

# Garden Highlights, August 2015

The highlights in the garden this month are mostly plants with grey-green foliage. Plants with grey foliage prefer full sun and usually grow in dry places. In many of those places the soil moisture is highest in winter, so this is the peak growing and flowering season. Red Parrot Bush, Medusas Head and Honey bush may be available in the Friends Nursery.

**1. Red Parrot Bush *Templetonia retusa*** grows along the winter-rainfall, dry southern coast of SA and WA. If you are quiet and move slowly, you may see our resident Honeyeaters flying between this plant and the other nectar-producing shrubs in the garden.

**2. Medusas Head *Euphorbia caput-medusae***: Most of what you see of this unusual flower are not petals or sepals, but 'bracts', leaves that have unusual forked white tips on shiny green pieces. This plant was introduced to Europe around 1700, from its native Cape Region in South Africa, a winter-rainfall area.

**3. Honey bush *Melianthus major***: In its native home in the south-western Cape of South Africa, the Sunbirds feast on the nectar dripping from the flowers of this bush. However, it deters everything from eating its leaves by their strong, unpleasant smell and their toxins. This explains its alternative name, Touch-me-not.

**4. Felt bush *Kalanchoe beharensis***: Like many plants from dry areas, this Madagascan plant uses special photosynthesis. All plants open their 'stomata', little holes in their leaves, to take in Carbon dioxide. However, this results in water loss. In the Felt Bush, the stomata open when the air is cool, around 2 am. But, plants need sunlight to convert Carbon dioxide into sugars for growth and flowering, so the Felt bush stores its Carbon dioxide, ready to be used when photosynthesis resumes at dawn.

## What's on in August

**Discovery Walk**, 'Hardy shrubs to enhance your garden'

Sunday 9 August 2:00 pm. Gold coin donation.

**Discovery Table**, Sunday 16 August, 1:00 to 3:00 pm.

**Friends' Annual General Meeting and Members' Forum**, Monday 31 August, 5:30 pm for 6:00 pm. <http://www.friendsgbg.org.au>.

**Free Guided Walks**, Each Sunday 2:00 pm, Wednesday 11:00 am.

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

See the **Soup Garden** in the Central bed.

The Curiosity Cabinet is featuring

**'Bonsai: The ancient art of tiny trees'.**

The **Tea House** is open every day.



1.



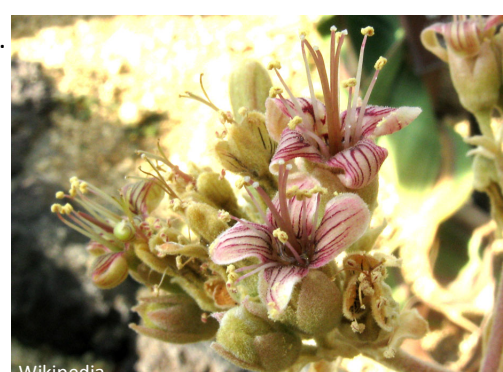
2.



3.



4.



Wikipedia



Over page:  
Map showing these plants

[www.friendsgbg.org.au](http://www.friendsgbg.org.au)  
Phone: 5222 6053

# Geelong Botanic Gardens Map



- 1. Red Parrot Bush *Templetonia retusa*
- 2. Medusas Head *Euphorbia caput-medusae*

- 3. Honey bush *Melianthus major*
- 4. Felt bush *Kalanchoe beharensis*
- 5. Soup Garden



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

[www.friendsgbg.org.au](http://www.friendsgbg.org.au)  
[www.geelongaustralia.com.au/gbg/](http://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/gbg/)