

ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS

GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP

NEWSLETTER No. 20

February 1998

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

Dear Members,

I hope you've had a happy Christmas and that you and your garden are surviving the summer season without trauma. It seems to me to have been a strange summer, with erratic temperatures and some areas terribly dry while others (particularly further north) inundated with rain. With our climatic differences it's difficult to generalize about very much in garden design in Australia! I suppose 'plant local' is one generalization, and another is to place emphasis on form, foliage and reliability of those plants which form the 'backbone' of the garden. Trees such as eucalypts are often prominent. Dean Nicolle's article on small eucalypts started me thinking again about the value of such trees, planted singly or in a group, or possibly coppiced. Bev Hanson's article on 'rockscaping' focuses on another important part of the 'backbone' of many gardens. Geoff Simmons takes a brief look at sustainability - how 'permanent' do we really expect or want our gardens to be?

Several articles in this Newsletter look at a completely different aspect of garden design - creating attractive but much more ephemeral 'pictures' with annuals or perennials. Peter Cuneo's article about display gardens at Mt Annan suggests what could be achieved on a much smaller scale in suburban gardens, and gives an idea of how to go about it and the work required. This links in well with Judy Barker's article. It also illustrates my recent thoughts on the detailed information we need for so many areas of garden design - to know what we can do with our plants, in terms of our knowledge of the plants themselves, which leads to an understanding of how we can use them successfully in design. Barbara Buchanan introduces our under-used conifers and tells of some of her experiences with them.

We've lost just a few plants over summer. Because last year's autumn rains never really came, we've even done some planting over summer (a real no-no). However, with more watering than usual, it's surprising how many do manage to survive and grow well. One significant & sad loss during January was a 26-year old eucalypt (*E. burdettiana*), top heavy and asymmetrical because of *E. crenulata* (Victorian Silver Gum) growing over it. Blown over in a storm, it has been transformed into mulch, logs and firewood, and gives valuable space for rejuvenation.

Now the GDSG is five years old, I think the time may have come to reassess our aims and consider what we have achieved so far and all that we still need to do, and how to go about it. There are plenty of possibilities. Please take the time to read page 4 and let us know what you think.

NEXT MEETINGS

Please see details of these meetings in text (page 19)

SOUTH AUSTRALIA: Saturday FEB 14th at Philip Tow's
NE VICTORIA: Sunday FEB 22nd at Gloria Thompson's
MELBOURNE: Sunday MARCH 1st at Maureen & Geoff Short's
SYDNEY: Sunday MARCH 15th at Jeff Howes'

INDEX

2	CORRESPONDENCE extracts
4	A "mission statement", our aims (and a new logo)?
5	DESIGN
5	Use of rocks in the garden - Bev Hanson
6	Painting living pictures - Judy Barker
8	Should sustainability be factored in? - Geoff Simmons
8	PLANTS
8	Ornamental small eucalypts - Dean Nicolle
10	Australian conifers - Barbara Buchanan
11	GARDENS
11	Open gardens
12, 13	Plan for a small courtyard - Jeff Howes
12, 18	A "neat" formal courtyard garden - Margaret Lee
14	BOOKS
14	<i>"Gardens of a Golden Afternoon"</i> by Jane Brown - Barbara Buchanan
14	Further comments on <i>"The Education of a Gardener"</i>
14	<i>"The Dry Garden"</i> by Beth Cato - Diana Snape
15	<i>"Cottage Garden Style"</i> by John Simpson - Barbara Buchanan
15	DESIGN IDEAS
16	News from the Mount - Peter Cuneo
16	Shaded pathways - Geoff Simmons
17	Coppicing - Diana Snape
18	Moon gates & SGAP S.A. Region Royal Show display
19	MEETINGS & NEWS
19	South Australia
19	Sydney
19	Victoria - Melbourne; NE Vic Branch: another garden design project
20	TREASURER'S REPORT - Peter Garnham
20	MEMBERSHIP: new members & membership renewals

CORRESPONDENCE extracts

"I very much enjoyed the Garden Design Seminar and hope you were pleased with the response to the planning and effort you and the team put in. I think it was very timely; with most interest in Australian plants focusing on their flowering characteristics it was great to have such a large audience obviously happy to be challenged to reflect on considerations of design. And I fell in love with Paul Thompson's work!"

Jennifer Davidson Vic

"I agree with many of the comments on the garden visits printed in the Newsletter. I really enjoyed the chance to see Linda Floyd's wonderful, idiosyncratic (high maintenance) garden after seeing your slides. And meeting and being with Linda over dinner was a bonus. Also the wonderful mosaic garden with more of it completed - I'd love to try to see it 6 monthly or yearly - I really enjoyed it and feel very inspired (to go home and break china!) And it would be great to visit Paul Thompson's garden in 3-5 years. For such a new garden it was important to have the designer there to explain the ideas behind it and where it was (hopefully) heading." **Danie Ondinea** NSW

3

"I have been reading *'The Virago Book of Women Gardeners'* by Deborah Kellaway, published by Virago Press in 1996, which is just delightful. However I particularly like writings by Gertrude Jekyll and I think I may do a journey around my garden in the style of GJ - we'll see.

I stayed at the Raleighs recently - their new water garden with Geoff Sitch's rocks is really well done. In fact the whole garden is looking great this year despite terrible frosts and also kangaroo attacks. With the wonderful Grampians backdrop it is certainly a special area."
Cherree Densley Vic

"I have been an apprentice gardener for 30ish years and attended many ASGAP Conferences, including S.A. Our two District Groups have many qualified native plant growers who share, willingly, their knowledge. I suppose I'm part of that! My present garden is near the coast south of Hobart, with temperate climate; mostly natives and ferns, some proteas tolerated." **Melva Truchanas Tas**

"I think it is great that semiprofessionals and professionals join the GDSG - it shows they are willing to learn about Australian plants and their landscaping use. Us amateurs with the gardening skills perhaps can impart our knowledge and make them better at their trade?" **Jeff Howes NSW**

Maureen and Geoff Short (Vic) have sent me a cutting from the Weekend Telegraph in England, from an article bemoaning the planting of eucalypts there. The sub-heading is "It's time to take an axe to the tree from Down Under before it takes over". The writer states "If God had wanted England to have gum trees, he would also have provided koalas and kangaroos. Eucalypts simply don't look right here. This is specially so in winter when they stick out like giant plastic ornaments in the austere, grey winter landscape."

It's interesting to hear the obverse side of our situation here!

Linda Floyd's garden: another comment

Jennifer Davidson Vic

I was captivated by the garden of painting and sculpture which Linda Floyd has created. Once inside the front gate, the visitor is drawn onwards to discover what surprise is next in store. A "stairway to the stars" is formed by clipping several shrubs in stepwise fashion. Any trees which have been removed are cut and placed in a corner which is a "cemetery of trees"; this area has something of the tranquillity of a Buddhist temple about it. Linda obviously takes pleasure in the form of plants rather than their flowers and she has guided many into intriguing shapes.

Proceeding around the side of the house one meets a brilliant palette of colour. The house walls at this point have been painted in a vivid variety of shades including violet, blue and yellow. In the back garden is Linda's studio; near the entrance is an almost horizontal melaleuca whose form has been guided over the years to make another striking feature in this surprising yet harmonious garden.

A "MISSION STATEMENT", our AIMS, and a new logo?

At the November 1997 Melbourne meeting, Geoff Short asked if the GDSG had a "Mission Statement". We don't at the moment - should we have? and if so what should it be?

When the Garden Design Study Group was started back in 1992, the main aims were as follows. These aims haven't really been re-examined in the last five years so it's probably time they were. They may not have changed very much but please send in your ideas, either as individuals or from groups of members or from branches.

The main aims of the GDSG are to:

1. carry out theoretical & practical investigation of garden design using Australian plants.

This includes reading books and articles on garden design (with exotic plants as well as Australian plants) and having experienced speakers talk to us. We have tried to define styles of gardens to provide a reference framework for discussion and comparison. A vital aspect of practical investigation is the keeping of plans and written and photographic records of examples of good garden design. A number of garden design projects are underway.

2. develop resources for people who are interested in garden design with Australian plants.

The resources would include the outcomes of our first aim. Cataloguing of records of gardens and photographs, using a computer database, has already started and is a big job. In time we'd also like to establish a database of Australian plants with a focus on garden design.

3. encourage more & better use of Australian plants in gardens which the public can visit.

This refers to both public and private gardens. We need a wide variety of good examples of different styles of garden, ideally in such schemes as the Australia's Open Garden Scheme, to overcome many people's negative view of straggly native gardens.

4. produce four Newsletters a year & publish articles on garden design.

As you know our Newsletters are about 20 A4 pages in length and they are our main means of communication, so we rely on 'feedback'. Some members also write articles for magazines and newspapers and give talks to SGAP and other groups.

- *Should we have a "Mission Statement" and if so what should it be?*
- *Should we alter or add to any of these aims?*

And while you're thinking about such things -

- *How can we achieve better communication between members? Is this necessary?*
- *Is it time for a new logo (the current one was not intended to last for ever)? Ideally the logo would suggest the 3 elements - Australian, garden & design (with ASGAP &/or GDSG).*

DESIGN

Use of rocks in the garden

Bev Hanson Vic

It is not necessary to use rocks when designing a garden but they certainly add interest if positioned in a natural way. The best way to learn the art of placing rocks is to take the time to study nature. Of course we cannot hope to reproduce the magnificent huge outcrops we see in wilderness areas but, on a smaller scale and with care selecting and placing, a pleasing result can be achieved. Just a few very large rocks of different shapes placed to look as though they had always been there can help to create much interest irrespective of the season.

