

Jubaea

FRIENDS OF GEELONG



BOTANIC GARDENS INC.



Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens Inc. Newsletter

October 2025 Volume 25 Issue 3

FRIENDS OF
GEELONG
BOTANIC
GARDENS



A YEAR FULL OF BOTANICAL WONDERMENT

Geelong School of Botanical Art presents *Inspired by Nature 9* Exhibition

Geelong School of Botanical Art showcased at The Gordon Gallery.

The opening night of our biennial *Inspired by Nature 9* Exhibition on 9 September 2025 encapsulated a wonderful celebration of the achievements of the students and tutors of our school. 33 artists showcased their stunning pieces of more than 90 artworks at The Gordon Gallery Geelong. Visitors to the exhibition were welcomed to a tranquil paradise that celebrated the wonders and life forms of nature. The exhibition demonstrated the artists' extraordinary skills, attention to intricate details and their passion for the subject matter. Visitors were in awe of how the Exhibition was presented and in particular, the high standard of work from our beginners to the more advanced students. Many came away appreciative of the beauty and fragility of our world, seen through the eyes of our artists.

The Geelong Botanic Gardens and the Geelong School of Botanical Art have a rich history in "painting the garden". We are

grateful to the Geelong Botanic Gardens horticultural staff for their help with specimens in the gardens for our students to study. Whether it be for a workshop, an individual specimen for a florilegium or a whole class study of magnificent magnolias, heritage roses, dahlias or prickly chestnuts, this important visual recording of the Gardens' living collection will live on through the artwork! Many of the artworks in the exhibition depicted specimens from the Gardens. An audio-visual presentation played throughout the exhibition highlighted the important relationship between the gardens and the school.

We were very appreciative of the generous support that both Helena Buxton and Jill Shalless have given the school over the years as our distinguished Award Judges. Their meticulous and considered judging was clearly evident in the way that they highlighted the intricacies of the awarded paintings, as well as other artwork around the gallery, giving rise to the curiosity of gallery visitors at the Opening Night.

INSPIRED BY NATURE 9 - EXHIBITION AWARDS

Congratulations are extended to the recipients of awards at the exhibition:



BEST ARTWORK AWARD - sponsored by Frameline

Winner: **Deb Chirside** for *Macrozamia communis*, Cycad 'Burrawang', Watercolour.



EMERGING ARTIST AWARD – sponsored by 44 Frame Factory

Winner: **Rose Boyd** for *Cosmos bipinnatus*, Garden Cosmos, Watercolour.



HONOURABLE MENTION AWARD – sponsored by Cavalier Art Supplies and Geelong Art Supplies

Winner: **Belinda Taylor** for *Eucalyptus macrocarpa subsp. macrocarpa*, Mottlecah, Watercolour and Gouache.



PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD - sponsored by The Frame Shop

Winner: **Deb Chirside** for *Gymnorhina tibicen tyrannica*, Australian Magpie Nest, Watercolour and Graphite Pencil

The Friends and School would like to thank our major sponsor GFG (Geelong Financial Group) and all the sponsors for their generosity. It has helped our ability to hold such events and is therefore greatly appreciated.



Top: Half view of the gallery
Bottom: Artworks by Mary Fielding *Cymbidium orchid* and David Wilkinson, Tall bearded Cayenne Capers

Our artists continue to shine on the national and world stage of Botanical art and is worthy of mention again.

Virtual World Exhibition – Bountiful Botanicals: A Botanical Art Worldwide exhibition.

40 artworks were selected Australia wide, to be part of a virtual worldwide exhibition with 40 countries participating. We congratulate students and tutors from our school whose artwork was selected to be part of this exciting exhibition: - Deb Chirnside, Craig Lidgerwood, Yvonne Lyons, John Pastoriza-Pinól, Rosemary Donnelly, Fiona Sutherland and Belinda Taylor. Here is a link to see our artists artwork.

www.botanicalartsocietyaustralia.com

Florilegium – a collection of botanical artworks of living plants; a visual record of significant plants or collections from Botanic Gardens, Parks and Gardens or specific areas where plant species are threatened.

It is extraordinary to think that several of our tutors and students here in Geelong, contribute to florilegium collections nationally and worldwide. To be selected to contribute to a florilegium is usually by invitation only and at the expense of the artist, whose artwork is donated to a florilegium collection. Artworks are

rigorously judged to meet scientific requirements and therefore not all artwork is accepted. Such recognition of artwork by the talented members of our school is held in high esteem and deservedly demands praise.

We congratulate Amanda Ahmed, Amanda Blake-Sutterby, Deb Chirnside, Niki Coates, Rosemary Donnelly and John Pastoriza-Pinól; their art works will be forever immortalised in various florilegia.

As Coordinator of the school, it is a privilege to be part of this Botanical Art Community. It is unique to Geelong and as a member of our wider Geelong community I believe we need to nurture this jewel in our crown. With vision, determination and opportunity the future of our school could be on the world stage of Botanical Art.

Pammi Pryor

Below: Barbara Grace, John Pastoriza-Pinól and Mali Moir



Visitor Experience:

I visited the exhibition and was blown away by the superb works exhibited by the students at Geelong School of Botanical Art. The Gordon Gallery and the school's Exhibition Team showcased them to advantage with their display and lighting. Geelong should be justly proud of the amazing talent and champion the school to the public of the region.

The artists and particularly Pammi Pryor deserve our thanks and praise for putting on this, our ninth "Inspired by Nature" exhibition. The exhibiting artists took turns welcoming visitors during the entire show from the opening on 9 September until it closed on 24 September.

