



GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP

ISSN: 1039 – 9062
ABN: 82 428 110 028
Newsletter
February, 2022

118

STUDY GROUP LEADER / NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Lawrie Smith AM 38 Sandpiper Avenue NORTH LAKES Q 4509

ph: 0411 228 900 email: gdsd@anpsa.org.au

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

Newsletter Theme: 'Gardens in Shade'

CONTENTS

	page
About the Newsletter & Themes	1
The Editor Comments	2
Newsletter Theme – 'Gardens in Shade'	3
Fifty Shades of Shade Jane Fountain	11
Shady Gardens – a few words Jeff Howe	12
Which vine for arbour shade? Susan Rouse	13
The Bannon's Shady Place Bob Bannon	14
Wilting Shade Loving Plants Pam Yarra	16
More Shade Garden Comments	17
PLANTS IN DESIGN	
Garden Design – Inner-suburban Living Ruth Beilin	20
A Vertical Garden in Melbourne Diana Snape	21
Native Plants in Urban Landscape Prof John Rayner	21
Maranoa Botanic Gardens Andrea Dennis	22
Hardy Natives for a Shady Garden Bev Hanson	23
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	24
PAST NEWSLETTERS – EXTRACTS: issues 56 – 59	25
Membership Matters	27
Stop Press	27



Shade is a fact of life in every garden - it can be naturally provided by an overhead canopy of foliage or else by a specially constructed shelter. The more luxuriant evergreen leaves and unique plant forms suited to these shady environments add diversity and visual interest to a native garden design.

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.

Membership of GDSG is free . . . 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 2021 Newsletter dates and themes:

Issue	date	Theme
119	May	"Design for Climate Change"
120	August	"Very Small Gardens & Courts"
121	November	"Diversity or Uniformity?"
122	February	"Garden Focal Points"

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

The Editor Comments

Next Newsletter #119 - Theme *“Design for Climate Change”*

There is still debate in the community about the reality of climate change and its impact. It appears certain that the seasons, rainfall, its distribution patterns, and the temperatures are all behaving in irregular ways that make garden design and gardening no longer as simple and consistent as it has previously been. Perhaps you have noticed in your local region, how it has become necessary to change your garden design, plant selection, construction and maintenance procedures to adapt to meet the changing environment. The next Newsletter will allow you to share how you have or intend to cope with the changes in climate.

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 for inclusion in the next edition.

ANPSA 2022 Kiama NSW

It is now only seven months until the September conference and some of you would have already booked to attend. Others are like me, still undecided as no one is sure how the pandemic will develop and we are concerned about the health issues that could be associated with a visit to Kiama. Unfortunately, due to my age (79) and my wife's health issues it is certain that I will not be able to attend.

The Conference organisers have planned to provide Study Groups with a number of ways to interact and present the value of being a member, and I have previously indicated that we would like to be involved where we are able. I know there are a number of GDSG members who have already offered to assist at the conference to promote and discuss our aims and what we seek to do.

Several options have been offered to consider - could we agree to any or all of the following:

- hold a GDSG meeting;
We always do this at a conference and it is an invaluable way to see how we can make the study

group more beneficial to members – we must do this! Who is interested to chair the meeting?

- stage and staff a small display;
We always do this, and I have the posters used previously which will need minor modification – we must do this too! Who is interested to erect and manage?
- lead a garden design workshop;
This is a new proposal and could be productive but would need a member to prepare and lead a carefully chosen theme – is someone interested?
- garden design presentation.
Similarly this would need a member to develop a special theme to be presented as a lecture or part of a panel discussion – is someone interested?

I know from past experience, that we have members who can very ably carry out whatever tasks are needed. The first step is to let me know if you are prepared to accept any of these roles. Please be assured that I would do whatever I can to assist those members who offer to assist with our GDSG presence.

While this thought is fresh in your mind, just go to the keyboard right now, and type your expression of interest or better still call me on mobile. I know seven months seems a long way off, but it is important to start early to ensure we plan an optimum participation.

I have been thinking!

Thanks to lockdowns etc there has been lots of time to consider ideas and initiatives for making the GDSG more useful and attractive for members. Following are two suggestions that could fit the bill – do you agree?

Form a local GDSG ‘chapter’ in your area!

Here is a challenge to the membership for someone in each state to organise to form a local GDSG ‘chapter’ to meet together informally, just as we still do in southeast Queensland. Remember that Victoria and NSW had also previously established local groups, unfortunately now in mothballs! Even if this local get together happens only once or twice a year it will be invaluable. Visiting gardens in company with others of like mind to discuss the design aspects considered and applied is a wonderful way to learn from example. Gardens visited need not always be those of members, as it is worthwhile to investigate other garden types

or applications which will inspire new directions through their innovation or differing landscape character from heritage to contemporary – expand your horizons!

Please start thinking about this opportunity to personalise and increase your knowledge in garden design by offering to convene or simply join a new local GDSG ‘chapter’. Let me know if you are interested and I can provide a list of existing members in your locality or postcode area. It would be great to have sufficient interest to allow discussion and resolution at the ANPSA Conference in Kiama later this year. I’m eagerly waiting for your responses.

GDSG Photo Competition

Let’s do it again! Back in 2000 we organised within the Society, an informal Australia wide photographic competition showing good garden design using native plants. The intention was to add to our GDSG library of garden images for inclusion on the ANPSA website. In March 2001, Diana Snape, GDSG Leader, advised that . . .

“The prize for the best photograph has been awarded to Fran Bright of Logan Village Qld, for a photo of the garden of Jan Glazebrook and Denis Cox. There were many entries and the standard of photographs was high, the committee found it very difficult to make the final decision; so warm congratulations to the winner, who will receive a copy of the Study Group’s book on with Australian Plants”.

Please let me know if you think this is a workable and valuable idea to increase awareness of native plants and garden design. It is one way to use some of our financial resources to further the aims of the study group. This is another subject for the GDSG meeting agenda at ANPSA Kiama.

Newsletter #118 theme: ‘Gardens in Shade’

Just over six weeks ago we experienced the longest day of the year and since then the shorter shadows cast from the overhead summer sun are now progressively

lengthening as the trajectory slowly drops toward the southern horizon. This imperceptible day by day change over the next five months, progressively changes the sun and shadow patterns across the garden as **shaded** areas move location. In addition some of the trees and shrubs will have grown taller and broader providing expanded **shaded** garden areas to deal with in the coming cooler months.

You might note that some plants you carefully planted to suit particular exposure to sun or **shade** are now be in less than ideal conditions and may need relocation. Possibly your initial garden design has been compromised, and it may be necessary to consider new species as suitable replacements! However this will offer the opportunity to establish other plants that were not suitable for the conditions at the time. Successfully dealing with **shade** in gardens goes back to first principles as you DESIGN a new garden or refresh an existing one. These are a few related considerations:

Latitude: Be aware that latitude will have a large bearing and impact on your design, whether tropical, temperate or anywhere in between. As the sun moves seasonally from north to south the angle of sunshine rays become progressively lower, automatically providing increasing areas of **shade** cast from the house, other structures and of course growing trees. North of the Tropic of Capricorn (e.g. Rockhampton & Longreach) there is minimal if any **shade** cast in summer on the south side of any obstruction. Whereas in say Tasmania, there are long periods of widely cast shadow over a southern aspect garden in most seasons.

Listen to the plants: Be aware that many plants can tell you where they prefer to grow best by simple observation. There is always an exception, but a good rule to follow is that the size of the foliage generally indicates the amount of **shade** a plant will tolerate. So very **shady** gardens generally have large luxuriant leaves which offer appropriate surface area

to collect and process the minimal sunshine penetrating through the leaf canopy above.

Control the Sun: Decide where and when you want the shadow to be cast then locate a tree in the correct position. In our new small suburban garden it was important to block the northwest summer sun from scorching the front garden. The sunshine analysis for the land defined the optimum location for a **shade** tree to allow morning sun into the garden but to cast its shadow over the front garden from early afternoon. There was really only one position which would also allow the sun to warm the garden all day in the winter months when the tree shadow is cast over the house.

