



GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP

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109

STUDY GROUP LEADER / NEWSLETTER EDITOR

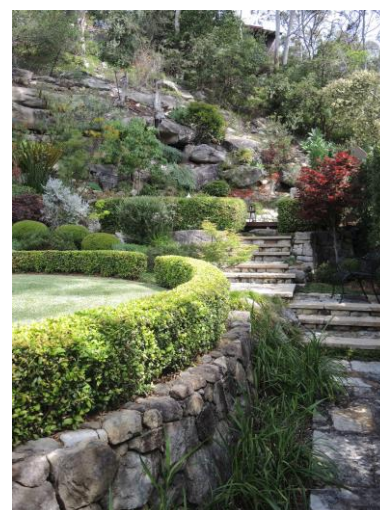
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Newsletter Theme: 'Framework Trees and Shrubs'

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Formal and informal Framework Planting invites exploration into and around the garden to discover the special detail plants that add interest and botanic diversity.

ANPSA Garden Design Study Group Newsletter

Published quarterly in February, May, August and November.

Copy Deadline: first day of the publication month, although earlier submissions will be welcomed by the Editor.

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Receiving the Newsletter – are your contact details current?

Membership of GDSG covers a period of twelve months from July 1 to June 30

Please advise me if you wish to change your contact details, or how you wish to receive the Newsletter or to discontinue membership. Remember that membership for emailed Newsletters is **FREE!** However, **if you prefer a copy posted** there is an annual fee of \$20 to cover printing and postage.

Newsletter timing & Themes

These are the 2019/20 Newsletter dates and themes:

Issue	date	Theme
110	February	Courtyard & Patio Gardens
111	May	Planning for Garden Colour

Issue	date	Theme
112	August	FIRE risk and Garden design!
113	November	Perfume & Aroma in the garden

Please ensure that your submissions reach the editor at least two weeks before the publication month.

The Editor Comments

Hello everyone!

Vale Diana Snape

In the week before the ANPSA conference in Albany we received some unexpected news that our Garden Design Study Group founder Diana Snape had passed away. On your behalf I expressed to her husband Brian our sincere expression of respect and appreciation for her deep understanding of garden design with native plants that she so freely shared with us all. Many of you at the conference signed and left messages on a special card which was personally delivered to Brian by GDSG members in Melbourne. It is wonderful to know that her legacy will live on in every part of Australia enshrined in the design for our gardens. We decided in Albany to follow in her footsteps, by investigating how best to prepare another source of native garden design principles and ideas, following on from her first book, but perhaps using technology to ensure optimum distribution and usefulness. [Refer later in this Newsletter].

Blooming Diversity 2019

It is always wonderful to attend an ANPSA conference every two years and renew friendships, make new ones and investigate native plants in their own regions. The 'Wildflower State' is a remarkable venue for us to enjoy – but more of that later. Our GDSG display was busy at every break in the conference proceedings, so capably staffed by Carol Guard who ensured that everyone's contact details were correct and that prospective new members received an application form. During the conference we received nineteen new membership applications [see the list on the last page] and were able to 'rescue' ten existing members who for various reasons had dropped off the current membership list – primarily due to forgetfulness in advising email changes etc.

GDSG Meeting



More than twenty five members (not all visible) met together around a large round table for almost two hours. Every one introduced themselves by providing insights into their garden and what they hoped to achieve as a GDSG member.

Six items of interest that were circulated in the last Newsletter, were discussed and this is a brief outline of the comments from the meeting. Remember this is your group and as leader I want to ensure that whatever we do, whatever we publish, reflects the reasons why you joined GDSG in the first place.

1. Do you find that the extracts from previous Newsletters encourage you to read more of past articles?
 - *It was agreed that this is very useful in prompting readers to delve deeper into the website Newsletter archives and should continue.*
2. Are the NL articles providing sufficient useful information or direction about garden design issues?
 - *Articles are generally useful and informative but it was hoped that information and design concepts for a wider cross section of Australia's regions would be incorporated; members are therefore encouraged to make the effort to write articles of any size or theme that they think would be invaluable to others.*
3. Would more or larger photographs increase understanding and information exchange?
 - *This was not considered absolutely necessary as the digital version has sufficient resolution to allow the reader to enlarge the photos on screen; larger photos use more space and would result in more NL pages.*
4. Is the theme for each NL working for you?
 - *It is useful to have the themes twelve months ahead in each issue and this can stimulate members to take up their pens and cameras. Members were encouraged to send more articles, even just one paragraph text/image observations would be of interest to others.*
5. Would including more detail information for hard landscape construction and planting design be helpful?
 - *This encouraged a debate as to whether we should get into garden construction issues or remain just for garden design; given the nation wide differences and potential for problems for say structural adequacy eg a pergola, it was decided that we should not offer detail construction design suggestions.*
6. How best to use the invested proceeds from the first GDSG book to further native garden design.

- *It was generally agreed that we should plan to use the term deposit (\$27,000) carefully and wisely to address new design issues since the first volume 'The Australian Garden' - printed in 2002; we questioned, if a book is the best way to share the garden design principles and ideas? The possibility of a web based, digital production that would have multiple authors, under a coordinating editor, contributing data to a predetermined index of design elements was to be investigated. [Refer later in this Newsletter]*

Extracts from Past Newsletters (Issues 29 to 32)

The GDSG Newsletter index on the ANPSA website is a great way to search out specific ideas and recommendations offered by members in relation to garden design over the years since the first Newsletter in May 1993. There are many gems of inspiration similar to the following excerpts below that are worth repeating as they are still as relevant today as they were when first published. *Make sure you read the full article of these references and other articles on the GDSG Newsletter archives section of the ANPSA website.*

Newsletter #29 – April/May, 2000

Tree Roots - Structures and Drainage Pipes.

Several authors

The moment a tree is planted it has the potential to alter the moisture content around the footing zone. A house constructed on reactive clay, with many trees planted in close proximity and lack of general watering and maintenance, has potential to *ED: read on for some very interesting comments and discussions*

Organic mulch as a facet of the Australian scene

Geoff Simmons, Qld

Invariably writers in garden magazines and TV presenters stress the importance of distributing a thick layer of organic mulch, such as straw or bark, on garden beds. Before considering examples it is necessary to stress that the subject is gardening with Australian plants in an Australian context - not the beneficial production of fruit and vegetables.

