

## ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS

**GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP**

NEWSLETTER No. 11

November 1995

Study Group Leader/Editor: Diana Snape

Treasurer/Membership: Peter Garnham

Dear Members,

I can't remember a busier Spring - and I'm still trying to catch up with work in the garden, which has been sadly neglected and looks rather forlorn. In early September I enjoyed my visits to Maitland and Newcastle, where I spoke to SGAP Groups, People there were very kind and hospitable and looked after us well, showing us some beautiful gardens. I wished I had longer (this was characteristic of all my Spring visits). Then to Sydney and more hospitality, talks and exciting gardens, including the unique and renowned one created by Betty Maloney. A quick visit home, then a diversion to Bourke to concentrate on birds with Brian for a few days. Back home to see how our builders were going and then on to the ASGAP Conference at Ballarat. Those of you who were able to attend will, I am sure, agree that it was a very stimulating week - not only the official program but all the unofficial conversations and ideas that flowed. It was great to meet more GDSG members. Extracts from Jane Shepherd's fascinating talk on the history of garden design and the influences from this history acting in Australia today, and from Doris Gunn's delightful talk on grey gardens, will be included in the next Newsletter.

Back to Melbourne for another talk, then to Kangaroo Island for ten days in the middle of October. There we admired beautiful natural gardens untroubled by rabbits - what a difference that makes! The plants, many endemic, were wonderful and it was fascinating that a number of them occur in the Grampians and Little Desert of Victoria too. By the end of October the work on our house was finished and since then it's been a busy time putting it all back together again and starting to think about and work in the garden; also a concentrated effort to get this NL finished and catch up with mail.

At the beginning of November we had a special evening meeting at our place attended by over 30 members and friends. Phyllis Simons gave an absorbing talk and showed us a selection of her slides. She has been designing with Australian plants for over 30 years, drawing the inspiration for her design from the natural areas of Australia. We need to locate and study the writing of people such as Phyllis who have in earlier years thought about the topics that now deeply interest us. I think it is important for us to correlate and build on the work of others and not spend time re-inventing the wheel. If you come across earlier work or writings of interest related to garden design in Australia, using Australian plants, please let the Study Group know. It would be especially good if someone was interested in actually doing research (and had some spare time to do it, of course!).

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 1/7/95 to 15/11/95

<u>Receipts:</u>	Subscriptions	1205-00
	Sale of books ( <i>500 Australian Plants</i> )	200 - 00
	Miscellaneous (back copies of NL, etc)	<u>174-00</u>
		<u>\$1579-00</u>
<u>Expenditure:</u>	Printing & photocopying NL	258 - 00
	Postage	94 - 65
	Purchase of books	200 - 00
	Miscellaneous	<u>21 -15</u>
		<u>\$573 - 80</u>
<u>Bank balance at 15/11/95:</u>		<u>\$2221 - 96</u>

**Peter Garnham****MEMBERSHIP**

With a steady flow of renewals and new members joining, our membership has now reached a total of over 200 with approximately 190 individual members.

Two members from South Australia are hoping to start meetings there next year. Though numbers are still small in S.A., it's enthusiasm that counts!

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### Extracts from correspondence

"I have my own Landscape Design practice and, from a work point of view, I'm interested in using native plants in a way which is acceptable to the average suburban homeowner i.e. semi-formal and doesn't look like the bush." Linda Green W.A.

"It is amusing to read the discussion on 'cottage gardens' for, as you know, I have written about this type of terminology before - see The Australian Garden Journal for March/April 1992 vol. 11 No.3p119. I still subscribe to the view that the use of well known terms such as annual or tree can be used in garden descriptions - if I have a bed containing shrubs and trees why not just say that and call it a shrub/tree (abbreviate to ST) garden? A list of acceptable terms could be devised such as groundcover, alpine, large or small, etc.

On page 2 of the last Newsletter, Grahame Durbidge mentions that mosquitoes do not breed in his water containers with plants such as nardoo. Is this so and why?" Geoff Simmons Old

"I do hope the GDSG Newsletter remains an integral part of SGAP (ie membership compulsory). I feel a sentimental attachment to SGAP and Australian Plants. A.P. was read by my grandmother and her sisters in their study of natural history and photography in the Darling Downs region of Queensland.

Queensland probably should take credit for having the first indigenous landscaped garden. My brother Michael visited Kathleen McArthur (born in 1915), author of many fine books, a conservationist and wildflower painter, at her home 'Midyim' at Caloundra in the early 1970s, and came away much inspired by her garden. This consisted of a lawn of Imperata cylindrica (Bladey Grass) and a simple clump of Melaleuca quinquinerva. This was the most radical approach I had come across for a garden design, so the idea of it has stayed with me ever since." Ian Percy NSW

"The question of whether Phyla nodiflora and Pennesetum alopecurioides are indigenous to Australia: Research into Vol. 3 and 4, Flora of NSW, edited by Gwen Harden, states that they both are. Phyla nodiflora extends north from Mildura and is also found in Qld, SA, NT and WA. Pennesetum alopecurioides is found in all parts of NSW, in Qld, Vic, Tas, SA, WA and has made its way to Asia!" Eva Flegman NSW

(My advice as to the status of these two plants came from Rodger Elliot, co-author of the Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants. I think his assessment was based on historical records of the spread of both these plants throughout Australia. Where they occur now is not under dispute. The fact that experts apparently disagree indicates how difficult such matters are to decide. DS)

"On behalf of the Melbourne Wildflower Show Committee, I would like to thank you for the display arranged on behalf of the Garden Design Study Group. The success of the Show depends on the enthusiasm of all the groups who give their time throughout the weekend. We appreciate the effort of your members and hope that the time spent was worthwhile. Thank you for setting up the display." Helen Morrow (for the Melbourne Wildflower Show 1995 Committee)

"Although I live in Malmesbury I work in Melbourne a few days every fortnight and would like to be able to tie in the Study Group meetings and outings to these Melbourne visits. I am a qualified horticulturist (Grad. Dip. Hort. - Burnley) and run my own practice designing, installing and renovating gardens and landscapes. I am very interested in native plants. If you have back copies of the Study Group's Newsletters, I would be happy to receive them." Jennifer Clancy Vic

"My special interest is in using indigenous plants, mainly colourful massed small plants and grasses, suitable for interesting school children and parents - natural heritage, food and medicinal use, Koori and Amrad. I think there is a need for all ASGAPers to ensure their own local plants survive in their natural communities and soils, for research and for the future." Stefanie Rennick Vic

### Membership of Study Groups and SGAP

"I was intrigued by the discussion in the last Newsletter on the pros and cons of SGAP membership. I assumed that anyone interested in using Australian plants in garden design would see SGAP membership as a complementary activity. Whilst many SGAPers are collectors and not garden designers (and some aren't even gardeners at all), the collective body of knowledge amongst members of the conditions which will get the best out of a wide variety of Australian plants in cultivation is quite formidable and one which I would expect garden designers would want to exploit. I also think it is limiting to think that the only benefits of SGAP membership are insurance and journal subscription. SGAP is an organisation whose role includes the conservation of Australian plants and raising the profile of Australian flora. It organises exhibitions, participates in conservation campaigns and supports research. It needs the support of all who value Australian plants to enable the organisation to be even more active and effective in our community. Maybe people have deep ideological reasons for not joining SGAP. One thing is certain, they can't be economic ones. The annual subscription is very modest with an even lower concession rate." **Jennifer Borrell NSW**

"I would like to add my comments on membership of SGAP. In my opinion this issue has nothing to do with insurance or the \$ cost. It is more basic than that. Yours and all other Study Groups have the title of ASGAP on the first page. This implies that as a member I am part of SGAP, not just a Study Group. We are one Society, not fragmented groups. I should not be able to obtain the benefits of a Study Group if I am not a member of my State SGAP. A bit harsh perhaps, however it is the principle that is the issue in the case and should be enforced." **Jeff Howes NSW**

At the recent ASGAP Conference the situation regarding Study Group and SGAP membership was discussed at some length by Study Group leaders and it was decided there could be two categories in addition to ordinary membership of Study Groups. A category of Honorary Member could be awarded to people (for example professional Botanists, or in our case professional Landscape Architects or Designers) who had contributed greatly to the work of the Study Group. Another category of 'Newsletter Subscriber' could cover people who were not members of SGAP (for whatever reason), but who wished to receive (& also contribute to) Newsletters of a Study Group. 'Newsletter Subscribers' would not be active members of Study Groups in terms of meetings, excursions or, for most Study Groups, obtaining seeds from Seed Banks. They could still of course be 'Visitors' for Study Group activities as can partners and friends. DS

### How do we recognise good garden design?

**Diana Snape Vic**

This question was raised by Geoffrey Long at the meeting I attended in Sydney in September, and started me thinking. I'd be interested in the answers of other members to this question, but here is my current answer. I think garden design is an art form, like painting for example, so it's interesting to make comparisons. We've all heard the comment in an Art Gallery "I don't know much about art, but I do know what I like." A purely subjective reaction to a painting is fine, but the more one studies art the more one appreciates the context of a painting - the aims, abilities and constraints of the artist; the painting's place in the history of art - how innovative it was in its time. You may learn from people who have devoted their life to such studies, who can help you analyse a painting's style(s) and subtleties, its strengths and weaknesses. You can also try the practice of painting yourself and learn by doing. The knowledge you gain by these methods may change both the paintings you like and their number; it will certainly increase your understanding and the depth of appreciation. I think there are no simple rules but, with sufficient knowledge, you may be prepared to say "this is a good painting".

Visitors to gardens may also say "I don't know much about garden design, but I do know what I like." If enough visitors say "I like this garden", does it necessarily mean that the garden is well designed? I think we will become more educated and able to evaluate the more we study garden design - its history, overseas as well as in Australia; the gardens that designers regarded as talented by their contemporaries (and followers) have created, and what they have written. Many different aspects of garden design can be analysed - space, proportion, massing, scale, colour, coordination, contrast - and each site has its own variables. The more one studies, the more one appreciates the context of a garden design - the aims, abilities and constraints of the designer; the garden's place in the history of design - how innovative it was in its time. You may learn from people who have devoted their life to such studies, who can help you analyse a garden's style(s) and subtleties, its strengths and weaknesses. You can also try the practice of garden design yourself, and learn by doing. The knowledge you gain by these methods may well change both the gardens you like and their number; it will certainly increase your understanding and the depth of appreciation. Again I think there are no simple rules but, with sufficient knowledge, you may be prepared to say "this is a good garden design".

## GARDENS OF INDIGENOUS PLANTS

### Native, Exotic, Indigenous

Jane Marriott Vic

(This topical article of Jane's first appeared in SGAP Victoria Newsletter, December 1994. I asked Jane if I could reprint it because I thought it was so concise and to the point. DS)

Some years ago when indigenous plants were newly popular, I needed, as a gardener, to assess the "morality" of planting native plants from all over Australia in our garden. There are probably many others who have been or will be experiencing this dilemma and although I have no black or white answers, there are a number of principles or guidelines which have guided our plantings.

