



The Herb Age



MARCH/APRIL 2023

NO 438



"My garden is my most beautiful masterpiece." Claude Monet

THE HERB SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC

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

HSOV COMMITTEE

President	Jan Illingworth
Vice President	Vacant
Committee Secretary	Vacant
(Acting til early 2023)	Graham Ellis
Treasurer	Carmen Hollway
The Herb Age Editor	Vacant
(Acting)	Meridith Hutchinson
Membership Officer	Marie Baker
Committee	June Valentine
Committee	Nigel Holmes

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>

Advertising Rates	Quarter page	\$15.00	Half page	\$25.00	Full page	\$45.00
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Payment should be sent to the Treasurer at the Society's address above. Advertising copy to be sent to the Editor by page 3 deadline dates.

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.

Post to:

Meridith Hutchinson
The Editor, The Herb Age
PO Box 396
Camberwell Vic 3124

Email to

theherbage@outlook.com

Deadline for next issue:

Emailed and posted articles

Friday 5th May 2023

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*THE HERB AGE is printed by
Eureka Printing Pty Ltd
702 High Street Road
Glen Waverley 3150
Phone: 9887 9496*

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THE HERB AGE

MARCH/APRIL 2023

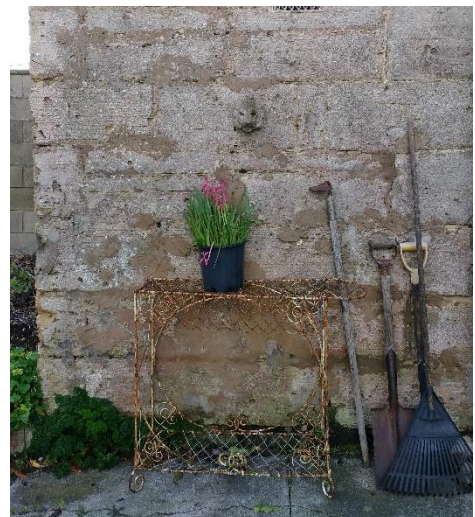
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Cover pic and quote.

Impressionist Monet's quote so beautifully demonstrates that gardens are great works of art. Magnolia shown on the cover, are one of the many trees growing in Margaret Sutherland's garden, as you'll see in her article on page 8.

Thank you so much, Margaret, for your delightful story to remind us that gardens become like old friends. And the beauty of the garden is often in the small details, in allowing the meandering of nature, and the joy the garden brings us and others.



Our Next Events

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 after the guest speaker.



Thursday 6th April 2023

General Monthly Event

Please be seated 7.15 for 7.30 pm Start

Guest Speaker: June Valentine

Topic: Chocolate

Just in time for Easter - hands up who likes chocolate? There won't be too many who don't like that sweet or bittersweet treat. Which is, of course, why it is one popular food on the planet and why it is so often associated with feasts, gifts and good times.

In this presentation, June will explore the history and health benefits of chocolate. Stay for chocolate tastings and see if you can tell the difference and which is your favourite.

Plus: Herb Plants for Sale

Thursday 4th May 2023

General Monthly Event

Please be seated 7.15 for 7.30 pm Start

Guest Speaker: Craig Castree

Topic: Great Soil for Success



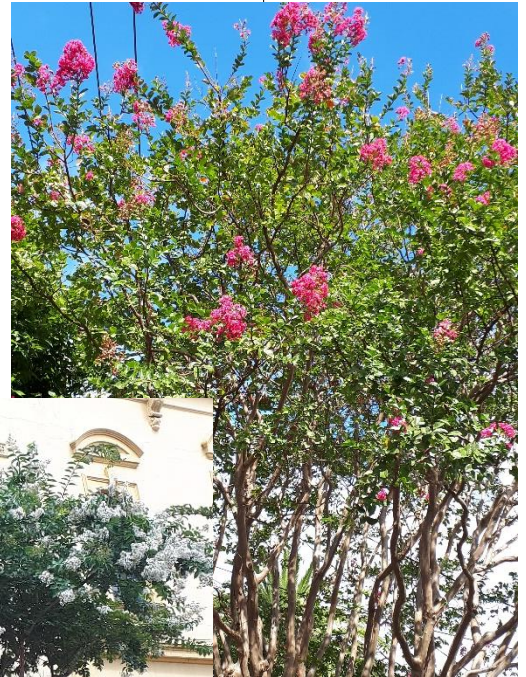
Craig is a horticulturist with 40 years' experience growing edible gardens in urban spaces. He is passionate about promoting organic gardening and sharing his wide expertise from edible garden secrets to cheese making. This presentation focuses on creating fabulous soil to promote micro ecosystems and great gardens.

