

# FMBG Newsletter Spring 2021

Here are some recent updates about the Friends and happenings in the garden.

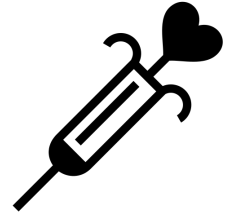


Friends of the  
Melton Botanic Garden Inc.

## 1. COVID

During the current lockdown we are operating with a skeleton crew to maintain the garden and the nursery plants.

We encourage all members to please get vaccinated. This will help with our return to volunteering as the Victorian Roadmap allows people who are fully vaccinated the ability to get together. Also, the FMBG Volunteer Workers insurance only covers workplace accidents not catching COVID during FMBG activities. Please help everyone to stay safe and to be able to volunteer with confidence.



## 2. Donation of Advanced Trees

Geelong Botanic Gardens donated a *Widdringtonia schwarzii* to the Melton Botanic Garden in June. It desperately needed planting, so we recently planted it as an essential task needing to be done, otherwise it may have gone to God. It is a Southern African conifer that is rare and endangered in the wild.

We also had to plant the *Brachychiton gregorii* donated by Sharon Vis.



After planting and mulching – John and Chris



Ian bringing the mulch



After pruning



Chris planting the *Brachychiton* on Ryans Creek East

### Garden Humour

I was in the Melton Botanic Garden early yesterday morning wondering where the sun had gone. Then it dawned on me.

I used to make loads of money clearing leaves from gardens. I was raking it in.



### 3. Donated Garden Furniture

We have received a few donations for recycled plastic garden furniture so far this year.

Orders are with Replas for 4 seats and one picnic setting.

We also have on order two picnic settings through grants and council initiatives. One will go on the south side of the main lake and one in the Eastern Australian Dryland Garden.

We have recently received another donation for a seat. We are applying for a Mayoral Charity Grant to install a seat on the new hill.

Photos are the Odd Jobbers Team installing a seat near the small lake and Vee enjoying a cuppa on the seat donated by the MBG Working for Victoria Team.



### 4. RHSV Article

The Melton Botanic Garden featured in an article written by our Patron Jane Edmanson in the Winter edition of the Gardener's Gazette by the Royal Horticultural Society of Victoria.

**Melton Botanic Garden**

TEXT AND IMAGES BY JANE EDMANSON

I visited the Melton Botanic Gardens recently – there is always a new project going on with volunteers doing so much good work. It is a place that you can visit at any time of the year because there is always something happening with an array of plants in flower. This time it was the South African area where the orange *Leonotis* (Lion's Ear) was complemented by the beautiful blue *Plumbago*. There are bulbs like *nerines*, always a gorgeous colour of tangerine red, the *Cussonia* plants are growing to be beautiful architectural features, the *Ericas* in flower and will continue to do so for ages. Ground hugging *pelargoniums*, yellow hot pokers, I could go on. There is so much to see in this South African section and I haven't even mentioned the protea.

It is worth a walk around these botanic gardens at any time of the year with one of the highlights being the River Red Gums growing along Ryans Creek, they are ancient and full of character. The nursery is well worth looking at for plants propagated on site by the volunteers. Remember the MBGS were established to highlight plants from around the world and within Australia that need little watering.

For further details about Melton Botanic Garden, 40 Lakewood Blvd, Melton go to their website: [fmbg.org.au](http://fmbg.org.au) and the garden is also listed on the [walkingmaps.com.au](http://walkingmaps.com.au) website and in the RHSV Garden Rambles.

**WHAT TO DO IN THE GARDEN IN WINTER**

- Camellias, especially *sasanquas*, are a highlight through winter and are great in pots or to bring a splash of colour to a winter garden bed. Primulas, violas and pansies will give plenty of colour massed at the edge of the garden bed, or in a pot. Don't forget about daphne [*Dodora*] which is always a special plant for its fragrance to pick for indoors.
- When you are planning to grow a new rose, just remember they need plenty of sunlight, at least five hours a day. They grow well in most soils, but do incorporate plenty of compost or organic material into the planting hole. Don't plant a rose in the same position where a rose has been before, if you must you should dig out plenty of soil and replace it with new soil plus organic material.
- It is also time to plant deciduous fruit trees, of which there are many to choose. Even if you only have a small garden, there are varieties of fruit trees that will suit.
- Bring any pots of orchids from out of the shade, into a sunnier position. If you are feeding with a liquid fertiliser do so every 3 weeks and watch out for snails that play havoc with new orchid shoots.

Over winter, impatiens leaves can go yellow, do not be alarmed, it is winter just wait until spring and cut the plants back to approximately 10cm high and feed with animal manure and watch them bounce back.

- Most herbaceous plants will have finished flowering, so flowering stems can be cut right back, for instance penstemons, gaura, chrysanthemum, shasta daisies.
- Work over any empty beds and in the vegetable garden, add compost and manure to help open up the soil. Get prepared for planting asparagus, rhubarb, peas and broad beans.



## 5. Pollinator Project Beds in Bloom



Interested in this project? Please contact Rob Stewart ([robin.stewart@fmbg.org.au](mailto:robin.stewart@fmbg.org.au)).

A bug hotel has also been made and installed by Odd Jobber James as part of the Pollinators Project. The bug hotels can be ordered through the nursery for \$15 each.