1. Australian plants are better than exotics as the food and shelter provided will support a local bird and animal population. However, the natural balance of populations and the range of species attracted is not always representative. Many butterflies and other insects need specific host sedges or grasses which aren't often planted in gardens. Also many Proteacea-dominant plantings attract disproportionate numbers of honeyeaters (such as New Holland) which tend to drive out other birds.
2. Any native plants likely to become invasive should not be planted near bushland.
3. In areas adjoining bushland, on roadsides or reserves, indigenous plants should be selected so that the character of the area is retained and the gene pool kept intact.
4. Indigenous plantings should be encouraged in all Australian gardens, in particular when planting the larger tree species amongst remnant trees. However, I believe indigenous exclusively need not be the ultimate aim of suburban gardening.
5. Indigenous plants are the most obvious and suitable for getting trees back in the ground in rural areas. They are suited to the soil, climate and local conditions and they look "right".

I see indigenous plants as an extension of the recognition of the beauty and value of our Australian flora that SGAPers have had for years. This does not make your average native garden "immoral" but may mean that when your fifth *Verticordia grandis* drops dead, you may consider replacing it with your local form of *Correa reflexa* or your local provenance *Themeda triandra*

Seeing the value (and not always obvious beauty) of planting local flora is a learning process that will slowly change the nature of our gardens. To people who still have their exotics, annuals, manicured lawns and roses the idea of an indigenous garden is, alas, light years away.

### Putting a regional stamp on Australian garden design

Geoff Simmons Qld

The huge size of Australia means that regional differences must occur in flora. Not only this but the isolation of the continent has resulted in the development of unique plants such as banksias and Kangaroo Paws. The recent article on dryandras is a good example of this point. The question to be asked is to what extent do we try to express these regional differences in our garden design. This may form a very desirable aspect for a single garden. It could also enhance the attractiveness or uniqueness of a larger area if many citizens were to adopt the same idea - variations on a theme. One feature of the Brisbane skyline is often the silhouette of palms, unfortunately usually the exotic cocos palm.

While we may decry the growing of exotic plants at the expense of Australian species, growing the latter out of their natural region is also a cause for reflection.

One has only to visit Australian gardens in several States to realise that the philosophy varies in the approach to garden design. This is in part because the local flora dictates the choice of plants, in that their survival may be better than those from a totally different climate. In my experience, hot humid summers in Brisbane are not kind to banksias from the west whereas many northern trees from wet rainforest can thrive in this region.

The approach of the collector is likely to differ from that of the person who is more interested in making a beautiful garden. Whatever the motive the plants used need to be selected with an eye to the ultimate effect and in this regard regional versus non-regional origin is a factor in the selection.

There is an adverse side to growing plants from other regions in that they may reach the status of weeds. Birds can distribute seeds widely and spread by man or mechanical means readily occurs.

Parochialism is a characteristic with unfortunate connotations but is this a good or bad trait in design of Australian gardens?

### Designing with indigenous plants

Ian Percy NSW

The use of indigenous plants in design is becoming increasingly important as we learn more about biodiversity and the concept of an association of plants that are unique to and adapted to a locality, district or region. Back in 1952, Edna Walling wrote of this 'association' in her book *'The Australian Roadside'* and it inspires us to look at the use of indigenous plants not as isolated specimens within a garden (ie the token local eucalypt) but as plants which look more effective when in groups, with grasses, scramblers, climbers, ferns, etc contributing as much to the picture as the trees and shrubs.

The following year, 17 of Walling's garden base plans were published in the Thistle Harris book *'Australian Plants for the Garden'*, and they certainly reflect the regional diversity of our landscapes. The plans covered a range of climates with rainfall, soil types, prevailing winds and slope being taken into consideration. It is noteworthy that the garden design concepts influencing Harris were coming from America and not the English cottage style which Walling had favoured. For reference, Harris used Loyal Johnstons *'How to Landscape your Grounds'* (New York 1946) and the book by Henry Ortloff

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& Stuart Raymore 'Garden Planning and Building' (New York 1947).

Using the Harris book as a direction point, indigenous design can be thought of as a garden style in its own right, if say we try to emulate the moraine habitat of an alpine region in NSW or a patch of coastal wallum in Queensland, as long as the plants were propagated from material that could be identified as site specific.

For those of us in the suburbs where there are few indigenous remains, let alone native trees, one can be forgiven for following this dictum. At least it is fun to imagine that outside your backdoor you can 'revisit', for example, the Grampians, if a section of your garden contained plants propagated from seed collected on an enjoyable holiday in that particular region. It is also easier to recreate where the hard surface landscaping has included raised beds constructed of a particular rock type and where soil, drainage, surface mulch and even watering can be controlled to mimic the natural habitat. As more plants are being made available as grafted specimens eg *Eremophila*, an indigenous arid region garden is within the realms of possibility although controlling that coastal humidity will always be a problem.

Australian plant gardens that are adjacent or close to unspoilt bushland provide the ideal opportunity for the use of indigenous plants, although the management and study of fire is an important consideration when designing such a garden. The recent Sydney Wildflower Spectacular at Rouse Hill helped promote this aspect by the inclusion of displays related to fire education and awareness.

It is fairly important however to use plants which have been propagated from the most local source and not 'import' one from another region. It is all about genetic integrity. The same plant occurring across a range of habitats may have slightly different characteristics. Planting local species ensures that the genetic integrity of species in adjacent or nearby vegetation is not lost through interbreeding. Fortunately, some Australian plant nurseries and Council nurseries are now growing indigenous, although they are often overlooked by the general public as they are not marketed with a glossy label nor do they go through an extensive horticultural selection process highlighting say a novelty form or a selected flower colour.

The local species are so well adapted to local conditions that they are more likely to regenerate naturally and establish a self-maintaining community. This has been the case in my garden with the unexpected appearance of seedling eucalypts and casuarinas; ground covers such as *Dichondra repens*, *Centella asiatica (cordifolia)*, and the rush *Juncus kraussii* subsp *australiensis* in the swampy sections of the garden. By investigating a local bush reserve and listing what I found there, I hope to be able to introduce some other local plants into the garden. The list at first seemed horticulturally dull compared to a sandstone flora, but as many of the plants are emerging from underneath a mountain of iantana, African olive, privet and tons of other weeds, it makes them all the more worthwhile preserving and including in the garden. One of the ways to classify an indigenous 'garden' landscape is to use the terminology presented by Ian Read in his book '*The Bush - a guide to the vegetated landscapes of Australia*' (1994 UNSW). Using this guide, one is able to recognize natural landscapes and assess their form and function. The natural landscape provides an information resource base which when 'read' for clues allows for its successful translation to a landscaped garden - one that has been fabricated or reconstructed.

It is often possible to classify a garden with the appropriate 'type' even when the remnants are few or rare, although you may have to get out old maps, soil and geological surveys, topographical studies and the like to help solve the puzzle. The landscape may have evolved into something else through an altered fire regime and this may not be such a bad thing from a design point of view. A tall open forest I recently viewed had an understorey of fire-adapted species of *Solanum* (Kangaroo Apple). With their boldly shaped leaves, bright purple-blue flowers and stems cactus-like with bristly spines on one species, they made quite an impact over a large area. (It was worth having a second look at Volume 29 of '*Flora of Australia*' which is devoted to the genus/family Solanaceae.)

It is important when designing with indigenous plants to get the proportions (planting numbers) of species right so as to achieve a representative balance, ie something studied, manipulated even, yet haphazard at the same time. Open spaces need to be left in the planting to give a 'resting' point, a sense of order amongst the chaos, and this aspect is important when the garden takes on the role of a 'nature trail'. The gap in planting, when furnished with a log or a group of boulders, allows for contemplation and interpretation of what has already been viewed. Formally shaped plants may be introduced to the edges of this section to reinforce the message.

The occasional strong element from say the thrusting leaves of a Gynea Lily, or the sculptural strength of a *Parsonia* vine snaking its way up a tree trunk, adds excitement and structure to the design. If such architectural plant forms don't exist in your area, you could go for a real sculpture instead. Sculpture, unfortunately more often than not, follows a romantic or kitsch notion or gesture. An antique row-boat beside a water garden is seen as a 'sculpture' although deserving more the name of 'folly'. A rusting car body in a 'bush garden' may never be thought of as sculpture even though it offers the same aesthetic response when seen as an isolated element in a natural setting. The car really fulfils a dual role. It tells a story and provides a nice home for reptiles and insects. (I digress from the topic!)

The easy way out with indigenous planting is by using lots of grasses or the ubiquitous *Lomandra longifolia* so that the garden takes on a natural appearance straight away. However, what is usually missing and which gives it most character, is that fragile veil of understorey shrubs, herbs & tiny orchids that deserve closer attention using a hand lens.

The much maligned scruffy native garden of the 1970s should be given a second chance in the 1990s, perhaps now with some 'grunge' indigenous plants like the untidy but worthy scrambling climbers *Billardiera scandens*, *Clematis aristata*, *Clematis glycinoides*, *Eustrephus latifolius* or *Smilax australis*. All of these occur in my local bush reserve and, in the garden, I would let them weave their way through some tall shrubs.

Now all I have to do is to learn how to propagate them!

### References:

- *Australia's Biodiversity - an overview of selected significant components. Biodiversity Series No 2.*

Books in the series are available from Dpt of Environment, Sport and Territories, GPO Box 787 Canberra ACT 2601

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(General enquiries (008) 803 772)

- Harris, Thistle *Australian Plants for the Garden* (1953) Angus & Robertson
- Read, Ian *The Bush - a guide to the vegetated landscapes of Australia* (1994) UNSW
- Saunders, Dr Denis A. Edit, (with others) *Nature Conservation 1 The Role of Remnants of Native Vegetation* (1987) & 2 *The Role of Corridors* (1991) Surrey Beatty & Sons
- Venning, Dr Julianne *Growing Trees for farms, parks and roadsides* (1988) Lothian
- Walling, Edna *Country Roads The Australian Roadside* (1952) Oxford University Press (1985) Pioneer Design Studio

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### **Landscaping our parks, gardens & roadsides for habitat value      Danie Ondinea NSW** **Does it matter if we use exotic, Australian or indigenous plants?**

It is often suggested that we need to plant native, especially local native, plants in our public and private landscapes to provide our native animals with the food, shelter and breeding sites they require. I was interested to see if there were any studies to support the proposition that the Australian fauna prefer the Australian plants with which they have evolved. There is now a great deal of information on the various uses made of native plants by our animals and the dependence of many of those plants on our native birds, mammals and insects for pollination, seed dispersal and pest control. However, are many Australian animals able to adapt to using exotic plants for all their needs? The work relevant to this question concentrates on birds and I've looked at a number of studies and one survey to try to find some answers.

A Melbourne suburban study (Green, 1986) carried out in the late 1970s found that native birds as a group depended on native vegetation. This was found to be partly due to the greater number of insects amongst native vegetation. All the common exotic birds were mainly ground foragers while many native birds found their food on foliage and bark.

