



# GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP

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**Newsletter**  
**May, 2022**

# 119

## STUDY GROUP LEADER / NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Lawrie Smith AM 38 Sandpiper Avenue NORTH LAKES Q 4509  
 ph: 0411 228 900 email: [gdsdg@anpsa.org.au](mailto:gdsdg@anpsa.org.au)  
 Website: <http://anpsa.org.au/design/> or Google 'Australian Native Garden Design'

*Please note the GDSG email address is temporarily unavailable so please use my personal address [lawries@live.com](mailto:lawries@live.com)*

*Newsletter Theme: 'Design for Climate Change'*

## CONTENTS

	page
<b>EDITORIAL</b>	2
ANPSA 2022 Update	2
GDSG Conference Participation	2
<b>THEME – 'Design for Climate Change'</b>	4
Climate Change demands Design Change	5
<b>MEMBERS STORIES</b>	7
Garden with Containers	7
A Garden Inspired by the Site	9
<b>CRITIQUE</b>	14
Look Critically at your Garden	14
Gardens at MIFGS	15
<b>PHOTO SEARCH</b>	16
<b>PLANTS IN DESIGN</b>	18
Love those Ground Covers	18
Pretty Flower Eh?	21
Remarkable Flowers and Foliage	21
Fifteen Years Onward	23
Monitoring Wildlife in my Garden	23
<b>NEWSLETTER ARCHIVES</b> (issues 60 – 64)	24
<b>MEMBERSHIP MATTERS</b>	26
<b>STOP PRESS</b>	26
Referring to Newsletter # 118	26
Adapting our garden for Climate Change	27



*While it is generally agreed that climate change is real and happening, never the less the major impacts on our landscape and gardens will most likely be some decades off. We are told that for the foreseeable future some regions will become increasingly hot and dry; others will become more hot, humid and wet; others may stay much the same. What does this mean for 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

The 2022/3 Newsletter dates and themes are:

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

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

# EDITORIAL

## Newsletter Layout

For some time now I have been thinking of modifying the Newsletter layout to make it more 'user friendly', and Chris Larkin has also been thinking along the same lines as we found out in a recent phone conversation. So this is the first issue incorporating some of those changes, for instance division into easily identifiable subject sections including: *Garden Design Critique, Plants in Design and Members Stories, etc.* Please let me know if you find this trial layout more helpful - perhaps you have other suggestions. I want to keep it simple and more of a treasure trove of ideas and suggestions, as opposed to a stylised 'picture book'. Your thoughts and suggestion as always, very much appreciated.

## Next Newsletter #120 - Theme "Very Small Gardens & Courts"

Expanding population in our towns and cities forces ever smaller housing lots to be planned and developed for sale, with some lots being as small as 300 square metres or less. In addition so many of us now live in apartment complexes where the only 'garden' is a small courtyard. Never the less we often see very innovative designs which make the most of these small spaces. The key to garden success, whether it is in contact with the earth, or is a patio or court high in the sky, is a detail assessment of the site environment to result in functional planning and useful design.

Perhaps you have a very liveable 'small garden' that works well, if so share how you did this with our members. One of our members recently emailed to say she was looking forward to the next Newsletter by saying: "Gardens in shade is no good for me, because I am doing "a small courtyard garden in the blazing sun" . . . . that is going to be a very useful future topic?"

## ANPSA 2022 Kiama - UPDATE

You will be pleased to know that I have now registered to attend the Biennial Conference in Kiama, and so far nine GDSG members have advised me of their intention to go.

**Please let me know once you have decided to attend and would be willing to be available to help in our conference participation.**

Registration is now open and I encourage you to come to Kiama and enjoy the interaction with fellow members and be enthused by the program theme of 'Past, Present Future', then marvel at the natural environment and unique native plants of southern NSW.

### **GDSG – Our Conference Participation**

The ANPSA Biennial Conference organisers, have invited all Study Groups to be integrally involved with the conference, and have offered the opportunity to take part in four ways - I have accepted all for GDSG:

- To hold a GDSG meeting - invaluable way to discuss how we can make the study group more beneficial to members.
- To mount and staff a small display, as a way to inform and gain members;
- To take part in a progressive 'Chat Room' where we chat with several small groups, each for 15 minutes about special aspects of garden design;
- The SG Leaders to deliver a lecture, based on the conference theme.

To prepare for Kiama, I really need to gain **assistance from as many GDSG members as possible** to contribute their thoughts, ideas and suggestions related to the theme I've nominated: "***The Past informs the Present and the Future***" through native plants in landscape and garden design.

- Do you consider that design for native gardens will change in the future?
- If so, how would this be?
- What would cause any changes?
- Will use of native plants become more recognised and accepted?

I have a some ideas in mind, however I feel sure that many of our members would like to add their personal thoughts about this too –

**Your help to ensure that the GDSG lecture presentation has an Australia wide content - will be much appreciated!**

### Agenda items for Kiama meeting:

#### **Form a local GDSG 'chapter' in your area!**

In the last Newsletter I challenged the membership for someone in each region to form a local GDSG 'chapter' to meet together informally, as done in southeast Queensland. Remember also that Victoria and NSW had 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.

**Has anyone taken steps to form a new local GDSG 'chapter'?** Let me know if you are interested as I can provide a list of existing members in your 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 still eagerly waiting for your responses!

#### **GDSG Garden Photo Search**

Another subject for GDSG meeting Kiama. In early March I emailed all members with this request to take and send a recent photo of parts of their garden to be added to the study group archives, but more importantly for a selection to be used for display at the September National Conference in Kiama. We have received a couple of submissions, thank you. **Please take out your camera right now and snap that special photo of your garden! Snap! Snap! Snap!**

#### **Hard Books & Photos or Digital?**

In Newsletter #118 (page 27) our member Susan Rouse suggested that we consider developing an online picture gallery linked to the Newsletter to view more details or images of particular gardens or subjects. She suggested: *"using online display allows images to be continually added keeping it fresh. It could become the 'big project' as it will demand constant care and attention, but it could also pay really big dividends. This medium is perfect for promoting plants, 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."*

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. So the meeting in Kiama is the perfect time to encourage further discussion on this subject to ascertain if

there is sufficient member interest and support, to then find out what is possible, and if we have the resources to fund it – ongoing! **Please send your ideas for discussion in Kiama.**

#### **The NL Format**

Perhaps the Newsletter needs a revamp in some way? I wonder if we are collectively not sharing many of the 'simple' design rules or telling of our triumphs and tragedies in the garden. Most new members tell me they join to plan and establish a new native garden. **Are we doing enough to help?**

#### **Newsletter Themes**

Keeping four Newsletter issues ahead each with an allocated suitable theme is sometimes difficult. **Does the subject help members to prepare submissions ahead of time? Is a theme really necessary?**

#### **Use of financial resources**

We all hate to see our funds languishing in a bank vault when **they could be doing something positive?** Equally we do not want to see the funds fritted away on initiatives that have no lasting value.

#### **GDSG Leader**

The position of SG Leader is not an onerous one - basically receiving and processing the occasional new member application; maintaining the Membership List regularly; starting the next newsletter immediately after the previous one has been distributed; the editor's job can be simplified if more members provide written or photographic information for the newsletter. **Looking to the future when we will need a new SG Leader!**

**Please send your comments on these items to me to present for discussion at the GDSG Meeting in Kiama.**

#### **Accommodation to share?**

I need a mate to share a two bedroom cabin overlooking Kiama harbour near the blowhole, just a few minutes' walk from the Pavilion conference venue and town centre. If anyone is interested please contact me.



# THEME

## 'Design for Climate Change'

NL 119 Theme

### Time and the Future!

Lawrie comments

While it is generally agreed by most people and authorities that climate change is real and happening, never the less the major impacts on our gardens will most likely be some decades off. But that does not mean we should become complacent as the larger tree and shrub specimens we plant today will have to tolerate the changing environmental circumstances as they progress to maturity. There is 'no size fits all' for GDSG members as we are distributed widely across this vast continent which means that we will have to cope with very different climate conditions in the diverse regional areas. We are told that for the foreseeable future some regions will become increasingly hot and dry; others will become more hot, humid and wet; others may stay much the same. What does this mean for garden design? Let's investigate.

