



FRIENDS OF BURNLEY GARDENS INC



Papyrus - Autumn Edition

No. 45 - April 2009

editor: Jan Chamberlain

From the Chair

Michèle Adler

Dear Friends

Glorious autumn. With the night air containing a little moisture, plants are starting to refresh after our long, hot and fiery summer. The Gardens are looking green and gorgeous.

The Friends of Burnley Gardens have been extremely busy. This year's program has an emphasis on research at the School of Land and Environment (including Burnley) and our lectures have been very stimulating.

We started off on Valentine's Day with a light meal and a congenial glass of champagne in the courtyard. This was followed by a challenging lecture by Rick Roush, the Dean of the School of Land and Environment. Rick put the case **for** genetically modified crops. He called on his extensive research in the area and gave us a very thought-provoking and convincing talk.

March brought us an international guest, Marian Bellerby who whisked us away to Madiera, a place very few have travelled to. Then, a session on significant trees that ended with a guided walk and a "hands on" evaluation of the old *Erythrina caffra* (Coral Tree) for inclusion in the Significant Trees register.

In April, Anne Bishop and I ran a very successful propagating morning. Twenty three people attended with some members refreshing their skills and others learning anew. Andrew Smith had collected lots of cuttings from the native garden for us to propagate. This was with a view to having some of the 'spoils' for Burnley Gardens and any extras being sold off on Pruning Day - 18 July. Fran Mason is leading the propagating group from here and she will organise dates and members to help with potting-on.

Talking about the 18th July, Andrew Smith, Anne Bishop and I have had a number of meetings with Burnley staff and Uni. of Melbourne Marketing Department. This year Burnley Campus wishes to combine with our Pruning Day to create a Burnley Gardens Open Day (BGOD). We will be running our normal Pruning Day and they will be showcasing their educational offerings and campus research as a combined function. We are excited about working with the Campus to our mutual benefit.

The number of people attending our monthly meetings continues to increase and we now have a great group of FOBG members and members of the community who are regularly attending. My sincere thanks to our committee and publicising team who are doing such a fantastic job.

We do still need some-one to "job share" our items for sale at the monthly meetings. It's not too onerous a task. The Committee is now flat out and we need another person to help ease the load. Please lend a hand. It's fun, we are easy to get along with and we are even quite nice!! Please contact Carol Ferguson if you are interested.

Looking forward to seeing you all again soon.

Michèle

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New Member Welcome - Jan Chamberlain

14 February



We were very pleased to welcome four of our new members prior to the St Valentine's meeting: Judith Scurfield, Leesa Abbinga (whose garden appeared on Gardening Australia earlier this year), Laurie Krauss (a new member of our committee) and Cheryl Andrews. They are pictured enjoying a glass of champagne.

GM Food - Jan Chamberlain

14 February



Our St Valentine's Day meeting saw a large crowd (pictured on the previous page) enjoy chicken, salad and champagne before listening to a provocative talk on the case for genetically modified crops by Professor Rick Roush. Prof Roush is Dean of the Melbourne School of Land and Environment and studied entomology at the University of California after reading Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*.

He began with describing some of the big issues in agriculture today:

- Conservation of soil
- Water quality and quantity
- Energy use
- Reduction of toxins/pollutants

All this has to be considered within economic and social systems.

In 1996 there were no GM crops grown commercially. Thirteen years later this figure is now in excess of 125 million hectares. GM crops have benefited growers everywhere - yields, inputs, net profits and or/time in at least some seasons. Wherever they are grown a decrease in pesticide use has been recorded.

All through history humans have taken seeds and selectively bred them so that they taste better (i.e. genetically modified them). The predecessor of maize is a plant called Teosinte. Believe it or not, but the weed that we call bitter lettuce is the ancestor of the lettuce that we eat today.

Other foods have been modified before we get to eat them. For example, pasta wheat has been through radiation breeding at the Institute of Radiation Breeding in Japan. Prof Roush suggested that there may be issues related to radiation breeding that have not been discussed in the same way as GM crops.

There has been no evidence of GM foods (including Roundup Ready soy) being unsafe, yet trans fat is known to be dangerous and there has been no real debate about it.

