

# Dovyalis

Friends of Bendigo Botanic  
Gardens Inc. Newsletter

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## In this issue:

1. BBG Curator - Brad Creme
2. Plant Review
3. From 'The President'
4. Samuel Gadd  
- Visionary Curator
6. Bendigo Botanical  
Illustrators Shiny  
Leaf Workshop
6. Botanic Illustrators  
Exhibition
6. Garden Guides
7. Progress on the Master Plan
8. What's On - 2015



## BBG Curator - Brad Creme

Welcome to the first edition of 'Dovyalis'. This newsletter is a collective production by the Friends of Bendigo Botanic Gardens, White Hills (FBBG). On behalf of all the contributors to this and future editions of Dovyalis, I'd like to thank you for having a read and we hope our readers get some entertainment and information about the Bendigo Botanic Garden (BBG) and many related topics.

Why Dovyalis? In the tradition of other publications by botanic gardens throughout Australia, a significant plant genus is often used as a magazine name.



*Dovyalis caffra*, the Kei Apple Tree has long been a symbol of the Bendigo Botanic Gardens, White Hills due to a remarkable specimen tree in the centre of the garden. It has also taken on significant meaning for the Friends of Bendigo Botanic Gardens as the symbol of their group, featuring in illustrations, logos, uniforms and various other graphics. Ferdinand von Mueller obtained this plant along with many other species from southern Africa for the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, and many of these were distributed to regional botanic gardens throughout Victoria in the 1800's. The Botanic Gardens, White Hills received plant material from him as early as 1861.

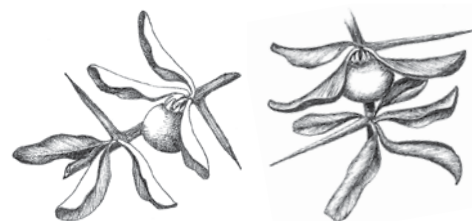
The Kei apple is a medium sized tree that gets its name from the Kei River in South Africa. It is native to the east coast including Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Tanzania. It is rare in cultivation but becoming more widely planted where space is available due to its tasty apricot-like fruits (that also leave yellow stains on your fingers).

As with many southern African species, it has large thorns, strong timber and edible fruit and is well adapted to Bendigo's climate. Our heritage listed tree is renowned for its size, form and age and has recently been given a new audience by its incorporation into the new children's play space. In its native habitat it offers shelter, food and protection to various species of monkey but here in Bendigo it has become a kids' climbing tree.



*Children playing in the Kei Apple Tree*

Botanic Illustrator and current President of the FBBG, Jan Orr has painted the fruit, thorns and leaves of this tree. These images have gone from black and white drawings to colour illustrations through to computer generated embroidery on FBBG uniforms.



*Initial pen drawings by Jan Orr*





*Embroidered logo*

The Growing Friends have propagated this tree previously and planted another in the garden. If you have the space at home, and the patience to watch it grow, you may want to try planting one in your own backyard. They can also be hedged, but watch out for those thorns when you pick up the prunings. Judy Milner leads the Growing Friends and can help you learn how to propagate plants or become an FBBG member. Judy and the volunteers also run plant sales with funds going back into the garden.

The FBBG have contributed to the BBG in many ways since their formation and have always supported heritage gardens throughout Bendigo and beyond. I wish to thank them for promoting Bendigo's heritage gardens, horticulture and nature in general. They now take a new step in producing a newsletter to further reach out to the community and engage with like minded people who have an interest and a passion for gardening.

Former President of the FBBG Jane Cleary has been working to promote the garden since the early 1990's and this year some significant results can now be seen from her work and that of many other enthusiastic garden advocates involved in this project.

In 2015, the BBG is undergoing an unprecedented expansion with the recent completion of the new road to the 'Garden for the Future' precinct. The City of Greater Bendigo is proud to announce that work on construction of this 3 hectare contemporary expansion to the gardens is planned to begin in late 2015.

I often hear stories from visitors who remind me what the garden was like 50 years ago (or even earlier) so it's exciting to be involved in a new stage for this garden and to see it develop.

I hope you enjoy your next visit to the garden and also enjoy *Dorvalis*, the newsletter of the Friends of Bendigo Botanic Gardens.



