



FRIENDS OF VICTORIA GARDENS

Newsletter July 2024

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Dear Member,

Welcome to the July Newsletter which includes information on the Weather, Engaged Program, Garden Inspection Walk, Garden Volunteer program and Sunken Oval.

Weather:

Melbourne has finally received some rain with 11.8mm falling on 10 July. So far in July we have received 29 mm. The average for July is 47.5mm. In June Melbourne received 20.6mm when the average is 49.5mm. This continues below average rainfall since February where the rainfall has been about half the monthly average.

The cold temperature, especially the minimum temperatures have been noticeable this winter. There have been a few days below 3°C and on the 3 July the temperature fell to just 1°C and 4 July 1.3°C, the coldest it has been for two years. On the 13 June the temperature only increased to 10.1°C, the coldest day it had been for 5 years.

Engaged Program:

In March the Friends were contacted by Zongo Kampengele from Council's Social Support Program to arrange a tour of Victoria Gardens as part of their Engaged Program. This Program helps with social isolation and encourages exercise and community connection. On Monday 17th June and Thursday 20th June respectively, John Hawker lead groups of about 12 members of the local community on a guided tour of the Gardens. Significant plants, features and history of the Gardens were highlighted. A copy of the newly updated Garden Guide was distributed to the participants. This is the third year that the FOVG has hosted a walk for the Engaged Program.



Garden Inspection Walk:

The annual Garden inspection walk was delayed and was finally held on Tuesday 9 July 2024 with Council staff Dominic Mazza, Adam De Zoete, and Chani Humphries who is a recently appointed arborist. Attending from the Friends were Gretchen Kaye, Sarah Jardine, Jenny Legge, Peter Saville, Jill and John Hawker.

While this inspection is later than usual and the report is still being finalised, an outline of the discussions include;

High Street and East Beds

1. Paint fountain base
2. Replace broken light on west gate pillar
3. Upgrade and/or replace dripper irrigation system in the High Street beds
4. Remove dead Arbutus, but do not replant due to overcrowding
5. Coppice and plant more Wormwood in High Street beds. Prune Variegated Privet over lawn
6. Remove seedling Ligustrum lucidum seedlings in east bed
7. Plant new Blackwood and Tristaniopsis along fence in gap N of Sycamore to screen modern buildings
8. Thin out bed, clean-up Plectranthus and Canna
9. Fix water logging, construct drainage pits and pipes. Repair brick drain
10. Deadwood and shape Luculia, treat compaction, mulch install fence and plant Clivia, Ruscus and new Luculia
11. Remove many Celtis seedlings N of shelter, clean-up and mulch bed
12. Plant new Diospyros dichrophylla in gap W of Queensland Box
13. Increase planting (eg Philodendron and ferns) in NE corner, along new paling fence
14. Mulch around Weeping elm

East Flats Bed

15. Remove elm suckers, including large elm east of Spotted Gum overcrowding Macadamia
16. Plant about 5 new Viburnum odorantissimum shrubs along fence
17. Remove dead Ilex that was lopped and Celtis seedlings

Murray Street Beds and West Beds

18. Plant new Magnolia grandiflora in bed centre and Tristaniopsis in NW corner
19. Remove Pencil Pine in poor condition (overcrowded by Claret Ash)
20. Remove dead Pampas Grass, and plant tree fern
21. Remove vine around Notice Board and clear path
22. Formative prune and crown shape Combretum
23. Remove damaged Bottlebrush overhanging fence, and Celtis seedling. Plant 2 Pittosporum eugenioides
24. Deadwood and shape Ilex beside Macadamia
25. Remove Buddleja madagascariensis in corner and prune (there are 5 plants)

Playground

26. Remove dead Pistachio and replant or a Crepe Myrtle. Trim Hibbertia
27. Remove Variegated elm stump
28. Formative prune Zelkova, and remove low branch

The very difficult task of pruning the overgrown and thorny Bougainvillea out of the Cedar tree and back to the paling fence has recently occurred. This is a very important improvement but it is unfortunate that the house owners have indicated that they want to retain the plant. Ongoing trimming to the fence line will be required.

It was suggested that future planting in the playground beds could include herbs, lemon balm, thyme, rosemary and vegetables like rhubarb, strawberry, and artichoke. The planting could also include sunflowers, daffodil and jonquil bulbs.

Victoria Gardens Volunteers:

All the documents related to the VGV including Proposal, Guidelines and Risk Assessment documents were modified and reworked based on guidelines used for other volunteer groups. These were returned to Deborah Neumann (Environmental Education Officer) who went on maternity leave on April 2023. We have had no success since then, in progressing our discussion with Council around the timing of such a group i.e. a weekday versus a weekend until recently, when Deb returned from leave.

The 3 documents were again forwarded to Deb Neumann and Dominic Mazza on the 9 July 2024 for further consideration by Council.

Sunken Oval:

During September - October 2023 Council undertook sunken oval works to repair and improve the grass cover prior to the Christmas holiday period. The Friends wrote to the CEO, Mr Dale Dickson complementing Council on this action but highlighting the impact by dogs on the condition of the oval and suggested limited access hours or to only have dogs on-lead.

On the 18 December 2023 the following response from the CEO was received;

Your concern regarding the ongoing damage to the sunken oval is noted. The deterioration of the turf is caused by a range of factors, although it is acknowledged that dogs are a contributing factor to the turf decline in the sunken oval.

Stonnington has approximately 100 open space areas of which 26 are designated as dog off-leash areas. Victoria Gardens is a much-loved recreational reserve and as I'm sure you would appreciate; the park is well-utilised by many local dog-owning residents. As such, any change to the current off-leash restrictions would require careful consideration and consultation with the surrounding community.

In the interests of ensuring our open spaces are being effectively utilised in accordance with prevailing community expectations, a review of the current off-leash arrangements at Victoria Gardens is intended for late 2024/ early 2025. I will ask Council's Animal Management Team to reach out to the Friends of Victoria Gardens to ensure your valuable feedback is received as a part of this process. Please contact Brad Petryczkowycz, Manager Liveability and Compliance on 0408 333 892 or bpetrycz@stonnington.vic.gov.au, should you wish to discuss the matter further. In coming months, the Friends will follow-up this matter with Brad Petryczkowycz.



29 October 2023



16 July 2024

Native Plant Giveaway Prahran Square:

Sunday 28 July 11 am to 1:30 pm
Prahran Square, Cato Street, Prahran

City of Stonnington is inviting you to help green our City by adopting up to three native plants to suit your space. As well as being blooming beautiful, these native plants will provide food and habitat to protect our local wildlife, bring the birds, the bees and the other pollinators to your backyard or balcony and adapt your garden to a changing climate.

What better way to celebrate National Tree Day than by taking home native plants to create your very own wildlife-friendly garden? If you plan on picking up some native plants, why not book a free small-space garden design workshop with STEM Landscape Architecture and Design and learn how to create the perfect native garden for your apartment, unit or townhouse.

FOVG Membership

Your Membership subscription for **2024-2025** is now due as of 1st July.

Your membership demonstrates the strength of community support for the Victoria Gardens.
Membership Fee: **\$10 Individual and \$15 Family.**

Payment via bank transfer as follows:

- Account name - Friends of Victoria Gardens Inc.
- BSB - 083 427.
- Bank - NAB
- Account number- 43 521 3152.
- Write your name in the reference section so that we can acknowledge receipt of your membership.

Next Meeting:

AGM: Tuesday 16 July at 7.45pm at 7 Gertrude Street, Windsor

General Meeting: Tuesday **16 July** (after our AGM on the same night)