#### Design:

Ben and Ros Walcott in their article later in this issue have shown how responding to the changing climate has provided a major physical and aesthetic opportunity for the garden which works now and will also be equally suitable in decades to come.

If your climate is forecast to become drier you may need to consider not using moisture retentive organic mulch and substitute gravels and sands to suit the conditions. Ben and Ros garden shows how successful this can be for a suitable range of species and the result is a very attractive and diverse plant collection.

Alternatively Ben & Ros garden also shows how to deal effectively with increased rainfall and its potential for soil erosion by collecting surface runoff through a network of carefully constructed 'natural waterways' effectively creating on-site water harvest instead of draining this valuable resource away from the garden through pipes. One benefit is that waterway species become an interesting component of the garden design and plant collection.

#### Plant selection:

It is generally agreed that to ensure optimum quality garden specimens the first and foremost task is to select species endemic to the locality or that are known to tolerate the local conditions. However looking to the future, you may have to cast your research further afield to another bioregional zone to select those permanent large structure specimens suited to your future local climate conditions.

What other design impacts can be expected as the climate changes? Consider how to plan your garden to respond to the expected future conditions by knowing what the impact may be and then thinking about ways to plan and design to respond positively, such as:

- Shade to combat increased temperature
- Water harvesting and recycling
- Species to suit changing conditions

Most of us like to experiment in our gardens to see what we can grow and often we plant species that we covet from an alternative climate zone, knowing that they may not cope locally! Sometimes they do, but often not. So we try all sorts of site modifications to help, and resort to grafting and even botanic science is used to modify genetics. It's all part and parcel of being a 'gardener' and trying to outwit nature to create the best aesthetic qualities for the garden.

Most likely this evolutionary process will continue, if not accelerate in consequence of climate change, possibly because humans seem to like change as over centuries the plant species of the 'old world' have been modified to become the tried and tested exotic species we see commonly today. The same process is happening with the Australian flora and this may be a key impact to the way we view our garden design in decades to come. For example we now have genetically modified Kangaroo Paws specifically developed to cope with wet humid summer conditions, completely the opposite of their natural place of origin.

The next few decades may be an exciting time for Aussie plants as hopefully they surpass the exotic 'invaders' to be more widely appreciated by the community at large. This is the basic reason why the Society for Growing Australian Plants was first founded, and now the various state chapters of ANPSA, and GDSG, have a

responsibility to increase and share the knowledge base of our flora when used in amenity horticulture. The expected climate changes of the future depend on it!

### Unimaginable 'Rain Bomb'

Southeast Queensland and northern New South Wales were drenched in February and March with record breaking torrential rains that persisted for many days bringing flood peaks far exceeding previous one-in-a-hundred year levels in most areas.

Authorities suggest that this is a consequence of climate change exacerbated by the influence of 'El Nino' on the Pacific Ocean over the past year. Apparently similar environmental conditions have occurred each time there is a comparable flood disaster in southeast Queensland approx every ten years: 1988/89, 1998/99, 2010/11, 2021/22 – there seems to be a regular ten year cycle happening here?

Whatever the situation really is, it appears that climatic extremes are becoming more significant and arriving with increasing regularity. For those whose homes and gardens are in the flood plains of rivers and creeks there has been much destruction and lives lost. Sodden soils have been unable to support tall shade trees once floods and wind combine to topple many. In these low lying city areas street trees have succumbed thereby removing the beneficial shade they have been providing for many decades – the streets have become 'sunny deserts'. Home gardens have suffered similar destruction and these flood impacted expansive residential areas are compounding the ever rising heat load of our cities brought about by deforestation for expanding urban sprawl.



North Pine River, Brisbane

## Climate Change Demands . . . Garden Design Change

Words Ros Walcott; Photos Ben Walcott, Canberra

Our climate change imperative came in 2006, only three years after we began planting our Canberra garden. We attended a life-changing afternoon visit to John Weatherstone's property Lyndfield Park, in Gundaroo, where the enlightened owner has planted 100,000 trees of many species, both native and exotic, to mitigate the effects of drought on his land. After suffering devastating effects from the 1980's drought John found that the shade from these trees encouraged grass to grow to feed his stock, quite against the common farming practice and belief of the time. He also found that his stock were much healthier and content lying in the heavy shade of many trees, instead of huddled under one wispy paddock tree.

We came home inspired to plant more trees, even in the meadow area of our garden, which was originally designed to be in full sun. We planted *Eucalyptus camphora*, *E. luehmanniana*, *E. polyanthos*, *E. maidenii* and *E. stricta*, and we had previously planted *E. sideroxylon rosea* in 2005 to make the new house 'sit down' in its environment. We added another *Melia azedarach* to the one already planted as part of our foundation planting.



Checking out the garden

We were also influenced by the garden of Maria Hitchcock in Armidale where she has planted many eucalypts to protect her plants from frost. Most of her gardening is accomplished under high shade. We realised that we could not continue to plant in full sun, with the variable, harsh and changing climate in Canberra.

We needed to create microclimates in our garden to ensure that the plants would survive. I am happy to say that all of the trees we planted in 2006 survive and thrive, with the exception of the original *E. sideroxylon rosea*, which lost half of its mass in a 2021 storm and had to be removed for safety reasons.



New sand garden



Early waterway construction

The resultant high shade has made all the difference to our plants and given them the protection that they need from sun, frost and wind. Rainfall in our garden is very variable. For several months of the year we can have no rainfall at all, or very low rainfall. The highest total for one month so far is 237mm in November 2021, a La Nina year. The total rainfall for one year has varied from 376mm in 2018 to 1,157mm in 2021, a factor of three times difference. On average the month of lowest rainfall is May and highest is November.

This La Nina year, 2021-2, we have had the best flowering ever of our plantings of Landscape Line Kangaroo Paws, bred by Angus Stewart. We always get flowers each year from Landscape Orange, Red, Pink, Lime

and Violet, but never such pools of colour as we have had this year.



Dense planting, pools of colour

Another blessing from the La Nina rain is flowering of our twenty Blueberry Ash, *Elaeocarpus reticulatus* 'Prima Donna', which only bloom when they receive generous 'Sydney style' rain, not the usual meagre Canberra showers. The dainty fringed pink bells of the Blueberry Ash and the following bright blue berries make up for the climax weeds of the La Nina years. We feel very fortunate to have adapted our garden design early in order to accommodate climate change.



*Elaeocarpus reticulatus*

# MEMBERS STORIES

## Garden – with containers

Nicky Zanen

In February 2022 I visited an Open Garden in Melbourne I hadn't been to before. The garden is located in Hampton, Melbourne, about 800m from the bay, and one of the biggest challenges was that the block had no side access. Every element used in the garden, including an in ground swimming pool, needed to come through the house or over the roof, by using a scaffolding system.



The designer has made a feature of raised walkways to the pool to draw guests deeper into the block, and included a fire pit around which socializing naturally occurs. The network of decks also provides a lovely habitat for lizards.



