

Garden Highlights, January 2017

Visit the Herb Terrace to see herbs thriving in the summer sun. Most of the herbs we use to flavour our food come from the warm Mediterranean and the Middle East, so they need full sun. However, they differ in their soil and water requirements.

Herbs are plants where we use small quantities of leaves or flowers to flavour food, whereas the flavour from spices comes from seed, fruit, bark or roots. People have been gathering leaves and flowers from the wild, since time immemorial, for medicine, ritual, flavour and aroma. Early gardens cultivated these valued plants to provide ready access, without the need to search for wild plants.

Many herbs have an attractive aroma. You don't need to pick them, just squeeze a leaf between two fingers and smell your fingers.

Despite the development of gardens, people continued to gather herbs from the wild. The science of botany developed from the need to use herbs in medicine and food, and to help people distinguish between closely related plants where some were very poisonous. An example is Hemlock, which still poisons people because they cannot distinguish it from other members of the Celery family (Apiaceae) that includes Angelica, Coriander, Dill, Parsley, Carrot and Parsnip. These all have small flowers, mostly white, arranged at the top of a stem in an umbrella shape.

Beware of eating any plant unless you are absolutely sure what it is, because many garden and wild plants are poisonous.

The mint family (Lamiaceae) also contains many widely used herbs. These include several varieties of Mint and Lavender. Other herbs in this family are Basil, Rosemary, Sage, Marjoram, Oregano and Thyme. These all have flowers shaped like those of the Sage *Salvia*, with a prominent lower lip, although many have tiny flowers crowded together on a stem. Many are blue, purple or pink.

Herbs attract insects with sweet nectar in their flowers. In return the insects pollinate the flowers to produce seed for the next generation of herbs. Herbs produce chemicals to deter or kill insects trying to eat their leaves. We find these chemicals, in small quantities, add flavour and aroma to our food.

What's on in January 2017 (More details on Friends website)

Discovery Table, Sunday 15 January 1:00 - 3:00 pm.

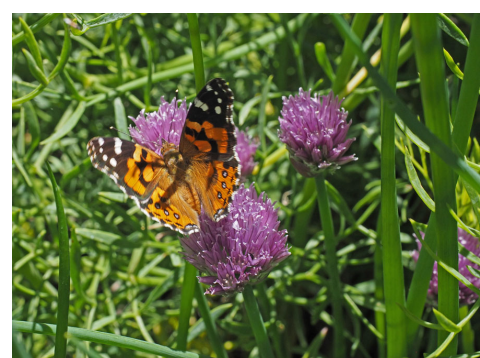
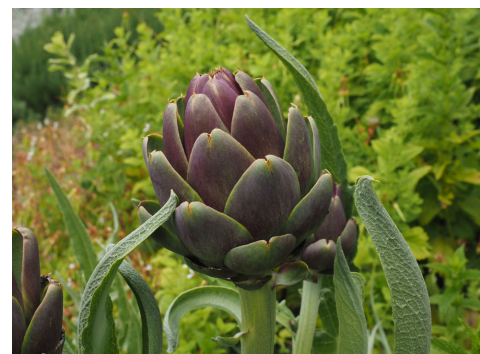
'Enlarged Flower Portraits', Two Botanical Art 4-day intensive workshops:

#1 Fri 13 to Mon 16 January #2 Thu 19 to Sun 22 January.

The Friends' Nursery is open on Wednesdays 9:30 am - 12:30 pm.

Free Guided Walks, each Sunday 2:00 pm, Wednesday 11:00 am. No walk Sunday 25 December.

The Tea House is open every day.



Geelong Botanic Gardens Map



This information was developed by the Volunteer Guides
Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens

www.friendsgbg.org.au
www.geelongaustralia.com.au/gbg/