

Flourish

Supporter News Summer 2022

ISSUE 12

Nature for Wellbeing

Finding Solace

Excursions For All



Royal
Botanic
Gardens
Victoria



ABOVE

Lord Mayor Sally Capp, RBGV Board Chair Chris Trotman and Director & Chief Executive Tim Entwisle open the 7th Global Botanic Gardens Congress.

COVER

The Wellbeing Gardens in Fern Gully are a peaceful place to relax.

Welcome to Flourish Summer

Dear supporters,

Welcome to the summer edition of *Flourish*.

The Gardens has been shortlisted as a finalist at the Victorian Tourism Industry Awards again this year, for the third time in a row. That bid is supported by us hosting events such as the 7th Global Botanic Gardens Congress in September, which was attended by over 500 delegates from 38 countries and then in October, the 17th Australasian Botanic Guides Conference. To have hosted these two major events was a great opportunity to position the organisation as a global leader in our sector.

I'm also excited to let you know that towards the end of the year, we will be installing new signage at both Gardens as part of the Wayfinding, Signage, and Interpretation project. You will soon see new map boards, gate signs and wayfinding to not only allow visitors to better navigate our two beautiful sites, but to also better understand the stories behind them. And in breaking news, new highway signage for Cranbourne is about to arrive!

This month's theme is wellbeing, and in this issue we share some research on nature for health. You'll also find an article on overcoming grief in the Gardens and find out how two donors have used their passions for books and quilting to support the organisation.

As I write, the spring evening light is just magic at both gardens (when it's not raining), and I encourage you all to take a late afternoon stroll when you can.

As always, my sincere thanks for your continued support of our work and I hope to see you out enjoying our beautiful Gardens soon.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Entwisle', written in a cursive style.

Professor Tim Entwisle
Director and Chief Executive
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria

A New Report: Nature for Wellbeing

We all have an intuitive notion that nature is good for health and wellbeing. But what exactly is the evidence on the topic?

In 2021, the Gardens commissioned a report called “*Nature for Health and Wellbeing: A Review of the Evidence*” to summarise key themes from contemporary research literature.

The report confirmed mental and physical benefits, as well as increased social cohesion. It confirmed that there is a positive relationship between greener environments and physical health, including increased activity levels and reduced stress, which is measured by self-observation, cortisol and blood pressure.

In addition to improved physical health, top researchers across the globe have found a link between immersion in nature and the burden of some types of mental illness.

Recognising these benefits, the Gardens hosts a Forest Therapy program at both Melbourne and Cranbourne Gardens each month.

Originating in Japan, *Shinrin-Yoku*, or Forest Therapy, is a preventative health practice that immerses the senses in nature.

It is recognised as a public health practice in Asia and Europe, and the program is gaining global acclaim as



an evidence-based, cost-effective and natural remedy – a ‘green prescription’ for a healthier mind and body.

One reason for this recognition is that all plants release organic compounds called “phytoncides”. When we breathe in these chemicals, our bodies respond by increasing the number and activity of “natural killer cells”, which provide responses to virus-infected cells and other pathogens.


This program is for those who enjoy the benefit of someone guiding them, switching off their phones, slowing down, engaging their five senses and really connecting to nature.

Sessions go for two hours or three hours, allowing people to escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life and reap the wellbeing benefits.

Visit rbg.vic.gov.au to book a session.

ABOVE AND RIGHT

Forest Therapy encourages participants to slow down and find inner peace.



Originating in Japan, Shinrin-Yoku, or Forest Therapy, is a preventative health practice that immerses the senses in nature.

Research shows that Forest Therapy can:

- Improve respiratory and cardiovascular functions
- Boost immune system function
- Improve physical fitness and support weight loss
- Reduce stress hormone levels
- Reduce inflammation
- Improve mood and attention, focus and creativity
- Decrease anxiety and depression
- Increase one's ability to focus
- Enhance sleep quality



**“There have been many offers to buy single books from the collection, but this would destroy the value in keeping this resource together for future generational study and research.”
Graeme Baker**



ABOVE
Graeme and Lee Baker with the book collection.