Extending the view

Cherree Densley, Vic

How many of us try to excite the eye of the observer? Here are some ideas which have appealed to me when looking at others' gardens.

Newsletter #30 – June, 2000

Australian garden design

Peter Swain, NSW

I am not sure that I really understand the need to categorise a unique "Australian" identity for our gardens. Why waste our time in search for a convenient but elusive set of words to describe the huge range of existing (and emerging) garden types that embrace our enormous 'mish mash' of climatic and geographical conditions plus enormous influence of our diverse cultural backgrounds.

Ornaments in the garden

Diana Snape, Vic

I suspect many growers of Australian plants are a little suspicious of the use of ornaments in an Australian garden. Especially if the garden is naturalistic in style, ornaments of any sort may be seen as unnatural in an environment which, although created, is still strongly influenced by nature. This is particularly true if their purpose is not functional but purely decorative.

Plants in Design

various authors

Pittosporum, my 'bush Nanny'; Trees for shade; Feature Plants; Leafy sticks (Cordylina)

Newsletter #31 – August/November, 2000

Photographing gardens

Helen Moody, NSW

These extracts are taken from an article ('Photographing plants and gardens') in 'Native Plants for NSW July 2000. The article appeared originally in the 'Sydney Morning Herald' in July 1999.

Plants in Design 'Top 10' plants

Jeff Howes, NSW; Bev Hanson, Vic; Ian Percy, NSW

In my opinion asking readers for their top 10 plants does not prove too much. Before I considered using any plants from readers' 'top 10', I would need to know other vital information such as: where in Australia is the

garden situated, what is the soil type the plants are growing in, what aspect are the plants in - morning sun, afternoon sun or dappled light etc. (Comment from Jeff Howes). *ED: totally agree that this is necessary!*

Newsletter #32 – November, 2000

Growing Designs

Paul Thompson, Vic

We are blessed with a rich floral choice for our designs. What drives the choice of plants? Do you allow the plants to influence the design, do you let the design choose the plants or do you think of both approaches at once? Does one let favourites have a place in every garden? Selection of plants is best when they all suit the purpose of the brief and the understanding of those responsible for the care of the planting.

Puzzling Landscape

Paul Fox, Vic

This paper examines how the colonial landscape was perceived as a set of puzzles. It examines the sources of these, and suggests that in colonial circumstances multiple visions of the landscape resulted. Colonial settlers arrived with minds already formed, so when they saw colonial landscapes they

Mistletoes in garden design?

Diana Snape, Vic

I remember writing a brief note on this topic in a GDSG Newsletter a long while ago (NL 13, May 1996). I have often wondered about introducing (or retaining) mistletoes in gardens for their sometimes very beautiful appearance and their value for birds. They are characteristic of so much of the wooded landscape of Australia.

Newsletter #109 theme: 'Framework Trees and Shrubs'

Our book, 'The Australian Garden' by Diana Snape contains a section that discusses framework plants. It seems appropriate to use extracts from that to introduce this subject. The opening statement nearly says it all!

"The best advice I ever received about gardening was to plant the 'bones' early and not to worry about the details; they could adapt to change as inclination and experience allowed." Montagu Don. *The Sensuous Garden*, 1997

- Framework plants define the shape of the whole garden and its various sections.
- They can also provide the essential unity to bind the whole together.
- Important characteristics of framework plants are reliability, long life, and green foliage that maintain its attractiveness throughout the year.
- Framework plants act as windbreaks and block unsightly views.
- They can be positioned to create a private enclosure or frame an attractive view from the house.
- Used as a backdrop they can highlight a feature plant, sculpture or water feature.
- In most gardens trees will be one of the most important components of framework planting.
- Repetition provides a strong framework for example screens of one species or similar species.
- A row of plants of similar height is more effective than one of different sizes.
- Plants with similar foliage colour or texture can also define a line or curve by standing out against other shades of green.
- Plants with distinctive form or foliage do not make good framework specimens because they capture too much attention – use them for that.
- Many framework plants have beautiful seasonal flowers – consider this as a bonus.

There are many other uses for framework plants, collectively these very important design attributes can lift your garden above the ordinary if you plan their physical and functional application.

- Framework plants can define an overall garden character or the aesthetic of a specific section.
- Framework plants are strong visual elements that do not change substantially over time.
- Create a 'ceiling' for the garden by one major tree or a grove of more columnar species.
- Locate framework trees to control the sun – admit winter sun, protect with summer shade.
- 'Transparent' hedges offer partial screening and enticing glimpses to entice garden discovery.
- Framework structure can be: formal or informal, sculptural, static or dynamic, define visual focus, colour impact or harmonious monochrome.

Some examples of Framework Planting



Mature specimen trees provide shade and a protective foliage canopy inviting garden exploration.



One huge specimen tree defines and dominates the garden, creating a specific character using related



Layered small and large shrubs define a garden path and focus attention on the distant 'borrowed landscape'.



Clipped hedges effectively provide direction and attract the eye into the garden through contrast in foliage colour and formal shape.

It would be very informative for all GDSG members if YOU would take the time to share images and descriptions of using framework planting in your garden - to be published in the next Newsletter.

Garden design with graceful grasses and strap-leaved plants

Diana Snape, July 8, 2016



ED: Through her words Diana is still able to contribute her knowledge to the subject of Framework Planting to encourage the use of monocotyledon plants across the 'floor' of a garden to achieve a truly natural, Australian character tying all design elements together.

We have a great range of monocotyledons in Australia and they add a very distinctive element in our gardens. They occur in most of our ecosystems as an important part of the natural environment, so a garden of shrubs without monocots looks 'unnatural' to me.

Tufted or strap-leaved Australian monocotyledons of different sizes can be used individually in a garden, in proportion to the size of the garden – large monocots for a large garden, smaller for small. They can be massed with repetition of a single species, but they could also be used to create formal patterns of differing species.