A survey carried out in 1991 (Wilson) by the Bird Observers Club of Australia attempted to determine the most important factors which attract native birds to gardens. They looked at exotic, mixed and native gardens. This survey concluded that:

- 1) the presence of tall eucalypts or other tree species appropriate to the region was more important than "mainly native planting";
- 2) the presence of dense middle and ground level shrubs planted beneath and adjacent to trees was more influential than the choice between natives and exotics; and
- 3) the presence of permanent water would increase the number of bird species visiting a garden, whatever the garden type.

A Brisbane study carried out in 1991/92 (Sewell) suggests that, to encourage bushland bird communities back into suburbs, we need to create shrub layers with similar proportions of plant species as those found in undisturbed areas, as well as increase the size of plantings, reduce human disturbance and predators.

Despite some differences in the importance given to mixed or all native plantings, all writers in this area agree that to attract the greatest variety of birds to a vegetated area you must provide a well developed shrub and herb layer as well as a range of tree species so as to offer as much surface area for wildlife use as possible. This is known as structural diversity and is considered much more important than floristic diversity (or the range of plant species).

There are, however, habitat problems which may be caused by planting species exotic to your area. Some of these problems are:

1. Invasion of nearby natural areas by planted species, from wind or water or ant dispersed seed or dumped garden refuse (eg Golden Wreath or Orange Wattle *Acacia saligna* from WA has naturalised in bushland around Sydney; Impatiens; etc.).
2. Invasion of distant natural areas by berry-bearing planted species from seed dispersed by fruit-eating birds (eg large and small-leaved Privet; Cotoneaster; Indian Hawthorn; African Olive; etc.).
3. Declining numbers of native animals with very specialised diets. For example, Glossy Black Cockatoos eat only the seeds of various species of Casuarina and they need large, old Eucalypts with deep hollows for nesting. Their populations are declining everywhere as land clearing removes their required habitat. An appeal is being mounted to educate landowners and encourage them to provide the species needed by these birds.

Also, a number of small possums (Sugar and Squirrel Gliders and the rare Leadbeater's Possum) have been shown to depend on Acacia gum as an important source of carbohydrate during winter, when other sources of energy-rich food such as nectar and some insects are scarce. The quality and quantity of gum produced by different wattles are highly variable and it is the abundance of suitable wattles (and the availability of nest hollows) which determines the numbers of these possums.

The beautiful Birdwing Butterflies of north-eastern coastal Australia have larvae which feed exclusively on species of *Aristolochia* which are native rainforest vines. If they lay their eggs on the introduced garden plant *Aristolochia elegans* (Dutchman's Pipe), the caterpillar fails to survive.

4. Declining numbers of insectivorous and seed-eating animals. Only a small range of insects and spiders found on native vegetation are found on exotic plants (eg Privet is eaten only by the larvae of a native hawk moth) and most exotic plants do not produce seeds that can be used by seed-eating birds.
5. Increased numbers of some native bird species which are able to make use of a wide variety of exotic plants. These

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birds, such as Pied Currawongs, Noisy Miners, Crested Pigeons, Rainbow Lorikeets, Red Wattlebirds, Australian Magpies, Welcome Swallows, Pee Wees, Willie Wagtails are able to make use of more open area (where the native shrub layer has been removed), or exotic fruit (like Cotoneaster), or exotic flowers (like Coral trees), or exotic seed (unmown lawns). While some increases in population seem harmless, others appear to apply great pressure to the smaller birds whose populations are already under threat from clearing of habitat, reduction in food and shelter trees, etc. The larger honeyeaters (like Noisy Miners and Red Wattlebirds), who have quite unspecialised diets and who are also favoured by the often unnaturally high occurrence of planted flowering eucalypts and grevilleas which are heavy nectar-bearers, are very aggressive to smaller native birds and will chase them out of their territories (and away from food plants). Pied Currawongs will eat small birds and nestlings and appear to be having quite an impact on Sydney's populations of small birds.

It would appear then, in the case of native birds at least, that the problem is not that no native birds use exotic plants, but rather that exotic plants cater for a small number of unspecialised native birds who are territorial and quite aggressive. Once in large numbers, these appear to harass and predate on the smaller birds already under pressure.

*(Danie provided a list of 16 references for this article, which I'll happily post to any meritoer who requests it. DS)*

### Are the locals good enough?

Diana Snape Vic

It is fascinating how many of us lack confidence that a sufficiently beautiful garden can be created using just the local plants. I think there are several reasons for this, and they're not unreasonable.

The first and probably the most obvious is that our mental image of the garden we wish to create may indeed be one that could not be created with local plants alone, or even predominantly. Our starting point is then not the indigenous plants and their qualities, but the particular vision of an Australian garden we wish to achieve, incorporating many of the beautiful Australian plants we admire. For a simple example, we might want a garden featuring shrubs with orange-red flowers, and these may be scarce or missing altogether in the local scene. (It's interesting to compare this with the attitude of all those Australians whose vision is still of an English style garden, which cannot be created using Australian plants - unless that vision is highly modified.)

A slight change in approach could alter our perception. If we get to know the indigenous plants and recognize their virtues, we could use as many as will fit into our grand vision (which may itself be modified to use more). Of course it depends on where we live, as the range and variety of local plants available can vary greatly. It depends too on knowing which plants are indigenous to the area. In a highly altered environment which has not been much investigated or studied, that knowledge may be hard to come by, especially for the less conspicuous plants such as ground flora. If we are also concerned about provenances, availability of seed or cuttings of many species may well be low and access to the required material limited.

It's partly also the attraction of rare or unusual plants from distant places in Australia, and the challenge of growing these successfully. When in W.A. I found it fascinating to see some plants from the eastern states featuring in street planting and nurseries, while we're so keen to grow their plants here! It makes one think. Perhaps we still want our gardens to be distinguished by having plants that are noticeably different, rather than the locals that anyone could have. On the other hand, it would be possible and sensible in every area of Australia for local plants (trees, shrubs, ground-covers, climbers, grasses) to be grown as a basis, in streets, parks and public gardens as well as private. After that basis is established, helping to create a sense of place and maintaining all those plants in cultivation in the areas where they belong, those exciting plants from other places could be introduced.

One significant reason for wanting to grow plants from elsewhere is that the range of plants that once grew in the area where our houses are built may not now be suitable for the changed conditions. For example there may have been woodland, with a predominance of medium to large trees and a relatively limited selection of understory shrubs and other plants. In a small suburban garden such trees are likely to be inappropriate; if they are grown there is room (and sunlight) for little else. It's fine for us to sacrifice our own sunlight, if that's our choice, but neighbours may not appreciate its loss. The understory shrubs and other small plants may be attractive as part of a total bushland scene, but may not be 'at home' without their canopy. On their own they may lack balance, or even sufficient interest and variety to be accepted as the whole garden. This may also depend on how far afield you allow yourself to go for your 'locals', which of course can change in just a few metres with a change in soil type, contour, moisture level or shelter.

It's really part of a more general problem. Study any patch of bush or natural landscape the size of a small suburban block (and these are getting smaller), and consider whether it, on its own, would make an attractive garden. It may, of course, but its beauty will often lie in the overall scene, the total environment of which it is an integral part. Neither can you live in 'the bush' without changing it; intrusion into a wilderness area means it is no longer wilderness. A garden ideally needs to distill or extract the essence of what it is that makes that bush attractive, and I think this is one challenge of using just indigenous plants. It's a matter of selection and placement, of proportion and balance.

The most significant challenge is in the design, whether to achieve a naturalistic, formalistic, formal or eclectic garden. So far most indigenous planting has been carried out to revegetate areas, often on a broad scale using direct seeding. Here 'design' is limited to choice of the species for use in designated areas. On a smaller scale, naturalistic gardens have been created in a somewhat similar way. Only recently there has been interest in using indigenous plants in more formal gardens, and it will be fascinating to see what is achieved in this very different design mode. Obviously the range and potential of gardens of indigenous plants throughout Australia will be gigantic - far greater than the enormous range of separate plants! Even in any one locality, different selections of its plants may be combined in a myriad of different ways.

You might want to both follow a certain design concept in a garden and give indigenous plants a "fair go". One

approach is to look first at the indigenous plants, of provenance as close to home as possible, to fill a niche or provide a design element. If no suitable one is found (or can be obtained) look further afield, first in the general region, then the State and finally all over Australia (or elsewhere). There will always be constraints, especially for gardens totally composed of strictly indigenous plants, but I think we have hardly begun to explore the possibilities.

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### The greatest indigenous garden

John Hulme NSW

The greatest indigenous garden is out there, Australia's bush. I guess men and women (the common vision is women telling men where to dig that hole; there always seem to be more women at the nurseries) do have a right to reorganise and redesign their own little space to suit their own tastes. We all really only have 'little' space compared to the great natural garden; I guess there is not much 'natural' or truly indigenous garden that people haven't tampered with in some way.

My saddest gardening experience here (at Forster) has been to see a subdivision of fifty two hectare lots in coastal heath end up as vast 'ride-on-mower' lawns and 'flower' gardens. Thank goodness for National Parks, nature reserves and a few indigenous gardens. Is it lack of education or is it insistent desire to reorganise and stamp our own little spaces?

I think that some re-directing of the hype about Australian gardens is necessary. Surely it is really Australian indigenous gardens that don't need care, don't need water, etc. That is because they are in their natural climate, soil, etc. Western Australian plants in New South Wales, or Victorian plants in Queensland, do need care, water, etc.

Some first thoughts suggest to me that indigenous gardens are necessary in the grand scale, in that particular plants are necessary for survival of various ecosystems. However all sorts of adaptations are possible; the honeyeaters around here just love non-indigenous grevilleas etc. Perhaps they are hybrids too? I guess as long as sufficient local plants remain, then people can plant their gardens to suit their own desires.

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### The Ethics of Non-indigenous Native Plants

Neil R. Marriott Vic

For some years now I have been growing more concerned about the number and range of non-indigenous native plants that I and most other nursery owners have been selling to the public. We already know that *Acacia baileyana*, *A.saligna*, *Grevillea rosmarinifolia* and *Pittosporum undulatum* are now serious environmental weeds in many areas of southern Australia. How many more potential environmental weeds are nursery owners selling each year?

Having sold our nursery "White Gums" and purchased 500 acres of partially degraded hilly granite country south of Stawell, I have "fallen in love" with indigenous flora. The superb natural swathes of bronze and green Kangaroo Grass *Themeda triandra*, the drifts of flowering Soft Spear Grass *Stipa mollis* when backlit amongst granite boulders; the discovery every week or two of a new orchid or some other grassy woodland species for our block; these are but a few of the excitements of discovering our own indigenous flora.

That does not mean that I have lost interest in our non-indigenous flora - far from it. In several areas near the house which were badly degraded by rabbit warrens I have established large collections of grevilleas, banksias and rainforest plants. However I am the first to admit that they definitely look out of place. Even though they are Australian, the shades of green in particular just don't look right. As a result, we are planting a buffer of indigenous species around the edge of all non-indigenous plantings.

