

# Jubaea

Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens Inc. Newsletter

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FRIENDS OF  
GEELONG  
BOTANIC  
GARDENS



Pacific Rim Garden January 2024

## GEELONG BOTANIC GARDENS 1984-2024

It would have been in the early 1980s when I really began to have some real connection with the staff at the Geelong Botanic Garden (GBG). By then my growing interest in gymnosperms had led me to the GBG to look at the two magnificent conifer trees, the Ginkgo, with its odd *chi chi* stalactitic-growths and on the lawn near the Trail Fountain the wonderful Chilean Plum Yew, *Prumnopitys andina* (although in those days the latter was still *Podocarpus andinus*). The *Prumnopitys* hails from Chile and is still quite a rare tree in Australia, and the Geelong example is almost certainly the largest to be encountered here. I could only gaze in awe at those two specimen trees, heritage registered by the National Trust, and wonder if I could ever grow anything so dramatic.

In early 1986 we first began to strike up a contact with Ian Rogers, then the Director living in that perfectly placed residence near the old front gate. I had organised a major plant hunting expedition to New Caledonia in 1987 and soon after that I was invited to give a slide presentation on our botanical travels to the Friend's Group. It was well received and I was given a copy of George Jones' book *Growing Together* as a thank-you gift. Jayne Salmon was President of the Friends at that time, and she is still my friend. My connection with Jayne has really paid off too, for both the GBG and for my own garden over the past 30 years. Included in the large collections that we brought back from New Caledonia were seeds of many species of the island's *Araucarias* and *Agathis* and the germination of these went extremely well.

There were a lot of spare plants that needed homes. As recorded by Ian Rogers in his great history of the GBG, in mid-May 1990, it was agreed between myself and Dr. Brian Morley, the Director of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens, that the GBG should have a number of different species including *Araucaria rulei*, *A. muelleri* and *A. montana*. Over the next year or so, we also provided other plant species as our own collections became more advanced. A few of these original *Araucaria* specimens were planted out in an open area where the Pacific Rim Garden is now placed, but most were held in pots until the later development of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Garden.

I should put on record a family connection with the GBG. Our youngest son Duncan did a spell there as a work experience student in 1988. He really enjoyed it, particularly being *paid* to climb trees being pruned, and would have been looked after by staff such as Jeff Hecker and Vince di Lorenzo.

My plant records note that the GBG gave me a potted plant that had been propagated from their *Prumnopitys andina* in about 1988, which I am delighted to say is growing very well here at Lavers Hill and is now some seven metres in height.

In October 2000, John Arnott was appointed Director with a brief to supervise the development of the magnificent 21<sup>st</sup> century garden. John first visited us at Lavers Hill in March 2001 and began to visit on a regular basis in order to take cutting material that we donated. Over the next few years, he brought a number of his garden staff with him including Kellee Reissinger in mid-2003 and Julie Duffield in October 2004. In an early planting the rare *Araucaria humboldtenis* specimen that Julie and I donated, was dug up from our own garden and finally planted out in late 2002 near the new front gate but was stolen only about a week or so later!

In 2005 it became clear to John that the 'harvesting' of plants from our Lavers Hill garden was becoming rather a one-sided affair. We were not receiving too much back in exchange. Furthermore, it was apparent that with losses in propagating, thefts etc, GBG would want more. So, John went to the Friends' group and came up with the proposal that led to a *Memorandum of Understanding*. For a three year period, the GBG could access *all* of our plant holdings, with sole rights for obtaining any material that they required, in return for a fixed financial consideration from the Friends funding sources. Among the visitors we received from the GBG in the following month was a certain young apprentice, Ashley Filipovski.

The memorandum led to extensive materials being taken from our holdings and I was delighted to finally see those *Araucaria* and other trees from our travels going into the ground and it is fantastic to see them settled in and growing so well!

Julie and I were sad to learn that John was moving on – but of course it was to a great new job for him. Annette Zealley took over in 2007 and after a period of settling in, was soon visiting us with Ian Rogers, Julie Duffield and Ashley there to make the introductions.

We were very pleased that Annette intended to continue the close cooperation to benefit the GBG plant collections.

In 2009 a detailed spreadsheet summary by Annette of the plant collections in the GBG nursery, provided a good look at the successes or otherwise, of what had been potted. We were then able to plan what would be target species to be propagated. Also, the spreadsheet was expanded to include individual provenance details that could then be readily accessed. By 2011 it was obvious that too many plants had thrived. It was an optimum time to wind down our joint project for a while. It was a sad fact that large potted *Araucaria* specimens, for example, languished in the GBG Nursery. Some of these trees, impossible to replace, were eventually planted out in Eastern Park as the Pinetum was re-established, but the following season was dry, making their survival rather difficult.



