



GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP

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Newsletter
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Leader's Comments

It is a real testament to Dianna Snape that this *Newsletter* is the 100th of a regularly appearing quarterly report of the Garden Design Study Group that she started 25 years ago. Diana was the editor for the first 10 years and has been a regular contributor ever since, reporting on the Melbourne group's activities as well as writing informative articles. In recognition of this effort and her promotion of the use of Australian native plants in Australian gardens as seen, for example, in her pioneering book "The Australian Garden: Designing with Australian Plants", Victoria APS nominated her for an Australian Plants Award in 2018. I am very pleased to say that the selection committee unanimously supported that nomination and the award in the Amateur section will be bestowed on Diana in Tasmania in January 2018 at the ANPSA Biennial meeting in Hobart. We hope to see some of you there.

One Hundred GDSG Newsletters and Counting...

This is our 100th Garden Design Study Group *Newsletter*!. It is quite an achievement for a small group to persist for over twenty-five years and keep up enthusiasm for writing about garden design with Australian native plants. Thanks to all our wonderful contributors over the years and especially to my two predecessors as editors, Diana Snape and Jo Hambrett. Keep up the correspondence and the contributions and we will continue for another twenty-five years. (*Ed.*)

Correspondence

David Redfern, Vic

Many thanks to Ros and you for another awesome *Newsletter* – better than any magazine.

Geoff and Jenny Densley, NSW

I would like to be a part of the Garden Design Study Group as that is my main interest.



Grevillea barklyana subsp. *barklyana* photo at the ANBG

Fiona Johnson, NSW and Canberra

Having seen how much money (not to mention manual labour) is spent producing and sending out the hard copy GDSG *Newsletters* I'm happy for you to switch me over to receiving it by email.

It's been an interesting winter (in Blayney) - cold nights, mild days, no rain. I've lost a number of very young plants which is once again a reminder to me NOT to plant in autumn! I know, it's against most commonly accepted practice.

(Ed. Also our experience here in Canberra. Better NOT to plant in autumn, although this is standard practice in our area. Much better to plant in spring and allow the plants to get established before the winter frosts.)



Part of Fiona and Alex's garden in Blayney in 2013 Photo by Ben Walcott

Caroline Gunter, NSW

I am having trouble getting about and won't be continuing my membership with the Garden Design Study Group. The *Newsletters* are terrific and you both are doing a marvellous job. After back surgery I'm having difficulty sorting the rampant weeds from the groundcovers, but a lovely gold *Deua grevillea* is being very brave. *(Ed. We are sad to lose you Caroline. Thank you for your contributions over the years and good luck with your health in the future.)*

Jim and Pam Yarra's Sustainable Habitat Garden

Pam Yarra, Vic

Some months ago I was contacted by Gerry Robinson, the convener of the Heathmont History Group. He had visited our Open Garden in September last year and saw that it was worthy of inclusion in the soon to be published Heathmont Sketchbook.

A local artist Linda Hibbs has certainly captured the essence of the garden with her composite sketch.



Sketch of Pam Yarra's garden by Linda Hibbs

This dry, shady suburban garden with remnant bush garden has evolved over 37 years, changing to meet the needs of the family. Other indigenous plants have been added, as well as water wise Australian plants. There are a few exotic plants for sentimental reasons and at the rear of the house are raised (hip height) no dig vegetable gardens. A herb garden is located in close proximity to the kitchen.

Many plants are bird attracting, as well as those plants which attract insects, butterflies, dragonflies, and bees. Spiders reside both inside and outside the house; lizards are found in sheltered areas with leaf litter bark and rocks. Frogs lay eggs in the frog pond and can be heard in many areas of the garden and often seen in unexpected locations. No garden is complete without possums and both Ring tail and Bushy tail abound, and while there are boxes for them, the inside of the shed roof is preferable for several Bushy tail families.

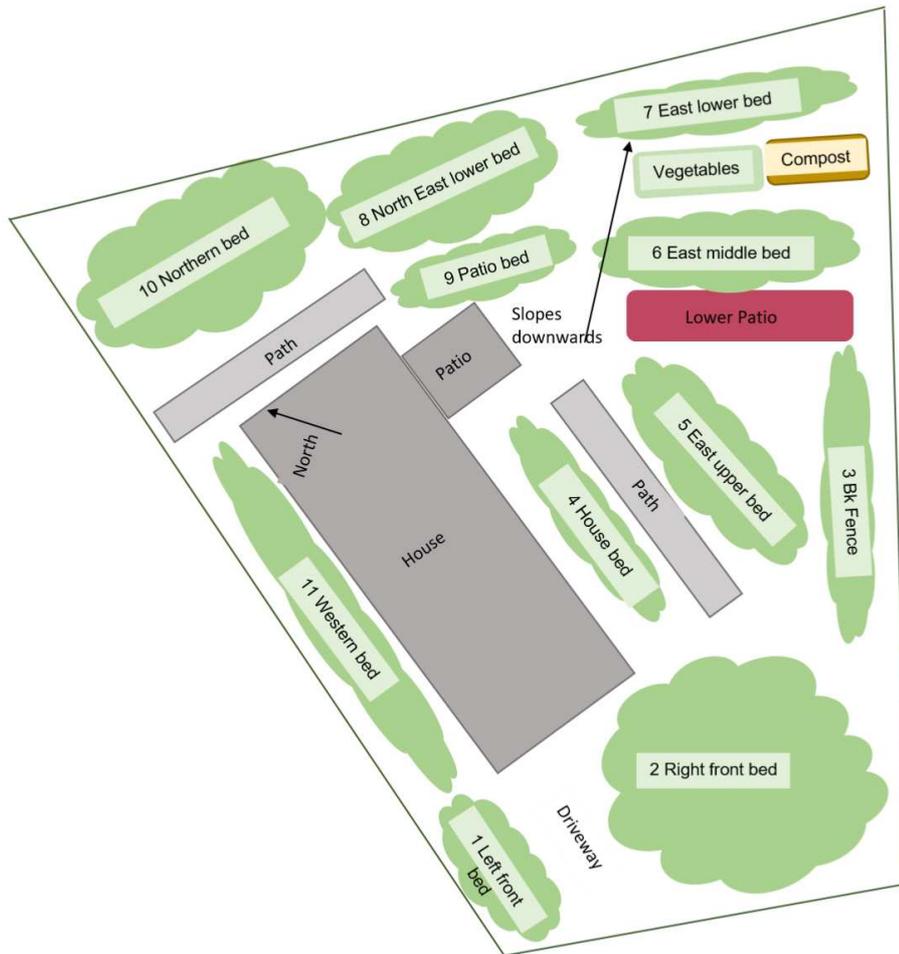
Water is significant in the garden and a number of water tanks have a total capacity of 12,500 litres. The water is used for the vegetable and fern garden and for maintaining the many bird baths. All suitable food is composted in bins or fed to the worm farm, ensuring that very little has to go into landfill. Leaves and prunings are mulched and stored in bins for garden use.