RIGHT
Lee Baker with her stunning patchwork quilt.

Supporter Spotlight: Graeme Baker

Long-time Gardens supporter Graeme Baker has donated his comprehensive collection of herbal medicine literature.

Graeme Baker has had a lifelong interest in herbal medicines. Over the years he built an impressive collection of literature on herbal remedies spanning over two hundred years and over 1200 books, including precious limited editions.

Graeme moved to Brisbane in the 1970's where he qualified for his Bachelor of Naturopathy and Diploma of Herbal Medicine. While raising his family and continuing his career in the automotive industry, Graeme's passion for phytotherapy and his collection began in earnest in these years.

Graeme and Lee Baker have been long-standing and generous supporters of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, joining the Director's Circle in the first years and coming along for volunteer planting days at Cranbourne. Lee even dedicated her creative talents to creating a beautiful patchwork quilt of the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria logo, displayed with pride at the staff entrance at Cranbourne Gardens.

Reflecting on his decision to donate his considerable collection to Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, Graeme

explains, "There have been many offers to buy single books from the collection, but this would destroy the value in keeping this resource together for future generational study and research." Some years ago, Graeme donated 26 books dating from 1570 up to 1900 to ensure their conservation and has now donated the entirety of his collection.

The collection dates back to 1877. Graeme says that he has no favourites but each book represents precious life experiences. Graeme's thesis was on Australian Native Medicinal Plants and he has brought together a fascinating set of books documenting First Nations' usage of plants for healing.

On one overseas trip, Graeme was able to buy a collection of five Vellum covered reprints of a 1500 Herbal that he carefully carried in a backpack from Rome down through Italy and Greece to get them back to Australia. On another Trip to Hay-on-Wye, the famed book town in the United Kingdom, he needed to purchase an extra suitcase to bring home more acquired treasures!

We are grateful for Graeme's trust in the Gardens to protect and treasure these wonderful books in our Library.

Events:

Cranbourne Friends Book Launch

In May, the Cranbourne Friends' new book *Of Friends & Gardens: A History of the Cranbourne Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria*, was launched to commemorate their 30th Anniversary.

Written by longstanding Friend and author Carolyn Langdon, the book provides a comprehensive history of the Friends, philanthropists and staff as they grew together with Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne.

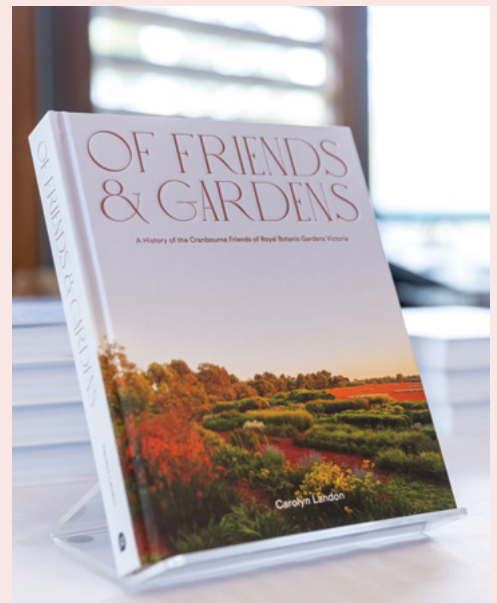
It features fascinating stories about the site's history, those who fought to preserve it and the battles they encountered along the way, including preventing a freeway being built through the Gardens.

Hon. Pauline Richards, Member for Cranbourne and Gardens advocate, helped launch the beautifully illustrated coffee table book at an event earlier this year. She described the Friends as a determined group of nature lovers who helped transform a sand mine filled with rubbish into an award-winning Garden and one of Cranbourne's most precious assets.

Published by Hardie Grant Books, 2021, the book is available for \$50 at both Melbourne and Cranbourne shops and other stockists. For more information, please visit www.rbg.vic.gov.au and www.hardiegrant.com/au/books.

BELOW

Tim Entwisle, Carolyn Langdon, Pauline Richards MP and Chris Russell





Lightscape

Donors joined Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria staff and their families for the preview night of Lightscape in late June this year.

