

La Trobe's Cottage Garden News

Autumn Update – March 2014

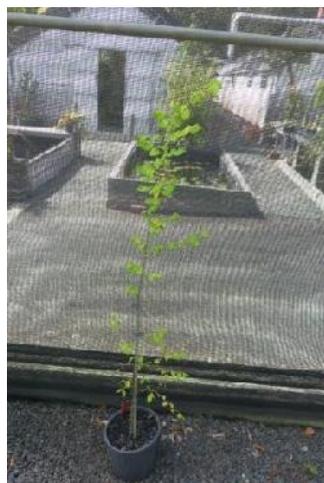
Another hot summer has passed and the garden has stood up to very well although there are a lot of burnt leaves on some of the plants. It is interesting, the new flax we planted in the bed along the path to the entrance did not cope well with the really hot days, but the tiny camellia did. We thought flax was tougher than that and have learnt that the cultivars are not as tough as the original species.



Leonotis leonurus Lion's ears

When you look back at the early photos of 2011 and you look at the garden now, you can see big changes. For a start, all the plants have grown and covered the ground, creating a very lush and gorgeous garden. But it is time now for some of the biennials such as the foxgloves to be removed as they are at the end of their life span, leaving quite a few holes in the Elm bed. Some of the plants are growing into each other and either need cutting back or moving. Re-jigging things is quite normal in establishing a new garden.

What's Happening in the Garden?



Our Elm at the RGB Nursery

Jenny Happell, who is a volunteer guide at the Royal Botanic Gardens, is one of our valued garden volunteers. Late last year she mentioned that the Gardens' nursery had an English elm (*Ulmus procera*) which was a descendant of one planted by La Trobe and that it needed a home. So we contacted Dermott Molloy who has helped us with other plant matters and arranged to see it with Tania MacLeod, Project Manager of Urban Forests/Urban Landscapes for the City of Melbourne. We would like to plant the elm near the Cottage and Tania agrees this is a good idea. We recently received approval to plant it and it will be included in the Planting Plan for the Shrine precinct. Tania recommended that it needs another year's growth before it can be planted.

Below is the Elm's history as provided by Jenny:

'It was planted by La Trobe in 1851 in his capacity as Governor of the new state of Victoria. He planted it just outside what is now a new toilet block near the Tea Rooms, near the Touchwood bed.

I was taking a Guided Walk in the Gardens one day in the 1990s, and one of the group said that his name was Cliff Grosvenor and that he had worked in the RBG as a gardener and propagator for 17 years (1960-1977); I later interviewed him about his time in the Gardens, and he told a story about the elm: it had been rotting and was removed in 1977. Cliff collected some of its roots, about as thick as a finger, cut them into segments and planted them in the Nursery. He retired from the Gardens

shortly after. On paying a call a while later he found that small elms had grown to one foot (30 cm) in height.

One of these resulting trees was planted on the site of the original tree by Dr. J. H. de La Trobe of Germany (a great-nephew) on 4th May 1979. I noticed (to my horror!) that this tree had gone, in September 2012. Apparently it had rotted again.

This elm has been mentioned, and photographed, in three Guides to the Botanic Gardens - William Guilfoyle's, Alex. Jessep's and Crosbie Morrison's.'

Another most unusual unforeseen event occurred when we received an email from Dermot



Glycine latrobeana

Molloy offering us eighteen plants of *Glycine latrobeana*. One of the volunteers with the Victorian Conservation Seed Bank at the Herbarium, Bob Hare, collected them from his property north of Melbourne and has kindly donated them to us. We have since met him when we were working in the garden and it was decided that when the plants are ready to be planted he would bring some soil down from his property and we will create a little grassland.

Bob is also researching what other native herbs we could plant around the *glycine*. It will be interesting to see how they go, as our two existing plants are not doing as well as we had hoped. Perhaps Bob's soil may contain some micro-organisms that they need and which our soil does not have. Many plants need such a symbiotic relationship in order to survive. We do not know enough about our native plants and it is unknown whether *Glycine latrobeana* needs a symbiotic relationship to thrive. As we do not know what will happen, it will be an interesting experiment.



The position for the Glycine grassland

Recently, Sandi and Tim Gatehouse dug a new bed, copying the garden beds in the 1843-1844 George Gilbert picture of *Jolimont* to create the crescent moon bed and at the same time fixing up the diamond-shaped bed where the olive tree is planted. They were very proud of their work and were considering writing 'Welcome to La Trobe's Cottage' in the lawn, but calmed down and decided not to. Then at the following working bee the garden group planted Russel Lupins, Foxgloves and some English Lavender, leaving space for a suitable rose that does not grow over one meter. Also some Can Can pansys and Granny Bonnets (*Aquilegias vulgaris*) were planted, and some holly hock seeds from our own plants were sprinkled in the crescent moon bed.

Sandi's Garden Chat

The City of Melbourne is trialling an Elm Project where they are trying to establish the DNA of the *Ulmus procera* (English Elm). Hopefully the La Trobe elm will be included in the

sample. So far, they have taken samples from the Fitzroy Gardens and Bishopscourt, the home of the La Trobe's friends Bishop Perry and Mrs Perry.

We are ordering some new roses: one for our new crescent moon bed, the Rose du Roi (red), and another irresistible one for the front garden, Rose du Roi à Fleurs Pourpres (pink) that used to be very popular with gardeners. Both are scented and repeat flowering and do not grow much higher than one meter, so they will be perfect.

What's Flowering in the Garden

The Australian native *Correa lawrenceana* var. *latrobeana* (Mountain correa) has set its first flower. We have not included a picture, so you will be enticed to visit the Cottage. It is located at the back of the Kitchen Block, facing Dallas Brooks Drive.



The new Crescent Moon bed



The Elm bed



The fuchsia and Mrs Perry's creeper



Correa lawrenceana* var. *latrobeana



***Salvia coccinea* Texas sage**



***Maurandya barclayana* Mrs. Perry's creeper**