

Dovyalis

Friends of Bendigo Botanic
Gardens Inc. Newsletter

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Grape Vine Arbour April 2020 Covid-19



View in the gardens April 2020

This newsletter is named after *Dovyalis caffra*,
the South African Kei Apple Tree
which is a heritage listed tree
in the Bendigo Botanic Gardens



Note from our President - Anne Bridley

As you are no doubt all aware, the Friends' activities have been suspended for the time being due to the COVID-19 pandemic, words that I would never have thought I would be writing. It will be up to the City of Greater Bendigo when we will be able to resume our work. It is to be hoped that it will be some time later this year. There may have to be some modifications in our work practices until a vaccine becomes available. In the meantime, Kirstie and the garden staff are looking after the plants we have propagated. I hope everyone is keeping well, and look forward to seeing you when we are able to socialise again.

Pandemic and the gardens response.

Staff Team Leader, Kirstie Paterson and the Botanic Crew

Wow! What an interesting time it is on the planet at the moment. From China, Europe, America and Bendigo we all have to adapt to the changing social conditions. In response to the restrictions that are now in place to protect us from the Covid-19 pandemic, we at the Bendigo Botanic Gardens have made some changes in our practices which follow the COGB guidelines.

Our bird aviary was closed to the public as the area inside didn't provide enough room for social distancing requirements and although we have had a few enquiries from the public about the closure, everyone understands the reasoning. The work depot was closed, and access only granted to staff or contractors who were needed on site (exclusion included the Friends' groups). One person per work vehicle at a time, and disinfecting of vehicles after use is a new practice. Everyone works on a different garden bed, or when more people are required to complete a task, strict social distancing guidelines are met. Drinking fountains, BBQ's, and the play space have all been shut down to restrict the spread of the virus.

We are still having a lot of people visit the gardens for their exercise, and the comments from the public have been very encouraging. One lady commented "you are saving my sanity by having these gardens open and in beautiful condition." It just shows how much people appreciate coming to our 'Botanic Gardens' in a time of crisis. We have had a visit by the highway patrol motorcycle police, who rode through the gardens on a patrol to make sure people were abiding by the social distancing rules. One officer commented that he loved the gardens and will be back for some advice for his own garden when the 'crazy time' is over. We are keeping in contact with other COGB staff, via iPad and phone and every day we receive an email from the CEO Craig Neiman on how we are travelling as an organisation. Communication is very important in these times as everyone is feeling unsettled, the more information we can spread to our teams the better. As we all know plants don't stop growing and after the rain the weeds are flourishing, so the work is continuing on, just a little differently. We are currently preparing our next annual display for in front of the gardens, which will go in after Easter (poppies and pansies) so keep an eye out for those if you're driving past on your way to shopping or the doctor.

Just remember the gardens are open to the public, so you are quite welcome to come and exercise in a beautiful environment.

Stay safe everyone and we hope to see you soon when the restrictions have eased.

Renaissance Herbs Tour.

Jan Bobin - FBBG member

On Thursday 6th February, FBBG hosted a tour of the gardens for Renaissance Herbs - a group of plant growers from around the country. They came to Bendigo for their annual marketing conference and were made up of business owners from Tasmania, South Australia and New South Wales, with Clive Larkman from Victoria being the host of the group. Jackie Goedhart and Kevin Shanahan conducted the tour on behalf of the FBBG (their first experience at conducting a tour) with Jan Bobin "tagging along".

All members of the group were extremely interested in the variety of plants in the cottage gardens, particularly the Lavenders and Salvia varieties. Clive was particularly interested in the Lavender as he had supplied some of the plants to the gardens when the area was developed. They were also very interested in the Garden for the Future with questions regarding some of the plantings in the area. Unfortunately the tour of that area was relatively short due to the extreme heat of the day.

The FBBG members learnt much from accompanying the visitors as they were very knowledgeable and experienced nursery people.

Jan Bobin.



Rosemary near the Grape Arbour



Basil and Mint in the Children's Garden.

Herbs Thyme. *Thymus vulgaris* Family: Lamiaceae

Kevin Shanahan - FBBG member



Thyme species are aromatic evergreen herbs of the genus *Thymus* in the mint family Lamiaceae.

Ancient Egyptians used thyme for embalming. The ancient Greeks used it in their baths and burnt it as incense in their temples, believing it was a source of courage. The spread of thyme throughout Europe was due to the Romans as they used it to purify their rooms and to give an aromatic flavour to cheese and liqueurs. In the Middle Ages, the herb was placed underneath pillows to aid sleep and ward off nightmares. It was also used as incense and placed on coffins during funerals to assure passage into the next life. Owing to its antiseptic properties, judges also used it along with rosemary to prevent gaol fever.

