



GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP

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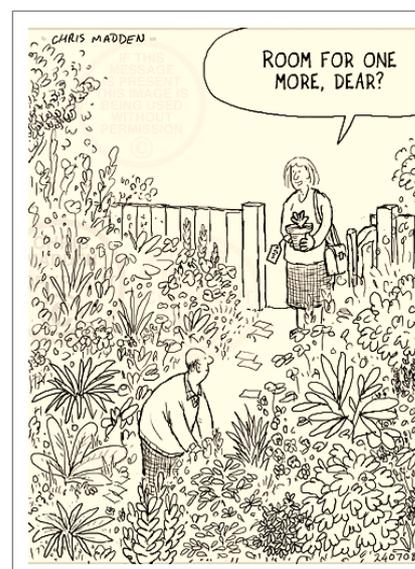
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Newsletter Theme: 'Very Small Gardens and Courts'

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There is always room for one more native plant irrespective of the size of the garden.

The important thing is to know the plants origin and characteristics and let those inform you where it is best suited in your garden!

Design with Nature!

ANPSA Garden Design Study Group Newsletter

Newsletter timing & Themes

Issue	date	Theme
121	November	"Diversity or Uniformity?"
122	February	"Garden Focal Points"
123	May	"Microclimate & Design"
124	August	"Plant Selection Principles"

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.

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

EDITORIAL

Next Newsletter #121 - Theme “Diversity or Uniformity?”

What garden design approach do you prefer? Lots of interesting, exciting diversity in colour, form and texture or a harmonious and visually related landscape that is soothing and restful? Show a photo and tell us why you design the way you do.

ANPSA 2022 Kiama - UPDATE

Just over a month now until many of us will be heading to Kiama for the 2022 Biennial Conference in Kiama, and so far fourteen 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.

You are encouraged to come to Kiama and enjoy the interaction with fellow members and be enthused by the program theme of ‘Past, Present Future’, then appreciate 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 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 20 minutes about special aspects of garden design;
- The SG Leaders to deliver a lecture, based on the conference theme.

My presentation “**The Past informs the Present and the Future**” through native

plants in landscape and garden design, is now basically complete after weeks and weeks of research, writing and finding appropriate illustrative photos. So hopefully it will be well received!!

Agenda items for Kiama meeting:

1. Form a GDSG ‘chapter’ in your area!

In recent Newsletters I challenged the membership for someone in each region to form a local GDSG ‘chapter’ to meet together informally, as we do in southeast Queensland. Remember also that Victoria and NSW previously had established local groups, unfortunately now in mothballs!

Has anyone taken steps to form a new local GDSG ‘chapter’? I’m still eagerly waiting for your responses!

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. Let me know if you are interested as I can provide a list of existing members in your postcode area.
This will be a discussion point for the GDSG Meeting in Kiama.

2. GDSG Garden Photo Search

Another subject for GDSG meeting Kiama. Thankyou for those who submitted photos of their gardens – what a talented group of garden designers you are!!! Your photos will be added to the study group archives, and a selection of the photos will be shown at Kiama. However this is a never ending request as gardens tend to mature and change and seasons change too!

Please keep your camera handy, snap and send that special photo of your garden! Snap! Snap! Snap!

3. Hard Books & Photos or Digital?

Many of you will recall that since 2009 we have been considering on and off about a second book as a companion to our first “*The Australian Garden – designing with Australian Plants*”. I have just looked through my records of the numerous discussions

between the editorial team up to the last meeting at the Adelaide ANPSA conference October 2011. These comprised 30 A4 pages close typed, offering a wealth of interesting suggestions and design detail. Perhaps not surprisingly, the summary paragraph below repeated almost exactly what was discussed eight years later in the GDSG meeting in Albany 2019.

'In short, we enjoyed a very interesting and wide ranging discussion, but really did not get too far into the format and content of the Book. I think it is fair to say that there was some hesitation to producing a book given the trend to declining book purchase. Also the proliferation of coffee table 'garden books' means that we must first identify the specific niche market and define a strategy that will produce a book that attracts and inspires readers interested in establishing an Australian garden. The book should aim to demonstrate simply how to satisfy the functional, aesthetic and environmental parameters in garden design.'

For various reasons activity has lapsed since but I consider that it is now time to review the possibilities.

Technology may make it easier!

In the recent years, the one thing that has rapidly evolved is technology, now providing the ability to streamline information storing and retrieval in a very user friendly, easily searched and referenced way. I understand that it could now be possible for an eBook to effectively pay for itself and possibly make a small profit! This could be the tool we need to create the 'book' without the costs of printing, publication and marketing that a hard copy format demands. Therefore the available funds would be used in an economic and realistic way to source and record the required data and garden photos used for illustration.

Please note that there is no final agreement as yet to prepare such documentation, it is still very much in the 'what if' stage. Several GDSG members have already engaged in preliminary discussions about this possibility and below are a few preliminary dot points

for members to consider and provide your opinion and ideas. Before the Kiama meeting we hope to have more detail information.

- An editorial team will need to be established to coordinate and prepare the 'document';
- Previous editorial discussions in 2011 have already suggested a series of 'chapters' and specific subjects for the book – this provides an excellent start;
- Instead of a book, the 'document' could take the form of a series of 'fact sheets' in various categories each covering a specific garden design element;
- The 'fact sheets' could be available on the ANPSA website (similarly to the GDSG Newsletter archive); this would need detail discussion with the Webmanager and a website programmer;
- A number of contributing GDSG authors would each prepare specific 'fact sheets' derived from a base category index, with pages following a standardised layout;
- 'Fact Sheets' would allow for ease of searching one or many specific design subjects or attributes;
- Once the required information is found the 'fact sheet' could, for a small fee be printed for future reference;
- Adding additional 'fact sheets' or modifying and updating existing information would be possible;

Here are some thoughts from Chris Larkin:

- Do purchases of eBooks own the book which they can save to hard drive or alternative device? Or is there an expiry date? Are they able to print pages from the eBook?
- Is the size of pictures with an eBook a concern? Are most eBooks read on tablets?
- Are there currently gardening eBooks available and if so is there any way of telling how popular they are?
- Can GDSG members survey friends and family, particularly younger home owners, about whether they have used an eBook on gardening or would use one?
- Part of me thinks if any new 'book' can't do something different, or say what needs to be said differently, then there is

no point in proceeding. On the other hand new audiences haven't been exposed to what I have, so even a similar approach would be new to them!

- It would be good to survey even the GDSG members to find out what they would like in a design book. Is there time in the next newsletter?

Yes Chris, there is just enough time! I encourage any member to send your comment about any of the various dot points in this column. The meeting in Kiama is the perfect time for 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 at the GDSG meeting in Kiama.

4. The NL Format

The last issue added format changes and new sections in an effort to make the NL: more user friendly. Most new members tell me they join to plan and establish a new native garden.

Are we doing enough through the Newsletter to help?

5. Newsletter Themes

Keeping four Newsletter issues ahead each with a suitable theme is often difficult.

Does the subject help members to prepare submissions ahead of time? Is a theme really necessary?

6. 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.

Any ideas about this from members?

7. GDSG Leader

The position of SG Leader does not need to be an onerous one - basically receiving and processing the occasional new member application; maintaining the Membership List regularly. The Newsletter editor requires some publication skills, starting the next newsletter immediately after the previous

one; chasing up articles from members, preparing theme articles; the editor's job can be simplified if more members their input.

Looking to the future when we will need a new SG Leader!

Please send your comments on any of these 7 items to me to present for discussion at GDSG Meeting in Kiama or before August 31.

IndigiScapes Environmental Education Centre

The June meeting of GDSG Queensland was one of the best to date with twenty attending. When choosing the venue, I understood that the gardens had been renovated and expanded, but on inspecting several weeks prior (not having visited for perhaps fifteen years) I was disappointed, and had reservations that we may find that the gardens would not offer the design attributes that we had hoped for. However we were still able to find a number of design issues, both good and not so good to discuss and learn from. Certainly there was considerable animated discussion.

Our Queensland group all urge members in other states to organise regular or periodic get-together's - we certainly find our face to face meetings very invaluable.

The IndigiScape botanic gardens are set out in a line along a pseudo residential street complete with roadway, footpath, fences and



gates – a true representation of what a native streetscape could be. We slowly traversed each garden observing and discussing as we went. At the entry to each garden a brochure is



available which describes the concept and lists the recommended principal species on display, complete with

colour photo for each plant. First the Coastal Garden, then the Wild Herb Garden, the Formal Garden, the Scribbly Gum Garden, the Bird Garden and the Reuse Garden – by then we had run out of time and the lunch booking at the IndigiCafe was ready.