Change over time: In any garden change over time is welcome and critical. As a garden matures the overall character of most will change substantially as plants grow, invariably developing greater areas and density of **shade**, which can become a limiting factor and/or opportunity impact. It is possible that I have created a bit of a monster in a parts of my new small garden by crowding some taller species more closely together than is desirable – but nature does that constantly in forest and rainforest particularly, where plants compete for light by becoming tall and slender. After four years of growth for many specimens I have uppruned or removed all side branchlets to establish a canopy 1 – 2m above the garden surface to allow the sun to penetrate under. The pattern of multiple ‘naked’ stems and branches provides an attractive ‘transparent screen’ that allows many **shade** tolerant small shrubs, covers, ferns and tufting plants to form a mosaic garden carpet under, which would have been impossible initially.

*Subtropical **Shade** Garden:* Several years ago I was impressed when visiting John & Liz Aitken’s garden in Bonnet Bay NSW and its relationship with natural **shade**. The dramatic site slopes steeply down a southern exposed escarpment to the Woronora River complete with a carefully created bush track, winding and stepping down the slope, under a tall canopy of mature trees, *Angophora* spp etc. The **shaded** moist conditions are ideal for a collection of subtropical species that



obviously love these conditions and are thriving. I doubt that any section of this enticing sloping garden receives full sun at any time of the year. What a wonderful framework it provides in the view to the waters far below under the tracery pattern of branches and foliage over the multiple understory species that cover the irregular ground surface. Truly a wonderful example of a garden design inspired and refined by nature through patterns of light and **shade**.

*Cool Temperate **Shade** Garden:* Similarly I have been inspired by the cool temperate gardens of Tasmania and Victoria where the **shade**, high rainfall and protected valleys have produced a completely different garden character to those of the subtropics and tropics.



Dicksonia forest, Cape Otway, Victoria

*Diverse Plants for **Shade***: Our continent is so full of species diversity with each bioregion offering its own palette of plants, each ideally suited to the environments of a specific location. In designing our gardens we are tempted to select plants from a very different climatic region which is a major challenge for success. However this is something that we all do - 'the grass is always greener over the fence!' - species from elsewhere will add visual spice to a garden. It is a trial and error situation where the research, the successes and the failures all contribute to our knowledge and experience with growing the Australian flora in horticultural application. 'Design with Nature' is the key to a successful garden.



Do you know the sun & shade patterns of your site?

After writing these comments about **shade** gardens in cooler climates I decided to review photographs that I have taken over the years of APS member's gardens visited to see what the images tell about this subject - for each I have made comments about the apparent design initiatives.

Summary 'Gardens in Shade'

It is not often that you take the opportunity to compare gardens with similar characteristics to one another and try to identify the elements that link them or separate them.

All of these gardens have one major thing in common, the use of Australian native plants. Irrespective of where in the continent they are located there is a visual similarity, even though the species in their composition might be radically different.

Glancing through this selection of photos, it appears that broadly, the tropical **shade** gardens and the temperate **shade** gardens are similar in character, in that the foliage is generally deep green and shiny, leaves are large or of distinctive form, basically for the same physiological reasons.

In most cases the understory species will need to be regularly maintained and pruned to form, to preserve intimate views across the gardens under the trees. There are no formal or geometric gardens in this collection of images, rather they illustrate a natural, informal association between specimens. This is not to suggest that it would be difficult or impossible to create a **shaded** garden that is stylised or formal. However nature seems to prefer diversity, contrast and interest, probably not for aesthetic reasons, but rather to attract wildlife to ensure production of the next generation of plant species.



Peter Olde garden - typical of many large gardens, where minimal overhead tree canopy allows colourful full sun gardens; however there is a bush house for shade tolerant plants



Sunshine Coast hinterland garden - typical of many in Queensland where there is substantial overhead tree canopy and consequently many suitable areas for shade gardens.



Garden in downtown Melbourne - taking inspiration from a traditional veranda, in a contemporary urban courtyard garden utilizing both sun and shade for species diversity.



Garden in the Darling Ranges WA - where the tree canopy provides shade and protection for lush understory screening gardens



Diana Snape garden in Melbourne - uses a high canopy to provide shade but allow the low level winter sun to penetrate for outdoor living



Kennedy garden in Melbourne - uses a high canopy to provide shade but allow the low level winter sun to penetrate for species diversity



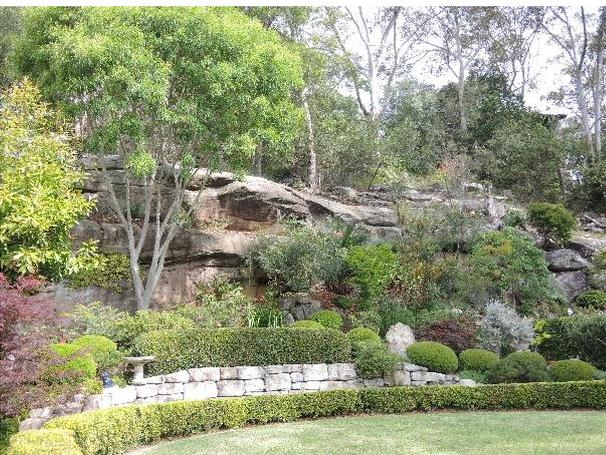
Pam Yarra garden in Melbourne - uses a high discontinuous tree canopy to provide shade but also allow pools of sunlight to enhance garden species massed together



Chris Larkin garden in Melbourne - uses a high tree canopy to provide shade closer to the house but opens up beyond to allow other areas of full sun for colourful covers and shrubs



Bev Fox garden in Melbourne - uses a high canopy to provide shade, but is discontinuous to allow several pools of sunlight to enhance collections of special garden species



Joan Zande garden in Sydney - takes advantage of a sandstone escarpment and an open sunny aspect with dappled shade to maximise colour and texture in garden display



Carol Guard garden in Shorncliffe Qld – rainforest established over many years where multiple trunks and tree canopy protect the diverse understory species collection



Sylvan Grove Garden in Sydney - takes advantage of a naturally protected moist valley and waterway to display shade tolerant, understory and aquatic species



Cox & Glazebrook garden Logan Qld - is an established collector's garden primarily for sun loving plants, a grove of trees to the south provide shade in that area



Garden in Gympie Qld - takes advantage of a southern aspect behind a two storey house to create a shaded garden and waterway.



George Smith garden Warner Qld - uses the existing forest canopy to shade and protect an extensive collection of rainforest understory



Marriott garden in the Grampians - surprisingly, has used a canopy of trees to protect and establish shade tolerant rainforest species in a unique environment



My previous acreage garden Whiteside Qld - grasses, covers, tufts, fern and small shrubs establish readily under a canopy of foliage



Yulara village at Uluru - has developed shaded gardens under the arid tree species to create a uniquely Australian outback shade garden



Bev & John Hanson garden in Melbourne - uses a high tree canopy to provide shade, but is discontinuous to allow pools of sunlight to enhance the garden views



Brisbane garden - specially designed veranda and pergola structures can imitate a natural foliage canopy by controlling the degree of sun and shade needed for the plant collection



Kawarra garden in Melbourne - illustrates firewise design with the forest canopy kept well away from structures, but admitting full sun for plants with colour around the house



Rockhampton garden - trees and shrubs providing overhead shade and shelter provide ideal conditions for shade tolerant plants



Schauman small garden in Melbourne - has few trees but expansive open sunny areas around the house to maximise flower display



Nicky Zanen garden in Melbourne - visually incorporates mature shade trees to provide drama as well as shade to enhance the garden species selection



Aitchison & Guymer garden in Melbourne - set in an open forest providing a natural shade canopy which opens up to admit sun over the waterway



Ben & Ros Walcott extensive Canberra garden - has evergreen and deciduous tree shade, but primarily open sunny areas around the house to maximise flower display



Bush Houses in Brisbane - simply constructed between house and side fence to provide sheltered conditions for collections of shade tolerant plants

Fifty Shades of Shade

Jane Fountain, Brisbane

Shade is easy in my garden – but how much shade and what time of day, month, year! The acre block runs east-west so the sun comes over the 120m length in summer and from the northern side in winter when it often hides below the neighbour's tree line.

