

Fagus

August 2023

The Quarterly Magazine of the Friends of the Royal Tasmanian
Botanical Gardens



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Yann Gagnon; Elizabeth Haworth;

Laura Williams and James Wood

Our Cover

Japanese Cedar *Cryptomeria japonica* Winter foliage colour

Photo: Fran Alexis

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RTBG Friends



Friends of the
Royal Tasmanian
Botanical Gardens

From the Editor's Desk

Spring is coming, signalled by the delicate perfume of plum blossoms on streets and the sight of yellow wattle in gardens. A glorious time of revival and renewal in the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens. Also, a time for renewal of committee members for our group with the AGM of Friends of the RTBG to be held on Saturday 9 September. You will find a nomination form and a description of the roles and their light duties listed in this issue of our magazine, *Fagus*. Please take the time to think about becoming an active participant. As a committee member, you will be made most welcome, will make new or consolidate old friendships, and you will make a worthy contribution to these beautiful Gardens which we all enjoy.

In this issue of *Fagus*, you will read a comprehensive report from the Director, Yann, about the many changes that have been made in the Gardens as well as a hint of changes to come. We are kept informed of staff changes and major works projects. Lee, our President gives an overview of some of the activities of Friends.

James Wood writes about his hunt for and identification of an elusive alpine plant with the homely name of cudweed. He reveals that he may have discovered a new and undescribed species during his search and collection of seeds. The Seed Bank is an important part of the main function of the RTBG; as a botanical Gardens we are committed to the scientific study and conservation of plants.

Laura Williams, the Horticultural Botanist at the RTBG brings us an update on her role and activities as she has settled into her job. She stresses that 'one of the aspects that distinguishes a botanical garden from a park, is that plants are documented, labelled and monitored' and that she is responsible for this as well many other duties such as answering queries from the public.

In May 2023, a morning tea was held in the Conservatory to thank Volunteers for their contribution. Included in this issue is the thank-you speech given by Vanessa Pinto, Chief Operations Officer for the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania. I attended and the scones were delicious.

Adding colour and scope to the magazine is an article by Elizabeth Haworth about Monet's Garden in France, which she visited recently. Ralph Crane, a new contributor, writes about his experience visiting a spectacular display garden at the Roraima Nursery near Geelong in Victoria. Wendy Bowman visited the Adelaide Botanic Gardens and has shared information she gained there especially about the active role the Friends of that Garden play. It is an inspiration to us as members of a Friends organisation and should further encourage you to become more involved with our supporting role at the RTBG.

I add another Significant Tree, the Himalayan Cedar, to encourage a closer look at a tree we all walk past on our way through the Main Gate.

Friends News includes a report by the speaker at our previous general meeting as well as the Friends trip to the Salmon Ponds in June. There is a reminder that the Kingston Library display coordinated by Jenny Parrott in September will be worth a visit and an announcement about our upcoming Photo Competition.

Keep the contributions flowing in – your articles make the magazine vibrant. The cut-off date for copy for the November issue is 18 October 2023.

Fran Alexis

Editor

Director's Report

I am very much enjoying my first Tasmanian winter and its mild climate. The Garden's collection of winter flowering plants is a good reminder of how lucky we are to live in such a favourable climate for horticulture. Some of my new favourite winter flowering gems now include *Luculia pinceana*, an extremely fragrant and showy small tree species from Asia, growing near the Lily Pond. Another stunning species growing in the Australian collection is *Hakea laurina*, an Australian native shrub with globular pink and white blooms, unique in colour and shape it is a flower that will definitely have you leaning in for a closer look. As we inch towards spring, I am looking forward to learning new species and working with our team in refining our collections and interpretation.

With lots of exciting major works planned throughout 2024, this will be a great time to refresh and update the visitor experience at RTBG. These spaces are designed to allow more people to enjoy the natural setting and connection to the significant collections here.

Marketing & Events Update

We welcome a new addition to the team with Joe Pickett starting in late June as our new manager of Commercial Operations. Joe will oversee the marketing and events activities at the gardens. He comes from a background as a major events producer and business manager, most recently having worked as the General Manager at Spring Bay Mill at Triabunna on Tassie's stunning East Coast.

Joe has hit the ground running with negotiations on our summer season of major events being hosted at the gardens. Shakespeare in the Gardens is booked in during January and February, with Big Monkey hosting a season of Pinocchio for daytime crowds during November, December and January.

The well attended Annual Plant Sale will be held on the 12-14 October, so pencil these dates in to your calendars. With the help of our committed volunteers, these Plant Sales are an important fundraiser contributing to the gardens upkeep.



On the Board front, the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Board has welcomed a new member, Sophie Davidson. Sophie comes to the Board with significant experience in philanthropy and excellent industry knowledge. I look forward to introducing Sophie to our hard-working team of staff and volunteers.

Visitor Experience Project

With some quality submissions received, the project architects are soon to be appointed. The second half of 2023 will see the architects and project team scoping the design and deliverables for this important capital works project. The Visitor Experience Project will include the construction of a new Welcome Point including a café and shop space at the main entry. There are also planned renovations on both the Visitors Centre and the gatekeeper's cottage. These works will allow for a level walking path gradually working its way down to the Visitors Centre. Stakeholder discussions will be held during late 2024 for project input to get the most out of these new facilities.

1. *Hakea laurina*
2. *Luculia pinceana*
3. *Aloe hybrid*
4. *Lobelia aberdarica*



Garden Operations Update

The slower months give the Horticulture and Operations teams time to repair and maintain areas in readiness for the visitor season. These works have included track maintenance, path maintenance, annual weeding programs and lawn care.

Recent work to remove a section of hedge at the Superintendent's Cottage has opened up a terrace area suitable for outdoor events. This terraced area with Olive Trees and a spectacular river view will be available to hire with events already booked in for this summer. The Pod space is also having an exterior update, with new cladding on the southern side of the building.

Another project kicking in to gear is the new Pineapple House at the Easy Access Greenhouse. Over the next couple of months, a new greenhouse and new garden beds will be installed in this area, removing the brick garden beds that have cracks appearing. The new Pineapple House is inspired by the tropical fruit greenhouses along the Arthur Wall during the early days of the Royal Tasmanian Botanic Gardens. These greenhouses used wood fired heating systems that are still visible in the brick sections.

Lastly, I would like to thank all the Friends who participated in the RTBG Strategic Master Plan Survey. Your input towards our organization's success is essential and we are extremely grateful for your contributions. The next engagement step of the process is underway, and I am looking forward to sharing the final document planned to be completed by late 2023.

Yann Gagnon
Director



Above: The Superintendent Cottage.



