



FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS Inc.

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Issue No. 28

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2002

Message from the President

The Gardens are looking very colourful and it is interesting to note that more and more families are using the Gardens for picnics and play. It reinforces the importance of developing a Children's Garden to further increase Garden use and interest. It seems the functions we have organised, such as the Federation Fair and The Teddy Bears' Picnic, have demonstrated that the Gardens are a Community venue, that can be enjoyed by everyone.

We have organised two very successful fund raising events, firstly a Theatre Luncheon and secondly a luncheon which featured Michael McCoy as guest speaker. Michael was a huge success and inspired us all with great garden ideas, particularly in regard to garden design and water conservation.

We look forward to 2003 when we will hold our second Teddy Bears' Picnic on March 23rd and our second Fair on April 6th. Please note these dates, as we will be requiring lots and lots of assistance from everyone.

The Parks Victoria Grant for a database and tree labelling has been successfully applied and the labels will be in place and the database organised by November 30th. Our thanks to Mandy for all her time and efficiency.

We have decided on December 13th as the date for our Christmas drinks and the committee and I would be delighted if you could join us at the Rotunda for drinks and nibbles at 5 p.m.

2003 will be soon upon us and I see it as a very exciting year with the completed upgrade of the Master Plan and the organisation of the Children's Garden

The Marvellous Mystical Magical Ginkgo

Just now, in early October the first green shoots are emerging on the ginkgo. In summer it will have a shady canopy of soft green triangular leaves that give it the popular name of maiden hair tree. In autumn the leaves will turn to gold.

Ginkgo biloba, is the only living species of the family Ginkgoaceae, which were gymnosperms that thrived 175 to 200 million years ago. It is a medium sized, deciduous tree, growing up to 36 m (120ft) in height. (Sidney F. Glassman)

The ginkgo is a survivor. It was here with the dinosaurs and is possibly the world's oldest living tree species. Fossil remains have been found all over the world. From the end of the last Ice Age its distribution contracted to China. It was grown in temple gardens where today there are trees 1000 years old and possibly as old as 3000 years. The ginkgo was used in Chinese herbal medicine to treat asthma and improve blood circulation, and similar therapeutic claims are made for it today. It is a hardy plant, tolerant of harsh conditions, as those surviving the polluted air of many Chinese avenues attest.

The name ginkgo is derived from the Chinese, which means silver nut. These nuts come from the fruit of the female trees and are roasted or boiled and regarded as a delicacy. Male trees bear cones. Taixing on the Yangtse delta has commercial plantings and is referred to as "Home of the Ginkgo". The fruit itself is soft and similar to an apricot, but is considered to have such an unpleasant smell that most gardeners choose male specimens.

The tree in the Warrnambool Botanic Gardens is male and about forty years old - just a baby. The Geelong Botanic Gardens has a gnarled old monster planted in 1859, the oldest ginkgo in Australia and possibly the oldest tree in the gardens. The male specimen in Kew Gardens was planted in 1762 and is more than 24m (80ft) in height.

Lie below the ginkgo and watch the sky through the lacework of its leaves. Dream of Ice Ages, dinosaurs, monasteries, temples and age old trees in distant lands. It is truly magic.

Pat Varley 9/10/02

DATA BASE FOR THE GARDENS

This project started in 1999. In August 2001 the Friends obtained a grant of \$3,560.00 from Parks Victoria "For Preserving the Heritage of Guilfoyle-designed Warrnambool Botanic Gardens". Below is a guideline of the project which will be completed at the end of November 2002

AIMS

- An up-to-date record of all trees and plants within the Gardens
- An up-to-date map of the location of all plants
- Accurate identification of all plants
- Labelling of plants

OBJECTIVES

- Computer record of all plants, that can be up-dated as work is carried out.
- An accurate grid-referenced map, which will show the location of all plants within the gardens.
- To create a database of all plants describing needs and habits.
- To create an easy reference guideline and record keeping for the garden staff
- Labelling of all trees and plants to enable visitors the opportunity to learn and understand more about the gardens
- To develop an on-going labelling program.
- To develop an on-going interpretive and educational signage programme.

"FAIR IN THE GARDENS"

Due to problems gaining funding in time to run the "Fair in the Gardens" we have had to delay the day to April 6th 2003. This day will run on the same basis as the "Federation Fair" Participants from last year will be contacted early next year with details of the day, a letter of explanation will be in the mail soon. We have had a lot of positive response for the day and are looking forward to another successful day next year.