This is a genus comprising numerous species that are very diverse in appearance and come from many different parts of the world.

Thymes have culinary, medicinal and ornamental uses and the species most commonly cultivated and used for culinary purposes is Common (or Garden)Thyme *Thymus vulgaris*. This well known herb is a low growing hardy evergreen perennial with thin aromatic leaves and mauve flowers in the summer. It is indigenous to the Mediterranean region.

It is best planted in Spring in a hot, sunny location with well drained soil. It is drought tolerant and can be easily propagated by dividing rooted sections of the plant. Plants are generally pest free but may rot in winter if too wet and cold.

As thyme is an evergreen it can be picked fresh all year round but can also be preserved by drying leaves or putting them in vinegar or oil.

Thymus vulgaris has strong antiseptic properties (thymol being the major constituent) and it can be used to make a gargle or mouthwash by infusing with hot water. Thymol is the active ingredient in a lot of commercially produced mouthwashes such as 'Listerine'. Before antibiotics came on the scene, oil of thyme was used to medicate bandages. It is also used for coughs, bronchitis, whooping cough and similar complaints.

References: Jekkas Complete Herb Book.

Jekka McVicar.

Potter's Herbal Cyclopaedia.

Elizabeth M. Williamson

Wikipedia

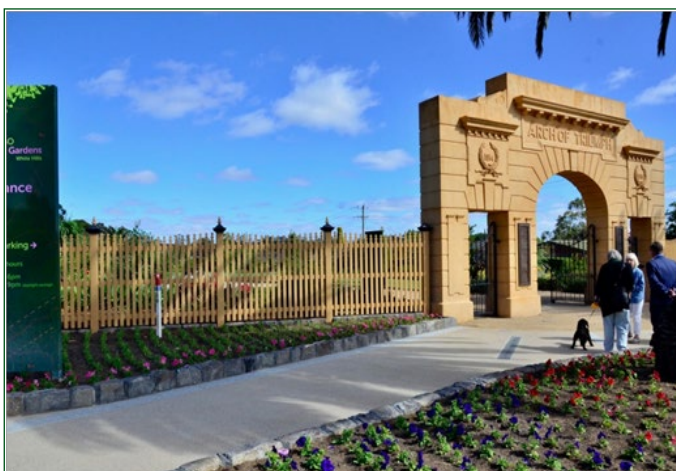
Opening of the restored Arch of Triumph and Napier Street upgrade

Pam Sheean - Secretary FBBG

The recently restored memorial Arch of Triumph and entrance to the Bendigo Botanic Gardens was officially opened by The Hon. Jacinta Allen, Member for Bendigo East, on Wednesday December 4th, 2019. Friends of the Bendigo Botanic Gardens were a part of the opening celebration.



The Arch and Gardens entrance have been given new life with the installation of a ground feature and heritage picket fencing similar to when the arch was first constructed. Engraved bluestone pavers, designed to represent the ANZAC rising sun symbol, connect with the honour rolls located on either side of the arch have been installed. Bluestone edging, new kerb and channelling, footpaths and plantings have also been completed along with extensive structural work to secure the foundations.



The project was a \$125,000 Victorian Government and Regional Roads Victoria investment as part of the Napier Street upgrade. The new \$19,000 picket fence project was funded by the City of Greater Bendigo, with \$15,000 from the Friends of the Bendigo Botanic Gardens.

Historical background

The Bendigo Botanic Gardens is one of Victoria's earliest regional botanic garden reserves. They were first shown on a plan in 1854 and gazetted in 1857. A pavilion was built in c1910 and in 1925 an Arch of Triumph was erected at the main entrance as a memorial to those who served in the First World War.

The Arch was officially opened on 23 May 1925 by Mr Joseph Sternberg, M.L.C.

It is of historical and architectural significance as a rare example of Mannerist design (a style in architecture of the 16th century, characterized by the distortion of elements such as proportion and space), with a massive rusticated wedge-shaped brick arch and decorative wreaths.

The Arch incorporates an inscribed list of 65 local servicemen on two metal plates. White Hills residents at the time subscribed more than £200 each towards the memorial as a tribute to soldiers from the district.



THE ROSE SERIES P. 10384 ARCH OF TRIUMPH, WHITE HILLS, BENDIGO, VIC.

Image: Libraries Australia; Created by Rose Stereograph Co.

c.1920-54

A Tour Around the Bendigo Botanic Gardens: Brachychitons

Anne Bridley - President, Friends of Bendigo Botanic Gardens

Brachychitons are members of the mallow family, Malvaceae. This family is notable for the amount of mucilage that its members contain, and brachychitons are no exception. It also contains a number of species that have been domesticated for human use, including cotton, okra and cacao and ornamental garden plants such as hibiscus, thomasia and abutilon. Brachychitons also have a long history of human use.

