



GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP

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Newsletter **101**
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NEWSLETTER EDITOR

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Leader's Comments

We are back from the Conference in Tasmania where the Study Group had an excellent meeting of those who were attending the conference, more on that later. Ros and I took over the Study Group leadership and *Newsletter* editorship from Jo Hambrett in February 2013 producing our first *Newsletter* # 81 that month. We are now at *Newsletter* 101, 20 *Newsletters* and 5 years later. As you have seen in the more recent *Newsletters*, the Queensland group has become very active under the leadership of Lawrie Smith and we are delighted to announce that Lawrie has agreed to take over the Leadership of the Study Group from the next *Newsletter* onwards. Lawrie is a now retired professional landscape designer who has an extensive list of native gardens he has designed. He will bring to the group a new perspective, ideas and energy to move us forward. Ros and I have thoroughly enjoyed leading the group but feel now is time to pass it on and that Lawrie is just the right person to move the Study Group into the future. Thank you, Lawrie, for being willing to lead our group.

At the conference, it was my great pleasure as Past President of ANPSA to give the Australian Plants Award, Amateur Category, to Diana Snape, the founder of our group. The citation outlining her achievements is reproduced later in this *Newsletter* but I would like to say that her continued enthusiasm for garden design and her communication skills have had and continue to make a significant difference in how people think about Australian gardens. Thank you, Diana. Ros and I would also like to thank all of you who have contributed to the Study Group *Newsletter* over the years we were producing it. Getting your personal perspectives on gardens is what makes the Study Group work and the *Newsletter* interesting and useful reading. Let's keep sending material to Lawrie (lawries@live.com) for future *Newsletters*.

Correspondence

Margaret Lee, SA

Dear Ben & Ros,

Thank you for the latest *Newsletter* – full of interest as usual. I was interested to see Fiona Johnson's comment about planting times. I think the "plant in autumn" practice was recommended in the days before drip irrigation systems were common and easily available. Also, planting of tubestock on a large scale both by individuals and groups led to this being the preferred planting time in much of Australia which received little summer rainfall.

However, I've found that clients in Adelaide who are prepared to install drip irrigation systems for use in long dry spells have had great success with spring and early summer planting, once danger from frost is over.

Diana Snape, Vic

Dear Ros,

Congratulations on the 100th edition of the GDSG *Newsletter* and for your kind words about me. The most significant change in more recent years has been the advent of digital colour photography, from which the newsletters have benefited greatly. I loved Ben's beautiful photos of wet and frosty foliage and your very apt descriptions.

There were a number of great articles in the *Newsletter* and I'm particularly enjoying seeing the new Qld group in action under Lawrie Smith's experienced leadership. It's wonderful to see some familiar names from the very early days of the GDSG still involved (hello Colleen and Ruth).

Garden Design Study Group Meeting

Lawrie Smith, Qld

Meeting of members and interested others at ANPSA Hobart, January 2018

The meeting was well attended and provided the opportunity to meet one another face to face, to share garden design stories and discuss how to keep the study group acting as a valuable catalyst for inspiring the development of our gardens. Together, we'll explore garden design with native plants!

Ben and Ros indicated that it was time for them to hand over the leadership and I have agreed to take on the challenge which will be a hard act to follow. Our Hobart meeting was really inspiring as we canvassed many ideas and opportunities from around the continent, which underlined the need for the study group to be as widely relevant as possible.

Obviously our group is primarily concerned with 'garden design' consequently it is vital for us to be aware that the principles of 'design' know no state or regional boundaries, neither are they confined by garden dimension. In my career as a landscape architect, I have always believed and practiced 'design with nature' – as you all no doubt know, you can never compete successfully with nature - nature always wins in the long term.

Similarly most plant species are generally bioregionally specific and will not always establish well in different regions BUT the aesthetic form and character of plants know no geographic boundaries. Therefore it is usually possible to find a local substitute species with similar aesthetic characteristics to a plant that is not suitable for your region.



Hemiandra gardneri in the Marriott garden

Another important design principle is that 'form follows function' and in inspiring successful garden design this phrase applies equally to the hard or constructed landscape elements as much as to the soft living vegetation and planting materials.

Remember there are more than three dimensions in garden design – the fourth is time! A garden develops progressively over time and is ever changing with seasons and with growth; a garden is never finished! That is the magic of planning, designing, establishing and maintaining a garden.

The overriding factor is that your garden is your creation and it expresses your values, your interests and your talents. Like nothing else it presents you to the world, warts and all. It will include interesting individual elements that focus the attention on a particular plant, a special interest or a regional theme. Your garden is just like you - dramatic, dynamic and changing with the seasons, growing and maturing steadily, (sometimes not so successfully) but always a wonderful place to enjoy, relax and share.



Verticordia ovalifolia

Photos from the Marriott garden



Pimelia physodes

The following is a precis of some of the discussions that interesting evening in Hobart, including also some personal comments inspired by the meeting. I hope that these will guide the activities of the study group as together we continue forward.