There were hundreds of visitors over the two-week period, and many artworks were sold. The large-scaled artworks, together with the more traditional watercolours and drawings were of such a high standard, it is hard to believe that beginners artwork hung alongside the more advanced students and tutors' work. The audio-visual presentation that played throughout the exhibition captured the important relationship between the Botanic Gardens and the GSBA, for many of the artworks portrayed specimens growing in the gardens. I look forward to the next exhibition.

Luanne Thornton

THE GIFT OF A FALLEN BRANCH

It was in December 2006 that a storm brought down a significant branch of the *Ginkgo biloba* in the Gardens. The Ginkgo, a deciduous tree, is commonly known as the maidenhair tree because of the shape of its foliage which changes to a beautiful butter yellow in autumn.

Graeme Lorimer, then a Friend of Geelong Botanic Gardens and also a woodturning friend of mine, obtained some of it and gave me a few small pieces.



Ginkgo biloba tree in the Gardens, photo taken in 2021

What to do with it? I first cut and dried a few test pieces. They dried quickly, with no noticeable shrinkage or distortion and I was able to turn a shallow dish and small bowl. The timber has a low density and uniform texture which are great features. I am lucky to have chainsaw, bandsaw and lathe and thus encouraged turned a series of pieces of modest dimensions.



Close up of the pyrography of the Ginkgo leaf

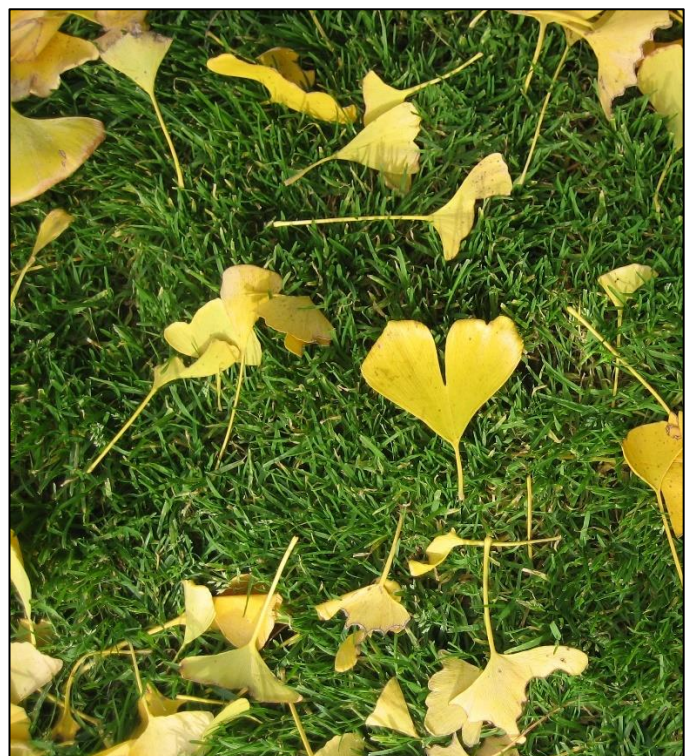
The pieces dried to a uniform pale straw colour, but some branchlet inclusions showed as dark spots that I sought to make less obvious by pyrographing some actual-size images of the distinctive *Ginkgo* foliage. All of this was done by July 2007. I used an oil finish to seal the surfaces which have now darkened to a uniform honey brown, and the pyrography is less obvious. The leaf images are still visible, as lower temperatures while still scorching the wood also softens it. The surface is then micro-sculpted by the 'nib', giving tiny highlights and shadows, creating a tactile difference that light and shade alone cannot do.



Shallow dish and small bowl hand made by Gregor Wallace

All woods that I have used darken over time in response to light or the oxidation effects of various finishes, but the form of the dish/bowl endures. Perhaps it is time to make a few more items. We will all continue to appreciate the *Ginkgo* tree that gifted the wood.

Gregor Wallace



Ginkgo leaves with their butter yellow unique shapes

40th ANNIVERSARY EVENT FOR PAST & PRESENT MEMBERS

During this year the Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens have been celebrating 40 years of Friendship with a number of events championing the group and being enjoyed by both Friends and others. These have included an official opening on Friday 4th April to which Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner AC, Governor of Victoria was invited and attended. She spoke of the work Friends' groups do to support their Gardens and planted a Glastonbury Thorn, *Crataegus monogyna* 'Biflora' to mark the occasion.

Other events included a film night and various garden visits. Our AGM was held at the CWA rooms in East Geelong and was well attended. Jan Cheyne has taken on the Presidential role as we continue to work through various issues.

The speaker for the night was John Bentley, President of the Melton Botanic Gardens speaking on the work volunteers have done to develop and grow these gardens. He also outlined the Strategic Planning they have developed to sustain them into the future and how they manage to set goals and achieve them with consensus. Melton Botanic Gardens are a wonder as everything has been achieved by volunteers driving outcomes and working with local council support.

The Friends are undertaking a Strategic Plan, so this was a very relevant topic. As we reach the end of this milestone year our final celebration event will be a morning tea to be held on Friday 7 November from 9.30 AM at the Visitors' Centre in The Geelong Botanic Gardens.

All current and past members of the Friends are welcome, and the invitation is printed here in Jubaea. Invitations will also be emailed out to an address list that has been developed from our members' database of current and lapsed members, as well as old Tea House lists.