The results from these indigenous plantings have further opened up my eyes to the great benefits of indigenous vs non-indigenous plants. The non-indigenous plants generally have required watering, mulching and even applications of iron chelates to get them established. In contrast, most indigenous plantings have shot away, with species such as *Banksia marginata* reaching 3+ m in 3 years and flowering for the last two years!

My wife Jane has always favoured indigenous plants and now I am beginning to appreciate her wisdom. As environmental consultants we were recently employed by the Department of Conservation to carry out a botanical survey of McDonald Park near Ararat, Victoria. In this beautiful grassy woodland remnant, local Field Naturalists had planted many species of non-indigenous native plants during the 1950s. Today a large number of these are not only still alive, but are spreading far and wide throughout the park. We have identified over 50 species non-indigenous to the park; of these over 40 are spreading, many at an alarming rate! Who would think that species such as *Acacia prominens*, *Acacia schinoides*, *Baeckea virgata*, *Callistemon rugulosus*, *Grevillea dimorpha*, *Grevillea aquifolium*, *Hakea lamina*, *Calytrix sullivani*, *Callitris rhomboidea* and *Micromyrtus ciliatusto* name but a few would become weeds when planted in other parts of our country? Probably the worst two weeds in the park are *Grevillea rosmarinifolia* and *Acacia howittii* they are hybridizing with local indigenous species; unless all parents and hybrid offspring are destroyed quickly, then in a number of years there will probably be no pure *Grevillea alpina* or *Acacia paradoxa* in the area!

As a result of this survey there are a number of plant species that I will NOT be planting on our property. However, getting back to my original statement, we don't know what potential weeds we are growing in our gardens at present. As growers of native plants we should all be responsible with our plantings - any plant which you notice seeding freely throughout the garden should be noted and reported in SGAP newsletters.

Most of what I have said applies primarily to gardeners who adjoin or live in or near the bush - it is these areas where ants and/or birds etc can most easily spread the seeds of non-indigenous plants. However, as a group interested in promoting and preserving the Australian landscape, I believe it is essential that we discover and use our indigenous flora around all boundaries and areas that can be seen from adjacent roadways etc so that we retain the intrinsic and unique natural character of the particular area in which we live. Only when we can use our indigenous flora to give the impression of the natural bushland can we really call ourselves a good Australian landscape gardener.

The term **wildplant** has been devised as a botanical equivalent of wildlife by the Wildplant Rescue Service. This organisation has saving endangered plants of the Blue Mountains as its goal and is working so people of this area can not only have gardens which reflect Blue Mountains flora but flora that is specific to each township or village (1).

Other groups have a similar focus although they may use different terminology, e.g. the Rural Environment Planning Association in my local area midway between Brisbane and Ipswich in S.E. Qld. has produced a Landcare Guide to assist in the retention of the natural beauty of this area and to help local residents identify and plant **local species** (2). A booklet encouraging the re-establishment of native bushland and wildlife by Brisbane gardeners gives examples of Australian plants which have become bushland weeds and advocates planting **local natives** (3). Yet another publication relating to Brisbane, the Gold and Sunshine Coasts and Ipswich advocates the use of **local native plants** (4).

Whatever the term chosen, the issue must be raised of just how 'wild' or 'local' should the selection of plant species be for a specific site. The publication for my immediate area (2) includes trees and shrubs for Sub-tropical Rain Forest, for Dry Rain Forest and for Eucalypt Woodlands and Forests. The book aimed at the Brisbane area (3) describes Rainforest, Eucalypt Open Forest and Paperbark Woodland and the one for the larger area (4) adds Wallum.

The hectare that we purchased in 1981 most closely resembled Eucalypt Woodland and Forest hence if we were revegetating with wildplants we would choose from the appropriate list in one of these sources, although the species lists would vary according to the publication selected. However, we were in the fortunate position of purchasing in an area that had not yet been 'developed'. This is no longer the situation as all the surrounding bushland has now been removed. The species which were growing here and which we have maintained in a large untouched area, include:

*Alphitonia excelsa*, *Angophora sp.*, *Acacia complanata*, *A. jwncifolia*, *A. cunninghamia*, *Casuarina sp.*, *Dianella sp.*, *Eucalyptus sp.*, *Gahnia aspera*, *Jacksonia scoparia*, *Lomandra sp.*, *Leucopogon sp.*, *MeUchms sp.*, *Persoonia sp.* and *Xanthorrhoea sp.*

However, if we extended our list to incorporate species adjacent to our side boundary, there would then be *Acacia fimbriata*, *Helkhrysum diosmifolium*, *hsptospermum sp.* and *Pimetea sp.* If we next stepped through the rear fence, within a few metres we would add *Goodenia sp.*, *Daviesia sp.*, and *Patersonia sp.* Still on that block, but a short walk away we would have *Boronia sp.*, *Hardenbergia violacea* and a *Hibiscus sp.*, which is apparently a natural cross between *H. splendens* and *H. heterophyllus*. If we stepped through the other side fence and travelled less than 200 metres, we would include *Hibiscus heterophyllus* and beyond that a stand of *Melaleuca quinquenervia* \*. If we kept going for approximately 2 km, we would find *Hovea acutifolia* \*.

The question of what is a wildplant becomes even more complex when we consider plants that are now growing on our block but that were not here when we moved and that have not been planted by us. These fall into two categories.

Firstly, there are the plants that have moved into 'pure bush', including *Acacia fimbriata*, *Hovea* (two species) and *Pandorea pandorana*. It is interesting to note that none of the plants included in the garden around the house have made this move into the 'bush', even plants such as *Pavonia hastata* have only spread within the cultivated beds. The only plants that have established in the untouched 'bush' with its heavy layer of leaf litter are species from this area. Secondly, there are plants that have colonised areas after the site has been altered but that are not part of the cultivated beds around the house. For example, a dam was constructed in the gully at the back of the block. *Phylodrum lanuginosum* now encircle the dam, *Melastoma affine* and *Ficus coronata* have appeared around the wall of the dam. Again, these are listed as local species although the location of the closest plants is unknown.

The claim has been made that 'one can populate a garden entirely with local natives and find no lack of colour, size and ease of growth' (4). While I do not dispute the claim that there would be no lack of ease of growth, I find it harder to support the assertion that there would be no lack of colour or size in relation to the species occurring within our boundary fence. If local species only are to be included, just what are the criteria for selection? When designing a particular garden, should only those species occurring within the borders of the block be incorporated in the design, or can the boundary be extended somewhat? If so, by how much? Should the *Goodenia* within .2 m of our boundary be considered local to our site? What about the *Acacia fimbriata* and *Pimelea sp.* within 2 m? Are the *Patersonia sp.* and *Leptospermum sp.* within 20 m still local? And what of the *Hibiscus heterophyllus* within 200 metres? Or the *Hovea sp.* and *Melaleuca quinquenervia* within 2 km? And what if I transplant a plant such as *Geodorum sp.* from the dam site? The question seems to be just how local is local?

At present our 'bush' is but a fragment, a limited repository containing only species that were actually growing within our boundary. It is also a reminder of the consequences of removal of wildplants. Even if we were to include the species previously found within 100 m. most of these local species exist only in our memories. Not only have the plants disappeared but wildlife is rarely observed outside our perimeter. What is beyond any dispute is that while the wildlife on the section of our block retained as 'pure' bush is much greater than for the surrounding areas, it is extremely limited by comparison with the cultivated areas around the house which have been planted with bird-attracting plants such as *Grevillea sp.*, *Banksia sp.*, *Callistemon sp.* and butterfly attracting species such as *Hefichrysum sp.* While none of these species are found within our immediate vicinity, there are varieties of each listed for the Brisbane area (4). The complex vegetation structure in the cultivated garden beds entices such a continual parade of birds and butterflies that the question of how local is local needs to be extended to consider the impact on local wildlife of only planting wildplants, particularly when bushland has been reduced to a small and isolated remnant.

Our wildplants alone would not sustain our present wildlife population. Had we restricted our plants to those occurring naturally on this site, not only would we have reduced the opportunities for local wildlife to share our site but we would have limited the enjoyment we derive from a garden designed mainly, but not exclusively, with locally occurring plants.

\* The only species listed beyond our boundary still standing



#### REFERENCES



1. Gardening Australia September, 1995
2. B. Hacker, R. Butter, R. Rekdahl (1994) Putting Back the Forest. A Landcare Guide for Brookfield, Pullenvale and Moaill. REPA Inc
3. T. Low (1993) Drinkum Gardening. Greening Australia/Queensland.
4. C. Ruaux, Ed. (1992) Brisbane's Native Rants. A Gardener's Guide. Encompassing Brisbane, the Gold and Sunshine Coasts and Ipswich. Pangolin Press, Brisbane

Australian grasses come in a variety of sizes, shapes and colours and make excellent garden subjects, especially when their tufting habit is used as a contrast to the bushy habit of herbaceous plants and shrubs. I've been growing native grasses for some years now, and feel confident in making some comments on their growth and maintenance.

Grasses are at their visual best in their first year of growth. All leafy stems are green and vigorous. At the end of the flowering season, all flowering stems and some central leafy growth will die off, leaving a mottled green/straw-coloured appearance which, in some landscaping projects, would be regarded as unattractive. In these situations, the tufts can be slashed or cut with secateurs to within an inch or so of the ground. This will promote new, vigorous, green growth within a few days. After a few years, the tuft may die out in the centre and complete replacement with new plants may be necessary. If multiplication by self-seeding is required, then cutting back should be done after seed has dropped.

Tufting species grow as single, discrete tufts, which increase in size by producing new growths at the edges. Stolonerous or rhizomatous species spread by producing vigorous horizontal outgrowths, either above or below ground, which produce new tufts at nodes along their length. Tufting species are more suitable for landscaping. Stolonerous species can quickly overrun an area and spread into adjacent areas where they may not be wanted. Complete removal can be extremely difficult.

Some species are autumn/winter growing (AW). They usually germinate naturally with the autumn rains and grow through winter, flowering in spring. Generally flowering has finished and seed has dropped by early to mid summer. Other species (SS) germinate in spring as the ground warms up and grow and flower through summer and into the autumn. Seed drops in autumn. In winter they are usually dormant, with new growth commencing in early spring.

Species I can recommend are listed below. Usually I try to keep to species which are locally indigenous (to Melbourne), but there are a couple of non-locals which just can't be ignored.

*Themeda triandra* (Kangaroo Grass) SS Large tussock to 1m high and wide. Flowering stems are erect to weeping. Flower heads are attractive, green tinged purplish, turning brown at maturity. Cutting back in early spring immediately promotes vigorous, new, green growth.

#### Poa species (Tussock Grasses)

*Poa labillardieri* (Common Tussock Grass) AW Large tussock to 1 m high and wide. Colour varies. Most forms have attractive, blue-green leaves. Flower stems are fine, open panicles and may be erect or weeping.

*Poa morrissii* (Velvet Tussock Grass) AW Medium, erect tussock, with hairy stems giving a soft greyish appearance. Flower stems grow to 1 m high. Clumps increase slowly in width and can become very tangled and flattened if not regularly cut back. (I suspect neighbours' cats may have something to do with this.)