Newsletter frequency: The *Newsletter* is the heart and voice of the study group and I suggested to the group that instead of quarterly, it be produced bimonthly as a shorter version. This would keep interest bubbling along and thereby be more stimulating? It was suggested by many and agreed, that we consider a focus theme for each issue, with several months' notice, so that members have sufficient time to provide short illustrated descriptions of their related garden triumphs and tragedies for inclusion!

Newsletter index: Ben reminded members of the GDSG *Newsletter* index which is an invaluable resource to assist research into garden design elements and to gain ideas from others. Over the past decades it is likely that the assistance you need has already been successfully offered by others as the design principles are still as relevant today as they ever were. Selected excerpts from past newsletters could be included as appropriate to enhance each issue theme.

Contributions: How to write a short description of your own garden was a common problem. It was suggested that one easy way is to take a photo of a specific section of your garden and describe from the photo, point by point in simple sentences, the most obvious elements you want to bring to the reader's attention. Don't wax unnecessarily lyrical, short sharp comments or observations focus the attention best.

Garden diversity: Establishing a record schedule of the specific site characteristics of all member's gardens – location, size, elevation, microclimate, aspect, soils, age, etc might be very helpful specifically to those wanting to do comparative assessments to guide their own design process. We can consider this later if there is sufficient interest.

Newsletter themes: These are some of the themes that members thought might be useful – please advise further theme subjects that will be of help with your garden design and establishment. From all of the suggestions received we will prepare a progressive annual issue theme list so that you will have plenty of time to prepare your contribution for the particular bi-monthly newsletter.



Thryptomene denticulata in the Marriott garden

- Garden arrival - first impressions
- Water in the garden
- Natives and exotics mixed together
- Coastal gardens - sun, sand and wind
- Framework trees and shrubs
- Windbreaks and microclimate
- Sometimes mistakes work well
- Borrowed landscape enlarges your garden
- Landform - opportunities and values

MEMBERS COMMENTS

(Hopefully I have interpreted my scribbled meeting notes correctly – apologies if I have quoted incorrectly)

Velda Ellis Vic – would value any design techniques for a mixed multi native and exotic garden with a canopy of ironbark trees;

Diana Snape VIC – On line group participation only, offers no personal contact. It is so important to visit gardens to see and feel the design success.

Bev Lockley WA – garden is 160 acres, influenced by salt and difficult soils; do similar design elements for town parks and gardens apply as much to larger residential gardens?

Riitta Boevink TAS – 7acre bushland garden by the beach, celebrating the location and coastal species

Ros Walcott ACT – garden arrival and first impressions are fundamental; consider gates and walls, views, glimpses. Water sensitive design is a constraint but also an opportunity for appropriate garden design.



Grafted *Corymbia ficifolia* in the Marriott garden

Jonquil Temple NSW – is it appropriate to mix natives and exotics together? What are the pros and cons; fertiliser, water, character etc.; selecting species for specific function and for site conditions

Marilyn Zakrevsky WA – a coastal garden, very windy and deep dune sand are major constraints inhibiting garden design and species selection; how to deal with this.

Nicky Zanen VIC – dealing with a body corporate who do not always understand or respect native plants; competition from gum trees affect unit landscape; using natives that have the character of exotics – what are they? Good manners in landscape design and in architecture - education needed. Nicky will consider encouraging Melbourne group meeting / garden excursions

Jan Hall VIC – discussing themes issue by issue will be an advantage and learning experience. Importance of specific themes and their influence in design and plant selection.

Lib Bartholomeusz SA – gardening on limestone and the opportunities and constraints that it offers; Eremophila and Flinders Ranges plants relative to climatic influences as well as soils; Acacia grove offers a varied character; Mediterranean gardens characteristics opportunities and relationships.

Alice McCleary SA – one small city garden in Adelaide established 20 years; a second large garden in Goolwa; wind exposure, needs site analysis to establish appropriate windbreaks; a stream and three lakes contributes sound and movement to the garden; excavated fill used for landform

“mountain”; discuss the value of landform to create specific micro environments and aesthetic values;

Leoni Read TAS – relocated from Alice Springs to Sheffield to a site with a dramatic borrowed landscape mountain escarpment; how to incorporate the borrowed landscape, views and vistas; influence of climate and microclimate from heat to snow; sunshine and shadow.

There is obviously a high degree of interest in this Study Group as after all we all get down and dirty in our gardens and love every minute!! Let’s ensure as we share our experiences both good and bad, that together we find new ways to create a unique Australian garden style for every bioregion.

OTHERS ATTENDING

Ben Walcott ACT
Margaret Lee SA
Jill Bartlett VIC

NEW MEMBERS

Bev Weston QLD
Pam Finger QLD
Carol Guard QLD
Jill Bartlett VIC
Jan Glazebrook QLD
Marilyn Zakrevsky WA



Pileanthus aurantiacus (orange flowers) with with *Verticordia insignis* (very pale pink flowers) and *Leucophyta browni* in the Marriott garden

The Marriott garden

Diana Snape, Vic

Background data

Data in brief

Area 200 acres total; 20 to 25 acres closely gardened

Orientation hilltop with aspects in all directions

Climate semi-arid, with extreme weather events

Soil types mainly low pH acid granitic sands and sandy loams

Mulch inorganic

Water supply tanks and mains water

Planning zone Property is in Rural Conservation zone, Northern Grampians Shire.