Many of the plants and art works have been presents from family and friends, so hold many good memories.

The beautiful curved paths covered with weed mat and soft eucalypt mulch, garden furniture, two decks for leisure and entertaining and all other labour intensive projects are the work of Jim. The garden, even more so now, has very special memories since the sudden and unexpected death of my husband Jim in January this year.

Meehans Native Cottage Garden

Brenda Meehan, Qld



We moved in this house in 2011 and immediately set to removing the existing palm trees, lawns and exotics from the 800sq m block. The original soil is sandy silt over silty clay and weathered rock, most of which has been improved with home-made compost, gypsum and fertiliser. Digging and planting provides lots of stones for some of the paths. We enjoy the many birds that visit us regularly including cockatoos, friarbirds, blue-faced and other honey-eaters, fairy wrens, magpie larks and once, a pheasant coucal.



Design/Growing Challenges

The garden is grown in the cottage garden style with plenty of plants everywhere and self-seeders generally left to grow. Other than a few grafted specimen plants, the aim is a flowing line of greenery in the shrub border effect. Every space is a planting opportunity! The following is a description of the challenges and highlights of each of the garden beds.





Bed 1, left front of driveway

This narrow bed gets the hot western sun at one end, has rocky sub-soil and competing roots with the neighbours' lilly pilly hedge. Taller plants will provide some summer shade to the house including *Dodonea viscosa subsp. cuneata*, *Grevillea* 'Candelabra' and a *Leptospermum brachyandrum* with a nice weeping habit and peeling bark. *Grevillea* 'Little Honey' has been doing well here.

Bed 2, right side of driveway

This large, west-facing, bed was mulched over in 2011, replacing a lawn and a few large spiky cacti. The initial design planting of a bordering hedge of Beach Cherries (*Eugenia reinwardtiana*) was removed when myrtle rust became a problem. For the next three years a variety of shrubs

were planted until the arrival of a new driveway next door and a permanently parked caravan. Though not wanting a garden full of lilly pillies that will require ongoing trimming, they seemed the best screening option and a mix of *Syzygium* 'Cascade' and S. 'Superior' were planted late in 2015 with a fortnightly application of seaweed solution and plenty of water. After 18 months they've reached the right height and as they thicken up, will replace some of the other



shrubs including the *Dodonea triquetra*, *Leptospermum* 'Pink Cardwell' and *Westringia* 'Naringa'. Successes in this bed include the metre-wide *Melaleuca violacea*, the mass of self-seeding yellow buttons, *Chrysocephalum apiculatum*, that have spread across the bed near the house and flower well after rain; and the feature tree, *Eucalyptus* 'Summer Beauty'. Along the edge of the driveway is a challenge with the northern and western sun and rocky soil.



Even the hardy *Callistemon viminalis* 'Little Silver' doesn't grow well here so a number of the common (to native gardeners) hardy *Sauropus albiflora* are planted along with a *Rhagodia spinescens* and some *Casuarina* 'Cousin It'. Surprisingly the grevilleas mostly do well on this rocky soil though the G. 'Peaches and Cream' plants are not growing so well after a hard prune. The mixture of bird-attracting grevilleas, flowering gum and the potted *Xanthorrhoea fulva* 'Trunkless Grass Tree' provide a very pleasing outlook from our bedroom window.

Bed 3, along the southern boundary fence

This bed mainly has plants that need to screen out the house next door. A pioneer Brisbane Wattle is gradually being overtaken by *Backhousia citriodora* 'Smell O'the Bush', *Mallotus claxylodes* and *Podocarpus elatus* pine along with understory lilly pilly and Myrtle Wattle plants. The Weeping *Baeckea frutescens* provides a nice overhang near the gate framing the initial view of the back garden.

Bed 4, along the eastern side of the house

The sheltered position here with morning sun provides some nice growth that's not replicated elsewhere in the garden. The bee-attracting *Swainsona galegifolia* is always in flower and provides interest while dining. The design plan here is to have 30cm high plants at the windows to frame but not obstruct the view and the dwarf



Melaleuca incana does this nicely. Finding flowering plants to border the path in full summer sun at the front of this bed is an ongoing challenge and even successful ones need regular replacement, e.g. scaveola and yellow buttons. *Goodenia ovata* is the latest trial plant.

