



Friends of Williamstown Botanic Gardens Inc.

NEWSLETTER No 15 March 2013

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1. Recent Events and Activities

General Meeting - Monday 1 October, 2012

Jill and John Bentley from the Friends of the Melton Botanic Gardens gave a presentation on how, in 2011, their Friends group established Melton Botanic Gardens in a joint effort with the Shire of Melton. Maintained by volunteers with no paid staff, the 24 hectare Gardens are located at Tullidge Street, Melton. Melton Friends first project has been the development of an arboretum with over 600 eucalypts and companion plantings. They have planted out along the Ryans Creek (a tributary to Toolern Creek and the Werribee River) establishing a low-rainfall botanic garden with dry land Eucalyptus trees. As well as giving an interesting handout kit, John and Jill invited our members to visit the Melton Gardens any time. They recruit support by getting people to join, now having 200 members, 30 to 50 actively involved.

Annual General Meeting – 22 October, 2012

At the AGM it was moved that the Friends of Williamstown Botanic Gardens Inc. committee be expanded by two members. All current committee members were returned and Helen Tribe joined the committee. Office bearers are Sue Murray, President, Kim Sawyer, Vice President, Geoff King, Secretary, Dianne Robinson, Treasurer, Barbara Sloan, Alan Murray and Helen Tribe, Committee and Helen Page representing the Williamstown Botanic Gardens Advisory group.

Book Corner

Run on weekdays in the school holidays in September October 2012 and January 2013 when the weather was suitable the Book Corner has been a great success. A dedicated group of members have worked hard to set up, pack up, and receive and collate feedback. It is planned to continue this in the first term school holidays in April 2013. Thanks to all the volunteers who made it happen.

An excellent two page display using the feedback collected by the Friends has been produced by Loraine Callow and will be on the web site and displayed at Friends events.

Story Times – October 2012 to February 2013

Our highly successful story times under the Golden Elm, run in partnership with Hobsons Bay Libraries, advertised three sessions for the season - Pond Life, 26 October 2012, Santa in the Gardens, 14 December 2012 and Kookaburra under the Old Gum Tree, 22 February 2013.

Unfortunately the December session 'Santa in the Gardens' was rained out so library staff ran an alternative story time at the Williamstown Branch of Hobsons Bay Libraries.

The October session "Pond Life" and the February session 'Kookaburra under the Old Gum Tree' again drew large and appreciative crowds. As ever thanks go to Anja Lee of the Friends for her energetic, creative work in planning the sessions with Hobsons Bay Libraries staff. We congratulate Anja and librarians Pamela Boyd and Sarah Lavelle on presenting such entertaining and engaging sessions for preschool children and their families.

Story times under the Golden Elm in our Gardens are designed specifically to develop appreciation of this wonderful place in children and their families. Elements of the Gardens are incorporated into the programme and it is integral to the sessions that they take place there. Should any session be rained out an alternative programme is run by library staff in the Williamstown Branch of Hobsons Bay Libraries.

At each story time in the Gardens people came up to say how much they love the sessions and they hope that for the 2013 – 2014 season we can return to five sessions. In planning for this next season we will explore this question with Hobsons Bay Libraries.

Propagating Group

Meeting on alternate Mondays from 10.00am to 12.00 noon at Williamstown Botanic Gardens, the propagating group produced a variety number of plants from stock collected in the Williamstown Botanic Gardens. The planned sale at December Story Time was rained out. Instead, Peter Lindstrum of the propagating group and Sue Murray took a collection of the plants to sell at the December morning tea run by the community group the Saturday Morning Team and raised \$104.00 for the Friends. Work is underway to produce plants for sale at Paint the Gardens 2013.

Members interested in propagating can contact Helen Olsen ph: 9397 5378 or email helena.olsen@optusnet.com.au.

Committee Meetings December 2012, February 2013 March 2013

At recent committee meetings a focus has been planning for the next Paint the Gardens Art Competition to be held in the Gardens on 14 April 2013.

After discussions with HBCC, the Friends have formally applied to continue to use the Ladies Bowling Club as a meeting venue until August 2013 when the future use of the site is to be decided. Representations will be made again to Council for the Friends to use part of this area for propagating and to explore the use of the clubrooms for meetings of the Friends and other community groups.

Interested members are always welcome to attend committee meetings.

Children's Activity/Education Sub-committee

The first meeting for 2013 was held at the Gardens on the 5th of March 2013 reviewing the last year's programme and planning for this year. If you are interested in joining this sub-committee please contact Carol Challis m: 0411 042 511, email carol@challispalace.com or Meagan Kearney m: 0414 918 724 email meagankearney@hotmail.com

Access to newsletters and articles

Interesting and relevant publications have been placed in the Williamstown Branch of Hobsons Bay Libraries. Ask at the desk for the Friends material.

2. Future Events

General Meeting of the Friends – 7.30pm Wednesday 3 April 2013

Speaker: Ian Rae “Significant Trees of Williamstown”

The meeting will be held at the Williamstown Ladies’ Bowling Club, 60-64 Melbourne Road, Williamstown.