We enjoyed an excellent lunch and companionship, if the hearty discussion was any indication!

Then followed the brief GDSG meeting, before we returned to the Gardens and the walk along the creek and wetland system. This is an important remnant of the



once extensive *Melaleuca* wetlands of the Redlands, with a diverse but typical plant community. The outstanding feature tree was the 400 year old *Eucalyptus microcorys*, its huge contorted trunk and branches confirming the age.

The photos were taken in 2005 when IndigiScapes was relatively new. Those who visited today observed the difference passing time and lack of maintenance have made – it is hoped that the promised restoration will revive this important series of demonstration native gardens which encourage people to plant Australian!.

After lunch, we travelled across several suburbs to Susan's garden one of our members, who was her usual bubbly,

excited, exuberant and humorous self. She had prepared a seven page introduction to the garden (which we had visited several years ago), complete with a scale map of the garden and 22 numbered specimens for which she invited individual suggestions for their management. The specimens were also numbered in location throughout the garden.

On this occasion Susan did not accompany us around the garden, preferring to talk intently with several of our members while seated in the carport with a tea or coffee in hand, while others roamed with her instruction sheet in their hand. As we walked we discussed Susan's questions (many tongue in cheek) in small groups as it was the intention to respond with our ideas by email to Susan. Quite a good way to analyse a garden and provide input to the design!

A short sample of Susan's 22 innovative questions:

"I would like the garden to do five things:

- *Screen the interiors of our house from view from outside the property*
- *Shelter the house from the blistering summer heat*
- *Create attractive and useable outdoor spaces*
- *Provide habitat for birds, micro-bats, insects & butterflies*
- *Minimise the need for supplementary watering"*

The Arbour (number 9)

*Initially planted out with *Pandorea pandorana* 'Snowbells' which turned out to be 'No Bells' and added further insult to injury by having me clinging to the top picking off what had morphed in to a giant messy 'birds nest'!*

Meet the Monster in My Garden (number 14)

*I bought this grafted *Grevillea flexuosa* at an NPQ plant sale. It was a little cute with interesting shaped leaves. It is not so cute anymore and showing no sign of slowing down. How big could this thing get? Which other grafted *Grevillea* are known to do this?*

THEME

'Very Small Gardens and Courts'

NL 120 Theme

A Small Garden is still a Garden!

Lawrie comments

For many Australians, living in a house on a small lot, an apartment in a high rise tower, in a block of flats or a gated community will be a fact of life as our population expands and space becomes ever more limited. There is no doubt we have been spoiled over the past century to accept that our inalienable right is to own a sizeable piece of Australia, at least a quarter of an acre or 1,000 square metres, and on it to build our home, raise a family and establish a garden. Unfortunately, those sylvan times have long gone, and today the emphasis is on small and crowded.

Consequently, the theme for this issue **'Very Small Gardens and Courts'** was suggested to allow you to share your experiences in creating a small garden, that might just have some special gems of garden design wisdom to help someone building a new small, even minuscule garden today. To clarify – a 'very small garden' could be one established on a small lot, say 300 – 800 sq metres. There are many differing types.

Perhaps you have a special small 'garden room' or courtyard within your larger expansive garden? It might be a townhouse courtyard garden? Hopefully someone has a veranda or roof top apartment garden to tell us about? Maybe you have a vertical 'green wall' garden enriching the one metre wide sunless space between your house and the one next door? Could it even be a collection of potted plants that have been arranged closely together to form a 'garden' in your rented property? Or is your garden really miniature and created by a bonsai collection? Probably it is a small garden you have seen somewhere that has inspired you? All these small garden types and many more, will be normal for so many people in coming years. Let's consider

the main planning and design principles that apply to these small spaces. When you think about small gardens it is obvious that the same design principals apply no matter what the size. Sure there will be some modification necessary relative to size and scale, but after all a garden is a garden, a practical, attractive and relaxing environment that you can create and manage.

I have always considered that a good design generally starts with a problem resolved. Our problem as GDSG people is that we may want to establish a true 'Australian Style' small native garden - just remember the word 'scale' - our typical large forest trees will be far too large for a small garden. But that opens a treasure trove of small trees and tall shrubs to select from as a replacement for a towering Eucalypt or Kauri Pine. This is only one problem resolved there will be many others to consider and solve.

Whatever the garden scale, memorable designs are not fussy or complex, they are very simple! Ensure that your small garden is planned as a simple design that reflects your main area of interest in native plants and a related landscape. Simplicity in all aspects - hardscape elements as well as softscape elements - is even more necessary in a small garden! This means simple, integrated construction materials with a simple colour palette. Although you may consider one vibrant contrasting colour, carefully used to give impact and focus?

Gardens created in a small space and crowded among other adjacent houses, will most likely have a strong sense of enclosure without too much interaction with the surrounding open spaces. If there are positive views, no matter how narrow, be sure to plan the garden to encourage views out and give visual connection to the wider landscape – this can expand the apparent size of the garden.

The most important, even fundamental, principle is to consider the microclimate, this is even more relevant in a small garden. Be sure to understand the changing pattern of sunshine and shadow across the garden as the seasons revolve, and from morning until night. On a

drawing of the garden site, record the pattern of full sun in mid-summer and in mid-winter at 9am and 3pm – from this you can derive the extent of and changes in garden exposure to full sun and full shade throughout the year, which will inform your plant selection. Make sure you know the direction of North!

Another important aspect is air movement, where impact on a small garden can be far more severe. Be sure to plan the garden to admit cooling afternoon summer breezes but exclude or deflect cold boisterous winter winds. Remember in high density housing situations air movement will be random, channelled between other structures. Streets of townhouses can become wind tunnels!

In small lot subdivisions there will be minimal space for shade trees and these will primarily be as avenues in the street corridors. Small back yards may have space for one or maybe two small trees, so shade structures or vine arbours may be the answer. Make sure you analyse the seasonal changing sun directions to inform placing the tree or shade device in just the right location to provide the sun control you need – do you want winter sun or summer shade?

Consider ways to increase the area of garden available – don't overlook that you have walls and roofs that can become 'green' by using vertical or horizontal gardens. With this comes the problem of species selection to be resolved! You will find plenty of Aussie species that grow naturally and thrive in similar difficult conditions.

These are just a few of many ways to plan a garden for a small space so that it is a fitting repository for a carefully selected plant palette. It is the plants that will bring life and vitality and with that change over time. Once again the principles of scale, simplicity, enclosure, views, sun/shade etc apply to influence the plant selection, layout and management.

I want to share with you a glimpse of three small gardens in subtropical Brisbane. They will be quite different to others in say Perth or Melbourne but there will be common links.

A Small Rainforest in Suburbia

Carol Guard, Shorncliffe, Qld

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



Carol's vision was to create a very special native garden, with the design philosophy - shade, trees, foliage, fruits and flowers. The rear garden of this long narrow site was planned effectively as a rainforest canopy with a diversity of understory planting. The front garden and the footpath was planned to feature tall and medium native shrubs and bedding plants in a more formal way. It is this street front garden that attracts the community as they walk along the footpath, invariably

stopping to ask Carol what plants are currently in flower. They never leave without all the necessary species details and several NPQ brochures, and often seeds or cuttings as well.



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



If Carol knows that a species she just has to have will not tolerate the site conditions, she is undaunted and successfully establishes the specimens in large containers; in many cases this has produced a 'bonsai' like specimen which brings flowers and fruits down to eye level or lower. Perhaps the most eye-catching container plant was a very large bowl, mounted on a pedestal in which a Stream Lily *Helmholtzia glaberrima* was thriving in the shallow water decorated with numerous 'feather duster' like flower spikes. This was one of many attractive potted specimens and artefacts that gave the garden many interesting focal points.

Small Collectors Garden

Brenda & Michael Meehan, Brisbane Qld

Brenda explains her garden design philosophy is 'more is more', and this is very true! She has expertly massed a wide range of species in her 800 sqm block. Her new garden has evolved following the complete removal of many exotic plants and palms from the original garden, leaving a legacy of steep boulder banks and meandering pathways to embellish.

Brenda has used almost every single square metre for the smallest native to the taller screens and trees. The city view to the south over the suburbs from the expansive terrace is attractively framed by the garden plants, which have been carefully chosen to block out the close views to neighbours.





Small Experimental Courtyard

Lawrie Smith, North Lakes Qld

Now a little about a section of my new small garden, it is 5 years since we moved to 800 sqm from 5 acres after 40 years! One of the last areas of the original exotic garden (now removed) include two unusable narrow triangular sections of the concrete slab at each end of the plunge pool, to be replaced with native gardens. Visually this will provide a seamless physical and visual transition from the existing newly established native gardens inside the boundary fence, and also with those outside the fence in the adjacent parkland.