Bed 5, larger eastern bed rhs of the path



This bed is intended to have the herbaceous shrub border look from the patio and house, and a variety of plants are bringing the look together. Several colours of *Melaleuca thymifolia* border the path and flower well with moisture. A grafted *Grevillea humifusa* provides long term colour and a focal point. Plants cascading over the retaining wall down to the next level include *Austromyrtus dulcis*, *Hibbertia scandens*, *Leptospermum liversidgei*, *Leptospermum 'Pink Cascade'*, *Rhagodia spinescens* and *Grevillea 'Poorinda Royal Mantle'*.



Bed 6, lower eastern bed next to the lower patio



Another shrub-border effect bed with a new low hedge of *Hibiscus insularis* and several grevilleas. *G. 'Lollipop'* is flowering well and a new *G. 'Sylvia'* will add more colour on the southern end of this bed.



Bed 7, lowest bed in the garden

This bed is planted to screen out the house below to a height of 3 metres and allow views to the distant ridge of native bush. Some pioneer Brisbane wattles, *Acacia*

fimbriata, are being gradually replaced by various lilly pillies, a paperbark tree *Melaleuca leucadendra*, and a *Podocarpus elatus*. The first ever native we planted in a previous garden was a *G. 'Honey Gem'* and it didn't survive long. However, *G. 'Honey Gem'* was one of the first plants in this bed before we got the mattock and started using gypsum and it's done very well.



Bed 8, narrow bed by the patio

This bed would be ideal as a showcase of small flowering natives but is challenging with an overhang from the patio roof reducing the rain it gets and a north-east aspect providing hot morning sun. *Thryptomene saxicola* does well there until it gets woody. Latest trial here includes a *Hibbertia scandens* and a couple of *Melaleuca violacea*. *Brachyscomes* provide seasonal colour.



Bed 9, lower bed below the patio

Another bed with screening plants hiding the highset house at the back. A Bribie Pine, *Callitris columellaris*, is doing well here as do the Dodoneas and a *Grevillea 'Candelabra'*. There's another *Podocarpus elatus* and a *Backhousia citriodora* coming along nicely; and a *G. 'Moonlight'* has been added for more colour. Picture shows the Scented Daphne *Phaleria clerodendron* and Tinkling Satinash *Syzygium alatoramulum*.



Bed 10, north facing bed at the back of the house

This large bed gets Winter shade from tall lilly pillies next door and hot northerly sun in summer. Plants compete with the lilly pilly roots as well. *Acacia o'shanesii* is one of the new screening plants here along with *Micromelum minutum* and some dodoneas.

A *Leptospermum maddidum* will provide a nice weeping plant view from the patio and a thicket of *Pittosporum multiflorum* is coming along nicely with plenty of suckers for small bird habitat.

Hypoestes floribunda and *Abelmoschus moschatus* provide hardy, self-seeding seasonal colour in this bed. In pics *Hakea actities*, *Bulbine bulbosa*, Phillip Island Hibiscus (*Hibiscus insularis*) and our resident possum.



Bed 11, narrow bed on the western side between the house and boundary fence

This bed of poorly draining gravel over clay suits *Melaleuca irbyana*, *Melaleuca quinquinerva*, *Phyllanthus lamprophyllus* and *Syzygium australe*. A shady spot under a lilly pilly outside the laundry door is planted with *Morinda jasminoides*, *Orthosiphon aristatus*, *Pararistolochia praevenosa* and *Plumbago zeylanica* providing a nice view of greenery. Bark of the Swamp Tea-tree (*M.irbyana*) is an attractive view from the study. These plants are all trimmed to the height of the house to shade some western sun without blocking all the light.



GDSG visit

It was raining the day the group visited in May and our garden was one of three on the agenda for the day so we didn't have much time to discuss the beds that are still developing. However, it wasn't long after all the rain from Cyclone Debbie so the garden was looking particularly green and lush on the day. It's been nice to enjoy the winter blooms before the summer heat comes around again.

Now that I've compiled this article I'd like to get around to drawing up a better design outline using the software as Lawrie suggested, maybe after I've potted up all those cuttings that are ready and done a few more spring plantings.

Correspondence GDSGQ

Brenda Meehan

I'm looking for ideas to plant something at the fence line btw two Lilly pillies, next to a large Brisbane wattle which we expect to take out as we want a green wall effect there rather than trees blocking the view beyond the roofline below.

The *Melaleuca* 'Revolution Green' that's planted there now is not shrubby enough. It needs to be bushy but not protrude too far, < 1m, because we pass there all the time. Something other than another Lilly Pilly. Any ideas welcome.

Bob Bannon

How about a *Graptophyllum excelsum* or *ilicifolium*. Alternatively, there is a Bottlebrush on the market now, called 'Slim'. Not sure of its parentage (maybe *M. saligna*?) or flowering capabilities though.

Leanne Dunne

I was going to suggest Slim also. It's going well in my front garden. Here is the Ozbreed promo video for it -

<https://youtube/PnC0iknO42E>

Lawrie Smith

Just filling in time after spending a day 'frolicking' in the snow at the top of a 1,800m mountain near Lucerne and gave Brenda's query a few minutes thought. You need something upright that will have a different but complementary texture. I have a similar problem at home. Thoughts out of left field:

Podocarpus elatus

Ptychosperma macarthuri - slow but worth the wait

Ixora timorensis

Cordyline spp - massed group of many

Leea indica

Lagunaria patersonii

Acmena hemilampra - could be too big?? But can be formed to shape

Dodonea sp - mental block

Persoonia sp - another blockage

Breynia nervosa - prune to form and density

That's the end of the first glass of local wine

Think I'll stop there!! I know there are other options but the Autumn leaves have obviously taken precedence!!!

