



FRIENDS OF BURNLEY GARDENS INC



Papyrus – Summer Edition

No. 50 – December 2010

editor: Jan Chamberlain

From the Chair

John Fordham

Greetings from The Chair

It seems like yesterday that I was writing my first 'Chair's Letter'. A year has gone by and that's a year's worth of great rain, and oh how we all talk about it and rightly so, as it's been long overdue.

I believe we had a wonderful year with some great speakers. Greg Moore is always someone I enjoy very much and his talk was most engaging on how trees pay their way.

Numbers continue to grow for our little friends group as do the tasks and objectives we like to achieve with our committee. I suppose our main objective this year was to hold a successful pond re-opening, affectionately known as the Luffmann Ponds. Professor Barry Jones did a wonderful job in bringing about a greater awareness of Luffmann and his achievements. I was unaware that Luffmann consulted to the Chaffey Brothers in Mildura.

The middle of the year was another very successful open / pruning day with attendances up and workshops well patronised.

This year, and I believe it was for the first time, saw the launch of Australia's Open Garden Scheme held at Burnley with the new Chair of the scheme Richard Barley having taken the mantle from Neil Robertson. We wish Richard all the best with his new position.

Our propagating group is doing well with sales up and interest as well.

It is such a lot of work for the committee to attempt to engage people to come along each month so we are going to back off a little. What will change next year is the frequency with which we meet and have speakers.

Stay tuned however as in April we are likely to run a tree tour for a day and visit some old friends of mine, which I hope will become your friends as well.

If all goes well we may do more, so keep up to date with the newsletter.

A big thank you to Jan Chamberlain who is leaving the committee this year having done a sterling job with our newsletter, Thank you Jan.

Finally on behalf of the committee I would like to wish you a safe and happy Christmas and New Year. My sincerest thanks go to the committee who has done so much throughout the year, thank you again.

Regards to all

John Fordham



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With the recent consistent rainfall it looks like the Summer of 2010-11 will be a good season for plant growth.

All areas of the Gardens are looking green and vibrant and there are even some beds that are suffering from waterlogging problems!

The waterlilies are in full bloom and it's good to see we haven't lost any flower colours in our replanting after the pond renovation. Pastel pink, lemon and white water lily flowers are covering the expanse of the ponds and the other water plants are close on their heels.

It was marvellous to see a pair of wood ducks with six ducklings using the ponds and Gardens each day during the last month. What amazing growth the ducklings put on, a month later and they look full grown! We have also been visited by a cormorant, which suggests the yabbies may be back in full force.

At long last the Gardens irrigation system is now fully run and operated by the on-site weather station.

The irony, of course, is that at present it isn't needed! The irrigation will now be switched on as determined by the numerous sensors from the weather station as well as garden bed variants such as soil type, slope and the type of plant material being watered.

A vertical soil sensor has also been installed to measure soil moisture at 200, 400 and 800mm depths. This will enable us to measure the amount of moisture and at what depth it is. It will also show how far down into the soil profile irrigation events go and enable us to fine tune irrigation scheduling.

The Gardens have been a fine example of water conservation strategies and this year, with only one month to go we will see a further massive 25% reduction in water use compared with the 2009 figure. The 2010 water consumption is one third of the total of 2006 and that equates to a saving of 20 million litres of water each year. Of course rainfall helps but the conversion of shower heads, basin taps, toilets, irrigation systems, refrigeration, rainfall tank collection, storm water harvesting into ponds, pond renovation and plant selection have all contributed to this massive water consumption reduction.

I'm sure you all have similar good news stories from your own homes and businesses.

I'm pleased to say the mud hut in the Native Garden has recently been partially renovated. A mud rendering company, 'Mr Mud', replastered the outside and inside mud brick walls using an authentic cow manure and river silt render.

The mud hut gazebo (thank you Jane Wilson for finding the original plan in the archives) was constructed in 1981 at a weekend mud brick construction short course run by the Burnley College (as it was then known). Considering 30 years has passed, I think the structure has done remarkably well. The next stage will be to get the roof shingles re-done. The western red cedar shingles are beginning to rot on the ends as well as cupping upwards from the years of drought. Thank you once again Friends of Burnley Gardens for making the mud hut renovation possible.



