



# GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP

ISSN: 1039 – 9062  
ABN: 82 428 110 028  
**Newsletter**  
**February, 2020**

# 110

## STUDY GROUP LEADER / NEWSLETTER EDITOR

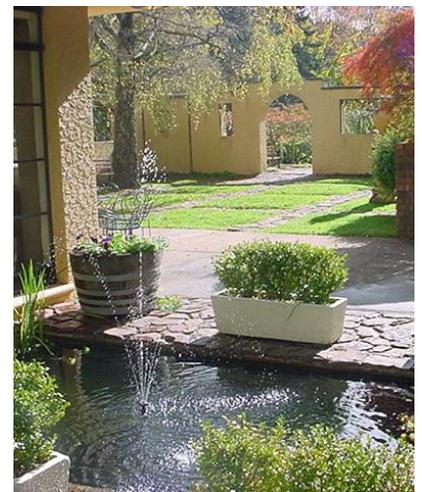
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## Newsletter Theme: 'Courtyard and Patio Gardens'

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*In a courtyard garden, as in any really small garden, every square metre is precious – the smaller the garden, the more surely each plant must deserve its place. Careful design is necessary!*

### ANPSA Garden Design Study Group Newsletter

Published quarterly in February, May, August and November.

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

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#### Receiving the Newsletter – are your contact details current?

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

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

### Newsletter timing & Themes

These are the 2019/20 Newsletter dates and themes:

Issue	date	Theme
111	May	Planning for Garden Colour
112	August	FIRE risk and Garden design!

Issue	date	Theme
113	November	Perfume & Aroma in the garden
114	February	Time as a Design Constraint

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

## The Editor Comments

Hello everyone!

As I write this editorial just after New Year, it seems that all of Australia is being scorched and burnt, no state has been left out and destruction is massive, lives have been lost and huge numbers of homes and businesses have been razed. A relative from Sydney explained to me that it has been many decades since the forests surrounding Australia's largest city have been back-burnt and this heavy load of flammable spent trunks and vegetation has apparently contributed to the magnitude of the burning. We contemplated how the aboriginal people had managed the continent so well for 60,000 years where burning was managed regularly, to produce the 'Australia Felix' landscape that many early explorers mentioned.

I do not intend to add to the debate about climate warming here, but sufficient to say that our members should continue to be very careful in their own landscape design and management and keep fire foremost in mind. I hope that none of our members have been victims of any of the fires, but I feel that this is unlikely, given the fact that so many of us love to live in the natural bushland surrounding our cities. Note that the August edition of the Newsletter is '**FIRE and Garden Design**' so I hope that members contribute lots of appropriate suggestions and information about this very very important subject.

Once again I have to advise about the loss of another of our long term members, Ruth Crosson from Gladstone, in Queensland. Those of you who knew her will remember an amazing lady who over the past 50+ years, would do literally anything to promote native plants. Some will remember the unique character she was and the way she could get things done against all odds. It is fair to say that Gladstone, a central Queensland industrial city, would not be as 'green' as it is today without Ruth's community stewardship – keeping everyone from the leaders of industry to the local Council environmentally informed and honest! Ruth is irreplaceable but she has left the Gladstone Branch of Native Plants Queensland a strong legacy which I know local members will continue to build.

The first couple of months of 2020 are going to be busy for me as I have been invited to Victoria in February to address APS meetings in Maroondah (18th) and the Grampians (21st) as well as a GDSG meeting (22nd) of local members. Then in April the same for the NPQ Mackay Branch (2nd & 4th). I am wondering if a small contribution made from our resources to assist these local groups with reimbursing some travel costs would be appropriate?

## Extracts from Past Newsletters (Issues 33 to 36)

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

*Make sure you read the full article of these references as well as other articles on the GDSG Newsletter archives section of the ANPSA website. <http://anpsa.org.au/design/des-news.html>*

### Newsletter #33 – February, 2001

#### 'Design Notes on Formal Gardens'

Glenda Datsun & NE Vic Branch

There is definitely a place for Australian plants in formal gardens, once the preserve of exotic plants - how do you translate Australian plants into that use? Formality is often forced upon the design because of the small size.

#### 'Private versus Public Garden Design'

Geoff Simmons, Qld

A rigid, more planned design is desirable in a public garden, that is, one based on the selection of species known to be reliable growers in that particular environment and offering some value in beauty. Fortunately there is an increasing number of varieties that meet these criteria.

#### 'Report on a Garden and an Open Garden'

Cheree Hall, NSW

Generally it seemed the main people who visited had native gardens that had "gone wrong". They had over-planted without giving consideration to the end plant size or how one would look in relation to the next. No thought was given about foliage contrast nor had the majority thought about varying height or groundcovers.

### **Newsletter #34 – May, 2001**

#### ***'Advantages of Lining Pathways'***

Cherree Densley, Vic

Most of the points made below relate to practical issues based on experience and 'my style' of laying out the beds of the garden here at Killamey. Firstly, using rocks, short pieces of logs, old bricks, sandstone pieces (all of which I have used) gives definition to design lines whether it delineates between beds and paved areas, along pathways, between garden beds and grassed areas or along driveways.

#### ***'What is an Australian Garden?'***

Diana Snape, Vic

When I was a child in Sydney, four plants in our garden were special to me. Down the back, beyond my father's beloved roses, a tall Lemon-scented Gum perfumed the air. Closer to the house, one shrub was covered with bright crimson bottle-brushes and a beautiful Geraldton Wax survived tennis practice against its north-facing wall. In the front garden grew a magnificent Fire-wheel Tree, given to my mother in the false belief that it was a shrub. It took me many years, many bush walks and several gardens of my own to realize the full significance of those four Australian plants in my childhood garden.

#### ***'Designing for the Dry'***

Chris Larkin, Vic

The business of watering, or not watering, is complex and somewhat speculative. Plants can look extremely refreshed after only very light showers or superficial watering. Why? Is it that the humid conditions created allow for transfer of moisture through the stomata and possibly even the stem pedicel?

### **Newsletter #35 – August, 2001**

#### ***'Blending Native and Exotic Plants to make a spiritually Harmonious Space'***

Jo Hambrett, NSW

When I was invited to present this talk it forced an examination of the phrase 'spiritually harmonious' which I had used in an attempt to describe our gardening aims at our home, 'Yanderra'. With the help of the Shorter Oxford I was delighted to confirm one of its meanings as 'intellectually and emotionally agreeable'.

#### ***'Creating Garden Vistas'***

Diana Snape, Vic

One aspect of design I think we could and should concentrate on more is the deliberate creation of beautiful vistas within the garden. It is often difficult to take good photos of a garden simply because this aspect has been overlooked – I think a good vista means a good photo and vice versa.

#### ***'Rainforest Plants'***

Nan Nicholson NSW

Over the years we have been slowly developing a harder line on which plants should be grown and, for our own place at least, we now feel that all plants should be either (a) edible or (b) local natives. This means that we have gradually been ripping out 15 most of those wonderful north Queensland rainforest plants that make first-rate garden plants.

### **Newsletter #36 – November, 2001**

#### ***'Lawns and God' – a little light relief!***

Glenda Datson, NSW

GOD: Saint Francis, you know all about gardens and nature. What in the world is going on down there in the USA? What happened to the dandelions, violets, thistles and stuff I started eons ago? I had a perfect, no-maintenance garden plan.

#### ***'Australian Plants in a Changing World'***

Diana Snape, Vic

. . . . . After 40 years existence of SGAP/APS, we might have expected its influence to have started to become more apparent in the general community, with increasing awareness and appreciation of Australian plants. I think in general it has not. What are the problems?

#### ***'Low Rainfall - Drought in Australian Garden Design'***

Geoff Simmons, Qld

A topic that has considerable importance for Australian garden designers is the possible lack of water at times. Reticulated reservoir water supply is often subject to restrictions, may not be able to supply all the plants but only a few selected prize plants, and this water may . . . . .