Under my eucalypt canopy in this bush block, there is always filtered **shade**, and shrubs become leggy rather than compact. My shady area near the house has extra summer **shade** and in winter the low sun provides light and warmth from the north and northwest. My choice of plants has been random - own propagation, plant swaps and plant markets. The design follows the natural path or waterway, and I have used bordering rocks (bought) near the house and have to fence or cover gardens with wire mesh to keep out the ever-present bush turkeys.



This area (above) is under a low canopy of several *Melicope rubra* with the filtered **shade** of the Eucalypts high above. Providing protection and a micro-climate are also *Lepidorema pulchella* (small leaved tamarind) and a 5m *Phyllanthus cuscutiflorus* (pink phyllanthus). These plants are *Asplenium australasicum* (bird's nest fern), *Phaius australis* (swamp orchid), *Helmholtzia glaberrima* (stream lily) in water, *Licuala ramsayi* (right of photo, lives in a pot), *Drynaria rigidula* and I have to admit to some random ferns and bromeliads that snuck in there.



Other plants are (above); swinging on the tree, *Hoya australis*, under the *Asplenium* is an exotic fern and the short upright leaves of *Dendrobium monophyllum* (lily-of-the-valley orchid), *Adiantum aethiopicum* (maidenhair fern having a good season), *A. hispidulum* (rough maidenhair, hiding) and *Proiphys cunninghamii* (Brisbane lily out of the picture); at the back, *Drynaria rigidula* in a big pot, *Angiopteris evecta* (a couple of tall stalks and new shorter fronds of king fern in big pot), beside it is *Alpinia caerulea* and *A. arundelliana* nearby. In the pot of water that birds use is a pot of *Ranunculus inundatus* and a young *Platycterium bifurcatum* (Elkhorn) on the tree behind with an exotic orchid.



There is a gully (above) that divides the block and water runs in good rain. On the north fence line there are a *Ficus benjamina* (weeping fig over little waterhole) and *Araucaria cunninghamii* (Hoop Pines) and under the Eucalypt canopy are 10m *Melaleucas*, and *Harpullia pendula*,

Auranticarpa rhombifolia, *Agathis robusta* (Qld Kauri, young), *Harpullia ramiflora*, *Cordyline petiolaris* and *C. stricta* and I have planted *Lomandra* to slow the water flow in times of heavy rain.



On an island (above) in the middle of the creek bed there are *Syzygium luehmannii*, *S. australe*, *Mackinlaya macrosciadea*, *Neolitsea dealbata*, *Alpinia caerulea*, *Wilkiea macrophylla*, *Diploglottis campbellii* (small leaved tamarind), *Cupaniopsis wadsworthii* (duck-footed Cupaniopsis, closest to camera), *Costus potierae* (corkscrew ginger), *Glycosmis trifoliata* (pink lime).

Shady Gardens – a few words

Jeff Howes, NSW

My 760 m2 suburban garden in northern Sydney is a dry garden, over a clay base that receives dappled light especially in my back yard, due to very large neighbour's trees (but a cool house in summer). The maximum amount of full sun is only a few hours and this varies during the different season.

I need to create privacy in my backyard along my fence line due to my suburbs 1960 – 70s covenant, mandating galvanised 'Weld mesh' see through fencing, (since being ignored when re-fencing is undertaken). They also mandated no front fences as well. I have used two different approaches to privacy and growing in dappled light.

Using a variety of 'semi' rainforest plants as screen plants as they are hardy and have

attractive colourful new leaves. Their flowers are also attractive, as is their fruit. They can be pruned hard if needed. A list of plants I use is as follows:

Acmena smithii - including some of the modern hybrids. They can be prone to white scale though.

Archirhodomyrtus beckleri - grows better with some morning sun, a great plant.
Syzygium paniculatum dwarf form but still a 3m tall grower.

Backhousia citriodora - grows at the end of my fence line, receiving morning sun.
Syzygium cv - various of the many hybrids available that all grow to around 2m or so tall.

Graptophyllum excelsum - a great tallish and skinny plant. I grow these on from seed and have many leaf and flower size variations.

On one boundary I have a neighbour's huge 70 plus year old English Oak tree, which creates heavy **shade** and dry conditions. For screening I have used, very successfully I may add, *Cordyline stricta* as it has narrow,



strappy leaves up to 50cm long and 1 to 2.5cm wide and grows in my situation to 2.5m tall with many stems creating a dense barrier. Again this plant is very prunable and after flowering has attractive black berries. They naturally grow in moist situations but are drought tolerant. Mine are slower growing due to the dry soil. They can become rampant and spread quickly, if they are given ample moisture.

I have also found that *Correa glabra*, the yellow flowering form, grows and flowers well in dappled light and is a hardy plant needing minimum watering.

It is worth experimenting with many other native plants to see if they grow although my lack of full sun has resulted in many 'non performers' and poor flowering, as you would expect. I have found any plant with green oval leaves grow much better in dappled light than those with thin grey leaves.

Which vine for arbour shade?

Susan Rouse, Brisbane

An arbour divides our north facing garden behind our suburban Brisbane house to create a shady path from the laundry on the way to the Hills clothes hoist. The challenge has been to grow vines that provide **shade** whilst not ending up like a giant bird's nest.



GDSG Qld members inspect the arbour

After seeing the floriferous display of *Pandorea pandorana alba* on the Internet, I thought I was onto a white winner. I duly bought three plants and started to train them up plastic trellis secured loosely around the metal posts. The idea was, that with the help of the vines, these posts would eventually take on the proportions of the block columns on the opposite side of the arbour. The first surprise was when the vines bloomed. I tromped back to the big green warehouse brandishing the label and the *Pandorea jasminoides* flower with its offending pink hues. To the store's credit they sourced plants to match the label and *P pandorana* entered the race to the top.

The *P pandorana* vines were planted midway between the others so they needed a string

to twine around on their way up. Quite by accident I learned that you can create wonderful plaits/braids/spirals with their stems. These retain their shape as the stems enlarge eventually fusing to forming a single shapely 'trunk'. A fantastic effect.

The *P pandorana* grew like rockets and that was the problem. In the first two years the new foliage provided an attractive light leafy cover. I was delighted by the first few cream trumpets, which while hardly overwhelming, they also turned out to be the only flowers I ever saw.

By Year 3 a twiggy scum was accumulating and the vines were quickly morphing into giant messy toupee with slight green fringe. It was very hot and dry so I mulched the garden. Then I learned something else – these heavy vines are prone to collar rot. The ascending plaits braids and twirls that were thicker than my arm were left swinging in the breeze topped by a massive brown scraggy bird nest.

When things were not going as hoped, I started a back-up plan. I had romantic visions of *Callerya megasperma* flowers dangling in dappled **shade**. Having seen this vine monsterring a 30 metre high tree, I was a bit wary, so to be on the safe side, I planted the two vines on the western side the block columns. That afternoon sun might have been a bit severe. Three years later and they each have about 10 leaves.

In the meantime there was a magical accident at the southern end of the arbour courtesy of *Geitonoplesium cymosum*. This delicate twining vine is remarkably adaptable. It had cloaked the end of the arbour with a soft green mantle, which, when in flower hummed with masses of stingless bees. Individually they did not appear to be a long lived vine – maybe two to three years, but the number of seeds dropping ensures continuity. If you plant a cluster somewhere accessible this hardy and trainable vine will reward you with an elegant green garland graced with delicate white flowers.

By Year 4 I was clinging to the top of the arbour 12 feet up plucking at and picking off

the birds nest back to the bare metal. The effect I was wanting is seen with the vegetation of *Dolichandra unguis-cati* or Cats Claw Creeper. I would never plant this. While *Parsonsia straminea* has a similar effect, I have seen what it is capable of and did not dare try it.

At the side of our house is a wrought iron gate with a weldmesh canopy over which is *Tecomanthe burungu*. This vine puts on a stunning floral display for around three weeks of the year. It does not like the full sun and is forever heading back for the cover of the eaves. Watching this vine attempting to retreat from the sun started me thinking about whether what the arbour needed was a vine sandwich.

Over the years the *P jasminoides* was notching up brownie points. It was green. It had survived the hot dry summer and it was not showing any signs of nesting. With *T burungu* in the now in the cross hairs, you could hardly call *P jasminoides* pink.



