



FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS

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NEWSLETTER www.wbgardens.com.au

Curator's Report July 18, 2012

The Warrnambool Botanic Gardens (WBG) team has been productive again this year. Despite fluctuations in staffing levels we managed to achieve a thing or two.

Projects undertaken by the team over the past year include:

- Continued mulching of existing specimen trees
- Realignment of garden beds to eliminate 'dead' areas and create more planting opportunities
- Installation of metal edging in the parterre display beds and sundial display beds
- Drainage works to pathways
- Planting and maintaining of annual displays within the display beds
- Planting and mulching of specimen trees in lawn areas
- Continued mulching of shrub beds
- Sourcing and planting of Acanthus species to continue our plant collection
- Leveling and returfing certain higher profile lawn areas (e.g. Rotunda)
- Continued planting out of Bill Funk pines within the Pinetum
- Removal of the Cypress archway closest to the fountain
- Removal of 4 over-mature Cypress from northern boundary (near children's crossing)
- Participation in a community program with Kings College where students are undertaking gardening work within WBG every fortnight
- Continuing our close association with South West TAFE in which apprentices gain much needed practical experience within WBG
- Planting out around the Giraffe swing

We again look forward to working with the Friends and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the FOWBG committee for their continued support of the team's work within WBG.



I look forward to seeing you all at the gardens over the coming year and would encourage you to grab a team member and have a chat.

Happy gardening!

John Sheely
Curator
Warrnambool Botanic Gardens

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

William Guilfoyle, botanist and landscape gardener extraordinaire, died 100 years ago on 25th June 1912.

This may seem an odd way to begin the President's report on the year 2011/2012. I can reassure you that I am not going to detail each of the 100 years in between. What I do want to acknowledge is the wonderful legacy we have today in the Warrnambool Botanic Gardens, the lay out of which was designed by Guilfoyle in 1877.

The Friends main purpose is the preservation and promotion of our Guilfoyle Garden. This is the criteria against which we wish to be judged. I believe we have had another successful year.

We took part in the National Trust Heritage Festival, presenting 'Tea and Talk in the Gardens'. This enabled us to display the results of some of the research we had undertaken on water, wells and windmills, which fitted the theme of innovators and inventors. The forty or more guests, who attended, were fascinated by the original hand written specifications for well and windmill on display, and by the short talks on inventors, presented by our members. They were able to view the well which we seek to restore.

Sunday guided walks continued on a regular basis and there were requests from visiting groups, school groups and others for a walk and talk in the Gardens. In March we issued a special invitation to Council to join us for a tour to reacquaint them with Gardens and to share our many stories.

Information is also available on the website we maintain, www.wbgardens.com.au and recently all our newsletters from 1992 to the present have been loaded onto this site. Our quarterly newsletter covers a wide range of issues that publicize and promote our heritage garden.

A series of talks, workshops and discussions held in Scoborios Shed on the first Wednesday of each month has been most informative and has provided the opportunity to get to know others who share our interest and passion for gardens.

We value the links we have with like minded organizations. The Society for growing Australian Plants, The Warrnambool and District Historical Society, Triton Woodworkers, Rotary and many others have had input to our activities.

More formally Wannan Water worked jointly with us to maintain the water wise garden and TAFE, with its Children's Services courses and Horticultural programs has worked in cooperation with the Gardens to our mutual advantage.

Cooperation can occur on many levels and the most critical is the willing cooperation of members of the committee. I have been fortunate to work with a great group of people and to have a dedicated and talented secretary in Mandy King.

Last month we remembered past committee members – foundation secretary Isobel Jones and past treasurer Kathy Wicherson and dedicated two trees to their memory. They made a huge contribution to the Gardens.

We could not function effectively without the cooperation of the great team that work with Curator John Sheely in the Gardens, nor without the support of Warrnambool City Council. Last year, in addition to Jazz in the Gardens and the Australia Day celebrations, there were more than eighty events in the Gardens.

Despite storm and tempest, traffic and pests, the Gardens are maintained magnificently.

We have achieved many of our goals, but there is still work in progress.

