

SATURDAY, 18 OCTOBER

MAIN STAGE

11am–11:45am

Soil to Supper: The RegenEdible Playbook
Craig Castree

Craig distils his RegenEdible method into a practical session that turns any space into a living food system. Learn why feeding soil biology — not just plants — changes everything, then set up no-dig beds that actually work. He covers compost that behaves, watering rhythms that reduce stress, and a realistic six-week crop plan for Melbourne spring. Whether you've got raised beds or pots on a balcony, you'll leave with a weekly routine that grows tastier, nutrient-dense food while building resilient, carbon-rich soil.

12:05pm–12:35pm

Sip, Swirl & Story: Beyond the Bottle
St Anne's Winemaker

A friendly guided tasting that demystifies terroir, style and food matches. The St Anne's winemaker explains how site and season shape flavour, what tasting notes actually mean, and three simple pairing rules for spring lunches. You'll sample a couple of wines, sharpen your palate, and gain confidence to order at the cellar door. Expect approachable language, zero snobbery and take-home cues you can use the rest of the day.

12:40pm–1:10pm

Garden Basics, Zero Nonsense
Vasili Kanidiadis

Beloved storyteller Vasili goes back to basics with natural, no-nonsense gardening that actually works. Learn to feed the soil first, choose the right plant for the right place, water smarter (not more), and use calm, chemical-light pest strategies. He'll share quick, affordable fixes and a simple rhythm that keeps edible beds and ornamentals humming. Expect straight talk, laughs, and practical steps you can use tonight — whether you're wrangling a courtyard or a full backyard.

1:15pm–2pm

From Sand to Clay: Grafted Grevilleas
Phil Vaughan

Master grafter Phil Vaughan shows how to bring West Australian Grevillea brilliance to heavier east-coast soils. He explains which rootstocks to look for, how to establish grafted plants without setbacks and the low-effort aftercare that prevents failures. You'll see why grafting turns "tricky" natives into reliable performers, with crisp tips on staking, watering and seasonal pruning. If you've ever lost a Grevillea in clay, this session rewrites the rules for success at home.

2:20pm–3:20pm

Under the Surface: Soil Life Unplugged — Fireside
Vasili Kanidiadis, Craig Castree and Ben Brooker

Soil is the engine room. Vasili, Ben and Craig unpack structure, organic matter, mulches that help not harm, and the living microbiology — fungi, microbes, worms — that drives plant health, flavour and resilience. You'll get a simple, weekly soil routine that fits real life, plus rapid-fire answers to audience questions. It's a relaxed, practical hour designed to cut through myths and give you confidence to grow better with less fuss.

3:25pm–3:55pm

Protea Playbook: Colour, Grit & Prowess
Maddingley Botanical

Ready to make Proteas behave in suburban gardens? The Maddingley team share the first-year routine that sets plants up for life: planting depth, airflow, watering rhythms and light pruning for shape and bloom. Expect myth-busting, quick demos and clear takeaways you can use as soon as you get home, even if your patch is windy or water-wise.

SATURDAY, 18 OCTOBER

POP-UP SESSIONS

11am–11:30am

Backyard Chooks, Zero Drama
Millbrook Free Range Co

Fox-smart housing, healthful feed and a weekly care rhythm families can keep. Meet the chicks, learn neighbour etiquette, and get straight answers on predators, noise and hygiene. A grounded start for happy hens in real-life backyards.

12pm–12:30pm

Protea Bootcamp: Plant. Prune. Bloom
Maddingley Botanical

A practical crash-course for first-time Protea growers. See correct planting depth, learn the first-year watering schedule, and practise a simple tip-prune that sets structure and flower. Bring site photos for rapid advice and leave with a routine you can follow.

Graft Lab: Natives That Behave
Vaughan's Australian Plants

Handle grafted stock with confidence. Staff show unions up close, explain rootstock choices for clay and wet winters, and demo pot-to-ground transitions. Learn staking, feeding and the little errors that cause failure — so your grafted natives settle and thrive.

12:30pm–1pm

Cottage Colour, Modern Care
White House Nursery

Old-school climbers, bulbs and fuchsias are back — minus the fuss. Get long-flowering picks for Victorian conditions, trellis tricks for tight spaces and a minimal feed/trim routine that keeps colour rolling without weekend-long maintenance.

1pm–1:30pm

Lavender Alchemy: Field to Flask
Chintin Botanicals

Family-run Chintin Botanicals lifts the lid on small-batch lavender distillation. See how fresh stems become pure essential oil and hydrosol, learn harvest timing for peak aroma and pick up simple at-home uses (linen sprays, balms, kitchen clean-ups).

1.30pm–2pm

Spring Superstars: The Magic of Leucospermum
Maddingley Botanical

Explore what makes these spectacular shrubs thrive, from choosing the right spot in your garden to understanding their unique root systems and seasonal rhythm. You'll learn how to get the best colour, manage pruning, and keep plants healthy through the seasons.

2pm–2:30pm

Truffle & Bloom: Gravy's Truffle Hunt
Duck Duck Pig

Watch truffle dog Gravy work the crowd and demonstrate how truffles are found. Hear how truffles are grown and harvested in Australia, then switch to a quick floristry sprint using seasonal stems. Take home three simple rules for balanced bouquets and a fresh appreciation for Aussie truffles.

Bees at Home: The Realities
Bee Responsible

Thinking of a hive? Get real costs, essential kit, placement dos and don'ts, and neighbour etiquette. Plus a planting list that keeps nectar flowing across seasons. A grounded intro that keeps everyone — especially the bees — happy.

