



## CAMPERDOWN BOTANIC GARDENS AND ARBORETUM TRUST INC.

Newsletter no 29

Autumn 2020

### Trees for the future

In 2013, when the CBGA Trust was first being established, we planted many new trees in existing tree guards in the north-eastern section of the Arboretum. Unfortunately, that area was soon after closed to the public and leased for grazing and there was limited opportunity for mulching, weeding and formative pruning. However, our members made the effort to water the trees over the crucial first few summers, so many of them are growing well.

Over the last seven years we have been gathering a collection of interesting and unusual trees. Some have been acquired through other botanic gardens and arboreta, and some have come from specialist growers and members of the International Dendrology Society.

New trees have also been propagated from some of the special specimens in our Botanic Garden, including *Olearia paniculata* (below left) and *Elaeodendron croceum* (below right), which are among the four species in our Gardens listed on the National Trust Register of Significant Trees.

Succession planting is vital to maintain the character and values of a heritage Botanic Gardens and the Arboretum. Council recently engaged a consultant to prepare a succession plan for tree planting throughout the Botanic Garden and the Arboretum. It will be good to have an opportunity to get these trees and many other new ones in the ground over the next few months.



Above: Flashback to 2013. Sue Cole, Jan Murray and Karen Richardson made an enthusiastic start to replanting the Arboretum.

Below: *Olearia paniculata* in the Botanic Garden.





## Botanic Gardens Day

We were planning a program of activities for Botanic Gardens Day this year on 31 May, but events won't be able to go ahead in gardens this year.

Instead, BGANZ (Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand) and the Australian Botanic Gardens Day Ambassador Costa Georgiadis are encouraging members and garden lovers to post about their plant inspirations on social media. It's a fun way of sharing enthusiasm for plants and gardens and they have been delighted by the response to their 'plant challenge'.

## Events

Last year we marked Volunteers Week with morning tea in the garden. This year it will be celebrated from 18 to 24 May but with restrictions on social gatherings, we haven't made any plans to mark the occasion.

The diary was full for 2020 before the pandemic hit and everything was cancelled or postponed.

The Mediterranean Garden Society's conference, to be held at Buda in Castlemaine in March, was the first to be postponed to 2021.

The Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show was cancelled and the biannual Australian Landscape Conference in Melbourne, a major event on the calendar for garden makers and landscape designers was rescheduled for next year.

Friends and volunteers were also disappointed by the cancellation of the annual conference of the Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens, planned in Brisbane this year.

The International Dendrology Society's annual members field trip in New Zealand was another casualty.

The Australian Garden History Society is still planning to hold its annual conference in Sydney in October.

We look forward to being able to gather in person with friends and associates from other botanic gardens and arboreta for all of these events next year.

Meanwhile, it is great to see the range of forums and presentations available online at the moment. Many gardens closed to the public, including Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and Cranbourne and Hamilton Gardens in New Zealand, are regularly posting photos and videos so visitors can stay connected and find out what's happening in their gardens.

## What's growing?

### *Plectranthus*, Spur Flower

There are around 350 species of *Plectranthus*. Most are native to the southern hemisphere.

We have around 10 species and cultivars in the Botanic Garden and they're in flower right now in shades of purple, mauve, pink and white.

All of these plants were donated from other botanic gardens and our members. They include *Plectranthus* 'Hawthorne Pink' (top), *P. ecklonii* (bottom left below) and *P. ciliatus* (right below), which are native to South Africa, and *P. argentatus* (top left below), which is an Australian species.

We are taking cuttings at the moment so we can add to the display for next autumn.



## Follow us on Instagram

Our Instagram account now has more than 1600 followers.

Corangamite Trees on Instagram also highlights the interesting and special trees growing around our Shire.

## Two wrongs ...

Plans are currently being considered by Council for a road to be built through the north-eastern gate of the Arboretum as an alternative route into the Botanic Garden. The aim is to give the historic oak-lined entry drive over to the caravan park for its sole use.

We will be objecting in the strongest terms to this destruction of what remains of our Arboretum, which should be a beautiful treed park for the enjoyment of the public, as it was reserved to be 150 years ago.

