



FRIENDS OF VICTORIA GARDENS

Newsletter March 2023

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Dear Member,

Welcome to 2023 and a future where pandemic restrictions are fewer. Melbourne has had near average rainfall and the Gardens have enjoyed a slightly cooler summer, with only one day to reach 40.5°C, the first time in 2 years to reach this temperature. The previous day was 37.2°C and only 4 other days were over 30°C. Unusually, the first week of February was wet and cold, temperatures ranging from 18-22°C. The last day of February was just 17°C.

This year is the third La Nina cycle of above average rainfall and there has never been a fourth. Predictions are that autumn will be hotter and dryer than average as Australia moves into an El Nino cycle.

An absence of extreme temperatures has seen the Gardens being presented in an attractive and colourful state. A highlight has been the flower bed inside the High Street entrance. Redeveloped in October when the four declining Prunus 'Elvins' were removed and replaced with Prunus mume 'Pendula' and an annual display of petunia, variegated coleus and the Spider Flower (Cleome).





There have been a few inquiries about the Spider Flower (Cleome), a rarely grown annual but highly recommended for sunny locations. Now *Tarenaya hassleriana* (syn. *Cleome hassleriana*) is a species native to southern South America, southeast Brazil to Argentina. The flowers are purple, pink, or white, with four petals and six long stamens. The fruit is a capsule up to 15cm long containing several seeds. A feature of the plant is its height which can reach more than 0.5m.

Spring into Gardening:

The Friends have contacted Council to inquire if this important community event will be reinstated in 2023.

Victoria Gardens Volunteers:

The guidelines, agreement and risk assessment forms have been reviewed and updated and forwarded to Council. A meeting with Council to finalise the forms will be held on 14 March with the expectation that the program will recommence shortly. Members will be updated as soon as possible.

News:

The Friends now have an Instagram presence at **friendsofvictoriagardens** and a WhatsApp group. We invite you to join our WhatsApp group by emailing the Friends at info.fovg@gmail.com and contribute by forwarding highlights and features of the Gardens.

The Website is undergoing a redesign and major upgrade which will be finalised shortly. In December a professional photographer was engaged to record the Gardens and many of these images will be included on the website.

Christmas Party:

Members of the Friends gathered in the Gardens on Sunday 4 December as a final 2022 activity. The Friends would like to thank all members for their continuing support.



Next Meeting: Tuesday 14th March at 7.45pm at 64 Bendigo Street, Prahran