I hope you all get a chance to visit the Gardens in the next short while to experience for yourself the wonderful effect 148 years of horticulture has on a Garden.

Speaking of which, the Burnley Gardens will be celebrating 150 years in 2013 and your help and contacts will be needed to make it a memorable occasion. Those of you with any contacts in updating the history of the Gardens please contact me. A lot has been written on the teaching side of things, I think after 150 years the Gardens themselves deserve to be highlighted.

Many thanks to the committee and volunteers who have made 2010 one of the most accomplished so far.

Enjoy your summer festive season and I look forward to catching up with you for Valentine's Day in 2011.

Denise Johnstone is currently a Lecturer/Researcher at the University of Melbourne, Burnley Campus and has been an arborist for over 20 years. She is a life member of the International Society of Arboriculture Australia Chapter and a committee member of the International Development Committee - International Society of Arboriculture. Denise has been in the Women's Circus and has been the national Australian tree climbing champion.

Denise is researching her PhD and is trying to answer the question 'Are hollow trees sick?'. The vitality of a tree is an indication of how healthy it is - if a tree is vital it can withstand stress. Unfortunately this has to be measured indirectly and is usually measured using growth and physiological parameters.

Wood decay is the process by which wood is broken down and it can be measured by assessing density changes. Denise has done this in earlier research. Her current study hopes to:

- Understand the factors effecting the health/vitality of trees
- Understand the factors effecting the amount of above ground carbon stored in trees
- Assist in tree risk assessment
- Assess the amount of above ground carbon in trees
- Increase the understanding of tree biology

Environmental stress causes lower vitality which means less growth. Stress also results in decreased resistance to pathogens and may cause more wood decay which means lower density.

Can wood decay be quantified in *Eucalyptus saligna* using sonic, mechanical resistance and visual methods?

The trees in the study are in a plantation in Tostaree in Gippsland. 36 x 20 year old *E. saligna* were chosen from the same location to limit the variability.

Tree wood decay can be measured by:

- Acoustic methods - sonic method which must have some sound wood in the tree
- Mechanical resistance - using a drill
- Visual methods - although the decay can't be visually seen until there is a large density loss

Denise then detailed how she had tried to establish if there was a relationship between tree growth and wood decay. One method used was to measure the chlorophyll fluorescence of leaf and bark and compare it to the visual vitality index. This was measured in spring, summer and autumn.

Harvesting leaves from 20 year old *Eucalypts* is no easy matter and called for the use of a shotgun. The top branches were needed as lower branches may be in shade. The leaves have to be tested within 3 hours of harvesting. Surprisingly there is quite a lot of bark area that can photosynthesise.

Graphs of the data showed no relationship between the summer leaf results and the summer visual vitality index. This was quite a surprise to Denise. However, the summer bark and the summer vitality index did show a relationship. Spring and autumn results did not show a relationship.

The autumn results were shown at Denise's talk for the first time.

arboriculture.org.au

arboriculture.org.au/info/bigtrees.htm

womenscircus.org.au/



Denise Johnstone with
Mary-Jane Gething

Friends' Activities

Michèle Adler

A number of events in 2010 were extremely popular, for example, the espalier workshop and the botanic art sessions. In the main, they were attended by **non-members**. However, I must say that our monthly member events were generally poorly attended by MEMBERS. We have over 150 members of FOBG but we get less than 20 at our monthly meetings and quite frankly at some of the events it was embarrassing that so few members made the effort to attend.

So now, looking towards next year... We (the committee) have decided to change the format a little. We will start the year on February 14 with a Valentine's meal in the quad courtyard (this date has

become our traditional beginning of the year), after which John Patrick will talk about some of his own garden designs. Many of you may know that John was a lecturer at Burnley in the '80's and later started his own landscape design business. You will have seen him on *Gardening Australia* – always presenting other peoples' work – but John is an extremely talented designer himself. Some of you may even have a garden designed by him. If so, then please bring some pictures along to the event.

Please put Monday 14 February in your 2011 diary **NOW**.

In March, I will give a talk on *Forgotten food plants of the Incas*. There is an amazing array of very nutritious plants which are of South American origin that are just starting to be available in Australia. We can grow them easily in Melbourne, so I'll bring along a few and give an illustrated talk on others.

