



# FRIENDS OF VICTORIA GARDENS

## Newsletter November 2020

**President: Vihra Migios**  
**Secretary: Denise Saville**  
**Treasurer: Jill Hawker**

**Email: [info.fovg@gmail.com](mailto:info.fovg@gmail.com)**

**Website: [www.fovg.org.au](http://www.fovg.org.au)**

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### **Dear Member,**

Well what a year it has been and only now are Victorians getting back to some level of normality. The 5 km limit and then the 25 km travel limit, closure of the border to other States and overseas, and working from home if you can, resulted residents being confined to their local area. The use of Victoria Gardens by residents has been enormous and overall, the Gardens has coped well with this increased use. A new and unusual feature in the Gardens, and many other parks and gardens, are painted circles on the lawn to ensure 1.5m social distancing is adhered to.

The spring flower display has now passed and in coming months the Coral Tree, Cape Chestnut, Geraniums and Viburnums will be a feature. The temperature has started to increase and unfortunately November has been very dry. With an average of 60mm only 9mm has been received. The rainfall over the 22 November has been very welcome.



For the first time in over 25 years there was no Spring Int Gardening, and earlier cancellations of Opera and Jazz in the Gardens has probably helped limit the impact on the Gardens, especially the sunken oval. All the Friends activities including the Garden Volunteer Program and Prahran High School project have been put on hold due to COVID-19. Council's animal management plan is due for review in 2021, and the impact of Dogs in Victoria Gardens will be an ongoing issue.

The new and improved Lumley Playground opened in September and has been busy. The array of new play equipment, new challenges and experiences are being enjoyed by families. The landscaping and planting is a vast improvement on the previous design and extra seating has been welcomed. A thank you to Amy Lee and others who lobbied Council to get this project underway and for their assistance in finalising the design.

Thank you to all those who have renewed their Friends membership. For those who are unfinancial but wish to join, membership details are on the Friends website.

## Plant News:



In a few weeks the spectacular Cape Chestnut (*Calodendrum capense*) on axis with the Murray Street path will be covered in purple-pink orchid like flowers. A small tree in the south east corner along Hight Street already has a few flowers. The pink flower with darker markings is slightly fragrant. The fruit is a 5 angled warty capsule about 3.5cm long and contains shiny black seeds.

Cape chestnut oil obtained from the seeds, otherwise known as *Yangu oil*, is a popular oil in African skin care. Its inherent ultraviolet protection, its high content of essential fatty acids and antioxidants and its mild odour destined it for natural cosmetics.

The tree can reach 20 metres high in a forest, but in cultivation it is more likely to reach 10 metres, with a spreading canopy. It is native to a swathe of the east side of the continent from the equatorial highlands of Kenya at its northern limit southwards through isolated mountains in Tanzania to both sides of Lake Malawi, the Mashonaland Plateau and Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe, and then along the lower slopes of the Drakensberg Mountains of South Africa and in coastal forests from Port Elizabeth to Cape Town.

### **Next Meeting:**

Due to COVID-19 restrictions the AGM will be held in Victoria Gardens beside the RSL Memorial on Tuesday 24 November at 6.00pm.

This will be followed by an Ordinary Meeting at 6.30 pm