



The Herb Age



DECEMBER 2021

NO 430



*"Nasturtium grew so big and tall. He climbed up on the garden wall."
Elizabeth Gordon*

THE HERB SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC

www.herbsocietyvic.org.au



www.facebook.com/groups/4104516136342577

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

HSOV COMMITTEE

President	June Valentine
Vice President	Nigel Holmes
Past President/ The Herb Age Editor	Meridith Hutchinson
Committee Secretary	Graham Ellis
Treasurer	Carmen Hollway
Membership Officer/ Library Coordinator	Marie Baker
Committee	Robin Calabrese
Committee	Jill Bryant
Committee	Mary Dawson
Committee	Jan Illingworth
Committee	Heather Davies
Committee	Lesley Northey

HSOV MONTHLY EVENTS

HSOV meets on the first Thursday evening of every month, from February to December. Monthly events often feature a guest speaker, mini-talks or event theme, like a picnic or trivia, and followed by herb refreshments.

Monthly events are generally held at:

- **Room MB10 Main Building.**
- Burnley campus of Melbourne University (was Burnley Horticultural College),
- 500 Yarra Blvd Richmond
- Enter from the main entrance.
- **Room is open 7.00pm for 7.30pm start**

Parking inside the grounds is often limited. There is ample parking on Yarra Boulevard, which is free after hours. Public transport access is nearby.

Next Meeting Details: See Page 4

HSOV DETAILS

ABN 22 261 579 261

PO Box 396, Camberwell,
Victoria, 3124, Australia

Bank Details to deposit payments, including membership renewals:

- BSB 633000 / Account 158914432

The Herb Society of Victoria acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we join together and pay respects to elders past and present

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THE HERB AGE

*Official Newsletter of the
Herb Society of Victoria*

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year, covering:

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

Members' original
contributions are warmly
welcomed.

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Email to

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THE HERB AGE

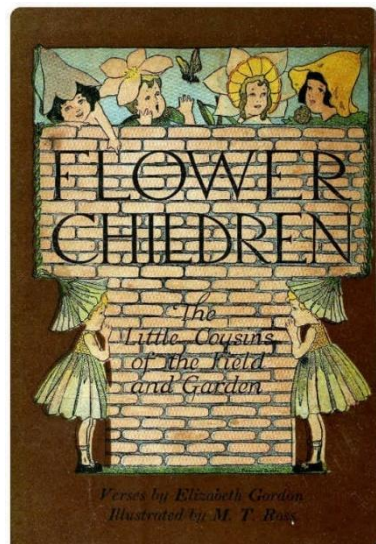
DECEMBER 2021

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Cover Pic and Quote.

The Nasturtium poem is from "FLOWER CHILDREN: The Little Cousins of the Field and Garden". The charming book for children and the child inside us all, was originally published in 1910. It is a collection of 82 flower poems by Elizabeth Gordon and illustrations by M T Ross. The photo from my collection is summer in the making. See the article on page 15 about Nasturtiums in study.



Our Next Event “Let’s Meet”

Burnley Horticultural College Campus and Gardens

There are no school activities this night, so there should be parking available inside the university grounds. There is also parking on Yarra Boulevard near the main entrance.



Thursday 2nd December 2021
BYO Picnic and Trivia Night

BYO Picnic: Starting at 6.00pm

AGM: Starting at 6.30pm

BONUS Herbie Trivia: Following AGM



Where to Meet: Lawn near the Main Building Hall
(in the Student Amenity Building if wet weather)

How lovely we can finally meet in person. We have so much to do at this **outdoor meeting**, so we'll kick off the official business early to be finished before sunset.

Opening with BYO picnic if you can make it early (note the change from the usual Sugar Gum table to the **lawn** near our MB10 room to allow for better social distancing). We have sourced tables and a few chairs, but if you can bring a fold up chair, it would be appreciated.



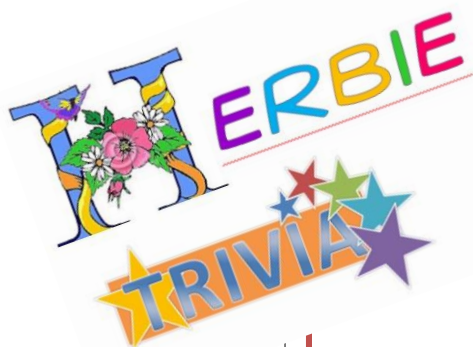
First business of the night is the AGM, scheduled for 6.30pm. The President's report was in the last THA; the financial report is in this THA.