In April, John Fordham will lead us on a merry dance looking at significant trees in and around Melbourne. This will be a day excursion. Date to be advised.

The Burnley Gardens Open Day will be held on 17 July. This has been a great success for us and a day in which all members can participate.



We have decided to recess for the winter and re-convene in spring – September, October and November.

If you are interested in some hands-on participation in the gardens, there is a regular group helping out in the herb garden on the fourth Monday of each month. Members of the Herb Society Vic will be there too. Talk to Andrew Smith on 9250 6861 if you wish to join this group.

Wishing you a very happy festive season and hoping to see more of you in 2011.

Watching for Wildlife - Jan Chamberlain

13 October

There are few opportunities to see the Burnley Gardens at night with a battery operated spotlight. You may have studied plant identification at night with Michèle Adler at Burnley or attended the talk on wildlife with Ian Temby. We saw possums, bats and heard frogs calling.

Before embarking on our night walk Ian was introduced as one of Victoria's living treasures. He is an unbelievable naturalist and an amazing observer of the natural world. He is the author of *Wild Neighbours - The humane approach to living with wildlife*. At the end of this year he is retiring from his position at the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE).



Brush-tailed possum

Ian commented on the fact that society is becoming increasingly divorced from nature and that young people have no connection with nature. At the same time there have been changes in the natural environment. For example, Little Corellas have dramatically increased their range in the last twenty years. They now nest in houses and make a mess which then upsets people.

People need to determine the cause of their problem. Is the noise in your roof a possum or a rat? They have very different solutions. Knowledge is part of the answer.

Feeding wildlife is not illegal but it is discouraged by the DSE. Feeding can:

- create hazards such as disease
- can harm wildlife as their behaviour alters and they are fed inappropriate food
- be opportunistic on the part of animals (gulls, ibis) as it is left behind by humans
- cause animals to lose their fear of people (e.g. kangaroos)
- lead to dependence of animals on people as the source of their food
- see wildlife build to unnatural concentrations (e.g raccoons in the US) and
- create other unwanted effects as some animals can be destructive (e.g. cockatoos).

Ian then went on to tell us about the various animals that are found in Victoria and their interactions with us humans.

Recently **platypuses** have been seen in the Yarra river closer to Melbourne. They are very

vulnerable to drought, predators, litter (hair ties, six-pack plastic rings), vegetation loss and siltation. Illegal netting also kills many platypus.

Many people have phobias about **spiders** but fortunately most are harmless to people. The White Tailed Spider has been linked to a skin condition that causes ulceration but recent research has suggested the spider is not the cause

The best way to deal with **possums** in rooves is to exclude them. Possums can no longer be legally trapped in gardens.

Kangaroos don't do well when they are close to suburbia. Predators, loss of biodiversity, urbanisation and competition all contribute to the issue.

Wombats have been accused of causing erosion. The fact is they may contribute to it but they are not the main cause. Mange, caused by a mite, is a problem for wombats and they generally die a long painful death. Wombats are territorial and trapping and relocation is not recommended. If there is a wombat around don't put up a fence as it will not stop them. They are creatures of habit and don't respect fences.

Ants can be a problem in the garden but they are a critical link in some ecosystems. The Eltham Copper Butterfly larvae are protected by ants. Ant nests at the base of *Bursaria spinosa* plants provide shelter for the larvae. The larvae come out at night and in return for sugar secretions the ants accompany the larvae as it feeds.

Grey-headed Flying-foxes are classified as a threatened species due to a dramatic reduction in numbers in Queensland. This reduction has corresponded to an increase in numbers in Melbourne. They have caused severe damage in Yarra Valley orchards and have a nuisance effect in backyards. There are no effective deterrents known. Netting can exclude bats (but for the orchardists it is an expensive option ~\$30-40,000 per hectare). Flying-foxes were relocated from the Royal Botanic Gardens in 2003 and are now located at Yarra Bend Park. The site will be developed for the flying-foxes and tourists. Ian told us that the main diet of flying-foxes is liquid and they will chew and chew on an apple (for example) and then press this to the top of their mouth and suck the liquid out. Then they spit out the fibre (called 'spat'). Flying-foxes are known to carry the Australian Bat Lyssavirus so they should not be handled.