Plus: Books for Sale

Craig has written several books which will be available for sale – see craigcastree.com.au

President's Report

Welcome everyone to Autumn, though for some it may have felt like Autumn for a while now. Personally, I prefer the cooler climes and appreciated the reduction of carrying buckets and watering the poor frazzled plants. While the basil appreciated this, the tomatoes are looking so anaemic that the recipes for green tomato pickles are coming out and I've included one for this Herb Age. At least we are not in some other countries which I won't depress you with, but only to say that looking at my cousybros across the ditch, we are not complaining. 40mm in 1 hour and after Gabriel and other weather phenomena. I blame Jacinda for resigning!



Despite the coolness of this summer, the crepe myrtles (left) are looking magnificent this year. Many councils have chosen them as street trees and I have included a couple of pics with the contrasts of the vibrant flowers and green foliage to the usual industrial street scape.



Our first HSOV meeting of the year was an awesome one with Penny Woodward, our patron, on natural pest controls with the first statement of; your garden should be for every creature, with them all working in synergy with each other, even spiders! Penny was passionate about not throwing any green waste away, but putting it back into compost and then garden. Rotation is also another must and she will grow crops in containers if it means that a garden bed would have an annual rest from the same family of plants.

Penny started with mechanic mechanisms to prevent pests such as sticky collars on trees, cages over pumpkins to stop rats and flywire bags over fruit to ward off pesky possums as well as the small mesh stops fruit fly from getting in to make a mess of edibles. She then moved on, for me the most interesting part; pest repelling herbs, especially the lamiaceae like mint, thymes and rosemary which interspersed through your vegetables send out their aromatic scents to put off pests. Along with all the Allium family, these are good as an understory to vegetables, but she also listed lavender, marigolds, Artemisia family and feverfew which is also make a nice floral show. Penny had her numerous books for sale.

Also for sale were the very plants that Penny talked about. Astute June, ordered from Renaissance some lovely herbs for this as well as flowering plants for Meridith Tussie Mussie workshop; Sunday 19th March. Have a nice picnic and demonstration at the sugar gum table, Burnley. BYO food, drinks and flora from your garden. Details on our web page and Facebook or contact Meridith.



Our next gathering is April the 6th, the Thursday before Easter, with June who is providing a timely talk on chocolate. So, let's get in the mood for Easter excess! See you next month.

Jan Illingworth, President



Green Roof Revisited

Our first monthly event for the year on Thursday 2nd February was supposed to be a picnic around the Sugar Gum table on a balmy summer evening. Of course, things don't always go to plan with Melbourne weather and the day produced rain and sent us indoors. We are so lucky to have the Burnley campus building back up available.



Fortunately, only a few brave (or daft!) Herbies ventured out to share a plate and a laugh, as our regular room was not available due to renovation. We had about the right number at 15ish to fit comfortably in the meeting room we'd been provided for the night. The indoor picnic was a great mix, with people also bringing offerings from their garden troves to share – seeds, lemons, cuttings.

The rain cleared enough to take a walk, with some exploring the grounds, while most of us took the opportunity to see the progress of the rooftop garden. The garden or 'Green Roof' is designed to thrive with little care, in Melbourne's usually hot dry summers and wet cold winters. It continues to be a teaching aid and research project into the benefits of greening roof spaces.

There are several planting zones, with varying planting levels from 10 to 30 cms. Succulents seem to dominate the stepped red-rimmed garden beds, as well as indigenous small tree and bushes. The design aims to support the ecosystem of insects, invertebrates and small animals, not just plants. It was so great to see how it is developing.

The evening didn't go as planned but was still lovely and provided an unexpected treat in revisiting the green roof.

More info on the garden is at:

<https://girg.science.unimelb.edu.au/burnleys-living-green-roofs/>



Other Events

These are not HSOV events, but include HSOV friends and allies.