The arbour several years later

To provide more initial cover from the searing sun **shade** cloth was attached to two separate sections of the arbour. I bought two *Tecomanthe hillii* from the big green warehouse. Each of the vines quickly made their way up to the top of the arbour. From here I have directed them to the protection of the **shade** cloth. In the meantime I have let the *P jasminoides* do whatever it wants with some added encouragement to get over the hump when it cannot get a grip on the sections with **shade** cloth.

The *T hillii* are proving quite vigorous. The first lot of flowers were larger and more spectacular than *T burungu*. Or so I thought. When I read the article about *Tecomanthe* in the quarterly NPQ Journal I laughed out loud. The big green warehouse had done it again. This time I had been sold *Tecomanthe dendophyllia* originating from PNG! The flowers are drop dead gorgeous and forgiven for their northern origins. Should the *Callerya megasperma* ever make it to the top of the arbour, I will encourage these towards the areas without the **shade** cloth so that the flowers can one day dangle in the dappled light.

The Bannon's Shady Place

Bob Bannon, Bray Park, Brisbane

We moved to our house at Bray Park in November 1976, and received two pieces of information from my wife Beris', work colleague. One was to plant a Grevillea she gave us, "Gets lovely orange flowers". The other advice was to join SGAP (NPQ) – Pine Rivers has a branch! Fast forward 45 years, the Silky Oak went about five years ago at about 16 metres high (on a 609 sq metre block) and we're still in Pine Rivers NPQ.

With the removal of the Silky Oak, the rest of the trees/shrubs discovered a new life and put on a growth spurt which continues today. Consequently, the existing trees, *Barklya syringifolia* (Crown of Gold), *Mrysiene variabilis* (Muttonwood), *Glochidion ferdinandi* (Cheesetree), *Backhousia citriodora* (Lemon-scented Myrtle), *Mallotus claoxyloides* (Smell of the Bush), *Xanthostemon chrysanthus* (Golden Penda), *Stenocarpus sinuatus* (Wheel of Fire Tree) and several *Harpullia pendula* (Queensland Tulipwood), one of which is our neighbour's on the eastern side and the largest, have all headed onwards and upwards!. A tall hedge of *Syzygium paniculata* (Magenta Lilly Pilly) on the western boundary, also ensures a well-**shaded** backyard from the afternoon sun.



As we have a northerly aspect, in winter, the sun barely sees the backyard, so the decision to remove any grass was an easy one. We virtually covered the area with cardboard and covered it with a healthy load of forest blend mulch. We have since planted several shrubs and smaller trees, *Commersonia salviifolia* (syn. *Rulingia salviifolia*) (Grey Rulingia), *Phyllanthus cuscutiflorus* (Pink Phyllanthus), *Syzygium 'Cascade'*, *Melicope rubra* (Little Evodia), *Hibiscus 'Aussie Pink'* (about to be severely pruned), to name but a few.

We've discovered over the past few years that Grevilleas really DO like full sun and really struggle without it! A couple of bottlebrushes – *Melaleuca 'Reeve's Pink'* and *Melaleuca 'Prestige Pink'* are coping quite well, receiving sun for a good part of the day in Summer.



Due to all of this **shade**, our understorey consists mainly of an assortment of ferns – a large number of *Asplenium australasicum* (Crows Nest Fern), *Drynaria rigidula* (Basket Fern) including *D. rigidula 'Whiteii'*, various lillies – *Crinum*s etc., *Coleus spp.* (formerly *Plectranthus*), *Violas* as a scrambler/groundcover and *Hoyas* love climbing through the trees. *Dianella caerulea*

and *Dianella caerulea var. assera* fill in some of the gaps also. Orchids also fill in and are always a joy to find them in flower in spring. *Phaius australis* (Swamp Orchid) are spectacular to see and require little care in S.E. Queensland. *Goodenia 'Gold Cover'* has been successful where there are the rare glimpses of sunshine and even *Scaevola albida*, although slower (read forever) to establish, has survived the lower light conditions. *Orthosiphon aristatus* (Cat's Whiskers) is a marvellous plant, able to withstand many varied conditions, and will tolerate **shade** to full sun conditions, but needs some warmth during winter, so the southern climes mightn't suit it. The white form is more tolerant than the purple.

While 99% of our garden is planted with natives, some will know I don't mind some exotics in pots, particularly "indoor" types – *Spathiphyllums*, *Aspidistras*, *Begonias* and various *Calatheas*, and *Zygocactus*. As a result, there are several species in pots scattered around the garden. Generally, they are easy to propagate, so are good as giveaways to visitors, who may not have room for a shrub or tree.

So far, it's been all about the back garden. The front garden is not too much different, apart from the driveway taking a large "chunk". Facing north, one would consider *Grevilleas* would be the item of choice. Partially correct! On the eastern side a small bed in full sun, consists of a *Corymbia 'Summer Red'*, which seems to be remaining at about the three metre height. Currently (January 2022), it heralded the New Year in full flower. Behind the *Corymbia* is a *Grevillea 'Dorothy Gordon'* which is about 4 metres by 4 metres and constantly full of flowers and lorikeets. (Hmm. I did something right.) A *Lomandra longifolia* (Long-leaf Mat Rush) and *Dianella caerulea var. assera* also occupy the garden.

The Western side of the driveway and on the footpath (verge for southerners) is a *Buckinghamia celcissima* (Ivory Curl). This *Buckinghamia* is constantly pruned by our good friends at Energex and has, consequently spread out, similar to a small Poinciana. The result of this has **shaded** the front garden for over forty years. How's that for good planning?

Not to be outdone, I was at a school fete, probably 35 years ago, and from 100 metres away could smell a *Mallotus claoxyloides*, and there it was in a 150mm pot in amongst hundreds of plants. This to be a mate for the one in the backyard which didn't have the familiar "Smell of the Bush". In it went along with a *Leptospermum madiddum*, two *Acacia fimbriata* 'Dwarf' (really??) and an existing *Melaleuca viminalis*. Consequently, the front yard is just as **shaded** as the backyard.



Understorey plants now consist of a similar planting to the backyard but include *Austromyrtus dulcis* (Midyim) it gets late afternoon sun and works well. More *Orthosiphon aristatus* (White flowering form) and *Drynaria rigidula* (Basket Fern), *Psychotria daphnoides* (Smooth Psychotria), *Cordyline rubra*, a small-growing form of *Syzygium paniculata* (Magenta Lilly Pilly), and an Elkhorn (*Platycerium bifurcatum*) or two. Several *Adiantum spp.* (Maidenhair Ferns) are throughout the garden as a whole.

The side gardens consist of *Callicarpa pedunculata* (Velvet Leaf) and *Synostemon albiflorus* (Showy Sauropus) on the western side and a single *Synostemon albiflorus* on the eastern side. Probably about three hours of sun a day.

Interestingly, many years ago we had a resident possum living (during the day) in a potted palm on our front verandah, coming and going as she pleased, along with her bubs. Every night she would head out and give the *Mallotus* a graze, keeping it to a good height but also bushing it up nicely. Our little possum has long gone but not so the *Mallotus*, providing marvellous **shade** and giving us a

wonderful perfume, not only from its leaves but the scent of the flowers is beautiful. The bees obviously think so also, as they swarm in with a loud hum when it's flowering.

Strangely enough, it seems that *Mallotus* is the right tree in the right place. Gotta have a win sometime.

Wilting Shade Loving Plants.

Pam Yarra, Melbourne



Your reminder email was very timely, as I watched wilting **shade** loving plants, before yesterday's 'tropical dump of 28 mm' in a short space of time (7/01/22). At top of photo low growing *Chorilaena quercifolia*, bottom is *Goodenia ? ovata* low growing form. Below are several *Banksia spinulosa*, great survivors in dry **shade**.

More Shade Garden Comments from our GDSG archives

The following extracts from various GDSG Newsletters all deal in some way with Gardens in Shade – I'm sure you will find some design inspiration in these extracts.

