

Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden Newsletter

May 2009



Photo John Bentley ©2009

What's On in May and June

14th Thursday & 24th Sunday May 10am-noon Grow the Garden - Planting

Meet at Ryans Creek near Tullidge Street - Botanic Garden site

28th May Stall at Woodgrove - membership drive and renewal

If you can help, please contact Jill 9743 3819.

2nd June Tuesday 7.30pm Executive Meeting

Bentley's place 9743 3819

10th June Wednesday 7:30pm Public Forum at the DJ Cunningham Centre

– Guest Speaker: Attila Kapitany

We are encouraging members to bring along a friend or two to this great night.

14th June Sunday 10am-noon Clean Up Day & Waterwatch

Meet at Rotundas Botanic Garden Site near lake.

26th June Friday 6.30pm FMBG Social Dinner

Info or to book please call Lynette Rehling 9747 9034

FMBG Monthly Meeting Venue

Monthly meetings are held at the DJ Cunningham Centre in Exford Rd, Melton South (Melways 342 K3) on the second Wednesday night of each month.

There is parking, easy access, good space, kitchen and toilets.

FMBG Events Calendar 2009

The 2009 FMBG calendar is on the website. You can also pick up a copy at our meetings.



Unusual West Australian Plants



Attila Kapitany

at the June FMBG Monthly Meeting

Wednesday 10th June 7.30pm

DJ Cunningham Centre

Attila is an acknowledged expert on succulents. Plants both in habitat as well as being used in gardens will be looked at and discussed. Attila has many spectacular photographs in his presentation.

- Attila is the author of eight books specialising in succulent plants.
- 'Australian Succulent Plants' by Attila Kapitany.
- He is President of the Cactus And Succulent Society of Australia
- Attila has travelled to the deserts and remote environs of the U.S.A, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and Chile to research a wide range of plants.
- He has extensive experience with rare and unusual plants which include bromeliads, succulents, orchids, carnivorous plants and cacti for over 30 years.
- Attila has experience in a wide range of successful cultivation techniques.
- He is an accomplished botanical photographer and co-author of the acclaimed book 'Copiapoa in their Environment', and author of many published horticultural articles.

Attila will have his books and plants for sale

More information:

Please contact John or Jill Bentley 97433819

Trip to CERES 18th April 2009

Our first trip for 2009 was to Ceres Community Environment Park in East Brunswick by a small group of us in the Melton Community Bus. On arrival we spent quite an amount of time in the information centre and then in their plant nursery looking at quite a range of plants that they grow to sell.



We then had a look at a dam that catches run off water used to water the nursery plants. There was an interesting filtering system using plants, rocks and gravel to clean the run off water.



Jean at the run-off dam

Following this was a walk around the energy efficient house with its solar panels and water tanks with a complexity of plumbing. Unfortunately there was no entry into the house which was the home for a caretaker. Also of interest was an arrangement of free standing solar panels for electricity. It gave a good idea of size and the visual impact of this system.

They run a bicycle repair shop for people to bring in old bikes to rebuild. The organic market sold small and very expensive produce much of which was not very attractive to look at. People had stalls to promote their environment friendly groups.



Grassland and bog display garden

We had a stroll through the garden area which reminded us of the vegetable gardens and chook sheds and memories of the old fashioned Australian backyard. There was nothing new about the advantages and sustainability of composting.



Someone's garden patch at CERES

Lunch and a relaxing drink and chat back at Hannah Watts Park in Melton completed the day.



One of the many environmental promotional stalls

Story by Alan Partridge

Landscape Design Plans

The final design submission to MSC is in receipt. The report and plans are in with just too minor amendments to be made. FMBG will receive three copies of the report, the layout and planting plans and a CD containing images and the report.

Grants Update

We have just received the funding agreement from Max Coster Project Manager of the Vision for Werribee Plains. This is for a grant of \$19,000 towards re-vegetation of Ryans Creek.

Congratulations to Jill on the successful submission of an MSC strengthening grant to purchase two marquees for our work in promoting the Melton Botanic Garden. We would like to thank MSC for making these competitive grants available. We will now have an even stronger presence at all those events where we promote FMBG and the Melton Botanic Garden.