Swallows and roosting birds can accumulate in large numbers in warehouses. Their droppings can create a health hazard. They can be excluded or a shelf can be erected for droppings.

Snakes will generally keep away from you. Do not try to catch or kill them. Keep properties clear of rubbish and long grass. If you keep chooks you will have an increased risk of having snakes.

For more information on some of these animals, type the following into your search engine: 'protecting backyard fruit trees'; 'Eltham Copper Butterfly'; 'flying fox' or 'trapping possums DSE'.



Rosta Buc, Ian Temby and
Sue Murphy



Barb Brookes and
Christine Sampson

Annual General Meeting (AGM) - Mary-Jane Gething

13 October

Eighteen members attended the AGM. John Fordham presented his report. In summary:

- John thanked the members attending
- He then reported on our contributions to two major events of the year, the official reopening of the newly-refurbished Luffmann Ponds and the Burnley Gardens Open Day
- John thanked the Committee members for the dedicated work that they have put in over the past year, describing the contributions of each member and passing on thanks to others who have assisted them in their activities
- There are now 159 members of the Friends of Burnley Gardens, a third of whom are Life members. Many of our members have renewed their membership for 10 or more years.

John also presented Andrew's report on works in the Gardens, including:

- The reconstruction of the pond, along with other water saving initiatives, has resulted in a dramatic reduction in water use for the campus.

- A replacement specimen has been planted for the Giant Redwood because the existing tree in the rose garden is suffering from an airborne fungal problem. A fungal treatment is being trialed to halt the disease.
- Other tree planting has been performed either to add new species to the Gardens or to increase species diversity.
- Extensive possum guarding works have been undertaken.

Jane Wilson presented the financial report

Christmas Croquet - Photos: Carol Ferguson; Text: Michèle Adler 20 November

Our final event for the year was the Christmas Croquet. ...and what a fun evening it was. Members of the MCC Croquet Club donned party gear to entertain us with a demonstration croquet match on the 'Principal's Lawn'. But we were not able to rest on our laurels for too long as soon it was our turn to have a go. We croquet-ed and roquet-ed, as the MCC Members 'put us through the hoops' while helping us to understand the game. Finally we 'pegged out' with Dianne's wonderful meal. A fitting end to a busy year.



Propagation Group

Susan Murphy

After our big effort on Open Day, the Propagation Group is pleased to report the launch of semi-regular plant sales outside the Burnley Nursery: these were held on Wednesday 20th October, and just recently, on Wednesday 1st December. Both were well attended by Burnley staff, students and Friends, as well as by clients from nearby businesses. We plan to continue these events next year, and members will receive advance notice.

We are also pleased that Glenys Rose has joined Fran and Sue as a regular at our Wednesday afternoon propagation sessions. Glenys is a recent graduate of the Bachelor of Horticulture, and has a wealth of experience in landscaping, nursery work and more recently, sustainable gardening, so she is a great addition to our team. In conjunction with Andrew Smith, we recently held a planning session to determine our future direction, including the range of plants we hope to propagate and sell in future years.

Our focus is on plants with a connection to the Burnley Gardens, with an emphasis on waterwise/drought tolerant varieties. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with Andrew in selecting and growing plants for the Gardens. A couple of ongoing and future projects are coming up for the Propagation Group. We are currently involved with the Friends of La Trobe's Cottage and propagating plants for their revamped cottage garden.



The species to be planted are known plants of the garden of Governor Charles and Sophie La Trobe and based on the historical sources examined in Helen Botham's publication 'La Trobe's Jolimont - A Walk Around My Garden'. Another project that the Friends may have a role in is the proposed Gallipoli Oak Project, in conjunction with the National Trust. The aim of this project is to commemorate the 100th anniversary of World War 1 by planting specimens of *Quercus calliprinos* in schools throughout Victoria. We are also more than happy to discuss prospective propagation projects with members who may have plans for larger scale plantings at home or at work.

As always, we would like to thank the Nursery staff at Burnley for their continued support of the Propagation Group's activities during the past year, and the Friends for their support at meetings and Open Day. We wish you all a happy Christmas season, and look forward to seeing you at FOBG events in 2011, including future plant sales (dates to be advised).