Alistair Watt and the Friends

For the next few years, we kept contact with the GBG and continued to donate rare plants as they became available. The prospect of a Pacific Rim garden had been raised from time to time but progress was not rapid. Julie and I were rather disappointed that the plaque placed by John Arnott in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Garden in recognition of our years of contribution was allowed to decompose into illegibility. We have since offered to pay for its replacement and it would be nice to see this happen soon.

By 2020, the condition of the plant collections so laboriously worked on for nearly 20 years, was in limbo and it was clearly touch and go whether very rare potted specimens, such as *Dacrydium nausoriensis* and *Agathis montana* would survive. I heard talk from the staff that most of the collection could very well be destroyed to clear out the nursery. Luckily, I was able to contact Jayne Salmon, well knowing what it had cost to put the collection together and she immediately agreed that this could not be allowed to happen. This coincided with the return of Ashley Filipovski to the GBG; someone who was also aware of what could be lost, from his own work ten years or so earlier.

At last things began to move more positively. Ashley quickly became involved in protecting the collection as a whole, while planning for the establishment of the Pacific Rim Garden began. We were delighted and honoured to work with Ashley, and his newly inspired staff including Lucy Griffiths, as our plant collections finally emerged from nursery pots and went into the ground. Ashley was kind enough to invite Julie and me to the GBG to plant the special *Dacrydium nausoriensis* tree, that I had chosen. This was in the middle of the Covid shut downs so there was only the two of us plus Ashley and Lucy for the occasion. There was a very quick mask removal for photos to mark the occasion! We have been able to continue to add new and rare species to the Geelong Gardens over the last couple of years. It has been amazing to witness what can be done in a botanic garden in a short time. Having had a close working relationship with Mt. Tomah in the past, I can see that marvellous, but somewhat moribund garden, also having a revival.



Preparing the ground in 2020 for the Pacific Rim Garden



Julie and Alistair at the GBG planting the special *Dacrydium nausoriensis* tree



Pacific Rim Garden January 2024

With Kellee Reissinger now in charge (another of our GBG apprentice visitors), we continue to keep involved and donate rare plants to the GBG, especially as they may well be the future back-up for any losses that we ourselves may experience. Only recently we were able to arrange the supply of some very rare conifer species from the Hobart Botanic Gardens. They included plants that I would have sent to the University of Tasmania back in 1994. Tomah in the past, I can see that marvellous, but somewhat moribund garden, also having a revival.

Julie and I have had a close relationship with the GBG for nearly enough 40 years, and it has given us much delight. During that time, we have seen garden staff, such as Jeff Hecker contribute their part and move on, we are now working with our forth Director and have had close contact with many of the 'Friends' such as Jayne Salmon and Allison Martland. Indeed, we have hosted many GBG Friends on visits to our own garden here at Lavers Hill. We hope that this relationship will continue for many years to come. After all a garden is never finished!

*Alistair Watt*



## NEW FGBG MEMBERS WELCOME



Members have the opportunity to meet Friends with similar interests from the region and to enjoy the many activities associated with the gardens. Contact the office to join or get more information, or browse the Friends' website

[www.friendsgbg.org.au](http://www.friendsgbg.org.au)

Members can also become involved with the Friends and the Gardens through volunteering in different groups. Obtain a Volunteer Application Form and volunteering information from the Friends' office. A Volunteer Induction and Training is provided before members start volunteering with the Friends.

# FROM THE PRESIDENT

Last year the Friends' Guides provided free guided tours on Wednesdays and Sundays, our usual practice. In addition, there were many group bookings for Guided Tours outside these times. Many of those who booked group tours also requested a morning tea, a lunch, an afternoon tea or a dinner. Historically, the addition of food has not been something the Friends have done but Covid 19 has changed the demographic and increased the number of groups seeking to have catered guided tours. For the Friends, administration costs were rising and in 2022 we made a small financial loss. Hence, a strategy was put in place to address this by providing catering for not-for-profit organisations, preferably horticulture based, to enhance their Geelong Botanic Garden experience.

Groups catered for last year included Botanic Gardens of Australia and New Zealand (BGANZ), the International Plant Propagation Society, the Alexandra Club, the Gateways Auxiliary, the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne Guides, and the Friends of the Cranbourne Botanic Gardens. In addition, the catering team also provided for in-house Friends' activities such as the Theatre Night, afternoon tea for *Through the Garden Gates* tour, an Open Gardens Victoria event at Jan Juc, high teas for new members, the Volunteers' Lunch, bus trips, and our special Rose Lovers' Day. Numbers catered for at these events have been between 30 and 110.