An amazing number of monocot species have now entered the nursery trade, many with sub-species, forms or cultivars. They provide great variation in colour and texture, from those with fine grass-like foliage, to substantial broad-leaved lilies. We can use these variations to have fun with patterns, and a touch of formality in an informal garden can be a focus.

For those of us with smaller gardens, where closer maintenance and specific weed removal is possible, trying a small patch of a grass with a few selected forbs can give a lot of pleasure. We did this with just a small area of a local *Rytidosperma racemosum* (Wallaby-grass). Wallaby-grass can also be used to form a lawn, as can *Microlaena stipoides* (Weeping Grass). These two can be combined in a lawn.

Marvellous monocotyledons, including grasses, have something to offer every garden.

On Leaving our Garden – the Snape Garden, east Hawthorn, Melbourne

This vivid description of the Snape's garden, originally published on the ANPSA website, is a fitting tribute to Diana who passed away on September 18, 2019. Diana was a much valued, respected and influential member of ANPSA and founder of the Garden design Study Group. She was and continues to be, an inspiration to us all!

Author	Margaret James, April 9, 2014
ANPSA website	http://anpsa.org.au/design/snape.html
Sources	Garden visit and interview with owners 30.9.12
Location	Bluff St, Hawthorn East, Melbourne
Area	0.125 hectare
Orientation	South/north, with a gentle slope from south-east to north-west
Climate	Cool temperate
Rainfall	600 mm per annum
Soil	Clay, assisted by the application of gypsum and built up in some areas with sand
Mulch	Tree mulch tends to self-regenerate, additional pine bark every 3 years
Tanks & watering	Series of linked tanks, approx. 23000 litres. Watering system for front garden and a section of the back garden.
Photographs	Diana Snape; except for four by Angela Kirchner as indicated



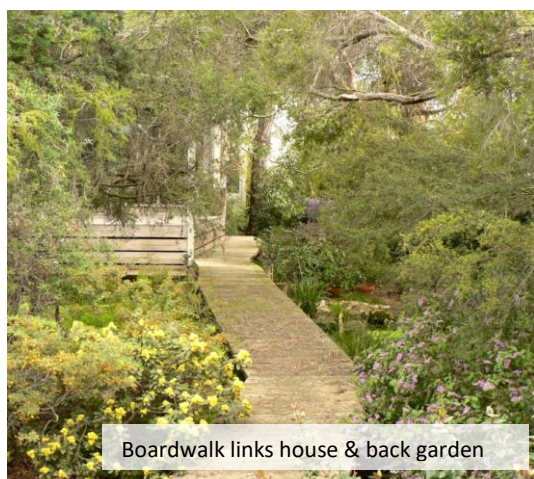
Sandhill garden

Angela Kirchner

This is the record of an Australian plant garden which was developed by the owners, Brian and Diana Snape for 39 years. The Snape's sold their house in 2013, knowing that almost all of the original houses in the area have been replaced with large, two-storey mansions with little or almost no garden. However, this fate has so far been averted and this wonderful garden continues to survive since the sale.

Beginnings

Brian and Diana Snape bought their house from the original owners in 1971. They were told that the house was designed by Neil Clerehan for the Age Small Homes Service and it was built on a block in the Cato Estate where covenants required that each block should have only one dwelling. The unusual provision that the land was not to be quarried reflects the prevalence of brick making in the area from the clay soil. At that time, the back garden in particular was much neglected, overrun with weeds including blackberries. There were only two Australian plants, a *Melaleuca hypericifolia* and a *Prostanthera ovalifolia*. A bobcat was brought in to clear the back and a framework of Australian trees and shrubs planted, mainly around the perimeter. The garden was then left to tenants while the Snape's lived in England for two years. On their return, they found about half the new plants had survived.

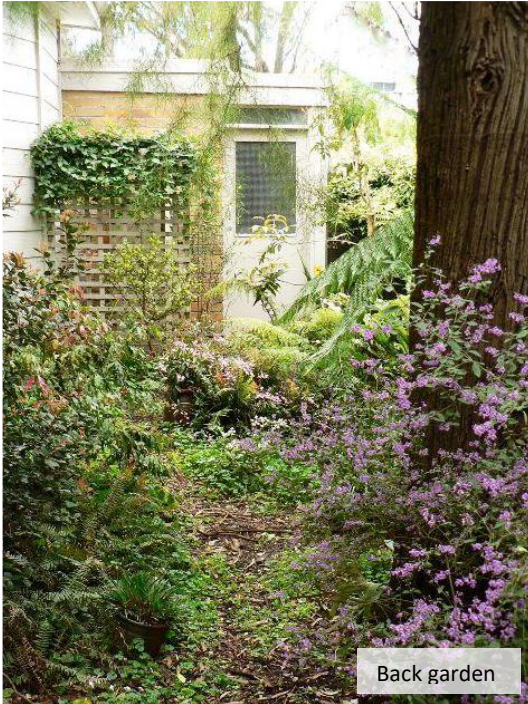


Boardwalk links house & back garden

Development

The garden design was established in the following years, based on the concept of sections of plants in their natural groupings, linked together without hard boundaries. For example, there was an area for WA plants, one for plants of the Grampians and another for Mallee plants.

Other important concepts included the provision of views to the garden from each window of the house, aided by two extensions and the construction of a deck and boardwalk.



Back garden

The subdivision of a lane on the west side allowed the Snape's to buy an additional strip of land, enabling a more extensive grouping of plants on this side of the house, in comparison to the usual difficulty of landscaping a narrow strip of land on the side of most suburban houses.

Rainforest plants, including ferns, were planted on the side of the house and small ponds constructed, making the area surprisingly cool and shady.

Perhaps the most notable of the garden views is a *Eucalyptus mannifera ssp. maculosa* with a splendid trunk, seen from a small meals alcove overlooking the back garden. The tree also centres the view looking back towards the house from the garden:

The lawns gradually disappeared in favour of grouped planting, with connecting paths. To maintain a soft and natural effect, some of the paths are mulched; even an old concrete path to the east of the main path to the front door has been covered with mulch.