There will be people who have been members, but we do not have addresses, and they may miss out on an invitation. If you know of past members who should be invited but miss out, please pass on the invitation. We must have acceptances by Friday 31st October for catering purposes.

2025 has been a challenging year for the Friends but we want to celebrate our achievements over the years and plan for many more ahead to support the Geelong Botanic Gardens and the many friendships that have been garnered over the past forty years.

Luanne Thornton



INVITATION

on **FRIDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2025 at 9:30 am**

President Jan Cheyne and the Committee of Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens invite current Friends, volunteers and past members to join them for a Morning Tea Celebration in the Visitors Centre at the Geelong Botanic Gardens to mark our 40th anniversary milestone

RSVP ESSENTIAL BY 30 OCTOBER

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS:

Entry to the event is via the front entry on Eastern Park Circuit

Parking: Parking is available in the carparks either side of the front entry

SCHEDULE:

Arrival time: **from 9:00 am**

Food and drinks served: from 9:30 am at the Visitors Centre

Please note, guests may be photographed during this event

Dietary: Please advise of any dietary restrictions. Catering by The Gordon

RSVP ESSENTIAL BY 30 OCTOBER:

email to info@friendsgbg.org.au or phone the Friends' office: 03 5229 0071

PLANT IN FOCUS: *Bursaria spinosa*

Overview

(Australian Native Plants Society and Australian National Botanic Gardens)

Bursaria spinosa is a member of the Pittosporaceae family. Its common names include 'Sweet Bursaria, Native Blackthorn and Christmas Bush. First Nations People know it as 'geapgna and kurwan (Dharawal). Bursaria is derived from the Latin origin word 'bursa' referring to 'a purse'. This relates to the shape of its fruit (Flora of Australia). spinosa refers to its a distinctive prickly / spiny branch.



Buraria spinosa: In full bloom at Wilsons Promontory National Park, VIC. Photo: twothylacines, inaturalist.org CC BY-NC.

Description

(Australian National Botanic Gardens)

This prickly bush can grow between 3 to 4 metres in height. It has elongated oval-shaped leaves approximately 20-45 mm in length. Its creamy white sweet-scented flowers are generally seen in mid-summer and during the Christmas period, which reflects its common name 'Christmas Bush'. When living in Tasmania, during the Christmas period, we picked the prolific flowers from this plant which had a slightly sweet scent.

It is described as a 'rather drab and unlovable shrub'. Nevertheless, it is a very tough plant which is long lived, from 25 to 60 years, which is able to resprout after bushfires.



Thorny branch. Photo: subsp. lasiophylla, Tony Rodd, Flickr CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Distribution

(Macquarie University)

Bursaria spinosa is mostly found in woodland Eucalypt and open forests along the coastal regions of Tasmania, Victoria, South Australia including in the Cumberland Plain of Sydney, New South Wales. Its underground network of rhizomes is extensive. This makes it an intriguing shrub for biologists as stands of these plants can cover a significant area but are genetically identical because of their substantial underground rhizomatous network. However, individual shrubs (phenotypes) can be distinct in their appearance and may differ from each other.



Bursaria spinosa: Flowers.

Photo: John Tann, Wilimedia Commons CC BY 2.0.

Uses and medicinal qualities

(Macquarie University, Plant of the week, *Bursaria Spinosa*)

A feature of *Bursaria spinosa* is that the macerated leaves when immersed in boiling water turn the water blue in sunlight. This is a result of the plant's production of the chemical aesculin which can absorb UV light and used for sunscreen from the European early settlers in Australia. Esculin is currently used for a variety of biological and medicinal applications. This includes for bacteria identification and treatment of diverse medical conditions.



Fluorescence of Aesculin in UV light.

Photo: Opuntia, Wikimedia Commons CC BY-SA 3.0

Pollinators and predators

(ABC Gardening Australia and Talking Plants)

When in flower, *Bursaria Spinosa* attracts lots of insects, including butterflies, moths, bees and beetles; while the native bee is the usual pollinator and the Pittosporum Beetle, named from its association with the Pittosporum, a close relative of *Bursaria*, is a frequent visitor at Mount Annan Botanic Gardens. This bug has a distinctively bright red head.

Bursaria spinosa is a hero plant in attracting predatory insects such as the orange assassin bug and native wasps. These predators control the brown apple moth, which, when they are caterpillars, devour the leaves of grapes and fruit trees.

The nectar, as well as the insects, attracts plenty of birds. Small birds, like the Blue Wren, can nest safely in the prickly branches.



Orange Assassin Bug *Gminatulus australis*,
inaturalist.ala.org.au CC BY-NC.

This plant also attracts the Eltham Copper butterfly *Paralucia pyrodiscus* which has a complex and unique symbiotic relationship with an ant mostly the *Anonychomyrma nitidicep*. Adult butterflies lay their eggs on the roots and stems of *Sweet Bursaria*. Once the eggs hatch, the ants guard the caterpillars (providing protection from predators) ushering the larvae to and from the ant nest at the base of the shrub, to feed on the *Sweet Bursaria* leaves at night. In return the ants feed on the sugar secretions exuded from the body of the caterpillar.