Below: View from the Cottage

Introducing Joe Pickett

Business Manager and Events Producer at the RTBG



Joe is an experienced Business Manager and Events Producer with over 15 years' experience managing major events. A proud Tasmanian, Joe grew up in Launceston and his work history extends nationally and internationally. Alongside events management experience his career has taken some surprising tangents, including a stint as a Logistics Manager for the humanitarian organisation Médecins Sans Frontières, where he was stationed in Libya and Jordan coordinating the logistical capacities of complex medical aid projects. Project Management credits include the development of the Hanging Gardens Precinct for Darklab and Riverlee Property Group. His numerous event experience includes Project Manager of Dark Mofo Winter Feast, Manager of Cygnet Folk Festival, Artistic Director of the Alice Desert Festival and Producer of the Tasmanian Circus Festival. Joe's most recent role was as the General Manager of the Spring Bay Mill on Tasmania's East Coast. At Spring Bay Mill Joe was involved in the ongoing native regeneration works on that site, and shaping that facility to be a major events destination.

Joe's knowledge across business and non-profit sectors combined gives him a great foundation to work for purpose driven businesses. His passion for nature and sustainability is evident in his work history.

President's Report

At our last meeting in the Banksia Room those of us in attendance were taken on a journey into the world of macro fungi, with Heather Elson our guest speaker. With so much still to be identified, our natural world abounds with an amazing array of shapes, sizes, forms and colours! Maybe you have the Fungi Flip pictorial guide in your day pack or are connected on Facebook to the daily postings from round the state. Such diversity and knowledge are shared by amateurs and experts alike. Well worth a browse. These (below) were at the side of the Hastings Cave car park recently:



Winter it may be, but many of our gardens continue to surprise and delight with blooms, buds and beauty. Around the RTBG there has been plenty of action too. One recent reveal was the north wall of the admin block. A section of the cyprus hedge, which had grown unmanageable, has been removed.

This has allowed visitors to once more gaze at the work of convict stone masons and wood workers who built the superintendent's cottage early in the 19th century.

Recently, on Saturday June 24, a dozen Friends gathered at the Salmon Ponds for a walk and a social get together amongst the stately trees which grace the grounds. Keep your eye open for the next planned excursion, I hope to see you there, details will of course be circulated via email.

We are very lucky to have the Queen's Domain on our doorstep. The Domain has, over the last 200 years, been subject to use and abuse. It was once a grassy area with lighter tree cover, but weedy species and especially native trees like she-oaks have taken over the native grasses which once provided for marsupial grazing. Hobart City Council Bushcare teams have been working over many years to re-establish remaining affected areas to original pre-colonial grasslands. Take a stroll around the Joggers' Loop where there are some great views to the north and see grassland areas which have resulted from the ongoing works by HCC teams. Volunteers with the Cornelian Bay Landcare Group have been active over time in removing weedy species such as thistle, bone seed, mirror bush, mullein, weld, cotoneaster, briar rose and garden escapees. This work allows the native species to regenerate. Meeting monthly, the group welcomes volunteers to their Sunday morning working bees where equipment and instruction is provided. For more information, visit the HCC Bushcare facebook page and The Bandicoot Times, published by HCC Bushcare. Perhaps you have some time to volunteer.

With the strategic review of the RTBG underway, as well as the announcement of the successful architects for the development of the long overdue visitor entry facilities, I hope many of you will find the time to share your thoughts and participate in the planned consultation process as it unfolds.

It is also timely to remind members of the upcoming AGM in September when all positions fall vacant. Friends have made many valued contributions to the Gardens and I encourage you to consider nominating.

Lee Cole

Now you see me: A cudweed conundrum

James Wood, Seed Bank Co-ordinator

One of the requirements of seed banking is locating and correctly identifying the species you seek or encounter in that search. Although we always aim to collect herbarium specimens when we make collections to confirm that we have collected the correct thing, a certain level of competency in field botany is required. The difficulty in finding or identifying your target species varies wildly. Some species are eye catching. Some are unobtrusive. Others can be quite cryptic, blending in with similar looking plants even for an experienced eye. To combat that, preparations are often required before hitting the field – reading field guides, reviewing internet sources and inspecting herbarium specimens. Generally, these preparations can be effective as long as the group is well studied. However, Australia is blessed with a huge amount of biodiversity but a paucity of botanists, so a good portion of our flora is not well understood.

This story relates to work the seedbank has been involved in, harvesting some rare, alpine cudweeds species. What I initially thought would be relatively straightforward project, ended up taking nearly three years to clarify the identity of one of our targets and the discovery of an undescribed species.

The confusing cast of cudweeds

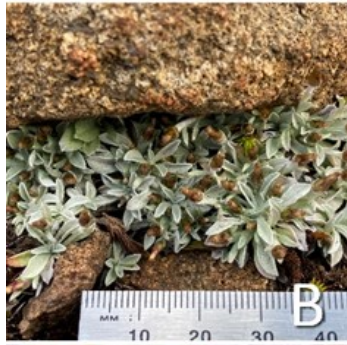
So let start off with the original targets - cudweeds. Cudweed is an English name that has come to cover a loosely related group of small-flowered daisies, lacking ray florets and generally having grey or silvery leaves. Within the daisy family, *Asteraceae*, they are part of the *Gnaphalieae* tribe named after *Gnaphalium*, a genus that used to include a large number of the cudweeds in Tasmania. *Gnaphalieae* itself includes some showy species like the everlasting daisies - *Chrysocephalum*, *Rhodanthe*, and *Xerochrysum*. In contrast, cudweeds aren't a particularly imposing group of plants. Some species have their charm, but by and large they tend to look a bit weedy and often thrive in disturbed urban landscapes. It's perhaps for this reason that they don't tend to get much attention and the understanding by many field botanists in Australia and New Zealand is fairly confused.



Not really appreciating this background, around 2020 I decided that I should attempt to collect *Argyrotegium fordianum*, a fairly robust, silvery, alpine cudweed that in Tasmania is rare and appears to be restricted to alpine areas where snow is likely to persist on the ground. Over the years I've encountered this plant sporadically and never in good numbers. One good spot for it was Ben Lomond and as it happens this is the location of a second, rare, alpine cudweed - *Argyrotegium nitidulum*. This plant is a relatively recent discovery. The plant was known from mainland Australia and New Zealand but hadn't been recorded in Tasmania. But in 2000 a couple of taxonomists from New Zealand working on cudweeds visited Tasmania and collected a specimen from Legges Tor, just above the ski village on Ben Lomond. In 2010 a threatened species survey was conducted on Ben Lomond but *Argyrotegium nitidulum* was not observed. So, as part of my 2021 Ben Lomond survey I decided we should look for both *fordianum* and *nitidulum*, as well as the rare alpine sedge *Carex cephalotes*.