Tomorrow Johannesburg



Graptophyllum ilicifolium photo from ANPSA

Jane Fountain

One of my favourites is the *Graptophyllum ilicifolium* mentioned by Bob - it is very hardy and responds well to pruning as Mackay Branch and Lawrie have trialed in hedging. Another favourite of mine is *Pavetta australiensis* which responds best in good soil and prefers to not dry out, but is fairly forgiving. I guess your lillypilly would like the same. My Pavettas are flowering now - lovely balls of sparkly white above the new green growth. It does tend to not keep the foliage low down, tho'.

Brenda Meehan

Thanks all for those suggestions. I do have a slim growing callistemon, if only I'd taken cuttings, so I might look for the new Slim version. I have a graptophyllum I could transplant seeing as the garden is nice and wet. I find pavetta is too enticing and loses all its foliage to the critters. Dodoneas seem to be short lived, succumbing to borers after a few years.

Wet and Frosty Foliage

Words by Ros Walcott, Canberra
Photos by Ben Walcott, Canberra

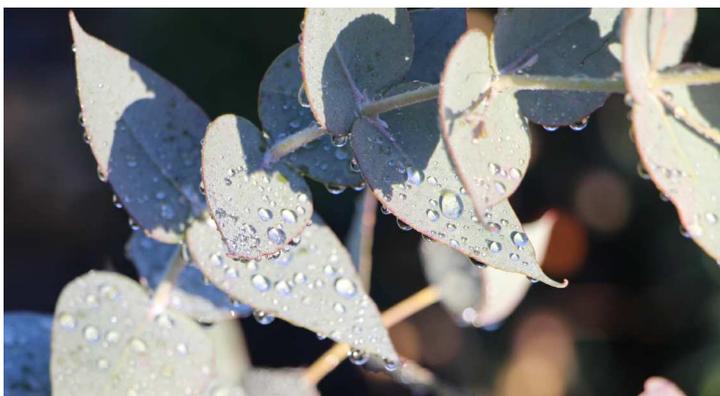
One of the best pieces of advice I can give to those designing a garden is put your most interesting foliage nearest the paths so that you can enjoy it in every season. Great foliage is always pleasing, no matter what the weather or time of day or year. Australian natives have marvellous foliage. The variety of shapes and display of colours is breathtaking. One of my particular garden pleasures is to walk around in the early morning or after rain to admire the beauties of wet or icy foliage .



Our garden after rain with the morning sun

'that unearthly clear shining after rain' Colour, Dorothea McKellar

Eucalypt leaves have a special relationship with rain and ice. The drops sit on the leaves like jewels or drop along the margins like a necklace. Below is *Eucalyptus gunnii* showing drops sitting on foliage and depending along the margins. *Eucalyptus gregsoniana* has teardrop ice crystals at the end of each leaf and around the developing buds (Ben's hands were freezing as he took this shot and I heard a few complaints about cruelty to photographers.)



Eucalyptus gunnii



Eucalyptus gregsoniana

Myoporum floribundum has distinctive foliage in any weather, but is particularly attractive with droplets hanging from its fringe of fine leaves. *Acacia cognata* 'Lime Magik' has fine, pendent, lime-yellow foliage which shows up well in the rain. *Hakea pachyphylla* has fine dark green leaves which give an overall array of droplets. *Xanthorrhoea australis* or Grass Tree has a spray of fine green foliage which displays a pleasing arrangements of drops. *Callistemon viminalis* 'Hannah Ray'



Myoporum floribundum



Acacia cognata 'Lime Magik'

has blunt drooping foliage which also shows off raindrops. *Acacia covenyi* or Bluebush is prized for its silver-grey foliage which contrasts nicely here with the yellow of the flowerbuds. Even short leaves like those of *Correa* 'Barossa Gold' look more attractive in the rain (see next page).



Callistemon viminalis 'Hannah Ray'



Acacia covenyi

Callistemon pityoides has fine dark green leaves which suspend plenty of drops. Best of all in the rain, and our gardener John's favourite, is *Casuarina cunninghamii*, with fine linear foliage which seems to hold the raindrops captive in the light. *Grevillea insignis* or Wax Grevillea has distinguished 'holly-like' blue grey foliage, very prickly and always attractively veined with the sun shining through it. Here it not only has raindrops, but also wet spider webs to add to the show. Overall sheen added to eucalypt leaves also increases their beauty, see *Eucalyptus citriodora*.



Correa 'Barossa Gold'



Callistemon pityoides

The buds of *Eremophila maculata* hold water. *Ricincarpus tuberculatus* 'Bridal Star' or Wedding Bush has delicate dark green linear foliage with red stems. *Eucalyptus pyriformis* or Pear-fruited Mallee cradles raindrops on its leaves. *Grevillea* 'Elegance' has thin, elegant dark green foliage which always looks terrific, but is particularly showy in rain.



Grevillea insignis



Eucalyptus citriodora

Some foliage is amazingly shiny and looks even better in the rain. *Pandorea* 'Mt. Macedon', and *Coatesia paniculata* have shiny foliage at any time, but it is enhanced by rain. *Acacia blayana* has elegant foliage, but with rain and buds becomes a feast for the eyes.