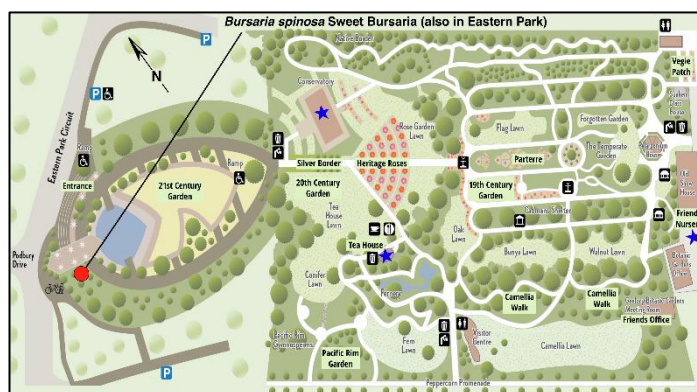
Leaves. Agriculture Victoria (Victorian Government)
vro.agriculture.vic.gov CC BY-NC.



Fruit shaped like a tiny purse. Photo: John Tann, Wikimedia
Commons CC BY 2.0.

View a snapshot about *Bursaria Spinosa*

You can view a segment about *Bursaria Spinosa*/ Sweet Bursaria on ABC iView / Garden Australia 2024 – 17 May 2024 - <https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/how-to/plant-profile-sweet-bursaria/103861196> -



Location Map in Geelong Botanic Gardens

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FGBG ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025

FGBG PRESIDENTS REPORT

This time last year I was not standing here as the newly elected President of the Friends. Due to unforeseen circumstances, our President felt he could not continue in the role and resigned his position, and I reluctantly became Acting President. Soon after this our wonderful secretary Rossy Jablonsky resigned as her husband Peter became critically unwell. So, it has been a year of upheaval, uncertainty and pain, and we have lost many talented and experienced volunteers, but I can happily say we feel we are well on the way to restoring the equanimity of our organisation.

There is one key issue that cannot be ignored in this report. Last November, 6 of our members, all of whom have held leadership roles at some time, were banned from volunteering and from entering any non-public areas of the Gardens, 4 of them for 4 months, and 2 people had a lifetime ban. There was no warning and no reason given.

The Friends Nursery was also under threat of closure, at the end of its current licence, and many volunteers left in disgust. By March the Friends relationship with Gardens Management had deteriorated to such an extent that the City instigated a Cultural Diagnostic Review which, after 38 interviews of Friends and GBG staff produced a 500-page report, a mammoth task, taking more time than predicted, but finally, I think we feel heard, believed, and valued. Our way forward is looking much brighter, and we would particularly like to thank James Stirton for giving so much time and effort into achieving this. Our Special 6, those banned from the gardens, are also on the brink of a resolution and we hope to see them back in the Gardens soon.

The committee has been working on a new strategy document to cover the next 5 years. As part of this process, we will be sending out a survey to understand members' experience of the Friends and to hear any ideas in terms of activities, projects or functions that could be considered, so please take the opportunity to have your say. Despite the setbacks we have had much to celebrate. 2025 marks the 40th anniversary of the Friends, and the City were determined it would not pass unnoticed despite our feeling we had little to celebrate.

So on 4th of April, we celebrated in style with a champagne breakfast attended by the Governor of Victoria, Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner, Executive Director, City Infrastructure James Stirton, Mayor Stretch Kontelj, Councillor Anthony Aitken, Volunteers and GBG Staff. *The Sweethearts* sang, speeches were made, and the Governor planted a Glastonbury Thorn tree in our honour, and it was a lovely morning. Planning is underway for another celebration on 7 November, our actual anniversary, to celebrate with all our members.

Geelong School of Botanical Art:

The school continues to be very successful thanks to its core group of prestigious Tutors, and its dedicated Coordinator Pammi Pryor, and our administration officer Tracey whose unwavering assistance with the school throughout the year has made a huge difference. Classes are at capacity, and whilst there have been some uncertainties around venue and parking, I think these are now resolving favourably. The schools main event this year is the biennial exhibition 'Inspired by Nature 9' to be held at the Gordon Gallery in Fenwick Street from 10 September to 24 September. Original artworks will be showcased ranging from beginners to professional pieces. The Exhibition will run concurrently with the Archibald Exhibition at the Geelong Gallery and hopefully visitors to Geelong will visit both.

Reports from each Volunteer Group:

Heritage Rose Growers:

Our group now has 5 core members, and although a small group, we managed well with the tasks this year and the roses rewarded us with a great display. We could not have achieved this without the support from the Botanic Gardens Staff, particularly during pruning, but also through the year. So heartfelt thanks to Sheree, Claude and Tracey, and also to the larger group of staff members who join us for a magnificent day of winter pruning. Special thanks to Liam and Dave who tackle the climbers each year. They looked beautiful last summer, spilling over the tops of the towers (which by the way were made by a member of the rose group 30 years ago). We have purchased new roses to fill in some gaps, and these will be planted in spring. Thanks to Lucy who has potted these for us. Unfortunately, it is becoming very difficult to source the older varieties.

A future project we have begun thinking about is the question of signage, to give some information about some of the special old roses we have. As this report goes in, we have finished our winter prune, but the older once-flowering roses are awaiting their turn. They will be pruned after they flower in spring and early summer. Thanks to my co-workers, Anne, Jennifer, John and Robyn, for hard work and good fellowship.

Perennial Border:

At this moment it is all cut back as it is every winter, and just waiting for a burst of warm spring weather to start growing again. Our volunteer numbers have halved with just 4 old ladies left, but we still manage to fill that trailer every week! Fortunately, we have

great support from the gardens staff when we need some extra muscle, like we do next Wednesday when we need to shovel about 5 trailer loads of mulch onto the garden beds, so I'd like to thank them all in advance, especially Claude who will be coordinating the event.