Membership Update

Carol Ferguson

Over the past months new members who have joined the Friends are: Caroline Brandt, Fiona Burn, Lyn Green, Jennifer Greenhalgh, Elly Fink, Simonne Liberman and Jill Hulbert. Welcome to all of you.

From the Cultural Collection

Jane Wilson

GRACE FRASER - LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT (9.3.1921 – 3.7.2010)

Grace Fraser, former Burnley student and staff member, passed away in July. Grace graduated with a Certificate of Competency in Horticulture from Burnley Horticultural College in 1944 and after spending two years with the CSIRO in Canberra, returned to Burnley as a member of staff.



After the completion of the Administrative Building in 1948, a plan to landscape the area around it was developed by her mentor, Emily Gibson, who asked her to help with the design. She left Burnley in 1950 to travel and then spent the rest of her career in landscape design. She worked with John Stevens on many of his landscape projects and, together with Professor Turner of the University of Melbourne, they developed town planning ideas that were adopted throughout Victoria. These included a requirement to landscape all new industrial and commercial buildings.

Grace was one of the pioneers in landscape design and was particularly keen to show how design could co-exist with conservation and ecological principles. Her works included the layout and planting of schools, Monash University, industrial sites, commercial buildings, private gardens and public parks.

The information for this article was drawn from information held in the Archives at Burnley.

Garden Gossip - What interesting things are our 'Friends' doing?

Judy Carrigan: My biggest news this year is that I will be the Botanical Guide for a Botanica APT tour next May/June taking in Chelsea Flower show 2011 and many 'must-see' gardens in the UK and Wales. Having nearly 20 years in Horticulture since graduating from Burnley's graduate diploma in 1991 and a few years in plant pathology prior to that, I am very excited to be visiting some of the world's favorite English gardens. Many have links to FOBG discussions over the past years. Examples are Kew Gardens where the Millennium seed bank is held, Great Dixter mentioned by Stephen Ryan, and RHS Wisley where Michèle Adler did research and improved Anglo-Aussie relationships. I am particularly excited at the prospect of seeing Sissinghurst again and to see some gardens that horticulturally-savvy friends and acquaintances have mentioned enjoying and giving them inspiration. These include the Beth Chatto Gardens, Hidcote and Powis Castle.



Australian connections at Chelsea will be a highlight in 2011. Both John Arnott and Jim Fogarty spoke at the Burnley Seminars during the year about their design work and preparations for Chelsea. Preparations take more than a year's pre-planning and highly precise almost military execution. I am sure it will be a great thrill to see at Chelsea the first all Australian Native design based on the fantastic Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne and the design by Flemings and their previously multi gold medal winning team.

www.aptouring.com.au/Tour/BTCW10

www.flemings.com.au/chelsea2011/

www.rbq.vic.gov.au/australian-garden/the-ag-goes-to-the-rhs-chelsea-flower-show

In the meantime I am visiting, reading about and talking gardens in preparation for my 2011 travels. You'll also find me solving garden dilemmas with customers at Town and Country Gardens Nursery in Malvern and looking forward to Christmas. Yarra City Council requested I trim my *Eucalyptus*



caesia 'Silver Princess' so I have used it for my Christmas decorations (see picture at right) and made some yummy gingerbread using a recipe by Jill Dupleix. Get out those fancy shaped Christmas biscuit cutters that clutter up the baking cupboard or use a knife or glass to shape as the decorative spirit takes you.



Jill Dupleix's Gingerbread

115 g soft brown sugar
175 ml golden syrup
90 g butter
1 tblspn ground ginger
1 tspn fresh grated ginger
1 tblspn cinnamon

1 tblspn bicarb soda
4 cups plain flour
pinch salt
2 eggs beaten

Combine first 6 ingredients in saucepan over low heat, melt, stir, take off heat, cool 2 mins then quickly stir in 1 tblspn bicarb soda.

In a large mixing bowl sift flour, add salt, pour eggs into well in centre and gradually add the syrup until all incorporated into a dough. Chill covered dough 1 hour in fridge. Roll out thinly on lightly floured surface and cut shapes out. Bake on trays lined with baking paper 10-12 mins in 180°C oven. Remove from oven and cool 5 mins before removing from tray. Cool on wire rack and store in airtight containers. Makes about 30 round biscuits. Can be decorated with dried fruit etc. before baking if making gingerbread men or women. Great with a cup of tea.