We are limited in shifting such heavy material by manual means, using rollers and levers such as crowbars. Much larger stones can be moved if a machine such as a bobcat is used. The people helping to construct the garden should have an appreciation of how to move rocks without damaging the surface area or indeed their backs!

Types of rock

There are several types of rocks one can choose. If there is a local rock it is good to stay with that. The most widely used in Melbourne is basalt which usually comes with lichen and/or moss. Granite rock is more dense and therefore heavier and is more expensive. There are various other rocks e.g. sandstone and mudstone. Rocks can also be constructed artificially from cement and, if done well, can look great especially on a grand scale or dealing with a large excavation. However, get the experts in as the natural - look finish and form will either make or break it. Once you start using one type of rock in the garden it is important to stick with that throughout.

Rock placement

It is advisable to see the rocks before they are delivered to the site. Some garden supply yards will let you take some chalk and mark the ones you want provided they are not down the bottom and back of the pile! The best rocks should be earmarked for the most prominent places. Rocks of the same shape, mass and height should not be positioned together. Most rocks have a definite best side and top so place accordingly.

When healing the scar of a large excavation, large rocks should be chosen, placing some forward and some back to try to get away from straight lines. Sometimes building a wall cannot be avoided even though it adds a straight line but even this can be softened by ending it with a rock outcrop.

On a more level site flatter rocks should be chosen and some mounding in conjunction with the rock placement will help them look as though they belong. If rocks are undercut they will need burying perhaps halfway; others with a flat base, no submergence is needed at all. Each rock should look as though it belongs to the next.

If rocks are small, all the same shape, placed in rows or confined to one place only in the garden, they can never give a unifying natural effect. Be bold! and take the same rock treatment across to another part of the garden. Never line a pathway or pond with rocks and banish any ugly, mis-shapen rocks to an unseen area or take it away completely. Keep any strata in the rock horizontal. Always backfill rocks with good earth as it is here your most interesting plants can be placed.

Planting near rocks

The choice of plants is most important near rocks. It is counter productive to go to the care and expense of placing rocks correctly, then plant inappropriately. Sometimes a very tight groundcover is required such as *Pratia pedunculata* squeezing between rocks, or *Brachy(s)come multifida* spilling down a slope between outcrops. Never place bushy plants such as some of the grevilleas too close so they encroach too much on the outcrops. Tufty small plants look just right beside rocks. Drifts of the same groundcover taken across to another part of the garden can always help unify the total picture.

A garden changes with seasons and in time. Plants get woody, die and need replacing but rocks never change. They give form to a garden and if placed well in the first instance can add beauty to a garden for a very long time.

Painting living pictures

Judy Barker Vic

A paper of a talk which was presented, accompanied by slides, at the 7 996 Seminar at Karwarra Australian Plant Garden, Kalorama, Victoria. Judy Barker is the leader of the Australian Daisy Study Group and editor of 'Australian Daisies for Gardens and Floral Art' and 'Australian Brachyscomes'.

This title covers a vast range of possibilities - most of which have been covered already in this seminar. The key word is 'living'. The title must involve design but does not include structures. Until fairly recently the interest lay in growing Australian plants as such. They were propagated and planted, and gardeners found out how they performed from experience - often from bitter experience. The pictures painted were complicated or disjointed. Now a large body of knowledge has been accumulated on appearance and performance; we know size, flowering period, variation of colour for each species, and reliability in different conditions. Much of this information has resulted from the work of Study Groups and individual members of the Society for Growing Australian Plants, and has been made available in such invaluable publications as the '*Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants*' and the '*Grow What Where*' series. Nurseries stock many more species, especially the smaller species. This knowledge and this armoury of new plants have added much more colour and certainty to the planting of living pictures.

My background lies in the accumulation of knowledge on the growing of Australian daisies. The only pictures I have painted have been accidental, for my garden is a trialling ground for daisies. I have therefore sought advice from three artistic friends, Peg McAllister, Maureen Schaumann and Gloria Thomlinson. It is largely their pictures combined with those of nature that are represented here. The painting of pictures depends on many factors, most of which are inter-related. Intrinsic personal attributes including taste, enthusiasm, plant knowledge, colour sense and energy will influence the completed picture. Other major aspects include size of canvas, background, surface treatment, and purpose. Let us explore the ramifications of these factors.

Size of canvas

The size of the picture has a large bearing on choice of plants. Planting of large areas can be bold, with stands of large trunks. Pleasing pictures result from clean trunks with low plants at the base. Small areas need smaller trees such as *Baeckea virgata* or some of the smaller eucalypts like *Eucalyptus leucoxylon* (Murray Bridge form) and *E. caesia*. The tall, open *Hymenosporum flavum* makes a handsome upper storey, flowers for three months and has a superb perfume.

Background

Beautiful backdrops of mountains or ocean do not need much planting at all - perhaps just a frame. An excellent example of restraint can be seen at Karwarra Garden where the view over Sylvan Dam remains unobstructed.

Paling fences and brick walls form the boundaries of most gardens, and they are not intrinsically beautiful. Most need screening with shrubs or climbers. Retaining walls on steep slopes can be softened by planting, for example the long, fine stems of prostrate *Acacia cognata* contrast with the prickly weeping form of white *Hemiandra pungens*. A novel idea for obscuring post tops is to crown them with cushions of *Scleranthus biflorus*.

Surface treatment

The colour of the soil or mulch has a great bearing on the picture, as has a complete floral carpet. The red soil of arid areas provides a beautiful contrast for plants of any colour. The usual grey-brown soil with a thin layer of leaf mulch is the background for the plants in Peg McAllister's Mooroolbark garden. The bright colours show up well against it and it has the great advantage that the precious flannel flowers, trigger plants and heaths regenerate naturally in it. The granite chip mulch in Maureen Schaumann's Mulgrave garden makes a good foil for the colours of the garden and also encourages many daisies and others to self sow.

Carpeting plants may be massed to produce an unbroken carpet. Annuals, perennials and small shrubs may be planted very closely to produce either a riot of colour or a mosaic. An excellent example of this may be seen from a slide taken near Kalgoorlie. It shows mulgas with a carpet of brachyscomes and everlastings beneath them. It is a dream of Gloria Thomlinson's to reproduce this picture in her backyard. In place of the

7

mulgas she would use small eucalypts (preferably with mallee habits) as the 'bones' of the garden, and then mass plant with such reliable species as *Brachyscome iberidifolia*, *Rhodanthe chlorocephala* subsp. *rosea*, or *Schoenia filifolia* subsp. *subulifolia*. Since this is a picture of an ephemeral nature, there could be liberal planting of perennial grasses and strategic placing of rocks. The ephemerals would dominate in spring and the grasses would take over when they had died down. A more permanent picture could be created with an increase in the numbers of grasses and rocks and the use of perennials. The newer perennials now on the market include many colour forms of *Brachyscome angustifolia* and *B. multifida*, both of which have suckering habits and very long flowering periods. There are also some reliable yellow brachyscome hybrids which could be useful.

Instead of grasses there are a number of perennials which may be used in mass planting or grouping, e.g. *Leptorhynchos tenuifolius* or *Chrysocephalum semipapposum*. The latter has the advantage that it is capable of being mown and it offers a variation of foliage form and colour, and flower colour. Plants other than daisies could be used, such as the blue *Dampiera*, *Scaevola* and *Wahlenbergia* species.

Purpose

Private and public gardens will often have very different purposes and therefore very different kinds of plantings. Virtually all public gardens must have substantial emphasis on minimum maintenance time and costs. On the other hand, private gardens generally fall into two quite different categories. One group of owners will want a garden which presents a satisfying picture but which does not involve much of their leisure time. Keen gardeners will want a garden which, by its nature, requires them to take an active, satisfying and continuous role in its upkeep and development.

By and large, the private garden of the enthusiast will contain a much greater percentage of small plants of a wide variety of species, shapes and colours. The public garden and the private garden of the golfer will include a number of plants chosen mainly for their reliability and colour. At the Balwyn Library both these characteristics are to the fore with plantings of *Brachyscome multifida* and *Thryptomene saxicola*. For roadside plantings the effect should be natural. This is achieved more easily if the species planted are local to the area.

The duration of the desired picture will have a major effect on the design. A display garden at a show needs a short term effect, as does an event such as Christmas, where red and green Kangaroo Paws may give the desired result. But long term considerations would require the choice of planting to rest upon reliability of performance and foliage interest. Maureen's garden falls into this long term category because it is full of colour at all times of the year, mainly due to the long flowering periods of the selected species. Seasonal effect is typified by the Mooroolbark garden in which the dominance of masses of flannel flowers over spring and summer gives way to a display of *Epacris impressa* all shades and heights in autumn and winter.

