

ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS

**GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP**

NEWSLETTER No. 18

August 1997

Study Group Leader/Editor: Diana SnapeTreasurer/Membership: Peter Garnham

Dear Members,

A reminder to any members who may have overlooked the calendar, that our membership renewal date (1st July) is now past. Check the list on the last page to make sure your name is there. We don't want to lose you by an accidental oversight.

Our trip north to the Gulf country through western NSW and Queensland earlier in winter was wonderful and inspiring - it was a little difficult to come home. Kakadu is crowded but still magnificent. We enjoyed observing 212 species of birds, including one which I've always wanted to see, the rare and endangered Gouldian Finch - much more beautiful in reality than its usually rather gaudy pictures show. We equally enjoyed observing the different elements of the Australian landscape - its infinite variety of colours, often very subtle; the sculpturing of the land surface; the massing, forms and patterns of rocks; the textures and exquisite liquidity of water; and, of course, the plants. The same trees or shrubs could be arranged a thousand different ways; disappearing grey foliage and eye-catching white trunks; silver, fawn or golden grasses; treasures like *Ptilotus* sp. (Mulla Mulla). The northern environment of feast or famine (in terms of water) produces a fascinating range of plants. Lessons for our garden? The main one (which I can never seem to learn) is simplicity with repetition of species. Another is the satisfaction of seeing combinations of plants looking exactly right where they are growing because they are happy under those conditions.

I recently visited Sydney and then Gosford to talk to SGAP NSW and then the Central Coast Group.

I greatly enjoyed visiting Jo Hambrett's garden with the Sydney branch of the SG, and also four (or actually seven) gardens in and around Gosford, where the hospitality was wonderful. No more excursions for a while - our garden is sadly neglected and the Seminar on 6th & 7th September is fast approaching.

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### MEMBERSHIP & TREASURER'S REPORT

Peter GarnhamVic

#### Financial statement - quarter ending 30/6/97

<u>Receipts</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
Members subscriptions	\$735.00	Postage	\$203.70
Past Newsletters	10.00	Photocopying	312.20
Seminar registrations	1353.00	Conference papers	20.00
Interest	<u>.98</u>	Meeting costs (10/5)	74.00
	<u>\$2098.98</u>	Petty cash	28.70
		Seminar reg. refund	<u>74.00</u>
<u>Current Funds</u> (30/6/97)			<u>\$712.60</u>
Bank deposits	<u>\$3050.74</u>	(includes Seminar registrations)	

#### Membership

Only 117 membership subscriptions for 1997/98 (due 1/7/97) have been received by 14/8/97! If you wish to continue your membership and receive the next Newsletter, PLEASE SEND YOUR SUBSCRIPTION IMMEDIATELY.

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#### CORRESPONDENCE

*"I have been so busy tending to my garden during this dry weather that I have had little time for anything else. My 5 acre garden is still in its infancy, but I am looking forward to gaining more knowledge and ideas from the group."*

**Pam EamesVic**

*"Sorry to miss the Seminar - we will be travelling in Western Australia this Spring."* **Jan Hall Vic**  
We'll miss Jan too but I'm sure she'll have plenty of distractions in W.A..

*"At last I am getting round to joining the Garden Design SG, spurred on by the interest of a new Southside Brisbane Branch member, Linda Brennan. I enclose her card for your interest Linda is very keen on the appropriate use of Australian natives in garden design and is also organizing a women's network in garden design in Qld. So you may wish to contact her about this. She may be the nucleus around which a Qld Garden Design Group may crystallize!"*

*Anyway, here is my \$10.00 and sign me up! Lyn Reilly has been very enthusiastic about the benefits of GDSG, so perhaps we will see some more Gold Coast SGAPers joining up."* **Bonni ReicheltQld** (Bonni is Chair of the SGAP Brisbane Southside Branch.)

I wrote to Linda Brennan with information about the GDSG.

*"Thank you for the May Newsletter - full of interest as always. One thing which caught my eye was Kay Dempsey & Gloria Thomlinsons 's small courtyard garden on page 16 and the comment "No water feature... don't want mossies." What a pity! In my experience if a water feature is well balanced there's no need to fear mossies. I have several ponds in the garden and all have small black native fish which take care of mosquito larvae. (I've given up on goldfish as the local cats and herons think it's their smorgasbord.)"*

*"I'm afraid I cannot commit myself to the Seminar in September, much as I would like to, as I am doing the papers for the ASGAP Conference (as well as numerous other things) and September could well be a horror."*

**Margaret Lee** S.A. (With Margie Barnett, Margaret leads the S.A. Branch of the Study Group.)

*"I love the Newsletter and envy you southerners for your exciting outings and the plant outlets you have down there. It would be nice to have a list of nurseries who (Australia-wide) would be willing to send Australian plants by mail order, particularly hard-to-get plants. My praise to members and contributors for a great Newsletter."* **Roby n Hartley Qld**

A list of Australian plant nurseries throughout Australia would be very helpful. Generally, but not always, they do advertise in State Newsletters (but not in 'Australian Plants'). Many nurseries are relatively small and of course their numbers and names change over the years.

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"The local SGAP Group here has asked me to give a talk on garden design even though they know John and I are "newies". I have been to two lectures given by a local qualified landscape gardener, so believe I know the basics - but so does everyone else who attends our meetings. This landscape gardener is an exotic lover and only has a few natives in her prize winning garden - whereas we have about 500 shrubs and trees planted here. I would love to have some slides of good and bad designs in order to make the presentation interesting and worthwhile for my audience.....

We need a book on country gardens using Australian plants, with emphasis on landscaping to fit the surrounding countryside. My pet hate is a dominant roadway cutting through the middle of a paddock, from main road to house. How often do we see a strip of bright white or cream gravel scarring the landscape? Often! Thank you again for your help with the birdbath garden - it's coming along nicely, even though I was unable to obtain some of the plants you suggested. Looking forward to the next GDSG Newsletter." **Annette Houseman NSW**

(Our GDSG slide library is building up but we still would like more. We should soon have a set of slides with notes available for loan for talks. Remember both slides and prints are welcome. DS)

"I am in love with native plants and landscape and perturbed that they are so disregarded. Everyone around me seems to be replicating their little patch of Europe. My garden is the back of a forlorn block of flats but most of it is in pots & it has been a real challenge creating something of a natural, native "look". I long to do more." **Faisal Grant Vic**

#### QUESTIONS & ANSWERS (with a 3-month delay, unfortunately!)

There have been no responses yet to Lyn Reilly's plea for information about plants that repel sandflies and midges - does anyone have any suggestions at all? I think mosquitoes are easier: the following is extracted from 'Australian Horticulture' Aug-Sept 1997

Following a request from Japan for an Australian plant that repels mosquitoes and is also attractive, plant explorer Bill Molyneux went searching - first through old literature to see which plants contained citronellal, the oil that keeps mozzies at bay. Then a search was made in the wilds of the Aussie bush.

A form of *Leptospermum liversidgei* was finally selected from dozens of plants for its high oil content, its shape, and the delicate shell-pink flowers that cover its arching branches in summer. It is now available after four years of testing and is called Mozzie Blocker. The active oil is constantly released into the atmosphere by the plant, more so in summer when mozzies are at their most active. Brushing against the plant releases more oils and regular tip pruning encourages new growth, which has the highest oil content.

Mozzie Blocker is a soft-leaved shrub suitable for multiple plantings around outdoor living areas or near doorways. Each plant provides protection over about three metres. While it may grow to 1.8 m, it can be pruned to retain a much lower stature if required. (Australflora Ry Ltd, Montrose Victoria. Ph (03) 97281222; fax (03) 9728 4840) / wonder if it - or *Melaleuca alternifolia* from which tea tree oil is obtained - could discourage those other nasty insects at ground level.

Ideas from the NE Vic Branch for Annette Houseman's low shrubs with white flowers around a birdbath  
*Callistemon* 'White Anzac'

*Leptospermum* 'Little Bun' (smaller than *L. polygatolium* 'Cardwell' or 'Pacific Beauty')

*Thryptomene* 'Supernova' (or *saxicola alba*) & *T. calycina*

*Westringia* 'White Rambler'

#### Where to start?

"I am very interested in garden design and hope to do this on a professional basis in time to come. I wish to aim my designs at people with small suburban blocks, normally about 700 to 1000 square metres, minus the house area. The front yards have power lines above and are small. The major problem I am having is Australia has such a vast array of plants I don't know where to start. The people I will be targeting when I start designing will not be very keen gardeners, so I will need to create gardens of low maintenance that look good and have some colour all year round. I have found that the *Grevillea* hybrids can do this.

Could you please send me more information, or recommend some books that I can read to learn more?" **Neil Goldsborough W.A.**

Neil's questions are not unusual ones. (See John Hoile's article on page 10). I suggested learning about plants from local SGAP (Wildflower Society of W.A.) members and local Nursery people and gardens, as well as from books.

"Wildflowers of Southern Western Australia" by Margaret Corrick & Bruce Fuhrer (Five Mile Press) would be helpful. We have a list of books on design reviewed in GDSG Newsletters and past NL have material too. What would other members suggest? DS

#### Why do they plant them?

**Jeff Howes NSW**

On a rare (for me) business trip last week I was in Port Melbourne (Victoria) at a large MIRVAC housing development that will end up, in three or so years, comprising 1000 homes & town houses and two high rise complexes. What annoyed me was the way the landscape contractor has planted the 4m tall advanced gum trees (not sure what type) as close as one metre from the houses.

We all know they will need removing shortly, so why plant them? The end result will reflect on Australian plants and not the landscaper - I'm puzzled.

## Mount Annan Botanic Garden - a sense of place (extracts from an article by Fleur Keel in the Sydney Morning Herald 20/3/97)

At Mount Annan, the need to display the incredible diversity of Australia's native flora has been spectacularly reconciled with the garden's performance as a landscape park of great beauty; as much a place for picnics and cycle rides, as a living botanical text. What is the secret of its design success?

The landscape architect Ingrid Mather led the Public Works' design team for Mount Annan in the '80s. As with any role, the landscape designer needs creative autonomy and respect to do a job well. At Mount Annan, says Mather, "the spotlight didn't come on it too early. I think being a little away from the centre of things is an asset."

At the heart of the garden is a bowl, which is enclosed by the arms of Mt Annan, a little volcanic mount, and the eastern line ridge. In contrast to Mount Tomah Botanic Garden, being developed about the same time, Mount Annan had the opportunity of much greater space. It was also regarded as a blank slate in the sense that, unlike Tomah, it was free of significant relics of European cultural history. At Mount Annan, the natural landform was the relic - the land of the Tharawat Aboriginal people until 180-odd years ago - together with a legacy of weeds and some soil degradation from its European life as grazing country.

