

## ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS

**GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP**

NEWSLETTER No. 30

June (August) 2000

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

Dear Members,

**Please note the details on page 6 of our photo competition. We hope that many members will participate in this initiative.**

I'm about to do something I've never done before - ask every member (yes, you too) to do something for the Study Group NL &/or book, to help us fill occasional gaps in our material. I'd like you to send me your suggestion of a favourite combination (or two) of 2 or 3 (even 4) plants - for form &/or foliage rather than flower colour. You can send just their names, or say why you like them too. Suggestions from distant places will be equally welcome to those from closer at hand. I would also like to hear what is (are) your favourite groundcover(s) - again just the names, or a few keen words too. I'll really appreciate an enthusiastic response. A selection of these suggestions will eventually appear in the book &/or the NL.

**If you didn't renew your membership (early) after the last Newsletter, you still have one more chance to be on time - and this is it!**

---

### NEXT MEETINGS

*Please see details of these meetings in text (page 21)*

**NE VIC: Sunday June 18 at Barbara Buchanan's**

**MELBOURNE: Sunday July 2 at Linda Floyd's**

**SYDNEY: please contact Jo Hambrett**

---

### INDEX

2	CORRESPONDENCE extracts
3	Some special interests
3	USE OF MULCH
3, 4	Mulch in Sydney gardens - Jeff Howes, Jo Hambrett
4	Organic mulch on the Alstonville Plateau - Peter Swain
4	Mulch in an arid area garden - Lynne Boladeras
5	Thoughts on mulch - Nicky Rose
5	Organic mulch - Melbourne meeting
6	<b>G. D. S. G. GARDEN PHOTO COMPETITION</b>

## 2

6	DESIGN
6	Australian garden design - Peter Swain
7	Design criteria for judging gardens for competitions - Jeff Howes, Peter Swain
8	GARDENS
8	RBG Cranbourne display, Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show - Diana Snape
9	Plan of RBG Cranbourne display
10	Plan of Merele Webb's design
11	Roundabout planting design - Merele Webb
11	Gardens in South America - Jennifer Borrell
12	Two historic gardens in Melbourne - Diana Snape
13 & 14	Plans of two historic gardens
15	BOOKS, MAGAZINES & the INTERNET
15	The new native garden: designing with Australian plants' - Jennifer Borrell
15	'Australian Horticulture' April/May 2000 - 5 articles, including grassland gardens
16	On the Internet - Colleen Keena
16	DESIGN IDEAS
16	Garden art - Jo Hambrett
17	Ornaments in the garden - Diana Snape
18	Decorating the Australian garden - Peter Swain
18	Extending the view - Jo Hambrett
18	PLANTS in DESIGN
18	Pittosporum - my 'bush Nanny' - Jo Hambrett
19	Trees for shade & feature plants - Melbourne meeting
19	Plant ideas - Nicky Rose
20	Leafy sticks (after Geoff Simmons NL 29) - Jo Hambrett
20	SNIPPETS
20	<u>No.</u> new name for Sturfs Desert Pea?
20	A new role for a Bunya Pine?
21	MEETINGS
22	TREASURER'S REPORT
22	MEMBERSHIP

---

### **CORRESPONDENCE extracts**

*"Erica Nathan's article in NL29 was very interesting (although I had to consult my trusty dictionary a few times) and was one that shows she has a way with words. However, I tend to agree with Diana in that our target audience are not readers of this newsletter and may not be growers of native plants at all.*

*Whatever style of words are used to describe why we grow native plants is not that important - the proof is getting people to use native plants successfully, i.e. they must be able to grow and thrive in their particular "bit of soil" (or should that be micro climate?). To get the plants to the stage of "weather defying resilience" requires very clever and sensible selection of plants together with a good knowledge of soil conditions.*

*As well, we need some sort of classification system of garden styles as it will force the reader to*

### 3

define their purpose and garden style - just because they are native plants does not mean they all look good together, as we all know." **Jeff Howes** NSW

*I'm trying to redesign my back garden after an earth-flattening renovation. My idea is for a native 'woodland glade' look, with existing trees (Lillipillies, ~~Melaleuca linariifolia~~ & ~~M. bracteata~~. ~~Tristania laurina~~. Blueberry Ash and Native Frangipani) framing a space of dappled sunlight with baeckea, dianella, ~~Grevillea~~ 'Ivanhoe', ~~Banksia collina~~. etc. (if they grow!). I want some different levels in the garden and more groupings of smaller plants (like drifts if possible) and sandstone rock as a curving, informal - looking pathway to add interest and focus. By being involved in the Study Group I hope to get some ideas to pursue my little botanical dream." **Ann Fenton** NSW*

*"The Melbourne meeting today was really great. Enjoyed the chance of visiting Karwarra again and the exercise of problem solving. With respect to putting a grate across the path, they would have to ensure that a wheel chair could easily go over it, and that the direction of the holes was across the path rather than lengthwise." **Nicky Rose** Vic*

#### **Some special interests**

**Robert Willson** Qld - mixed Australian and exotic suburban gardens. As trees and shrubs are essential to such gardens, fully understanding the roots/drains/foundations problem is necessary.

*We need more ideas from members about mixing Australian and exotic plants in gardens - an important topic - so please let us know your thoughts and/or examples. DS*

**Alexander Mackenzie** NSW - incorporation of indigenous species into landscapes; flowering grasslands (native) and their broadscale adoption as alternative to low mow (high maintenance) turf in low use areas!

*Again, really important areas. There's a helpful (though brief) report on maintenance of grassland gardens on page 15 - I'd be interested in your comments on this report, Alex, and any further ideas. DS*

**Jan Hall** Vic - many special interests, including coping with climatic limitations; what is a wild garden?; use of indigenous plants; so called 'low maintenance' or 'low water use' gardens that are interesting.

*There could be links between these, Jan. If such challenges can be met successfully, constraints will actually give gardens their particular character and appeal (the opposite of 'instant gardens'). DS*

---

#### **USE OF MULCH**

*There were a number of responses to Geoff Simmons' comment on mulches in NL29.*

##### **Mulch (in a Sydney garden)**

**Jeff Howes** NSW

Geoff, as always, raises some interesting points and made me think why I mulch my garden. My reasons and, I suspect, those of many others are:

To reduce weed growth when compared to bare soil.

To stop soil splashing on to walls when it rains.

It looks "good" for my style of garden as I think it does typify "Australian gardens", especially in suburbia.

I have an abundance of leaves from neighbours' trees.

While I acknowledge all Geoff's negative aspects of mulch the only one I have trouble with, if the mulch gets too thick, is that it can thatch and repel water.

The main point Geoff is making, is that we should not always use and recommend mulch if it does not

complement that garden style - a good point.

---

### **Mulching (another Sydney garden)**

**Jo Hambrett NSW**

Mulching is, I think, 'horses for courses'. I find my rainforests thrive on eucalypt leaf mulch, plus their own leaves, cut grass, and bark and small sticks raked off the surrounding grass or bush path areas - before we did this they were far less happy. I think the fact that where they are is upl Queensland and faces west - hot afternoon sun and wind - means that they need the extra help, whereas if they were in Queensland in their natural habitat they may not. The other rainforest bed which is protected by the shed/stable building and under a light eucalypt canopy does not get mulched nearly as thoroughly. Indigenous rainforest plants do not get mulched at all (they are all under a thick eucalypt canopy) but they do get a drink when it's dry (once a week or fortnight).

The dry sclerophylls (grevillea, leptospermum, some callistemons, lomandra, persoonias, kunzeas) are in a bed in almost full sun (4-5 hours a day) and they are mulched with leaf litter. Mulch, to my mind, defines a bed, protects the plants and looks like a garden is happening - it also allows easy seeding of plants in or near the bed - I have had Red Cedars, Blueberry Ash, cordylines, eucalypts, native grasses (they love the pebble drains), Bleeding Hearts, *Hibiscus splendens* & *H. heterophylla*, Birds Nest Ferns, Native Frangipanis, lomandra, libertia and *Casuarina torulosa* all spring up in the defined garden beds, most of which are mulched to some extent.

Straw I don't like. It doesn't look 'right' with Australian plants in any sort of setting - more a vegie patch mulch I think - but sand, pebbles, leaf, bark and twigs all look good and work in a garden situation which is, to an extent, about care and control!

---

### **Organic mulch on the Alstonville Plateau**

**Peter Swain NSW**

In reply to Geoff Simmons, Qld, questioning the value of organic mulch - full marks for the question, Geoff, but take care not to overstate your case.

My wife and I live on the Alstonville Plateau - deep rich volcanic soil, some of the best soil in the world, capable of sustaining a huge range of vegetation, including the original magnificent sub tropical rainforest, food crops and weeds. When creating a new garden in this area the case for organic mulch is overwhelming. Mulches such as seed-free hay or tea tree/sugar cane industry residues are invaluable. They suppress the weeds, conserve moisture and enrich the texture of the top soil with humus circulated by the hidden worms and the like. We do not favour sawdust for all sorts of reasons. As the garden matures, decorative and longer lasting mulches such as macadamia shells or pine bark can be used.

The alternative is weekly or daily(!) hand weeding, glyphosate poisoning and hand watering. Artificial weed mats have their place but not in the front garden. Any covering to 'naturalise' the weed mat becomes a growing medium for the weeds.

---

### **Mulch in an arid area garden**

**Lynne Boladeras WA**

I work at a mining village in the NE goldfields of WA. I had a lot of problems with mulch brought in from the SW of WA. There were some very nasty weed seeds in it, e.g Paterson's Curse and various thistles, and I had to be very diligent about checking for new germinations.