Spatial alteration will give added variety to the picture. It may be derived from the height and colour of species which die down or are pruned back at certain times of the year. Examples include the stiff, sculptured form of *Ammobium alatum* with its white everlastings. This perennial needs to be pruned back when it becomes untidy so that it again goes through its cycle of rapid growth and production of bright flowers. Similarly, *Arthropodium milleflorum* is another excellent perennial which will lend a fragile air to a garden in summer. Delicate pale mauve to white, vanilla-scented flowers are held on leafless stems over a long period. Massed for best effect, it is beautiful when grown with the white *Isotoma anethifolius*.

The small pictures in Peg's Mooroolbark garden use paths softened by lechenaultias and trigger-plants to draw the eyes and feet onward. Her philosophy of planting living pictures employs the over and under principle with three different plant levels - going up off the ground, coming down to the ground and crouching on the ground. One example is seen in the grouping of a *Micromyrtus leptocalyx* - a delicate, arching shape, with *Acacia nervosa* beneath - a pleasing dense, round ball even when it is not in flower, and the ground hugging, cream-flowered form of *Hibbertia vestita* at the base. The hint of blue stems from *Dampiera feres* and *Hovea chorizemifolia*.

The enormous variety of Australian plants in terms of size, colour of flower and foliage, habit, and geographical diversity offer great scope for the development of gardens for every purpose and location. A garden provides the opportunity for anyone to paint pictures of their own conception, and so to enjoy the great sense of satisfaction that comes with this.

In recent years new concepts have been introduced into garden lore. These include permaculture, self-sufficiency and sustainability. The first two invariably depend on the use of exotic plants and animals so don't come into the picture of Australian garden design to any great extent. On the other hand sustainability may be a major desire.

Gardening is basically a selfish occupation if the aim of the private gardener is to make a statement, namely that my garden is unique and attractive and is all my own idea. Very few gardeners could claim that a private garden was designed for generations into the future. The factoring in of sustainability varies according to the type of garden. The forest or tree garden will tend to copy the natural rainforests where falling leaves and other debris are recycled so forming a closed system in regards to nutrients. It is also likely that self seeding will occur so perpetuating the type of plants.

At the other extreme is the garden consisting mainly of annuals. This type of garden has very little sustainability in respect to plant life although by mulching back this vegetable matter the piece of land may sustain successive crops of this type of plant.

The argument that good garden design will last a long time may be true but reflects a static time period. The designer is failing to recognise that new varieties of plants and new ideas may show that a design that is good now may be less perfect in the eyes of tomorrow's gardeners. The classic example is the dissatisfaction with French geometrically designed gardens expressed particularly by the Englishman Kent in his view that straight lines were contrary to nature.

There is relevance of the above to Australian garden design as we have a storehouse of plants hardly touched by plant breeders. A few decades ago, the advent of highly developed cultivars of Kangaroo Paws would not have entered into consideration.

In a rapidly changing world, sustainability in a garden is not a factor for private garden design except to enable plant life to function in the best possible fashion. Evolution is more likely to influence Australian garden design in this dynamic situation. The GDSG Newsletter and other activities are important lubricants in bringing about an Australian emphasis.

PLANTS

Ornamental small eucalypts

Dean Nicolle S.A.

Dean Nicolle's book "*Eucalypts of South Australia*" gives comprehensive descriptions of all of S.A. 's 95 eucalypts and illustrates all in full colour (20 for the first time). It can be obtained from Dean

for \$20.00 plus postage \$3.00 (special prices for 10 or more books).

Here is a list of what I think are the 12 best and most ornamental small eucalypts for the average Australian garden. Some are well known but others may be difficult to obtain. They are listed with the best at number 1. Their mature height and rainfall region in which they grow best are included.

1. *E. preissiana* 3 m 400-700 mm
Bell-fruited mallee

There are two subspecies, the rarer subsp. *lobata* being superior, with larger leaves and flowers and a lower growth form than the more common subsp. *preissiana*. Both have large bright yellow flowers in winter/spring and broad, blue-green leaves. It is a bushy shrub native to the south coast of WA and is suited to any well-drained soil including those with limestone.

2. *E. kruseana* 3 m 200-600 mm
Book-leaf mallee

An interesting as well as ornamental open mallee with small, blue-grey leaves (giving it its common name) and clusters of yellow flowers in winter/spring. Native to the Kalgoorlie area of WA, it prefers well-drained soils.

3. *E. websteriana* 2m 200-600 mm
Round-leaved mallee

A slow growing rounded mallee with interesting curled reddish bark and small, rounded bluish leaves. The small pale yellow flowers are more insignificant. Similar is *E. orbifolia*, growing to 4 m, differing in the broader leaves and larger buds and fruits. Both are native to the goldfields of WA and suited to most well-drained soils.

4. *E. caesia* 4 m 300-600 mm
Caesia

There are two subspecies, both have curled reddish bark, pendulous pink/red flowers in winter and large,

white bell-shaped fruits. Subsp. *magma* has a strongly weeping habit and has larger flowers and fruits and darker red flowers than subsp. *caesia*. Both are native to the northern wheatbelt of WA and demand a well-drained soil.

5. *E. macrocarpa* 4 m 400-600 mm
Rose of the West

E. macrocarpa subsp. *macrocarpa* and subsp. *elachantha* as well as *E. rhodantha* are all highly ornamental open mallees with large silvery leaves and large, single red flowers scattered along the stems. They are relatively slow growing and require a well-drained soil. All three are rare in nature, being native to the wheatbelt in WA.

6. *E. angustissima* 3 m 350 - 700 mm
Narrow-leaved mallee

Recognised as being the narrowest-leaved eucalypt and often mistaken for a melaleuca, this species forms a bushy shrub with fine, dark green leaves and insignificant white flowers. There are two subspecies, with subsp. *angustissima* having narrower leaves than subsp. *quarrenda*. Also recommended is *E. m. seila* (2 m) a similar bushy mallee with broader, bluish leaves. All are native to the sandplains of southern WA and are very salt tolerant but require a well-drained soil.

7. *E. pimpiana* 2 m 150-400 mm
Pim pin mallee

An unusual mallee with no related species. Its low habit, thick, bluish leaves and large yellow flowers make this an ornamental species for drier areas. Native to the Great Victoria Desert of SA and WA, it flowers profusely when quite young.

8. *E. peranqusta* 2m 350-700 mm
Slender-leaved mallee

Another mallee with very narrow leaves, it forms a small very bushy shrub with masses of small white flowers in the warmer months. It is related to but with narrower leaves and much smaller growing than *E. formanij*. Native to the southern wheatbelt of WA, it should grow well in any well-drained soil.

9. *E. sepulcralis* 6 m 400-700 mm
Weeping mallee

A very interesting mallee, although taller than the other species, it is very thin-stemmed (to arm thickness) and finally weeping and is suitable for small gardens. Its gracefulness is what makes it attractive although the large vase-shaped fruits formed from small white flowers are also attractive. Native to the south coast of WA. Very similar is *E. pendens*, native to the west coast of WA, differing mainly in the smaller fruits.

10. *E. leptopoda* 3 mm 250-600 mm
Whipstick mallee

A variable mallee with four subspecies. All are attractive small mallees with thin stems, fairly narrow leaves and small dainty white flowers in the warmer months. The related *E. synandra* is also attractive and has flowers that change from white to pink with age. All are native to WA except *E. leptopoda* ssp. *elevata* which extends over the border into the desert of SA.

11. *E. crenulata* 6 m 500-1000 mm
Silver gum

A larger eucalypt but well worth a mention. It is usually a single-stemmed bushy tree with a crown of small scalloped silver leaves. The small white flowers are insignificant. Very rare in the wild, native to a small area in Victoria, it grows well in poorly-drained soils.

12. *E. suaarandis* 4 m 300-750 mm
Swamp mallee

A small mallee with narrow dark green leaves and reddish buds that open to white flowers. It is the dwarf form of *E. spathulata* (to 12 m) and will grow in almost any soil. Also suitable is the related *E. vegrandis* (to 4 m) which has narrower, more metallic blue-green leaves. All are native to saline soils in the wheatbelt of WA.

Others that are also good are:

<i>E. lansdowneana</i>	4 m	250 - 600 mm
<i>E. xanthonema</i>	4 m	300 - 750 mm
<i>E. moorei</i>	5 m	500 - 1000 mm
<i>E. doratoxylon</i>	3 m	400 - 700 mm

Editor's note. Many thanks to Dean for sending us his list.

In case you're wondering why the emphasis is on small (6 m or less) eucalypts, I think more knowledge about these is a great need in garden design. On the other hand I think the choice of large eucalypts for large gardens is extensive, with the planting of indigenous trees becoming much more

widespread. Having at least a proportion of indigenous eucalypts has much to recommend it. Information about these is available from many different sources, both local and otherwise. How eucalypts are placed in garden design could well be the topic of another article.

As you can see from Dean's list, nearly all his recommended trees come from WA and only about half are well known here. Please tell us any good sources of the less common species that you find. Many may flourish in WA and SA gardens better than in those of the eastern States. We grew *E. preissiana* a long while ago but then sadly lost it. Now we have a nice position to try another! (One comment though - we planted *E. crenulata* 25 years ago expecting a 6m tree - it's now a magnificent tree about 12 m in height!)

