who give their time and skills to botanic gardens, parks and arboreta across Australia. AAFBG also has five international affiliate organisations.

The AAFBG has an MoU with the Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand (BGANZ) to ensure volunteers and professional staff of gardens, parks and arboreta have opportunities to cooperate at a range of levels to achieve their complementary aims.

The AAFBG is also a member of Botanic Gardens Conservation International, an organisation representing botanic gardens in more than 100 countries in a global network for plant conservation.

For information about Members see AAFBG website at

www.friendsbotanicgardens.org

also see website for full calendar of events

Calendar of events

Monday 12 April 2021

AAFBG Annual General Meeting at Waite Arboretum, Adelaide.

29 April to 1 May 2022

Thriving together: resilience and renewal in a changing world. AAFBG Biennial conference at Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Garden at Batemans Bay, NSW.

Websites worth visiting

Visit our website:

www.friendsbotanicgardens.org

Contact website editor to list your events or add garden photos to the members' gallery:

info@WordsWorthcommunicating.com

BGANZ on line Newsletter – *The Botanic Garden*

www.bganzt.org.au/newsletter

Botanic Gardens Conservation International

<http://bgci.org/resources/news>

Garden Plant Conservation Association of Australia

www.gpcaa.com

Australian Native Plants Society

<http://asgap.org.au>

Significant Tree Registers – there are a number of State and local registers. Search: Significant Trees

Plants for the Planet:

www.plantsfortheplanet.com

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