## Newsletter #110 theme: 'Courtyard and Patio Gardens'

*ED: Our GDSG book, 'The Australian Garden' by Diana Snape contains a section on Courtyard Gardens. As we did not receive too many ideas or comments from members about the theme topic, I thought it appropriate to add a few pertinent extracts from the book. But read the full chapter for much more detail.*

"In a courtyard garden, as in any really small garden (25 square metres or less), every square metre is precious – the smaller the garden, the more surely each plant must deserve its place. You may choose to focus on the hard landscape – paving, rocks or pebbles – and introduce a pool, with very few plants. You may prefer a flamboyant approach, with rainforest and tropical plants, cycads or zamias, Bird's-nest Ferns, cordylines or palms. Or create a more subtle and tranquil atmosphere with Grass Trees pimeleas and hibbertias. Your favourite plants could combine fittingly with rocks, providing a pleasing contrast of soft and hard textures. . . .

"Group a range of small plants to compliment and define the hard landscape outlines . . . . frame by geometrically shaped beds with well-defined edges or irregular soft-edged shapes. Consider introducing contrasts between formality and nature's exuberance, for example by letting groundcovers spill over edges of raised beds.

"Using few varieties will avoid a cluttered appearance. Dwarf forms can also substitute for their larger parents. . . . Perhaps plant a slender tree (or train a tall shrub as a tree) to lift the eyes and the spirits. Not only will it act as a focal point and a magnet for birds but it will also contribute a strong vertical accent and extend the space of the garden upwards. To achieve the harmony, such as we now associate with a Japanese garden, study form and foliage of plants and make sure these are well suited to the hard landscape background. Walls and paving will occupy a significant proportion of the available space, making them relatively conspicuous. Colours can be neutral and unobtrusive or bold and exciting. . . . One or two decorative features will add a personal touch – a sculpture, mosaic work or a 'found object' will all add character to a small garden.

"Walls can be pleasant to look at but are often more attractive partially screened by foliage. Climbers excel here, requiring very little 'foot space'. They can grow in small narrow beds or in containers beside walls and be trained on fixed wires, lattice or sculptural supports. Choose species carefully to suit the aspect of the wall and the degree of exposure to sky and seasonal sunlight which encourages upward growth. . . .

"Containers provide a flexible garden which can be moved at different times of the year to benefit from sun or shade. Designing mini-gardens in containers is a whole world of delight, using small infill gems as well as tried and true ornamentals."

### **My Entry Courtyard – a problem!**

After reading this section of the book I decided to share some thoughts on one of my courtyards. Since we moved to the new house almost three years ago now, I have been planning to upgrade the existing entrance courtyard garden that has a few quite difficult and opposite physical and functional constraints to resolve. Obviously to achieve optimum success with the final design you must initially identify all of these aspects, develop options that respond appropriately to each and ensure they work together collectively.

You would think that a small courtyard about 4 metres square would be a simple design exercise . . . wrong! Not this one! I have been analysing the area for over a year now in all seasons and conditions, so I now have a detail understanding of the courtyard space – which includes the following:

- The court is an integral part of the entrance to the front door and so has to be memorable and inviting.
- The court will basically be a garden without formal physical access except for maintenance.
- The court faces due north-west but is protected by a juvenile shade tree that is (as planned) progressively providing more and more afternoon shade. Without this tree the court space would literally 'cook' in the Queensland afternoon summer sun. It was the first specimen planted!
- The court is contained on the right side (west) by a full height garage wall;
- The back wall (south) of the court has a large window opening off a small study;
- The court flows to the left (east) across the entry deck to another smaller court and beyond to an open sunny north-east garden;
- Two narrow rectangular ponds flank the entry deck complete with aquatic plants, fish and aeration bubblers.

- The court is protected overhead by a timber pergola, battens and temporary shade cloth which will be removed once a protective vine is fully established.
- The court functions as a visual focus in the approach along the path from the front entrance through the adjacent gardens – so needs a distinctive design and character.

One of the most noticeable physical impacts on the design and the plant selection is the distinct diagonal line separating full sunshine and full shadow across the courtyard. The entire right (west) hand triangle never receives any direct sunshine at any time of the day due to the influence of the house walls and pergola. However the opposite triangle (east) receives morning and afternoon sun, particularly across the entire north frontage, except in mid-afternoon when the juvenile tree interrupts the sun and provides shade for a few hours. Obviously this sun/shade pattern dictates that half the court will need to have shade tolerant species and for the other side plants will need to be sun tolerant – a somewhat difficult mixture?

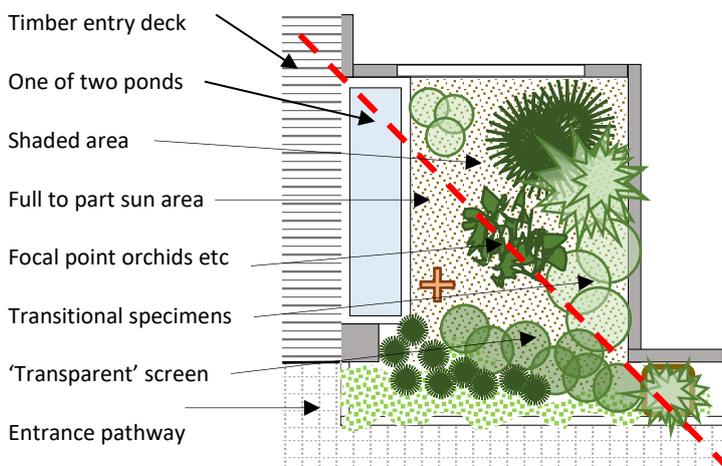
In order to principally modify the effects of NW sun exposure but also ensure that the small entry courtyard can be glimpsed in the approach to the house from the front garden, an informal open or transparent ‘screen’ of seven *Melaleuca pachyphyllus* Wallum Bottlebrush (red & green) has been planted across part of the court frontage. In the full sun across the court, edging the pathway *Dianella species*, *Scaevola aemula*, *Chrysocephalum apiculatum* and other similar colourful tufting and bedding plants will be used.

The back right sunless corner is ideal for a large container of *Microsorium punctatum* Terrestrial Elkhorn Fern and this already provides an excellent backdrop of upright shiny green fleshy fronds. Beside that tall canes of *Costus potierae* Australian Spiral Ginger provide a decorative geometric form as the new stems develop. Although they seem to like the shade and moist conditions so much that they have already exceeded their usual height by fifty percent! In the shade triangle, *Asplenium australasicum* Bird’s-nest Fern, other ferns, tufts and small covers like native violets *Viola banksii*, that respond well to the shade and occasional softer sun will be established.

I’m considering a few impact plants of sun/shade ‘transitional’ species for the part sunny areas, such as orchids like *Dendrobium speciosum*, Swamp Orchid *Phaius australis*; also including interesting foliage shrubs kept pruned progressively to a special sculptural form and size like *Podocarpus spinulosus* and *Pleomele angustifolia*.

Overall this relatively simple palette of plants should merge aesthetically with the much wider species range, foliage types and flower colours of the sun tolerant species in the adjacent north eastern front garden. The plan below shows indicatively the various elements that impact of the courtyard and dictate the design.

The photo is of ‘works in progress with a long way to go – actually a bit embarrassing to show right now!!!



## SOME ASPECTS TO CONSIDER IN DESIGN OF COURTS AND OTHER GARDEN SPACES

*These images are from my photo library and have been taken throughout Australia – the design principles apply everywhere!*



A courtyard is the transition space between the house and the garden; plan it to entice the observer to '*come inside the outside*' and explore the differing landscape characters and plants.



Shade is important in many courtyards, and structures to support vines can be of many materials; well-designed they can make a dramatic focal point, as well as being functional.



Why not use the top of the waste disposal tank to create a small intimate area for tea and scones under the shade of a sophisticated umbrella, all surrounded by the manicured garden shrubs?



Where space is at a premium vertical 'Green Walls' can be used for innovative and successful display of native plants. Don't be afraid of deep strong wall colours, they can add drama & excitement.



Do a sunshine and shadow analysis of your garden over twelve months, to identify that special place for enjoying a warm sunny winter breakfast or a cool shaded summer lunch.



If that best view of the garden and wider landscape is located in full sun for most of the day, then shade sails make a fast and economic method to ensure that your patio is used regularly.



Your patio or courtyard does not have to be paved! In fact this circular lawn provides a wonderful place for all sorts of garden activities and is the major focus of this garden enticing exploration.