Mulch was made on site early on, using trees knocked down when the airstrip was cleared. While this was an extremely good idea, environmentally sound, etc., the commercial operator ruined his machine due to the extremely hard wood of the predominantly trees - Mulga, *Acacia aneura*.

The next load of mulch was weed free but, if anyone brings mulch 1000 km, they need to have a

## 5

suitable truck! The mulch packs down over the rough roads and had to be scraped out with a bobcat - not an easy operation if the truck is only designed as a 'tipper'.

The next load of mulch was on a specially designed truck so was unloaded very easily. However it was the black (fine) 'peaty' variety. This caught fire very easily in summer, when cigarette butts were thrown into the gardens. It would smoulder for ages, underneath the surface.

We then tried 'green waste' mulch and this was probably the most useful organically but of course didn't look so pretty.

Now we are cutting costs and only need to 'top up' the gardens, so make our own mulch with a chipper/shredder. There are copious amounts of prunings to put through the 'mulcher' as the gardens are about 5 years old - well, parts of them are that age - I am still planting new areas.

In my opinion mulch is extremely valuable in the arid areas - but you have to think of the fire risk too. I really prefer the use of very low ground covers as a 'living mulch'. Examples are:

*Myoporum parvifolium* (a few types of these) (Creeping Myoporum)

*Eremophila serpens* (Creeping Eremophila) & *E. bisserata* (Prostrate Eremophila)

*Grevillea obtusifolia* (*G. thelemanniana* ssp. *obtusifolia*)

Lippia 'lawn' (not an Australian plant)

*Dichondra repens* (Kidney Weed) - in damper areas

*I enjoyed reading this fascinating history of Lynne's experiences with mulch in her and garden! Like Lynne, I value 'living mulches' and (among many) use two that Lynne lists - Myoporum parvifolium and also (I think) Grevillea obtusifolia. (We have two different forms that both used to be called G. thelemanniana.) DS*

---

### Thoughts on mulch

Nicky Rose Vic

It would be interesting to get some technical information of what happens when you put soil wetter on mulches.

I tried a bed of washed river sand (which varied from 5 inches to 12 inches) to grow some of the trickier plants. This turned into a haven for all wind borne seeds and gave me enormous problems with weeds. An ideal propagating medium for them although I did get some daisies self seeding there.

The problem with most organic mulches is that not a lot of self seeding happens, at least not in my garden. The native iris and *Dianella tasmanica* are going mad at the moment, self-seeding on composted mulch. A real problem area for me.

I observed recently dried clay with cracks near Femtree Gully Road. It occurred to me that soil cracking is an ideal mechanism to get water into the clay and under the surface. The water would naturally run into the crack and fill that rather than washing away.

---

### Organic mulch

Melbourne meeting

Members present thought that organic mulch was invaluable in their gardens for suppressing weeds, retaining moisture and reducing the effects of wind. However the old recommendation of 100mm or 4 inches of mulch was generally considered too thick. In Melbourne, application in late winter or early spring was thought best. A number of members preferred groundcover plants as 'living mulch', though these obviously use some water too. Disadvantages of organic mulch mentioned were:-

- prevention of penetration of water (especially with fine much) - soil wetting agents can help;
  - bush fire prone; \* not suitable for frost prone areas where completely flat soil surface is best;
  - limits self-seeding of plants (not just weeds).
-

As you know, an editorial committee of the G.D.S.G. is currently working on a book on garden design with Australian plants. We are keen to have the best possible photos to illustrate the beauty of our Australian plant gardens.

We are therefore holding a photo competition for the best photo (slide or print) from each region (State), showing good garden design using Australian plants. Any APS (SGAP) member can submit photos, not just GDSG members. Preference will be given to photos showing gardens with regional character, though this is not essential. We do not want photos of individual plants or flowers. Entries will be judged by the editorial committee of the book.

The closing date to receive entries for the competition is November 30th 2000. Entries are to be sent to Diana Snape, 3 Bluff Street, East Hawthorn, Vic 3123.

The winner in each State will receive a certificate and, if the photo is of publication standard, a copy of the book (expected to be published by December 2001). All photos submitted (or their copies) will become the property of the GDSG slide/print library.

## DESIGN

### Australian garden design

Peter Swain NSW

I am not sure that I really understand the need to categorise a unique "Australian" identity for our gardens. Why waste our time in search for a convenient but elusive set of words to describe the huge range of existing (and emerging) garden types that embrace our enormous 'mish mash' of climatic and geographical conditions plus enormous influence of our diverse cultural backgrounds. I do concede that the 'Australian bush garden' has an Australian uniqueness and could be described, but this is only a small part of the story. Whilst many APSers and SGAPers live on larger rural blocks or acreage, we must remember that Australia is one of the most urbanised societies in the world and we must consider the needs and aspirations of town and city folk.

It is surely a principle of successful marketing that the product must be tailored to the customer. Our 'product' is 'garden design with Australian plants' and I think we can take a tip or two from the horticultural industry with their new products designed to suit the customer. Plant breeders have produced a range of exciting dwarf hybrid native shrubs. For example *Eucalyptus ficifolia* is a stunning WA tree that is not always happy in my part of the sub-tropical eastern seaboard. The 'idealistic' answer is to plant something else e.g. *Eucalyptus ptycocarpa* (Swamp Bloodwood). The 'commercial' answer is to produce a hybrid of *E. ficifolia* and graft it onto a rootstock suitable to local conditions. We plant these hybrids and hey presto - masses of superb ficifolia-like flowers at and above eye level on very bushy small trees - customer happy, QED.

I readily accept the place for bush gardens but it would be a dull world if we all did the same thing. In Australia we have the wonderful opportunity to allow our enormously diverse cultural community to influence our garden design. As a Johnny-come-lately Australian citizen I have a European background that undoubtedly

## 7

influences my thought processes - for me that's a matter of fact and not a subject for the emotions of shame or pride. As Australians why cant we just get on with it? We all know it's a great place with a fantastic array of native plants. We must embrace both the natural look through 'Australian bush gardens' and the range of formal and semi-formal gardens. Whether we personally like or dislike old or new styles developed at home or overseas should not really be an issue.

I have no quarrels with people who want to grow roses or tibouchinas but I do take issue with gardeners and shire councils that insist on planting environmental weeds like cocos palm (here in the sub tropics) or asparagus fern. Our local group spends a lot of time in publicizing these dangers, as well as promoting our treasure trove of Australian plants.

*I like Peter's focussed approach • what really matters is creating well designed gardens that appeal to us (and others) and do justice to our Australian plants. Words are just words, though they can help clarify our ideas and help us spread them. DS*

---

### **Design criteria for Judging gardens for competitions**

**Jeff Howes NSW**

The categories that Diana Snape suggested cover the topic adequately, however I would like to add another: *Integration of Australian plants into established garden.*

The reason for the inclusion of this topic is because we should be trying to encourage the idea that native plants can be used with established non-native plants successfully. While this may be covered by your *Dominance of Australian plants* it needs to be clearer.

*I agree with Jeff about the importance of encouraging gardeners to do this. It might be a particularly appropriate category in a garden competition for mainly exotic gardens. DS*

---

**Peter Swain NSW**

General design criteria as listed by Diana in the last newsletter are great - they apply across the board. Some additional suggestions:-

1. Lack of/control of potential environmental! weeds e.g. in subtropics, camphor laurel, lantana, privet, cocos palms, asparagus fern, water hyacinth, water lettuce, etc.
2. Rare and endangered species - perhaps add this to local species category.
3. Contribution of colour - foliage in particular.
4. Seasonal balance - e.g. not all spring flowers.
5. Simplicity/ease of management. Even in high maintenance gardens, management can be simplified by good design, e.g. mulched borders, simple lawn shapes for convenient mowing,
6. Use of levels/contours - I agree with Norm and Maureen Webb. Credit must go particularly to the owner of a flat block who manages to create interesting levels as well as to someone able to take advantage of natural contours.
7. Human needs and lifestyles e.g. location/screening/integration of services and facilities e.g. dustbin, tennis court, basket ball hoop, septic tank, transpiration pit, garden shed, outdoor entertaining area, bbq, etc.

*We have had a number of excellent extra suggestions to add to (or modify) the original list. I certainly don't want to dictate which ones should be used or given prominence. Anyone involved in judging gardens can select from the total list the criteria they think are the most important. Other suggestions may act as sub-categories and help clarify the main ones. DS*

## GARDENS

**RBG Cranbourne display at the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show 2000**  
**Diana Snape Vic**

The superb Royal Botanic Garden Cranbourne display was placed first in its category and won the overall award at the Show, and deservedly so. This display was designed by a team headed by Andrew Laidlaw. Quoting their handout: "The display will take you from natural wetlands, to a sand garden with a rich mosaic of textures, and to a highly sculptured garden where the edges between horticulture and art are blurred." Although the area available was relatively small, the design succeeded in making it seem much larger by appropriate screening from the exterior and between sections.

The first pathway was a boardwalk, straight-edged and angled, adjacent to water. The design in this section successfully produced an appealing naturalistic garden. The wetland landscape contained only plants indigenous to the RBG Cranbourne, producing a feeling of unity and harmony. Plants that starred included *Banksia marginata* (Silver Banksia), *Gleichenia microphylla* (Scrambling Coral Fern) and a wonderful variety of rushes and sedges (see plant list).