Finally, we'll finish off with **Herb Trivia for a bit of fun** (3rd time lucky!), so get those herbie brains ticking. Prizes await the winners!

We have access to the Student Amenity Building for toilets and kitchen facilities, as well as a wet weather backup.

If there are any changes, we will notify members as soon as possible via email, our meetup page and the Facebook HSOV group page.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/4104516136342577>

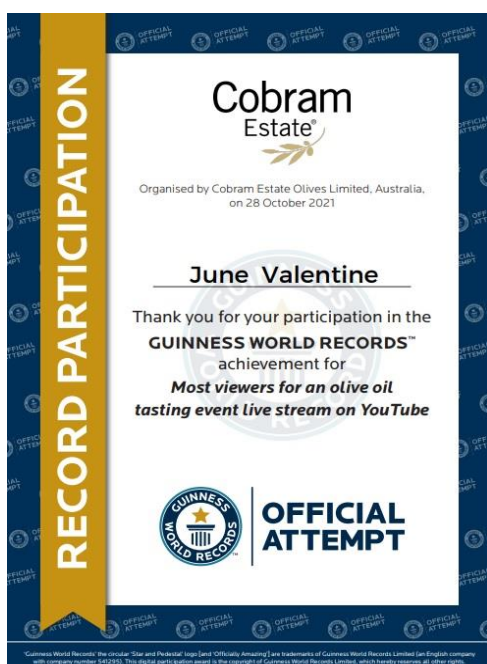


President's Report

Welcome to my late spring/early summer news. What a great time for gardening, particularly for herbs, many of which are emerging from winter hibernation/go slow period. So looking forward to meeting in person again, at the December meeting. The saying is third time lucky, but it will be our 4th time lucky for the herb/spice quiz, following on from the AGM and picnic. Hoorah!

Meanwhile I have been Zooming along with nature; A library talk on the book, "The Language of Butterflies" by Wendy Williams (from Cape Cod USA). Subtext: How thieves, hoarders, scientists and other obsessives unlocked the secrets of the world's favourite insect. Of particular interest was Maria Sibylla Merian, a German born naturalist and scientific illustrator, who was born in 1647. When she was only 13, Maria documented the first evidence of metamorphosis and also included the host plant of the insect. David Attenborough considers Maria to be one of the most significant contributors to the field of entomology. Wendy spoke at length about the Monarch butterfly in North America which travels from Canada to overwinter each year in Mexico. Gardeners are encouraged to plant milkweed, (*Asclepias subulata*) as an important food source for said butterflies. A fascinating talk on her book that is available to borrow from your library or to buy from all good bookshops. Wendy is currently working on a book about bats (not cricket, but the flying kind) and is very keen to visit Australia which would be wonderful as she has such a delightful personality.

Another nature event for me last month was the event "Attracting frogs to your garden" presented by Richard Rowe from Sustainability Gardening Australia. Frogs are the only living native amphibians in Australia and there are about 240 known species. Frogs are threatened because they are highly sensitive to changes in the environment. It's important to avoid garden chemicals, especially high nitrate fertilisers and also wetting agents. Feed your garden naturally, manage weeds naturally and wet your soil naturally plus be a responsible pet owner. When building a frog friendly garden provide food, shelter and water. A frog pond needs to provide for each stage of a frog's lifestyle. You can record frog's calls which can then be identified using the Frog ID app from the Australian Museum. It was an excellent presentation, and for more info go to SGA website. Frog pic by Stephanie Leblanc via Unsplash.



I am now a Guinness World record holder (along with the other 11,981 participants). Cobram Estate organised a virtual tasting of their Extra-Virgin Olive Oil last week, with the aim of setting a new world record for such an event and they smashed it! Registered persons were sent four sample bottles of EV00, plus a bottle of rancid oil for comparison. Participants were given the background story of Cobram, plus a dietician's report about how good EVOO is for you. Then we were all shown the process of harvesting and bottling of the oil, after which everyone was guided through the tastings. Not only was it fun, but also informative, and world record breaking. Cobram's superior quality has seen them awarded several international gold medals so if you aren't already using that brand (and why wouldn't you support an Aussie product) go out and purchase some today. I don't work for the company but am spruiking their oil because it's so good.