Traditional Australian homesteads have always used the veranda for outdoor living and the transition to the garden – they really knew how to *design with nature* – we should learn from their example.



Many contemporary houses now open up the walls and windows to blur the line between inside and outside. Courtyards and patios have now become very important as the garden invades the house!

**Vale Ruth Crosson**

Lawrie Smith, Brisbane Qld

In early December the Gladstone Tondoon Botanic Gardens, and the Gladstone Branch of Native Plants Queensland, as well as the Garden Design Study Group, have all reluctantly said an unexpected but heart felt goodbye to Ruth Crosson, their most amazing, memorable and irreplaceable supporter. She was lovingly thought of as a human dynamo who would do almost anything to promote the values of Australia's native flora and encourage everyone to plant and grow our unique plants in their gardens, streets, parklands and industry.

Ruth and I first met in the mid 1970's when I was appointed as landscape architect to prepare the site planning and detail design for Tondoon. Right from that first meeting we became firm friends sharing a common vision to create a unique Regional Botanic Garden that would research, display and interpret the flora of Central Queensland - Tondoon was the first of the new phase of botanic gardens to be established in the various bio-regions of Australia. Since then, throughout the four decade development process, Ruth has basically been the face of Tondoon, her continued involvement almost day to day, has been one of the major reasons that resulted in Tondoon earning a well-deserved place among the top ten Regional Botanic Gardens of Australia.

Ruth joined the Society for Growing Plants (SGAP), now known as Native Plants Queensland (NPQ), in 1978 and has remained a staunch member ever since, always at every opportunity furthering the aims of the Society - Cultivation, Conservation, Education. Most remarkably anonymously topping up the memberships of any local members who had overlooked payment, to ensure that the local Branch remained viable and active.

Ruth was awarded Life Membership of SGAP / NPQ in December 2009 in recognition of her invaluable service over the past 30 years, freely offered not only locally in Gladstone, but also in many Queensland wide initiatives, and she is also known throughout Australia due to her participation in many of the Bi-annual national native plant conferences in most states. She continued her vision and enthusiasm at full capacity for the fourth decade.

The local Calliope Garden Club has described her as a 'powerhouse' in relation to utilizing native flora in horticulture. But her vision was wider still! She looked for every opportunity to bring awareness of native flora and was always front and centre at any environmental investigations to do with expansion of industry, mining or port development in the region. Ruth did not step away from any situation that had overlooked the values of native flora - she was always a major proponent endeavouring to ensure that in proposed urban or regional development's realistic environmental preservation initiatives were addressed.



A very colourful, irreplaceable lady whose outgoing personality was strongly supported by her unique and characteristic fashions, used so successfully to bring attention to the causes she loved so much. Who will ever forget her sophisticated gown as the 'Black Geisha' for the native Bonsai exhibition or the costume of a colourful 'Butterfly' fluttering around at Eco Fest, but two of her many creations worn at Tondoon. The regular escorted tours of Tondoon she orchestrated for the passengers from cruise liners, will be a little less colourful now that Ruth will no longer be leading.

One thing is certain though, Ruth has made so many valued friends and created so many memories for us all over the past four or five decades, that she has unknowingly provided her own lasting memorial which will never be forgotten. She was always good at organising everything down to the last full stop. Ruth you have lived a wonderful life championing native plants for which we are all so thankful.

**1937 – 2019*****Unforgettable! Irrepressible! Irreplaceable!!***

## Tips on Landscaping - a good idea

Yes, some tips on landscaping would be a good idea, with photos.

Perhaps to start it off and ensure some consistency, a check list could be formulated with broad topic points such as:

- What was constructed
- Constraints and site problems
- What materials were used and why
- Construction problems
- How good was outcome
- What would you do differently if you did it again?
- A few links used with this project

*ED: As an example Jeff has used the above 'check list' to tell about building a path in his garden. I think this is a very positive initiative and encourage all GDSG members to share similar details of their garden development.*



- Construction was a gentle path that needed to be broken up with a few steps.
- In heavy rain mulch could be washed down the slope.
- Used fine eucalypts mulch as it matted down hard, timber was 100 x 25mm H4 pine with a 250mm length screwed and cemented in at each end.
- No construction problems were encountered.
- Visually it worked well but in very heavy rain the mulch tended to pool at each wooden step.
- Would not do anything different as it achieved the look I was after.

## Borrowed landscape – Pitfalls of relying on it.

My suburban front courtyard has appeared in gardening magazines and other publications and I used my neighbour's large 30 year old Maraylya tree that was hiding their old and ugly flat roof carport as my 'borrowed landscape' to good effect. All was well for years until they sold the house and the young couple that moved in had it removed even though it shaded their cars from the western sun. The whole ambience of my courtyard has changed and it will take years for my new plantings to have the same blocking effect, if at all. Interestingly the same new owners removed all the leaf mulch from their garden and heavy rains deposited their top soil into my place resulting in me undertaking hasty drainage work. All that is left of their garden now is exposed sub soil clay. Plant blindness indeed.

My advice for those living in suburbia, is not to borrow too much on neighbour's trees and shrubs as they can easily disappear. For those living on acres borrowing distant views is entirely feasible and how lucky are you to be able to do so?

## Garden Design.

A few questions I ponder as I make a new garden after extensive building work demolished most of my garden.

- Is it the gardener's impulse to create a landscape and distinguish it from ordinary places?
- Is our garden a show or display of our specific relation with nature?
- Is our garden unique to us whether we consciously or subconsciously design it?
- How much does our garden reflect our physical and intellectual interdependence with nature?

**A Pocket Handkerchief Garden near Moreton Bay**

Carol Guard, Shorncliffe Qld

*ED: The GDSG SEQ group visited the following two gardens in October 2019 - this is my description.*



*Carol's community streetscape*

Carol is a long-time member of NPQ in Queensland. She firstly explained how her native garden was instrumental in developing an excellent relationship for her with all of her neighbours up and down the street. It was intended when moving to Shorncliffe more than 20 years ago that she and her husband would make every effort to become integral members of the local community. It was a very different community then to what it is today with all of the traditional 'Queenslanders' now preserved and restored to create a special heritage niche suburb on this headland jutting into Moreton Bay beside Cabbage Tree Creek. While there were large shady street trees (Moreton Bay Figs) and a scattering of other species in residential gardens, the small narrow lots with the houses occupying almost the full width of the block did not offer scope for large gardens.



*Semi-formal front garden courtyard*

Carol's vision was to create a very special native garden, with the design philosophy - shade, trees, foliage, fruits and flowers. The rear garden of this long narrow site was planned effectively as a rainforest canopy with a diversity of understory planting. The front garden and the footpath was planned to feature tall and medium native shrubs and bedding plants in a more formal way. It is this street front garden that attracts the community as they walk along the footpath, invariably stopping to ask Carol what plants are currently in flower. They never leave without all the necessary species details and several NPQ brochures, and often seeds or cuttings as well.



The garden established on the basically vacant site began with Carol carefully selecting a dozen or so tall, slender, rainforest shade trees to create the framework of scattered trunks with a foliage canopy or ceiling to ultimately cast shade on the future understorey plants below. These developed quite quickly in the well-watered and fertile sandy loams of the bayside location. Progressively and with much research and thought Carol acquired and planted a diverse range of species that thrive in the filtered sun. Each plant has been carefully located in the optimum sunny or shaded microclimate position. The neighbours each side (north and south) basically have open

full sun backyards, so Carol's rainforest receives a diverse pattern of sun and shade across the garden by day and by season. This is unusual for such a small residential allotment.

If Carol knows that a species she just has to have will not tolerate the site conditions, she is undaunted and successfully establishes the specimens in large containers; in many cases this has produced a 'bonsai' like specimen which brings flowers and fruits down to



*Helmholtzia enjoying a shaft of morning sun*

eye level or lower. Perhaps the most eye-catching container plant was a very large bowl, mounted on a pedestal in which a Stream Lily *Helmholtzia glaberrima* was thriving in the shallow water decorated with numerous 'feather duster' like flower spikes. This was one of many interesting potted specimens and artefacts that gave the garden many interesting focal points.