The second section of the pathway leading through the display was S-shaped and surfaced with pale Lilydale toppings. The mounded and edged sand beds were terracotta-coloured and the plants were linked by their tolerance of dry conditions, often having blue-grey or silver-grey foliage. Five small *Brachychiton rupestris* (Queensland Bottle Tree) were magnificent living sculptures. A sweep of *Swainsona formosa* (Sturt Desert Pea) was planted in one area - the only vivid colour - and *Actinotus helianthi* (Flannel Flower) in another with a dampiera (not listed). Scattered *Triodia sacariosa* (Porcupine Grass) contributed their unique texture. Two of the plants listed (Kangaroo Paws and *Rhodanthe* sp.) were not in the end included because they "did not look right" in the final display. The garden here was beautiful - highly designed but not looking too contrived.

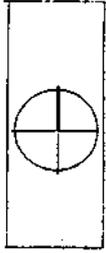
In the final section the path enclosed a semi-circular water area with patches of attractive-foiaged *Marsilea drummondii* (Common Nardoo). In this water area stood marvellous sculptures created by an environmental artist, David Wong. Several more were situated in two groups on the other side(s) of the path. These were "rock baskets" or gabions, prisms almost three metres tall (8 feet), square in cross-section, made from wire mesh and half filled with layers of wonderful textures and subtle colours of a variety of plant materials - dried foliage, seed pods, banksia cones, even roots. Each was different and had its own unique arrangement in the top section of the prism. This description does not capture their magic! It was great to see eight different rushes, sedges and tussock-grasses complementing the sculptures. Such plants are too often neglected in gardens and are a very significant part of the Australian landscape. Other plants in this area included the sculptural *Macrozamia communis* (Burrawang).

I am grateful to Andrew Laidlaw for supplying the plan for the display, reproduced on the following page. I shall now wait (patiently?) to see the emergence of the Australian Garden at Cranbourne. (It's good to see the term 'Australian Garden' being used correctly at last and widely accepted in this context.)

I recently called in to the RBG Cranbourne to see the new entrance garden which I had heard praised by a number of people. It looked magnificent. It is a formal arrangement of long stripes of low plants of species with contrasting foliage and texture, contained by the curving roadway and two curving hedges of taller Lilly Pilly. Species included *Leucophyta brownii* (Cushion Bush) (of course), *Brachyscome multifida*, a dianella and one or two others. There were several large trees already growing in strategic places and the whole effect was striking. It will improve further as individual plants grow and merge.

---

# Wetland Landscape

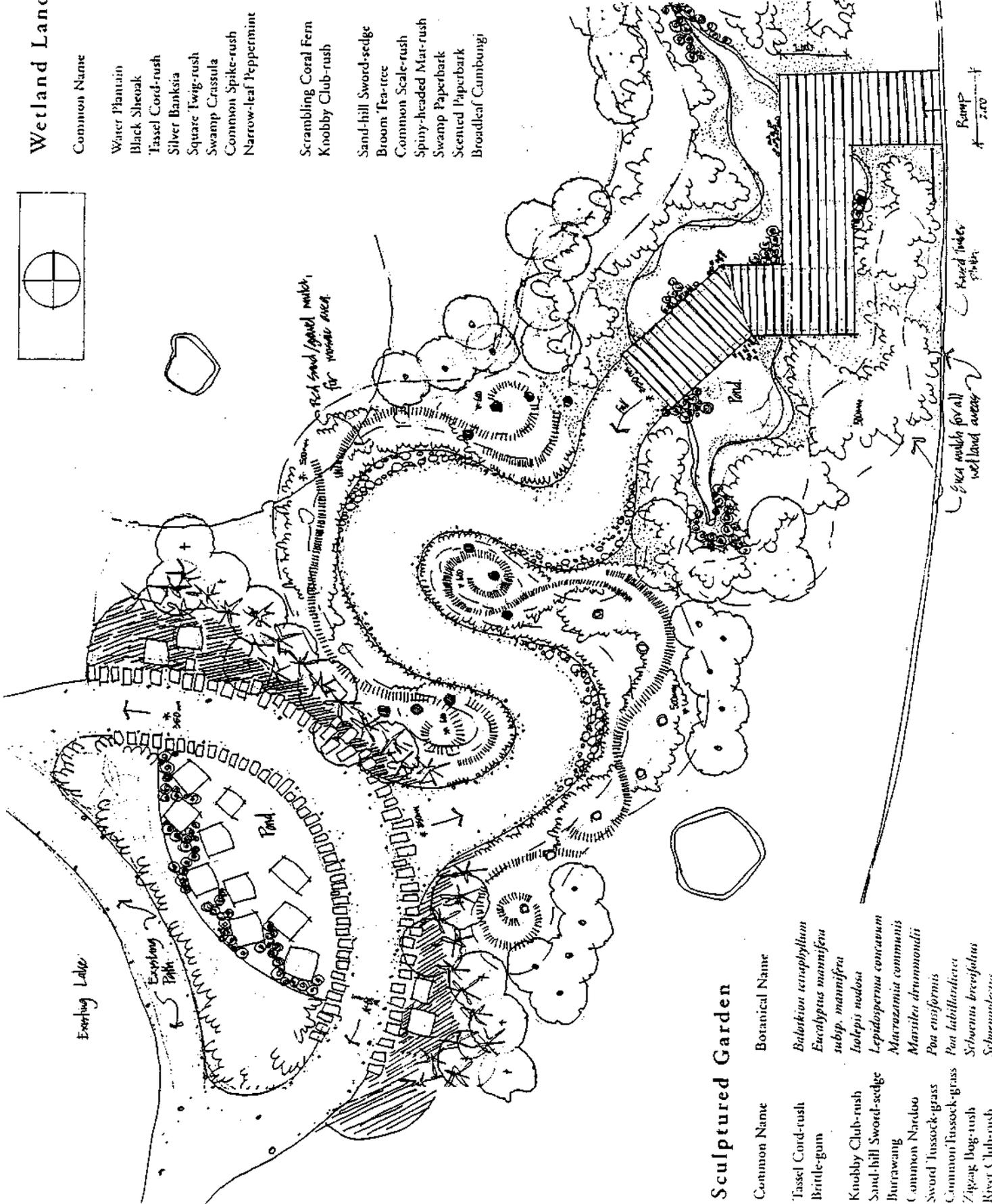


Common Name	Botanical Name
Water Plantain	<i>Alisma plantago-aquatica</i>
Black Sheoak	<i>Allocasuarina litorea</i>
Tassel Cord-rush	<i>Balckton tetraphyllum</i>
Silver Banksia	<i>Banksia marginata</i>
Square Twig-rush	<i>Banmea tetragona</i>
Swamp Crassula	<i>Crassula helmsii</i>
Common Spike-rush	<i>Eleocharis acuta</i>
Narrow-leaf Peppermint	<i>Eucalyptus radiata</i>

Scrambling Coral Fern	<i>Eucalyptus viminalis</i>
Knobby Club-rush	<i>subsp. pyroriana</i>
Sand-hill Sword-sedge	<i>Gleichenia microphylla</i>
Broom Tea-tree	<i>Isoplepis nodosa</i>
Common Scale-rush	<i>Juncus amabilis</i>
Spiny-headed Mar-rush	<i>Lepidosperma concavum</i>
Swamp Paperbark	<i>Lepidosperma scoparium</i>
Scented Paperbark	<i>Lepyrodia muelleri</i>
Broadleaf Cumbungi	<i>Lomandra longifolia</i>

# Sand Garden

Common Name	Botanical Name
Flannel Flower	<i>Acinonops helianthi</i>
Saw Banksia	<i>Anigozanthos 'Bush G'</i>
Queensland Bottle Tree	<i>Banksia serrata</i>
Common Everlasting	<i>Brachychiton rupestris</i>
Grey Cottonheads	<i>Chrysocephalum apiculatum</i>
Sand-hill Sword-sedge	<i>Conostylis canadensis</i>
Forest Phebalium	<i>Eremophila nivea</i>
Forest Phebalium	<i>Lepidosperma concavum</i>
Narrow-leafed Phebalium	<i>Melaleuca quinquenervia</i>
Sturt Desert Pea	<i>Phebalium squamulosum subsp. argenteum</i>
Porcupine Grass	<i>Phebalium squamulosum subsp. rosea</i>



