



FRIENDS OF VICTORIA GARDENS

Newsletter March 2024

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Dear Member,

Many thought that we had escaped severe summer temperatures in 2024. The first weeks of March have turned out to be like what would usually be expected in early February. Over the long weekend 9th to 11th March saw consecutive days from Saturday reach 38°C, Sunday 37°C and 35°C, 10-12°C above average, and overnight temperatures ranging from 21°C to 23°C. During February there were only 5 days over 35°C and fortunately no days over 39°C.

Perhaps the greatest impact on gardens was the very low rain fall in February as only 6.2mm fell when the average is 48mm. There has been no rainfall in March. This has resulted in the Gardens needing to be watered for the first time this summer.

Peter Legge:

In mid-January the Friends of Victoria Gardens lost one of its founding members, Peter Legge. Peter was a resident of Trinian Street and had a long association with Victoria Gardens. Since 1987 both Peter and Jenny have been involved in the early activities of the Friends, including the 1989 Conservation Study and Master Plan, restoration of the Winged Victory statue, urns and fountain, installation of the Weeping Elm circular seat and helping with the Friends stall and activities at *Spring into Gardening* for many years. Peter and Jenny hosted several Christmas events.

Peter was a keen bike rider, sailor, and traveller. He was also an accomplished photographer, taking impressive photographs on overseas travels and of Victoria Gardens. In November 2014 Peter took this outstanding image below of the Gardens which was voted by photographer Kevin Birks as the winning entry at the Friends Christmas event in December 2014.

The Friends express our sincerest condolences to Jenny and the Legge family. We are most appreciative of Peter's many years of involvement with the Friends of Victoria Gardens.



Victoria Gardens Volunteers:

We are continuing to liaise with Council over the recommencement of this group.

Plant News:

Following the great success of the Cleome display last summer the High Street entrance bed is a blaze of colour with a central planting of Foxgloves and a perimeter planting of Coleus, grown for its richly decorated coloured leaves.



Coleus scutellarioides, commonly known as coleus, is a species of flowering plant in the family Lamiaceae (the mint family), native to southeast Asia through to Australia. Widely grown for the highly decorative variegated leaves found in cultivated varieties. The leaves of the wild species may be somewhat variegated but this has been developed to an extreme degree in cultivated varieties, whose leaves may include one or more shades of green, white, cream, yellow, pink, red, maroon, and dark purple. Green colouration is due to the amount of chlorophyll present in the chloroplasts in the leaves. Red, purple, pink, and orange colours are due to anthocyanins. The species was first introduced into Europe from Java in 1851. At this time, there were few leaf colours and shapes. A wider variety was available by 1877. Coleus breeding was revived in the early 1940s and by the 1980s the availability of an improved range of cultivars led to coleus becoming the tenth most important bedding crop in the US.

Christmas Party:

Members of the Friends gathered in the Gardens on Sunday 3 December as a final 2023 activity. The Friends would like to thank all members for their continuing support.



Next Meeting: Tuesday 19th March at 7.45pm at 64 Bendigo Street, Prahran