Prof Roush put his case very convincingly and if you were unable to make it to the meeting and would like to hear a similar talk by him go to: upclose.unimelb.edu.au/episode/20

www.oqtr.gov.au/

www.isaaa.org/

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teosinte

www.irb.affrc.go.jp/index-E.html

Have Some Madeira, M'Dear - Jan Chamberlain

10 March

Before our talk by Marian Bellarby, Friends and guests were primed with some Malmsey (the politically correct name for Madeira that is not made on Madeira) and Madeira cake - beautifully made by our resident caterer, Dianne Cranston.



Elisabeth, Gwen (holding Malmsey) and Chris



Geoffrey, Marian Bellarby, Carol and Jean

Maria Kayak introduced the talk with some interesting snippets on Madeira wine:

- the Madeira wines belong to Portugal (and like Champagne only that style of beverage made at that location can use the traditional name)
- it is usually a sweet dessert wine
- in the times of exploration, Madeira (the island) was used as a stop for ships involved in the long voyages to the New World and the East Indies. On these long trips the wine taken on

board at Madeira was exposed to very high temperatures and the movement of the ship improved the flavour of the wine. This was discovered when wine returned to Madeira after a trip out and back!

- being a favourite of Thomas Jefferson it was used to toast the declaration of independence

Marian Bellarby was visiting Australia from the UK after having met Michèle Adler over the Internet (no, not a dating agency but a swap of horticultural knowledge for accommodation). Marian has been for many holidays on Madeira. Her mother had also taken holidays there and loved the flowers and the toboggans. Marian is now hooked on the island and seems to have an affinity for islands - travelling to many other islands including Australia!

Madiera is 600km from the north coast of Morocco and is 54 km long and 23 km wide. While not tropical the weather is generally frost free although in November 2008 the tops of mountains were covered in snow for the first time.

With tales of: flower farms; pavement tiles telling the history of the island; 28 harbours; a nun's refuge in the central mountain range so they were hidden from pirates; waterfalls; dragon trees; terraced gardens; lost mahogany and oak trees; we were taken on a whirlwind tour of this lovely island. Marian's great photographs captured it all.



Maria, Ellie and Anne



Joy, Tony, Olivia and Michèle

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madeira_wine
www.madeira-web.com/camera/cam-01.html
www.madeira-web.com/PagesUK/map.html
www.madeira-web.com/PagesUK/monte-toboggan.html

Significant Trees: Talk, Walk and Gawk - Jan Chamberlain

28 March

John Fordham is an ex-Burnley graduate and specialises in heritage trees and gardens. His illustrated talk covered the classification of trees for inclusion in the register. In 1981 the Register of Significant Trees was started as a pilot project by the National Trust and John started with them in 1992. There are over 1000 trees on the register. Unfortunately there will have been many significant trees lost in the current conditions and after the February fires. As John said, the list is a dynamic one.

The Trust does not classify at a local level but does on a state basis. Locally, trees are classified by Councils and these trees may be called a 'Habitat Tree' or a 'Local Landmark'.

There are many features that can make a tree significant. It may be its height, circumference, growth form, unique location or rarity. On the Trust website you can download an application form - all six pages of it. This form started as one page and just like Topsy it has grown!

Heritage Victoria selects the best of the trees from this register and lists them separately. Both private and public trees are registered.

Some trees listed on the register and which were included in the slide show are: *Angophora costata* (Smooth Barked Apple) at 646 High Street, Prahran; *Cedrus atlantica* 'Glaucua' (Blue Atlas Cedar) at Raheen in Kew; *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* (River Red Gum) at Guildford which is thought to be 500-1000 years old); the Separation Tree (another River Red Gum) in the Royal Botanic Gardens and the Burke and Wills tree (*Ficus macrophylla*) at Swan Hill. The best *Ginkgo biloba* in Australia is in the

Geelong Botanic Gardens. At Chewton is the largest Victorian example of *Quercus robur* which has a spread of over 35m. The King Billy Tree is the biggest snowgum (*Eucalyptus pauciflora* subsp. *pauciflora*) in Victoria and has a girth of 9.45m.