The three days of surveying in January of 2021 confirmed my suspicions of *Argyrotegium fordianum*. The plant was present but scattered diffusely over a large area, meaning that collecting seed was

going to require either seed orcharding or a large, multi-day collecting exercise. To test the feasibility of seed orcharding in the gardens, samples were brought back to the nursery and although the plants fared well initially, they struggled with the warm winters of sea level Hobart. It would seem that wild seed collecting was the only option here. Meanwhile, the search for *Argyrotegium nitidulum* came up blank. In preparation for the trip, I read up descriptions and looked at images on the internet for *nitidulum*. The plant certainly seemed distinctive enough to be spotted. Compared to other cudweeds this plant had numerous, narrow, almost oblong leaves held in tight rosettes which often cluster to form distinctive cushions. Such a growth habit should have been obvious.



Ben Lomond assemblage

At this point I should probably mention that Ben Lomond is home to several, silvery alpine cudweeds. Most common are *Argyrotegium mackayi* (A) and *Euchiton lateralis* (B), both typically bearing a single flowerhead on an inflorescence. Both go into flower whilst the flowerhead is nestled in the leaves and the inflorescence extends as it goes to seed. On Ben Lomond, at least, *A.mackayi* seems to grow in quite a wide range of microhabitats, whereas *Euchiton lateralis* seems to thrive in areas of disturbance and is particularly abundant around the ski village and access road. Regardless, these species can co-occur and telling them apart can be tricky at times. The stark difference is that *Euchiton lateralis* produces its flowerheads from the sides of the rosettes, whereas *Argyrotegium mackayi* (and all *Argyrotegium* species in fact) produce their flowerheads from the centre of the rosettes. This means that *Argyrotegium* can only produce one inflorescence per rosette, whereas *Euchiton lateralis* can produce several and generally produces two. This would seem to make things easy, but when you meet large, dense, mats of these two common species it can be difficult to discern where those spikes are coming from. Elsewhere on Ben Lomond, on gravelly rockplates and in boulder crevices you can find mats of the *Ewartia catipes* (C). This silvery plant produces tiny pink florets in clustered flowerheads borne on a flattened inflorescence, cupped by an imbricate rosette of diamond shaped leaves making this a rather fetching alpine herb. Strangely, this species hasn't made its way into the collections of alpine plant enthusiasts in the northern hemisphere. Less common on Ben Lomond is *Ewartia planchonii* (D), another mat or cushion forming herb with cottony silver leaves. *E.planchonii* tends to grow in slightly moister rock fissures or in very short herbfields and unlike *E.catipes* produces a single flowerhead, with yellow florets surrounded by upright brown bracts that make the flowerhead resemble a tiny matchi whisk. Finally, in and along some of the streams on Ben Lomond, you often found straggly mats of *Ewartia meredithiae* (E), or at least that's what I thought. So, to sum up, if we include the rare target species I was after there are at least 7 species of small silvery daisies on Ben Lomond so some confusion is to be expected, but none of the other six should be mistaken for *Argyrotegium nitidulum*, surely? Right?

About a year after my trip, I was reviewing photographs of plants taken on the survey and two shots caught my eye. In short herbfield out towards Little Hell I'd photographed *Ewartia planchonii*, or at least I thought I'd photographed *Ewartia planchonii*, because looking at the images I realised that although they were in flower, they were missing the brown bracts. So not *Ewartia*? *Argyrotegium mackayi*? But the leaves didn't look right. With a single central flowerhead the other option was *nitidulum* but that didn't look right either. What was this thing?



In spring of 2022, I decided to reattempt collection of *Argyrotegium fordianum* and give greater scrutiny to the mystery *Argyrotegium* from my photograph.

In discussion about my trip with folk in the herbarium, Miguel de Salas mentioned that he thought the *Ewartia* in the streams looked a bit odd. Hmmm. Yeah, they do. Okay, that's on the list as well.

A Christmas curiosity



I spent my usual Christmas on the central plateau and quite a bit of that time was scrutinising the cudweeds to hone my eyes. As luck would have it, I came across the "weird" *Ewartia* growing in a drainage ditch north of Pine Lake. It's a straggly plant with fairly open leaves that are the same colour on both sides which isn't what *meredithiae* does (*meredithiae* has discoloured leaves i.e., the upper and lower surfaces have noticeably different colours). A weird form perhaps? The plants were in bud, so it was hard to be sure if it was *meredithiae* or *planchonii*. When *meredithiae* flowers the bracts peel back to display a white inner surface and exposing purple florets - a very different flower to *planchonii*'s "matchi whisk". So maybe another week or two till it flowered and then its identity should be clear.

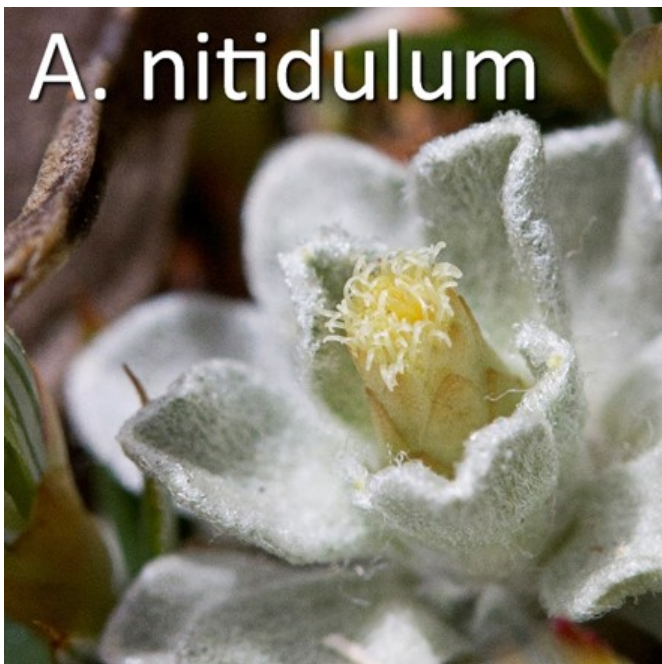
The week before the Ben Lomond cudweed survey trip I decided to drive on a day trip to fine tune my plans. For the survey itself we had at best a day and half as the weather by day 3 was not looking great. So, the weekend before I popped up with Natalie Tapson to get familiar with the site and cudweeds around the village. Thus, on day one I could introduce the survey team to several species in the flesh and get them familiar and confident with where to look and to tell them apart. As we headed back that afternoon with several waypoints, a few specimens and a lot of photographs I decided to review some of the images on my tablet. As I looked at some of my photographs of the "weird" *Ewartia* I noticed something I hadn't spotted before. I could see stigma from the flowers sticking out above the flowerhead bracts. The plants weren't in bud. They were in flower. This wasn't like any of the other *Ewartia*. Was this something new?