There were also the constraints of service easements, such as for water and power, and a tight budget. As well, there were significant remnants of now rare Cumberland woodland, complete with its perennial meadow understorey. Senior ecologist Doug Benson and his team were keen to integrate that into the garden.

With landscape architect Helen Evans, Mather undertook volumes of analysis drawings - covering elements such as aspect, constraints and soil - and came up with a strong sense of what the landscape was about. "It had a very strong and simple land form, which really dictated what the structure of the landscape should be. It gave a lot of guidance," says Mather. She responded, working closely with the existing site structure, to amplify it and display its more theatrical aspects. The four months of systematic analysis "allowed for a certain depth of contemplation and design, which I think isn't always possible - necessary in order for them to stand the test of time....."

The success of this approach is evident in sinuous roads and tracks, beautifully married to the landform, and the diversity of the planting made cohesive by its subservience to the scenery of hills and sky. "Straight lines are forbidden here," says Peter Cuneo (Horticultural Development Officer at Mount Annan).

There are stunning surprises, such as the *Callitris* (Cypress Pine) arboretum, a Mather-designed planting with strong vertical elements at a meeting of pasture and sky. Says Cuneo, "We get mixed reactions to that. Some people will drive up through that section and they'll think the whole feel of it is wonderful. Other people will just drive and say there's nothing here, so it's a challenge.

There are some points of difference between the design and botanical perspectives, although Cuneo has a strong sense of planting design. He would love to see some of Annan's bare hills covered in interesting textures and mosaic plantings - brushstrokes of silver wattles, for instance, between deep greens of native conifers. It is Mather's desire, however, to see whole stretches of the naked landform. "A problem with a lot of Australian design is they're scared of keeping a space and allowing the form of the land to express itself," she says. "The idea of really exposing the bones of the land is still rare ... and the Gardens do have a tendency to fill things up.".....

Cuneo's brief is "to grow the full range of Australian flora that's climatically possible and have documented, wild source collections ... the eucalypts, the acacias and the proteaceae are probably the three big families that form the core of our collection." After only ten years, Mount Annan now grows about 12% of the Australian flora and has the biggest collection of grevilleas anywhere - 300 species, all wild collected.

The terrace garden is the living textbook, designed to display an evolutionary progression through the flowering plants. Within it is the new, Cuneo-designed Epacridaceae section - a drystone "rockery" realised in all its subtlety and naturalness by Geoff Duggan's superb rockwork. ....

Many of the plantings are not confined to garden beds but meander along stream lines, march across the hillsides or nestle in dips and valleys. This gives greater access to the sense of the whole plant - bark, trunk, form. Says Cuneo, "I see one of the main roles of this place as really defining the palette of Australian species."

Peter Cuneo is a member of the GDSG, so I wrote to Peter to see if he had any comments to make in response to this article. The following is his reply.

### Plans for Mount Annan: a Bush Foods garden Peter Cuneo NSW

I was extremely happy with the article - the only point that I didn't totally agree with was the perceived desire by the Gardens staff to fill the entire garden with plants. I can assure you that there are some areas such as the Central Valley that will remain unplanted to allow full appreciation of the lovely rolling topography and themed grasslands.

We are currently developing some interesting design proposals; these are a Bush Foods garden as well as large scale dry stone wall sculpture.

Concept designs are well advanced for the new "bush foods" garden adjacent to the Visitors Centre. This new garden will explore all aspects of bush foods from row crop cultivation for the bush foods industry, through to habitat displays emphasising traditional aboriginal uses. The newly released book "Bush Foods of NSW" will provide the basis for layout and interpretation of the garden that will take advantage of proximity to the Cafe and the natural gully line that leads towards the Education Centre.

Through our education and volunteer guide walks, bush foods have always attracted interest from visitors as they walk through the Terrace Garden and contemplate the edibility of fruits like native raspberry and Davidsons Plum.

Recent years have seen the emergence of the Australian native food industry which has developed to the

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point where you can now buy gourmet creations such as Lemon Aspen and Macadamia salad dressing, or Bush Tomato Chutney. Native food restaurants have been established in some cities and bush food ingredients have made their way into the menus of many mainstream restaurants.

The bush foods garden would commence near the Cafe with a highly cultivated formal area featuring row cropped beds enclosed by a clipped hedge of Lemon Myrtle (*Backhousia citriodora*) and Lilly-Pilly (*Syzygium australe*). Cropped beds would feature high yield selected varieties which are being cultivated for the bush foods industry. This section would provide good opportunities for interactive interpretation with enough plant material for visitors to sample for themselves. As we move through the enclosed feel of this cultivated formal display area, the path leads through an opening in the hedge which gives a glimpse of the rainforest section. The path leads downhill through feature mass planting of bush food plants with distinctive foliage such as Burrawang (*Macrozamia communis*) and Gynea Lily (*Doryanthes excelsa*) set against a backdrop of dense shrubs.

Several water bodies will be created along the natural drainage line to provide a focal point and establish plants from moist habitats. The first water body would be surrounded by a Paperbark and Cabbage Palm forest merging into a wet margin planting of edible sedges and aquatic plants, visible from a boardwalk. On the western side of the water bodies a dense rainforest bush foods section will provide another interesting habitat display. Using the same fast-growing wattles as the Terrace Garden to create a shelter, this section will have a lush cool feel and feature plantings of Lilly-Pilly, Macadamia, Davidsons Plum with an emergent crown of Illawarra Flame Tree. The rainforest understorey would include Tree Ferns and Mountain Pepper. As the path emerges from the rainforest section, the well drained west slope adjacent to the Education Centre will display species from drier habitats, commencing with plants from the sandstone areas around Sydney. Rocks and boulders will be used to create a dry country feel as the path winds through grey-leaved groves of Mulga (*Acacia aneura*), Quandong and Bush Tomato.

Most of the plants that make up this garden design have been successfully cultivated at Mount Annan, making the concept very achievable. Corporate sponsorship will be needed to make the construction and maintenance of this garden a reality.

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## GARDEN DESIGN

### Site Analysis

Glenda Datson NSW; Margaret Lee SA

*(Two separate articles on site analysis from Glenda and Margaret covered a number of similar aspects, as you might expect. It's remarkable how many things one should take into consideration when analysing a site! I have taken the liberty of combining the two summaries to obtain the following. DS)*

#### Physical data

##### 1. Topography

- (1) Surrounding area - characteristics, pattern of landforms
- (2) Site - contours, slope analysis, minerals, fill, change from original, stable? - slides, subsidence, rock outcrops, erosion, topsoil retention, visibility analysis, circulation analysis, unique features.

##### 2. Geology and soil:

- (1). Underlying geology, rock character and depth
- (2). Soil type (characteristics of texture, structure, pH, salt) and depth, value as an engineering material and as a plant medium

##### 3. Climate

- (1) Regional - rainfall (when and how much), humidity, cloudiness, frost-pockets
- (2) Local - wind direction and force, wind deflection and local breeze
- (3) Micro - sheltered and exposed areas, sun patterns, variation of temperature, solar angle, warm and cool slopes, shade, heat reflection and storage, plant indicators
- (4). Sound levels, smell, atmospheric quality.

##### 4. Water & drainage

- (1). Existing water bodies - variation and purity; quality & quantity of water supply
- (2). Natural surface drainage patterns
- (3). Natural and man-made channels - flow, capacity, purity
- (4). Water table - elevation and seasonal fluctuation, springs, wet and dry areas
- (5) Flooding, pollution, methods for disposal on-site, off-site
- (6) Area suited to water storage

##### 5. Ecology:

- (1) Surrounding area
- (2) Site
  - a. Vegetation - type, association, size, species, indigenous or introduced, health, weeds, fire-prone; mapping of general plant cover, including wooded areas
  - b. Dominant plant/animal communities - location and relative stability
  - c. Their dependence on existing factors, self-regulation and sensitivity to change
  - d. Animal life of all types - seasonal, evidence.
  - e. Specimen trees to be retained: their location, spread, species and elevation at base.

##### 6. Services

Roads, easements, access, communications, boundaries (surveyed and apparent).  
Check with local authorities re existing and proposed.

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### 7. Man-made structures:

- (1). Existing buildings: outline, location, floor elevations, type, condition, use
- (2). Circulation facilities (roads, paths, rails, transit, etc.): location, capacity and condition
- (3). Utilities (storm and sanitary sewers, water, gas, electricity, telephone, steam, etc.): location, elevation, capacity

Also check surrounding district and adjacent properties for type, materials used. Note state of repair, desirability, materials on site suitable for a future building.

### 8. Land use:

Former and present (e.g. burnt pine forest, grazing land, sanitary land-fill, old well, market garden, weeds - persistent or otherwise).

### 9. Visual analysis:

- (1). Surrounding area- character (past, present and future)
- (2). View from site
- (3). Character of site.

### 10. Sensuous qualities:

- (1). Character and relation of visual spaces
- (2). Viewpoints, vistas, visual focal points
- (3). Character and rhythm of visual sequences
- (4). Quality and variation of light, sound, smell, feel.

### **Aspects of data correlation**

1. Classification of site by areas of similar structure, quality and problems
2. Identification of key points, lines and areas
3. Analysis of current and likely future changes - the dynamic aspects of the site
4. Identification of significant problems and possibilities.

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## Design philosophy behind "The Sorn"

Lindsay Campbell Tas

*GDSG member Lindsay Campbell teaches Garden Design and Construction full time at Hobart Institute of TAFE. His garden "The Sorn" has featured in the Open Garden Scheme. After reading an appreciative article on this garden in the May/June issue of The Australian Gardener (page 56), I contacted Lindsay and asked if he would write an article for us. Below is Lindsay's article; the beautiful coloured photographs in The Australian Gardener illustrate it well.*

My garden "The Sorn" seems to be attracting some interest from garden enthusiasts. I find this perplexing (& pleasing) as it has little of what seems to be popular in modern gardening (strong colour, contrast and prominent features). It is a simple, relaxed garden that is very easy to live in. While this is our day to day experience it is surprising to have visitors relate to it on this level. Perhaps I can attempt to explain this by detailing the motivation behind the design.

The design philosophy is based on the following precepts:

### **1. The garden must function on a practical level.**

It must cater for entertainment, work, play, relaxation etc. The spatial organisation must operate in conjunction with the house to create one living organism. The circulation and sequence of spaces must be logical and a diversity of experiences should be offered.

