



The Herb Age



FEBRUARY/MARCH 2018

NO 407



*Let my words, like vegetables, be tender and sweet,
for tomorrow I may have to eat them. Author Unknown*

THE HERB SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC

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www.herbsocietyvic.org.au

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Meetup group: www.meetup.com/Herb-Society-of-Victoria/

AIMS OF THE SOCIETY

- ☼ To act as a forum for all persons interested in herbs for their mutual benefit and fellowship.
- ☼ To further the education of the public in the use, value and growing of herbs.
- ☼ To promote and encourage the organic growing of herbal plants.

Patron: Penny Woodward

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HSOV BRANCH INFORMATION

The Herb Society of Victoria

General meeting is on the first Thursday of every month, from February to December, open 7.00pm for 7.30pm start. At: Room MB10 Main Building. Burnley Horticultural College campus, 500 Yarra Blvd Richmond MelRef: 45 A12

Next Meetings: Thursday 1st February
Thursday 1st March

The Hills Branch

meets on the third Wednesday of the month from February to November at 7.45pm
At Belgrave Library, Reynolds Lane, Belgrave MelRef 75 F10.

Victorian Salvia Study Group Branch

meets regularly at garden visits, sale days, working bees and events. See more info on www.salvias.org.au

WORKING BEE: VOLUNTEERS WELCOME

Tussie Mussie Making to support the Collingwood Children's farm. On the mornings of the Second Saturday of the month at the Collingwood Children's Farm Market, St Heliers Street, Abbotsford. MelRef 44 G5.

Advertising Rates	Quarter page	\$15.00	Half page	\$25.00	Full page	\$45.00
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THE HERB AGE

*Official Newsletter of the
Herb Society of Victoria*

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- ✿ February/March
- ✿ April/May
- ✿ June/July
- ✿ August/September
- ✿ October/November
- ✿ December

Members' original contributions are warmly welcomed.

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THE HERB AGE

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2018

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Cover Picture:

A Vegie basket by our November guest floral artist, Myrna Demetriou. The edible artwork includes red sorrel, kale, radicchio, artichoke, eggplant, kohlrabi, white asparagus, chillies, broad beans and their trains, passionfruit halves, tubes of spices and a few artificial cherries for a touch of flair.

In fact Peter Narandja was so impressed, he offered to buy the basket of goodies from Myrna or make a donation to her favourite charity. She kindly gave it to him as a gift, which he and Beverley then shared the abundance around. I took home some very nice kale. More on Myrna's creations on page 13.





Our Next Meetings

Burnley Horticultural College Campus
and Gardens, Burnley Mel Ref 45 A12



Parking inside the grounds is limited so, if possible
please park on Yarra Blvd and walk in.

Thursday 1st February 2018

New Year PICNIC MEETING

From 6.00 pm

BYO Picnic to Share



At the Sugar Gum Tree Table

Near the herb and sunken gardens
(or in our usual general meeting room
MB10 if poor weather)

***Followed by a walk along new
Wisteria Walk and the Gardens***



Thursday 1st March 2018

General Meeting - Please be seated for 7.30 pm Start

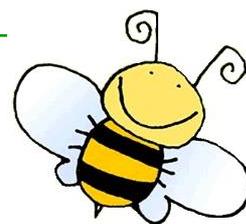
Please bring a plate of supper per car to share after the general meeting.

Guest Speaker: Peter Dyer from Backyard Honey

Topic: Bee Loving Plants and more.



Peter Dyer is a local Apiarist, who specialises in hive maintenance, raw honey extraction and swarm and nest relocations. As well as covering the topic of plants that bees like, he will provide tips on how to tell the difference between native and introduced honey bees, plus amazing bee facts and will be bringing in an empty hive to show. And there will be honey for sale. Sounds like a very buzzzzzzzy... I mean.... busy night!



President's Report

November 23rd 2017, saw us venture to Readings Bookshop in St Kilda to see Angus Stewart and Simon Leake launch their new book **'Grow Your Own' How to be an Urban Farmer.**

Most of us have seen how committed to organic growing Angus is, and Simon is equally so. Simon is a soil scientist with many years' experience in developing soils for specialised sites or for particular plants' needs. He explains how to determine what type of soil you have, or which potting mixes are best if you garden in pots. If you would like to know more, he offers a diagnostic and advice service – for the presence or absence of minerals or pollutants - and how to rectify any anomalies.

