

*Your local indigenous plant nursery,  
100% run by volunteers*

June  
2022

# Greenlink News



## Regular Open Days

Tuesdays and Wednesdays  
9.00 am to 12:00 pm

## Saturday Sales Days

Saturdays 9:00am-1:00pm  
27<sup>th</sup> August, 1<sup>st</sup> October and  
5<sup>th</sup> November 2022

## Contact or Visit Us

[greenlinkboxhill@gmail.com](mailto:greenlinkboxhill@gmail.com)

41 Wimmera St  
Box Hill North 3129

0479 121 653  
(Answered 9:00am -12:00pm  
Tues & Wed only)

## Stay in Touch and follow us on

[www.greenlinkboxhill.org](http://www.greenlinkboxhill.org)

[www.facebook.com/GreenlinkNursery](https://www.facebook.com/GreenlinkNursery)

If you have any stories, news, photos, an upcoming event, etc. that you would like to share with Greenlink for publication in our next newsletter, please write to the editor at [greenlinkboxhill@gmail.com](mailto:greenlinkboxhill@gmail.com)

# Bees in the City & Suburbs

In late February a free Sustainability Festival event was held at Emporium Melbourne by Rooftop Honey founders, Vanessa Kwiatkowski and Mat Lumalasi who are the founders of a unique project that aims to bring bees back to our cities.

Both Vanessa and Mat are urban bee-keepers right in the heart of the city. They look after about 130 hives placed around the city many on rooftops of buildings. The reason why they started Rooftop Honey was to connect people to food and educating the wider community of the importance of bees. Their background is in technology and they wanted to start a hobby which was an extension of gardening for them, to grow their own food and know where their food came from and hence took up bee-keeping. They did a course in Doncaster which consisted mainly of aging men, who looked at them strangely, wondering what are these two doing here. Vanessa and Mat were amazed at the knowledge held by those men in that room and their passion to become bee keepers grew. After having a great experience at home, they wanted to share it with the community. Vanessa came up with the idea of utilizing roof tops.

With more people and businesses wanting to create sustainable living within the CBD, Mat and Vanessa approached a few restaurants about putting up bee hives on their roof tops or around their veggie beds, fruit and flowering trees and plants. In the first year they joined forces with four restaurants and put up 22 bee hives around the CBD. As more people got interested, this weekend project took over their lives but this passion was not going to pay their mortgage.



So, they both quit their jobs and commenced offering a service of managing bee hives on peoples' own sites. The businesses or people sponsored them to take care of sites and in turn received honey. Popularity of bees has risen over the past 10 years and bee hives has grown from 1,000 to 13,000.



Did you know that one in three mouthfuls or some say two in three mouthfuls if you include feed for cattle rely on bees for pollination? So, they are really important for 65% of food production. Food such as fruit, rice, wheat, veggies, nuts, and more are the produce that are pollinated by bees.



Humans are the biggest threat to bees as they spray poisons and pesticides on their crops, then we eat them and often get sick. Through evolution and the help of councils who now do not use pesticide, we are starting to make progress in helping save bees.

The numbers of recreational bee-keepers has risen and science of bees has evolved over time. There are many clubs around to help teach about being a bee keeper. There is an [Apiary Code of Practice - Victoria](#) and if you follow the guide lines no one can stop you from becoming a bee keeper and having bees. European Honey Bees thrive here as our flora has evolved.

Studies have shown that bees can fly up to 5 to 7kms to collect pollen. Bees are even "dye" tagged so that their movements can be tracked, particularly at nectar stations. They prefer food source from gardens and parks. Honeybees collect nectar from over 1000+ flowers per day and transform it to honey. Most honey in Australia is produced from the pollen of Eucalyptus trees. Eucalypts produce an insane amount of nectar. Other plants that are popular are Bracyscombe, Everlastings and Dianella.