Combing through the collective



As the target species were likely to be diffusely scattered across Ben Lomond, Laura Williams and I were assisted in our search by four volunteers from Threatened Plant Tasmania. After a quick introduction to some of the more frequent species we headed out to find *Argyrotegium fordianum* and hopefully my mystery *Argyrotegium* too. As with a lot of botanical walks and especially when you're getting to grips with a confusing suite of species, our team of six took an hour to travel 600m but it was at that point things got interesting. In one of the first snow-hollows we hit we found our mystery *Argyrotegium*. Perfect! Let's have a good look at this plant.



The name *Argyrotegium nitidulum* in part refers to the fact that amongst the cottony hairs on its leaves it has distinctive, thick, waxy looking hairs that can glisten (*nitidulus* means shining). So regardless of the overall shape of our plant what was happening on the leaf? A hand-lens inspection of the leaf surface did in fact reveal thick, waxy hairs almost held parallel on the leaf as though they had been combed. This was in keeping with *nitidulum*. Fortunately, where we found it, it was growing close to *Argyrotegium mackayi* so samples of that were picked and examined for comparison. The difference was clear, *A.mackayi* bore nothing but cottony hairs on its surface. Additionally, we noticed that the leaf tips of *A.mackayi* were naked but in *A.nitidulum* they were obscured by hairs. So, this small, compact plant that I had mistaken for *Ewartia planchonii* was in fact *Argyrotegium nitidulum*.

That day and the next we wandered over part of the north end of Ben Lomond covering a distance of 17.5 km. From this trip we gathered 27 new spots for *Argyrotegium fordianum* adding 49 plants to my previous survey, 22 locations for *Argyrotegium nitidulum* totalling over 200 plants and 21 locations for the "weird" *Ewartia*. As a bonus, we also found 3 spots for *Carex* "Algonkian Rivulet" confirming its presence on Ben Lomond and adding 2 more pressed specimens to the herbarium. (To understand the significance of this find, I refer you to "The Edge of the Sedge" published in *Fagus* in August 2020.)

With all this information we were well set up to collect. In our first follow up trip we were able to collect seed from *Argyrotegium mackayi*, *Euchiton lateralis* and the “weird” *Ewartia*. Sadly, our timing was just a little off for the *Argyrotegium nitidulum* as it had already shed. The *Argyrotegium fordianum* however were still maturing so a second trip was organised with volunteers once again enlisted to help cover the ground that we would need to successfully sample this plant. Unfortunately, on the first day of the field trip I realised I had caught COVID (again) and the trip had to be cancelled, and our chance to collect *fordianum* was lost as well. 2024 perhaps?

Cudweed cogitations

The failure to collect the target species is a little frustrating but there was a lot gained through this collection season. First is that Tasmanian *Argyrotegium nitidulum* looks fairly different to plants elsewhere and the fact that it superficially resembles *Ewartia planchonii* probably explains why the plant hasn't been reported since the original discovery in 2000. I have to be careful here because we are talking about a group of plants that are 1) restricted to high elevations, and 2) not popular with botanists. Compared to things like orchids, few people are spending heaps of time documenting cudweeds across their distribution, so it is difficult to be too sure about the unusualness of the Tasmanian population. This brings me to the second point. There are a lot of wrongly identified images of cudweeds on the internet. As the group is poorly known and poorly documented, misidentifications are common and compound the confusion that already exists, and that wasn't something I was immediately aware of. Thirdly, genera-based keys aren't always suitable for field work. Tasmania's cudweeds fall into 10 different genera with usually only 1-4 species in each and it isn't always easy to know which genus you have. As part of this project, I drafted a combined key covering *Argyrotegium*, *Euchiton* and *Ewartia* to aid with the alpine field work. It's gone through several revisions, but recent testing with the herbarium has still found a few flaws, so there is some way to go, and I still hope to create a combined key to cover the entire group. For those interested I've been sharing these sheets on the Tasmanian Flora Facebook page. Lastly, it's surprising what can be right in front of your nose. Given the nature of the florets, bracts and flowerhead, and the very pronounced habitat difference, the “weird” *Ewartia* seems likely to be an undescribed species. This plant being an alpine species is restricted, but it is not rare. In fact, there's an impressively large mat of it growing in a stream in the Ben Lomond ski village next to one of the boardwalks. I know that I've looked at that plant and others in other spots (including the Overland track) but as it was so obvious, I didn't give it much scrutiny.



One of the reasons that motivated me to move from the UK to Australia was the fact that Australia's flora is still poorly known and therefore offered plenty of opportunities to make new discoveries. The seedbank regularly makes contributions in mapping the distribution of our flora through our collecting and survey work, and the ecology of species with our germination studies. The herbarium specimens we collect assist in the taxonomic understanding of the flora as well, but I must admit that shedding light on neglected groups like this is especially satisfying. For now, the question of the *Ewartia*'s identity falls to the herbarium staff but other questions are available to everyone. What's the distribution of this *Ewartia*? The three locations known so far are in the north of the state but does it occur further south? How widespread is *Argyrotegium nitidulum*? If the plant can be mistaken for *Ewartia planchonii* and can co-occur, then is this plant hiding on other peaks in the state? More scrutinising slopes in summertime seem to be in order.

My thanks to all those involved in the field work and to the staff of the Tasmanian Herbarium that assisted me in this project. Additional thanks to Megan Marrison and Chris Lang for reviewing this article and their feedback. *Ewartia meredithiae* image courtesy of Tim Rudman.

Update from the Horticultural Botanist

Laura Williams

I have now been in the role of Horticultural Botanist for nearly 12 months so it is a good time to provide an update on what this role involves, and what I have achieved in the last year.

The Horticultural Botanist role is very diverse and with the absence of a Horticultural Botanist at the Gardens for nearly 2 years, there has been a lot of catching up to do!

As many of you may know, one of the aspects that distinguishes a botanical garden from a park, is that plants are documented, labelled and monitored. We have a database where we record the accession number (unique identifying number for each new set of plants to the garden), up-to-date name of the plant and its natural distribution, where the plants were sourced from and where and how many have been planted in the gardens. The names of some plants can change for various reasons, and so I am required to update the database to reflect this, as well as updating the countless plantings and removals that have occurred over the past few years.

Audits of each garden area are undertaken periodically to keep track of plantings and removals. I have updated the collection areas (which we use to document plant locations) and mapping to reflect the changes that have occurred to the RTBG landscape over the years since this mapping was last done. Some examples of changes to the landscape include; the removal of the Rills in the eastern section, the development of the Tasmanian Community Food Garden in 2014 and the loss of mature trees such as the golden elm which was lost during a storm event in 2022. The labelling of plants in the gardens is also receiving an overhaul and standard labels will be rolled out across the Gardens over the next few years.

