



The Herb Age



DECEMBER 2022

NO 436



*Appreciation is a wonderful thing;
it makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well.*
Voltaire

THE HERB SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC

www.herbsocietyvic.org.au



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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	Vacant
Vice President	Vacant
Committee Secretary	Vacant
(Acting and committee)	Graham Ellis
Treasurer	Carmen Hollway
The Herb Age Editor	Vacant
(Acting, not committee)	Meridith Hutchinson
Membership Officer	Marie Baker
Committee	Jan Illingworth
Committee	June Valentine
Committee	Nigel Holmes
Committee	Purwani Wiryana

The Herb Society of Victoria acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we join together and pay respects to Elders past, present and yet to emerge.

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 held at:

- **Room MB10 Main Building**
- Burnley campus of Melbourne University (was Burnley Horticultural College)
- 500 Yarra Blvd Richmond
- Enter MB building 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

Membership can also be paid via Try Booking link:
<https://www.trybooking.com/BZGPX>

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THE HERB AGE

*Official Newsletter of the
Herb Society of Victoria*

Six issues published per
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 views expressed by the
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THE HERB AGE

DECEMBER 2022

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Note from the Editor:

Welcome to the last edition of The Herb Age for 2022. Gosh what a year it has been with so much to report since the previous THA. The cover has a collage of photos from the Herb Conference held in early October and from some of the following day trip walks. There are several articles throughout.

The quote from Voltaire, one of France's greatest writers and philosophers, just seemed to capture the essence of the Herb Conference. While the knowledge, generosity and passion of those presenting and otherwise involved with the Herb conference was evident, it was the appreciation from everyone who attended that made it work. Everyone was so positive and the feedback we have received has been wonderful, much to the delight of all involved. We are most humbly appreciative in return.

There were a couple of hiccups, including a change of Presenter on Sunday, due to illness and cancellation of a day trip with the flooding rains. These events will go ahead, Penny Woodward is committed to delivering her presentation at one of our regular monthly meetings (held the first Thursday evening of the month, these are free to HSOV members). The day trip to Heide with garden tours will go ahead in January, more details inside.

If you notice there is something missing this issue, then you are right – the Presidents Report is not available, but the committee are working out how to report in in the THA all the exciting things they are up to in the coming months. Season's Greetings to all our wonderful members, your family and loved ones and may 2023 be a fabulous herbie year.

Our December Event

Burnley Horticultural College Campus
and Gardens, Burnley Room MB10



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

Please bring a plate for shared supper, herbs for tea or help out at the tea trolley at the end of the main event.

Thursday 1st December 2022

Part 1 Picnic

Picnic from 6pm

In keeping with our Christmas and end of year festive tradition and for those who can make it a little earlier,

Meet at the Sugar Gum Tree Table (near the Herb Garden)

BYO plate to share.

Please note, the picnic will go ahead in our regular meeting room (MB10) if the weather is unkind for the outdoors.



Part 2 Meeting

General Monthly Event

Please be seated 7.15 for 7.30 pm Start

Guest Speaker: Lynsey Poore

Topic: Chelsea Physic Garden

For those who have been lucky enough to see a presentation from Lynsey you will know that she has a wealth of knowledge and fabulous speaker she is. Lynsey is a passionate volunteer guide at the Royal Botanic Gardens and President of the Friends of RBG, Melbourne during the 175 anniversary last year.



The Chelsea Physic Garden near the River Thames in London was founded in 1673 by Apothecaries to grow medicinal herbs and plants, with a living collection of about 5,000 edible, useful and medicinal plants. Lynsey will guide you through this incredible garden with her warmth and expertise, so please sit back and enjoy.

January Event - Walking Tour of Heide Gardens

This tour of the gardens at Heide Museum of Modern Arts was offered as an optional day trip after the Herb Conference in October. Unfortunately, it had to be cancelled due the flooding rains predicted for the day. The good news is that you have another chance to enjoy this. There is no limit on numbers, but please book so we know how many to expect.