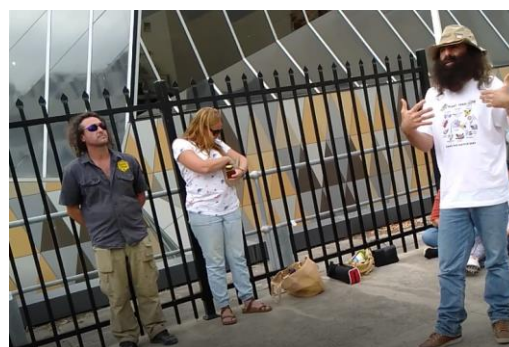
Mat and Vanessa often get called to various buildings around the CBD where a swarm of bees are found to help remove them. Apparently in New York a swarm of bees got into an M&M factory and when they returned to their hives, they produced blue honey. The same thing happened when they got into a cherry factory and produced red honey.

Background pictures by [Rooftophoney](#)

### **What can you do to help them, which in turn helps us all?**

The event was joined by Costa Georgiadis of Gardening Australia, who was amazed at all the people who in some form cared about the environment to turn up on a Sunday for the Sustainability Festival.

He mentioned, "*that you don't need to be a bee keeper, that you can be a keeper of the bees. When we start talking about honey bees we also start talking about native bees.*"



*We have native pollinators that do an incredible job and we need to think about pollinators, timing, forage across the year and where can you make a contribution to help the bees. From a sustainability, ecology, bees need you to be the planter of various plants that flower at all different stages throughout the year. Not only the bees need you the pollinators, the ecology, and the environment. By being a keeper of the bees, you will start to notice the Blue Banded bees, the Cuckoo bees, the Teddybear bees and you won't go and say that was a fly when it was a native bee. Our native flora is the most incredible flora on the planet and so resilient to grow in some of our land and scrub."*

The most interesting form of "scrub tree" is *Leptospermum* which is native to Australia. The common name tea-tree derives from the practice of early settlers of soaking the leaves of several species in boiling water to make a tea substitute. The old timers collected honey from these bees and it used to set like jelly in the frames and they couldn't get it out, so they burned the frames called it a jelly bush. In New Zealand the Maori's call *Leptospermum* "Manuka" hence Manuka Honey, which is the most expensive honey around.

***Leptospermum scoparium*** - Commonly called manuka, manuka myrtle, New Zealand tea-tree, broom tea-tree or just tea tree, is a species of flowering plant in the myrtle family Myrtaceae, native to south-east Australia and New Zealand. They say it originated in Australia, cyclones and other wind activity are most likely responsible for transporting seeds long distances across the ocean.

## Leptospermum grown at Greenlink



***Leptospermum continentale***  
(Prickly Tea Tree)  
Medium Shrub

Attractive and hardy plant suitable for poorly drained sites. Useful as a screen, it benefits from pruning, A Good habitat plant, it is frost tolerant



***Leptospermum lanigerum***  
(Woolly Tea-Tree)  
Small Tree

A medium shrub/small tree, leaves grey-green to dark green with dense, small hairs and are generally oval-shaped. White, 5-petalled flowers are followed by small, woody fruits containing many seeds



***Leptospermum obovatum***  
(River Tea-Tree)  
Medium Shrub

A shrub with egg-shaped leaves that are narrower at the base, white flowers usually arranged singly on short side shoots and fruit that remains on the plant until it dies. It will grow in heavy shade, is frost hardy, and a useful screening plant

## QUIZ

Signs of winter approaching are starting to poke their heads out around the grounds of the nursery, under work benches, behind compost bins, under trolleys and in flower beds.



The first person who can email us at [greenlinkboxhill@gmail.com](mailto:greenlinkboxhill@gmail.com) with the correct name of all these fungi, will win 10 free standard plants.



# Creating your own wetland habitat



*"A great evening"; "Thanks for organising such a fantastic event"; "A really fabulous evening"; "Thank you for a great night."; "We had a great time and thank you all very much. It was evident that a lot of thought and planning had gone into this event."*

This is just some of the feedback from what was an exciting time for Greenlink as we played our part in Whitehorse's Sustainability Week in partnership with Whitehorse Council's Trees and Urban Forest Program by conducting an evening seminar on creating your own frog bog/wetland habitat area in your garden.

