



# GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP

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**Newsletter**  
**November, 2021**

# 117

**STUDY GROUP LEADER / NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

Lawrie Smith  
 38 Sandpiper Avenue NORTH LAKES Q 4509  
 ph: 0411 228 900  
 email: gdsg@anpsa.org.au

Website: <http://anpsa.org.au/design/> or Google 'Australian Garden Design'

*Newsletter Theme: 'Visual Attributes of a Garden'*

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*Our eyes are an amazing tool, able to instantly see then sweep over an all-encompassing garden landscape, before being arrested by specific details both large and small . . . a memorable garden is appreciated within the first few seconds of viewing, and those first impressions are the most lasting.*

## ANPSA Garden Design Study Group Newsletter

Published quarterly in February, May, August and November.

**Copy Deadline:** two weeks before the publication month, earlier submissions will be welcomed.

**Newsletter Editor:** Lawrie Smith, Phone: 0411 228 900 Email: Lawries@live.com

**There is no charge for Membership of GDSG . . . . .** annual period from July 1 to June 30

Newsletters are distributed to all members only by email

Please advise if you wish to change your contact details or to discontinue membership.

## Newsletter timing & Themes

These are the 2022 Newsletter dates and themes:

Issue	date	Theme
118	February	"Gardens in Shade"
119	May	"Design for Climate Change"
120	August	"Small Gardens & Courts"
121	November	"Diversity or Uniformity?"

*Please ensure to send your submissions at least two weeks before the publication month.*

## The Editor Comments

### Important instruction for GDSG members.

In your records please delete the email address [displays@npq.org.au](mailto:displays@npq.org.au) previously used to communicate with me as your study group leader and add this new address:

**[gdsg@anpsa.org.au](mailto:gdsg@anpsa.org.au)**

If you continue to use the old address your study group questions and submissions for the newsletter may never come to me!

This is why - after twelve years as Displays Officer for SGAP/NPQ, I had been considering relinquishing this important role of promoting native plants and the Society. It was obvious I could use the time to relax a little more, attend to our own garden & of course GDSG too. So when NPQ Council made the recent decision to change direction away from holding the 'Spring Flower Show' each year as had been done since 1969, it was the ideal opportunity for another member to develop this new initiative.

### **A reminder for me from a new member**

Recently in her application to join GDSG a new member Jeanette Wilson, asked about the pictorial history of native gardens included in the garden design section of the ANPSA website. I have a confession to make - it has been a very long time since I last looked at these garden records on-line! If you review those now, you will find lots of invaluable information and practical ideas.

This project was a Study Group initiative to make a progressive lasting record of significant gardens that have a predominance of Australian plants. These "virtual tours" were to be highly detailed explorations of gardens that many people would be unable to visit in person through assisting them in developing ideas for design of their own Australian garden. The aim was to cover a range of different types of gardens - small and large, suburban and country, naturalistic and more formal designs.

The ANPSA/GDSG website lists six 'Significant Gardens' which have detail descriptions and images – all are in Victoria:

- Kennedy Garden, Wheelers Hill, Victoria a 'bush block' developed to extensive garden
- Hanson Garden, Warrandyte, Victoria a garden in the bush.
- Snape Garden, Hawthorn East, Victoria a suburban garden.
- Ford Garden, Eltham, Victoria a garden developed by renowned landscape gardener Gordon Ford and his wife Gwen.
- Moore Garden, Park Orchards, Victoria.
- Marriott Garden, Stawell area, central Victoria.

In addition there are sixteen less detailed 'Garden Snapshots' with short descriptions and images to show some features of the member's gardens – these are in Victoria, NSW and the ACT.

*At the end of this section, I have incorporated an extract from one of the 'Garden Snapshots' to give an idea of how interesting and beneficial an expanded range of gardens would be for members – Lawrie.*

These garden articles date well back to the time when the GDSG commenced, primarily as a Victorian initiative and all of the listed gardens would now be very mature. Similarly the GDSG has 'matured' with membership (now almost 200) from throughout Australia and overseas. Obviously since then, there would be many more quality native gardens by members that we should consider adding to these records.

Jeanette informed me that before completing Landscape Design qualifications, she worked in various roles for a motoring media and publishing company as a videographer / photographer. She recently spoke with Max and Helen Kennedy, while taking photos in their garden in its current phase and wondered if we would like to add some of those photos to the collection as a kind of evolution of the on-going history of that garden. Helen is happy for this to happen.

### **Nominate Native Gardens for the website**

I'm sure that we can all think of some wonderful gardens in all states (and overseas too)! Could I request members to send your suggestions for one or more gardens that you know would be suitable? Please indicate

if you would be prepared to review the garden and provide text and photos. From this list we will determine a strategy for action to add to our 'Significant Gardens' and 'Garden Snapshots'. Also wondering if this could be one excellent way to invest part of the GDSG funds for members benefit?

### **Nominate useful Garden Design Books**

Perusing the website further, I noted that it would also be advantageous to provide an updated listing of books dealing with Australian native plants and garden design. Many books dealing with Australian native plants also contain useful information on garden design. Some of the more relevant can be found in Jo Hambrett's article in the website (2004) "*Short History of Australian Garden Design*". In more recent years numerous specialised titles that cover the topic in detail have been published. Could I request members to send your suggestions for favourite garden design books that you have found helpful?

### **Theme for the next Newsletter #118 "Gardens in Shade"**

Here's the opportunity to share your experience in designing areas of your garden where there is limited sun exposure. The differing seasonal sunshine and shadow patterns influencing a site stimulate specific garden design opportunities. Shady protected gardens require and exhibit a completely different character to those established on a sunny open site, primarily related to species selection. The extent of shade over any garden varies seasonally, and in mid-winter cold shaded areas present many design constraints but also opportunities. Latitude plays a major role in this effect too – there are marked differences when comparing the sunshine and shadow patterns of the tropical northern half of the continent with those of the temperate south, and of the dry interior. Perhaps you have designed innovative layouts or permanent shade devices to protect sensitive plants to incorporate them as subjects of interest?

Remember this is your Study Group and it functions best with interaction and

involvement from members located in all corners of the continent. So please take up a pen or keyboard and share your experiences and thoughts with us all for the next edition.

### **Newsletter #117 theme: 'Visual Attributes of a Garden'**

A memorable garden is appreciated within the first few seconds of viewing and those first impressions are the most lasting. Our eyes are an amazing tool, able to instantly see and sweep over an all-encompassing garden landscape, before being arrested by specific details both large and small, then quickly adjusts the focus to concentrate or zoom in to particular focal points. There are so many visual attributes that individually distinguish any observed landscape; collectively these provide a major influence on how we perceive and personally rate the aesthetic value of any given garden being observed.

There are many books, articles, photographs, even television productions that cover this subject, and there are also interesting texts in the pages of our GDSG Newsletters. Every member would have their own ideas and observations and some have been shared in this issue. If this subject catches your interest please share your 'visual experiences' with us all in future newsletters.

The following list of observations and cryptic comments are from my personal viewpoint, and are in no specific order. However, they provide something of an incomplete check list for the planning and design issues that are usually considered in the landscape planning and design of a garden.

*First impressions:* at first glance you will know whether to take up your camera and photograph a garden, even before you look closely at individual species, because it has an immediate visually pleasing arrangement of hard and soft landscape elements.

*Composition:* the appearance of a garden is strongly defined by the arrangement of all the diverse elements within it. Is it a formal, possibly geometric arrangement which creates a more structured garden? Perhaps it

is a very informal composition of numerous elements basically inspired by the beauty and complexity of a naturalistic landscape? Organising the composition is a design issue.

