

Dovyalis

Friends of Bendigo Botanic
Gardens Inc. Newsletter

Issue 22 Spring 2025



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*The Gardening and Growing Friends
hard at work*



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



Report on the FBBG 25th Annual General Meeting 16th September 2025 2pm at the Samuel Gadd Centre.

Mandy Scott (our Vice President) welcomed members in the absence of our President who was away in Asia.



Our Financial Position - Jan Bobin - Treasurer

The Finance Report recorded a very healthy balance of \$42,136.98.

Plant sales, membership, term deposit investments and our Illustrators' contributions all helped to achieve this excellent result. Our positive working balance has allowed the Friends to make significant contributions to the gardens, as well as the purchase of promotional signs, tools for our volunteers and significant improvements to the Nursery area. Further major projects are earmarked for funding.

Membership

Membership fees were confirmed at \$15 for a single, \$25 for a family and \$7.50 for a student. These very reasonable fees are reflected in our strong membership of 76 people.



President's Report (provided by President Pam Sheean and read to the meeting).

Pam outlined achievements of the Friends during the year, noting that we are now a registered Charity regulated by the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission.

- She acknowledged the contributions made by the various groups that volunteer regularly including the Nursery propagation group, the Plant Sales rostered volunteers, the Garden Maintenance group who improve the appearance of the garden through weeding and pruning and the Garden Guides who enthusiastically recruit new guides and expand their knowledge for the benefit of visitors and locals.
- She also detailed the local events that the Friends and Illustrators participated in to promote the gardens, the quality production of 'Dovyalis' with thanks to editor Judy Milner and her team of contributors and proof readers and the ongoing work of Sarah White and Simone Carmody to update and secure our website.
- The Illustrators held a very successful "Re-Emergence" exhibition in Eaglehawk with attendance in excess of 250. They are currently working hard towards the Friend's 25th Anniversary with their next exhibition 'Retrospective' to be held in early October.
- She recognised the continued hard work of the Bendigo Botanic Gardens Staff led by Kirstie Paterson, in caring for the valuable trees and plants throughout the gardens, and maintaining the condition of the gardens to manage the increasing number of major events and bookings.

In conclusion Pam thanked all volunteers who continue to raise the profile of the Friends and promote the Gardens to the broader community.

FBBG Annual General Meeting - 2025

continued

Garden Staff Report

Kirstie Paterson (Staff team leader) recognised the valuable work of each of the Friend's groups and the mutual appreciation and support that the Friends and Garden Staff have. She thanked all volunteers for their ongoing efforts to support the Gardens.

The New Committee for 2025 – 2026

All positions were filled with the following people:

President: Mandy Scott
 Vice President: Jenny Makepeace
 Secretary: Caroline Byrne
 Treasurer: Jan Bobin
 Committee Members: Anne Aston, Lindy Sloan, Judy Lee, Simone Carmody and Sarah White.



Returning Treasurer Jan Bobin



New Office Bearers. Jenny Makepeace, Mandy Scott and Carolyn Byrne

The meeting was followed by afternoon tea and new President Mandy Scott introduced our Guest Speaker, Stephen Ryan, President of Mount Macedon Horticultural Society.



Guest Speaker Stephen Ryan

- Stephen spoke about Ellis Rowan (1848-1922), a Melbourne-born internationally renowned Australian botanical artist, naturalist, writer and explorer. He focused on the extraordinary contribution she made to botanic art and to our understanding of the natural world. He described her as a remarkable woman and one of Australia's most adventurous and talented natural history artists, specialising in flowers, birds and occasionally insects.

- He is supporting the project led by Australian Cultural Fund to raise money for the creation of a bronze statue to generate a lasting testament to the achievement and legacy of this remarkable Australian woman. It will be located at the Horticultural Hall, close to the Botanic Gardens at Mount Macedon.



Ellis Rowan and some of the paintings from her prodigious body of work of over 1000 paintings.