Australian conifers

Barbara Buchanan Vic

"Ferns, Fern Allies and Conifers of Australia" by H.T. Clifford and J. Constantine, was published in 1980 by University of Queensland Press. It is described on the frontispiece as a Laboratory Manual and has no horticultural information and very scanty descriptions of timber quality and uses. Just recalling this makes me realize how well served we are now for information. I am fairly confident there has been a later version. Cycads and Zamias are included in *Pinophyta-vieW* pre-Wollemi.

Australian conifers

- 3 *Athrotaxis* species (Tasmanian endemics) - *A. cupressoides* (Pencil Pine); *A. laxifolia*; and *A. selaginoides* (King Billy Pine)
- *Dietsmaarcheri*
- 3 *Actinostrobus* (WA. endemics) - *A. acuminatus* (Dwarf Cypress); *A. arenarius* (Sandplain Cypress); *A. pyramidalis* (Swamp Cypress)
- 14 *Callitris* spp. in Australia, e.g. *C. rhomboidea* (Port Jackson Pine); generally called Cypress Pines

4 genera of Podocarpaceae:

- -- 8 *Podocarpus* spp. e.g. *P. lawrencei* (Mountain Plum Pine), and 1 unnamed
- -- *Microcachrys tetragona* (formerly *Athrotaxis tetragona*) (Creeping Pine)
- - *Microstrobus fitzgeraldii* (Dwarf Mountain Pine) and *M. niphophilus* (Dwarf Pine)
- -- *Lagarostrobos franklinii* (Huon Pine) a Tasmanian endemic
- *Agathis robusta*, *A. atropurpurea*, *A. microstachya* - the 3 Kauri Pines from Queensland;
- *Phyllocladus aspleniifolius* (Celery-top Pine) also Tas. endemic
- *Araucariabidwiltii* (Bunya Pine) and *A. cunninghamii* (Hoop Pine) which may have a var. *glauca* from the coast.

Years ago my involvement with Australian plants was spasmodic; bringing up the kids and going back to work brought other foci of interest, and early Australian furniture was one. This opened up an interest in Australian timbers and a desire to grow some for future generations, while I enjoyed the trees agrowing. My husband was a few steps behind me in Australian plant obsession and had for a time a keen interest in conifers - exotic ones, but not *Pinus radiata* ever. Then I found on a 'remaindered' table a book on New Zealand conifers and they certainly have a few to be proud of, many of which have relations in Australia. Hunt as I might I could not find anything similar about our conifers until I chanced upon a reference to *"Ferns, Fern Allies and Conifers of Australia"*, either just published or about to be.

I tried collecting Australian conifers years ago, about the date of the book, while we still lived in Canterbury. Hunting for the plants to grow was almost as bad as finding the information. I finally learnt (from someone in the Herbarium) of Yamina Rare Plants of Monbulk (now operated by a son/s), the only local source I could find. It specialised in rare plants which were of course almost all exotics, but a few of the Australian conifers were included. Then a little later I was shown the advertisement of Woodbank Nursery of Kingston, Tas, which was a treasure trove not only of conifers but also Tasmanian endemics. It is typical that the conifers should be stocked by up-market nurseries of exotics. Other sources were from the former Forestry Commissions of NSW and QLD.

Callitris have always been available and I had an ambition to grow a row of *C. oblonga* from seed brought back from Tasmania, which I imagined would grow as nice tidy pyramids of dark green and make a substitute for the yew that is so successful as a hedge in England. Two plants that I had to buy later to fill in gaps have more or less the desired form; my originals grew wherever it took their fancy. I also managed to raise one plant I have designated *Callitris* Coolstore from the carpark (originally planted by Roger Stone) where I took the seed. This is a nice tidy plant, just beginning to get a little blowsy with middle age perhaps, but a really dark

green cylinder, put in another part of the garden.

I was also going to have a row of *C. glaucophylla* from Pine Gully in the Warbies as a frame to a view from the front of the house. One of five remains, and only one of the losses was due to natural causes. At the bottom of the frame on the other side is a group of the *Callitris* from the Chiltern forest, with a better survival rate. At Pine Mountain near Beechworth the *Callitris* have furrowed orange trunks and lots of lichen/algae/moss growing on them, making it look European and quite unAustralian but still very beautiful when I saw it in a wet season.

I think the W.A. *Callitris* look-alikes (*Actinostrobus*) could be very useful in town gardens if they could be tamed. A daughter has one growing well at Lakes Entrance. I think the lovely emerald green one comes from Esperance. They are generally a little more refined in their foliage.

At this distance in time I can't quite remember what I got from where but I had quite a range, from the Huon Pine, all the *Athrotaxis*, to the small ground huggers. I kept these latter in pots for some time but lost them one by one. All that remains are some Huon Pines which I suspect were a later purchase from Kooringa Nursery near here whose owner John Emsley has a great collection of rainforest plants round his own house and usually a few for sale. The Huons are painfully slow and are grown from side cuttings which have no desire to grow upright on their own. I have also lost King Billy Pines and a Celery-top Pine, probably by now two Celery-tops, I'm not game to check.

A Kauri from one of the Forestry Commissions has finally grown above frost danger and is slowly becoming a tree. Jan Hall has a lovely one at 'Patanga'. Bunya Pines raised from seed from cones dropped in Swanpool, which took over a year to put a shoot above ground despite having sent out a root early on, are also finally moving, maybe 2ft (0.6m) high. I despaired of them many times but frost protecting Burgans (*Kunzea ericoides*) are now effective and I gave them a solid fertilizer pellet last year. I will not try Norfolk Island Pines again, they are too frost susceptible when young at least, but I really did want to have one as a memento from Esperance where they dominate the old streets and foreshore. We were especially intrigued by an oldtimer which grew beside a small holiday house, talk about David and Goliath, the tree had just about all the block.

I have had some success with Hoop Pine here, from collected seed. Of the Podocarps, we actually have a fine row of Chilean Plum Pines from Alan's conifer days, but among them is *Podocarpus elatus* holding its own. (Unfortunately the foreigners are a deeper green, with finer leaf, so usually attract more attention.) They are all big trees now. In contrast *Podocarpus lawrencei* will probably stay shrubby and is much more amenable to a house block. The foliage is an interesting blue-grey and it is fairly easy to strike from cuttings - Wangaratta Group produced 1,000 plus for planting at Mt. Hotham. They grow slowly at first, but once established seem to move faster. All conifers will root given time. I have produced roots on a few others but not grown them on.

So there are at least 40 species of Australian conifers, of varying sizes and not all giants, to try. I don't know how many are available in nurseries nowadays, but those low ones such as Podocarpus lawrencei are very attractive growing in tubs or in the ground. Please tell us if you are using any conifers in your garden. Our Callitris drummondii from W.A. is growing slowly but steadily. The compact and elegant form and deep green foliage provide a lovely contrast to nearby shrubs with less defined form and green or grey-green foliage. DS

GARDENS

Open Gardens

Diana Snape Vic

During January I visited the McKillop garden in Shoreham, open as part of the Open Garden Scheme and described as one featuring Australian plants. It's a large garden on a block which slopes irregularly down to a creek along one side, with a shallower intermediate gully (crossed by a bridge) which apparently becomes a wet area in autumn. Entering the garden, I was impressed by its spaciousness and the pleasing continuity provided by its contoured mown lawns (!), with nicely spaced and shaped beds of shrubs. The owners said that they have replaced a number of Australian trees (mainly eucalypts) by exotic trees because they were worried by falling branches. Many shrubs were Australian, with beautiful callistemon foliage and grevilleas in flower. There were mainly large shrubs, with few smaller ones, groundcovers or tufted plants. Outside the garden, along the nature strip, hardy shrubs had been used to provide shelter.

The owners have built a series of boardwalks along beside the creek, which for me was rather spoil

by blackberries and other weeds, although I liked the boardwalks. It would be interesting to visit this garden when it is open again on May 2-3, 1998, to see the effect of autumn rain creating a wet area or long lake.

The gardens of four Melbourne GDSG members will be open in the coming season and we'll advertise details in advance. Please let me know about other Australian plant gardens in the Scheme.

Shirley Cam's garden will be open in the coming season and it was written up by **Holly Kerr Forsyth** in the *'Weekend Australian'* Dec 20-21, 1997 ('Real Life' Review page 13).

It's pleasing to read a sympathetic account of an Australian plant garden in a newspaper. Shirley's 1ha garden close to the Dandenongs slopes steeply and has been terraced for ease of access, with built-up beds to provide perfect drainage. She says "the trick with growing Australian plants is to have a good pair of secateurs and be brutal in cutting back from the beginning. Colour and form in your planting are most important. ..." Particular examples of colour and plant combinations are given, e.g. white, blue and yellow flowers together. One of many appealing plant combinations was of Native Wisteria (*Hardenbergia comptoniana*), deep blue-purple with a white eye, growing through an apricot grevillea next to a scrambling white *Hardenbergia*. Shirley recommends knowing the natural habitat of species you want to grow.

Plan for a small courtyard (see page 13)

Jeff Howes NSW

Aspect: This is a north facing courtyard and receives full afternoon sun. The mature trees on the east to north side give shade up to about noon in both summer and winter. There is the added problem in winter of the garden on the south side of the north wall receiving next to no sun, hence the use of chorizemas as they flower well in bright shade.

Soil: Poor loam to a depth of 150 to 250 mm over a solid clay base.