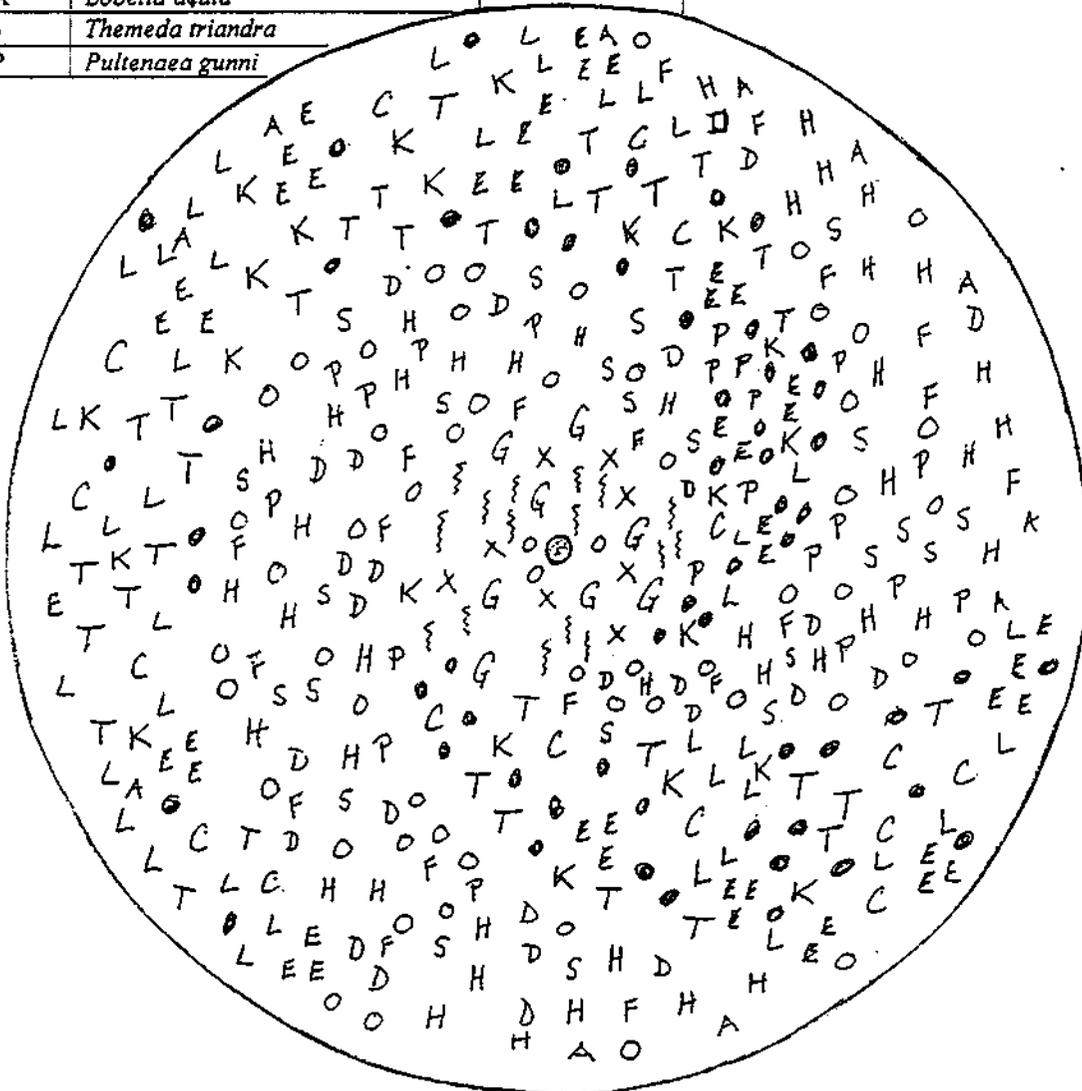
# Sculptured Garden

Common Name	Botanical Name
Tassel Cord-rush	<i>Balckton tetraphyllum</i>
Brittle-gum	<i>Eucalyptus mannifera subsp. mannifera</i>
Knobby Club-rush	<i>Isoplepis nodosa</i>
Sand-hill Sword-sedge	<i>Lepidosperma concavum</i>
Burrawang	<i>Macraemia communis</i>
Common Narciso	<i>Marsilea drummondii</i>
Sword Tussock-grass	<i>Poa ensiformis</i>
Common Tussock-grass	<i>Poa tabillardiana</i>
Zigzag Bog-rush	<i>Schoenus brevifolius</i>
River Club-rush	<i>Siberiopsis</i>
Broadleaf Cumbungi	<i>tabernaemontani</i>
	<i>Typha orientalis</i>

Roundabout Planting Design. Proposed planting: Mt Evelyn York Road/Hereford Road/Silvan-Monbulk Road roundabout (revised plan, Merele Webb, June 1998). NB. 1 metre shrubs in centre can be trimmed back to suitable height if necessary. See description page 11.

No.	Code	Scientific name	Comment
8	G	<i>Grevillea alpina</i> Mt Evelyn form	1m.
16	Z	<i>Leucopogon ericoides</i>	Upright 2-3 foot
70	O	<i>Danthonia caespitosa</i>	Tufted grass
8	X	<i>Carex appressa</i>	
41	H	<i>Hardenbergia violacea</i>	
30	T	<i>Tetralochea ciliata</i>	
18	F	<i>Platylobium formosum</i>	
16	S	<i>Dillwynia cinerascens</i>	
24	D	<i>Pimelea humilis</i>	
15	C	<i>Chrysocephalum semipapposum</i>	
33	L	<i>Wahlenbergia stricta</i>	
15	K	<i>Kennedyia prostrata</i>	
11	A	<i>Lobelia atata</i>	
66	•	<i>Themeda triandra</i>	
13	P	<i>Pultenaea gunni</i>	

E. EPACRIS IMPRESSA



It is very pleasing and instructive to have interesting garden plans to include in the Newsletter. I think we often do not have enough, so please remember to contribute any you design yourself or come across. DS

**Roundabout planting design****Mereie Webb Vic**

Enclosed is the planting design for the roundabout in Mt Evelyn, using indigenous plants. The idea for the planting design came when I considered use of the roundabout - always turning to the right - so the different sets of plant combinations swirl away as you drive around it. It is a low planting except at the centre, where the local *Grevillea alpha* (Mountain Grevillea) is planted with *Leucopogon ericoides* (Pink Beard-heath) and *Carex appressa* (Tall Sedge) to help give them some shelter. Members of the Environment Group will trim these plants to below one metre if the windy conditions don't!

Epacris and lobelia are dotted around the perimeter to give a more complete round feeling to the whole thing - a hint rather than a whump! There are plenty of ways to combine local plants like these, and this may start other groups doing this in roadside areas in other Shires.

I believe the Work for the Dole group is going to do the planting when they are organized and funds come through. I hope I'll be able to supervise the planting. I plan to use two long hoses to assist the group to follow the subtle swirls of pea-plants, grasses (themeda & danthonia) and other plants in the design.

*(The plan for Mereie's innovative design is shown on the previous page. DS)*

**Gardens in South America****Jennifer Borrell NSW**

The overall impression of gardens in South America is of the use of the Spanish plaza in public gardens and the patio in private gardens. The plaza is the heart of every South American town. In Peru where the climate is dry - in Lima it never rains - the plazas are planted in geometrical shapes accented by colourful annuals such as marigolds, pansies and petunias. In more tropical countries such as Paraguay the plaza is still dissected by avenues but the predominant plantings are shade trees such as poincianas and jacarandas - both in flower at the time of our visit. By the time you get to the southernmost reaches of the continent in Patagonia the only trees which can grow are cypresses and these are the prominent planting of the plaza - either as fully grown trees or as trimmed shapes. The common feature of all the plazas is the square shape dissected by paved paths, with statues and busts of heroic figures, often military or literary, placed at the focal points. This formal framework is the space for many activities - passing the time of day, busking, and selling goods and services such as shoe shines. However in the climates where grass grows, there were always signs "No pisar el cesped" (Don't walk on the grass). The plaza is often surrounded by prominent public buildings such as the parliament, president's palace, cathedral and other churches and the law courts.

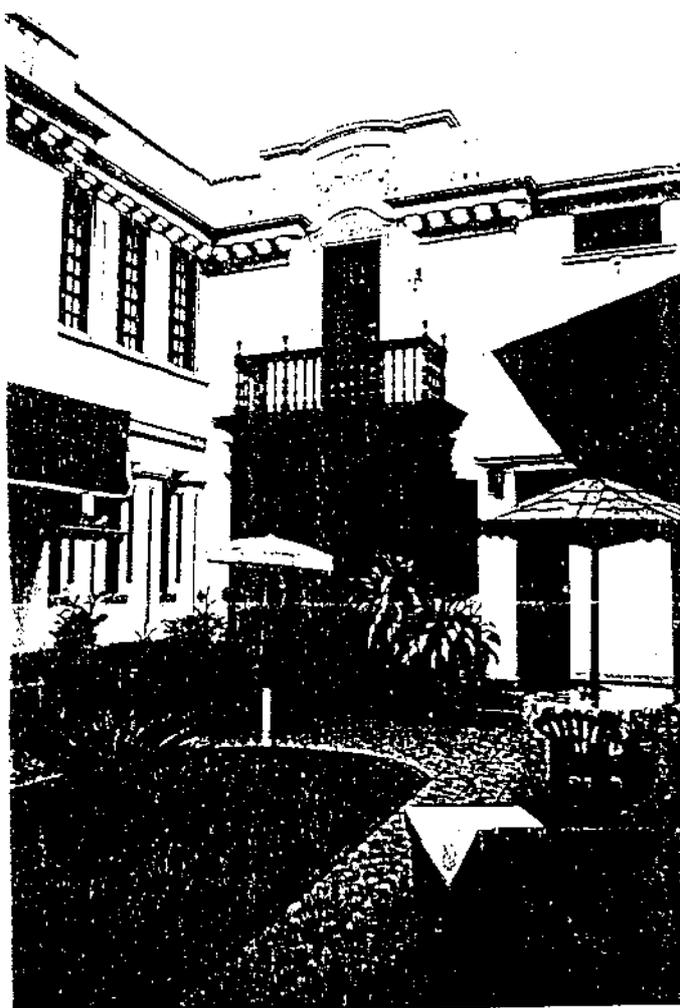
Argentina was the only country we visited which had a real tradition of public gardens as distinct from the plaza. Buenos Aires has a very large green belt around the city very similar to and apparently larger than the gardens in Melbourne. It includes the famous polo fields and the magnificent rose gardens of Palermo. In the other countries we visited, places marked on city plans as parks often turned out to be disappointing dustbowls with a few sad trees and seats. There seems to be very little money spent on public infrastructure like footpaths, roads, drains and playgrounds, let alone parks.

As tourists we didn't see many private gardens. However, many hotels where we stayed had previously been private homes or were still family businesses. Some older houses from the colonial period are now museums or other public buildings. These all followed the Spanish style of building whose focus was the internal patio. This was usually a paved courtyard with a fountain and decorated with plants in pots (the best we saw of these was in Paraguay). In larger establishments there were also flower beds and a tree or two.