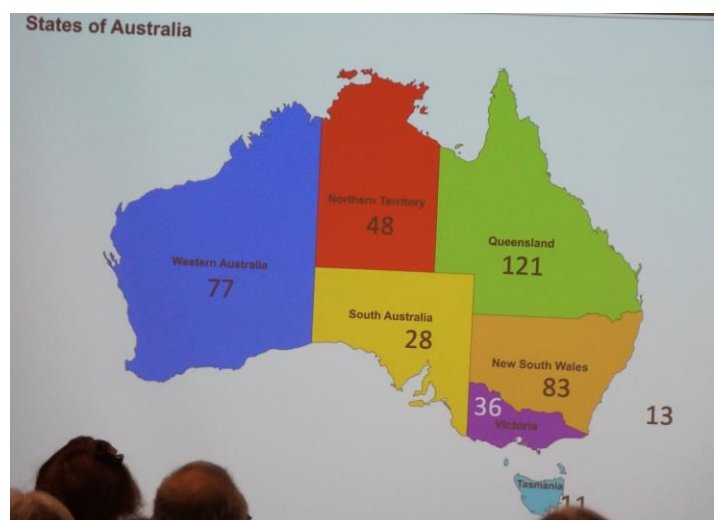
We were fortunate to have native garden expert and Author of three books, **AB Bishop** talk to us on how to create your own habitat pond/frog bog area. She gave us tips and tricks on how to attract frogs and dragonflies into your garden, which is a wonderful way to support our local biodiversity.

Our President Robert opened the night by welcoming everyone and introducing AB Bishop, who following the presentation was described by the audience as: *"inspirational, knowledgeable, engaging, approachable, her enthusiasm was infectious, and she presented her knowledge in a manner that held your interest."*

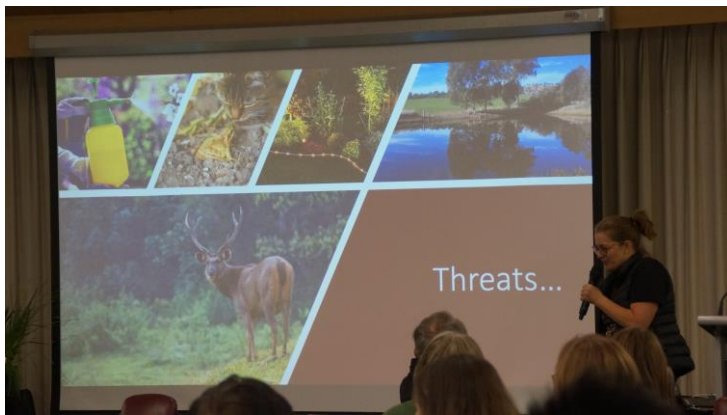
AB started by talking a bit about herself and then went right into a quiz session on how many frogs there are in Australia and broke it down to State and Territory, rewarding each correct answer with a chocolate frog.



- AUSTRALIA has 248 species of frogs
- Queensland has the highest number species - 121
- Tasmania has the least number - 11
- Victoria has 36 species - 15 tree frogs and 21 ground frogs
- MELBOURNE has 10 species - Southern brown, Lesueur's, growling grass, Verraeux's/Whistling Eastern common froglet, Victorian smooth froglet, Eastern Banjo / Pobblebonk, Striped Marsh, Spotted Marsh, Bibron's toadlet

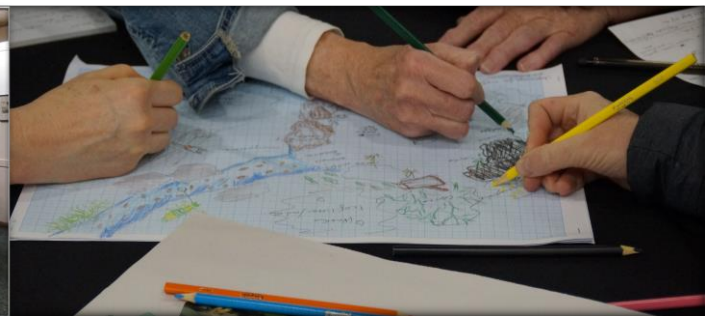


It was interesting to hear how to identify the frogs by shape, pads and male calling (females attracted to the best call and only to same species), life cycle, and how they can travel up to 500m.