We are being encouraged by the Vision for Werribee Plains staff to prepare a grant for water harvesting and other projects for the Melton Botanic Garden. This is very exciting and is another step to developing the botanic garden. However, it is a substantial and technical grant that at the moment is a little difficult for us to prepare.

If you have major industry contacts or know of sources of major funding to develop beds in the botanic garden please tell us. The cost to develop the whole garden and infrastructure on current estimates will be about \$7m.

MSC Encouragement

Following email invitations to the May meeting we have been encouraged by council responses. We have received some acceptances and apologies. Cr. Kathy Majdlik, Deputy Mayor, Shire of Melton as an example responded:

"Thank you for your kind invitation to the Melton Botanic Gardens meeting on the 13th May. Unfortunately, I already have commitments on this evening, I will however, endeavour to attend a meeting in the near future. May I just add what a fantastic job you are all doing for our community. As a councillor, I understand and appreciate the importance of our residents volunteering for the benefit of our community, thank you."

Growing the Garden Days

Probably the windiest and dustiest day we have ever experienced at the Melton Botanic Garden was on Sunday 26th April. Still the extreme weather conditions were not enough to stop nine hardy FMBG volunteers getting out along Ryans Creek and weeding where we had been planting last year. Well done everyone – you deserved a medal but were happy with tea and biscuits, even if a little dusty.

We will be planting at the May Growing the Garden Days so why not join us next time to help grow the garden and have fun doing it.

Getting the message out there

John gave a presentation to the Melton and Bacchus Marsh Australian Plants Society meeting on 22nd April. This was another opportunity to use the notebook and projector we received from the Commonwealth Volunteer Grant. Attending in support were Executive Committee members Allan, Alan and Jill. They also helped to set-up the display stand of the layout plans and FMBG information. We also took along the hanging basket of indigenous grassland plants. A number of FMBG members were also present who are also APS members. It is encouraging to see such support.

John spoke for an hour about the proposed Melton Botanic Garden and then fielded questions.



Ryans Creek

The talk covered the activities of FMBG and a brief history since its inception in 2003. The vision and planning from feasibility studies in 2003 and 2004, to concept plan and finally the 2009 landscape design plans set the scene about the Melton Botanic Garden site and the garden themes.

Before moving into the plantings John spoke and showed ideas for landscape art, use of texture and materials, and the type of entrances and signage.

John introduced the plantings through the South African, Californian, Central and South American and Mediterranean themed beds and showed examples of the types of plants from those regions that would suit a Melton climate plus some other unusual specimens that we may never see. Many photographs were shown of the Melton Botanic Garden site so that the potential of the site could be envisaged.



Eucalyptus Arboretum area

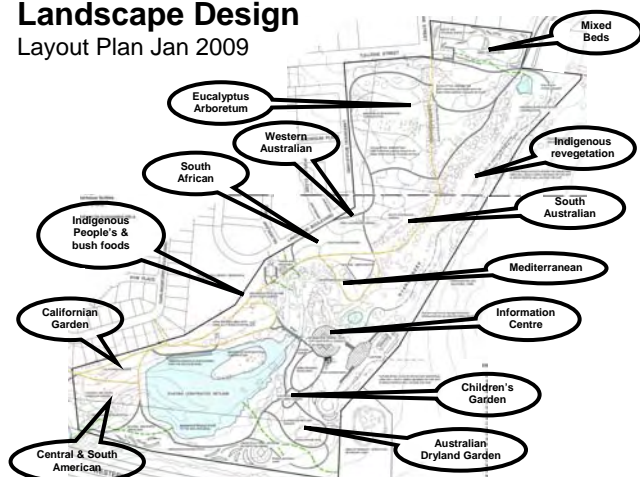
The Australian plant sections covering the Eucalyptus Arboretum, Western Australian, South Australian, Australian Dryland Garden and Indigenous People's Garden were presented. Finally the progress of the revegetation along project along Ryans Creek showed the on ground work of the Friends in helping to establish the Melton Botanic Garden.