Some landscaping thought: From a landscaping perspective, I needed to strike a balance between selecting plants for their form and texture and what will actually grow there, considering the relatively poor soil and the less than ideal afternoon sun.

There was a further problem of the courtyard being too hot in summer (but great in winter). That is why I used fairly tall plants in the NW corner hoping to give shade when they mature.

The large rock (5 tonne) was another fixed problem. I had it put there many years ago before the courtyard wall was built. As it is about 1.2m tall and 3m long it is a little too large for the scale of the courtyard. The *Grevillea oleoides x shiressii* is an excellent plant; it grows to 2m and flowers all year, even in shade.

End result: I have used *Brachy(s)comemultifida* as a linking plant together with repeating some native poas throughout the area. In the SE corner the flowers are all yellow, which brightens up that corner in spring. Use has also been made of decorative logs and wood (not shown on the plan). Ideally the courtyard would look better without the large shrubs/small trees in the NW corner - but that could not be.

Considering my limitations the end result is not too bad. It will be interesting to see what the Sydney members think of it when they visit my garden and give their opinions of it on March 15, at 2.00pm.

A "neat" formal courtyard garden (see page 18)

Margaret Lee S.A.

SGAP S.A. Region has, for many years, arranged a floor display at the Royal Agricultural & Horticultural Society Spring Show at Wayville. This has usually taken the form of a small "wild garden" with pots and cuts?, logs, stone and possibly a pond arranged to look as natural as possible. However in 1997 we decided to do something different. We were allotted a space 3m x 6m, open on two sides, with six foot (2m) partitions on the other two sides.

Many of the other exhibits are arranged by nurseries and florists, complete with neat brick edges. We decided to make a "neat" formal courtyard garden, using a restricted number of plants and considerable repetition. Mabs Madden kindly started six months ahead and propagated a number of pink daisies, *Rhodanthe helipterum*, and we obtained from Brenton Tucker's Nursery enough *Orthrosanthus* to edge a diagonal grass path which led to a pedestal bird bath.

Tall *Callitris* and *Grevillea* (not as tall as we would have liked, unfortunately) were used as a backdrop. *Xanthorrhoea* made a graceful centrepiece in a slight mound on one side and other smaller potted plants were tucked in the space between the diagonal rows of daisies and the backdrop and edges, which were of bricks to match the other exhibits. Bark chips were used as mulch to hide the pots as far as possible. The Society information board and a card table for fliers was situated on the shorter open side.

This design, although less interesting to many of us, had more impact than the more subtle and complicated gardens we usually construct, and for a Show where there are thousands of exhibits competing to attract attention, it may be more appropriate. Whether it was coincidence, a better position, or the design, we received much more attention from the public than usual and were kept very busy answering queries. I hope this year some of the Garden Design Study Group members may like to try their hands at preparing a design for us. (On page 18 are a sketch plan and a picture of the Royal Show display.)

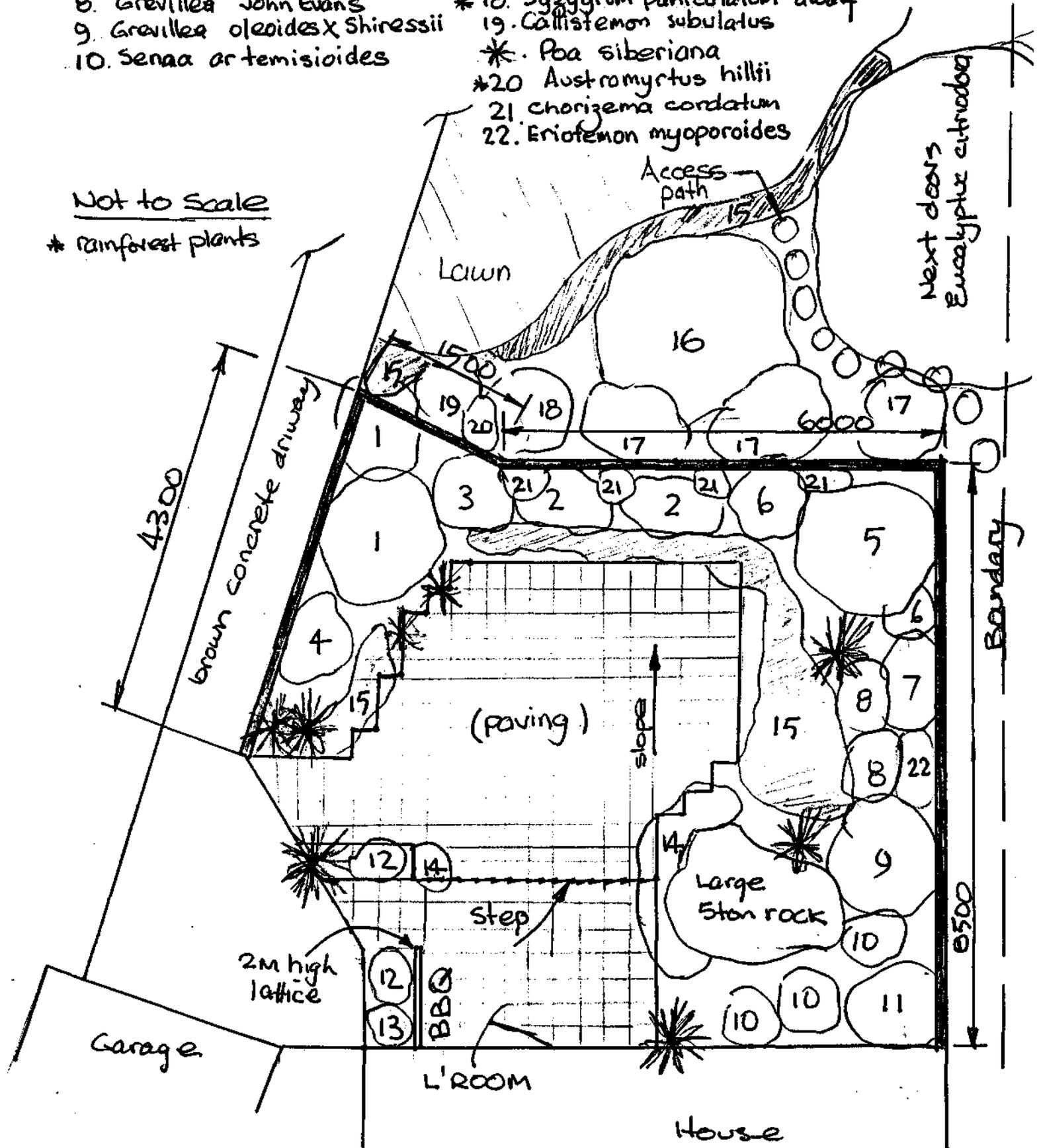
Plants used.

- * 1. *Buchinghamia celsissima*
- 2. *Prostanthera phyllicifolia*
- * 3. *Archirhodomyrtus becklerii*
- 4. *Pimelea ferruginea*
- 5. *Ceratopetalum gummiferum*
- 6. *Banksia spinulosa*
- 7. *Grevillea 'superb'*
- 8. *Grevillea John Evans*
- 9. *Grevillea oleoides* x *Shiressii*
- 10. *Senecio artemisioides*
- 11. *Hibbertia cuneiformis*
- 12. *Micromyrtus ciliata*
- 13. *Isopogon anethifolius*
- 14. *Dendrobium Speciosum* and *D. delicatum.*
- 15. *Brachycome multifida*
- * 16. *Dysoxylum fraserianum*
- * 17. *Acmenia smithii* var *minor*
- * 18. *Syzygium paniculatum* dwarf
- 19. *Callistemon subulatus*
- * 20. *Poa siberiana*
- * 21. *Austromyrtus hillii*
- 22. *Eriofemon myoporoides*



Not to Scale

* rainforest plants



BOOKS

**'Gardens of a Golden Afternoon' by Jane Brown (1985, Hammondswoth Penguin)
Barbara Buchanan Vic**

This is a book about the Jekyll/Lutyens partnership and the Golden Afternoon is that of the British Empire from about 1890 to 1900 but up to the Great War when money was still available to spend as much on structures in the garden as on the house itself, and of course plenty of staff for the actual work. The book gives background lives of the partners and current garden styles then describes individual gardens, the existing conditions, the problems and how they were solved.

The architecture of the house was the starting point and guiding principle, the garden was adapted to complement it. Lutyens organized the space with genius, Jekyll filled in the plants. I discovered a kinship with Lutyens when I read he was not greatly impressed with the Classical Continental water gardens, such as the Villa d'Este, which are really engineering feats using water with aplomb, often including trick features. I've never been closer than photographs and while I think water in the garden can be wonderful I feel the 'garden' is lost when the fountains dominate. The amazing thing is that in the work of the partnership on gardens which depend so much on hard landscaping, the plants were still essential components of the whole; the brick and stone structures are very fine but quite inadequate without the plants.

The book gave me a new respect for Jekyll. Her gardens were part of the movement back to style and taste from the ostentation that was common, which sounds paradoxical given my comments above on the central role of hard landscape features, but I believe is true. She kept her plant palette simple, based on what was indigenous and adapted to prevailing conditions and was at her most comfortable dealing with her immediate district. Apart from the famous borders which have no counterpart in Australian plant gardens she was interested in the transition from formal areas around the house to woodland. In the gardens she later did on her own while Lutyens was busy planning New Delhi the plants had to stand more on their own and though these are not much discussed in the book I feel they were probably much closer to our gardens.