Our Seniors' week activity provided 60 seniors from the Geelong community with a complementary guided tour of Geelong Botanic Gardens and a morning tea. We were successful in obtaining a grant from the City of Greater Geelong to fund an externally catered morning tea for this event served by Friends' volunteers. This event was so successful that in February 2024 two similar events will be held. Interested seniors can book for tours on either the 22nd or 29th February at 9.30 or at 11.30 followed by morning tea book on the Friends website.

Our catering team has benefitted greatly with the addition of some professional cooks as well as our much appreciated and experienced home cooks. Two of our members have completed the Safe Food Handling course at the Gordon TAFE and we now hold a Food Trader Licence Level 3 to enable us to serve food as specified under this licence anywhere in Victoria. Each event requires the assistance of volunteers. The catering team consists of 7 people but for some events many more volunteers are required. For example, I would estimate that 15 volunteers assisted with catering for 85 members of the International Plant Propagation Society on one evening. We could not undertake large catering events such as this without these willing helpers.

Catering is more complex than it was a decade ago. When catering is booked, we now need information as to whether any guests are celiac, vegetarian, dairy free, vegan, lactose free, Kosher etc. In addition, we need to know the type of food

required. We offer boxed lunches, in addition to buffet morning teas, lunches, afternoon teas and dinners. We are only entitled to serve certain food classes under specific conditions outlined in the Food Trader Licence. The timing of the food to be served is estimated in consultation with the Guides tour times. Guides are invited to join the group for refreshments.

Since its inception, the Friends of the Botanic Gardens have been able to attract and sustain a strong member base. I think this is an indication that people feel welcome and that those who volunteer feel their contribution is valued by the wider community. Another indicator of how the community feels is that we have a waiting list of community members who would like to volunteer.

The outcome of last year's catering and guided tours included comments about how welcome visitors felt, how great the food was, and how professionally the food was presented. At one event 4 of our guests enjoyed their tour so much they offered to train as Guides. Other comments were about the professionalism of the Guides.

Historically the public face of the Friends has always been the Friends' Guides who regularly welcome visitors to the Geelong Botanic Gardens. For example, last year, Guides assisted at welcome tables on Botanic Gardens Day as well as performing their usual roles guiding regular and booked tours and manning the monthly Discovery Table. However, it also needs to be acknowledged that all volunteers whether Weeders, Perennial Border Gardeners, Heritage Rose Growers, Library staff or the Nursery Growers Team interact with the public.

Thank you to all of you who regularly play a role at the Geelong Botanic Gardens as a representative of the Friends. The Caterers are now added to this list. From my experience all our volunteers go out of their way to answer questions, provide information and assist where required. Equally the catering team are committed to providing gastronomically pleasing fare.

While the Tea House was closed, and garden lovers were visiting our wonderful gardens to explore on a day out we were able to provide a catering service. Now that the Tea House is again open, we continue to offer a service that in 2024 is evolving to work with and complement the Tea House, (now named *Where You Meet Café*). By catering for larger groups that the Tea House may be unable to accommodate.

Welcoming the community to the Gardens to enjoy the experience is what the Friends have always done well and look forward to doing for a long time to come.

*Denise Feldman, FGBG President*

# ROSE LOVER'S DAY

It was a real privilege to celebrate the Geelong Botanic Rose Garden and all things Heritage Rose related at the Friends' Rose Lover's Day in early November. The GBG roses must have known they would be having a lot of admiring visitors, as they were in glorious condition.

The lineup of presenters was remarkable – all very knowledgeable and passionate about the *Rosa* genus, as were the other participants attending the event! Jane Edmanson, of Gardening Australia fame, opened the afternoon with many personal anecdotes about her connections to roses in childhood and throughout her career. Jane was freely available throughout the afternoon for chats and noted how well organised the event was and how much she enjoyed it. I'm a bit disappointed I didn't get a selfie photo with her!

Some of us were even provided with cuttings from the collections as a result of John's practical demonstrations.

Our own wonderful FGBG volunteers Rosslyn Jablonsky and Margaret Ward discussed the history and importance of the Heritage Rose collection at the Geelong Botanic Gardens. They spoke of the original design and development of the rose collection showcasing the development of roses, and explained how they are currently cared for and managed.

Thank you to the Event and Catering team for treating us to a truly delightful rose-themed afternoon tea in the pavilion where we could enjoy the pleasant weather. I had to try one of everything (sometimes more than one). Needless to say, dinner was not required that night!



Jane Edmanson, of Gardening Australia fame



Peter Ades, ex Heritage Roses in Australia President

Peter Ades, ex Heritage Roses in Australia President, gave an interesting summary of rose classification development over the centuries. Whilst he claimed not to be a rose expert, his knowledge and passion for his own collection of over 300 types, including very rare species, left me believing otherwise. He and Rosarian, John Nieuwesteeg, displayed their close working relationship and friendship as they shared banter throughout the presentations. This continued amongst the rose garden beds when we were free to ask any questions of John.