## Revisiting a forty year old Garden

Verna Cornford, Bracken Ridge Qld



Western garden slope to the road



part of the fern collection

Verna's garden dates back to the very earliest days of the Society (SGAP) more than forty years ago, when she and husband Colin moved to Brisbane from Rockhampton where they were influential and well respected society members. Consequently their garden comprises many rare and unusual species that were collected or given by some of the earliest SGAP 'plant collectors' who were so influential in bringing an awareness of native plants to the community.



Melaleuca collection now growing taller

The garden was Collins pride and joy and Verna says he spent so many hours, secateurs in hand, meticulously maintaining and forming the garden. He knew just how to prune and shape the various species to make the best of their foliage, flowers and fruits resulting in a very attractive garden. Colin passed away in 2007 and Verna has done her best to keep up his work, but as expected after 40 years the garden has become mature and some specimens need 'intensive training'. However it is still a wonderful walkabout garden to weave in and around the diverse species, finding gems of botany almost at every turn.



*Macrozamia moorei* - seed collected 50+ years ago

Colin was the leader of the 'Melaleuca and Allied Genera Study Group' for many years, consequently this family predominate in his garden. Many species in the garden will be recalled by older members, but now they have long since ceased to be commercially available, replaced by newer cultivars – but are they any better? In his SG Newsletters, Colin wrote about species like the following in his garden: *Neofabricia myrtifolia*; *Triplarina pallescens*; *Hemigenia biddulphiana*; *Melaleuca thymifolia* (tall growing form); *Callistemon* 'Captain Cook Pink'; *Leptospermum* 'Little Lemon Scent'; *Leptospermum* 'Aussie Blossom – Martin' (pale pink); we found most of these still integrated within the garden.

*Callistemon* 'Injune' was one of those specimens you expect to see, about 2m tall with weeping grey green foliage and pink brushes. It was still there but after forty years, it had multiple, decorative, spreading, thick contorted trunks with a foliage canopy spanning about eight metres shading most of the front garden! To see the sculptural form of *Eucalyptus shirleyii* with grey leaves and black trunks spreading like a canopy over one garden section is amazing, particularly when you expect something half the size! One very special plant is a *Hovea longipes* Colin sourced from the shallow red sandy depressions of central Queensland which produces bright blue flowers that age to white; it flowers for about three months from early spring. The decorative 2 metre shrub was setting seed and some members collected a few to try their luck in propagation – they may not have been mature?

## Global Warming, the Elephant in the Room

Jeff Howes, Sydney

The science of Global Warming is well established and widely published in the media and newspapers from the early 1980s. Awareness goes back far further than that. Svante Arrhenius, a Swedish scientist, was the first to use basic principles of physical chemistry to estimate the extent to which increases in atmospheric carbon dioxide are responsible for the Earth's increasing surface temperature.

From an Australian Plants Society aspect it seems little attention has been given to Global Warming and the Earth's increasing temperature rise and its implication on the world we live in. As well, what does it mean for us as Growers of Australian Plants? So I thought I may add my comments and give a few facts on Global Warming you may not be aware of.

I am writing this on the first day of Sydney's stage two water restrictions commencing due to the continuing east coast drought. These water restrictions, will I suspect, only affect those suburban keen gardeners as most home owners suffer from plant blindness as they do no gardening maintenance at all, let alone watering (what is a hose?).

As for those of us who are keen gardeners and love growing and caring for plants and creating a pleasant environment to appreciate nature, this drought and increasing water restriction will affect the way we garden. Do we only select tough and hardy plants that may not have been our first or second choice pre drought? Do we have less plants to minimise root competition? Do we install another water tank (if there is room as my current tank is empty) to help cope? Do we not grow shrubs and plant more trees to capture carbon? OR do we continue as normal with increasing water use? Choices will need to be made.

To end I would like to add a few facts about Global Warming that you may not be aware of.

- In the past 100,000 years there has only been two generally stable periods of climate according to Richard Alley<sup>1</sup> the first was when the ice sheets were biggest and the world was coldest. The second is the period we are living in now. For the rest of the time there has been a 'crazy jumping climate'.  
*<sup>1</sup> Richard Blane Alley (born 18 August 1957) is an American geologist and Evan Pugh Professor of Geosciences at Pennsylvania State University. He has authored more than 240 refereed scientific publications about the relationships between Earth's cryosphere and global climate change.*
- The present period from the last ice age from around 10,000 years the world has been as warm as it is today. This allowed agriculture to commence and the growth of cities. There has been a few hiccups along the way to the present day. Two of many were: 5,500 years ago there was a sudden aridification of the Sahara from wet to dry and from 1300 to 900, North America was experiencing a near permanent drought.
- If El Niño becomes semi-permanent there will be longer droughts for Australia, the Asia monsoon could fail and the Amazon could become drier with increased fires.
- Changes in the Earth's environment can occur as quickly as ten years to two generations as has happened in the past, it appears.
- For over 100 years we have been ignoring the warning signs as we head towards one of many environmental tipping points.

**Back to my gardening dilemma** --- I will do little hand watering from now on, except for key plants I do not want to lose, and observe how drought hardy my plant selections are.



## Creating a Roadside Verge Garden

Dan Clarke, Sydney

*ED: Dan Clarke presented on his new roadside verge garden at the APS Sutherland Group September 2019 meeting and wrote this article which appeared in the APS Sutherland October 2019 newsletter.*

### Planning

I presented my road verge garden (not fully completed) at the September 2019 meeting. The garden has been installed for about 5 months. The main reason I was able to install the garden is because my property falls within the Sutherland Shire Greenweb mapping. This mapping serves the purpose of covering biodiversity areas in the Shire and many residential areas are mapped as potential linkages to biodiversity areas. Therefore, the Greenweb initiative provides for planting of locally indigenous plantings in such areas to enhance local native habitat and create habitat corridors. However, this does not mean you cannot install a verge garden in a non-Greenweb area, or in another Council area.

When planning a road verge, it is important to consult your Council first and then be sure to plan it out, deciding where you want plants, paths and other features. Be sure to ask Council if you are entitled to any free native tubestock. I obtained 100 tubes from Sutherland Council community nursery and I have only used 50 so far.

### Beware the 5 P's

Firstly, consideration must be given to the 5 P's:

**Pedestrians**, some of who may have **Prams**; **Powerlines**, **Postman** (or Postlady) and **Parked/Parking cars**.

To quickly cover these:

- Pedestrians (with or without Prams) must be able to walk through the garden unimpeded.
- Plants installed in the garden must not interfere with any Powerlines.
- The Postman/Postlady must be able to conduct their work unimpeded.
- Parking cars must also be unimpeded by any planted vegetation.
- It is also important to not block traffic views, which might happen if the garden was on a street corner.

I would strongly advise that space is left for a footpath (if there is not one already). These are typically 900 mm wide. This path can be left as turf or constructed of gravel or mulch. If Council decides to install a formal footpath later, then this is possible without destruction of the garden.

### Getting started

My verge is about 60 m<sup>2</sup> (3 wide x 20 m long).

I removed the grass and then planned out a series of garden beds with a pathway in the centre. I used treated H3 Pine (90 mm x 45 mm x 2.4 m lengths) to construct my beds (screwed together) and then filled them with soil borrowed from minor excavations elsewhere on my property. I then overlaid the path area with crushed blue metal dust and compacted it.

I then asked a local tree lopping service for some free mulch. This can be a risky strategy as the lopping service will simply want to dump at least half or all of their load on your doorstep and the mulch may contain anything in terms of plant species, including weeds. I was lucky enough to get a load of Liquidamber mulch, which seems benign enough, and will add much needed organic matter to my soil.

### Getting feedback

My other tips are to install a few sections at a time and see how neighbours and anyone else reacts to the space. So far, all of my feedback has been positive and I really love to see people strolling through the space and taking it in. I must complete it when I get a chance!

## Species used

I have chosen a mix of species from low grasses to shrubs to trees.



