



FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS

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Issue No. 36

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2005

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

It has been a strange summer, with mostly overcast skies, lower than average temperatures and above average rainfall. As a result the gardens, in common with the surrounding countryside, are lush and green. The wild storms of mid summer did some damage. A limb came down from the old Manna gum to the east of the lake, a cable in the golden elm (the money tree) snapped and a section of paling fence between the depot and the Coffin pine blew down. No great damage and a tribute to the relatively sheltered site.

The Gardens have provided a lovely venue for events great and small over the holiday season. The Australia Day celebrations and Jazz in the Gardens with the Wunta Festival attracted big crowds. Numerous Christmas parties, family picnics, the Walk against Want, and long lingering lunches, show how much the public appreciate the Gardens. We believe the Management Plan is in the final stages of acceptance by the City Council. It is now almost two years since the process began. In that time there have been many changes. Council elections have produced a new Council, Cr Jacinta Emacora succeeds Cr Jack Daffy as designated councillor for the Parks and Gardens Committee, Neil Allen is Director of Physical Services following Peter Reeve's departure, long term gardener Stan Crow has retired and Billie Rowley has completed her term as President of the Friends. As it was initially anticipated that the 'Plan' would be completed by the end of 2003, you can understand the frustration that Billie and the whole Committee have experienced. However with the acceptance of the Plan we hope to move forward rapidly with the replanting of degraded garden beds and the labelling of trees and plants. Secretary, Mandy King, has identified those trees that need labelling and has ordered the required labels.

Thank you so much, to all the members who have supported us throughout the year. We need to retain our membership and to encourage new members with new energy and new ideas to join us. We need to be able to demonstrate our commitment to our gardens. Warrnambool is so fortunate that over the years Council has resisted attempts to encroach on the Gardens. Camperdown, Port Fairy and Koroit have all lost land to camping grounds and/or other use and the competition for land continues even to this day.

I hope you can take part in some of the events planned in the next month, including the Teddy Bears and Fairies Picnic and the talk on Von Mueller.

Details of these events are given elsewhere in the Newsletter.

Pat Varley
March 2005

GHOSTS OF THE PAST

Members will recall the *Curators' Day in the Gardens*, in November 2003, arranged by Isobel Jones and Marie Johnstone. As part of the celebration, descendants of Charles Scoborio and of William Donald planted a tree. The Hoop Pine, *Araucaria cunninghamii* they planted that day is doing very well.

Charles Scoborio was curator from 1872 - 1906.

William Donald succeeded Scoborio and held the position until his retirement in 1913.

Donald lived with his wife and five children in the Curator's cottage, which after some time was enlarged to better accommodate them. Mrs Donald and her daughters, on occasion, served afternoon teas from the cottage veranda.

Donald was a Scottish horticulturalist. He had worked at Mount Macedon before coming to Warrnambool. While the family were in Mt Macedon their little daughter, Nellie Isabel, died. She was enjoying the autumn leaves as they were raked and burnt, but got too close and her hair caught alight. She died from the burns two days later. She was six years old. This terrible accident was possibly the reason the family left Macedon and came to Warrnambool.

On the centenary of her death, in December 2004, descendents of William Donald arranged a family gathering at Mt Macedon. Joan Astbury, whose mother, Jean Anderson was the youngest daughter of William and Ellen Donald had arranged for the grave of that little girl to be restored. The inscription on the headstone reads,

IN LOVING MEMORY
OF
NELLIE DONALD
TRAGIC ACCIDENT 5 . 12 . 1904
Age 6 years
IN GODS CARE

As well as visiting the grave in the Macedon cemetery the families were able to explore the old town and the site of the early Presbyterian Church where the Donalds had worshipped. There is a new church there now replacing the earlier one that was destroyed in bushfires,

Over the years there have been hints and stories of ghosts that visited the Curator's Cottage in the Warrnambool Gardens. Most tell of friendly unthreatening ghosts. Some describe a lady in old-fashioned dress with a black cape, others a pretty fair haired girl about five or six years old, who wore a pink sash, and others of piano music, lovely melodious sounds that were hard to trace. Do you believe in Ghosts? Do the dead return to haunt us? Be you a sceptic or a true believer you can make what you will of the ghost of the Cottage.

PV Feb 2005

MAIN PROJECTS FOR 2005

In the hope that we can achieve a positive move forward with the restoration and advancement of the gardens, 'The Friends' will be setting 3 main projects to put forward to the WCC for 2005-06. One project that has been on the books for many years is the removal of the 'Privet garden' which is located near the large urn. This garden bed hinders the view of the sweeping lawns, which otherwise can be enjoyed after walking through the Cyprus arch. We have details for re planting the two beds at the West end of the gardens near the Pinetum, and the bed at the Eastern end near the giraffe swing. You may have noticed most of the beds although looking good, have lost a lot of their botanic significance over the years. We will be endeavouring to return all beds to their former status. The third project is the inclusion of a native bed along with the assistance of the Warrnambool branch of the 'Society for Growing Australian Plants'. We will also be formulating proposals, to put forward to the WCC in regard to obtaining the use of the Curators Cottage and the employment of a Curator. The Friends have 80 new plant identification signs, which will be put into the gardens over the next few months. The revision of the Management Plan is nearing completion.