Yarra Valley Autumn Plant Fair & Garden Expo 2023

When: Saturday 22 - Sunday 23 April; 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Where: Romantic Nursery (Clive Larkman's nursery) 125 Quayle Road, Wandin

Cost: Adults/Conc \$17/\$14 at the gate or \$14/\$12 online

Two day plant fair focused on autumn, with speakers, top growers' plant stalls (incl VSSG Salvia Group), rare plant auction, food, drinks and more. See yarravalleyplantfair.com.au

Royal Botanic Gardens Autumn Plant Sale

When: Saturday 29 April, 10am to 4pm; Sunday 30 April, 10am to 3pm

Where: Inside Southern Gate (formerly Gate E), Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne.

Cost: Free entry. Many uncommon plants from RBG and expert advice available.

rbgfriendsmelbourne.org/autumn-plant-sale-5

Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show from Gardens Clubs Aust back to full capacity at the Carlton Gardens from the 29 March 2 April melbflowershow.com.au



Program of 2023 HSOV Events

Here's what's coming up at the Herb Society of Victoria.....

The program for the rest of the year is nearly finalised and promises a Herbal Workshop, plus more amazingly, knowledgeable speakers and some fun nights. More details will come in future Herb Ages, but here's a taste to get you started.

Herbal Workshop in October, featuring Naturopaths **Jill Cheah and Jan Illingworth**. A chance to build on the workshop from Jill and walk from Jan from the Herb Conference last year for practical herbal home remedies. Date will be coming soon, but it will be held on a Saturday or Sunday in mid to late October.

Monthly events – first Thursday evening of the month

June - Karen Sutherland is back and speaking on **Bush Food Gardens with Indigenous plants**. Karen is an amazing garden designer with a passion for edible gardens, especially Indigenous Herbs. Learn to expand even the smallest productive garden. edibleeden.com.au

July - Wendy Clark on **Small Creatures in the Garden**. Wendy is a gardener and photographer, combining her interest and knowledge of Wildlife and Nature with her skills to photograph creatures, flowers and the environment. **August - Sean Buckley** from Evergreen Products with **Nutrient solutions for the garden**.

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September – Speaker TBC

October – AGM and mini speakers. Remember, knowledge is only any good when it is shared. What herbal something do you know that you'd like to share for 5 minutes? Do you know all about Tea Tree oil or how to make a great Garam Masala? What about growing basil over winter, making herbal gifts or all about a favourite herb. I bet there's something you know that others would love to hear about. Or research an unusual herb of interest and share it. Let the committee know your topic and start planning. We're looking for 3 or 4 people to take mini-talks, just five minutes long.

November- Market night. Who doesn't love a market. This is aimed at you – you can sell, buy, barter or exchange your herb or garden goods. Start thinking about herbs you can plant up, or preserves or crafty ideas to make or, seeds to store, books to set aside, or whatever else to have your own or share a mini stall.

December – Picnic and Speaker TBC

Welcome to our New Members

The Herb Society of Victoria welcomes our latest members and we hope to see you soon at a monthly event or other HSOV event soon.

Frances Sutherland
Faye Margaron

Marie Baker, Membership Officer

My Garden Joy

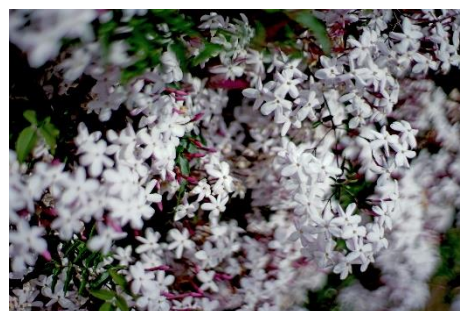


Like all Herb Society members, I look forward to receiving the Herb Age six times a year. Thankfully to June and Meridith, I received my Herb Age today. I would like to say that the committee is vital for the smooth running of any organisation. Sadly, in the previous Feb-March 2023 Herb Age, there were rather too many vacancies listed beside the various committee responsibilities. Let's hope the words 'Vacant' will be replaced by willing persons with the skills needed. *(Ed Note: Yes please, many hands make light work and the HSOV really needs more people on the committee, so please have a go!)*

I recently spent a few days at Mornington with a gardening friend. We visited four nurseries and came home with a Ginkgo tree for my nephew, cuttings from my friend's garden and other plants from the nurseries. The phrases "Where will you put it?" and 'it will take over' came up a few times when I purchased plants. Well, I found plenty of spots to put many plants over the years and am happy for them to follow their way!