I decided to try an experiment by building a garden on top of a concrete slab (as you might do on a multistorey apartment terrace!) Ideally I probably should have used a jackhammer to remove the slab sections, but I thought that disposing of the concrete would be too difficult. As I did not want anything larger than matting and small tufting plants in these two new gardens, so decided to do a 'podium garden',

straight on the slab. If it works I'll be pleased, if not it is possible to do it again a different way.

The project required fixing a treated 200mm timber beam to contain the soil at the slab edge along the fence line. Then a few selected weathered sandstone boulders were acquired to function both as aesthetic elements and a couple as stepping stones. Many bags of soil mix, potting mix and sand were purchased from the 'big green shed' and mixed together, then placed over the slab to an average depth of 150mm. Washed gravel and river pebbles were used to suggest a stream bed but really functioning as a surface drainage system.



Several artefacts were recycled from the original garden (just because they were there and did not look too out of place!) - a stone 'Easter Island Head' and an upright fluted black ceramic pot supporting a silver mirror sphere (once a fountain) are integrated into the background. A male Blue Wren loves to fight his reflections in the sphere to impress his ever present harem of wives! A well weathered 900mm square fibre cement box 500mm high, a sentimental object we had brought with us from our home garden at Whiteside, was placed to contain a special focal shrub *Breyenia cernua* 'Ironstone Range' emerging above a weeping foliage blanket of *Casuarina* 'Cousin It'. A weathered log round containing a *Dendrobium speciosum* was relocated to the garden as a focal point.

The intention is that the new garden will take advantage of the full morning sun and the southeast to northeast aspect, to support a colourful and textured carpet beside the pool -

including *Apowollastonia spilanthoides*, *Bulbine bulbosa*, *Chrysocephalum apiculatum*, *Coronidium rupicola*, *Enchylaena tomentosa*, *Lomandra*, *Dianella*, *Viola banksii*, *Zoysia macrantha* and others. This will contrast and act as a foreground to a grove of *Banksia integrifolia*, *B. robur*, *B. serrata*, *Brachychiton compactus* and *Melicope rubra* in a 'real' garden between the two slab gardens. (This garden was also mentioned in the 'Critique' section of the last Newsletter.)

Vertical Gardens make sense

Lawrie Smith, North Lakes Qld

In the Tropical Shade Garden at Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens a shade house is used to protect valuable plants. The logs of the Turpentine Tree *Syncarpia hillii* were logged on Fraser Island almost 100 years ago, used to build the wharves at Mackay Port until fifteen years ago, when they were rescued at demolition to become the structure and support for the 'green wall' gardens. Various rare ferns, tassel ferns, orchids and epiphytes find the textured, barnacle encrusted and sea worm hole patterning the logs to be ideal habitat.



The Allocasuarina "Wheel"

Christine Cullen, Lorne via Kendall NSW

Fifty six *Allocasuarina torulosa* are planted in a 'wheel' formation with 8 'spokes'. We used the Forest Oak, mainly to attract the Red-tailed black cockatoo as it is their preferred food source tree. We have, in a different area a Casuarina 'Wedge' of over 100 River Oak *A. cunninghamiana* for the Yellow-tailed black cockatoos, of which we get many. We used to have lots of the Red-tailed birds, but less these days.

When the trees were smaller we built a series of ornamental tin 'flags' with cut-out shapes in them, also good for perching on. We then decided to use an old bath as a centre piece in which we've planted water lilies. Then we had to name it "Lilly's Bath", as it stands today, but winter is not a good time for flowers.



It is now about 20 years old and is one of our many feature areas in our 5 acre hilly garden which backs on to 40 acres of Native Bush and is surrounded by a creek, a 20 foot waterfall, and a river.

What an intriguing idea! A piece of living botanic sculpture for a very good reason.

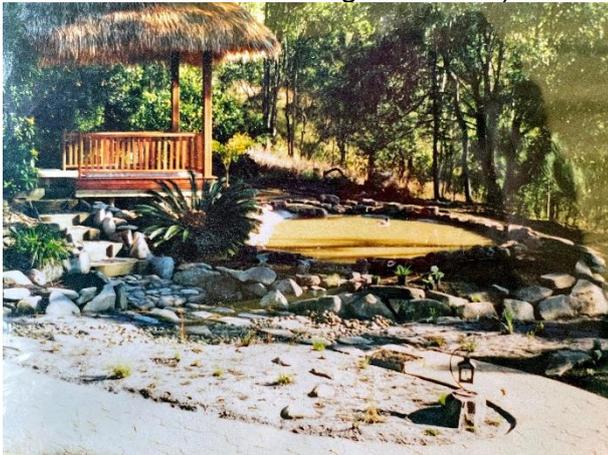
About one month ago we had a flock of about 12 yellow tailed black cockatoo ripping into the many Acacia species in the environmental park beside us, in search of the larvae in the trunks and branches. The Acacia are about 20+ years old and many slowing dying so there is plenty of spent wood for the Cockatoos to use. We see them irregularly, but generally in pairs – never before in such numbers!
Lawrie

Creating a “Wallum” Garden

Bonni Yee, Gold Coast, Qld

Those of you who know coastal heathlands, know what amazing and diverse ecosystems these are, containing a plethora of unique and wonderful plants; many of which grow nowhere else! Barbara Henderson championed these special ecosystems, forming the “Wallum” Study Group and taking members on guided tours whenever she could. These areas are now very limited due to human development and changing conditions.

In 2000, I decided to see if it was possible to create a “wallum” garden on our Nerang clay base. We live 72 M above sea level, but with clay subsoil, we hoped to create a “wet” pan area in our patio. We excavated a 4x5 M oval in the patio area, to about 60 cm depth. This was filled with 7 cubic sandy soil from Hervey Bay (from Landscapers who use this as sand fill for making soil mixes).

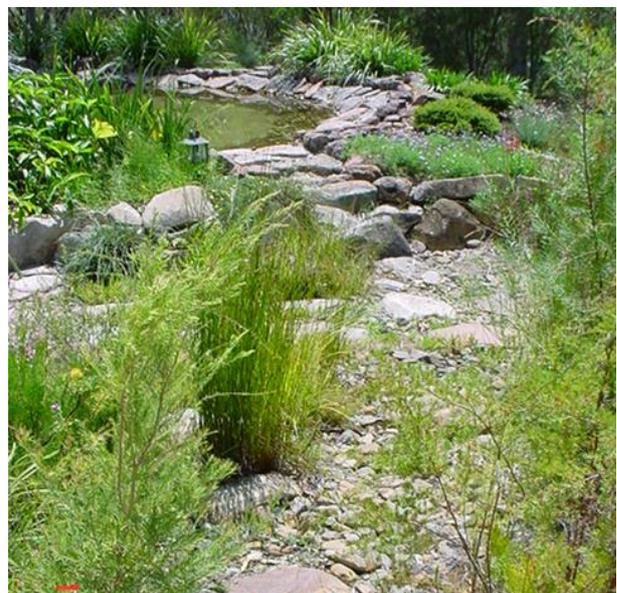


Wallum has peaty, acidic soils, so we packed the newly poured concrete edges with peat to ensure a lower pH. This area is poorly drained, being on clay and at the base of a sloping section of our “ridge”.

Where to get plants? You cannot buy “wallum” plants commercially, but Barbara had a letter of permit to collect plants from a wallum area that had been bulldozed and was to be planted as a “Paulownia Plantation”! So we collected seedlings there, each taken with a plug of soil, wrapped in wet newspaper and transplanted immediately when we reached home.



As these pictures show, in the first 2 years, it did indeed look like “Wallum” with many seedlings flourishing: sedges, peaflowers, *Patersonias*, *Boronias*, *Sowerbaea* and things I still don’t know the name of...it was wonderful! But droughts have taken a toll and some plants have died. Now in this wet season, new seedlings are coming up! After 20 years, I think you cannot really re-create a true Wallum outside of its natural state; but you can learn a lot by trying.



Wildlife Small Space

Bev Hanson, Melbourne, Vic



This is an example of a small space with a bowl of water which doubles as a bird bath or drink for animals. I find *Conostylis aculeata* Prickly Cotton Head, a clumping grassy perennial, pictured here is the most reliable of this species in Melbourne.

A tiny and small courtyard in Sydney's northern suburbs.

Jeff Howes, Westleigh, NSW

My few words are about my small courtyard between the front of my house and a pitched roof carport that now exists as a result of building works.