*Fruit*

*Fruit of the Kei Apple*

## Plant Review

By Kirstie Paterson – Parks Staff – Leading Hand

Botanical Name: *Vitex agnus-castus*

Family: Lamiaceae

Common Name: Chaste Tree

This very attractive plant is located in our Victorian Cottage Gardens. *Vitex*, also known as Chaste Tree, Chaste Berry or Monks Pepper is a deciduous shrub or small tree which grows to about 4 meters. It has aromatic palmate leaves which are divided into five or seven elliptic pointed leaflets to 10cm. The leaves are grey-green in colour with downy undersides and the scented lilac flowers are formed on new wood in upright spikes which attract butterflies and bees (as seen in the photo). These are followed by purple to black berries.

Medicinally the ripe berries are used as a relaxant herb that regulates hormonal functions. The dried berries are used as a substitute for pepper and in Middle Eastern spice mixes.

### Growing Conditions

*Vitex* will grow in full sun to part shade and tolerates a wide range of soils. It is also frost hardy. We prune back the *vitex* hard in winter to keep it a compact shrub, and feed it with an organic fertiliser prior to spring growth. This plant is one of my favourites in the garden.





## From The President'

Jan Orr

The Friends of Bendigo Botanic Gardens were started in 2000, a milestone date if ever there was one and therefore we are now 15 years old.

For all of this time Jane Cleary has been the driving force in our development. She has served the FBBG as secretary, president and guide.



Jane has always been fascinated in the variety and growth of plants. This interest started in her native England and continued throughout her travels before settling in Australia. It is unusual for one person to acquire such a wide knowledge of plants from around the world.

(Jane is the 'go to' person for quick ID of European and Australian plants. If the plant is new to her she knows which section of the reference book to turn to.)

Bendigo has been most fortunate to have a community member with such depth of botanical and horticultural knowledge who has been prepared to use this knowledge to assist in the development and restoration of our botanic gardens.

Jane's involvement in the Bendigo Botanic Gardens goes back beyond the establishment of the Friends. She understood the importance of Bendigo's Botanic Garden to the community and the need to restore it to a standard that is again worthy of its 'botanic' title.

To achieve this she attended countless meetings, public forums and steering committees. She wrote letters and submissions to council and lobbied councillors. She freely gave her time to give talks and conducted garden walks to clubs, schools and community groups.

All this activity has been centered around the pivotal importance of plants in our lives and the need for a botanical garden in Bendigo that places plants and horticulture in the foreground.

It has been my privilege to work alongside Jane for much of this journey. Through her I have come to appreciate the historic importance of trees and the need to propagate replacement plants. (It gives us pleasure to see some of the plants that we have propagated now growing in the gardens) The most crucial things for me to learn from Jane were 'don't go away, be there', and that there is no obstacle we can't swerve around.

Jane's retirement from the FBBG executive does not mean that she has 'put her feet up' to contemplate her considerable achievements as she is busier than ever leading garden tours for interested groups.

Jane, the Friends of Bendigo Botanic Gardens thank-you.

Jan Orr  
FBBG President



## Samuel Gadd - Visionary Curator

Research and article by Helen Hickey (FBBG)

'The White Hills hamlet is worth a visit – for one shilling each way, we have really good botanical gardens with a small but varied collection of native animals'



As early as 1862 Bendigonians were being encouraged to visit our botanical garden – and for 'one shilling each way' the time spent here was considered well worth the cost.

The man whose work inspired many visits over the past century and beyond was curator Samuel George Gadd.

Samuel G. Gadd was born in 1844 in the parish of Blagdon, Sommerset, England.

From an early age, Samuel expressed interest in horticulture and his first professional gardening position was at the House of Sutton (Sutton Seeds).

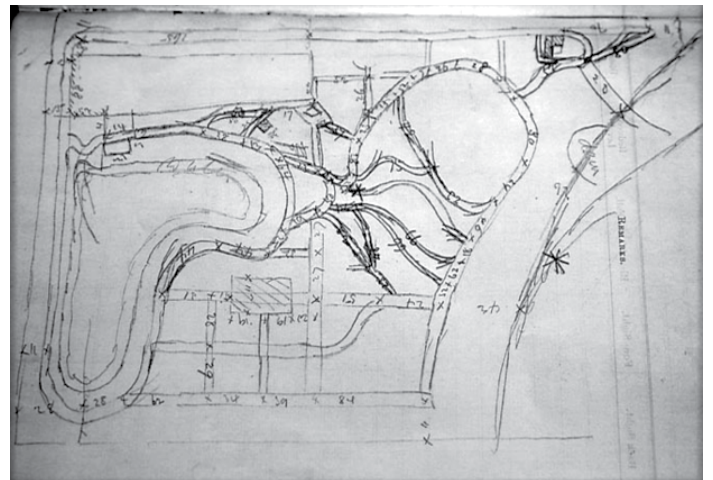
In 1870, at the age of 26, Samuel and his wife Eliza arrived in Australia aboard the Steamship, 'The Great Britain'. They had one son together who died in infancy in 1871.