That's all folks as I am relinquishing the role of president at the AGM so this position will be open to any of you Herbies out there who would be happy leading such a lovely group plus presiding over an excellent committee.

June Valentine, President

Eden and Fungi

Our last meeting in person was back in March, believe it or not! We have had some interesting Zoom meetings between then and now until in person meetings can resume. How wonderful that is. The October and November meetings were both well worth the zoom attendance as we journeyed into other worlds and places from the comfort of the living room.



October Fantastic Fungi

The October meeting was all about Fungi with an amazing video presentation 'Fantastic Fungi'. The beautiful time-lapse photography of the incredibly diverse fungi world was spell-binding. The fast changing and delicate mushrooms above ground are the tip of the iceberg, with networks of mycelium underground. The film briefly touched on some research on uses, including waste reduction.



One research project looked at different experimental methods of trying to deal with oil spillages. Mycelium were sprayed over an oil waste, it was covered and left. A few weeks later, the cover was removed. The fungi had transformed the waste and a new micro-ecosystem was developing. The research and the absolutely gorgeous look of this film were the parts I found most interesting. If you missed it, it can be found on some of the paid streaming networks. Thanks to Jan for allowing us to use her copy.

November The Eden Project

Cornwall is home to the Eden Project, where a vast mined wasteland has been transformed into a series of Biomes and outdoor gardens. Garden visionary, Sir Tim Smit, who was also behind the 'the lost Gardens of Heligan' in Cornwall, saw the potential of the enormous clay pit, and development began some twenty years ago. The giant igloo like Biomes feature the biodiversity of different parts of the world. Who would have thought of tropical pineapples growing in Cornwall? Our wonderful and generous President, June Valentine has visited this marvel and guided us through video and slides, with her usual humour and insights.

But it didn't stop there, as the Eden Project will soon be in our home state. Situated at Angelsea, this project is in partnership with Alcoa. Once again it is turning a disused mine into an area of natural wonder. The ground work has started and it is on track to open in 2026. This will not use biomes, but instead focus on different concepts: Earth, Air, Water to have low impact restored landscapes, with architectural and art features. See more updates on the website <https://www.edenprojectanglesea.com.au/>. Thank you to June, and hubby David, as well as the help from Bob and Lesley over some technical hitches.



The Zoom meetings have been a wonderful way to connect, but I am glad that we have (hopefully) seen the last of them for our main HSOV events. Bring on our next December meeting and a chance to really see each other, even if I have to leave the comfort of the living room to do it!

Meridith Hutchinson

Burnley Campus (COVID-19) Update

Below are the latest updates from the University of Melbourne. We would like to draw your attention to requirement that anyone attending the campus grounds must be Vaccinated against COVID-19.

The Herb Society of Victoria have had a close working relationship with the Burnley Horticultural College, now the Burney Campus of the University of Melbourne. Our inaugural meeting was held there 40 years ago and we currently use their facilities to meet. We are very appreciative of their continued generosity and encourage all members and visitors to respect these requirements.

The University of Melbourne Coronavirus (COVID-19) update.

Last updated 4.25pm, 6 November 2021

- **COVID-19 vaccination is a requirement for anyone attending our campuses** or undertaking University activities in third-party or public settings. You may be asked to show your vaccination certificate or medical exemption.
- **Check in at every building you visit on campus** using the QR code displayed or alternative arrangements (ie sign a register)
- **Face masks must be worn indoors** and are highly recommended outside if you cannot maintain physical distancing.

We all have a role to play to keep our campuses and community safe. Stay home if you are unwell, adhere to physical distancing, maintain hand hygiene, cover your cough and sneeze, 'check in' to buildings and spaces, and carry and wear a face mask as required.

Melbourne University have enhanced infection control and cleaning measures in place to ensure we are creating the safest on-campus environment and continuing to prioritise health and safety. They are continuing to explore other measures, such as improved ventilation and increased use of outdoor spaces, to reduce the potential for transmission, building on those already in place such as masks, QR codes, physical distancing, sanitiser stations, density limits and additional cleaning.

