



NEWSLETTER

Horticultural Therapy Association of Victoria Inc.

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Issue 1, 2010

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2010.

We have two big events coming up for this year. The first will be our Garden Festival next month and the Biennial Conference later in the year.

Our Garden Festival will be on Saturday, 20th March and will coincide with National Horticultural Therapy Awareness Week which runs from 14th – 21st March, 2010. See more information inside this issue.

The aim is to raise community awareness of horticultural therapy and therapeutic gardening, which use the natural environment, especially plants to enhance and improve the general wellbeing of people.

Also in this issue there is an article on Bankias, which are drought resistant and beautiful bird-attracting plants for a sensory garden.

Hope to see you at the Garden Festival.

Best wishes
Paul de la Motte

Horticultural Therapy AwarenessWeek

14th - 21st March, 2010

Celebrate Horticultural Therapy Awareness Week by spending some time in the garden.

Organise a garden activity with clients.

Cut and arrange flowers, herbs or fruits.

Promote the benefits of gardens and plants.

HTAV Garden Festival

being run in conjunction with the
Balwyn Community Centre Open Day

Date – **Saturday, 20th March, 2010**

Time – **10am – 3pm**

Place – **412 Whitehorse Road, Balwyn**

Sale of Plants, Food, Children's activities

Volunteers needed to assist on day
(Telephone 9836 1128 and leave details)

Drought Tolerant Therapeutic Plants

By Paul de la Motte

Common Name: Banksia

Botanical Name: many species.

Banksia spinulosa (Hairpin Banksia)

Banksia integrifolia (Coast Banksia)

Banksia coccinea (Scarlett Banksia)

Family: Proteaceae

Banksias are Australian native plants that commemorate Sir Joseph Banks, the renowned botanist who travelled with Captain Cook in his voyage to Australia in 1770. Banksias come in a variety of colours from white, pale yellow and gold to pinks and bright red. They are a tough drought tolerant plant. Most need good drainage, however some prefer damp conditions such as the Swamp Banksia (*Banksia robur*).



Banksia coccinea (Scarlett Banksia)

The Banksia's value as a therapeutic plant has a number of attributes. Aesthetically the barrel-like flowers are striking and unique. They are long-lasting and therefore ideal as cut flowers. They look fantastic and have a wonderful textural feel to them. The leaves can range from long, thin, linear shapes to broader and roughly lobed.

One valuable quality they have which is less obvious and often not fully appreciated is their ability to attract wildlife, in particular nectar-eating birds.

Most Banksias flower from late winter through summer. Some species like the Western Australian *Banksia coccinea* can be susceptible to fungal diseases. All prefer full sun and are better suited to low humidity. They are best grown from seed, however some can be grown successfully from cuttings. Banksias are considered medium to large shrubs but some have been hybridized into smaller compact varieties. A good example of this is *Banksia spinulosa* "Birthday Candles" which makes an ideal low-growing rockery plant.

Even though Banksias have a relatively low need for fertilizers, a good organic fertilizer will give great results. It is important to remember that most plants in the Proteaceae family have intolerance to phosphorus, so always use a native mix if you feed them stronger artificial fertilizers.

Banksias are a great addition to any garden. Large or small, there will be one right for you.

Development of the Tilly Aston Garden in Carisbrook

Tilly Aston, born Matilda Ann Aston in Carisbrook, Victoria in 1873, was a great pioneer in our history for the blind. At 21, she founded Australia's first Braille Library and the Association for the Advancement of the Blind, now known as Vision Australia Foundation. Through Tilly's endeavours, the world's first voting rights for blind people and free postage of Braille were obtained. Tilly went on to become Australia's first blind teacher. Vision Australia now provides services for more than 20,000 blind and vision impaired Australians.

The Carisbrook Lions Club plan to erect a rotunda surrounded by a sensory garden in Carisbrook in her honour. There will be wide flat pathways and signage in Braille as well as normal wording. The garden will also have appropriate seating and will be designed to suit those with various disabilities.



Tilly Aston (second from right) reading Braille to young girls in Melbourne (c.1900)



Tilly Aston in later years.

The story of Tilly Aston is inspiring and the sensory garden is a delightful way to show recognition and pay tribute to her achievements. It is hoped work on the garden will commence in 2010 and will be a fitting legacy to a remarkable woman. We look forward to watching it's progress.

If you would like to find out more information on this project -

Contact: Susan Censi

Email: john_susan1@bigpond.com.au

Tel: 03 5464 1212

Helen Macpherson Smith Sensory Garden at Ottrey Homes, Cobram, Victoria - by Pam Rudd

The Helen Macpherson Smith Sensory Garden at Ottrey Homes comprises a Dementia Sensory Garden and an Aged Care Sensory Garden for 39 elderly, daily respite clients, visitors and staff.

Overall aim of garden:

1. To stimulate the senses of aged and dementia affected residents.
2. To improve the mental & physical health of residents.
3. To make residents feel happier and more 'at home'.
4. To create a feeling of wellness and thus lessen the need for analgesics.
5. To create a feeling of a 'life worth living'.
6. For residents to feel like they have had a pleasant journey without leaving the facility (i.e. by walking in the garden)

A walk through the sensory garden will help you understand the positive experience the residents gain each time they venture into this garden.