Estimating the height of *Erythrina caffra*



Barb Brookes and Christine Sampson with gawkers



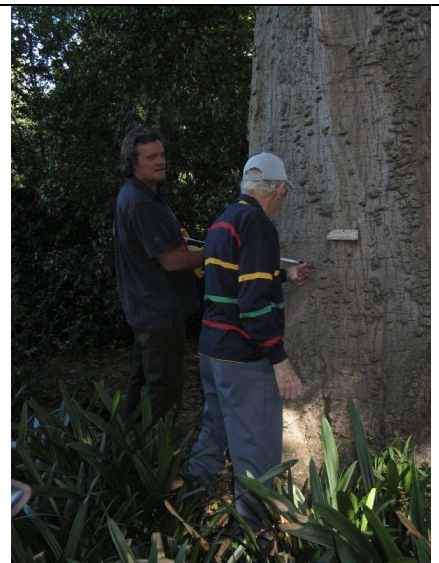
Members and guests witness the girth measurement.



Eleanor Stephenson (nee Parsons), Margaret Barrett (both ex-Burnley students), Glenys Rose (current Burnley student) and Michèle Adler

John encouraged everyone to buy the book that lists all significant trees in Victoria. The book is ideal for popping in your glove box. Then, when you are out and about touring Victoria, look up what trees are in the area and visit them. After John's talk we wandered around the Burnley Gardens (it was a glorious day) with some Friendly Guides - Ellie Bastow, Barb Brookes, Jane Wilson and Jean Corbett. They were ably helped by new recruits Christine Sampson and Maureen Costigan.

Following the tour we regrouped to measure the *Erythrina caffra* (South African Coral Tree) for possible inclusion in the register. After placing a few bets the measurements were: 6.7m girth, 14.1m canopy and 18.5m high.



John Fordham and helper measuring girth of *Erythrina caffra*

www.nattrust.com.au/trust_register_1
vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/vhd/heritagevic#

With the first cold days of Autumn having just begun, the scorching summer months are now thankfully over.

The Gardens, like the rest of Victoria, has had new challenges thrust upon it as highlighted by the extreme temperatures of early February. The Gardens coped reasonably well, with the plants that had some overhead shade coping far better than those exposed to the full sun.

Perhaps not surprisingly, various plant species from New Zealand suffered severe leaf scorching and in one instance even death (*Coryanocarpus laevigatus* - Karaka) in response to the extreme temperature.

Many plants in the Gardens, as you have also experienced in your own gardens, have put out new growth and will only need minor pruning to remove damaged branches. The kikuyu lawns have greened up quickly and have given the Gardens a well needed green lift to its appearance. This grass species seems to be the best suited to our climate as even 20mm of rain, after months of no rainfall, is enough to kick start it back into a marvellous green landscape.

The water level of the Luffman Lilly ponds has dwindled away to nothing over the late summer months. The 33,000 litres of water put in from the rain water tank in mid December, lasted only 6 weeks. The hope is that 2009 will see the ponds being renovated so that the cracked side walls and porous base can be made water tight.



This is no small or inexpensive task and I am seeking and raising funds from all quarters to make it happen. If you would like to contribute to this fundraising effort please either contact me or take the opportunity to contribute later in the year when fundraising events are organised. I thank the committee and members of the Friends who purchased pea straw for this pond restoration fund. Extra rain water tanks have now been installed, bringing the storage capacity to 173,000 litres (see picture at left). With current rainfall figures and roof catchment area, there will be the ability to harvest 900,000 litres of water each year.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karaka_\(tree\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karaka_(tree))

Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show**Jan Chamberlain**

At the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show (MIFGS) there were lots of interesting displays. For the first time I watched a flower arranging competition. The timing was perfect as the rain started tumbling down while we were sitting in the Exhibition Building. The florists in the competition had to complete a presentation arrangement for the Diva at the end of the opera Carmen. Starting with the same flowers and trims the five finalists produced stunningly different bouquets.





Outside, the theme was sustainability although how sustainable the displays would be in the long term is not that clear. There was a billabong, chooks (you can rent chooks to try before you buy!), fish, aquaponics, fruit trees galore, veggies everywhere, vertical gardens, a green roof designed by Burnley campus, recycled materials and the most Australian plants I have seen at MIFGS.

Pictured above is Michèle sunning herself on the deck (made of big garden stakes) of one of the gold medal winning exhibits. This one was entered by Mitre 10 one of the major sponsors of the show.