There is excellent advice on which crops to choose for your site, how to develop soil fertility, propagate plants and cultivate them, as well as tips on composting, mulching and drainage plus pest and disease management.



There are wonderful photographs to inspire your endeavours, plus tips like how to net your treasures to keep them safe from marauders - birds, possums and others. Jane Edmondson expertly guided us through an hour of stories and information as well as questions and answers. We all found the session most informative.



The first three panels of the mural depicting European settlement in the new State of Victoria.

The 5th of December. Three Herbies took the train to Geelong to see the Archibald Prize entrants and the development of Johnstone Park near the Arts Precinct. What took our eye was the mosaic mural in The Government Office, Geelong.



The 19th of December. For their end-of-year function, The Friends of Burnley Gardens boarded a ferry at Como Park and took in the sights along the Yarra – the parks, gardens and sporting stadiums – seen from a different perspective. Many thanks to Michele Adler, the founding president of FOBG, for 20 years of unstinting service to the preservation and development of the Burnley Gardens. Enjoy your next venture(s)!!

Enjoy the summer break, and we will see you in February, for a picnic tea and a walk around Burnley.

Robin Calabrese, President



February Outing and Lunch

Visit Mordialloc Foreshore, Pier, Creek and coastal plantings

Lunch Tour de Café

Meet Tuesday 6th February at 10:30am.

Meet at "**Tour de Café**", **Pier Rd**, Melway 92E1. From there we can stroll onto the quite long pier to check out the action. Nearby Mordialloc Creek provides safe anchorage for many small boats. We will be able to walk beside the creek to check out the sights, smells and delights of this intensely active harbour.

The Mordialloc foreshore has been planted out with quite a range of local seaside vegetation species. Many of these plants are now quite substantial and can provide shelter from any wind. Mordialloc Beach is an excellent spot for swimming on warm days.

We will be able to have lunch at "**Tour de Café**". Menu items include

- * Flathead tails (4) and chips \$12
- * Calamari rings (8) and chips \$11
- * Chicken Nuggets (8) and chips \$ 9
- * Banana Bread or muffin \$ 4

Other cafes in the shopping strip nearby include a Sushi place, Siesta Café while at the walkway to the station is Main St. These places are all popular at lunch times.

Transport is Frankston Line Train to Mordialloc Station, and 903 Bus to its terminus at the Mordialloc shops. Some other buses can bring you to Mordialloc: check the Melway directory. A short walk will bring you to "Tour de Café" near the creek.

Please advise me if you are planning to attend.

Graham Ellis

Lost and Found

An earring was found after the December meeting. If you think it may be yours, please speak to Joy Thompson at the next meeting.

What herb am I?

- 5 Points I am sometimes used to flavour gin.
- 4 Points My medicinal properties are many; especially for skin and hair health.
- 3 Points My sweet smell has been likened to violets and I am used in perfumery.
- 2 Points I'm often used as a fixative for Pot Pourri
- 1 Point I am the powdered rhizome of perennial Iris plants.

I am _ _ _ _ _



March Outing and Lunch

Visit Frankston's Beauty Park and Frankston Arts Centre

Lunch Eeny Meeny at 96 Young St

Meet Tuesday 6th March 2018 at 10:30am. Meet at the end of the ramp from Frankston Station out to Young St, Melway 100A E7 or 102D2. From there we will walk along Young St (away from Melbourne) past the Arts Centre to Beauty Park. That walk amounts to about 700m.

Attractions in this park include a lake with well developed stream side vegetation, some wildlife, substantial oak trees, various Australian plants and trees such as Ti trees and Coast Banksia trees, an interesting war memorial. Naturally there is a scattering of seating. At the far end of this park you are quite close to George Pentland Botanic Gardens which is probably too far from the station for many people attending. It is a well developed Gardens showing many native plants.

On the way back along Young St towards lunch we can inspect the Arts Centre. The local library is in the same building.



A very good choice for lunch is **Eeny Meeny at 96 Young St**, Phone 8774 4236. There is seating both inside and outside under shade. This is a very convenient location to eat and to observe the passing parade. I had an enjoyable lunch including a substantial soup there recently. Some offerings are

- * A choice of filled Panini \$8 or \$12 large
- * Activated Turmeric Toast w peanut butter, pepper, coconut & spring onion \$10
- * Soup, always vegetarian, sometimes vegan \$11.30

Young St is only about 400m from the foreshore with its usual attractions. After lunch people could divert there to check out the sights. Alternatively, adventurous souls can head to George Pentland Botanic Gardens.