The Melton Botanic Garden lake

Melton Botanic Garden Landscape Design

Layout Plan Jan 2009



FMBG have received a \$50 donation from the Melton and Bacchus Marsh Australian Plants Society. Thanks of course to M&BM APS for the donation it was a very pleasant surprise.

If you know any groups who would like a presentation we can organise for someone to speak to them.

Presentation to Melton Shire Council

Representatives of FMBG have been given a timeslot on Monday 6th July being the earliest date we could get to give a brief presentation on the Melton Botanic Garden and where are headed now that the landscape design has been completed.

This is an excellent opportunity to formally meet the new Council as we work together to attain the goal of developing a botanic garden in Melton.

FMBG on Melton Radio

Jill Bentley will represent FMBG on Carolyn MacGavin's "At Noon" Melton Radio show for a Desert Island Discs segment. Hear Jill on Wednesday 20th May at 1pm. You can listen to the Melton Radio Station on 97.9 FM or streaming over the internet at <http://www.979fm.net/> (listen from work or wherever you are in the world).

We will have more opportunities to promote the Melton Botanic Garden on radio. We need some people to volunteer to liaise with or to go on Melton Radio – any takers? Please contact John on 9743 3819.

Open Day - September

We are planning an open day at the Botanic Garden in September with a free BBQ and tours of the garden.

Propagate, Propagate, Propagate!

Plants that is! We need you get out and make new plants for FMBG to sell. Starting in spring we will have many events until the end of the year where we will be selling plants.

We also need to re-pot many plants to the next size pots for re-sale. Please look out for our propagation days. This activity is usually once a month on a Thursday. Propagating and selling plants is great fun and a fundraising activity that many Friends groups undertake. It is also a great way to catch up and learn about plants.

If you need pots or have any for us to recycle or to enquire about the propagation days please contact Margaret on 5367 3328.

Membership

Renewals are due by July 1st. Anyone new who joins now will membership until 1st July 2010. So this is an opportunity for you to encourage some new memberships from your friends and family. We currently have 113 members and 3 corporate members.

Single - \$10

Single concession or student -\$5

Household/Concession - \$20/\$10

Corporate - \$50

New memberships are approved each month at the Executive meeting.

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.

Logo Design

As mentioned last month we are working on designing a logo based on a Fuchsia Gum. Here are some more images which are taken from photographs of the fuchsia gum in the Melton Botanic Garden.



Melton and Wyndham Landcare and Friends Forum

On Wednesday, April 29th at the Melton Civic Centre eight members represented FMBG at this gathering. We had a four minute opportunity to present about FMBG to the gathering of about 80 people. It was a good networking and learning forum. We got to talk to people from other friends and landcare groups. We also learnt some new ways to recruit and retain members which we hope to put further into practice. It was also a great fun evening.

Other Upcoming Events

Victorian Volcanic Plain Biosphere

The Threatened Ecosystems Network and Victorian Volcanic Plain Biosphere Project Group have put out an open invitation for people to attend a discussion on the formation of a Victorian Volcanic Plain Biosphere later this month at the Ballarat Horticultural Centre.

The biosphere is proposed to help raise the profile of this important biodiversity hotspot, educate the public about its importance and declining condition and identify what needs to be done to conserve and restore it for future generations.

The discussion will take place on Friday, May 22 starting at 7.15pm, Ballarat Horticultural Centre on the corner of Gillies and Gregory streets, Wendouree.

To RSVP please email:

Stuart McCallum at stuartm@jc.com.au

or phone 03 5281 1601.

The deadline for RSVPs is May 15.

Waterwatch Training – Gisborne

It is important to attend training if you would like to assist with our water monitoring program – here is free opportunity.

When: 30 May 2009

Time: 10am–4pm

Where: Macedon Ranges Shire Offices, 40 Robertson St, Gisborne (opposite the Police Station) If directions on the day are required, please call Sam on 0438 314 931

Details: Waterwatch is a river health education and monitoring program aiming to increase community understanding and ownership of local rivers, creeks and wetlands. Waterwatch Training is provided free of charge and is designed for Waterwatch monitors, teachers and members of the public. No previous experience is necessary.