Plants for dry shaded garden and clay soil

NL #55 August 2006 Pam Yarra Vic

Following the Melbourne Branch's November 2005 lunch in our shady garden in Heathmont, an outer eastern suburb of Melbourne, this list of plants that survive and even thrive with combinations that work well. After the last large pine tree was removed many years ago, the following indigenous plants continue to regenerate, *Gahnia sieberiana* (Red-fruit Saw-sedge), *Lomandra longifolia* (Spiny-headed Mat-rush) and *L. filiformis* (Wattle Mat-rush). These plants define the pathways with the addition of other clumping plants & grasses such as *Poa sieberiana* (Wiry Tussock-grass), *P. labillardieri* (Large Tussock-grass), *Thelionema caespitosum* (Tufted Lily) and *Orthrosanthous multiflorus* (Morning Flag).

The indigenous *Prostanthera lasianthos* (Victorian Christmas Bush) often does not survive drought conditions but does regenerate. Some *Grevillea* have not survived the current drought, but a long living survivor is *G. arenaria* and it is also available in a dwarf form. Its flowers are inconspicuous, but the birds always find them. Another long-lived thriving plant, *Chorilaena quercifolia* with its small greenish yellow flowers is a constant source of food for the bees. It, too, is available in dwarf form. *Callistemon* all thrive, as do the many forms of *Banksia spinulosa* (Hairpin B.), *B. integrifolia* (Coast B.), *B. blechnifolia* (Fern-leaf B.), *B. paludosa* (Marsh B.), *B. canei* (Mountain B.), *B. ericifolia* (Heath-leaf B.) and *B. penicillata*. *Correa* thrive with *C. 'Duskybells'*, *C. decumbens*, *C. baeuerlenii* (Chef's Cap C), *C. calycina*, *C. alba* (White C), *C. glabra* (Rock C.) and *C. pulchella* being a constant source of food for the numerous eastern spinebills and other honeyeaters visiting the garden.

Lasiopetalum floribundum (Velvet-bush) is variable, however *L. macrophyllum* (low form)

with its reddish new growth combines well with *L. floribundum*, *Thomasia foliosa*, *T. rhynchocarpa* and *T. laxifolia*. Although these plants all have small, almost insignificant flowers, the leaf variations make them an attractive combination.

Not to be overlooked is *Phebalium squamulosum* (Forest Phebalium), with its small oblong leaves complementing the narrow-leaved *P. stenophyllum* that forms a screening hedge. Many other plants have survived in our suburban bush garden and the remnant *Eucalyptus* deserve a mention as they convinced us to buy the block and they define the framework of the garden.

An unexpected groundcover

NL #10 August 1995 Geoff Simmons Old *Jasminum suavissimum* (Sweet Jasmine), with its wiry 1-2 mm stems and small white flowers, was planted with the thought that the strong fragrance of the flowers would be a desirable feature to have along a stairway. Several plants were positioned on a slope in an open to **semi-shaded** area. The result has been a thick carpet. The runners or stems develop roots at intervals, so nourishing the plant from start to finish and the appearance, even in drought conditions, has been a bright green with small, starry white flowers appearing above the foliage. While the flowers are scented, the perfume is not as strong as plants that I have grown elsewhere.

Ideas for a Secret Garden by members GDSG Melbourne visit to Freake Garden

GDSG NL # 81 February 2013

During our visit to the amazing 21-acre garden of Malcolm and Monika Freake last October, we were shown an area that was partly screened from its surroundings and quite shady, even on a sunny day. In terms of the whole garden it was a relatively small area (estimated to be approximately 10m by 8m) and you could easily walk past it without realizing it was there. Monika called it her secret garden. One conspicuous plant towards an edge of this area was an *Acacia cognata* 'Limelight', striking because of its foliage colour. Monika asked us for suggestions for further planting, or any other

ideas for this area. Following are the responses forwarded to her from the group.

Margaret James: For Monika's secret garden, I would suggest growing the wildflowers indigenous to the Gisborne area – these would probably include, for example, chocolate lilies, orchids, *Wahlenbergia*, *Geranium*, *Pelargonium*, *Ranunculus*, *Dianella*. They could be interspersed with kangaroo and wallaby grasses. These plants are not necessarily reliable or showy, but there is a special satisfaction in growing them and on a small scale they are very beautiful, which would make a great contrast with the large scale planting in the main areas.

Pam Yarra: I recall the area was quite shady and maybe the soil was dry. I would create an intimate area by using informal hedges, maybe a combination of *Thomasia* (preferably *T. purpurea*) and *Phebalium*. If more screening was desirable, *Plectranthus* could be used as a creeper on a framework. A small *Plectranthus* bush with bright blue flowers is hardy in all conditions too. The small, variegated form is worth inclusion for contrast (*Plectranthus parviflorus* 'Indigo Spires'). For me this area would definitely include seating and maybe a table and a birdbath too.

Nicky Zanen: I thought I saw a *Backhousia citriodora* planted in the area, and would encourage that Monika plants other scented plants nearby like *Prostanthera* and native mints. And as a separator between the secret garden and the rest of the garden have a boundary with a lot of understorey grasses and strappy plants, and maybe creepers so that it is all enclosed. The strappy plants will also be conducive to having a go at weaving.

Diana Snape: To create a sense of mystery and enclosure, trees around the perimeter could be interspersed by groups of medium-large shrubs as an informal hedge. Plants happy in **shade** or **semi-shade** include *Prostanthera*, *Phebalium* and *Pomaderris*. *Prostanthera incisa*, for one, has particularly perfumed foliage. The existing *Pomaderris* lights up its area with cream flowers and *Phebalium squamulosum ssp argenteum* would do the same.

A *Prostanthera* Bank

GDSG NL # 32 November 2000 Ros St Clair, Vic
I recently planted several *Prostanthera* in a garden that is **shaded** except in hot summer afternoons. I put *Prostanthera lasianthos* (Victorian Christmas Bush) 'Kallista Pink' and *P. melissifolia* (Balm Mint-bush), pink and mauve forms, at the back to screen the fence; *P. ovalifolia* (Mint-bush) for mid height (I hope) in the middle, and *P. cuneata* (Alpine Mint-bush) and *P. violacea* as foreground plants. While the intention was to vary the flowering and extend the flowering season, the plants look as though I have hit on a good combination. The variation in size, colour and shape of the leaves is working well. I chose a variegated *P. ovalifolia* and, with its central position, it is 'lifting' the whole combination. I am looking forward to seeing how it progresses.

Change of Species over Time

GDSG NL # 76 Nov 2011 Diana Snape
Widely recognized is the expansion of **shade** as trees (or large shrubs) grow to full size, so sun-loving species such as *Eremophila* and *Grevillea* suffer. Can this be avoided? If we want full sun in an area, then we can only include trees if they are well to the southern side of that area. We can omit trees altogether and retain full sun (but I couldn't bear to do that in a quarter-acre garden). I think it's both impractical and expensive to plant trees large enough to mean that there would be little change in size in the future. So, in our garden, there was no alternative but to adapt to increased **shade** when it became necessary. Species such as *Correa*, *Phebalium*, *Thomasia* and *Prostanthera* liked **semi-shade**. Some gardeners might decide from the start to have no trees in an open area to keep it sunny and possibly trees and **shade** elsewhere in the garden.

Design Ideas - Ask yourself!

GDSG NL # 32 Nov 2000 Geoff Simmons Qld
Many books, articles on gardening and journals give detailed instructions on the practicalities of designing gardens such as physical layout, paths and plants. However a more important factor may be the type of questions to be posed at the beginning or during the development of a garden, i.e. the philosophical concept. This may be particularly

pertinent to Australian garden design because the Australian plants chosen may differ considerably in form and habit from exotic species.

Consider the following - will the garden be:

- A kaleidoscope of colours or a few colours? Will they reflect the green and gold of the dominant Australian scene?
- Are single plants preferred to multiples of the same species?
- Are specimen plants to be included?
- To what extent will open spaces be provided?
- Should there be an attempt to mimic a natural type of vegetation (rainforest etc)?
- What colour, size or shape of foliage is desired?
- Should the plants encourage native animals and insects?
- Should the scents of the Australian bush be included in the plan?
- To what extent should 'Australianism' be expressed?
- Will the plantings be local native plants or species from anywhere in Australia or a combination?