At left is the designer, Wayne de Klijn, who is standing next to a veggie patch in a tank.

Propagation Workshop - Anne Bishop

18 April

The Propagation Workshop was a great success. The response from members and the general public was enthusiastic. 24 people attended and others were still ringing to make a booking over the weekend, we may need another session next year!

The morning began with Michèle giving a talk about the principles of propagating. Some of the material for the workshop was gathered by Anne Bishop and Andrew Smith the day before. Andrew was interested in replacing or expanding some of the plantings in the Burnley garden, so any plants/cuttings that were not required by the participants were going to be used at Burnley. Fran Mason (gardens.flare@optusnet.com.au or mobile 0415 795 115) also brought along some plants to be used for cuttings most of which will be used by her group preparing plants for sale on Burnley Gardens Open Day (BGOD) in July.

Following Michèle's talk the group was split into two – first group walked round the garden with Michèle while the others had refreshments then the groups reversed the procedure.

In the nursery the first group propagated the cuttings while the second group planted up a large variety of seeds. Again the procedure was reversed so everyone had a chance to learn and practice both activities. It was great to see the members who had some knowledge of propagating helping those who were less confident, and it was a great sharing activity.

It was a very informative, as well as, a fun day. Many participants said they were keen to come again. Propagating is such a rewarding activity and a fantastic way to share your favourite plants with friends.

Michèle and Anne would like to thank Andrew and Nick as well as Fran and Margot McDonald for their help to make the day so successful.

Books from the Nina Crone Estate

Jo Lindsey

In 2008 the family of Nina Crone donated her substantial personal book collection to the Burnley Library. Nina's collection reflected her passion for gardens. Her role as Editor of *Australian Garden History* and garden newspaper columnist for *The Age* newspaper from 1982-1997 shaped the parameters of her collection. Many general gardening titles were review copies from publishers and in almost pristine condition. She had gathered a rich and diverse collection in the subject area of garden history and students at the Burnley Campus have benefited from this generous donation. Several items will be placed in the Rare Book Collection.

After the Burnley Librarians assessed the collection, it was determined that there were many items that were not required as the library already held copies. The Burnley Librarians suggested to the family that the remaining books be offered to the Friends of the Burnley Gardens for the book sale at the Pruning Day. The Friends were grateful to accept the offer and the books were included in the sale.

Dick Morrison

Jan Chamberlain (with Graeme Morrison)

Dick Morrison is now 92 and has recently moved into a nursing home. He was a great collector of books and his family has kindly donated the books to the Friends of Burnley Gardens. Graeme Morrison of Morrison Bros Nursery (Dick's nephew) said that Dick was a very clever guy and thought outside the square. He was a carpenter, a cabinet maker and pattern maker and very cluey with measurement.

Dick was an orchardist who took on his father's orchard. He grew pears, apples, lemons, peaches and other crops. He was very keen on Australian native plants and joined the Field Naturalists. He is a life member of the Field Nats. He went on many bush excursions photographing terrestrial orchids - over 130 different species. Dick was also a 'twitcher' and together with Trevor Noonan he photographed many birds on their nests and their eggs. They constructed many hides up off the ground to observe birds at close quarters. He also recorded bird songs.

When Dick married Barbara, who was also a fan of Australian plants, they had a great life taking photography trips into the bush together.

The Friends are again grateful for the kind donation.

Membership Update

Carol Ferguson

We welcome the following new members to the Friends who have joined the group in 2009:

Margot McDonald, Caroline Davies & David Martin, Glenys Rose & Andrew Hodges, Keiko Sasaki, Mary Long, Marcia Smith, Robin Robert, Anne Fitzpatrick and Sue Feldmann.

We also welcome back a previous member – Margaret Donald. Margaret was active on the Committee in the early days of the group.

Purchase of Timber Slab

Jan Chamberlain

You may recall that the Friends bought a slab of the 140 year old Sugar Gum (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*). We were sad to hear that the timber firm that moved was burnt out in the February fires. We believe the friends now have the only remaining piece of the Sugar Gum.

Support the Gardens

The following fund raising articles are available at meetings.