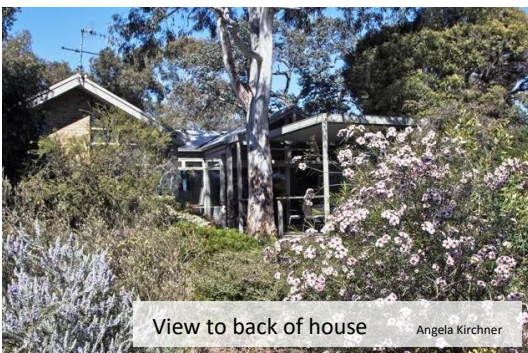
Kitchen garden

Angela Kirchner

The garden has changed and evolved over the 39 years, although the original concepts of the different areas remain and can still be discerned. As Diana explains, *'Over the years, we've seen the garden mature as trees and large shrubs have given it height and substance. They've screened areas to create separate 'rooms' and introduced interest and a touch of mystery as, with a curve in a path or through a gap, you see a new vista'. 1*

Plants

Plants were originally sourced from the few existing native plant nurseries at the time, such as Austriflora. The Snape's were much helped by gifts of cuttings and plants from friends and fellow enthusiasts like Bill Molyneux and Trevor Blake. Diana established a small nursery for propagating plants from cuttings and seeds. She used them for the essential plant repetitions in the garden and gave away many to friends who in turn supplied other cuttings. Over time the choice in nurseries has broadened considerably, with the result that approaching 1,000 different species or varieties of plants have grown in the garden during its lifetime. A count some years ago established that there were 500 different plants, with many repetitions, particularly of groundcovers. Diana and Brian demonstrated their commitment to growing Australian plants by joining the Society for Growing Australian Plants, [now the Australian Native Plants Society (Australia)] in 1959 and their interactions over the years with this group have influenced their garden and in turn their garden has been a source of knowledge and inspiration to many members of the association.



View to back of house

Angela Kirchner



Purple & gold flowers line path

Plants have lived and died; some became too large for their positions and had to be removed. In recent years, especially in the drought years, the emphasis has changed from collecting a wide variety of plants including rare and endangered ones to selecting



Callistemon brachyandrus



Eucalyptus prieissiana

colour clashes or a few individual shades that did not appeal. We looked out for attractive foliage colours, to be there all year round."

Visiting the garden

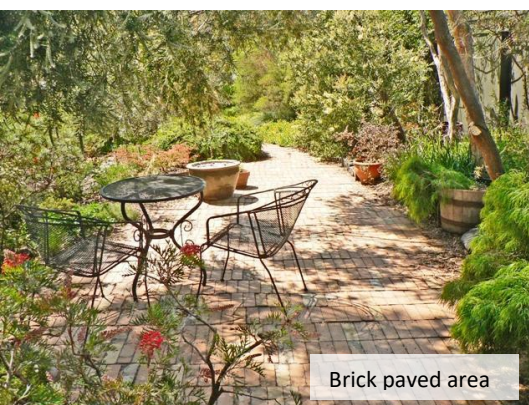
Approaching the house, the garden makes a gentle statement in a street largely given over to exotic gardens. Most of the original one-storey houses have been replaced with much larger two-storey buildings, leaving smaller gardens. The nature strip in front of the Snapes' house is immediately noticeable as different from the ubiquitous exotic lawn, as it is planted with small indigenous plants including impressive clumps of kangaroo grass (*Themeda triandra*), daisies (*Brachyscome multifida*) and common everlasting (*Chrysocephalum apiculatum*). The street



Side path front of house

trees (Brush Boxes, paperbarks and a tall *Eucalyptus scoparia*) continue the Australian plant theme. An *Acacia covenyi* (blue bush) overhangs the carport on the left. The tall front fence is constructed largely of a loose wire mesh, which allows glimpses of the garden where not obscured by creepers such as *Billiardiera* and *Pandorea*. A particularly attractive specimen of the latter (*Pandorea 'Ruby Bell'*) is growing over the tall timber gate, suggesting a welcome to visitors.

A concrete path leads to a slate verandah along the south wing of the house and leading to the front door. It is bordered on either side with a range of low shrubs, smaller ground-covering plants and one or two larger trees. Between the two paths, the Snape's have established three coppiced gum trees (*Eucalyptus leucoxylon*). Coppicing has meant that the trees have spread wider, each with several narrow trunks, and have stayed at a relatively low height suitable for a small garden. The gums are surrounded by an understory of small shrubs. A small area near the east fence is planted with lush wallaby grass, interspersed with chocolate lilies, creating a miniature lawn surrounded by taller, screening plants. Other plants in the front garden include several *Philotheca myoporoides* with their star-like pink and white flowers, a macrozamia, a white *Hardenbergia violacea*, clumps of *Orthrosanthus laxus*, and *Crowea* which, like the *Philotheca*, have self-seeded in different places.



Brick paved area

Walking through to the back garden on the east side, past the house, there is a paved area with a painted brick wall, a sculpture and potted plants. A small table and chairs make this a pleasant spot for morning tea.

At the back of the house, two garden beds running north-south

divide the space, providing three north/south open areas. These areas merge into each other so that the divisions are not immediately obvious at first sight. The back garden includes several planted areas, a boardwalk, two ponds, a shed, the nursery, a studio and a substantial vegetable garden, all fitted into a standard house block (although it might be added that blocks in Hawthorn are somewhat larger than those in more recently developed suburbs). The vegetable garden is invisible from the house, but is large enough for five raised beds, tanks, citrus trees and compost facilities. The original exotic lawn has long since gone and the Hills hoist replaced by a discreet clothes line against the fence.

In the eastern third, nearer the house, a brick-paved area and a curved brick path (both constructed by Brian) establish a different character from the front garden. Plants here include *Acacia cognata*, several *Callistemon*, *Melaleuca lateritia*, *M. fulgens* and *Dodonaea sinuolata*, interspersed with small tufties, *Brachyscome* and *Scaevola*. For many years, the eastern fence was screened by a hedge of *Grevillea endlicheriana*, which had to be taken out as it grew unhappy when growing conditions changed. This allowed a new planting, not only of plants to screen the fence, but a whole group of small plants such as low *Eremophila*, *Scaevola*, more *Brachyscome* and *Lomandra*, which are growing happily just outside the studio.