*Banksia serrata*  
*Banksia marginata*  
*Breynia oblongifolia*  
*Ceratopetalum gummiferum*  
*Grevillea buxifolia subsp. buxifolia*  
*Hakea sericea*  
*Isopogon anemonifolius*  
*Isotoma axillaris*  
*Olearia microphylla*  
*Persoonia pinifolia*  
*Poa labillardieri*  
*Prostanthera incisa*  
*Themeda triandra*

## UPDATE: A second Australian Garden Design Book – electronically?

As long time members will know it was always the intention to use the proceeds from the first book (authored by Diana Snape and published in 2002) toward the creation of a second book which developed the original content further in response to ever-changing conditions and requirements in garden design with Australian Plants. This was discussed at the 2019 ANPSA Conference in Albany and a precis of discussions was included in the November 2019 Newsletter. Although we have received a few comments and suggestions from members since then, I have effectively put the book/fact sheets on the back burner for the moment due to time constraints.

## A Book or Fact Sheets?

Chris Larkin - Victoria

*ED: Chris has recently offered some very interesting thoughts and these are pertinent extracts.*

“I think the hard reality is - when was a book ever written by a large group of people unless they are each given, for instance, free reign over a chapter. Although Diana insisted that ‘The Australian Garden’ came out of the group, the reality is it was largely written by her with other people contributing in some ways. Diana always said that being able to source great pictures to illustrate what you have to say was the most difficult thing of all.

“Understanding garden design – the things to take into consideration when designing a garden – makes it extremely complex. The list of things to take into consideration, at every step along the way, is long, and the big picture must always be kept in mind. I learned about garden design by reading, visiting gardens and analysing them, and closely observing my own garden with that critical eye always evaluating. Through this kind of education I could then make changes to my garden, big and small, always striving to improve its hard structure design and planting design.

“The ‘big picture’, the vision of the finished garden a few years into the future, is made difficult by a lack of Australian plant gardens around us in the suburbia where most of us live. What examples do we have to follow? How do we get to see how a range of plants grow and are used to good effect in the home garden? When I started I knew close to nothing about Australian plants. That’s where belonging to the Australian Plant Society of my state has been extremely useful. If you want to garden with Australian plants then you need to learn a lot about the plants.

“How to proceed with respect to a ‘book’ or ‘fact sheets’ for the want of a better name at the moment? I think realistically the only way to proceed is with the latter. Decisions will need to be made about topics, although I think there should be the flexibility for topics to arise out of interest, and certainly an editorial team will have to ensure the quality and accuracy of what is put out. Each fact sheet needs to deal with some issue at sufficient length and with sufficient authority to be worthwhile. Maybe fact sheets will evolve to be more about solving design problems and reworking gardens than dealing with garden design theory because knowing what is involved in designing a garden won’t solve your problems, it can only give you the framework for going about designing your garden.”

## Using GDSG funds wisely

Jeff Howes, Sydney NSW

It is good to have discussions regarding best use of our funds as they are nearly all the result of Dianna Snape donating the royalties of her two books to the GDSG.

The last large outlay that I was involved with, was the project to digitise our past newsletters which was very successful.

I would advise against producing a paper book. My current experience in working with Lifeline for nearly 10 years, sorting up to 1000 donated books each week has shown me that the majority of gardening/landscaping books are 10 to 15 plus years old and most are too old to be saleable and are recycled. I suggest we consider some type of e-format and if so do we do it for free or how do we charge for downloads?

Having a look at garden design with native plants 20 years on since Dianna's last book would be a great topic. Here in Sydney land sizes have shrunk and house size increased to the point of only having a courtyard to fill with plants. Also the proliferation of home units, limits gardening to a few pots. I have also noted that a lot of people moving into my older established neighbourhood suffer from plant 'blindness' and are non-gardeners either because they have little time to garden OR just cannot see how feral their garden is becoming. I pity the 'gardener' that comes every 6 months to sort it out.

We would also need to have some constructive comments on the increasing effect of the rapid change in our climate and how this will affect our designs and plant selection.

The article in NL 109 -- Characteristics of Water Efficient Plants by Colleen Keena, Qld was brilliant and should be printed out and used as reference by all gardeners in these environment changing times.'

I would also advise against using too many detailed plants lists as they are only really applicable to the gardens specific site. I have found it is getting harder, especially in Sydney, to source a wide range of native plants, however that may not apply to other states.

Another aspect to consider is how many members have that special gift of turning garden design into words (I do not).

## Canberra members visit Melbourne

Words, Ros Walcott; Photos, Ben Walcott - Canberra

This November the Daytime Activities Group (DAGs) and the Garden Design Study Group (GDSG) of Australian Native Plants Society Canberra Region (ANPSC), 18 of us in all, travelled to Melbourne to see some gardens and nurseries. The weather was kind to us, except for one memorable day, 41 degrees, howling gale, red dust and smoke. We had a marvelous trip, met some distinguished gardeners, and came back to Canberra with plenty of new plants.



The first garden was that of Shirley Carn in Monbulk. Shirley's garden is relatively new, only six years old, a long, rectangular shape, and one quarter acre in area. We were all amazed by the progress Shirley had made in only six years. The garden looks mature, with many well grown mallee eucalypts sheltering a dizzying array of interesting shrubs. Shirley loves the colour blue in the garden, so there were many shrubs with blue flowers of varying shades. Shirley added topography to her gently sloping block by creating a number of mound gardens and adding rocks.

We visited Cranbourne, Royal Botanic Gardens of Victoria to see the progress made since we were last there, soon after the opening of the second half of this ambitious native garden. The vast expanse of the Red Sand Garden, dotted with grey foliage, was still mind expanding, and the growth of the tall kangaroo paws fringing the area was dramatic. We were ably guided around the many different gardens by Alex and Wendy Smart, who have been watching the growth of the gardens since its inception.



Central Red Sand Garden



Experimental Beds – Callistemon & Kangaroo Paw



*Eucalyptus lehmannii*



Aitchison/Guymer garden

Central rock pool



Bridge to creek & borrowed landscape

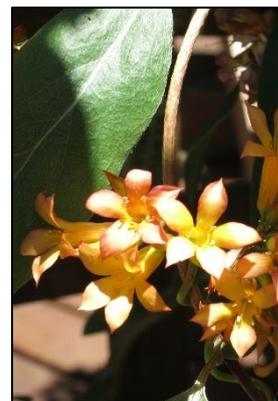


from bridge to house

Bill Aitchison and Sue Guymer's property in Donvale, was the first of three habitat gardens. Bill and Sue's garden has been featured on Gardening Australia in July 2019. Sue and Bill have created a one acre naturalistic garden centred around a Philip Johnson designed rock pool which attracts all forms of wildlife. They have been adding to their landscape for over 30 years now and some of Bill's favourite acacias have grown into large trees. The water on their block includes a small stream right near the house so that they can enjoy the sound and sight of water at all times. Extending their environment is nearby Mullum Mullum Creek wildlife corridor which provides a green backdrop to the garden.



Yarra garden - Small informal paths meander through gardens - an ideal way to observe species closely



*Billardiera ringens*

Pam Yarra's garden in Heathmont, is a mature habitat garden crammed with many interesting trees and shrubs which give shelter to wildlife. The shade and dryness of the garden limits Pam's plant selection, but the haven created for birds in particular is well worthwhile. Pam has noticed many species of butterflies and bees in her garden, including blue-banded bees. There are no grassed areas in the garden but many informal paths winding through the shrubs and trees. One sitting area featured a *Billardiera ringens* in full glory. (Photos page 15)



Fox garden - back garden packed with interesting plants



view from house

Bev Fox's garden at The Basin is also a habitat garden, which was proved conclusively while we were there by the sight of two Ring-Tailed Possums sleeping peacefully in the quiet shady garden. This garden is also one quarter acre in area and a long rectangular shape. Bev has stacked the garden with star plants, one of which was *Boronia fraseri* Lorne form, which was in full flower during our visit.



O'Neill - Long entrance to the house & garden

Bob and Dot O'Neill's garden in Narre Warren South is one acre in area and is another relatively new garden, nine years old. This garden was also featured on Gardening Australia five years ago when it was quite new, and recently in August 2019 to celebrate the subsequent plant growth. This packed one acre is Bob and Dot's idea of downsizing – they did own a much larger garden for many years before 'retiring' to this one. The long entrance to the garden (80m) is a tour-de-force of massed plantings of over one hundred and twenty different correas, a favourite plant species.