Without exception these spaces were elegant, charming and relaxing. They were also totally private. They

had to be entered from the street outside via an internal hallway or passage.

i was also interested in observing the native flowers of South America. Part of our trip included the trek to Machu Picchu along the Inca Trail. This was a marvellous opportunity to see the flora up close. It was novel to see snapdragons, begonias, fuchsias, bromeliads and gladioli growing as wildflowers. The range of orchids in flower was also wonderful. It was sad to see that the Andes have not escaped the scourge of introduced weeds. A colourful but unwelcome intruder in these mountains is the Scottish broom, which smothers native vegetation.



In Lima, Peru

Further south we did more walking in Patagonia in the southern beech forests (three species of nothofagus). The red flowers of *Embothrium coccineum* (once known as *Grevillea coccineum*) were a common feature over a large area of Southern Chile and Patagonia, as were fuchsias. The knowledge of my botanical guide was very elementary and did not help to identify the heath plants which were very reminiscent of some seen on the East Coast here.

*I really enjoyed Jennifer's visit to South America through her article. It is fascinating to hear of the different styles of garden there and to contrast them with gardens here. I wonder whether they will become more relevant as garden sizes in Australian cities continue to shrink, I hope Melbourne won't become like Lima! DS*

### Historic gardens in Melbourne

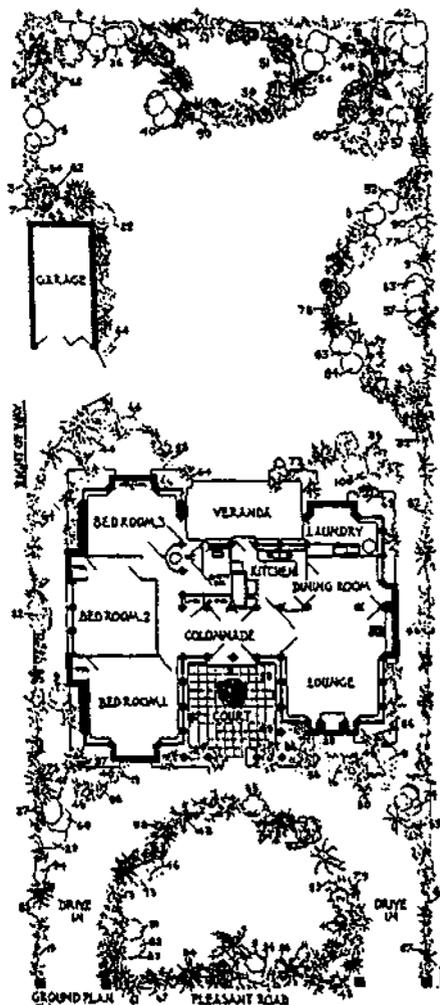
Diana Snape Vic

Recently, plans of two historic gardens in Melbourne/Victoria have come to light. The first was discovered by **Peter** and **Wilma Garnham** Vic in conjunction with the sale of a historic house in a Melbourne suburb. The house and (presumably) garden were designed by an architect, Eric M. Nicholls, from the Burley Griffin Studio of Design, influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright.

On the following page is a copy of the plan from an article in *The Australian Home Beautiful* January 1, 1930. Out of 100 plants listed in the planting scheme, approximately 40 are Australian. Some survive today, including large doryanthes and eucalypts. I found it fascinating to see what plants were included 70 years ago. Many were striking plants and a number were very big for a normal suburban garden. I've listed the 40 Australian plants using the names that they were listed under then (except that I have abbreviated *Acacia* to *A.* (etc.) to save space). I noted from the plan that they tended to be used as single specimen plants, though there was some repetition with small groups of several shrubs.

Plant list

1 Acacia acinacea	40 Eucalyptus citriodora
2 A. elata	41 E. rubida
3 A. floribunda	42 E. Stricklandii
4 A. Howettii	43 E. torquata
5 A. pruinosa	45 Eriostemon obovalis
6 A. longifolia	54 Grevillea robusta
7 A. retinodes	55 G. rosmarinifolia
9 Angophora costata	56 Goodia latifolia
10 Agonis flexuosa	57 Hibbertia volubilis
15 Bauera Bubiodes	58 Hardenbergia Comptoniana
16 Beckia plicata (?)	59 H. monophylla rosea
21 Brachychiton acerifolium	67 Kennedyya rubicunda
24 Callistemon lanceolatus	74 Lept. scoparium Nicholii
25 C. phoeniceus	75 L. scoparium Chapmani
26 Callitris cupressiformis	79 Lomatia silaifolia
29 Ceratopetalum gummiferum	83 Plectranthus Ecklonii (?)
30 Chorizema ilicifolium	84 Prostanthera Siberi
31 Clianthus puniceus (red)	92 Swainsonia galegifolia (pink)
38 Doryanthes excelsa	93 Telopia speciosissima
39 Doryanthes Palmeri	95 Thryptomene ericaea



The second historic garden, featured in an article in *'The Sun News-Pictorial, Melbourne'*, was found by **Cherree Densley** Vic. The article "Planning a native garden" was written by Olive Mellor. I hadn't heard of Olive Mellor before - please let me know if you have any information about her. Unfortunately we don't have a date for this article - what date would you guess? The following extracts are from the article and again I include (on the next page) a plan and a list of the Australian plants (about 63 out of 70 or so species) used in her plan, following her naming. This design was for an "average suburban garden", presumably in Melbourne - again note the number of large trees included.

"Only twice during the years in which I have been making gardens have I been asked to plan a native garden and yet, in our own natural flora, we have a wonderful field to draw from, limited at present far more than it should be; for business men cannot afford to produce goods that are not saleable, and though nurserymen are gradually educating the public by introducing a few more of our own trees and shrubs each year, we are still only beginning to appreciate the value of our native plants....."

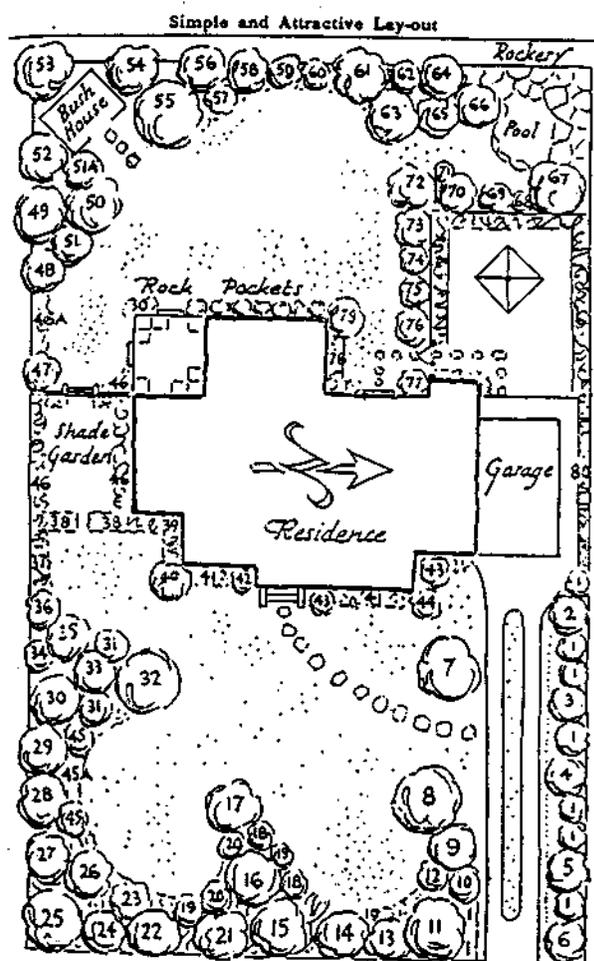
There are many interesting little native flowers such as our pincushions, or the harbingers of spring, or the chocolate lilies that so attract the children with their delicate colouring and their vanilla scent. There are also many plants belonging to the 'composite' or daisy family, which would make a bright array growing round the roots of trees, in the rock pockets, or in the rockery (which should be so made, by the way, that it has a little stream trickling into the pool below). For this reason I have given no planting list for the rockery and would here add that such shrubs as *chorizema cordata*, *boronia elatior*, kangaroo paws, *melaleuca pulchella*, and the little trailing *fuchsia procumbens*, a native of New Zealand, should be used to give height and character among these dainty little denizens of the bush, while maidenhair and other ferns could be used in shady spots and, in the pool, lilies from Queensland.

The lawns are also native, for we have a natural grass in Victoria, known as woodend bent, that will probably prove itself to be one of the best grasses to use in suburban lawns. Its foliage is very fine; it is

suitable for sowing alone and it gives the nice even sward (*if kept in order*) attributed solely to 'English grasses'. It will thrive on less water than any other soft grass.

The grass strip in the motor drive looks rather prim for a native garden. It could be planted very happily with dwarf wild plants that could be taken from the bush (only in their *very tiny stages* - and with a Government permit - as they do not transplant readily, or from seed); for instance the pretty prostrate, *Kennedyia prostrata*, with its bright red bean flowers that one finds growing in the hardest of places; so that anyone with both time and patience could make a much more attractive break in their concrete drive than the very ordinary strip of grass."