Photographs Neil and Wendy Marriott; Diana and Brian Snape; one other, labelled

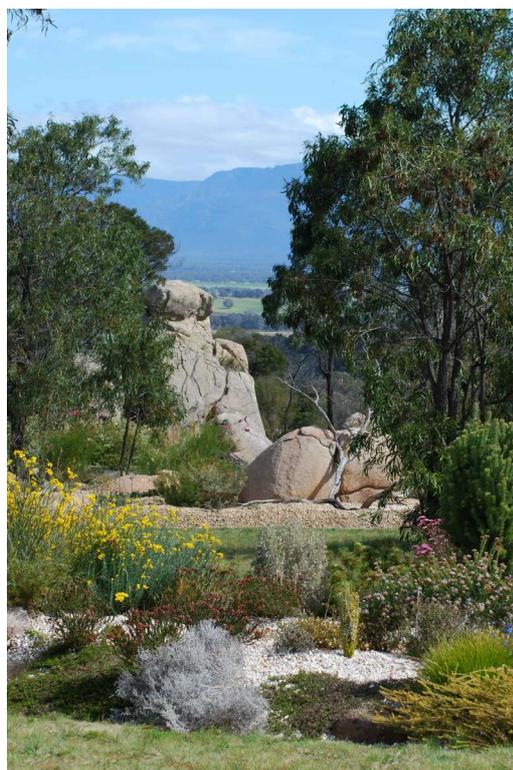
Property and area The property, Panrock Ridge, is an eastern ridge of the Black Range situated east of the Grampians and south of Stawell in central Victoria. It has a Trust for Nature covenant. Its total area of 200 acres has a rabbit-proof fence and, within this, between 30 and 40 acres has a modified covenant allowing some limited development. A feral-proof fence encloses this inner area, maintained to prevent the entry of all feral animals. Within this area again, 20 to 25 acres is more closely gardened.



View across verticordia garden to Mount William Range

Design of the garden

Setting The house has a south-westerly aspect and is sited just below the brow of the hill, to make it less prominent in the landscape and to minimise the effects of hot northerly winds. The south winds also tend to go over the house, which is placed to maximise views of the Grampians. The shared landscape is extensive and magnificent. From the house site, to the SW, the Black Range is close and the Mount William Range more distant. To the north, visible from the block, are the Pyrenees Ranges and to the east, Mt Langi Ghiran and Mount Cole.



Left: View to Redman Bluff, with blue *Lechenaultia biloba* and pink *Chamelaucium megalopetalum* in flower

Right: View to Mount William Range, with yellow *Chrysocephalum semipapposum* in flower

Aims and motivations

The first specific aim was to establish a comprehensive collection of grevilleas. The garden still has the National Plants Collection Association grevillea collection. Neil is an extremely active member of the Grevillea Study Group of the Australian Native Plants Society (Australia) and co-author of the 3-volume *The Grevillea Book*. He has been involved in finding around 50 new species and very many new forms of grevillea, especially in Western Australia.

The second was to establish a naturalistic Australian garden, incorporating as broad a range of species and forms as possible. Examples include many forms of *Banksia spinulosa*, 40 forms of *Grevillea alpina* and several forms of *Thryptomene denticulata* (which Neil says are brilliant in flower from February to September, and are mass planted in the north courtyard gardens).

A third aim is to establish collections of eremophilas, banksias and dryandras, in addition to the grevilleas.

However the fundamental, overall objective and motivation is the conservation of indigenous species - plants and also the wildlife dependent on these plants, including mammals, birds, reptiles and invertebrates. In Neils' words:

Today, as the gardens again begin to mature, our aim is to create a harmonious display of some of the real gems of the Australian flora, in a way which highlights the plants against contrasting foliage colour and texture, while providing habitat for our huge diversity of birds. Few attempts are made to mix and match flower colours, as it is the foliage variations that make a garden look good together for the whole year. Likewise, we are always looking for ways to incorporate our local shrubs, lomandras and grasses into the designs, so they look attractive and natural, while supporting our local fauna.

These aims collectively have been the focus of the design of this garden.



View of house and cottage from verticordia garden

Design challenges

There are three really major design challenges. The first and over-riding one is climate change. Not only has this affected the climate and rainfall throughout the year but it has caused the loss of the springs that were so important in watering large areas of the garden. In addition, big, established trees have dropped dead where their soil, lying over big slabs or floaters of granite, is now too shallow to retain enough water when once it could be sufficient. Garden beds have had to be relocated for the same reason.