The RTBG is well regarded for its horticultural and botanical expertise. As such we receive many public enquiries which I respond to, ranging from where to buy a certain plant, to whether a species is edible, for advice on weed or pest identification and management as well as requests for historical information relating to the garden.

I also administer plant distributions – where we release plant material from the Garden for research or conservation purposes. Our Gondwanan Collection is of particular interest as we are the only institution to hold so many of the world's Southern Hemisphere Conifers.

Part of my role is to ensure the living collections of the RTBG are protected from potential pest and disease incursions. With the Gardens situated close to the ports in Hobart and the high number of visitors we receive from all over the world, we have a high likelihood of being one of the first locations where new pests and diseases will appear in Tasmania. As such, I conduct monthly monitoring for 5 priority pests and diseases – Myrtle Rust, Rose Rosette Virus, Polyphagous Shot-hole Borer, Brown Marmorated Stink Bug and Stigmina Leaf Spot. Thankfully, none of these have been detected at RTBG, but it is important to continue checking so that we can initiate an early response if required. If a plant is unhealthy, I will do an investigation into what the cause of this is, working with Biosecurity Tasmania's Plant Diagnostic Services and other relevant experts. One example is the large Bunya pine on the restaurant lawn which has some big cracks in the trunk. We are working to determine whether there is a pest or pathogen causing this, or if cracking occurs naturally in response to growing conditions.



My role also involves supporting the Tasmanian Seed Conservation Centre, helping our Seed Bank manager James Wood. During the latest collecting season, we were able to collect several dozen new seed collections for the seed bank, and have also cleaned, processed, quality assessed and banked the large backlog of accessions ready for a new season of seed collecting this spring and summer. I also play a role in administering our conservation projects such as the Azorella seed orchard on Macquarie Island which was set up to enable seed collection of this critically endangered species. A particular highlight of my work so far was to join a research trip to the Alkaline Pans in the South West Wilderness to collect *Milligania johnstonii* which we grow as a seed orchard at the RTBG. This is a challenging species to collect as we cannot wild-collect seed due to the difficulty of accessing the remote population. (A full overview of this project was provided by Lorraine Perrins in *Fagus*, February 2023).



Excited to be collecting *Milligania johnstonii* from the Alkaline Pans in the South West Wilderness

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or requests. I look forward to seeing you around the Gardens!

Volunteers Morning Tea

Fran Alexis

Held In the conservatory on Friday 19 May 2023, I attended the morning tea where Vanessa Pinto, Chief Operations Officer for the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, known as NRE Tas., delivered thanks to Volunteers. Introduced by Esther Beecroft (Coordinator Visitor Experience, RTBG), Vanessa spoke as follows:

National Volunteer Week is an annual event celebrated across Australia. It recognises the vital support that volunteers like yourselves provide to the community. The Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, known as NRE Tas, has over 2000 volunteers, plus 48 community groups across Tasmania registered in our volunteer management system (Better Impact), who assist and support us in many divisions including the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, Parks and Wildlife Service, Biosecurity Tasmania, Environment, Heritage and Land and Marine Resources.

At the RTBG, the **Tasmanian Community Food Garden team** have contributed to much-needed food relief for Tasmanians this year by assisting with the maintenance of this Garden. The food garden has provided many hundreds of kilograms of fresh produce to our community partner Loaves and Fishes, who in turn produce meals and hampers of fruit and vegetables for those in need.

Our dedicated **Begonia Group** (affectionately known as The Begoniacs) have propagated and vetted 57 different varieties of begonias this past year. Thanks to their help, we've seen the return of beautiful begonias to the Conservatory display. From the experience gained working with the Begonia Group's long-standing volunteers, one young volunteer has moved on to secure a horticultural position at our neighbour Government House. Thank you to those volunteers who shared their wisdom with her. Our **"meet and greet" volunteers** provided support in welcoming over 280,000 visitors during the peak tourism period between October and March and over this past year we have seen a 50% increase in demand for our buggy services. Thank you to the **buggy driving team** who have helped deliver this service, sometimes coming in outside of the roster to provide a tour. And welcome to our 4 new drivers who have just joined the team. Our **Nursery Growing Group** volunteers assisted with the sowing and propagation of thousands of tomato plants sold at our annual fundraising plant sale event. In addition, we have also had volunteers assist with a native orchid display, seed collection field trips, and on-going lab work in **Tasmanian Seed Collection Centre**.

Volunteers for the Parks and Wildlife Service and have recently assisted with working bees at Tasman Island, Maria Island, Melaleuca, and Maatsuyker Island and Wellington Park.

Fishcare Tasmania volunteers and assist with teaching responsible fishing practices to the public and providing advice about fisheries rules.

We are proud of the important role that volunteers play, and encourage all volunteers themselves to take the time to acknowledge their own contribution and benefit to the community and to actively recruit or encourage others into this act of service.

On behalf of NRE Tas I wish to personally 'thank you' for volunteering your time, knowledge and effort in supporting the work that we do in 'delivering a Sustainable Tasmania'. - Vanessa Pinto



Vanessa Pinto addressing the group



Peter and Deb



Morning tea spread

Discounts offered to Friends of the RTBG

Discounts are offered on selected purchases at the following plant nurseries, garden centres and retail outlets to members of Friends of the RTBG. Just show your card at the time of purchase.

Botanical shop – RTBG – *10% discount*

Chandler's Nursery – 75 Queen St, Sandy Bay – *5% discount*

Greenhill Nursery – Leslie Vale – *10% discount*

Julie's Nursery -- 2273 Huon Highway, Grove – *5% discount*

Plants of Tasmania Nursery & Gardens – 65 Hall St, Ridgeway – *10% discount*

Stoneman's Garden Centre – 94 Grove Rd, Glenorchy – *5% discount on full priced stock*

Wildseed Tasmania – 91 Weston Hill Rd, Sorell (0429 851 500) – *10% discount on tube stock only*

Woodbridge Nursery – 3 Llantwit Rd, Woodbridge (open Fri and Sat only 9.00–5.00pm) – *10% discount*

Neutrog Australia Pty Ltd—Order twice a year through Friends when notified

Visiting Monet's Garden at Giverny

Elizabeth Haworth

July 2023

Twenty years after our first visit to Monet's Garden at Giverny, about 80 km northwest of Paris, my husband and I visited it again. This time it was in May and mid spring while our first visit had been at midsummer when the waterlilies, in full bloom, were breath-taking and the 'grande allée' weighed down by nasturtiums.

In May, although some tulips were coming to their end, many were still spectacular, the irises were still magnificent, and the peonies were of many varieties, including new cultivars, such as this Itoh peony.



Instead, there were wisteria, azaleas, rhododendrons and lilacs of many colours and lots of the other plants we expect in the spring.

