

## Media release

### Spring Open Day 2007

Sunday 14 October 2007

10am to 5pm

On Sunday 14 October, the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne opens its gates, doors and glasshouses and invites the public to see what happens behind the scenes of one of Melbourne's oldest landmarks.

This year there is an exciting array of free activities:

- Sample bush tucker with an indigenous guide;
- Take a sneak peak at the conservation collections in our Glasshouses;
- Explore the new rain garden and gain some water wise tips;
- View the sun with an astronomer at the Old Melbourne Observatory;
- Step behind the scenes of the National Herbarium, one of Australia's most significant working scientific institutions;
- Free gardening advice and the ever popular Growing Friends Plant Sale.

Meet characters from the Australian Shakespeare Company's new productions, stroll amongst the quality products at 'Markets in the Gardens', sample some delicious fare from Blakes Feast, learn new cooking skills at the refurbished Terrace and explore elegant Gardens House.

For children, there is plenty of free fun; pick up the beats of South Africa with singer, songwriter Valanga Khosa, make a 'Fantastic Friend' from seeds and pods, discover how wiggly worms make the best compost and enjoy flax weaving activities in The Ian Potter Foundation's Children's Garden.

This exciting day of free events features the great sounds of 'Jack Howard and the Long Lost Brothers' and the tribal beats of 'Purple Dog Rhythms'. So make your way up the Garden's path and discover the hidden treasures of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne.

Supported by the City of Melbourne in partnership with the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne.

**Public inquiries: 03 9252 2429**

***Bookings are required for all free walks and tours.***

**Media inquiries: Penny Underwood or John Myers, MediaWise on 03 9818 8540.**

## **Free walks and tours:**

### **Water-wise garden tour**

Step out under the fresh green leaves of spring and discover the Gardens water wise practices. Take a closer look at the new Rain Garden and Water Conservation Garden in this topical tour.

10am, 11am, 12noon and 1pm (1.5 hours)

### **Behind the scenes of the nursery**

Take advantage of this great opportunity to see behind the scenes of our glasshouses, conservation collections and propagation houses.

Every 30 minutes between 10am and 1.30pm (1 hour)

### **Behind the scenes of our scientific treasure house**

This rare opportunity to tour one of Australia's most significant working scientific institutions provides a fascinating insight into the role of the Herbarium and the work undertaken by staff and volunteers.

10am, 11am, 12noon and 1pm (1.5 hours)

### **Melbourne's backyard tour**

Join the Royal Botanic Gardens' Development Team on a tour of the Gardens and discover how financial support from the Melbourne community has shaped the place many Melburnians consider their own glorious backyard.

11.15am and 1.15pm (1.5 hours)

### **Bush tucker tales**

Sample some seeds and sauces at the Gardens Shop then step into the Australian Forest with an indigenous guide and explore native bush foods. Complete the walk with a native herbal tea.

10am, 11am, 12noon and 1pm (45 minutes)

### **Solar tours**

View the sun with our expert astronomical guides and learn more amazing facts about the solar system.

1pm, 1.30pm, 2pm, 2.30pm and 3pm (30 minutes)

**Public inquiries: 03 9252 2429**

***Bookings are required for all free walks and tours.***

## **Free special events**

### **Growing Friends plant sale**

Huge sale of popular, high quality plants including some rare and unusual treasures. Also features a horticultural advice service relating to the plants available.  
10am–3pm, Lilly Pilly Lawn, adjacent to the Glasshouses

### **Gardens House**

Visit the beautiful Gardens House. Formerly the home of the Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, it is now one of Melbourne's most popular wedding and function venues.

12pm–2pm, Gardens House

### **Blakes Feast**

Sample Blakes Feast delicious canapés, wines and house preserves and speak with their expert consultants to discover which magnificent venue or vista you need for your special event!

2pm–5pm, Observatory Buildings

### **Australian Shakespeare Company**

Wacky and wondrous characters from the new summer productions gallivant around the Observatory Precinct.

10am–4pm, Observatory Gate

### **Markets in the Gardens**

Quality products in beautiful surroundings: a great sneak preview of the unique stalls that will be included in Markets in the Gardens this summer.

10am–2pm, Observatory Gate

### **The Terrace cooking demonstration**

Learn new culinary skills at the recently refurbished Terrace with this cooking demonstration by their new Head Chef. Look out for a fantastic wedding promotion and a delicious lunch offer!

12pm and 3pm, The Terrace

### **Master Gardeners**

Free gardening advice from our passionate Master Gardeners from the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne.

11am–2pm, Oak Lawn

### **Plant Craft Cottage**

Visit the busy Plant Craft Cottage and see fascinating craft demonstrations in Fibre, Natural Dye, Basketry, Plant Card, Paper and Pot Pourri.

10am–3pm, Plant Craft Cottage

### **Meet the artists**

Meet the design team from Melbourne based 'Studio Latitude' who create beautifully illustrated flora booklets.

11am–3pm, Gardens Shop, Observatory Gate

## **Free children's activities**

### **Compost critters!**

Get wriggling with the worms in the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden! Discover easy and clean ways to compost with worms and learn tips on composting in general.

10.30am, 11am, 11.30am and 12noon, Activity Shelter, Children's Garden

### **Fun activities in the Children's Garden**

Visit the magical Children's Garden for a range of free, fun activities including: making ears and tails from plant materials, string making and weaving your very own bookmark!

10.30am–12.30pm, Children's Garden

### **Fantastic friends**

Have fun with leaves, gumnuts and seed-pods to create your very own fantastic friend!

11am–1pm, opposite the Children's Garden

### **Children's book signing**

Meet Corrine Fenton at the Gardens Shop when she reads and signs the gorgeous local tale: "Queenie: One Elephant's Story".

12noon–2pm, Gardens Shop, Observatory Gate

## **Free live music**

### **Wesley College Stage Band**

Enjoy some vibrant jazz from the talented students of Wesley's St.Kilda campus.

10am–11am, Observatory Gate

### **Purpledog Rhythms**

Share the spirit of African drum rhythms with the Purple dogs.

11am–12 noon, Western Lawn

### **Michael Johnson**

Uplifting sounds from our resident Harpist, Michael Johnson, by the tranquil Ornamental Lake.

11am–4pm, The Terrace

### **Jack Howard and the Long Lost Brothers**

Jack Howard, vocalist from "Hunters and Collectors", plays impressive tracks from his new album "My Lucky Day".

12.30pm–2pm, Observatory Gate

### **Valanga Khosa**

Pick up the beats of South Africa in the Children's Garden with singer, songwriter and storyteller, Valanga Khosa.

2pm–3pm, The Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden

### **Bookings and information**

Bookings are required for all free walks and tours. Unless otherwise stated all tours meet at the Visitor Centre. Please contact the Visitor Centre located at Observatory Gate or phone (03) 9252 2429.

**Media enquiries: Penny Underwood or John Myers, MediaWise on 03 9818 8540.**