At the conclusion of his talk, new President Mandy Scott presented Stephen with a small gift in appreciation of his time and for sharing his knowledge.

FBBG Garden Guides

Six Months in the Making: Our Walking Tours Hit Their Stride -
Simone Carmody (Guide co-ordinator)

Over the past six months, our dedicated volunteers have been working tirelessly behind the scenes - recruiting passionate new guides, developing fresh content, and completely re-imagining our walking tours to captivate both locals and first-time visitors.

Winter became our intensive workshop: we explored new routes, refined our storytelling, and fine-tuned those small details that transform a good tour into an unforgettable experience. We've also embraced the digital age with regular updates across Facebook, Instagram and our website.

That careful groundwork is now paying dividends. With the arrival of spring, weekend attendance has grown substantially, and we have several mid-week tour bookings. Most encouraging of all, we're welcoming repeat visitors who return to discover the week-to-week changes in our living landscape.

A particular highlight this season so far was our Wattle Week walk, expertly led by Friends member Rod Orr. This special event perfectly demonstrated our new approach which combines scientific expertise with hands-on discovery in nature. It reinforced our new philosophy: visitors are drawn to tours that feel dynamically connected to the present moment - what's in bloom, how the gardens are transforming, and what seasonal treasures await their next visit.



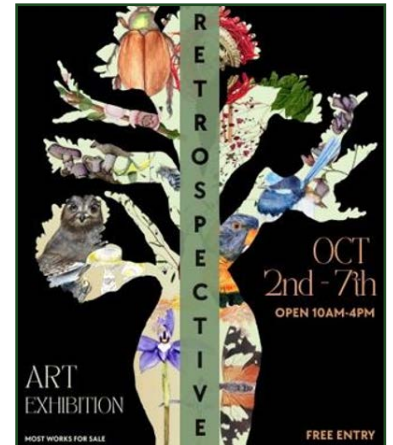
We are committed to continuous improvement - training our guides, refreshing our routes, and adapting to seasonal conditions and audience interests thus ensuring every walk feels welcoming, enlightening, and perfectly paced for discovery.



FBBG Illustrators - Art Exhibition

'Retrospective'
celebrating our 25th Anniversary. - Pam Sheean

The FBBG Illustrators group held a very successful exhibition at Dudley House (2nd-7th Oct) celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Friends of Bendigo BG. Natural subjects in watercolour and pencil, photographs and sculptures featuring plants, fungi birds and insects were included. Many works were sold and over 400 people visited the exhibition.



Pam Sheean (Illustrators co-ordinator) welcomed visitors to the opening.



Glenys Anthony (First President of FBBG and Gallery Guide) opened the exhibition.



Swamp Billy Buttons - *Craspedia paludicola*

Eliza McDonald – Garden Staff - Larni Garingilang Horticulturist

Flowering now (September) in Larni Garingilang is *Craspedia paludicola*, commonly known as Swamp Billy Buttons. This perennial herbaceous species occurs across several Australian states and favours wet, boggy, swampy areas often prone to seasonal inundation including grasslands, bogs, drainage lines, wetlands, marshland, sedgeland and edges of water bodies. *Craspedia paludicola* flowers from September – January and typically reaches a height of up to 75cm. The inflorescence consists of a single globular compound head, on which up to 300 partial heads occur. Propagation is via seed. A member of the Asteraceae family, this species is highly attractive to butterflies and other insects.



Whilst widespread, the species is uncommon due to being highly restricted to its niche preferred habitat, where it can be locally abundant but often only present in small patches. This species is listed as rare in Tasmania, and vulnerable in South Australia. In its natural habitats, *Craspedia paludicola* is threatened by livestock grazing, land clearing, direct and indirect changes in land use and alteration of wetlands, as well as increased risk of drought associated with climate change.



