



CAMPERDOWN BOTANIC GARDENS AND ARBORETUM TRUST INC.

Newsletter no 24

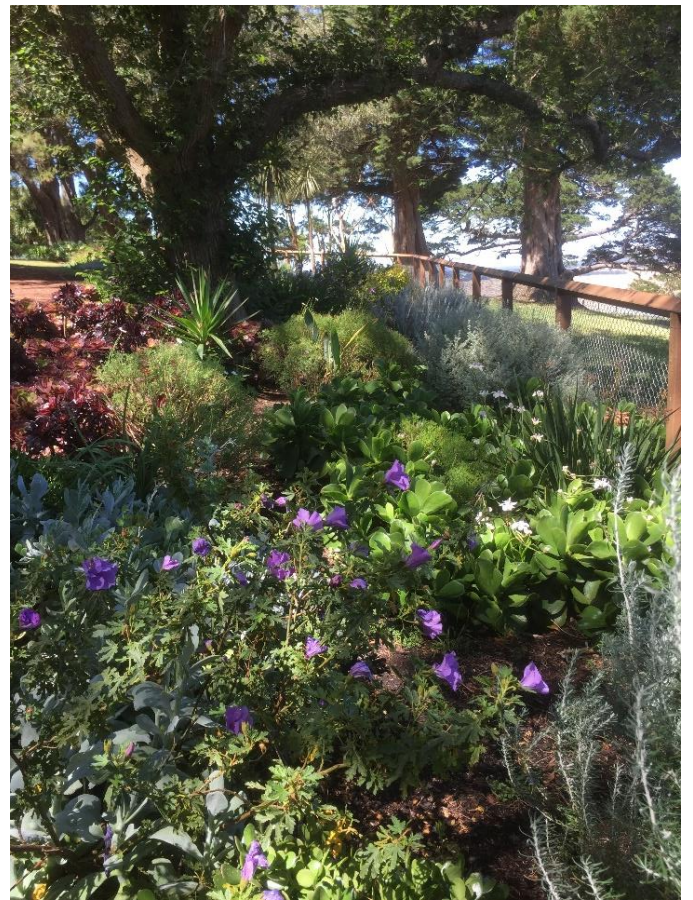
Summer 2018–2019

Hottest summer on record

With Victoria experiencing its hottest summer on record, we've been watching carefully to see how our new plantings have been holding up.

The western border (see right and below) is a particularly challenging growing environment, with strong winds, patches of black clay, a thick layer of old wood chip mulch and roots from giant Cypress, Pine and Elm trees. With careful plant selection and after care we have been able to make an attractive and colourful display in this border. Things have been looking good throughout the rest of the garden too, and plants in the new beds are growing well, although we did lose the Zinnia seedlings to rabbits.

Our volunteer group brings together enthusiasm and expertise as well as the benefit of close links with Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand (BGANZ) and a broad network of other botanic garden, heritage and horticulture groups.



Above and left: Planting on the western border.

National Trust tree plaques

Trust members are invited to a ceremony to install five plaques for trees in the Botanic Garden which are listed on the National Trust Register of Significant Trees.

Corangamite Shire Mayor Neil Trotter and National Trust representatives Jessica Hood and Justin Buckley will join Councillors, Shire staff and members of the Trust and the Camperdown Historic Society for an unveiling ceremony and morning tea on Thursday 14 March at 11.00 am in the Botanic Garden.

Please RSVP for catering purposes. (Contact details at the end of the newsletter.)

Visitors

Committee members from Camperdown's Courthouse visitor information centre joined existing and new Trust members for a State of the Garden end-of-year gathering and guided walk around the Botanic Garden in December. Our two groups are keen to work together to promote the Botanic Gardens and Arboretum as a destination for visitors to our region.

Below, Courthouse Camperdown chair Becky McCann meets the Wollemi Pine.



Below: Spotted in the Gardens. Karin and Andrew Miller, of Ballarat, formerly of Camperdown.



What's growing?

Red Orach (*Atriplex hortensis*)

Orach is a plant in the same botanical family (formerly Chenopodiaceae, now Amaranthaceae) as silver beet or Swiss chard. It has a long history of use as a cooked vegetable, and is more suitable for growing in a warm climate than spinach.

There are red, green and white (a pale chartreuse colour) varieties available. The red form also makes a pretty ornamental plant. It's been growing in the round perennial bed in the main lawn at the Botanic Garden.

It grows quickly, does well with little water, and like many plants in this family (such as Amaranth) looks decorative when it goes to seed. We will save seed to plant again next year.



New management arrangements

In January, Council Parks and Gardens staff member Dale Evans was appointed to a dedicated half-time role in the Botanic Garden. It was also announced that one of the team would begin training in Arboriculture. Both of these developments are welcome steps towards the better management of the Botanic Gardens and Arboretum.

