



FRIENDS OF VICTORIA GARDENS

Newsletter November 2023

President: John Hawker
Secretary: Brendon Gray
Treasurer: Jill Hawker

Email: info.fovg@gmail.com

Website: www.fovg.org.au

Dear Member,

On the 21st September the Friends were advised by Council that works to rejuvenate the sunken oval were to occur. "Victoria Gardens is a very popular and extremely well used area of open space. The turf on the sunken oval is under significant pressure due to the ongoing issues caused by compaction, dogs off leash, shade, and competition for moisture with the plane trees.

These works are being undertaken to address the current poor condition of the grass on the sunken oval ahead of summer. The works include:

- Installation of temporary fencing
- Irrigation audit and repair
- Cultivation of the surface to enhance levels for the seed bed
- Topsoil to be spread, levelled and rolled
- Aerate and apply seed
- Fertilize and irrigate in the growing period

The installation of a temporary fence in conjunction with the works is the only way to guarantee success and provide a high-quality turf surface. The sunken oval will be closed for about 8 weeks".



Sunken Oval following rejuvenation works, 29 October 2023

Overall the Gardens are looking in excellent condition. While the months of July, August and September were drier than average, only receiving about half the average rainfall. Fortunately, on the 4 October there was a major rain event and Melbourne received 76mm, 119% above the average. In Gippsland there were fires one day and floods the next. In Melbourne the average temperature in October was 1.4°C below the long-term average.

An El Nino cycle has been declared by the Weather Bureau after 3 wet La Nina years. El Nino weather event will bring hotter, drier conditions, which will, in turn, increase the likelihood of bushfires. Fires have already commenced in Northern NSW and Queensland. It is Australia's first El Niño event in about eight years. Fortunately, Melbourne's water reserves are near record levels, and so far the cool periods and rainfall have delayed the risk of drought and fires in Victoria. It would be wise to prepare gardens for a hotter and drier summer, especially when compared to the past few years and last summer.

Annual General Meeting:

At the AGM held on the 11th July 2023 Denise Saville, who had held the office of secretary since 9th October 2012, stepped down from the committee. In recognition of her work and support of the Friends a book gift was provided to thank Denise. Brendon Gray has now taken on the role of secretary and public officer for the Friends. The other positions remain the same.

Instagram:



As a member of the Friends I encourage to follow us on Instagram and you to use your phone to take photographs of the Gardens. It is a great way of recording changes, plants, and features in the Gardens. Members may share photos of the Gardens they have taken by sending them to our gmail account at info.fovg@gmail.com

Website

The Friends website has been upgraded and it is now much easier to navigate; additional information and photographs have been included. Thanks go to Nick Hawker who volunteered his time to completing this project. Feedback on the updated website is welcomed.

Plant News:



Arthropodium cirratum (Renga Lily, New Zealand Rock Lily, Rengarenga, or Maikaika) is a species of herbaceous perennial plant, endemic to New Zealand. It occurs naturally north of Greymouth and Kaikōura near the sea and often on rocks. It is used for medicine as well as food, and has symbolic importance in traditional Māori culture.

The glaucous leaves are 30–60cm long and 3–10cm wide. The flower stalks often reach one metre and bears many white (occasionally pink) six-petaled flowers. The plant grows well in dry shade

Arthropodium strictum is the purple flowering Chocolate Lily found in Eastern Australia and Tasmania.

Next Meeting: Tuesday 14th November

- **Time: 7.45pm**
- **Place: The Studio - 64 Bendigo Street Prahran**