The garden now has to be designed with the possibility of fire in mind. It is a bad idea to grow eucalypts close to the house (the *E. caesia* are within the house fire sprinklers). On the other hand, all ferny-leaved wattles survive fire and, Neil says, *Acacia mearnsii* (Black Wattle) is priceless as a medium sized, fire-resistant tree. *A. pycnantha* (Golden Wattle) and *A. implexa* (Lightwood) are also fire-resistant. It is essential that inorganic mulch such as gravel be used around the house.

The hyper-acid soils in some areas were an initial problem but the treatment with lime and dolomite already described has cured this problem, wherever they have been applied.

Another design problem would have to be the sheer size of the property, the scale of the planting projects, and the variety of micro-climates and micro-niches available. This makes it a complex challenge to carry out planting, trying to match both garden areas or beds, and individual plants, with suitable situations.

One constraint on design is that no regenerating bushland has ever been cleared. The compensating benefit of this is that the garden is framed by its bushland setting.

Large areas of native grasses are seen as a bonus, not a problem, and are used, where possible to show off, and contrast with, the non-indigenous plants grown in the adjoining gardens. These grasses are mown close to the gardens and for access, with large areas left till the end of spring for wildlife to nest in and the grasses to drop their copious seed for the native birds. Come early summer big areas are mown down for fire safety, although natural areas are still retained for wildlife.



Austrostipa mollis with *Grevillea oligomera*



Entrance garden features *Eucalyptus macrocarpa* with, from left, *Austrostipa mollis*, prostrate *Grevillea pinaster* and *Eremophila glabra*

Visiting the garden

You enter the garden by a curving drive through an indigenous landscape that looks entirely natural but was created initially by the owners' planting. Since then it has matured, with some losses over the years and much natural regeneration. As you pass through the feral-proof fence, you notice the difference in density of vegetation. Two local shrubs that have regenerated where grazing has been prevented are *Leptospermum myrsinoides* (Silky Tea-tree) and *Calytrix tetragona*. Amongst the rock outcrops superb large Sweet Bursaria trees (*Bursaria spinosa*) are colonising, along with the local form of *Grevillea aquifolium*. Other species include Hedge Wattle (*Acacia paradoxa*) and Cherry Ballart (*Exocarpus cupressiformis*).

Once inside the feral-proof fence, you could choose any one of a hundred appealing routes through the garden, depending on your mood or particular interests. The only set paths are those close to the house or to work areas such as the nursery and orchard. Looking around the house first, on the northern side, the steep banks provide a planted backdrop for an intimate area outside the kitchen and dining room. The gardens on the southern side are especially attractive in spring with their beautiful colour schemes

Ed. This is an edited version of the fascinating full report that is on the Garden Design website (<http://anpsa.org.au/design/marriott.html>). Thank you Neil and Wendy for your magnificent garden and to Diana for her superlative description.

Book Review: *Native – Art and Design with Australian Plants*

Kate Seddon (reprinted in part from) *GardenDrum* October 19, 2017

Attending the launch of Kate Herd and Jela Ivankovic-Waters' book, *Native*, it was intriguing to see the mix of artists, designers, landscape professionals, a scientist, photographers, growers and horticulturalists both attending and represented in this book.

Native is a beautifully designed and thoughtfully set out guide to design with Australian plants. It is a horticultural reference source, yet it is also a design guide, showing the use of native plants in settings less familiar, expanding the genre of native garden from dusty bush gardens, to highly cultivated and organised design settings. Beyond gardens, it also demonstrates the extraordinary breadth and beauty of our native foliage and flowers through many forms of design across a number of mediums.

Chapter headings define roles and usage of native plants in various broad topic areas: Feature Foliage, Pliability, Legacy Trees, Shapely Low Cover, Rare Beauties and so forth. Each chapter outlines the usefulness of a palette of native plants and how they can be selected and placed into a garden setting to best effect. Cultural notes for the key species featured are wonderfully practical, describing growth habit; role; adaptability to horticultural and designed settings; maintenance tips; and tolerances for soil, aspect, water and exposure. So, while the aesthetics of each plant are important, this guide also demonstrates the plant's contribution to a broader ecology, a response to climate and of course, its performance in a garden setting.



Copies of *Native: Art and Design with Australian Plants* under Kate Herd's flowers.

Every chapter is paired with a personality – some well known and some quieter achievers. Scientist and plant breeders bringing Australian plants to a broader audience and developing new, more horticulturally useful cultivars. Sculptors, jewellers and artists using Australian plant material as inspiration and palette. While landscape designers and architects are well represented by Jo O'Connell, Kate Cullity, Paul Thompson, Fiona Brockhoff, Sue Barnsley and Catherin Bull. The overwhelming sense of the book is as a horticultural and garden design reference, and there is a wonderful cross pollination (excuse the pun) of influences, both scientific and artistic, across this compelling guide.

