

La Trobe's Cottage Garden News

Summer Update – December 2014

Our biggest news is that, with the help of our volunteers, we won the Victorian Community History Award 2014 category *Historical Interpretation Award*. This was our second try and with all of our 2013 major garden projects finished (garden seat, trellis, etc) we were able to make a better submission which the judges obviously agreed with. The awards are presented by the Public Records Office Victoria in partnership with the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. Associate Professor Don Garden, president of the RHSV, chaired the selection panel and awarded the prizes.



Associate Professor Don Garden with Sandi Pullman at the award ceremony

There is a lovely connection between Charles La Trobe, Don Garden and Sandi Pullman, our volunteer garden co-ordinator. La Trobe was the patron in 1848 of the Victorian Horticultural Society, which eventually became the Burnley School of Horticulture in 1891 (currently the Burnley Campus of the Melbourne School of Land and Environment) and is where Sandi studied and graduated in 2006 and where Don has his office.

We have also been very fortunate to have talented landscape artist Jo Reitze paint a picture of the garden. She has kindly donated it to the La Trobe Society for display at La Trobe's Cottage. Her style is colourful and vibrant and she has chosen a view that we hope in time will be a valuable record of what the garden looked like in 2014. To discover what angle she has captured you will have to visit the Cottage to see her painting, which will be on display in the reception area for all to enjoy.

Earlier in the year we were delighted to receive a survey plan of the area of La Trobe's Cottage, generously donated by a member of the Trobe Society. This plan is invaluable because we will be able to use it to create a landscape plan of the garden, document all the services into the property and for any future developments. This will be one of the garden projects for 2015.

What is happening in the Garden?

With all the work over the last few months by the Friends of La Trobe's Cottage garden volunteers, the garden is looking very good. As early spring erupted, the orange calendulas, the red anemones and the yellow flowers of La Trobe's gold dust wattle (*Acacia acinacea* syn. *A. latrobei*)* were creating a riot of colour in the garden. [* an image is on the last page] As spring moved closer to summer the Russell lupins flowered for the first time in the crescent bed dug by Tim Gatehouse and Sandi. They still congratulate themselves on their effort considering they did not use a string line to create the shape of the bed.



Russell lupins
(*Lupinus polyphyllus*)

The stem graft on the weeping elm (*Ulmus glabra* 'Camperdownii') has been successful, due to the skill of our arborist John Fordham who is a member of the National Trust Victoria's Significant Tree Register, and you would never know that the tree was nearly completely ringbarked by either a rat or a possum.

The front surrounds of the Cottage have been greatly enhanced by the removal of the old boundary paling fence at the adjoining Domain House. The formerly fenced-in area behind Domain House now runs into the Domain and provides a much improved vista from the front of the Cottage. The City of Melbourne Open Space/Urban Landscapes department are currently researching the heritage of King's Domain and when that is understood they will be able to decide how to develop the area.



Weeping elm (*Ulmus glabra* 'Camperdownii')

Sandi's Garden Chat

It was very exciting after contacting many of the unusual-plant growers looking for the sand lily bulb (*Veltheimia capensis* syn. *A. glauca*) to finally find it at the Friends of Burnley Gardens fund-raising plant sale. It is planted in the bed where the wine barrel is located under the canopy of the English elm which is ideal as they don't die down over summer and don't like hot burning sun.

We have two gorgeous new roses *Rosa du Roi* à Fleurs Pourpres (hot pink) just near the front door steps and *Rosa du Roi* (deep red) planted in the crescent bed. Watch out for these two roses, they are stunning.



Rosa du Roi à Fleurs Pourpres

The health of our original purple clover (*Gylcine latrobeana*) planted in the weeping elm bed under the spotted emu bush (*Eremophila maculata*) has improved after we added some soil from the Heathcote area, which is where our second collection of glycine came from.

Recently it was discovered two Pomme de Neige apples are forming on our heritage apple trees. This is most gratifying, as last year there was no fruit on the espaliered apple trees. The lack of fruit forming could quite possibly be due to the lack of pollinators, bees, when the flowers are open.



Purple clover (*Gylcine latrobeana*)



Spring - apple blossom



Summer - apples forming



Gold dust wattle
(*Acacia acinacea* syn. *A. latrobei*)