Heide was the home of John and Sunday Reed from 1934, who established a renowned artist retreat and gardens on an old dairy farm in Bulleen. The household and their contemporary art collection outgrew the old farm house, and commissioned an art gallery/ living space for their new home on the grounds. The property was purchased by the state government to be a legacy for modern art in 1981. Heide also boasts several very different gardens, including the walled garden wild garden, kitchen gardens and the sculpture park. The gardens fell into disrepair and were nearly lost. HSOV volunteers were instrumental in saving and restoring these gardens through the 1980's with many of the ancient roses still thriving. More recently artist gardens have also been established.

Where: Gardens of Heide Museum of Modern Arts, 7 Templestowe Rd, Bulleen

When: Saturday 14th January

Meet Time: 10.30am

Meet at: Heide Entrance via the carpark. 7 Templestowe Rd, Bulleen

Driving: Free parking on site

Public Transport: Train (Hurstbridge line) to Heidelberg station and bus #903 (Moordialloc bound) to Heide. Disembark at the Bridge Street/Manningham Road stop. Walk to Heide through Banksia Park, via pedestrian path next to the Helmet sculpture

Morning: Come on guided walks with HSOV member Elsie Carter of the walled garden, original kitchen garden and the wild garden. Elsie has an intimate knowledge of the gardens and some of its secrets.

Lunch: Arrange your own lunch at Heide Café or BYO lunch.

Note: the website www.heide.com.au has a note that the Heide Café is closed from end October for renovations and a food truck is available instead.

Afterwards: walk around the sculpture park or optional visit to the art galleries and exhibitions.

Cost: Gardens and HSOV guided tours are free. No charge for the tours. Galleries around \$20

Booking: Please advise your intention to come at the December monthly event or email theherbage@outlook.com or contact Meridith or Elsie.

Contact: Meridith or Elsie

Please join us for a great day out.



Your New Committee

Welcome to the new committee voted in at the recent Annual General Meeting at the November monthly event. Its great to see many of last year's committee members have been re-elected and a new face with Purwani Wiryana popping her hand up. Unfortunately, we did not have nominations for some key roles. That leaves plenty of scope for members to still join the committee this year.

The current committee can vote for any new nominations on behalf of all members. Step up and have a go to help mould the future of this great organisation.

Elected Representatives for the 2022/2023 committee are:

<i>President</i>	Vacant
<i>Vice President</i>	Vacant
<i>Committee Secretary</i>	Vacant #
<i>Treasurer</i>	Carmen Hollway
<i>The Herb Age Editor</i>	Vacant **
<i>Membership Officer</i>	Marie Baker
<i>Committee</i>	Jan Illingworth
<i>Committee</i>	June Valentine
<i>Committee</i>	Nigel Holmes
<i>Committee</i>	Purwani Wiryana
<i>Committee</i>	Graham Ellis #

Graham Ellis will continue in the 'Committee Secretary' until January 2023 and on the committee in the short term at least.

** Meridith Hutchinson will act in 'The Herb Age Editor' role until the position can be filled, but not on the committee.

Thank you to all who have nominated and accepted roles on the committee for your dedication to HSOV and helping to shape our society over the next year; it is very much appreciated. In the words of Winston Churchill, 'We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.'

The Novice Gardener



Linda Trikarso provided a mini talk on her entry into the 2016 Gardening Australia's 'Gardener of the Year'. She started her entry simply enough – she felt she met all the criteria and it was worth a try. Then discovered the application process was about to close in 2 weeks and with a mad rush, popped her entry in.

She entered the small garden category, thinking that might be her best chance, since she has a small yard. To her great surprise she won! but in the regular sized garden (the most popular) category. The hardest part was having to keep it a secret until it was announced when she was presented her award at Floriade in Canberra.

Her presentation had a few snaps of her gorgeous garden, including the front yard with a wee Monet inspired bridge using blue flowering plants beneath instead of water. The beautiful pictures clearly demonstrated the pride and care Linda takes in her garden and why her efforts created a winner.

Welcome to our New Members

The Herb Society of Victoria would like to welcome some of our newest members. Lovely to meet many of you at the Herb Conference and we are looking forward to catching with you at our regular events soon. Keep an eye on our website, Facebook group or meetup page (links are on inside front cover) for event details, as well as in The Herb Age.