You are reminded:

- **Do not attend campus or the grounds if you have symptoms and please get tested.** Symptoms include fever, chills or sweats, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, runny nose, or loss or change in sense of taste or smell.
- **You must notify the HSOV committee** (who will advise the University) if you have visited an exposure site, are a contact of someone with COVID-19 or test positive for COVID-19, and have visited the University.

Reference:

<https://www.unimelb.edu.au/coronavirus/attending-campus>

<https://www.unimelb.edu.au/coronavirus/vaccination-at-unimelb>

HSOV COVID-19 Plan for Melbourne University document



Bunya Pine Fun

Remember our picnic earlier this year. I picked up a Bunya pine nut, which was very heavy, when leaving the picnic. I placed it on the table and when my granddaughter visited, she tried to pick it up but it shed all over; see picture. From then, I tried boiling it as per a recipe I found, but seeds just went soggy. Have planted a couple and my brother also planted some so, maybe we will get a baby Bunya pine (*Araucaria bidwillii*) one day!

Elsie Carter



Annual General Meeting 2021

FINAL NOTICE

The 2021 Annual General Meeting of the Herb Society of Victoria Inc. will be held on **Thursday 2nd December '21 at 7:30 pm. Location is now the Lawn outside the Main Building Hall** (near our usual room MB10) at Burnley Horticultural Campus, Melbourne University 500 Yarra Blvd, Richmond. If inclement weather, the AGM will be moved to the Student Amenity Building, near the Main Building at the same campus.

The purpose of the Annual General Meeting is to attend to the business of the Society and the Annual Election of Officers and Committee Members as defined in the Rules 2014.

Our Rules 2014 allow for up to fifteen positions on the Committee of Management. All positions are declared vacant at the AGM. Nominations are called for the following positions:

- ☼ President
- ☼ Vice-President (2 positions)
- ☼ Committee Secretary
- ☼ Treasurer
- ☼ Membership Officer
- ☼ Editor and
- ☼ Up to seven other Committee members.

NOTE: we currently only have nominations for the Treasurer, Secretary, Editor, Membership Officer and Committee roles. We do need nominations for President and two Vice-President positions. A full complement of Committee members is important for the functioning of the Society and to provide services. It is also your chance to put your stamp on the future direction of the Herb Society of Victoria.

Candidates, if unopposed, shall be declared elected at the Annual General Meeting. Where more candidates are nominated than required, voting shall be by secret ballot. Any member who is unable to attend the meeting may appoint any other financial member as proxy. The member appointing the proxy must notify the Committee Secretary (or President) in writing before the meeting. A Proxy Form is in this edition of THA.

The Committee meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month except December to organise General Meetings and other activities of the Society. Committee Meetings are conducted in a friendly atmosphere and kept as short as possible. They are either held in the same room as the general meetings that is MB10, Main Building, BURNLEY CAMPUS or via Zoom.

All financial members are eligible to attend the AGM and to stand for election to the Committee of Management. Nomination forms will be available on the night or complete the form in this issue. All new Committee members are very welcome.

The HSOV Financial documents will be published in the upcoming December issue of The Herb Age and should enable you to understand the financial position of the Society. As a financial member you may ask questions at the AGM about financial matters or other issues that concern you.

A Nomination and Proxy form are on page of the previous issue (October/November 2021) of THA.

Graham Ellis
Committee Secretary,

HERB SOCIETY OF VICTORIA FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2020/2021

PROFIT AND LOSS STATEMENT for the year ended 30 June 2021	2020	2021
INCOME	\$	\$
interest received Bendigo Term Deposit	0	1257.28
Interest Received - Bendigo Account 159401736	7	5.09
membership/subscription	2680	2895
raffle	351	120.05
sale of plants/seeds/books	971	95.55
TOTAL INCOME	4009	4372.97
EXPENSES	\$	\$
bank charges	0	0
donations	200	159.2
general expenses	0	0
insurance	336	251.13
Library Additions	47	0
postage	448	253.35
printing	1518	1244.65
Purchases Plants, Seeds, Soil, Tags, Pots	665	0
raffle costs	82	0
speakers' fees	300	100
subscriptions	0	96.1
website expenses	239	1802.66
TOTAL EXPENSES	3835	3907.09
NET PROFIT	174	465.88
BALANCE SHEET for the year ended 30 June 2021		
ASSETS AND LIABILITIES	\$	\$
CURRENT ASSETS		
cash on hand - petty cash	50	94.15
Cash at Bendigo Bank	19435	18232.22
Bendigo Bank - Term Deposit	16680	17937.28
TOTAL ASSETS	36165	36263.65
LIABILITIES		
deposit held for conference	1500	1500
TOTAL LIABILITY	1500	1500
NET ASSETS AND LIABILITIES	34665	\$34,906.75
MEMBERS FUNDS	\$	\$
retained earnings	34491	34665
current year surplus/deficit	174	465.88
TOTAL MEMBERS FUNDS	34665	34906.75