Transport is Frankston train to Frankston and the 901 orbital bus. Many other buses terminate very close to where we shall meet. Melway map 100A identifies them.

Please advise me if you are planning to attend.

Graham Ellis

To make my outings more attractive to HSOV members I would appreciate further help from readers to provide attractions for visiting. This can be as diverse as a sculpture park, public parks and worthwhile eateries. Probably herb gardens, botanic gardens and herb related activities will be the most useful to members.



In 2016 we visited Bendigo and last December we went to the Archibald's at Geelong so suggestions for a visit to Ballarat would be appreciated. Remember that I aim for these outings to be accessible by public transport.

Graham Ellis

Mugwort

Artemisia vulgaris



Ed note: This article is one of the 3 fantastic mini talks from our October AGM meeting and delivered by a new member and committee member, Naturopath Jan Illingworth (pictured left in presentation mode at the AGM). A word on warning - Mugwort is a strong medicinal herb, with chemical constituents that need to be treated with respect. It should definitely be used with the advice of a skilled professional.

Mugwort is a northern hemisphere perennial which dies back in winter to its roots. Spring up to 2 metres tall with aromatic, dark green, smooth leaves. The top spike has small oval flowers coloured reddish or pale yellow with cottony involucres. Tolerates many conditions and can be a weed. In the same family Compositae as Wormwood, but as it lacks the essential oil it is not as bitter or strong so can be used for longer. More similar in looks and smell to the Chrysanthemum.

Mugwort is one of the primary sacred, magical, ceremonial European herbs, particularly female reproductive disorders. Observed in wreaths from Irish archaeology sites and noted in the Lacnunga from the 10th century. Dioscorides praises Mugwort; ordering that the flowering top be used just before they bloom for women's problems, hysteria and attacks of moths.

Culpepper used the fresh tops in a very slight infusion for disorders of the stomach, to create appetite; as too strong disgusts the taste. The powdered flowering tops are good against agues, and have a virtue of killing worms.

- Add juice of large leaves to water, ale or wine. This infusion drank morning and night for some time; against the dropsy, jaundice, hysterics and obstruction of the spleen.
- The oil taken on sugar killed worms, resists poison such as the mischief from mushrooms, henbane and biting seafish or mixed with vinegar to dab on stings.
- One could boil Mugwort in lard for quinsy and tonsil swellings. Culpepper also placed leaves amongst woollens for those dreaded moths.

Gerard 'cureth the shakings of the joynts inclining to the Palsie.' Mrs Grieve stated Mugwort; taking it as a cold infusion, to having slight tonic properties. Medicinally still used for women's problems; as an emmenagogue and period regulator, as a bitter digestive, intestinal worms, diuretic, blood purifier, diabetes, haemostat, for fever and as a mild sedative and pain reliever.

Mugwort (pictured right shows variegated Mugwort) contains tannins, inulin (which helps maintain blood sugar levels) thujone and artemisinin that has a weak antimalarial activity and is antibacterial against *Escherichia coli*, *Klebsiella*, *Pseudomonas* spp., *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Streptococcus mutans*. Wash infected wound with cooled strong Mugwort tea (1 Tbsp to 1 cup hot water) then apply the powder or essential oil to poultices or plasters. Dress daily. For gum infections & mouth ulcers use strong tea as a mouth wash. Genito-urinary tract infection use in a spa or douche.





Mugwort in Moxa

Mugwort leaf has long been used in cupping or moxibustion, (hence one of its names Moxa) which adds heat to the area and draws out toxins such as with rheumatism. Inhaling the smoke has been used traditionally by many indigenous people with the dried leaf rolled up in cigarettes for nervousness, insomnia and the DT's.

General Ailments

Fever; sip tea often until heat reduced. Better with Mint, Echinacea and Yarrow and/or Peppermint.

Dyspepsia; drink a cup after eating or discomfort.

Diuretic/blood purifier; have a cup in the morning.

Menstrual problems; up to 4 cups a day the week prior to expected period. For better results add to Ginger, Chaste tree, Licorice, Motherwort or Black Cohosh.