In their description of the garden, the owner's state:

*"One of the most striking and potentially controversial elements of the garden is the decision to place a very large Angophora costata tree, slap bang in the middle of the space. It provides natural dappled shade to the seating given the northerly aspect and is central to the eco-system of the garden.*

*It is also a way for the garden to give back to the local area with the reintroduction of a generous canopy to the skyline. We also chose the specific location keeping in mind its eventual size without infringing on the neighbour's space. It acts to divide the garden and give it a sense of foreground versus background, creating added depth."*

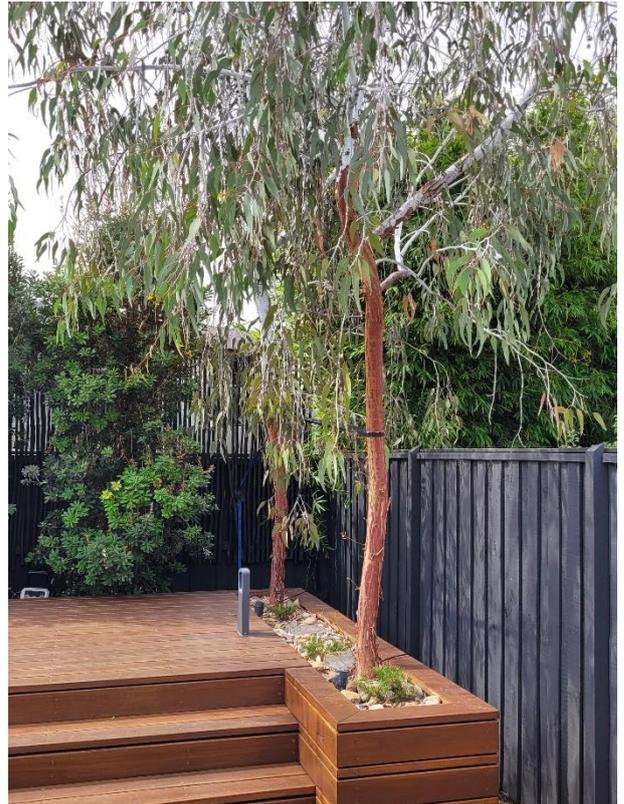
The garden is on a small block in Hampton, not far from the beach, so the owners face several challenges; sandy soils, relatively close to the beach although the garden is generally protected from salt air, and limited planting space.

As a result the owners have found that using containers to trial their conditions and suitability of the plants, is an efficient way of assessing which plants to use in their garden.

The following photographs illustrate how effective the use of containers was in this instance.



*Grevillea lanigera* in a hanging basket  
*Grevillea synapheae*  
*Banksia serrata* prostrate  
*Acacia cultriformis*



Two *Eucalyptus caesia* trees which appear to be growing very well in a boxed container. It's hard to know if their roots are in the ground.



The container holding the Woolly Bush, *Adenanthos sericeus*, is big enough for the plant to grow into an impressive tree. Ideal for Christmas decorations.



Wall garden. In a very tricky situation, a narrow passage that runs parallel to the east side of the house, the owners have purchased and installed a vertical garden which is viewed from the lounge.

## A Garden inspired by the site

Judy & Andrew Baghurst, Port Elliott, SA

Our garden of about one hectare is part of a twenty one ha property which we bought in 1997 as denuded farmland above Port Elliot in South Australia, with the aim of afforestation for biodiversity and native fauna.



*Sea views a borrowed landscape*

Advantages: magnificent sea views from north of Victor Harbor around to the Murray Mouth and Goolwa Lakes to the south and east, with hills views to the west and north. The land itself contains a hill, two gullies and a large plateau in the middle, where the house and garden are now established.

Disadvantages: Some very steep sections, large areas of old olives to be removed along with many other woody weeds, no mains water, strong winds and much bluestone rock. On the whole twenty one ha there was one eucalypt, one *Olearia*, three casuarinas and a few acacias with hardly a herb or native grass to be seen.

Immediately we set about clearing and then planting the wider property, firstly with a windbreak around a proposed house site. When we began we were aware of a few birds of prey, a few kangaroos and the odd snake, but there was virtually no habitat for smaller birds apart from the olives and woody weeds. As I write this, a kangaroo is drinking from a birdbath by the lawn – there are up to two dozen Western Greys frequently on the property now. Vast numbers of New Holland and other honeyeaters, wrens, finches, thornbills, golden whistlers and grey shrike thrushes, pardalotes along with many species

now live here - parrots and magpies too, of course. We don't know how many echidnas, but enough to dig up my stone paths!

The garden was to blend in with this revegetation and would contain a gradually higher proportion of local species the further one moved from the house – acacias such as *A. calamifolia*, *Bursaria spinosa* and various *Melaleuca*. We chose as the garden's southern boundary a contour running between our two sheds – a curved 'Tank Track' of about 180 m. The water tanks, now five in all, capable of storing some 160,000 litres, were cut into the hill near the second shed.

In 2001 when we moved into our new L-shaped house, carefully designed to maximise views from all sides as the southern coastline swings around, I was so keen to start the garden that building sand, rubble, and rocks flung up from the ripping of garden beds were not removed. Warning and advice to new garden developers: spend time preparing the soil first! The soil here is heavy loam over clay, pH6, with some areas predominantly clay. I have spent the last 20 years digging up rock as I replace or extend planting, at the same time gradually adding around twenty tonnes of gypsum.



*The house faces west toward the sea*

And so the garden began, with a plan drawn up by Alan Fisher of Gardens Australis, based on circles, semi-circles and curving beds surrounded by cut grass. Planting was to be kept low to preserve the views of the sea, and most areas were mulched (28 x 13 cubic metre truckloads of it). To the south (seaside) of the house, there are island beds in lawn; to the east, garden divided by one gravel and several stone paths; to the north, a brick patio,

ephemeral pond, and several semi-circular garden beds. By December 2002 all the garden beds contained at least some tube stock.



*Ephemeral pond north of the kitchen*

Directly north of the patio and drive, an entry roundabout with parking for 4 cars was ripped, mulched and planted with *Eucalyptus scoparia* and a grass understorey of *Poa foiformis* with shrubs of *Leucophyta brownii* defining the path to the house. Since then, as most of the *E. scoparias* failed, some *Casuarina verticillata* have been added, and *Eucalyptus citriodora*. The delicate perfume of the lemon-scented gum leaves wafts near the house in both hot and rainy weather.



*Roundabout with Poa foiformis, Leucophyta brownii and Eucalyptus scoparia*

In the next few years, another large bed was created at the northern end of the long north lawn (called the Rock Garden for obvious reasons) and planted mostly with bigger shrubs – *Melaleuca*, *Hakea*, *Acacia* and a stand of *Eucalyptus caesia*.

Overall, while some plants grew well, there were disappointments in the early years. The official average rainfall of 480 mm did not eventuate; we have seen the average gradually falling over 20 years, with some significant drought periods. I now tend to look for plants requiring a minimum rainfall of 350 mm or less.

Winds were extreme from the beginning, and while at first there were no rabbits, they soon found us and everything we plant must be guarded, at least initially. Even hares like living here – hence damaged bark on trunks of trees and shrubs.

As it turned out, much of the initial planting was not suitable for our particular soil and for full sun in increasingly hot summers – *Correa reflexa*, *Scaevola sp.*, *Kennedia prostrata*, *Dampiera sp.*, *Grevillea lanigera* (Mt Tamboritha form) and a grey form of *Chrysocephalum apiculatum* were some of those favourites that needed to be replaced. I have now minimised the number of *Anigozanthos* for similar reasons.

In hindsight, early planting around the house was too regularly low to balance the size of the building e.g. *Myoporum parvifolium*, *Goodenia ovata* (pros.). Although these groundcovers grew quickly in the first, wet years, they looked like giant green cowpats and needed variation. Looking back, I think small, sparsely leaved trees would have fulfilled this need, but I impetuously removed most of them, not realizing how hard it would be to achieve that rate of growth in the future – perhaps the fertilising effect of residual cow manure as well as wet seasons?

Beyond this low foreground the original plan was for gently graded shrub heights across the beds, low shrubs to rise gradually in height across a bed, east to west, but we found that in the first few years the frequent gale-force winds, south-west in winter and north-west in summer, pruned everything to the same height. In fact, brittle bushes such as some *Correa* were often halved to a semi-circular shape, and I almost despaired.

Gradually plants edged upwards and outwards, however, until they knitted together to gain

mutual protection. For example, hardy *Grevilleas* such as 'Lemon Supreme' and 'Flora Mason', low *Thelemanniana*, even 'Coconut Ice' and 'Billy Bonkers', *Calothamnus quadrifidus* (pros.), *Alyogyne* and *Eremophila glabra*, *Hakea* 'Burrendong Beauty' and a few hardy *Correa* filled in the garden. Add a few more years and the daring, most hardy bushes put their heads up above their surroundings and we started to enjoy some variety in the profile of the garden as well as its increasing density. Seeds of *Acacia pycnantha* were welcome to grow where they wanted, and, short-lived though they be, their dead branches now provide sculptural perches for birds. That variation in height evidently inhibits the torpedo flight of the more aggressive birds and so gives small, shy birds a chance to make use of the cover.