Carmen Hollway, Treasurer

Fire Retardant Plants

Do you live in a fire prone area? Especially those areas subject to grass fires, for it is worth considering planting fire retardant plants in your garden. The internet provides much information about fire retardant plants, pointing out that any plant will burn if exposed to enough heat, but some will ignite more slowly than others. Some plants have been investigated scientifically and some have been used on farms as fire breaks. Not surprisingly, dry leaves ignite quicker than green leaves. Fire resistant plants provide a heat shield in case of fire that may save property.

Some years ago, friends claimed that their home was saved by an avenue of native deciduous trees, along their boundary fence, next to their drive, and their house. On the other side of the fence was the neighbours' paddock of thick, dry 1 meter high *Phalaris* grass which burned to a paddock of ash. We will not deliberately grow *Phalaris* on our farm.

Plants may resist fire by slowing wind speed, and trapping sparks and cinders. Plants that will not burn in the face of continued flame may have a high salt content, fleshy or succulent leaves or less volatile oil content, such as most exotic trees and shrubs except conifers, unlike many natives, but not all.

There are in fact quite a number of native fire resistant plants, including numerous salt bushes such as Old Man Saltbush, (*Atriplex mummularia*), lilly-pillys, kurrajong (*Brachychiton acerifolius*), flame tree, pigface (*Carbobrotus*), *Hymenosporum flavum*, (Aus. Franjapani), a number of Acacias, including blackwood. Among exotics are crape myrtle (pic right), English holly, black locust, honey locust, oak, oleander, apple trees and plums, including ornamental varieties, and olive trees. It is suggested that most exotic garden plants are fire retardant.



What about herbs? A very useful one is tree wormwood, *Artemisia arborescens*, (pic left) which a delightfully ferny, soft leafed plant, extremely hardy, and if kept trimmed so that it has lots of new, soft foliage, makes good, grey contrast in the garden. If you try to burn a piece you will see that it glows into ash, but it will not flame. It is easily grown from cuttings. A hedge around a garden could retard a grass fire by a very useful degree. Any plant should be pruned to keep it free of dead or browning foliage.

Any plant will burn if provided with enough heat, so keeping gardens in fire prone areas as safe as possible is important, such as selection of appropriate plants, care about placing of plants, raking up dry leaves in summer, an adequate watering system for garden and house, adequate water supply, such as good use of roof water, clearing roof gutters plus a system of keeping gutters clear. We have family experience of a large house being burnt to the ground in a bush fire in 1927 when a large Cootamundra wattle had grown under the roof. Good luck in the coming summer, take care and precautions.

Colline Muir

Be our Facebook Group Friend

You may have noticed references in the Herb Age to our Brand-New Facebook Group. This is another tool to help us get up to speed with social media and encourage new members to our wonderful society. It depends on YOU. Please visit, join, like, share and add posts. It can be a quick simple comment or maybe a photo of herbs in your garden, in your cooking or something else herb or garden related. We really need everyone who uses Facebook to work together to kick it off and keep new group members on board. *Please be our friend.....Please!*



Facebook HSOV group page. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/4104516136342577>

Horsing Around with Horseradish

One of my favourite times to take a walk over the last couple of months whilst living under the Covid-19 curfew hours during Melbourne's lockdown has been between dusk and the 9pm scurry-home. There are usually few people around and the smell and fragrances of gardens, earth and air have never smelt so good since.....well, pre-mask days!!

