



CAMPERDOWN BOTANIC GARDENS AND ARBORETUM TRUST INC.

Newsletter no 14

Winter 2016



Above: As an icy July drew to a close, a still and sunny day brought out some garden visitors. Alicia Jones and her son Declan took their puppy Tika for his morning walk.

What's growing – and how do we find out?

Before a plant can be labelled it's important to make sure you know exactly what it is. The Melbourne Herbarium at the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is a good place to find out. We recently took advantage of their plant ID service.

We knew our plant was a *Plectranthus* (below), but were not sure which one. After all, there are more than 350 species, mostly native to Australia and South Africa.

Our pressed specimen offered no challenge for the Herbarium's Senior Horticultural Botanist Dr Roger Spencer, who identified it as *Plectranthus parviflorus* or Little Spurflower, which occurs in south-eastern Australia in a variety of habitats, including open eucalypt forest and rocky areas in Victoria and New South Wales.

It grows to around 75 cm and produces spikes of pretty mauve flowers throughout the year. We've just cut it back to encourage spring growth.





Above: One of two Himalayan Cedar trees (*Cedrus deodara*) in the Camperdown Botanic Garden.



Left: Two seedlings found in the garden during our first working bee in 2012 are being grown on to eventually be planted in the Arboretum.



Above: A Blue Atlantic Cedar (*Cedrus atlantica f. glauca*) grows in the section of our Arboretum occupied by the caravan park.



Above: A magnificent local specimen of Himalayan Cedar (*Cedrus deodara*) at the private garden Wuorong overlooking Lake Bullen Merri.

What's growing?

Cedar trees (*Cedrus* spp.)

One of the special things about an arboretum or botanic garden is that it allows us to see and enjoy plants, and especially trees, that would be far too big to be grown in a normal home garden. The Cedar trees in the Camperdown Botanic Gardens and Arboretum are a good example.

In the Garden we have two large specimens of the Deodar or Himalayan Cedar (*Cedrus deodara*). It is from the Himalayas. Its species name comes from Sanskrit and means 'wood of the gods'. We have two trees coming along, which we found as seedlings in the garden on our very first working bee late in 2012. They will soon be ready for planting out in the Arboretum.

We also have the Blue Atlas Cedar (*Cedrus atlantica f. glauca*) from the Atlas mountains of northern Africa.

Two local Cedar specimens are listed on the National Trust (Victoria) Register of Significant Trees: a Himalayan Cedar at the private garden at Wuorong overlooking Lake Bullen Merri, and a Blue Atlas Cedar at Glenormiston. You can download the Trust Trees app from the National Trust website to find out more about special trees, including several in our local area.

Cedar trees, with their needle-like leaves, are classified in the same family as pines, but just to make things confusing, the name Cedar is also used as a common name for a number of other trees entirely unrelated. Western Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata*) and White Cedar (*Melia azedarach*) are two well-known examples.

Heritage Council appeal

Last year we lodged an appeal with VCAT over Council's decision to issue a building permit for 10 new structures in the caravan park. Our main concern was that heritage issues were not considered. A Heritage Victoria permit is required for any developments in the caravan park, given that it sits inside the Camperdown Botanic Gardens and Arboretum, which is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register.

Council and the caravan park proprietor eventually asked us to drop the appeal in exchange for dropping the decision to issue a building permit, and we agreed.

An application for a heritage permit was eventually made, but Heritage Victoria knocked back eight of the 10 structures proposed. This decision was appealed by

the caravan park proprietor at a Victorian Heritage Council hearing in Camperdown in early June.

Council and the caravan park proprietors, and their lawyers and expert witnesses, argued that the proposed six two- and three-bedroom cabins, in-ground swimming pool and in-ground jumping pillow would not negatively impact on heritage values.

The CBGA Trust (represented by Professor Simon Molesworth AO QC, who provided his services *pro bono*) the National Trust (Victoria) and the Australian Garden History Society all made submissions in support of Heritage Victoria's refusal to grant the permit.

The decision of the Heritage Council will be advised in early August.

Public gardeners gather for plant forum

Burnley campus of the University of Melbourne (below) commemorates 125 years of horticulture education this year, so it was a fitting venue for a joint Parks and Leisure and Australia (PLA) and Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand (BGANZ) forum on plant selection on 20 July.

The seminar was aimed at staff involved in the planning, design, maintenance and management of public landscapes.

Parks and gardens staff from Melbourne and regional municipalities and small and large botanic gardens were treated to a variety of inspirational presentations by researchers and industry professionals on tree selection, maintenance strategies, ornamental planting and the ecological impacts of plant choices.



Dates to remember

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| 14 August, am | Working bee |
| 25 August, 2 pm | Film: A Voyage Round My Father |
| 25 August, 6 pm | CBGA Trust AGM |
| 11 September, am | Working bee |

A film for garden lovers

Corangamite Film Society and the Camperdown Garden Club are joining with us to screen a film for garden lovers on the afternoon of 25 August.

A Voyage Round My Father tells the touching and funny story of the special relationship between a son (Alan Bates) and his blind and cantankerous lawyer father (Laurence Olivier). It was written by John Mortimer of Rumpole of the Bailey fame, and filmed in the beautiful garden of his own family estate.

Join us at 2 pm in the Killara Centre in Camperdown for a pleasant winter's afternoon. There is no charge, but you are welcome to bring a plate to share for afternoon tea.

We have also had some great raffle prizes generously donated.

A Voyage Round My Father



JOHN MORTIMER

What's growing?

Aeonium

In the south-western corner of the botanic garden we have started a Canary Island collection beneath the large Canary Island Pine trees. Several well-known garden plants originate in that part of the world, including Perennial Statice (*Limonium perezii*) and Marguerite Daisy (*Argyranthemum frutescens*). Our collection is expanding, and ranges from the silver-leaved groundcover Trailing Lotus (*Lotus berthelotii*) to the Dragons Blood Tree (*Dracaena draco*).

We have eight different Aeonium species and cultivars (right) within this collection. Aeonium is a succulent genus in the plant family Crassulaceae. It is well-suited to our local conditions of dry summers and wet winters, but most would struggle to survive in a frostier climate. The foliage forms distinctive rosette shapes and the plants produce cream or bright yellow flowers in summer. While they have recently become popular garden plants, especially the cultivars with red foliage, such as *Aeonium* 'Zwartkop', Aeoniums were also grown in 19th century gardens. In his book, *Aeonium in Habitat and Cultivation* (2007) Rudolf Schultz says:

In the western district of the state of Victoria, Australia, a number of aeoniums have survived neglected on abandoned homesteads for over 100 years, but only when protected from grazing animals, which relish the plants. The aeoniums were originally planted in the gardens when there was a cactus and succulent craze and gardeners went to great lengths to establish plants from exotic locations.

In William Guilfoyle's 1883 catalogue of *Plants in the Botanic Gardens, Melbourne* the Aeonium was listed under its former name Sempervivum.



CMP progress

Progress continues towards the preparation of a Conservation Management Plan for the Camperdown Botanic Gardens and Arboretum.

A Conservation Management Plan is the main guiding document for managing a heritage place, setting out policies to make sure the heritage values and significance are properly protected and conserved.

Specialist consultants from Context Pty Ltd have been engaged by Corangamite Shire Council to prepare the plan. Two of our Trust committee members are participating in the Steering Committee, which is overseeing the project.

A draft of the plan is expected to be available for public comment in September.

Final approval will be the responsibility of the newly elected Corangamite Shire Council in February 2017.