A delightful rose-themed afternoon tea in the Visitor Facility



A delightful rose-themed afternoon tea in the pavilion

To top it all off, a fantastic Rose Lover's Guide and a 2024 calendar, both inspired by the Heritage Rose Collection at the Geelong Botanic Gardens were launched. They are both wonderful resources that consolidate the information shared in the afternoon, and more, recall the beauty of the heritage roses with their beautiful illustrations. I won't be forgetting this afternoon nor the glorious smell of the roses for a long time.

Thank you to all involved in making this day happen, especially Rosslyn Jablonsky.

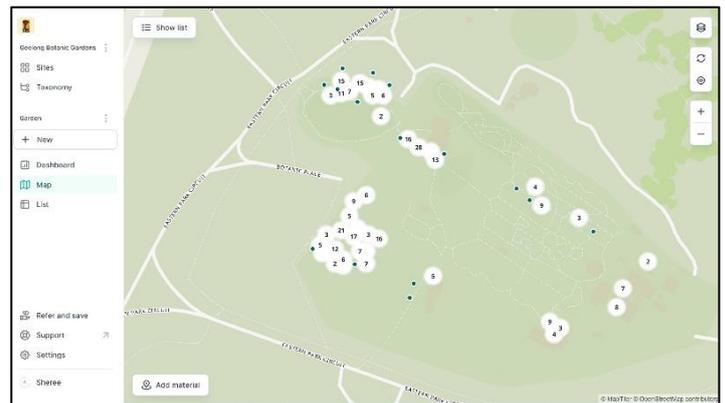
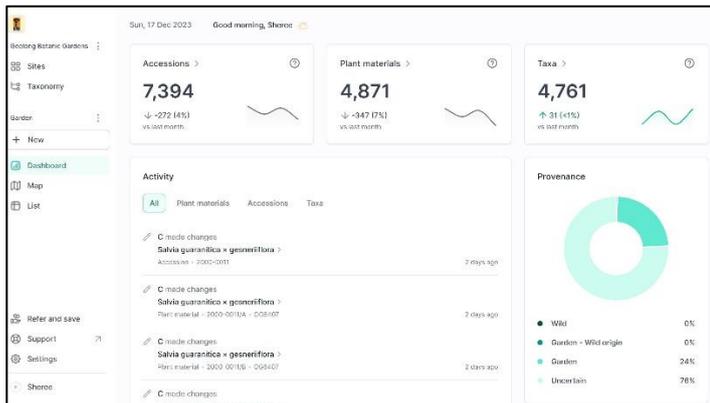
*Rosalyn Carr Gellie*

# BOTANIC COLLECTIONS AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT

## How I ended up as Convenor of Botanic Collections and Records Management (BCARM)!

A few years ago, the GBG team was discussing the database and the options we might have to update it to align with other Botanic Gardens and Institutions. We wanted something easier to use and that could be taken out in the field to record our data. This led to a few requests being sent to Botanic Gardens to see their databases. During this process Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand (BGANZ) Vic and BCARM approached GBG to see if it was interested in coming on board to help with a new database provider tender. I put my hand up for this and that started my involvement with BCARM.

After a successful tender, Hortis was appointed, and we have been using the new database for about 1 ½ years working on mapping our accessions throughout the garden.



A snapshot of the Hortis dashboard and Geelong's accessions

I really enjoyed collaborating with this group and joined the committee. When the previous convenor stepped down, I offered to take the role. It's been a great journey so far learning, networking and developing skills. I usually try to avoid such as public speaking, so it has been a great way to develop professionally.

The aims of BCARM are :

- fostering collaboration and advocating best practices in collections and associated records management (collections management) across the BGANZ membership
- identifying professional development needs and sharing expertise to enhance collections management capability.
- scanning the environment for current and emerging issues and trends that may influence or impact on collections management.
- providing harmonised responses and recommendations to generic collection issues across the BGANZ membership.
- reporting and providing recommendations to BGANZ Council on significant matters.

BCARM is a specialised group within BGANZ focusing on collections and records management within Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand. We look at strategies and security issues and solutions for the living collections held within the gardens. We investigate a range of topics including pests and diseases and in April planned a forum to highlight this topic to help guide better collections management in this space. Our botanic gardens range from big state-run institutions, local

government gardens and volunteer groups, so our skills are varied.

The committee is made up of members from Australia and New Zealand : Sheree Parker (Geelong Botanic Gardens), John Sandham (Botanic Gardens of South Australia), Donna Thomas (Ballarat Botanical Gardens), Peter Symes (Cooktown Botanic Gardens), John Arnott (Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria), Tex Moon (Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden), Wolfgang Bopp (Christchurch Botanic Gardens) and Amanda Shade (Kings Park and Botanic Garden).