Invitation to come inside the outside

Not just correas though, many *Brachychiton rupestris*, which have grown particularly well in a short time. Also in this area is the striking *Gastrolobium aff. coriacea*, with its shaggy blooms. Bob is now becoming enthusiastic about *Hibbertias*, which he considers under-used in the garden. Bob and Dot have an amazing variety of plants in their garden, including a spectacular display of two standard *Grevillea*, 'Wendy Sunshine' and 'Billy Bonkers' on high wheels which allow their prolific flowers to drip down at eye level.

We also visited Bushland Flora and Kuranga native nurseries and stocked up on many special plants. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit and thank our wonderful Melbourne hosts for their generosity.



## Foundation Plants in the Walcott Garden, Red Hill

Words, Ros Walcott; Photos, Ben Walcott - Canberra

Our one hectare garden was planted in 2003 in the middle of the Millennium Drought. This meant that many plants that we wanted were not available and that some plants did not survive the lack of overhead protection, the heat and the very dry conditions.



A variety of wattles were planted, 16 *Acacia boormanii* or Snowy River Wattle, 9 *Acacia cardiophylla* or West Wyalong Wattle, and 10 *Acacia spectabilis* or Mudgee Wattle. One *Acacia melanoxylon* planted itself by hitching a ride on a Tree Fern trunk and outlasting the fern. This volunteer tree is now the largest of our wattles. We still have many of our original *Acacia boormanii* around the fence line and have added another 18. These shrubs are not large, bloom extravagantly in the spring and have attractive silvery foliage that is popular with Silvereyes and other small birds. This wattle species comes with a warning that it may sucker, but we have not had any suckers on our property. The other wattles have not fared so well.

All have been removed now for failure to thrive, although some have lasted up to the last few years. Both *A. cardiophylla* and *A. spectabilis* are beautiful plants when they are growing well and they provided much needed shade and shelter in the early days of our garden.



One *Araucaria bidwillii* or Bunya Pine planted at the front of our property. We covered it during the first winter, as young plants are sensitive to frost. However, this tree has thrived and grown to 10 metres high and produces large female cones each year with edible seed much appreciated by cockatoos and parrots. The dense prickly foliage is popular with Red-Browed Finches which weave their graceful grass nests under its protection & raise their young.

Around the large pond we planted 36 *Baloskion tetraphyllum* or Tassel Cord Rush which were attractive for several years and then began to disappear – none are left now, but the pond is full of other native reeds which protect young fish.



Six of our local banksia, *Banksia marginata* or Silver Banksia. These grew well and produced attractive yellow cones with plenty of nectar for the birds. In fact, Yellow-Tailed Black Cockatoos quietly attacked a couple of trees and damaged them extensively. The silver backed foliage as it moves in the wind has been a valued asset. All but one have now been removed. The remaining Silver Banksia droops over our lily pond and remains a favourite tree for small birds. We also planted one *Banksia serrata* or Old Man Banksia. This tree has grown well and is developing the wrinkled trunk that makes older specimens so attractive. It bloomed well for a couple of years, but has not bloomed now for five years. Why?





A number of different callistemons, 64 *Callistemon salignus* for the hedge along the front of the property, augmented by 20 *Callistemon* 'Firebrand' Fairhill form, and 26 *Callistemon viminalis* 'Hannah Ray'. The hedge species was chosen for the beautiful pink new growth that fits in with the hedges of *Photinia robusta rubra* which are commonly grown in Red Hill. This species has grown from miniscule to about 5m high and blooms well each year.

We also planted five *Callistemon* 'Kings Park Special' in a diagonal row in the back garden to give some shade and blossom. These shrubs have performed well, grown to 4 metres high and bloom every year.



Five *Casuarina cunninghamii* or River Oak and three of these survive. Two were totally trashed by the fall of a large pine tree (*Pinus radiata*) in July 2016. One Casuarina has grown particularly well as it has its roots close to our largest pond. Rain on the leaves of casuarina is a beautiful sight and the red fluffy blooms are also attractive. The drooping branches are elegant, although do get nipped off by cockatoos.



In Ben's courtyard we planted three Meyer Lemons as Ben had never lived anywhere before where lemons would grow. These three trees produce enough fruit to satisfy ourselves, our family, many friends and also two restaurants which we frequent. The lemons are particularly juicy and delightfully tangy.



We planted 34 *Correa* 'Dusky Bells' and 20 *Correa glabra* 'Winter Glow' (now more correctly called *Correa glabra* 'Coliban River'). During the first summer hot spell ten of the 'Dusky Bells' succumbed, but most of the correas have lasted well. The 'Winter Glow' have been cloud pruned every two years and now form a pleasing mass under the original cypress trees.

Two Corymbia, *C. citriodora* (Lemon Scented Gum) and *C. maculata* (Spotted Gum). The Lemon Scented Gum has grown to 10m, blooms for a short time each year and the foliage scents the whole back garden whenever it rains. The Spotted Gum (a coastal tree) has grown to be the tallest of all our planted trees. In the truly appalling frost of two years ago all the leaves turned bronze and we thought that we would lose this valuable tree. However, it has rallied and the leaves have turned green again.

Two hundred viro tubes of *Dianella tasmanica*, or Flax Lily, and these have not been successful. Originally they were in too much sun and we moved them into the shade where they thrived. However, about ten years ago, most Dianella in Canberra contracted a disease which causes their flower buds to remain closed and droop. We had planted a number of different dianellas over the years, but all have contracted this disease and we have removed most of them.



Twenty three *Dicksonia antarctica* or Tree Fern, and these were immediately attacked by a persistent crew of cockatoos which left them looking battered. We ended up moving all 23 closer to the house where the birds are not so bold. The Tree Ferns have thrived, even those in full sun. Of course, the Crimson Rosellas do wreck the fronds later in the season when the spores develop, but that is after the magnificent spectacle of the new fronds unfurling.

Twenty two *Elaeocarpus reticulatus* 'Prima Donna', or Blueberry Ash, and have retained about 15 of these despite the damage caused by severe frost two years ago. These trees have flowered only a few times, after rain, but when they do, are very beautiful. When not flowering they provide glossy green foliage for a 'rainforest' look, rare in Canberra.

Five *Hakea salicifolia*, or Willow-leaved Hakea, but only one of these remains. The others were comprehensively shredded by Black Cockatoos.

Twelve *Leptospermum* 'Aphrodite', developed at Bywong Nursery near Canberra by Peter Ollerenshaw. These plants have been trimmed up from the base to show off their slender, winding stems. They bloom every year with pink and green flowers, large or small, depending on the amount of rain we have received, (virtually microscopic this year with only 390mm of rain!).

Twenty five *Lomandra leucocephala*, but have ended up giving most of these to other gardeners. They are very dependable, but somewhat coarse in the garden.

Eleven advanced *Xanthorrhoea australis*, but unfortunately two of these were stolen after three years. The remainder have bloomed on and off, and look iconic all year round.



Performing an inventory on your foundation plants is a valuable exercise, as I find that I have forgotten how hard it was to get these plants established and how useful they are in the garden. I do tend to take them for granted and move on in the garden to more delicate plants, but without their shelter and backbone the garden would be poor indeed.



## PLANTS IN DESIGN

### Some plants that work well in my garden

Jeff Howes - Sydney NSW

An interesting topic with many factors to consider in a few words. In selecting plants I have to consider my dry environment, yes in the northern end of Sydney, mainly due to a very large neighbour's eucalypt on our boundary.

For a few years I favoured the greyish leaved *Westringia* species of which many are available. However they present a problem as they age. Unless constant pruning is kept up, they become quite 'leggy' and if hard pruning is undertaken on older plants they either fail to shoot or die. So, I have moved away from these plants over the years. I try to plant at least three in number plants of most species at any one time, to maintain symmetry.



In my long term garden (30 plus years) the first plant I grew from seed was *Senna artemisioides*, it very showy in flower and seed, is hardy with no extra water and can be pruned into hard wood and grows no higher than 1.2m. Another of my long term favourites is *Philotheca myoporoides*, they are hardy and grow in dappled light and full sun and again only grow to about 1.5m tall and can be pruned heavily.

Another plant that looks promising (early days) is *Grevillea* Lindsay's Pink an oval leaf form of *G. victoriae*. My year old plants are growing quickly, I hope will be long lived as they have great form & need little watering.