*Continuity:* a carefully selected, simple and harmonious arrangement of complimentary forms, textures and colours of the plant material in a garden, will enhance the visual appreciation of the qualities of the collection.

*Character:* it is very easy to visually distinguish diverse garden characters, principally due to species selection and relationships. Compare the extreme visual difference between the luxuriant, broad textured, monochromatic appearance of a shaded rainforest garden, against a sunny garden of species with fine leaf textures and brilliant primary coloured flowers. Continuity of visual character results in good design.

*Function:* a garden for personal pleasure is very different to one for wider appreciation such as a public botanic garden. Your garden exhibits your personality, interests and even which plant communities you favour, or that you simply just like Aussie plants and that is its primary function.

*Diversity:* multiple colours of flower and foliage attract by sheer exuberance and spectacle, but careful massing of blocks of colour or texture will increase visual appreciation and enhance design awareness.

*Imagination:* add interest, and possibly amusement, by imaginative use of distinctive garden elements, both structures and plants, in unusual ways to provide a memorable unexpected experience.

*Attraction:* a uniform garden mix of similar specimens can create a monotonous visual appearance – relieve this by carefully integrating contrasting plants or features that attract the eye against a background of basically similar vegetation.

*Memorable:* aim to create a garden which immediately springs to mind long after first observed, perhaps because of the use of specimens not commonly seen in gardens or by other interesting or unique features.

*Focal Points:* consider locating a series of focal points or special plants, throughout the garden progressively or randomly, to lead the visitor from point to point encouraging exploration of the most interesting areas of the garden.

*Rooms:* provide varied visual interest and divide the garden into several distinct areas each with a specific plant palette or character, related to microclimate & function.

*Views:* identify, establish and maintain view corridors and glimpses from the house and within the garden, to give diverse visual experiences encouraging exploration and visual appreciation.

*Perspective:* geometric linear pathways, hedges or structures draw the eye simply and strongly into the garden, and change the perception of the space, by apparently lengthening or compressing the view, depending on the relationship to the angles.



*Change:* seasonal changes to foliage and flowers automatically ensure the garden is always new and developing whenever observed – maximise these ephemeral opportunities.

*Screening:* hide those necessary functional but potentially visually negative elements, by careful garden planning and by use of appropriate screening vegetation.

*Borrowed landscape:* preserving expansive views beyond the garden to adjoining landscapes will increase the apparent size of the garden – incorporate wherever possible.

*Sunshine and shadow:* the north side and south side of a house will provide significantly opposite environmental conditions for your plant collection; establishing appropriate species in the varied microclimates maximise the visual diversity throughout the garden.

*Structures & materials:* plan and design these functional elements wisely to ensure that they contribute to the character and continue the visual qualities of the garden.

*Sense of Place:* does the character of the garden 'belong' to its locality? Gardens that reflect and respect the local flora are generally most successful as they respond to the attributes of the regional location, local environment and soils.

*Sense of scale:* select and locate major plant specimens carefully to ensure their ultimate size and form will be appropriate for the garden design, and suitable to create and continue the planned character and visual attributes over time.

*Complimentary:* respecting the architectural qualities of the house will define and dictate much of the garden planning and design; this will ensure optimum visual and physical transition between the house and garden; will your invitation be "Come inside the outside!"

## **Garden Snapshot** **O'Neill Garden, Victoria**

*This is one of a number of the series of "Garden Snapshots" included in the GDSG pages of the ANPSA website. Refer to the 'Editor's Comments' in this issue where Lawrie requested that members suggest and hopefully prepare snapshots of new gardens for inclusion.*

Bob and Dot O'Neill moved to their current 0.4 ha property just four years ago but their garden, begun from nothing (actually worse than nothing), is already well established. The growth of plants has been remarkable, so that the garden now looks twice its age. The amount of work involved in achieving this has been enormous. They have a video recording the progress over the four years, so we had to believe them! Their soil is good

- a fine, grey, sandy loam. The air is clear with no city pollution and the garden is sunny with, as yet, not very much shade. In addition to this (plus all the hard work), as one member said, "much-loved gardens thrive".

Their garden is a model of practical design. First they had about 14 large cypresses (with other similar exotic trees) removed - a huge job. They also put a root barrier along one fence to keep unwanted tree roots out. Other plants and structures were also removed. In



the first year, in an unexpectedly wet period, they lost many plantings and discovered they had a high water table. To improve drainage, they treated this problem in two ways - by using agricultural pipes and by importing 140 cubic metres of soil to build up beds.



To lay out the garden, they marked out beds on the existing lawns with hoses (Dot) or stakes (Bob), then sprayed and re-sprayed these areas until the grass was completely dead. Beds are curved as are the grassed paths between beds. The number of plants in the garden is in the thousands (for example about 200 were planted last summer) and

Bob has propagated about 90% of these, mostly from cuttings from many sources.

The O'Neills' garden is a collectors' garden. They initially specialised in correas and are growing about 200 different forms, with two of each sort where possible. They keep records of which of the 47 numbered beds each correa is planted in. Bob recommends space and sun for good flowering in correas and eremophilas.

For more information on this garden see GDSG Newsletter 91, August 2015, p. 19.

### Letter to the Editor

#### Hanging Native Garden

*"I wish to make a native hanging garden on the side of a galvanised shed, mostly south facing but a lot of evening sunlight. Would like advice please!"* Janis Baker, Broadford (Mt Piper)

This email was first sent to APS Victoria but after being redirected through several people it found its way to GDSG, via Chris Long.

Establishing a 'hanging garden' or probably more correctly termed a 'green wall' would be quite different in Victoria than in Queensland. Certainly the plants would be very different, as would the growing media and irrigation etc. So I redirected it again to Chris Larkin to see if she knew if any GDSG members in Victoria may have been experimenting in this process. Chris replied that she was unaware if anyone has done this, but found that if you Google 'green walls Vic' then kits for doing it and businesses pop up.

In urban Brisbane 'green walls' are popping up everywhere, also in home gardens!! Most are primarily of exotic species but there are always a few natives as well. Creating 'green walls' with native plants could be of interest to a number of our members, and some may have already developed successful procedures and species selections. If you have done this, no matter how small, please share your ideas and observations with your fellow members, because there certainly seems to be a growing interest in using native plants in very different ways. It would be great to include

photographs of successful 'green walls' primarily of natives – make sure to note the successful or unsuccessful species used. So get those cameras out as you walk around the city or suburban areas.



Green building in Paris



construction



Sydney Botanic Gardens



Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens

## 'Visual' comments from members

### Visual Attributes of a Garden . . . from a Wildlife Perspective

Joan Dillon, Sunshine Coast

Ours is a Garden for Wildlife, a program supported by Barung Landcare in Maleny on the Sunshine Coast.

Since we have a rural property, our garden is large but its spread is fortunately restricted by buildings, steep gullies and old slips. Parts have undergone plant removal and redesign to improve accessibility, remove lawn or to hopefully attract specific wildlife species, a not necessarily successful venture.



Safe habitat, water, food, diversity and linkages within and between areas have dictated the design parameters and created its visual attributes. A Garden for Wildlife need not be unduly messy, can be colourful, layered, lead the eye, show perspective and be attractive from a human as well as a wildlife perspective. Curving access paths lead the eye around corners and have become highways for brush turkeys and some furry animals. Birds will be the main visitors or in time residents and add to the visual attributes of any garden.