As gardening is a dynamic process the answers may change with time - ideas alter, new varieties are seen and different moods are expressed. The juggling of the answers in formulating the whole or parts of the garden is one of the interesting features of design. In my case a visitor will not see any *Grevillea* in my garden, not because I dislike the specimens but because I am more interested in other genera to fill the space. Also no annuals are included as they mean more work and time that could be devoted to long-lived species. Ask yourself the question - where are you going with your garden?

Light and Shadow

GDSG NL # 76 Nov 2011 Jeff Howes

In my opinion, the most striking aspect of the Australian landscape (not rainforest) is that you can see the sky through the trees – there is that interplay of light and **shadow**, especially with the wind blowing. This openness and the subtle smells of the oils contained within a lot of the leaves makes for the uniqueness of an Australian garden – is this what we are trying to create?

'Must Know' - Principles of Gardening

GDSG NL # 76 Nov 2011 Jeff Howes

For many years I have been growing native plants, reading gardening books, listening to garden gurus, advising people on what native plants to grow in their gardens and listening to other people's gardening problems. During this time, I have come to the conclusion, that there is only one important garden principle that one must endeavour to obey to maximise your gardening success and it is:

Principle: Do not fight your site. The plants natural growing conditions must closely match your site to maximise results. Failure to do this, results in plants that grow far below their best and eventually require removal.

Your site environmental factors, will determine how successful a plant will or will not grow. Try to accurately assess the important factors, such as:

- Amount of light – full sun, no sun, morning or afternoon, **shady** etc.
- Soil types -- heavy clay, sandy or somewhere in between.
- Soil water retention -- evenly moist, boggy or does it dry out quickly due to root competition from nearby plants.

Once you have accessed your site the following are examples of miss-matching conditions:

- Trying to grow a plant that needs full sun in a **shady** position -- you will have a plant that grows weakly, flowers poorly and is susceptible to scale. Not a good look.
- Trying to grow a plant that needs a **shady/dappled light** position in a full sun position -- the plant will, at best wilt because it is too hot and at worst burn and die.
- Trying to grow a plant that needs a moist position in a dry position -- you will need to continually water it just to keep it alive.
- Trying to grow a plant that needs a dry position in a moist to wet soil -- you will need to provide additional drainage or add soil to raise the planting position.
- Not selecting plants correct soil type. Plants that grow naturally in lighter, sandy soils often do not have a strong enough root system to establish themselves in heavy, clay loam. To grow a plant in this situation requires it to be staked and watered often.

- Conversely, plants that grow naturally in heavy clay loam, will establish in any soil as they usually have a stronger root system and are more adaptive.

Over the years, I have seen many examples of plants deciding their most suitable position in one's garden, especially if they self-seed i.e. moving away from a sunny dry position to a more suitable shadier and moist position. If your site does not suit the plants on your 'wish list' then all is not lost. Plant them in a suitable size pot, this way:

- They can be moved around to maximise sun and **shade** requirements.
- You can provide the right soil and water requirements.

To conclude . . . know your site and learn to live with its limitations.

PLANTS IN DESIGN

Garden Design Implications in medium-density inner-suburban Living

GDSG NL # 28 Feb 2000

Ruth Beilin Senior Lecturer at Burnley College.

The move to higher housing density in inner-suburban areas in Australian cities has significant implications for the way we design gardens in these areas. Most fundamental is a huge change of scale. Previously most gardens contained large trees (albeit often too large for the space), but there will be little room for trees except in the streetscape. We will most likely see the use of shrubs pruned as trees. We desperately need indigenous nurseries to fund plant breeding research and selection, so the available plant spectrum is extended.

The other major change is likely to be a move to increased use of hard surfacing. All the common space may be transition space - used for moving through rather than as a focus in itself. We have to rethink how we use hard surfacing in these areas. One solution is to meld the ground plane and the vertical plane - perhaps run similar surfacing materials up the walls. This has the effect of symbolically pushing out the space and making it more than a transition zone and part of the liveable space.

The big challenge in these small gardens is to find a sense of place. Once you've determined what it is, I think you should set about dramatizing it. The garden can be bold or subdued depending on the mood you wish to create. Careful selection of plant material can help reflect the mood. It is often best to confine your plant choice to a limited range of plants. You might, for example choose bold, dramatic plants in the style of Roberto Burle Marx and treat them like living sculptures. Alternatively you could choose a selection of ferns and let their patterns and textures create a feeling of peacefulness.

To create the illusion of space in a small area, the most effective way is to make use of glass walls that extend the garden into the house and vice versa. Depth can also be created by careful choice of wall colours - white gives the appearance of extending space and interestingly, a matt black on a corner wall can suggest shadow and the illusion of on-going depth. Another possibility is to make use of reflective pools. Even if the space only allows for a still pool that runs along the bottom edge of a wall, it will add depth to the space. Running water, too, can create this effect. Small gardens often lend themselves to contemporary style water features that sit flat against a wall, but bring light and movement into the space.

Courtyards can be difficult because the walls often create deep **shade**, except for a burst of hot sun in the middle of a summer day. To deal with this, it is important to choose plants that have the environmental tolerance to deal with these conditions. I think you have to live with the fact that these areas will be largely **shaded**. You can create **shade** structures easily in a small area and this may be the best solution for the midday sun - areas of hard surfacing can get very hot. Courtyards also lend themselves to container gardening and once again I must emphasise the importance of the vertical plane. Containers can actually be built into the walls at different heights.

Walls themselves need to be reassessed. Traditionally, walls have tended to be made of materials that discouraged people from leaning against them. In such small spaces

walls need to be friendlier and part of the living space, and of the whole design. I think we can make much better use of wall colour, and not just use invisible colours. Coloured galvanised iron can be used very effectively. The Sante Fe gardening style is a good example of the use of colour. Often in these gardens you will see a courtyard tiled in rich ochres, purples and midnight blues. Two of the walls might be white and the other picks up the wonderful deep colour.

We can use plant materials in exciting ways too, to give walls texture and life. Consider the idea of areas being cut into the foliage and three dimensional tiles hung on the wall - the wall becomes a feature wall. The important thing in a small space like a courtyard is that there must be a great attention to detail. Care must be taken with edging and transition zones. Ornamentation and furniture must be kept to scale. Keeping a sense of scale, attention to detail and reassessment of how we use hard surfacing and walls areas are the major considerations in meeting these new design challenges.

A Vertical Garden in Melbourne

GDSG NL #88 November 2014 Diana Snape, Vic

We recently visited a garden in a Melbourne suburb, open in the Australian Open Garden Scheme, with a very beautiful vertical garden. I think it is the first such garden I have seen designed solely with Australian plants! It was designed by Philip Johnson, the designer of the highly successful garden that has just won prestigious awards in England - Gold Medal and Best in Show at the Hampton Court Flower Show. The owners commissioned the vertical garden for the tall white wall of a neighbour's place that backs on to their small courtyard. It faces west and measures 4 metres high by 3 m wide. Other than in winter, it is **shaded** by a wisteria vine growing on a trellis.

The owners had a slide show running that showed the installation of the garden. The design started as a wavy pattern drawn on the wall. The curved segments of this design were then planted out with a range of carefully selected plants including *Bauera*,

Baeckea, low *Correa*, *Acacia cognata* 'Dazzler', *Rhododendron lochiaie*, ferns, beautifully weeping *Lomandra* 'Tanika' and *Brachyscome*, *Scaevola* and violets. The plant list also included some surprisingly large plants such as *Leptospermum* 'Pink Cascade', *Acacia acinacea* and even *Grevillea endlicheriana*.

Over time, of course, some species grew better than others and there has been a gradual replacement of some species. Now some plants are even self-sowing in the vertical garden and maidenhair ferns have arrived too. The photos show how beautiful the effect is and also the setting, with the neighbours' decorative fence (as well as their high walls). The vertical garden might have been quite expensive to install initially but the owners said they enjoy maintaining it, helped by a 2-monthly visit from the designers. The owners have underground water tanks for storage of rainwater to be recycled through the system into a deep trough/reservoir at its base. Philip Johnson insisted that the vertical garden should use no off-site water.