During one of these recent evening strolls I brought home with me a pot of very sad looking dried-up brown leaves that had been left on a local's nature strip with a note attached 'Horseradish' Not having grown horseradish before, but fond of eating it over the years, I was glad to see the note kindly attached naming what I was taking home with me!!

In a matter of a week, still in pot, with a little addition of potting mix, regular watering and exposed to all the elements that Melbourne is famed for, the horseradish leaves are now thriving on my balcony. This had me reaching for *The Book of Herbs* by Dorothy Hall, published & purchased in 1972 by a local Bega collector and which came into my possession when I was living there in the Mimosa Rocks National Park for some ten years.



According to the book Dorothy Hall's Grandfather was a Government Botanist and her Mother a dedicated herb gardener. Of horseradish the author writes 'Authorities differ as to the correct botanical name for this herb; some of the confusion seems due to its variation in leaf shape and habit of growth, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* referring to it as *Armoracia rusticana*, but Culpeper, and many later writers such as Clare Loewenfeld, who has the famous Chiltern Herb Nursery in Surrey, England, call it *Cochlearia armoracia*.....but as far as I can discover all the names refer to the same old pungent horseradish we serve with the roast beef'.

One more titbit from Dorothy before I leave you with her recipe for Cold Horseradish Sauceshe tells us 'that it has been discovered recently (remembering 1972 publication) that a clump of horseradish at each end of the potato rows can improve the health and resistance to disease of the potato tubers. Organic gardeners are ever seeking natural methods of improving crops and maintaining the fertility of the soil. It seems horseradish can give plants as well as humans the benefit of its natural antibiotic properties'.

Thanks to Dorothy for sharing her knowledgeit seems there was a real explosion of herbal books published in the 1970s and I find them wonderful to refer to for all sorts of reasons. I hope to create a dish of Cold Horseradish Sauce from my own nature-strip plant one day.....if I can save its enticing leaves from the snails!!

Cold Horseradish Sauce

4 tablespoons grated horseradish	Pinch of paprika
2 teaspoons dry mustard	1 teaspoon wine vinegar
4 tablespoons yoghurt or thick cream	

Mix first four ingredients together, then add the yoghurt or cream. Blend till creamy and smooth. Serve with a salad, cold meat, or smorgasbord platter of vegetables. Enjoy!

Mary Dawson

Monet's Flowers and Plants



Monet grew flowers for their colours and as inspiration for his painting. The list, written in French, of all the plants in his Giverny garden are arranged in three sections: Firstly, the Trees, secondly Spring Flowers and thirdly, Summer and Autumn Flowers.

The trees are all familiar to us. The Weeping Willows around the pond have been shown so often that their graceful branches are familiar. Monet admired their arched vistas with festoons of creepers. The reflection of the Willow branches and the droplets of rain which dimple the surface of the lake, create a cool and moist atmosphere in Summer. Poplar, Ash and Alder trees give height and strength to the garden. Chestnut trees' new green leaves, and Laburnum pale gold petals were so fresh. The Lime trees or Linden trees, not the citrus Limes we know, were in pale bright green leaf too. Dark green Holly leaves contrasted strongly with the gorgeous pink flowering heads of Rhododendrons.

Bamboo and Black stemmed Bamboo give the European garden an exotic flavour, and reveal Monet's admiration for Japanese plants. Japanese Cherry, Japanese Crab Apple and Japanese Quince give bountiful blossoms In Spring and yellow or red leaves in Autumn, as do the Japanese Maples. The Ginkgo with its golden Autumn leaves and the Judas Tree whose mauve pink flowers in Spring rise directly from its twigs are superb interesting trees. The small trees which I saw last year in April and most admired were the Tamarisks: clouds of feathery pale pink soft and beautiful, above both a pink gravel path and the more substantial flowers of Spring bulbs.



Spring in Giverny revealed swathes of tulips, planted in one tone in each area. My favourites were the two pinks and reds of Tulips dotted with brilliant blue Chinese Forget-Me-Nots around Monet's pink washed house with green shutters. In other areas were mauve and purple Tulips along with mauve Wall Flowers and other dainty mauve flowers under Mauve or Rich purple Lilac bushes. Elsewhere Yellow tulips with pale orange and "Perrotquet" or in English, Parrot tulips with serrated petals and reddish stripes on yellow, were so dramatic.