A long-running revegetation program has created a mature dry vine forest with fallen timber available to use as garden edging. These old logs double as food for insects, fungi, spiders and the birds that feed

on them. Most plants are selected for a dual purpose.

Natural elevation provides distant vistas through "windows" in the vegetation. Within the garden layers of plants lead the eye upwards from groundcovers to large shrubs to the forest beyond and create protected fly-paths for small birds. Plant form varies but dense and diverse species favour small birds needing different habitats, from groundcovers for White-Browed Scrub Wrens to high outlooks for Yellow-Tailed Black Cockatoos.



Seasonal colour has been a challenge in terms of providing an all-year-round nectar supply. This peaks in spring but there's always something in

flower either in the garden or the backdrop of mature trees and shrubs. A large *Melaleuca/Callistemon viminalis* attracts a multitude of honey eaters from striking Scarlet Honeyeaters to browns, duskies and combative Lewins. We do not have Noisy Miners and avoid grevilleas with large, nectar filled flowers. Our many small birds seem satisfied with smaller flowers and groundcover or low shrub forms suit the garden style better.



Apart from nectar, fruit and insects are an important part of the diet of most native birds and animals. Grasses and low fruit bearing shrubs fulfil this role. Hunting occurs in the air, in leaf litter, under

bark with probing beaks and around either fallen or strategically placed old logs.



Rocks are unfortunately in short supply so any that can be collected double as substrate for small native orchids and hiding places for skinks. Experiment has shown that orchids in general will

only grow in one or possibly two (an experiment in progress) areas that provide the right shade/light and air circulation.



Soil type, drainage patterns and limited tank water dictate species selection and therefore the visual attributes for different areas. A drier area supports wallaby grass

and *Xanthorrhoea* species which provide cover and seasonal flower spikes for the wildlife. Water is a critical attribute. Dishes

either hung just under the edge of the canopy or supported out of the reach of cats need to be filled every day. We have extraordinarily clean birds!



Our most recent design excursion is replacement of a "lawn". The open space is being retained, covered in liberal quantities of bark chips, and progressively planted with low shrubs pruned to maximise spring flowering, plus groundcovers, dwarf

*Lomandra* and



grasses. Three *Xanthorrhoea latifolia* will be the feature. This garden has been deliberately designed for visual effect but will also be used by yellow robins and others.

Gardens are always a 'work in progress'. Some areas have been designated 'habitat' and can therefore be largely ignored other than when their flora exceeds its boundaries – a convenient work avoidance scheme. Some birds are now breeding on-site, new visitors are recorded, and some residents previously seen only well beyond the house, are visiting the water dishes. A Garden for Wildlife is visually satisfying and well worth striving for.

### Fifty three year old garden - design

Margaret Lee, Adelaide

Strangely visual appearance was not uppermost when designing our own garden 63 years ago! These were some of the design initiatives considered:

*Use* – space for young children to play – therefore long diagonal across lawn for cricket/football/tennis.

*Shade* - tree placement

*Block* - unwanted views and enhance those wanted by tree and shrub size and placement.

*Fence screening* – suitable shrubs

*Experiment* - desire for some species which didn't like our heavy clay soil, using several strategically placed mounds.

In writing this I can see that the visual attributes were always considered.

### **Visual Attributes of a Garden . . . time the fourth dimension**

*Leslie Page, Canberra*

A garden that works visually is an enormous work of art in progress, as in the visual arts we are looking at the same elements. The garden is about significant form. What makes significant form are the elements of mystery, line, contour, shape, variety, texture, colour, light, time, man-made structures, and landscape therein.

I live on a 20 acre block of land, which is Box Woodlands. It is dominated by Yellow Box, Stringy Bark and Brittle Gum. There is also *Eucalyptus dives*, and down the road *Eucalyptus bridgesiana*. Understorey consists of *Acacia dealbata*, *Daviesia mimosoides*, *Cassinia* sp and small plants, open grasslands. It is undulating. The house sits elevated over dams facing north. We have been here nearly eighteen years. Before we came it had Hereford cattle on it. Since then they have gone and the land has rejuvenated rather well. Around the house we have planted smaller shrubs which provides protection for the little birds. In the area where we live there are many different species of birds and wildlife.

I am not a purist. Our garden is made up of mostly natives but does have exotics around the house. That has been mainly influenced by bushfire protection. Creating a garden is an ongoing sculpture which has no end. It has a fourth dimension of time. It is affected by the weather, the time of day, and the four seasons.

Natural vegetation, borrowed landscape, water views down the valley, undulating land

and elevation are what makes our 20 acres. It looks down a valley where Brooks Creek feeds all the dams. The dominant old Yellow Box are a major feature of the landscape. The series of dams are like stepping stones down the valley.

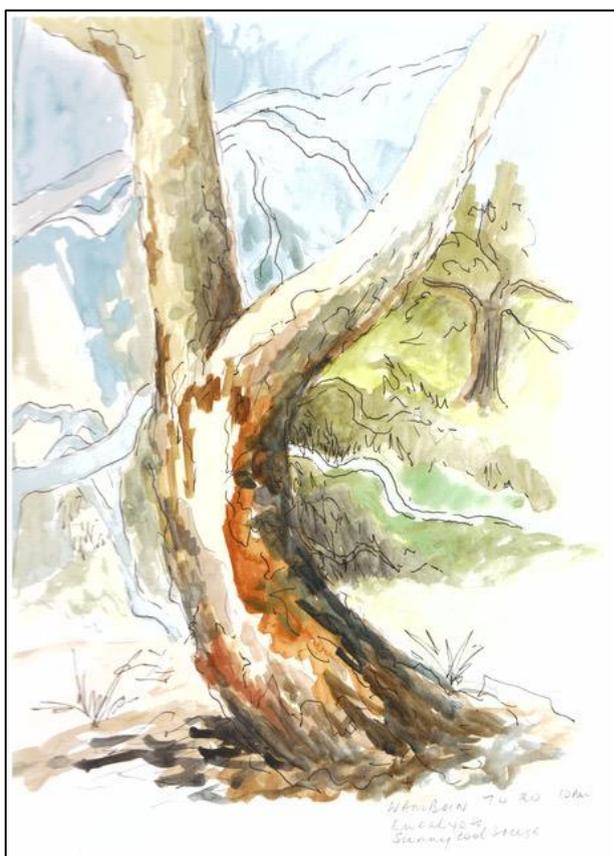


The house faces north overlooking the series of dams. The entry to the property is just a normal rural entrance but the road curves up to the house and invites curiosity. Structures are the house which blends into the landscape, a large shed and rock walls which are like a curving line inviting contrast to the native vegetation. Colour is predominantly multiple shades of green: an Australian palette.



There is whimsy too: the wildlife, kangaroos, birdlife, lizards, snakes, and echidna. Mystery is created because the house is hidden from the road by a curved driveway. Blending of the natural vegetation with garden design occurs around the house and with borrowed views.

When we first viewed this property, we were dazzled by the magnificent *Eucalyptus melliodora*. A friend said "Oh you don't need to do much revegetation as it will do it naturally". And it has over the 18 years. It was once part of a farm. Hereford cattle lived here. But now it is rejuvenated bushland. We have planted windbreaks to the west of *Acacia rubida*, mint bushes, *Melaleuca sp.* and *Callistemon sp.* Lower down are naturally grown *Acacia dealbata*. With an elevation of 846m above sea level we planted mountain gums along the west. These plants we think are harmonious with the landscape.



