



# Horticultural Therapy Association of Victoria Inc

Newsletter - 2016 – Autumn Issue



## **Autumn in Victoria (Silvan)**

Finally a break from the long dry summer. Autumn is arguably one of the best seasons for gardeners in Victoria with breathtaking foliage and mild, yet not quite cold weather. This is the time to get out and delight in the splendour of the garden.

There are always a few chores to do. Rake up all the autumn leaves and add to compost. You can also feed camellias and azaleas to encourage flowering. As it is getting cooler, start planting out your winter crops, such as peas, broccoli, cabbage, etc.

Inside is a story on a NSW school with a horticulture/agriculture program and a look at the Geelong Playspace garden for children.

Enjoy your garden.

Paul de la Motte

# **Plants for Sensory and Therapeutic Gardens**

By Paul de la Motte

**Common Name: Lambs Ears**

**Botanical Name: Stachys byzantina**

**Family: Lamiaceae**

One of the most popular textural plants used in sensory gardens, this small perennial groundcover plant is suitable for all types of gardens.

Originally coming from the middle east it takes its species name from the old Byzantine empire name.

Lambs Ears has white, pale purple or pink flowers on spikes in late Spring and early Summer. It is most highly prized however for its thick woolly leaves and its ability to grow with little water.

Lambs ears is also used as an accent plant and border plant due to its spreading habit and silver colour.

Normally growing to 200mm to 800mm high including the flower spikes it can easily spread to one metre or more.

As a therapeutic plant it is used for its textural feel and is very popular in aged care settings, in children's gardens and in hospitals.

Lambs Ears spreads rapidly but is not invasive and can be easily propagated by division, making it a good source for propagating activities.

It can be very successfully grown in containers and attracts birds and insects.



**Lambs Ears growing in front of some Irises**

## **Encompass Community Services, Geelong - Workshop**

Recently the HTAV conducted a Therapeutic gardening workshop for the Encompass group in Geelong.

Encompass Community Services is a not-for-profit organisation committed to promoting equality and universal opportunity for all. For nearly 30 years they have provided a range of services to people with physical, intellectual, sensory and psychological disabilities as well as other individuals such as disengaged youth, long-term unemployed and those facing financial, social or learning barriers.

The workshop was held at their Leopold site “The Paddock” a short distance east of Geelong and included a presentation on the benefits of gardening to special needs groups and involved a propagation activity. The workshop targeted Encompass staff who ranged from experienced gardeners to novices.



**Members of the gardening staff at The Paddock**



**The vegetable gardens**

“The Paddock” is a safe, friendly and supportive environment. All staff and clients are involved in encouraging and supporting others and celebrating each other’s achievements. This has a flow on effect which benefits the clients, including improved work satisfaction and a sense of personal accomplishment.

“The Paddock” site had a diverse range of gardens that included a mixed fruit orchard, vegetable gardens and some small scale major crops. There are also a number of glasshouses for propagating their own plants. Poultry are also kept in a spacious enclosure. A number of large water tanks help with water requirements as they are in a low rainfall region. At the front of the site there is an attractive ornamental garden and a she oak walk-way.

The workshop participants were all keen and the feedback was very positive.



**The chicken enclosure**



**Propagating benches and glasshouse**



**Bathtub raised bed**



**The orchard**

## **Therapeutic Gardening Short Courses in 2016 Term 2**

### **Therapeutic Gardening**

Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2016, 9.00am - 4.30pm

### **Advanced Therapeutic Gardening**

Saturday 25 June 2016, 9.00am - 4.30pm

Holmesglen Institute, 595 Waverley Rd, Glen Waverley Registration: (03) 9564 1546  
<http://www.holmesglen.edu.au> Short Courses, House and Garden.

## Oakhill College, Castle Hill, New South Wales

Oakhill College is a Catholic, co-educational, secondary, day school in Sydney's western suburbs that provides a wide curriculum including modules in "Primary Industries" including agriculture and horticulture.

These modules are part of Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses offered by the college. These courses enable students to study courses that are relevant to industry needs and have clear links to post-school destinations.

Other VET courses offered include Hospitality (Kitchen Operations), Business studies, Entertainment and Construction.

The facilities at the college include a large vegetable garden surrounded by orchard trees. There is also a fixed chicken pen and a portable chicken "tractor".

A small orchard has also been established near the Kitchen operations building.



**The school buildings**

A range of farm animals such as cattle, sheep, goats, etc are kept also on the property with a stock yard and cattle crush for managing the animals.

