



FRIENDS OF VICTORIA GARDENS

Newsletter September 2016

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Dear Member,

Over the past 2 months further works have continued to implement the works program the Friends discussed with Council in May. This has included the removal of ivy and weeds and mulching of beds. A dying Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) on the western boundary near the entry to the playground has been removed. Interestingly a 2.5m sapling and a younger 1m sucker (which will need to be removed) have grown in response to the declining blackwood. Several Wattle species naturally sucker but not all species. This includes Blackwood, Silver Wattle (*Acacia dealbata*) and Snowy River Wattle (*Acacia boormanii*). An impressive stand of this attractive wattle is growing at the Prahran Railway Station. A wattle currently displaying a mass of yellow flowers is the Golden Rain Wattle (*Acacia prominens*) a native from New South Wales occurring mainly in the Hunter Valley, Singleton to Gosford district. A feature of this evergreen tree is the small blue-grey leaves and numerous clusters of ball shaped flowers. Flowering commences in late July and along with many other wattles symbolises the commencement of spring.



Acacia prominens



Acer negundo

Maintenance works have been undertaken to a declining Box Elder (*Acer negundo*) in the Lumley Playground. Rather than complete removal of the tree it had been pollarded to remove dangerous branches and to provide space for the growth of a young Chinese Elm, Chinese Pistachio and a Variegated Elm. The trunk has a major wound and the branches have decay and cavities. Normally this treatment is not recommended however there is still an opportunity to provide playground shade and it will be removed in about 3 years by when the other trees will take on this role.

Spring into Gardening:

The City of Stonnington's award winning ***Spring into Gardening*** sustainability and gardening festival will be held on **Sunday 9 October 2016 between 11am and 3pm**. Held in Victoria Gardens the event draws about 5,000 keen gardening enthusiasts. The festival has free demonstrations and workshops by industry experts, and market stalls, kids entertainment, music and free plants to Stonnington residents. The Friends will again be present to provide information of the Gardens and the work of the Friends. Please introduce yourself and we look forward to meeting you.

If you can help with the Friends stall can you please contact Vihra Migios, ph: 9529 1959 or email: info.fovg@gmail.com

Plant News:

A popular plant in many old Victorian Gardens is the Mayflower (*Spiraea*), a plant available in Victoria since 1865. Found mainly in temperate East Asia, China and Japan, and North America this genus from the rose (*Rosaceae*) family has around 70 species of deciduous to semi-evergreen spring and summer-flowering shrubs. These attractive plants are popular for their easy-care nature, abundant spring and summer flowers, and their versatility. There are *Spireas* for most purposes. The taller-growing types can be used for informal hedges or in borders, the low-growing types are suitable for rockeries, and there are some species that grow as groundcovers. While a few species are used in herbal teas, *Spireas* are grown almost exclusively for their ornamental properties. The species commonly cultivated in Victoria are *Spiraea thunbergii*, *S. prunifolia* and the red flowering *S. japonica* 'Anthony Waterer', and *S. douglasii* a native of British Columbia. An attractive feature of the Victoria Gardens is the dense flowering Double Mayflower (*Spiraea cantoniensis* 'Flore Pleno') with masses of white flowers now seen in the western shrubbery.



Spiraea cantoniensis 'Flore Pleno'



Royal Botanic Gardens Plant Fair

The Spring Plant Sale will be held in conjunction with the Botanic and Rare Plant Fair which is being organised by RBG Victoria, The Diggers Club and the Friends of the Melbourne Gardens. The Event will take place on the Southern Cross and Observatory Lawns and will be a paid entry event, but Friends of the Melbourne Gardens will be admitted free when showing membership cards.

When: **Saturday 22 October 2016 10 am to 4 pm**

Sunday 23 October 2016 10 am to 3 pm

Where: **Observatory Lawn, near RBGVM Visitor Centre**

NEXT MEETING:

DATE & TIME: Tuesday 6 September 2016 at 7.45pm

LOCATION: The Studio, 64 Bendigo Street, Prahran (opposite the Flying Duck)