Site constraints and size:

- Overall courtyard paved and garden size approximately is 7 m deep and 3.5 m wide.
- Garden size is 3 m deep and 3.5 m wide.
- The front of the house receives dappled sun most of the day
- In winter the carport cast a sun shadow and the left hand half receive no sun for all winter and then increasingly more sun until in December/January it receives a few hours of the hot afternoon sun.
- Soil is heavy loam that retains moisture and can also dry out.
- Neighbours have an old ugly carport that would ideally be screened out.
- My overhead power mains are one metre above the wooden panelling at the back of the patio garden.

My design thinking:

- Need to make the garden a pleasant backdrop to the house entrance and when seated at the table enjoying coffee.
- Flowering plants would be ideal but not practical due to limited sunlight. So it will tend to be a foliage garden.
- As it is a long thin courtyard your eye will be drawn down the centre to the far end. So I have tried to plant accordingly and have a feature plant at the end.
- Due to the patio gardens small size, a high degree of formality will be needed to make it work.
- I have tried to plant group plantings in uneven numbers as that works best.

Reality

Plantings commenced 3 years ago. The back end of the carport (LHS) is clad with floral pattern steel sheets from Stramit Building Products to frame the courtyard.

Left hand side plantings. A tree fern was planted in back left hand corner and in front of that are a few seed raised native hollies *Craptophyllum ilicifolium* to offer some afternoon shade to tree fern. Thinking about it now the tree fern should not have been planted there, as that back corner ideally needs some height to it. In front of the tree fern is a very successful *Correa baeuerlenii* that flowers with no sun in winter. The three multi stemmed plantings in front are *Carex quadichidians* that thrives in the damp heavy soil and also tolerate dryness. To prevent prolific seeding I trim the plant back after it sends up the flowering/seed storks (culms). There are also many smaller ferns planted in this area to fill the ground area.



Centre plantings. At the back are two *Acmenia smithii* var Minor shrubs, planted either side of the centre line and in front of that is a yellow flowering grafted grevillea, not sure of name, that was to be the centre feature but is a bit to straggly in its growth and flowers sparsely at present. I await summer sun to see if growth thickens up. To help lead the eye down the centre of the courtyard, I have planted five *Lomandra* Blue Ridge as they the thinner leaved *Lomandras* appear to do better in my heavier soil.



Right hand side plantings. These are years old plants that I have left in place till the newer planting have established. The foreground is a white flowering *Babingtonia* (was *Beackia*) *crenatifolia*. In front of this plant are a few smaller hybrid *Grevilleas* struggling in Sydney's wet and overcast present conditions and will need replacing, I suspect with *Grevillea* Ruby Jewel. The foliage of this plant better matches the left hand side leaf texture and colour. It also appears to be hardy in my garden. In the background is a heavily pruned and old *Grevillea* Misty Pink that flowers well despite its age.

Summary

- I have tried to balance foliage shape and texture, how successful have I been?
- Is the garden too formal?
- Should I remove the *Grevillea* Misty Pink on the right hand side and replant to better balance the left hand side foliage or is it a welcome contrast?
- Any comments appreciated in the next newsletter.

North Queensland garden in Pots.

Ishara Udawela, Bushland Beach Townsville, Qld

Having lived in rental houses the last three years, I've collected a few native plants that have managed to survive in pots over that time. My intention is to plant them in the ground when we finally have a property to move into. Because of the limitations of space in terms of keeping plants in pots and the challenge of carting them around between rentals, I have tried to limit my collection to the more rare, harder to find plants that I come across over the last few years. Once we settle into a property hopefully later this year, these plants will go into the ground alongside local plants from Landcare nurseries.



This collection contains mainly small understorey rainforest plants which is why they are closely grouped together in this fashion. In the previous rental houses, I had lined the pots along the walls but found that the plants grew too leggy and leaned away from the walls, and were not getting full advantage of the rain due to the roof eaves. Because of this I decided to group them together in a more open position so the plants had a more even distribution of sun and rain. This seemed to have rectified the leggy growth. The more sun sensitive plants are in the middle while sun hardy plants are around the edges creating a mini micro-climate. This situation is in full sun during the winter months, and in summer the house shades the area from sun from midday onwards, making this spot an ideal situation. Please excuse a couple of the exotic edibles you may notice in the photo, they help to create some shade and take the brunt of the midday sun.

I live in Townsville which is notably the dry tropics, but my plant preferences are more suited to the wet tropics. Because of this the pots are watered well every day, and they sit on a rubber mat that retains the moisture while preventing roots escaping into the ground. When a permanent garden can be established, these plants will be planted in a well-protected, shadier, rainforest type garden style, much similar to what can be seen in most botanical gardens. I will use some of my favourite QLD rainforest trees to create a canopy with large well mulched garden beds.



Proiphys amboinensis



Hoya potseii

My experience has been that rainforest understorey plants are easy to keep in pots, and are not as fussy with conditions as long as they're well-watered and sheltered from extreme heat. They are longer lived than some of the arid plants, and are better suited to the rainy seasons that occurs in the tropics. Mind you I have still lost a few here and there. Most of these have so far not required re-potting once they've come out of their tube pots. Some remain in the tube pots to keep their roots growing down and prevent root bound issues. I am hoping that there won't be issues once they are finally free to grow in the ground. To the right of the photo is a native banana (*Musa banksii*) that looks very much like the commercially grown varieties. Some of the lily types are also easy to keep in pots, such as *Crinum* and Cardwell lilies *Proiphys amboynensis*. Some orchids seem to be happy sitting on top of other pots where they are still sheltered while being aerated. I have a few *Dendrobium* species including the Cooktown orchid, and other epiphytes such as native Hoyas *Hoya potseii*.

Bonsai the Ultimate Small Garden

Wendy Lahey & John Holzappel, Gladstone Q



Brachychiton sp



Clerodendrum sp



Ficus microcarpa

MEMBERS STORIES

Design for Climate Change, including Gardens in Shade

Chris Larkin, Melbourne

Chris lodged this article well before the May issue deadline and I somehow overlooked this valuable text – 1000 apologies Chris, better late than never! Lawrie

I missed writing something on the last topic but considering where I live the current topic on the effect of climate change on garden design and shady gardens dovetail together nicely. In introducing the current topic Lawrie stated in the last newsletter that ‘there was still debate in the community about the reality of climate change and its impact’. Sadly, that may very well be true but there is no debate amongst the vast majority of the scientists’ examining changes in our climate. I don’t even think there is a debate on a political level about the reality of climate change but rather, again sadly, the role of different human activities on bringing it about. Yes, some truths are inconvenient.

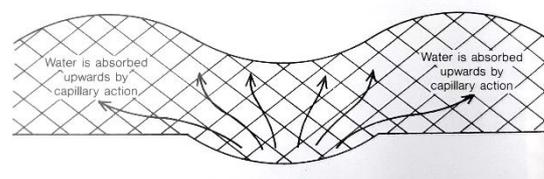
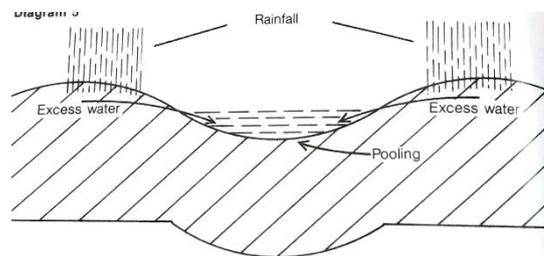
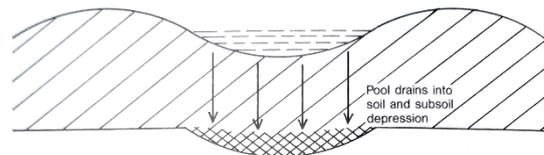
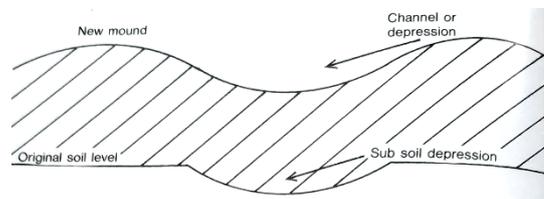
This is a La Nina year when Australia experiences higher than normal rainfall and South America drier conditions. I was hopeful we would get some decent rains over summer but as often happens the effects of La Nina struggle to penetrate as far south as Melbourne. For NSW and QLD monsoon season combining with La Nina and climate change has resulted in a disastrous amount of rainfall.

The long-term outlook for Melbourne is for hotter, drier and windier. Thankfully we have not had excessive wind this summer or days over 40, but we have had low rainfall and an abundance of hot weather.