The shade border we planted out last year has grown well, and while we still have gaps to fill, it just takes time to find the right plants. Many interesting plants are difficult to find, and we want to show that there are some that may be out of fashion, but are worth hunting down and growing, whether it's for their perfume, colour of flower or foliage. Also, the soil in Geelong Botanic Gardens is so amazing I have heard staff say they could eat it!

Nursery:

The past year has been challenging for the nursery team. Propagation restrictions and operational changes have reduced the number of nursery volunteers, and damaged morale of the small number of volunteers who still turn up to run the nursery. We have followed all requests made by Gardens management, but a direct consequence of this is a drastic reduction in the plant stock available for sale.

At a Growers meeting in December, it was unanimously agreed to halt production from January 2025 after the COGG produced a draft suggesting the closure of the nursery on the 30 June 2025.

Regardless of this negativity, a dedicated group of 9 volunteers presented each Wednesday and continued to be an advocate for the Gardens and record steady Wednesday sales. The Saturday April 5 Autumn sale was exceptionally successful and a credit to the volunteers.

Propagation under tight management guidelines resumed after receiving news of the postponing of the nursery closing date. After the recent negotiations with Management there is an air of optimism in the group, and we are looking forward to rebuilding a strong, respectful relationship with them. The primary task now is to rebuild the Grower volunteer numbers so that we have a sustainable group for the future.

Weeders:

The weeders group has maintained our number of volunteers during this last year. It is pleasing to see the areas we have weeded over the past three years are showing significantly less regrowth.

We continue to have a very effective working relationship with the Gardens staff and have assisted them on other projects including mass planting, propagation, harvesting of produce and maintenance in the vegetable garden area.

The introduction of FGBG uniforms has greatly increased our visibility and Interactions with the public, and led to more frequent opportunities to promote the Gardens

Guides:

The Guides are a group of people with an exceptional knowledge of the history of the Gardens and the plants within. This has not been an easy year for them with many obstacles put in their way resulting in poor morale and the resignation of several exceptional Guides. However, those left have filled the gaps in rosters and continue to offer an amazing service to visitors. Free walks on Wednesdays and Sundays and booked walks for interested groups and also some special themed walks, all of which take many hours of research to provide the standard they aim for. Donations and booked walks have raised nearly \$2000 this year, which is amazing considering the issues they have had around advertising and marketing.

The Guides are optimistic that by 2026 these issues will be resolved, and they can continue to offer Geelong residents and visitors a really interesting experience.

Library:

This year there has not been as much to do in the library, partly because fewer people are using the resources and we have not purchased anything new. Our computer catalogue is an old program on an older PC and requires an update, but as the future of the library is uncertain, I have been reluctant to pursue change at this stage.

The main task for this year has been the ongoing work on our Timeline of the Friends over 40 years, Nadia Zacchigna has been assiduously adding to the current year and editing as any new or altered information arises, and we have been going through our newspaper and photo archives for any additional facts. We are lucky that Meralyn Roberts and others have maintained and updated these, and we plan to publish it electronically later this year and produce a few hard copies.

The library belonging to the Friends and the collection of the Geelong Botanic Gardens which we look after, includes many valuable gardening and horticultural assets, and I hope it will continue as such into the future, even though resources and databases available on the internet are used more and more for up to date nomenclature etc.

Events:

The Events Team has put together another excellent program of activities for the year despite the difficulties regarding room bookings. Many successful events have been held off site, such as this one, and the Friends volunteer lunch which packed the hall.

The Winter Lunch at Mt Duneed Winery was a resounding success, and we hosted our first Silent Auction there. The generosity of donors was much appreciated, and it could be a model for future Winter Lunches. Many positive comments about the venue were appreciated by the team, who put a great deal of consideration each year into the venue and format.

Still to come this year are several interesting events including a Coach tour to Cranbourne Botanic Gardens and the McClelland Gallery, details of them can be found on our website.

And we give a very special thank you to Allison and the events team for all the hard work they do.

Summary from Sheree Parker, GBG Supervisor:

Despite the difficulties experienced during the year by the Friends, the Gardens are looking magnificent, the Weeders might be hard to find, but you can certainly see where they've been, and the Staff have literally moved mountains of soil and rocks.

The Woody Meadow project is the newest and most exciting project. 1000 Australian Native plants, propagated in the GBG nursery were all chosen for their robustness and floral display. Some of our volunteers helped on a particularly wet Wednesday! You can find it running along outside the fence line from the Playspace carpark towards the old Directors cottage, the plants still very small, just waiting for Spring. The Florence E. Clarke Conservatory now houses a display of Cacti and Succulents, the previous residents are growing around the Heritage Ferny rock structure, and the species Pelargonium collection is now located within the South African garden beds on the Teahouse lawn.

Much work is being done mapping and labelling the plants and updating the database. The gardens currently hold 5,555 plant species across 1,287 genera and 206 plant families. Julie has this never-ending task. The nursery team have been working on creating a chemical free environment by using Bugs for Bugs. Lucy has been the lead for this and has dramatically cut chemical use, plus reduced the number of pests in the greenhouses. Supported by a Sustainability grant from the Waste department, the Gardens are collecting data on the use of the City's green waste compost in wicking beds for vegetable production, while also refining a potting mix blend for future use. Liam has been on the ABC talking about the program. Excess produce is delivered to Geelong Food Relief, with the Weeders helping pick the produce.



Gardens Staff and the Heritage Rose Growers Volunteers:
Liam, Anne, Jacob, John, Tim and Robyn

This is just a snapshot of the work the staff do, Sheree oversees all this and more, and the Gardens are a credit to her and her team, and we can't thank them enough.