"The Sorn" achieves these criteria to some extent. A large deck allows connection between the house and garden (the front of the house is two metres above ground level). This connects the living area of the house to the outside entertainment areas and thus to the outside spaces. Paths and spaces connect around the house, each one providing a harmonious yet varied experience from rainforest to grassland, from alpine to woodland. These spaces allow for play, service, entertainment, contemplation, etc. The garden has some failings here largely due to problems with the original house design.

### **2. The garden must function on a psychological level.**

Luis Barragan said that designers must design for "serenity". This is a necessity for me. Our living space must be harmonious. Harmony is partly achieved in the garden by repetition of some elements from space to space. In my garden this is largely achieved by repetition of the fine texture and forms of *Eucalyptus coccifera*, rushes, sedges, *Dianella* spp and other monocots, and the aggregate used for paving. The harmony of textures and forms is vital. Too much repetition would be monotonous but lack of it creates disharmony which can be exciting but not serene.

The garden must provide spaces that allow the person experiencing it to feel immersed. Gardens that are based on groupings of small plants (and nothing else e.g. grassland) often fail to create the mystery of immersion. Whether connecting to external features or providing introspective view we must always consider the architecture of the garden: that is, the manner in which the spaces are constructed, the floor, the roof, the walls; the sense of enclosure, whether it's intimate or spacious. "The Sorn" provides a wide cross section of areas from very enclosed to wide views of the south west mountains.

### **3. The house and garden must feel as though it belongs to the site (sense of place).**

As a gardener I have always felt that ugly architecture can be greatly enhanced by the garden design.

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Because we were young, inexperienced and didn't have much money when we built, our house is not the best planned or most attractive construction (though we are happy with it). It is built of fibro sheeting and brick. Initially it stuck out like a sore thumb. It is built in a two hectare paddock that is surrounded by *Eucalyptus obliqua* forest. To the west is a stunning view, to the east, north and south is forest and behind the house to the east is a steep hill. The challenge was to meld the house into the forested hill while maximising the view.

We considered the continuation of the stringybark forest into the garden space was not appropriate for two reasons:

- The scale is inappropriate. The trees are too large and not on a human scale.
- The forest did not provide me with enough horticultural diversity/interest.

After some experimentation I settled on the loose theme of sub-alpine forest. This had a number of attractions including:

- The scale of the tree canopy is less imposing/dwarfing.
- The plant material is diverse and is more likely to visually accept plants from other communities.
- The practical considerations of limb drop, maintenance and solar access are all much less of a problem.

Though the planting around the house is generally not indigenous to the area (some is), the house sits beautifully into the hill. The repetition of *Eucalyptus coccifera*, *Banksia marginata* and *Acacia riceana* provides a harmonious canopy that helps achieve this and does feel to be of the area.

#### 4. I want the garden to display the wealth of Tasmanian plants suitable for ornamental horticulture.

When I moved to Tasmania in 1979 I was immediately impressed by the unusual nature of the flora. As I have become more experienced in the use of Tasmanian plants and watched the experiences of other pioneers before me, I have become even more convinced of their suitability to gardening. The diversity of environments, the isolation and the climate have all contributed to the uniqueness of the flora. This flora has been greatly misunderstood (in a gardening sense) and thus greatly under-used.

To add to these design criteria, I also have strong opinions about the terms garden and gardening. I believe that gardening is a contrived activity. If we plant a plant or prune a shrub we are gardening. The natural areas of Tasmania that I revere for their aesthetic appeal have developed over millions of years, pruned and controlled by wind, snow, frost, soil, animals etc. I believe that if I want to capture any part of the spirit of these places in a short time frame in my garden, I must also control the growth patterns of the plants. Tasmanian plants are suited to this because of our climate. That is, to some extent, we can apply more traditional horticultural practices to them. I prune, fertilise, mulch, move and remove plants all with the aim of achieving a harmonious landscape that has at least some of the feeling of the natural areas from which inspiration is derived.

This is the approach I take. I would not claim that it is the only correct approach. It has resulted in a garden that has generated some interest because:

1. it works reasonably well as a design.
2. it feels relaxed and serene and is easy to live in.
3. it has a strong sense of place.
4. the plants work in a horticultural sense.
5. it uses unusual plants.
6. it questions some conventions as practised in Australian gardens.

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### Garden Design Project for Jenny Davidson's property

Gloria Thomlinson & Kay DempseyVic

How we approached the project.

1. Selected and marked our road and parking areas leaving areas for arranging planting.
2. Decided that riverfront outlook should be unimpaired by anything.
3. Challenge - restrict our picture building to indigenous plants. Grid "R" was chosen from Vic Region map (mainly Riverina plants to be used). An extended area could be drawn from by encircling Rutherglen taking in some of "Q" NSW at a later date. Lists grew longer and longer.
4. For areas 1 and 2 a forested area was visualized between the house and shed with thick cover for sides and back of shed to then converge into area between fork in track.
5. A decision was made to use a limited number of local (as possible) species, especially if encroaching near the river scene.
6. Area 6 was imagined as a grassed area with transition between house of unmown grasses interspersed with low growing herbs, lilies, etc. To manage such a project we suggest that planting would hasten slowly, beginning at the edge of pavement in sections with grass clumps and perhaps only one or two added species to start with. This way each year could bring a change in 'look' e.g. first year grasses interspersed with *Isotoma axillaris* & *Pultenaea prostrata*. The following year adding e.g. *Swainsonia* species, daisies - *Brachyscome ciftaris*, *Leptorhynchos squamatus*, *Podolepis jaceoides*.
7. Kangaroo Grass is to be used to lead from area 6 and merge into areas 2 and 4 near edges of treed areas along paths. *Wahlenbergia* species, Chocolate Lilies the same?
8. *Microlaena stipoides* could be grown as start to 'lawn' (mowed grass). Encourage local Windmill Grasses and Lomandra sp. found on block.
9. We seem to remember a small cutting at the side of carport. If high enough perhaps a quite formal wall of

## 8

masonry (brick same as used for house) could be built echoing the shape of the protruding roof shapes (further excavation would then be necessary). Within this shape a small pond would be involved with a surrounding 'ephemeral soak'. A soak would be a chance to try the many small plants available for this situation - yes in 'R' - a challenge - imagine - *utricularia* sp. if water was pumped through! A simple planting could be (a) *Viola betonicifolia*, *ranunculus*, sedges, or (b) *Mazus pumilio*, *Isotoma fluviatialis*. These would do very nicely all by themselves - easy - with Nardoo in the pond.

10. An opposite wall - facing south east? - if planting is required here suggest simple planting of *Indigofera australis* undergrown with *Tetratheca ciliata*.

11. Area 3. To be mass planted with small shrubs and ground covers behind retaining wall to soften line of masonry and keeping profile low so view to olive plantation is not lost.

12. Area 4. Screen side boundary with large shrubs with understory of such things as *Bursaria spinosa* descending to lower plants along both sides of path rising in height against wall. This area to merge with grassed herb area.

13. Area under clothes line paved, with outline softened with low plants.

*A plan of Kay and Gloria's design is shown on the following page (much reduced, so I'm sorry it makes it difficult to see the detail). Lists of suggested plants for each area were attached, with flowering times. They carried out extensive research on the indigenous plants of the area. I haven't included these in the NL but if any member is interested, Kay and Gloria have said they would not mind copies of their lists being sent to members who request them. DS.*

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### Glenda & Bernie's garden: shelter & shade

Glenda Datson NSW

We moved to our current garden four years ago. Being adjacent to the eastern slope of Nail Can Hill Flora and Fauna Reserve we are able to enjoy its delights all year round and our avid interest in birdwatching has influenced the planting of our garden to a large extent. As I write I am aware of Yellow-faced and White-plumed Honeyeaters, Spinebills, a Golden Whistler, Double-bar Finches and Thornbills foraging in and around the *Grevillea* "Canterbury Gold" and *G. lanigera* "Mt Tamboritha" outside the toungerroom window.

Our tiny front garden contains camellias and other exotic plants but our large rear garden is almost exclusively native (or will be), apart from the vegie garden and fruit trees.

We are lucky to have some very large Red, White and Long-leaf Box trees which provide shelter from summer heat but the downside is that they shade the entire garden from lunch time in winter. This is proving a challenge in plant selection, not only because of shade but also the dryness from root competition.

Our block slopes down to the north. Run-off during winter accumulates at the northern end making conditions very boggy. The north-eastern corner was at some stage a tennis court and this flat area we raised with clay mounds (from a neighbour's house excavations). This provided drainage for the West Australian banksias, hakeas and grevilleas. A small creek runs from the west to the east on the northern end and in a particularly wet year will flood the bottom level.

When we moved in, the garden contained fish bone fern, privet and wandering jew. We spent the first 12 months eradicating this (which still pops up). We also have some ivy yet to be removed. Our aim was to provide a source of nectar and seed plants from tall, medium and low canopies for the birds, to encourage them to remain all year round. Therefore we had to provide a flowering period throughout the year. I think we have succeeded pretty well except for summer so we need to go back to references like "Grow What Where" and do a little more research.

Because of shade, plants are taking much longer to grow than I had previously experienced and need constant tip pruning to enhance bushiness. Currently you could say the garden is a collector's garden but we are propagating from the successful plants (e.g. correas & westringias, which we keep tip pruning) and planting back into groups to fill the gaps. Our current task is to plant groundcovers in large numbers of just a few species (e.g. grevilleas such as *G. "Royal Mantle"* and *Myoporum parvifolium*) to tie things together. We intend to put a pond or soak into the bottom level and have collected seed and propagated a number of Nail Can Hill grasses and shrubs to plant in this area. This will remove another area of grass cutting. We will need to bring in some coarse river sand to mix with the clay to provide drainage. Once this area is completed we can remove the vehicular access and turn it into more garden bed which will improve the aesthetics and allow us to choose even more wonderful Australian plants for this area.

We originally used tan bark for mulching but found that whilst this looked OK and retained moisture after heavy rain, it did not allow penetration of summer showers. We now mulch with eucalyptus litter from our large trees and adjacent bush and find this more satisfactory. We are trying to stick with species which we know will perform well on this site; however it is extremely difficult to resist some of the beautiful western plants. We have found that grafted plants are generally unreliable, mainly because they don't flourish above the graft or because they are grafted onto rootstock which, although possibly better suited to our eastern soils, are not adapted to Albury's hot, dry summers. Maybe someone else can relate their experiences here.