Hats: \$15.00 each in 4 sizes (55 cm, 57 cm, 59 cm, 61 cm)

Publication: \$5.00 *Burnley Gardens* by Lee Andrews

Mugs: \$10

FOBG Committee Members

Chairperson	Michèle Adler
Deputy Chairperson	Anne Bishop
Treasurer	Maria Kayak
Secretary	Jane Wilson
Membership	Carol Ferguson
Member	Laurie Krauss
Assistant Secretary and Newsletter Editor	Jan Chamberlain
Member	Dianne Cranston
Gardens Representative.	Andrew Smith*
Publicity	Geoffrey Kneebone*

- non-committee positions

Contacts for activities:

Anne Bishop 9827 7753 abishop@timeweb.net.au

Michèle Adler 5145 5422 michele@adland.com.au

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plants in print

Due to the closure of the Plants in Print book shop at Burnley there is a special offer on purchases made through the Plants in Print web site until the end of May. This discount means that FOBG members pay instore prices on web purchases.

Don't forget the Annual Grand Buffet Hall Book Sale at the University of Melbourne Parkville campus from 4-8 May from 10am to 5pm. There will be thousands of books from \$4.94 including popular fiction, academic books, gardening, lifestyle and coffee table titles.

www.plantsinprint.com.au

Gil Teague at Florilegium 'The Garden Bookstore' offered us a great deal on the Horticultural Flora of South-East Australia at Christmas time. If you would like to go on their mailing list please contact Gil on Phone: 02 9571 8222, Fax: 02 9571 8333 or Email: florilegium@tpg.com.au or visit their website: www.florilegium.com.au and download a catalogue.

Diary Dates 2009

Date	Activity
MAY Tuesday 19 May 7 for 7.30 pm	Burnley's Green Roof presented by Burnley Lecturer John Rayner. Cutting edge horticulture is occurring on the roof of Burnley College. How is it done? What is being planted? How successful is it? Follow the research being done at Burnley on green roofs and walls.
JUNE Wed 17 June 1.00 pm - Lunch 2.00 - 4.00 pm - work bee 7 for 7.30 pm	Lunch and Members Working Bee in Burnley Gardens Preparation for July Pruning day. Meet in the café for lunch at 1 pm then lend a hand to Andrew Smith and the garden staff in the Gardens. Afternoon tea at the café. Fungi, mosses and other ancient plants with Bruce Fuhrer
JULY Sat 18 July 11 am - 3 pm	Pruning Day. Pruning, sizzle & sozzle. Workshops and demonstrations of pruning techniques on fruit trees, native shrubs, grapes, and roses in the Burnley Gardens Field Station.
AUGUST Wed 12 August 7 for 7.30 pm	Cranbourne Botanic Gardens - Stage 2 with John Arnott, Horticulture, RBG Cranbourne. Follow this exciting new stage of the project in the Australian Garden at the RBG Cranbourne
SEPTEMBER Wed 16 Sept 7 for 7.30 pm	The answer is blowing in the wind with Burnley lecturer Ken James. Ken is an engineer with a focus in horticulture. He has been researching wind stress in trees for around 10 years and his findings are quite amazing. He has been presenting his results at international conferences and it's all happening here in our own backyard.
OCTOBER Saturday 10 October 10.00 am - 12.30 pm	Friends' own Garden Gander. A Saturday morning wander in some of our Friends' own gardens followed by a BYO picnic lunch. We have some very talented people who belong to the FOBG; let's have a look at what they have done in their own patch.
NOVEMBER Tues 10 November 7 for 7.30 pm	Keeping our connection with the Yarra River with Yarra River Keeper, Ian Penrose and AGM



F R I E N D S O F B U R N L E Y G A R D E N S I N C

Invite you to a cutting-edge evening talk about

Burnley's Green Roof Project

presented by

John Rayner

(Burnley lecturer in Horticulture and researcher)

Cutting- edge horticultural research is happening on the roof at Burnley. How is it done? What is being planted? How successful is it?
Come and find out about Burnley's green roof and walls.

Champagne (or fruit juice) and nibbles provided

When: Tuesday 19 May 2009

Place: Burnley Gardens, 500 Yarra Boulevard, Richmond.

Meeting place: QAD 6 (Follow the signs)

Time: 7 pm for 7.30 pm.

Cost: \$3 (members), \$10 (non-members)

Bookings essential: 9250 6800 or kcannon@unimelb.edu.au