Nothing I am going to say is the solution for unprecedented rain events or really extended droughts. There is nothing anyone can do to safeguard a garden against being shredded by a vicious hailstorm like the one that occurred

here in March 2010. I am not sure how relevant what I have to say is to gardens in the tropics and sub-tropics with wet summers in those regions when it’s at its driest here. Some strategies, however, are valuable for establishing a new garden or even for retrofitting into the design as you renew part of your garden. All the ideas are good for normal weather times but with climate change they become more important in helping to make a garden more resilient to increased variability in the weather.

If you were starting a garden from scratch then a design idea thoroughly explored by John Hunt in his extremely practical guide, ‘Creating an Australian Garden’, is worth considering. The idea is to use mounding and channelling to harvest water run-off from the mounds so it can be stored at depth and accessed by plants during low rainfall times through capillary action. It should help plants establish deep roots, whereas watering favours root development closer to the surface where they are most likely to be damaged in dry times.



The mounds and channels can be formed within or between garden beds, doubling as dry creek beds or possibly even paths so long as the system does not allow water to easily drain away rather than being stored at depth. I learned about this after starting my garden but have been able to use it to some extent in remodelling parts of the garden. I need to capture water being shed from a reasonably steep slope.

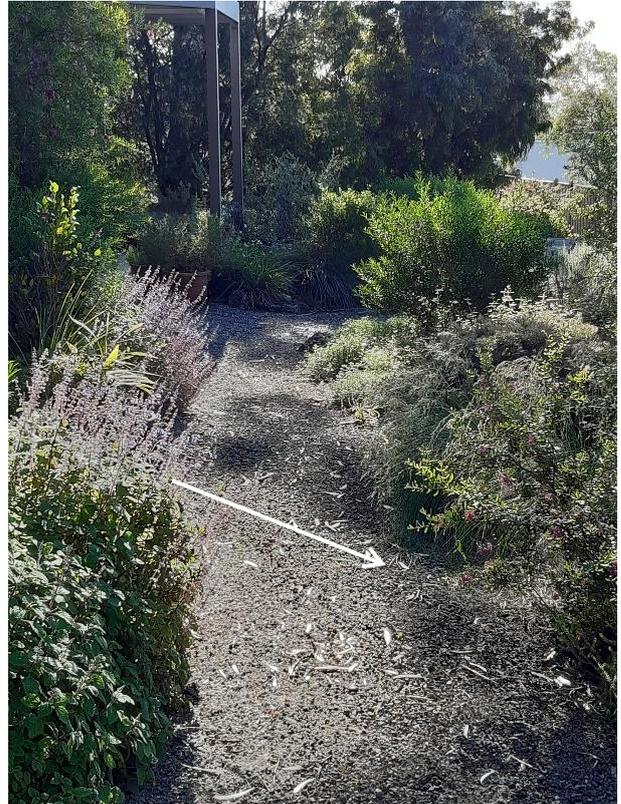


Driveway shedding water into large garden bed

Until I was on town water and sewage waste water was pumped to the top of the hill and drained away gradually through pipes placed at depth, snaking over the hillside and covered with stones. Inadvertently this may have been a useful way of getting rainwater too at depth. Establishing paths running across the slope has slowed the water down doing some of the job, deliberate depressions beside a driveway and within beds have also been used. Plants are not placed in the channel area as a rule but on the sides or tops of the mounds. When they mature it is not always easy to see the undulations especially if you are growing a mix of plants with horizontal and vertical growth habits.

Hunt goes on to look at soil which needs to hit that Goldilocks sweet spot between draining too well and retaining too much moisture. The solution to the extremes of soils retaining or shedding too much water is generally agreed to be the addition of humus rather than the introduction of foreign soils although some people would also be against this interfering with the nutrient load in the soil. Especially with respect to planting indigenous species. It is important to protect soils, and the all-important

micro-organism living in them, by using either organic or inorganic mulch. Over time prostrate plants can grow and spread taking over this job as well as giving voids/space to the plant design. Rocks of a reasonable size can help provide a cool root run and even shade for small plants.



Path running across slope in dappled shade

With so much more sun and wind I'm all for organising shade in the garden which means there will be gardens in the shade! It was very difficult to work here in the garden, on a basically bare north facing hillside, before trees and shrubs could provide shade at different times of the day. Shifting shade is great for most plants, which, I hazard to say, are mostly understorey plants in nature. I note that plants exposed to too much sun can suffer from bleaching whereas the same plant in part shade will do much better all things being equal. Shade is a great relief for the gardener wanting to work outside, particularly in summer. A house and/or the surrounding surfaces will benefit hugely from being shaded in summer. It is a scientific fact that it is cooler in the shade, but you might find it surprising how large that temperature difference can be. This temperature difference was made clear in a segment of 'Gardening Australia' aired on

February 25th. If you didn't see it at the time, then check it out on iView. So, the selection and placement of trees is critical in the planting design of your garden for shade but also for supporting wildlife remembering that birds, for instance, use trees as their highways, pun intended, to move from one area to another. Trees and large shrubs also protect the garden from wind to some extent as they shield, deflect or break up the wind.



Path running across the slope between beds and dipping to a low point halfway.

Knowledge about plants and their selection is critical, and the criterion for choosing a plant are multiple. The function of the plant in terms of size and shape is one factor, how each plant 'fits' with surrounding plants in terms of foliage type and foliage colour is another, and then there is the question of how happy a plant will be with the growing conditions of a particular spot in the garden. I am lucky to have a full set of Elliot and Jones 'Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants' which gives invaluable information on the likely best growing conditions for a plant. I don't know of anything on the Web that provides this detailed information. I have found it useful to visit gardens around Melbourne to see how plants are growing - their shape, size and growing

conditions. Talking to and getting advice from Australian plant enthusiasts is useful too. You can't build a garden on impulse buys or constantly trying to grow difficult to grow plants. If you are somewhat conservative in trying to build most of your garden with plants tolerant of the conditions you have, even without the addition of watering, then you can generally find room for experimentation as well. I know I do.

I was on tank water for around 25 years so luckily I have plenty of tank water that can be used for the garden or most importantly to keep water up to the frog ponds. I do not have a watering system, but I do admit to doing some hand watering for new plants. It is more difficult to see how watering can be helpful for established plants growing in a clay soil. As part of my maintenance regime I try to prune plants before the heat of summer or even during summer with the idea that reducing the size of the plant will reduce its needs for water. With a view to protecting the soils and lessening them drying out I leave any plants that have died in the ground until the end of summer. Additionally, I resist removing the browned-off growth of *Brachyscome* sp and *Scaevola* sp etc for the same reason – the dead material is protecting the ground and even the root system of plants that will spring back with new growth for the next spring season.

If you concentrate on the health, happiness and the function of a plant i.e. how it fits into the picture or feeling you are trying to create in your garden rather than the colour of flowers which might appear at different times of the year to a neighbouring plant then your garden is more likely to look good year round. Chris Larkin on a north facing hillside south-east of Melbourne, clay soils.

(Diagrams from: Creating an Australian Plant Garden by John M. Hunt, Kangaroo Press in assoc with SGAP NSW, 1986, reprinted 1994)

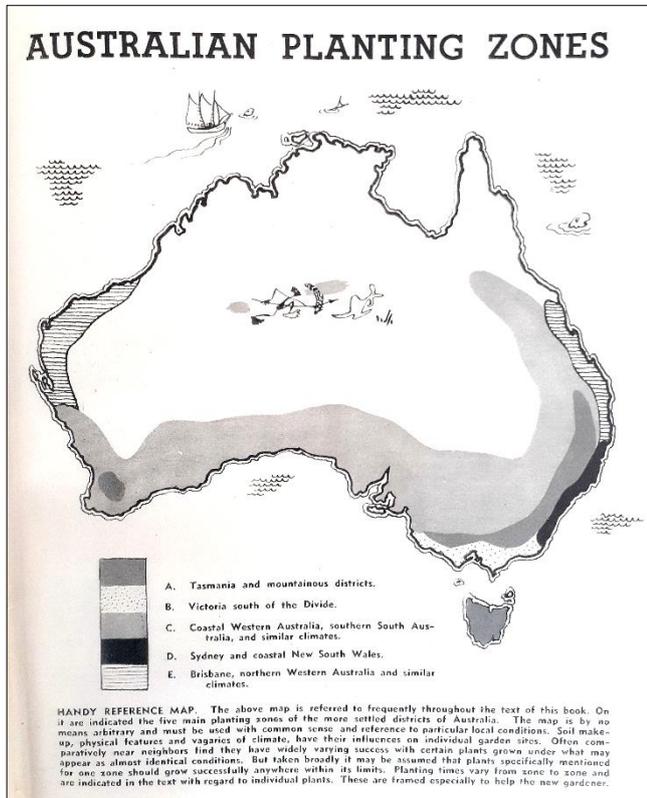
Where are the Tropics & Inland?