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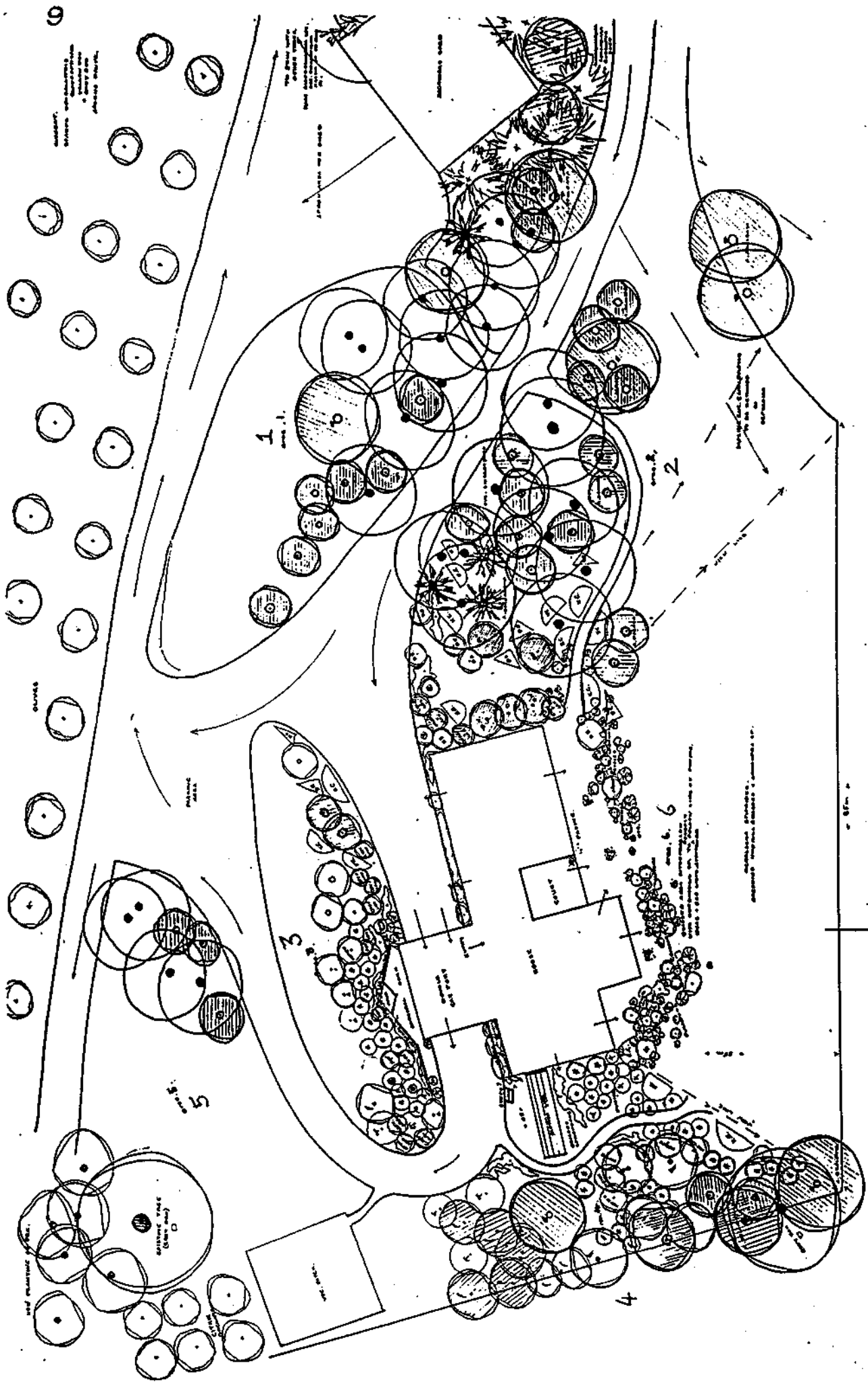
### Use of a set maintenance program (maintenance as part of design)

John Hoile NSW

Thanks for back copies of the Newsletter. They have been more informative than some books on design I've come across.

In my design work I set out to cater for those, in this region (Cowra NSW), who think they have little time for gardening but want relaxing, colourful surroundings. They are generally not environmentally aware, although urban





Project of 1911 - 1916  
 University of California, Berkeley, California

Scale 1/4" = 100'

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salinity helps raise awareness. For commercial reasons I must give the customers what they want. At this stage I cannot be choosy about who I design for. This type of person often cannot tell when a plant is under stress and forgets to prune anyway. Moreover I forget sometime myself with a busy workload. Hence I thought a program like this would be of benefit to the client. I sell my service on the basis of very low maintenance but *some care is needed*. In a bigger garden the chart would come in blocks according to zones in the garden. The client will have a named plan.

I found John Stowar's comments quoted in the July 93 Newsletter very relevant from my point of view: "Plants should have to win their place on their merit." (John Stowar's book *In Sunshine and Shade - Change in the Garden* was reviewed by Barbara Buchanan NL2-7.) It would seem to me that the future for expanding the use of Australian plants amongst the wider community lies in selecting species and outstanding cultivars which conform to the tastes of the client even to the point of cultivars which have been improved to such an extent they don't look like "natives". A few of the best examples suited to my region:

species            *Sollya heterophylla*; *Geijera parviflora*;  
cultivars         *Westringia* "White Rambler"; *Pimelea* "Mauve Mist".

At this stage, of the range of plants I use, I feel I can only justify no more than 40% Australian plants. Casual observation shows that the Australian plants I have selected to use are far more prone to insect attack (particularly scale) than the exotics. Hopefully habitat creation will lead to efficient control in large gardens but I wonder about small urban gardens.

Some might suggest that following a set maintenance program would destroy the charm of a garden. It may be OK where experienced gardeners are on hand but on many sites a set program might be preferable to inappropriate care or no care. I enclose a sample program for a critique. (*We'd like your comments. DS*)

### "To help you keeping it look good"

Simple garden service plan For best displays and ease of care; it's just like servicing your car! It only takes a few hours a month.

<u>plant list</u>	<u>water code</u>	<u>January</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>March</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>
<i>Grevillea</i> "Boongalla Spinebill"	low	DWS	1 good soak		DWS		DWS
<i>Grevillea</i> "Mt Tamboritha"	low	DWS	1 good soak		DWS		DWS
<i>Hardenbergia</i> "Mini Ha Ha"	low	DWS	1 good soak		DWS		DWS
<i>Westringia</i> "Blue Elf"	AR	DWS	1 good soak		DWS		DWS
<i>Scaevola</i> "Mauve Clusters"	low	DWS	1 good soak		DWS		DWS
<u>plant list (continued)</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>August</u>	<u>September</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>November</u>	<u>December</u>	
<i>Grevillea</i> "Boongalla Spinebill"	trim 1/5		DWS		1 good soak	trim 1/5; DWS	
<i>Grevillea</i> "Mt Tamboritha"	trim 1/5		DWS		1 good soak	trim 1/5; DWS	
<i>Warcefenberfif/a</i> "MiniHaHa"			DWS		1 good soak	DWS	
<i>Westringia</i> "Blue Elf"	trim 1/5		DWS		1 good soak	DWS	
<i>Scaevola</i> "Mauve Clusters"			DWS		1 good soak	DWS	

Weeding: a little each month, by hand for preference. Maintain a heavy mulch for weed control, water conservation & protection of roots from summer heat.

Description of code (codes apply when growing area is well composted and mulched to 10cm deep (keep mulch away from stems).

AR: this group need infrequent watering but for simplicity of the program will tolerate a little more  
(AR = adapted to region)

low: plants in this group need some regular watering to maintain ornamental character

DWS: drought time watering supplement only, once during month indicated

Please note watering routine outlined here can begin 3rd summer after planting, when mulched as specified. We reserve the right to revise recommendations as the result of our research program.

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### The challenge of creating a grassland/grassy woodland garden in Canberra; part 1

(reproduced from SGAP Canberra Region Journal, March 97)

by Ian Anderson ACT

The *Readers Digest* tells us 'Have you ever noticed that all that is needed to grow healthy vigorous grass is a crack in your front path?'

This year, for the first time, after 11 years of growing local native grasses in my formerly largely exotic garden, three Kangaroo Grass plants came up in a crack in my path. Did this mean I had achieved some grassland goal deserving high praise? Or should I merely try to fill in the cracks in my path? Was this a hint to record some experiences for the SGAP Journal?

Trying to grow native grasses can have its unexpected repercussions. In the early years, a taxi cab driver dropping me off at the front drive noticed the uncut seedheads of Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*) and Wallaby Grass (*Danthonia* spp.) in the drive and offered without any prompting to lend me his lawnmower to clean up the 'overgrown garden'. I decided any reference to deliberate planting and any attempt at education would be met with the utmost incredulity and kept silent.

Attitudes have changed considerably now. Public plantings of native grasses, for example near the entrance of the new Foreign Affairs and Trade building, have received complimentary words from people who I thought may not

have cared or might have been negative. Indigenous grasses are an increasingly attractive alternative to traditional lawns in a user-pays water situation as they do not need watering once established.

The main motivating force for me during all those years has been the knowledge that grasslands/grassy woodlands are the indigenous vegetation of Canberra and that much has been destroyed. Anything that can be done to put some of this heritage back, no matter how little, is a positive step. Local grassy woodlands form an amazingly diverse and beautiful landscape. There is the choice for the gardener of so many plants from these landscapes at all three levels. The upper canopy usually consists of eucalypts but perhaps includes *Allocasuarina verticillata* and *Acacia melanoxylon* in moister gullies. The shrub layer includes many fine garden plants - grevilleas, hakeas, callistemons, smaller acacias, banksias and woody pea-plants like daviesias.

The lower layer is of native grasses mixed with herbs such as wahlenbergias and members of the daisy family, for example *Chrysocephalum* sp. Attractive plants with straplike leaves such as dianella, lomandra or that excellent landscape plant and good cut flower, *Stypantra glauca*, can also be found in the grassland layer, not to mention the striking appeal of the Grass Tree, *Xanthorrhoea* sp. Ground orchids are found in this layer and present a special challenge to the suburban gardener trying to cope with high populations of slugs and snails.

Grasslands without shrub and tree layers are another option for the Canberra gardener, mimicking those natural grasslands of the limestone plains, now so rare. I prefer a garden where the main part has elements of a grassy woodland but with a drive strip which of necessity is a grassland so that cars can readily pass over it. They can do this without much damage even when the native grasses are flowering.