The **Friendly Guides** combined their Xmas lunch with a celebration of Jean Corbett's 70th birthday at Studley Park boathouse.

Jean (blowing out the candles) is still actively participating in the guides group and regularly leads tours of Burnley Gardens.

Pamela Carder (left), Jane Wilson (right) and Christine Sampson (who made the cake) are there to enjoy the day.



FOBG Committee Members

Chairperson	John Fordham
Deputy Chairperson	Michèle Adler
Treasurer	Jane Wilson
Secretary	Mary-Jane Gething
Membership	Carol Ferguson
Member (Merchandise)	Saskia Townsend
Member	Dianne Cranston
Co-opted Member	Susan Murphy
Gardens Representative	Andrew Smith*
Publicity	Geoffrey Kneebone*

* non-committee positions

Contacts for activities:

Michèle Adler 5145 5422 michele@adland.com.au
Andrew Smith 9250 6861 a.smith@unimelb.edu.au

Friends' Benefits

As a member you will receive:

- Three newsletters (Papyrus) per year detailing past and future events and activities and current projects in the Gardens
- Discounts for most Friends' activities including interesting guest speakers, garden visits, theatre nights and more
- Opportunities to purchase plants and other merchandise at member meetings
- Discounts on purchases at specified retail outlets
- Priority bookings for special events and activities

Your membership also allows you to:

- Support the historic Burnley Gardens
- Join the Friendly Guides
- Help with the Cultural Collection
- Work in the Gardens
- Help with label making
- Join the propagation group
- Meet like-minded people that seek a greater interest in contemporary horticulture
- Use the Burnley library during business hours (but not to borrow books)
- Access to the Burnley seminar series

Editor's note

Jan Chamberlain

This will be my last newsletter. It is the 50th edition of *Papyrus* so that seems as good a number as any to say 'good bye'. Thanks to everyone who has contributed over the last three years. It is time for someone else to take over and give the members a fresh look at the activities of the Friends of Burnley Gardens. Thanks for reading the newsletter and for your feedback. Merry Christmas and have a great 2011.

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
Plants at various prices

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Diary Dates

2011	
FEBRUARY Monday 14 February	John Patrick will talk about some of his own garden designs. Meal and lecture: \$20 (members of FOBG), \$30 (non-members) Lecture only: \$3 (members), \$12 (non-members)
FEBRUARY Monday 28 February	Regular hands-on garden maintenance in the Gardens. Talk to Andrew Smith on 9250 6861 if you wish to join this group. Members of the Herb Society Vic also come along.
MARCH Date TBA	Michèle Adler <i>Forgotten food plants of the Incas</i> . There is an amazing array of very nutritious plants which are of south American origin that are just starting to be available in Australia.
MARCH Monday 28 March	Regular hands-on garden maintenance in the Gardens. Talk to Andrew Smith on 9250 6861 if you wish to join this group. Members of the Herb Society Vic also come along.
APRIL Date TBA	John Fordham will lead us on a merry dance looking at significant trees in and around Melbourne. This will be a day excursion.
MAY Monday 23 May	Regular hands-on garden maintenance in the Gardens. Talk to Andrew Smith on 9250 6861 if you wish to join this group. Members of the Herb Society Vic also come along.
JUNE Monday 27 June	Regular hands-on garden maintenance in the Gardens. Talk to Andrew Smith on 9250 6861 if you wish to join this group. Members of the Herb Society Vic also come along.
JULY Sunday 17 July	Burnley Gardens Open Day. A great family outing. Kids activities, demonstrations, talks, seminars, gardener's forum and pruning workshops. Refreshments available. Further details available late May 2011.
JULY Monday 25 July	Regular hands-on garden maintenance in the Gardens. Talk to Andrew Smith on 9250 6861 if you wish to join this group. Members of the Herb Society Vic also come along.
AUGUST Monday 22 August	Regular hands-on garden maintenance in the Gardens. Talk to Andrew Smith on 9250 6861 if you wish to join this group. Members of the Herb Society Vic also come along.

We have decided to recess over winter and re-convene in spring – September, October and November.