Craspedia paludicola can be found in three areas in the Larni Garingilang gardens, with the most impressive display situated at the top area of the constructed 'ephemeral creek bed', near the double gates off Hamelin St. In this particular spot in the gardens, the plants seem to have favoured the garden conditions of limited competition, consistently moist, low/flat soils, full sun and potential shelter from wind and frost provided by the surrounding *Poa* and *Lomandra* species, with one of the flower spikes measuring in at 84cm tall!

Anchor Plant - *Colletia paradoxa*

Anne Bridley - FBBG member

A prickly July flowerer, *Colletia paradoxa* can be found at the northern end of the Round the World section of the Garden for the Future. This incredibly spiky rounded shrub, growing to about 3m, has rather attractive small white flowers nestled in between spine tipped leaves. The leaves are actually flattened stems, which help it tolerate dry conditions. Young plants may need frost protection. It would be good for deterring unwanted visitors, although not suitable for indoor decoration.

The Anchor plant comes from South America. It is a member of the Rhamnaceae family, and is closely related to *Discaria pubescens* (Australian Anchor Plant), native to central and eastern Victoria. The Royal Horticultural Society (UK) suggests propagation by semi-ripe cuttings of short side-shoots in late summer. It may be available from specialist nurseries at a price. It can tolerate moderately hard pruning, but long-handled loppers would be needed.



As a side note, the genus was named after 17th/18th century French botanist Philibert Collet.

Native Fish Update

Kirstie Paterson - Team Leader BBG Staff

Southern Pygmy Perch thriving in Larni Garingilang ponds

We're delighted to share some exciting news from the Larni Garingilang ponds — the Southern Pygmy Perch (*Nannoperca australis*) population is flourishing!

In early September, Peter Rose from the North Central Catchment Management Authority conducted a fish audit, and the results were outstanding. The survey revealed a robust and healthy population, with many individuals reaching impressive sizes. Notably, a high proportion of females were found to be pregnant, indicating that breeding season is just around the corner and the lifecycle of this native species is set to continue strongly.

Peter is scheduled to return later in the year to assess the other aquatic species in the ponds. These species are currently less active due to cooler water temperatures and are expected to become more visible as conditions warm.

This is a wonderful outcome for native fish conservation and a testament to the ongoing efforts to support biodiversity in our local waterways.

Measuring



The males have colourful fins in the breeding season



The Memorial Arch - 100th Anniversary - 11am Friday 23rd May

Judy Milner FBBG member

A small ceremony was held in front of the arch to celebrate 100 years of the White Hills Arch of Triumph. Community members gathered to commemorate its centenary and honour those who fell. Descendants of servicemen listed were present for the occasion.

Mayor Andrea Metcalf said “even a century after it was built, the monument continues to be important to the people of White Hills. People have turned up, because they do pay their respects. It really does mean a lot for the people of White Hills, the veterans, and the historians.”

The Arch of Triumph is located at the entrance to the Bendigo Botanic Gardens, White Hills and lists the names of 64 local servicemen who served in World War 1.

Unveiled on May 23, 1925, the Arch of Triumph is one of just four World War 1 memorial arches in Victoria. The other arches are located in Ballarat, Murtoa and Mansfield.



Around 10 years ago, significant underground structural works were carried out to improve the foundations of the arch and ensure its longevity.

Since 1925 it has formed a key feature of the gardens providing a grand entrance from Napier Street.

The Arch of Triumph is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register and stands as a permanent memorial for our brave local soldiers.



*Laurie Preston and his sister Janice.
Their grandfather Arthur Preston
served in the war.*



*BBG Team leader Kirstie Paterson with
wreath of flowers.*



*Relatives marked their family
members with poppies.*

Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens NSW

Jan Bobin - FBBG member

During a South East coast “Road trip” in late June, I visited the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens near Batemans Bay, NSW. The gardens were originally established in the mid 1980s on a 42 hectare forest site and have evolved over the years despite being ravaged by bush fires twice, the most recent being January 2020. Extensive walking tracks have been constructed throughout the site with 6 self-guided walks up to 2km in length suitable for varying abilities. An area of “Naturescape Gardens” featuring Cottage, Wildlife, Formal and Coastal gardens has been developed showing how local plants can be used in the different styles.