I was left wondering what Lutyens would have recommended for this place, not in physical structures but in arrangement of space. I am confident the layout would have been enormously improved. I doubt I have what it takes to start again, but I rather wish I had called in one of the current masters of handling space before we began. Of course advice from Jekyll could only be in very general terms, first and foremost may have been plant the natives as foundation, then embellish. Advice we get from many sources, there must be something in it.

Further comments on **"The Education of a Gardener" by Russell Page (1962, Harvill)**

Inspired by Jo Hambrett's review (NL 17-14), I'm glad to say I have at last read *"The Education of a Gardener"* by Russell Page and I agree with Jo's enthusiastic comments. Page in this century designed mainly large, formal gardens in marked contrast to those of Capability Brown, of whose gardens he speaks quite disparagingly. However he does make the comment "I never saw a garden from which I did not learn something ...".

Page says "Garden designers, like all artists, need nourishment; they need to exchange ideas, to study plans and photographs of new work and to visit gardens; in short, to acquire an education and a wide documentation. All these, all of the garden designer's vocabulary and art, can (then) be either valuable or useless...". This description ties in closely with what our Study Group tries to do.

The special difficulty of combining good design with plant cultivation is detailed. "The gardener or designer who can combine the two is a rare bird." Although the book describes and refers to design with non-Australian plants, which becomes a little frustrating, it illustrates how difficult it is to become such "rare birds", gaining sufficient knowledge of the cultivation of our plants to be able to use them more successfully in design, with subtlety and flair.

It is a wonderful book - ideas about a huge variety of gardens, the use of water, trees, paths, steps, resisting or not resisting temptation, and a brief description of Le Corbusier's surprising roof garden (what sort of garden would you expect?). DS

"The Dry Garden" by Beth Cato (1978, Weidenfeld & Nicolson) Diana Snape Vic

One doesn't expect a 'dry' garden in England but such things are relative. In East Anglia, Beth Cato's sand mixed with red gravel receives an annual rainfall of 370 mm. It was interesting as I read the first

section of this book to notice how frequently I found myself nodding my head in agreement. However this useful descriptive section constitutes only just over half the book (90 pages out of 176) and virtually no Australian plants (just two or three) are included in the following 86 pages of plant lists.

Cato comments on "how right plants look when they grow together, in association, in the conditions to which they have become adapted" (in natural areas). In her garden she finds it "best to plant plenty of something that looks good most of the year rather than struggle to keep alive plants which at best only accentuate the fact that what you have to offer them is not what they need." Nevertheless she designs with an enormous variety of plants which she details. She extols the benefits of mulch and discusses the use of gravel or paving in place of lawn. The balance of tidiness and creativeness in a garden should make working a pleasure, not a repetitive chore.

Beth Cato's precis of ideas which have helped her in general garden design differ little from what we might suggest here.

- Make an 'outline' plan (it doesn't have to be on paper).
- Use only plants that are suited to the conditions you have to offer.
- Use plants that rely on foliage and form rather than a mass of flower (saves expense and labour).
- Try to have one or two spectacular plants to create drama.
- Do not cram all your spectacular plants into the front garden. Star performers need quiet companions to show them off.
- Try to remember that the best overall effect is one of simplicity, even though it may be made up of dozens of interesting plants.
- Where space will allow, plants look better planted in groups of odd numbers rather than dotted about singly like hat pins.

Cottage Garden Style by John Simpson from *Fine Gardening* Nov/Dec 1996

Barbara Buchanan Vic

There are five essential elements which make a cottage garden:

1. Walls, fences or hedges surrounding a yard.
2. Welcoming gate at the roadside - arched etc.
3. Path straight to the front door and at least one other bisecting path.
4. Planting beds defined by paths i.e. not set in lawns.
5. A rich mix of plantings.

Vernacular and eclectic by definition, a cottage garden requires only local materials, native plants and the personality and invention of the gardener. Cottage gardens evolved slowly from subsistence gardening which gave them their essential characteristics - practicality, lack of pretension, intimacy of scale and the half wild quality of 'organized disarray'.

Cottagers could not afford to buy plants or follow garden fashions; they swapped cuttings and collected local indigenous plants. Cuttings would be obtained from the Big House and so plant introductions slowly spread into cottage gardens. There are three photographs accompanying the article of cottage gardens in three different regions of the USA which show the use of local plants and materials giving local character to each, so that they may not appear to have much in common.

It seems to me that some of our Australian plant gardens would fit quite a few of the criteria - maybe not the straight paths. Those of our pioneers would fit with that, but lack local plants largely because of the nostalgia of their makers. Many came out under compulsion or for a tour of duty and England was still 'home' to the older generation when I was a girl. Added to this the strangeness of our flora and the difficulty of cultivating much of it and it is easy to see why cottage gardens here remained copies of those in England. Let's start a crusade to turn cottage gardens into havens of Australian plants!!

DESIGN IDEAS

I have recently been reading several books from the U.K., and these emphasized to me one general difference between most 'English'gardens (there or here) and almost all our Australian gardens. This is the use of bedding plants - annuals which have to be replaced very regularly, involving what seems a large amount of work. So it was interesting to read in Native Plants for NSW, January 1988, an article by Peter Cuneo. Peter is the Horticultural Development Officer at Mt Annan Botanic Garden and also a GDSG member. His article, reproduced here, details the achievement of colourful displays of annuals at Mt Annan. This gives us a guide as to what could be applied on a smaller scale in suburban gardens. It is good to have an idea of how to go about it if we want to achieve such effects. (A certain amount of work is required I)

With the warmer weather now well underway, the paper daisy colours are fading on what was a spectacular display throughout September and October, in front of our Terrace Garden. Our ever reliable and star performers throughout this spring were a number of vividly coloured annual species from Western Australia, particularly (note new botanical names):

- *Rhodanthe chlorocephala* ssp *rosea* "Rosy Everlasting" (formerly *Helipterum roseum*), with its vivid pink flowers with a yellow centre.
- *Rhodanthe manglesii* "Silver Bells" (formerly *Helipterum manglesh*), beautiful deep pink nodding bell-like paper daisies that have a silky appearance.
- *Schoenia filifolia* ssp *subulifolia* "Showy Everlasting" (formerly *Helichrysum subulifolium*), vivid yellow paper daisies with dark linear leaves.
- *Brachyscome iberidifolia* "Swan River Daisy", superb foreground plant for massed displays. Colours range through mauve, pink, blue and white.

The secret to growing these large scale displays is direct seeding in autumn. The seed germinates well as the soil temperature decreases, with plants growing slowly and hardening off before the winter frosts. Despite their soft appearance, the plants are surprisingly frost resistant (down to around 0 degrees) and develop a strong root system over winter. Our main problem at Mt Annan is preventing the local ducks, rabbits and swamp hens from having a "snack attack" on the display during winter. The lure of this "gourmet salad bar" amongst the brown winter lawn is irresistible and means we have to laboriously net every display bed. A three strand electric fence was also used this season!

As the season warms up we liquid feed with Aquasol (they love fertiliser) to create a great display of pinks, yellows, mauves and whites. The direct seeding means there are always a few surprises and nice informal drifts of colour. Direct seeding can also be done in tubs. The main thing is to start in autumn, when temperatures are right.

We are beginning to have some good success with summer annuals, especially some of the collections from the 1995 Pilbara field trip where a number of attractive *Ptilotus* and *Gomphrena* species were collected. Unfortunately these long flowering and spectacular plants do not germinate freely and have to be grown as tubestock for planting out once the paper daisies are finished.

Look out for this year's summer-autumn display of mauve *Trachymene caerulea* "Rottneest Island Daisy", *Ptilotus exaltatus* "Pink Mulla-Mulla", deep mauve gomphrenas and starry white *Isotoma anethifolia*.

Shaded pathways

Geoff Simmons Qld

While the debate continues on whether the climate is getting warmer, the present situation in sub-tropical and tropical areas is that the sun's heat is already strong enough to warrant providing protection from the sun along paths or other exposed areas. In colder climates, trellises with laburnum or wisteria are favourites and at the appropriate time of year make a spectacular sight. Australian plants such as pandoreas or kennedias may be used to the same purpose but it is worthwhile considering the alternative to structure as a solution, namely the use of tree foliage overlapping the path to provide the equivalent shade. This system is especially suitable to the warmer regions where growth of trees is often faster and a wide range of rainforest species are becoming available. Many of these may not reach the huge sizes often seen in rain forests.

What is required of a species to be used for this purpose?

1. A solid growth on top - i.e. a dense canopy.
2. Reasonably rapid growth.
3. Survivability - not subject to borers or other devastating insects, or climatic troubles such as drought.
4. Some decorative features, whether flowers or foliage or perhaps bark, as exposure of the trunk and lower limbs will be necessary to produce a clean looking tunnel topped by a leafy canopy.
5. As pruning will be part of the process in producing the cover, the chosen species should be amenable to this activity.
6. A tree that is deciduous to a minor extent may be favoured in cooler regions but this factor should not be used to prevent the selection of a plant that is going to give good shade in summer.

These parameters will narrow considerably the choices of suitable species.