Harvest

Harvest in autumn before seeding by cutting off at the base, dry in a cool, dark place for 2 weeks. Crush in hands; put 1 Tbsp into a teapot. Add 1 cup of boiling water. Steep 10 minutes before drinking. The root can also be used by drying, rubbing off rootlets for a slow bitter and best stomachic.

Mugwort in Cooking.

Use in cooking as you would spinach. The Japanese make rice cakes (pictured right) with Mugwort. Germany traditionally used Mugwort to stuff goose. The Taiwanese have a familial stir fry dish, as with many Asian countries who add Mugwort to their food. Even Martha Stewart has a soup recipe with of course cream. 2 cups of fresh leaf incorporated into stir fries or added as a soup base.



Mugwort Ale

Mugwort was used before Hops were introduced to give a bittering finish.

- 1.4kg brown sugar
- 700g molasses
- 2 litres water
- 1 cup dried Mugwort herb
- 1 tsp brewers yeast

Boil sugar, molasses, water and Mugwort for 30 minutes. Cool to 20C, strain into fermenter, add yeast. Ferment for 1 week. Add ½ tsp sugar to clean bottles. Pour in beer, sit for 2 weeks before enjoying cold.



Jan Willingworth

Ed Note: Interesting Mugwort Historical Fact:

The Anglo-Saxons believed Mugwort was given to the world by the God, Woden, as one of the 9 sacred herbs or glory twigs (wuldortunas). It was also called Una, being the first of these sacred nine. Carrying a sprig of Mugwort was said to ward off tiredness.

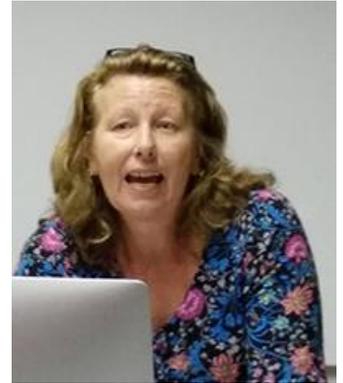
Nettle

Urtica dioica

Ed note: Another of the great October AGM minitalk, delivered by another new member and Herbalist Julie Wilkinson Flores (pictured below delivering her talk). These notes are in bullet point form from her presentation.

A **Conversational Monograph** for those who embrace plants & their story

Tenderhearted grasp the nettles
And it stings you for your pains
Grasp it like a man of nettle
And soft as silk it remains
Unknown, quoted in Polson 1996



URTICACEAE FAMILY

- globally about 500 Urticas - tropical & temperate
- likes sun, fertile loamy soils and drainage
- pollinated by wind, propagated by rhizome or seed
- erect stems, heart shaped opposite leaf, toothed margins
- green flowers from leaf axil in paniced spikes, achene fruit

NOMENCLATURE

- Nettle aka Common or Stinging Nettle - Devils leaf, wild spinach
- Anglicised name from *Noedl* (dutch-needle), *Nere* (latin-to bind/sew)
- *Acantum* - Latin, *Analyse* - Greek
- *Scaddie* - UK, *Grande Ortie* - French, *Grosse Brennessel* - German
- *Urtica dioica* & *U.urens* often used interchangeably

“...our doctors are ashamed of fetching such a common weed from behind the fences & including it in their formulas, even though in both cookery & medicine it has proven its mighty & impressive effects” *Hierionymus Bock, 1532*



NETTLE CROPS

- Commercially viable - multiple harvests; 2-4/year
- Spreading plant crops up to 5 years, goes dormant in the winter
- Harvest tips for foods and stems for fibre
- Dried on screens 45C or in bunches in shade

HISTORICALLY Recorded use in

- Mesopotamia
- Romans transported it to Britannia
- Mentioned as a culinary & medicinal on several continents
- Included in classic literature

“ In Scotland, I have eaten nettles, I have slept in nettle sheets, and I have dined off a nettle tablecloth. The young & tender nettle is an excellent pot herb. The stalks of old nettle are as good as flax for making cloth, I have heard my mother say that she thought nettle cloth more durable than any other species of linen.” –Campbell, a poet - quoted by Maude Grieve (1931)

FOLKLORE

- Dye - green / yellow Lamp oil
- Food and Wine - nettle tips Beer
- Architecture
- Repellent
- Remedies
- Beauty
- Animals & compost Fibres - aerial parts Textiles .

