

Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden Newsletter

July 2008

What's On

1st July

Your annual membership is now due. Please renew your membership at the next meeting or by post. If you need a membership form or wish to drop in your money please call Jill 9743 3819.

8th July Tuesday 5.00 pm - Water Monitoring

Mikala from Werribee Plains Waterwatch will lead the training session on water testing and calibration techniques before our next water testing date (August 10th).

The 45 minute training session is on at 5:00pm, Tuesday, 8th July, 2008 at Don Nardella's Office, 3 Alexandra Street, Melton.

9th July Wednesday 7.30 pm - FMBG Meeting

Meeting: Guest Speaker – Helen Lovell from Neutrog "How to Make your Botanic Garden Grow" – Helen a speaker worth listening to. Also we have sample bags for attendees. Woodgrove Community Room.

24th July Thursday 10.00 am - Ryans Creek Planting Day.

Meet at corner of Tullidge St and William St, behind Melton Timber and Home store.

27th July Sunday 10.00 am - Planet Ark National Tree Planting Day - Ryans Creek Planting.

Meet at corner of Tullidge St and William St, behind Melton Timber and Home store.

10th August 10.00 am - Clean Up Day

Meet at Rotunda – Lakeside Boulevard.

13th August 7.00 pm - AGM & Landscape Architects

"Meet the Landscape Architect" – here is an opportunity to consult with the designer of the Melton Botanic Garden.

Landscape Architects Appointed

Well here's the news we have all been waiting to hear. The Melton Shire Council (MSC) panel assessed the landscape design submissions and have appointed **Michael Smith and Associates** to undertake the landscape design for the Melton Botanic Garden.

See <http://www.msalandurb.com.au/> for examples of their work.

The timelines for undertaking the landscape design are tight with the expected completion by early October so there will need to be commitment by FMBG members to work with the landscape architect, community and MSC to achieve the landscape design for the Botanic Garden. FMBG representatives, MSC staff and Michael Smith will be meeting for a site visit on 11th July at 10am.

Michael Smith and Associates will be speaking at the August meeting about the design of the Melton Botanic Garden. This will be an opportunity to discuss the progress and any draft plans/ideas.

Ryans Creek Project

A group of FMBG and Melton Environment members got together on 19th June to start weeding at Ryans Creek in preparation for planting in late July. Please start praying for rain or doing rain dances or whatever you think will work!

We are sourcing plants from the Greybox and Grassland Nursery and Western Plains Flora Nursery. We have \$2,000 to spend on plants, mulch and stakes (so we know where we have planted something).



Friends of Melton Botanical Gardens relaxing in the rain after removing Carpet Weed at Ryans Creek
(Photo D.Akers)

This is a joint project with the Melton Environment Group (MEG). FMBG have been given \$1,000

grant from MSC and we are contributing \$1,000 from FMBG fundraising activities to purchase indigenous plants for this project.

Ryans Creek retains some indigenous Creekline Grassy Woodland vegetation which needs to be protected and enhanced. FMBG have liaised with MEG about the choice of indigenous plants to be purchased for this restoration project. These are all plants listed as Creekline Grassy Woodland EVC. Over 1000 plants are to be purchased for



Piles of Galenia removed from Ryans Creek
(Photo D.Akers)

this initial stage of the project.

On Thursday 19th June the site was prepared by the removal by FMBG of masses of Carpet Weed (Galenia) that had infested the area.



Dianella Longifolia Ryans Creek (Photo D.Akers)

Several indigenous plants were found among the trees including: Dianella longifolia, Dichondra repens, Stipa scabra, Ruby Saltbush, Nodding

Saltbush and Berry Saltbush. A restored Ryans Creek would link the Toolern Creek corridor, with the restored wetland and Red Gum woodland precinct at Killarney Lakes (via the small woodland remnant between High Street and Melton Valley Drive). This is another exciting environmental project that is happening in Melton. FMBG have invited us to their panting day on Thursday 24th July at 10.00. Meet at corner of Tullidge St and William St (behind The Willows beside Melton Recreational Reserve) Melways Edition 35 (2008) Map 337 Ref D10 (adapted with permission from Melton Environment Group Newsletter July 2008 – Daryl Akers)

June FMBG Public Forum Report

A very successful forum with over 50 participants

(The following reproduced with permission from Melton Environment Newsletter July 2008 – Daryl Akers)