The impressive Visitor Centre contains a Café, a Gift & Garden shop and interactive displays which are manned by Friends’ volunteers. A multipurpose centre is available for small functions. The attached nursery contains an array of tube stock and potted natives mainly grown from seed or cuttings by the Friends.

A climate controlled Herbarium is also on the site. The buildings fortunately survived the most recent bushfires although some of the surrounding infrastructure was not so lucky.

The gardens provided an enjoyable short break and pleasant lunch stop during our trip.



Cafe and visitor Centre



Nursery Sales area



Aboriginal Heritage Walk starting point



Formal Garden display



Cottage Garden



Interactive display



Artworks for display and sale



Preserves for sale made by the Friends of Eurobodalla

Heat Gun or Weed Burner -

Sarah White - FBBG member

The problem

Two years ago I moved into my Epsom house and inherited an incredibly weedy 350m² rear lawn. Mostly I have Flatweed also called Cats Ear *Hypochaeris radicata*, but also many others including Capeweed, Cudweed, Clover etc.

Weedkilling options

I don't want to use weed killers, and hand-weeding takes too long. I read online reviews about heat guns, and almost all were very positive. I bought one from our favourite German supermarket.

Method

Heat guns blow exceedingly hot air through a nozzle directly onto the centre of the weed. It is not a flame, but is almost as hot, and will set alight the weed and surrounding dry grass if held in place too long.

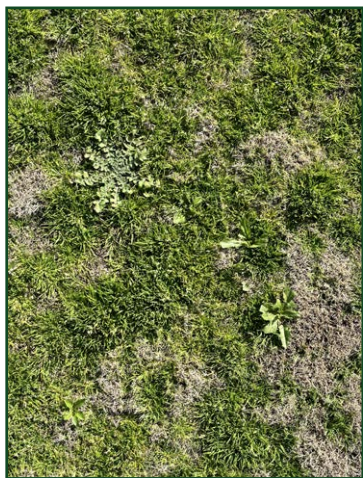
By burning/heating the growing tip or central core, the plant withers downwards and dies.

Surprisingly, the weed will start to be killed after just 7-8 seconds. It is very tempting to burn it for much longer until it looks fried or frazzled. This is exceedingly satisfying but just wastes time. After convincing myself with some tests, I settled upon 7-8 seconds which is about 8 weeds/minute.

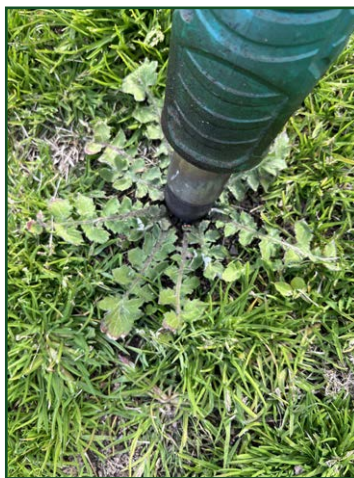
I leave the weed in place to wither away naturally. Removing it afterwards just doubles the workload, and risks breaking the root.

Results: These are the photos of my heat gun weed treatment.

