

Our Magnolia tree, that struggles to survive, is now in flower. This has to be one of nature's most glorious perfumed flowers and the Grandiflora is a truly beautiful tree when kept well.



Magnolia grandiflora. *Common Names:* southern magnolia, bull bay, *Family:* **Magnoliaceae** (magnolia Family) Southern magnolia is a large, broad-leaved evergreen tree that can grow 60-90 ft (18-27 m) in height with a trunk up to 2-3 ft (0.6-0.9 m) in diameter. It's trunk is typically straight and erect with spreading branches that form a dense, broadly pyramidal crown. The evergreen leaves are large 5-8 in (13-20 cm) long, leathery and dark glossy green above with rusty, velveteen undersides. Southern magnolia has large, showy white flowers that are 8-12 in (20-30 cm) in diameter. These have a pleasant fragrance and appear throughout the spring and summer. The fruits are reddish-brown conelike structures, 2-4 in (5-10 cm) long, with bright red kidney shaped seeds that hang from little threads when fully mature in autumn.

Friends of The McKay Gardens

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Happy Birthday McKay Gardens

Yes ladies and gentlemen this year is the Garden's 100th birthday, a time to celebrate and make a splash! The Friends will hold their first monthly meeting on Saturday 31st of January between 9 and 10am in the church meeting rooms in the Gardens.

On the agenda:
The Friends of the McKay Gardens have been successful in receiving a grant under the **Federal Volunteer Grants Program** to assist us in our activities. Congratulations to Helen for her application writing abilities. Now to discuss how to make best use of the funds.

Further discussion to develop our joint project with the **Sunshine and District Historical Society**. So far free plant give aways are proposed, possibly along with Friends Badge sales. If you are interesting in propagating plants for this or other purposes please contact the Friends. Other suggestions welcome.

Discussion of lobbying the Council for full watering strategy for the gardens. Due to restrictions on the use of potable water, the Gardens are still being under watered. We need a more sustainable watering solution.

Afterwards: Tea and coffee for those would like it. A stroll through the Gardens and rubbish clean up.

More News:
You may have noticed that the wrought iron gates on Anderson Road have been missing for a while. These have been removed by Council for repair. The good news is that Council has received funding for the restoration of the gates and gate posts.

Two new seats have been installed around the "Green" including the one to replace the Dorothy McNeil memorial seat. The flower beds around the "Green" are now in full bloom and worth a look. Unfortunately, grass on the

Green hasn't survived lack of water although I'm told it may sprout with Autumn rains.

An extraordinary number of beer bottles and smashed glass was dumped in the Gardens over the holiday break. Council officers have by and large done a good job of cleaning most of this up but keeping the Gardens clean is something everyone can do. Think about picking up rubbish you encounter as you pass through the Gardens. Rubbish attracts rubbish! Tidy spaces attract people.

Something else that was dumped in the Gardens at Christmas was a six week old kitten. Pet dumping is the pits! Report any one you see doing it to the Council or RSPCA.



The Friends of the McKay Gardens have a website at <http://www.mckaygardens.org/> and can be contacted via contact@mckaygardens.org Usually we hold our meeting on the last Saturday of each month in the McKay Gardens. Contact us to join the mailing list.

This issue of the newsletter has been made by ShedPlus, a free service to collate and publish regular or ad hoc newsletters for Schools and Community Groups in St Albans and surrounding areas as a means of providing work experience and training opportunities for eligible unemployed participants.

Djerriwarrh Employment & Education Services receives funding from the Commonwealth Government to run Work For The Dole (WFD) Activities in the West Melbourne Employment Services Area (ESA) and takes responsibility for the operation of the Activities.

Participating groups will supply the content for their newsletter by an agreed deadline in draft form. The activity participants will prepare and collate the material into an agreed format, seek clarification on content and layout as required, and produce a draft publication for proof reading by the editorial group which submits it for approval by the School or Community Group. Final editing will then be completed, the newsletter published and duplicated to the agreed number of copies, and the final product returned for distribution.

Schools and Community Groups can contact the WFD Activity Supervisor, John Egan on 90269606 Tuesday - Friday during business hours.



ShedPlus



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Interesting web links: For those interested in what our Gardens *could* look like, try a virtual tour of the Burnley Gardens in Richmond.

<http://www.horticulture.unimelb.edu.au/tour/lawns.html>