According to a rates notice taken in 1873 Gadd stated his occupation as 'Florist' and was living in Barnard Street, Bendigo.

Gadd was appointed resident curator of the Bendigo Botanic Gardens at White Hills in 1873, however, by 1875 he had been appointed overall Curator of Parks and Gardens and therefore was also responsible for Rosalind Park and later the Lake Weeroona reserve. His work load seemed endless - he was amongst other things a supervisor, planner, animal keeper and reporter to the Council. His prior knowledge in gardening stood him in good stead, though trying to cope with endless Australian summers, lack of water, rising salt issues together with birds and monkeys, a paddock of animals, including deer and constant demands from council must have been challenging!

From 1873 to 1875 he designed a network of connecting pathways through beds of herbaceous plants and shrubs. Around the perimeter of the gardens he planted avenues of elms, pines and oaks and some of these trees still survive.

In April 1874 The council's intention to remove Gadd as resident curator at the Botanic Gardens White Hills and install him as resident curator at the Camp Reserve (now Rosalind Park) sparked an angry petition from the White Hills residents who noted that Gadd had 'transformed what was formerly almost a wilderness into a pleasant place of resort' and were concerned that if Gadd left, 'the number of visitors would consequently be reduced also'.



Plans from a notebook presumed to belong to Samuel Gadd dated 1877 – the period when he was the curator of the three major parks in Bendigo confirms his attention to detail and determination to have a watering system in the White Hills gardens. It is believed to have been drawn by him for the council's Parks committee to estimate a new irrigation scheme.

Confidence seems to grow in Samuel Gadd's work. In 1880 correspondence from Gadd calling attention to the 'Green House' in the Botanic Gardens and the need for repairs to the keeper's lodge. The Parks Committee recommended the lodge roof be repaired by putting an iron roof over the existing shingles and that other repairs 'be left in Gadd's hands'.

A report he gave to Council in 1883 describing works carried out at the Botanical Gardens, Lake Weeroona and Rosalind Park gives us an insight into his many duties;

'At (the) Botanical Gardens the usual work of attending and keeping the flower borders clean and in good order, as well as shrubs and trees, planting where required, which has been a large quantity compared with other years; I am sorry to inform you that nearly all three large *Pinus insignis* trees [Monterey Pine], and willow trees on the island have died out, which is a great disfigurement to the gardens, these we have been obliged to



remove and replant; the cause I think is owing[sic] to the roots reaching brackish water. This if correct will cause extra expense each year by removing and replanting other trees that will be suitable for the soil'.

In his 1894 report he writes,

'Last year it was decided to remove the entrance. This was carried out and the gates put facing the main road and a drive made around the ground for the convenience of the public. This compelled us to make alterations which are a great improvement and the gardens have been well patronized since. Everything at present looks well and is in good order'.

The Fernery in Rosalind Park was another of his many achievements in Bendigo. In 1879 a George Mackay, botanist and fern enthusiast, suggested creation of a fernery in 'The Willows', using many species of indigenous Victorian ferns.



In 1880 construction of the fernery began under the supervision of Gadd who estimated three hundred and twenty pounds was needed for excavation, filling in portion of the water, finding stones and ferns, and laying on water. By 1888 the fernery was completed and later it was described in the Bendigo Advertiser as 'a beauty spot which the larger cities of the Commonwealth might be proud of'.

Acknowledging his expertise Samuel Gadd was commandeered to supervise a floral display for the Golden Jubilee Exhibition, 1901 which was opened on the 13th November by the Governor-General (Lord Hopetoun) to commemorate the discovery of gold in Bendigo. Gadd's skills were called upon to create a decorative scheme in the exhibition area adjacent to the Bendigo Town Hall.