AB's presentation covered, threats to frogs, frog food, shelter, frog bogs, hydration station, ponds, and the advantages of plants. (For more details, click on the [Creating a frog-friendly garden - Notes and Slides within the Photos by AB Bishop](#) link).

Whilst the evening was conducted in a workshop format the round table setting created an environment where the audience could interact with each other whilst at the same time enjoy the presentation. This was really important especially when it was time for each table to design their own wetland habitat



There were so many participants who displayed their very creative talent. The calibre of the designs was so great that AB found it difficult to determine an outright winner, so she awarded prizes to two groups. Each member in both groups were given a Greenlink plant voucher to the value of \$40 equivalent to 20 plants.



The night finished off with refreshments and supper which in our participants words was: - *"amazing and what a wonderful spread", "very well catered", "Exceeded expectations", "The food was a feast. I love mixed sandwiches and they were great, but the star of the evening was the Italian shortbread. The variety of food was incredible, it was like being a child in a lolly shop".*

Though the Box Hill Town Hall location was great, convenient, well suited for the purpose, it was unfortunate that pre-polling was on the same night which made it tricky for parking. You would have thought that the Government would have checked with us prior to calling the election seeing we booked the venue first.

*Slides within photos by AB Bishop – Article and Photos by Emi Luppino*



# My Interest in Australian Natives



My name is Hamish, and I am 9 years old. My love for gardening started when I found an old Banksia cone (Candlestick) and I named it 'Smurfy'. I always wanted one of these plants in my garden. Just before COVID I visited my nearby nursery and found a Banksia Birthday Candle plant. Using my pocket money, I was able to buy one!

I love natives because they are found in Australia, and they are hardy. I also love the diversity in the foliage, flowers, and forms of Australian natives. Walking through the bush is one of my favourite things to do. I like to look for the native plants that I have growing in my garden and see how they grow naturally in the bush. Greenlink Nursery is also my favourite place to visit because it sells a wide variety of native plants.

I enjoy helping my Nanna in the garden and I especially love helping her plant plants and collect cuttings from them to propagate and use in my own garden. She pretty much taught me everything I know about gardening.

Gardening Australia is one of my favourite TV shows. I also like going to the library and borrowing books on plants so I can read and learn more about them. I am also interested in worm farms and have one of my own that I make compost in. I use the soil to top dress my pots and the worm juice to feed my plants.



Some of the plants that I have in my Australian native collection are Banksia Birthday Candles, Woolly Bush, Bronze-glow, Common Heath, Bushy Needle-wood, Angled Lobelia, Common Trigger-plant, Twining Glycine, Nodding Greenhood and Kangaroo Paw.

*Photos and story by Hamish Bond - our youngest Greenlink customer*

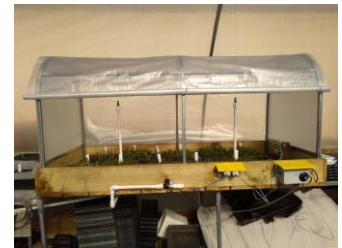


## President's Report

As life now settles back into what we can say as the post Covid era and we can move around without restrictions our operations at the nursery have returned to normal with all volunteers back and customers once again free to come in wander around and purchase their plants resulting in a strong first few month on this year.

We have now held 2 very successful Saturday sale days, put many hours of work into step by step rejuvenating the parkland area around the nursery and the front garden beds and held a public seminar as part of Sustainability week at the Town Hall with an evening talk by AB Bishop on creating your own wetland/frog bog area where around 70 people were able to attend to what was a very informative and fun night. Also, one of our volunteers is now planting out a section of the nature strip outside the nursery into an indigenous garden as a display area for the public to see what they could create on their own nature strip.

Our recently installed new heat bed along with our older heat bed are now fully stocked with cuttings, newly planted seeds sprouting in the polyhouse getting ready to be pricked out and a full polyhouse of pricked out tube seedlings ready start marking their way outside to fill up the benches over the winter months.