Crocus both yellow and purple, Lily of the Valley and true Snow drops in the shadows and Daffodils in the sunny spots gave perfume and beautiful abundance. Their long flowering is partly ensured by the moist environment from the lake and gentle rain. Lupins, yellow, mauve or purple plumed up to give a different dimension to the springing landscape.

Helebores with green or pink or subtle purples and crimson flowers burgeoned under the budded deciduous trees. Pale yellow species Primroses, much smaller flowers than the Polyanthus Primrose on display, purple violets, violas, Viola cornuta and intense purple and burgundy Pansies surprised with rich velvet colours. Pictures above are from Jill's visit. Pic right courtesy Veronica Reverse via Unsplash.



Aubretia with little pinkish trumpet flowers and Viburnums' clusters of cream and pink tipped flower clusters created a level of colour below that of the cascading mauve or pristine white of the Wisteria tumbling from green frames and especially glorious on the arch over the green wooden bridge above the lake. Dutch Iris and Bearded Iris in Golden shades or mauve tipped with yellow stood erectly above their pointed leaves. Azaleas were finer in branches and flowers than we see and created a fine background and delicacy above the bulb flowers and Sweet William. Picture above from Pascal Bernardon via Unsplash. Pic below is by Jill.



Disappointingly for me were the fat buds of Peony Roses or Peonies. Some buds had a tiny split revealing the promise of superb pink, crimson, white or magenta blooms. Only one Peony shrub was in salmon pink flower. Its warmer micro- climate was occasioned by another pink gravel pathway and the hundreds of human visitors' warmth, each day, as it was near the doorway into the Monet artefacts shop.



Giverny: a heaven of blooming beauty!

Jill Bryant

Stunning Developments in Riversdale Park

In January 2020 the monthly Outing was to Platform 1 Cafe at Riversdale Station. Afterwards we checked out the garden beds in Riversdale Park before having lunch at my house nearby. While wandering through the park we discussed many of the plants we viewed. One was the plant showing as labelled *Doryanthes palmeri* (pictured right). Last year the plants were not flowering but they sure are now. There are at least four plants in the park, each flowering like this one: spectacular. The leaf growth of each plant covers a diameter of about 3m. Unfortunately, last year I called this plant Gynea Lily but it is usually called Giant Spear Lily. It grows either side of the Queensland/NSW border in rainforest country.



There is one related species, *Doryanthes excelsa* (pictured left) which is commonly called Gynea Lily. This plant is thoroughly restrained compared with the other. Gynea Lily forms clumps of leaves 1m to 2m in diameter and sends up a narrow flower stem perhaps 3m high before flowering at the top. This photo shows some only of the plants scattered in a mixed planting at Camberwell Civic Centre, Camberwell Rd. These Gynea Lily plants seem to fit in to the plantings which includes several mature Elm trees. Maybe the Gynea Lily fits in so well because you would not expect it to be an Australian plant. Compliments to the Horticulture staff at Boroondara Council for their bold vision. Gynea Lily naturally grows near Sydney around Royal National Park in mainly heathland settings.

Graham Ellis

Talking Tea

Second only to water, Tea is the most popular beverage consumed worldwide with 25,000 cups drunk every second. *Camellia sinensis*; native to China is an evergreen bush with glossy, dark green, elliptic leaves. Numerous white flowers with a yellow centre form over the bush. Prefers subtropical areas.

Types of Tea



- Green; freshly, often handpicked leaves are steamed and packed to hold in the antioxidants, making this the most therapeutic tea. Japanese Matcha is green ground down to a powder, whereas Sencha is the whole leaf as is Gunpowder. They have an earthy fresher taste.
 - White; is covered before picking, very young leaves with little oxidation (drying).
 - Yellow; older leaves that are not oxidised.
 - Black; fully oxidised to produce a robust flavour.
 - Oolong; not oxidised for as long as Black.
 - Pu erh; oxidised with added fermentation, sometimes up to 3 years making it very earthy to taste.
 - Lapsang souchong; oxidised and smoked on pine needles to give it the strongest taste.
 - Purple; a new species from Assam that is partially dried.
- Many other flavours are continuing to be botanised for that niche in the market.