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 <i>Acacia myrtifolia</i> (9 specimens)           | 2 <i>A. cultriformis</i>                        |
| 3 <i>A. saligna</i>                                | 4 <i>A. pycnantha</i>                           |
| 5 & 28 <i>A. baileyana</i><br>(Cootamundra wattle) | 6 <i>A. prominens</i>                           |
| 8 <i>Callitris arenosa</i>                         | 7 <i>Eucalyptus ficifolia</i>                   |
| 10 <i>Acacia podalyriaefolia</i>                   | 9 & 77 <i>Cllanthus puniceus</i> (NZ?)          |
| 12 <i>Thryptomene Mitchelliana</i>                 | 11 <i>Agonls flexuosa</i>                       |
| 14&63 <i>Grevillea Hilliana</i>                    | 13 <i>Telopea oreades</i> (Vic. Waratah)        |
| 16&50 <i>Callistemon lanceolatus</i>               | 15 <i>Melia azedarach</i>                       |
| 18 <i>Boronia megastigma</i>                       | 17 <i>Stenocarpus sinuatus</i>                  |
| 20 <i>Baeckia plicata</i>                          | 19 <i>Epacris impressa</i> & <i>longif lora</i> |
| 22 <i>Callistemon phoeniceus</i>                   | 21 <i>Banksia spinulosa</i>                     |
| 24 & 72 <i>Eucalyptus Lehmannii</i>                | 23 <i>Calytrix Sullivani</i>                    |
| 27 & 66 <i>Agonls flexuosa variegata</i>           | 25 <i>Podocarpus elatus</i>                     |
| 30 <i>Agathis robusta</i>                          | 29 <i>Tristania conferta</i>                    |
| 32 <i>Nothofagus fusca</i>                         | 31 <i>Eriostemon obovalis</i>                   |
| 34 <i>Cordyline australis</i>                      | 33 <i>Prostanthera lasianthos</i>               |
| 37 <i>Hovea elliptica</i>                          | 36 <i>Eugenia myrtifolia</i>                    |
| 39 <i>Prostanthera ovaifolia</i>                   | 38 <i>Hardenbergia monophylla</i>               |
| 42 <i>Grevillea rosmarinifolia</i>                 | 41 <i>Leschanaultia</i>                         |
| 44 <i>Cassia artemisioides</i>                     | 43 <i>Chamaelaucium uncinatum</i>               |
| 45A <i>Swainsonia</i>                              | 45 <i>Chamaelaucium</i>                         |
| 47 <i>Ceratopetalum gummiferum</i>                 | 46 <i>Ferns in variety</i>                      |
| 49 <i>Acmena Smithii</i>                           | 48 <i>Ficus australis variegata</i>             |
| 52 & 68 479 <i>Eucalyptus cltriodora</i>           | 51 <i>Crotolaria laburnifolia</i>               |
| 54 <i>Eucalyptus leucoxyton rosea</i>              | 53 <i>Nothofagus Cunninghamii</i>               |
| 57 <i>Correa speciosa</i>                          | 55 <i>Pittosporum undulatum</i>                 |
| 61 <i>Callitris cupressiformis</i>                 | 58 <i>Melaleuca nesophila</i>                   |
| 65 <i>Leptospermum Nichollii</i>                   | 64 <i>Grevillea robusta</i>                     |
| 69 <i>Leptospermum Sandersif</i>                   | 67 <i>Casuarina quadrivalis</i>                 |
| 71 <i>Beaufortia sparsa</i>                        | 70 <i>Chamaelaucium Newmanacarra</i>            |
| 74 <i>Grevillea oleoides</i>                       | 73 <i>Prostanthera Sieberii</i>                 |
| 78 <i>Chorizema cordata</i>                        | 76 <i>Westringia rosmarinifolia</i>             |
|  | 80 <i>Clematis aristata</i>                     |



*Again, spelling and the way of naming plants is reproduced directly from the article.*

*Two questions • can anyone help? - which particular plants would Olive Mellor have called the 'harbingers of spring' and which grass is 'woodend bent'? DS*

## BOOKS, MAGAZINES &amp; THE INTERNET

*'The new native garden: designing with Australian plants'* by Paul Urquhart (Lansdowne 1999)

**Jennifer Borrell NSW**

This book has some wonderful photos and seems very comprehensive. There are photos of gardens known to GDSG members including the Sydney gardens of Betty Maloney, **Jeff Howes** and **Gordon Rowland**. I found it inspiring - "... a good garden is like a painter's palette. The beauty of the paints or the colours don't impress us, it's how the colours are merged into a pattern which makes the picture. A garden's worth is not measured by the number of exquisite specimen plants. It's how plants, many considered ordinary, are grouped together, trained or mixed with others that creates the tapestry and the art". Also challenging. For years I have been trying to achieve a cottage garden and the examples in this book indicate that I have still a long way to go. The book also breaks new ground in acknowledging that not everyone wants to have a pure Australian garden. People are bound to choose favourite plants from anywhere in the world. Suggestions of blending Australian plants successfully with exotics are given in the text and in many of the photos. One rule to follow if this is to be successful is to blend plants from similar climates e.g. Mediterranean or rainforest, or to choose similar leaf types.

*'Australian Horticulture'* April/May 2000

*There were five articles in this issue I found interesting, particularly the first one below. DS*

Garden design

How to maintain a grassland garden

In this article, Melanie Kinsey begins with exotic meadow gardens but then turns to Australian grasslands, composed of mainly perennial plants. Her report is based on the experience and knowledge of James Ross, former Grasslands Officer for the Victorian National Parks Association. After preparing the site in autumn, planting should be carried out in winter or (if the site is boggy) in spring, using a combination of plants in tubes or mini tubes (cells) and direct seeding.

A *Themeda triandra* (Kangaroo Grass) grassland might contain genera such as *chrysosephalum*, *brachyscome*, *convolvulus*, *brunonia*, *eryngium*, *wahlenbergia*, *bulbine* and *dianella*; also other grasses such as *danthonia* (Wallaby Grass) and *dichelachne* (Plume Grass). An occasional deep watering in early summer prolongs flowering of most species (between late September and early January). After setting seed, the grassland is cut back between midwinter and early spring. Cutting back to ground level has a similar effect to burning. Varying the timing of maintenance in a mosaic pattern will help maintain the variety of species, though some will occasionally need replacement.

John Delpratt (a lecturer at Burnley College who spoke at our GDSG weekend at Burnley) carries out research on plant communities of native grasslands. Such research may help lead to our eventually (in the distant future?) being able to buy an Australian grassland garden in a packet.

'Instant gardens'

Tim North writes that he finds 'instant gardens' depressingly boring - "Two or three men, with a ute and a wheelbarrow, descend upon the site, and, Hey Presto, two days later there is a brand new garden, complete with automatic watering system, loads of mulch and a rag bag of small shrubs neatly spaced one metre apart."

*/ sympathize with Tim North's feelings. How can one love a garden created like this? DS*

~~Plants in design~~**'Lechenaultias lead the way'**

Eight new lechenaultias, produced in a breeding program by two partners in the Centre for Australian Plants (CAP) in WA, were recently offered for national tender. They are small, compact plants with a greatly extended flowering period. The initial appeal of the new hybrid lechenaultias is expected to be as 'potted colour'. They can live for three years but it is suggested they should be treated as annuals or biennials. Colours include bright scarlet, pinkish apricot, red and dark pink - the last two are large flowered.

In time, the CAP pot-plant product group will investigate other genera within the Goodeniaceae such as *velleia*, *dampiera* and *scaevola*, as well as other plant families.

**'Fascinating WA pitcher plant' by Gwen Elliot** via

Gwen writes of the beauty and fascination of insectivorous (or carnivorous) plants such as this Pitcher Plant, *Cephalotus follicularis*, usually cultivated in containers. Sundews (*Drosera* sp) and *Utricularia* (Bladder-worts) are two other intriguing genera of insectivorous plants. Several nurseries specialise in such plants and Gwen says sources of supply can be found in *'The Aussie Plant Finder'* 1999/2000 by Margaret Hibbert, published by Florilegium, Glebe NSW.

***Banksia spinulosavar. cunninghamii* 'Lemon Glow'**<sup>1</sup>

This cultivar (raised by Alt Salkin, Vic) of a very popular species has now been described. It grows as a more compact, dense shrub to 3m tall, with lemon-yellow rather than black styles.

**On the Internet**

**Colleen Keena** Qld thought the following sites might be of interest to members:

<http://starbulletin.com/97/11/18/features/evergreen.html> (even though it doesn't use Australian species)

[http://www.suite101.com/article.cfm/english\\_country\\_gardening/27372](http://www.suite101.com/article.cfm/english_country_gardening/27372)

<http://www.ocgd.demon.co.uk/welcome.htm>

She tells me it is interesting to look up under curriculum and see the course outlines, assessment etc.

**DESIGN IDEAS****Garden art**

Jo Hambrett NSW

*The following is one part of a talk Jo gave recently. The rest of the talk will be included in the next AL. The talk was illustrated with slides, so you'll have to use your imagination as you read. DS*

Garden art, whether decorative or functional, should be made of local material or a material which harmonizes with the surroundings. Its colour, texture, shape and size should relate to the overall picture of house, garden and borrowed landscape.

Most pieces have an association with garden styles of the past. French and Italian gardens have given us the classically inspired statues, fountains and sundials; the English cottage garden the birdbaths, seats, arches and wells; the Japanese garden the calming simplicity of raked pebbles, placed rocks and the famous red bridge. Paving, tiles, archways and water features in strict geometric pattern are a legacy of ancient Islamic gardens.

Some of these elements, providing they do harmonize with their surroundings, can be incorporated in the Australian style garden successfully.

I suspect many growers of Australian plants are a little suspicious of the use of ornaments in an Australian garden. Especially if the garden is naturalistic in style, ornaments of any sort may be seen as unnatural in an environment which, although created, is still strongly influenced by nature. This is particularly true if their purpose is not functional but purely decorative. I'd like to consider the role of such ornaments and what they can contribute to a garden.