THE GROWING FRIENDS

The growing friends have been very active. Bad weather hampered their stall at the gardens, but a stall held under cover in the arcade proved very successful. The old apple trees are yielding a fine crop.

THE GUIDING FRIENDS

The guides have been going to the gardens as usual on every second Sunday, and walking with usual number of interested people, meaning from about nil to five. We all always have a very pleasant time as our guests come because they are wanting to know something about the history and horticulture of our treasure and we enjoy telling them about a place we love and are trying to help preserve.

PLANTS OF INTEREST

Sandpaper Fig

Ficus coronata

The small but strong tree growing near the fernery is a Sandpaper Fig given to us some years ago by John Hawker of Heritage Victoria. It was collected by him from near Mallacoota. They are usually found up the east coast of Australia and are fast becoming rare in Victoria with only a few isolated stands left in this area. They can reach a height of 15 meters (50 feet) and in time will compete with the nearby Moreton Bay Fig. As the name indicates, the leaves are extremely rough and in the past aborigines used them to smooth their wooden utensils. They also used parts of the tree to treat wounds.

Marigold Curtis

BARON FERDINAND VON MUELLER.

Thursday March 17th 2005 at 7.00pm

Prof. Rob Wallis, pro Vice Chancellor, Deakin University, will be giving a talk on **Baron Ferdinand Von Mueller**. Rob has a special interest in Von Mueller who was the first Government Botanist in Victoria and the first Curator of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens. Mueller provided plants to Warrnambool Botanic gardens in the early days of their establishment. Come along and hear about some of the other less orthodox things that he did

Venue: TAFE institute - enter from Timor Street

Please notify us by Monday 14th as space is limited.

Contact Pat on 55 624800

3YB TEDDY BEARS & FAIRIES PICNIC

Held in conjunction with the Friends

Takes place from 12 - 3pm
at the Botanic Gardens

Lots of entertainment and catering for
Teddies and Families



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2005

- Von Mueller talk: Talk by Rob Wallis on the 17th March 2005 at 7.00pm. Contact Pat on 55624800 by Monday 14th to notify attendance – space is limited.
- TAFE students in Child Care and in Leisure and Recreation sessions for pre school children March 17 and the aged April 20.
- 3YB Teddy Bears & Fairies Picnic 20th March 2005
- AGM 20th June 2005. Warrnambool Club Kepler St.

Guided walk dates: March 13th, 27th. April 10th, 24th. May 8th, 22nd. June 12th, 26th
Every 2nd & 4th Sunday starting at the Main Gate at 2.30pm

Remember that if you would like to organise a group 'tour of the gardens', for your family or business, please contact Isobel Jones or another committee person. Most times can be accommodated.

**FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL
BOTANIC GARDENS Inc.**

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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.

March 2005

What's in a name?

Have you ever thought how many of our given names are those of plants, particularly, flowers?

There is Azalea, Anthea, Acacia, and Anemone and they are just a few of the "A"'s.

Boronia, Buttercup, Coral, Daffodil, Daisy and Daphne, Erica, Fern and Flora, all follow alphabetically. Then there is Hyacinth of Mrs Bucket (bouquet) fame, and Holly, Heather, Hazel, Ivy and Iris. Jasmine is so sweet and there is Lily, Lillian and even Tiger Lily. Marigold, Marguerite, Melissa (Lemon Balm), Myrtle, Olive, Poppy and Pansy have been popular through generations, as have Rose and Rosemary, Violet and Veronica. My granddaughter is named Sidonie, like the Australian Lavender and as the beautiful ladies, the Bella Donna Lilies bloom we recall Belle, Bella and Donna.

It is not easy to find boys' names in the garden. There is Basil, Bud, Herb and Heath and I did read of an Alfalfa, and how about Sweet William? Well there is always Spud!

Let us have your contribution to our herbaceous roll. Susan Purveur has written a handy guide *Plant that Name* (Penguin London 1996) that simplifies finding a plant to match a name .

Refer to it if you are seeking a relevant birthday or anniversary gift. For example Geranium would be appropriate for Carolyn or Claire as there are varieties with those names. For Flora there is a rambling rose of that name.

On the other hand, if you are more interested in the name of the plant and how it came to be so named, you might enjoy. *100 Flowers and how they got their Names.* by Diana Wells.

PV 2005

EXTRACT FROM WBG MASTER PLAN 1995

The Gardens are on the Register of the National Estate and also on the National Trust Register (14 November, 1990). Two significant trees are registered.

The Gardens occupy Crown Reserve Land which is managed by Council as the Committee of Management. The land is zoned Public Open Space under the Warrnambool City Planning Scheme.

The Warrnambool Botanic Gardens occupy a rectangular site of about 8 hectares, located about 500 metres north of the Princes Highway. Botanic Road forms the northern boundary to the gardens and is a direct east-west link between the Princes Highway and the major northern approach to the town from Mortlake Road