A track for walkers and bike riders could be worth considering in this area, but to open up a road for cars, buses and all manner of vehicles, with signage and carparking, would destroy the ambience of the park. It would spoil views into the park from the Botanic Garden and require the removal of the barrier planting that was planted to shield the caravan park from the view of visitors to the garden. It would also mean the destruction of the Elm tree and the small Mulberry tree under which our members have planted a collection of Leonard Buckland's daffodils from Keyham.

This costly and destructive plan is another damaging consequence of ill-conceived attempts to develop a caravan park in our Botanic Garden and Arboretum.



Above: The beautiful trees at the north-eastern gate to the Arboretum are under threat by a plan to put a road and carpark in this area.

## Lockdown changes plans

Planned bus tours from regional garden clubs have had to be cancelled under the coronavirus lockdown. We will look forward to rescheduling and welcoming the visitors when conditions change.

Our monthly working bees have also been suspended, but individual members are still working hard, as is Dale from Council's parks and gardens department.

The Botanic Garden remains open and walking for exercise is still allowed – while observing the necessary social distancing of course. Autumn is beautiful in the Gardens right now, so rug up and take a stroll.



Above: Autumn colour in the garden.

## VCAT hearing

In February our appeal was heard at VCAT against a planning permit for five buildings to be added to the caravan park that still occupies 2.5 hectares of our Arboretum. Unfortunately, VCAT determined that it did not have jurisdiction over the issues we raised, which will have to be taken up with other government authorities. These include sewerage disposal, compliance with State Government requirements for 'annual' vans, protection of trees, detriment to the Botanic Gardens and Arboretum as a tourism asset, and management of a place reserved as a public park.

In 2015, a plan for growth of the caravan park proposed 12 new structures. Five years on, after appeals at VCAT and the Victorian Heritage Council, only two cabins and two pre-fab replacement ablution blocks are able to go ahead (with conditions). It was also made clear by the Heritage Council that the 'threshold' for development of the caravan park on the site has been reached.

Our members donated around \$25,000 for February's VCAT appeal. We acknowledge their commitment to the conservation of our precious public asset.

In the 50s and 60s the intrusion of caravan parks was a common problem in Victoria's regional botanic gardens, but in 2020 botanic gardens and arboreta are well appreciated. They are being valued and developed as special assets for their communities and major drawcards for visitors. Plans for beautifying them and adding attractive features and new facilities for the enjoyment of garden visitors are going ahead in many regional botanic gardens. This should be happening here too.



## What's growing?

### *Correa*

The genus *Correa* occurs naturally in eastern Australia. There are 11 species and hundreds of cultivars. They all make attractive and bird-attracting garden plants.

We planted several *Correas* when we began work in the Botanic Garden in 2013, including *Correa alba* along the western fence. It's a coastal plant, tough enough to cope with dry summers and strong winds, and with its grey foliage and pretty white star flowers, it combines well with all sorts of native and exotic plants.

There were several *Correas* already growing in the garden. They're still thriving, and right now in the autumn they're all flowering.



## Realising Guilfoyle's plan

William Guilfoyle's 1910 plan doesn't include details of the layout of the Botanic Garden at the heart of the park. There are, however, several notes that set out some of his intentions. One note specified planting to cover the fence.

In the last seven years, along the western border and part of the eastern fence, we have set out to achieve the intent of Guilfoyle's plan. The next step is to create a colourful border, including 'pretty things' as he wrote, for the eastern border of the garden. The Australian Garden History Society has provided funding for this project and we are keen to begin the work.

## Vale Cr Wayne Oakes

Cr Wayne Oakes' recent passing was a great loss for our local community. In November, we enjoyed Wayne's company at a special event to acknowledge the role of the Lions Club in restoring the Botanic Gardens in the 1980s. At the end of a very enjoyable evening, he spoke about how pleased the Lions Club was that another community group had taken up the cause to continue the work they started.

## Vale Mik Barley

Members will be saddened to learn of the passing of Michael Barley in April. Mik was an enthusiastic supporter of the CBGA Trust, having been raised in the South West with a deep love of trees, plants and the natural environment.

With Covid19 restrictions, the funeral at the Yaugher bush cemetery in Forrest was streamed live to enable friends in Camperdown and Mik's family, including brother Richard, Anita and Georgie, locked down at Kew Gardens in the UK, to participate.