In planning such a feature, a number of factors deserve consideration. Amongst these are whether to use a single species on one side of the path; should both sides be planted to allow the canopies to overlap; is it desirable to mix the tree species and the height of the clear space below the foliage. The position, length, width and surrounding plants will influence the selection process for suitable trees.

The choice is not limited to trees as, with modern grafting techniques, standard forms of bush and groundcover plants may be suitable, although the spread of this type of plant may limit the width of the covered area. A guide to plant selection, particularly in ruling out unsuitable species, could be gained by having a look at the article by Diana Snape on small trees in NL8 -9 (Feb. 1994).

As this garden feature is one that requires a long term view, new gardens may present the best opportunity to create a shaded path. If the air temperatures rise as predicted by some climatologists, this may be the time to look at planting trees to form shady areas as a means of counteracting future higher temperatures.

Coppicing

Diana Snape Vic

The Macquarie Dictionary tells us that a coppice (or copse) is a wood, thicket, or plantation of small trees or bushes. The verb to coppice is to cut, as of *Eucalyptus* trees, to encourage numerous slender trunks to regenerate from the root-stock.

There should be much potential in applying the technique of coppicing to achieve attractive effects in garden design. This might mean coppicing just a single tree, or a group of them to obtain a small 'plantation'. We have tried using it with four species of eucalypts - two single trees, two in groups, with varying degrees of success.

The first was *Eucalyptus calycogona* (Gooseberry Mallee). This was one of a group of several different mallees we thought would grow well as small trees in the garden, providing a fine light screen and canopy. In fact they liked garden conditions too well and grew rather tall and rangy. When we tried coppicing a pair of *E. calycogona*, they were not really happy about it and the few trunks which grew tended to be rather floppy. Another of the group of mallees is *E. behriana* (Bull Mallee), the mallee which occurs naturally closest to Melbourne. It has five or six trunks growing from a large lignotuber and so it needed no coppicing, though it's said to respond well (*Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants*).

Coppicing one *E. gunnii* (Cider Gum) annually worked well for several years but the beautiful glaucous new growth proved too tempting for numerous caterpillars/insects. Cutting back had to be done each year if we wanted the silvery juvenile foliage. We don't use sprays; sometimes we were away or not on guard; sometimes the birds let us down. The combination of producing new growth each year and fighting insect attack weakened the tree, so *E. gunnii* and we eventually gave up the struggle. It did look lovely at its best but not when it was suffering. If we'd had a larger number of these trees, not just one, it may have been less of a problem (or possibly not) but I think the process itself seemed rather too unnatural.

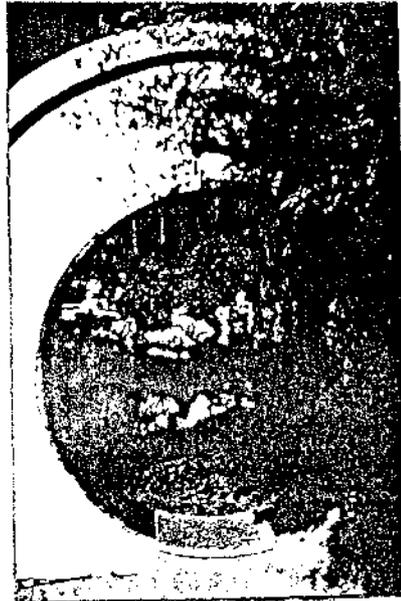
We planted a group of three *E. leucoxylon* (Yellow Gum) in the front garden, then later decided there was one more than we really wanted and cut one back to ground level. After a little while it sprouted and we cut it back again. After this happened a few times we decided we should let be a tree so determined to grow. It's now a beautiful little tree with three or four slender trunks - an asset in a small garden - looking very natural with the other two more advanced trees. It's interesting to note that *E. leucoxylon* is the only one of these four eucalypts which is indigenous to Melbourne (as it is to many areas). Gloria Thomlinson in Shepperton has coppiced two *E. leucoxylon* trees with excellent results. Each time the 2, 3 or 4 main trunks are cut back. (Judy Barker's article on page 6 includes comments on Gloria's landscaping aims.)

Just recently it was necessary for us to cut back a single tree of *E. macrandra* (Long-flowered Marlock) when the forked trunk was badly split during a storm. We decided to take it back to its large lignotuber. It's now starting to sprout generously, so we're waiting with keen anticipation to see how it goes. (We've put wire over it temporarily to discourage possums, which seem to think any delicate new shoots are put in the garden especially for them.)

Have you tried (or seen interesting examples of) coppicing of eucalypts (or other genera)? Please tell us about it. As it imitates one natural and characteristic response of mallees to fire, it's a very Australian trait.

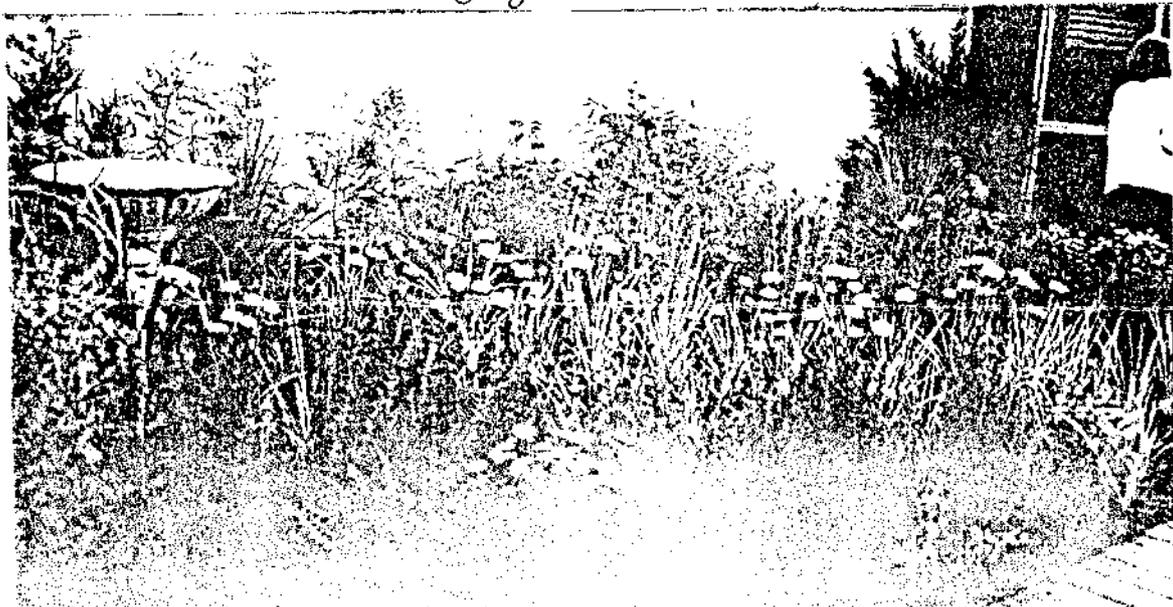
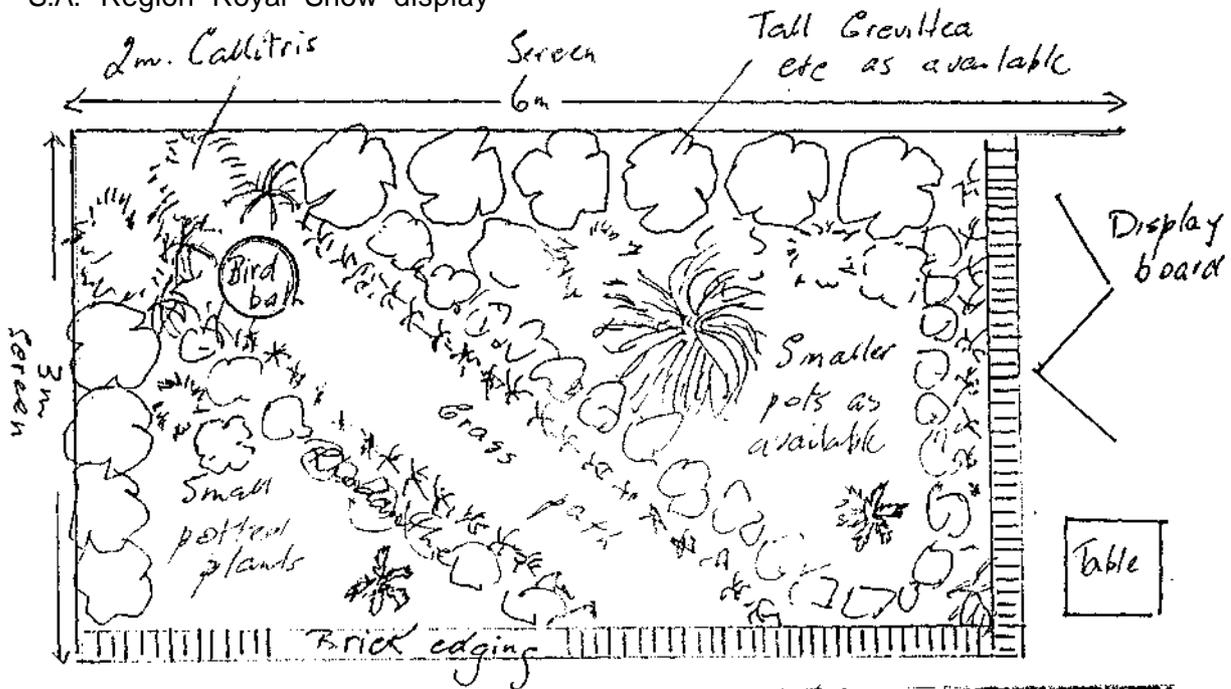
Moon Gates

Barbara Buchanan used this term which I had not heard before, but I liked the sound of it. Barbara said Moon Gates were often used in Chinese gardens to provide a glimpse of what lay beyond a wall, as a frame for a view - they are essentially circular openings in the wall or a hedge. This photograph is of an example in the 'Chinese Garden' in Sydney,



In that garden the circular shape seemed to me extremely formal, but somehow also satisfying as it contrasted so strongly with the foliage and forms of plants.