Without the waterlilies, we were still able to enjoy the lily pond and its iconic bridge, festooned in mauve and white wisteria and could pay more attention to the garden plan and the artist's colour palette'.



Sadly, it was not water lily time, there being only three pink flowers visible.





We also noted some changes in the gardens such as the handsome rooster in the poultry yard in the house garden and the tunnel connecting the latter to the lily pond.



Claude Monet lived at Giverny from 1883 till his death in 1926. A day trip to Giverny from Paris allows one to escape to the Normandy countryside and get a taste of Monet's life through his garden and house and the village of Giverny which he made into a desired home and inspiration to painters and artists and a home to those able to afford it.



After spending hours in Monet's house and garden, we walked through the village to the Romanesque church of Sainte Radegonde, first built in the 11th century and rebuilt in the 16th century. Monet's funeral carriage and tomb are here.



Despite lots of tourists, this is a peaceful place. Perhaps reflecting Monet's thinking. On the day after Armistice Day, i.e., 12 November 1918, Monet offered a series of water lily paintings to the French state as a symbol of peace. These were transferred to the Orangerie Museum, beside the Seine in Paris in 1926 just after Monet's death. You can see them there even when the water lilies are not in bloom at Giverny.

These, and Monet's Garden at Giverny are a great tribute to the artist and certainly worth a visit if you get the chance.

Roraima Gardens at the Roraima Nursery, Lara

Ralph Crane

Many Friends of the RTGB will no doubt make sure they include a visit to the Geelong Botanical Gardens if they are staying in Geelong or passing through. However, some may be unaware of the spectacular display garden at the Roraima Nursery, situated in Lara, just 15 km from Geelong.

While the nursery is packed with plants and worth a visit for itself, the real lure for garden lovers is the unique display garden which stretches over two acres. Created by Lyle Filippe, these dramatic gardens are well laid out with winding pathways that take visitors on an exciting adventure, revealing the unexpected at every turn.

The focus of the plants is on unusual cacti and succulents, but there are also plenty of other mature plants including palms, pines and Australian natives, too. The eclectic display of plants is complemented throughout by the quirky landscaping which features large metal artworks, industrial artefacts, and the clever use of rocks, crystals, and other recycled materials.

The display gardens at Roraima Nursery are open every day from 0900-1630, and entry is by gold coin donation. The nursery's amenities include a car park, a small café, and toilet facilities.

Roraima Nursery, 20 Swan Street, Lara, Vic 3212

The photos below give you some idea of what to expect.



A large bat colony keeps watch



A surprise at every turn



Innovative landscaping



Cacti and crystals



Metal flowers complement the exotic flora



Koalas watching over the gardens



Metal art defines the walkways

The Botanic Gardens of Adelaide

Wendy Bowman

On my first visit to the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide (BGA), comprised of the Adelaide, Wittunga and Mt Lofty Gardens, I went to the Adelaide Botanic Garden, a green haven in the heart of the city. I entered through the Friends' Gate on Plane Tree Drive. My first stop was at North Lodge (Figure 1).



North Lodge was built in 1866 for the Head Gardener. It shares several characteristics with the cottage in our own gardens, one of them being that it is a heritage-listed building. This is the home of the Friends – where they greet visitors, promote and support the work of the Friends, and have Friends' activities. There are four main, public rooms.

The entry room (Figure 2) is where visitors are greeted by Friends. It is also where items are sold as part of the Friends' fundraising enterprises. Items range from tea pot cosies to botanical posters.



Another room (Figure 3) is the Friends' library, with an impressive collection. There is also a table of donated second-hand books for sale. Their official publication, *Friends of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide Gazette*, is similar to our *Fagus*.



The third room (Figure 4) has two displays, one of photographs and one of botanical art works. The Friends has a Botanical Photography Group which meets twice monthly in another building on site. Guest speakers and tutors support workshops and tutorials with a botanical theme that are held throughout the year.



From each year's photographic competition, photographs are selected to make up the following year's calendar. The 2023 calendar cost \$15.

For those members interested in drawing and painting flowers, plants or natural history subjects, the Botanical Art Group meets on Saturday afternoons, again in another building on site. Workshops and tutorials are held regularly throughout the year, and a major exhibition is held biennially. Cards and prints of art works are for sale.

The fourth room (Figure 5) has a section devoted to the history of North Lodge, a Friends Little Library (bring one - take one), and several smaller displays.



Figure 5

One of these is a Besom – a garden broom made from plant material (Figure 6).

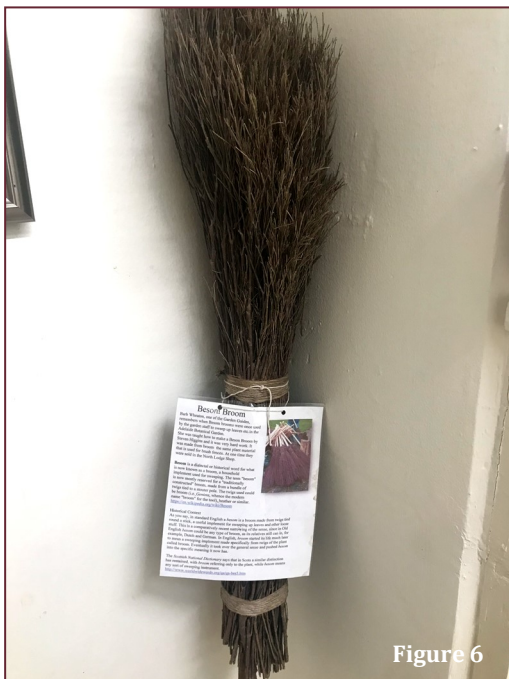


Figure 6

Friends were taught how to make one from *Melaleuca uncinata*, of the paperbark family, and commonly called Broombush. Besom is derived from the Old English “besma” which means broom.

As I leave, I spy the table of plants that are for sale out on the verandah – alas, I can only look.

Currently there are two groups propagating plants, each meeting one morning a week in the Nursery at the Mt Lofty Garden where there is an on-site glasshouse, a shade house, and where a database of plants is kept. The propagation material is collected from all three gardens, where the plants are also sold, as well as at community garden events.

Though larger than our Cottage, it shows possibilities for various uses of ours, should we have the opportunity, and about which some of our members’ minds have been active.

Another impressive building in the gardens is the historic Santos Museum of Economic Botany, completed in 1881. It is home to an extensive permanent collection, much of which dates back to the original museum display. This Museum is the last of its kind in the world.

The Guildhouse Collections Project with the Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium gives artists the opportunity to produce new work for complementary exhibitions within the museum. The exhibition that I saw ran from 11 February to 16 July.

Plans to adapt the building to a function centre met with opposition from the Friends, who now volunteer their time during opening hours.