TEDDY BEARS' PICNIC

As you will be aware the Teddy Bears' picnic was a huge success this year and because of this 3YB in conjunction with the Friends will run this function again on 23rd March 2003.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Rugosa Art Studio & Garden	Monday 18th November 2– 4 pm
Christmas Drinks in the Gardens	Friday 13th December 5pm
Teddy Bears' Picnic	Sunday 23 rd March 2003
Fair In The Gardens	Sunday 6th April 2003

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

At our AGM this year Isobel Jones and Marie Johnstone were presented with life membership for their tireless work towards the achievements of the Friends. They are both inaugural members of the Friends that started in 1989. Isobel being our first secretary and Marie being president 1996-7 plus many other office positions, this presentation was performed by life member Ellen Dwyer

HISTORY OF THE FRIENDS

Marie Johnstone has spent many hours compiling the history of the Friends, which has proved to be a very interesting exercise in that we now have a document that gives us a real understanding of what has been achieved by the Friends since their inception. In reading the history of achievements of a handful of people, one can gain strength and inspiration to forge through the difficult times that can sometimes seem daunting. It makes one wonder where our Gardens would have been today without these years of dedication.

The History of the Friends will be launched at our Christmas drinks in the gardens and copies will be made available for purchase.

HELP FROM THE MEMBERS

As you have read in this newsletter the Fair in the Gardens will be held on the 6th April 2003, we would like to call on the help of members for this day. The friends are known for their very exciting **plant sales**. Because of the date chosen for the Fair there are difficulties in holding plants at the potting shed over the summer months. If we could all pot up a few plants each over the next few months we should have a substantial stall. A potting day will be held in February where we will be able to bring all our plants and organise them for the Fair. If you are in need of empty pots please contact Lorraine Richardson. Thank you in advance for your support "many hands make"

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Our annual Christmas party will be held again at the Rotunda on Friday 13th December at 5pm. Looking forward to seeing you there.

THE URNS

Marie Johnstone is compiling the history of the "three urns" in the Gardens, in a prelude to restoration. This picture seems to be "pre" urns, would you know when it was taken and more importantly do you have memories of the history of the urns to help Marie with this project?



FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL
BOTANIC GARDENS INC.

A0032902E

Patron

Hon. Richard McGarvie

President

Mrs Billie Rowley (03) 5561 1583

Secretary

Mrs Mandy King (03) 5562 0343

Treasurer

Mrs Judy Phillips (03) 5562 3320

General Committee

Marigold Curtis (03) 5567 6316

Jean Fitzpatrick (03) 5562 3447

Tricia Houghton (03) 5565 8065

Marie Johnstone (03) 5562 3238

Isobel Jones (03) 5568 1076

Anne Kelly (03) 5562 4982

Mandy King (03) 5562 0343

Judy Phillips (03) 5562 3320

Lorraine Richardson (03) 5565 1217

Billie Rowley (03) 5561 1583

Pat Varley (03) 5562 4800

Kathy Wicherson (03) 5562 1436

Growing Friends Lorraine Richardson

Guided Tours Isobel Jones

Newsletter Editor Marigold Curtis

Newsletter Publisher Mandy King

Historian Marie Johnstone

Functions Anne Kelly

Publicity Jean Fitzpatrick
Tricia Houghton

Public Officer Billie Rowley

Correspondence:

Friends of Warrnambool Botanic Gardens Inc.

P.O. Box 1190

Warrnambool 3280

Email: amandaking@datafast.net.au

Our newsletter is published spring, summer autumn and winter. If you would like to contribute to our publication please forward material to the above address.

Editor:

Marigold Curtis

Publisher:

Mandy King

4th November 2002

NEWS FROM THE GARDENS

The Growing Friends prepared dozens of succulents for sale at the Michael McCoy luncheon in August. These plants, Echeveria elegans, were particularly appropriate for the day as Michael spoke about dry climate planting and being aware of water shortages in the future. \$80 was raised from their efforts. The fruit trees which they carefully pruned in the winter are all in leaf and look very healthy. Further work continues on the entrance beds, including the planting out of three "Washington Thorns".

The Guiding Friends have only been showing small groups through the gardens because of poor weather during winter. However on one fine Sunday it was noted that many family groups were there—indicating how many more young people come and enjoy the gardens these days. No doubt this is due to our increased children's activities such as the hugely successful Teddy Bears' Picnic and the "Federation Fair" where more families visited the gardens than ever before.

RUGOSA ART STUDIO & GARDEN

Monday 18th November 2—4 pm

The Friends have been invited by Lynne Strahan and Brian Dunlop to come to Yambuk and see their lovely "Eumeralla" garden, now full of beautiful roses, perennials and bulbs. It is famous for its clever planting and colour coordination.

We will be driving over by car, so please contact a committee member if you would require transport. We also need to know if you are coming independently for catering purposes. (After you leave Port Fairy, turn right off the highway before the Craggs on Fingerboard Road)

Lynne will have copies of her book "Gardens of Light" recently published by Penguin and will show us through Brian Dunlop's gallery.