I must admit I love the idea of vertical gardens. For a site with restricted space, it could be a very appealing option. Diana Snape

Native Plants in Urban Landscape

Associate Professor John Rayner

Reproduced from 'Correa' NL 375 December 2021 - APS Geelong

John is a senior lecturer at Melbourne University Burnley Campus and spoke to us about his 'Woody Meadow' project, a new way of looking at urban landscape design.

John believes that Australian plants are seen in their worst light in public landscaping. They are low maintenance and functional but not really aesthetically pleasing. John's approach is for a more 'naturalistic' planting scheme using, mostly, Australian native plants. Many other countries have starting adopting similar approaches and provided some inspiration.



A grassy woodland inspirational landscape

Naturalistic plantings are based on natural

habitats where plants fit together as a community. While plants may be endemic, native or exotic, 'natural' plantings form the basis of the design. Heathlands occur all over the world – Greece, south-west USA, South Africa, Western Australia - and many of them form stunning displays of colour and form. Could they be replicated in some way in public landscapes?

Fires are key to maintaining the health of heathlands with frequencies between 3 – 8 years. How could this be replicated in a local park? The alternative was rather severe coppicing which is used in agriculture and floriculture to great effect.



One of John's urban 'woody meadows' in Melbourne

Research into plants which respond

well to coppicing, are low maintenance and have low water use requirements was carried out. Scoria was used as a substrate as suburban soils are often excessively fertile and carry a huge seed-bank of weed species.

The plants used fitted into three basic categories:-

- Base Layer ... plants to 50cm, planted in high density.
- Bump Layer ... plants to 100cm, the main flowering plants planted in medium density.
- Emergent layer ... plants 150cm+, sporadically planted 'feature' plants.

All of the plants used respond well to coppicing and are chosen to offer colour in the garden in every season.



A mature 'woody meadow' in Birrarung Marr

John describes his 'woody meadows'

as organised chaos. The plants are not in neat rows and planted in geometric patterns – chaos. But they are carefully chosen to suit the style of planting and so are quite organised.



A street landscape of John's design, inner Melbourne

The video of John's

entire presentation can be found online at: <http://apsgeelong.org/webinars.html>

Maranoa Botanic Gardens

Reproduced from 'Kunzea' NL November 2021
APS Maroondah

Our October Zoom meeting featured Andrea Dennis presenting a virtual tour of Maranoa Botanical Gardens. Andrea is a very well-known member of APS Maroondah who has served several years on our Committee, with 2 years as President. In her work life she is Co-Curator and Co-Plant Record Officer of Maranoa Botanic Gardens (with Paul Birch).

Andrea said that with COVID severely cramping their style, she and Paul haven't been able to give many tours or talks this year. So she offered to take us by the hand and lead us down the garden path, to see a few highlights of Maranoa Botanical Gardens in spring.

*Following is an extract from the main text which relates to 'Gardens in **Shade**'. Lawrie*

The Rainforest was set up in 1988 using plants considered to be suited to Dry Temperate Rainforest. However, many of the plants suffered in this north facing site. In 2005 APS Maroondah donated \$5,000 towards the removal on the Rainforest area. This removal included the removal of the heavy plastic screen which had been constructed along the northern edge of this garden, cleaning out of the creek bed, installation of an irrigation system and more suitable plants. The redevelopment used tougher plants on the north, with Cool Temperate species further into the more protected area. One genus which has been successful in the tougher parts is *Plectranthus*. There are 3 different species, but unfortunately they do hybridize. *Pittosporum revolutum* is also doing well.



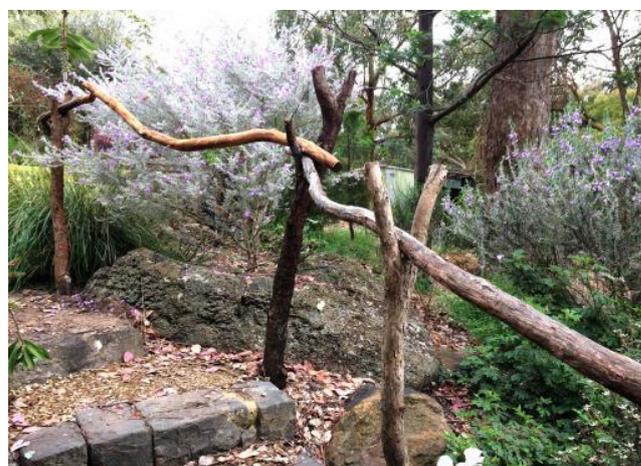
The Rainforest includes a number of bush tucker plants. Andrea points out *Alpinia caerulea* which chefs use to infuse a cardamom flavour to fish by wrapping in the leaves. October 1920 saw the planting of Rainforest. *Hakea eucalyptoides* (now *H. laurina*), *Eucalyptus calophylla rosea* and *Eucalyptus ficifolia*. There is photographic evidence of this event, when John Watson was presented with a ceremonial spade. The photos were included in "Home Garden" magazine in November 1920.

Lockdown Handrails

Reproduced from 'Kunzea' NL November 2021
APS Maroondah

Diane Hedin reports on "lockdown mania" and how it manifested itself in Peter Smith! Attached are photos of handrails that Peter built from fallen branches. They are beautiful in his rambling, wild garden and they are growing in numbers.

What an interesting way to recycle surplus garden prunings for functional and aesthetic purposes – Lawrie



Hardy Natives for a Shady Garden

Bev Hanson, Melbourne

The south side of our house is in **shade** most of the time. We are lucky in Australia to have many hardy ground ferns suitable for areas such as this including *Doodia*, *Blechnum*,



polystichum, *Asplenium* as well as shrub plants like *Cordyline terminalis*. We did have tree ferns for thirty years also in this area but unfortunately most were lost in the drought. Running through the area is a pathway and dry creek bed with a few flat rocks and brown river pebbles.



A bedroom window looking out gave us an opportunity to create an interesting visual picture from inside looking out with ponds beyond complementing the landscape.

Letters to the Editor

Joanne Foley, Crescent Head NSW

Yes I am going to Kiama, Covid or no Covid. "Gardens in **Shade**" is no good for me, but I am doing "small courtyard garden in blazing sun" if that is going to be a future topic?

I bought a villa that had a steeply sloping courtyard and small garden area because that was all I could afford, and the fact that it had a bit of dirt attached was the clincher for me. My first area is just the courtyard, and I will move on to the attached area when this is more established. I suspect that this will be the situation for many people as the real estate prices continue to escalate, so maybe that is a new topic for GDSG? It will be quite a challenge to pick just a few plants for the small area, and I don't think I will be alone with the "how do I hide a colorbond fence" especially with limited planting area. The landscaper set



up a border bed of 0.5m which is good, but looking for something very tall and slim, or adding e.g. chicken wire and planting climbers.

Joanne, the August issue theme is 'Very Small Gardens & Courts' so there should be information that will help you. Send along a little more information size, aspect, etc and I'm sure members will give their suggestions. I think we can do better than 'chicken wire to support vines! Lawrie

Anne Keaney, Stanwell Park NSW

Just read through the November newsletter and am responding on two items. Firstly I expect to go to the annual conference given it is in Kiama and I am in Stanwell Park – less than an hour away. I would be happy to help.

Secondly on the issue of garden design books – I would recommend 'Native Art and Design with Native Plants' by Kate Herd and Jela Ivankovic-Waters. I attach a couple of photos, especially suited to Victorians (although I am in NSW). I love the use of Australian natives in modernist style gardens which suit modernist architecture. I have tried to follow this style in my own garden although I keep just falling into planting plants I like, rather than for a particular design effect.

Anne, Great images for a special type of Aussie garden. I must see if I can get a copy of this book. It is important that we Aussie plant exponents promote the use of native plants in contemporary architecture and gardens to counter the overwhelming bias to the current use of Mediterranean species. Lawrie

Past Newsletters - Extracts

(Issues 56 to 59)

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 for 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 #56 November 2006

Green groundcovers for a dry continent

Diana Snape Vic

Recent rainfall across the country unfortunately does not change the underlying situation. Australia is the driest inhabited continent - which is why many States now have water restrictions. However we still value the appeal of green ground surfaces in the garden. Many Australian groundcover plants have evolved to live happily with our dry climate.