Those who attended were treated to a crowd-free VIP view of the event which allowed them to embrace the ambiance and installations.

We had wonderful feedback from this event, with the team from Government House telling us it was the most spectacular event of the Melbourne winter calendar.

With a such an enthusiastic response for our inaugural Lightscape at the Gardens, we can't wait to see the light and sound artistry next winter!



TOP RIGHT

Charles Carroll, Manager Aborigiculture with Jennifer Wolcott

ABOVE

Bridget Patrick with Angok Angok

**"When grief struck,
I found solace in the
Gardens, and would circle
from the New Zealand
Collection to the Herb
Garden, to the camellias
and to the Children's
Garden, imagining my
mother beside me."
Fayen d'Evie**



Finding Solace in the Gardens

Fayen d’Evie is a multi-award-winning artist, scientist and academic whose work disrupts the normative ways of viewing and engaging with public art.

Fayen d’Evie has visited Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne on many occasions – for comfort after tragedy and for peace after the greatest joy.

She grew up in New Zealand, before studying at the Victorian College of the Arts, choosing to live in South Yarra so she could walk through the Gardens to art school in nearby St Kilda Road.

“In 2009, I moved in to a 1930s apartment in St Leonard’s Court, opposite the Gardens,” she says. “It was rough around the edges but had a sweeping balcony large enough for a row of potted grevilleas, and [it was] close enough to the Gardens to lure visits from some of their abundant bird life.

“My parents – Marian d’Evie and Russell Smith – had died suddenly a few years before in a plane crash in New Zealand in 2005, and I missed my mother terribly. She had been an avid gardener, toiling on a windswept block in Canterbury, Aotearoa, to lay the foundations for an Italian-style herb garden, planting daffodil and jonquil bulbs, and planning a grand camellia walk.

“When grief struck, I found solace in the Gardens, and would circle from the New Zealand Collection to the Herb Garden, to the camellias and to the Children’s Garden, imagining my mother beside me.”

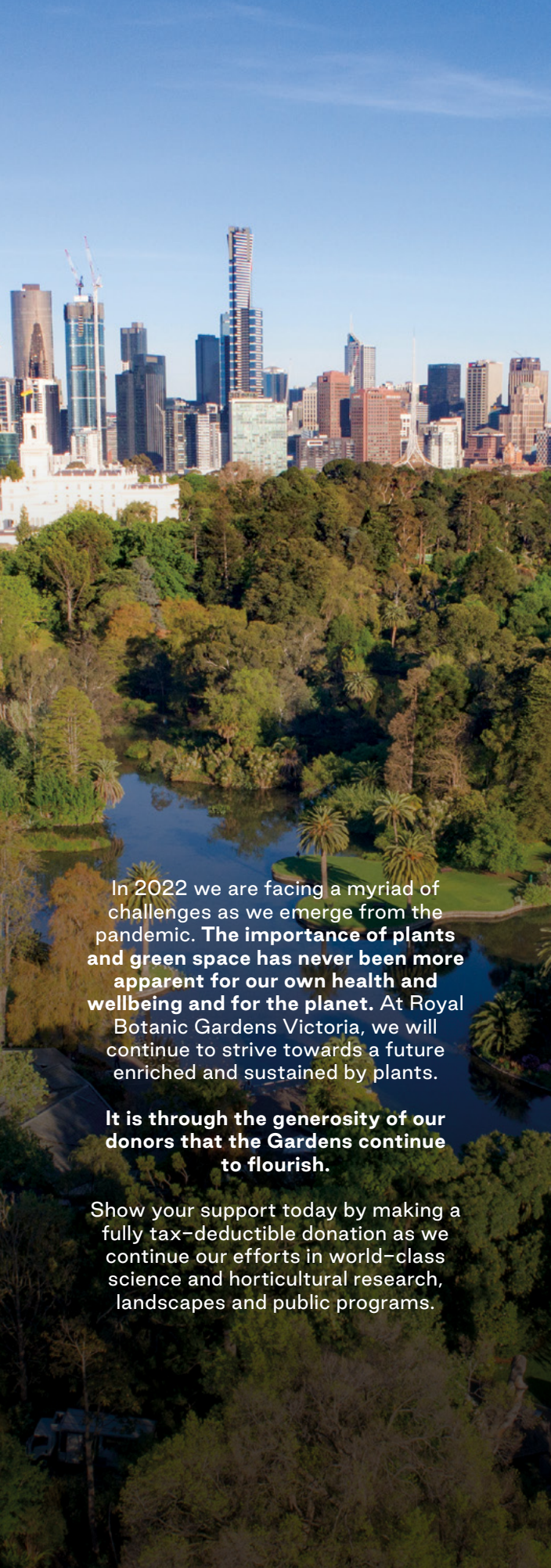
While Fayen was mourning her parents she was also preparing for the arrival of her own baby.