Aged Care Garden

Leaving the building, a resident wanders along a path, past the scent of Gardenias, Lavender, aromatic Geraniums and Pelargoniums to the barbecue area, which is walled with colourful Camellia sasanqua. A colourful wall mosaic depicting a native bird sets the scene for relaxation and friendship. Placement of wooden ducks, digging dogs and sculptures serve as points of distraction from thinking about poor health and other issues that can affect the elderly. A broken pot in the garden is spilling over with yellow Calendulas and native birds frolic and sing in the water urn.

The path to the Australian garden is a mass of a variety of multi coloured plants such as Viola, Iris and Kangaroo paw. Blue Fescue grasses border this garden and maroon Swamp Fox grass sways with the breeze providing a mesmerising experience. A trickle of water from the fountain brings on a state of relaxation as the resident passes through a plant covered arbour to the next garden, which comprises the English Garden.



The English garden is more formal with a tall urn and box hedge surround. The scent of Daphne, Gardenia, Peppermint and Curry plant can evoke pleasant memories of a resident's home garden. The gentle sound of the breeze through the canopied Jacaranda tree and a protective hedge of Pittosporum plants set with a seat, provide a wonderful area for contemplation. A Japanese maple adds colour and shade to show the change of seasons and the seats surrounding it have aromatic herbs such as various Thymes and Marjoram so that as resident's feet brush against them it provides a wonderful scent. A built-up garden has vegetables galore for residents who wish to participate in active gardening or for those who just want to eat the vegetables!

Dementia Garden:

Leaving the building one brushes their hand across a tall garden pot brimming with a selection of herbs, which can be eaten if wished, followed by the smooth feel of succulents and the enticing smell of the Chocolate lily. The feel and smell of Rosemary evoke memories of roast lamb shared with family. The looped path finds Australian natives such as Correas and Banksia, which attract birds and butterflies. Movement is constant with furry grasses swaying in the breeze. Further along the path a wet garden and water feature sit comfortably alongside a landscape painting of a beach, with shells, buckets, etc. Residents remember with joy the beach holidays with their families and feel the happiness of living. An English cottage garden surrounds a miniature weeping maple tree to add colour and shade. The scent and beauty from Freesias, Lavender, Hellebores and other plants further enhance positive feelings.

Residents actively engage with the garden by planting bulbs, checking the rain gauge and moving garden objects from one garden to another.



Clients have ownership of the garden and thus use it and gain many positive physical and mental benefits from the experience.

HORTICULTURAL THERAPY AWARENESS WEEK

Sunday 14 – 21st March, 2010

National Horticultural Therapy Awareness Week runs from 14th – 21st March, 2010. The event is listed on the Better Health Channel Calendar.

Mark it in on your calendar and try to organise an event or activity during that period to promote the benefits of gardening. Suggestions for activities are included on the next page.

HTAV Garden Festival

Saturday, 20th March, 2010

10am – 3pm

412 Whitehorse Road, Balwyn

HTAV is hosting a Garden Festival in conjunction with the Balwyn Community Centre Open Day at 412 Whitehorse Road, Balwyn on Saturday, 20th March, 2010 from 10am to 3pm.

During the day we will have various **talks on Therapeutic Gardening, Gardening tips, demonstrations and activities for the kids**. There will even be a **free tennis clinic for children**.

We will also have a **plant sale**.

There will be **food, drinks, sausage sizzle, stalls, handcrafts, music** and lots more.

Displays and demonstrations of activities conducted at the Balwyn Community Centre will also be showcased. These include various types of art classes, upholstery, French polishing, bridge, ceramics, etc.

Transport is easy as the Box Hill tram runs right past the front of the centre.

We are also looking for volunteers to assist on the day, so if you have some time to spare, please let us know. (Email: contactus@htav.org.au Tel: 9836 1128)

Horticultural Therapy Awareness Week

Sunday 14 - 21 March, 2010

Thank goodness for gardens!

Activities to celebrate Horticultural Therapy Awareness Week could include –

- ♥ Plant herbs and vegetables for your own supply of fresh food
- ♥ Plant floral displays of colourful / perfumed plants to stimulate the senses
- ♥ Cut flowers and create floral arrangements
- ♥ Enjoy a morning tea in the garden with your neighbour
- ♥ Help an elderly neighbour with their garden chores
- ♥ Savour vegetables and fruits from different cultures
- ♥ Showcase your therapeutic garden
- ♥ Relax outdoors in a healthy environment
- ♥ Organise a physical activity or exercises in the garden
- ♥ Harvest and share fresh food straight from the garden
- ♥ Advertise your community event on the Better Health Channel website

For more details contact -

Horticultural Therapy Association of Victoria www.htav.org.au Tel: 03 9836 1128

Australian Horticultural Therapy Association www.ahta.org.au Tel: 03 9013 9556



Horticultural Therapy Association of Victoria

Thank goodness for gardens!

Why are gardens so important?

- ♥ A place to relax
- ♥ Colourful plants and flowers stimulate our senses
- ♥ Perfumes and scents of plants trigger memories and emotions
- ♥ Trees provide shade and shelter from the elements
- ♥ Plants and trees provide a micro-climate effect keeping our homes cooler
- ♥ Herbs, vegetables and fruit help sustain us
- ♥ Habitat for birds and animals
- ♥ Physical activity involved with gardening helps keep us fit
- ♥ Being in the natural environment of a garden can help combat stress
- ♥ Fresh food straight from the garden is healthy and economical
- ♥ Nurturing our plants give us a sense of achievement

**Celebrate Horticultural Therapy Awareness Week
by getting involved and enjoying your garden.**

Horticultural Therapy Awareness Week 14 -21 March 2010

For more details contact –
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