*Poa clelandii* (Tussock Grass) AW Medium, erect tussock with fine, bright green leaves and flower stems to 50cm high. Flowers are often purplish.

#### Danthonia species (Wallaby Grasses)

A number of Wallaby Grasses occur locally. They are generally small to medium tussocks, although some may have flower stems up to 1m high. All are autumn/winter growers (AW). Most flower heads are green and white with attractive, purplish tinges when they first open. As flowers mature they turn straw-coloured and fluffy. Recommended species are: *D. geniculata* (Kneel Wallaby Grass) Small tussock to 40cm usually producing a large number of flowering stems. Ideal for mass planting, eg at the front of a garden bed.

*D. linkii* (Wallaby Grass) Medium tussock, interesting only because of the hairy, blue-green leaves. Rower stems up to 1m.

*D. caespitosa* (Common Wallaby Grass) Medium tussock. Also blue-green in colour but, in addition, foliage often develops pinkish tinges.

*D. procera* (Tall Wallaby Grass) A locally rare species. Bright green leaves with flowering stems to 1.5m high. Flowers are attractive, with orange anthers, but this species doesn't seem to produce many flower stems.

*D. setacea* (Bristly Wallaby Grass) Two forms exist in our area. One form grows on heavier soils and is a medium tussock with large flower heads, deep purple when emerging. The other is much finer in all respects and seems to be confined to sandy soils.

#### Stipa species (Spear Grasses)

A number of Spear Grasses exist locally. They generally have tall, feathery flowering stems, but the plants are smallish tufts with not much leafy growth. They appear insignificant when not in flower but come into their own at flowering time, especially if closely grouped.

One species which is beautiful when flowering is *Stipa elegantissima* (Feather Spear Grass). Although leaf growth is often sparse and spindly, if mass-planted it would look superb at flowering time.

#### Two non-local species

*Cymbopogon artiiguus* (Lemon Grass) SS. Large tussock to 1 m high and wide. Not a local species, but well worth

growing for the blue-green foliage and attractive, silvery-green flower-heads. Leaves are lemon-scented.

*Dichanthium sericeum* (Silky Blue-grass) SS. Medium, erect tussock with flower stems to 1m. Foliage colour is blue-green with purplish tinges, and several clumps look beautiful when close planted. Unfortunately not local to our area, but this is one species I can't resist.

In the garden I generally allow the smaller grass species such as danthonias to self-seed where they like, and this helps to provide the 'natural bush' look I want to achieve. I don't cut them back after flowering, as there are usually too many and I like the look of the dried flower stems and heads, which give a seasonal transition from spring through summer and into autumn. An added bonus is that birds seem to relish collecting the dead stems at nesting time. Treated this way, these species tend to behave as short-term perennials and die completely after 2-3 years. Each year I go through the garden, completely removing the dead and the worst-looking of the still-living, so that there are always new seedlings and middle-aged plants looking reasonably attractive.

The large tussocks are best if rejuvenated every 1 or 2 years. I grow fewer of these because they take up more room, and I treat them more as single specimens rather than to provide a bush effect. I would love to have the area to be able to plant large swards of each species as I feel that they would look spectacular when in flower. I hope to have the opportunity to be involved in such a project in the near future, when the George Pentland Botanic Gardens in Frankston are re-landscaped.

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### Survival of *Microlaena stipoides* (Weeping Grass)

Barbara Buchanan Vic

Last year, December in Myrree was a terrible month with the heat, drought, trouble with water supply, thought of bushfires, and outside the dead grass so glaring and reflecting the light. There was one good patch of *Microlaena stipoides* in the shade but elsewhere even that had dried off. Now after the rain it is beautifully lush and green, and Alan has had to fight it with the lawn mower again! The regenerative power of the *Microlaena* in particular is quite wonderful. (Barbara has written before (GDSG NL 2, p 9) about the use of *Microlaena* as a pasture grass and, with only occasional mowing, as an attractive lawn substitute. It is a rhizomatous species, so check Bev's comments about these. DS)

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### Designing for Wally (a resident wombat)

Mark Burns Vic

In mid 1992 I purchased a property at Venus Bay. The land covers approximately 0.5 acre and backs on to the foreshore reserve. Although the former owner had cleared half of the block, I inherited a healthy plant community of *Banksia integrifolia*, *Leptospermum laevigatum*, *Allocasuarina verticillata*, *Acacia sophorae*, *Correa alba*, *Lomandra longifolia*, *Poa labillardieri* (local form) and *Poa poiformis*.

Just on three years down the track, I have revegetated the entire block after countless trips backwards and forwards from Melbourne. All of the plants were tube stock, whose seeds originated from my property. I have re-introduced *Eucalyptus viminalis*, *Hardenbergia violacea*, *Leucophyta brownii* and *Correa reflexa*. These plant seeds were collected from neighbouring properties or local native plant nurseries in Inverloch and Leongatha. (If not locally collected, ie 5 km or less, the plants were factor matched.)

To combat sand drift and the need for mulch to aid water retention, I initially used carpet underlay. This worked perfectly, it has since been covered with organic mulches and is slowly decomposing away.

The only plant loss that occurred was via a resident wombat (affectionately known as Wally). I overcame this problem in three ways. I covered the smaller plants with tree guards, leaving *Poa poiformis* uncovered. I had noticed Wally had a particular liking for these plants so I doubled their planting. While Wally dined on the *Poa poiformis*, the rest of the tube stock reached the top of their tree guards and are now well on their way. None of the *Poa poiformis* have died, and Wally's constant pruning means the bio-mass of the plants remain low. Any new leaves have a relatively high moisture content resulting in plants with a reduced fire hazard.

The recent dry weather saw Wally up to his old tricks again. Because the *Poa poiformis* had relatively dry leaves, my favourite little Wombat had a feast of correas (roots and all) and stripped the leaves off *Banksia integrifolia* and *Allocasuarina verticillata* plants. I have rectified this problem by sinking a small ceramic watering bowl (60mm wide & 40mm deep) near his burrow. Whenever I am down at the property I refill the ceramic bowl and, to date, he has returned to reducing the bio-mass of my sacrificial group of *Poa poiformis*, his thirst apparently satisfied.

Now I can devote more of my time to putting on my wetsuit and paddling around in freezing cold water acting like shark bait - perhaps bushwalking through Point Smythe of the 'Prom' (Wilson's Promontory) may be a better way to go.

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### Provenances

Barbara Buchanan Vic

From Darren Wallace's paper in NL8 : - Some propagators are beginning to add provenance to plant names and I would like to see the practice becoming much more widespread. It is more than having a batch that is consistent in size and habit, it is knowing if *Banksia marginata* will grow to 1 m or 10m (the range in the Encyclopaedia). While the growing environment will also have an influence, knowing the provenance will help an informed guess as to ultimate size and shape. 'Myrree' would probably not mean very much to many people and NE Victoria is very broad, covering mountains and river flats. 'Myrree NE Vic foothills' is getting a real mouthful - or labelful - so some sort of system needs to be worked out.

The taxonomists don't seem to like their names being cluttered with unofficial extras but, until we start using the provenances, we won't even know what forms come from where and for variable plants it seems we just have to learn the extra. Also professional propagators tend to turn to the Encyclopaedia for size even though they have taken cuttings

from the plant in their garden which they know has reached, say, 3m in the 1-10m range. Names like 'Howies Midget' do the job, of course, but there aren't that many of them. (Is there a Howies Midget?) In short, I think provenance information would help match plant needs and site, help select and identify best forms, and enable selection of specific uses.

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### Articles in previous Newsletters related to the use of indigenous plants in gardens DS

A quick check revealed these (and I may well have missed some). If you want to catch up on back copies, each of the two sets of earlier Newsletters (NL1 - 5 and NL6 - 9) is still available to members for \$10 (\$5 concession), including postage.

NL10 p 8 Your own wildf lower colour parade - Phil Watson

NL9 p10 Establishing a three bucket rainforest - Colleen Keena

NL8 p18 A garden design with a difference: reflections on a visit to the garden of Geoff Simmons - Colleen Keena

NL7 p11 No all-Australian gardens in a wildf lower paradise? - Barbara Buchanan

NL6 p15 An indigeous garden."always there is a challenge" - Betty Rymer

p 20 Gardening in the Southern Highlands of NSW - Vanessa Elwell-Gavins

NL5 p 7 A display area for Frankston's indigenous plants - Bev Courtney

p12 The additional dimension: wildlife in the garden - a talk by Graham Pizzey, reviewed by Danie Olbrich

p18 An indigenous garden of modern industria - a design by Paul Mewton, reported by Diana Snape

NL4 p 6 An indigenous coastal garden - Diana Snape

p15 Design and siting guidelines for development in hot arid zones - adapted by Nicole Lenffer

p16 The importance of Australia's indigenous plants (Ockham's Razor talk) - Diana Snape

NL2 p 9 A garden design project - Bev Courtney & Margaret Fraser (also NL3, p10)

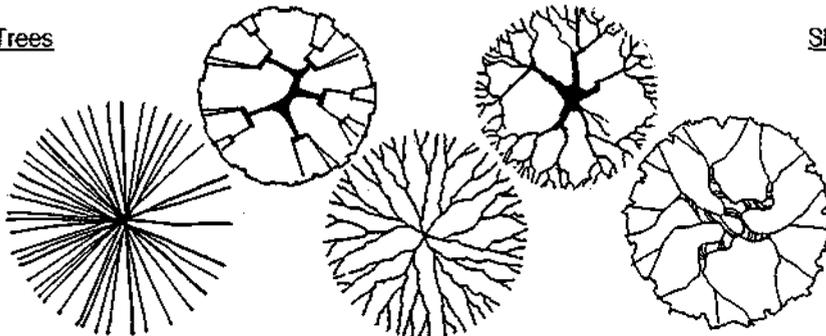
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### BOOKS

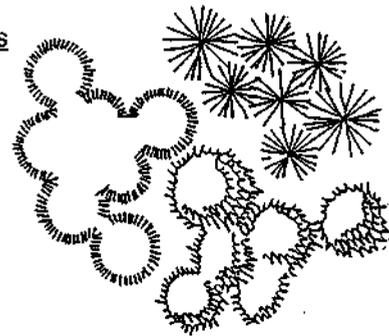
'Landscape Graphics' by Grant W Reid (1987) Whitney Library of Design, New York **Cherree Densley Vic**

The following graphics are examples from this book. If members are going to draw designs, we may be able to get some suitable graphics which would be 'more Australian'. If we have a graphic artist amongst our ranks, this could be a great program for them. Is there software available for landscape drawing and designing?? If so, it is probably similar to these - conifers and other exotics. Maybe an opening here for an enterprising graphic design person. Just a thought!