Julie Nimmo, Woody Point, Qld

Hi Lawrie, I have finally made it back to QLD! After much sorting, packing and select unpacking I have been reunited with some of my older plant, garden and landscape books. I

had a look at my 'Rainforest Trees of Australia' by Francis c1951 and 'The Complete Gardener Illustrated' by Olive Mellor c1950.

collectors of rare and interesting native plants and so their garden is a patchwork of collections and design ideas gained over a lifetime of tending one property.



Each area has its own character and is almost like an open plan series of rooms. The design principals is what brings it all together, there are varying heights, a sense of scale and seclusion and a continuity drawn together by materials such as bluestone, gravel and a sense of whimsy orchestrated by sculpture. This garden proves that a successful design does not have to contain mass plantings of a few plants, as long as there are other design principles tying it together.

I had a chuckle at the Mellor book as there are few local species mentioned from a gardening perspective and the tropics and inland don't even seem to exist. I have attached a diagram from the book to illustrate. Looking forward to hearing from you and catching up soon.



Thanks Julie, welcome back! This is a surprising diagram, but I'm sure that not too many other authors overlooked the tropics and the inland when thinking of native gardens. Australia is a diverse continent and every bioregion has wonderful examples of equally diverse native species and gardens. Lawrie

Scale, seclusion & continuity

Janette Wilson, Tyabb, Vic

Max and Helen Kennedy's garden in Wheelers Hill Victoria is a half-acre suburban block that takes in views of Mount Dandenong to the north east. There are a number of large trees on the site providing substantial habitat for birds and wildlife. The soil overlays a clay pan but Helen and Max have built up garden beds over the last 60 years, making for great soil structure above the clay. They are avid



Space for Time in the Garden

Jenny White, Slade Point, Mackay QLD



What a surprise it was for our first wedding anniversary to have my husband John suggest we celebrate with a custom made sundial for our location in Slade Point, Mackay, QLD.

Two and a half years later it sits comfortably in its space, surrounded by a myriad of native plants. Lunch is never late, well most of the time.

Groundcover: *Vitex rotundifolia*. To the left: *Antidesma parvifolium*; *Hibiscus divaricatus*; *Heliotropium sarmentosum*; *Cleodendrum floribundum*; *Melaleuca recurva*; *Dianella longifolia* (self seeded)

At Long Last

Ray & Wendy Benfer, Blackbutt, Qld

Since the January edition of our NPQ Kingaroy & Districts Newsletter, I have been including updates on the first flower to appear on the Gynea Lily (*Doryanthes excelsa*) in our front garden. It is now nearly 6 metres from the base of the plant to the top of the flower.

It certainly is a stunning plant, now about 8 years old, starting its life in our garden as a tiny specimen. Surprisingly we failed to establish a small community of Spear Lily (*Doryanthes palmeri*) some years ago. Extended dry weather and very hot spring and summer conditions were the likely cause.

In part due to the wonderful, above average rainfall and insufficient input from us, our bush garden in front of our house has suffered from intense competition from Bearded Grass (*Oplismenus aemulus*) and Native Wandering Jew (*Commelina diffusa*) as well as some

residual grasses from the pre-existing lawn. Over winter a big effort is required to retrieve the situation. The *Oplismenus* and *Commelina* behave so differently in their natural environment and probably should be excluded or at least confined to small areas.



CRITIQUE

Look Critically at Your Garden

This section provides 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 overall garden design.

Hopefully this page will provide the forum for members to send in a photo and analysis of a section of their garden to share 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 seeing unfortunate solutions, and sometimes possibly more.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU!
I hope you too 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 with reference to your related explanatory text.

CRITIQUE: Front Entrance Courtyard Garden

Bob Bannon, Brisbane

Site conditions & analysis

Location, 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 is the front section of our residential garden in Moreton Bay north of Brisbane, confined by the street, driveway, side boundary and the house, approximately 6 metres square. The aspect is to the North so the garden receives sun most of the day.

Answering the challenges

What you wanted to achieve through the design.

The garden was initially planned to create a memorable arrival experience for visitors by displaying a collection of native species along the entry path – a garden that might also enthrall neighbours to follow suit. The courtyard developed over a period of years transitioning from full sun to the shaded understory now established. The principal shade tree emits the '*smell of the bush*' aroma, so distinctive of Australian bushland and also provides a decorative gnarled and twisted branch 'sculpture'.

Hard landscape elements

Paving, rocks, retaining walls, fences.

The gardens are surrounded by gravel mulch and matching brown concrete stepping stones define the entry to the front stairs. Logs and sleepers contain the garden edges and continue 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 but varied, with understory species defined by the shade cast by the selected canopy trees. Small to medium edge shrubs provide privacy and filtered views to the street. These with the tree canopy and understory of dominantly low tufting plant species creates a large 'green room' space to visually expand the apparent courtyard dimensions.



Front Entrance Courtyard



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

Plant Grouping Analysis

1. The sculptural contorted trunks of this cluster of small open canopy trees provides filtered shade to this entry courtyard from mid-afternoon N-NW sun.
Acacia fimbriata Dwarf Brisbane Wattle, *Mallotus laoxyloides* Smell of the Bush, *Leptospermum brachyandrum* a Tea Tree
2. A large Swamp Orchid receives morning sun and the many flower spikes provides a seasonal focus at the footpath entry to the garden. *Phaius australis* Swamp Orchid
3. The dense cluster of strappy leaves highlight the tufting understory foliage theme of the central garden.
Dianella caerulea Flax Lily
4. The weeping foliage of several other tufting species cascade out to the garden edge. *Drynaria rigidula* Basket Fern
5. This decorative layered, prostrate shrub maintains an open view of the gate to the side garden just ahead. *Plectranthus sp.*
6. The tall white emergent flower spikes held above the dense dark green foliage add focus and interest along the entry path.
Orthosiphon ariatatus Cat's Whiskers
7. A small leaf cascading cover adds visual interest to the foreground of the plants along the footpath garden edge.
Austromyrtus dulcis Midyim

8. This irregular branched sun tolerant orchid contrasts with the surrounding plants and provides dramatic seasonal flower display.
Oncidium sp. Dancing Lady
9. The footpath edge of the entry garden is shaded from the northern sun by a dense globular street tree.
Buckinghamia celcissima Ivory Curl
10. The dramatic rosette of long cycad fronds contrasts with most other foliage and provides asymmetric balance to the courtyard.
Lepidozamia sp. in neighbours garden

CRITIQUE: My Australian Woodland Garden

Anne Keaney, Braidwood NSW

When I planted out this garden in the summer of 2020/2021 my intention was to create a woodland garden featuring plants from open woodlands of the NSW ranges and tablelands, most of which are not commonly grown. This garden which is very large (much larger than the photo suggests) sits between two fully matured *Eucalyptus viminalis* and behind some smaller *Eucalyptus radiata* and is in light shade for most of the day.



It contains many individually beautiful plants including various forms of *Pomaderris*, *Phebalium olearia*, *Ozothamnus*, *Oxylobium*, *Hovea*, *Pultenaea* and others. They have thrived in this wettest of summers, and unlike much of the remainder of my garden which has been badly damaged by the continuous

rain, are in great condition. However, when I look at the garden I find it rather dull and visually uninteresting.

I believe I have made a number of basic design mistakes. Firstly, I didn't think about the backdrop which is not very appealing and perhaps should have been blocked out. Secondly I have planted too many different kinds of plants and those I have planted are overall quite similar in appearance. They blur into each other rather than set each other off. Thirdly the plants are all fairly evenly spaced. Finally, I didn't even stay with my original objective, having strayed into planting some WA shade tolerant plants near the front.

Fixing the overall effect, will I think, require some radical surgery. Firstly extending the garden out beyond the *Eucalyptus radiatas*. Secondly reducing the number of different types of plants from about twenty to about six and perhaps grouping them a bit more, and finally, introducing a contrasting plant in form and size to repeat plant across the garden. I'm thinking a smallish tufted plant such as the local form of *Patersonia* or perhaps a smaller *Lomandra confertifolia*. These will hopefully form a lower layer giving a more natural woodland appearance, and tie the garden together.

CRITIQUE: **Deciduous Trees – don't do it!**

Anne Keaney, Braidwood NSW

Very large deciduous trees have been a popular choice for rural gardens for many years. They do have many virtues and no doubt that splash of brilliant green in a dry brown landscape has comforted many a drought affected farmer. They do not, however, work in an Australian native garden.

