

# La Trobe's Cottage Garden News

## Summer Update – December 2012

There has been a lot happening in the garden at La Trobe's Cottage over the last few months. For the first time after 3 years of hard work visitors are starting to compliment us on the garden. And finally the Weeping Elm bed is looking fabulous: everything has grown and with the help of lots of rain, fertiliser and the occasional sunshine, the garden is looking very floriferous.

### What's Happening in the Garden at the Cottage?



*Glycine latrobeana* just above the oak leaf

Something very special happened in spring. The Euroa Arboretum donated two very rare *Glycine latrobeana* (Purple clover) plants to us. We were very lucky! Its legal status is nationally listed as Vulnerable. It is a small perennial herb (related to the soya bean) that ranges from southern New South Wales to Victoria, across to South Australia and down to Tasmania.

We were given two tubes: one we planted under the *Eremophila maculate* in the Weeping Elm bed and the other under the *Acacia acinaceae* syn *Acacia latrobei* in the Succulent bed to see which conditions suited them best. We learnt that they like a reasonably good soil that holds moisture. As the second glycine was moved four times trying to find the right spot, we

deduced that they are tough. We finally decided to move it to the Weeping Elm bed, as the first one is doing so well it even flowered! Now they are next to each other.

Something else very exciting happened. We were given permission to put on our website a photograph of the specimen of the glycine that La Trobe collected in the Port Phillip District in 1841. It is now the property of the New York Herbarium. How did it get there? – please see the page on [Glycine latrobeana](#).

We are trying to raise people's awareness of this very special herb named in honour of La Trobe.



Valerian Flower and Fox Gloves

As you can see, the foxgloves and salvia are blooming.

With the help of Citywide and our team of volunteers, we mulched the elm bed with sugar cane. This has had two effects – suppressed the annual weeds that were driving us to distraction and conserved the moisture in the soil.



*Salvia patens*



Weeping Elm Bed

In our last Garden News, we mentioned that we had planted our bare rooted roses and they are all doing well, especially the ones in the front garden where they do not get quite as much sun as we would like. We were waiting with excited anticipation for our *Rosa* 'Duchesse d'Angouleme' to flower, when we became suspicious that it wasn't the Duchesse... And we were right, when she flowered she wasn't, because the supplier had mixed up the labels. The Duchesse is a beauty and we were so looking forward to her gorgeous pink flowers. We will now have to wait until next year, as our supplier realised it was either *Rosa* 'Leda' or 'Mme Zoetmans', so they are sending us a replacement. As all good gardeners complain, we are running out of room, so we are not sure where we are going to put our 'Leda' or 'Mme Zoetmans' rose.

There is now a space next to the Banksia rose, because finally we got around to moving the rose that was too close and this will allow the Banksia to grow and not swamp everything. She flowered for the first time this year and we discovered she is white. La Trobe loved banksias and with 12½ acres he had the room to let them ramble, but we don't so she will have to be maintained so we don't lose the cottage under it. But we will let it get a little wild.

And there is more.... The good news is that the National Trust has approved putting trellis around the front entrance steps, which will help Mrs. Perry's very vigorous climber *Maurandya barclaiana* (Angles trumpet or Mexican viper, a very ominous sounding name) by having something to grow on. The pastel drawing *A View of Jolimont 1843-44*, by George Alexander Gilbert, depicts the early cottage and garden and we are using this as our reference to re-establish some of the lattice work. This will give the cottage more authenticity and help us create the climber-covered cottage that Edward La Trobe Bateman captured in his sketches.

We were hoping to have a display of petunias over summer but unfortunately the snails got most of them. We know that La Trobe's grew petunias because the Mitchell Library in Sydney has a letter from his friend Ronald Gunn in Tasmania listing what plants he was sending.

### The Wild Life at our Cottage



The Backdoor Mat Culprit

We have a lovely family of magpies who we are sure think the cottage is theirs. To a certain extent it is, as they live there and are there more than we humans are. Some of them come up to the dining room door and listen to the guides. One day Sandi, our Garden Coordinator, was pottering around the garden and walking towards the tap near the back door. The magpie could not have cared less she was there, but Sandi was trying very carefully not to disturb the avian resident. Well, Sandi could not believe her eyes when she saw Mrs. Maggie pulling the door-mat all over the veranda to get the fibres for her nest. How clever she thought! Sandi also wondered if Lorraine, our Property Manager, knew why the doormat keeps moving.



## Collage of Pictures



Elephant Ears is thriving



*Parodia ottonis*



Olive tree is finally growing



Old Scented Geranium doing its thing



Geranium hedge starting to grow

*If you or your group would like to book a garden tour  
please contact  
Property Manager  
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Edward La Trobe Bateman, *Front View of Jolimont*  
Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria