

ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS

**GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP**

NEWSLETTER No. 10

August 1995

Study Group Leader/Editor: Diana Snape

Treasurer/Membership: Peter Garnham

Dear Members,

This winter has been a memorable one for the Snapes, firstly with alterations to our house (including a new roof) during cold, wet wintry weather, and secondly with my knee recovering rather slowly and painfully from a heavy fall. I'm sorry this has delayed a little both my correspondence and this Newsletter. I expect spring will have more than its usual feeling of re-birth as we do some planting in affected areas of the garden, mostly with plants a metre or less in height (in accord with this NL's theme of *'Australian wildflower gardens'*). However we'll be away for most of September, in Newcastle and Sydney for GDSG talks, then Bourke (for the RAOU Congress - birds instead of plants) and finally Ballarat for the ASGAP Conference. I'm looking forward to meeting many GDSG members both during my travels and at Ballarat.

TREASURER'S REPORT

FINANCES - Bank balance at 1/8/95 is \$1372.78

MEMBERSHIP - Membership of the Group is still spreading throughout Australia - only the Northern Territory is now unrepresented. An analysis of the 1994/5 membership locations showed the following: Vic. 49%, NSW 27%, Qld 8%, SA 6%, WA 4%, ACT 4% & Tas. 3% from a total of approximately 180 locations. Overall, about 60% of locations were in the metropolitan areas of capital cities, with the remaining 40% being in provincial cities and other country areas. Another interesting figure to emerge from this analysis was the divergence of the country locations, widespread throughout the States with 31 locations in Victoria and 24 in NSW. It is very pleasing to see this broad spectrum of interest in the Study Group and we hope that this trend continues in 1995/6.

Peter Garnham**INDEX**

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Extracts from members' letters

"I was particularly pleased to see two of our Tasmanian eucalypts listed in Kevin Rule's suggestion's mNL\$-Eucalyptus barberi and E. vermicosa. I am keen to promote these two gems, and I am propagating a bumper crop of E. barberi at the moment! Another of our Tasmanian species which I am keen to try out is E. archeri (common name, Alpine Cider Gum), This grows up to 10 metres and I think it should have potential for small gardens. I enjoyed the article very much - I think it's a good idea to include a theme in the Newsletters.

I am interested in all aspects of garden design, but particularly in designing with plants with practical, useful features for craft work, eg dyeing, cut flowers and foliage, woody capsules, etc. I'm very interested in designing to involve children - designs suited to their needs. Also plants for a formal garden and scented plants. I like the idea of creating differing atmospheres in the garden • open and sunny, dappled shade, jungle-like, formal, etc. Also the use of Australian plants in a period style garden interests me." Trudy Grace Tas

"In our orchard - thank goodness it's not in the garden - we have a Lagunaria patersonii (Norfolk Island Hibiscus). I bought another one last year not realizing it was what my husband referred to as a Pyramid Tree. On the label it stated that it was a bushy shrub or small tree. Well when I found out it was a Pyramid tree, unfortunately I had to remove it as our tree (admittedly about 120 -130 years old!) is much taller than our house and in width about 45-55 feet (15-16 metres). Certainly not a bushy shrub or small tree. It was covered in blossom this year and visited by dozens of Wattle Birds and other birds and was really worth looking at - I can see it from my kitchen window." Joan Henderson Vic

"Use of water in the garden is a great theme. On the aesthetic side I like seeing old half whisky barrels full of whisky! Seriously, a rustic barrel with a few Australian water plants (eg Nardoo) floating on it and in it looks good, doesn't breed mosquitoes and oxygenates the water which stays clear. On the ecological side, planting in autumn rain would have to be the best time." Grahame Durbidge NSW

"I have recently moved to a largish block on a sandstone ridge and have a garden where there is much scope for improvement and design. I am particularly interested in the idea of combining native and non-native species. I would appreciate any information you have and will participate in any way I can." Lyn Johnson NSW

"At the end of my street is Bellambi Lagoon. There is a small patch of mangroves and lots of seabirds resting on the sheltered island. The bushland area surrounding the lagoon is interesting to explore. It contains a banksia and eucalypt forest plus a high dune with a ladder-like slatted walkway up its steep slopes, leading to an observation deck. From here one is able to get a fantastic view of the coastline, the Illawarra Escarpment, as well as see the steelworks and coal mining industries. Small birds flit about in the scrub while you take in the view. This bushland has some fairly serious weed problems, so I have been using it as my study area for the Bushland Weed Control course I am completing at Yallah TAFE." Ian Percy NSW

"I have recently purchased a new home in the beautiful Blue Mountains area of Sydney. I had joined the local SQAP group so that I could gain some knowledge of native garden design. However, much to my dismay, there is a great deal of enthusiasm for individual plants but no idea of where I can go to get an Australian native garden design! So I hope you and the Study Group can assist me. I thought the ideas in your book very inspiring. Do you know of anyone in Sydney who does designs for Australian native gardens?" Lyn Waddell NSW

"I work as Council Subdivision Engineer - trying to combine urbanisation with retention of vegetation on small blocks - trying to break the urban roofline but not have trees fall on houses/block drain lines/paths, etc. I have been a member of SGAP for some years now, being an interested, active grower of a small urban native garden. Past gardens have been in Canberra and Moss Vale. I'm afraid I am not very selenitic about it and am very amateurish. However my gardens have been a small attempt to compensate for the loss of native vegetation through urbanization. The garden is black soil on the side of a hill, overlooking Waltis Lake to the south (and rear) and about ten metres above it. The garden is now five years old, having started from scratch, including building the back yard terraces (two at about 500m and 0 - 1 metre high).

I try to grow anything that I think will look good and some things that present a challenge and am proud when they go well. My prizes are Eucalyptus caesia (continuously in flower for 4 months now), a Banksia orbiculata 300 mm tall showing one bud (a B. menziesii purchased similarly and planted adjacent died after 2 months); and a Macropidia in the ground for 8 months which appears to have survived 'planting out shock'. The front is mostly a mass planting and I have, a few times, thought about making it more interesting but don't have the guts to pull it out and start again. The 'backbone' plantings have been mostly callistemons, acacias, grevilleas and banksias, now 1 to 5 metres high." John Hulme NSW

I'm interested in indigenous, water-conserving gardens; use of shapes and textures rather than colour; true bush gardens and finding good ways of humanising the bush garden; using shade well. I would like more native plants readily available and I'm interested in the training of Australian plants." Shirley Fisher WA

"I have a small 100% Australian plant garden two years old in the Southern Highlands region. It is surviving on minimal watering and only weekend attention, but needs more 'form'. Your book is a great guide and inspiration. Are you writing one on Garden Design? If not, please do, as there is nothing (for Australian plant gardens) to help! Particular interests are; designing for fire protection; ornament in the Australian plant garden; spreading 'colour' throughout the year." Gillian Davies NSW

"I live on a farm and have access to soil, mulches, etc. Have one acre of garden with winding paths, and have won several awards in Two Wells over the years for my garden. The garden is native, although with introduced areas for hedge/landscaping roses and old-fashioned flowers." R.R. Treviyan SA

"I am currently Horticultural Development Officer at Mount Annan Botanic Garden, responsible for design aspects and thematic layout. Working at Mount Annan, I am particularly interested in Informal design on a large scale. Other areas of interest/expertise are plant propagation, direct seed establishment techniques, use of native annuals, use of indigenous species, Proteaceae and Acacias." Peter Cuneo NSW

"I am frustrated with the inadequacies of 'mainstream' horticulture - the limited plant selection, the neglect of conservation principles. As an environmental researcher with a land rehabilitation focus, I am interested in the landscape factor (lack of!) in broadacre projects." Erica Nathan Vic

"Just the battles of growing natives on a pretty shaded clay block which is either very dry or very wet! Also sloped, which doesn't help as much as it might Nor does the attitude of the gardener - me - which ranges from very enthusiastic (so I can't walk the next day) - to "I really need a self-care garden". Plus a large goofy dog. You can see why I'm joining. There's a lot of room to improve in my garden, as well as bits that are good." Gillian Morris NSW

"I find that rather than trying to change a person's whole garden to Australian plants first up, it is more positive to employ a slow and steady transition by showing people how to do a section of garden with natives and then building off this section, ie grouping of plants or hedging. I'm interested in formal use of Australian plants." Murray Flynn ACT

"Mine is just a small garden in a very built-up suburb and a bit of a disaster at the moment. I like the layout' but the plants are not right - there is no 'design' with them. Now I will go back to square one and start again. I think 75% of a good garden design is knowing what plants to use together, so it looks good all year. I have included a couple of photos to show the garden as it is now, and after I have laboured long and hard I will send some more so you can see how I have progressed. I want to be able to show Australian plants at their best, so others will be interested too." Wendy Mackie NSW

"I am interested in environmentally sound garden design including water conservation techniques. I think urban landusers as well as rural landusers have a responsibility to landcare." Wendy Cannon NSW

Extracts from Mends' letters

"I enjoy your Newsletter and indeed we have copied in our own garden, in our own way, an illustration in your last Newsletter of a group of logs with bird baths on a couple of the logs. It should look nice when the plants grow up a bit. As you probably have noticed, I have included mention of the Garden Design Study Group in my notes in 'Eucryphia'." Jeanette Closs, Study Group Liaison Officer, SGAP Tasmania, (I think Shirley Fisher's illustration of her farmer friend's idea has inspired quite a few people. DS)

Letters to another Editor ('The Garden', U.K. Feb 1995) noted by **Barbara Buchanan Vic**
{You can picture from these responses, which illustrate the designer/collector debate, the nature of the original article.}

"Stephen Anderton's well reasoned plea for more thought about the form of gardens and less about their content, must be welcomed by all serious gardeners. Wander around any garden centre and the temptation to try something new is immense. Most of us can find a corner for just about anything, but at what cost in visual chaos?"

"I have found that, by organizing colour, shapes, light and shade, and contrasts, and setting these against simple open space, I am transforming my garden. Visitors generously marvel at my industry and skill, but the truth is quite the opposite. The revised layout saves time and is simpler to manage, and more effective than a riot of colour. However, in following Stephen Anderton's principles, I have found there are difficulties. How does one deal with gifts of plants? And is there any way to keep one's wife (or husband) out of garden centres?" John Rose, Surrey

"Stephen Anderton suggests that design is often sacrificed to accommodate a large range of plants. Without doubt, a well designed garden is effective and pleasing on the eye, but not every gardener has the artistic ability for design, myself included. Having said that, I believe that gardens are about plants. Structure in the garden, particularly of plants, certainly has a place. But artificial structure! Definitely not! I do not expect other gardeners to hold the same opinion. How many flowering plants should one have in the garden? Surely that is for the gardener to decide." Muriel Tansley, Little Hampton

Membership of SGAP - compulsory or voluntary?

Diana Snape

There has been debate for some years about whether ASGAP Study Group members must be currently financial members of SGAP. At the last ASGAP Conference in Sydney in 1993, it was agreed that membership of Study Groups should not necessarily be restricted to SGAP members. I think this question will be raised again at the next ASGAP Conference at Ballarat in September.

There are reasons both for and against this requirement. As I see it, there are two main reasons to support it.

For compulsory membership:

1. The main concern seems to be insurance. All members of SGAP are covered by ASGAP in terms of Insurance for any harm or Injury caused to themselves or others during any function organized by ASGAP, SGAP or ASGAP Study Groups. Non-members are not. Unfortunately society is becoming more litigious and if an uninsured person is seriously injured, they may try to obtain damages from wherever they can and huge sums of money could be involved.
2. ASGAP and State SGAP Groups give financial support to each Study Group and send us copies of their Newsletters.

There are several reasons against it.

Against compulsory membership:

1. insurance: How great is the risk? I think many/most people are covered by their own personal insurance but can we afford nowadays to live with any risk for the small number who are not? As an ex-secondary school chemistry teacher, I lived with the risk of insurance claims associated with potentially dangerous activities (laboratory work, excursions, camps) during my whole teaching life, I don't think there's anything risky about receiving (or writing articles for) Newsletters, so any potential risk can occur only for the small proportion of members who are involved in organized meetings, garden visits or camps.

2. **Financial support:** ASGAP and State SGAP Groups each receive one, two or three copies of all Newsletters produced each year (as individual members do) in return for their annual donation. Also we think SGAP win benefit now (from articles, displays, speakers etc) and in the future in more general ways from the work of the Study Group.

3. **Benefits from a broad membership:** Our Study Group, more than most, needs and benefits greatly from input from a wide variety of members including professional landscape architects, landscape designers, horticulturists and nursery owners. Our members come via different routes - most through SGAP, as members of SGAP, but some via their interest in indigenous flora; others through owning nurseries (which may sell both Australian and exotic plants) and helping clients design gardens; some Join as tertiary students, recent graduates or lecturers in related fields. We benefit from their membership of other, related organizations in terms of the knowledge and ideas they bring to us and the knowledge and ideas they take back and help spread.

For voluntary membership of SGAP:

We strongly advocate membership of SGAP for all the obvious reasons. To design well with Australian plants we need to know as much as possible about as many as possible, appropriate to the scale of our activities. No other organization can do so much to help us learn.

Possible solutions:

1. Mine (not really a solution) has been to ignore the perceived problem and hope it will go away. I have not tried to keep up-to-date lists of current members of SGAP in all the different states - I think this would be extremely difficult to do. (At this time of year I'm sure Peter will agree it's hard enough keeping up-to date with our own membership list).

2. It has been suggested that members who contribute a lot to Study Groups and are not members of SGAP be given honorary membership of SGAP. This does not seem fair or reasonable to me.

3. Have a closer look at the Insurance position. If this is covered, in whatever way, then I think there is no problem.

Please write in with your comments on this before September so I have time to collate them for the ASGAP Conference.

Design and the longevity of plants

Geoff Simmons Qld

As a garden is an evolving situation, how long each plant is expected to live is a major consideration in the design of a garden. The length of life may range from the ephemeral period of annuals to the long time duration of trees. Most gardens will be a mixture of annuals, perennials and 'permanents' and the differences of each may be considered separately.

The life of a plant can be divided into several stages. The initial one is the period between germination to first flowers, then a period of growth with flower production; later a stage of stasis when the adult plant doesn't markedly increase in size. Finally there is the period of decline. This is the pattern that most gardeners look forward to when they purchase a plant. The end of life has many causes - disease, water (either too much or too little), mechanical damage, failure to provide the correct nutrients or unfavourable climatic conditions to name a few. Such factors make predictions of longevity a garden hazard.

The use of annuals virtually eliminates the problem of unforeseen death of plants as replacement is a short term effort and there is always next season to plant different varieties. However the vast array of Australian plants as yet include few suitable varieties to compare with the highly developed exotics. The increasing publicity of daisies of Australian origin is noteworthy. It is also worth noting that some varieties thought of as perennials in warmer climates such as I experience are better treated as annuals.

Plants in the middle range of permanency comprise the bulk of Australian plants grown. Shrubs such as grevilleas form the backbone of many gardens both private and public. The development of hybrids such as we have in the Kangaroo Paws augurs well for the future. For many reasons, not least the huge number planted, this group is where many disappointments are experienced - the sudden death of a selected variety such as a ground-cover grevillea can greatly detract from the appearance of a garden bed. In many cases the lover of Australian plants may expect too much from a plant growing outside its natural environment.

Long life plants include trees. An aged tree is of great beauty and to ensure that this characteristic is obtained extra care needs to be taken in the selection of trees. Not only appearance but chances of survival must be taken into consideration. It is worth recalling that we are using plants that have co-existed for thousands of years with their own particular pests.

There are circumstances in which longevity assumes enhanced importance. These include hedges and avenues where missing plants produce empty spaces that spoil the desired effect. While replacement plants can be used, it takes time to fill those gaps. The mixing of species can also be used so the occasional loss is less noticeable or we may choose several species from one genus. In my garden a bushfire killed an avenue of *Brachychiton australis* about four years of age. I have replanted the strip with the sequence as follows: F F F F A B B A F F F F A B B A F F F F where F represents *Brachychiton acerifolium*, B represents *B. bidwillii*, A represents *B. australis*

Another aspect to be considered when long living plants are chosen is the provision of long life labels. Most labelling materials deteriorate over years so due attention should be given to this aspect of garden design. The label may contain data on date of planting and source as well as the name of the plant. Because names may change the label provides an historical record of the prevailing nomenclature at the time of planting.

Possibly an Index As the second book written by the Australian Daisy Study Group nears completion, **Bev Courtney** (Vic) has lately been working very hard indeed. When this work is finished, Bev hopes to have time available to investigate preparing an index of GDSG Newsletters.

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AUSTRALIAN WILDFLOWER GARDENS (or WHAT'S IN A NAME?)

I dislike the term "cottage garden". 'Wildflower garden' sounds as though it belongs in Western Australia where this style can be pursued to perfection. I use the term 'heritage garden*' and aim to mix natives/indigenous with exotics in a harmonious way. **Jan Percy NSW**

My idea of a 'cottage garden' is what I used to see in England - a colourful garden full of herbaceous plants (non-woody). Whenever someone says I am going to have an Australian cottage garden, what do I see? A few non-woody groundcovers and lots of woody plants - not my idea at all. A cottage garden using Australian plants is a real challenge and hard to achieve - maybe easier in some parts of Australia than others. To get height from perennial herbaceous Australian natives together with colour, leaf shapes and plant forms is not easy. I will certainly be interested to hear about other peoples' ideas, but at the moment I cannot come to grips with the term 'Australian cottage garden' - probably my English upbringing. Perhaps we need a definition of what is meant by this term. **Betty Rymer NSW**

At a recent meeting in Melbourne we tried to think of appealing new names for wildflower/cottage type gardens, with little success. Jane Galder Vic suggested 'kipsie garden', from an old word meaning house, home, cottage or "steep-out", but we're not sure whether it's Australian or English in origin. Other suggestions are 'Verandah garden' (you look out on it from your verandah) and 'town' or 'urban garden' (as against 'bush garden'). I wonder if there's an aboriginal word meaning 'nibbled by kangaroos and waBabies'.

Please let us know if you can think of an interesting name!

'An Australian wildflower garden'?

Diana Snape Vic

Apart from the 'bush garden', there have been to date only a few recognised types of Australian (in GDSG sense) garden. These include gardens described by the group of plants they contain, eg fern or rainforest gardens, or those belonging to a certain geographical location, such as coastal or alpine gardens. I think it would be helpful to encourage recognition of many different types of Australian garden which could be created. Raised awareness, both inside and outside SGAP, of different design possibilities will help promote a diversity of approaches which could then lead to a wider variety of well designed and fascinating gardens.

I'd like to consider a style which (until I find a better name) I'll call an 'Australian wildflower garden'. It is certainly not intended to be a direct replacement for a 'cottage garden', a much over-worked and often disliked term. This term means different things to different people but usually implies 'flowers' - that is, flowers from countries other than ours, belonging to herbaceous plants rather than 'woody' shrubs. A minority of small Australian plants have this 'un-Australian', 'cottagey'¹ look, with soft flowers and/or foliage which suggest mild climates. For example there are many daisies, lilies and other small tufted plants, scaevolias, dampieras, goodenias, violas, *Lythrum saicaria* (Purple Loosestrife), *Plectranthus* species, *Dementia (Parahebe) arenaria*, some creepers, and lots of other plants with which I am not familiar. A small 'wildflower garden' composed entirely of such plants could be delightful and quite 'cottagey'. It would probably not be naturalistic, though a natural combination of some of these plants might be found in a moist area of the high country, so the naturalistic category of alpine garden might be appropriate.

Among the Australian flora is a diverse and fascinating range of small 'woody' shrubs, often with interesting and significant foliage, usually sclerophyll rather than soft. Such low shrubs may be used in a garden for their foliage alone, which can produce an attractive 'tapestry' effect. Their individual flowers may be large or small but generally become conspicuous when massed, either on one plant or groups of plants. I picture a garden consisting largely of such shrubs when I hear the term 'heath garden', though heathlands of course have other types of plant too. A heath or heathland garden would be one category of garden in a naturalistic style, which (depending on choice of plants) could also be linked to the theme of a wildflower garden.

"Wildflower"¹ probably invokes a different image for each of us. I remember the term from when I was a child and to me it suggests small, dainty flowers. It often meant herbaceous daisies or lilies, found among grasses; it generally didn't mean large, showy flowers (like some Western Australian beauties). Again a naturalistic category here would be a grassland garden, with grasses, lilies, daisies and other small herbaceous plants. Recently when I visited Canberra I saw some delightful gardens in this style, designed by Leon Horsnell, and this type of garden is also described in Phil Watson's article (page 8). These grassland gardens could be called wildflower gardens too.

So the Australian wildflower garden I picture now could be a naturalistic one, but is equally (or more) likely not to be. Natural inspiration could come from coastal heathlands, alpine meadows, grasslands, or wonderful Western Australian sand gardens. It could have a marvellous combination of any number of these types of small plant - herbaceous, 'woody' shrubs (including prostrate or low forms of larger ones), tufted plants, groundcovers, creepers; there could be annuals or perennials, small flowers or large. The plants would generally be a metre or less in height and rarely much more, growing quite close together. (They could be lower again, mostly 0.5 metre or less in height.) I think height is a key factor in my mental image, but "taw garden" or "knee-high garden" don't really have much appeal as names.

An individual garden would have its own proportions of variety and repetition, its own mix of colours, foliage and perfume. The colour scheme of flowers could be carefully planned for each season of the year, or quite serendipitous. Some plants might be long flowering, others inconspicuous for much of the year until they burst into bloom. The garden can be mulched

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and look after itself quite well in terms of watering and weeding, or receive attention as frequently as the gardener wants to give it. If plants self-seed (more likely in sand or gravel) the design is likely to become more random as time passes, in a small block, the wildflower (low) garden could occupy most of the space. Its area could be clearly defined by formal (or informal) hedges, pathways or walls. It could equally well blend in with the larger garden by a gradation of sizes in plantings around its edges. Fence screens, clumps or borders of larger shrubs and trees are important to attract a variety of birds and insects, as well as for structure in the garden. A pond could be included, or sculpture. Each wildflower garden could have its own emphasis and unique Australian character.

Design for a 'cottage garden' border

Anne Pye Vic/SA

I always think 'cottage gardens' are for gardeners who fiddle with their gardens i.e. a lot of plants are none too permanent - so that's what the border is based on. In some ways it also means a 'cottage garden' is ideal for a lot of smaller natives as they grow fast and don't live long (like the ubiquitous daisy bush in a traditional 'cottage garden'). Schematic layout:

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X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X
  O O O O O W W W CA CA
ss ss ss Hb Hb Hb Hb Hb D D D Hb Hb
ss ss Hb Hb Hb Hb D D D D Hb
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COOL COLOURS FOR A SMALL SUNNY BORDER WHICH DOESN'T GET TOO MUCH HEAT (e.g. AFTERNOON SHADE), IN A TEMPERATE CLIMATE

X one plant of *Pandorea Jasminoides* 'Lady Di' trained to cover lattice
 O *Plectranthus argentatus*
 W *Dianella revoluta*
 Ca *Coneea alba*
 ss *Halgania preissiana*
 Hb *Helichrysum (Bmcteaosa) bracteatum* (white form)
 D *Dampiera rosmarinifolia* (dark blue)
 « *Scaevola albida*
 » *Scaevola* 'Mauve Clusters'
 @ *Brachycome multifida* (in paler tones than 'Break O Day')

HOTTER COLOURS FOR A HOTTER SPOT (WITH PLANT NUMBERS/SPACING ADJUSTED ACCORDINGLY)

X *Kennedia coccinea*
 O *Grevillea* 'Robyn Gordon'
 W *Anigozanthos* (tall orange Bush Gem form)
 Ca *Cassia artemisoides*
 ss *Acacia* 'Kuranga Gold Lace'
 Hb *Helichrysum bracteatum* 'Dargan Hill Monarch'
 D *DHLwynia hispida*
 « *Helichrysum (Chrysocephalum) apiculatum*
 » *Lechenaultia formosa* (in red & orange)
 @ *Eremophiia glabra* (red, prostrate) if necessary intermingled with *Kennedia prostrata* to cover the gaps

COTTAGE GARDEN DESIGN WITH AUSTRALIAN FLOWERS IN SOUTH-EAST QLD

Colleen Keena Qld

Edna Walling noted that she preferred the wild rather unkempt garden to one that is meticulously maintained. She spelt out some of the best elements of a cottage garden: meandering pathways edged with overhanging plants, low stone walls, creepers, perennials. The pathway has been described as the main structural component of a cottage garden, defining the garden spaces and beds. Scale and balance must be considered from the outset, with plantings in balance with the house. Climbers or adjacent plantings are used to soften and screen strong intrusive structures, such as garages. A low hedge can be grown to provide shelter from prevailing winds and give screening for privacy. Structural foliage plants maintain the effect even when flowering is reduced and special use plants can entice creatures such as butterflies and birds and so enhance not only the visual beauty but add the dimension of sound.

The main decorative feature of what has been termed a cottage garden is the plants, particularly flowering plants, their colour, their form and their composition. With colour combinations, if colours are graded too closely, the planting may take on the appearance of a formal border. Part of the challenge is to work out pictures for different times of the year, with planting to ensure some species are in flower in every month. This can be facilitated by including plants which flower for long periods as the main performers, for example, Grevilleas and perennial daisies, and adding plants with shorter flowering times, e.g. Hoveas, for added impact. Consideration of the mature height and shape of each plant will mean plants can be graded from high to low, but some lesser high points will need to be included away from the focal point or the effect will be formal.

In a cottage garden, vertical lines are very important. Clumps of different plants are used to strengthen the middle storey while medium to small plants are suitable near the garden edge. Edging plants soften the edges of pathways and bulbs and annuals complete any gaps. The following list of plants is not meant to be exhaustive, but indicative of the range of plants able to grow under local conditions of extremes of soil, shale to day, extremes of temperature, -6 degrees to 46 degrees and extremes of moisture levels, wet summers and dry winters. They mostly either flower over an extended period or produce a spectacular

showing if they bloom briefly. Grafted species, particularly Grevilleas, are extending the range of plants able to be grown locally but only species able to grow on their own roots are included here. While the plants usually listed as suitable for cottage gardens do not normally include Australian plants, there are Australian species of some varieties, e.g. Violet, *Pelargonium* and closely related species of others, e.g. Hollyhock (*Althaea rosea*) and Hibiscus *diversifolius*. It would perhaps be possible to start from a list of "suitable plants for cottage gardens" and work backwards, e.g. Arum lily resembles *Alocasia macrorrhiza*, however the plants have been chosen for the contribution they can make in their own right to an Australian flower garden in S.E. Qld.

Edna Walling gives both a description of a garden based on Australian species and also a recipe for planting: **Drifts** of *Podocarpus lawrencei*, **spilling masses** of *leptospermum rupestre*, **sheets** of *Brachycome mwlifida* ... **misty clouds** of Mintbush (*Prostanthera*), **glades** of *Bursaria*. She was writing mainly of species that would not grow here. Again, the challenge is not to substitute species but to find species that thrive in our local conditions. Not only do the plants listed produce flowers but they add various tones of bark, display a variety of foliage forms and are attractive to wildlife. Planting in drifts, masses, sheets, clouds will ensure an Australian flower garden in the cottage garden tradition: flower-filled spaces with a profusion of different varieties spilling onto the pathways and demonstrating the subtle yet effective combinations that can be achieved by designing with Australian flowering plants.

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	RED	PINK	PURPLE	WHITE	YELLOW
HEDGING PLANTS	<i>Graptophyllum excelsum</i> Callistemon -Captain Cook	<i>Bauera rubioides*</i> <i>Acmena smithii</i> Codywarf form	<i>Westringia</i> -Wynyabbie Gem form) virgata	<i>Westringia fruticosa</i> <i>Baeckea virgata</i> - form (dwarf)	<i>Melaleuca</i> -Golden Gem <i>Acacia fimbriata</i> warf (dwarf form)
PERENNIALS Tall, vertical	Anigozanthos sp.* <i>Doryanthes pallmeri</i>	Anigozanthos <i>flavidulus</i> -pink	Dianellasp. e.g. <i>D. caerulea</i>	Crinum <i>pedunculatum</i>	Anigozanthos -yellow <i>A. flavus</i>
MIDDLE STOREY Clumps	Callistemon -little John Grevillea sp. e.g. -Rebyn Gordon; Peerinea Constance Eremophila <i>maculata*</i>	<i>Thryptomene</i> John saxicofa saxicofa Grevillea sericea Indigofera australis Melastoma polyanthum	<i>Orthosiphon</i> aristatus* <i>Hovea longifolia</i> (dwarf) <i>Prostanthera</i> sp. <i>Melaleuca thymifolia</i>	<i>Orthosiphon</i> aristatus* <i>Austromyrtus dulcis</i> Callistemon sp. e.g.-Anzac <i>Pavonia hastata</i>	Bracteantha bracteata Cassia sp. e.g. artemisioides Pultenaeasp. Hibiscus diversifolius
MEDIUM TO SMALL PLANTS	<i>Abelmoschus moschatus</i> -Mischief Leptospermum -Rea Cascade	<i>Meibomia</i> -Pink Lace <i>Hibiscus geranioides</i> Leptospermum -Pink Cascade	<i>Melaleuca</i> -Little Beauty <i>Artanema fimbriatum</i> Viola <i>bettoniifolia</i>	<i>Melaleuca</i> -white Lace <i>Baeckea</i> sp. e.g. -Miniature Leptospermum -Pacific Beauty	Hibiscus panduriformis Bulbine bulbosa <i>chrysocephalum apiculatum</i>
EDGING PLANTS	<i>Abelmoschus moschatus</i> var. tuberosus Grevillea Poorinda -Royal Mantle	<i>Pelargonium australe</i> <i>Brachyscome</i> sp.* <i>scaevola</i> sp.* Myoporum parviflorum*	<i>Viola hederacea*</i> <i>Baobab</i> sp.* <i>Scaevola</i> sp.* <i>Mazus pumilio*</i>	<i>Viola hederacea*</i> <i>Baobab</i> sp.* <i>Scaevola</i> sp.* <i>Pratia pedunculata*</i> Myoporum sp.*	<i>Chrysocephalum ramosissimum</i> Brachycome sp.* Grevillea Mongolo Acacia ambylgona Goodenia sp.
ANNUALS	Helichrysum -Bright Bikini Red	Rhodanthe sp.	Brachyscome -Starscope <i>isotoma axillaris</i>	Rhodanthe sp.	Hibiscus trionum -Sunny Days Bracteantha sp.
CLIMBERS	<i>Kennedia rubicunda</i> <i>Passiflora aurantia</i>	<i>Pandorea jasminoides*</i>	<i>Hardenbergia violacea</i>	<i>Pandorea</i> sp.* <i>jasminum</i> sp.	<i>Hibbertia scandens</i> <i>Pandorea</i> sp.*

(*) represents a form with a flower in the appropriate colour for the column.

STRUCTURE/SPECIAL USE: *Lomandra* sp. e.g. longifolia; *Gahnia aspera*; *Melichrus urceolatus*; *Plectranthus* sp.
 Grasses, e.g. *Pennisetum alopecuroides*, *Themeda triandra*

77MS extmct is reprinted with thanks from Eucryphia (Newsletter of SGAP Tasmania) December 1994. Although it refers of course to Tasmanian species, many of these are also appropriate for other areas, at least in south-eastern Australia, or can readily be translated to more suitable species for other localities. I don't know how many of the species suggested are both readily available and hardy, for example I know in Victoria Astroloma humifusum is difficult to obtain and several other plants mentioned are difficult to keep growing. DS

English Tradition

Have you ever marvelled at the colour parade of floriferous offerings that are featured in the formal, traditional English Spring and Summer annual, herbaceous and perennial borders? The dedication of the gardeners, who present these works of art (a palate of flowering plants on a canvas of deep, rich, organic soil) is equally matched with a massive resource of time, fertiliser, water, constant vigilance and maintenance. So how does this relate to gardening in a dry, harsh environment with minimum water availability?

Tassie's Answer

Believe it or not, Tassie's grassy woodlands and grasslands have their own unique suite of floral gems. These can become the ingredients of your own identifiably Tasmanian garden border display. It would have equal aesthetic appeal to the English borders, but with many important environmental, cultural and maintenance advantages.

The Spring Flowering Ingredients

Consider a planned framework of the Blue Tussock Grass (*Poa labillardieri*) or Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*) interplanted with a selection of spring/summer flowering forbs. These could include yellow Leek Lily (*Bulbine glauca*), Chocolate Uly (*Arthropodium milleforium*), White Candles (*Stackhousia monogyne*), Black-eyed Susan (*Tetradlea glandulosa*), the purple Trigger Plant (*Stylidium graminifolium*), pink Peach Berry (*Lissanthe strigosa*), the golden Goodenia lanata, the golden Guinea Flower (*Hibbertia riparia*), the white bearded flowers of *Leucopogon virgatus*, the egg and bacon bush peas - *Pultenaea pedunculata*, *Bossiaea cinerea*, *B. prostrata* or *Dillwynia cinerascens*, and our colourful daisies: *Brachyscome aculeata* or *B. scapiformis*, *Chrysocephalum apiculatum* or *C. semipapposum*, *Craspedia glauca*, *Leptorhynchus squamatus* or Lemon Beauty Heads (*Calocephalus citreus*). These can be knitted together with selections from our twining, spreading delights such as the Purple Fringed Lily (*Thysanotus patersonii*), the fascinating Pussytails (*Ptilotus spathulatus*), the Blue Love Creeper (*Gomesperma volubile*), the red Running Postman (*Kennedia prostrata*) or the delicate blue-flowering *Hovea diversifolia*.

Formal or Informal landscapes

The list for this Spring and Summer border display is limited only by one's imagination and knowledge of the indigenous flora in your nearest local patch of remnant urban/rural bushland. The above landscape is essentially an informal bedding display, but could easily be formalised by selecting a few of these plants and planting them in a designed, planned way.

The Summer Flowering Ingredients

This scenario can be replicated for a Summer/Autumn wildflower display by choosing from the palate of everlasting daisies, the native geranium (*Pelargonium australe*), Bluebells (*Wahlenbergia consimilis* etc.), white *Pimelea humilis*, the yellow flowers of *Vellela paradoxa*, *Oxalis perennans*, Wood Sorrel (*Sebaea ovata*) and *Hypericum gramineum*, the Peppergrass (*Lepidium pseudotasmnicum*) and the native cranberry (*Astroloma humifusum*). Again these can be knitted together with the native Buzzy (*Acaena novae-zelandiae*), the subtle pink *Convolvulus erubescens*, the succulent *Tetragonia implexicoma* or the mat-forming *Rhagodia nutans*.

Changing the Framework

The framework species can be altered using the many grasses or sedges available, each of which creates a totally new perspective to a formal or informal planting. These include the versatile Sagg (*Lomandra tongitolia*), the sword sedges (*Lepidosperma* sp.), the Flax Lilies *Dianella revouli* or *D. tasmanica*, Native Iris (*Diplarrena moraea*), Weeping Grass (*Deyeuxia quadriset*), the long, flowing, curly locks of plume grasses (*Dicheiachnesp.*), or the spectacular flowering heads of spear grasses (*Stipa* sp.).

Low Maintenance, Minimal Water Requirements

Probably the greatest value of this landscape is the low maintenance and minimal water requirement. All that is needed is a once-a-year pruning with hedging shears and a watering for establishment purposes only. Once established and clothed with a mulch of shredded garden clippings and prunings or imported mulches of gum bark or pine bark, the plantings can become self-sustaining. The seeding, tillering and runner production will ensure a continuous supply of young propagules to tweak our senses for many years to come.

The unusual complementary approach of a three-yearly firing will really elicit many questions from your inquisitive neighbours. Fire as a management tool, in order to enhance biological diversity, begs explanation to all concerned onlookers.

Summing Up

In conclusion, there are many more positive than negative reasons to provide your own little contribution to conserving and promoting awareness of our exquisite, life-sustaining 'Sense of Place' promoting indigenous flora. Get out there and enjoy the experience. Perhaps join a local Landcare or Coastcare group or SGAP to tap into the vast experience which will help you on this feast of learning you are about to experience.

(Other paragraph headings in this article were: Local Plants Have Other Values; How to Buy/Propagate These Plants; Mulches - Getting it Right.)

With the completion of *"The Grevillea Book"* by Peter Olde and myself, we have recognized 343 species and 56 sub-species. With such a large number of grevilleas to choose from, the selection of the best 20 to 30 should be an easy task. However if one of the selection criteria is that they should be available from nurseries, then the number of species to select from plummets alarmingly. Sadly, a vast number of the "best" are presently only cultivated by grevillea enthusiasts. Hopefully our three volume work will create a demand for some of these beautiful less known species and force some of our less progressive nurseries to propagate; them. It seems that if a plant is harder to strike than a *Brachyscome* or *Grevillea* 'White Wings' then it is dropped from the production line.

Grevilleas come in all shapes and sizes, from groundcovers to large trees; something to appeal to everyone and for every requirement. Selections can be made for full sun, full shade, dense screens, "tall skinnies", heavy or sandy soil and many more. In this article I recommend several species for various landscaping types; however, in Volume 1 of our books, over 60 selection criteria are listed for every species and subspecies. There is also a table which lists the best 15 species for each major city in Australia (regardless of availability!).

Despite the fact that there is a grevillea for practically every site, as a general rule they do best in an open, sunny, well-drained position. The following grevilleas have been selected for their attractive form, flower and foliage and for their hardiness, primarily in S.E. Australia.

GROUNDCOVERS

Grevillea humifusa is the new name for an 'old' grevillea, incorrectly sold for many years as *G. thelemanniana* - grey leaf prostrate. It actually has closer affinity with *G. preissii* than *G. thelemanniana* but is sufficiently distinct to warrant recognition as a species in its own right. Regardless of what it's called, with its ashy-grey soft foliage and masses of vivid red flowers during autumn and winter it certainly is worthy of cultivation. Whether cascading down a retaining wall or used as a vibrant foliage contrast, it commands considerable attention in the garden.

Grevillea lanigera is a variable species but the best variety would have to be the superb prostrate form which has been incorrectly labelled as 'M Tamboretha'. It is suspected to originate from Yanakie Isthmus, north of Wilsons Promontory in Victoria. Extremely adaptable, the dense grey leaves contrast delightfully with the pink and cream flowers throughout the year.

Growing naturally on the cool mountain tops of the Blue Mountains, *Grevillea iaurifolia* has proven to be a wonderful dense groundcover often over 3m across. It thrives in cooler climates and the large oval leaves are dense enough to form a living green mulch, making it a valuable plant for large landscapes. The showy red toothbrush flowers during spring and summer are an added bonus.

Grevillea microstegia from the Grampians similarly makes a dense cover to 3 metres, though not always completely prostrate. With its deeply divided green leaves and dark red toothbrush flowers during spring and summer it makes an attractive low shrub. New growth in autumn and winter is a beautiful bronze colour, creating distinct tonal variety in the garden.

Grevillea nudiflora from W.A. is another most variable species, the very best being the 'curly leaf form from Pt Anne in Fitzgerald River National Park. It creates an extremely dense groundcover capable of choking out most weeds. Its bright green foliage and massed red and yellow flowers on long trailing stems are set off superbly when cascading down a large retaining wall or embankment.

Grevillea repens from Victoria is a wonderful dense groundcover-up to 3m across with attractive holly leaves and burgundy-red toothbrush flowers. It can be grown under large trees if given sufficient moisture and makes a distinct landscape feature during the colder months, when its foliage becomes a deep plum colour.

SMALL SHRUBS

There are many grevilleas that are small enough to grow in small gardens and courtyards or as tub plants. One of the best for this purpose is *Grevillea lavandulacea* which occurs in a range of colours, sizes and forms. I have two favourites - one is the 'Billywing' form which comes from the Billywing swamp area of the Grampians. It forms a dense low



grey shrub to 0.3m with masses of showy red flowers, suckering lightly under favourable conditions. The second comes from Aldinga in South Australia and grows as a compact silver-grey shrub to 0.8m with a profusion of pink-red flowers. This form is sold incorrectly as the Tanundra form. Both forms are ideal as small feature plants or low border shrubs in a more formal setting.

Grevillea chrysophaea (pictured) occurs in the Brisbane Ranges, as well as in western and central Gippsland. Flower colour and habit vary, however the form from the Rosedale area is most pleasing with compact green foliage and masses of rich golden flowers throughout winter and spring. This is another species proving to be of value for planting under trees, as long as the shade is not too dense and there is sufficient water to allow its establishment.

Grevillea confertifolia from the Grampians grows in winter wet sites. However under cultivation it withstands extremely dry summer conditions once established, a valuable landscaping feature. With fine needle leaves and masses of showy mauve-pink flowers during spring and summer, it arouses much comment.

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Plants can be selected from prostrate, decumbent or upright populations.

Grevillea dryandroides ssp. *hirsuta* from the central wheatbelt region of W.A. is a most beautiful small suckering shrub. Its deeply divided ashy grey 'fishbone' leaves are bold and attractive year round while the red toothbrush flowers on trailing leafless stems radiate out from the bush. Sited in a built-up sunny bed it makes a truly spectacular feature plant. Although not widely available in nurseries at present, the compelling beauty of this plant is steadily increasing its permanent position in many nursery lists.

Grevillea maxwelliite a delightful low, layered shrub from an extremely limited area on the Pallinup River in W.A. It has deeply divided stiff foliage and massed orange-pink and red flowers hanging like bunches of grapes below the horizontal branches. It is best planted on a built-up bed so the vivid flowers can be clearly seen. The strongly layered habit is excellent in enhancing horizontal lines or giving an 'oriental' look.

MEDIUM SIZED SHRUBS

A large percentage of the genus falls into the 1 to 1.5m category; however, as with most plants, the ultimate size of these grevilleas varies according to moisture, soil fertility, etc.

Grevillea bipinnatifida comes in a range of forms from prostrate to robust 2m x 2m shrubs. It is the medium size shrubs like this that have much to offer the landscapes. With its large, boldly divided green to grey leaves it could be used as a distinct landscape plant for this feature alone but, when in full flower, the better forms are truly eye-catching with a profusion of large orange-red pendulous flowers adorning the plant like bunches of grapes.

Grevillea levis has been available for a number of years as *G. paniculata* - pink. It is a fast growing compact shrub with fine prickly grey-green leaves, which give the shrub a distinctive billowing appearance, enhanced by the masses of pink and white flowers for long periods. *Grevillea levis* makes a commanding feature or low screen plants.

Grevillea montis-cote rates as one of the most attractive of the holly-leaved grevilleas, with its bright green, coarsely-toothed leaves and pleasing, though not overly conspicuous, red toothbrush flowers. It is a valuable plant as it will grow in damp shady sites but adapts to full sun given a cool, moist root run.

Grevillea preissii has been confused with *G. thelemanniana* for over 100 years, with practically all forms of *G. thelemanniana* under cultivation actually being *G. preissii*. The most beautiful and reliable of these is the erect form that grows along the coast south of Perth. It has been occasionally sold as the 'superior' form of *G. thelemanniana*. It has dark green, finely divided, soft leaves and makes an ideal species for dense low screens or mass plantings, coming alive during winter and spring with a profusion of showy red and yellow flowers.

Grevillea speciosa from Sydney is not as readily available at nurseries today as it used to be. This is a pity as it is a delightful shrub with simple oval leaves and masses of large red 'spider' flowers from winter to early summer. It is a compact rounded shrub which looks excellent when mass planted.

LARGE SHRUBS

These selections are ideal for use as screens or background plants in large beds. They are unsuitable for small beds or where space is limited as they will quickly swamp the garden or invade paths and drives. This was a common mistake of the 1960s and 1970s, resulting in a backlash against large 'rangey' natives.

Grevillea barklyanairom north of Labertouche, Victoria, is a truly beautiful foliage plant, with broadly lobed leaves up to 0.3m long and large, though relatively insignificant, pale pink flowers. These are popular with honey-eating birds. Coming from damp forested gullies, *G. barklyana* grows rapidly, particularly in moist sheltered sites. It develops into a single-trunked shrub or small tree, ideal for shaded sites on the south side of buildings etc.

Grevillea insignis from the southern wheatbelt of W.A. is also a most beautiful foliage plant. Subspecies *insignis* has large glaucous holly leaves and stems, with bunches of showy pink and white flowers, while subspecies *eliotii* (in honour of Study Group member Rodger Elliot) has smaller grey-green holly leaves and red and white flowers. Both are large spreading shrubs ideally suited to warm sunny sites in the garden. They make superb feature plants or prickly barriers to direct traffic flow in public landscapes.

Grevillea johnsonii comes from the deep sandstone valleys north of the Blue Mountains in NSW. It develops into a dense rounded large shrub with deeply divided, soft, fine foliage which makes it a valuable screening plant. When in flower in spring with its large heads of waxy red and white (or occasionally orange) flowers, it is indeed a most pleasing shrub.

Grevillea longifolia, from the sandstone valleys south of Sydney, rapidly develops into a large spreading shrub with strongly ascending to spreading branches. The long, regularly lobed leaves are most attractive, often being used as a "filler" in floristry, whilst the red toothbrush flowers from winter to summer are profuse and showy. The bold branching habit of *G. longifolia* gives a distinctive appearance in the landscape.

Grevillea tetragonabba, from the south coast of W.A., is a wonderfully dense upright shrub with deeply divided soft green leaves. As a young plant it usually develops a bold pyramidal shape, gradually becoming more spreading with age or when grown in dappled shade. It is a long and profusely flowering shrub with showy orange-red toothbrush flowers throughout the warmer months of the year, making it popular with honeyeaters.

Grevillea milisii by contrast has a strongly layered horizontal branching habit which can be used to emphasize horizontal lines. It has very attractive ashy grey holly leaves and large cream toothbrush flowers during late spring and summer. It is an adaptable spreading plant 2 x 2-3m, making it valuable in larger landscapes.

This is a small selection from a diverse and most beautiful genus. (Unlike Margaret and Tony, the "Dryandra duo", I am far from unbiassed!!) All these species are illustrated with colour photographs, with distribution and cultivation requirements described in much greater detail in our three volumes of *The Grevillea Book*.

(I certainly didn't think I was giving Neil an easy task when I asked him if he could find time to write *Wildflower*. After writing a three volume book about 343 species, I think to choose 20 to 30 species is very difficult indeed! Neil's selection reminds us of the wealth of possibilities offered by this genus. If your own personal library cannot manage it, encourage your local library to obtain *The Greville Book*". DS)

BOOKS

"The Handbook of Australian Flowers for the Garden and Home" by Denise Greig (1993)
Simon & Schuster reported by **Joan Barren** Vic

This small, soft cover book is one of the Mount Annan Botanic Garden Native Plant Series. Other books of the Series apparently cover Native Plant Gardening, Indoor Gardening, House Plants, and Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, Chapter contents are as follows:-

- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| 1. Annuals | 2. Herbaceous Perennials | 3. Sedges and Rush-like Plants |
| 4. Bulbs & Lilies | 5. Flowers in Pots | 6. Flowering Plants for Hanging Containers |
| 7. Shrubs for Cut Flowers | 8. Cut Flowers for the House | 9. Decorating with Dried Flowers |

Quite a lot of info, for an aspiring ~~wildflower gardener!~~ (and some glossy pictures also).

Denise Greig is also responsible for the **"Australian Gardener's Wildflower Catalogue"** (1987) Angus & Robertson, which I really like because of its colour plates for every plant described and helpful cultivation notes.

"Gardening with Australian Plants - Small Plants & Climbers" by Thistle Harris (1979) Nelson has info, on rock gardens, water gardens and naming of plants; the major part of the book is made up of descriptions of alphabetically listed small plants and climbers. JB

Cottage Gardening with Australian Wildflowers by Nola and Brian Parry (1990) MacMillan 112 pages
Although the concept of this book is good, its promise has unfortunately not been realized. It covers only 120 species of plant and includes garden plans (six, each of just a section of a garden), chapters on annuals, perennials and colour combinations, and a chart of flowering times. The quality of some photographs is disappointing as are spelling and nomenclature errors. These are noticeable as we have become accustomed to a very high standard of both photographs and editing in today's books. DS

'Grow What Small Plant' Australian Plant Study Group (1987) Nelson 217 pages

This book lists and gives information about 1000 Australian plants less than one metre for courtyards, rockeries or garden beds. It has some coloured photographs but mainly black and white illustrations, and is a very useful resource. DS

'Australian Plants for Small Gardens and Containers' Gwen Elliot (1979) Hyland House 110 pages

The first section of this book deals with containers, the second with small area gardens. Each section includes general information and then helpful lists of plants to suit different purposes, giving their botanical and common names, flowering period and the author's comments. Section three lists the major horticultural features of each plant (over 550 species). Another very useful reference, DS

Useful booklets available to members

"500 Australian Native Plants - A guide to flowering times and flower colour, size, habit and cultural requirements" by SGAP Maroondah Group. This is based on the Melbourne area but can be extrapolated usefully to other areas. Cost \$2.50 plus postage 85c.

"Australian Native Plants in Melbourne: Where to find them" by Frank Shann, published by SGAP Victoria. This is a comprehensive list detailing the individual locations of plants belonging to 3,920 species in 13 public parks or gardens in Melbourne. Useful for residents or visitors. Cost of postage only, \$1.25.

Please let me know if you would like a copy of either of these booklets. DS

'Beautiful Gardens with Less Water' by John Patrick (1994) Lothian reviewed by **Anne Pye** Vic/SA

This book gives a good introduction to people starting to think about using less water in their gardens, it includes chapters on soil composition, the relevance of climate, the need (or not) for lawn, watering systems and mulches, as well as a short list of plants suited to low water gardens.

The book makes some important practical points which may not have been considered by many gardeners. These include the potential of many low water plants to become environmental weeds if used inappropriately (eg planted near natural bush or in higher water climates such as the Dandenongs or Adelaide Hills); the importance of windbreaks and mulch in reducing plant desiccation, and the relative efficiencies of different watering systems.

Basic points about designing a garden considering foliage as well as flowers, allowing space for service areas, and grouping plants of similar water needs are all clearly set out. The list of suggested plants included about 45% Australian. I thought the book covered most of the important points fairly concisely and is a good buy (\$12.95) for people who haven't seriously thought about low water landscapes yet.

"The Outdoor Room" by David Stevens (1994) Hodder & Stoughton reviewed by **Tony Heawood** Vic

David Stevens has won more Gold Medals for his gardens at the Chelsea Rower Show than any other contemporary designer. He is Professor of Garden Design at Middlesex University, an eminent gardening writer, lecturer and broadcaster, perhaps best known as the writer and presenter of the highly successful BBC2 television series

"Gardens by Design" as well as the presenter of BBC1's "Gardenwise". In *The Outdoor Room* he draws on his years of experience, and the many gardens he has designed, to produce what could be the one indispensable book for anyone designing their own garden. It is illustrated with over 230 colour photographs (principal photographer Jerry Harpur), plans and diagrams.

The ideal garden, as defined by David Stevens, is an outdoor room designed to serve its owner's needs in a way that reflects personality and lifestyle. Neither the area available nor the budget need be large: what is essential is a clear plan, the observation of a few rules and an awareness of appropriate solutions. Once you have clarified your needs, David Stevens explains how to get to really know your plot by making a detailed but simple survey. Armed with this essential data, he takes you through all the steps in drawing up a final design. With the basic framework decided, he shows how to make informed choices for the hard landscape paving, walls and so on) as well as for planting. Finally, he puts forward stimulating suggestions for the finishing touches.

A whole new way of looking at landscape architecture and design began in Germany in 1919 and was later welcomed in the USA, where a new style of American garden emerged. In England the Second World War ensured that the Modern Movement got off to a slow start, compared with the developments taking place in America, and its influence on gardens was initially minimal. After several decades of modernism, gardens and lifestyles have changed. But there need be no real division between inside and out and no hangups in exterior planning. This is the crux of the matter. Most of us are not conditioned to think of manipulating or designing the space outside - although the principles are the same as those that apply inside the house. This is one of the few spaces over which you have complete control: so don't waste it! Use it and enjoy it.

Gardens, just as much as houses, are for living in and the ideal garden is tailor-made to fit the needs of those who use it. And it goes on: planning for living outside; the total environment; working with the climate; personality and lifestyle. Good design is about simplicity, fitness for purpose and personality. If you can remember this alone, your garden is on the way to being a success.

Assessing your site comes next: aspect and impact; shelter and shade; soil types and planting; from simple survey to scale plan, working to final designs, form and function, with the note that changes may be required with the growing family.

It ends with quite a number of well-designed gardens from around the world, and I have no difficulty in applying Australian flora in place of their exotics. There are a few Australian gardens. The ideas that flow out of this book are so numerous that I suggest you keep a copy beside Diana Snape's book *"Australian Native Gardens: putting visions into practice"*, for they both provide a great deal of stimulus from successful gardens of others.

Design influences

Ian Percy NSW

I like the garden writing of Beth Chatto, in *"The Damp Garden"* published by J.M. Dent and

James Hitchmough writing for *"Gardens Illustrated"*.

To pursue naturalistic planting design, you need to work out which are the key species that make your area appealing. These 'signature' plants often possess strong architectural shape or distinctive colour. They must be used in sufficient quantity in the design to make an impact, but you will want them to occur less frequently than they do in nature so as to leave spaces for species which extend the flowering season. Sometimes it is necessary to exaggerate these secondary display species in smaller spaces. The beauty of natural vegetation often depends on it being present in extensive patches, highlighting textures, rhythmical patterns and other qualities not readily apparent on a garden scale. I have found that on average about 20 out of every 100 planting spaces need to be occupied by the key signature plants, with the rest divided up between secondary display species. The tapestry-like mosaic that results is exciting and the structural grasses, if chosen with care so that they are not too invasive, look good for a long season."

WATER

The velocity of running water

Peter Graham Vic

I read with interest the latest Newsletter with reference to water within the landscape and gardens. My mind went back to the lecture given by Tony Brindley at the Karwarra Australian Landscape Design Conference, November 1994. He talked about the way nature slows down the velocity of water by creating ponds and dams, through rocks, mosses, tufted grasses and fallen logs. By this, the water changes direction and speed; it helps lessen erosion, plus create wetlands for wildlife.

Because of the scale needed for such works, the normal backyard is no place for such a project, but the local suburban creek is the perfect place. Too many creeks around Melbourne have been planted with exotic willows and ruined by pollution and neglect. The project at Damper Creek Reserve, Mount Waverley, is such a classic example of what changes can occur with planning and forethought by Suburban Councils and design teams. This project, plus others of Melbourne Water, have brought the bush to the city and have created wetlands within our suburbs that all should enjoy. When people walk near creeks, they should look at the water cascading over smooth shaped rocks, and the cushioning effect that the tufted grasses have on the velocity of running water.

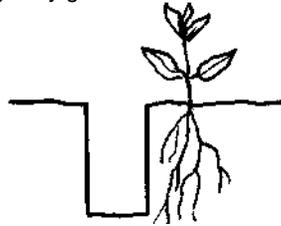
Some water conservation ideas from Sydney

Betty Rymer NSW

How about a water-wise garden? This is a theme of one of our displays for our Garden Festival, Water is scarce in many parts of Australia and water restrictions often apply, so how about some ideas from members? The old story of "grow natives - they don't need water" is not quite true. The general public need to know how to grow Australian plants and keep them alive for many years, and conserve water. You did a water theme but it was mainly focussed on ponds, not conserving water.

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Until recently we had an extended dry period in Sydney - my garden survived with very little water. I certainly avoided putting in many small plants, except where I could give them a drMc. When I do plant tiny plants I put a tin next to the hole - a weH washed open tin with holes in the bottom. When we hand water into the tin, this ensures the water gets to the roots and doesn't just run off the surface. We can use liquid fertiliser this way.



 bottom of can
encourages roots to go down
& keep away from dry surface

Our garden is quite large, on a southerly facing slope, and the garden runs into bushland of Blaekbutts and Turpentines so the soil is quite good (not poor sandstone type) but we have large areas of solid sandstone rock. We have a septic system but do have mains water. All the water from the septic tank goes from the trench into agricultural pipes (those with holes) under the flower beds. All the water from the rest of the house is also piped under the ground and dispersed. The washing machine water is piped separately - I use washing liquid free of phosphate and this water passes right by a *Grevillea* 'Robyn Gordon', *Banksia spinulosa*, *Melaleuca lateritia* and *Eriostemon myoporoides*. This was done nearly two years ago and all are thriving. We also get a lot of water runoff from the nursery opposite, and my *Toona australis*, *Brachychiton discolor* and more banksias all flourish and enjoy the water.

Some ferns are very tough and as long as they have shade and protection from wind survive without much water. In the bush part of the garden *Pellea falcata*, *Adiantum hispidulum*, *A. aethiopicum*, *Caecita dubia* (name change) never receive water - just die back and come again with moisture. It does seem important to select the ferns with rhizomes that survive drought rather than those that die down and come again from spores. Another group of plants I have tried recently is grasses. In one area we cleared blackberries and weeds - it is dry but Kangaroo Grass grows naturally so I planted here. Growth is slow, I'm sure due to lack of water. In another area where the soil retains moisture much better, the Kangaroo Grass is growing much faster. For people in the Sydney area Tod Lyatt at AABULK is a good supplier of native grasses. He has supplied them for places like the Homebush development and will be at the 1995 Rouse Hill Show in August.

GARDENS

Kurring-gai Cottage and Jill Rossiter

Barbara Buchanan Vic

The GDSG was possibly the last group to visit Kurring-gai Cottage during Jill Rossiter's lifetime; a month or two later she was admitted to hospital with terminal cancer. I like to think our enthusiasm for her beloved garden gave her comfort. When Jill retired in 1965 she began a period of extensive travelling, locally and overseas, including a trip up the East Coast with Jean Galbraith to help her complete her *Field Guide to the Wildflowers of South-East Australia* and several to W.A., Northern and Central Australia, during which she collected seed of plants which impressed her. She already had some seedlings growing from these when she began work on her two acre garden in 1971.

The site must have been both daunting and inspiring. Set on a very steep, largely east-facing slope of the Warby Range, the site is the remnants of an old gravel pit with gravel just below the surface of a thin skin of granite sand. The site is blessed with a high water table of water flowing down the slope and a magnificent view from the top of the block to the distant mountains, but a swampy area at the entrance where the underground water comes close to the surface. On the first garden visit by the newly formed Wangaratta SGAP, Jill explained to us some of the principles and constraints that had guided her during the development of the garden and showed us her album of photos made as a record.

In outline her aim was to use the seeds gathered on her Australian journeys to make a naturalistic garden which would blend into its background. She chose a brown painted timber cottage placed near the top of the block on a small terrace with some space for outdoor living. The NW wall of the cottage is protected from summer sun by a living green screen of Clematis (I think *C. aristata* as it does develop storage roots). A long lath is suspended from the eaves and each year strings are dropped from its length to the ground in late winter. New growth is trained up the strings to provide the new shield. At the end of summer the lath is easily detached, dropped to the ground and the strings and senescent vines cut.

The swampy ground at the entrance was dug out to make a roughly oval dam across the block, its length offset by a clump of tall *Gasuarina cunninghamiana* at one end. Other clumps of shrubs are grouped around the dam making a serene and satisfying picture. Each year a pair of Australian grebes rear a family of chicks here. The left hand side of the drive is lined with *Acacia mptera*, a Warby wattle with bright gold flowers offering the protection of its prickles to small nesting birds. Several magnificent remnant Red Box (*Eucalyptus polyanthemos*) all gnarled and burlled with twisted limbs, link with their fellows in the bush behind; some fallen trunks make natural sculptures in the lawn.

The edge of the terrace beside the house was planted with low growing shrubs including the rarely seen *Melaleuca cardiophylla* var. *longistaminea* from Jill's travels. Within quite a short distance so steep is the closely planted slope that 3m specimens of *Hakea buccubnta* and *H. multilinear* do not intrude on the view. Below these the slope is gentler and there is an area of lawn of quite irregular and undefined shape allowing appreciation of the old Red Box and the dense shrub thickets.

Behind and to the left of the house (as seen from below) is a varied group of banksias, some very tall and including many of the hard to grow species from WA. Jill's special favourite among the 28 she propagated was *B. prionotes*. Even without flowers the foliage of this group is a significant contribution to the garden. Because she was raising her own plants from seed Jill always had plenty available to plant in species clumps, which means that if individuals die (or have to be removed to prevent overcrowding) there are no great gaps left. Her reasoning was that this is the natural way for plants to grow and it certainly makes for effective planting. A little lower where the drive curves round to the carport there have been many dryandras; this area is now more shaded than formerly and some replanting has been started.

To me, this garden achieves that elusive blend of design and rare plants and I think Jill achieved this because of her logical, practical approach. Plants with similar needs are grouped together and only plants likely to succeed are used. This is not to claim others were never tried but they were not persisted with in the case of a rare failure. Jill also admitted to trouble with plants grouped to create special colour effects as flowering times did not always coincide. She used a lot of white flowers as a foil for other colours and a visual link through the garden. Moreover she was aware of, and used, the variety of form and foliage colour available in Australian plants with great year round effect. The view is preserved and framed, the steep slopes clothed and accommodated and a balance is struck between open space and shrubbery, light and shade. It is a garden with a wonderful, pervasive feeling of well-being.

Kurring-gai Cottage has been described in *'Ideas from Private Gardens'* N. McMaster and J. Edmanson 1986 as a 'Colourful Native Garden' by 'A Countrywoman' and has been opened several times in the Open Garden Scheme. With Jill's death the property has passed to her niece who lives in Queensland. It has been decided to offer the house and garden as a holiday destination for plant and nature lovers with the hope that this will provide an income sufficient to maintain this unique Australian garden. (Phone (057) 253 270 for further information.) There are difficult decisions ahead as no garden is static and already some plants have reached their natural life span. Every effort will be made to make any necessary changes as Jill herself might have done in the new conditions.

Australia's Open Garden Scheme (1)

Cherree Densley Vic

This is the first of a series on **'Australian gardens'** (more than 50% Australian plants, ideally closer to 100%) in the Open Garden Scheme. The information was received in reply to the letter Cherree sent to the owners of all such gardens.

Norah Elliott's garden 'High Trees' at Avalon NSW

Unfortunately a superbly detailed plan of the whole garden and a series of coloured prints cannot be reproduced in our Newsletter, but photocopies of the front garden layout and one photograph are included. Norah's description of her garden and its creation follows.

"Four years ago, this conventional and very steep garden which I inherited from my late aunt was entirely reconstructed and planted with Australian native trees and plants.

Reconstruction of Back Garden

*I soon realised I needed professional help in this task, and by good tuck was referred to Joanne Green Landscape Design Pty Ltd of Warriewood. Joanne assigned their brilliant young Designer, Chris Miller, to carry out the reconstruction to my requirements. These were:

The incline to be terraced in asymmetrical levels - definitely no straight lines; the use of chiefly native plants; screening of boundaries to camouflage no less than five adjacent buildings, especially an ugly brick wall at the foot of the property; emphasis on self-care.

Chris produced a free-flowing plan consisting of three curving grassed terraces supported by retaining walls of Gosford stone., the lower section a bushy mini-forest though which ran a stepping-stone path, each entrance to this path shaded by Tree ferns (*Cyathea cooperi*). Quick-growing melaleucas (*M. styphitoides* and *M. quinqueruvia*) and casuarinas (*C. glauca*) line the back fence, other trees being the lovely pink-flowered form of Blueberry Ash (*Elaeocarpus reticulatus*), several varieties of Lilly Pilly (*Syzygium* and *Acmena* species), the beautiful Illawarra Plum (*Podocarpus elatus*) etc. Under-storey consisted of *Melaleuca decussata*, *Correa reflexa* and *C. decumbens*, *Lomandra longifolia*, *Dianella caerulea*, *Viola hederacea*, etc. Although I am not keen on palms, Chris persuaded me to include some Cabbage Palms (*Livistona australis*) as they are natural companions of the Spotted Gum - and after all, this is the Palm Beach Peninsula.

Added features were a gazebo from which there is a glimpse of the sea, a bird-bath, and a graceful flight of stone steps (faced with terracotta tiles) with a pergola over. Each level was designed to be screened from the others - 'sequential revelation' - meaning the total garden should only be revealed gradually. The top bank was planted with *Callistemon viminalis* 'Hannah Ray' and quickly made a splendid hedge, their crimson brushes delighting us and the birds all summer. The lower bank was planted with *Banksia ericifolia* and *B. spinulosa*, but unfortunately only a few thrived, so additional plantings were later made of *Eriostemon myoporoides* and *Melaleuca incana*. As always with gardening, there are quite a few disappointments, for instance, swathes of *Bauera rubioides* along the bush path and cascades of *Myoporum parvifolium* over the stone walls only survived the first season. However, the many wattles have been a joy throughout, particularly *Acacia iteaphylla*, the delicate *A. fimbriata* veiling the gazebo and the graceful *A. howittii* beside the pergola, which was rapidly covered by the Wonga Wbnga vines (*Pandorea pandorana* and *P. jasminoides*). Also, borders and

clumps of yellow Kangaroo Paws (*Anigozanthos flavidus*) made a brilliant display yearly. Maintenance has been reduced to a minimum with the use of many ground covers of hibbertia, native violet, prostrate grevillea and acacia, baeckea, etc., repeated heavy mulching and an automatic watering system.

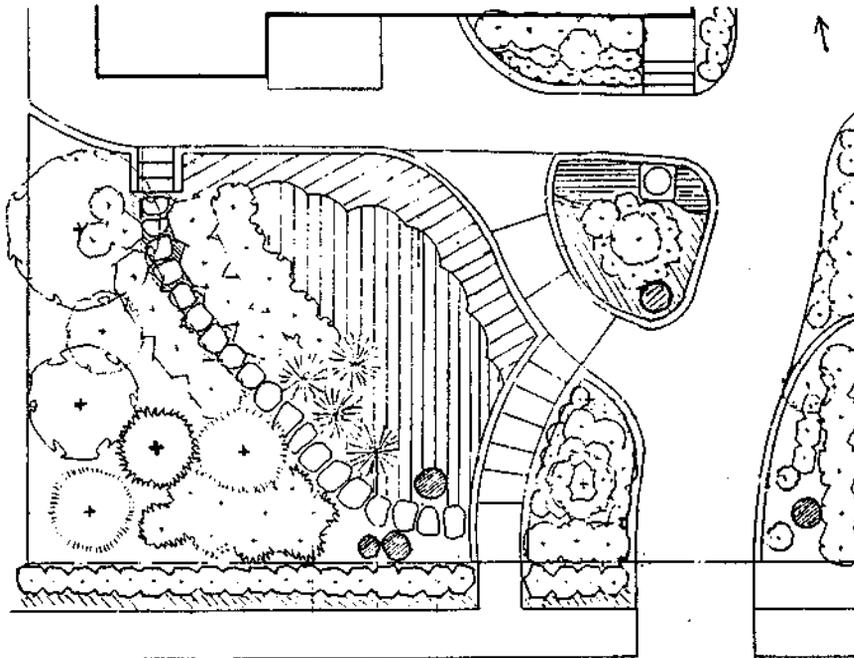
Reconstruction of Front Garden

At first I did not intend to renovate the front garden, consisting mainly of banks of azaleas. However as there were also several Spotted Gums there, a year or so later I asked Chris to plant natives more in harmony with these beautiful eucalypts. He has now transformed the site with simple treatment using ferns (*Asplenium bulbiferum*), Tree Ferns (*Cyathea cooperi*) and Grass Trees (*Xanthorrhoea communis*); also some grevilleas (G. 'Moonlight', G. 'Superb' and G. 'Ned Kelly'), the grey-leaved *Correa alba*, *Baeckea* 'Mt. Tozer', etc. Agapanthus on the footpath have been replaced with the new dwarf Lilly Pilly (*Acmena smithii* var. minor ('Riparian' form)), but some exotics were retained, including the good specimen of *Strelitzia parvifolia*.

To complete the street aspect, the soft pink paving was continued up the drive and along the front, and a new entrance gate and steps for pedestrian access constructed.

Chris Miller's imaginative yet disciplined approach to the re-designing of this seaside native garden, and his continuing interest in its development, has made our collaboration in its creation a pleasure throughout. I am immensely grateful to Chris and to Joanne Green Design Company for their expert and enthusiastic assistance in this project."

Front Garden



Gazebo



The region in which I live is best summed up by the following words:-

"Flame Trees Illuminate the Warm, Wet Forests" (Chapter 6 heading of "After the Greening" by Mary E. White).

I have been trying to classify my garden as per Newsletter No. 9 and have come up with the following.

Classification of my garden: N.A. (naturalistic, at least 55% Australian plants)

Age of garden: 9 months

Style: Ei (Integrated eclectic)

Themes: experimental/ collector/ coastal/ wetland/ scent/ texture/ sculpture/ fun!

Description (3 to 5 year vision): naturalistic/ influenced by nature, harmonious, regenerating, low maintenance & water use, ecological.

Landscape construction: nil at this stage

Horticultural notes: soil poorly drained - gypsum added; 'Roundup' used to kill weeds. Some areas are filled with 'coal wash' which has compacted, a crow-bar sometimes necessary for digging planting holes. Some mounding of soil undertaken so that I could grow plants which like well drained conditions; mulched with eucalypt litter/compost. Strong salt laden winds are a problem at times; occasional flooding after heavy rains.

Indigenous remnants: (reference text: "Wollongong's Native Trees" by Leon Fuller (1980, new edition 1995)
Casuarina glauca & *Eucalyptus panbulata* (Grey Ironbark) on neighbouring properties.

Planting design: I aim to mix natives/indigenous with exotics in a harmonious way. I am still fond of formal gardens so I am including some clipped shrubs among the naturalistic plantings.

Clipped specimens: *Acmena hemilampra*, *Acacia boormanii*, *Backhousia citriodora*, *Banksia ericifolia* dwarf, *Calothamnus quadrifidus*, *Qrevillea sericea*, G. 'Forest Rambler', *G. jenkinsii*, G. 'John Evans', *Prostanthera ovalifolium*, *Graptophyllum excelsum*, *Eucalyptus gunni*, *Callitris runcleayana*, *Westringia fruticosa* 'Smokie'.

Tree specimens: The following trees are partly experimental. Some may be removed and others will contribute to the framework of the garden as it matures.

Angophora floribunda, *A. hispida*, *Banksia serrata*, *Eucalyptus cassia*, *E. curtisii*, *E. eximia nana*, *E. haemostoma*, *E. kitsoniana*, *E. obstans*, *E. ptychocarpa*, *E. sideroxybn rosea*, 3 unidentified regenerated Eucs, *Acacia macradenia*, *Casuarina equisetifolia*, *Commersonia bartramia*, *Euodia elleryana*, *Hymenosporum flavum*, *Melaleuca leucadendron* (fine and broad leaf forms), *Pittosporum rhombifolium* and assorted rainforest trees.

Shrubs: I am experimenting with grafted grevilleas; have planted a group of 3 *Melaleuca viridiflora*.

Hedge plants: I have an informal hedge along the front fence of mixed grevillea hybrids with cherry red *G. banksii* to complement gold/amber/cream/Galah pink of hybrids. This is flowering nicely at the moment. *Callistemon pollandi* hedge at the end of the driveway (tube size). This is pure nostalgia for me, as *C. pollandi* was the first Australian plant I bought at an SGAP Show in 1968 in Brisbane.

Waterhousia floribunda hedge to screen a neighbour's shed.

Bird hide/protection shrubs: I wanted to keep the cat out of some sections! so I have included some prickly wattles, hakeas, grevilleas and grasses.

Cut flowers/Perennials: Banksias, blandfordia, *Grevillea* 'Evelyn's Coronet', Gerakfton Wax, *Haetnodorum corymbosum*, *Hakea laurina*, various Paper Daisies, crinum.

Grasses, rushes, etc: various

Nature strip/footpath garden design:

This is one of my current projects. Wollongong Council provides 10 free trees/shrubs per year. Their nursery grows a mixture of indigenous/native plants and some popular exotics.

I have chosen a Red Ash, *Alphitonia excelsa*. This rainforest tree reaches 6-10 metres on the coastal plain and is distinguished by having olive green leaves with a white underside, so that when the leaves become upturned in the breeze the whole crown takes on a grey or white appearance. To complement this I have planted *Banksia integrifolia*. For clipped shrubs, *Melaleuca linariifolia* and *Acacia floribunda* and from these, the slender trunks of *Melaleuca decora* will emerge.

Some *Eucalyptus curtisii* am included in the design to provide a visual link (thanks Fred Young of the ACT for that word) with existing specimens in the front garden. This was an important consideration as I hope to remove the fence at some stage and merge the gardens into one.

Local gardens provide inspiration for the study of design

Ian Percy NSW

The Illawarra Grevillea Park Society Garden at Bulli: I love the scale and the scope of this place, with both grand and intimate spaces (and the great cup of tea from the SGAP volunteers).

Wollongong Botanic Gardens: especially rainforest water garden (mysterious); rainforest type gardens eg local, dry, sub-tropical. Also dry climate plantings, native grasses, how to design with a mountain backdrop.

Puckeyes Estate: Coastal annexe of WBG for sea-spray, coastal, wetland, rainforest overlap and overview. Great use of boardwalks over tidal lagoons; bike track on perimeter and simple picnic tables/shelter sheds on the fishing island. The birdlife is rich and varied.

Wollongong University: What happens to a native garden as it matures and is used by a large number of people? This is a good example. (Perhaps get the chainsaw onto *Melaleuca armillaris*.) (Or treat it as a large tree instead of an overgrown shrub? DS)

Yallah TAFE: Contains a *Melaleuca decora* woodland "garden". Hand lens essential for observing specimens amongst grasses - a delight!

News from the *Friends of the RBG, Melbourne Newsletter*

At the *Associations of Friends of Botanic Gardens* Conference, Catherine Drew (a GDSG member) and Alister Hhook discussed the Brown's Lagoon Therapeutic Garden near Albury, in which they have been involved, both in design and implementation.

The Royal Botanic Gardens (RBG), Cranbourne

Work will start shortly on the Australian garden, thanks to the \$1.83 million grant by the Victorian Government. Landscape architects Taylor and Cullity Pty Ltd and Paul Thompson (GDSG member) are finalising the masterplan for the new Australian Garden, which will occupy 25 hectares in the north-western section of RBG, Cranbourne. Their imaginative design explores the theme of The nature of Australia* and the influence of plants on our life and culture. The Australian Garden will include a major visitor complex with exhibition, education, retail and catering facilities. It will be the first point of contact for most visitors to RBG Cranbourne.

The masterplan includes:

- * recurrent fingers of woodland stretching into the Australian Garden to break the site up into framed garden spaces
- * a large dramatic space designed to reflect the spaciousness of Australia's interior through the sculptural use of dryland plants, sands and landforms
- * a series of suspended structures such as boardwalks and platforms which will take visitors through a long valley planted with marsh vegetation
- * water as an essential element within the Australian garden; a spine of cafes, promenades and interpretation structures will be located along the central waterway, enhanced by gorges and rock pools.

The GDSG has renewed its membership of the Friends of RBG, Cranbourne, for 1995/6 because of the significance and importance we see in the development of this Australian Garden. Do NSW members want us to support Mt Annan BG for similar reasons? Is there a Friends Group for Mt Annan? Please contact Jo Hambrett and/or Diana Snape to let us know. (At the last meeting we decided to send a donation of \$10 to the Illawarra Grevilfea Park Society for their work.)

DESIGN IDEAS

Design ideas - for fun

Grahame Durbidge NSW

Imagine. The Landscape Design Brief calls for an outlandish - almost gaudy - planting in a small (0.5 acre) public park. Only Australian plants can be used and the "outlandish" effect must be achieved by the use of plants and not statues or other hard items, it's a flat site in full sun with good soil.

What are you going to do with it?

I would have to include a maze - *Hakea salicifolia* (syn. *H. saligna*) (Willow Leaved Hakea) about 2 metres apart and hedged at 2 metres. Some topiary might be good. How about a giant's head? A strong wire frame planted with hakea would be O.K. Some unusually shaped spiralling gravel paths and garden beds planted with brilliant colour combinations, like the purple of *Hardenbergia violacea* 'Mini Ha Ha' shrub and the yellow of *Craspedia apiculatum* (Billy Buttons) flowering together in the one garden bed. Old Man Banksia (*Banksia serrata*) planted with *Teiopea speciosissima*. Dream on.

Suggestions

Barbara Buchanan Vic

Grahame Durbidge's little exercises are very good - they make me think, even if I don't actually respond. I think it's important to visualize and describe the result you want, and analyse what you're trying to do when you choose the plants.

An alternative idea might be to nominate a tree or shrub and describe how you'd use it in a particular situation or to achieve a particular effect.

Another would be to identify a certain feature you need in the garden and then what you would do to achieve this.

Low hedges

Jan Hall Vic

Rhagodia spinescens. About five years ago we planned hedges to form letters on a steep bank at the golf club where conditions were harsh and the soil, dry sand. We now have patches of the letters in little hedges - if it had been maintained it could have been most effective now and, in fact, the staff are trying it elsewhere. I have cut ours back to form 1m hedge where it had covered a large area but it certainly can be pruned harder and will shoot readily from old low wood. We have used at least three *Rhagodia* spp. In this way, including *R. crassifolia* and *R. nutans*.

Syzygium australe 'Bush Christmas' looks very promising among the four or five dwarf Lilly Pillies I have, with the smallest leaves and compact growth.

I am about to plant *Graptophyllum excelsum* which struck easily from cuttings - now we'll try its performance under our variable conditions.

Melaleuca bracteata 'Golden Gem' is very hardy but needs summer water. Ours has had the chainsaw treatment twice. *Melaleuca arnutlaris* 'Green Globe' is hardy here but also needs extra water and fertilizer to keep it looking dense. Other people have nice specimens growing without competition in lighter soil.

Pavonia hastata probably is a problem in high rainfall or very good garden conditions. Here it will self seed in certain spots but is quickly limited by long dry periods. I don't mind the occasional useful volunteers. It is useful where tree roots compete and in other harsh situations. Include the plant with other so-called environmental weeds such as

Sottya heterophylla and *Pittosporum undulatum* which are "hardy" in an area with no adjacent bush areas. It is up to us all to take a responsible attitude to their use and labelling is part of the answer.

Comments on small trees

Geoff Simmons Qld

The contributions by Jeff Howes and Barbara Buchanan on page 15 of the last Newsletter both referred to pruning shrubs to make small trees - I have done this with two species planted in 1992. These are *Rhodamnia rubescens* (Scrub Stringy Bark or Brown Malletwood) and *Toechima dasyrrache* (Blunt-leaved Steelwood). The first has been described as a large shrub or small tree and the latter as a small tree. By cutting low growth they can be shaped. In regard to coppicing, the gums, mainly *Eucalyptus curtisii* (Plunkett Maltee), that were affected by the bush fire were cut off at ground level and allowed to shoot up. There were numerous shoots that I have since pruned at a height of about a metre but whether they will produce flowers and hence seed when kept low is problematical.

In regard to height of trees, there seems to be quite a divergence of opinion. Irrespective of the influence of environmental factors on the growth of trees, it seems desirable to have definition of small, medium and tall for the height of trees. I am of the opinion that 3 metres or less is a small tree. It is possible that a tree that grows 4 or 5 metres can be pruned to keep below 3m, hence the expression of this fact could be used in conjunction with the natural height data.

(I thought we were aiming quite low when we decided on 6 metres for our maximum height for 'small' trees. Many (most?) reference books refer to trees of height 12 metres as being 'small'! DS)

Plant and colour combinations

Red/grey combinations

Cherree Densley Vic

There are two areas of absolute beauty in the garden at present with this unexpected colour combination.

(1) *Eremophila glabra* form 0.3 m high up to 1 metre wide. Small neat grey bush, tightly branched, upright. The Eremophila Study Group are not sure where this one comes from; it's easy to strike and looks like a low clipped lavender hedgerow. It has small and inconspicuous flowers (green) and doesn't look sad in winter, as some eremophilas do. Through this and beside it are two plants which in flower look very special: *Correa reftexa* - bright red with heaps of flowers - a Kurartga Nursery form; and *Grevillea pinaster* - very healthy here at Killarney (one of the few I can grow) with large, very elegant bright red heads of flowers. This area, altogether about 2 m squared in area, really draws the eye.

(2) *Leucophyta* (formerly *Calocephalus brownii*, which we should use much more, with *Grevillea themanniana* - the low prostrate grey form with bright red flowers (now *G. humifusa* - see Neil Marriot's article) and once again - guess what - a *Correa* of course. This time *Correa reftexa*, Anglesea form, upright with very thin, long dark red flowers - the whole about 3 m squared in area.

So the message here is - plant something grey against those red flowering grevilleas and correas to bounce those deep reds back and forth and to make a real dazzle!

Two plant combinations

Diana Snape Vic

(1) When an unexpected patch of winter sun drew me outside, I noticed recently three small plants flowering together for the first time. The tallest is a small shrub, *Phebalium squamulosum* (a low form, I think - ours hasn't reached a metre yet) with dumpy buds and starry, pale lemon flowers. Close by, *Brachyscome multifida* 'Sunburst' is, for us, a far more vigorous and successful groundcover than the earlier 'Lemon Drops'; its daisy flowers range from pale to deep cream with lemon centres. Both of these have pleasant but inconspicuous foliage. The third, *Lomandra confertifolia* ssp. *rubiginosa*, is a wonderful plant which gives structure and a focus to the trio. It has arching, fine, grey foliage (like a firm grass) and long-lasting spikes of tiny flowers in shades of cream, lemon and rust. This combination of colours is subtle and very appealing.

(2) You might call the second a colourless combination. In an area which we want to keep low, adjacent to a mulched open area, we have planted over the last year or two a variety of groundcover plants, several of each species and all with flowers in shades of white. There are daisies, the irresistible *Brachyscome multifida* (white) and *B. segmentosa*; *Pimelea humilite*, which suckers happily; and vigorous *Scaevola albida*. Growing among these towards the back are slightly taller plants: two *Epacris tongiflora* (white), one *Correa pulchelia* (a creamy white, from Cherree Densley) and, the tallest at this stage, two plants of *Hypocalymma angustifolia* with lovely, fluffy all-white flowers. Already a nice "tapestry" effect is developing of different foliage colour and textures, with always a few flowers.

Nearby are several newer plants of *Brachyscome sturtii* and *Tetratheca thymifolia* (white). A mature *Leptospermum potygalifolium* (*flavescens*), centrally placed on the other side of the open area, is the original (medium-large) shrub in the area with white flowers which inspired this colour theme here. Three low 'Pacific Beauty' forms, two on one side, one on the other, have been added since. Behind all this white we do get into colours, but there is something restful and appealing about the combination of green and white.

After the Autumn break - a pleasing blend of flower colours in May.

Jan Hall Vic

Tall shrubs *Acacia harveyi* soft yellow

Hakea orthorhyncha & *Allocasuarina nana*, similar reds, both backlit by the sun

Eucalyptus kruseana & *E. websteriana*

Medium shrubs *Eremophila oppositifolia* cream & pink tones

E. neglecta shiny red, cream bracts and *E. oldfieldii* green foliage, red flowers

Acacia brovnmii cream

Small *Bracteantha bracteata* creamy pink & pink forms

Banksia integrifolia dwarf form creamy yellow with hint of pink

Brachyscotm 'Stardust' cream & yellow

After picking these flowers I realized the subtle blending of the colours. Obviously other bracteantha, eremophila, banksia & hakea would harmonise as well in these red, pink, cream & soft yellow colours. The banksia is in a container but the others all tolerate drought conditions and clay soil. These are not planted together so I can't oblige with a photo, but I would like to try them together somewhere.

An unexpected groundcover

Geoff Simmons Old

Jasminum suavissimum (Sweet Jasmine), with its wiry 1-2 mm stems and small white flowers, was planted with the thought that the strong fragrance of the flowers would be a desirable feature to have along a stairway. Several plants were positioned on a slope in an open to semi-shaded area. The result has been a thick carpet. The runners or stems develop roots at intervals, so nourishing the plant from start to finish and the appearance, even in drought conditions, has been a bright green with small, starry white flowers appearing above the foliage. It doesn't entirely suppress other plants as I notice the nuisance fern *Lygodium japonicum*'s growing in one area.

While the flowers are scented, the perfume is not as strong as plants that I have grown elsewhere - perhaps there is a variation between clones, a soil influence or a diminishing ability on my part to detect the jasmine odour.

JOTTINGS

New ideas from members - None!?

Can you help? Some years ago we installed a micro-jet watering system using (now obsolete) fittings. As the garden has changed, some watering points need to be removed but I cannot find 5mm. plugs/stoppers to occlude the old holes; those now available are only 4mm and are therefore too small.

Does anyone else have this problem? Does anyone have a solution? **Linda Floyd**

Questions Recently members have asked whether two attractive plants are Australian natives:

Phylla (Lippia) nodiflora - a great groundcover for hot, dry spots (Grahame Durbidge)

Pennisetum alopecuroides - a beautiful grass

Rodger **Elliot** says that, after recent uncertainty, the answer for both of these is now unfortunately WO.

Australian plants, Australian gardens (revisited)

Diana Snape Vic

I'd like to outline my own ideas about the use of these two terms, particularly for new members who missed out on earlier discussions in the Newsletters. Please write in with your comments, whether in support or disagreement.

I am sure about the first term. I would encourage all members to use 'Australian plants' instead of 'native plants', consistently, for the following reasons:

* 'Native plants' has no real meaning unless you say native of or to a particular area.

- 'Australian native' seems unnecessary - why not just Australian?

- The word 'native' has, I think, a suggestion of inferiority, a heritage of past (and present) ignorance and prejudice.

- 'Native plants' were given a bad name in many eyes by the mistakes of the sixties.

- The word 'Australian' should help people see our plants in a new and more positive way.

- It is very reasonable to confine the term 'Australian plants' to those which originated in this country, rather than all those which happen to grow here now, including introduced exotic plants. In this latter context the term becomes meaningless.

'Australian gardens' is much trickier, as it is already a widely used and accepted term (in books, magazines, etc), meaning any gardens situated in Australia. (These *could* just be called 'gardens in Australia'.) However I see no reason why GDSG members (or SGAP members) should not, as far as possible, confine this term to gardens which have at least 50% Australian plants - a modest proportion. ('Real Australian garden' could add emphasis to its use.) However we don't want to discourage people from introducing Australian plants into an exotic garden.

An 'all Australian garden' is easier. We can define it as one (in Australia) which has at least 95% Australian plants. This has a clear meaning and is a new term, which we could encourage all people with suitable gardens to use. (I'm not sure about fruit and vegies - do they have to be part of the other 5%?) A garden with at least 95% plants indigenous to that area could either be an 'irdigenous garden' or an 'all indigenous garden'. (Difficult questions of provenance, and just how big an area, we'll leave till next Newsletter to discuss, so send in your ideas.) If we used 'all indigenous garden' here, then an 'indiaeous garden' could be 'all Australian' with at least 50% indigenous plants.

Sydney meetings

Eleven members braved the icy weather to attend a meeting at my house on Sunday 18th of June. Michael Bates, Stephanie Bull, Ron Gornall, Jeff Howes, Nadia Lalak, Geoffrey and Anne Long, Danie Ondinea, Gordon Rowland, Louise Gore and myself gathered round the log fire and contributed to a lively discussion on the NSW GDSG and its future. It was decided that we should have four meetings a year - SUMMER, AUTUMN, WINTER & SPRING - held on the fourth Sunday of February, April, July & October. This avoids school holidays and public holidays etc.

The 1995 Spring meeting will be held on 29th October. It can be treated as a full or half day excursion, but we do need a minimum of ten at each inspection so please all members make a special effort four times a year.

10:00 am Inspection of John Hunt's garden (of "*Creating an Australian Garden*" fame)

12:30 - 1:30 Bring your own picnic lunch to enjoy in Betty Rymer's garden.

2:00 - 4:00 pm Inspection of a Bruce Mackenzie garden belonging to Mr & Mrs G Cockburn.

All these gardens are in the Durai/Kenthurst area, on acreage, and the owners have kindly agreed to walk and talk us through their design principles. RSVP15/10/95

Our summer garden will hopefully be a coastal one and the Autumn inspection possibly the Blue Mountains.

Please don't hesitate to ring with ideas, suggestions and possible sites for discussion. Kind regards, **Jo Hambrett**

Melbourne Meetings: revised time - 1.45 pm for 2 pm.

If you haven't been to a meeting for a while and there hasn't been a recent Newsletter, please check the venue by phoning. Occasionally changes become necessary and it's difficult to contact everyone. It is also helpful to the member whose home is the venue to know approximately how many are coming.

August 6 at Joan Barrett's,

Sept 3 at Tony & Joy Robert's 'Noorumboon',

October 1 (just after the ASGAP Conference) at Diana Snape's

November 5 at Diana Snape's: **Special meeting** for members and friends with a guest speaker,

Phyllis Simons, author and pioneering Landscape Architect. Her topic is **'Designing with Nature in Australia'**.

Do come to this meeting if you possibly can, and also please let Diana know if you're coming so we have an idea of how many people to expect.

** STOP PRESS - GDSG Workshop Weekend 1996 ***

An invitation has just come from Cherree Densley, on behalf of Warrnambool and District SGAP, for the GDSG to hold a workshop weekend at Warrnambool on March 15-17 next year. More details next NL, but note the date in your diary now.

New Members for 95/96 (1/7/95 to 30/6/96) ("professional qualifications &/or practice)

A warm welcome to the following new members. A plea to all members who haven't yet done so to send in membership forms, to make it easier for Peter Garnham and me to keep our records up-to-date. DS

David Alman

Nik Brown

Steve Burley

Wendy Cannon

Janice Creasey

Peter Cuneo

Gillian Davies

Aline Deckert

Murray Fyynn

John Hulme

Mark James

Lyn Johnson

Wendy Mackie

Gillian Morris

Erica Nathan*

Gil Teague

R. R. Trevilyan

Lyn Waddell

C & D Wtlksch

SGAP Nowra NSW

SGAP Pine Rivers Qld

Further membership renewals for 95/96

Carol Beatley, Shirley Bloomfeld, Elizabeth Brett, Barbara Buchanan, Tony Cavanagh, Simone Chappie, Karen Clarke, John & Janet Coath, Bev Courtney, Glenda & Bernie Datson, Catherine Drew, Vanessa Elwell-Gavins, Linda Floyd, Bernadette Flynn, Margaret Garrett, Wendy Geale, Louise Gore (Wesley), Trudy Grace, Peter Graham, Marilyn Gray, Jan Hall, Tony Heawood, Jeanette Heinemann, Joan Henderson, Nick Hockey, Jeff Howes, Margaret Ingall, Greg Ingerson, Nadia Lalak, Margarete Lee, Margaret Lee, Nicole Lenffer, Doug McIver, Helen Morrow, Penny Munro, Ian Percy, Anne Pye, Joy & Tony Roberts, Gwen Sanders, Phil Skillicorn, Ross Smyth-Kirk, Stephen Thomas, R.K. Willson, Jane Weyand, Jacqueline Winder, Fred Young, Alik Zouliou; SGAP SA Region, SGAP Tasmania.

Our main theme for NL 11 is *Indigenous gardens* - or perhaps we should say *Use of indigenous plants*. Many members have expressed interest in this aspect of garden design, so don't hesitate now to let us know any Ideas (or problems) you have. Must an indigenous garden be naturalistic, or can it be formal? Are ideas widely applicable or will they be limited to a local area? How local is local? Remember YOU are the GDSG; if you are stirred to write something, please don't resist the impulse. Other themes coming up soon: Formal gardens and plants; Large gardens, and Combining Australian plants and exotics.

My best wishes to all members - enjoy the delights of spring.

Q>/*
Jloy™

Diana Snape