#### Trees



#### Shrubs



'Landscaping Your Garden' by Rosa Niran (1987) Viking O'Neill

**Jeff Howes NSW**

In this book Rosa Niran attempts to classify different garden landscaping styles, eg traditional or English, informal, formal. In particular you may be interested in pages 106-109 where she describes (very well) what makes a native (or bush) garden and how it differs from other styles of landscaping. A few quotes from these pages:

- "They are more natural than formal English gardens and for that reason have less maintenance.....These gardens must be planned and looked after. . . .Native gardens still need to be maintained by pruning, planting and staking."
- "Plants must be arranged differently from an exotic garden. . . .The native garden relies on a number of the one species planted in clumps. . . .In native gardens the plant groups present tend to be small trees, small and large shrubs, ground covers and climbers. In fact, the climbers and groundcovers are very important. It is in the use of ground covers that native gardens differ most from exotic and formal gardens."
- "The other time a native garden is appropriate is if you have a very modern house. Modern architecture and native gardens suit each other."

(These comments are apt but I noticed one disturbing quote (with my underlinings):

"When should you consider a native garden? In harsh climatic areas where there is a very low rainfall or particularly poor soil conditions. This situation is ideal for a native garden as you can still find native plants that will do well." DS)

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### On the Internet

Some news for those of you who are boldly surfing the Internet (while I timidly stand on the beach). Brian Walters, Editor of NSW SGAP Newsletter, has installed material about SGAP and its activities on the Internet. It can be found at: <http://www.ozemail.com.au/~sgap/index.html> (I can work out ozemail and sgap/index, but the rest?)

I think it is an excellent idea of Brian's to widen publicity for SGAP in this way. All Study Groups are listed but the Garden Design Study Group gets two extra mentions because Brian used two articles of mine - my Ockham's Razor talk on 'The Importance of Indigenous Plants' and the article on 'Banksias in Garden Design'. So we're on the Internet now. (I wonder how many of our SG members aie Internet users. You might like to let us know.) DS

## Garden Design using Australian Plants - a sense of unity

Gordon Rowland NSW

*This is an abbreviated version of a talk which Gordon has recently given in NSW.*

I arrived in Australia about twelve years ago and began to see the subtle beauty of Australian plants during walks in the bush. I was astounded to learn that Australia is home to over 25,000 species, far more than in the whole of Europe. My interest in growing Australian plants began when I started to notice not only how attractive they are, but also how well they tend to combine visually with one another. This is particularly interesting to me because it touches upon the sense of unity which in my view is the single most important factor in successful garden design, and the one which is lacking in many gardens today.

As unity is so important to successful garden design, I should make quite clear what I mean by it. I certainly don't mean dull uniformity, like a field of wheat or a timber plantation. The English garden designer Gertrude Jekyll gave a very good description of unity in something she wrote about the turn of the century, and I'd like to quote a slightly shortened version of her words:

*"It is not possible to use to good effect all the plants that are to be had. In my own case, I should wish to grow many more than just those I have, but if I do not find a place where my critical garden conscience approves . . . I would rather be without it."*

*It is better to deny myself the pleasure of having a particular plant than to have placed it where it neither does itself justice nor accords with its neighbours, and where it reproaches me every time I pass it."*

Of course, she's talking about this mysterious sense of unity and how even a single plant out of place can spoil it.

My own definition of unity is less poetic: I would call it a visual impression that every part belongs within the whole, that nothing appears mismatched, incongruous or out of place. This applies as much to the hard elements of the design as it does to plants. For example, it's easy to compromise the unity of a garden through using paving and other hard landscape materials which are out of sympathy with one another or with the materials used to construct the house. It's equally easy to compromise it by cultivating plants which are visually out of sympathy with one another. If you're not careful you can even do this with an incompatible mixture of Australian plants, but it's much easier with a typical mix of exotics plucked from random parts of the globe.

So, if you have an easy garden where anything and everything will grow, be extra careful in your choice of plants if you're wanting to maintain or achieve an appearance of unity. On the other side of the coin, people with difficult growing conditions should be able to take heart. Whether you're lumbered with shallow soil, or exposure to salt winds or lack of sunshine, you've only got to select indigenous plants adapted to these conditions and you're half way to achieving unity.

When it comes to selecting plants avoid the temptation of using too many different species with only one or two plants of each because, if you do, they will almost certainly make the garden look rather fussy and contrived. The sense of unity is much more easily achieved by repeated use of a limited number of species at each level and adding, if you like, several carefully chosen and carefully placed specimen plants. And when you use plants in a repeat pattern, planting them in drifts and at varying distances from one another is usually the best way to go. Plant them equidistant and in straight lines only if you prefer a formal garden.

Lack of unity creates a sense of discord, although a lack of variety creates a sense of boredom. What we have to do is achieve a balance in which unity and variety can coexist. For people like ourselves with an interest in growing plants, a lack of variety is not likely to be the problem. It's much more likely that we'll be tempted to use too many different species, with one of this and two of another, which is fine of course if you're a plant collector but definitely to be avoided if you're aiming for unity and a satisfying overall garden design.

If I'm designing a garden in the vicinity of bushland I encourage the client to use mostly indigenous plants, so that the garden is able to blend with the bush, which also increases its apparent size, whereas in a very built-up area such as the suburbs of inner Sydney where I live, I tend to be more flexible. It's not always feasible to use strictly indigenous plants in such conditions anyway, as the soil and other factors are often quite different from their pre-European state.

I'd like to add a few words about colour in the garden. Although there's something to be said for the advice to "take care of form and let colour take care of itself", most successful designs use one of three methods of dealing with colour. The first is to use a background of green or blue-green highlighted with a simple colour scheme; another is to use colour as a painter does, to create a picture using the colours of plants like a palette; and the third is to observe and adapt the methods of nature, using a mosaic of scattered colours as mother nature often does. Never use blocks of solid colour like those you see in the flower beds of municipal parks or you'll probably end up with the same disastrous effect!

As the eye is led straight to hot colours, especially bright red, avoid using this where it can be seen in the distance or at the far end of the garden or a vista, because it will have the effect of foreshortening the garden and making it appear smaller. Red and other hot colours like orange and yellow are best as foreground colours. Blues are excellent mixers and they combine well with most other colours. Pale blues are particularly good at the far end of the garden, where they may blend with the sky and induce a sense of mystery and distance, which makes the garden appear larger than it really is.

Pinks and yellows tend to clash with one another so these two colours should preferably be kept apart or buffered with blue or violet, which go well with both of them. As the sun makes colours appear lighter, pale colours and white look best in shade and they also help lighten a shady corner, although too much white mixed in with other colours tends to weaken their impact.

In conclusion, if you want a unified garden rather than a garden of individual specimens, I would urge you to

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simplify your design and resist the temptation to have 'one of this and two of that'. Instead, go for one or two dominant species of trees, preferably indigenous trees, and plant several of each. Add to these a limited number of specimen trees, if you have the space, and also use repetition of shrubs and ground-cover plants in appropriate positions throughout the site. And if you want to grow some favourite plants which might look out of place in the garden, try growing them in a pot or tub on the verandah or somewhere close to the house. Or, if you have a large garden, screen them from the main part of the garden.

Finally, whatever you decide to do, I'm sure you won't go too far wrong so long as you continue to take your inspiration from our beautiful Australian bush.

*Gordon listed and described a few of the basic landscaping plants he recommends for the Sydney and Gosford regions.*

### Trees

*Angophora costata* (Sydney Red Gum); *Archontophoenix cunninghamiana* (Bangalow Palm);

*Elaeocarpus reticulatus* (Blueberry Ash);

*Eucalyptus citriodora* (Lemon-scented Gum), *E. maculata* (Spotted Gum), *E. haemastoma* (Scribbly Gum), *E. leucoxylon* 'Rosea' (Yellow Gum), *E. scoparia* (Willow Gum);

*Melaleuca quinquenervia* (Broad-lead Paperbark), *M. styphelioides* (Prickly Paperbark);

*Melia azedarach* var. *australasica* (White Cedar); *Stenocarpus sinuatus* (Firewheel Tree).

### Fence screeners

*Acacia prominens* (Gosford Wattle);

*Grevillea aspleniifolia*, *G. longifolia*, *G. banksii*, *G. sericea*, *G. speciosa*;

*Kunzea ambigua* (Tick Bush); *Lambertia formosa* (Mountain Devil Bush);

*Leptospermum rotundifolium* (Round-leaf Tea-tree); *Prostanthera ovalifolia* (Purple Mint Bush).

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## Creating a new garden "inside" an old one

Shirley Pipitone ACT

I am creating a new garden "inside" my 22 years old garden. My new garden is less than two years old. The original garden, a full quarter acre suburban block, contained a mixture of Australian and exotic plants and I will keep many of these, including eight established eucalypts in the front. Unfortunately I lost my only tree in the back, a large *E. nicholii*, in a strong windstorm, but I have just "replaced" it with an *E. sideroxylon* var. *rosea* and two *E. leucoxylon*. Because of the shape and orientation of the block and lack of neighbours on one side, I can have all these trees without casting excessive shade in my garden or anyone else's.

While I have removed several large old grevilleas, melaleucas, five of my 17 *Cotoneaster serotina* (weeds) and other shrubs, I still have most of the basic large infrastructure and screening plants in place. I have also completely removed the lawn and replaced it with a wood chip mulch.

My project now is to fill in the centre spaces. In the past I have thought of this as a "woodland garden" rather than a wildflower garden as discussed in the last GDSG Newsletter. In my woodland garden, trees provide height and a range of microclimates for the real focus of the garden which is the lower understorey, comprising a variety of smaller plants (less than one metre in height) including shrubs, herbaceous plants, ground covers, creepers, climbers, tufted plants and some grasses in the more open areas. Larger shrubs provide screening of undesirable objects and also partially separate different "garden rooms".

My real love is colour and along with that goes form, light and movement. What I am aiming to achieve is a garden where flowers define areas of different colour combinations that flow into one another. For example, pink with some white, then adding some mauve, then flowing into white/blue/mauve, then mauve/cream/apricot, cream/apricot/yellow, yellow/orange/red, yellow/blue white, etc.

I am also trying to take foliage colours into account, for example I love blue and grey toned foliage with pink and white flowers. And I love my old Prunus trees with their burgundy foliage against the blue-green eucalypts.

Finally I am trying to create special effects with form, light and movement. For example, I want to use *Hypocalymma angustifolium* in a position where dappled sunlight plays on its graceful form, with its arching branches swaying in the breeze. So far, this part is in my dreams. I have killed off three hypocalymmas but I will keep trying!

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## 'Planning a low water garden in the ACT'

Ian Percy NSW

I was in Canberra last weekend and my visit coincided with a SGAP sale of plants in the National Botanic Gardens. It was very interesting to see the large percentage of local plants being offered for sale. The plants were labeled as local species, if the term applied. I have come around to thinking that the word local is more "user friendly" than the word indigenous. The following is an (edited) extract from a SGAP Canberra leaflet called '*Planning a low water garden in the ACT*' and I thought it might be interesting for the Newsletter.