Andrea Mallett	Duncan Kirkland	Kris Wirthensohn
Angela Rosato	Felicity Strong	Louise Lowe
Anna Lorains	Francine Hall	Marie Wurttemberger
Anna Lorains	Georgie Neubauer	Martin van Rin
Anna Tarasova	Janet Goss	Milica Fraser
Anne Makhijani	Jennifer Waters	Monique Percy
Ash Harding	Jenny Dillon	Neville Cook
Bec Bennett	Jill Cheah	Noelle Janaczewska
BJ Johnson	Jo Henselwood	Pamela Smith
Bridget Lyons	Jo Neil	Pamm Brittain
Carmela Gallo	Joan Higgins	Peter Gilmour
Carol Henderson	Judy Bell	Sabina Crawley
Catherine Ray	Julie Allen	Scot Muirden
Deborah Giles	Karen Ramselaar	Sharon Wright
Debra Hopkins		

Sage Advice

At the November Event I gave a talk about Sage. Sage Is one of the hardest herbs to grow for some people. The issue is that Sage (*Salvia officinalis*) needs good drainage. Sandy soils suit it well but clay soils need to be improved by applying lots of compost. This causes the tiny clay particles to stick together and make way for water to pass through.

Salvia plants in general have the reputation of wilting as cut flowers. This can be improved by recutting the stem underwater. This means that there no air bubbles being dragged up the stem.



Sage leaves can be used fresh or dried so this herb is versatile. If you cook fatty meats such as duck and pork with Sage this will make digestion easier. Dried leaves are probably best for this cooking. For beef rissoles I food process half an onion chopped, 2 sage leaves, 2 teaspoons mixed herbs, ground black pepper and one egg. Combine this with the beef mince and mix well. Make up smallish balls of mix. Ensure the oil is hot before adding the rissoles.

People then volunteered ways they use Sage. Lesley deep fries fresh Sage leaves very briefly: yum. Donato drizzles olive oil and a little salt over fresh Sage leave and bakes in a hot oven for a few minutes. Finally, June recommended slices of raw potato, stack them while adding fresh or dried Sage leaves then roast. Hopefully this mini talk has spread around some useful ways to use a very common and available herb.

Graham Ellis

Merri Creek Weed Walk

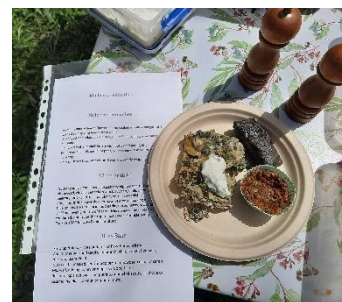
I was disappointed to have not been able to attend the Weed Walk earlier in the year conducted by HSOV member and Naturopath, Jan Illingworth. The Weed walk followed Jan's very informative talk entitled *Eat Your Weeds*, at our April event. In fact, whilst I had observed Merri Creek at the back of CERES in East Brunswick, I had never walked along its banks. Hence, I was delighted to be able to take part in the post conference day trip led by Jan at Merri Creek, Clifton Hill.



A sunny start to the day augured well as we gathered at The Labyrinth, located close to the path by the Merri Creek in Quarries Park. The Labyrinth is possibly the only labyrinth located in a public space in Melbourne. The Labyrinth was created by the community about 20 years ago and today the Labyrinth and the adjacent gardens are maintained by the Friends of Merri Creek Labyrinth.

The eager band of Melbourne HSOV members were joined by our visitors to the conference from Western Australia and Queensland, which made for a very congenial group as we set off for our tour of the vegetation growing by the creek.

Jan pointed out various weeds and spoke about their medicinal and culinary uses. These included Chickweed, Cleavers, Clover, Dandelion, Fat Hen, Fennel, Mugwort, Mallow, Nettle, Onion Weed, Purslane and Sorrel. In addition, we were able to observe plants indigenous to the area. These included *Wahlenbergia communis* – the tufted bluebell, *Calocephalus citreus* – lemon beauty heads and *Brachyscome paludicola* – basalt daisy. Among the trees were a number of *Eucalyptus viminalis* – Manna Gum and an array of grasses and other tussock plants. We were aided in our plant identification by one of our members who is very knowledgeable in that field, Anne Makhijani. Thank you, Anne.