The delay in signage has been frustrating, but we hope it is near resolution. Otherwise it is still all about water; watering systems, wells and windmills. We look forward to a productive year ahead

Pat Varley
July 2012

AGM

Our Annual General Meeting was held on Wednesday 18th July at the South West Institute of TAFE's Conference Centre. The meeting was attended by about 50 members and guests. Curator John Sheely and President Pat Varley reported on the year's activities. Their reports are published in this newsletter.

All the Committee indicated their willingness to serve a further term and as nominations did not exceed the positions available all were returned. There has been some change in roles. Pat Varley will serve as President, Janet Mc Donald as Vice President and Mandy King as Secretary. Laurel Myers agreed to take over as treasurer from Judi Phillips. Judi has served on the Committee for 23 years during which she was treasurer for a total of ten years. A great contribution.

Our guest speaker was the Director of the Geelong Botanic Garden, Annette Zealley. Annette, who is also a member of the BGANZ Council, gave an illustrated talk on the Geelong Gardens, past present and future. It was inspiring to hear of the plans and achievements of another of our significant gardens.

A light lunch provided the opportunity for conversation, networking and reflection.

QUEENSLAND KAURI

Agathis robusta



The Kauri pine is indigenous to Queensland's East Coast and has been growing there for hundreds of years. It has a tall straight trunk and has been known to grow up to 50 metres. Even at half that height, they were valuable to the early settlers. In the past century they have been heavily logged and used extensively for building and furniture as the timber is fine, extremely strong and knot-free.

The only other Kauri in this part of the world comes from New Zealand, known as *Agathis australis*, likewise with straight trunk and large crown, but does not grow to the great height of the Queensland Kauri. The wood was very much valued from the earliest days of settlement. The Maories had been using it for centuries, even their canoes were hewn-out kauri logs. The early settlers soon found the strength of the timber and its length invaluable for sailing ships where they could use full-length kauri planks.

Kauri pines are from the Araucariaceae family and therefore of significance to us because of our collection of araucarias, now totalling ten. They have been known to grow in the wild for over 300 years. We are fortunate to have both kauris growing not far from one another. The New Zealand Kauri was planted not long ago by our team and is already 2 metres high.

It is sad to report that over the last century these spectacular and valuable trees have been heavily logged by the timber industry. As late as 1970-80 a significant stand of *A. robusta* was cut down in the Windsor Tableland and carted out by rail to Cairns. Some of these huge trees could not fit through the tunnels in the Karanda Range because of their girth - the maximum size permitted on rail-wagons being 7 metres!

Fortunately, Kauris have been grown down south as feature specimens in large parks and avenues for future generations to see. The most spectacular of these was planted in 1910 in the Albury Botanic Gardens and now reaches a height of 37 metres.

Marigold Curtis

THE LONE PINE WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS

The Shrine of Remembrance's lone pine was removed on 15/8/2012 after efforts to save it from a fungal infection, *Diplodia pinea*, failed.

The Warrnambool tree *Pinus brutia* is in good health.

Most of the trees distributed by Legacy to mark the 50th anniversary and later the 75th anniversary of Gallipoli, were grown from seed harvested from the tree at the Shrine. A mature tree grown from seed of the "Lone Pine" that grows in Warrnambool Gardens, stands at Ballangeich, appropriately on what was a soldier settlement block where it was propagated by a returned serviceman, Alan Strain. This was the only known offspring of the Warrnambool tree, until recently. Now seeds have been raised by Friends of Warrnambool Botanic Gardens. One of these grows in Toll Bar Park, Lexton. Others have been planted in the Warrnambool Gardens.

The battle of Lone Pine was fought on the Gallipoli Peninsular. It was planned to create a diversion for a British landing in Suvla Bay. The scene of the battle was a heavily fortified plateau on which stood one solitary pine tree. The battle was fought between August 6th and 10th 1915. Turkish deaths were estimated at between five and six thousand and Australian deaths at 2277. The Lone Pine was also destroyed.

After the battle, Sergeant Keith McDowell, picked up a pinecone and on his arrival home in Warrnambool gave it to his aunt Mrs Emma Gray of Grassmere.