I could not write this without saying a few words about *Banksia spinulosa*. A great foliage plant, hardy and is a no water plant, in Sydney and finally they have very attractive flowers. A hardy and very attractive foliage, hedging/screen plant is *Syzygium paniculatum* dwarf (Magenta Cherry).



Another semi rainforest plant I have been growing for a long time and one we all should be growing is *Archirhodomyrtus beckleri*, the Rose Myrtle. It can grow to 6m but my plants stay around the 3 to 4m height. Prolific pink/white, highly scented flowers are followed by red berries. They are easily propagated from seed.

Another plant that I have used extensively in my garden is the kangaroo Paw *Anigozanthos*. Although whoever promotes them as hardy, low maintenance and water wise has never asked for my comments! I find they need a fair amount of water in spring to flower, then after flowering they need to be cut close to the ground. All up, a plant I classify as high maintenance. My favourite is the low growing A. Bush Pearl that flowers most of the year (with water).

Unfortunately I have had no long term success with *Correas* as my situation/soil is all wrong for them and so have given up even thinking about them.

One of my stand alone feature plants is a grafted *Grevillea georgiana*. Great in flower and has only one problem and that trying to cut the flowers to put in a vase is a painful exercise.

### *Lomandra glauca* 'Blue Ridge'

Leanne Dunne - Brisbane, Qld



Some years ago I introduced a 'drift' of the delightful *Lomandra glauca* 'Blue Ridge' expanding across the middle of my back garden. Overall the 20 metre wide garden is designed in a more naturalistic style with mostly dry sclerophyll species. The scattered clumps of 'Blue Ridge' span across 4-5 metres throughout the centre of this section and are dispersed amongst varying species of small shrubs and other grasses. As the name suggests, the distinctive powder blue leaves which darken to green as they mature are a wonderful contrast of colour and texture. 'Blue Ridge' is a hardy low maintenance drought tolerant *Lomandra* which is highly recommended.

**Potted native plants growing in shade or courtyard planting**

Brenda Meehan – Brisbane, Qld



*Medicosma cunninghamii*



*Castanospermum australe*



*Synostemon albiflorus*



*Kunzea graniticola*



*Costus potierae*



*Pittosporum revolutum*

< Cousin It, Yellow Buttons, Fairy Grass, White daisies, *Hibiscus* and *Plectranthus*

***Failing Balcony Garden in Mackay* (from open gardens in Canberra)**

Pamela Finger – Mackay Q

I am in the category of HELP required. After 30 years of having gardens in what is considered a challenging climate (Canberra) I am being completely overwhelmed by the new challenges of what to grow and how to grow a balcony garden in Mackay. In Canberra I just needed to worry about the frosts, then hot winds and extended dry periods. A good drip watering system and sensible plant placement was all that was required. I had few pots and the few I had where either ground orchids or ferns which drained freely to the ground.



A balcony mmm . . . . My first choices were ferns which worked in Canberra, however the winds on a balcony have knocked them around. I have decided pots are not designed for balconies! Self-watering pots are either too dry or too wet. With mosquitos being unwanted visitors using saucers is not really an option. If the plug in the bottom is out, dirty water covers the balcony and they lose all the water, then go too dry. Second getting water to the pots. No tap on the balcony so it is hand watering, filling the watering can from the nearby bathroom but travelling over carpet. Thus leaving my garden is difficult, the neighbour kindly offers to water the plants, but tends to overwater.



I have decided an innovative solution is required! **But I would like some feedback before I put it into operation as it is irreversible.** Using my experience putting in watering systems, reverse the purpose and use them for drainage. Thus drill holes the correct size about a CM above the bottom of the pot, connect to a hose which drains from higher pots to the lower pots and in the end will be directed to go straight into the balcony drainage. This then leaves a small amount of water at the bottom of the 'self' watering pot but the soil above this gets free drainage. I do intend to experiment with a short hose connected to the shower outlet, however I could not trust this while away, so my neighbour will still be called upon.

ED: Pam I think I understand your hydraulics and expect it relates to the tiered garden troughs? You could consider making the polypipe draining from the upper trough into a 'T' with perforations to drip distribute water evenly across the entire soil surface in the next lower trough. Water application rates would need to be carefully estimated and monitored to supply adequate moisture to each trough level down the 'ladder'. Could be tricky!

### Garden Courtyard in Blackbutt, Q

Wendy Benfer - SEQ hinterland

It began as a dog enclosure, functional but not very attractive. There were a few plants: A Tape Vine *Stephania japonica* on the fence, *Hibiscus splendens* (which died) and *Acalypha pendula* (Strawberry Firetails) as a groundcover. There are still a few *Acalypha* plants, but we are gradually removing them.

Because this was the view from our kitchen window, we decided to make some changes. The fibreglass sculpture, given to us by our neighbour, was in a neglected state. We had it repaired, and it became the focal point. It was given the name, 'St. Francis', by a visitor who had attracted birds by placing a small amount of water in the hollows made by the arms. A non-native, *Nasturtium officinale*, Watercress, has been planted in one of these. The intention is to make the sculpture a water feature so some of the plants surrounding it are bog plants, growing in pots which are buried completely or partially in the ground.



As we only started the project in September 2019, it is still in its early stages – this is the Species List.

<i>Acacia decora</i>	Pretty Wattle
<i>Adiantum hispidulum</i>	Rough Maidenhair Fern
<i>Alocasia brisbanensis</i>	Cunjevoi
<i>Alpinia caerulea</i>	Red-back Native Ginger
<i>Apium annuum</i>	Sea Celery
<i>Bulbine sp</i>	Native Leek
<i>Centratherum riparian</i>	A Native Daisy
<i>Commelina diffusa</i>	Native Wandering Jew
<i>Cordyline murchisoniae</i>	
<i>Crinum pedunculatum</i>	Swamp Lily
<i>Cullen tenax</i>	Emu Foot
<i>Dendrobium kingianum</i>	Pink Rock Orchid
<i>Dendrobium speciosum</i>	King Orchid
<i>Dianella tasmanica</i>	Tasmanian Flax Lily
<i>Dichondra repens</i>	Kidney Weed
<i>Einadia nutans</i>	Saltbush
<i>Eugenia reinwardtiana</i>	Coastal Cherry
<i>Glycosmis trifoliata</i>	Pink-fruited Lime Berry
<i>Hibiscus splendens</i>	
<i>Hypoestes floribunda</i>	
<i>Jasminum didymium</i>	Slender Jasminum
<i>Juncus prismatocarpus</i>	Branching Rush
<i>Juncus usitatus</i>	Common Rush
<i>Mazus pumilio</i>	Mazus
<i>Melaleuca (Callistemon) sp</i>	Red Rocket
<i>Melaleuca viminalis cultivar</i>	Little Silver



*Murdannia graminea* a serendipitous discovery among the grass at Nanango dump!

<i>Melaleuca viminalis</i> cultivar	Little Silver
<i>Murdannia graminea</i>	Slug Herb
(why call such a pretty plant this name?)	
<i>Oplismenus aemulus</i>	Creeping Beard grass
<i>Orthosiphon aristatus</i>	Cat Whiskers
<i>Proiphys cunninghamii</i>	Brisbane Lily
<i>Ranunculus inundates</i>	River Buttercup
<i>Scaevola</i> cultivar	Fan Flower
<i>Sesuvium portulacastrum</i>	Sea Purslane
<i>Stephania japonica</i>	Tape Vine
<i>Tetragonia tetragonioides</i>	Warrigal Greens
<i>Viola betonicifolia</i>	Arrow-leaved Violet
<i>Xyris complanata</i>	Feathered Yellow eye / Hatpin

ED: The town of Blackbutt is located in the South Burnett Region of Queensland, 166 km north-west of Brisbane within undulating to steep forest clad hills, just east of the Bunya Mountains. This selection of species collectively creates a suitable character for the courtyard that have obviously been selected to respond to and work with the local drier climatic regime and geological conditions.

## Notes from Members

### Drought biting hard in Keena garden!

Colleen Keena - Brisbane, Qld Dec 2019

Our poor garden is so sad. Trees have lost leaves to such an extent that we now hear everything that happens around us. As in the previous drought, some plants, especially *Hibiscus divaricatus* and its seedlings, don't seem to realise it is drought.

Bottlebrushes are looking good here and around this area, both what was *Melaleuca* and *Callistemon*. *Grevilleas* are also looking fine.