In the middle area, near the house, Diana and Brian have chosen plants with yellow, cream and apricot flowers to harmonise with the colour of the bricks. *Grevillea 'Superb'* with its almost perpetual apricot flowers epitomises the theme, complemented by a dwarf leptospermum and cream *Hibbertia dentata*, with a *Prostanthera* (mint bush) to provide a contrast of deep purple when in bloom. Towards the north, another area is devoted to plants from West Australia including many species and forms of *Eremophila*, *Chorizema cordatum* with its vibrant orange blooms and mauve-flowering *Guichenotia macrantha* supported by a trellis. An area originally for Mallee plants now includes *Eucalyptus gracilis*, *E. calycogona*, *E. Behriana* and *E. preissiana*, with *Micromyrtus* and *Rhagodia* understorey.



Boardwalk and pond

On the west side of the house, where taller plants provide shade, we also find a small pool and rocks, which help create a cool environment for *Prostanthera*, *Thomasia*, maidenhair fern and orchids. This shady area is lit up in spring by the abundant white flowers of *Phebalium 'Green Screen'*.

For birds, there are raised birdbaths, nectar and seed-producing plants and a few prickly plants for shelter. Over the years the Snape's counted 65 species of birds visiting the garden, although fewer birds visited in later years because of the loss of nearby gardens and the resulting 'island effect'. Recent visitors included Red and Little Wattlebirds, magpies, Magpie Larks, Little Ravens and Grey Butcherbirds. The few smaller birds are Brown Thornbills, White-browed Scrubwrens, Eastern Spinebills and occasionally Spotted Pardalotes.



Wildlife friendly

A complex garden such as this required considerable effort to establish and the Snape's estimate that they put in 12-15 hours per week in the early days, but have since found it can be maintained with, on average, only 2-3 hours a week devoted to pruning, weeding and new planting. Additional help, mainly with planting, has only been required since 1999. Time has brought several challenges – shrubs and trees grow straggly and may not respond

to pruning; the years of drought made some plants impossible to grow; heavy rain has killed off others. Like other suburban gardens, this one is inevitably affected by its neighbours' choices. Until recently, a very large cypress right next to the east fence provided heavy shade and sucked up moisture, hindering growth in the Snapes'

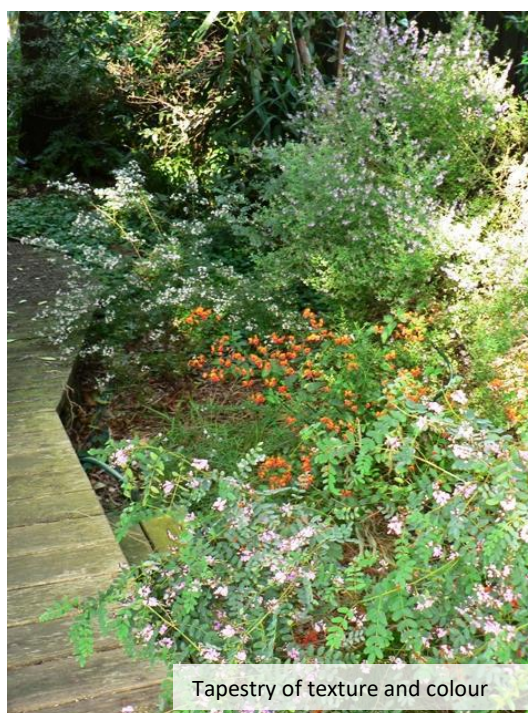
garden and causing the death of two established *Callistemon*. The tall lemon-scented gums over the back fence provide more pleasing shared landscape, but also provide unwanted shade for the vegetable garden.



This garden cannot be understood from one vantage point, but must be walked through to reveal its complexity, special beauties and hidden treasures. Each part of the garden offers something; there are no dead areas or neglected corners.

In this way, the Snape garden fits the description of a walkabout garden in Diana's book, *The Australian Garden: designing with Australian Plants*, even though the concept refers especially to a large garden with a substantial network of paths. But large or small, these are gardens to "be in" rather than "be looked at".

Owners and visitors alike go for a wander in the garden at any time



of the day or year to enjoy what it has to offer, including unexpected or rare delights. Changes probably occur daily and certainly weekly. The walkabout garden suggests a relaxed and intimate approach. 2

This garden has brought great joy and satisfaction not only to its owners, but to the thousands of people who have visited the garden over the

years. A description of the garden, "Bushland in the City", written by Diana and Brian, appeared in the 1986 collection *Ideas from Private Gardens*.³ It has been featured in the Open Garden Scheme five times and was regularly visited by the Garden Design Study Group of APNSA which Diana convenes. In fine weather, lunch on the deck was a special pleasure.

The garden exemplifies dedication, extensive knowledge of Australian plants, gardening skills and a subtle but coherent design, based on an appreciation of colour and form. It exemplifies the ideas about Australian gardens Diana expressed in her articles and books.⁴

Those who have visited this garden over the years will endorse Diana's parting words:

Many people have told us they have been influenced by it. It also inspired my writing articles for gardening magazines and The Age newspaper for over 20 years. I'm sure my continuing interest in our own garden and its design, as well as the beauty I've seen achieved in the gardens of others, played a part in motivating me to start the Garden Design Study Group back in 1993.



Winding pathways



So, even if it is to be destroyed now, I feel the garden has not lived in vain. I think it has all been worthwhile, not just for our enjoyment alone but for the interest of others (and for the insects, birds and other wildlife it has helped support).⁵

- 1 *On leaving our garden* in the Garden Design Study Group Newsletter 81, February 2013
- 2 *Diana Snape, The Australian Garden: designing with Australian Plants, Blooming Books, Melbourne 2002, Contributing authors Barbara Buchanan, Jo Hambrett, Chris Larkin and Danie Ondinea. p.67*
- 3 *Natalie McMaster and Jane Edmanson, Ideas from Private Gardens: 35 Australians Share Their Secrets, Ann O'Donovan, 1986.*
- 4 *For more about Diana's philosophy of gardens, See Anne Vale, Exceptional Australian Garden Makers, Lothian Custom Publishing, 2013, pp166-174*
- 5 *'On leaving our garden' in the Garden Design Study Group Newsletter 81, February 2013*



Diana's Garden - Bushland in the City - Bluff St, Hawthorn

A second Australian Garden Design Book – electronically?