Another Australian soldier, Lance Corporal Benjamin Smith also souvenired a pine cone which he sent home to his mother, Jane McMullin in NSW. Two trees were grown from this cone. One was planted at Inverell and the other was planted by the Duke of Gloucester at the Australian war memorial in Canberra in 1934.

The story of the "Smith" pine is recounted in a recent children's book Lone Pine.

(*Warner, M. & Brown, S. Little Hare Books 2012*)

Of the four trees grown by Mrs Gray three survive – Wattle Park in Burwood, The Sisters Soldiers Memorial Hall and Warrnambool. Prior to the removal of the pine at the Shrine a replacement, propagated from it, had been planted nearby in 2006.



Warrnambool Lone Pine looking very healthy

*Pat Varley
August 2012*

ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF BOTANIC GARDENS CONFERENCE REPORT

The Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens (AFBG) 2012 conference was held in Port Augusta on 17-19 August, 2012 and for all those fortunate enough to attend it was a very happy and successful weekend.

The conference was held at the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden (AALBG). This garden was first proposed in 1980 but it was not until 1996 that planting and building began. The garden was established to promote arid zone ecosystem research and conservation and to encourage a wider appreciation of Australia's arid zone flora. Today it is a flourishing garden of about 200 hectares containing a great variety of plants from low rainfall areas all over Australia. A walk through the gardens soon dispels the notion that the only outback flora in Australia is saltbush and bluebush. The AALBG has a large collection of 'desert loving' *eremophilas* – more than 200 different species – as well as many very rare plants. Some of these rare plants can no longer be found in the wild and the Growing Friends of the AALBG look after these special plants, propagate them and sell them to the public.

The conference was organised by the Friends of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Gardens Inc. (FAALBG) and it was widely agreed among attendees that the FAALBG had set a new benchmark for conferences – the attention to detail was obvious from the time we were all welcomed at the Wadlata Outback Centre in Port Augusta on Friday evening through all the conference sessions, the dinner, and the activities on the final day. The presented papers were educational, inspirational and entertaining, and the guided walk through the gardens was very informative. Over 135 delegates attended the various sessions of the conference and 170 people attended the conference dinner on Saturday night. The conference venue was the Port Augusta Golf Club and fifteen women from the club provided all the catering. The quality, quantity and selection of food provided throughout the conference was outstanding. It was a most enjoyable and memorable conference!

The conference program:

- A presentation by Professor Chris Daniels from the University of South Australia opened the conference. He highlighted the

role of nature in our cities arguing that city people need a connection to the environment in order to create sustainable communities and to give people a sense of place. He then focused on the role of backyards in conserving diversity and maintained that backyards were becoming more important as we move to high density communities where there is little or no urban open space. He urged us all to start raising chickens and to get planting – vegies, flowers, fruits, anything!

- Jeff Reid from the Australian Plants Society spoke about the fragile area along our coastlines where the sea meets the land. He concentrated on mangroves and samphires – two species that survive in this environment – and explained why their retention is so important.
- Dr. Carolyn Ireland, a natural resource management professional, gave a presentation on the Western Myall – *acacia papyrocarpa* – an important overstorey species of the shrublands in South and Western Australia. It is a long-lived tree forming low open woodlands of individual trees or small groves; the older members of the population have branches that become procumbent with age, a distinctive and most attractive characteristic of the species. The Western Myall is featured on the logo of the AALBG.
- Dr. Peter Hayman discussed 'Goyder's Line' (the old 10" isohyet that many of us learnt about years ago). Dr Hayman maintained that Goyder was ahead of his time in thinking about climate risk and reliability and his work enabled Australians to come to terms with their variable and changing climate.
- Dr Nita Lester and Dr Dean Nicholle, two very interesting botanists, gave stimulating presentations about preservation of the environment and protection of biodiversity. Dr Lester is the director of the Myall Park Botanic Garden in Queensland, a garden which features plants from arid, semi-arid and dry tropical regions, and which concentrates on the conservation of threatened species. Dr Nicholle is from the Currency Creek Arboretum, South

Australia. He has travelled extensively in order to find every known example of eucalyptus in Australia and entertained the audience greatly with his descriptions of different eucalypts he has collected. We had a photographic tour of all the different habitats in which eucalypts have been found and we learnt how these trees have not only evolved to cope in various environments, but have thrived!