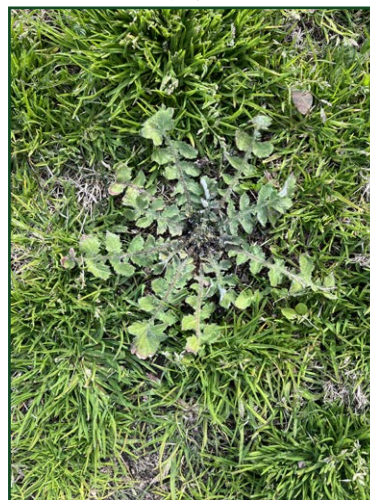
Before treatment



Applying the heat gun



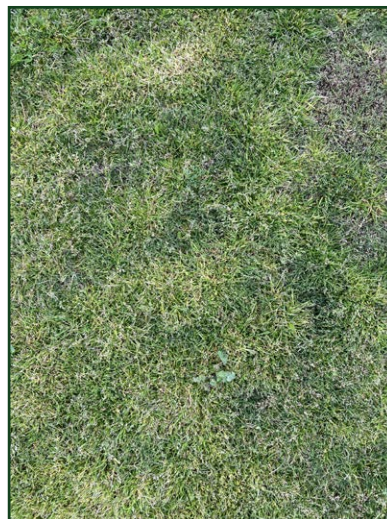
Immediately after treatment



After 8 days



After 37 Days



Heat Gun or Weed Burner -

continued



Heat Gun

Firstly, you will see that I have a horribly weedy lawn. Secondly, the heat-treated weeds have shrivelled away within 8 days.

They do return elsewhere and around the treated weed, but I'm convinced **the same weed has never reappeared or regrown in the same spot.** I can't remember what happened after hand-weeding.

Considerations

The treated weed never returns in the same spot, so in that respect the treatment is successful. But has it died, or are the new weeds offshoots from the original? If I have identified Flatweed correctly then this is unlikely, as according to 'myhometurf' these weeds do not spread from broken roots, runners or underground offshoots, only by seed, and I never let the weeds flower.

By last autumn, I had got on top of the weeds which were reappearing much more sparsely. But having ignored them over winter, I'm back in the same position this Spring. So this is a short-term fix as my lawn/soil must contain many seeds. I think I need to start again with a new lawn and soil.

I'm still not tempted by weed-killer which is described as only preventing germination for 6-months.

Conclusion

So I am concluding that the heat gun is an exceedingly effective and rather satisfying weed treatment. The downside are some divots from occasional grass burns but only when it is very dry. Obviously I didn't use it on very hot, dry, windy days, or during fire bans, but I wouldn't recommend it for areas of long, dry grass.

Celebrating our 25th Anniversary

Propagation Workshops - on Saturday 11th October



The Growing Friends ran free public workshops in the Bendigo Botanic Gardens' Nursery.

Workshop 1 - Propagating native plants from cuttings with Judy.

Workshop 2 - Propagating Succulents with Mandy and Lyn.

Meet the Illustrators Day

Saturday 18th October. 10am-12noon

The public were invited to come and see displays of completed works and watch the illustrators working on projects. Visitors were invited to have a go at botanical illustration themselves.



A Journey Through Time at Culzean Castle

by Simone Carmody - FBBG member

This year, Simone visited the Scottish castle where her ancestors worked as gardeners in the 1830s.

Travelling the tree-lined avenue approaching Culzean Castle, I couldn't help but imagine the countless people who had travelled this same path before me. Among them, nearly two centuries ago, were my great-great-great-great-grandfather and his father-in-law (my 5 x great grand father) who worked these grounds as gardeners in around 1830, before seeking a new life in Australia in 1852.



Perched dramatically on Scotland's Ayrshire coast, Culzean Castle represents the pinnacle of 18th-century landscape design and horticultural ambition. David Kennedy, 10th Earl of Cassillis, spared no expense in creating this 260-hectare testament to wealth and status. The gardens we see today tell a story of evolution and expansion, reflecting changing tastes and the extraordinary skill of Scottish gardeners who became legendary throughout Britain.

The current walled garden spans over three hectares, having been relocated from its original position near the castle in the 1780s, then significantly expanded in 1830 - precisely when my ancestors would have been working here. This timing suggests they were likely part of the team that helped shape the garden into its current magnificent form. A spine wall divides the space between productive northern plots and the ornamental southern gardens, a design that maximised both utility and beauty.



Within these walls, Victorian gardening culture flourished under demanding conditions. Gardeners worked six-day weeks from 6am to 6pm, surviving on meagre wages - a watering boy earned just eight shillings weekly, while apprentices received barely more. From these pittances came fines for dirty tools or improper equipment. Many lower-grade gardeners shared cramped quarters, sometimes sleeping three to a bed in makeshift accommodations.