Garden south of house, with sun dial

Our attitude to height of vegetation overall has also changed. At first we were insistent that nothing impede our views of the sea, but we have come to appreciate glimpses rather than straight panoramas of water. Sparse, more open trees such as *Eucalyptus caesia* are ideal, and provide vantage points for birds large and small. It's unfortunate that the wind and comparative dryness have killed most of the *E. caesia* I have tried over the years, but *Eucalyptus pulverulenta*, normally requiring more water, is doing well on the south side of the house and in some beds where I can water more readily. In other places dense foliage provided by *Acacia iteaphylla* and some more heavy-canopied eucalypts such as *E. torquata* (the lovely WA coral tree) is helpful in obscuring housing developments below us, and in providing shade.

In particularly difficult places, I am trying drought-tolerant mallees such as *Eucalyptus websteriana*, *youngiana*, *calycogona*, *pimpiniana* and slender *E. rosacea* along with *Senna artemisioides*. While retaining the overall effect of rolling, rounded shrubs, the garden has benefited from more height and variety. Several *Eucalyptus kruseana*, growing even smaller here than normal, with beautiful rounded silver-grey leaves and tightly packed lemon flowers, also add contrast and provide florist materials.

In general, when plants fail I try to replace them with proven successes. *Melaleuca coccinea* is one such. It grows reliably, with no extra water, and produces brilliant pink/red flowers at times of the year when the garden needs a lift. Nothing can beat *Hakea* 'Burrendong Beauty' in autumn, and bushes are now dotted throughout the garden, some suffering from old age but sometimes responding well to a stiff prune.

For bigger areas, *Melaleuca lanceolata*, *nesophila*, and *diosmifolia*, also *Acacia argyrophylla*, are among the most hardy, and recently I have discovered *Eremophila mackinlayi*, which is fast-growing and vigorous, with soft grey-green leaves and strong purple flowers in summer and autumn. There are, of course, more: I must add *Eremophila calorhabdos*, not because it's totally reliable, but because it is very beautiful, and worth several tries, branches bending almost to the ground under the weight of a New Holland honeyeater.

Amongst the smaller plants, early and continuing successes include *Leucophyta brownii*. From sandy coastal regions it always leaps ahead and can be trusted to liven a dark spot in no time at all; *Dianella brevicaulis*, native to this site, pops up everywhere, often in the middle of other plants where it's not wanted, but I admire its stamina. The stand-out success for constant colour is *Xerochrysum bracteatum*, fast-growing and lasting at least a couple of seasons if spent flowers are lopped regularly. It is easily propagated from cuttings, a delight in the garden and perfect in arrangements.

*Kunzea pomifera*, also from the sandhills, has spread slowly but surely, forming a dense groundcover with the advantage of beautiful fluffy flowers and sweet, edible fruits, mostly snaffled by the kangaroos. Misty green, fine-leaved *Chrysocephalum ramosissimum* flourishes, particularly amongst the paving bricks, with only a little summer water, and *Banksia petiolaris* spreads widely, with its unusual serrated leaves and striking ground-hugging flower cones.

Dense groundcover along with thick mulch has been paramount in controlling the myriad pasture grass and weed seeds that blow in from the ungardened parts of the property. Over large areas near the house, West Australian *Eremophila biserrata* has established strongly. It provides a bright contrast to darker shrubs.

Several *Acacia baileyana* (prostrate form), dense, silver-grey and cascading with golden flowers in spring, have grown to an immense width and keep weeds at bay, along with shrubs such as the prickly *Hakea lissocarpha*, and *Correa* 'Dusky Bells'.

*Rhagodia spinescens* surprised us with its big mounds, and invited formal trimming which we hadn't intended, but the contrast enhances the more asymmetric, natural forms of other shrubs. Every couple of years as mulch breaks down, some needs replacing. We can now create our own from dead branches and trees on the property.

Naively we first thought that instead of lawn meandering around and between garden beds we would simply mow the pasture grass, but vast areas of waving seed heads, however often we mowed, soon proved that impossible. This 'void' space was much too large to water, or to establish with *Microlaena stipoides*, so kikuyu was chosen. We planted it ourselves over several years, slicing up pallets of lawn into small rectangles or plugs and digging them in. On the whole, this was very successful, the grass covering well, turning cornflake-brown in summer but greening up with autumn/winter rain.

The two drought years of 2017-18 and limited rainfall since have taken a heavy toll, however,

and large areas have died completely, partly due to the surrounding trees now taking up more water. While we can reduce the grassed area by widening the mulching around clusters of trees in the lawn, we will still need to top-dress and replant quite an expanse in the next couple of years – a daunting prospect as we have a new Border collie pup that particularly likes digging!

Recently the western windbreak near the house has been extended to enclose part of the lawned area, and one more large semi-circular garden bed has been added to complement a western extension to the house built some years ago. The focal point for this is an established, spreading *Eucalyptus leucoxylon megalocarpa*. Strips of butyl rubber left over from the ephemeral pond outside the kitchen, to the north of the house, were used to line a rock-filled 'creek bed'. The low planting here is just starting to become established and will create immediate interest from the windows.

Rock from the property has been at times a great frustration but also a great delight, with its varied colour and texture. Feature rocks were placed in the garden initially, and while waiting for the original garden to be laid out I managed to make some stone paths between beds and a sneak path of stepping stones.



Large rocks and stone path, with *Acacia baileyana* (pros.) top R

One wall of the house is our own stone. This is carried through in a low retaining wall to the west of the house, and recently in two undulating walls leading to the feature sun dial,

itself mounted on a massive rock. Inscription: 'Today is yesterday's tomorrow', always a timely reminder for garden jobs.

At first when we dug up stones we used them as fill to extend an apron in front of one of the sheds, but then recognised their beauty and usefulness. In the occasional patches of garden where there are rock seams which prevent planting we have laid stones as dry creek beds. In the roundabout, between the grasses, we have spread them as rock mulch to add interest. To keep rabbits from young plants, I have built low, circular drystone walls as a sort of sculptural addition. All sizes of rock and stone now edge the Tank Track on the revegetated bush side that borders the garden, along with mulch over geofabric, to inhibit weeds and form an aesthetic interface between garden and 'bush'.

Large flat rocks make good seats, and in one place a collection of interesting rocks amid gravel forms a playful sculpture, beloved of children and dogs.

When we first came here, there was a dead tree trunk at the bottom of the garden, completely exposed, but now it naturally nestles among strappy plants, adding habitat for lizards. We are lucky to have deeply weathered timber on the property and have subsequently brought in interesting pieces to somehow give meaning to barer areas.



*Original dead tree trunk with Orthrosanthus multiflorus*

As the garden has matured, the views from the house have become more satisfying, particularly from the dining room. Surprises

happen. We would never have planted a big tree outside our dining room window, expecting it to block distant views of hills and sea, but a *Eucalyptus leucoxylon* grew from a seed in the mulch. We decided to give it several years to see if the canopy would rise and thin enough for us to see through and beyond, and it did, to perfection! Where morning summer sun poured in to heat our breakfast table and then the whole room, we now have a great fan of dappled shade, almost transparent. There is a constant exchange of parrots, lorikeets, honeyeaters and more, drawn to the profusion of pink blossoms that eventually form a carpet on the eastern patio. Our first birdbath on a large rock beneath the tree is a favourite bathing spot for New Hollands and red-browed firetail finches, also enticing rare birds in to drink on hot summer evenings. What sheer delight for us!



*New Holland Honeyeaters at birdbath visible from dining room table*

Twenty years of gardening here have bound us to this garden in ways I could not have imagined when we began. We have worked with the site as planting has evolved, rather than strictly imposing original plans. Yes, we are at the mercy of the climate and the terrain, but within those constraints we have produced diversity and beauty that continues to surprise and delight. The garden also provides for a variety of native creatures. Even the carport is more of an aviary for swallows, the lawns a source of worms for magpies and green feed for Western Greys, the myriad ants a constant food supply for shy but distinctly present echidnas. Our main aim now is to continue here well into the future!

