



NEWSLETTER

Horticultural Therapy Association of Victoria Inc.

ABN 27 369 163 101

PO Box 369, Balwyn North Vic 3104
Telephone: 03 9836 1128

contactus@htav.org.au
www.htav.org.au

Issue 3, 2011

It's that time of year again with our Annual General Meeting coming up on 29th November, 2011 at Holmesglen Institute, Glen Waverley

If you are interested in attending the AGM or joining the committee, please RSVP to the office by 22nd November, 2011.

This issue of the Drought Tolerant Therapeutic Plants features the Red Hot Poker (*Kniphofia uvaria*). There is also a story on some gardens from the North eastern region of Victoria.

Activity sheets are from Dianne Relf.

If you have any stories to tell, please let us know so that others can be inspired by what is being accomplished elsewhere.

Good gardening

Paul de la Motte

Annual General Meeting

29th November 2011
Commencing at 5pm

Holmesglen Institute
595 Waverley Rd
Glen Waverley

Light refreshments will be provided
RSVP: 22/11/2011 - Tel: 9836 1128

Therapeutic Gardening Short Course

Sat & Sun, 19th – 20th November 2011
Holmesglen Institute, Glen Waverley

General enquiries: Tel (03) 9013 9556

Registration - Tel: (03) 9564 1546

Email:

shortcourses@holmesglen.edu.au

Website:

http://www.holmesglen.edu.au/programs/short_courses/lifestyle_and_environment/therapeutic_gardening

Drought Tolerant Therapeutic Plants

By Paul de la Motte

Common Name: Red Hot Poker

Other Names: Torch Lily, Tritoma

Botanical name: *Kniphofia uvaria*

Family: Xanthorrhoeaceae

Related to the Australian Grass Tree the “Red Hot Poker” is one of a number of species that originate in South Africa. A valuable architectural plant that provides great winter colour.

They are a small herbaceous plant with strap like leaves generally growing to 60cm with the clumps spreading to about 60cm also.



However, as the name suggests, the striking flower head of these plants is a deep orange and yellow colour that can stand up to 1.5 metres high. Some other related species can range from red to pure yellow.

The Red Hot Poker flowers in winter and provides a dynamic display when many other garden plants are dormant.

Their nectar attracts a large range of birds and insects, and can be used in a wide range of settings.

As *Kniphofia* are an unusual plant they are particularly valuable in children’s gardens and in gardens where the clients may have developmental difficulties. They will develop into large clumps over time.

They prefer full sun but will tolerate some light shade. They are frost tolerant and prefer a well drained garden bed. They can be used as borders, in garden beds, along driveways and just about anywhere to provide a little contrast in your garden.

This plant is an interesting and tough addition to any garden.

Stories from the North East

Yamaroo Hostel Yackandandah

During a recent tour of horticultural therapy venues in north-eastern Victoria, we visited Yamaroo Hostel in Yackandandah to see how their sensory garden was progressing. The official opening of their spiritual and sensory garden was in November, 2010 and the plants have now grown in well and the thyme lawn has fully covered its garden bed.



They are now planning to build a walking track with exercise stations to further enhance their clients' experiences. The activities co-ordinator Leonie Bell and her team are a real inspiration with the work they do with their garden program.



Ottrey Homes , Cobram

Ottrey Homes (Aged Care) in Cobram, was a past winner of the HTAV JD Bone Trust award. Even though the garden was presented at last year's conference, there is nothing like experiencing it live. The garden had a number of effective elements for aged care and dementia applications, including raised beds, a large shelter, outdoor paintings and decorations, a bus stop and letterbox.



Artwork in the gardens at Ottrey Homes Aged Care

Cobram Communal Garden

While in Cobram we also visited the Cobram Community Centre and had a tour of their small communal garden. The garden had a strong link to the local High School that

conducted classes within the setting. As well as providing a wonderful program for the students there was also the added benefit of keeping the gardens maintained.



The garden had ground level and raised beds, a large paved area and extensive artwork.