He designed and directed the construction of a fern walk, rockeries, a fish pond stocked with gold fish, and a waterfall, together with a fountain. Abundant palms, ferns and other foliage (sourced from Gippsland) were placed around the main court. The exhibition attracted visitors from various parts of the state.

A medal awarded to Samuel Gadd is engraved with the words, 'To the deserving arts, distinguished honour, celebrating the Centennial Exhibition, Melbourne in 1888', was discovered by a man in Gympie, Qld. and has been donated to CoGB. It has been a source of interest as more information is sought.

By 1903, the year he retired, Samuel Gadd was a well known figure in Bendigo. He held the position of curator of parks and gardens for over thirty years. He and his wife, Eliza attended the Mayoral Balls and he was a member of the Bendigo Jockey Club. He took a keen interest in mining and had a portfolio of many shares. He was also a prominent member of the Masonic Lodge.

According to the Bendigo Advertiser, twelve years after his retirement, he returned to Melbourne and entered the Masonic Homes where he died in September 1917. After thirty years of service to Bendigo, Samuel Gadd has been acknowledged as a passionate and industrious worker. Today the Botanic Gardens, White Hills are a constant source of enjoyment to locals and visitors.

'Everything at present looks well and is in good order' When Gadd uttered these words in 1894 he may, with a typical gardener's gift of foresight, have been confident that the future for his beloved gardens was a bright one. The Samuel Gadd Centre, located in the Bendigo Botanic Gardens, White Hills has been named in recognition of Curator Gadd's contribution to Bendigo's botanical heritage. The centre occupies a renovated early 1980's house formerly used by the caretaker. It was officially opened in 2006 and formally named in 2007.



## Bendigo Botanical Illustrators Shiny Leaf Workshop

Tutor - Fiona McKinnon  
Report Rod Orr

Our most recent workshop was conducted by Fiona McKinnon, who tutors at the Jenny Phillips School of Botanical Art in Melbourne. Fiona is a very experienced and highly regarded teacher who has won several awards for her art works.

She encouraged us to make our paintings bolder so that they stood out from the page. We used quite intense colour mixes and dark shadows in an effort to achieve this.

The leaves chosen, from the Fire-wheel Tree (*Stenocarpus sinuatus*) in the Bendigo Botanic Gardens, had bright yellow veins, interesting shapely margins and curls & folds. They were quite a challenge. Mixing a convincing green to match the colour of any leaf is always challenging so we all had plenty to think about during this one day workshop.



Although our group is relatively small we are able to organize at least 2 workshops each year and we have invited a diversity of tutors to conduct these for us. We also run in-house workshops on particular topics when the need arises. Every one of our regular sessions (Wednesday mornings & Saturdays) throughout the year is an opportunity to

observe and learn from each other. We are pleased that our group is so co-operative and offers such strong mutual support and assistance to our members.

We are neither exclusively 'Botanical' nor 'Watercolour' and occasionally branch out into other subjects or the use of different media. Several of our members have remained with the group since its formation in 2005. We exhibit our work occasionally and our most recent exhibition was held at Dudley House, Bendigo.

Through exhibiting our work we have managed to attract many interested people some of whom have joined and remain members of our group. We welcome visitors who are interested in illustration and painting, who just want to see what we do or because they may be considering joining a group such as the Bendigo Botanical Illustrators.

## Botanical Illustrators Exhibition

The illustrators held a very successful exhibition of their work at Dudley House Bendigo from 2nd-10th May 2015. Both Mayor Peter Cox and Steven Ryan (horticulturist, rare plant nurseryman and television presenter) spoke at the official opening on May 1st, which was very well attended.

The venue was ideal and an extensive range of illustrations was displayed. These were mainly watercolour but also included coloured pencil, photography, and mosaic works.

There were many positive comments made commending the professional standard of the work and the way it was presented. The illustrators are very much appreciated for the skill and work involved in presenting this important exhibition, which promotes the Botanic Gardens and highlights the plants.



## Garden Guides

Garden Guides play an important role in informing visitors about the key elements of the gardens, including the collections, the heritage, and the future plans. People gain a lot more from their visit by participating in one of these tours. Jane Cleary and Jan Orr from the Friends as well as the parks staff have guided various groups through the gardens recently. We would love to increase the number of guides and invite anyone who may be interested in this role to come along to the next guided walk run by Jane.