SGAP S.A. Region Royal Show display



MEETINGS & NEWS

South Australia Branch meeting

Next meeting - Saturday February 14, 1998: 2 pm at the home and garden of Philip Tow and afterwards at the home of Anne and Colin Dealtry (Dealtry Native Garden and Plant Nursery Lot 2 Trevilla Rd, One Tree Hill).
 Please phone Margie Barnett to confirm attendance (or inability) and for directions.
 (My apologies to Philip for spelling his name incorrectly in the notice in NL19 for the coming meeting. DS)

Sydney Branch meeting

Next meeting - Sunday March 15: 2pm at Jeff Howes',
 Please phone Jeff or Jo Hambrett to indicate whether you can come.

Melbourne meetings

Next meeting - Sunday March 1st 1998: 2 pm at Maureen & Geoff Short's,
 Please phone Maureen & Geoff or Diana Snape to let us know whether you can come or not. Please bring this Newsletter too, to help in discussion of any items which have raised interest (you can have fun with highlighters or those little yellow stickers).
 Report of meeting on February 1st

Designing a garden on a steep block

Monika Herrmann Vic

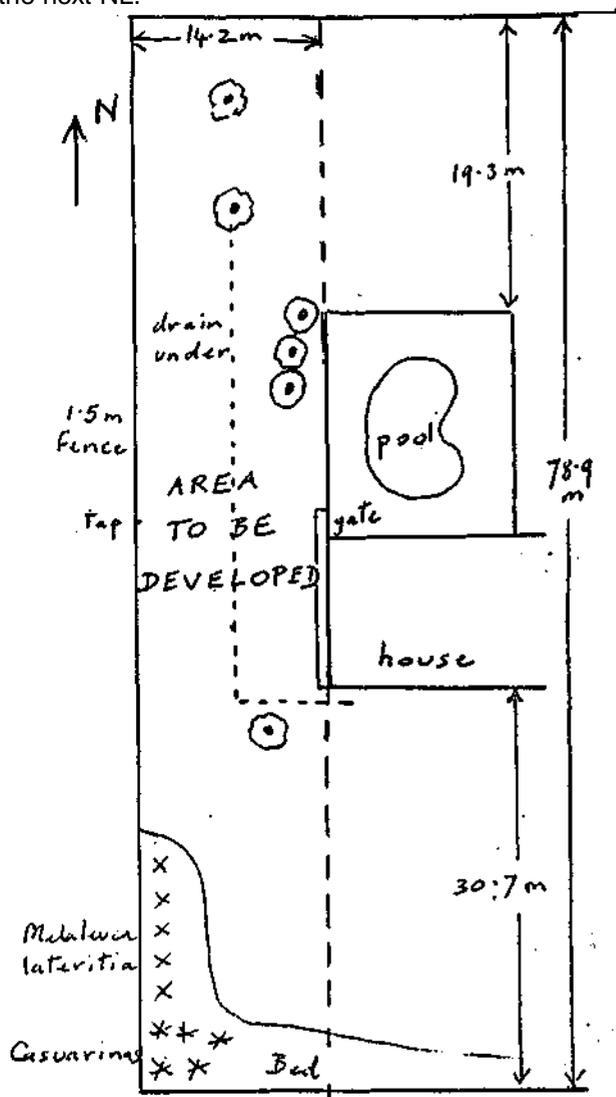
- House on steep western slope on the boundary of the Dandenong Ranges National Park.
- Large eucalypts around house (*E goniocalyx* (Long-leaved Box or Bundy Box) & *E macrorhyncha* (Red Stringybark)) restrict light in winter and take up moisture and nutrients from surrounds, restricting plant growth.
- Soil is clay-loam with very little topsoil.
- Full western sun in summer but very little sun in winter (however no frost).

To improve the soil Monika has mulched and aerated it by forcing holes around plants & adding Wettasoil or similar (to attract water molecules to soil particles).
 Suggestions of suitable plants & other ideas will be in the next NL.

**North East Victoria Branch
 Another garden design project**

Jill and Tony Judd's block is dead flat and was underwater for some time in the wet winter of 1996. Previous owners had used bore water with quite a high salt level. Jill has made well mulched (lucerne), wide beds along the front and one side in which some plants were surviving. The articular problem is the west side of the house which has only the shelter of a 1.5 m high fence to protect from the wind and afternoon sun. There are a few established callistemons and other shrubs in poorish condition. Jill has only recently realised that one can have a garden of 'pretties' using Australian plants, and this is her aim apart from shelter. We all advised reshaping the ground to give raised beds and temporarily wet areas - there may be some problem as Tony has spent a lot of time and effort in establishing underground drains.

Wind protection is essential as willy-willys come in from the paddock. Extra creek soil is available and a truck load of cow manure is coming. Jill is not afraid to prune and has just trimmed back her *Melaleuca lateritia* hedge, which is only very young. She's doing the shaping I can never quite bear to, so should be interesting to see how it develops. The accompanying ground plans show the area to be developed.



Next meeting on Sunday February 22nd at 10.30 am for an 11 am start. This will be at Gloria Thomlinson's.

Gloria is thinking of reworking her road frontage, which has been used to trial daisies for the Daisy Study Group, to make it less labour intensive. Also there has been some remaking of the bridge and approach road nearby, maybe we could also do a theoretical exercise on suitable treatment of this area.

Wyndham St is the main road from Melbourne and 662 is on the Melbourne end.

Report of November 16th meeting

Those who attended the Garden Design Seminar added their impressions to the report in the main NL. All were agreed it had been inspirational. Paul Kennedy also described gardens he had seen during the ASGAP Conference in Adelaide.

Geoff Simmons' 'Walkabout Garden' is a lovely term which we will adopt.

We went through Jeff Howe's list of maintenance activities thoroughly, agreeing that this aspect of designing is often neglected. Much of the discussion centred on the pros and cons of various types of mulch, which not only conserves moisture but is a critical part of the appearance of a garden.

Re any problem of professional/amateur balance. We feel very grateful to our professional members for the experience they can add; such personal contact is a way of passing on ideas and knowledge which is often not yet recorded in the literature.

Plans for the redevelopment of the Brett garden were produced. There was quite an overlap in ideas which Elizabeth will study and adapt. **Barbara Buchanan**

MEMBERSHIP & TREASURER'S REPORT

Peter Garnham

FINANCIAL STATEMENT - Quarter ending 31/12/97

<u>Receipts</u>		<u>Expenses</u>	
Subscriptions	240-00	Photocopying	257-40
Donations	40-00	Postage	<u>94-25</u>
Newsletter sales	2-00		
Bank interest	<u>1-14</u>		
	\$283-14		\$351-65
<u>Current funds (31/1/98) :</u>			
Balance in bank	\$2458-88		
Cheques in hand	<u>70-00</u>		
	\$2528-88		

MEMBERSHIP

1997/98 Subscriptions - 200 paid as at 31/1/98 (approximately 250 members)

A list of current financial members of the GDSG in your State is included with this Newsletter. I hope you can make contact with other members in your area.

Please let us know if any change is required to our records.

New members

A warm welcome to the following new members of the Study Group. We hope you enjoy your membership.

Bev Kapernick

Melva Truchanas

Membership renewals *We value the continuing membership of all our members who renew.*

Our apologies to anyone whose renewal wasn't acknowledged promptly.

Christine Beasley, Ted Belcher, Dave Bright, Leanne Harper, Nick Hockey, James Leonard (currently living in England), Philip Tow, Gil Teague, Frederick Young.

Thank you very much to all the contributors to this Newsletter - I've found it a really stimulating one to start the year. A reminder that articles on disk are particularly welcome. I have a humble Mac, but if you have an IBM compatible I believe text only (Microsoft) or DOSS format (WordPerfect) (ASC11) format makes it convenient for me to use PC exchange. I will of course return floppy disks. Contributions not on disk are also welcome, especially if they are easy to read!

For the next NL one suggestion is to concentrate on how to reduce fire risk around the house. This could tie in with a look at different hard surface coverings - paving, gravels, etc. The NE Vic Branch's topic of 'pros and cons of various types of mulch' would also be a good one to focus on sometime.

Maxine Armitage has once again generously prepared an Index for last year's Newsletters. If you're on e-mail & would like a copy of the 1997 Index, you can obtain a copy directly from Maxine or else by mail from me by sending a large ssa envelope. Thanks, Maxine!

Hoping your autumn rains do come this year in time for planting - best wishes

Giana