At the launch held at Melbourne's iconic Heide Museum of Modern Art this month, Professor Tim Entwisle gave the opening speech describing gardening as a "grand experiment", taking plants outside of their native habitat and adapting them to our needs. He spoke of gardening being a "creative, experimental, fascinating thing to do", and you can closely align this philosophy with the work of many of the artists featured here. He launched the book stating, it "will inspire and provide huge nourishment".

Kate Herd's speech echoed this sentiment, describing her upbringing as a free-range childhood in a bush setting, equally influenced by the productive gardening of her neighbour Neil Douglas (then head gardener at Heide), as she is by the native surrounds. These two voices have been merged into one in her extraordinary work, which runs across garden design, horticulture, print making and now, a second book on gardens. In writing this book, she wanted to compile a "rich resource about working with native plants."



Kate Herd speaking about *Native* in front of a huge floral display by Flowers Flowers

Jela Ivankovic-Waters cited viewing Fiona Brockhoff's garden 'Karkalla' at Sorrento as being a defining moment for her, that it "blew her mind", and importantly, has stood the test of time. The raw beauty and resilience of Australian native plants is for her the opportunity for bolder experimentation and diversification of our plant palettes from a European sensibility. As she said "there is a great deal more dare and flair with Australian plants".

It is a rare plant book that makes you want to read it all. Often you just dip in and out. *Native* invites you to go on a journey of discovery, and to view and experiment with our native flora in a different light.

Native: Art and Design with Australian Plants

Kate Herd & Jela Ivankovic-Waters

RRP AU \$49.99

Thames & Hudson

ISBN: 9780500501023

October 2017



Dramatic column of native flowers



Hot coloured native flowers at the launch of *Native*.

Comments on *Native: Art and Design with Australian Plants* by Kate Herd and Jela Invanovic-Waters

Ros Walcott, Canberra

I am also impressed by this stylish and well produced book which adds something new to the literature of garden design with Australian plants. Even the end papers are delightful and unusual depictions of banksia cones and flowers. Both the photography and its reproduction are quite outstanding. The ornamental twining of a snake vine (*Hibbertia scandens*) on a colourful wall as a frontispiece and a photo of Fiona Hall's iconic Fern Garden at the National Gallery of Australia hints at the treats to come. The layout of this book is well described above and I am only going to comment on the parts that concentrate on plants. This does not mean that I did not enjoy the chapters on people and their achievements. They are indeed well written, illustrative and worth reading. However, the plants sections are really interesting to native garden designers. The book begins by examining Low Cover and selects dwarf banksias, wattles, Geraldton Wax, *Correa alba*, *Lasiopetalum baueri* and *Philotheca myoporoides* for special mention. There are many other plants listed that are good for low cover, but each of those listed above gets a half page description of their horticultural merits and an excellent photo of their use in gardens.

The next section is devoted to Feature Foliage and concentrates on Clay Wattle, (*Acacia glaucoptera*), Woolly Bush (*Adenanthos sericeus*), *Acacia cognata* cultivars and Grass Trees (*Xanthorrhoea* species). Once again there are generous lists of feature foliage plants but this book examines closely the virtues of those above accompanied by some stunning photos of *Daviesia pachyphylla*, *Banksia blechnifolia*, and two contrasting calothamnus amongst many others. The photos make you want to run out and try some of these combinations for yourself.

The format is now established and continues with a chapter on Flowers. Here the photos are really mouth-watering, Kangaroo Paws, *Xerochrysum bracteatum*, Gynea Lily (*Doryanthes excelsa*), Sturt's Desert Pea (*Swainsona formosa*) to mention a few. This chapter does make you reflect on how many

outstanding flowers we have amongst our native flora, Flannel Flowers (*Actinotus helianthi*), Scarlet Banksia (*Banksia coccinea*), Black Kangaroo Paw (*Macropidia fuliginosa*), Qualup Bell (*Pimelea physodes*), Mottledcah (*Eucalyptus macrocarpa*), Creamy Candles (*Stackhousia monogyne*) and Waratah (*Teleopea speciosissima*). We are accustomed to our native flora but people from around the world are amazed by the magnificent flowers that we have.

Another chapter on Sculptural Forms lists Gynea Lily, Bunya Pine (*Araucaria bidwillii*), Burrawang (*Macrozamia communis*) and Grass Trees. Once again this chapter brings to your attention that Australia has some of the very best sculptural plants. Strangely no mention here of Tree Fern (*Dicksonia antarctica*), surely a plant used worldwide as a sculptural accent, although Tree Ferns are listed under other headings.

This book lists plants suitable for topiary, pleaching, hedging and espalier. Special mention is made of *Leptospermum laevigatum* for copses. In our garden we have used *Leptospermum* 'Aphrodite' and 'Rudolph' to create copses by trimming up to show their marvellous trunks and underplanting with correas and violas.

For Covering Ground Pigface (*Carpobrotus* species), Ruby Saltbush (*Enchylaena tomentosa*) and Boobialla (*Myoporum parvifolium*) are featured. We find all these to be excellent groundcovers and very bird-attracting. In the case of pigface and the King Parrots, maybe altogether too attractive! King Parrots decimate our *Carpobrotus glaucescens* 'Aussie Rambler' – they love to eat the leaves.