The wind the other day showed the back of *Grevillea robusta* leaves and they looked great.

There are a dozen or so self-sown 'Gumby Gumby', *Pittosporum angustifolium*, here and probably even more self-sown seedlings of *Cupaniopsis parvifolium*.

Neither of these so far show any ill effects of the dry conditions.

When it does rain, we'll just let what has survived continue to spread around.

### More Drought Information from Colleen

As the drought has made growing edible plants more difficult in the garden, we have been increasingly growing edible plants in pots in our Courtyard, which is just behind the kitchen. This also assists us as bending is no longer so easy. The majority of plants are not native plants but we do include these when we can.

Plants fall into 4 categories: flowers with edible petals, herbs, vegetables, particularly leafy greens with good levels of leaf protein and fruits.

- *Viola banksii* Native Violet is cascading over the edge of a table and has formed such a dense screen that the base of the table is no longer visible.
- *Mentha australis* Native Mint is grown in a pot so it can be controlled.
- *Abelmoschus manihot* is one of my favourite vegetables, especially delicious in an omelette. It took us a long time to get a form which flowers but was worth the wait. This leafy green has good levels of leaf protein.
- *Davidsonia jerseyana* is a small form of Davidson's Plum, and my favourite small-growing *Syzygium*, 'Select Form', are two native fruits in an adjacent shade-house.
- *Rubus probus* Native Raspberry has been tried in the courtyard, the fruiting has been amazing.

Recent temperatures have been over 42 C and we are finding that some plants need more controlled watering than they have had so far in the courtyard. We are now in the process of deciding which plants to retain in the courtyard and which will go into the large shade-house as it has an automatic watering system.

**A Most Awful Summer!**

Ros Walcott, Canberra

*January 8:* This has been a most awful summer so far. We have had tremendous heat, record drought and hazardous air. Evidently air becomes hazardous at 200 whatever's and the reading in Canberra last night was over 5,000. Worse than Delhi! So we are wearing masks to go out into the garden. We are watering our garden as best we can, but have had a lot of plants die. It is just too hot, 42 deg.C today. We cannot do much at all, except sit inside away from the smoke for most of the day. Last rain we had was on November 4. 2020 sounds like such an auspicious year, but is not starting well in Oz.

*January 16:* We are still enduring the most awful weather, hot, dry and smoky. Yesterday we visited the Terra Australis garden for the first time in about a month, as it has been closed because of poor air quality. The same with the ANBG. We went in fear and trepidation thinking that the garden would look horrendous, but it was okay! We were so relieved. The *Macrozamia* is very brown, but still has some green in it, so there is hope yet. The *Scaevola*'s are magnificent, blooming their heads off and the clumps of *Brachyscome ramosissimum* are spreading and looking very cheerful. We have had very few plant deaths for such a terrible period. We are supposed to get rain today, the first since the beginning of November, so fingers crossed.

We were very sad to hear that the marvellous garden of John and Carol Stanton, Stokes Bay Bush Gardens, was totally destroyed in the Kangaroo Island fires. That garden was a lifetime achievement and now has gone. All Australians are enduring losses at the moment. We hope GDSG members are coping with conditions.

*January 21: 'Hailageddon'* hit! We were in town, every car in the street was damaged, including ours. Windscreen smashed, whole car dented, metalwork skewwhiff. When we got home the whole kitchen area was under water. Ben mopped and mopped and then we were sitting down and suddenly whoosh, the whole ceiling dropped out of the larder onto the floor. The huge golf sized hailstones had backed up on the roof and caused it to collapse. What a mess, all we have been doing is clean up. In the garden leaves were stripped off the bushes and trees, but they will grow back. A sadder sight is the pond full of shredded waterlilies, leaves and flowers in strips. Everywhere smells of vegetation. What next indeed?? What a summer we are having in Oz. Cheers, Ros

**MEMBERSHIP MATTERS**

**Coming 'Garden' Events** – check out the ANPSA Website for specific details and other garden activities  
Please send any information for 'Garden events' in your region to promote in the next Newsletter

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

Del Harland WA; Verna Cornford Qld; Maureen Sheargold Qld; Mallee Eden NSW; Raina Emerson NSW

**Current Membership:** 171 - including 9 posted Newsletters & 159 email Newsletters

**Treasurer's Report** – January 30, 2020

General account: \$ 4,993.44  
Term Deposit: \$ 27,492.21 (reinvested including interest of \$628.38 - for 12 months to January 25, 2021)  
TOTAL: \$ 32,379.72

<b>Membership year</b>	July 1 – June 30	<i>Membership dues payable annually as follows:</i>
Email Newsletter	FREE	Posted Paper Newsletter \$20.00 per annum

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

**PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOUR NAME IS CLEARLY ENTERED ON THE ELECTRONIC TRANSFER DETAILS**

**ANPSA Garden Design Study Group Newsletter**

Published quarterly in February, May, August and November.

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

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## STOP PRESS

### Garden Design in Courtyards

Rhonda Daniels, Sydney

As a gardener in a courtyard for nearly 20 years, these are my tips. My main design issue is how to get height without bulk to screen the walls which create a courtyard. My walls include lovely common brick but also Colourbond fencing - at least it is eucalypt-coloured. A 2 m high x 2 m wide shrub is fine in a garden, but doesn't leave much room for anything else in a courtyard. One solution has been to use climbers.

I have timber lattice trellises attached to the brick walls which support Clematis and Pandorea. These work well but the growth does occur at the top, leaving the bottom bare. I also have wire climbing cones in garden beds which are good for Hardenbergia violacea, which is almost shrub-like in its bushiness, and Hibbertia scandens. These do climb over anything and everything, but can easily be cut back.

I have also gone for upright plants in pots including Kangaroo paws, and plants with long linear foliage such as Xanthorrhoea, Orthrosanthus, Cymbidium suave and grasses. I have many plants in pots, which allows a greater diversity of plants in a small space, but pots do need regular watering (a lesson learnt the hard way of course). I have also suspended a hanging basket with Goodenia ovata from a tree branch to attract the eye up at fence height, but it dries up easily and the natural basket fibres do attract some bird interest.

### Growing Wildflowers in Gardens

David Hockings, Queensland

*ED: This is an excerpt from a lengthy article by David Hockings published in the Australian Plants Journal Vol 5 No 37 December 1968 in which he provides excellent comment and information about growing Australian wildflowers out of their ecological situations. From the earliest days of SGAP until the day he died in 2017 David was an active member and his knowledge of native plants, their uses, pests and diseases was phenomenal and freely shared.*

The beauty of our plants is in the character of the individual blooms and in the graceful form of the plants, not in symmetry. It's their sweeping lines or unusual form, an intangible something that characterises the Australian bush. As we experiment with various native plants we must constantly measure them up to see they reach the requirements that make them worth cultivating. Some improve florally with cultivation, others run more to foliage. So many need trying we can't waste time and space with the doubtful ones.

Showiness is of course one of the main basic reasons why we should cultivate a plant. Flower for flower or more accurately plant in bloom for plant in bloom, a large number of our plants can easily hold their own with the exotics. Sometimes our plants only do this where they grow naturally or in certain aspects.

We can so easily get carried away with a couple of flowers of something that is a favourite in another state. Look critically at it - is it just a couple of tiny flowers on a spindly or sickly plant? Does it fill a place here? We are trying to gain a place for our natives among the accepted garden plants. They have to appeal to everyone by standing on their own virtues as ordinary plants. Plants have no special virtue merely because they are native. They have to compare as shrubs. The general public doesn't always see them as a native plant enthusiast does.

Adaptability is the second of these basic qualities we must look for in natives. It may be beautiful where it grows naturally in the bush or in cultivation in a different climate from here but how does it look in your garden. It must grow satisfactorily and flower well when it is cultivated. Until a plant has been tried in a district it is difficult to know how it will behave. We need enthusiasts in all parts of the state and nation, and on different soils.

A garden needs to be planned carefully to show off natives in a way that will advertise them. You can have a landscape planting which involves a certain amount of duplication for the sake of continuity or unity, or you can have, as is too often the case with native gardens, a collection of plants where every plant is different. Do our Australian native plants reach this standard in your garden?