Garden furniture is primarily functional but can be decorative as well. Most gardens provide some sort of seating - it is a shame not to be able to sit and relax while enjoying the garden. A seat can be as natural as a log, a rock or a sawn-off tree trunk, though these may not always remain comfortable for very long. Timber seats in many styles are widely popular - carved out of a single trunk, woven from flexible branches, or the more conventional types. They may have a natural finish or introduce a strong colour. Fine, light stainless steel or wrought iron seats can almost disappear against foliage. Furniture can be beautiful - the luxury in both comfort and appearance of Margot Knox's mosaic sofa, in Melbourne, is memorable. Nearby plant forms and foliage need strength to match the solidity of this sofa, or other substantial seats. All seats should be placed where they are enticing to the garden wanderer, probably in a sheltered position, often anchored and shaded by a tree and/or with a pleasant vista to focus on. Tables are less essential but may also be useful and will complement seating.

In contrast to furniture, sculpture has no obvious function, so what is its role in the Australian garden? It is further evidence of human intervention in a garden, so does it have a place? I think the use of sculpture can enhance even a naturalistic garden, in several ways. Any sculpture, whether realistic or abstract, should have its own intrinsic value through the skill and artistry of its creator. Its material - stone, wood, metal or glass, even concrete - can contrast with and complement foliage textures. Its shape can reflect, relate to, or deliberately differ from, nearby shapes in the garden. It can emphasize height, weight, intricacy, space. It can be a focal point in the garden, a feature' in a similar way to an outstanding plant, or tucked away in an inconspicuous spot where it can be discovered to "surprise and delight" (Merele Webb's nice phrase). It can epitomise some aspect of the garden or its locality, for example a metal cormorant with its wings outstretched to dry, on top of a pole in a coastal garden. Its colour can be neutral, like that of the wonderfully original sculptures of David Wong in the RBG Cranbourne display in Melbourne. Alternatively it can introduce strong colour(s), such as bright red to complement the garden's green. It can be in or beside water, to emphasize the special quality of water, its reflection adding another dimension. It can express humour, producing beneficial smiles in serious times.

If we accept the potential value of sculpture in the garden, we probably would also accept the inclusion of other ornaments such as fountains and sundials. Fountains can be regarded as sculptures linked to water and their variety is great. Sundials (and floral clocks?) express our fascination with time, the fourth dimension of our gardens. Wail plaques and mosaic work can enhance vertical surfaces - the interface between house and garden - and mosaic work can also decorate paving, birdbaths, even artificial rocks. Windchimes are small sculptures but in a different category because they embellish the sound of the wind. I think most people either love them or hate them. Their tones differ - some need more wind to activate them and are less intrusive than others. I enjoy them very much in other peoples' gardens and yet would hesitate to have them permanently in my own. Two further important categories of decoration, pots (containers) and lighting, have been mentioned in previous Newsletters. Both of these have practical advantages, of course, but they can also make a significant contribution to the beauty of a garden.

---

To my mind there are two main divisions:-

1. Human activity areas Here we expect to see the more obvious trappings and hardware of our activities. Personally I like well designed, functional garden features, e.g. patios, paths, steps, pillars, retaining walls, bbq, seats, terracotta pots, etc. Natural and traditional materials suit my taste but I suppose someone loves plastic gnomes otherwise some garden centres would go broke.
2. The living landscape Here great care needs to be taken before adding lots of ornaments in all but some formal gardens. Perhaps a superbly modelled and weathered statue as a focal point is an asset, but my preference is still for a functional object such as a well vegetated arbour overlooking a vista or a rustic bridge to an island in a naturalised lake (not a farm turkey nest dam!).

We must make provision for other tastes and I leave it to others to describe how a collection of modern sculptures or concrete ornaments can fit into a suburban block or rural acreage. I shudder at the memory of Henry Moore's modern sculptures in a London park and life size fibreglass cows "grazing" in fields at Milton Keynes new town but perhaps I am showing my age or background!

*We would like to hear more comments, ideas and suggestions from other members on garden art (or ornamentation). What do you like or dislike? DS*

---

Extending **the** view

**Jo Hambrett** NSW

(a brief addition to **Cherree Densley's** thoughts in NL29 on extending the landscape)

Another wonderful way of not only extending the view but of bringing the garden in, or the house out, is to put a plant (flowers, shrub or tree) of the same colour or tone that is dominant in the room from where you are viewing your garden. Naturally you can use non-animate things for this as well, such as pots, stone and ornamental pieces. This links the house and the garden - the inside and outside - beautifully, drawing the eye away to the distant focal point but immediately relating it to the house, the place from where you are viewing the garden. It further reinforces the idea of a 'oneness' of house and garden.

---

## PLANTS in DESIGN

**Pittosporum • my 'bush Nanny'**

**Jo Hambrett** NSW

I remember writing (years ago, when I knew even less than I do now) that I had bought (gasp) and planted (gasp) pittosporums - how they were tough, obliging and shinily evergreen, a welcome relief in a dry season when looking over an essentially 'bush' garden. Well, you know, I still feel the same! I ~~d~~jj. pull them out, if they absolutely can't stay where they've put themselves, but I feel a bit sad doing it all the same.

Over these years I have found my trusty pittosporums serve a variety of uses - for an informal hedge, or clumped along a fence to screen out an unappealing view next door. They grow quickly and are very much part of the 'bushscape'. I use them as 'nursery plants' i.e. they look after my tubes and seedlings by providing shelter while they grow; they can then be removed or pruned as the garden design allows. I have a few in various rainforest beds - their colour and form blend very well with the other trees and I keep the pittosporums pruned so they don't get too overbearing in size and colour.

Where they have put themselves hard up against a eucalyptus or a turpentine I leave them as they are. They hide the worm farm and the compost heap; if I want to see through I prune accordingly. Yes, they do get some sort of grub and yes, they go very leggy and woody underneath if not trimmed but these trees, with an absolute minimum of care, can be a real ally in the Australian garden, especially if there are large areas

to maintain and time is at a premium. So don't be too hard on my 'bush Nanny' - I know they are interfering and bossy but they are also tough, resilient and have a heart of gold!

*You're a brave woman, Jo. I hope you don't get pelted with pittosporum fruit by those who spend their time removing pittosporums from their gardens - or from natural areas where they don't belong. DS*

---

## Trees for shade

## Melbourne meeting

Members suggested:

*Melia azedarach* (White Cedar) - fruit dangerous on paths? (so are those of plane trees, oaks, etc!)

*Brachychiton discolor* (Lacebark) & other *Brachychiton* species

*Lophostemon confertus* (*Tristania conferta*) (Brush Box) & *L. (T.) laurina* (Water Gum)

*Acmena* & *Syzygium* species; rainforest trees generally

Some large melaleucas & callistemons (low branches pruned back to trunks if necessary)

*Eucalyptus crenulata* (Victorian Silver Gum), *Corymbia (Eucalyptus) ficifolia* (Red-flowering Gum)

A close stand of 3 eucalypts, *Corymbia (Eucalyptus) maculata* (Spotted Gum)

*(I recently saw a laboratory at the Melbourne Herbarium where DNA research on the eucalypt group has been carried out. After having the process explained to me and understanding the results, I will now take a deep breath and try to use Corymbia where appropriate. DS)*

## Feature plants

Members suggested a few and then we gave up because there are just so many possible ones!

*Acacia caerulescens*, *A. cognata* (Bower Wattle) & many other wattles; *Casuarina torulosa* (Rose She-oak);

*Banksia serrata*, *B. spinulosa* & other banksias; *Doryanthes excelsa* (Gynea Lily) & *D. palmeri* (Spear Lily);

*Corymbia (Eucalyptus) citriodora* & (many/most eucalypts, corymbias & angophoras);

*Persoonia pinifolia* (Pine-leaved Geebung); *Stenocarpus sinuatus* (Fire-wheel Tree);

*Xanthorrhoea* species (Grass-trees) *(We'd still like to hear yours! DS)*

---

## Plant ideas

## Nicky Rose Vic

### Garden shade

Clusters of eucalypts are a useful idea. We have three *Eucalyptus prava* near each other in one corner of our garden and they provide delightful thick shade during summer, especially over our sheds.

We used to have *E. conferruminata* (formerly *E. lehmannii*) (Bushy Yate) which covered and shaded an extensive area on the north east side of our house. Because of it, we built a pergola and fernery on the east side of our house. The tree has now been removed and we have a problem of too much sun in this area. We have covered the pergola with shade cloth, and the sides too, but it is not too aesthetic and I was wondering whether we should do away with the fernery altogether and plant a small cottage garden here with a fish pond (for frogs) (under the pergola). I would hate to lose the view from our family room windows though. We have two windows facing east - one window is filled with tree ferns and the fernery; the other has a view over our patio onto the lawned area and planted area surrounding the patio. On the other hand the ferns are not thriving in the hotter conditions and it may be time to cut our losses.

### Feature plants

Feature plants that come to mind include *Grevillea* "Pink Surprise" and *Eucalyptus caesia* (especially if you can clump 3 or 5 together). Mind you, I just cannot grow *E. caesia* in my garden but they are all around us here, even 5 houses down. That neighbour has one on the lawn with a lemon scented gum nearby. The only two plants in the front garden, but they both look terrific. Ours has died but does provide a perching spot for a lot of birds so I am reluctant to remove it. (Primarily cockatoos and 1 can see Chris Larkin shuddering if she reads this).

A couple of streets away a front garden had only lawn and an *Allocasuarina torulosa*. This was a magnificent specimen tree for many years. Strange just having the one, but very effective. Unfortunately the house got sold and the tree chopped down. They have never put anything in its place - just plain lawn. Sad really.