Eremophila maculata



Ricinarpus tuberculatus



Eucalyptus pyriformis



Pandorea 'Mt. Macedon'



Coatesia paniculata



Acacia blayana

Nicky Zanen, Vic

In celebrating her 65th birthday one of our members tried to make this a memorable event for her family. In the middle of winter there wasn't much to choose from, but after a visit to the local hardware store she bought four sample pots of fence paint and four paint brushes. The grandchildren had no problem in getting stuck in; their parents deemed it all too cold but eventually also joined in. Now our member has a great reminder of a significant birthday.



GDSGQ Meeting Notes

Date: September 8, 2017 @ 9.30 – 4.00

Venue: Jane Fountain, 5 Kirkdale Road, CHAPEL HILL, 4069

Agenda Items

1. **Attending:** Jane Fountain, Fran Middleton (GDSG Canberra), Lawrie Smith, Bob & Beris Bannon, Steve Hibbert, Susan Rouse, George Smith,

Apologies: Ruth Crosson, Colleen Keena, Carol Guard, Kerry & Richard Lonn, Leanne Dunn, Joe & Joan Abercrombie, Mark Schuman, Brenda Meehan

2. GDSGQ Membership

Currently we have 29 memberships for 41 people.

3. The GDSG Newsletter

Don't forget to check out the GDSG website [http:// anpsa.org.au/design](http://anpsa.org.au/design) all back copies of the *Newsletter* are there and you can find a wealth of garden design information easily sourced through the index

4. Newsletter contributions from GDSGQ

Any Q members garden descriptions can be sent straight to Ros Walcott to ensure that they are added to the eNewsletter – the email address is on the front of the eNewsletter - rwalcott@netspeed.com.au; alternatively send them to me for forwarding to Ros.

5. Garden for Today

Jane Fountain - 5 Kirkdale Road CHAPEL HILL QLD 4069

Everyone agreed that Jane does a magnificent job establishing and maintaining her bush block of more than one acre on the undulating slopes of Mt Coot-tha. We don't know how she finds



Visitors in Jane's garden

time to 'do' the garden as well as attending to all of the responsibilities of her work as a teachers' aid four days a week, family responsibilities elsewhere, as well as the many other tasks as a member of ANPSA and NPQ. This garden, an obvious work of love, has been continuing for more than 40 years and Jane has no plans to stop just yet!

Jane's garden is a true 'walkabout' garden that leads you from room to room along meandering pathways that occasionally finish abruptly at a very special focal plant. But most of the various access ways continue along and down the slopes, across the waterway gully and back up to the upper levels traversing through numerous microclimatic zones which each support a special GDSGQ. The newly establishing plants have to compete with the tenacious root systems of the scores of huge Spotted Gums, Bloodwoods and Stringy Barks which suck every last nutrient and drop of moisture from the soils. Undaunted, Jane has resorted to keeping many of the special specimens in containers and burying these in the top layer of soil throughout the garden and keeping these regularly fertilized and watered, effectively isolated from the marauding Eucalyptus roots – this process works a treat! It also makes it very easy to revise the garden design planting arrangements from time to time as needed. Jane's never ending battle with Brush Turkeys means that the surface mulch over the potted specimens has to be regularly checked, replaced and protected with twigs, mesh and anything else suitable close at hand.

Dominating the front entrance courtyard, not more than 5 metres away from the front door, is a giant Spotted Gum 30 or 40 metres tall, a commanding focal point when viewed from most sections of the garden. This magnificent specimen initially defined the location of the house when

it was first built. Unfortunately that house, of solid red cedar, was destroyed by fire but was replaced on the same slab but with non-inflammable materials. The extensive plant list Jane prepared reflects the 'garden rooms' concept and emphasises the fact that 5 Kirkdale Road, Chapel Hill is really a botanic garden of species most suited to Brisbane gardens.

6. September Meeting subject – Your Garden Design Workshop

After we inspected Jane's garden and shared lunch together around the round table, we workshopped each members selected garden area. Much discussion and questioning of each 'gardener' resulted in a draft design concept which was swiftly drafted by Lawrie on A3 pages to guide progressive design development and implementation. This design exercise was a great way for us to understand both the physical and functional attributes of each garden and apply the identified opportunities and constraints to garden planning.

“After the Moreton Bay Fig Tree” – Steve Hibbert

We planned a corner of the garden to symbolically replace the shade and visual drama provided by a 40m diameter Moreton Bay Fig Tree rapidly self-destructing as its dead branches fall.

“Shaded Backyard Grassland” – Bob & Beris Bannon

We planned an integrated garden and walkway across a wide strip of shaded grass to physically and aesthetically link the existing backyard garden with the veranda and paved shade terrace.

“Bangalow Horseshoe” – Fran Middleton

We planned a special memorial garden within a natural horseshoe of seven Bangalow Palms approached along a spiral pathway edged with woven palm fronds and a central focus of palm sheaths.

“Orchid Alley” – Jane Fountain

We planned a random arrangement of varying height log sections tiered up each side of a shallow depression to create a sculptural garden for the orchid collection complimented by a range of other native plants with similar strap leaf form.

“Beside the Lychee Tree” – George Smith

We planned a corner of the front garden to be viewed under the canopy of a Lychee Tree in a layered arrangement of colourful low foreground bedding and shrubs in front of an arc of medium height shrubs and a semitransparent tall screen along the fence line.

“Small Hedge / Tall Hedge” – Susan

We found difficulty in suggesting species for a formal clipped low hedge 500m wide and a taller one metre clipped hedge with cover and spill over planting under in the narrow garden between two houses.