Following the walk, we were rewarded by continuing good weather and a hearty lunch supplied by Jan. The lunch offerings were Mulberry Leaf Dolmathes, Weed Frittata and Bliss Balls, followed by Spring Tonic tea. The tea was made from Cleavers, Kaffir Lime Leaf, Marshmallow and Mugwort. The Weed frittata was proclaimed the dish of the day! And a bonus was to be given a sachet of Spring Tonic to take home.

If you wish to gain more comprehensive information on weeds, including which parts of the weeds to use and their preparation for use, please refer the article written by Jan and published in the June/July 2022 edition of the *Herb Age*.

Thank you so much, Jan, for the introduction to Merri Creek and for such an enjoyable and informative day.

Marie Baker

A Happy Conference Visit to Royal Botanic Gardens, Cranbourne

In the week after our very successful Herb Conference (8th & 9th October) tours in the Melbourne area were organised on each day Monday to Friday. On the Wednesday the tour was to the Royal Botanic Gardens at Cranbourne in the far south-eastern suburbs of Melbourne. These Gardens feature plants from all parts of Australia. There were 12 people going including our Editor, Meridith Hutchinson. Most of us were travelling by train so Meridith had organised for us to be picked up from Cranbourne Station.

This year two members of The Herb Society of Western Australia attended the Conference. Ingrid and Wendy have had a lovely time in Victoria and I did not want them getting lost. I arranged to meet them at their Richmond Hotel and walk to Richmond Station to catch the train. That worked well and we had a grand time chatting for the one hour train trip.

Despite showery weather we were guided around the Australian Garden by our volunteer guide. Most of the plants were displayed in groups which made for effective displays. This spring in Victoria has had above normal rainfall which helped many of the species to display spectacular floral displays. The Australian Garden is laid out a bit like a maze so that there were always new surprises just around the corner.

After that fascinating tour we were able to have lunch in the cafe. This allowed us to yarn some more about our morning's activity. Soon afterwards we were transported back to Cranbourne Station for our train trip home. The day was another enjoyable part of the Conference organised so well by The Herb Society of Victoria.

HSOV exchanges newsletter and journals with herb societies around Australia, NZ and with several other groups. Recently Jan Illingworth was reading through the latest The Herbal Thymes newsletter from The Herb Society of Western Australia. We were rapt to find that Wendy has been made a Life Member of HSWA because of her 33 years of active membership. Well done, Wendy.

Graham Ellis

What Herb am I?

- 5 points I'm packed with goodness to support intestinal health and the immune system.
- 4 points I am a leafy perennial native to south east Asia, rooting very easily like mint.
- 3 points At the Herb Conference, several speakers mentioned me.
- 2 points Leaves and roots are used for cooking, which removes my unusual smell.
- 1 point My leaves taste and smell like fish.

I am _ _ _ _ _

Answer page 15



Herb Conference – WOW!

(Wonderful Outstanding Weekend!)



WOW what a wonderful and outstanding weekend the 17th Australian and New Zealand Herb Conference was!

I'm sure many of you reading this were at the Herb Conference and found treasures throughout the weekend that have stayed with you (apart from the fabulous conference bags and goodies, of course!). The aims of the Herb Conference followed the aims of the Herb Society of Victoria, to promote the use, value and growing of herbs. "Herb" is such a simple word, but a multifaceted subject to present. Herbs are for food, cooking, medicine, folklore, pest deterrence, aromatherapy, health, beauty and simple enjoyment. It is like Alice down the rabbit hole, for once you delve inside the subject of herbs, it goes on and on!