In Shady Spaces are listed Cunjevoi (*Alocasia brisbanensis*), Giant Water Vine (*Cissus hypsoglauca*), Tree Ferns, Wax Flower (*Hoya australis*), Palm Grass (*Molinieria capitulata*) and Scrambling Lily (*Geitonoplesium cymosum*). In Canberra we cannot grow any of these except Tree Ferns, but this chapter does challenge you to find plants for shady spaces. Such plants are always at a premium.

Grassy Swathes featured plants are Knobbly Club-rush (*Ficinia nodosa*), Coast Tussock Grass, (*Poa labillardieri*), Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*), and Weeping Grass (*Microlaena stipoides*).

Flowering Meadows examines the uses of Peas, Daisies, *Hibbertia*, *Goodenia*, *Stylidium*, *Pelargonium*, *Chrysocephalum* and *Wahlenbergia*.

The book concludes with Small Gums, Legacy Trees and Rare Beauties. Small Gums features *E. erythrocorys*, *mcquoidesii*, *strictlandii*, *preissiana*, *puverulenta*, *tetraptera*, and *websteriana*.

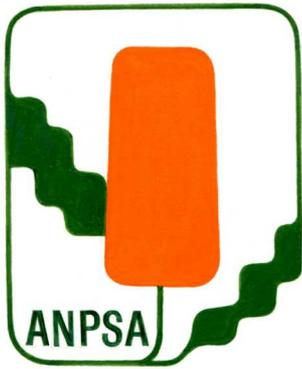
Legacy trees listed are Spotted Gum (*Corymbia maculata*), Scribbly Gum (*E. haemastoma*), Queensland Bottle Tree (*Brachychiton ruprestis*), Port Jackson Fig (*Ficus rubiginosa*), Broad Leafed Paperbark (*Melaleuca quinquinervia*) and Firewheel Tree (*Stenocarpus sinuatus*).

Rare Beauties include Pencil Pine (*Athrotaxis cupressioides*) and Austrobaileya (*Austrobaileya scandens*) amongst others.

This book contains many excellent suggestions for plants for particular purposes. These are of interest to the beginning gardener and the expert. I appreciate the detailed examination of a number of our native plants for use in gardens. I highly recommend this book.



Marriott Garden: Cottage garden west of door on southern side of house with, from left, *Maireana sedifolia* (Bluebush), purple *Dampiera rosmarinifolia* and pale pink *Hypocalymma angustifolium*



Australian Plants Award - Amateur category:

For every biennial Conference of ANPSA, a committee considers nominations from the member Regions for both a Professional and Amateur award. This year, the Amateur award was given to Diana Snape in recognition of her long and active service to the native plant gardening community and to APS Victoria. The professional award was given to Alexander Floyd of NSW, an exceptional botanist and supporter of APS NSW.

What follows is the text of Diana's award certificate that summarizes some of her many achievements.

Diana gained a Master of Science degree at the University of Sydney and taught science at the University and at secondary schools in Sydney and Melbourne. She wrote her first book, *Meet the First 30 Elements* in 1989, a chemistry text for junior high school students published by Science Teachers Association of Victoria.

Diana joined the Australian Plants Society (then SGAP) in New South Wales in 1960. When she and her husband moved to Melbourne in 1967 Diana joined APS Victoria.

Diana was a member of the Open Garden Scheme selection committee and actively promoted the scheme in Victoria. She and her husband created a beautiful landscaped Australian plants garden in Hawthorn East which has been featured in *Landscape Australia*, *Australian House and Garden* and in overseas publications.

Diana and her husband Brian support the Royal Botanic Gardens, Victoria and also the Australian Flora Foundation research fund which fosters research on Australian plants. The Snape Reserve at Dimboola, Victoria was acquired by Trust for Nature in 2002 and named to honour the personal generosity of Diana and her husband. It is a 754 hectare property adjacent to the Little Desert National Park.

Diana founded the ANPSA Garden Design Study Group in April 1993. This study group became popular almost immediately and grew to a membership of over 200 in 1996. The group remains very active with sub-groups formed in several areas of the country. As Leader/Newsletter editor for 10 years, Diana ensured the publication of 41 newsletters each containing about 20 pages. The newsletters contained articles from Diana and other group members. Diana led the Melbourne sub-group from 1993 until 2017, almost a quarter of a century!

Diana has written many articles for *Growing Australian*, the Australian Plants Society Victoria Newsletter as well as other Australian Plants Society journals. With over 70 articles published, Diana's skill to communicate through the written word is clearly evident.

Diana is the author of two books on garden design and the use of Australian native plants: *Australian Native gardens: putting visions into practice* published by Lothian in 1992 which kindled the interest to form the ANPSA Garden Design Study Group and *The Australian Garden: Designing with Australian Plants* Published by Blooming Books first in 2003 and reprinted in 2008, with some input from other study group members, which has sold over 10,000 copies. Diana was among the first to promote through her books and talks the idea of an Australian garden using Australian native plants. Employing her depth of experience, knowledge and expertise in using Australian plants in garden design, Diana is able to demonstrate how to achieve vistas of harmony and beauty in every situation and climate.