SUNDAY, 19 OCTOBER

MAIN STAGE

11am–11:30am

30-Minute Spring Kickstart

Vasili Kanidiadis

Vasili opens Sunday with a punchy blueprint for spring. He shows how right plant/right place, water-wise routines and soil-first feeding create healthier, easier gardens. Expect relatable stories, quick wins and “do this, not that” habits you can put to work immediately. Whether you’re tending veg beds or ornamentals, you’ll leave with a weekly rhythm that keeps growth steady and pests calm — without turning the garden into a chemistry set.

11:30am–12:15pm

Essentials for Rookie Gardeners

Chloe Foster

Chloe turns total beginners into confident growers — while giving veterans a tidy refresher. She covers the only tools that matter, a first-season plan you’ll actually keep, right-plant/right-place fundamentals, and fixes when things wobble. Drawing on roles at Melbourne Zoo and RBGV and her new book *The Rookie Gardener*, Chloe makes the fundamentals fun, clear and totally doable, even if your “garden” is a few pots and a sunny step.

12:15pm–12:45pm

Pour & Explore: St Anne’s Favourites + Fortifieds **St Anne’s Winemaker**

A guided tasting designed for real people, not sommeliers. Learn how St Anne’s styles are crafted, why fortifieds are back, and how to pair with Sunday lunch. You’ll leave with tasting notes that make sense and three easy pairing ideas to try straight away. It’s the perfect palate warm-up before your cellar-door visit or a relaxed glass on the lawn.

12:45pm–1:30pm

RegenEdible Sprint: Feed Soil, Harvest Better **Craig Castree**

Craig compresses RegenEdible into a half-hour action plan: no-dig basics, compost that actually heats and sweetens, and a maintenance rhythm that keeps biology humming. He links soil health

to flavour and nutrition, then hands you a next-six-weeks crop list tailored to Melbourne spring. Expect clarity, not complexity — so you can start (or reboot) this afternoon.

1:30pm–2:30pm

Proteaceae Unpacked: Proteas, Banksias, Waratahs and More

David Mathews

Proteaflora’s David Mathews distils decades of Proteaceae success into clear, repeatable steps. Learn site selection, planting in different soils, watering rhythms that prevent sulking, and pruning for flower rather than just growth. He shares a short Proteaflora backstory — breeding and selection that make modern plants tougher — then answers audience questions. Leave knowing exactly how to set up Proteas, Banksias and Waratahs to perform in real Melbourne conditions.

2:30pm–3:15pm

Soil Truths: A Fireside Chat

Vasili Kanidiadis, Craig Castree and Ben Brooker

A tight, practical conversation on structure, compost that behaves, fungal networks and microbe-friendly habits that boost flavour, flowers and resilience. The trio land clear weekly actions for busy gardeners, then take rapid questions. If you want big results from small, consistent effort, this is your roadmap.

3:15pm–3:45pm

RESTORE at Home: Gardens that Help Us Feel Better **Sandra Schwarz**

Why do gardens help us feel better — and how do we design for that on purpose? Landscape architect and author Sandra Schwarz translates global evidence from RESTORE into practical moves: shade and microclimate, paths that invite gentle movement, textured and scented layers and spaces that support connection.

SUNDAY, 19 OCTOBER

POP-UP SESSIONS

11am–11:30am

Backyard Chooks, Zero Drama
Millbrook Free Range Co

Learn housing that keeps birds safe, feed that maintains health, and a weekly routine families can manage. Meet the chicks and get answers to the real questions — noise, neighbours, predators — so backyard chooks are a joy, not a chore.

11.30am–12pm

Habitat in an Hour
Birds in the Bush Nursery

Rapid garden templates for biodiversity — from small yards to acreage. Get plant lists for nectar, seed and shelter, smart watering strategies, and layout ideas that reduce maintenance while bringing wildlife back.

12pm–12.30pm

Rare & Remarkable: Perennial Picks
Treasured Perennials

Eye-catching perennials and bulbs that deliver long seasons of colour with modest inputs. Ben explains site selection, feeding and division for longevity — plus how microbial life and smart mulches boost resilience in summer.

12.30pm–1pm

Kitchen-Bench Mushrooms & Micro Hydro
Quality Plants & Seedlings

See compact mushroom and hydro setups you can run on a shelf. Learn cleanliness, light/temperature basics and how to coax second and third flushes. Perfect for renters and curious tinkerers.

1pm–1:30pm

Cottage Colour, Modern Care
White House Nursery

Climbers, bulbs and fuchsias that flower for months with minimal fuss. Learn staking that disappears, light tweaks for continuous bloom and a lightweight feed/trim routine you'll actually keep.

Bees & Backyards
Bee Responsible

Everything you need to know before adding a hive: real costs, essential kit, safety and neighbour etiquette. Plus a planting list that keeps nectar flowing so your bees — and garden — thrive.

1:30pm–2pm

Lavender Alchemy: Field to Flask
Chintin Botanicals

A hands-on peek at Chintin Botanicals' distillation process: prep, gentle heat control and separating oil from hydrosol. You'll get planting and pruning cues for bushy, long-lived plants, drying and storage tips, and easy everyday uses for your own lavender. Perfect for balcony pots through to backyard rows.

2pm–2:30pm

Truffle & Bloom: Gravy's Truffle Hunt
Duck Duck Pig

Gravy returns for a second show. See how trained dogs locate truffles, learn the basics of growing and handling truffles at home, then enjoy a fast bouquet-building demo using seasonal flowers. Practical tips, good laughs and plenty of aroma.