I inherited our old home and garden on a ¼ acre. At the front, I have planted a Tangelo, 2 Lemon trees, a Persimmon, Orange, Grapefruit, Kumquat and a Strawberry Guava. At the back you find a selection of herbs and other small plants, plus a Pear, Fig and Bay tree. The bay became very large and interfered with the clothes line, which my neighbours thankfully attended to. Some of the fruit is netted providing enough for myself and some friends. Possums, birds and other creatures enjoy the unnetted fruit too.

There are two precious dogs buried at the back (no puppies have sprouted!). One has an Angelica and Cecile Brunner planted over her grave; while the other lies under a lovely Magnolia. There are yellow and white Jasmine (the white has a lovely perfume). One has become the fence between my neighbour and I. The other has rather taken over the drive and encroached on the garage – not a problem 😊.



The south side has hydrangeas, lots of alstroemeria, tree dahlias and other self-sown plants. Children love to explore my, so called 'jungle' and float the swans from the swan plant. So called weeds appear and as we know some can be eaten or used medicinally, they are welcome. Some plant material I press (or some say – squash) and use it to decorate cards.

I wonder why it is common for people to clear their land of established gardens prior to building a new home? Do they understand that it takes a very long time to grow a tree from a seed? Maybe they don't want a tree or know the value of a garden to provide edibles and gifts, and for health, exercise and simple joy.

Margaret Sutherland

Herb Conference

Overview of Presentations Part 2

Clive Larkman – Herbs, Herbs, Herbs

Below is Clive's presentation, which he kindly allowed us to reproduce, plus a few notes added.

What is an Herb?

- Any plant with leaves, seeds, or flowers used for flavouring, food, medicine, or perfume.
- Botanically is any seed-bearing plant that does not have a woody stem and dies down to the ground after flowering. = Herbaceous Perennial
- Culinary fresh or dried leaves, flowers, stems of a plant, spice is dried/ground seeds, fruit, bark, root

Herbs have been used for thousands of years. In folklore medicine a plant that looked like a part of the body was used to heal, eg: liverwort.

Columbian Exchange

The Columbian Exchange refers to the exchange of diseases, ideas, food, crops, and populations between the New World and the Old World following the voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus in 1492. I.e: potato, tomato, chili, coffee, cocoa, chia seeds (Australia is now the biggest exporter of these), many more.

Nurseries and History

Allowed Man to live in cities

Select, plant and cultivate

Home Cottage gardens and large palatial gardens

Supermarkets turned gardens to ornamental

Top Ten Culinary Herbs

Ocimum basilicum – Sweet Basil fresh only

Coriandrum sativum – Common Coriander + Mexican and Vietnamese

Capsicum annum – Chilli variation in heat to taste

Salvia officinalis – Common Sage

Anethum graveolens – Dill aniseed flavour for fish

Allium sativum – Garlic Herb or spice or vegetable – All parts are edible

Mentha spicata – Common mint – dozens of flavours

Origanum vulgare – Oregano new flavours coming on market, Hot n Spicy

Petroselinum crispum neopolitanum – Parsley – curly or flat *Salvia rosmarinus* – Common

Rosemary, now sage, multiple varieties

Top Ten Traditional Medicinal Herbs

Rehmania glutinosa – Chinese Foxglove, Traditional Chinese medicine

Glycyrrhiza glabra – Liquorice, Ayurvedic medicine

Hydrastis canadensis – Golden Seal, Native American medicine

Ocimum sanctum – Sacred Basil, Ayurvedic medicine

Melissa officinalis – Lemon Balm, Ancient Greek medicine

Echinacea angustifolia – Narrow Leaved Cone Flower, Native American medicine

Angelica sinensis – Female Ginseng, Ancient Chinese medicine

Vitex agnus-castis – Chaste Tree, Traditional European medicine

Polygonum cuspidatum – Japanese Knotweed, Ancient Japanese medicine

Astragalus membranaceus – Mongolian Milkvetch, Traditional Mongolian medicine

Tip on essential oils – always choose Australian produced if you can, as there are very stringent laws to ensure purity. Eg: some Eucalyptus oil can be produced in Asia and may be adulterated.



Using Herbs in kitchen

Choose Protein and five vegetables of three colours and three plant parts (root, stem, leaves, etc)

Do modern plants have good nutrition?