“Wallum Front Garden” – Lawrie & Carmel Smith

We planned a front garden exposed to the exposed northwest, using Wallum species in semi-formal massing to moderate the microclimate, to conceal and reveal the house in the view from the street, and to create a 'sense of place' demonstrating the use of local native plants. First impressions are always the most lasting!

7. GDSGQ Meeting Calendar 2017/18

We also decided to meet at one garden each visit so as to allow optimum time to inspect and enjoy. To spread our visits equally around southeast Queensland, meeting venues have been rotated around the geographic zones of the region.

December 2 (west) Join in with the NPQ Christmas Gathering in the new Queensland R&T Garden at Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha.

February 9 a surprise cool and dry garden venue – watch this space!

April 6 (east) Leanne Dunn - 11 Yarranabbe Street, Mt Gravatt East

June 8 (north) Lawrie & Carmel Smith – 38 Sandpiper Avenue, NORTH LAKES

August 3 (south) Denis Cox & Jan Glazebrook - 87-95 Daintree Drive, LOGAN VILLAGE

October 5-6 (north) Joe & Joan Abercrombie Bellthorpe; Gadd Garden Gympie – an overnighter

December 7 (west) MT Coot-tha Botanic Gardens

Please let me know if these dates conflict with any known events that make attending difficult

Provisional Meetings 2019:

Other possible future garden venues for meetings in 2019 – in no specific order.

? GDSGQ members gardens to be included as offered.

? Peter Bevan Rail Trail - 10 Patrick Street, Lowood, Q 4311

? Standing Garden Mount Clunie Road, Woodenbong (near Killarney)

? Gold Coast Gardens & Botanic Gardens

? Fran Middleton Garden, Tomewin NSW (near Murwillumbah)

8. April Meeting subject

It's a long time until April 2018 so between now and then I'll let you know a subject. But if you have an idea then please let me know. We could do another design workshop for those who were unable to come today? Over to you!

Thanks all for a wonderful time today applying 'Design with Nature'.

See you next time!

Cheers

Lawrie

38 Sandpiper Avenue

NORTH LAKES Q 4509

0411 228 900 lawries@live.com

Informal GDSG Meeting on October 2 at 69 Dickasons Road, Heathmont

Pam Yarra, Vic

At the last GDSG meeting on June 25th, when Diana officially retired, it was agreed that "a new, informal leaderless Group could be tried". Several ideas for garden visits were put forth, including mine, a visit to a new neighbour's property.

After discussions with my neighbours and emails to GDSG members and Foothills APS group members, eight of us (including Diana and Brian Snape) met briefly at my place on Sunday October 2 before visiting my neighbour's garden

Next door but one to my place, a young couple, Leigh and Kim, have just built a new house on approximately one acre (0.5 hectare) at the end of a battleaxe block. Their long driveway of crushed metal is on top of the barrel drained creek sand will be reconstructed before the end of this year.

On either side of the driveway, the 'creek banks' slope downwards and are predominantly weeds of all types. There are some trees and clumps of *Lomandra longifolia*. All the pine trees were removed.

Both Leigh and Kim run their own separate businesses and have two preschool age children. They are keen to revegetate the block with a mixture of Australian plants, including local indigenous plants. As they are time poor, they want a very low maintenance garden.

The main issues identified were weed removal, how this would be done, as well as landscaping and drainage. The type of plants, including those for screening out neighbours' properties was important, as well as where they would be sourced. Leigh wants to tackle this project in total now, and not consider working on the garden in sections, as had been suggested. Weeds to be removed, driveway reconstructed by end of year and planting in April or May.

A feature area near the steps that lead up to the front door was also discussed and ideas put forth, especially the importance of well placed rocks, by an experienced person.

During the visit, information was discussed with Leigh and Kim about the difficulties of weed eradication and the need to spray more than once.

Screening plants and other local indigenous plants were discussed , including those used in the next door neighbour's garden.

As agreed, since the meeting, I have passed on contact details to Leigh and Kim for weed eradication and landscaping . I have just obtained a current list from the local indigenous plant nursery and plant availability in April to pass on to them. This will include names of plants in adjoining neighbour's garden. As their property is revegetated it will add to the green corridor and hopefully in time will see the return of wildlife, namely small birds .

Both Leigh and Kim valued the input from the group and, as I have personal interest from the local environmental perspective, will retain contact with them. It could be interesting for the group to visit their property in another 12 months time?

In conclusion , the future of the informal GDSG is unknown and this visit was not the usual type, with its unlimited challenges. Garden design and gardens have changed over the years due to many factors. Houses are bigger, work force/family demands, modern technology (access to information) climate change and so changing environments. As I strongly support sustainable gardening, this could be a direction for APS and all special interest groups, including the informal GDSG.

Proposed Trip to Blayney and Binnaway, Daytime Activities Group and GDSG ANPS Canberra

Fiona Johnson's Garden, Cloudy Hill, Blayney

Travel to Blayney Monday 13 November and stay overnight, or travel to Blayney early Tuesday 14 November. Meet at Cloudy Hill 10.30am Tuesday 14, lunch in Blayney. Drive to Wellington to visit Burrendong Arboretum in the afternoon. Overnight stay in Wellington or environs.

Bilby Blooms, Binnaway

Drive to Binnaway to visit Anthony and Annabelle and tour the nursery at 10.30am Tuesday 19 November.

Thursday 16 November return to Canberra.

Visit to Oakey Creek

Bob Nader, Canberra

In June, 2017 25 members of ANPS Canberra Daytime Activities Group and Garden Design Study Group visited Bob Nader's garden in Wallaroo, NSW.