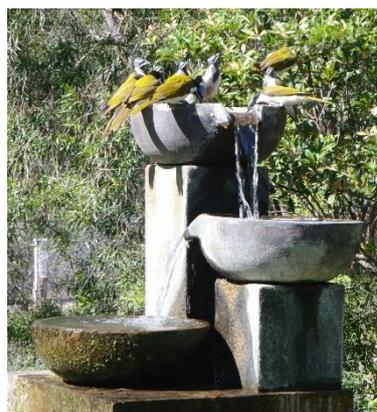
Regarding visual attributes of a garden, what better point of reference is there than the natural landscape? But it is the shape of the land that matters. A flat block is uninteresting. It shows no hidden secrets. We are surrounded by mature trees. The leaves and limbs are waving in the breeze. I see this from my living room window. Unity is the natural landscape which we have augmented choosing local species. Variety is the shape, form and height of the plants. Water and dams dot the landscape. The

garden blends gracefully into the landscape. The lighting affects what we see and experience during the day. Change comes with early morning, evening, night, clouds, a sunny day, rain and the wind in the trees. All provide a dimension of time which visually changes what I see at different times of the day.

The house sits into the landscape, becomes a part of it. There is contrast of the straight lines of the house and the dominant curving of the landscape. Indoor/outdoor window views we see from each window. A garden makes up all these elements and it is continually changing. A garden is never finished.

### **Cascading Fountain - Garden Focus**

*Ray and Wendy Benfer, Queensland*



As visitors enter our garden, attention is drawn to the multi-level cascading fountain. It has also developed into a focal point for wildlife, mostly

birds, but also the occasional water dragon and carpet python. Having suitably placed vegetation enhances its multiple roles. Bringing some of the understorey from the surrounding bush has made the garden especially appealing to our fauna. Seeing butterflies that are attracted by flowers and host plants, watching the birds at the

fountain, and hearing the relaxing sound of the running water, all creates a sense of calm in the garden.

### **Visual perception is very personal!**

*Doris Schwarz, Queensland*

It's personal! I know a gardener who has an enviable collection of native plants. The individual plants are attractive and interesting, but I wouldn't call that garden particularly attractive.

While the plants certainly matter (including the absence of weeds), for me other aspects contribute significantly to the visual appeal of a garden. It's the path that invites you to explore, it's the view of water (running, still or even just an illusion via a rocky bed), or the seat in shade that invites you to sit, relax and ponder.

And then there are the features amongst the plants. I love rocks that look like they have always been there, an upturned tree root, an interesting log, or perhaps something rusty. I find the overuse of "garden art" detracts. Too many pieces and/or bright bold works that dominate jar for me. However, I was visiting a garden with a friend recently and we stopped in front of a large mosaic piece. As I was thinking "how awful, it dominates and detracts from the beauty of this garden", she said "isn't it beautiful here in this garden". It really is personal!!!!

(Confession: In my garden I have a hideous ceramic sculpture that I made many years ago, and a mosaic piece that was here when we came. I also have weeds.)

### **The Curve** *Chris Larkin, Lysterfield Vic* *south-east of Melbourne on a north facing slope with clay soils*

I looked at the topic for the upcoming newsletter rather late with regards to the submission date. 'The Visual Attributes of a Garden'. Wow, that's a biggie I thought. Where to start? How to start? When and where to stop? Before I knew it I had a page of jottings with a pathway forward to addressing the topic no clearer. And not enough time to write a book! I guess my point is everything in garden design is with a

view to realising the visual attributes of a garden. Answering the many questions that must be addressed is the design process to achieving the dream. Whatever that garden design dream is.

That being said I have retreated to the relative safety of tackling just one little aspect of design in my garden. An ever present aspect and very current aspect with respect to a section of garden I am now renewing. Since the advent of Covid we have heard, and graphically seen, a lot about 'the curve' in tracking how well we are containing or indeed getting on top of the virus. Now that is definitely not the curve I want to talk about here. I want to lead you down the garden path – the curvey or wavey – garden path in celebration. I don't think anyone will mount a serious argument with me when I say that one of the hallmarks of a naturalistic Australian plant garden is curved paths, or if you prefer the reverse way of looking it - the curved edges of garden beds. This is a story of curved paths.

The garden renovation. I'm not sure what came first: the removal of an oversized, vigorous *Correa baeuerlenii* I was over pruning, or the removal of an overly large, brooding, space-eating *Banksia ericifolia* due to wind damage. Suffice it to say both of these plants were removed which led to reviewing the space anew with a critical eye and deciding to remove several more plants. I believe if *Melaleuca wilsonii* hadn't come into glorious flower at that very time it would not have been spared because this silly plant is growing more horizontally than vertically in a most annoying way. I have stayed my hand on that score and will investigate placing some kind of wooden support under it to preserve and control its behaviour.

I take my cue for this strategy from the Japanese. What did I find at the end of all this laying waste? I discovered wonderful through views into the garden and beyond. When the sun shines it can now reach into this garden and light up plant foliage and flowers. And I rediscovered the most beautiful curve of a staired path leading to the top of the garden. There are two pictures



to look at – numbers 1 and 2. Picture 1 has been taken looking down the path with picture 2 taken looking up the path with the section being renovated really a bit out of sight – that’s how long the staircase is.



I don’t ever want to completely obstruct the view of the full sweep of this path again, although it could be interrupted by a small strap leafed plant like *Orthrosanthus multiflorus*. Careful planting is already underway. The

plants I have chosen will remain low and ground covering lapping onto the path, defining and accentuating its curve in time. Further back behind these plants I need mostly low growing plants carefully placed so the through views are not lost and the strange structure of the melaleuca is softened. It’s an interesting challenge as I rack my brain for plant solutions that will have to meet other criteria such as thriving in the growing conditions and fitting in with neighbouring plants, as this garden is part of a much, much larger garden bed.

But back to the curve. There are good reasons to love the use of the curve as opposed to the straight line in garden design. The curve is a relaxed shape and hence will make you feel less uptight. As you look down a curved path you are enticed to venture further on to see what is beyond the sweep of curve currently in sight. Now you are relaxed but also curious.



I want to look at a couple of examples from my garden – what they look like and how they are achieved. Picture 3 is a mature curve with all the attributes discussed. It is simply the case that the path follows a curve.



Picture 4 shows a path that actually has one edge which is straight (on the right of the picture) and even parts, but not all, of the left hand side is straight. The straight right hand side of the path has been softened by the

occasional use of rock. The curve of the path is largely achieved by what is going on on the left hand side. Rock is used instead of sleepers for part of the distance and in the near view the width of the path is much more generous. Add to this the fact that plants alone can take the straight edge off a path by overlapping the path edge at various points.



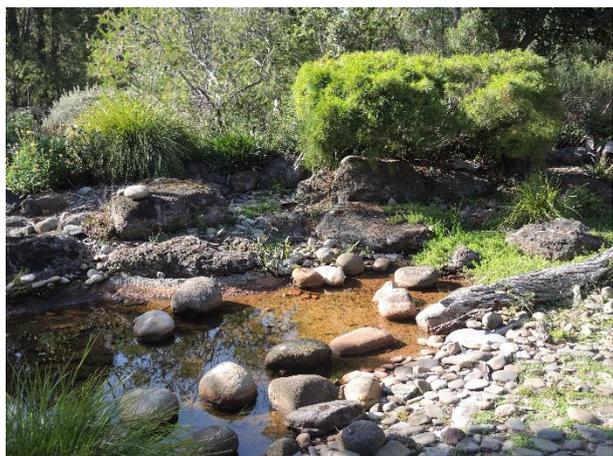
Picture 5 is of a wave rather than a curve. It is appropriate to the style of the garden with paths crossing it top and bottom and halfway along. The path is wavy and the plants help to hopefully accentuate the

fact. What’s not to love about the curve!

