

Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden Newsletter

August 2008

What's On

10th August 10.00 am - Clean Up Day

Meet at Rotunda – Lakeside Boulevard.

13th August 7.00 pm - AGM & Landscape Architects

"Meet the Landscape Architect". Woodgrove Community Room.

14th August Thursday 10.00 am Grow the Garden - Ryans Creek Planting Day.

Meet at corner of Tullidge St and William St, behind Melton Timber and Home store.

19th August Tuesday 6.00 pm - Water Monitoring

Mikala from Werribee Plains Waterwatch will help us develop the Water Monitoring Plan.

21 Leggatt Street, Melton South, 9743 3819.

24th August Sunday 10.00 am Grow the Garden - Ryans Creek Planting.

Meet at corner of Tullidge St and William St, behind Melton Timber and Home store.

13th September Saturday all day – Fundraising BBQ at Bunnings

This is a major fundraising event. Please contact Jill on 9743 3819 if you can help on the day.

10th September Wednesday 7.30pm Meeting

"What is flowering now and next month?" Bring cuttings from your garden or a nearby area. Community Room Woodgrove Shopping Centre.

26th September Friday 6.30 pm Social Dinner

Melton Club - contact Lynette Rehling to book a place 9747 9034.

Landscape Design First-Cut

Michael Smith and Associates presented the first-cut of the landscape design plans at the meeting on 13th August for the Melton Botanic Garden. Feedback was given by members on the plans, infrastructure, site and plants.

The timelines for undertaking the landscape design are tight with the expected completion by early October. Members can next attend an on-site meeting late August or early September with

the Landscape Architects to further discuss ideas and plants.



Ryans Creek Project

Well it's finally rained and just in time for the planting along Ryans Creek.

We sourced plants from the Greybox and Grassland Nursery and Western Plains Flora Nursery. We have \$3,000 allocated to spend on plants, mulch and stakes.



Getting ready to start planting

This is a joint project with the Melton Environment Group (MEG). FMBG have been given a \$2,000 grant from MSC and we are contributing \$1,000 from FMBG fundraising activities to purchase indigenous plants for this project.

Ryans Creek retains some indigenous Creepline Grassy Woodland vegetation which needs to be protected and enhanced. It is an endangered EVC.



Norma doing her first planting at the Melton Botanic Garden

On Thursday 24th July and Sunday 27th July members were out there planting. Allan Benson, Aaron Benson, Jill and John Bentley also put in more plants on Saturday afternoon 26th July. On Sunday morning after overnight rain most of the Saturday planting was underwater, but survived.



Don making holes for plants with the Hamilton Tree Planter

Membership Renewal

Your annual membership is now due. Please renew your membership at the next meeting or by post. If you need a membership form or wish to drop in your money please call Jill 9743 3819.

All members' renewals are due on July 1st.
Single - \$10 Single concession or student -\$5
Household/Concession - \$20/\$10
Corporate - \$50

It is important to show we have a large membership base to help get grant funding and MSC support. In 2007/08 we had just over 150 financial memberships.

Please call Jill 9743 3819 for information or to drop in a payment. If you are housebound we can arrange to collect your payment and form.

Propagate for Djerriwarrh Festival

Last year selling of plants was a major fundraising activity and thanks to many members who propagated plants we had lots to sell. So make sure you are on track to help out and start putting those cutting in or dividing plants. If you need pots contact Margaret Peters 5367 3328. The group also has potting-up days for the many plants we are growing for sale.

We also need many more pots. So please recycle your pots by giving them to Margaret P.

Calendar items 2009

We are now starting to think about the 2009 FMBG calendar. Please consider ideas for guest speakers, topics and activities for 2009. The Executive would like to have a draft ready in September so that we have a final calendar to distribute at the Djerriwarrh Festival. Please share your ideas by speaking to an executive Committee Member or email us your idea to botanicfriends@fmbg.org.au

Growing the Garden Days

"Growing the Garden Days" are held on the 2nd Thursday and also 4th Sunday of each month. This allows those who are free weekdays to attend and also provide a weekend activity.

Clean-Up Days

"Clean-Up days" are held on the second Sunday of each second month. The August clean-up day had to be cancelled due to rain and consequently

being too water logged to enter the site. *Next clean-up day is Sunday October 12th.*

Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held on Wednesday 13th August
The following positions were filled through nominations received before the meeting:

President: John Bentley
Vice-President: *Vacant*
Secretary: Janet Dyke
Assistant Secretary: Alan Partridge
Treasurer: Margaret Peters
Executive committee members: Tushan Fernando, Jill Bentley, Allan Benson
Public Officer: Leo Johnson
Returns Officer: Don Nardella
Safety Officer: *vacant*

Please consider nominating yourself or others you feel you could fill the VP or Safety Officer positions. Contact FMBG Secretary Janet Dyke 9743 2743 or email secretary@fmbg.org.au

Bird sightings at the Melton Botanic Garden

Here is a story from one of our FMBG members, Daryl Akers.

Just back from a walk around the lake at Town Centre Park (site of the Melton Botanic Garden), saw three new birds for this site.

I stopped in the new gazebo for a few minutes. Just across the water was a Royal Spoonbill standing on the hill there. It has a spotless white coat, glossy blue-back bill and legs, and long plumes about 3-4 inches long at the back of its head. It stood there for a few minutes, then turned and walked to the top of the hill. It then flew into a dead tree. In the tree was a Yellow-billed Spoonbill. Most Yellow-billed Spoonbills I have seen seem to have a dirty appearance, and this one was no exception. It was a striking contrast to the spotless appearance of the Royal Spoonbill perched about three metres away. I have never seen them together before. I saw a Royal Spoonbill by a farm dam at Exford yesterday also, along Eynesbury Road, just before the forest.

In the long flooded Paspalum grass immediately east of the lake, where the water drains through the long grass from the freeway into the lake, there were several small birds. They flew into the air at my approach. I have seen them here before a few times but have not seen them close enough to have any idea what they were. They had a fluttering butterfly-like flight, hovering above the grass for a few seconds then flying into the Cumbungi. They perched on the edge for a few moments, long enough to get a short look at them. The first impression was that they may be Reed Warblers, as they flew into the cumbungi and disappeared. But they seemed too small, had striated markings, and made a curious nasal call, rather like a single Zebra Finch call, but stretched out for about a second, with a downward inflection. Completely unlike the song of a Reed warbler, also I have never seen Reed Warblers flying out of dense grasses like this (almost quail-like). Could these be Cisticolas perhaps? Would they be found around here? I'll check with Dave at BOCA on this one

and from Nora Peters:

I had a cancellation so went looking at nest in Hannah Watts, nothing, so went down to Botanical Gardens and saw bird fly into tree, got a couple of shots, but not that good and then I was surprised by another flying up and dislodging the other! Snuck around the tree and got 80 odd shots before it too left!



(Photo © Nora Peters)

If you have stories or photographs from activities in the Melton Botanic Garden please send them in: botanicfriends@fmbg.org.au
