

FBBG President's Report

It is my pleasure to present a brief overview of the FBBG's activities from August 2019 to January 2021.

Due to COVID-19, our activities have been largely suspended since March 2020. We look forward to resuming them in the near future. From April to October committee meetings were held by Zoom, and since then meetings have been held in the Pavilion.

During 2020 year it was our 20th birthday as a group. Some of our original members are still active. During that time they have contributed to much progress with the production of a master plan, construction of a new garden and upgrading of the heritage garden. I feel that the group can take pride in the results of our efforts. I would like to thank all those members who started the group 20 years ago.

Unfortunately, we were unable to have a formal celebration, but Judy Milner produced a valuable history of the Friends support and advocacy from 2000 – 2020.

Committee:

President: Anne Bridley

Vice-President: Delene Commerford

Secretary: Pam Sheean

Treasurer: Ann Clark

Minutes Secretary: Jan Orr

Growing Friends Nursery: Judy Milner

Growing Friends garden workers: Ann Clark

Dovyalis editors: Judy Milner and Delene Commerford

Other Committee Members: Jan Bobbin, Jane Cleary, Lyn Hamilton, Kevin Shanahan, Lindy Sloan, Eric Wilkinson. A City of Greater Bendigo representative, usually Kirstie Paterson, also attended.

I would like to thank all the hard working members of our committee who have kept our group going during the last year.

Committee meetings were held 9:30 am every 3rd Tuesday.

Growing Friends nursery: organisers Judy Milner, assisted by Helen Gardam. Once our work sessions were suspended, garden staff have been keeping our nursery plants alive and potting up cuttings. Our November 2019 plant sale raised over \$4000 in spite of the rain. Unfortunately our May and November 2020 plant sales were cancelled. The nursery was upgraded with a shade cover for the poly house and an automatic watering system.

The Growing Friends Gardens group, organised by Annie Clark and Kirstie Paterson, also had their Activities suspended from March.

Thanks to, Judy Milner, Annie Clark and Helen Gardam for their organising work during the year and for all their willing helpers.

Botanical Illustrators group:

Weekly catch ups with the illustrators were organised via zoom in September, progressing to Wednesday morning meetings firstly at the GFTF then at the Pavilion.

The illustrators took part in the Australian Flower Show Sep 2019 and the Mandurang Valley Artisan's Trail, October 2019 at Marilyn Sprague's garden. In December 2019 members visited the Customs House Gallery, Echuca where some of their work was displayed. Another month-long exhibition was held in that Gallery in December 2020, where several works were sold and much interest generated regarding the Friends.

Planning is in place working towards exhibitions at the St Arnaud Railway Hub in April 2021 and the anticipated opening of The Central Hub in 2022.

Guided Walks

Guided walks were also suspended from March 2020. Using notes provided by our chief guide Jane Cleary, a new leaflet giving a self-guided tour of significant trees in the Heritage gardens was produced. New garden guides AnneBridley, Jackie Goedhart, Kevin Shanahan completed their basic training.

Walks & talks were provided for the following groups:

Sep 2019 Heathcote U3A Garden Group

Oct 2019 Caravan Expo Group

Oct 2019 St Michael's PS, Deniliquin,

Feb 2020 Renaissance Herbs Group

Jan 2021 talk to Strathfieldsaye Probus at the gardens

Thanks to Jane Cleary, Sandra Crump, Jackie Goedhart, Kevin Shanahan, Jan Bobin, Annie Clarke and Judy Milner.

Dovyalis

Editors: Judy Milner, Delene Commerford

The standard of production continues to be excellent, and is a credit to the editors, contributors and proof readers. Issues 10, 11 and 12 contained article on plants in the gardens including herbs, Mexican Hawthorn, wattles, brachychitons, and Daphne genkwa. Other articles included one on local geology, and accounts of trips to Perth for the Australasian Botanic Guides conference and a tour of gardens in Regional France. There were also illustrations from our talented illustrators.

Dovyalis is widely distributed via email and other social media with copies also going to the State Library of Victoria.

FGGB excursions:

Three private gardens in Bendigo were visited by the Growing Friends during the year.

Grants and Donations

We received a donation of \$1000 from the Bendigo Bank in the current financial year. Half went to defray the printing costs of our new leaflet, Trees of the Heritage Gardens self-guided walk, and half to planting a Gingko biloba.

In recent years, money raised from plant sales and donations after costs has been used as the community contribution for substantially larger government grants. These grants need a demonstration of community support.

A donation was made in the last financial year of \$15,000 to the new picket fence at the Memorial Arch entrance. Members of the FBBG attended the opening of the restored Memorial Arch and fence in Dec 2019. We also contributed \$10,000 towards the Central Hub design cost.

Central Hub

The group continues to be involved with the planning for the new Central Hub and visitor's centre, to be built between the new and old gardens. Four meetings were held with CoGB staff and consultants for the project where we were informed of progress and had a chance to express our views.

Bendigo Botanic Gardens Staff

Kirstie and her team have continued to work extremely hard to maintain the gardens. They have been much used and appreciated by residents during these difficult times.

I would like to thank all the members of the FBBG who have maintained their membership and interest in the group during the last year. I look forward to welcoming you all back to help in maintaining and promoting our wonderful Bendigo gardens.

Anne Bridley
President
9/2/21