We organise bi-monthly BCARM forums / workshops on relevant topics which are all living collections related. In 2023 we have held 5 forums with 19 presenters from 9 different gardens with 6 other related institutions represented and approximately 260 participants listening in.

In February we hosted Kellee Reissinger, Geelong Botanic Gardens and Peter Symes, Cooktown Botanic Gardens who showcased their collections.





All images sourced from: [https://youtu.be/FojprqZn\\_DY?si=SY3zEV7GiemExyxA](https://youtu.be/FojprqZn_DY?si=SY3zEV7GiemExyxA)

In March we collaborated with ANPC to host a Webinar entitled *Collective action provides hope for future recovery from myrtle rust*, with Bob Makinson, Amelia Martyn Yenson and Bradley Desmond.

In May on Botanic Gardens Day a series of speakers presented on the topic, *It's all about plants! Botanic Gardens and their collections*. This was followed by the introduction of the soon to be released Living Collection Toolkit. The BGANZ Collections Toolkit has been a major project for the Group this year. The committee met monthly to discuss ways in which the Living

Collection management plans could be used as an online tool giving both smaller regional gardens and larger gardens an opportunity to develop and assess their living collections. Funding was provided through BGANZ Vic who are leading the project.

Next year we hope to deliver more forums and workshops for the BCARM community. It's been fun to help with these projects and workshops. I have had wonderful support and encouragement from the GBG team.

*Sheree Parker, Supervisor Geelong Botanic Gardens*

## GUIDE TRAINING 2024

2024 is looking very promising with around 10 people commencing the guide training course from February to April 2024. The course offers 6 sessions of instruction, with plenty of opportunities to observe experienced guides and practise guiding skills.

Guides will learn about the Garden's history as well as its plant collections, its heritage trees, the Eastern Park area, the Wadawurrung people, Gondwana, the 21st Century Garden and basic botany.

We are always in need of new guides to take on this role and host our many visitors who either come as individuals or in large groups. Now that the Tea House has reopened, visits to the Gardens are expected to increase dramatically, so there will be even more demand for guides.

Please contact the office if you are interested in joining the group for guide training.

*Gwen Anderson, Guides Coordinator*



### 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 \$ 413,660.69

This Fund may only be used to support special projects and programs within, and initiated by, Geelong Botanic Gardens. It may not be used to support the Friends or Friends activities.

**To make a donation to the GIFT FUND online**  
go to the Friends' website [www.friendsgbg.org.au](http://www.friendsgbg.org.au)  
or at the Friends' Office ph. 5222 6053

# 2023 INSPIRED BY NATURE 8 EXHIBITION

An extraordinary 571-plus visitors came to view the *Inspired by Nature 8* Exhibition, (that's 95.166 approx. people each week). Our visitors were from as far as Wales, France and Vietnam plus interstate travellers from Perth, Queensland and NSW, as well as Victorian travellers from far and wide; Mildura, Woodside, St Arnaud, Bendigo and Ballarat to name a few and not forgetting the many, many locals!

Visitors' comments about the artworks and exhibition were overwhelmingly positive, encouraging and humbling – our artists should indeed be very proud of their accomplishments! In this economic climate it was also good to see artworks sold.

People's Choice award and Geelong Arts Supply donated the prize voucher for the Encouragement Award for an Emerging Artist.

We congratulate: Niki Coates for Best Painting *Seed and Pod Study*, and Belinda Taylor for Emerging artist award *Bellarine Yellow Gum*.

Linda Fiddes for the People's Choice Award. We thank Helena Buxton and Jill Shalless for their meticulous and considered judging.



Niki Coates, Padriac Fisher, Jill Shalless and Helena Buxton



Niki Coates – Best Painting 'Seed and Pod Study'



Padriac Fisher, Helena Buxton and Belinda Taylor



Belinda Taylor - Emerging artist award 'Bellarine Yellow Gum'

We were very appreciative of the generous support from a number of local businesses. Deakin University kindly hosted the exhibition, providing the gallery and decal for our introductory panel and windows, free of charge, as well as hosting our opening. Scotchmans Hill provided the wine at cost price for the opening, Cavalier donated the prize voucher for the Best Painting category, the Frame Factory donated the prize voucher for the

Our exhibition opening featured two special guests, Christine Couzens MP graciously opened the exhibition, and, Padriac Fisher, Director of the Wool Museum, spoke eloquently and knowledgeably about such things as the history of botanical illustration, art and the importance of having something creative to offer.

As in previous years our daily rostered artists warmly greeted the visitors, offered their knowledge on Botanical Art and promoted the school and the Friends. As in previous exhibitions, our daily roster at times was difficult to fill, with many days a single person managed the visitors and at times, sales on their own. I am very grateful to the artists who volunteered their time and to those who covered for others who were unable to attend due to sudden illness. Our roster system is one area that will need reviewing to overcome scheduling problems.