“When I was heavily pregnant, and missing my mother even more, I barely left the apartment, except to gingerly step into the Gardens each day, where I would sit and watch the cantankerous swans.

“The day before my son was due was a clear but cold August day. I lumbered over the road and, ignoring the bemused looks of other visitors to the Gardens, I walked my circuit, one foot up on the grass verge, one on the pavement. I managed to make my way to the Camellia Bed, where I hoped to gain a sense of comfort and moral support through the memory of my mother. I’m not sure if the uneven ground trick was responsible or coincidental, but by the time I was back in my apartment the contractions had intensified. My son was born the next day, on 7 August 2010, the fifth anniversary of my parents’ plane crash.”

Excerpt from WONDER – 175 Years of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, on sale at both Gardens shops.

LEFT
Fayen at Ornamental Lake, Melbourne Gardens

An aerial photograph showing a dense, green forested park area with a winding river. In the background, a city skyline with various skyscrapers is visible under a clear blue sky. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

In 2022 we are facing a myriad of challenges as we emerge from the pandemic. **The importance of plants and green space has never been more apparent for our own health and wellbeing and for the planet.** At Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, we will continue to strive towards a future enriched and sustained by plants.

It is through the generosity of our donors that the Gardens continue to flourish.

Show your support today by making a fully tax-deductible donation as we continue our efforts in world-class science and horticultural research, landscapes and public programs.

YES, I would like to support the Garden's mission to see life enriched and sustained by plants.

Title First name

Last name

Address

State

Postcode

Email

Phone

Date of birth

I will give \$

via: (please tick)

MasterCard

Cheque (enclosed)

American Express

Visa

Card no.

Expiry date / CVC

Cardholder's name

Signature

Please send me information about including a gift to the Gardens in my will

I have already included a gift to the Gardens in my will

Please tear off and return to:
Private Bag 2000,
South Yarra Victoria 3141

To donate online, please visit:
rbg.vic.gov.au/support-us/excursions

All donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible



Excursions For All

When the children from Wonthaggi Primary School stepped out and looked at the Red Sand Garden at Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne in October, there was a lot of surprised, open mouths. The children, who had travelled to the Gardens as part of the Nurtured by Nature Program from their beachside town, had never seen anything like that giant red sand desert. It was clear the visit would stay with them for a long time.

The students spent the day touring the bushland, the landscaped gardens and viewing landscape from the lookouts. There were scores of questions about seeds, animals, flowers and the rocks. Their minds were activated, interested and absorbed.

ABOVE

Students participate in the Nurtured by Nature: Excursions for all program at Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne

Thanks to your generous support for our Excursions For All campaign, these children, and the 1600 others who have participated in the program this year, were able to experience Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and Cranbourne. For many remote and low socio-economic schools, cost is a major barrier that prevents many students ever coming to the Gardens. Your support is helping us to break down these barriers and introducing these children to the wellbeing benefits of nature.

The Excursions For All appeal made it possible to run the *Nurtured by Nature: Excursions for All* Program to support priority education audiences to come to the Gardens and participate in education programs by subsidising buses and waving excursion fees.



Royal
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Victoria

To support our work or learn more please contact us on:

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