## Attributes of a Garden.

*Bev Hanson, Melbourne Vic*

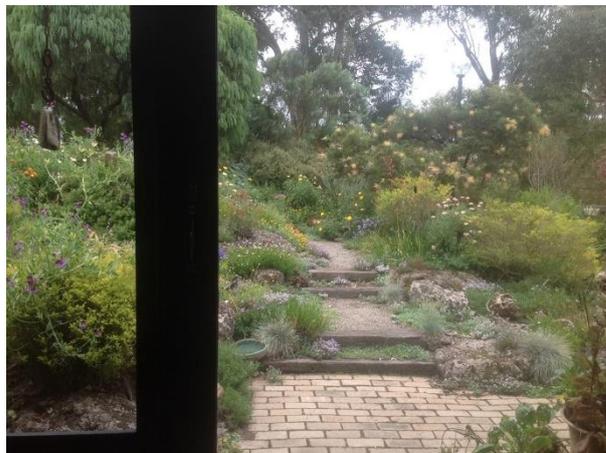
In the 1980's to 1990's I was a tutor with the Council of Adult Education. Each term I would have 25 students helping them to think for themselves in what to look for in a good design. I always advocated adding the most interesting design features to the locations that matter.



For example the entrance should be inviting. The addition of a pond adds a great feature.



Interest is created when a path or lawn curves out of sight so, with boundaries planted out, one is not sure where the property ends.



The view from the windows also is most important, particularly living areas where we spend most time. If a site is flat, with the aid of machines, the levels can be changed to achieve an attractive result and most Australian plants require good drainage so mounding is advisable.



Raised garden beds assure good drainage with path as the low point and appropriate planting. Of course the planting is the icing on the cake and we are so lucky in Australia to have such a range of great plants and books on the subject.



## Naturalising Melbourne's waterways

*Andrew Kelly the Yarra Riverkeeper and a member of the Birrarung Council.*

Naturalisation is a growing initiative in contemporary urban planning that has the potential to deliver better outcomes to our waterways than just drainage alone. As opposed to restoration, naturalisation is a pragmatic approach to return natural systems and experiences to our landscapes, within the constraints of a working city. It is not often that a community, is given the opportunity to redesign a waterway. In an urban context, these linear landscapes are often seen simply as drains, but in actuality they can provide an invaluable lifeline for wildlife, vegetation and people.



The 20th century was witness to an engineering movement that swept across Melbourne's dynamic catchments, reducing complex systems of natural rivers, creeks and tributaries into a simple 'grey infrastructure' of concrete channels and drains. Thankfully these views are beginning to change, with waterways now being valued as crucial spaces to integrate our urban and natural systems.

Following its commitment to "enhancing life and liveability", Melbourne Water, the statutory agency responsible for all water management across Melbourne's catchments, is now reviewing how it can improve waterway health to better meet the needs of the contemporary city. Its focus now is the naturalisation of the concrete stormwater systems inherited from last century.

The project, 'Reimagine Your Creek' redesigns a series of urban creeks to 'naturalise' them, and reveals how Country benefits from slowing water down as it moves through the city. Gone are the days of straight-lined concrete channels taking this valuable resource on the fastest route to the bay.

When designing a naturalistic system, the flow path is lengthened by flattening the bed grade. This leads to a waterway with natural meanders instead of straight concrete channels. These meanders result in gentler, less erosive flows which helps hold water in the landscape in soils and in plant life.

Naturalisation can also bring much needed attractive open green space to communities which might otherwise be underserved in this regard. 'Reimagine your Creek' targeted four creeks in lower socio-economic areas of Melbourne that have traditionally been deprived of open space. Altogether, this project has seen human life flow back to over five kilometres of waterways previously underutilised by their communities.



Critical to the transformation of these waterways was extensive consultation with their surrounding communities. The consultation process revealed a community desire to engage with water: to hear it and see it flowing, to touch and smell it. The community wanted a waterway that looked like a natural waterway, not like a drain. They wanted to invite nature to come back into the city. The design recreated ecological and hydraulic features that provide opportunities

for the community to connect with water. One symbolic feature of creek naturalisation, was the introduction of stepping stones, leading people down into the creek bed and across it. Water was forced between the rocks to hurry and rush with trickles, riffles and ripples; creating an audible and visual experience.

Life and activity has been quick to return to the waterways since the completion of the project. Humans and non-humans alike are finding their place in the naturalised sections. Where once not even the expected chorus of bird's sounds were to be found, frog croaks ripple out in the background, while a steady trickle of joggers can now be heard deep in conversation.



One of the exciting things about these projects is that they are dynamic. Water can be managed, but over time it will dictate its own expression. Although the course of the waterways has been fixed by engineering, the design approach supports movement and change to occur over time, particularly by visitor engagement with the landscape. Some species will come to the fore in wet seasons, and in drier seasons others will come to dominate. The creeks themselves will become vehicles for seed movement.

Plantings are intentionally complex mosaics, with arrangements intended to continue evolving over the coming years. While some species populations will shift from year-to-year, others will be quick in establishing a

short-term dominance. Movement in these creeks is about much more than water. Water is a fundamental and dynamic element of Country that needs to be recognised, especially in our urban environments. There is such power in the Australian landscape; we have to release that.

*The achievements of the 'Reimagine Your Creek' project were recognised by AILA Victoria's 2021 awards, winning an Award of Excellence for Infrastructure*

*Lawries comment: Although for this project, the planning and design principles are applied at a far larger scale than for any residential garden, the positive outcome underlines and emphasises the significance of applying the laws of nature into a garden of any scale for mutual benefit. We can learn from this.*

*Article extracted from 'Foreground' by Australian Institute of Landscape Architects*

## Vale Shirley Pipitone

*Ros Walcott, Canberra*



I am sorry to tell you that Shirley Pipitone died last week (July 2021). We had a call from her daughter Olivia last night to tell us the sad news. I had just said to Ben the week before that it was a long time since we had heard from Shirley, but put that down to the COVID restrictions. Shirley had many battles in her life, but went through patches of great enthusiasm and vision. Her health was

always a problem and interfered with many of her activities.

*Lawrie: As fellow landscape architects Shirley and I always enjoyed every opportunity to meet at ANPSA conferences and discuss our mutual interests. Immediately on hearing this sad news I scanned through the back issues of the Newsletter and found much valuable input from Shirley and have included excerpts in the following text. Her intimate knowledge of design with Australian plants will be missed.*

**Master of Landscape Architecture degree**  
*Diana Snape, Melbourne  
Newsletter #53 February 2006*

Warm congratulations to Shirley Pipitone for attaining her Master of Landscape Architecture degree. Her proposed research sounds fascinating. As she says, having quantitative data about peoples' beliefs and attitudes is most important.

**GDSG Meeting ANPSA Conference 2006**  
*Shirley Pipitone ACT  
Newsletter #53 February 2006*

Dear Jo, It was lovely to meet you and some of the Study Group members on the Cootamundra weekend. I want to let you know that I have the names of the 22 people who came to the little gathering of GDSG members and other interested people which I organised at the ANPSA Conference, at the end of the day's seminars on Wednesday October 5. I introduced myself as standing in for you as GDSG Leader, and spoke briefly about how the Study Group operates. Diana Snape spoke a little about the history of the group and Chris Larkin was successful in getting some volunteers to write up the Conference garden visits for the newsletter. Nicky Zanen [Rose] offered to take subs then and there from some of the people interested in joining the Group.