As long time members will know it was always the intention to use the proceeds from the first book (authored by Diana Snape and published in 2002) toward the creation of a second book which developed the original content further in response to ever-changing conditions and requirements in garden design with Australian Plants.

A short history so far

Between October 2009 and May 2011 moves were in progress to prepare a second book as a companion to the very successful “The Australian Garden – designing with Australian Plants”. The GDSG members appointed to research, prepare the text and illustrations for the book was headed by Joanne Hambrett (NSW) and also includes Diana Snape (Vic), Chris Larkin (Vic), Barbara Buchannan (Vic), Margaret Lee (SA), Judy Baghurst (SA), Ros Walcott (ACT) and Lawrie Smith (Q). Preplanning and research indicated that this publication should focus largely on small gardens, small spaces and their specific related opportunities and challenges. Discussions over the past twelve months defined that this book would attempt to provide an Australia wide content – a difficult challenge given the size and diversity of our continent.

I have just looked through my records (30 pages close typed!!) of the numerous discussions between the editorial team up to the last meeting at the Adelaide ANPSA conference October 2011. There is a wealth of very interesting detail and suggestions we collected then. Perhaps not surprisingly, the summary paragraph repeated exactly what was discussed eight years later in the GDSG meeting in Albany this October 2019.

‘In short we enjoyed a very interesting and wide ranging discussion but really did not get too far into the format and content of the Book. I think it is fair to say that there was some hesitation to producing a book given the doubt about declining book purchase. Also the proliferation of coffee table ‘garden books’ means that we must first identify the niche market and define a strategy that will produce a book that really inspires readers to ‘plant an Aussie plant’. The book should aim to demonstrate simply how to satisfy the functional, aesthetic and environmental parameters in designing a garden or garden element of whatever scale.’

Technology may make it easier?

In the years since then, the one thing that has evolved is technology, providing the ability to streamline information storing and retrieval in a very user friendly, easily searched and referenced way. This could be the tool we need to create the ‘book’ without the costs of printing, publication and marketing that a hard copy format demands. Therefore the available funds would be used in an economic and realistic way to source and record the required data and gardens used for illustration.

Please let us know your reaction to this possibility and particularly provide any specific pointers to assist the final decision. Note that there is no final agreement as yet to prepare such a document, it is still very much in the ‘what if’ stage – so please make your comments, they will be invaluable. Several GDSG members have already engaged in preliminary discussions about this possibility and below are a few preliminary dot points for members to consider and add further ideas.

- An editorial team will need to be established to coordinate and prepare the ‘document’;
- Previous editorial discussions have suggested a series of ‘chapters’ and specific subjects for the book, which provides an excellent starting basis;
- The ‘document’ could instead take the form of a series of ‘fact sheets’ each describing and illustrating a specific garden design element;
- The ‘fact sheets’ could be available on the ANPSA website (similarly to the GDSG Newsletter archive);
- A number of contributing authors would each prepare specific ‘fact sheets’ derived from a base index, allowing for ease of searching a specific subject;
- On finding the information needed the ‘fact sheet’ could be printed for future reference;
- Adding additional ‘fact sheets’ or modifying or updating existing would be possible;

Where to from here?

The first question is do we all consider that 'Fact Sheets' could be an appropriate way to prepare garden design information as opposed to a book? Perhaps the real question we need to answer first is - do we currently have sufficient interest and expertise within the GDSG to embark on a process that could realistically take up to four years of constant work to develop and complete? (The setting up of the format and content would be most time consuming process but the production of fact sheets could be progressive over any given time period.)

If it is decided that the fact sheet option is not viable, are there any other ways that the invested resources could/should be utilised in a meaningful way to further our GDSG aims.

The editorial team for the first book and several other interested members have given the proposal some consideration and these are few of their more relevant responses.

- I have once again looked though Diana's first book in some detail. It really is an amazing and comprehensive book with so much information that is so useful to anyone who wants to establish an Australian Garden. As I turned the last page, I felt strongly that it was a shame that this treasure trove was now out of print BUT then it dawned on me that if it was used as the basis of the 'Fact Sheet' process we could effectively make it available to a whole new generation technologically. The many gems of design wisdom could be reproduced fact sheet by fact sheet, updated where necessary, and augmented with contemporary issues and it would all be freely available on the ANPSA website. Isn't that a win win situation??
- I think the assumption of using fact sheets, rather than a book that is sold, is that we are not pursuing a commercial proposition i.e. one that will make money. Rather, it is making info and knowledge more freely available to the general public, hopefully with the aim for it to increase use of native plants. Correct?
- Could the fact sheets be all pulled together as an Australian garden design Sourcebook? (i.e. a book, but leveraging short articles as per the fact sheet outline). A way to capture the knowledge in people's heads, but create a tangible product
- There are already many hard cover books, and most of the younger people I know source information via Google, YouTube, or other social media and read books on a screen. It's the younger, time poor generation - we need to target using the media they use, and recognising the 10 second attention span. We don't want a 'picture book' series but illustrative images can catch sufficient attention for the text to be read.
- My preference would be for a book - a part two companion, 20 years later for 'The Australian Garden 2002'. A book while far more work, also carries far more gravitas but possibly reaches fewer people than the electronic publications.
- A possible use of the money, which honours the memory of Diana, without whom there would be no GDSG: a donation to the various Botanic Gardens which promote Australian plants; a scholarship (but not a lot of money for this).

Responses from all other interested GDSG members would be very much appreciated – please share your thoughts to assist the decision to either:

- ***Investigate and determine the best course of action now, or***
- ***Defer the process to some future time.***

PLANTS IN DESIGN

While looking through the GDSG Newsletter archives I noted that in the issues of the late 1990's and early 2000's much use was made of a regular section to discuss individual plants that were an integral component of garden design when used in various innovative ways. Therefore I want to reintroduce this in every issue as I feel that many members will be able to write just a small paragraph, hopefully with a photograph to share with us all.