Large Scale Flower Artworks



Large Scale Flower Artworks



View from outside – Large Scale Flower Artworks



Inside the main Gallery at the Opening Night viewing



Christine Couzens MP, Carol Richardson and Barry Fagg

For the first time, we were able to display our large, scaled artworks collectively. These took pride of place in the windows along Cunningham St/Western Beach Rd and attracted foot traffic especially, during the first 2-3 weeks. ‘Stunning’ was the most common description by artists and visitors alike. Although it was disappointing that the public was unable to view these artworks within the Project Space, we respected the need for the restrictions placed by Deakin University. We’re very grateful for the opportunity to showcase our wonderful artworks.

I extend a big thank you to all the workers who put in many selfless hours behind the scenes!

Congratulations to all our artists for participating and providing such a high standard of artwork. Our visitors were gobsmacked at the fine detail, the outstanding compositions and the subjects that danced across the surface in movement and colour! ‘Such a wonderful exhibition – when is the next one’, was asked time and time again.

*Pammi Pryor, Co-ordinator, Geelong School of Botanical Art*

# PLANT IN FOCUS - *Metrosideros*

## Description

*Metrosideros* is a hardy, dense, evergreen plant that can be a shrub, tree or vine. It has soft, velvety silver-green leaves with new growth occurring most of the year. In Spring and Summer there are masses of small, fluffy, orange, red or yellow flowers each consisting of a mass of stamens which attract birds and butterflies.

*Metrosideros* is a versatile plant, ideal for full sun or part shade in gardens exposed to coastal conditions. It makes an ideal refuge for native birds who love the blossom's nectar. It is perfect for hedging, windbreaks, privacy screens or specimen planting. It has an open, tidy habit of growth.

## Nomenclature

*Metrosideros* (Myrtaceae family) is a genus with a confused naming and ancestry. There are 68 accepted species of *Metrosideros* shown in the World Flora Plant List. This includes trees, shrubs and vines found mostly in the Pacific region. Many nurseries and websites use the incorrect names when labelling *Metrosideros* and in particular *M. Thomasii*, which is often given the common name of New Zealand Christmas Bush.

All the *Metrosideros* of New Zealand are referred to as *Rata* except for *M. excelsa* which has two common names, *Pohutukawa* and New Zealand Christmas Bush.

## Cultural Significance

The Maori noun, *rata* means doctor. The Maori personal pronoun *Pohutukawa* refers to one of the stars in the Te Katrui o Matariki, the Pleiades star cluster. Matariki is a female star that connects these stars to the dead. Matariki is the brightest star in the centre of the Pleiades star cluster. Matariki married Rehua (Antares) and is the mother of the other eight stars of the Pleiades known to Maori.

## Distribution

*Metrosideros* occurs naturally over the whole of New Zealand except for above the tree line. Outside of the New Zealand region the species and cultivars of *Metrosideros* are grown in Australia, Hawaii, Spain, mild regions of England, Ireland and the USA. Surprisingly, considering the *Metrosideros* species' unique and highly effective seed dispersal biology, this plant is not found growing naturally in Australia, although it thrives in Australian coastal areas and inland frost-free locations.

## Medicinal:

The bark is used topically in traditional Maori herbal medicine for wounds and abrasions. The bark contains Ellagic acid, known for its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Deeply moisturising and soothing, the bark is also used in many modern pharmaceuticals.

## Wood

Early Europeans in New Zealand used the wood for curved boat frames and plant numbers were greatly reduced in areas adjacent to boat building yards.

## Propagation

The best way to propagate *Metrosideros* is from a cutting. Use tip or stem cuttings that are about 1/4 inch in diameter and 4-6 inches long. Tip cuttings should be taken from vigorous, recently matured growth. Propagation cuttings will generally take 3-4 weeks to root. Propagation may be attempted in water or soil. Plants generally develop stronger roots in soil than in water. If attempting propagation in water be sure to add fresh water as needed until the cuttings are fully rooted. When the roots are 1-2 inches long or longer, the plant is ready to be potted - consider using metric lengths.

## Landscape and Garden Use

There are several *Metrosideros* plants in the Pacific Rim Garden: *M. collina* cv *Thomasii* is at the rear of the garden on the path leading to the Peppercorn tree plantings and currently labelled *M. Thomasii*; *Mollina* is in the 21st Century Garden on the left in the island floral garden; *M. excelsa* (*Pohutukawa*) is in the 19th Century Garden in the top bed above the Forgotten Garden near the path leading to the toilets.