Those present were: Ingrid Adler, ACT; Ian Anderson, ACT; Ritta Boarine Tas; Heather Daley, NSW; Beverley Fox, Vic; Carolyn Gillard, NSW; Joan Knight, Vic; Chris Larkin, Vic; Margaret Moir, WA; Paul Godwin, WA; Jan Hall, Vic; Janelle Harvey, NSW; Philippa O'Brien, WA; Sue Radford,

WA; Lyn Reilly, Gold Coast Group; Don Greer, Qld; Nicky Rose, UK; Peter Shannon, WA; Jan Sked, Qld; Diana and Brian Snape, Vic; Rosemary Verbeeten, Tas.

### **Shirley's Garden**

*Shirley Pipitone ACT  
Newsletter #35 August 2001*

My garden has developed quite patchily, depending on my state of fitness at the time, so some areas are relatively well-grown and others are very newly planted. For example, I have had to take out some monsters, such as *Grevillea* 'White Wings' which grew to 2.5 x 3m in two years, and threatened to stab anyone who walked on the nearby little path (the wallaby track kind of path, which Ellis Stones called 'sneak tracks'). And I have had several episodes of vandalism in the front near a public path (as many pricklies as possible seems to have helped there). I have more or less kept to my original concept of a pretty, open woodland garden. I am hoping to achieve a pretty look as a way to encourage exotic-lovers to appreciate our plants.

My garden is on a suburban quarter acre (0.1 ha) block, at the end of a cul-de sac. It has an area of public land down one side, planted with *Eucalyptus globulus* (Blue Gum), about 25 years old. I have lived here for 28 years but my garden now is a new Australian native garden designed and built within a framework of older eucalypts. I have retained a few exotics for sentimental reasons, and one because it protects a Queensland rainforest tree.

I have given a lot of thought to flower colour, with colour schemes changing gradually as you move around. At the time I had this idea, I had not read any Gertrude Jekyll, but what I have done is quite similar to her colour schemes. I have given a fair amount of thought to foliage contrast and similarities, in terms of colour, foliage size and texture, and movement. Movement of foliage is fascinating. Some plants wave, some dance or shimmy, others rustle or murmur or wobble or shake, and so forth.

Most of my understorey is one metre or less but there are occasional plants which are

taller than this, either because I actually planned them to be taller, or because they have defied all the best-laid plans. My garden, like life, is a work in progress.

### **The "dullness" of indigenous plantings?**

*Shirley Pipitone ACT  
Newsletter #38 May 2002*

In this article Shirley was responding to a comment: *"But what a dull world it would be if we stuck to just the local flora!"*

The best way to create a dull world, whether in terms of plants or anything, is to create a homogenised world: a world where you can buy McDonald's everywhere, where you are equally likely to be hit on the head with an acorn or a coconut in Fiji, where you can smell eucalypt foliage in Sardinia and Israel, admire tulips in Canberra and Bracteanthas in South Africa, and, of course, grow WA plants in NSW, NSW plants in Vic, Vic plants in Qld.... Need I continue? Soon, WA will look like Vic, NSW like Qld or is that NT? SA will look like Tassie now that Tassie looks like Norway used to look before it started to look like California etc.

In the design world it's called internationalism and is strangely admired. Some variety in our own little world is lovely but when I travel, even just from Canberra to Cowra, I want to experience the character of each different place, and that includes the plants.

*Reply from Brian Walters:*

*Thanks, Shirley. I agree that the local character of many parts of Australia is polluted by inappropriate public plantings. In fairness to the writer, I think she was referring mainly to growing indigenous plants in private gardens rather than in public areas - and I suspect that few of us grow entirely indigenous flora. I certainly grow some of my local flora (and I'm expanding the range) but the bulk of the plants in my garden come from various areas. And, I have to say that, despite claims to the contrary, indigenous plants are not always the easiest ones to cultivate because garden conditions rarely match undisturbed natural conditions. Ask anyone in Sydney's sandstone areas how*

*successfully they grow the local boronias, waratahs and flannel flowers....you won't find too many success stories.*

### **The way Australians value the Australian "natural" landscape**

*Shirley Pipitone ACT  
Newsletter #52 November 2005*

Jo I haven't written for the newsletter for such a long time. Study commitments have been my main excuse. Last year I finished my Master of Landscape Architecture and I have established a small business in landscape design and consultancy which is yet to generate any real income. Apart from my study passion, I am sort of retired. You know the sort.

My main interest is in research. I want to investigate the way Australians value the Australian "natural" landscape and whether this is related to their preferences for garden and landscape design styles (both domestic and public) and then actual lifestyle and gardening behaviour.

In other words I want to find answers to the kind of issues Chris Larkin raised in the August 2005 NL: Does a greater sense of environmental responsibility tend to be associated with -

- growing native plants
- a preference for less formal gardens
- a dislike of shrubs pruned into geometric shapes
- no desire for manicured edges
- having picnics in the bush
- visiting National Parks
- preferring large expanses of lawn to shrubs and groundcovers
- preferring bush with messy understorey etc?

Are there any special demographics associated with the way people value the bush? For example, several recent surveys suggest that concern for biodiversity is decreasing among young people, in spite of the strong interest shown by small activist groups which ANPS Canberra Region has seen in some of our outreach activities. Clearly they are in a minority. Have young

people given up because environmental problems seem so immense, are they just ignorant or are they simply too busy getting on with their lives in a consumerist society to care?

I am not very optimistic about a citizen-led environment revolution. The very terms citizen, ethics, and social and environmental responsibility have little currency in a society motivated by fear and self-interest, more interested in mobile phone ring-tones and choosing the best broadband internet deal, and little concerned with issues of honesty and integrity in our politicians and business leaders. But I diverge a little. My research will be quantitative. Many writers such as Tim Flannery, David Horton and more recently George Seddon, have made pronouncements about Australians needing to learn to live with our environment not work against it.

Some research in rural areas is investigating attitudes towards biodiversity and the environment and much research into land degradation and salinity issues is encouraging ecological restoration in agricultural areas because of its economic value. However, most Australians live in cities and there is little research aimed at getting detailed data about what urban people actually believe. Without such quantitative data, we cannot begin to devise ways to encourage urban people to engage in more ethical behaviour, to be more understanding of the difficulties faced by rural people, to support scientific research and evidence-based action, and to demand stronger policies and action from governments.

My research will investigate people in Canberra and a large rural town in the region, and will look at sub-groups including the general population, members of Australian Native Plants Societies, members of other environment organisations, members of other garden groups or horticulture societies, and also landscape architects and garden designers. I consider that landscape architects have a particular responsibility to provide leadership in five environmentally

responsible practices, rather than merely following the wishes of their clients.

I recently said to a landscape architect that we should use the small forms of *Crowea* in place of English Box and her response was "if you can get them to grow." *Crowea* self-sow freely in Canberra! It is all very daunting and I have yet to seriously start looking for a team of supervisors and the most appropriate university to enrol in, although I have a lot of background information. When I am devising questionnaires and getting ready to gather data, I may come to GDSG members for comments or to take part in pilot studies!