Topics covered include:

- OH&S
- Developing a Strategic Monitoring Plan
- Physical and Chemical Water Quality Testing
- Equipment Use and Maintenance
- Macroinvertebrate (waterbug) Monitoring

Program:

9:45am - Arrive, tea & coffee.

10–11am

- OH&S, Monitoring Methods, Developing a Strategic Monitoring Plan

11–11:15am

- Morning Tea

11:15–11:45am

- Physical and Chemical Water Quality Parameters.

11:45am– 1:15pm

- Equipment use and maintenance
- QA/QC

1:15–1:45pm

- Lunch (BYO)

1:45–2:30pm

- Macroinvertebrate Theory & Sampling Techniques

2:30–2:45pm

- Afternoon Tea

2:40–3:30pm

- Macroinvertebrate assessment

3:30–4pm

- Q & A, conclusion

Cost: FREE, fun and easy to do

Note: Please bring your own lunch.

Maribyrnong Waterwatch is managed and supported by Melbourne Water.

More information or bookings: please contact Sam Harrison (Waterwatch Coordinator - Maribyrnong Catchment), email: sam.harrison@melbournewater.com.au phone: **9218 5606** mob: 0438 314 931

Land Management Bus Tour - FREE EVENT!

DATE: Friday 29th May

RSVP: by Friday 15th May

TIME: 9:30am– 1:30pm (BBQ Lunch included!)

“How can fencing out the waterway improve stock management?”

“What support is available to help me better manage my land?”

“How can I improve my planting success rate?”

Come and see first hand revegetation sites that have overcome adversity and become successful sites for landholders and groups. Meet landholders who face similar challenges to you. Talk with experts on the technical question you may have, meet other groups in your area and learn about innovative projects and ideas. This tour will visit three different properties in the Bacchus Marsh, Ballan and Rowsley area. Morning tea, refreshments and lunch will be provided.



If you have stories or photographs from activities in the Melton Botanic Garden please send them to: botanicfriends@fmbg.org.au

Program:

9:30 Pick up from Peppertree Park carpark, Bacchus Marsh (melways 333 G8)

10.00 – 10:30 Vic Brown’s Property

Vic Brown runs a grazing property on the Werribee River south of Ballan. Vic has been a member of the Stream Frontage Management Program (SFMP) for 3 years. In the early years Vic had participated in small scale weed control programs targeting Gorse and Serrated Tussock and in early 2008, Vic decided to fence off his entire 3.2km frontage of Werribee River. Vic believes that the fencing has helped achieve better stock management in an area characterised by steep, rocky outcrops. The riparian plantings he has done in the fenced out area also provide shelter for stock from wind and increase soil temperatures resulting in increase plant and animal growth.

10:30 – 11:30 Yaloak Estate

Yaloak Estate is a 14,000 acre sheep grazing and cropping property in the Rowsley Valley covering approximately 1/3 of the Parwan Creek catchment. Property manager John Sheehan has been undertaking revegetation on a large scale for many years to assist with Serrated Tussock control and erosion management. At this site we will see large scale examples of riparian revegetation in one of the toughest locations in the catchment. John will provide us with an overview and history of revegetation projects at Yaloak and you are sure to be amazed at the sheer size of the projects and techniques used.

11:30 – 12:30 Bacchus Marsh Race Course

Alan Comrie has managed the Bacchus Marsh Race Course for over 25 years. During this time Alan has seen the site transform from an ocean of Serrated Tussock to a site containing areas of quality local indigenous plantings. The site has seen a variety of projects over the years with some doing better than others. We will discuss some of the current issues at the site, such as rabbit control, and also review some of the successful and challenging projects that have occurred.

12:45 - 1:30 Return to Bacchus Marsh and BBQ (Peppertree Park)

RSVP by 15 May 2009 to Brenton McMahon via phone 9235 7231

or email brenton.mcmahon@melbournewater.com.au and please indicate if you have any special dietary requirements.

Executive Committee

Next Executive Committee Meeting Tuesday 2nd June at 7.30pm – meeting at Bentley’s place.