There are some 30 species of brachychiton in Australia, and two in Papua New Guinea. Most are present in the tropics and subtropics, but some do occur in more temperate parts of the mainland. Habitats vary from rainforest to woodland to desert. Victoria has one species, *B. populneus* or Kurrajong, which occurs in rain shadow areas of eastern Vic. and dry woodland and open forest in north east Vic. It can be found in the Burrowa-Pine Mountain National Park.

Brachychitons can be readily identified by their very distinctive boat shaped dark seed pods.



Brachychiton Seed Pods -

Drawing by FBBG Illustrator Annie Clark

Their flowers vary from greenish, white or cream to pink or red. Male and female parts occur on separate flowers. Some species, such as the Illawarra Flame Tree, *B. acerifolius* are notable for their attractive displays of flowers, although these may not occur every year. Leaves may be large, and range from more or less oval to deeply lobed. The trunks tend to be straight, at least when young, and may be cylindrical or bottle shaped. Young trunks may have smooth, greenish bark. Some species are evergreen, others may be deciduous in the dry season.

The botanic gardens has eight species or cultivars. They can be found in the following locations:

Heritage Garden

If we come from the main entrance and turn left past the Morton Bay Figs, at the north end of the Northern Victorian garden we find three Qld endemics coping with a much colder climate:

B. sp 'Ormeau', Ormeau Bottle Tree, is a critically endangered Queensland rainforest plant. It has a very restricted distribution, and a low number of plants remain in the wild. Ongoing threats include habitat loss, weed invasion and low genetic diversity. Its natural habitat is riparian rainforest, occurring near small streams in rocky gorges.



Brachychiton sp Ormeau

The natural habitat of the Little Kurrajong (*B. bidwillii* 'Northern Form') is vine thickets and vine thicket margins with eucalypt woodlands on slopes, ridges and hilltops.



Brachychiton bidwillii

A Tour Around the Bendigo Botanic Gardens: Brachychitons continued

Garraway's Bottle Tree (*B. garrawayae*), grows in open forest, vine thickets and monsoon forest on the Cape York peninsula.



Brachychiton garrawayae

If we head toward the aviary, we can find a young *B. populneus*, Kurrajong, near the northern aviary entrance. A more mature Kurrajong can be found further along the path besides the billabong.

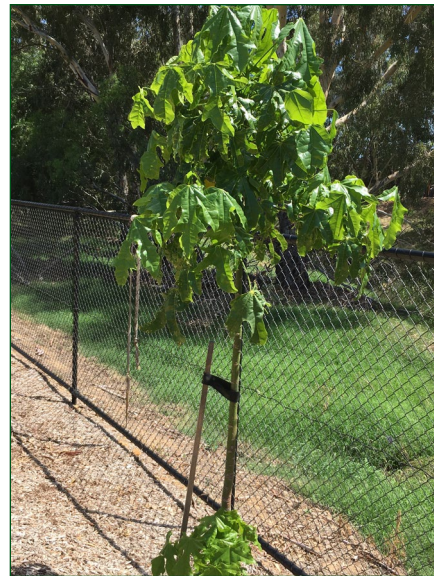
B. populneus range is from Victoria to Qld. In Bendigo there is a stand of mature trees giving excellent shade next to the bike path in the angle between the railway line and McIvor Hwy.

Kurrajongs have been widely planted in inland Australia as a shelter and shade tree and have been highly regarded as a fodder tree. The best known human food use is the seeds. Like cocoa, they contain caffeine and have been suggested for use as a coffee substitute after roasting and grinding. Indigenous women warn that great care must be taken when cleaning the seeds of their irritating hairs to keep them away from the eyes, nose and mouth as they can cause blindness. One traditional way of preparation was to bake mature pods in ashes while avoiding the smoke, after which the seeds were pick out and cleaned of any packing material. The seeds were then ground for damper.



Other parts of the tree that were eaten included young tap roots, and gum. Water could be extracted from the roots. The fibrous inner bark of the Kurrajong was used by Aboriginal people to make string, dilly bags and fishing lines and nets. Altogether, a very useful tree.

Many other species of Brachychiton were used in similar ways, including *B. acerifolius*, *australis*, *diversifolius*, *gregorii*, *paradoxum*, *rupestre* and *tuberculatus*. As well as the above uses, the wood of some species was used for bowls and shields.



Brachychiton acerifolius

B. populneus is well adapted to Victorian conditions. It is hardy, drought and frost tolerant and will cope with poor soils. It will regrow after hard pruning and grows readily from seed.