# CRITIQUE

## Look Critically at Your Garden

Lawrie Smith, Qld

This new section will provide a continuing opportunity in each Newsletter issue to encourage GDSG members to look critically at their garden, or any other garden, in order to gain an understanding of what design issues have been used and their success in creating a memorable garden. Too often we rush home from a nursery and plant a new acquisition without sufficient thought as to how it will contribute positively and effectively to the garden design.

To illustrate how the 'critique' might work I have used a photo of one section of my garden, describing under four headings the most pertinent elements used as part of the design process.

Hopefully this page will provide the forum for members to send in a photo and share their design triumphs and tragedies with us all. Remember you can gain as much inspiration to apply in your own garden when looking at images of 'good' design, as you can from lesser quality examples, and sometimes possibly more.

### Critique – My North Lakes garden



#### Site conditions & analysis

*Location such as town and State, rough size, sun direction, slope or flat, soil type etc*

Location and aspect are both fundamental in understanding the planning and design

approach to any garden. This small section of our 800 sqm residential garden in Moreton Bay north of Brisbane, extends six metres along the side boundary fence and averages about two metres wide. The view or aspect is to the north east into a wetland environment park. This garden receives sun all morning, progressively reducing during the afternoon.

#### Answering the challenges

What are you wanting to achieve through the design and how it might be met.

The garden was planned to take advantage of the trees and shrubs in the adjacent parkland, by visually integrating them into the garden design to expand the apparent sense of space.

Careful shrub management by pruning provides low privacy screening and also control the extent of sun penetration. Perhaps it could be termed a 'transition' garden - as during the day the NE aspect, in conjunction with the influence of the shade tree, progressively changes the sun exposure along the garden from full sun to shade.

#### Hard landscape elements

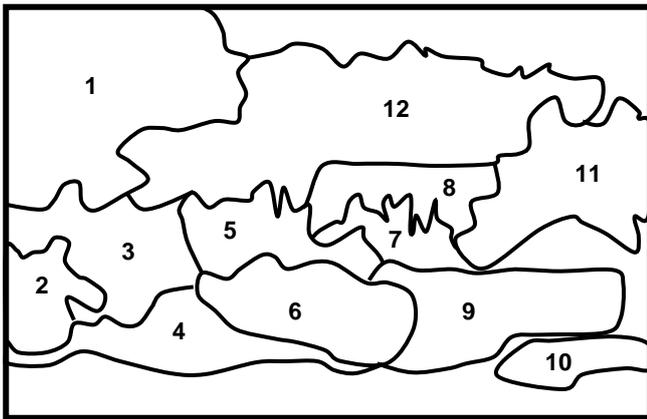
*Paving, rocks, retaining walls, fences.*

The foreground paving and gravel mulch matches the sandstone boulders now obscured by vegetation. The black powder coated vertical fencing merges into the foliage. A grey textured container compliments the neutral colour scheme.

#### Planting design strategy

Identify the size and form of the plants rather than the genera and species.

The plant selection is simple, used in layers and in sweeping drifts to visually expand the apparent garden dimensions. The varying character and texture of the species selection, specifically reflects the daily change in microclimate across this small garden.



The numeric photo key diagram relates to the photo defining the main garden plant groups to assist easy reference in the related description text.

### Plant Grouping

1. A semi mature evergreen tree shades the left third of the garden from mid-afternoon N-NW sun. *Xanthostemon chrysanthus*
2. A selected container and specimen plant defines the entry to the garden. *Macrozamia macquillii*
3. The large scale leaves contrast with the diverse smaller foliage of the garden. *Remusatia vivipara*
4. The colourful fine textured carpet offers visual transition from the adjacent shade garden into the sunny garden edge. *Viola banksii*
5. The irregular open shrub adds contrast in form and foliage to the mid-background. *Orthosiphon aristatus*
6. The dense upright tufting cover drifts across the slope to meet the garden edge adding visual interest and continuity. *Bulbine bulbosa*
7. Contrasting upright fronds visually soften the vertical geometry of the fence. *Microsorium diversifolium*

8. A formal hedge behind the fence provides the low level background to the garden. *Syzygium sp.*
9. The dense mixed matting cover provides the visual link with the adjacent garden. *Chrysocephalum apiculatum*
10. The darker green grass carpet continues the differing garden edge textures. *Zoysia macrantha*
11. The informal shrub straddles and visually integrates the fence also providing contrasting grey-green foliage. *Hibiscus Barambah Creek*
12. The tall regularly pruned background hedge preserves sun penetration and adds seasonal flower colour display. *Grevillea 'Honey Gem'*
- 13.

**AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU!**  
 I hope you will be inspired to share your garden story with us all! This is the process - take a photo of a special section of your garden, then write a critique about it under the four headings - if you prefer I will prepare the numeric photo key diagram from your photo and the related explanatory text.

### Gardens at MIFGS

Jeff Howes, NSW

Jeff Howes recently attended the 'Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show' and was impressed by the display gardens both native and exotic. He suggested we add two of these photos to this Newsletter and ask our members to prepare a short (approx 100-200 word) critique identifying the relevant design attributes that you observed in the image. We will place your comments in the next issue.





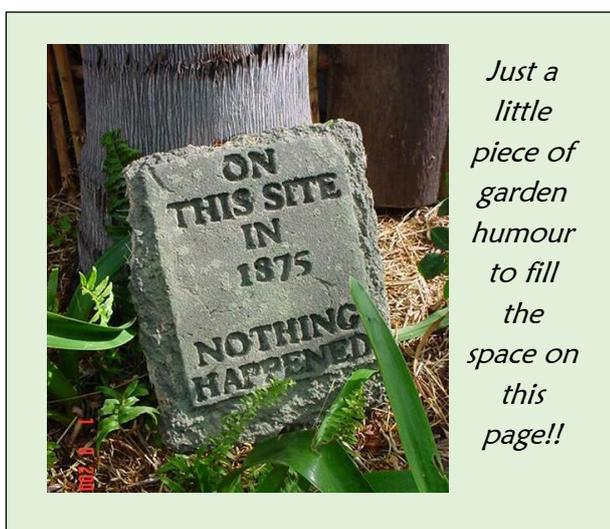
'Haven' by Alex Koskiniotis

*"Welcome to Haven a place where people and insects can find safe haven – the design seeks to inspire people to create their own haven in backyards large and small"*



'Balance by Nature' by Gina Robertson

*"This modern Australian outdoor space restores the balance of our lives by enticing us into a relaxed garden to reconnect to nature"*



*Just a little piece of garden humour to fill the space on this page!!*

# PHOTO SEARCH

## Your garden is the subject!!

In recent Newsletters there was discussion about the Study Group archive of garden photos on the ANPSA website, which has not been updated for some considerable time.

In early March I emailed all members with this request to take and send a recent photo of parts of their garden to be added to the study group archives, but more importantly to be used as a special selection collated for display at the September National Conference in Kiama, NSW; they could also be included from time to time in future Newsletter issues to illustrate written articles.

Most importantly be sure to add a short descriptive paragraph outlining the site location, microclimate, garden aspect and soils etc, and particularly how the image illustrates your garden design intent.