Finally, after many long delays we are making progress in having a roll out system for our shade cloth constructed and installed at the nursery which by the time our next newsletter comes out I trust I can report has actually been installed, progress comes slowly in some cases. This will then complete the last of the major capital expense upgrade projects for the nursery having over the past several years replaced all our infrastructure apart from the shed and benches.

Weekday sales have continued to remain strong with increasing numbers of customers coming into the nursery each day purchasing plants. With several new orders having been received over the past few weeks this is giving us plenty of work to keep our active team of volunteers busy over the coming weeks and months to ensure we have a strong supply of plants in the months ahead replenishing any gaps on the benches.

With all indications being that we will again end the financial year on a strong note we have found ourselves in a position to be able to put something back into the community and will be making a donation of \$2,000 to Old Park Orchard Primary School to assist them with purchasing equipment for their sustainability/kitchen garden that they are creating for the children. We will also be donating \$2,000 to Blackburn Creeklands Advisory Committee to support their ongoing efforts in taking care of the parkland around Blackburn Creek downstream of the lake. These two donations are in addition to our previous commitment of a \$1,000 donation to our two local primary schools. This is something I think we can all be very proud of in that Greenlink is able to put something back into the community who continues to support our nursery.

If you have not been to the nursery for some time do call in and say hi and come and join us at around 10.30am for morning tea, we would love to see you. *By Robert Jones, President*



## Treasurer's Report

Greenlink continues to be in a strong financial position and in line with our 21/22 budget estimates. Strong Autumn sales and delivery of orders to our larger commercial customers means we will have a very positive quarterly result and I expect we will exceed overall expectations despite the impact of COVID in the early part of the financial year. During the course of the year, we have made significant capital improvements and we are now preparing to switch our labour-intensive shade cloth cover with a mechanised one. Our results mean that we can make a number of donations to support environmental education programs in some of our local schools as Robert mentioned in his report. We will have no difficulty meeting our day-to-day obligations. *By Trevor Eddy, Treasurer*



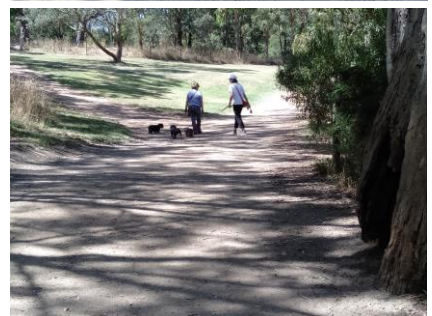
*This article is for the dog lovers out there.*

On a leisurely walk out in Gardiners Creek we came across a group of people who were walking their dogs "a pack of Dachshunds". As we found out there is a huge Dachshund club who regularly get together and walk their dogs in Gardiners Creek and other parkland in the City of Whitehorse. These seven dachshunds are all related, parents, auntie, son, daughter, and cousins. When we first noticed these gorgeous creatures raising dust, we thought "wow", so many and so cute, then you notice a few more passing and think, "where did they come from?" And just when you think you have seen them all, you see a few more who are curious of their surroundings and lagging a little behind.