Brachychiton acerifolius x populneus

A Tour Around the Bendigo Botanic Gardens: Brachychitons *continued*

Garden for the Future

After entering at the northern end, turn right to walk through the Australian section. Here we find *B. acerifolius x populneus* 'Bella Donna' and *B. x excellens*. These highly ornamental cultivars have brilliant pink or red flowers. They tend to be small to be medium sized trees, and are moderately drought and frost tolerant in spite of their rainforest heritage.



Brachychiton acerifolius x populneus



Brachychiton acerifolius x excellens

As we return along the main promenade we can see *B. acerifolius x bidwillii* (northern form) 'Robin Hood' and *B. discolor x acerifolius*. These two cultivars have non invasive roots and are suitable for full sun and most soils. They do need good drainage.

B. acerifolius, the Ilawarra Flame Tree comes from coastal rainforests in New South Wales and Queensland. It is planted as a street tree, inspiring the title of the well known Cold Chisel song "Flame Trees". *B. discolor* is a rainforest tree from Queensland & New South Wales.

The hybrid between the two has a rounded shape and retains its leaves while flowering.



Brachychiton discolor x acerifolius

Just before exiting the gardens, turn right to find a *Ceiba speciosa*, Silk Floss Tree. This South American plant almost looks like a young brachychiton, having smooth (apart from thorns/spikes), greenish bark and a straight trunk. It is also a member of the Malvaceae.



Silk Floss Tree *Ceiba speciosa*

Get to know our Illustrators

My Journey to the Bendigo Illustrators . Audrey Baillie

I studied art at Prahran Tech (now known as Swinburne University) despite my parents wish for me to go to university. Initially I studied Advertising completing Matriculation subjects at night. Work experience was in an advertising agency.....it was exactly like the TV series 'Mad Men'....ugh !!! It put me right off advertisingso...fine art was next on the agenda. At the end of the course I took a sideways step into Engineering drawing which I loved and did for many years.

After a move to Queensland and a few years in engineering, I started my own business doing hand painted resort wear, with many well known clients. It was a very interesting and profitable time. I then spent two years working and living overseas....China, Sicily and Poland along with many trips to the British Isles.

After returning to Australia and a stint in Queensland I settled in Mornington, Victoria. Following a visit to Bendigo to see the Grace Kelly exhibition, a decision was made to call Bendigo home.

One afternoon my husband Rod took me for a walk in the Bendigo Botanic Gardens where we saw a notice about the FBBG Illustrators Group. A big nudge from Rod encouraged me to become a member.

I have been warmly welcomed by The Bendigo Illustrators since joining in 2014. We meet on Saturdays and also Wednesday mornings when the friendly discussions include "Where are we going for lunch?"

The workshops are most helpful and I especially enjoy the 'in-shop' sessions run by our members. With support from the Bendigo group I now work in watercolours as well as coloured pencil, which I find very restful.

Our bi-annual exhibitions are an exciting chance to share our achievements.



Oriental Poppies
Coloured Pencil



Echeveria elegans flower
Coloured Pencil



Galahs
Coloured pencil

What's On - 2020 -

N.B all groups are discontinued until futher notice, due to Covid 19 Virus.

The following applies when restrictions are discontinued.

Committee Meetings

The monthly committee meetings are held from 9.30 am to 11.30 am on the third Tuesday of each month, except for January, at the Samuel Gadd Centre at the Bendigo Botanic Gardens. All other members are welcome to attend
Office bearers are elected for 2 year terms and the annual general meeting is held in August.

Growing Friends

The Growing Friends propagate plants for the gardens and for sale as well as assist the BBG park staff in the gardens. They meet: each Tuesday (9:30am - 11:30am) at BBG nursery (behind the Samuel Gadd Centre).
Plants are available for sale during Growing Friends times. Two major sales are held each year - Spring and Autumn.

FBBG Illustration Group

Meet Saturdays 9:30am – 4.00pm & Wednesdays 9:30am – 12.00pm at the BBG Samuel Gadd Centre. New members welcome.



The gardens are showing their Autumn colours as usual despite what is occurring in the community.

If you maintain the current social distancing requirements, I'm sure a walk through the gardens will lift your spirits.



The Bendigo Weekly printed an article about the Friends on Sat March 7th.

This was a precursor to the FBBG 20th anniversary celebrations which have had to be postponed.

Dovyalis is published by the Friends of Bendigo Botanic Gardens, Inc. 71 Napoleon Cres. Bendigo 3550

Email: friends.bgobotanicgardens@gmail.com
Website: www.bendigobotanicgardens.com.au

President: Anne Bridley **Vice President:** Delene Commerford
Secretary: Pam Sheehan **Treasurer:** Annie Clark
Committee Members: Jan Bobin, Jane Cleary, Lyn Hamilton, Judy Milner, Jan Orr, Kevin Shanahan, Lindy Sloan and Eric Wilkinson.

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