Marilyn Hewish, principal author of “**Birds of the Long Forest**”, spoke at the Friends of Melton Botanical Gardens public forum. Marilyn is an acknowledged expert on birds of the Long Forest. She described in detail the Long Forest Mallee (LFM) and its birds. LFM is a large woodland between Melton and Bacchus Marsh. It is the only mallee south of the Great Dividing Range; an isolated remnant of the days when large expanses of mallee scrub extended to this region. This is an “island” that has been isolated from the mallee region further north for over 5,000 years, by climate change and extensive local lava flows. Mallee birds such as Crested Bellbird and Yellow-rumped Pardalotes have therefore been isolated here also for this period of time. Other vulnerable woodland birds such as Diamond Firetails, Brown Treecreepers and Speckled Warblers find refuge here also. Birds from dry lands further north (such as Red-capped Robins) move south seeking water in drought years and find the LFM to their liking, before returning to their own regions again when conditions improve.

There has been a long history of bird watching here, dating back to the 1880's, when the railway first came to Melton. Marilyn described how bird watchers from Melbourne would travel to Melton by rail, walk to LFM to spend the day bird watching, and then walk back to Melton; to return to Melbourne by train. LFM was recognized even then as unique. A day's bird watching in those days was clearly a major expedition and involved a great deal more planning than it does in these days of easy motorized transport.

The book "**Birds of the Long Forest**" describes in detail local birds, not only those confined to the Long Forest reserve but also birds that can be found in and around Melton. It is an excellent aide to identifying birds around Melton, and is also a valuable reference when restoring bird habitat (especially for endangered local birds with specific habitat requirements).

Membership Renewal

All members' renewals are due on July 1st.
Single/Concession or student \$10/\$5
Household/Concession \$20/\$10
Corporate \$50

It is important to show we have a large membership base to help get grant funding and MSC support. In 2007/08 we had about 145 financial memberships.

Please call Jill 9743 3819 for information or to drop in a payment. If you are housebound we can arrange to collect your payment and form.

2008/2009 should another great year in the drive to create the Melton Botanic Garden.

Commonwealth Water Grant - Update

The trailer is nearly ready. We will be purchasing tools for clean up, planting and maintenance activities. Some of these will be used at the next planting days 24th and 27th June. Last month at the clean up day we opened the box of high visibility safety vests which we will wear on activities in the Botanic Garden.

Potting and Propagating Days

Another successful potting day was held on 26th June. The group re-potted many of our stock plants which we sell at meetings and events. The group meets at Margaret Peters place, Hopetoun Park – 5367 3328. Next potting day may be in August. We are purchasing around 300 indigenous grassland's plants this month.

We also need many more pots. So please recycle your pots by giving them to Margaret P.

Calendar 2009

We are now starting to think about the 2009 FMBG calendar. Please consider ideas for guest speakers, topics and activities for 2009. The Executive would like to have a draft ready in September so that we have a final calendar to distribute at the Djerriwarrh Festival. Please

share your ideas by speaking to an executive Committee Member or email us your idea to botanicfriends@fmbg.org.au

Growing the Garden Days

We are looking to have "Growing the Garden Days" on the 2nd Thursday and also 4th Sunday of each month commencing in August. This allows those who are free weekdays to attend and also provide a weekend activity. We will continue "Clean-Up days" on the second Sunday of each second month.

Reduction Not Destruction

Mother of all life, sweet gentle Earth,
You nurture and care for all from birth
You gave us trees, and the air we breathe
Wonderful creatures on land, air and sea

So we should be sure to love, care and cherish
Nature's bounty so that all may not perish
Tell me then, is it 'sport' when man with rifles armed
Hunt magnificent beasts and cause them great harm?

And were we thinking beyond here and now
When we rushed technology after the plough?
Our planets been mined, drilled, 'felled' and 'tested'
Now surely its time to say "Hey, let's rest it"

Yes, Mother Nature we will kill
If we continue to 'fell', mine and drill
We must stop all pollution and clean up the air
Damn it, doesn't anybody care?

If we would all use only what we need
And resist being driven by insatiable greed
This Earth, our Mother and our friend
Might just survive, and it would not all end

So come on everyone, it's up to you and me
To leave future generations a beautiful legacy
We have got to fight and strive for reduction
Or our wonderful planet faces destruction!

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September 2000

Annual General Meeting

Annual General Meeting Wednesday 13th August
– Please consider nominating or others you feel would serve FMBG well. Nominations for positions are called for President, Treasurer, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, 3 Executive Committee members as well as a Safety Officer, Public Officer and Returning Officer (*only financial members as of 31st July are eligible to nominate and vote*). For a nomination form please call FMBG Secretary Janet Dyke 9743 2743 or email secretary@fmbg.org.au