And finally, I'd like to thank our amazing office staff, Tracey and Sally for all the work they do each year.

The committee, for helping me navigate this unfamiliar terrain, and lastly, Ali Wastie and James Stirton for believing the Friends have a rosy future here in the Geelong Botanic Gardens.

Thankyou

Jan Cheyne, Acting President 2024-25

FGBG TREASURER'S REPORT

The full audited annual reports are tabled at this meeting and are also available to members from the Friends' Office. There are reports for:

- Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens and
- Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens Gift Fund
 - a Public Ancillary Fund, with a Trust Deed, administered by the Committee of the Friends as Trustees.

Financial Management

- Davidsons continues to provide professional accounting advice and to lodge IAS and PAYG returns when necessary.
- Financial records are maintained by our administration staff
- Annual audit is completed by the Audit department of Davidsons.

Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens Gift Fund

- The Gift Fund is a separate business entity to the Friends and is reported separately.
- Many members have again taken the opportunity to make a 'tax deductible donation' to the Gift Fund – thank you for these contributions.
- Donations \$9,695.00 2024/25 cf \$4,763.84 2023/24
- Interest \$15,189.53 2024/25 cf \$19,188.55 2023/24
 - This difference due to timing of Interest being received
- Total Assets are \$422,663.54 June 30, 2025 cf \$414,364.87 June 30, 2024.

Contributions to Geelong Botanic Gardens and Eastern Park from the Gift Fund

- \$16,586 has been distributed from the Gift Fund to the Geelong Botanic Gardens during 2024/25:
 - \$8,250 Landscape Design Scope for Gate 3 Entrance
 - \$2,805 Plants from Wombat Gully Nursery
 - \$1,790 Support for the Education Program (teaching materials)
 - \$500 Australian Plants from Kuranga Native Nursery
 - \$3,241 Gardens: development and improvements
- This distribution ensures that we are compliant with the Statutory Requirement for distribution from a Public Ancillary Fund – 4% of Total Assets at end of previous Financial Year.

Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens

Contributions to Geelong Botanic Gardens and Eastern Park from Friends

- This includes some Garden Beds and the Volunteer Guides:
 - \$120 maintenance of the Perennial Border and Rose Garden
 - \$550 support for the Volunteer Guidesand
 - \$973 Wadawurrung Project, supported by grant funding.
- Volunteer Hours constitute a significant annual contribution by the Friends. This is not quantified or valued in exact dollar terms:
 - Volunteers, such as the Gardeners (Perennial Border, Weeders and Heritage Rose Bed), Librarians and Guides are directly involved in projects and programs within the Gardens
 - Volunteers involved with Committee, The Friends' Nursery, The Geelong School of Botanical Art and Events ensure that the Friends can exist as a viable organisation to support its members and also to support the City, the Gardens and the community.
 - Financial support for the activities of these volunteers is ongoing. Additional uniform items were purchased (\$2,350) to for volunteers to supplement those obtained last year with grant money.
- The Wadawurrung Project received a further component (\$13,860) of the grant.
- Grant also received (\$850) towards the Seniors' Week event

Annual Reports

- **Profit and Loss:**
 - Loss recorded at \$-32,225 cf \$-28,215 2023/2024
 - Significant elements:
 - \$17,406 Reduction in valuation of stock in Plant Nursery

- \$1,760 Increase in Accounting Fees – assistance with Government Audit of Covid Grant
- \$4,648 Decrease in Event Revenue
- \$5,983 Decrease in Seasonal Plant Sales
- Administration, Operating and Staff expenses have been well held

- **Balance Sheet:**

- Total Equity is \$318,361 cf \$350,586 last year
- The Plant Stock in the Friends' Nursery is valued on June 30 each year and listed as a Current Asset. The movement in the valuation of the Plant Stock (decrease \$17,406) is listed in the Profit and Loss. Plant propagation significantly decreased during the year.
- 'Provision for Annual Leave' and 'Provision for Long Service Leave' liabilities are recognized and allocated against the appropriate expense accounts of 'Annual Leave Provided' and 'Long Service Leave Provided'.
- The Term Deposits are evidence of a long history of careful financial management since the Friends began in 1985. These funds ensure a secure future for the Friends and indicate the ability of the Friends to continue support, regardless of the annual return of any particular year.

General Comments

- We will continue to strive to generate income and to contain our costs and investigate new strategies for managing both income and expenses, while also considering member benefits.
 - Membership subscriptions will not alter for next year.
 - Prices for the Plant Nursery, Botanic Art and Events, Tours and Workshops are reviewed annually and at planning stages - all have member discounts.
- Staff and volunteer expenses continue to be monitored closely, resources will be used carefully, and training opportunities will again be provided.
- Interest rates are low, and this will continue to have an effect on revenue.
- Sincere thanks to the members of Committee for continual support over the last year.
- Very sincere thanks to our two staff members in our office. Sally and Tracey manage all of the receipting of monies and ensure that our record-keeping of all financial transactions are completed accurately and promptly....as well as a million other 'non-financial' chores.
- I am confident that procedures are in place that ensure current and future financial management will be compliant and as straightforward as possible for future Committees.

Judy Fyfe, Treasurer 2024-25



After the AGM, the guest speaker John Bentley, President of Melton Botanic Garden presented his talk titled 'From Dreaming to Reality - Planning to Make it Happen'.