Below is a selection of the first images received, not many but they do give an indication of what is of value and interest to members. Some of you may need to wait for a particular season to capture the most appropriate image – so this is really a continuing opportunity over months to come. **So please keep snapping those images!!**



*Keaney Garden, Stanwell Park, NSW*



*Cox Garden, Sydney*



*Hanson Garden, Melbourne*



*Zande Garden, Sydney*



*Howes Garden, Sydney*



*Rouse Garden, Brisbane*



*Poetzscher Garden, Brisbane*



*Marriott Garden, Grampians Vic*



*Hall Garden, Yarrowonga, Vic*

# PLANTS IN DESIGN

## Love Those Groundcovers!

Chris Larkin, Melbourne

### Is Australia over-endowed with ground-covering plants, or does it just seem that way to me!

I have been told that South Africa has more (and maybe other parts of the world too) but regardless there is a wealth of choice of prostrate plants in Australia. I'm not going to attempt to define what a ground-covering plant is because there is quite a lot of variation in growth habit. Some mat the ground, some are very ground hugging, and others that are not ground hugging, never-the-less tend to spread out rather than grow up. Some plants are categorised as groundcovers pure and simple, but others are really prostrate forms of larger shrubs

I live on a north facing hillside south-east of Melbourne with clay soil and around 800mm of rainfall. My garden is very large – close to an acre or 0.4 of a hectare. I grow a great many different groundcovers because they are useful in helping me manage such a large garden and because I think they are such an important and interesting part of the success of the garden's design. The practical reasons for growing ground covering plants evidence a role they have with regards assisting a garden's resilience to the hotter, windier, drier conditions expected here as well as unpredictable high rainfall events.

### Here are the purely practical reasons for growing ground-covering plants. This is how they can assist you in the garden.

- Weed suppression. Make sure you have cleared the area of weeds first because it can be very difficult if not impossible to control weeds growing through a groundcover.

- Moisture retention. Groundcovers shade the ground, and in doing so shade their own root systems and/or the root systems of plants growing through them, from the drying effects of sun and wind.
- Allow more sunlight and air movement through the garden, thus helping plants to stay healthy.
- Protection of the soil's delicate ecosystem - its complex microbiome. Protecting the soil protects the life forms in the soil that are so important for the health of a garden.
- Erosion control. Groundcovers will slow the flow of water and help with stabilising slopes.
- A living mulch replacing the need to keep renewing organic mulch, thus saving precious resources, time and money.



*A range of plants covering slope and bordering driveway allowing through views and increased sense of space.*

### Beyond the dead practical reasons given above, groundcovers play an important role in garden design.

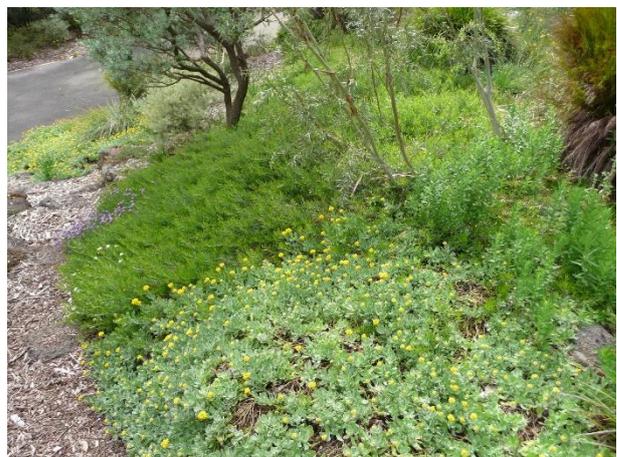
This is what really interests me. There are a lot of groundcovers to choose from. Which

plants you use is a matter of matching the growth habit, foliage type, growing conditions and your personal taste to the vision of what you are trying to achieve in the garden's design. Here are some of the design functions that ground covering plants can help you realise.

- *A Balance of mass (shrubs etc) and void/open space.* Using groundcovers allows a greater feeling of open space. Placed beside paths and driveways groundcovers will expand the visual width of paths/roads. (The opposite of being 'shrubed in' which in its extreme form is a high hedged maze or tunnel). Used more generally throughout the garden they will allow you to see more of your garden from any vantage point as you see into garden beds to the detail of plants and maybe even further to more distant views.
- *A Balance of light and shade.* Ground covering plants allow more sunlight and air into an area so different light effects on flowers and foliage can be enjoyed and appreciated throughout the day and over the seasons
- *Appropriateness to the site.* You need to consider the scale of the plants in relation to your garden. On sloping sites you can use plants to mound and cascade down slopes, or simply cover the slope in a simple sheet of foliage. Think of how plants might surround, lap up against or drape themselves over rocks and sleeper walls adding to the drama, the lushness and the interest.
- *Use complementary and contrasting foliages and even growth habits* for harmony on the one hand and interest and variety on the other.
- *Think of growing plants up through groundcovers.* Simple groundcovers like *Grevillea obtusifolia*, which doesn't flower well in my experience, makes a wonderful, lush groundcover like new mown grass with trunks growing through it.

**I have listed some of my favourite groundcovers below, but in doing so I make a few disclaimers.**

- No matter what I have to say about the size, toughness, ease or difficulty of growing a particular plant there will be some people who will disagree with me because no two growing conditions – or indeed plants – are the same.
- I have a large garden and you may have a small one so the plants you chose to use should be appropriate to the scale of your garden.
- There are no shortcuts to gardening, which in this case is knowing which groundcover to plant where to place it. People who love gardening love this about gardening. What you can know or need to know knows no end. Gardening is as intellectual as it is physical! Enjoy the journey as the destination is elusive due to the dynamic nature of gardening and our own evolving understandings related to gardening.
- Visiting gardens is one the most powerful ways of learning about plants – their growth habit and dimension.
- There is only so much you can learn from someone else's garden. Becoming intimate with your own garden throughout the year is extremely important. You need to know your soil, wet and dry areas, sunny and shady ones. *Let your garden talk to you.* It will tell you which plants are happy and you can build on this with the same plants (repetition is good) or ones that like similar growing conditions.



*Ground covering plants allowing plants to grow through as well as edging a path.*

### Some Favourite Groundcovers:

*Kunzea ambigua prostrate*. I have about 10. Mounding and cascading. Grows in tough conditions with respect to dry (but will take wet) and low light. Masses of white flowers in Spring.

*Grevillea obtusifolia*. I have at least half a dozen. Not great for flowers but lush foliage with slightly broadleaf grass appearance. Enough uplift to catch the light. One plant goes a long way. Great down embankments and with plants growing through it.

*Pultenaea pedunculata*. Still have several large patches. A local variant now available at KES (Knox Environment Society) but common around the Bendigo area. Fine foliated, layering habit, massed with small pea flowers in Spring. Fabulous down slopes and draped over rocks. Establishment time seems to be important – give a long lead into summer.

*Hibbertia pedunculata*. I must have 20 or more of these plants. One growing at the base of a tree! How far will they layer and go? Who knows! Fine foliated, can lightly mound, massed with large yellow flowers over a long period in Spring. More likely to flower with a decent amount of sun. I use this one as a grass replacement in smaller spaces.

*Myoporum parvifolium*. Different forms that are flat to the ground and a coarser plant that is called 'upright' that rears up and gives the opportunity for a great play of light. I grow plants through the various forms so really treating it as a living mulch. Have good success with some Hovea plants in dappled shade through the upright form.

*Goodenia ovata prostrate*. Fat, round, serrated slightly fleshy leaf, small yellow flowers. Tough plant that layers and will spring back after any summer set-back.

*Zieria prostrata*. If this plant seeded as well in the ground as it does in pots I would be worried. Good hanging down a big pot or in the ground. Mounded to ½ meter it is tolerant to dry but more so if it gets shade. Nice dark green leaf, massed with small white/pink flowers in Spring.



*Plants lapping up against rocks and spilling down between them*

*Dodonaea procumbens*. Nice bright dark green leaf making it a healthy lush looking shrub. Covers a wide area taking dry and sun. Not succeeded with this in complete shade.

*Persoonia chamaerpitys* (soft needle fine leaf), *P. mollis* (broader leaf), *P. oxycoccoides* (small roundish leaf), *P. nutans x oxycoccoides*. Love the difference here in leaf and growth habit. Grow more for the foliage than flowers which are small yellow.

*Lasiopetalum macrophyllum*. Big furry grey leaf but Tassy form is smaller. Both have showy new growth. *L. micranthum* is compact and grows in a fair bit of shade. All can flower well but hidden underneath the plant. Again I'm interested in what these plants have to offer that is different.