Council also dissolved an 'advisory group', which had been set up to allow caravan park and grazing lessees to provide advice to Council on the future of the Botanic Gardens and Arboretum. We believe an advisory group should have a different composition with relevant expertise and interest.



What's growing?

Agapanthus 'Guilfoyle'

Agapanthus has long been one of the staple plants in summer gardens in the South West. They're beautiful and tough, but they self-seed and spread, and their weediness is a big drawback.

Plant breeders have been working on developing new sterile or near-sterile varieties, which give all the ornamental value but without the environmental problems. Agapanthus 'Guilfoyle' is one of these.

David Glenn of Lambley Nursery describes it as having huge heads of waxy midnight-blue flowers, lasting for 6-8 weeks with secondary flower stems carrying the display into autumn, in a tidy, less spreading clump.

With the association of our garden with William Guilfoyle, Agapanthus 'Guilfoyle' was a logical choice for us from the new cultivars available.

Below: Gladdie (*Gladiolus* cv.) and Purple Mist Flower (*Bartlettina sordida*).



Van park plans rear their head again

Attempts are again being made to develop the caravan park business that still sits within our Arboretum. A 2015 plan to add 12 new structures was stopped by VCAT and Heritage Victoria, but eventually five permits were issued after an appeal to the Heritage Council in 2016. The permits contained stringent conditions to protect the main purpose of the place as a botanic garden and arboretum. After two years, the conditions had not been met and the permits expired.

In 2018, the plans were resurrected after Council decided to commit \$200,000 to the project. Permits were renewed, but the conditions still apply. They include a Landscape Planting Plan, compliance with EPA sewerage disposal requirements, and proper tree management and protection from the random parking and traffic that occurs at present (see below). A planning permit application has been lodged with Council and will go to its February meeting. The Trust has submitted a number of objections.



Above: Permit conditions aim to prevent random parking and traffic.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the reservation of the Camperdown Public Park as a place set aside for public recreation. The Botanic Gardens and Arboretum occupy 25 hectares of that park reserve. At the moment only one hectare, the Botanic Garden, is actually open for public recreation use. All of the Arboretum land is closed to the public and leased to private interests for cattle grazing and a caravan park.

Our Botanic Garden and Arboretum should be a splendid public amenity and, with its spectacular location, could be a major attraction for visitors to our region. Instead, public funds continue to be invested into supporting the growth of an incompatible business in its midst, which appropriates the Arboretum land and deters visitors to the Botanic Garden.

We should be celebrating the 150th anniversary of our Botanic Gardens and Arboretum this year. Instead, we will be devoting time, energy and our own financial resources to defending this special public asset against privatisation.

Working bees

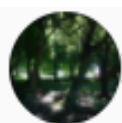
For the last six years our volunteers have gathered regularly in the Botanic Garden for working bees. We've shifted dozens of metres of mushroom compost, sheep dag and elm chips, and planted thousands of new plants and watered them over the hot summer months. We've raked and weeded and deadheaded and pruned, edged paths and garden beds and sprayed soapy water on harlequin bugs. We've planted shrubs and bulbs and corms and cuttings, thinned *Stachys*, dodged swooping magpies, fought in vain with *Acanthus* roots, and watched while seedlings were eaten by rabbits.

But we've also met lady birds, blue wrens, kookaburras and Imperial Jezebel butterflies, and even a wallaby under the Bay tree. Most importantly, we hear lots of positive feedback from garden visitors who are enjoying the results of our efforts. If you'd like to join us on the second Sunday of every month, just turn up or contact us at the number below.

Below: Our gardeners down tools at the end of January's working bee to admire their work.



Follow us on Instagram



camperdownbotanicgardens

Also follow Corangamite Trees, which highlights some of the interesting and special trees around the Shire.

What's growing?

Oaks (*Quercus* spp.)



Most people know an Oak tree when they see one, but how many can recognise more than the English Oak or the American Pin Oak?

There are around 600 species of Oaks in the world. There are nine growing in our Arboretum. In addition to the English Oak (*Q. robur*) there is Sessile Oak (*Q. petraea*), Downy Oak (*Q. pubescens*) and Turkey Oak (*Q. cerris*) from Europe, some mighty Algerian Oaks (*Q. canariensis*) from northern Africa, and a White Oak (*Q. alba*) from North America. More recent additions are Cork Oak (*Q. suber*), Holm Oak (*Q. ilex*) and Red Oak (*Q. rubra*). In the Botanic Garden we have two Himalayan Oaks (*Q. lanata*), which are listed on the National Trust Register of Significant Trees.

The leaves above are from another 10 species we have waiting to be planted. They have come from specialist growers and other botanic gardens and arboreta around the country, and include evergreen Oaks from California and Mexico, which should do well in our climate.

Dates to remember

Tree plaque ceremony: 11.00 am, 14 March

Working bees Second Sunday of every month
8.30 am to mid-day
10 March, 14 April