NUTRITIONAL

- Pottage herb
- Full of chlorophyll
- Rich in minerals, vitamins
- Abundant in trace elements
- Biochemical understanding

**MEDICINAL - INTERNAL**

- Scientific studies
- Safe and Integrative
- Therapeutics
- Leaf and Root

“Among the bushes they bray, under the nettles, they huddle together. A senseless disreputable brood, they have been whipped out of the land” *Job 30: 7-8*

MEDICINAL EXTERNAL

- The sting (microscopic picture of the sting above)
- urtication
- anti-inflammatory
- Skin repair
- First aid

“Just as God in his mercy has given us food to eat, so too has He placed amongst the herbs of the fields beautiful plants to heal us when we are sick. These are there to extend a helping hand to man in those dark hours of forgetfulness when he loses sight of his Divinity... the need now is for those who have knowledge of these certain herbs to go and teach all people how they may use them.” – *Dr Edward Bach, 1936*

Julie Wilkinson Flores

M.HSc Herbal Medicine

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Herb Sales and Carers

Our President, Robin, announced at the December meeting that the committee has reviewed herb sales for our general meetings and we are going to trial some sales.

Background

Just to recap, for many years the Herb Society of Victoria sold plants at meetings. Some of these were from members with their own herb nurseries, but largely they were plants raised or propagated by members and donated to our trading table.

Last year we stopped selling plants at the meetings, for a few reasons. Firstly, long time plant carers, sellers and HSOV promoters, Marion and Graham Bond relinquished the role, but no-one else was able to take it on. They had been nurturing and carting around dozens and even hundreds of plants at a time. Also many members already had the range of home grown plants available. Nurseries now have huge ranges to select from, inspiring desires for unusual herbs.

Oh but wait!

We all love our herbs – learning, growing, using and yes....buying them! Whenever we have guest speakers with herbs for sale, they are eagerly snapped up (the herbs I mean - not the speakers!). So we have thought about how to re-introduce herbs for sale in a fresh way.

We have a cunning plan....

OK - we'll buy herbs from nurseries (hopefully at wholesale prices) to have for sale at the general meetings. It means we will be able to take suggestions for orders and provide some more unusual herbs. The plan is to have it up and running for our March meeting.

...with Herb Carers

And let's share the plant care. We don't want to overload any 1 person (or couple) with looking after the herbs between meetings. Instead we'd like to have a few people as **Herb Carers** to take home 1 tray (or possibly 2 trays at the most) of plants at the end of a meeting, water, tend them and return their tray of herbs for sale at the next meeting.

When a few people can care for a tray of herbs each, it spreads the load and if someone cannot make the next meeting, there are still other plant carers to bring some in, so there should always be some for sale.

We really do plan to keep it to 1 tray per person (which is only a few plants each). The more **Herb Carers** we have, the more trays of plants we can purchase and the more diversity of plants for sale at meetings.

How to Volunteer

So please step up to share the care by becoming a **Herb Carer**. Email, text or call me to volunteer or with ideas on what to purchase. ☺

Meridith Hutchinson
theHerbAge@hotmail.com



Herbie Floral Art

November guest speaker, was our Myrna Demetriou from Vermont Floral Art group who worked magic on arrangements of flowers with herbs and spices. She was helped along the way by June Valentine, who lugged tubs of flowers around and presented Myrna with the right flower selected from the dozens and dozens of them. The creations had specific themes with the vegie basket on the front cover, and those below.

TIPS

- Prepare stems by cleaning them and removing leaves that will be under water.
- Sounds obvious, but always keep the water up to arrangements
- To help the flowers hold longer you can use a water conditioner or watered down Seasol solution
- Where flowers have thin stems, use florist wire to hold them up
- Use odd numbers of feature items – 3, 5 or 7.
- Use large leaves at the back as a block to stop the eye going through the arrangement.
- You can supplement fresh displays with artificials and dried, like dried poppy heads, which can be sprayed with gold or silver.
- Use an oasis at the base to hold the arrangement in place; these already have the conditioner applied too.



Myrna brought in piles of flowers with her, so many that she ran out of time to include them all in her creations. Below are notes on the arrangements and flowers – these are not all included, just what I had time to write down!