When I bought my property near Braidwood NSW 6 years ago the modernist style house was newly built. Rather than leave the landscaping as a blank canvass the builder had planted dozens of deciduous trees; – oaks, pinoaks, birch trees, manchurian pears, elms, poplars, liquid ambers, London plane trees, tulip trees not to mention wisteria, running bamboo and rows of the

hideous Leyland cypress, the almost equally unappealing pittosporum silver sheen and of course, photinia. I immediately started on removing the running bamboo and all of the deciduous trees on the northern side of my property as these would have quickly grown to block my sweeping views across the valley. Unfortunately I left most others in place, which I now hugely regret.

All these trees were small when I arrived and grew only slowly during the drought. However, since March 2020 they have all put on enormous growth and now dominate and overwhelm parts of my garden. I see them as ugly and garish with colours too strong to blend with the more subtle grey/green hues of my Australian natives. Their canopies are too thick and low to the ground and there foliage is too large. They do not mix at all. My only relief comes in winter when they lose their leaves to show their bare branches and trunks.



The photo above looks over one of my beds of mixed plantings of Australian natives and towards my ground cover garden. Behind it are birch trees, pear trees and golden elms. From October to April these trees are a wall of bright green. From late April as their leaves fall they begin to blend into rather than dominate my Australian native garden.

To my eye in winter they become beautiful. Fortunately our winters in this part of the NSW Southern Tablelands are not only very cold but quite long.

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.

This is a selection of some images received. I am sure that there are many other wonderful gardens that you would like to share. Obviously 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!!***



PLANTS IN DESIGN

One stop Pharmacy in the forest!

Lawrie Smith, Brisbane

Not really a garden design subject but once I found out its medicinal properties, I could not restrain myself sharing! This attractive specimen was photographed in March 2022 at Deception Bay just north of Brisbane. A sprinkling of flowers remain, but the tree is shrouded by thousands of narrow pods up to 400+mm long. It is assumed that the peak flowering may have been in February.



There are two semi mature trees and it has been assumed that these specimens could have derived from the experimental and research plantations of native trees established in the early 1880's on the Bancroft

Farm, which contains the park area. The farm has been cleared since the early 1900's for a small lot coastal suburb. Dr Joseph Bancroft was a renowned medical researcher particularly of the native flora, as was his son.

Alstonia scholaris

Milky Pine sometimes Green Spaghetti Tree

MEDICINAL QUALITIES

Native to the forests of northern Queensland, India, Asia-Pacific and South China; valued by the Yirrganydji and Djabugay people of NQ and all these other cultures.

The white milky latex is a good tonic, it provides a quality chewing gum, which also treats toothache, mouth ulcers and rheumatic pain; and also makes excellent glue.



The leaves are used for fish poison. Sap from leaves or a leaf decoction is applied as a wash for skin diseases, used as a gargle, and to clean infected wounds.

Flowers emit an intoxicating perfume; Seeds are strongly hallucinogenic and also an aphrodisiac.

The ground bark and root juices have bitter astringent properties that reduce headache, lower fever, treat chest pain, relax spasms, stimulate lactation and expel intestinal worms; also used to treat abdominal pains, bowel complaints, chronic diarrhoea, and for snake bite. Timber used for pencils, making manual tools. Altogether it seems to be a one stop Pharmacy in the forest!

National Arboretum visit

Jeff Howes, Westleigh NSW

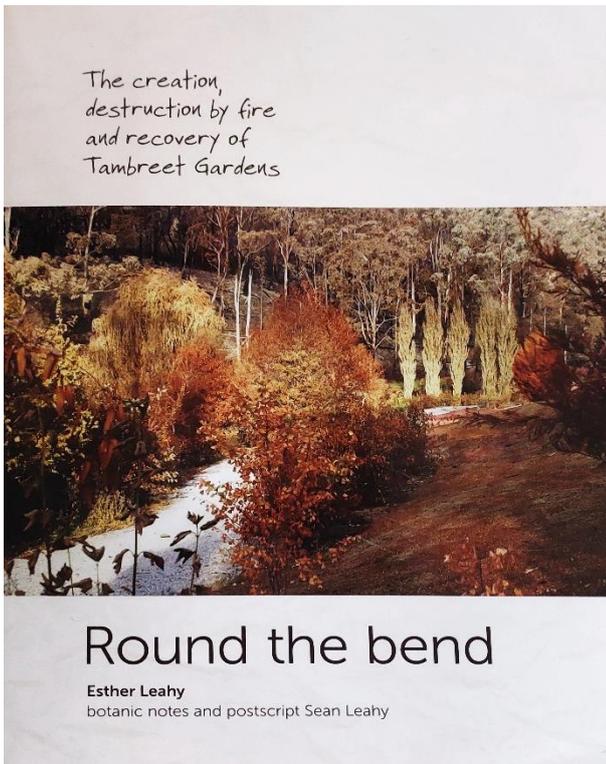
I was in Canberra in May this year and visited the Arboretum to check on the progress of the ANPSA *Terra Australis Garden* - great design and growing well. The depression or soak was designed to fill in heavy rain and I was delighted to see it full, as the photo shows.



'Round the Bend' – Book Review

Jeff Howes, Westleigh NSW

I also looked in at the centres book shop and bought a very good book about a Victorian garden before and after the February, 2009, Black Saturday Bushfire. This fire resulted in the death of 150 people and the destruction of 1,500 homes, a true disaster. I thought I would share my comments on this great book titled '*Round the Bend. The creation, destruction by fire and recovery of Tambreet Gardens*' Author Esther Leahy. Published in 2013. EG Publishing. PO Box 9093 Traralgon Victoria 3844.



Tambreet Gardens was a deserted 6 acre, ex dairy block of land, with a creek, in country Victoria not far from the small town of Koornall, which is about 150kms from Melbourne in the Latrobe Valley. The author Esther and her husband Sean Leahy bought this land to build a house and fill the garden with exotic species, trees of antiquity, trees of Australia and around the world, many grown from seed collected in their travels. Their garden was only four years old when on 7 February 2009 the terrible Black Saturday fire arrived at their property. They stayed to fight the fire, being well prepared with many water tanks, pumps and full protective gear etc. They did save their house just, and the first

pages of the book describe the heart rendering story of their struggle to do so.

The rest of this 265 page book gives a page or two of accurate botanical information and details of each of the garden plants or tree, pre fire and post fire growth or lack of it. As well, each of these pages includes photos to complement the text. Details are also provided on the return of animals and birds.

After the fire they were surprised how many plants burnt to a stalk, relied on their suckering ability to shoot from below the ground including many rainforest plants like Davidson's plum *Davidsonia pruriens*, black bean *Castanospermum australe* and the brown plum pine *Podocarpus elatus* to name a few of our native plants. Many introduced trees did the same.

A few of the many lessons they learnt in post fire rejuvenation were:

- How to rejuvenate the baked soil
- Avoid pruning for a year except for safety reasons to remove torn and dangerous limbs.
- Wait four years before deciding a plant will not regrow.
- Leave broken and blackened trees in situ.
- After a year returning exotic, non-native trees outnumbered native trees many times over.

In summary a great read and a book you will gain an appreciation on nature's survival strength. Well worth scouring a copy of this book.



Regeneration after the bushfire

Archives

Issues 65 to 68

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 GDSG Newsletter archives section of the ANPSA website.

<http://anpsa.org.au/design/des-news.html>

Newsletter #65 February 2009

Oh Our Designing Ways!

Chris Larkin Vic

I was talking to a woman the other day who wants to create an Australian plant front garden. She had visited Bev Fox's garden and she loved the restful feel of the garden ... I said the relaxed (and relaxing) feeling achieved in this garden is a result of a lot of thought has gone into the role, and hence placement, of each plant.....

The Future of Cultivars

John Walter, Vic

After many years researching the people and documentation surrounding the formation of our Society, I can say with absolute certainty that there was no doubt about the importance of hybrids and cultivars in the minds of our founders. (In) Arthur Swaby's draft Federal Constitution the primary purpose was *"to do all in our power to introduce Australian plants into cultivation and to improve them by breeding and selection."*

Native Plants Increasing in Popularity?

Jeff Howes, NSW

Native plants have been popular for a long time... During the period leading up to and

after Australia's Federation there were articles on how to grow them, germination of seed and nutrition requirements just to name a few of the articles.... During the 1970s there was a surge in popularity of native plants and this led to many desirable plants from Western Australia being introduced to the public, even though many were unsuitable

Newsletter #66 May 2009

Australian and Japanese Gardens

Diana Snape Vic

I think there are some similarities as well as great differences between these and Australian gardens. Similarities include the presence of rocks, a feature of both garden styles. The difference lies in how they are used. In Japanese gardens, much is symbolic rather than natural. An individual rock is carefully chosen for its shape and is likely to be given a name illustrating its significance or purpose...