*Correas* – prostrate alba has large greyish round leaves and open white flowers whereas *Correa alba ssp pannosa* eg 'Western Star Pink' has small leaf and white flowers with pink centres. Both are excellent. *C. reflexa* forms like *numularifolia* are also good. *Correas* have suffered in recent years if exposed to too much

sun on extreme days and they can also die in wet times. They like dry semi-shade.

*Lysiopetalum involucreatum*. Not sold as a groundcover by it acts like one for me! Long flowering period and sporadic at other times. Grey leafed, pink flowers. I use it repeatedly as a key plant either side of one of my paths so it helps to tie the area together.

*All those pretty herbaceous plants.*  
*Brachyscome, Helichrysum, Scaevola.* They are often set back in summer but have a great ability to 'come again' when the rains do. The rewards are in the wonderful show of colour they provide so who can do without them! They are 'cottagie' and delightful and we must learn to admire their ability to regenerate and forgive them their time of stress induced retreat!

*And so much more.* There are a few banksias, like *Banksia blechnifolia, B.petiolaris, B. repens* – what great foliage difference here! Lots of different grevilleas, too many to name, different acacias and ground-matting plants like *Dichondra repens* and *Pratia* sp forms. Go forth and explore! Lighten and brighten your garden with the space that ground-covering plants can provide.

#### SPECIES KEY FOR PHOTOS ABOVE:

Chris wants you to first consider the design implications of the three photos in the text above without the distraction of species identification.

The first pic shows a range of groundcovers including *Kunzea pomifera* coming down the slope along with *Pultenaea pedunculata, Grevillea nudiflora*, species of *Brachyscome, Scaevola* and *Chrysocephalum* above and below the wall.

Second pic is *Grevillea obtusifolia* with plants growing through it, *Chrysocephalum* and *Brachyscome*.

Third pic is *Hibbertia pedunculata* and *Prostanthera serpyllifolia* in the foreground.

## Pretty Flowers Eh?

Lawrie Smith, Qld

Yes, of course flowers are colourful, and some add perfume and most are a food source for birds and bees, but do flowers provide a major component for garden design? Flowers are 'visually ephemeral' providing spectacle and interest for a

relatively short period of the year. It is the foliage and the varied plant forms which principally provide the continuing physical and aesthetic structure of any garden.

It is a useful idea to consider the flowering times of individual plants as a design bonus, as their colour will contrast with and enrich the otherwise green toned garden landscape. Knowing the colour and peak season for flowering will inform the design process so that specimens can be suitably located to enhance a garden by creating either, a multi-colour vibrant spectrum or alternatively a simple more monochromatic visual character.

So you are in control to use flowering as a vital design tool. Do you: enhance your garden by providing colour diversity, or provide colour continuity to highlight the landscape; whatever you decided ensure to create the most logical and visually pleasing result.

Moist importantly, as you decide where to locate the specimens, don't forget to consider their other fundamental physical and functional requirements of - soil preference, optimum microclimate, and final size and form - all of which ensure optimum long term health and aesthetic performance.

## Remarkable Flowers or Foliage

Bob Bannon, Qld

It's always difficult to find plants to fit the bill when there is a plethora of species to choose from. Add to this the various landscape desires and requirements, then throw in flower colours and the plant palette can become quite large.

As Lawrie has often said "the flowers are a bonus". They last only a couple of weeks, unless of course, you're able to grow some of the *Grevillea* species which flower endlessly. We don't all have that luxury, and if you saw the last Newsletter about Shaded Gardens you'll know our place by the photos, so the alternative is to look at the foliage – colour, texture, and form, which often displays several times a year

One of my favourite shrubs would be *Syzygium wilsonii* – the Powder-Puff Lilly Pilly from the rainforests of far north Queensland. The large, dark crimson pom-pom flowers on *Syzygium wilsonii* are stunning to behold and are truly remarkable.



The new, long, lanceolate leaves of both these Lilly Pilly's present in beautiful shades of reds, pinks and bronzes, weeping beautifully at the ends of the branches, standing out against the more mature darker foliage. This carries over the whole shrub, making for a spectacular plant all year round.



*Syzygium wilsonii*



*Syzygium 'Cascade'*

Its cousin, *Syzygium 'Cascade'* has similar flowers, but to me, play second cousin with their "Watermelon Pink" flower colour. The shrub is still a great example of a wonderful foliage plant. Allowed to grow, both will reach to about 3 metres by 3 metres but don't mind a severe prune, looking resplendent with the new growth.

So don't overlook the visual attraction provided by colourful new foliage which has the potential to add regular vibrancy and focus to your garden design.

## Fifteen years Onward!

Pam Yarra, Melbourne

Pam has sent a before & after photo of her frog pond to show the difference time makes in a garden.

“The before photo was taken in 2007, when I am starting to plant out frog friendly strappy leaf plants. So much has changed, since the original planting & the frogs are happy.”



In the back garden there is a row of *Correa* and *Eremophila* along the fence, and a footpath. Behind the fence my neighbour has two huge *Melaleuca* which give plenty of cover to avian visitors. My most frequent visitors are the Rainbow Lorikeet, Spotted Dove and Indian Mynah. Also visiting is the Noisy Miner, the Red Wattle Bird, and a pair of young Crimson Rosellas. Occasional visits are made by the Raven who stops for a bath sometimes lasting up to ten minutes, a Sulphur Crested Cockatoo, a Starling, Crested Pigeons and a Blackbird.

In the front garden, there are actually two birdbaths – one on the ground, the second one on a pedestal, but no vegetation nearby. Many of the back garden visitors use these baths too, including the Noisy Miner and Rainbow Lorikeet, and the young Crimson Rosellas. A couple of adult Crimson Rosellas also pop by, as does a family of Magpies, and on one occasion a Grey Butcherbird. One evening I was woken up by the slurping sound of a fox drinking from the ground level birdbath, but I've only seen him once.



## Monitoring Wildlife in my Garden

Nicky Zanen, Melbourne

During the past month I've had such fun monitoring and recording the bird activity in my garden. There is a lot to be said for having birdbaths within easy view of your windows. The back garden certainly gets more visits, but the front garden gets a fair number too. The belief that shrubs close to the birdbath are necessary does not apply here as both birdbaths are fairly exposed. The main thing is that I don't have any cats nearby.



# Newsletter Archives

Issues 60 to 64

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 #60 November 2007

### **Save those Trees!**

Diana Snape Vic

Greg Moore the Principal of Burnley Horticultural College Melbourne and was the inaugural President of the International Society of Arboriculture, Australia. . . .

"Perhaps never before in human history has there been such urgent need to appreciate the role of trees in climate control. They fix great quantities of carbon, hold water, purify air, provide protection from sun & wind, and are themselves ecosystems. We must design urban environments with them in mind."

### **The greenhouse effect, climate change and Myall Park Botanic Garden**

Lynette Reilly Qld

The future of humankind may depend on maintaining the diversity of plant species in the world - they are our natural resource for the future. Plant species which have not been 'Rare & Threatened' on the IUCN's Red List up till now, may well become so as the climate changes. Myall Park Botanic Garden, like other botanic gardens round the world, has several important roles to play. . . . .

### **Frieda Andrews and John Lloyd's exciting straw bale house at Chesney Vale**

Barbara Buchannan, Northeast Victoria

Before we go into the garden, a word about the house - they had just heard that it has been awarded an Architecture Prize which seems only natural when you see it and all its environmentally friendly features. From its siting on the block, snuggling into the saddle on the hill, the windows with stunning views from every one, stone feature wall, . . . . .

## Newsletter #61 February 2008

### **Green Roofs and Walls**

Diana Snape Vic

As global temperatures rise, I wonder how long it will be before use of green roofs and walls will be seen as an essential method of improving our buildings, domestic as well as commercial and public?

### **I've got that . . . feeling**

Chris Larkin Vic

It starts with a kind of itch in my right hand and soon turns into an overwhelming compulsion to get snipping. It can strike at any time but this year I found the disease particularly bad (or is that good?) around late spring - and I wasn't going to be put off by a plant in flower or about flower.