Renaissance arrangement filled with soft hues of foxglove, dutch iris, poppy seed heads, fennel sprigs, pelargoniums, lobelia sprays, wandering dew stems (leaves removed), aquilegia.

Victorian Posy: lots of small roses, love in the mist, lemon balm and fruit salad sage and senecio cineraria dusty miller.



Tudor bridal cup, a simple one of Rosemary tied with ribbon or cord and placed in a pretty cup.

Christmas wreath and trees. Wrap hessian around the frames to start wreaths off. For trees, take conical frames and wire rosemary down them. Finish off with ribbons.

Tall floral arrangement. Marigolds, tiger lilies, iris and the leaves – cut them lengthways and let them hang down, roses, angelica seed heads and many more.



Meridith Hutchinson

As it Was



Science has advanced so fast in so many fields that it is really surprising how recently we have taken for granted a greater understanding of how a number of things work, including inheritance and how plant (or animal) breeding works. When my mother, Enid Carberry, was a Burnley student around 1913-15, (and that, come to think of it, is more than a hundred years ago), there was little knowledge of genetics.

It was only about thirty years since the work of Gregor Mendel (right), the Austrian scientist and monk who discovered the basic laws of inheritance by working with green and yellow peas, had been published. Considered too revolutionary at the time, they were discounted and forgotten. In 1900 his work was rediscovered, but the information took some time to disseminate and be accepted. Although selective plant breeding had of course been practiced since ancient times, the “rules” were little understood.



Back to Burnley; my mother told me that she had been taught that when annual zinnias were grown under very favourable conditions for some years they became weak, but if they were then grown under harsh conditions for a generation they regained their strength. It was thought that ‘acquired characteristics’, such as ‘regained strength’ from exposure to adversity, could be inherited. We now know that acquired characteristics (such as growing taller with good nutrition, or being pruned into a shape), are not inherited in that way.

For instance, giraffes did not develop long necks because they stretched up to reach high branches, but rather those with longer necks, who could reach food more easily, were more likely to survive and reproduce, passing on their longer-neck genes to their offspring. Under ideal growing conditions both strong and weaker zinnia plants were able to grow and set seed, weaker plants mostly producing weaker offspring, but under hard conditions only the genetically stronger zinnia plants survived, their seed mostly inheriting genes for strength. An example of natural selection at work.

A Burnley lecturer also taught that in European forests tree trunks were devoid of branches below human head height. This was explained in terms of God’s plan, as man was given dominion over the earth.

Dr R. T. Patten, formerly of the Botany School, M.U., observed that European forests were not virgin, but over long periods of time had often been cleared and modified many times, lower branches being cut off, providing access, fire wood and timber.

Maybe God said “I let you evolve with a brain. Use your nut and work out how I did it.” We’re trying, God.

Colline Muir



Tea Roster

FEBRUARY

Not required for picnic meeting

MARCH

Volunteers Required Please



If you are able to have a go at the Tea Trolley in March or any later meeting this year, please speak to Carmen Holloway or one of the committee at the picnic meeting.

Please bring fresh herbs for the tea pots if possible.

Thank you to all our willing helpers. Your extra effort is very much appreciated.

Salvia Study Group Events

Salvia Study Group of Victoria branch events coming up for February and March include:



Feb 18th Sun. Cranbourne Botanical Gardens 11am
Ballarto Rd, off Sth Gippsland Hwy, 2km, from the
Cranbourne Junction. Mel 133 F9

Feb 25th Sun Nobelius Working in the Garden
9.30am – 2pm Mel: 127 G4.Nobelius Heritage Park,
Crighton Rd, Emerald, under the Packing Shed, along
the Puffing Billy line

March 11/12th. Sat/ Sun Ferny Creek Horticultural
Society
Annual Plant Collectors Garden Expo
9-4pm both days Mel: 75 D1 -100 Hilton Rd, Ferny
Creek

March 18th Sun Pat Anderson's Garden Visit 11am
98 Bradley's Lane, Warrandyte Mel:23 C11

For more information see their website: <http://salvias.org.au> or contact
Lyndi Garnet

What herb am I? Solution

I am Orris Root (rhizoma iridis)
- the roots *Iris germanica* and *Iris pallida*



If undeliverable, return to:
HSOV
PO Box 396
CAMBERWELL VIC 3124

The Herb Age

PRINT POST
100004717

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AUSTRALIA