Taste of Tea

Depends on where Tea is grown, when picked, length of oxidising, fermentation or if or what the Tea is smoked on or in. Twinning's has captured the flavour market from establishment in 1706, such as Assam, Darjeeling, Orange Pekoe, Lapsang souchong, Earl Grey and other Royalties. Teabags invented by Tetley in 1953, probably saved us all 5 minutes a brew.

Many countries besides China and India grow Tea, followed by Kenya and Sri Lanka. We now have many plantations in the Daintree and now Tassie is on board.

History of Tea

Native to China, namely Yunnan Province, Tea is said to be first drunk 1500BC by the emperor and medicine man; Shen Nong who while resting and boiling water noticed some leaves floating that imparted a pleasant flavour. About the 6th century, Buddhist monks took Tea seeds back to Japan and started religious ceremonies from where it became popular, especially rolled green leaf tea and sencha which is briefly simmered in a cauldron.



Not until the 17th century did Tea reach the Western World through the Silk Route by Portuguese Mongs and the annual Russian Caravan of camels but was delayed by 50 years because Tsar Michael did not care for it. When the English invaded India, to avoid the Chinese monopoly of Tea they grew plantations; Southern side of the Himalayans, Ceylon, Burma and Kenya.

The British East Indian Co (BEIC) who monopolised the Tea, slave and opium trade, would sell opium for silver and then trade it for Tea from the Chinese and to avoid the Tea tax. Many businesses would buy property to avoid the middleman. e.g., Lipton, Tetley, Typhoo. Twinings who have had a Tea shop in The Strand since 1706, joined with BEIC.

The famous Boston Tea Party 1773 was more about the high taxes USA was paying to the English for no representation. The Liberty group boarded the BEIC ships and emptied out hundreds of tea chest into the harbour to cause a stewing stench for weeks and further clamp downs and retrograde laws from the English to culminate in the subsequent Civil War.

Note: Pictures in this article by various contributors on Unsplash.

Benefits of Tea

Tea not only increases fluid intake with nutrients but makes one feel good by relaxing and the ritual. All teas contain **among** other chemistry; antioxidants, alkaloids, caffeine, polyphenols, quercetin, theanine & catechins (more in Green). These constituents help to reduce weight, dental problems, skin ageing, diabetic severity (by 33%), cancers (breast by 20%), kills microbes (including virus's), while increasing immunity, bone density, stamina, & sleep.

Tea is readily available and easy to make, (especially tea bags) and one can grow herbal teas. Caution; if anaemic, Tea's tannins can reduce iron absorption, so take away from food. Even though Tea has caffeine, the theanine content reduces the stimulating effect.

Making a good cuppa

Start with your water, rain is best, though it is said that the chemicals in tap, such as chlorine are boiled off.

After boiling, rinse out and warm your teapot.

Put in the tea leaves; 1 tsp per cup.

Pour over the hot water.

Let it steep (sit) for 5 minutes

Strain into your cup.

If desired add milk or sugar or honey or slice of lemon and Enjoy

Jan Ulingworth



Reach for the Sun

Without realising it, I have been running my own experiment into plant dependency on the sun. We moved into our house in June and desperate to get into garden, I managed to find seedlings over lockdown, among them a punnet of Nasturtiums. Down the sideways, the previous owners left trellis frames outside each window. I strung some string from ground to trellis and popped 2 of the climbing plants at the base of each trellis.

All are the same variety, from the same punnet, planted in the same soil, at the same time and fed and watered at the same time with the same amounts. At yet they have grown at very different rates. The main difference is the proximity to the sun. The sideways is east facing and has double story buildings next door, so their best sun is from the north at the front of the block.

- ☼ Site 1 is on the wall at the southern end of the house. The plants are growing quite compactly and have reached the height of 1.07 m, with a couple of flowers.
- ☼ Site 2 is in the middle and the plants have gained a good foothold on the trellis, steadily climbing to 1.56 m, with about half a dozen flowers.
- ☼ Site 3 is closest to the north-facing front of the house and the sun. The plants are going gang-busters and have easily reached the top of the dividing fence, well over 2 m. The leaves are much more dispersed, and there are lots of lateral shoots, but surprising, not a bloom yet. I'm sure they are not far away.

Nasturtiums literally grow as you watch them. It has given so much joy observing their daily progress, as well as a very interesting experiment!

Meridith Hutchinson



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