## Research

Ancestors of *Metrosideros* may have originated in Australia. Fossil research describes two previously unknown species of *Metrosideras* found there. The fossils, found near St Helen's on the east coast of Tasmania, come from roughly the middle of the Cenozoic era of about 25 million years ago.

## References

Wikipedia. Myall Tarran, PhD candidate, University of Adelaide School of Biological Sciences.

Maryla Lawler, *FGBG Volunteer Guide*



Left: *Metrosideros excelsa* NZ Christmas Bush or *Pohutukawa*, GBG



Right: *Metrosideros excelsa* 'Aurea' GBG. Photos Maryla Lawler

# FGBG EVENTS FOR 2024

The role of a Botanic Gardens Friends' Group is to support botanic gardens by promoting interest in and educating people about horticulture. The Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens keep that purpose at the forefront when planning events and activities for our members and for the public.

The 2024 Friends Events Calendar promises to be one of our best, with several coach tours and self-drive tours catering for a wide range of horticultural interests and budgets. We have also included our most requested events, such as a horticulture-inspired movie and supper, a seasonal cooking demonstration by Gwen Anderson, and a guest speaker evening for those interested in Geelong's early European agriculture. And of course, our most popular events, the Winter Lunch and the *Through the Garden Gates* tour are on the program.

Keeping coach tours diverse and affordable is always a major consideration and the Friends' Events Team enjoys offering catering whenever we can to give good value and add enjoyment. We'd like to encourage everyone to join us on these tours, which have been selected to offer interest and a convivial day out with like-minded people.

The first tour, on **Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March**, is to the **Alister Clark Memorial Rose Garden** at Bulla. This garden highlights the work of Australia's most prolific rose breeder, the late Alister Clark. It is maintained by community volunteers and the Hume City Council. From there we will travel on to **Villa Verde** at Greenvale, a stunning 3-acre ornamental garden, which includes a Japanese garden, a deciduous forest, roses and bulbs, lakes, a waterfall, a vegetable garden and an orchard. Then enjoy a BYO lunch at **Poynton's Nursery** which overlooks the Maribyrnong River. This highly acclaimed nursery has operated for several generations and has a magnificent range of plants, a gift shop and a café. On the way back to Geelong we will stop at **Newport Lakes Park**, a bushland oasis in the heart of suburban Newport for afternoon tea. Created from a former bluestone quarry and rubbish tip site, it has been extensively revegetated using indigenous flora and is a sanctuary for wildlife. We will make time for a short bushland walk or visit the onsite Newport Lakes Nursery, which specialises in indigenous flora of the volcanic western plains.

Our second coach tour is on **Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> May**. The trip begins with morning tea, in the glorious Otways, followed by a fascinating 2-hour fungi-foraging guided walk and talk at Forrest, where we will learn to identify the amazing fungi in the forest. Our appetites will be ready for lunch in Forrest at the Daar Teta guesthouse, where we will experience a delicious 2 course authentic Palestinian menu. Host Ellam's love shows in everything here from the cooking to the garden and décor. We will stop at Colac Botanic Gardens on the way home to enjoy afternoon tea in the autumnal splendour of this beautiful heritage garden. It promises to be an unusual and interesting day. All-inclusive ticket, including lunch.

Many members have requested a visit to Melton Botanic Gardens. On **Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September** car-pool with friends to join us for morning tea at the garden, before being hosted by the Melton BG Friends for a tour of this fabulous dry-climate garden. It covers an extensive area and features a vast array of plants from Australia, South Africa and other regions with arid climates and fascinating plants. The Melton Friends will provide lunch and it will be a day not to be missed.

Our coach tour to the Dandenong Ranges on **Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> October** offers a completely different experience. After morning tea in the stunning reconstructed Australian garden that won the gold medal at Chelsea Flower Show you will be delighted by the **National Rhododendron Garden/Dandenong Ranges Botanic Gardens** at Olinda. A visit and BYO lunch at highly acclaimed **Cloudehill** gardens and nursery will be followed by a chance to explore the beautiful **Kawarra Australian Botanic Garden** at Kalorama. Morning and afternoon tea are included and this promises to be a stunning day.

Many thanks to those who regularly join us. We look forward to welcoming new members, their friends and interested members of the public, at some of these wonderful events that are sure to uplift and inspire everyone who participates. Bookings on the [Friends Website](#) or Office 52226053.

*Allison Martland, Events Coordinator*



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Treasurer: Judy Fyfe

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# DIARY DATES AT A GLANCE

JUBAEA SUBMISSIONS for the next Edition are due by 1 May 2024.  
All articles including high resolution photos (jpeg) can be sent to the FGBG Office



## FEBRUARY

### THEMED GUIDED WALK 'PACIFIC RIM GARDEN'

**Sunday 11 February, 2.00 pm at the Front Gates**

Discover some of the amazing trees that grow around our Pacific Rim. Many of these are rare and threatened in their native habitat. This important collection is displayed in the attractive southern extension to the Geelong Botanic Gardens. Gold coin donation.