Are Organic better for health. Certified Organic (is expensive and takes time to be certified)

Blending herbs in cooking – use one of each colour code:

- Red – Flavours go quickly with heat – add to the end of cook, ie: Dill, Coriander, Parsley, Basil
- Blue – Strong flavour – add at the start of cooking, ie: Oregano, Rosemary, Sage, Lavender
- Orange – can go in anytime eg: Garlic, Ginger, Turmeric, Galangal

Chilies have 3 types of chemicals aimed at different parts of the palette – mouth, throat or back of the nose. Tip: Add sugar to take the burn out of chilies.

Green Tomato Pickles



This is a tasty way to preserve those end of summer delights.

Chop:

- 1 kg green tomatoes
- 2 large onions
- 2 capsicums.

Throw into a large pot to heat up.

Cover with a litre of malt vinegar. Then add:

- 2 cups sugar
- 1 Tbsp salt
- 1 Tbsp pepper
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed.
- 2 Tbsp mixed herbs
- and any spices that you desire like allspice, cloves, mustard, curry powder, turmeric, pinch cayenne (more if heat wanted).



Simmer until a pulped consistency (more water may need to be added). Taste for more seasoning if required, when happy, bottle into heated jars. Green Tomato Pickles last for ages, are good on sandwiches and with pasties or charcuterie platters. Enjoy!

Jan Illingworth

Delicious Tahini and Parsley Spread

Recipe comes from 'Happy Herbing in Australian Kitchens, Second Serve'; a cookbook prepared by the Herb Society of Victoria, way back in 1989 and submitted by Janet Odgers. This looks so simple and well.....delicious.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 cup lemon juice | 1 cup tahini |
| 1 cup parsley, finely chopped | 4 garlic cloves, minced |
| ½ cup mint, finely chopped | salt to taste |

Blend all ingredients well.

Season to taste and if the mixture is too thick, just add a little extra water or lemon juice.

Serve with bread, crackers or celery/carrot sticks.

Cockatoos and Onion Grass

This article is a summary from an article by Dr Greg Moore, Doctor of Botany, The University of Melbourne, who was one of key speakers at the recent Herb Conference. His article was published on 'The conversation' website.

"Australians have a love-hate relationship with sulphur-crested cockatoos, *Cacatua galerita*. For some, the noisy parrots are pests that destroy crops or the garden, damage homes and pull up turf at sports ovals.

For others, they're a bunch of larrikins who love to play and are quintessentially Australian.

Along with other scientists, I had a unique opportunity during the COVID-19 lockdowns to study things that had intrigued me closer to home, perhaps for years. While isolating in the suburbs of Melbourne, I wanted to find out why cockatoos return to the same places, and what they're after.

The answer? Onion grass, reams of it. Onion grass is a significant weed, and I estimated in a recent paper that one bird gorges on about 200 plants per hour. A flock of about 50 birds can consume 20,000 plants in a couple of hours.

This significantly reduces the weed level and may make expensive herbicide use unnecessary. So, if you have a large amount of onion grass on your property and are regularly visited by sulphur-crested cockatoos, it would be wise to let them do their weeding first.....

While cockatoos feed on the fruits and seed of native species, they've adapted very quickly to the introduction of exotic species, such as onion grass from South Africa, which is plentiful and easy to harvest.

I observed flocks ranging from nine to 63 cockatoos at seven sites along the Maribyrnong River in Keilor last July and August. Onion grass was the only item on their menu.

Onion grass (*Romulea rosea*) is small and usually inconspicuous with grass-like leaves. It's typically only noticed when it flowers in spring, producing pretty, pink and yellow-throated flowers.

Onion grass comes from South Africa, and is a big problem for native grasslands. Onion grass can be a serious weed that's very difficult to control. It's not only a problem for agricultural land, but also for recreational turf and native grasslands.....

Onion grass gets its name from its onion-like leaves. At the base is a small bulb, which works as a modified underground stem called a "corm". The corm is what cockatoos will travel many kilometres for, to dig up and return to for days on end. When cockatoos eat onion grass corm, it prevents the weed from regenerating.....

So, if we're going to try to eradicate onion grass, it may be better to let the cockies do their work first before we humans take a turn.

We have a lot to learn about how our native species interact with introduced weeds, and more research might reveal some very useful future partnerships. They might be birdbrains, but sulphur-crested cockatoos really know their onions when it comes to, well, onion grass."

Source: [Don't disturb the cockatoos on your lawn, they're probably doing all your weeding for free](#) Dr Gregory Moore, Published: February 18, 2021



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