Much of the volunteering at the gardens is done by the members of the Friends group. The Friends provide free garden walks in all three gardens, as well as the Botanic Park opposite the Friends’ Gate. They also take booked group walks; prepare monthly or seasonal trails for self-guided walks and offer special-interest walks to coincide with exhibitions and festivals. Their Tours Group organises outings to gardens, exhibitions, talks, and activities with a botanical, natural history or environment interest.

Members also have the opportunity to volunteer at the Botanic Gardens as hands-on horticulturalists at Mt Lofty and Wittunga; at the Santos Museum; in the SA Seed Conservation Centre; with school holiday programs; and in the State Herbarium.

There are many similarities between the activities of the Friends of the Adelaide Botanic Garden, and some of our former and current activities, and I note that they have evening and twilight meetings with guest speakers. We can always be further inspired by other Friends groups.

Significant Trees in the RTBG

Number 22: *Cedrus deodara* or Himalayan Cedar.

The *Cedrus deodara* or Himalayan Cedar is significant because this species, native to the western Himalayas is now almost extinct in its former range, although it is widely cultivated throughout the world. At the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, this important tree is situated outside the main entrance on the left, and was planted as one of a pair, the other would have been across the driveway near the Arthur Wall. It is an old tree and possibly one of the original plantings in the Pinetum (established by Francis Newman during the 1840s and 1850s) or it may have been planted when the Main Gates were installed in 1878.



The *Cedrus deodara* or Himalayan Cedar is one of only four species of 'true' cedars (genus *Cedrus*) three of which come from the Mediterranean and this one, from the Himalayan Mountains in Asia. Of the Mediterranean cedars, the Cedar of Lebanon (*C. libani*) is the most well-known, and is the oldest cedar in cultivation. The first Cedar of Lebanon planted in Britain in 1646 is still alive. With its majestic shape and wide spreading branches which hold the foliage in spreading plateaus, the Cedar of Lebanon caught the imagination of landscape gardeners such as Capability Brown, and it was planted as a striking feature of many stately English gardens of the early 1800s. The next most common in cultivation comes from the Atlas Mountains in Algeria and the blue-grey variety, the Atlas Cedar (*C. atlantica* 'Glauca') is especially prized. Least popular as a landscape plant is the Cedar of Cyprus (*C. brevifolia*) which comes from the Island of Cyprus in the Mediterranean. We have a lovely small specimen in the Pinetum. With longer needles and a softer colour than these three, the Himalayan Cedar (*C. deodara*) maintains its overall conical shape into maturity, and its overall outline and texture is soft rather than rigid like the *C. libani* so adds a less dramatic but none-the-less pleasing shape to a garden or park.

Cedrus is the Latin for the English word cedar, while *deodara*, meaning tree of the gods, is named for the Hindu gods. The common name is self-explanatory, revealing the origin of the tree as the Himalayan Mountains. Cedar is, however, the common name for many trees that are not 'true' cedars. Used for almost any tree with dark, spice-scented timber, cedars, so-called, come in many forms. Writing this article at my dining room table I reflect that this piece of furniture is made from Australian Red Cedar but that what is commonly known in Australia as Red Cedar is, however, a deciduous tree, *Toona australis*, syn. *Cedrela toona* and is called 'cedar' because it has deep red resinous, scented timber that is easy to work. It used to grow in profusion on the east coast of Australia and was almost harvested to extinction by the 'cedar cutters' of early settlement. Many American 'cedars' such as the Incense Cedar, the Western Red Cedar and the Alaskan Yellow Cedar are named in the same loose way.

One of the true Cedars, *Cedrus deodara*, is native to the western Himalayas in eastern Afghanistan, northern Pakistan, the northern Republic of India - Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand states, southwestern-most Tibet and western Nepal, growing at elevations of 1,500 - 3,200 m above sea level. Referred to as Deodar, the trees of the Devdar Forest of Himachal Pradesh in particular, are sacred to the Hindu. It is also the national tree of Pakistan and the state tree of Himachal Pradesh.

The *C. deodara* at the RTBG (below) has multiple trunks and a broad crown, though in outline, is broadly conical. The branches are mostly horizontal to drooping, with the tips pendulous. Its bark is grey and deeply fissured.



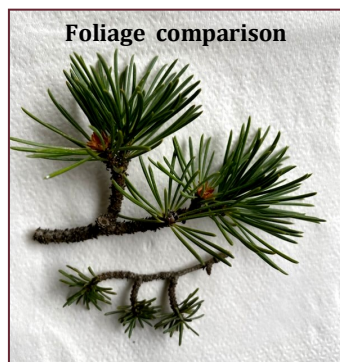
In its native habitat the Himalayan cedar is an evergreen coniferous species of tree that grows to mature heights of about 50 m. Here at the RTBG it has not attained that height but is a significantly big tree. You might notice the litter below it on the path and steps throughout the year; spent pollen cones, resin from the green seed-cones and, when they are ripe, the scales and 'cedar roses' from the disintegrating cones.

Because it is a conifer, what we refer to as 'leaves' are needles. *C. deodara* needles are three-sided with pointed tips. Green to blue-green measuring about 3-5 cm long, each needle has two resin canals and the needles remain on the tree for up to three years. The needles are held in dense tufts of about 30 in a cluster.



When I came across the Cedar of Cyprus in the Pinetum, I was excited to discover how its foliage differed from that of the Himalayan Cedar. The Latin name for the Cedar of Cyprus is *C. brevifolia*, where the Latin *brevi* means short and *folia* referring to the foliage, pointing to the tiny needles which grace this tree.





The seeds are covered by closely overlapping scales. Maturing to a reddish-brown, the cones disintegrate when ripe.

Leaving the central stalk on the tree the scales fall away, and the winged seed is shed to be blown away by wind. Often the tip of the cone retains its shape and you can pick up 'cedar roses' underneath the tree when this happens. The seeds themselves are about 17 mm long and 6 mm wide and their large light brown wings cling tightly to the seed.

On the *C. deodara*, male pollen cones are produced in abundance, and when ripe release pollen which wafts in air currents about the tree before settling on the sticky resinous female seed cones to fertilize them. When spent, they fall to make a thick carpet under the tree.



The seeds between scales, winged seeds and Cedar cones, called Cedar Roses

Seed cones on the *C. deodara* appear alone or in pairs, on very short stalks on top of the branches and are barrel-shaped (ovate). Measuring up to 7-10 cm long and 5-6 cm wide they are rounded at the apex and bluish-green and very resinous when young.

Timber from the *C. deodara* is soft, light and resinous. It is an important timber tree in India and used for building; it is durable because of its resin content so is also used for boat-building. Because the wood is aromatic it is often used for cedar-wood storage chests, while aromatic oils are also distilled from this tree. It is, however, mainly grown as an ornamental tree in gardens and parks in the rest of the world.