In our back garden *Banksia serrata* with his wrinkly trunk and extravagant limbs (one particularly hangs all over the place) is definitely one of our highlights.

#### Favourite indigenous plants

*Bulbine bulbosa* (Bulbine Lily), especially as it is now self sowing. *Cassinea arcuata* (Drooping Cassinia) on my nature strip is performing many roles. It has grown to about 4 ft high and is on the right side of our driveway. It is my marker plant for reversing up the driveway and I love the way the flowers will turn coppery soon. I took a sprig of flowers to the Foothills meeting and someone thought it was rubbish. Guess it is in the eye of the beholder!

*Themeda trianda* (Kangaroo Grass) would be another must. It is finally self sowing in a limited way, much to my delight. Would love to convert my lawn to it, but husband says no and dogs aren't allowing it to establish. Not sure how best to tackle this.

#### Basic genera

Selection is based partly on the evolution of the grower. Our first selections were similar to the ones named at the meeting - eucalypts, banksias, grevilleas, hakeas, acacias, callistemons, prostantheras, etc. But as my involvement with APS and interest in native plants developed I have gone away from planting these types of plants although they still form the backbone of my garden. But now I am just as inclined to put in rainforest trees and many more smaller plants such as a mass planting of *Brachyscome multifida* and correas.

*Do other members have ideas for basic landscape or design genera - those which they would choose to form the framework plants in their garden? If so, please let us know. DS*

---

#### **Leafy sticks (after Geoff Simmons NL 29)**

**Jo Hambrett NSW**

I have a lot of cordylines (*C. rubra* and *C. stricta*) in my garden. They are prolific seeders (which I love because it saves me work and money and it means they have found thg, perfect spot). Whilst I personally find their colour and texture a little 'flat' and uninteresting, they blend very well with dianella, *Carex appressa* (Tall Sedge), lomandras, Birds Nest Ferns, Gynea Lilies and rainforet tree/shrub species. Their upright form combined with droopy leaves and their darkish green colour mean they either blend well with these species or are a good backdrop for the lighter coloured ones.

I agree that *Alpinia caerulea* (Native Ginger) is a plant that also does well with these plants and appears to like the same conditions. I have it under a ficus and am watching it with interest. "Leafy sticks' do certainly have their place in a garden - their shape gives a 'patterning' to an area completely different to a small tree or shrub of comparable height. It is learning to use these different shapes in varying spaces that is one of the tricks in garden design.

---

## **SNIPPETS**

### **££2.new name for Sturt's Desert Pea?**

Peter Bailey writes to Gumnuts: "Several issues back you reported that Alex George had transferred Sturt's Desert Pea to *Willdampia formosa*. It is interesting to note that T.D. Macfarlane does not support that decision and that *Swainsona formosa* is still recognised by Western Australian Herbarium."

*(The name Swainsona formosa is also still recognised by the Melbourne Herbarium, so I shall relax for now. DS)*

### **A new role for a Bunya Pine?**

In the *Australian Plants for Containers SG NL*, April 1999, David Racliffe reported that a Bunya Pine

which had grown indoors in a pot for 21 years was just 1.8 metres tall and (from his description) looked magnificent. We have scarcely begun to realize the potential of our wonderful plants!

## MEETINGS

### Melbourne meetings

**Report of meeting on Sunday** May 7 at Karwarra, Kalorama

Marilyn Gray showed us two areas needing attention. The first was near the new entrance building, where water was draining the wrong way and collecting close to the building. To alter the drainage, one suggestion was to divert the water further up the road into a swale. Another was to change the camber of the road from the gate to beyond the entrance building, so water all drained to the opposite side of the road. A low wall on this side, similar to the existing new walls, would enhance the slightly formal look of the new entrance area.

In the second area, Golden Everlastings (*Bracteantha bracteata*) were looking colourful but straggly. The consensus was they should be removed permanently as they did not suit the nature of the garden and the colour did not make up for the rather untidy look. *Dianella tasmanica* (Tasman Flax-lily) was spreading enthusiastically - opinions were divided as to its possible removal. Some shrubs in this area were well worth retaining but the area did need renewal ("a new look").

Other topics discussed included mulch (see page 3) and examples of various categories of plants, such as trees for shade and feature plants (see page 19).

**Next meeting: Sunday July 2- 1.45 pm for 2 pm, at Linda Floyd's,**

Topic - decorating/ornamenting/enhancing the garden. Bring along any photos (prints or slides) or small ornaments (as well as ideas), please phone Diana Snape to indicate whether you can come.

**Remaining meetings** planned for this year - please mark the dates in your calendar now:

**September 3** - at **Chris Larkin's,**

for an exciting garden visit.

**December 3** - end of year meeting - venue to be decided.

### NE Vic Branch

**Next meeting: Sunday June 18,** 10.30 am for 11 am, **at Barbara Buchanan's**

Please phone Barbara \_\_\_\_\_ to indicate whether you can come.

**Further meetings: September 5** at Buchanans' and **November 12 or 19** at Datsons'.

### Svdnev branch

**Report of GDSG (NSW) South Coast weekend** 27-28 May

**Jo Hambrett** NSW

Our South Coast Meeting, hosted by Maureen & Norman Webb, was a great success. A Saturday night BBQ & Happy Hour for the 10 members who were staying over was a wonderful opportunity to meet fellow GDSG members and a further 8 turned up for the inspection of the Webb garden the next morning. From there we moved on to look at three public spaces which Norm & Maureen have 'reclaimed' from mown grass &/or inappropriate planting. They have been putting in suitable Australian & largely indigenous species - many rescued from sites which are being redeveloped so the previous landscaping was about to be destroyed - a thoroughly commendable achievement environmentally. It also keeps the local plants in the view of the local residents, many of whom have since asked the Webbs for help with their gardens.

After lunch we inspected two very different coastal gardens, one a virtual continuation of the bushland surrounding the house and the other a mixture of Australian & exotic plants in a picturesque collectors' style. It is always a pleasure to speak with the owners and be uplifted by their obvious devotion to their hobby (obsession?). We finished the day at Jervis Bay standing on the white sand, looking across a

thousand shades of blue to the great cliff at the entrance to the Bay. Our discussion ended with the question "What is a garden?" - the horticultural equivalent (I've decided) to "What is the meaning of life?".

**Next Sydney meeting:** please phone **Jo Hambrett** (02) with ideas or for information.

The report on **Norm & Maureen Webb's** garden will be included in the next Newsletter.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Peter Garnham *via*

As Peter has only just arrived home from a trip to France, the **financial statement** will be presented in the next Newsletter.

### MEMBERSHIP

188 subscriptions paid for the 1999/2000 financial year - approximately 225 members.

We're hoping that as many as possible of you will want to renew for the 2000-2001 financial year.

#### New members

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

Ann Fenton

*Ann is interested in all aspects of garden design, with (predominantly) Australian plants, especially smaller gardens.*

#### Membership renewals

*Thank you to all these members who renewed promptly (and early) - it is much appreciated.*

*Please let me know if your name doesn't appear in the next NL after you've paid.*

Ian Abbottsmith, Ingrid Adler, Michael Bates, Carol Bentley, Trevor & Beryl Blake, Shirley Bloomfield, Lynne Boladeras, Judy Boldiston, Ian Bond, Jennifer Borrell, Dave Bright, Barbara Buchanan, Maree Burgoyne, Lindsay Campbell, Dianne Clark, Yvonne Coventry, Ian & Tamara Cox, Brian & Mary Dacy, Gienda & Bernard Datson, Jennifer Davidson, Gillian Davies, Arthur Dench, Cherree Densley, Betty Denton, Jeanette Devlin, Rodger & Gwen Elliot, Wendy & David Evans, Shirley & Graham Fisher, Barrie Gallacher, Mary Graham, Sue Gwilym, Jan Hall, Jo Hambrett, Bev Hanson, Monika Herrmann, John Hoile, Annette & John Houseman, Jeffery Howes, Judith Hunt, Margaret Ingall, Brenton Isted, Mark James, Elaine & Ron Jell, Julie Jones, Allan & Helen Joyce, Colleen & Geoff Keena, Catherine King, Faleiry Koczkar, Chris Larkin, Jennie Lawrence, Margaret Lee, Nicole Lenfer, Geoffrey & Ann Long, Alex Mackenzie, Neil Marriott, Fiona McCallum, Gillian Morris, Deidre Morton, Erica Nathan, Leearne Neal, Anne Neild, Danie Ondinea, Dorothy Parris, Alison Payne, Don & Thel Peterson, Christine Proud, Michele Pymble, Lynette & Peter Reilly, Pam Renouf, Joy & Tony Roberts, Nicky Rose, Karen & Geoff Russell, Gwen Sanders, Chris Schaffer, Jan Schapper, Peter Shannon, Geoff & Maureen Short, Geoff Simmons, Diana Snape, Peter Swain, Elspeth Swan, Stephen Thomas, Lesley Waite, Jim & Pat Watson, Maureen & Norm Webb, Merele Webb, Pat & John Webb, Robert Willson, Tim Wilson, Debbie & Rudy Youssef, Alik Zouliou.

SGAP Qld, ASGAP Foothills, APS Keilor Plains, Library Aus. Nat. Botanic Gardens.

x If you are a photographer, please enter our photo competition. After all, GDSG members should star!!

x Don't forget my two requests on the front page. We do want your suggestions for: -

- a favourite combination (or two) of 2 or 3 (even 4 or more) plants;
- your favourite groundcover(s).

(You S/S allowed to mention flowers and flower colour as well as the beauty of the foliage.)

I'm looking forward to hearing from you soon (and I hope the postie will be amazed by the amount of mail!).

Best wishes from

*Diana*

Diana Snape