In May 2003 we moved to Oakey Creek, four months after the devastating bushfires in Canberra. 'The Rivers', the property we had been leasing on Uriarra Crossing, was engulfed in the most severe firestorm. Luckily, we survived, along with our seven horses and four of our five dogs.

The previous owners of Oakey Creek had built the house and completed some basic landscaping. Apart from that the property was in a fairly run-down condition. The property had not been properly fenced and there was erosion on the creek and a profusion of broad-leafed weed and african lovegrass.

Consequently there was a lots of work to do. We started off expanding the garden around the



Native planting as a dense scrub land with trees along the driveway.



Deciduous trees around house

house by planting deciduous trees, a common practise on properties such as this one. Cedric Bryant, who I have known for many years, visited us a few times and recommended to plant trees in clumps. You will notice that trees have been planted in groups of fours and fives around the farm.

The native plantings started reasonably early in combination with soil conservation. The creek was very eroded and you can still see areas to this day of fairly deep erosion gullies. In those days they used to 'batten down' the banks which entailed getting a bulldozer in and flattening the banks and filling in the erosion gullies. This practise was largely unsuccessful as after heavy rain the gullies reappeared. After contacting Soil Conservation I was advised that the best approach would be to fence the area off and let nature take its course. We began by very generously fencing off the creek. I met Damien (DeMarco) who, as you know, has a nursery with some very fine plants for sale. Damien had a small group of tree planters available and we started planting trees along the creek. I improved the paddock fencing and fenced off the road to the house, planting trees on both sides of the laneway.



New native garden bed near house



Eroded creek line with native plantings

Next we created tree-lanes, in particular on the north-east, east and south-eastern boundaries of the property. This included a remnant stand of eucalypts on the north-eastern side which now displays regrowth. We sometimes have picnics there in the summer.

After speaking to Leon Garry, (ex Mayor of Yass), who had developed a technique of self-seeding trees, I contacted Greening Australia who consequently implemented this technique to sow trees including eucalypts and wattles along the top three borders of the property.

We also continued on planting native shrubs and trees in the area in front of the house on the eastern side. It had originally been excavated to build up the garden around the house. There was a rocky hollowed out area there so I had a few loads of soil and mulch delivered to improve that area of

the garden before proceeding to plant various natives. These plants had to suffer through many years of severe drought, however, they were resilient and somehow survived. Through experience, I have learnt that for plants to thrive in this country, which is mainly granite, they need to be carefully planted and kept well mulched.

I have recently started working on the garden on the western side of the house. The first job was to remove a gigantic Banksia Rose which took up a considerable amount of space and was also impacting on the integrity of the guttering and foundations of the house. We then planted out the area with a variety of beautiful natives, which is to me the icing on the cake.

Along with improving our quality of life we are also attracting more species of native birds and animals. The creek area which was originally a very barren area, now has a resident population of wombats and is a real pleasure to walk through. The creek now retains more water and we now have permanent billabongs with waterbirds and frogs galore.

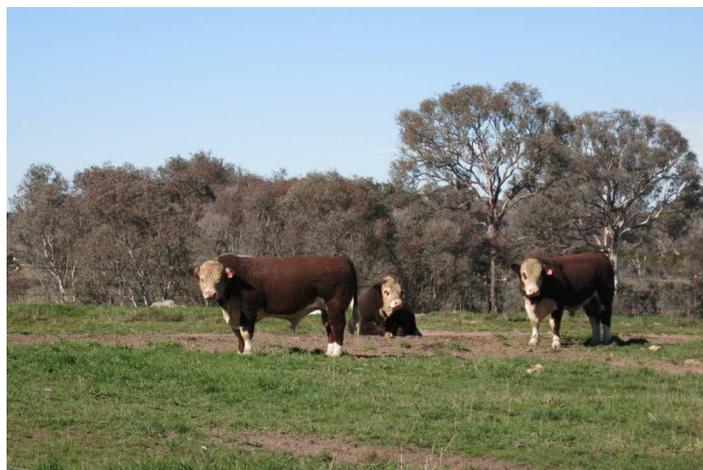
We now have a secure water set up on the property including an 8,000 gallon an hour bore which reticulates water to troughs in the paddocks and also to the garden around the house. All the dams are fenced off to provide a haven for native vegetation, wildlife and birds. More recently, we have reticulated water to dam areas and other areas with recent tree plantings around the property.



Creek with permanent water with native plantings in the background

Since the ANPS recent visit to our property, which we very much appreciated, we have had some extensive landscaping completed including the installation of a pond and fountain.

First published *Journal* ANPS Canberra September 2017, pp. 35-38.



Adjacent neighbours watching us with interest



Upper portion of eroded creek

A visit to Dave Bishop's Garden in Yass, August 2017

Dave Bishop, Canberra

About 20 members of Canberra Daytime Activities Group and Garden Design Study Group visited Dave Bishop's relatively new garden in Yass to note his progress. Below is the back story to his garden journey.

Growing up in Port Adelaide SA, I didn't have much interest in plants. We had a small house with very little land. My mother attempted to have a lawn and some plants but this was eventually replaced as my brother's cars. I joined the RAAF at 17yrs and once again had no involvement in growing plants on the various bases I was stationed at. In 1969 I applied, and was selected for, an Antarctic expedition with the Australian Government, so left the RAAF after six years and eventually ended up spending about two and a half years in Antarctica.

I think the lack of any plant life, other than a few lichens and some mosses, finally got to me and I got interested in "real" plants when I purchased a house on my return.

Native plants got my interest and purchased a few books and joined the SGAP in Adelaide.