Members of our Friends group, Ian Rae and his wife, Joan, both grew up in Newport, and after living for many years in other suburbs and other countries, they moved back to Williamstown in 1995. An organic chemist with broad scientific and cultural interests, Ian is sort-of-retired but holds an honorary appointment at the University of Melbourne. He makes time to advise the EPA and the UN Environment Programme on 'brown issues', write about the history of chemistry, and work with the Royal Australian Chemical Institute, the National Trust, the Williamstown Historical Society and the Friends of Williamstown Wetlands.

In 2001, consultants prepared for Hobsons Bay City Council a list of 'significant' trees, as judged by the criteria of the Australian Heritage Commission. They found about twenty significant trees, mostly in private gardens. Going beyond the strict criteria to trees that are just 'interesting', the Williamstown arboriculture is astonishing - another botanic garden dispersed across our suburb. Ian has photographed some representative trees and he will invite you to identify them and their locations, while explaining why he finds them interesting.

Following Ian’s presentation, we will plan for 14 April’s Paint the Gardens and start a roster for setting up from 8.00am to 11.00am, manning the Friends Stall, tables in the main path, voting boxes etc from 11.00am, and packing up at 5.00pm after the prize presentation at 4.30pm.

Book Corner 3 April to 12 April 2013

The popular reading corner is going to be set up again for the first term school holidays and we invite as many members as possible to assist with set up or pack up. This is important as two key volunteers will be unavailable in April.

If you have time on weekdays to help setup somewhere between 8.30 to 9.30am or pack away the Reading Corner at 3.00pm during the next school holidays (weekdays from Wednesday 3rd April to- Friday 12th April), either log on to **<http://doodle.com/pyr5ewcudc4vvase>** to register on the Reading Corner Roster or contact **Meagan Kearney, 0414 918 724 or meagankearney@hotmail.com** to be added to the roster. If registering on Doodle, please send Meagan your phone or email details.

Sub-committee members will be happy to provide a briefing on the procedures and the equipment. Should someone have already indicated they can help at a time and date which suits you, please add your name anyway. It is good to have a couple of people rostered for both set up and pack up. Set up usually takes about half an hour.

Paint the Gardens Sunday - 14 April 2013

Our Friends group is joining with Hobsons Bay City Council Art and Culture Department to run the Paint the Gardens art competition again as part of Art in Public Places. After set up, the event will be open to the public from 11.00am to 5.00pm in the Gardens. This highly successful initiative of the Friends of Williamstown Botanic Gardens has once

again attracted generous sponsorship for the prizes. We are grateful to Banjo Plumbing, Bendigo Bank Williamstown, Bonnie Gardens, Councillor Angela Altair, Dirty Dogs Pet Supplies, Ferguson Street Lotto, Ferguson Street Provisions, Fitzgerald Optometry, Foster Care Association of Victoria, Williamstown Lions Club and Kim Sawyer as well as our Friends of WBG for their generous commitment.

All the publicity material will be ready shortly. If you would be able to distribute posters please phone Sue Murray 9397 5698 or email Kim Sawyer at kim.sawyer@unimelb.edu.au

Other Matters

Williamstown Botanic Gardens Update: Head Gardener's First report for 2013

In December we obtained services of our brand new first year apprentice Daniel. He will be with us for 4 months until the end of March. Amongst the usual weed removal we concentrated on pond clean up with regard to algae and general weed build up in between all of the preparation for Christmas. Some days of extreme hot weather required several areas to be hand watered eg: front garden of house, around statue and smaller new trees in Pinetum.

During January, staff levels fluctuated as holidays were taken. Strong concentration on weed removal, watering and pond clean up continued, together with ongoing sprinkler maintenance taking in to account it was school holiday time. On that note vandalism was at a minimum compared to some previous years with only a little damage to small sections of perimeter fence on the Fearon reserve boundary. We also found by placing extra bins out on weekends rubbish pick up was reduced a fair amount.

Amanda Pennini (University of the Sunshine Coast- final year student in Public Relations and Communications) produced some invaluable interpretation for the WBG during January, which included researching historical information and photographs.

More recently we had 2 days filming of Winners and Losers a television show, together with 2 days of Shakespeare in the Gardens. A further film shoot of House Husbands another television show happened over 2 days, not too disruptive but still requires our attention at times. Due to the fact that many people were in the gardens over the summer they have held up very well.

Reading corner held during school holidays was very successful. The Friends Propagation Group has been very active over past weeks preparing plants for sale. No mean feat considering extremes of temperature, well done to those involved. Looking forward to Paint the Gardens on Sunday the 14th April.

The next few weeks will be a continuation of sprinkler maintenance, weeding of as many garden beds as possible with focus on the main path beds.

All in all a positive start to the year with much work being carried out by Shelley and Loraine in the engine room. Michael and his "team" will continue to soldier on at the coal face. It really is the best environment to work in.

Cheers

Michael Wilkins

PS We have 6 new additions to the pond. Baby ducklings and hopefully, a fountain is on the way soon.

The pond is back to life!