So members why not share with us in a few words, something about your favourite plant and how you have used it in the landscape design for your garden to provide that special character or personal meaning. "Plants in Design" will now be a continuing feature in each issue of the Newsletter.

Characteristics of Water Efficient Plants

Colleen Keena, Qld

When establishing a water efficient garden, it is important to choose plants that are best suited to the hot Queensland climate. There is a vast selection of beautiful Australian native plants, as well as plants from the Mediterranean, South Africa and the west coast of America that are adapted to survive dry conditions. They may store water, limit water loss or find water deep in the soil. Look for the following features when choosing new plants for your garden.

Some Australian WaterWise plants

Tall shrubs and trees

- Bribie Island pine *Callitris columellaris*
- Brown laurel *Cryptocarya triplinervis*
- *Casuarina* species (most are WaterWise)
- *Eucalyptus* species (most are WaterWise)
- Kurrajong and bottle tree *Brachychiton species*
- Native rosella *Hibiscus heterophylla*
- Norfolk Island hibiscus *Lagunaria patersonii*
- Tuckeroo *Cupaniopsis anacardioides*
- Weeping bottlebrush *Callistemon viminalis*
- Willow bottlebrush *Callistemon salignus*

Low plants and climbers

- Angular pigface *Carpobrotus glaucescens*
- Helichrysum or straw flower *Bracteantha bracteata*
- Snake vine *Hibbertia scandens*
- Spiny mat rush *Lomandra longifolia*
- Spreading flax-lily *Dianella revoluta*
- Twiggy Baeckea *Baeckea virgata*
- Wallaby grass *Danthonia species*
- Wonga Wonga vine *Pandorea pandorana*

Medium shrubs

- *Acacia* species (many are WaterWise)
- *Grevillea* species (many are WaterWise)
- Hairpin Banksia *Banksia spinulosa*
- Hop bush *Dodonaea viscosa*
- Long-leaf waxflower *Eriostemon myoporoides*
- Narrow-leafed palm lily *Cordyline stricta*
- Native rosemary *Westringia 'Wynyabbie gem'*
- Silver Banksia *Banksia marginata*
- Sturt's desert rose *Gossypium sturtianum*

Small leaves: Many water efficient plants have small, tough leaves, often rounded or needle like to minimise surface area.

Light leaf colours: Water efficient plants have light green, blue-green or grey-green foliage, which reflects light, keeping the leaf cooler and reducing transpiration.

Hairy leaves: Hairs are an indication of water efficiency as they surround the plant pores and act like a windbreak, slowing down air movement over the pores and thereby reducing moisture loss.

Tough surface: Water efficient plants have a tough, hard and sometimes waxy surface to their leaves.

Strong internal structure: Water efficient plants have a strong internal skeleton, which prevents wilting. This combined with reduced transpiration ensures they can survive extended periods of heat stress.

Protected pores: Water efficient plants have fewer stomata (small pore-like openings through which moisture is lost through evaporation) or have protected pores to minimise water loss. Water efficient plants also have most of their stomata on the underside of the leaves where they are less exposed to sun and wind.

Internal water sources: Water may be stored in many different parts of a plant including the trunk, a swollen root system and in the leaves.

Deep root systems: Water efficient plants develop very deep root systems, which enable them to reach down into the ground and search for water. Once they are established they need no further supplementary watering.

Tecomanthe dendrophylla cv 'Roaring Meg'

Susan Rouse, Qld



Thought you might enjoy 'Roaring Meg' – unfortunately my pictures do not do her justice. The lower part of the vine is obscured from frontal view by the black column so when people step down to go through the gate they are utterly gob smacked. Can't claim any planning there – I had no idea that the biggest clumps of flowers are closest to the ground where there are no leaves.

ED: Susan has been puzzling for several years about a suitable climber to cover a large barrel vault constructed over section of the front garden courtyard, under which visitors pass on the way to the front door. Our local members have suggested numerous species but it seems that *Tecomanthe* has proven to be a winner. Some of us think that it is Australia's best flowering vine. As Susan has found out, it flowers from ground level most prolifically on older stems, right to the top of the vine. It is from the rainforests of subtropical (Fraser Island *Tecomanthe hillii*) to tropical Queensland (Daintree *Tecomanthe dendrophylla*). The form 'Roaring Meg' is found in the Daintree along a creek that gives it its common name. As you would expect it is evergreen, very hardy and a fast grower in cool, moist semi shaded conditions, really it is a large and vigorous rainforest liana and will climb to the top of the highest trees.



The bell or trumpet shaped flowers are borne in large clusters with each being up to 150mm long and 20mm in diameter. Individually they remain on the stems for perhaps a week or two, constantly being replaced by juvenile buds in the cluster, so the magnificent display lasts for one or two months in September to October. Flowers best in more sunny areas but the roots need to be in shade.

Carolle Gadd's Garden in Gympie, SEQ

This large rural garden can be, and is, described using many superlative terms but really it is a simple garden where Carolle has used her knowledge and experience to create a very special landscape artwork of botany and horticulture in such a way that at every step from the front gate to the lower slopes there is species diversity, colour harmonies and contrasts, textural variety and interesting focal points that I would term a 'walkabout' garden. Certainly all of our GDSG members were enthralled and the two hours we spent there passed very



quickly as did the number of images stored on camera memory cards. We all learnt so much as we randomly progressed around the garden absorbing everything at the typical GDSG 'snail pace'.

There was so much to see and digest, so many expansive views across the garden and many more close details of plant combinations and design arrangements to appreciate. Rarely do



you see the careful introduction of ‘found rural objects’ so skilfully integrated into gardens, as if they have always been there. They never dominate the plant collection and displays but compliment them.

We were all enchanted by the basalt rock waterway which might well have been there for a million years as it was so carefully constructed. In design terms this structure illustrates how to select and place rocks so that they ‘belong together’. The construction technique so skilfully ensuring that every boulder is carefully placed so the obvious strata is parallel in all rocks and that they are buried to the ‘equator’ of the rock. Don’t worry that half of what you have paid for is never seen again – the end result will be ten times better!! That is an important garden design lesson to learn. We noticed too that the waterproofing membrane was never seen and the stones and gravel used to cover and integrate it, were the same material as the boulders and flagstones. Of course the careful choice of plants used adjacent were totally appropriate and added to the timeless character.