Native Grasses for Australian Gardens

Tony Cavanagh, Vic

This is only a small book by Nola Parry & Jocelyn Jones 2007, but is jam packed with information. Because the authors are interested in the form and function of plants other than grasses they have included a wide range of plants with strappy leaves, such as sedges, rushes, irises, kangaroo paws and flax plants. For those wanting to design a garden featuring grasses, the third chapter has many ideas

Two Native Gardens in Sydney

APS NSW

Our first garden was Blackstump Natives owned by Tony and Penny Sexton. Tony is determined that his plants are beautiful – he is conscious of a pushback against Australian plants as straggly and leggy and will have none of it in his garden. His plants all do indeed look very beautiful.....

Next was 'Silky Oaks' owned by Peter and Margaret Olde. Peter stressed his garden says more about the plants than the landscape – he does not see his garden in any way as a part of the Bush Garden school. His interest is in plants and their performance, their form, flower and colour.....

Newsletter #67 August 2009

Natural, Formal and the World in between

Diana Snape Vic.

We are fortunate in Australia to have, at one end of the formality scale, completely natural landscapes that often have a beauty we only wish we could replicate in our gardens. In the GDSG we have called these 'natural gardens', as the only ones that truly are... At the formal end of the range are gardens with "straight lines, clipped hedges and manicured lawns"....

Some Garden Design Fundamentals

APS, NSW

Extract from a summary of the Garden Design Workshop - July 2009 hosted by S.E. Coast – very interesting!

"There is much discussion about the Australian garden, the Australian style. It is as yet- and may always be – impossible to describe a single Australian garden style.... Perhaps the most useful interpretation of an Australian style is a sustainable garden designed to thrive with minimal water and maintenance; planned for stable and steady growth with potential for regeneration and incorporating the site adapted indigenous flora that is able to survive, thrive and support itself along with its reliant creatures large and small." **Paul Thompson, Vic**

This whole issue Newsletter #67 is really worth reading for the wealth of articles about garden design.

Newsletter #68 November 2009

Modern Gardens

Barbara Buchannan, Vic

"A modern garden is one in which people sit rather than just passing through enroute to somewhere else." This comment by a prominent English garden designer in an article in Gardens Illustrated set me thinking. We don't usually sit in our garden, we work in it, stroll round for gentle exercise or to discover the latest new flowers or we come inside to rest. My husband hates sharing food with flies so we have never developed the barbeque lifestyle. We have never set aside an area with seats and table for resting. Maybe it is time we did, but I think it may be connected to living in the country. Those of our offspring who live in

the big smoke do all the outdoor living things, those who are in the bush, don't. We are lucky enough to be immersed in the great outdoors and don't need special efforts to enjoy it.

Change, in Landscapes and Gardens

Diana Snape, Vic

Natural landscapes in Australia are subject to change. So is our garden. I think change is a key characteristic of many (most?) Australian landscapes and gardens. A natural landscape changes during the year in a somewhat cyclical way with the seasons and weather conditions. In a landscape you know well, it's surprising to see just how much change there can be during a year. For example, small plants come and go, occasionally a tree dies...

The Garden of Joy

Joy Cook, Tathra NSW

We were presented with a relatively new home facing west on a steeply sloping block of land covered with Kikuyu grass. Doesn't sound ideal does it? The house stood out like a sore toe when viewed from the street. To accommodate a steep slope the house is built up at the front and gradually decreasing in height to ground level at the rear. We were impressed with the house being open plan inside and on one level, and myself enthused by the surrounding grounds begging for a garden. I intended to spend my retirement gardening and I always enjoy a challenge.



Jan Hall garden, Yarrawonga Vic

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

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
- Tom & Ronni Kendall, Zillmere Qld
- Ann Croot, Samford Qld
- Michael Arthur, Brisbane Qld

Current Membership: 213

Treasurer's Report – July 21, 2022

General account:	\$ 3,733.91
Less Expenses:	\$ 0.00
Term Deposit:	\$ 28,412.42
(incl interest \$70.85 - reinvested for 12 mths to 25/01/23)	
TOTAL:	\$ 32,146.33

Membership of GDSG is free ...

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STOP PRESS

A Small Garden at Kojonup

Chris Lewis, Kojonup WA

Attached is a photo of a section in my garden in Kojonup WA our rain fall is 550 mils annual only in winter very little summer rain.



The plants are *Thryptomene saxicola* small pink flowers, *Melaleuca pulchella* not in flower, *Grevillea thelemanniana /preissii* orange flower, *Lomandra confertifolia* Silver Grace. All these are hardy plants. I Look forward to and enjoy the newsletters.

Chris, I find it hard to imagine gardening in your rainfall, given the fact that this year so far, in Brisbane we have received 2125mm, which is almost twice the usual yearly average!! And this is the highest by far that I have recorded over the past 40 years!! Should I send some over to you – you might find it handy! Lawrie

Naturalising Melbourne's waterways

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

Naturalisation is a growing initiative in contemporary urban planning that has the potential to deliver better outcomes to our waterways than just drainage alone. As opposed to restoration, naturalisation is a pragmatic approach to return natural systems and experiences to our landscapes, within the constraints of a working city. It is not often that a community, is given the opportunity to redesign a waterway. In an urban context,

these linear landscapes are often seen simply as drains, but in actuality they can provide an invaluable lifeline for wildlife, vegetation and people.

The 20th century was witness to an engineering movement that swept across Melbourne's dynamic catchments, reducing



complex systems of natural rivers, creeks and tributaries into a simple 'grey infrastructure' of concrete channels and drains. Thankfully these views are beginning to change, with waterways now being valued as crucial spaces to integrate our urban and natural systems.

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

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

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

their surrounding communities. The consultation process revealed a community desire to engage with water: to hear it and see it flowing, to touch and smell it. The community wanted a waterway that looked like a natural waterway, not like a drain. They wanted to invite nature to come back into the city.

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



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

Plantings are intentionally complex mosaics, with arrangements intended to continue evolving over the coming years. While some species populations will shift from year-to-year, others will be quick in establishing a short-term dominance. Movement in these creeks is about much more than water. Water is a fundamental and dynamic element of Country that needs to be recognised, especially in our urban environments. There is such power in the Australian landscape; we have to release that.

*Does your garden deal with water this way?
Lawrie*

'Native Plants in Garden Design – The Past INFORMS THE Present and the Future'

This final page includes some extracts from the presentation I will be making to the Kiama Conference that you may find of interest.

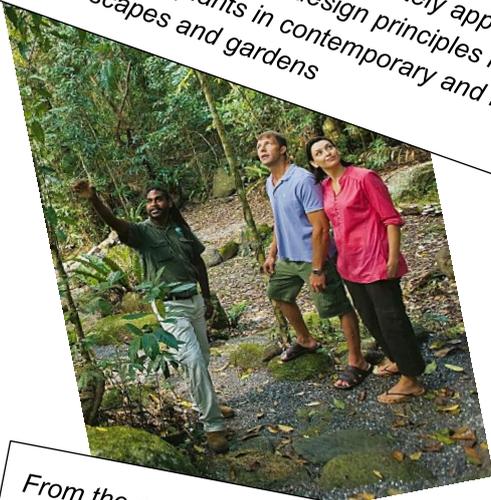
The sheer size and diversity of the continent with its unique natural landscape, from the Top End to Tasmania; and from Perth to sub-tropical Queensland, obviously makes the concept of one 'Australian Style' for gardens a nonsense.

The result is that today, throughout the continent we have a great diversity of garden characters which reflect the design brief, but are most forcefully informed by the specific site location, local environment and climate – each demonstrating 'Design WITH Nature'.



The traditional knowledge, understanding and stewardship of Australia's unique natural environment, specifically the flora, was derived over thousands of years by the people of the First Nation's, and should never be forgotten.

It is imperative that the known truths continue to be preserved, valued and appropriately applied to inform the planning and design principles in using indigenous plants in contemporary and in future landscapes and gardens



Contemporary native garden concepts should ideally be planned and managed to be strongly linked with and informed by the related natural environment. It is difficult to see how such strong 'physical and scientific relationships' could be challenged by any impact such as climate change.

Just as the Australian flora has adapted over millennia, tomorrow's gardeners will also learn to progressively adapt their gardens to respond to any new global or local processes and changes that are imposed.



From the commencement of settlement in 1788, the local landscape and flora was not widely respected or appreciated. Establishing the new colony in this strange land where everything seemed to be 'upside down', took precedence. Native plants were not seen to be of value or of much use, but instead were treated as something to be dominated and replaced.