Billabong Garden Centre, Shepparton

The Billabong Garden Centre in Shepparton has relocated onto the highway. The nursery still has a strong partnership with Connect GV, which is a leading Disability support organisation in the region. A regular group of clients help maintain the wholesale nursery and the increased number of customers has made the centre a far more viable enterprise.



Floriade in Canberra



Floriade runs every year in Canberra from mid September to Mid October and has free admission. Well worth a visit.

Box Hill RSL Garden Day

HTAV were recently invited to take part in the Box Hill RSL Club's garden day celebrations as part of Veterans Health Week

Our input included an information table displaying herbs, different types of adaptive tools and brochures as well as a short presentation on the benefits of gardening. Practical suggestions on how to work safely in the garden and modifications to assist usage were discussed.

The event was attended by around 40 people from the local area, who were keen to offer their own ideas and suggestions also.

Their newly established edible garden was also displayed where already there was parsley, mint, oregano, marjoram, thyme and a number of fruit trees planted.

Many thanks to Holmesglen Institute for their generous donation of pot plants including basil, rosemary and thyme as giveaways to those who attended. Left over plants will be used in the new garden.

Overall a great day was had by all.



Activity: Harvesting Herbs Grown for Flowers

Recommended staff/client ratio: 1 staff and 1 volunteer for every 6-12 participants

Estimated time to conduct activity with clients: 30 minutes

Estimated time to set up/clean up: 20 minutes/20 minutes

Month for activity: summer into early autumn

Materials

- Garden clippers or children's scissors
- Light-weight containers to collect harvest (use a small basket with handle, or a paper lunch bag with a string tied through holes cut in the sides)
- Herbs grown for their flowers (i.e., Chamomile, Lavender, Nasturtium)

Background

The ideal time of day to harvest herbs, whether for fresh use or preserving, is morning. Gather herbs after the dew has evaporated, but before the heat of the day. Sun and heat wilts plants. The best time of year to harvest herbs depends on the plant and the part that is to be harvested. If just a fresh sprig or two is needed, it can be collected at any time during the growing season. For most plants, harvest as soon as the flowers are fully open. It may be useful to harvest them at different stages, from just-opening buds to full blooms to see which work best for your purposes. If the stems aren't needed, then cut off the flowers just below the uppermost leaves on the stem. For crafts, cut the stem 6" below the flower head.

Preparation and Set Up

1. Prepare a harvesting kit for each participant consisting of clippers and container.
2. Determine how much material should be harvested for the afternoon's activity
3. Determine if herbs are ready to be harvested.
4. Practice harvesting herbs before demonstrating participants.
5. Combine with an activity to use or preserve herbs the same day.

Procedure

1. Let each participant choose which herb they will harvest.
2. Demonstrate the harvest method for that plant, using fingernail or garden clippers to snip off flowers.



Chamomile – Harvest open flowers in summer for fresh use or drying). Use to make tea.

Lavender – Clip off flower stalks just as blooms open. Use for potpourri and pillows.

Nasturtium – Harvest leaves and flowers as needed for fresh use. Use in salads or sandwich.



3. Bring harvest to table. If several different herbs were harvested, have participants show each other what they did.
4. Sort the herbs to check for weed parts, diseased plant parts, and insects that may have been brought in on the harvest.
5. Store herbs in an open plastic bag in the refrigerator until they are used.

Special Considerations

- ❖ The harvesting container will need to be lightweight, convenient to carry, but not easily dropped or blown over.
- ❖ When working outdoors, use adequate sun protection. Have a chair handy for participants to rest – in shade - if necessary.

Suggestions for Interactions

- ❖ Ask participants if they have ever grown these herbs before. Discuss possible uses for the herbs after they have been dried.

Key Questions

1. Have you ever grown this herb before?
2. Do you know what this herb can be used for?
3. How would you store or preserve this herb?
4. Have you ever used this herb for cooking or crafts?

Horizontal Programming

- ❖ Harvest other herbs with similar characteristics

Vertical Programming

Downward Extension

- ❖ Give lots of hands-on help for participants who are having trouble. It may help to hold the stem for the participant to cut the flower or have the participant hold the stem while you cut it.

Upward Extension

- ❖ Ask participants to tell you when plants are ready to be harvested.