The Herb Conference started with a hum of activity for registrations, and kicked off with our first presenter, Dr Greg Moore who tackled a huge subject, 'trees, herbs and roots'. It was fascinating and has been the main point of discussion with many I've caught up with since. When he said roots don't grow in the shape like the inverse of the tree, but are more like a pancake as the roots hit hard earth and spread out instead, it made sense. Of course! That was the first of so many 'Ah ha' moments I experienced throughout the weekend. And the discussion on fungi...well I think we must have him back for more. Penny Woodward was next with what she calls an introduction to herbs, but with the knowledge and experience she has, of course it was in depth and enthralling, as well as offering practical tips for growing herbs. After lunch was Clive Larkman, always a larger-than-life personality, who ranged from herb to herb like a bee in an Echinacea field. And our last speaker for Saturday was Tony Hoseman with rare and interesting Native American herbs, which destiny brought to his world. A consummate entertainer, Tony closed with a couple of sweet songs, rounding off a fabulous day.

Sunday's first presenter was Dr Chis Williams who is passionate about the research of local sustainable food crops and brought along many examples of his subject 'edible aquatics'. Chris, brought a huge trolley load, which some were lucky enough to take home to put into practice the advice he provided. After another sumptuous morning tea from the CWA ladies, Dr Brian May took us on a journey through South East Asia and the herbs and useful plants of those areas. After lunch, Pharmacist and herb grower, Caleb Armstrong presented in very easy terms some of the chemistry behind why some plants provide pain relief and the complexity of how some of these chemicals (and prescribed medicines) can interact. Caleb has blossomed and grown in knowledge since we first saw a young Caleb 5 years ago at a general monthly event, and he was pretty amazing then! We definitely need to propose a trip to his nursery near Wandin.

We had planned for our Patron, Penny Woodward to close the Herb conference with the last presentation, but unfortunately that wasn't to be. Jan Illingworth came to the forth with her Naturopathic skills to present 'Anti-viral plants in the Garden', with a focus on supporting the immune system against COVID19. A fabulous talk and in some ways, it was fitting that the final presentation was about herbs for health in a very contemporary and practical way, to aid us to overpower the virus that had put this Herb Conference and our lives on hold for so long.

If you are itching to know more about the presentations, don't despair. I am in process of writing up notes and seeking permission from the presenters to be shared on the website Members' section. You will also be seeing more over the coming issues of the Herb Age, so watch this space.

In between those presentations, there was a fabulous workshop each day with naturopath Jill Cheah showing how to make herbal extracts. It filled with the room with heady aromas and the samples were...well...surprisingly strong! The horehound syrup certainly warmed the cockles! Of course, you could choose between the workshop or a guided garden tour. We were so lucky, considering all the heavy rain preceding and a few days after, that the weekend itself was grand weather; a little overcast and cool, with bursts of sunshine. This allowed people to sit outside for the breaks, enjoying the gardens and gave the Friend of Burnley Gardens (FOBG) the opportunity to hold their plant sale alongside the Herb Conference and provide the walking tours of the historic Burnley Gardens broolly free!

I know this will be making a long article but I would like to take this opportunity to formally thank the people involved in making this a success event, on great or small tasks. I'll try to cover as many as I can, but if your name isn't here, the gratitude is just as heartfelt.

Thanks to those who volunteered to help over the weekend on the market stall or in the kitchen or elsewhere, and setting up and cleaning the kitchen the day before. The likes of Jan's partner Geoff, Graham Smith, Elsie Carter, Purwani Wiryan, Jan Rosenberg, Marina Bistrin, Katherin Grelis and Linda Trikarso. Thanks to our hubbies and rellies, especially Cathryn's daughter Elizabeth for registration duty, June's and my hubbies David and James on traffic duty, helping those who arrived later, sorting out caterers, cleaning up and being general dog's bodies! Thanks also to James for designing the brochure and the parking maps. Thanks to the HSOV committee for their support of the event, many of whom also introduced speakers and volunteered over the weekend, especially to Nigel Holmes who offered to sponsor any potential loss (as it happens it came out in the black, largely due the successful raffle and market stall – an interim report was tabled at the AGM).



Thanks to all our Presenters, Jill Cheah who ran the Workshop, the FOBG tour guides, the CWA and local café, Sardi. Thankyou also to the market stall folk who provided wonderful wares and plants for sale, special thanks to Lyndi Garnett from the Salvia group who also helped with promoting the conference. Thanks to those who contributed making crafts or donated books for the HSOV market stall. Thank you to the businesses that contributed to the amazing conference bags, particularly the Aussie company who locally make Grants Toothpaste with herbal extracts (look at your toothpaste packet and see where it's made - you may be surprised).