There were many garden design principals we considered, too many to relate here, but for me it was the visual qualities of this informal garden design that stood out. The minute you entered the garden that wonderful composition of hollow log, *Xanthorrhoea*, *Ptilotus* and Kangaroo Paw captured your vision, once there you glanced to the right and appreciated the sparkle of the water in the basalt waterway. Following the stream along enabled you to see the carpet of white and pink *Helipterum* unfolding along the adjacent bed. Then you glanced across the lawns to the massed *Grevillea* cultivars along the boundary, standing out vividly against the borrowed landscape of the rugged ranges to the west. You were then distracted by a series of island genera beds where *Eremophila*, Kangaroo Paw, Myrtaceae family and many others were skilfully colour mixed and matched, each almost floating like opals in a green lawn carpet.



All of this remarkable garden covering more than three acres, is the work of Carolle Gadd and her partner who must spend almost every waking hour on this labour of love. Every plant is pristine and well maintained by regular pruning resulting in the compact branching, dense foliage and multiplicity of flowers over the canopy. Water is applied sparingly and despite the current drought conditions the garden is a picture – a wonderful advertisement for the hardiness of Australia’s native plants.



This remarkable expansive ‘walkabout’ garden was one of four very different residential gardens visited by the members of GDSGQ when we travelled north of Brisbane in August for our annual weekend excursion. Thankyou Carolle we have voted to make you an honorary member of GDSGQ!

GARDEN TIPS

- *Select the best possible plant – but don't buy the biggest. Be careful larger plants are often root-bound. Have a look at the drainage holes. If you can see roots protruding from the bottom, then it's best to avoid the plant. Ask the nursery person to remove it from the pot. If there is a big mat of roots curling around the bottom, then don't buy it. These roots will continue circling around and the plants will literally strangle itself and may blow over within a few years.*
- *Many Australian native plants benefit from regular pruning, especially tip-pruning or pinching off the growing tips. This helps to promote healthy new growth giving plants shape, dense foliage, compact branching and increased flowering. All of which is very important for attracting small birds. In the wild, Australian native plants are pruned constantly by animals, fire and weather. So imitate these natural processes by pruning trees and shrubs.*
- *Planting in odd numbers is a design key, as putting plants in twos can look contrived - but threes, fives and sevens are the way to go. Once you get past about nine, you don't notice numbers anymore, particularly if plants are set out in a random, non-grid fashion which always gives a more natural character.*



Notes from Members

Margaret Lee, South Australia

Re the garden tip about rusty nails for banksia (*Garden Tips Newsletter #108 August 2019*)

Back in the 1940s my father used to bring home iron filings from his engineering workplace and spread them around his yellowing citrus trees. It worked very well. The leaves soon turned a healthy green. I can recommend it. Incidentally – Our home was opposite Bill Tulloch's at Woodville in SA and we were often exchanging useful garden tips and plants.

Lib Bartholomeusz, South Australia

Thanks for the newsletter. It is very interesting. I will continue to get the newsletter online cos I like not collecting lots of paper that I only occasionally look at again. However I find reading electronic papers much harder than hardcopy. I find I browse hardcopy newsletters at my leisure over a month or so. I tend to read electronic newsletters once and tend not to come back to them to browse again later. Maybe this old dog is just struggling to learn new tricks. Any suggestions??

Lorna Murray, Queensland

Thanks very much Lawrie, obviously haven't had time to read these Newsletters properly yet. However, I see now that I made the wrong decision quite a few years ago, when I decided that it was not much use my joining the GDSG as I didn't know much about garden design. Should have tried to see what I could learn. We had a garden design done for this allotment, when Allen and I first moved in to a new house on a bare block in the 70's, but we didn't follow it really. Will try to find this plan sometime soon for my general interest.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Coming 'Garden' Events – check out the ANPSA Website for specific details and other events

Please send any information for 'Garden events' in your region to promote in the next Newsletter

New South Wales: refer to ANPSA website

Victoria: refer to ANPSA website

South Australia: refer to ANPSA website

Tasmania: - refer to ANPSA website

Western Australia: refer to ANPSA website

Queensland: refer to ANPSA website

As you probably recall, membership of GDSG covers a period of twelve months from July 1 to June 30 so this August Newsletter # 108 will be the first one for the 2019/2020 year. UNLESS you want to change your Membership status there is no need for you to do anything to keep receiving the Newsletter electronically.

- If you wish to terminate your Membership & Newsletter by email, then please advise me; OR
- If you wish to resume your Membership & Newsletter by post, then forward the annual subscription \$20

Welcome to reinstated members – please advise which newsletters you have missed

ACT: Andrew & Janet Reid, Pat & Warwick Wright

NSW: Fiona Johnson

Qld: Pamela Finger

Vic: APS Grampians, Beverly Fox, Jan Hall, Monika Herriman, Chris Larkin, Neil & Wendy Marriott

Welcome to new members – we look forward to your active participation in the study group

NT: Geoff Kenna

NSW: Paddy Lightfoot, Virginia McIntosh, Shirley McLaren

Qld: Ray & Wendy Benfer, Carol Cave, Shelly Gage, Steven Harris, Margaret Lane, Lorna Murray, Sharon Robinson, Paula Wallace, Jenifer White

SA: Tim & Sandra Wood

Vic: Peter McGrath, Joanne Cairns, Malcolm Roberts, Andrea Himmelspach

WA: Karen Clarke, Wilhelmina Dadour, Chris Lewis, Shannon Murphy, Candy Wong

Current Membership: 168 - including 8 posted Newsletters & 157 email Newsletters

Treasurer's Report – October 30, 2019

General account: \$ 5,058.89

Term Deposit: \$ 27,320.83 (incl interest of \$614.25 - reinvested for 12 months to Jan 25, 2020)

TOTAL: \$ 32,379.72

Membership year July 1 – June 30

Membership dues payable annually as follows:

Email Newsletter FREE Posted Paper Newsletter \$20.00 per annum

Payment by cheque or EFT to: ANPSA Garden Design Study Group BSB 032-729, Account 285 385

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