"For some people in Canberra the ultimate replacement of lawn could be something approaching the lowland grasslands which were present before European settlement. This grassland garden could include local grasses such as *Themeda*, *Danthonia*, *Poa*, *Stipa* and *Microlaena* species. These grasses can be readily established provided invasive exotic grasses such as couch have been removed first. A range of smaller herbs and shrubs could then be introduced between grass tussocks, or even a few terrestrial orchids. One or two eucalypts may be planted into the grassland and bordered by larger shrubs. These can be chosen from a list of local species (given in the leaflet) which should not need supplementary water."

There are some points I would like to raise.

The first point with design is to pick the plant that suits the particular place that is proposed for the plant. The debate rages through horticultural circles constantly on the hardness of Australian plants in cultivation compared to the exotics. Australian plants have been in cultivation for about 35+ years but used in landscape design about 25 - 30 years and are now starting to be used in general landscaping with home owners. Exotics have had hundreds of years head start and many years with hybridization techniques to make them reliable.

Australian plants are now starting to get "better", helped by genetic engineering and advances in horticultural science techniques. A classic example is the 'Bush Gem' series. These plants would never have been available 10 years ago, as the genus *Anigozanthos* had a reputation of being quite difficult to grow in Victoria. This is surely an advance for designers using Australian plants, but designers must be aware that the development of Australian plants is still young. Mistakes can still be made from the false sense of security that "if it is an Australian plant it is tough"! Hence sometimes plants that like plenty of sun are being put in shady positions or vice versa. The general rule in design is to recreate the environment that the plant thrives in. If you cannot do this, then do not use the plant. Try another genus or species that has the characteristics that suit the situation that has been designed. Do not put a square peg in a round hole; do not try to work against nature, work with it. In some instances this general rule may be proven false, but that is what makes the whole thing so fascinating.

Another point is that good intentions and design fall down because the designer has not considered another vital factor and that is the soil. Plants being autotrophic require nutrients within their immediate environment. Soil is not just dirt; soil is where the other half of the plant lives and survives. Many a fine plant has been given a hard time by being located in bad soil and has not been given a chance. Designing a house, people spend money and time on the house foundations. The basic foundation of a garden design is the soil. Develop the soil and the plant will reach its full potential. The problems of disease and stress for the plant will be less and the result will be a better finish to the design.

Good references on soil are:

"An Introduction to Trees of South Eastern Australia" K.J. Simepender Rev. Ed. Inkata Press, Ch. 1 - Part 1, pp 49-64

"Growing for Ornamental Plants & Tun" K.A. Handreck & N.D. Black 5th Ed. 1992 Chapters 5,7,8,10,11,14,15,22,29

"CSIRO leaflets on soil" available from the Rural Bookshop, Wellington Pde East Melbourne

## Design ideas for fun

Grahame Durbidge NSW

Thank you for the encouragement to contribute. Appreciating Barbara Buchanan's idea that nominating a tree or shrub and describing how you would use it in particular situation or to achieve a particular effect might be rewarding.

Here's what happened when I thought about *Melaleuca quinquinervia*. It's the papery bark that is visualized; the interplay of light and shadow on the trunk is very appealing. I once walked through a melaleuca forest where the trunks were only about arm thickness and very close together - virtually impenetrable. Might make a living fence. Planted in threes or fives they would make a nice group.

What about a plant at the other extreme, *Myoporum parvifolium*? It's a spreading green mat. How about a garden bed planted with it? When the entire area is covered, cut holes in the myoporum and plant these spots to create a mosaic.

Barbara also mentions identifying a feature you need in the garden and then visualizing and describing what you need to achieve this. Here goes. . . colour, yes I want a riot of colour in a small garden: *Helichrysum agrophyllum*, small & spreading, with glossy grey leaves. Also *Leucophyta brownii* for fine grey foliage; *Grevillea* 'Royal Mantle' 'Sunkissed Waters' and its yellow green leaves. What else can give colour all year? How to make a real "dazzle" (Cherree Densley's term)?

## An outlandish planting

Diana Snape Vic

I've been thinking about Grahame Durbidge's challenge from last Newsletter: an outlandish - almost gaudy - planting in a small (0.5 acre) public park, a flat site in full sun with good soil. One or two ideas had to be discarded because I thought that, though outlandish and interesting, they would not be very attractive. The following, I think, survived.

I picture a roughly square park, divided diagonally in quarters by very wide paths, not straight but each with a slight curve. There would be a central raised area where they meet, with seats and tables and plenty of space around it. This could be grass, or coloured paving or gravel (except on the slope). Unless shaded by the trees or large shrubs, paths would be bordered with blue and purple groundcovers- e.g. scaevolias, dampieras, brachyscomes, patersonias, *Hardenbergia violacea*.

Each quarter would feature one genus. (As a general rule I don't like this arrangement, but this is different - it's meant to be slightly strange.) The four genera would be banksias (orange and gold flower cones), grevilleas (just reds), acacias (yellows of course) and callistemons, opposite the grevilleas (more reds).

In each segment, heights would descend from one or two curving rows of medium to small trees at the back along the perimeter, then wavy but definite lines of large shrubs, medium shrubs, several of small shrubs, to a wide curved row of ground covers near the central area and a little way back along the two paths, inside the blue and purple groundcovers. Just one (or maybe two) reliable species of each size category should be selected, with consideration of form of trees and large shrubs, foliage contrast and flowering times. (How many rows of each would depend on sizes.) I picture waves of colour 'breaking' in each of the four sections as different species come into flower.

As Grahame says, dream on.

# WHITE/YELLOW/CREAM/GREEN COMBINATIONS

At "Denbly," Killarney  
September 1995

1. *Olearia teretifolia*
2. *Hibbertia cuneiformis*
3. *Correa backhousiana*
4. *Banksia praemorea* yellow form
5. *Myoporum floribundum*
6. *Acacia leiophylla*
7. *Bracteatha bracteatum* 'White Cockatoo'

1. *Correa reflexa* var *nummularifolia*
2. *Thryptomene saxicola* *white prostrate form*
3. *Brachyscome segmentosum*
4. *Hibbertia grossularifolia*
5. *Hibbertia a&pera*
6. *Phebalium squamulosum*
7. *Correa* 'Marion's Marvel'
6. *Acacia verticillata*
9. *Acacia drummondii*
10. *Eucalyptus diversifolia*
11. *Olearia floribunda*

1. *Correa reflexa* green prostrate
2. *Melaleuca incana*
3. *Olearia phlogopappa*
4. *Acacia truncata*

*Cherree Densley*

## PLANT COMBINATIONS

"Flowering just finished, *Grevillea tridentifera* next to *Acacia macradenia* looked good. Beware, *A. macradenia* has small thorns. *G. tridentifera* is of course prickly as is *G. sericea* (white). I think the pricklies do have a place, shelter for small birds, people keep off, etc. The pink *G. sericea* has also been a flush of colour. *G. sericea* looks interesting in the rain (or hose spray) - the droplets seem to hang on the foliage and sparkle. The *tridentifera* perfume spreads over the whole backyard (though small), somewhat similar to *Acacia podalyritolia* which is less strong. I like both. Their flowers drop quickly when cut." **John Hulme** NSW

"Our front garden is a mass of flowers at the moment. What looks particularly fine is the combination of colour and shapes presented by the following planting scheme. Fan shaped flowers of gold coloured *Grevillea* 'Honey Gem', fronted by and on a slight rise, a clipped *Hakea laurina*, an explosion of *Craspedia* globes, and fading flowers from a Geraldton Wax. In other areas are gold, silver and bronze foliage plants. A low terracotta pot near the front door is a sea of pale blue *Wahlenbergia* and from its froth emerges a hula-skirt swirl of *Xanthorrhoea* foliage. How's that for an over the top description?

My inclusion of the annual *Helichrysum* 'Bright Bikini' was a bit of a mistake. The garden immediately lost all sense of form and the wretched things grew like mad in a few spots and swamped some baby correas. They are towering above them like triffids and have gone off like French bombs! And are in a similar colour range." **Ian Percy** NSW

"I am trying to do a monthly (or at least two-monthly) flower check in our garden, so I have some idea of what flowers when for us. Doing this recently I noticed a pleasing combination in our "Western Australian" sandhill, enclosed within the curve of a path. A dwarf *Agonis flexuosa* is the centre piece, many years old but only a metre high, with red tipped foliage. It's now surrounded by a ring of *Conostylis aculeata* ssp. *preissii*, which has gradually expanded to encircle it, with many stems of yellow flowers 20 to 30 cm tall. Adjacent is an area of another conostylis, *C. seorsiflora*, an almost prostrate mat covered with paler yellow flowers quite starry in appearance. The yellows contrast with a sweep of vivid purple-blue flowers of prostrate *Dampiera diversifolia*. Deep rusty red cones of *Banksia petiolaris* in bud sitting tall on the ground add an arresting touch." **Diana Snape** Vic

### Does anyone micro-burn?

**Geoff Simmons** Qld

By micro-burn is meant the use of fire on individual plants. The experience of a macro-burn, a bushfire, made me aware of the beneficial effect on the appearance of certain Australian plants. This occurred with *Xanthorrhoea* and cycads. Before the fire these had leaves that cloaked the trunks to ground level but, after the fire in which all foliage was burnt off, only clear trunks remained. With astonishing speed, new fronds appeared and the appearance became the classical type usually seen depicted. Incidentally they had been grown from seeds and the foliage had never been subjected to fire, in contrast to many grasstrees scavenged from the wild.

My intention to use a small gas torch was no longer required but I am curious whether any person uses the application of flames to individual plants as part of their garden practices. If so, what method, how often and what range of species. Possibly it is used with those forming lignotubers. The effect of fire on the opening of seed capsules or stimulation of germination is another subject not considered in the context of this note.

Perhaps fire introduces a unique character to Australian landscape, a factor not much used in garden design. (Please write in about your experience or ideas. This is a possible theme for a future Newsletter - garden design for protection from 'macro-burns', as well as use of 'micro-burns'. DS)

## GARDEN DESIGN PROJECTS

The Friends of Gardiner's Creek Valley is a group of residents in the Malvern - Glen Iris area of Melbourne who are dedicated to improving the Creek environment for the benefit of all residents. In recent years, members have planted many thousands of mainly indigenous Australian plants in the Creek environs and the 'greening' project is continuing.

Boroondara Council (formerly Camberwell, Hawthorn and Kew) has offered the Friends the opportunity to restore a 1.2 ha (3 acre) area on the north east side of the Creek between Dunlop & Maxwell Streets (known as the Duntop Street Reserve - Melways 60A11). The Reserve is relatively undeveloped, with an eclectic mixture of both young and mature Australian and exotic trees and a couple of swampy areas in a gently undulating rectangular grassland.

The Friends have invited the Garden Design Study Group to prepare a 3-year staged landscape design for a pleasant, passive recreational area featuring Australian plants. If acceptable, this would be submitted to Boroondara Council for a financial grant over the 3-year period. The Friends, in conjunction with the Council, would complete the project if the submission was successful.