Six plants for a very small garden

Chris Larkin Vic

This was the topic for our last Melbourne Meeting and it elicited some quite different responses. Now that the exercise is complete I think it might be valuable to ask members to select 6 different plants and design a small garden bed, as I'm sure in thinking about associations

Boongala Gardens, Kenthurst

Jo Hambrett NSW

We had a good roll up of members interested to see the result of 20 years of gardening by Australian plant specialists, Mai and Jenny Johnson. . . . Whilst still running the retail nursery Mai and Jenny began to plant out their 11 ha garden. . . . to show each individual plant or groups of plantings off, so one can see what it would look like in the garden. It is, in essence, a large collector's garden rather than a designed space.

Newsletter #57 February 2007

Planning or designing a garden - is there any difference?

Diana Snape Vic

Planning and designing are words with very similar meanings and we can define them or interpret them as we choose. So this is just

my interpretation I think all we gardeners do a lot of planning for our gardens, involving many practical aspects. We plan the garden to serve the needs we have in mind for it, now or in the future. We plan entrances, paths, outside eating areas, utility areas, possibly a pool (little, big - or both). We put in plants to screen fences or other structures we want to hide. For me, designing a garden involves all that practical planning but then goes a little further. We try to integrate 'hard' and 'soft' landscape and also combine plants in such a way that the garden as a whole looks beautiful. It's a complex business! Ultimately, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, so there are no fixed rules. . . .

Use of Lomandra in design

Colin Turner Vic

With a range of sizes and forms, foliage colours and textures, interesting flowers and general reliability, *Lomandra* species deserve to be more widely grown. *Lomandra*'s are promoted for massed plantings or linear edging. Massed plantings at very close spacing are common along major roads and freeways. Often impressive due to their scale, these plantings would be static and boring without the moving perspective created from our cars. Varying planting densities or mixings species or forms to create swales of different heights, colours or textures might create greater interest and variety in these plantings.

The Elliston Estate

Chris Larkin Vic

We had an interesting last meeting of the year at Margaret James's home in Rosanna. Margaret's home is part of the Elliston Estate, which was a bold experiment in urban design in the early 1970s. The initial concept for this former golf course was to have a subdivision of courts and crescents opening directly onto parkland equal in size to the land for housing and including a natural creek. We can speculate that the idea of exercising so much control over the living choices of possible buyers spelled an early death for the project

Newsletter #58 May 2007

20 facts about mulches

Kevin Handreck SA.

In nature, virtually all soils have a mulch on their surface. The soils of forests have litter and leaf mould; those of grasslands have a layer of decaying grass and mosses; many desert soils have a stony surface; the sand of sandy deserts is an excellent mulch. In our gardens, we use mulch as a substitute for these vital natural soil covers. The most important property of a garden mulch is that it should

Mulch and native plants

Jeff Howes NSW

Click on this link for information: (<http://www.mcsl.org.au/BlitzFactSheets.html>) Why do we mulch native gardens? The main reason is to try and simulate the growing conditions in the bush, where leaf litter forms a very natural and effective layer over the soil. This is especially so along the coastal regions. As well, mulch makes the garden look more 'Australian' in its appearance. How thick should mulch be applied?

'Dairy Cans' pebbly garden

Annette Houseman NSW

The 'Dairy Cans' garden started last November when I attended a St John First Aid Meeting at an old established dairy farm in the hills of Upper Comboyne. I espied a scrap metal heap of disused and rusty dairy equipment. The property owner was kind enough to let me take home an old milk can, an even older cream can and the bowl of a milk separator. Surprisingly my husband John's expected question "Why did you bring that rubbish home?" didn't eventuate; just as well as I didn't have a sensible answer. . . .

Newsletter #59 August 2007

A 'no-water' drought resistant garden

Brenda Moore Vic

Jan and husband Alan moved from a large acreage and nursery on flat clay plains, with hot dry summers and cooler moist winters, to a flat two-hectare windswept block adjoining an airport - this resulting in a happy husband

and a wife with a determination to create a garden in extremely difficult conditions. . . . With the house completed, Jan and Alan drew up a garden plan based on ten metre grids so that they could keep a record of what was planted where. The property has a slight gradient to the back of the block. This gradient was deliberately 'disturbed' by putting in mounds and an ephemeral wetland. . . . There are apparently no landscapers in Yarrawonga, so Alan valiantly took on a lot of the heavy work.

Ann and Tom Raine garden

Ann Raine NSW

. . . . We purchased our property of 4.87h in 2001 and commenced the garden around the house in 2002. We did not really have a clear idea when we started of exactly what we were hoping to achieve - we knew we wanted to have only Australian plants and we didn't want a 'bush garden' close to the house. A large proportion of the block is bush - tall gums, and remnant rainforest. We were aware the bush required care and to expand our knowledge we joined Land for Wildlife

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 new ways for our group.

A warm welcome to all our new members
We look forward to your active participation in your study group

- *John Aitken, Sydney NSW (reinstated);*
- *Sonya Chambers, Jeeralang Junction, Vic;*
- *Janet Kueng, Howard, Qld:*

Current Membership: 203

Treasurer's Report – January 13, 2022

General account:	\$ 4,065.40
Less Expenses:	\$ 331.49
	(NL Indexing; NL copies)
Term Deposit:	\$ 28,341.57
	(incl interest \$70.85 - reinvested for 12 mths to 25/01/23)
TOTAL:	\$ 32,075.48

Membership of GDSG is free ...

The Garden Design Study Group Newsletter is published quarterly in February, May, August and November

Newsletters are distributed only by email.

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: gdsg@anpsa.org.au

STOP PRESS

Hard Books & Photos or Digital?

Susan Rouse, Qld

Given the space premium in the newsletters could a link within an article be an option? Maybe this could direct members to an online picture gallery should they wish to view more details or images.

The beauty of an online display is that you can continually add to it and modify as required. The downside is keeping it fresh and compliant with protocols that (should) give greater compatibility with various browsers. It could become the 'big project'. It will demand constant care and attention, but it could also pay really big dividends by accelerating people's increasing appreciation of and care for Australian native plants in their own gardens and in the environment.

The medium is perfect for promoting the plants, and garden design and so much more. It is streets more powerful and advanced than what a glossy magazine or book can ever hope to be. So much more complete and yet also very real – literally right down to someone's back garden.

If we could have a standardised format of display for consistency then the various regions of Australian could look after their patch. There is no limit has to how microclimate it could become. Particular attention needs to be given to the structuring of the navigation, how cross links and references would be presented. It must be kept simple (this is in my view, is the hardest thing to do) so the viewer can draw out the information they are seeking, quickly. I think the key is to keep the viewing screen simple and very visual. Keep it understated yet able to be navigated to very great depths.

This would require the backbone to be a database – the skill is to hide this in the design of the layout. An online display should aspire to become the glossy magazine of the Internet, with the depth of the reference books. I see this as really important work as effectively compiled resources will provide the counterpoint to the disconnection from the ecology of life that are promoted by the likes of Zuckerberg’s ‘Metaverse.’

Thank you very much Susan for raising this subject again now, and in plenty of time for discussion at the ANPSA Congress in Kiama. We have previously shared ideas along the same lines as Susan suggests, as a way to improve our outreach about garden design with native plants to members and to the wider community. But the excellent ideas have not progressed, and I apologise for that. Obviously it requires the knowledge and application of a person skilled in digital technology to prepare and organise just the right system. In addition, it will most likely need staffing by members with similar skills, so as to share the load of data input. There is no doubt we have financial resources from our previous hard cover books to make this happen. But low interest rates are not currently enhancing the sum invested!

So now is the time to encourage further discussion on this subject to ascertain if there is sufficient member interest and support to find out what is possible, and if we do in fact have the resources to fund it – ongoing! So let’s hear your thoughts. Lawrie

Two photos of my shade garden to fill the space!



Phaius australis, Costus potierae, Viola banksii, Cordyline petiolaris, Asplenium australasicum, Graptophyllum spinigerum, Remusatia vivipara, Davidsonia pruriens, Ptychosperma macarthurii, Lepidorema pulchella, Phaleria clerodendron. . . . prize first to find the lot!