THE YEW TREE

The Yew (*Taxus baccata*) in the Gardens, the remaining one of a pair that flanked the central path, is a beautifully maintained specimen of this ancient genus. Yew is dioecious, meaning that male and female flowers grow on separate trees, visible in Spring. Male flowers are insignificant white-yellow globe-like structures. Female flowers are bud-like and scaly, and green when young but becoming brown and acorn-like with age.



The Yew tree, *taxus baccata* at Geelong Botanic Gardens.
Estimated at approximately 100 years old

Unlike many other conifers, the common yew does not actually bear its seeds in a cone. Instead, each seed is enclosed in a red, fleshy, berry-like structure known as an aril which is open at the tip.

Mature yew trees can grow to 20m. The bark is reddish-brown with purple tones, and peeling. The yew is probably the most long-lived tree in northern Europe. Some specimens still living in the countryside in England date back to the Bronze Age. Yews are some of the longest living trees in Northern Europe, some dated as old as 700 years.

The Yew's ability to grow its leaves along its stem and reshoot has made it a favourite plant for topiary and hedges. In England the most famous example of this is Levens Hall with some of the specimens being over 300 years old.



Yews at Levens Hall, Cumbria. Photo: Copyright Tim Hills 2017

Yews have a long and rich history of myth and practical use. The Druids held the Yew sacred in pre-Christian times. Drooping branches of old yew trees can root and form new trunks where they touch the ground and came to symbolise death and resurrection in Celtic culture. Association with rebirth and eternal life as evergreen trees contributed to their widespread planting in churchyards into the Christian era.



A Yew tunnel, the unique growing habit of these trees can form tunnels. Photo: www.ofthegoodtree.wordpress.com

But Robert Turner tells us in his 1664 work, *Botanologia*, that there was a more practical reason for yews among the graves. "The Yew is hot and dry, having such attraction that if planted near a place subject to poisonous vapors, its very branches will draw and imbibe them. For this reason, it was planted in churchyards, and commonly on the west side, which was at one time considered full of putrefaction and gross oleaginous gasses exhausted from the graves by the setting sun. These gasses, or will-o-the-wisps, divers have seen and believed them dead bodies walking abroad."



Yew Foliage. Photo: www.freetrees.ie

Yews have slow growing softwood which is very strong and is popular in gardens as it can withstand clipping and shaping. Yews are also famously associated with medieval battles such as Agincourt and Bannockburn where their wood was made into long bows. These bows were constructed with a combination of yew heartwood for compressive strength and the sapwood for elasticity.

The Yew has a rich and fascinating history and the specimen in the Gardens, as well as giving beauty and distinction, is a reminder of the important role trees have in enriching our lives.

Anne Bourke

EVENTS

As an independent organisation with no external financial support, the funds raised by the Friend's Annual Events Program is integral to our continuation and success. But importantly, the activities and events we provide are a means of reaching out to members and drawing in public participation.

Almost all events are open to the public and particularly since covid, participation in our events has notably increased. It is wonderful to welcome new members and the general public, encouraging us to provide a wide variety of

horticulture-related events which appeal to a broader audience.

Many thanks to all who have enjoyed the coach tours, workshops, garden walks, lunches, guest speaker evenings and supper and movie nights. Please enjoy this snapshot of the year's highlights, for members to look back on and to perhaps inspire joining us in 2026.

Denise Feldman and Allison Martland
Co-coordinators of the Friends Events Team



From Top Left to Right:

- Authentic French cuisine provided at supper and movie night in the week of Bastille Day.
- The Angair Heathland Wildflower Tour
- Arundel Garden Visit & Friends Plant Sale
- Arundel Bee Garden in full bloom
- 40th Anniversary Champagne Breakfast at the Gardens, current and former volunteers Barrie, Geoff, Peggy and Ian
- Winter Lunch Fundraiser Event at Mt Duneed Estate with Speaker Caroline Davies

FGBG GIFT FUND

The Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens Gift Fund is registered with the Australian Taxation Office to receive donations, which are tax-deductible. The Gift Fund currently has \$424,069.96. The Fund may only be used to support special projects and programs within Geelong Botanic Gardens. It may not be used to support the Friends or Friends activities.

There has been approximately \$16,000 distributed from the Gift Fund for projects and programs in the Geelong Botanic Gardens before 30 June 2025. This is to ensure that this Public Ancillary Fund meets all Statutory requirements for distribution this financial year. The projects and programs have been listed by Gardens management, approved by Committee and include the Education Program, several plantings and the development of the Gate Three entrance.

The Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens are very appreciative of your generous donations to the Gift Fund and would like to thank you.

To make a donation to the GIFT FUND online
go to the Friends' website www.friendsgbg.org.au

Term 4 Botanical Art Classes

MONDAY CLASS

LARGE SCALE

FLOWER STUDIES

Tutor:

Amanda Blake Sutterby

9.30 am to 4.00 pm

6, 13, 27 October

1, 8 December

FRIDAY CLASS

INTERMEDIATE

Tutor:

Craig Lidgerwood

9.30 am to 4.00 pm

10, 24 October

7, 28 November

12 December

FRIDAY CLASS

BEGINNERS

Tutor:

Craig Lidgerwood

17, 31 October

14 November

5 December

SATURDAY CLASSES

ADVANCED TO SEMI

PROFESSIONAL

Tutor:

John Pastoriza-Pinol

9.30 am to 4.00 pm

11, 25 October

8, 22 November

6 December

BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL:

Please contact
the Friends' Office
on 5229 0071

or

info@friendsgbg.org.au

BECOME A FGBG MEMBER

Members can meet Friends from the region with similar interests, to enjoy the many activities associated with the gardens.