Thanks also to Melbourne University who provided the facility at Burnley campus (the home of HSOV) at no cost. They have been very supportive of the HSOV over the years. Dr Lisa Wittick and Sascha Andrusiak have been especially helpful, booking everything in, providing answers to lots of dumb questions, guiding us and being incredibly accommodating.

Many thanks to our wonderful Patron Penny Woodward, who provided a book for every attendee, publicised the conference on 3CR, Organic Gardener and on the horticultural industry website. She also had a stall with her amazing books and promised 2 presentations gratis, one each day. Unfortunately, illness kept her away the second day, but Penny has made a commitment to deliver that Presentation at an upcoming general monthly event (a little bird has told me it be the March monthly event, so pencil it in!).

Thanks of course to the wonderful subcommittee who worked so hard on making the event a success. It was a fantastic team, with a diverse and complimentary range of skills and expertise - truly a case of the sum of us. The team was founded BC (Before COVID!), with Jill Bryant kicking us off with our first agenda to get us on track and meetings at her house. Robin Calabrese was also an early starter, initially liaising with FOBG and returned as a late finisher on the committee. Janine Groves, Jan Illingworth, June Valentine and myself made up the rest of the early team.

Two years of postponement created uncertainty as we carefully emerged from lockdown - should we wait or go ahead? Decision made to commit to 2022, Cathryn Robinson joined the subcommittee to run the finances and, with help from Marie Baker and Carmen Hollway, set up the online booking system. Many thanks to the wonderful job Cathryn has done in budgeting and managing the funds, with support from our Treasurer Carmen. Thanks to Janine, our link across several Herb Conferences and woman on the spot to liaise with the folk from the Dandenongs.

Thanks also to Jan who handmade the delightful banners and every conference bag, many in a mad rush as the numbers grew faster than her sewing machine! Jan is also on the CWA and coordinated the amazing morning teas, as well organising and helping Jill on the workshop. As a Naturopath, she provided skin tonic and herbal teas for every conference goodie bag, ran her own market stall and providing the amazing contingency presentation on the last day. But that's not all, post conference, she also did the amazing weed walk too.

To June, thank you so much for coordinating many of the speakers, volunteers, FOBG walks, and stall holders, arranging the pre-conference social dinner, hosting most of our meetings, organising an interview in the Age to promote the conference, running the craft day, and providing crafts and managing the incredibly successful HSOV stall and raffle, (phew!) always with good cheer and a big smile. For my part in planning, publicity and being MC, I have already received acknowledgement for which I am humbly grateful. Honestly, I was probably the luckiest of all the sub-committee as I got to see every presentation from a great vantage point as MC. So, I absolutely know that the presenters were a great mix of knowledge, topics, expertise and personalities.

Apologies for this long list of thankyou's which really does demonstrate how many people contributed to the Herb Conference and how passionate we were to deliver a great event. One last and not least thankyou is to you all of you who attended the Herb Conference, particularly those from interstate who made brave decisions to book when travel was still tenuous. Thank you for your patience when things didn't quite go to plan, your attentiveness and enthusiasm throughout the weekend and for helping us to make it a WOW of a time!

Meridith Hutchinson - Herb Conference sub committee

Weed Frittata

This recipe is from Jan Illingworth's Weed Walk on the Meri Creek on the Tuesday after the Herb Conference, with samples for lunch that she made the night before – does she ever stop! You may need to experiment with ratios below.



Gather young, clean leaves of blackberry nightshade, mustard, chickweed, clover, dandelion, dock, fat hen, mallow, onion weed, pellitory, prickly lettuce, purslane, sorrel, sow thistle.

Chop and sprinkle evenly over the base of a greased baking dish. Dice onions, fry until translucent, add garlic, mixed herbs, seasoning, pinch chilli. Add evenly on top of the weeds in the dish.