### More Garden Humour

Why is Incredible Hulk such a good gardener? He's got green fingers.



## 6. Lighting Your Garden Path with Solar Power

Fifteen solar street lights were installed in the garden in late July. The funding came through a State Government Regional Botanic Gardens grant, which was applied for by Melton City Council. Lights dim but brighten when a person approaches them (but only at night of course).



*Lights at the Bushfoods Garden*



*A light near the Mediterranean and Southern African Garden – it works*



## 7. New Interpretive Signage

The Gumnuts and the Working for Victoria teams have built and installed new stands and signage in the Western Australian and South Australian Garden beds. We see many visitors reading the signage across the whole garden. They certainly help for an improved visitor experience.



### More Garden Humour

I met a lady at the Melton Botanic Garden who only eats plants.

I liked to tell you about her, but you've probably heard of herbivore.



## 8. Eremophila Book

Russell Wait, an Eremophila collector, who holds a nationally registered collection with Plant Trust and has supplied and donated Eremophilas to the Melton Botanic Garden, has produced a book "Growing Eremophila". Russell Wait has spent years dedicating his life and knowledge to be able to bring this fantastic publication to print. Two people who are also FMBG members, have also assisted with the publication Cathy Powers and Jenny West. As has Christine Huf from APS Melton and Bacchus Marsh.

To purchase a copy email [eremophilabook@gmail.com](mailto:eremophilabook@gmail.com)

Cost through Westprint Outback Maps is \$80.

See <https://www.westprint.com.au/growing-eremophila.html>



## 9. Garden Explorer at Ballarat Botanic Gardens

Would you like to know where and what plants are in the Ballarat Botanical Gardens but can't get here? Then try their new online Garden Explorer at <https://ballarat.gardenexplorer.org>

Donna Thomas, the Plant Collections Officer at Ballarat BG has mapped plants in the garden with their IrisBG records. IrisBG is the plant collection database that FMBG also uses. Donna has supported FMBG with training and answering our IrisBG questions. Donna will also be giving a presentation on Begonias at an FMBG Meeting in 2022.



Photo source: <https://www.visitballarat.com.au/stories/explore-ballarats-botanical-gardens-online>



## 10. Training

FMBG has grant funds for first aid training and chemical use training (mixing and using herbicides). Thanks to the 7 volunteers who since the start of 2020 have refreshed their first-aid or undertaken the course for the first or after a long time.

*First Aid Courses* – we have grant funds remaining for 4 people to attend courses but should be able to fund more if required. Many volunteers have completed their course at the Melton South Community Centre. Look out for the next “Provide First Aid” courses (HLTAID003). There is a prior online learning component, taking about 12 to 20 hours depending on prior experience and then you attend one of the Saturdays for the practical training and assessment. Please contact John Bentley if interested.

*Chemical Accreditation Course AFQ3* – we have grant funds for 3 people to attend courses. You need to be a regular volunteer and be prepared to mix glyphosate and oversee others spraying.

For course details and where you can attend see:

<https://www.chemcert.com.au/courses/aqf-3-chemical-accreditation>

Sometimes a course is held in Bacchus Marsh.

Please contact John Bentley if interested.

## 11. Memberships

A special welcome to all our recent new members. Our current membership tally stands at 228 members.. Could we make it 400 by 30 June 2022? You can help by encouraging friends and family to join.

## 12. August Financials

August Revenue: \$1,505.00 (includes a \$1,350 seat donation)

August Expenditure: \$579.95

Bank Balance as at 31st August 2021 \$166,841.65

## 13. Volunteering

You don't have to volunteer only in the garden or nursery, we also have administration and office tasks. If you have office skills and would like to use them at the depot helping with administrative tasks, please let us know. Some volunteers also undertake tasks at home.

We also need people who would like to take guided tours.

Volunteer information and the volunteer handbook is at: <https://fmbg.org.au/volunteer.htm>





#### 14. New FMBG Committee

The Committee elected at the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 8th September 2021 is:

**President:** John Bentley

**Vice-President:** David Pye

**Secretary:** Barbara Frampton

**Treasurer:** VACANT (*John Bentley was appointed Treasurer at the September Committee Meeting*)

**Committee members:** Adrian Booker, Barb Pye, Jen Eldridge, Jill Bentley, John Woof, Sharon Vis.

**Public Officer:** Barbara Frampton

**Assistant to the Treasurer:** Mike Coveney (*Appointed at the September Committee Meeting*)

#### 15. Poetry

Lastly a poem by Iaian Wade, an FMBG member in the UK.

##### Swallows

Darting swallows demonstrate  
Their mesmerizing skills  
That leave me feeling paralysed  
And isolated on these hills.

Through the unseen corridors  
Of space they fly with ease  
Until the setting sun's demise  
Denies them of their expertise.

Silently they dip and weave  
At such alarming speeds  
Above the scented scenery  
Where life in harmony succeeds.

They are complete acrobats  
And perfect architects  
Who constantly survey the skies  
Of summer for airborne insects.

But their fortitude and grace  
Will face man's weaponry  
When they endeavor to depart  
And follow nature's destiny.

*[Please be aware this is set in the UK and swallows start arriving there in spring, but unfortunately, they are getting caught, slaughtered and eaten by people along their flight paths to and from Africa. In Australia swallows will migrate to northern Australia over winter, fortunately, I don't think we trap and eat them.]*



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