A Journey Through Time at Culzean Castle *continued*

Yet despite harsh conditions, these men became masters of their craft. The Camellia House, built in 1818, stands as testament to both ambition and adaptation. Originally conceived as an orangery with Roman-inspired hypocaust underfloor heating, it failed in its primary mission to produce citrus fruits in Scotland's challenging climate. However, the gardeners discovered it excelled at nurturing camellias, transforming failure into horticultural triumph and giving the structure its enduring name.



The recreated vineyard represents an even more ambitious feat of Victorian engineering. The original structure, built in the late 18th century and rebuilt in the 1880s, enabled head gardeners to provide fresh grapes throughout the year - a luxury that would have astounded guests. The current recreation, complete with modern heating and ventilation, honors the technical mastery required to coax Mediterranean fruits from Scottish soil, showcasing how these skilled craftsmen turned the impossible into routine.

The legacy of Culzean's horticultural excellence extends beyond structures to actual plant varieties. The Ailsa Craig onion, bred at the castle by head gardener David Murray in the late 19th century, was introduced commercially in 1887. Named after the volcanic island visible offshore, this Scottish heirloom produces large, globe-shaped bulbs with golden skins and sweet, mild flesh. Thriving in cool summers and rich soil, it remains popular with exhibition growers and represents a tangible legacy of Victorian horticultural expertise.

Today, artist Trevor Leat's willow sculptures honor these forgotten craftsmen. The figure of a gardener, bent over his work among wildflowers, serves as a poignant reminder of the human hands that shaped this landscape, including those of my ancestors. These contemporary artworks bridge past and present, celebrating both the productive heritage and artistic vision that define Culzean.



Standing beneath the ancient trees, now two centuries old, I walked the same paths my ancestors knew and passed through the ornate gateways they would have used daily. The gardens they helped expand continue to thrive, tended by new hands but rooted in their original work.

In this place where my ancestors once worked, I found not nostalgia, but inspiration. Gardens endure. Long after we're gone, they remain as testament to the enduring partnership between human vision and nature's endless capacity for renewal.

What's On -

The Friends' Committee Meetings - all members are welcome to attend.

Currently held at the Samuel Gadd Centre - 11.30am on 3rd Tuesday of alternate months and at other times as required.

The Annual General Meeting is generally held in August or September.

Growing Friends

Growing Friends meet at the FBBG nursery (behind the Samuel Gadd Centre) each Tuesday from 9.30am - 11.30am. New members are always welcome. Sign in required.

Activities include

- * Assisting the BBG staff in the gardens.
- * Propagating plants for the gardens and for sale.
- * Maintaining the plant nursery.
- * **Plant Sales** - Supervising plant sales on Saturday and Tuesday mornings between 10am and 12 midday.

Botanical Illustration Group

Meet Saturdays 9:30am – 3.00pm & Wednesdays 9:30am – 3.00pm at the BBG Samuel Gadd Centre. New members including beginners are always welcome.

Guiding Group

Guides run free guided walks most Saturdays commencing at 10.30am from entrance to Larni Garingilang. Other times are by arrangement.

New guides are always welcome and training is provided.

Date	What	Details
Tuesday Nov 18th	FBBG Committee Meeting	11.30 at Samuel Gadd Centre
Tuesday 16th Dec	FBBG Christmas Break-up	Lunch - TBA
Saturday 3rd Jan 2026	FBBG Illustrators recommence	Samuel Gadd Centre 9.30am - 3pm
Tuesday 6th Jan 2026	Growing and Gardening Friends recommence	Meet at Samuel Gadd Centre 9.30am
Tuesday 20th Jan 2026	FBBG Committee Meeting	Samuel Gadd Centre 11.30am



*FBBG display at APS Native Flower Show Bendigo
28-29th Sept 2025*

Dovyalis is published by the Friends of Bendigo Botanic Gardens

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