### FREE GUIDED WALK & MORNING TEA FOR SENIORS

**Thursday 22 & 29 February** - Bookings essential.

9.30 am: Guided Walk and 10.30 am: Morning Tea

Free event, including morning tea. Please contact the Friends' Office on 5222 6053 or book online [here www.friendsgbg.org.au](http://www.friendsgbg.org.au)  
Proudly funded by The City of Greater Geelong, Positive Aging Grant.

## MARCH

### THEMED GUIDED WALK 'PERENNIAL BORDER AND SILVER BORDER'

**Sunday 10 March, 2.00 pm at the Front Gates**

Geelong Botanic Gardens has an impressive display of perennial plants and silver plants in its borders. Come and learn how these plants not only conserve water but also offer a colourful addition to our gardens. Gold coin donation appreciated.

### NEW MEMBERS HIGH TEA & GUIDED WALK

**Monday 18 March, 1.30 pm**

New members will be invited to meet the Friends, with a guided walk through the Gardens, followed by a sumptuous afternoon tea.

### GREENVALE COACH TOUR

**Tuesday 19 March, 8.00am to 4.45 pm**

Join the Friends to experience the Alister Clark Memorial Rose Garden at Bulla, a tour of stunning Villa Verde Garden at Greendale and beautiful Poyntons Nursery at Aberfeldie. Entry fees, morning and afternoon teas included. Purchase own lunch at Poyntons Nursery café. Afternoon Tea at Newport Lakes Park. Bookings by 13 March. \$85 members and \$95 non-members. Book online [here www.friendsgbg.org.au](http://www.friendsgbg.org.au) or through the Friends' office on 5222 6053.

## APRIL

### THEMED GUIDED WALK 'GEELONG'S REMARKABLE GARDEN'

**Sunday 21 April, 2.00 pm at the Front Gates**

Geelong Botanic Gardens, established in 1851, is the fourth oldest botanic garden in Australia. The first curators were avid plant collectors and many of the splendid trees they planted now have heritage status. Several historic structures have also found a home here, including some 'curiosities'. Gold coin donation.

### GUEST SPEAKER GAIL THOMAS 'GEELONG'S PIONEERING VIGNERONS AND ORCHARDISTS'

**Monday 15 April 5.30 pm to 7.30 pm – with supper.**

Come and join the Friends for a fascinating talk by member and journalist Gail Thomas, as she pays tribute to Geelong's Pioneering Vignerons, many of them also being early orchardists. \$20 members \$30 non-members. Bookings by 12 April. Book online [here www.friendsgbg.org.au](http://www.friendsgbg.org.au) or through the Friends' office

## MAY

### THEMED GUIDED WALK 'OUR PLANT INHERITANCE FROM GONDWANA'

**Sunday 12 May, 2.00 pm at the Front Gates**

Once upon a time Australia was joined to Africa, India, New Zealand and South America around the hub of Antarctica in a single continent called Gondwana. These countries have a common plant ancestry from that time, different from the plant ancestry of the northern hemisphere. You'll be introduced to Australian plants that have a Gondwana heritage along with their cousins from other Gondwana breakaways. Gold coin donation appreciated.

### VOLUNTEER WEEK LUNCH

**Wednesday 8 May, 12.30 to 3.00 pm**

Friends' volunteers are invited to join us for a delicious Soup Lunch to celebrate Volunteers Week. Free event for volunteers only. Lunch catered by the Friends.

### OTWAYS COACH TOUR

**Thursday 16 May, 8.00 am to 6.00 pm**

Join the Friends for a fascinating forest fungi tour, with afternoon tea at Colac Botanic Gardens, and lunch at Daar Teta guesthouse in Forrest. Tickets include bus cost, fungi tour, lunch, and morning and afternoon tea. All inclusive, fully escorted tour. \$110 members and \$120 non-members. Book online [here www.friendsgbg.org.au](http://www.friendsgbg.org.au) or through the Friends' office on 5222 6053.

### GWEN'S COOKING DEMONSTRATION AND LUNCH

**Thursday 23 May 11am-3.00pm**

Join Gwen at her beautiful home in Newtown for a fabulous Winter Soups demonstration, followed by a delicious gourmet lunch. Printed recipes included. \$35 members and \$45 non-members. Book online [here www.friendsgbg.org.au](http://www.friendsgbg.org.au) or through the Friends' office on 5222 6053. Address supplied after booking.

### For the Diary:

#### WINTER LUNCH AT THE DAVIDSON

**Tuesday 18 June, 12.00 pm – 3.30 pm**

Guest Speaker Amanda Blake Sutterby

*Capturing rare and threatened plants through botanic art*