Fran Alexis

Sources:

H Johnson, Trees, Octopus Publishing Group, 2010
www.conifers.org/pi/Cedrus_deodara
www.britannica.com/plant/ceda



Friends' News

Heather Elson spoke on Fungi at the General Meeting in June, 2023.

I very much enjoyed sharing with the group both my personal interest in fungi and the amazing array of unique and interesting species we have right on our doorsteps (often quite literally)!!

We learnt what fungi are and how they differ from plants. We learnt about fungi evolution and the giants of the past towering 8metres high! We covered the three main fungi lifestyles - Saprotrophic, Parasitic and Mycorrhizal fungi, with some images of some of the fungi in each of these groups. Learning about how fungi feed, leads us to know where we might find different types of fungi and why. We saw how some fungi like the Common Inkcap (*Coprinus comatus*) even trap micro-organisms!

We briefly covered things like reproduction - and how some fungi like our native *Aseroe rubra*, use clever tricks like hiding their spores in a foul-smelling brown 'gleba' to attract flies to spread their spores and how the Humungus Honey Fungus is around 2,385 acres across! We explored some interesting Tasmanian species with Gondwanan connections and saw how little we know about Australian fungi (less than 25% of Australian fungi have been formally named (Taxonomy Australia 2022). We touched on how pressures such as climate change, habitat loss and human interference, can place additional pressures on animals and organisms searching for fungi as food and habitat.

Recommended Websites:

Fungimap - Australia's National Fungi Mapping Scheme: www.fungimap.org.au

inaturalist - A website where you can submit your photos for science. Especially plants also: www.inaturalist.org It is ok if you do not know what the fungi is. Fungi sightings can be uploaded as 'Kingdom fungi' and somebody will ID it. inaturalist is also good for photo comparing against 'Research Grade' identifications and generally learning more about species, their distribution and seasonality. Sightings can be done via the Fungimap Project on inaturalist here: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/fungimap-australia>

TASfungi: www.tasfungi.com.au - local site with some images and brief info on the "identify it" page and there is also a big links page with heaps of links to fungi websites.

TASfungi Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/tasfungi> If you are on FB, request to join this group, and you'll see what other people are finding, learn lots and see lots of beautiful photos from many photographers and interested general public! This group does not discuss edibility of fungi or share information in that regard, there are many other groups catering to that interest online if your members are interested in this area.

Record your sightings to help conservation and understanding efforts, because fungi are so important to carbon cycling, plant /ecosystem health.

Thanks for the opportunity to share the wonder of fungi with your welcoming group.

Heather

www.farsouthfungi.com.au

Lee Cole

Coming Up:

Kingston Library Display

Make time this September to visit the Kingston Library. The Friends of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens will again promote the RTBG at the Kingston Library with a display of photos showing some of the **Heritage Structures at the Gardens**. The display has become a yearly event, and each time brings a different aspect of our Gardens to a wider public audience of visitors to the Kingston Library.

Our Next Photo Competition

See back page for details



Lee Cole and Heather Elson

Salmon Ponds Visit

Our event organizer, Elizabeth Haworth, arranged for a group of members of Friends to visit the Salmon Ponds on the 24th of June. The weather was kind to us and we thoroughly enjoyed the day. Many took the chance to arrive a little early and indulge in some morning tea. I heard no complaints about the food.

The Salmon Ponds was established circa 1861 with the first live eggs of salmon and trout arriving by ship packed in boxes in May 1864. These eggs were hatched in ponds then the fish were subsequently released into the Derwent River. While the salmon did not return, the trout flourished in the Derwent and its tributaries. Trout ova have been sent to the mainland Australia and New Zealand to establish hatcheries. The salmon and trout at the Salmon Ponds are now only for show.

Salmon Ponds has a great public open space with large open lawn areas in the 19th Century English Style and is a perfect spot for a picnic. The area was developed by locals who were interested in gardens and are well worth a visit. Some of the trees are over 140 years old and consist mainly of conifers and exotics. The variegated elm is a lovely specimen although not in leaf this visit. New signage has been recently installed and the Museum of Trout Fishing, located the cottage built in 1865 for the first superintendent of the Salmon Ponds, added to the experience.

Some of us then enjoyed the opportunity to lunch together. We did not get to see the local platypus this time but I was fortunate enough to see it on my last visit in April.

A great day for all.

Nicole Clutterbuck

Jon Baines Tours Pty Ltd

(Details circulated to members via email 7/6/23)

In October 2023 we are running another local fund raising tour for the AAFBG **A Botanical Tour of Gardens of Southern Highlands with the AAFBG**

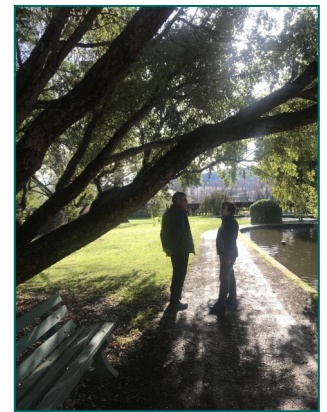
In January 2024 we are repeating our tour in South India **Spice, Trade and Botanicals: Histories of the Malabar Coast**

In August / September 2024 we are repeating our tour **Wildflowers, Wine and the Cape Floral Kingdom - Botanical Histories in South Africa**

For bookings received from members of the Friends of the RTBG we provide a **5% commission to the Friends** of the RTBG. This would be \$287 per booking for India and \$394 per booking for South Africa.



Friends enjoying the Salmon Ponds outing



Welcome to New Members

It is with pleasure that we welcome the following new members to the Friends of RTBG: Serena Ellery, Robert Donnelly, Jennifer Stackhouse, Eddy Steenbergen, Roxanne Steenbergen, Deborah St Laurenz and Mark Brothers.

If you know anyone who wishes to join Friends or you would like to give a gift subscription to someone, you can email membership@rtbgfriends.com.au or ring Stuart Clutterbuck on 0418534814 and a membership form will be forwarded to you.

Stuart Clutterbuck

Membership Officer

General Meeting Dates

September 9, 2023 (AGM)

December 2, 2023

At this stage all meetings will be held in the Banksia Room commencing at 10 am. You will be notified of any changes should they arise.

Our Next Issue: November 2023



Friends of the
Royal Tasmanian
Botanical Gardens

Structures Within the Gardens RTBG

2023 PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION



PRIZES IN ALL SECTIONS
OPEN
FRIENDS OF RTBG
CHILDREN U18

ENTRIES OPEN 1 - 30 NOVEMBER
ENQUIRIES TO INFO@RTBGFRIENDS.COM.AU



GARDENS.RTBG.TAS.GOV.AU

2023 Photographic Competition