My Canberra Garden in Transition

Fran Middleton, Canberra

One of my New Year's resolutions has been to more regularly photograph what's happening in my 28 year old Canberra suburban garden. Back in 1990 I had that sometimes-prized opportunity, a blank canvas on which to create a garden, but sadly, my enthusiasm for native plants was well into the future. Being from a completely different climate zone (Brisbane), upon arrival in Canberra in 1982 I became enthusiastic about all the 'new' wonders of the plant world which the Canberra climate allows and over many years spent a small fortune on bulbs, perennials, Camellias and the like. That was my garden...

More recently, I have decided to tip the balance in favour of native plants and thought I might make some contributions to the GDSG *Newsletter* about my challenges, strategies, successes and failures as I'm probably not the only member who would be embarking on such a project, whether the existing 'canvas' on which they are designing is of their own making or not. So, here's instalment number 1. Tipping the balance, rather than starting all over again, is key to my decision as I do intend to keep many of the mature deciduous trees for their amenity in ameliorating the climate extremes of this city. Some of my exotic plants have sentimental value and a few I just really like... but native plants are really my passion.



Former semi-circle of lawn beside driveway now a small garden surrounded by a path. *Callistemon* 'Kings Park Special' (left) will provide height eventually. Four year old *Xanthorrhoea glauca* doing well so I've recently planted 2 more a few metres away

My garden has a gentle slope roughly east to west and the private back garden is on the north side, a delight in winter. The irregular shape of my house means that there are nooks and corners facing in all directions, microclimates for which I am very grateful in this part of the country. I do have one area that suffers total cold shade in winter and then baking afternoon sun in summer and I am still thinking about what plants might do best there. I've always found that gardeners and gardens have to be very resilient here.

Canberra has a 'no front fence' policy which theoretically means that gardens flow out to the footpath, enhancing the streetscape. A corner block on the main through-street has its challenges in that there is just so much garden 'on display', whether I like this or not and whether the weeds have gone feral or I'm managing to get on top of it all. I must ensure that my plantings don't reduce visibility for traffic turning out of my street. Being so visible does seem to lend itself to chats with passers-by who occasionally stop when I'm gardening and ask what I'm up to and some even notice the greater number of native plants now. More importantly, the birds and insects have noticed and numbers and species have increased. At last count there were three Blue Tongue Lizards in residence.



The gradual transformation of gardens beside the public footpath - *Acacia* 'Little Nugget' (is only little if I prune it), *Melaleuca incana* (dwarf, I think/hope), plumes of *Dichelachne crinita*; Textures and colours of *Brachyscome multifida*, *Chrysocephalum apiculatum* and *Kunzea* 'Badja Carpet' wrapping around a rock; Life imitating Art, will the real Blue Tongue Lizard please stand up?

Challenges included a very large amount of lawn which I've gradually reduced to a small area in the back garden. Being a compulsive plant collector, it's not hard to fill up such spaces so I need to try to apply good design principles to make sure that these new gardens are worthy of the hard work of getting rid of so much lawn. Early failures with *Grevilleas* in some former lawn areas made me wonder if there might have been some residue of Phosphorus from lawn fertilisers. I persevered with them and other *Proteaceae* and over time assume that the Phosphorus has been leaching out.

My suburb used to be a hillside pine plantation on clay soil. Years of autumn leaf fall in my garden has overlaid this soil with a humus layer in many areas. I have earthworms in abundance but I also have mature tree roots. Whenever I have any serious tree pruning done I acquire a big pile of chips for mulch. It doesn't have the even size or colour of commercial mulch but it's free. I have an automatic irrigation system but I have found after some losses that new plantings need hand watering over their first summer. The only straight lines in my garden are those created by the public footpaths on two sides and my approach has been to create meandering paths that follow the curved edges of the former lawn areas. This mostly works well for moving in a coherent way around the garden. I must remember to stand back more often and gaze and think and imagine.

I've admired *Leatherwoods*, *Eucryphia moorei* on ANPS Wednesday Walks in the mountains between Canberra and the coast and *E. lucida* when walking in Tasmania so when a mature and diseased double white ornamental peach in a prominent place at the front of the house had to go, I was delighted to find *E. lucida* at a recent ANPS plant sale to replace it. Hotter, drier climate here, but a bit of extra water in summer and fingers crossed.



Eucryphia lucida, first flowers January 2018; *Brachyscome multifida* soften the edges where 3 hard surfaces meet. Note to self, propagate more *Brachyscomes*!; Replacing roses and a hedge, some 'pretties' I propagated, *Isotoma axillaris* and *Scaevola humilis* 'Sitting Pretty'. *Pandorea jasminoides*, *Billardiera* sp. (obscured) and *Boronia* 'Purple Jared' complete the picture

So, it's clear that I'm not immune to the disease of impulse purchases, many bought with wishful thinking during my travels, but I don't have too many other vices... Sometimes I try my hand at propagating from cuttings – a good insurance against loss as well as providing plenty of opportunities for repeat planting which will help to unify the look of the garden as they mature.