Meanwhile I continue to lavish neglect on my long-suffering garden. But I certainly know which plants thrive, as opposed to survive, without water! My absolute treasures are *Scaevola humilis* which self-sowed in gaps in the paving while receiving no water at all, *Pelargonium rodneyanum*, *Crowea exalata*, *Philotheca verrucosa*, and some forms of *Platysace lanceolata*. They all have a deceptively delicate appearance especially *Platysace lanceolata* which remains bright green yet flowers during the hottest and driest months. Others I have found really hardy include *Hibbertia obtusifolia*, *Indigofera australis*, *Prostanthera scullaroides*, *Rhodanthe emthemoides*, *Brachyscome* sp, *Bracteantha bracteata* fine leaf forms, *Wahlenbergia communis*, most of the *Correa* (but not *C. manni*), *Dianella* and *Lomandra* of course, *Grevillea* Pink Lady and Jubilee, and *Ricinocarpos pinifolius*. The white flowers of *Ricinocarpos* are so intense that its foliage seems to disappear into the background leaving the flowers to float in space.

### **ASGAP Study Group Leaders meeting**

Shirley Pipitone, ACT  
Newsletter #53 February 2006

Here is my extremely brief summary of the meeting chaired by Lorna Murray. I get to everything eventually!. Brief outline of subsidy agreed by ASGAP for Study Group Leaders to attend future Conferences. Note that part of the motion says that it is appropriate for Leaders to use Study Group funds to help subsidise their attendance. I

think we should have a discussion about this through the newsletter. Would you like me to write something to start it off, seeing as I moved the motion? Maria Hitchcock's proposal that ASGAP set up a database of photos of plants: agreed to compile a list of people who have good photos. No action person stated. Discussion on publishing: someone mentioned two good free pdf converters: pdf995 and cutepdf. Some discussion of how study group leaders want to be incorporated into the ASGAP Conference program eg displays, in speakers program?

### Summary of criteria for assessment of garden design

Shirley Pipitone ACT  
Newsletter # 56 November 2006

- sense of arrival
- dominance of Australian plants (essential in an Australian garden)
- overall structure and balance
- relation of garden to house
- effective screening - of both external and internal areas
- framework of trees - balance of sunshine and shade
- harmony and unity contrasts and textures
- paths to lead around the garden vistas - from the house and within the garden
- use of water, both ornamental and conservation
- blending of hard landscape into soft - includes sympathetic use of rocks
- inclusion of local (indigenous) plants
- provision for wildlife appeal to the senses - light and colour, fragrance, sounds, touch delights and surprises
- pleasing spaces - to look at and be in
- suited to purpose

### Small Trees

Shirley Pipitone ACT  
Newsletter # 26 August 1999

Geoff Simmons' comments in NL #24 have set me thinking again about the huge differences between Australian plants in different regions. In Queensland, it may be possible to create a treed look using trees up to 4 metres high. However, in the Canberra region, where the indigenous vegetation is

grasslands and dry sclerophyll forest, very small trees would look quite out of place. Being shrubby, they would also take up much more space than tall tree trunks. But then only a very few of the small eucalypts named by Dean Nicolle will grow here so that problem doesn't really arise.

In my 0.1 hectare (1/4 acre) garden, I have 10 eucalypts. The seven mature trees are 8 to 10 metres high. About three years ago I replaced one 8m tree (which was damaged in a windstorm) with two *Eucalyptus leucoxylon* and one *E. sideroxylon*. Many of my trees are along the south-east boundary which means they cast shade mostly on the other side of the fence, where open space is planted with Tasmania Blue Gums. At the moment my garden looks a little top-heavy in places because I have taken out almost all the mature shrubs and started the garden again from scratch. But I think my eucalypts look wonderful - I don't think they are too tall and I don't think I have too many. Fortunately one (only one!) of my neighbours also likes Australian plants.

We share the end of the cul-de-sac with the Blue Gum backdrop and we love it! To continue, my comment about different Australian plants in different regions has a broader purpose. I acknowledge that it is important and a useful function of GDSG to gather information about the reliability of Australian plants. However I find the plant listings in this wonderful Newsletter to be its least useful contribution to my state of knowledge. Canberra's climate has such extremes that many listed plants won't survive here or need a tot of special treatment.

But SGAP Canberra Region has a great deal of information about plants which will thrive here. I think GDSG should encourage Regional and District groups to take into account design factors when gathering information and labelling plants which grow well in their area. Many GDSG members, especially those from non-mainstream areas (e.g. country NSW), might be better to rely on local plant knowledge rather than GDSG information.

*Reply from Diana Snape: I agree with your last paragraph, Shirley, but I think plant lists in our NL may suggest or remind us of plants we are less familiar with and extend our palette. Of course they have to be tested in different regions, and members may prefer growing indigenous vegetation.*

### **A gentle colour scheme**

*Shirley Pipitone ACT  
Newsletter #15 November 1996*

I've been too busy to even get out into my garden very often, except to look. One of the things I have been doing is renovating my house. Now I am planning the plants to fill the new garden window in my bathroom. It faces north-west and is too hot for most "indoor plants". I am planning mostly blue and grey-green foliage plants with blue or mauve flowers - mostly natives - to contrast gently with the pale beige of the room and the interesting texture of imitation travertine tiling! There isn't a lot of space but I'm hoping to squeeze in a smallish *Dianella* or two, *Eriostemon nodiflorus*, *Dampiera rosmarinifolia*, *Lechenaultia biloba*, *Rhodanthe anthemoides* and *Scaevola* 'Mauve Clusters', many of which won't normally grow in Canberra of course. Also I plan to have an English lavender, if I can keep its height under control. While the colours will be similar, there will be form and foliage contrast, and plants spilling everywhere.

### **PAST NEWSLETTERS - EXTRACTS**

*I'm sure you will agree that all of the above articles are so pertinent, well written and still as applicable today as they were when Shirley first wrote them. I have gained much invaluable knowledge from them and I hope that members will find this too. Consequently there is no need to provide the usual extracts from past Newsletters in this issue - Lawrie*

Don't forget, 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 articles above, which are worth reading as they are still as relevant today as they were when first published.

*Be aware! You can spend many hours perusing the interesting GDSG Newsletters in the archives section of the ANPSA website. <http://anpsa.org.au/design/des-news.html>*

### **STOP PRESS**

*This article was prepared for NPQ Pine Rivers Branch & might be of interest to our members.*

### **My Gardens on Concrete**

*Lawrie Smith*

After forty years establishing a specialised collection of native plants on our five acre rural property, we moved several years ago to 880 square metres in a sensitively planned new suburb in northern Brisbane. Really it is unlike living in suburbia, as from three sides of the house we view into an extensive environmental park, wetland and four lakes.

The existing exotic garden was immediately removed and designs prepared to progressively create a seamless transition from house to garden to environment. Being used to the expansive acreage property, we were now learning to garden in miniature using every available square metre!



There were two substantial areas of paving at each end of the swimming pool which were unnecessary and converting them to gardens would be a far better use. Obviously I needed to jack hammer out the concrete to reveal the sandy loam below. This seemed a bit too much of a task! Instead I decided to be

inspired by a recent excursion to the top of a local mountain, where a diverse collection of small heath plants were thriving in shallow sandy soils over solid granite rock. I would build a rockery garden over the concrete!!



The concrete slab was about 20 years old and the surface had been sealed with a rubberised finish, and theoretically the lime had already leached away. This would be an interesting experiment, and if it failed it would not be difficult to start all over again.