### **The Munro Court story from Castlemaine**

Sue Turner and Don Wild Vic

For many years we have been appalled by the housing developments that have sprung up all over Victoria - the design of the houses and the contents of the gardens show very little regard for the climate of this state or the diminishing supply of water. We were keen to show that new houses can be built to make the most of the free energy from the sun to heat them and to be surrounded by gardens that need very little water.

## Newsletter #62 May 2008

### **Design categories of plants**

Diana Snape Vic

It has always been difficult to advise gardeners from other areas on possible plants for their gardens. The only reliable advice seems to be "Look at the locals' first - indigenous locals and/or plants doing well in local gardens".

Plant selection is becoming even more difficult with ongoing climate change, especially in the dry (arid?) south-eastern area of Australia. In these circumstances, I think it helps to . . . . .

### **Our Eco-House and Garden**

Gordon and Marie Rowland

In 2002, we sold our Sydney house of nineteen years, and bought 10 hectares of partly cleared wet-sclerophyll forest on the edge of Wallingat National Park on the mid-north coast of New South Wales. It was one step closer to the vision we shared: an eco-friendly house and garden of understated beauty, inspired by the natural environment.

### **Orange & District Meeting, March 2008**

GDSG members in the Orange Blayney area of NSW, organized a veritable feast of native garden visits on a clear autumnal weekend in March. They visited six gardens and a winery, don't miss reading their descriptions of these diverse gardens.

## **Newsletter #63 August 2008**

### **Where Eagles Drift**

Jenny and Ted Finnie, NSW

When my husband and I moved to this beautiful property of 574 ha. 19 years ago, there was a four roomed dilapidated house full of rats and spiders with a wire netting fence hugging a minute yard. The whole area was surrounded by the most beautiful natural environment imaginable, with river flats for cattle grazing. In my mind's eye I envisaged a large natural bush garden to complement the surrounding craggy mountains and natural vegetation which form part of our property and to provide habitat for the many wild creatures which pass from the hills to the nearby river.

### **A novel approach to creating a small water feature using a recycled resource.**

Jeff Howes, NSW

I have a north facing front courtyard at my house, in the northern Sydney suburb of Westleigh. In this courtyard I have a large (about 5 tonne) imported sandstone rock that has many native *Dendrobium kingianum* and *D. speciosum* (now *Thelychiton*) orchids growing on it even though it receives full afternoon sun. As I always wanted a small

pond/water feature, I created a dry creek bed leading from the rock to a small stainless steel 47 litre laundry tub. To make it all appear 'natural' I undertook the following work . . . . .

### **Australian Succulent Plants in Cultivation**

Attila Kapitany Vic.

Some experts regard most native succulent plants as unsuitable for cultivation, but an increasing number are being grown successfully. Succulent plants need less water, fertiliser and other chemicals than many commonly cultivated plants.

## **Newsletter #64 November 2008**

### **Fifteen Ideas for Garden Design**

Diana Snape, Vic

I was asked by Helen Moody for some suggestions for designing with Australian plants, to be included in an article she was writing. In her article Helen says "*The most distinctive quality of Australian plants and native gardens is that they impart a spirit of place that is uniquely ours. They create a feel, a sense, a smell and a sound of their own.*" Here are those ideas as I wrote them . . . . .

### **Design..... and sticking to it!**

Jo Hambrett, NSW

. . . . . In a never ending battle to achieve the ongoing design one holds in the mind's eye or for the more organised amongst us, on a drawing, many hours are spent organising garden hoses or eucalypt branches as indicators for future appropriately shaped edging for garden beds, grass swathes, new paths and so on; or, wandering around . . .

### **How should we spend the GDSG money?**

Chris Larkin, Vic

Another publication? The decision may be to select a core number of gardens from town and country that are depicted at different times over the year with a range of other gardens used to highlight their beauty at a particular season. No matter what the final format ends up being, it all depends on having a selection of high quality pictures as a starting point. Ideally the home garden-owner would also be the picture taker, because no-one else is going to be able to track the garden over the seasons capturing it at its best.

# MEMBERSHIP MATTERS



**Vale Max Kennedy** – Our thoughts are with Helen after the recent passing of Max. They have been remarkable members over so many years. Their garden, built together since 1963 at Wheelers Hill in Melbourne, is a significant and inspiring example of sensitive garden design created by two amazing people. Helen has said that unless a garden is loved it will have no soul, and this is perhaps why this much-loved garden has such an aura of peace and tranquillity. Max will be forever remembered by his handiwork!

## 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 . . . . .*

- Julie Broadfoot, Duranbah NSW
- Catherine Pearce, Launceston TAS
- Lisa Walker, Mount Crosby Qld
- Julie Nimmo, Woody Point Qld
- Ishara Udawela, Townsville Qld
- Kerry Dempsey, Mackay Qld
- John Elliott, Townsville Qld

**Current Membership: 209**

### Treasurer's Report – March 31, 2022

General account: \$ 3,733.91  
Less Expenses: \$ 0.00  
(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

### Referring to Newsletter # 118

Nicky Zanen, Melbourne

Lawrie, referring to Newsletter February 2022, it has taken a little while to respond.

**Photo Competition:** I see you are looking at starting a photo competition again. Maybe this can be tied in with increasing our awareness of the work of garden designers who are currently making waves and the up and coming new ones. Or even better, making the garden designers who are the 'big' names aware of us!

**Gardens in the Shade:** I loved your article on and how you included so many photographs of our members' gardens, past and current. You have certainly travelled widely. Just to comment on the photo you included of my garden. Under one of my *Corymbia* I planted three *Goodenia amplexans*. These have grown so well and cover the base of the tree beautifully. They also provide a home for all kinds of insects including praying mantis and spiders.

Anything in my garden needs to compete with the shade thrown by the *Corymbia* and *Eucalyptus* specimens, all of which have put on phenomenal growth since I moved here 13 years ago.

Other favourites include *Veronica araneura*, various *Correa* and *Thomasia*, *Poa labillardierei*, *Themeda triandra* and *Hakea* 'Burrendong Beauty'. The veronica needs to be replaced every two or three years but I love that it flowers during summer and almost all year round, and the *Poa* plants were evicted from my back garden because they were self-seeding too prolifically and replanted under the *Corymbia* specimens.

## Adapting our garden for climate change.

Judy Lovelock, Brisbane

We have a corner block in Petrie, north of Brisbane, of 659sq m. Our side yard has a frontage of about 30 m, and slopes gently down to a busy road. We moved our fence 1.8m inside the boundary, which allowed us to plant a row of flowering trees along the footpath: *Melaleuca* 'Hannah Ray', *M. saligna*, *M. viridiflora* (burgundy flower), *Corymbia ptychocarpa*, and *Xanthostemon chrysanthus*. We under planted these with *Austromyrtus dulcis*, *Melaleuca* shrub species, and *Graptophyllum* sp. This creates more privacy, and with rising temperatures, keeps us cooler. As the line of trees run roughly north-south, regular pruning is needed to share sunlight.



We began adapting our garden during the drought of 2009-2011, by creating a shade garden in the north-eastern corner. We planted medium sized trees – *Backhousia*

*citriodora* lemon myrtle, *Eucalyptus curtisii*, and a native gardenia. These are under planted with *Hoya* sp, bromeliads, blue gingers and orchids. This was to create more shade and reduce the lawn area.

We extended this area after the drought, to about 29sq m with a pathway through the middle, to act as a dry waterbed which channels very heavy rain. The garden is about 1 metre wide at the top and increases in a curve to about 2 m. near the fence. We planted *Evodiella muelleri* little Evodia, *Elaeocarpus reticulatis* blueberry ash, *Syzygium* sp, and *Pipturus argenteus* native mulberry. We under planted this area with *Asplenium* sp bird's nest ferns, other ferns and *Dianella* sp.



We are taking advantage of the increased rainfall at present by growing *Orthosiphon aristatus* Cat's whiskers, and even a small tree fern, but we realise they would not survive a drought. In other areas of the garden, we have *Cordyline* sp and *Goodenia ovata*, which survived the drought well. Our main aim for our garden is to create a bird friendly, and butterfly host plant area, to help them survive a more hostile environment.

