

# Inspiration for Spring !

The anticipation of spring can be at times, all too frustrating. A few warm days and we are swapping our winter woolies for sandals and t-shirts only to become exasperated by the blunt return of cold weather. I have learnt to be patient with the changing of seasons and appreciate that the 'seasons' (and seasons within seasons) are what Ballarat is all about. And I love it !

Spring brings expectation and inspiration to all gardeners and is easy to find. We are indeed lucky to have such a plethora of garden related material we can easily draw from whether it be magazines, television, radio, open gardens, books, horticultural groups, conferences and of course, like minded friends.

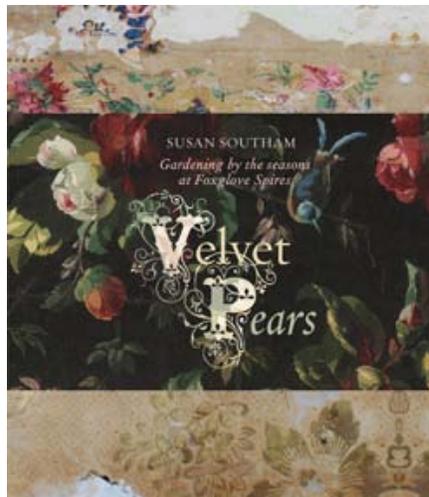
As with cooking, gardens infotainment is easily accessible however why not move out of the lounge room and increase your knowledge, friendship networks and skills by joining a club, enroll in further studies or attend a conference. Like most interest groups, once you start searching you realise there is another world out there specifically focusing on that area.

I like to find a few hours a week to, not only brush up on my plant knowledge but read books that take me to another 'space'. I love garden related books where the author has created over a long period of time, with minimal resources and a family life going on around them – a garden... their garden. A personal journey of triumphs and disappointments interspersed within the fabric of everyday living. Three books that come to mind which I continue to enjoy immensely are *Wheelbarrows, Chooks & Children – a gardener's life* by Margaret Simons; *Velvet Pears – gardening by the seasons at Foxglove Spires* by Susan Southam; and *Michael McCoy's Garden* by Michael McCoy. Each book depicts all facets of creating a garden however there is much more than that – each delves into the complete immersion of gardening, sometimes common sense, sometimes mystical, following the seasonal ebbs and flows of preparing, sowing, reaping both mental and physical. These books follow the trials and tribulations and sheer hard work, a few tricks of the trade whilst imposing their influences and gardening philosophies.

Another source of inspiration is working with children in the garden. Whether it is a structured school lesson in the school's kitchen garden or with client's children creating a garden. I love to hear their stories of what plant they have planted, harvested, cooked and eaten and what died due to neglect ... great lessons for life. Getting children interested in gardening at an early age is a great way to teach them about the cycles of life, where food comes from and respect for the earth. It can be as simple sowing some seeds in a pot to setting up rotation vegetable gardens.



*Encourage children in the garden*



*A good read !*



*Visit open gardens*

Open gardens are another way I can understand local microclimates, appreciate different styles and personalities and generally get some hints and ideas. It never ceases to amaze me how creative people are especially when funds are limited but alternative resources are obvious e.g. reduce, reuse, recycle! Often I find that dollars can buy ‘ a look’ however when dollars are scarce some gardeners respond and create fabulous garden art and growing structures that to my liking, money just can’t buy! Often too I find these gardeners extremely generous in terms of sharing their knowledge and plants.

I have listed below various local organisations that may be of interest to you; these include the Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens who are an energetic and passionate group of people from all walks of life, who get together on a regular basis. Various ‘arms’ of the Friends include the Guiding Friends, who host informative guided walks, the Growing Friends who propagate, catalogue and provide plants for sale and also groups that look at history, education, art classes and fund raising for various projects in and around the botanical gardens. I have also included a couple of events to mark in your diary – well worth attending.

<b>Organisation/Event</b>	<b>Contact details</b>
• Australian Open Garden Scheme	www.opengarden.org.au
• Australian Plants Society	5343 2245
• Ballarat Gardens in Springs - October 25-27 2013	0407 324466
• Ballarat Cacti & Succulent Society	5345 2995
• Ballarat Floral Art Group	5339 4472
• Ballarat Horticultural Society	5334 4105
• Bonsai Society of Ballarat	0409 873801
• Ballarat Orchid Society	5334 0210
• Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens	53 429354
• Growing Friends plant sales – Botanical Gardens Tuesday 1-4pm & 2nd Sun each month 1-4pm	53 429354
• Landcare Ballarat	5341 2364
• University of Ballarat – Horticulture Courses	1800 811 711
• Victorian Begonia Society	5336 2125
• The Robert Clark Conservatory	5320 5135

Ballarat is proud of its history, heritage buildings and gardens and gardening is still the most favoured leisure pastime in Australia. With an increasing awareness of the importance of sustainability, carbon footprints and total wellness, gardens are more popular than ever – so get out there and be INSPIRED!

*Happy gardening ... Helen*

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