Mix up eggs, milk, ricotta until combined, pour over the top to just cover. Sprinkle over parmesan. Cook at 150C for 30-45 minutes until set.

Jan accompanied this with a simple herbed up yogurt and it was delicious!

*Pigface - **Carpobrotus rossi***

For my mini talk after the AGM on our November event, I chose Pigface, as it is a common indigenous plant on coastal areas, but I really had little idea of how to use it and figured most other people won't either. Since there is a lot of around, it could well be an underutilised resource. Other names for it are Kalkalla, Sea fig, Beach bananas, Iceplant (NZ) and an indigenous name kanikung.

Native Pig Face is a low growing spreading groundcover with thick succulent leaves and bright hot-pink daisy like flowers. Its very hardy and easy to grow, liking full sun and tolerates a little frost and salty areas. The genus is found in Australia, South Africa and Chile and is found along coastal areas.

All parts are edible:

Leaves

- can be eaten raw, but are quite astringent so not so appetising.
- or cooked – Indigenous peoples baked in fire for side with meat
- see also a recipe – fish with miso butter Kalkalla April/May 2021 issue 426 THA
- picked pigface – samples provided at the meeting – see recipe below

Flowers can be eaten in salads, but best to leave them wait for the fruit

Fruit

- After flowering, the fruit swells and turns deep red.
- Squeeze out pulp from the leathery skin.
- Very sweet, but eat in moderation as they can have laxative effects!



Benefits: High in Anti-oxidants, anti-inflammatory and flavonoids. One small study showed it reduced fat in blood of rats. Caution is advised if you use blood thinners as it may have blood clotting behaviour.

Applications: Juice from leaves:

- can be mixed with water for sore throat gargle or mild bacterial mouth infections.
- Can be used topically for insect stings and bites, mild sunburn (similar to aloe vera)

Caution: Pigface accumulates heavy metals, especially cadmium. Best to pick from where you know is not high in pollutants (even better from your own garden!)

Pickled Pigface.

Pick sprays of Pigface and wash thoroughly. Pluck the leaves from the stems and place in a large sterilised glass jar.

My Tip: pack the jar and fill with water. Tip out the water into a measuring jug so you know how much pickling liquid you'll need. I used a general pickling mix with ratio:

- 1 cup white vinegar
- 1 cup water
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 2 tablespoons sugar

Pop pickling mix ingredients in a saucepan and bring to the boil. Pour over the pigface to the top of the jar. Pop on the lid and allow to cool. Allow about a week for it to pickle, turning every day to ensure it all gets juiced up. I also found that the longer it pickled the better it got, but also sweeter. That was my first try, so next lot I think I'll try using a little less sugar. From sampling at the AGM meeting the other night, it actually goes well with cheese.



Meridith Hutchinson

Gardens for Wildlife

What an enthusiastic and knowledgeable gardener, Anne Makhijani from 'Gardens for Wildlife Victoria' is. She clearly loves her garden and the wildlife she has encouraged into it. At our July meeting, she presented how we can share the joy and rewards.

To encourage wildlife, logically, we need to use the plants in our gardens to support fauna that has used them over thousands of years. These are local indigenous plants, which also evolved in local place and are therefore best adapted to your garden's soil condition. Even a small garden offers refuge and food for microbes, insects and small reptiles and animals and can be part of a network for birds and larger animals to visit .

Anne then went through the types of plants for the garden from large trees to the tiniest fungi to explain how they all work together to create the perfect micro climates in our gardens. Planting in layers creates a great ecosystem for fauna to occupy ecological niches. Structure is important, ground storey, mid storey and canopy and is best developed gradually. Key Elements in Garden are tall trees, tall shrubs, large shrubs, medium shrubs, climbers and scramblers, fillers (grasses, lilies, wildflowers), small shrubs, ground covers, water and aquatic plants, mulch, logs, and rocks.



Tall trees may be in nearby reserves if not in garden. Dead trees, old habitat trees, cracks, crevices create hollows for birds and animal nests. You can create nesting boxes but they need to be a variety of sizes for different animals and birds. But also think about the roots of trees. Insects, invertebrates and fungi have developed to live and breed around indigenous tree roots.