The eucalypts in the upper canopy shedding their old leaves regularly provide a continuous mulch, filling in the gaps between the grass tussocks and helping reduce weed growth to some extent. These trees also provide food and perching spots for birds, an attractive feature of any garden. A suburban grassy woodland may not seem so out of place to many when surrounded by the immaculate watered, close shaven green lawns common to lots of gardens.

### The realities of making a garden

Margaret Garrett Vic

We bought 23 neglected acres and a dilapidated mud brick cottage with the overgrown remains of an apology for an exotic garden. After clearing up the outer environment and gradually making a plantation of Australian trees and shrubs, and massively renovating (rebuilding) the cottage, I finally had time to re-make the home garden. I aimed to keep the useful exotic trees - to remove them might disturb the water table too much - so to unite the surviving exotics with the new native gardens I used herbs, daphnes and fuchsias at the interface. These, to my eye, blend well with natives but importantly can take the leaf drop from a huge English walnut tree. Besides they go with what I have come to accept as indestructable, naturalized bulbs that have been here for generations.

Making my garden included building rock walls, steps and paths, paving areas, removing fences, re-routing others as well as grubbing out awful plants and reshaping good ones. As each stage was accomplished in went a bed of Australian plants. As most of the plants I use are my own propagation I have to plant according to what is on hand at the time. Now four years down the track the garden is a mixture of recent and quite mature beds.

Sometimes as I look down the slope to an overview of the garden I feel pleased at its development; it's me, it's my garden and I like it. Other times when I am working there I'm not at all satisfied. I think it's all just cut and paste, no style. My moment came the other day as I walked to the house with Mathew, my 13 year old computer consultant, who without any prompting announced 'This is a lovely garden'.

*A nice tribute, Margaret! I know exactly how you feel with your two different reactions to your own garden. DS*

### Limits to garden design & photography

Barbara Buchanan Vic

Geoff Simmons (Correspondence NL17) and Tim North (Aust. Hort. May 97) raise similar questions - are we too reliant on overseas ideas, especially English ones?

I believe that certain design principles are universal, even though the details and materials used are varied to suit individual circumstances. You can't go wrong if you incorporate distant views that are worth having or exclude those that are unlovely. Small leaved, grey foliage will seem more distant than large dark green leaves. Each season should have moments of interest, there should be vertical and horizontal lines — look at Margaret Lee's list on NL17-6.

Some people are instinctive artists and never need to read a word to create masterpieces. I am a plodder artistically and I derive great interest from reading what other people have done. I don't want to copy because I like doing my own thing too much, but I like to know what effects were sought and what means were used even though the plant material is quite alien. There is so little written yet about our plants. Tim North suggests magazines from areas with a similar climate to our own could be better value (he is talking to mixed gardeners) than English writers and offers *Pacific Horticulture* from San Francisco and the *Mediterranean Garden*, both of which include but are not devoted to Australian plants. The important thing is that they are about garden making under conditions which occur over much of southern Australia, hot dry summers and cold wet winters.

A recent RHS journal had a provocative piece about the disservice that glossy photography does to real garden design. Modern techniques enable beautiful reproductions of single flowers and single plants and these dominate magazines and books to the virtual exclusion of photos which capture the atmosphere of the garden and show plants being used as part of an overall pattern. It brought me up short, because here have I been thinking this was just an Australian problem since experience has shown how difficult it is to do justice in a photo to a garden of Australian plants compared to one of exotics. Individual portraits are no problem, again maybe they are too good, too seductive, with all their concentration on just one component of a plant's total attributes. A herbaceous border, in full sun, set in

lawn and backed by trimmed yew hedges also comes up very well in the camera although there may be some foreshortening. A dappled path through shrubs which are in and out of shade, with fine leaves and smallish flowers, becomes flattened, formless and dull all too easily. That vital third dimension, space, is often lost on film. I am sure this all contributes to the general public's love affair with exotic plants. However it is comforting to know that even in the heartland of herbaceous borders there are gardeners who look for something more, even though this search is best expressed in words, not photographs.

I don't believe in starting out with the idea of following a particular garden style, not any more, that is. I believe now in seeking the spirit of the place, the *Genius loci*, and trying to find what will work in the environment I have chosen to live in. I've made more than my share of mistakes, having a sentimental attachment to West Australian plants, having disbelieved the frequency and severity of the frosts here, discounted the long dry summers and autumns and simply been ignorant of the limits of lots of my chosen plants. So it always cheers me up to read of other people muddling through their opportunities and limitations. It would be wonderful to have more local literature, and I think the success of our Study Group proves that there are a lot of people feeling this way but we are not enough to interest commercial publishers. So I devour whatever garden writing comes my way - these days it is easier than going out and digging.

Perhaps one attraction of the garden literature is that I can only have one actual garden; it changes but its history dictates its future, whereas the literature makes available an infinite variety. I could never bear to be restricted to creating a period garden but I am interested in the efforts and results of those who do. I can indulge in dreams of a very formal manicured setting, and wonder what Australian plants to use. There are no limits of soil or climate, no need to wait for things to grow, through reading I can try everything at once and then go outside and rejoice in what I have, not perfection, but mine.

*Pacific Horticulture* PO Box 485 Berkley CA 94701 U.S.

*Mediterranean Garden Society* PO Box 14 Peanian 19002 Greece

## BOOKS & MAGAZINES

### Influences

Colleen Keena Qld

Matoney, Walker and Mullins *All about Australian Bush Gardens*, Hunts's book (SGAP) and Wilson's *Landscaping with Australian Plants* had a major impact on my philosophy/practice as a gardener. I particularly related to Wilson p81 "With the pressures and stresses of modern living ever upon us, it is my deep and sincere belief that landscaping should be designed to be gentle, to provide an atmosphere that may soothe and relax our over-active nerves."

Landscaping in the truly Australian character gives a soft restfulness that is desperately needed in today's world and, being quite unique, presents the opportunity to develop a new approach to landscape design." As I read the Tim North article on page 22 of *Australian Horticulture* (April-May), I couldn't help wondering about what plants had been used, whether natives would increase effects etc. I know I love it when schools are full of plants! A neglected area of Landscape Design?

*Native Australian Plants: horticulture and uses* edited by Dr Krystyne Johnson & Dr Margaret Burchett (UNSW Press) 1996

Reviewed by Diana Snape Vic

This book is not about garden design but it contains a tremendous amount of information and is a valuable resource for Australian horticulturists, professional or amateur. Each of its 20 chapters deals with related genera, or a single genus, or sometimes just a single species (e.g. Sturt's Desert Pea). Central are the characteristics, horticultural uses (generally as a cut flower or pot plant), methods of propagation and favourable growing requirements for that genus or species.

Geraldton Wax (*Chamelaucium uncinatum*) is our leading plant cultivated for cut flowers, as well as being a wonderful garden shrub. However many outstanding Australian plants, such as Flannel Flowers and lechenaultias, have great horticultural potential which still remains to be developed beyond the embryonic stage. This book records successes to date but it also makes clear the challenge, if we wish the horticultural development (and economic benefits) of Australian plants to progress further in Australia, rather than Europe or Israel.

The horticultural uses of plants for cut flowers and pot plants may not be directly relevant to garden design - our concerns are wider and more general. We are of course interested in form and foliage as well as (more than?) flowers, and we'd like to see more consistency and greater reliability in the outcomes of the horticulture of Australian plants, particularly trees and shrubs. This book indicates the depth of research necessary to achieve the knowledge about our plants that should enable us increasingly in the future to design with real confidence.

## COMPUTER~PRdGRAMS~

3D *Landscape* by Books that Work

Doug McIver Vic

Alison Payne demonstrated the American Garden Design Program, 3D *Landscape*, at the last meeting in Melbourne. She has made extensive use of this program in redesigning her own garden.

The program allows the user to enter the specification of the site and any existing buildings on the site. It allows the user to specify the latitude and where north is. (It understands that a negative latitude puts the site in the southern hemisphere.) The computer stores this data in such a way that it can generate perspective views of the site and the buildings from any chosen position, on the ground or from above.

It provides easy-to-use facilities to allow the user to add hard garden features as desired. Paths, fences, steps, garden beds and garden edges, for example, down to considerable detail, even to tables and chairs and cats and dogs! The appearance of the site can be viewed from time to time from any chosen angle, and the features can be added, moved and removed until the desired effect is achieved. Information is entered into the design while the plan view is displayed, and there is a zoom facility to make this easier.

When the user is satisfied that the site has been appropriately prepared, he or she can move onto the "planting". The program includes an extensive data base of specific plants and a range of generic plants. The user can choose specific plants from the data base, or a plant type from the range of generic plants, or enter the description of a plant not included in the database. The program can deliver its best results if specific plants are chosen. It is able to "plug in" the correct characteristics for the plant chosen - size, shape, colour of foliage, colour of flowers; it knows the seasonal behaviour of the plant - when it's in flower and whether it's deciduous, and it knows the rate of growth and so too its size at any particular age. The program also has a picture of the plant to insert into the views.

If generic plants are used, the generated views will be a little less realistic but Alison found them to be adequate. If the user describes known plants not in the data base, a better result will be achieved but the images will still be based on the generic ones included with the program.

The user can specify the plants, the age of the plants and their position. As before, the program can generate views of the developing garden as often as desired and plants can be changed, moved, aged or removed. The program can show how the designed garden changes with the seasons, and it can show where the shadows will be throughout the day, according to the time of year.

Using this program, Alison has designed her new garden to a considerable level of detail - all the hard garden features, and every plant in its place. She has photographed her garden, as it was, from a variety of angles and used the program to produce matching views of the garden to be, and printed those views in colour.

The computer used to demonstrate the program was considered powerful a couple of years ago - a 486/100 chip and 16MB of memory, an SVGA screen, and a CD ROM drive. The performance was quite satisfactory. The program and the data bases come on a CD ROM which must be in the drive when the program is running. There was no manual with the CD ROM but there is good "HELP" information available when the program is running. So far as we know the program is not available in Australia at present but it can be ordered from the USA. Alison paid \$US60.00 for it.

There are some garden design programs available but it seems unlikely that any of them would have facilities to match 3D Landscape. The main weakness in 3D Landscape from our point of view is the lack of Australian plants in the data base, but this isn't a serious obstacle, as Alison has found.