The college also encourages participation in agricultural shows.



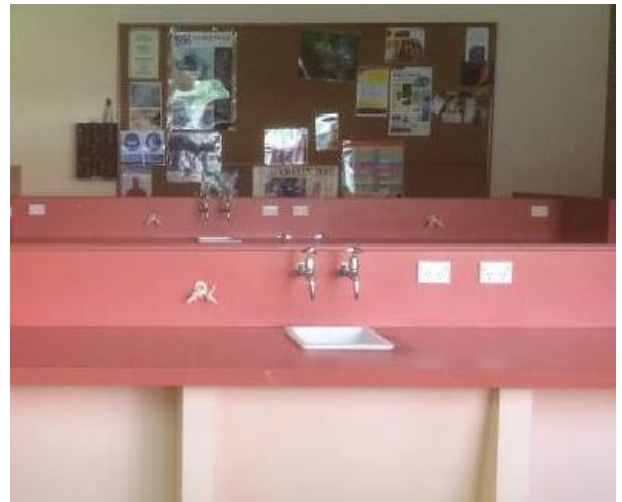
**Vegetable garden beds**



**The "chook" tractor**



**Farm animals**



**The kitchen operations classroom**

## **Geelong Play Space – Children’s Garden**

The Geelong Play Space is an award winning facility situated next to the Geelong Botanic Gardens. The play space is designed as an inclusive area for children of all ages and abilities.

Located in Geelong’s Eastern Park, the Geelong Play Space provides stunning views over Corio Bay.

The garden area is also securely gated so children can play in safety.



**Playspace entrance sign**



**Raised sandpits for wheelchair access**

There is a she oak walk, a human sundial, stepping stones of various shapes through the trees, sound machines scattered about, raised sandpits for wheelchair access, hand pumps, a big maze made from different coloured pavers, a creek spring, dragon fly, Liberty swing, musical bridge and standard swings.

The garden was designed by Ric NcConaghy, who also designed the award winning Wombat Bend garden in Templestowe. Visitors will see many similarities in the designs.



**She oak (Casuarina) walk**



**Paved maze**

The Geelong play space shows how integration of a playground with a well designed garden can dramatically improve the amenity of what would otherwise be a traditional playground.

## **Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show 2016**

The biggest garden show in the southern hemisphere was held earlier this year and again had an interesting range of floral displays and show gardens on display. Wandering through the Carlton gardens was an opportunity to get great ideas to take back to our own gardens. The show continues to showcase innovative garden designs and products and this year there was also a cubby house competition that involved auctioning unusual cubby houses with proceeds going to charity.

The Royal Horticultural Society of Victoria (RHSV) conducted its popular hanging basket competition. There is now a section for "Therapeutic Gardening" (HT Groups). The RHSV supplies hanging baskets so all you have to do is supply potting mix, plants and put it together. Please contact HTAV if you wish to participate and need help to get started.

There was also the 2015 Victorian school garden awards which included raised garden beds designed by Victorian schools. The major winner was the exhibit by the Wooragee Primary School (see photo below).



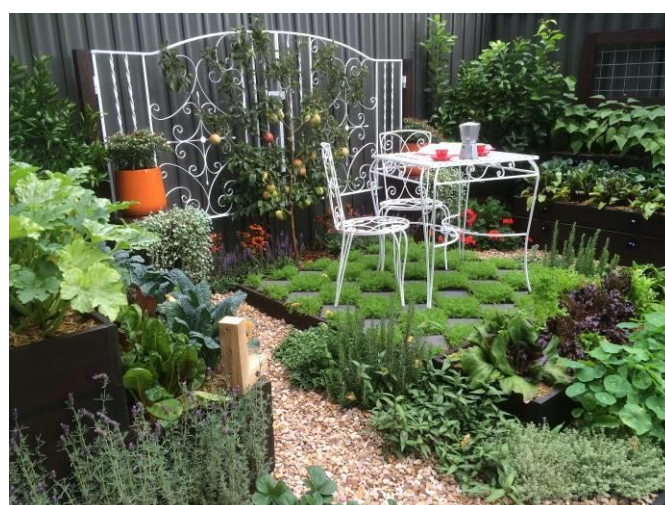
**Unusual cubby house**



**Dragon garden**



**Tranquil show garden – Gold Medal**



**Achievable herb garden**



**Victorian School Garden Awards**



**RHSV - Hanging basket competition**

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