Please contact Jane on ph. 54 484396 if you are at all interested in becoming a guide and could join Jane on a tour.

For more information on the role of Guides in Botanic Gardens there is a good article in the Autumn 2015 edition of The Wellingtonia which is the Friends of Ballarat Botanic Gardens Newsletter. See the link to newsletter on their website [www.fbbg.org.au](http://www.fbbg.org.au)





## Gardens Development Update - Garden for the Future

Gemma Fennell, Bendigo Botanic Gardens Development Officer, City of Greater Bendigo



The Garden for the Future project is progressing well.

Community consultation demonstrated public support and the designers are now getting ready to document the garden for construction.

The exciting new garden is being designed by Taylor Cullity Lethlean landscape architects who are known for designing outstanding botanical institutes such as The Australian Garden at the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne and the National Arboretum in Canberra.

The design for the new, two-hectare, contemporary garden will showcase plants from around Australia and the world at large. All the plants will be especially selected to suit Bendigo's dry climate.

500 different species of plants will call the garden home and they will grow to become a sensational background for community gatherings and events.

Once completed, the City of Greater Bendigo want the Garden for the Future to function as an outdoor classroom for school groups; to be a place that inspires children to learn about and love plants and to respect and care for the environment.

The project is funded through a partnership between the Friends of Bendigo Botanic Gardens, City of Greater Bendigo and the Victorian Government. Construction will start in November and community groups are already inquiring about booking the garden for functions in 2017 when it opens to the public.

### Background

In 2010 Council developed and adopted a master plan for the upgrade and extension of the Bendigo Botanic Gardens, White Hills. In addition to Garden for the Future and restoration of the existing heritage-listed garden, the plan includes a new visitor centre; regional-scale playspace; childrens' garden and arboretum. The vision statement is that the Gardens will 'Respect the past, appreciate the present and embrace the future'. The Friends of Bendigo Botanic Gardens are instrumental to the Gardens, continuously promoting its ongoing significance.



## What's On - 2015

The Friends' Monthly General Meetings are open to all members .

Held at Bendigo Botanic Gardens Samuel Gadd Centre - 2.30pm on 3rd Tuesday of the month (except December). Office bearers are elected for 2 year terms and the annual meeting is held in August.

### Growing Friends

Propagate plants for the gardens and for sale as well as assist the BBG park staff in the gardens.

They meet: 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month (9:30am - 11:30am) at BBG nursery (behind the Samuel Gadd Centre).

Plants are available for sale during Growing Friends on the 4th Tuesday of the month. Two major sales are held each year in Spring and Autumn.

### Botanical Illustration Group

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

<b>June 4th 2015</b>	Launch of Dovyalis Newsletter and life membership award to Jane Cleary.	Samuel Gadd Centre, Bendigo Botanic Gardens. 10am-11am followed by an optional guided walk.
<b>June 5th 2015</b>	Australian Association of FBG - Presentation, Tour and AGM 9.30am	Ballarat Botanic Gardens. info@friendsbotanicgardens.org
<b>July 2nd 2015</b>	Curators Walk and Talk 'Ecology of the Bendigo Botanic gardens.	11am-12am Bendigo Botanic Gardens.
<b>August 11th 2015</b>	FBBG Annual General Dinner Meeting with speaker Stephen Ryan. (Rare plant nurseryman, horticulturalist and media presenter.)	Samuel Gadd Centre. Commencing at 6.30 with speaker at 8pm.
<b>September 5th</b>	Vegetable Growing Workshop. Parks Staff.	Bendigo Botanic Gardens. Bookings 54346000
<b>September 10th 2015</b>	Visit to Australian Botanic Garden Shepparton Transformation of the Old Kialla Tip into a feature botanic garden.	Car pooling from Samuel Gadd Centre. Guided walk 11am. See web site riverconnect.com.au Click on news.
<b>September 21st-25th 2015</b>	Volunteer Guides Conference. 'Guiding in a Changing Climate'	Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney. Contact: Donna Osland email Donna.Osland@rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au
<b>October 25th-29th 2015</b>	7th BGANZ Congress.	Wollongong Botanic Gardens, NSW



*FBBG Committee Meeting in the shed – in the early days.  
Note the custom made table!*

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