There are other difficulties, which may be overcome with more experience with the program. Entering curves seems to be time consuming as it appears to be necessary to zoom in to a close detail level and enter the curve, say a garden edge, as a series of short straight lines. Also, Alison has the impression that entering changing levels may not be easy, but she has not had to pursue this aspect as her block is flat. These apparent problems may reflect the lack of a manual. With a manual you can assess the scope of a program more easily. With only the HELP information you tend to blunder on and only read the HELP as a last resort. You can easily miss useful guides that way. (Perhaps I should be writing "I" there, not "you".)

Finally, there is another problem, which no computer can overcome - plants are not as consistent in their behaviour as a computer would like. Often they only reach half the size expected, or grow two or three times bigger. They can even take on an unexpected form, like a ground cover that grows tall, or a tree that grows at 45 degrees!

However, 3D Landscape is a very sophisticated program, capable of handling a high level of detail and delivering near realistic images of the designed garden, from any position selected, and it can be very useful to the designer of a garden of Australian plants.

**Alison Payne** will tell us about it **from the user's point of view** in the next Newsletter.

### More garden design programs

**Doug McIver Vic**

Since our demonstration of a garden design program I have seen about half a dozen garden design programs in the shops, including the one we saw, 3D Landscape. 3D Landscape 2 was available at Harvey Norman, bundled with Garden Encyclopaedia 2, for \$79.95. That was the most expensive package I have seen, the other end of the range being \$19.95.

Another American package, Land Designer, also selling for \$79.95, was claimed to be among the top 100 software programs for 1996, as selected by "Home PC".

There was an English program, 3D Garden Designer 2.0 from Europress, for \$49.95. A review of this program in PC World stated that "This BBC Gardeners' World-branded program is much deeper than practically all the rest", but it suggested that more time should be allowed for learning how to use it.

All these programs run on IBM-compatible machines and no doubt they all focus on what we call "exotic" plants. It would be very interesting to hear from anyone who has experience with any of these programs.

*I can see that my dear old Mac and I will not be able to resist the march of progress for very much longer, though my impression is that a lot of time is required to learn how to use a design program - time that computer enthusiasts happily give. ("How time flies...") After reading the report of the last S.A. meeting, I hope we'll hear more about other programs from Janet Fisher or another S.A. member, for the next Newsletter. DS*

### Small courtyard gardens

You may remember in a recent Newsletter (NL16-14), in 'Design ideas for fun', I suggested having a go at designing a small square courtyard 5m x 5m. I then mentioned in NL17-16 that *The Age* newspaper had, by a nice coincidence, set exactly the same challenge to six Melbourne designers. I've chosen just two of these to reproduce on the next page (but I'm still hoping for ideas from members).

**Charlie Evans** from Southern Earth Landscape writes:

"We specialise in design for inner city gardens, so we combined the elements for the best use of a small space. We use indigenous local products, like tussock grasses and Chocolate and Vanilla Lilies, and in this case cordylines and native rosemary. Indigenous plants bring back birdlife and are self-maintaining and weed resistant.

for interesting ground cover we use local river pebbles and stone, crushed quartz paving and brightly coloured broken-tile mosaic.

We incorporate the work of Victorian artists and sculptors who use recycled material like weathered flotsam and jetsam from the beach. Here we used recycled metal for a sculpture cut from a 44-gallon drum. We put metal cicadas, bugs and parrots as little surprises in a small bush-style garden."

**Stuart Mayhew** from LanDesign says:

"We like to set the cat among the pigeons by moving away from the formal and rather sterile things like box hedges. We're deeply impressed by the Balinese culture, architecture and landscape, which we interpret in an Australian way. In our Garden Show display garden our "Bali Dreaming" exhibit has a sculpted kangaroo-head fountain and cockatoo water spouts.

We like using the tropical plants and foliage that will grow in Melbourne, like cordylines and Chinese windmill palm. We set out to make an exciting atmosphere by using colourful, flamboyant plants that create a sense of exuberance and love of life. More subdued colour and style of plants create a tranquil atmosphere."

### Pruned formality (NL 17-15)

**Jan Hall Vic**

Some slightly formalized touches in my 'naturalistic' garden would include the naturally rounded shape of *Melaleuca incana* dwarf in view at the end of a path. To the side of the same gravel path is a curve of clipped rhagodia with its attractive silver foliage - plus a mound over a stump. This saltbush once took over an area of about 5m x5m but was subdued and reduced (redirected!) to neatness with the hedge clippers. Between these are three green leaved eremophilas forming another curve within which is a specimen, upright, small tree - *Eremophila bignoniiflora*. I like the contrast of the foliage and it also solves a problem in a dry spot near large *Eucalyptus citriodora*.

**Barbara Buchanan** Vic reports seeing *Leptospermum laevigatum* at a wildflower farm, pruned as little round balls on sticks. Barbara says the effect was quite like that achieved with box and quite successful.

### Plants in pots

**Geoff Simmons Qld**

From the smallest to the largest garden, there is a place for pots of plants. Considered in the context of Australian gardens they present another challenge to create something expressing unique design. Container grown plants as part of a garden depends on the garden layout, so this point will be avoided although it should be interesting to hear how they are blended into a garden scene.

The potted plant basically consists of two items. The scope for using the imagination in regard to containers is limited to some extent by the vast importation of pots from overseas countries that are able to produce a less costly product than can Australian manufacturers. Occasionally one sees something locally made that is different and reflects an Australian viewpoint. This limitation on pot design means that an expression of Australian design must rest mainly on the plants used.

Books written on plants for pots indicate that there is a wide choice of Australian plants for this purpose and the problem is to select one that has characteristics suiting the pot and the situation, as well as satisfying the desires of the owner. Quite often I find that having plants at hand leads to their use to see what value they have as potted plants. This is not perhaps the best approach from the aesthetic or design aspect but can lead to interesting results.

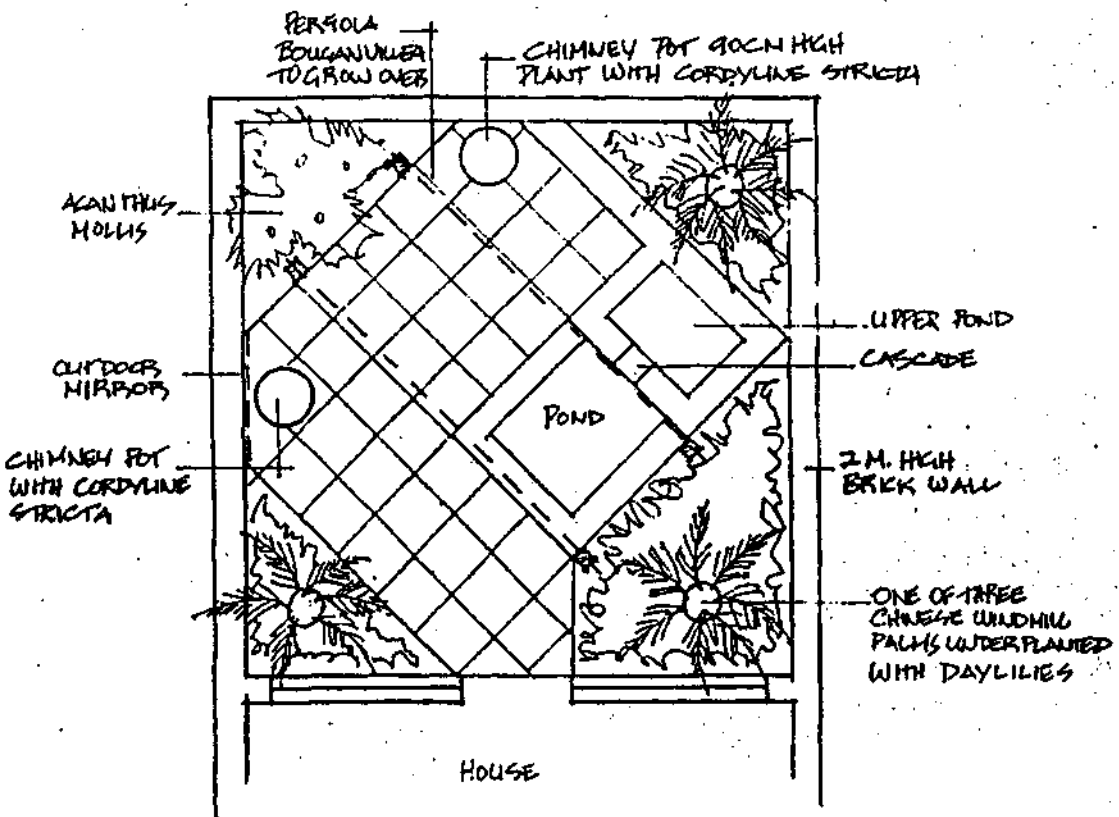
Five examples that I have tried are as follows.

1. *Ficus congesta* in a terracotta pot - only recently combined so the outcome is awaited.
2. Queensland Kauri in terracotta container - was left in the pot for a year or so until about a metre high but has now been planted into the garden. While this plant does not produce floral display, it has attractive foliage and no doubt would last many years in a pot. This is worth repeating.
3. Bunya Pine (*Araucaria bidwillii*) in a glazed earthenware container.
4. White calostemma bulb surrounded by several thysanotus plants in a terracotta pot with white marble chips on the surface. The flowers of these two species should be a good combination and the container will not require much effort to keep it attractive.
5. A home-made cement pot, painted red, contains a clump of *Kreysegia (Tripladenia cunninghamii)*. Originally planted with *Ptilostigma rhytispermum* but it was thought the container did not have sufficient volume to enable this plant to survive without constant attention to watering. One of these in the garden is growing well.



Conceptual only, not-to scale, April 1997.

**Charlie Evans**



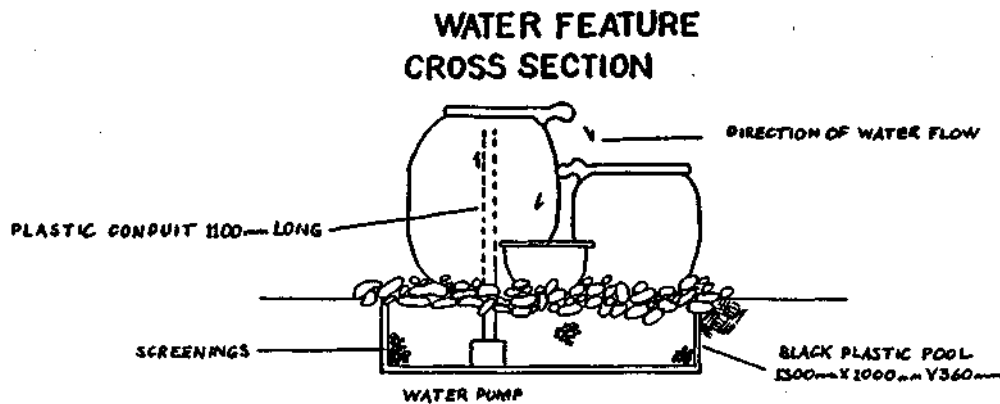
**Stuart Mayhew**

Besides choosing for appearance, desirable criteria include long life and minimal maintenance needs. No mention has been made of potting mixes yet this aspect is one that I find most disappointing in growing plants in containers. Most of the commercially available mixes have a high or very high organic content. This lack of solid substance means that the volume of medium is rapidly depleted by the plant so that it sinks lower and lower in the pot. This not only detracts from the appearance but means that re-potting is required much sooner than need be.