The first task was to collect a series of small to medium weathered rocks to be placed in accordance with the plan I had drawn to contain the garden soil. Their final location was carefully modified to ensure that the visual qualities of the two new gardens were suitable and integrated with the adjoining garden areas and views from the house. Consideration was given to several gravel 'drainage ways' to convey excess surface water from the pool surrounds across the gardens to the perimeter. These would also function as maintenance pathways. The river washed pebbles would flow out of the garden to abut the sandstone pool paving.

I considered adding a drainage layer covered by geotextile filter fabric, as you should do in such circumstances. However as the slab sloped gently to the outside this would not be necessary as I wanted to keep the applied soil moist. Once again thinking back to the top of the mountain, I decided that the perfect soil mix would be two thirds premium garden mix and one third mineral rich decomposed granite. This suitable robust free draining soil mix was mounded and profiled around the

rocks to a depth ranging from 100 – 500mm, to emulate the form of the natural 'mountain top' gardens.

In subtropical Queensland we do not have the broad selection of small growing native plants that seem to be readily available in temperate areas of the continent, something that always makes me envious! So these shallow soil gardens would hopefully provide an ideal base to experiment with many lesser known small shrubs, matting and tufting species – something like planting out a huge container?

It was an immediate success and over the past twelve months the garden has been a riot of colour and texture changing with the seasons. Most of the plants trialled have adapted well to these conditions, except a few that resented the moist, occasionally wet root zone. The outstanding successes have been:

*Bulbine bulbosa*, *Dichondra repens*, *Xerochrysum cultivars*, *Hibbertia vestita*, *Pelargonium australe*, *Zoysia macrantha*, *Carpobrotus glaucescens*, *Lomandra hystrix*, *Dianella brevipedunculata*, *Chrysocephalum apiculatum*, *Coronidium rupicola*, *Mazus pumilio*, *Plectranthus argentatus*, *Poa labillardierei*, *Microsorium diversifolium*, etc.



The most important species is *Viola banksii* used as an indicator plant, to warn by its drooping leaves and flowers, that the garden soil is dry and water application is urgent. The new garden has overspray from adjacent irrigation which is sufficient for all but the driest climatic conditions. In the last six months since May, when the last reasonable rainfall figure was never more than single digits on any one day, this garden has richly demonstrated which small species best tolerate our usual extremes of wet and dry.



Perhaps this experiment might encourage others to consider the conversion of concrete surfaces of courtyards, terraces and apartment balconies to gardens?

## Light and Shadow . . . visual attributes of a garden

*Janette Wilson Tyabb, Vic*

Light and shadow go hand in hand, together they are present in every garden but often taken for granted. They may not immediately reveal themselves as garden attributes, but considering their passive roles in an overall design can be the backbone to the feel of a space. Aside from the placement of plants and how important light and shade is to their health and growth, using shadow in more deliberate ways will flesh out an enchanting theme, lead the eye or create a focal point on a bland wall, or render a space intimate.



Shadows have so many properties that can be used to our advantage. The shadows cast by

sunshine are mobile while shadow cast by a fixed light source are not. Natural light provides Interesting movement in the garden by careful placement of an open fence allowing sunlight to shine through and meander across a lawn. The more intimate feel of candle in a laser cut holder will cast shadows that dance on a table or wall.

Considering the use of a space will of course determine the kind of light and shadow effect desired. Seating in an open sunny space is often ideal in winter but how could shadow play a role in high summer when it might be too hot. A deciduous tree is often the answer to a general landscaper but with so few native deciduous trees and the leaf fall this may not be an easy solution. Orientation is the key to placement of a perforated sunshade that allows for winter light and summer shade, an architects trick on north facing homes with wide verandas or battens that cast intermittent shade.

Shadow is always a constant companion of the sun, but it is present at night too, moonlight taking the night watch alongside our lighting choices. Moonlight is always great lighting to reflect off the water of a pool onto a wall or ceiling.

Shadows from laser cut feature walls can lend even greater depth to the reflection, first falling on the wall itself and then through the holes onto whatever is behind it, wall, foliage or ground.

Of course man made lighting can be used in this way too and the positioning of outdoor lighting can contribute a great deal to a gardens theme. Tree lighting can cast a lovely set of branch shadows, highlight a particularly beautiful bark or trunk, or twine up branches to create a magical enchanted feel.

It's not all smoke and mirrors though, lighting can be practical, lighting the way along paths, decks and stairs, leading us to an entrance, or ensuring we don't trip on the way there, banishing the shadows for our own safety.

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

**Upcoming 'Garden' Events** – check out the ANPSA Website for specific details and other related native garden activities. Please send information for 'Garden Events' in your region to promote in the next Newsletter.

### ANPSA Biennial Conference

10 – 16 September, 2022  
Kiama Pavilion, NSW south coast

*“Australian Flora – past present future”*

There will be a GDSG meeting for members to meet face to face and discuss how to improve our group.

### A warm welcome to all our new members

We look forward to your active participation in your study group . . . . .

Jeanette Wilson, Tyabb, Vic;  
Jane McLean, Chapel Hill, Brisbane;  
Samantha Newton, Lane Cove Sydney, NSW;  
David Prigg, Cessnock, NSW;  
LaVerne Marshall, Pottsville NSW;  
Jan Darr, Glenwood, Qld;  
Gemma Rimmer, Albion Park NSW;  
Beth McDonald, Gold Coast, Qld

**Current Membership:** 201

### Treasurer's Report – October 19, 2021

General account:	\$ 3,995.40
Expenses:	\$ 0.00
Term Deposit:	\$ 28,341.57 (incl interest of \$392.36 - reinvested for 12 months to January 25, 2022)
TOTAL:	\$ 32,336.97

**There is no charge for Membership of GDSG and the quarterly Newsletters are distributed only by email.**

The Newsletter for the **ANPSA Garden Design Study Group** is published quarterly in February, May, August and November.

**Copy Deadline:** two weeks before the publication month, earlier submissions will be warmly welcomed by the Editor.

**Newsletter Editor:** Lawrie Smith AM  
38 Sandpiper Avenue NORTH LAKES Q 4509  
Phone: 0411 228 900  
Email: [gdsq@anpsa.org.au](mailto:gdsq@anpsa.org.au)

## GDSG at the Biennial Conference

Study Groups recently received this request from the Biennial Conference committee encouraging SG participation at Kiama.

*“There are three ways we can have SG leaders or reps participate, in addition to each having their own meetings:*

- 1. Be incorporated into the main conference agenda as presenters. The theme is Past, Present and Future and in the latter two we are hoping to address such issues as what are the current good practices and successes, what are the challenges and threats and what can we do about them.*
- 2. Take, for example, current projects they are working on and do a presentation which is repeated several times in workshops when participants circle around a number of presentations for half a day. Or take part in a “world café” type activity*
- 3. Have a display in the allocated room.*

*Are you able to put out feelers and gauge who might want to be involved and in which activity?”*

On behalf of GDSG I responded positively to the committee and am now awaiting to hear what is possible or preferred.

At these biennial get-togethers we always have a display of GDSG initiatives, a very productive meeting, and new members are always signed up. If you have any ideas about special promotional techniques and ways to engage interest thru our display please let me know. Also advise if you are attending, so a roster to staff the display can be organised.

Obviously it is still eleven months until the Conference, however it takes time to organise participation. So, it would be great if members could give this some initial consideration and contact me to offer to provide any assistance whether attending the conference or not. Not surprisingly I have yet to register for the conference, preferring to wait and see how the COVID impact progresses.