Any GDSG members interested in this design project should contact Diana Snape or myself for further details and copies of plans. **Peter Garnham** Vic

Students of Ormond East Primary School in Melbourne have been enthused by energetic GDSG member **Stefanie Rennick** to undertake a project at their school. They are using indigenous plants, which they have helped propagate from local sources such as railway line remnants, to develop a special entrance garden for the school. A number of students have been working on designs for their garden, and Stefanie and Diana Snape are helping them decide on their final design. The students are very keen on their project and are considering joining SGAP as a group.

## PROBLEMS

### Planning reflections

Can you help me out with a problem? Where do I plant 30 *Melaleuca cuticularis* on the banks of my wetlands for maximum reflection - north, south, west, east? **Cherree Densley** Vic

**Plants for dry, shady areas**

I have a need to find some reliable ground covers for a corner of my garden which is dry and mostly shady. The shade comes from a macadamia and a firewheel tree. Two flourishing tree ferns and a bird's nest fern are the other dominant plants. When I first moved here the ground was choked with impatiens and fishbone ferns, i pulled all these out but have had trouble establishing anything else in their place. Perhaps plants for dry, shady areas could be a future theme? **Jennifer Borrell** NSW

**Attention! Professional designers.**

If you are a member of the GDSG and have suitable qualifications, you may like to join the recently formed Australian Institute of Landscape Designers and Managers. We need you to help advance the cause of Australian plants!

To be a full member you must hold the minimum qualification of Associate Diploma of Applied Science (Landscape) or Landscape Technicians Higher Certificate, their equivalents or a higher qualification. If your qualifications fall short you may be required to sit for a professional practice examination or other examination depending on the qualifications you possess.

Further information: The Membership Officer  
 Australian Institute of Landscape Designers and Managers  
 PO Box 693  
 Hamilton NSW 2303  
 Ph: (049) 65 3366

**Gordon Rowland** NSW

*A reminder to professional members of a previous request for information for the GDSG Newsletter about any aspect of their professional work they would like to highlight We'd be very pleased to profile one professional member in each NL*

**Garden Design Study Group weekend, March 15 - 17, 1996**

*The GDSG has accepted the invitation from Warrnambool and District SGAP to hold a workshop weekend at Warrnambool on March 15-17 next year and planning is well underway. We hope many members will be able to attend, including members from South Australia. I'm sorry it's such a long way from NSW & the other States but maybe a few people at least will be able to organize some time away.*

**Planned activities:**

- Friday 15th March is Warrnambool & District SGAP's normal meeting night, so we are combining forces on that night. Peter Brennan, who designed for Warrnambool the 'Japanese' Garden using Australian plants (see NL4, p8) has kindly agreed to speak to the combined meeting on Friday night. Time 8 pm, venue to be decided.
- For those who are able to get to Warrnambool for dinner, we'll gather at Macey's pub before the meeting.
- Peter will also visit the project site with us on Saturday morning. He hopes the earthworks will be finished by then, ready for planting in autumn, so it will be a good time for us to see the site with Peter.
- On Saturday we'll also be visiting three small gardens in Warrnambool and having a sandwich lunch at one of them. In the afternoon there'll be a garden design workshop, possibly at the TAFE Centre.
- After an early pub tea at 6 pm at Maceys on Saturday night we'll have two stimulating speakers. The first (at 7.30 pm) will be John Fenton, a farmer from Hamilton involved in design for Landcare. The second, GDSG member Paul Thompson, is one of the team designing the display garden of Australian plants at Cranbourne Botanic Gardens. Warrnambool & District SGAP members are also invited to this evening, again probably at the TAFE Centre.
- On Sunday we'll visit two or three larger gardens, including two which have been in the Open Garden Scheme - Joan Henderson's and Cherree Densley's. We'll have a barbecue lunch at Cherree's, with time for a good talk.
- Sunday afternoon - completing garden visits or workshops; suggested garden visits on the way home.

**Accommodation:**

10 or 12 billets will be available for "early birds" (allocated in order of receipt of requests); there is a choice of good, reasonably priced motels at Warrnambool; Figtree Caravan Park has on-site vans or units.

**Meals:**

breakfast with your accommodation; barbecue or sandwich lunch provided; BYO morning or afternoon teas or supper; 'counter- teas' at the local pub Friday & Saturday nights.

**Partners welcome:**

Husbands, wives, families, partners and good friends are all welcome. For anyone not completely fascinated by gardens and garden design, there are many interesting attractions in and around Warrnambool, eg nearby Tower Hill.

Cost:

Your individual expenses: accommodation, breakfasts, morning or afternoon teas, evening meals;

Shared expenses: lunches, hiring of hall, speakers' costs & general, estimated at \$20 per person.

**Suggestions:**

Any suggestions for the weekend are welcome.

*Last year's weekend was very successful - enjoyable socially, most stimulating and instructive - and I'm sure this one will be too. To register, please fill in the accompanying form and send it with \$20 to Diana Snape as soon as possible, so we can plan ahead - particularly in terms of organizing venues, lunches and billets. We'll send further information & details, such as a list of motels and 'mud maps' & times for garden visits, to members who register. (A reminder in the next Newsletter, February 1996, will be far too late in terms of planning.)*

**Caulfield Garden Show, Melbourne October 26 to 29**

This Garden Show was the first of its kind, with an emphasis on garden design. It was held at Caulfield Race Course so there was plenty of space (unlike the confined area of the Chelsea Flower Show which is, to some extent, its inspiration). Over the four days it was visited by sixty thousand people. Some examples of garden design were excellent and most were at least interesting. Kuranga Nursery won a silver award for their beautiful and colourful 'rustic' display, designed by Leanne Watson, as did Paul Thompson for his arrangement of grasses and daisies in conjunction with realistic old 'timber' fences (made of concrete). The pool surrounded by ferns, shrubs and trees, designed by Robert Boyle was so natural many people thought it was a permanent part of the landscape. The only gold award went to a small Japanese style garden - I think it really went to the superbly shaped Japanese maple which was the central feature.

Indoors, I thought the reproduction of the prize-winning display from the Chelsea Flower Show was disappointing. There were some spectacular plants and flowers but I found their arrangement and coordination less pleasing. The display did not sound like the descriptions I have read, so probably it was not a good reproduction. Marilyn Gray's small Karwarra display also won silver and SGAP maintained a presence with an information booth. Congratulations to all involved. DS

**Melbourne Meetings** Usually 1.45 for 2 pm on the first Sunday afternoon in the month. It's a good idea to let the member concerned know you're coming (also confirming time and venue).

December 3: John Armstrong's, Discussion - indigenous plants in garden design.

January: no meeting

February 4: Diana Snape's, Discussion - designing a holiday house g /beach g.

March 3rd: no regular meeting this month because of GDGSG weekend March 15 - 17 (see above)

April 7: Nicole Lenffer's, 'Hands on' artificial rock-making session - discussion (if time!) on the use of rocks in garden design.

**Sydney Meetings**

Sunday February 18: visits to small gardens in the Australia's Open Garden Scheme; these are coastal gardens on the Northern Peninsula. Then we'll have lunch at Nadia Lalak's house at Pittwater to discuss the gardens we've seen on this and the last garden visit meeting.

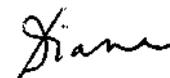
Thank you to the people who supported our last garden visits, and a reminder that partners and friends are welcome.

For further information about February 18, please phone

The response to this NL's topic of indigenous gardens was strong, with a somewhat philosophical bent. Topics proposed for coming NLs include formal gardens and plants, which could be allied with structure in the garden; combining Australian and exotic plants; large gardens. Articles will be very welcome.

Please keep in touch and let us know your ideas concerning garden design. I'd like to include more plans (or just sketches) of gardens but I can't if no-one sends them in. Also any news to do with garden design - anything of interest that's happening in your area. This could mean reports of garden visits, displays, talks you hear or articles you read. It doesn't have to be long - even a line is worth sending in. Remember we have people at all levels of knowledge and experience, including many beginners as well as professional members, so please don't be shy about writing - and we're still looking for a logo symbolizing Australian / garden / design.....

Best wishes to all members and their families for Christmas and the summer holiday season.



Diana Snape

*Registration Form*

**Garden Design Study Group weekend, March 15 - 17, 1996**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like a billet? \_\_\_\_\_ (These will be allocated in order of receipt of requests.)

Can you get there for dinner on Friday night \_\_\_\_\_; the meeting on Friday night \_\_\_\_\_?

When (on Sunday) would you need to leave to go home? \_\_\_\_\_

To register, please include deposit of \$20 per person

## 20

**New members** *A warm welcome to the following new members.*

John & Christine Beasley  
Ted Belcher  
Robert, Jacci & Matthew Campbell  
Jennifer Clancy  
Matthew Collins  
Mary Cotter  
Chris & Leigh Cousins  
Ian & Tamara Cox  
Jennifer Davidson  
Dee Dinkgreve  
Theresa Feile  
Eva Flegman  
Brett Hall  
Kevin Hoffman  
Anne Homes  
Morton Kaveney  
Sue Keon-Cohen  
Chris Larkin  
Rhys & Julie McGregor  
Anne Neild  
Ian & Mary Paul  
Shirley Pipitone  
Jim Reid  
Susan Reidy  
Stefanie Rennick  
Philip Tow  
Carol Wilmink  
Tim Wilson

### **Further membership renewals for 95/96**

Ingrid Adler, Helen Allen, Tracey Allen, Karin Andersson, John Armstrong, Marion Bakker, Margie & Geoff Barnett, Michael Bates, Beryl Blake, Ian Bond, Jennifer Borrell, John Bramley, Mark Burns, Jane Calder, Lindsay Campbell, Patrea Cook, Rosemary Gunning, Helen de Faye, Kay Dempsey, Alison Dredge, Betty Drummond, Bohdan Durnota, Rodger & Gwen Elliot, P.B. Feige, Steve Fielke, Shirley Fisher, Gloria Freeman, Meredith Freeman, Joy Greig, Doris Gunn, Steve Hailstone, Jo Hambrett, Chris Hampson, Bev Hanson, Robyn Hartley, Monika Herrmann, Barry Jahnke, Julie Jones, Paul & Barbara Kennedy, Catherine King, Faleiry Koczkar, Chris Larkin, Bryan Loft, Geoffrey Long, Pat MacDonald, Neil & Jane Marriott, Christine Maxfield, Wendy McClelland, A & J McKechnie, Ron & Pat McKeown, Barbara Meyer, Bruce Muir, Dorothy Parris, June Parrott, Ricky & Katrina Reeves, Nicky Rose, Jan Schapper, Peter Shannon, Peter Sharp, Mardi Simons, Roger Stone, Stuart Taylor, Gloria Thomlinson, Paul Thompson, Pam Tourle, Belinda Wallis, Jim & Pat Watson, Maureen Webb, Don & Jean Weybury; SGAP Canberra, SGAP Old, SGAP NSW, Wildflower Soc. of WA, SGAP Foothills Group, Geelong Group, Maroondah Group, New England Group, Nowra Group.  
*Please let Peter Garnham or Diana Snape know if you have renewed but your name hasn't appeared on any of our renewal lists. We try to be 100% accurate but it's getting to be a big job!*

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