The land before the house (Photos by Dave)



The house is built and driveway installed



Garden newly planted and mulched (photo by Dave)



View of the garden from the opposite direction in August 2017 (photo by Ben Walcott)

My first attempt at propagation was not a success. I obtained some *Eremophila* seeds as I liked the flowers shown in my plant books - a couple of months later I joined the propagation group of SGAP to see what I was doing wrong!!

The first native plant garden was from scratch at Banksia Park, SA. The name was true to its word as the soil was a grey, sandy and neutral pH which was fairly rare for the Adelaide area. I managed to grow quite a variety of WA banksias there among other things.

After about five years, with the garden flowering nicely, I was transferred to head office in Melbourne, where I purchased a new house again in the bushy suburb of Eltham. I joined the local Yarra Yarra group of SGAP and set about establishing a new garden.



Part of the group at the side garden (Photos by Ben Walcott)



The front of the house and driveway in Aug 2017

After about another five years I was offered a position in Brisbane and one of the conditions the family requested was that the house had to have a swimming pool. This house we purchased had an established garden and a pool, so apart from growing some palms and ferns, the native plant interest dropped off quite considerably.

I eventually retired and headed back to Moonta Bay in SA about 12 yrs ago, where I purchased a house with one rosemary bush on the 1000sqm block. Once again I joined the local APS group and soon realised that it was a good place to grow *eremophilas* in the limestone soil. I had a good selection of *eremophilas* and was propagating and grafting quite successfully using a lot of these plants around the local information centres, council parks, bowls club etc

After about nine years, with the grandkids located in Brisbane and Canberra, travelling to school plays, birthdays etc started to get to us so we began looking around the Yass area as an affordable place to relocate to.

House and landscaping

We found it difficult to find an established house that met our requirements, and our price range so decided on a relocatable home from Austwide in Wagga. We had a couple of designs in mind, so started the search for some land. We finally settled on this block of land in Perry St, which was only being used to keep horses.

The land is close to 1800 sqm, and as can be seen from the plan, an unusual shape. Additionally there was an easement on two boundaries, a slight slope and one 4.2m gate opening in a steel fence.

We decided on a “ranch” style house which could face north to take advantage of the sun in winter. I also wanted to use the existing steel fence as much as possible to speed up the establishment process, as we have a dog.

The house was positioned to face north in a situation that we could use the existing main gate and a second gate was created to service the garage area.

I had the top 100mm of soil removed from the house, garage and driveway areas and stock piled for later use. The void left was replaced with blue metal road base for a couple of reasons. I wanted a clear dry area under the house for ease of maintenance, a good base for the concrete slab for the garage, also a good mud free driveway while getting things established. The cleared area also assisted in getting the house delivered on time as it was quite a wet winter in 2015 and no one wanted a large truck getting bogged. Once we moved in I was able to observe and take photos of where the water ran and where the wet spots were.

I had the basic concept of a circle drive at the front of the house, making use of the original gate opening. I also wanted (hoped) that I could get the bore on the land working again, so that require some sort of path/access along with power and plumbing. The council allowed me to make use of the stormwater pipe that runs across the rear of the yard, so all of the roof area water is diverted into it.

Even though I controlled the roof water I found the front area between the two gates got very wet during the winter of 2016 (a very wet winter according to locals)

Having encountered water concerns in previous properties, I decide the best was to control it not try to stop it, so the “creek” was incorporated to give drainage.

I knew frosts and low temperatures were normal for the area so I imported some large local rocks which I wanted to use as features and hopefully assist with giving me a larger range of plants that I could have in my garden.

After a short while I ran out of room in my garage so I added a 7m carport to the front of it which tended to cut off access to the rear section of land. At this stage I decide to put a lawn area along side of the house, allowing access to the rear should I require it at a later stage.

I imported some soil to build up mounds so that I could control where the water flowed and also give me areas of good drainage. Most of the mounds in the front garden are a mixture of normal top soil

mixed with about 50% river sand to give good drainage and hopefully allow me to finally achieve success in growing Waratah.

(I get frustrated at times when touring the Australian National Botanic Gardens and seeing the wide range of plants that appear to thrive there!)

I decided to use 20mm crushed river gravel for my driveways and paths, over the road base to try and achieve a more natural look. I have kept pathways around the house for ease of maintenance.

As you can see there is still some work to be done on completing the gravel coverage in both driveway areas and I also want to import some more soil to raise some beds either side of the service driveway.

I'm fairly happy with the progress to date when you consider that I have built most things myself, i.e. back deck, lined a section of the garage, built fences, gates etc etc.

I would have been further advanced but I had to under go a major operation (8hrs) to remove a malignant tumour in my gall bladder area, followed by 6mths of chemo, which tended to put me out of action as far as using the shovel and other gardening tools for awhile.

I did use my recovery time to build a grader system for my ride on mower, enabling me to sculpture and level top soil for the grassed area as well as spread the gravel on driveways etc..

At this stage it has been just under two years since we moved in so I'm fairly pleased with the growth of the plants which most were grown by me from seed. Unfortunately the run of frosty mornings over the past month (-8 the lowest) has hit a lot of the plants so it will be interesting to see what the recovery is like come spring.

I have a range of frost hardy plants ready to come out of the green house as soon as the frosts are over.



Backyard raised veggie patch and shade house with seedlings



Banksia coccinea



Philotheca myoporoides



Melaleuca orbicularis

Treasurer's report:-

Cheque account: \$ 7,333.39

Term Deposit: \$ 26,055.20

TOTAL: \$ 33,388.59

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