- Professor Don Bursill is South Australia's Chief Scientist and a respected water scientist and water management expert. He spoke about the available water resources in South Australia and freely gave his opinion about various decisions taken to address the water challenges faced by South Australia including an assessment of the current proposals under the Murray Darling Basin Plan. His comments were both insightful and thought-provoking.
- Dr John Read gave a most entertaining 'tub-thumping' after-dinner talk. He raised serious issues concerning the survival of turtles in coastal areas, and the control of 'buffel grass' in our pastoral regions. This grass was sown as a major pasture grass and has spread across the country causing significant problems. It is now a weed species and it is having a severe impact on conservation and pastoral production.
- On the final day we heard two very interesting talks: one from Peter Langdon, a birder and local bird artist, and Valmai Hankel, an Australian historian and librarian. Peter had a wonderful collection of birds to show delegates and Valmai entertained us with her stories of some 19th century explorers who travelled from or near Port Augusta in the mid 1800s.
- Friends from the Botanic Gardens in Sale, Vic., Melton, Vic., Maroochydore, Qld. and Geelong, Vic. gave short presentations about the work that goes on in their gardens. The Friends of the Gold

Coast Regional Botanic Garden, hosts of the 2014 conference, gave a detailed presentation about their garden.

The conference was a resounding success in so many ways. All those present had a great time together. We were able to renew old friendships, make new friends and share common interests. Many of the speakers challenged us to think about the problems facing the environment and urged us to make our gardens relevant to today's communities. We all left the conference keen to maintain our support for our Botanic Gardens and newly inspired to raise the profile of our gardens in our respective communities.

Thirty-two friends went on a 5-day tour of the Flinders Ranges after the conference. What a great experience it was to travel with a group of people who were passionate about history, the environment and the indigenous people, as well as native trees, flowers, birds, rocks, soils and fossils. It was a wonderful trip and a great learning experience!

Laurel and Bill Myers



Front entrance to Australian Arid Lands Botanic Gardens. Port Augusta

To read more go to:

<http://www.abc.net.au/local/photos/2012/08/17/3570292.htm?site=northandwest&xml=3570292-mediars.xml#bigpicturepos>

**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.

Membership: Payable at/or by the AGM
July 2012

GUIDED WALKS

Guided walks are conducted by our volunteer
guides every Second and Fourth Sunday
of the month commencing at 2.30pm,
weather permitting

Walks can be organised on request

Walks proceed from the main entrance gate in
Cockman Street

Please note: If you would like to have your
Newsletter sent by email please send an
email to friends@wbgardens.com.au and we
will put you on the email list

Annual Spring Garden Day

Sunday September 23rd 11am - 2pm.

Hope you have been able to pot up some cuttings or
seedlings to sell on the day. We would also appreciate
Conserves, Produce, Gardening books or anything else
gardenesque, these could be left with or picked up by a
committee person

As the years go by we are perfecting this day and now
have plenty to sell and do. As well other groups will be
involved so come along and see what is there

A separate flyer will be sent with this newsletter
Please forward this to everyone you think will be
interested in attending.

Internet

We now have a face book identity. The garden staff are
uploading photos and giving updates on what is going
on in the gardens. If you are on facebook add us as a
'friend' or 'like' the page.

<http://www.facebook.com/WarrnamboolBotanicGardens?ref=stream>

Another bit of technology will be QR scans. This is a
'barcode' which once scanned by your smart phone will
take you to our web site, that will then give you related
information. These will be placed on signs around the
gardens

Booking An Event In The Gardens

Please go to your web site to get information and
download the application form. You are also able to
book through the council if you are not 'on line'

COMING EVENTS

Annual Spring Garden Day

Sunday September 23rd 2012 - 11am - 2pm

Morning in the Gardens

First Wednesday of the Month 11am

Membership payment

If you did not pay your membership before or at the
AGM we would be pleased if you could do that now.

We now offer Direct Payment for your membership,
please see your membership renewal form for details.