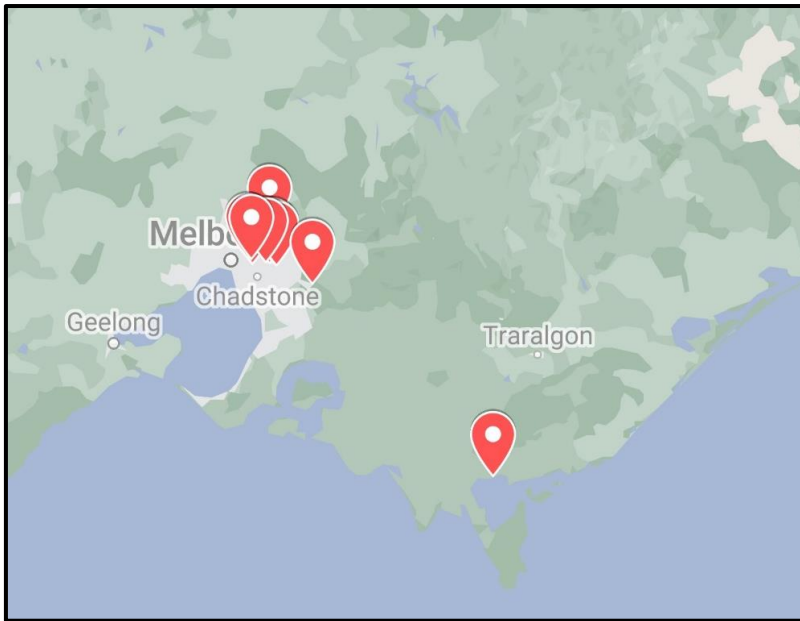
A bit of trivia about the Dachshund – we do know that he was a native of Austria and southern Germany in the late sixteenth century. There are a number of varieties, long, smooth and wire haired. The German foresters needed a dog small enough to go to ground, with a good nose to find his quarry and with a loud bark and a courageous nature. When there is more than one Dachshund they are usually called "a pack of Dachshund" but depending on your sense of humor you might also hear the terms:

- A link of dachshunds
- A moxie of Doxies
- A train of dachshunds
- And a string or sausage of dachshunds

On your next visit to one of our parklands, keep your eyes open for them.



# Nest Boxes for Wildlife – a year in review



**Despite** a rough year of lockdowns, timber shortages and a regrettably cold, damp summer, the nest box industry continues to chug away. I've now built almost 50 boxes since I first started my little venture in early 2020, a number entirely attributable to the support of Greenlink and its members. A large proportion of these boxes have welcomed tenants throughout the year, including (mostly) possums, lorikeets, rosellas, and even bees.

While I haven't had the opportunity to collect occupancy data at this stage, it seems like almost every box I've installed has become a home for native critters of some type.

I made the first of these boxes for myself a few years ago because I was unable to find anything of a reasonable quality for sale, and I wanted to improve the habitat in my own backyard. I was already capable of using power tools and figured it couldn't be too hard. So far, I've been right! Overall, it's a fairly simple process. Large sheets of thick marine-grade plywood are cut into pieces that are typically the intended size, before ladders are routed into the appropriate faces and the boxes are assembled with screws. Installation has always been the best part of the process, as I get to meet people, pets, and their gardens.



It's often challenging to pick the right tree, angle, direction, and height, but it's worth the effort to consider all the options, as it impacts the utility of each new home for local wildlife.

Increasingly, orders have been coming through with requests for specific features, or for animals that are typically stigmatised and therefore avoided, such as possums. This suggests that people are engaging with experts in habitat protection, ecology, and nest box design, and represents a significant shift in public opinion on the matter.





Perhaps recent episodes of the ABC's Gardening Australia, or the last 24 months spent trapped in our own backyards, are responsible for this change? Regardless, these are exciting times to be involved in the world of artificial habitat, and it seems as though there's little chance of things slowing down from here. *By Robert Ham*

## The 2022 Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show

On the spur of the moment and as a way to break out of COVID lockdown we decided to go to the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show. Strangely enough, we were not alone in this, as the full car parks at the venue would attest to. After driving around and around we finally found a cheaper carpark a distance away from the venue. One short, free tram ride and 20 minutes later we arrived at the show grounds. The usual stalls were there spruiking their wares. Plant suppliers, tool and equipment suppliers, sheds, outdoor furniture, hot houses, landscapers, garden sculptures and ornaments. If you wanted cacti you would have been in heaven. I picked up some wonderful spring bulbs and a few plants I had been looking for. Lunch on the lawn overlooking one of the ponds and its water features was very pleasant.



*The City of Melbourne Award of Excellence for Best in Show to Inner Calm, designed by Christian Jenkins Landscape Design*

Strolling around the students' gardens is always interesting. Some looked a little chaotic being so jam packed with plants and landscaping features. But if you took the time to actually look at them you could see the ideas behind them, some of which I would like to try in my garden. The garden storage bench/seat was one that really caught my eye. The sculpture display is one part of the show I never miss. It had some very interesting and quirky pieces. Not many pieces are to my tastes, but I find it fascinating to see what people come up with and the materials they use. The imagination and talent that people have is on show for all to enjoy. There was a metal sculpture of banksia fronds and flowers that I thought was wonderful. Sadly, I don't have a garden or vestibule big enough for it. Maybe next time. But I couldn't find the hanging basket competition this year.