I am challenged by all those exotic bulbs which have multiplied and self-seeded prolifically and to my eye don't always look quite right alongside native plantings, although the sheer hard work of removing absolutely all of them is probably unrealistic now so selective culling and 'deadheading' before seeding

has been my strategy so far. I have been casting a critical eye over mature exotic shrubs that are past their best and many have had the chop! Even painting their cut stumps with herbicide hasn't stopped some of them reshooting but overall I'm winning that particular battle. And the scourge of carpets of *Vinca* (both major and minor) has now been overcome by a very labour-intensive exercise with gloves, herbicide and a paintbrush. In general I would prefer not to use herbicide for all the usual reasons, but I'm using it responsibly and sparingly and for the greater good.

There is always something in flower, even if only briefly and tiny, and to my surprise and delight the January 2018 tally of flowering plants is around 90 and counting. Many of my plants are still tiny so I find myself celebrating a solitary flower. However, I don't want to rely solely on flowers so I also seek out interesting foliage.



Hemiandra pungens showing promise as a ground cover; *Regelia ciliata* has lovely, neat foliage; *Melaleuca hypericifolia* 'Ulladulla Beacon'

I do like to clothe the walls and vertical structures with greenery and I hate to admit it but there had even been Ivy in this garden at some stage! I'm finding that *Billardiera* make good light climbers as long as they have support. So far I've been trying 6 species for suitability in Canberra, all of which seem easy to propagate, so far so good and I can replace those that may not survive their initial locations.



It seems to be taking forever for the Colorbond fence in the back garden to 'disappear' behind this 4 year old hedge of *Callistemon* 'Great Balls of Fire'. When this summer heat is over a light prune should encourage some more of its colourful new growth. I know there are different approaches to gardening with natives and I am definitely a pruner. Much as I admire them, it has not been my intention that this garden will ever look like a naturalistic bush garden but I hope it will eventually be an example of how to effectively combine native and exotic plants. I'm a little impatient to see how some of my planting combinations work out.



Many of my plants are grown in pots, some just to see how they survive the frosts as they wait out the winter under varying amounts of shelter, some because I'm almost certain they won't be happy in Canberra clay soil. There are often 'spares' coming along from my propagation efforts, just in case. *Crowea* 'Ryan's Star' was successful last year so I'm now trying four in the ground.



Ceratopetalum gummiferum 'Johanna's Christmas', *Darwinia diosmoides*, *Crowea* 'Ryan's Star', all in pots.

There are some weedy areas of my garden that I haven't yet incorporated into my plan – just not enough hours in the day. There have been losses due to absence, weather and poor choices. However, I'm definitely past the point of no return with this project and loving it.



Some more January flowers - *Correa glabra* 'Coliban River', *Pelargonium rodneyanum*, *Dianella* 'Uralla', a delightful miniature plant

Garden Design Study Group Queensland

NOTICE OF MEETING Friday February 9, 2018 – 11.00am

Hello everyone!

Learning design from the artists! VENUE: Queensland Art Gallery, Southbank.

Plan to meet in the Gallery foyer at 11.00 am

Bring a small A5 notebook and sketching pencil to record your impressions and ideas suggested by the artworks about garden design or landscape composition, perspective, textures, colours etc. This will be useful as we discuss everyone's observations over lunch.

It might be best to buy lunch at the Gallery so as to avoid carrying it around with you.

Together we will search out the most relevant Australian and world landscape artworks, then analyse and discuss what we can learn from them about garden design. I'm not sure what we will find out but I feel sure that many artists have a lot to communicate about design, scale, physical and aesthetic relationships, sunshine and shadow, perspective, focal points, plants, rocks etc that will inspire us in our own garden designs.

In addition weather and time permitting, we could visit the adjacent Gallery of Modern Art for some contemporary visions and inspect the linking gardens in that section of Southbank Parklands.

So far the following have confirmed their attendance □ Jane Fountain □ Susan Rouse & Mark Shuman || Brenda Meehan | Leanne Dunn || and me

Please let me know if you will be attending so we know to expect you

Treasurer's report:-

Cheque account: \$ 6,777.34

Term Deposit: \$ 26,706.58 **TOTAL:** **\$ 33,483.92**



Banksia serrata



Hibiscus heterophylla

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Calothamnus tuberosus



Hibiscus divaricatus

ANPSA Garden Design Study Group Newsletter

Copy should be sent to Lawrie Smith, Melaleuca Lakes, **38 Sandpiper Avenue, NORTH LAKES, QLD. 4509** (NOTE new address and email)
Email: lawries@live.com

Membership dues 2017 - 2018: per year

Email Newsletter: **FREE**

Paper Newsletter \$20.00

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