Newsletter readers may have reports of successful or unsuccessful results with the use of potted plants.

Kevin Handreck's book "Gardening Down-under" (CSIRO) is highly recommended for its information on soils and potting mixes. Kevin belongs to SGAP South Australia.

We are particularly interested in how you incorporate plants in pots into your garden design. I remember Shirley Fisher's appealing sketch (NL9-9) showing a group of log stumps and terracotta bird baths among plants - such an arrangement could also be attractive with plants in pots in a focal area of the garden. They could be combined with a small water feature, like this one designed by Mark Burns for his plan NL15-5 (where we ran out of space to show it). DS



### Winter sun, summer shade with clematis

Jan Hall Vic

This method of providing screening and shade during the hottest period of summer, while allowing the winter sun to shine through, was devised by the late Miss Jill Rossiter of Kurringai Cottage in the Warby Ranges near Wangaratta. It was adapted from observation of the management of otopos grown near Ivry-le-forck.

*Clematis glycinoides* is planted about 50cm apart and trained up on strings which are replaced annually. The strings are tied to rods top and bottom, which are held in place on cuphooks fixed under the eaves on the verandah and secured to a stake at the bottom. Once the root system is established, this plant can be pruned back to ground level in winter. It will grow rapidly during spring in time to flower and shade the area in summer.

I have a single plant on my patio which I tried this way to give a patch of shade over the kitchen window. It seeds readily so care may be needed that it stays where intended.

Kurringai can be visited, and offers accommodation, by calling SGAP member Ray Purches

### PLANTS TO DESIGN

#### Ten favourite plants

Don't forget to send in a list of your ten favourite plants (or a dozen if you like) - on the back of an envelope will do! You could choose a category and select e.g. your ten favourite trees, or ten favourite groundcovers.

#### Signature plants & a 'universal' plant list

Colleen Keena Qld

The 10th signature plants requested in NL 17-19 is easy! No prizes for guessing what I'd say - a Malvaceae family member! e.g. *Gossypium* for drier inland areas; *Hibiscus* sp. for Wollongong and further north; *Alyogyne* for Vic, S.A. and W.A.?

(For recent members who haven't seen Colleen's earlier articles, she is our chief *Hibiscus* enthusiast. DS)

But then *Leptospermum* sp. could hardly be omitted (I suppose N.Z. may also lay claim to *Leptospermum*), and you'd have to have some kind of palm as well - maybe a baker's dozen would be a safer number than the top ten.

I've often wondered if there is a 'universal' plant list! Are there plants that cross climatic zones?

(I'm sure there are • our lists of favourite plants could help to indicate this. DS)

#### Grevilleas for cottage gardens

Some time towards the end of last year a Newsletter of the Grevillea Study Group apparently included a list of grevilleas for "cottage gardens" (with apologies to Geoff Simmons for using that term) in SE Queensland. I'd be interested in seeing a copy if a GDG member who belongs to the Grevillea SG has it - would other members too?



## Ten popular plants - only four Australian

Jeff Howes NSW

While delivering the Telstra White Pages to over 200 Sydney homes last week (as a father of a Scout/ Venturer daughter) around the hilly, Hawkesbury sandstone areas of leafy North Shore, I was amazed that the majority of homes had used only a 'core' planting of 10 plants (not counting weeds such as Camphor Laurels and privet). The ten plants were used often in the one garden even though they were struggling in the poor soil.

The ten plants were (not in any order of use):

- azalea sp.
- hydrangeas
- fishbone fern (Australian but not sure what species)
- *Asplenium australasicum* (Birds Nest Fern)
- *Dicksonia antarctica* & *D. cooperi* (Tree Ferns)
- roses
- *Eriostemon myoporoides*
- camellia sp.
- ajuga & aloe sp.
- agaves (Century-plant) especially popular near pathways with their deadly spikes edging fleshy leaves

Where Australian natives have been recently planted they were either *Ceratopetalum gummiferum* (NSW Christmas Bush) or one of the various *Grevillea banksii* hybrids.

Overall it was quite obvious that the trend to landscaping and planting using our native plants has not yet reached into my sample of Sydney 'suburbia' - a pity.

## 'Sydney Easy Grow' list - a request to Sydney members

Caroline Gunter NSW

Following on from Jeff's comments, a reminder of Caroline Gunter's request some time ago for Sydney members to send her lists of the names of plants they have found most reliable (and rewarding) to grow. Caroline then plans to combine these lists. Any number of plants can be included. As well as thinking about your list, does any member know of any such list already in existence?

## Figs in Australian landscaping

Geoff Simmons Qld

My earliest acquaintance with Ficus was as a schoolboy in Adelaide - large Moreton Bay Figs in the schoolyard provided shade and a plentiful supply of leaves that were used as musical instruments. Since coming to Queensland, my use of species of this genus has been low key but persistent.

Leaving aside the edible nature of the fruit of many of these trees, one can only wonder at the variety of unusual features that are exhibited by these Australian plants. Unfortunately many of them grow to become huge trees and hence have limited use except in large gardens. Two desirable features are their evergreen and, in most cases, glossy leaves and their hardiness.

I have used them to denote ends of garden beds or avenues as described below and have also used one as a potted plant.

At each end of a row of brachychitons a single fig has been planted - *F. virens* at the end where I want a very large spreading tree (while not yet more than three metres high, the growth has been remarkable considering it was planted only three years ago) and at the other end, *F. superba* v. *henniana* - Cedar Fig, which is less bushy at the moment but should eventually reach around 20 metres.

The two other species at each end of a smaller garden bed are *F. coronata*, a Sandpaper Fig, and an unidentified fig that could be *F. platypoda*. The former is a curiosity with its rough leaved, although on one occasion it was almost completely defoliated by an insect. The unidentified fig has proved to have rapid growth.

The potted plant is *F. congesta* from northern Australia. With large ovoid leaves this is an attractive plant but the leaves soon wilt unless the plant is watered well.

## MEETINGS

VICTORIA

Melbourne meetingsReport of Neil Marriott's talk on Saturday May 10

Diana SnapeVic

Neil began by showing wonderful slides of some of the magnificent natural gardens he had seen in Western Australia, particularly those which acted as inspiration for creating heathland gardens. After these varied and colourful scenes, we saw equally beautiful heathlands closer to home in the Victorian Grampians. Points he emphasized included:

- the importance of repetition of a small number of species (say 1,2 or 3) as the dominant species in a natural area (or a garden), with either a small number or sometimes quite a large number of subsidiary species;
- the way a natural area could look almost as though there was only one species present when that species was in flower, while in a different season another species could seem to be completely dominant;
- although the straight line of a roadside does not appeal to Neil, the richness and abundance of roadside flora does, as it responds to water run-off from the road, soil disturbance and open, sunny conditions.

Then Neil illustrated how he and Jane went about creating the gardens at White Gums. The first step (as in their new garden) was the planting of shelter belts against prevailing winds, with extensive use of indigenous plants. Some of the garden beds were very large indeed and made use of imported soil. Neil stressed the importance of:

- being aware of soil pH to suit the needs of particular groups of plants;
- building up beds as much as possible to provide good drainage;
- using adequate mulch, for which he favours a thick layer of gravel.

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We saw 'before' and 'after' photos of the house and of large, curved beds in pleasing relationship to each other. The need to know the plants - their requirements and growth habits - was illustrated by seeing how, over the years, the house had disappeared and how well these beds with their complement of plants had developed. There were also examples of striking flower colour combinations contrasting with Neil's enthusiasm for the subtle indigenous grasses and, of course, wildlife - particularly birds. Thank you, Neil, for an inspiring talk.

Report of last meeting on Sunday August 3 - see Computer Programs, page 12

The next two monthly meetings of the GDSG in Melbourne will be overtaken by major events. The first is our GDSG Seminar combined with our hosting of the quarterly SGAP Victoria meeting on the first weekend in September, at Burnley College. The second would have been the first Sunday in October, too close to the ASGAP Conference in Adelaide. So our remaining 'normal' meeting for the year will be in November.

### **Next meeting**

Sunday November 2 at Tony & Joy Roberts' new house, 1.45 for 2.00 p.m.

Come with your ideas as Joy and Tony contemplate starting their new garden, and bring a 'plate' for our end-of-year meeting. We can also discuss thoughts from our Seminar and the ASGAP Conference. Please ring the Roberts to tell them you're coming.

### **GDSG. Northeast Victoria Branch**

Report of meeting at Paul & Barbara Kennedy's, Strathmerton, on 24/5/97

The Kennedy property was carefully selected by Paul to provide a range of growing conditions including sand for those Westralians he loves. There are two sandhills, the main one being 700m long and 2-300m wide, with packed sand to a depth of 60m; between the hills the profile is clay. Winds are predominantly from the west or east.

The plan is to develop wind breaks using as wide a range of plants as possible as the basis of an arboretum with sand loving plants grown in the protected areas. This work is well under way.

In the clay hollow a dam has been made which is visible from the house, so sight lines must be kept clear. An island in the middle provides refuge for birds.

Several smaller pools have been made nearby with the aim of attracting wading birds. These pools fill to overflowing after good rain and can be kept full with water from a bore. Paul and Barbara are asking for ideas for landscaping the area around these ponds.

### **Next meeting**

Elizabeth Brett's place, Corowa, on Sunday 17/8/97 at 10.30 am for 11 am start.

### **GDSG. South Australia Branch**

Report of meeting held on July 6, 1997

We met in Janet and Peter Fisher's home in the foothills above Adelaide, with a panoramic view of the city below us. Janet gave us a demonstration of several garden design computer packages she has and we examined her books to decide whether we should purchase any new ones for our own libraries.

Margaret gave a brief outline of matters to be considered in site analysis (see page 5) and we discussed members' specific problems. Following lunch, we looked at recently developed gardens in the area and some remnant vegetation.