As always, the flower displays in the exhibition hall were very popular. I had just started to look around when a brief shower sent almost everyone into the hall at once. Ahhh!! So many people. (Ahhh! COVID!) Since I cannot handle being a sardine, I fled the hall and didn't get to see much this year. Maybe next time.



One of the stalls at the show this year was for Urban Pollinators. It had ideas about how to attract all the different types of pollinators into your gardens. Not only honeybees but native bees, wasps, flies, other insects, birds, and (sorry about this but,) also possums. They were handing out brochures indicating the different plants to use to ensure you had flowers in your garden all year round. Strangely enough, their plants list looked a lot like ours at Greenlink. *Chrysocephalum*, *Billardiera*, *Acacia* sp. etc. It's great to see that by supplying our plants we are encouraging everyone to do a bit to help the pollinators. An interesting tid-bit: did you know that some Australian bees are solitary bees that don't form hives? These bees make burrows in soil or wood and need to warm up before they can forage. Early morning sun falling on their burrow helps warm them up.

Because they are slow risers compared to honeybees they often miss out on the best flowers. This is one reason why it is so important to have a mix of all different types of flowering plants. It helps make sure there is something there for the slower bees.

By Karin

My tips for anyone heading to next year's garden show:

- Book your tickets online
- Take your own lunch and a thermos of tea/coffee. Buying food is very expensive and the queues are usually long. Also, food vendors were not accepting cash this year
- Take your own water bottle. There are water bottle filling stations dotted around the place where you can fill for free
- Parking at the venue fills up very quickly and extremely expensive. It might be better to take the train to Parliament station and walk or to Melbourne Central and catch a tram.
- If you go into the Exhibitions Hall, try do so when it's not raining. Hopefully you will be able to see the exhibitions
- Take a raincoat with a hood



# Nursery Funnies

**Q: Why was the gardener so embarrassed?**

**A:** He wet his plants!

**Q: How did the flowers survive so long without water?**

**A:** They really rose to the occasion!

**Q: What makes some plants better at maths than others!**

**A:** Square roots!



Who would have thought when becoming a volunteer at Greenlink that weeding in the parkland meant you're a hard waste removalist, or contributing to morning tea means you're a French Pâtissier, or putting away the polystyrene boxes means training to join the circus and let's not forget Sale Day turns our volunteers into customer service staff handing out free bread.



In all seriousness, Greenlink is so proud of its volunteers and the contribution they make, especially our life member Helen who has been volunteering at Greenlink since it's started in 1988. Bushy Creek Reserve has evolved and retained its beauty through the hard work of our volunteers who selflessly continue to donate their time to Greenlink unconditionally and with a smile.

In line with National Volunteer Week which was 16 – 22 May, we are so grateful and would like to acknowledge the generous contribution that Helen and the many volunteers provide Greenlink which contributes to its success.







## GREENLINK BOX HILL



Greenlink will welcome the return of any empty and unwanted plant tubes. Please return them to the nursery when you next visit or simply throw them over the gate/leave them at the gate if the nursery is closed.

### At Greenlink Box Hill we value:

- Every customer who deals with us.
- A happy, safe and enthusiastic workplace that embraces all volunteers and makes them feel welcome, respected and honoured.
- The high quality of our plants.
- The contribution that everyone makes to our success.
- Honesty and ethics in all of our dealings with customers and each other.

## Greenlink front garden evolves



Dec 2007



Apr 2017



Feb 2022

**Greenlink Box Hill Inc. Reg No. A0018547D**

**President:** Robert Jones **Vice President:** Emi Luppino **Secretary:** Chris Almond

**Treasurer:** Trevor Eddy **Committee Members:** Karin Godfrey, Jenny McCausland

**Newsletter editor:** Emi Luppino