Tall shrubs like acacias and banksias can be a haven for small birds to feel safe and provides insect larva food. Some small birds depend on spider webs to knit the nests together. Medium and small shrubs such as correas and honeysuckles can also offer protection. Think about the food for the wildlife. A lot of birds eat both nectar and insects and to feed their young. They need flowers all year, especially through winter months.



Fillers like lilies and grasses are good for lizards and invertebrates. Ground covers are travelling paths for little creatures. These allows them a place to retreat to after basking in sun and to hide from predators.

Climbers are great habitat for vertical areas, creating excellent habitat for bees and insects needing pollen & nectar, as they can provide lots of flowers for food as well as refuge. Scramblers create a great space around and under other plants.

Native bees are often solitary, stingless and most don't make honey. Bee hotels are a good idea if it is designed for the bee. If the tunnel is too short the bee will lay too many male eggs instead of female so upsetting the balance. Diameter should be 4 to 9 mm. Some native bees nest in the ground and need soil but not in direct heat in summer.



Mulch and leaf litter moderate soil temperatures and protects tree roots, but don't use commercial mulch everywhere as the bees need to be able to burrow into the soil. Keep leaves and twigs sticks and branches and if a tree is taken down keep the logs for the garden.

Rocks are also good where there are cracks and spaces in between provide safety and habitat and shelter from wind. If you have stone walls leave gaps and holes or just have a few stone piles in the garden.

Insects and Butterflies. Daisies or daisy shaped flowers are excellent for butterflies. Yellow, white and blue are best for butterflies. These plants also provide them shelter from wind. Think of the fauna when pruning as are you taking their habitat. You may need to wait a short time for larva of local insects to hatch.



Frogs. Frog friendly bogs are great. Frogs need water to breed but live on the edge so need permanent water to breed in surrounded by moist, shady areas. Use aquatic plants to oxygenate the water. Where there is little oxygen in water, then you get lots of mosquitoes. Avoid fish and turtles in the pond area which eat the eggs. Also avoid cleaning the pond and using herbicides, pesticides, and fertilisers nearby. Plant the right plants instead to keep the water and creatures healthy.

Resist feeding birds seeds regularly. It can affect their ability to eat nectar or pollen by destroying the fine filaments in their tongues and mouths. Bird baths should also be cat proof. Birds love to drink bath socialise and have them positioned so they quickly retreat from predators. Add sticks and rocks for birds and insects to get out and a rough texture is better. Change water 2 to 3 days to stop mozzies. Provide water at all levels for all creatures. And with any water in the garden, be mindful of access for cats and dogs and small children.

Living with possums. Possums have been here 25 to 50 million years and are often blamed for damage by other animals like rats or mice. We need to recognise value of all wildlife creatures in our gardens.

Gardens for wildlife Victoria is a network of communities to nature flora and fauna and the environment. Many councils are getting behind it and doing research into benefits which establish the value in the area. Community nurseries are the best place to find local indigenous plants. Buy tubes as they establish the roots best in your garden and they are cheap. The value of wildlife to the ecological system and to each one of us too!! To see more go to gardensforwildlifevictoria.com.

Meridith Hutchinson

with notes from Mary Dawson

What Herb Am I? Answer: Fish Mint - *Houttuynia cordata*

Known by a myriad of names, among them; Fish Wort, Heart Leave, Bishop's Weed, Chinese Lizard Tail, Rainbow Plant, Chameleon Plant, Plu Kaow (Thailand); Diếp Cá or Dap ca (Vietnam).

This is one of the herbs that crossed over many topics presented at the Herb Conference. It was discussed by Brian May on the 'Herbs of South East Asia', Chris Williams on 'Aquatic Edibles' and Jan Illingworth on 'Antivirals in your Garden', and this is why.....

Fish Mint is a native to South East Asia and grows very easy in warm moist areas from runners (like Mint, where it gets part of its name, but it is not a mint) and can be invasive, especially near waterways. It smells like Fish (obviously the first part of its name) and tastes a little fishy. Traditionally it has been used for respiratory disease to reduce mucus and to alleviate coughs and has antioxidant and antibacterial properties.



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