### **Next meeting**

Saturday October 18, 1997 Meet at Gums Reserve, 31 Tennyson Avenue, Tranmere, from whence we shall visit some local gardens. Time 11 am. Phone Margaret Lee

### **GDSG. NSW Branch**

Garden visits Sunday July 20, 1997

#### A brief overview of the Hambrett & Cockburn gardens

**Jo Hambrett NSW**

20 years ago both gardens were part of a 45 acre dairy farm. The Cockburn garden was a completely cleared - save for two remnant Port Jackson Pines - 5 acre paddock.

The Hambrett garden was a partly wooded (turpentine, blackbutt, angophora, *Casuarina torulosa* and Grey Gums (*Eucalyptus punctata*) and partly cleared kikuyu grass 5 acre paddock. There was no middle or bottom storey as the paddock had been grazed extensively and used as a burial ground for elderly cows! As a direct result of these practices there was an enormous weed build-up.

15 years ago both gardens were building sites as the houses were constructed and fences put in; the gardens began 13 years ago. The Hambrett garden proceeded slowly (as did our learning process) beginning aptly enough in "the bush"! "Hard landscaping" intervention occurred four years ago when the house was extended and the pool put in. The

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slopes were replaced with terraced dry stone walls. This move made maintenance easier, allowed for effective drainage of the site to occur and introduced a new design element into the garden which (we hope) related well to the house and surrounds.

The majority of the planting is native and most of that indigenous; there are some exotic plants scattered throughout. The non-native plants tend to be fruit and herb bearing (pool, terraced area and carport bank); many Mediterranean in origin and suit Sydney's climate.

The aims of both gardens could be summarised as follows :-

1. To employ a strong design element complementing the house and the surrounding landscape.
2. To use Australian native plants as much as possible within the design concept to support native wildlife and reinforce existing native flora. (Both gardens help support 20 or so bird species as well as snakes, lizards, possums, sugar gliders, bats, etc.)
3. The creation of useful and spiritually harmonious space for all to enjoy.

### The Hambrett garden

Ann Long NSW

We were greeted by the ghosts of the old dairy as we entered the Hambrett garden at Dural - fantastic corrugated iron silhouettes of cows - suggestive of the earlier life of the place, a gentle reminder of other times and efforts on this land.

House and garden are a unit, hand in hand unobtrusively. The garden is very peaceful, wrapping around the house and spreading down into the natural bush. The line between formal, cultivated and civilized and the wild wood is subtly drawn. One is surprised to find the comfortable foliage under the eucalypts and turpentine is a mixture of exotic species happily combined - daphne, rhododendrons, hydrangeas, banksia roses - while some naturals like lomandra are lined up to form a gentle border. The hardenbergia climbing on the fence in the drive, flowers falling elegantly over wood and wire, was a reminder that well placed and pruned Australian plants can take your breath away, transport your spirit to paradise, as well as or better than borrowed flora. A group of planted rainforest plants curve nicely up to meet the lawn behind the house and the horse paddock beyond combines happily to remind of rural life and the real wild wood that was there many years ago and still remains in the gully beside the house.

It was a very special feel however, to move from Hambretts to the next garden through the friendly garden gate which links the neighbours. We participated in relaxed and "rural" friendship even though the creations were really the offspring of urban society.

### The Cockburn garden

Caroline Gunter NSW

The second half of our garden tour was to the property next door, originally part of the same cleared dairy farm. About 15 years ago the house had been built in almost the middle of the 5 acre subdivision. The present owners, who bought it 8 years later, had previously owned and enjoyed a Bruce Mackenzie garden, so re-engaged him to create something of this near level site.

Now after about three years construction and four years growth, "level and cleared" no longer apply. Main features include two large connected lakes/storm water containment dams with a low heavy timber bridge to link a driveway circle; large sweeping mounds formed from excavated material, dressed with reserved topsoil and well mulched; plantings in the mounds of broad bands of at least 10 or more of each plant, now trees and shrubs two or three metres high; wide sweeps of grass to connect, provide access and open vistas. Groves include a mass planting of *Allocasuarina* around the lake, *Leptospermum* with purple new growth, *Acmena smithii* minor densely green, *Banksia marginata* with open wiriness, *Syzygium paniculatum* and cultivars providing soft shining forms and a microclimate formed by protection from fast growing acacias and *Glochidion ferdinandi* for the owner's special collection of *Ficus* and rainforest species. The owner and the growth displayed sing praise to the planting medium of crushed shale, clay, sand and rock in the mounds.

Near the house is a specially constructed sandstone bed created to hold a mixed planting of heath varieties like *Grevillea sericea*, *Xanthorrhoea* and *Banksia robur*, *B. marginata* and cascading forms of prostrate *B. serrata* and *B. integrifolia* over the lake wall. The owner's interest in Japanese design (and the garden design of Luis Barragan) is evident in this garden also, e.g. in an *Acer palmatum* grove, Bonsai collection and a crystal Koi carp pool.

Stretching away to the back is a simple paddock rise with plantings of various trees and a swimming pool with a very neatly clipped melaleuca hedge. It is obviously a garden with plantings, form and wildlife intensely enjoyed by its owners.

### Next meeting

Sunday 19th October at 11.30 a.m. at Wendy Mackie's - two gardens in Mortdale about 35 minutes from the CBD in the south-west. Take a picnic lunch. Please ring Jo Hambrett

Wendy says "My garden in its present form is about two years old. I have tried to design the front as a typical suburban garden, to draw attention to how well Australian plants can be used for an attractive effect. I have been more successful in some areas than others! The side garden is a rainforest. Maureen's garden is more unstructured and uses local flora as much as possible, e.g. rescued from local factory sites."

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**Geoff & Ann Long's weekender, 'Bolwarra'**, (see NL16-7) is for sale: one acre in the sub-tropical Foxground rainforest with resident lyre-bird, Australian thrush, whip bird, cat bird, etc, and a flora list of 137 species. Geoff says special price consideration will be given to those who wish to preserve and further develop the concept of this natural

habitat garden. All weather road access, and the house sounds wonderful too. Private sale, price on application.

Geoff & Ann's house in Camperdown, close to Sydney University/Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, is also for sale. Architect and landscape architect designed, it will be auctioned in October if not sold previously.

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*Welcome to the following new members of the Study Group - I hope you enjoy your membership.*

### **New members**

Ian Abbottsmith  
 Leeanne Brockway  
 Shirley Came  
 Arthur Dench  
 Joyce Edgerton  
 Neil Goldsborough  
 Faisal Grant  
 Allan & Helen Joyce  
 Gary & Katherine Pedersen  
 Michele Pymble  
 Digby Richardson  
 Pam Renouf  
 Margaret Stanton

### **Membership renewals**

Ingrid Adler, Karin Andersson, John Armstrong, Margie & Geoff Barnett, Joan Barrett, Michael Bates, Carol Bentley, Shirley Bloomfield, Ian Bond, Jennifer Borrell, John Bramley, Elizabeth Brett, Barbara Buchanan, Steve Burley, Mark Burns, Wendy Cannon, Matthew Collins, Janice Creasey, Rosemary Cumming, Peter Cuneo, Brian & Mary Dacy, Sandra & Kim Davey, Jennifer Davidson, Gillian Davies, Aline Deckert, Kay Dempsey, Cherree Densley, Catherine Drew, Laurie Dunn, Grahame Durbidge, Judith Dykes, Rodger & Gwen Elliot, Vanessa Elwell-Gavins, Peter Feige, Shirley & Graham Fisher, Linda Floyd, Gloria Freeman, Christine & Angelo Gaiardo, Peter & Wilma Garnham, Margaret Garrett, Robin Gemmill, Mary Graham, Marilyn Gray, Caroline Gunter, Jan Hall, Beverley Hanson, Kay Harries, Robyn Hartley, Anthony Heawood, Jeanette Heinemann, Monika Herrmann, John Hoile, Jeffery Howes, John Hulme, Margaret Ingall, Mark James, Julie Jones, Morton & Judith Kaveney, Colleen & Geoff Keena, Catherine King, Florence King, Jennie Lawrence, Margarete Lee, Margaret Lee, Geoffrey & Ann Long, Wendy Mackie, Kate Malfroy, Rhys & Julie McGregor, Doug McIver, Gillian Morris, Helen Morrow, Deirdre Morton, Anne Neild, Danie Ondinea, Dorothy Parris, Alison Payne, Jonathan & Georgina Persse, Donald & Thelma Peterson, Shirley Pipitone, Lyn Reilly, Frances Rein, Stephen Riley, Tony & Joy Roberts, Nicky Rose, Gordon Rowland, Karen & Geoff Russell, Gwen Sanders, Peter Shannon, Geoff & Maureen Short, Geoffrey Simmons, Diana Snape, Roger Stone, Eispeth Swan, Gloria Thomlinson, Jim & Pat Watson, Merele Webb, Robert Willson, Tim Wilson, Debbie & Rudy Youssef, Alik Zouliou; SGAP Canberra, SGAP NSW, SGAP Queensland, SGAP Tasmania, SGAP Blue Mountains, SGAP Maroondah Inc.  
*Ptsase let us know if your name should appear here but is missing.*

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Plans for the Seminar on September 6 & 7 are going very well and we expect a good attendance - I'm looking forward to seeing many of you there. If you have sent in your registration and NOT received the program outline please contact Peter Garnham straight away. It was unfortunate that the timing placed the weekend rather close to the ASGAP Conference in Adelaide, with its pre-Conference tour. This may have deterred some GDSG members from interstate. It's always difficult to find a suitable time in Spring, which really just isn't long enough.

Thank you to all the contributors to this NL - we're lucky to have you! Other NL editors sometimes ask me how we do it. I always look forward to receiving contributions of whatever length - from two lines to two pages - ideas about design, plants for design, gardens, books, etc. In the next NL we'll read about Geoff Simmons' concept of a Walkabout Garden, and more about the grassland/grassy woodland garden. We'll also have an up-date on how Colleen Keena's '3-bucket rainforest' is coming on. I liked Geoff Simmons' suggestion of a "Wallum garden" but then I wondered whether it could be 'transplanted' to an area which does not have the soil and climatic conditions of naturally occurring 'Wallum'. I suppose we already try to do this 'transplanting' with our 'rainforest' gardens, for example. What do you think?

I hope members have had sufficient rain (or in some places, not too much!) to be able to enjoy Spring. Very best wishes,

*Diana*

Diana Snape