- Learn more about the Geelong Botanic Gardens and Eastern Park
- Join social activities, guest speakers, film nights and tours to other gardens and places of interest
- Use the Botanic Gardens Reference Library and Friends' Lending Library
- Receive the *Members' Update* (monthly) and *Jubaea* Newsletter (3 per year) outlining recent news, what's happening in the Gardens and provides a program of events and activities for the coming month
- Receive discounts from selected local businesses (FGBG membership card required)
- Receive a *Member's Discount* on most Friends' events and activities including the Geelong School of Botanical Art program, merchandise and purchases from the Friends' Nursery (current membership card required).

BECOME A MEMBER ONLINE AT www.friendsgbg.org.au

or pop into the Friends' office at the rear of the gardens. 03 5229 0071 info@friendsgbg.org.au



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Vice Presidents: Anne Bourke and Carol Richardson

Treasurer: Judy Fyfe

Secretary: Luanne Thornton

Committee Members: Tilly Brunton, Chris Balaam, Pammi

Pryor, Lynne Clarke, Barrie Satchell

Patron: Stephen Ryan

Phone: 03 5229 0071

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DIARY DATES AT A GLANCE



JUBAEA SUBMISSIONS for the next Edition are due by 6 January 2025.
All articles including mid to high resolution photos (jpeg) can be sent to the FGBG Office

OCTOBER

MEMBERS EVENT: A SPRING AFTERNOON with FRIENDS

Tuesday 7 October, 12.30 pm - 4.00 pm

In this year of our 40th anniversary, members have generously offered to contribute to the Friends who have come to mean so much to them over the years. Friends' members and their companion are invited to a relaxing afternoon enjoying afternoon tea and a plant sale, at the Belmont home of Anthea and Chris. Two of Anthea's neighbours would love to share their much-loved garden collections with us as well. It will be a welcome opportunity to enjoy the Spring weather and purchase from a stall full of plants donated by members, with proceeds to the Friends. Lynne would also like to open her garden to those who wish to begin the afternoon with a stroll through her Highton Garden. It is a fascinating collection of edible produce and sustainable, mainly native plantings, which reflects much thought and love of the environment.

Free event for members, please RSVP to the Friends' office.

THEMED GUIDED WALK 'ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES & PLANT ADAPTION'

Sunday 19 October, 2.00 pm at the Front Gates

This themed walk will describe some of the impressive features that many plants have developed in order to cope in desert or arid growing regions, in low water environments and during drought conditions. We will explore some of the plants in the Geelong Botanic Gardens describing the strategies they employ.

CRANBOURNE COACH TOUR

Thursday 30 October, 7.30 am – 6.00 pm

All are invited to the Friends' Spring coach tour, visiting three gardens in the Langwarrin-Cranbourne areas. Following morning tea from the bus will be a guided tour of a section of Cranbourne Botanic Gardens, with opportunity to tour the Friends' Nursery operations and purchase plants from the Cranbourne Gift Shop. At nearby McClelland Sculpture Park, you may buy take-away lunch or bring a picnic lunch to enjoy amongst large sculptures and native gardens. You may choose to pre book a table and purchase lunch at the cafe. It is essential to pre- book a table a week beforehand by contacting ph. 9789 1671.

It's a short distance to Cruden Farm, where you may explore the world-famous gardens in their Spring glory and enjoy views of the ornamental lake. Afternoon tea will complete our day. Tickets include morning and afternoon tea, with bring/buy your own lunch. Comfy shoes a must.

\$110 members and \$120 non-members. For bookings and more information www.friendsgbg.org.au

NOVEMBER

FGBG 40th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION with MEMBERS

Friday 7 November, 9.30 am – 12 noon

This event is for current and past members of the Friends to celebrate 40 years of support for the Geelong Botanic Gardens. The first meeting to establish the group was held on 7 November 1985 and today we will celebrate that milestone with a morning tea in the Visitors Centre at the Gardens. A copy of the invitation appears in this issue of Jubaea, and invitations will be sent via email. If you know of past members of the Friends who do not have an email address, please encourage them to join us. Commemorative cups will be available for sale.

THEMED GUIDED WALK 'NATIVE PLANTS AND THEIR POLLINATORS'

Sunday 9 November, 2.00 pm at the Front Gates

The pollination of plants is integral to their reproduction and survival. Come and hear about the differing ways native plants are pollinated. They can provide habitat for local native fauna to encourage pollinators such as small birds, butterflies, native bees, lizards, frogs and bats.

DECEMBER

FREE DISCOVERY WALKS

Every Wednesday at 11.00 am and Sunday at 2.00 pm

Meet your guide at the front steps of the gardens.

DISCOVERY TABLE in the Gardens

Third Sunday of Every Month, 1.00 – 3.00 pm

Meet the Friends' Guides for interesting information and direction to key plants and seasonal change.

WEEKLY PLANT SALE

Every Wednesday at the Friends' nursery at the rear of the Gardens 9.30 am to 12.30 pm.

DURING THE HOLIDAYS

- **No Guided Walk on Wednesday 24 December, Sunday 28 December and Wednesday 31 December**
- **For Plant Nursery dates, check the Friends' website in December.**
- **The Office will be closed from Monday 22 December.**

JANUARY 2025

- **The Office will re-open on Monday 5 January at 10.00 am.**