

ISSN 1039 - 9062

ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS
GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP



NEWSLETTER No. 31
August/November 2000

Study Group Leader/Editor: Diana Snape

Treasurer/Membership: Peter Garnham

Dear Members,

Thank you to the many members who have contributed to this Newsletter, again filling it with interest. It is always exciting to read contributions as they come in and then to see the tapestry of material in the finished NL. It is already our fourth one for this year, so if (as I hope to) I can manage another one in November (when the pressure of work on the GDSG book will be mounting) we'll have an impressive total of five NL for 2000.

My holiday in Queensland was wonderful with the 'beautiful one day, perfect the next' weather we missed out on two years ago when rain brought our holiday there to an abrupt end. We visited some splendid gardens in the Brisbane area and magnificent natural places, mainly away from the coast. In parts of inland Queensland we were surprised by the thought that, from the scenery and general appearance of the vegetation, we could easily have been in any one of several other Australian States - near the coast the differences are marked but inland seem much less so. I was greatly impressed by some of the trees - handsome silver-tinted Brigalow Wattle (*Acacia harpophylla*), graceful Weeping Myall (*A. pendula*) and the significant presence and stately appearance of the Bottle Tree (*Brachychiton rupestris*) - all wonderful features in the landscape! We saw just over 200 bird species ranging from brolgas, bustards and jabirus down (in size) to jacanas, superb parrots and red-backed wrens - July was more a bird than plant time of year.

I'm reviving my policy of trying to include common names of plants (as well as scientific names of course) wherever possible. (This policy may not be applied consistently.) I think it helps people who are not yet familiar with all the scientific names to ease into learning them, particularly with the many recent (discouraging) changes of scientific names. My apologies to any members who find it distracting.

NEXT MEETINGS

Please see details of these meetings in text (pages 19, 20 & 21)

MELBOURNE: Sunday September 3 at Chris Larkin's

NE VIC: Sunday September 3 at Barbara Buchanan's

SYDNEY: Sunday November 19 please contact Jo Hambrett

2 INDEX

- 3 CORRESPONDENCE extracts - Debbie & Rudy Youssef, Lynne Boladeras, John Hoile, Ian Percy,
- 4 Geoff Simmons, Jennifer Borrell
- 4 A stranger in a strange land - Peter Thompson (courtesy of Carol Bentley)
- 5 Special interests - Ros St Clair, Neil Marriott, Peter Cuneo, Pat & John Webb
- 5 Answers to questions
- 5 Olive Mellor and 'Woodend Bent' - Ian Percy
- 5 What is 'Woodend Bent'? - Eleanor Handreck
- 5 The 'Harbinger of Spring' - Stefanie Rennick
- 6 GDSG GARDEN PHOTO COMPETITION
- 7 Photographing gardens - Helen Moody
- 8 DESIGN
- 8 An Australian style garden - Jo Hambrett
- 9 A collection of thoughts - Penny Munro
- 9 Tranquillity or challenge? - Geoff Simmons
- 10 GARDENS
- 10 Starting a new garden - Debbie & Rudy Youssef
- 10 Norm & Maureen Webb's garden - Jo Hambrett
- 11 Plan of Debbie & Rudy's site
- 12 Our garden - Norm & Maureen Webb
- 12 Opening a garden - Penny Munro
- 13 Garden openings - Illawarra Grevillea Park; Wagga SGAP Group
- 13 Gardening a 'nature strip' - Diana Snape
- 13 BOOKS, MAGAZINES & the INTERNET
- 13 Viridans CD ROM biological database - Stefanie Rennick
- 14 On the Internet - Colleen Keena
- 14 DESIGN IDEAS
- 14 More about mulching - Jennie Lawrence, Diana Snape, Penny Munro
- 14 Ornamenting the garden - Penny Munro
- 15 PLANTS in DESIGN
- 15 Top 10' plants (via 'Gumnuts') - Jeff Howes
- 15 My favourite Australian plants - Bev Hanson
- 16 Top 10' Australian plants - Ian Percy
- 16,17 Favourite indigenous and feature plants - Jan Hall
- 17 Golden Penda, a feature plant - Annette Houseman
- 17 Some favourites - Penny Munro
- 18 Photos - arid area garden, Lynne Boladeras; suburban garden, Doug McIver
- 19 SNIPPETS
- 19 Pollen and allergies; Little mounds, not flat-tops; Wallaby tracks
- 19, 20 MEETINGS
- 21 TREASURER'S REPORT
- 21 Volunteer(s) needed
- 21,22 MEMBERSHIP

3

CORRESPONDENCE extracts

"At this stage our home is sitting in the middle of an excavated site with only a very small patch of garden (we had to plant something!). Any suggestions on the design or development of the garden would be greatly appreciated. We have enclosed a sketch and description of the proposed garden site. Interested visitors are always welcome." **Debbie & Rudy Youssef** Vic

Debbie & Rudy's plan is on page 11 following their description on page iO. I wrote to them with a few initial suggestions but I hope other members will also have some ideas to help them. They are keen to get started. (You can contact them directly - please see page 10). DS

"Yes, I agree totally with Tim North (NL30 p15) about the gardens as depicted on TV - instant gardens indeed. Slowly getting my Perth garden in some sort of shape - will take me years really.

Finally have a few photos of the garden at the Mining Camp. As most buildings are close together there are very few general views as buildings get in the way (about 500 rooms on site). The main requirement in the garden design for the camp is to provide residents with something to look at from their bedroom and to cut dust down. So the design is very different from what you would do for (say) a park of the same size." **Lynne Boladeras** W.A.

The photo (see page 18) shows just how successful Lynne's designing at the arid area Mining Camp has been, with much repetition of beautiful healthy plants combined with wonderful rich inland colours. DS

"On page 5 of the June Newsletter a report on a Melbourne meeting says that mulch is "not suited to frost prone areas." Could this be explained.

I have a copy of an American (Ortho publication) "Gardening in dry climates", where temperatures in the South West are more extreme than ours. I quote "The heat generated from sunlight on bare ground can kill roots to 8" deep. Soil beneath a 3" layer of mulch is ddeg F to 10deg F cooler than soil in direct sun, enabling roots to spread into fertile top soil."

It carries on to say, "Mulch . . . protects against cold in winter." I must do some trials here.

In reference to "living mulch", I find a resistance to using ground cover plants in this area because of snake hazards, particularly where young children play." **John HoHe** NSW

I have had no experience with frost myself, but members with experience said that a perfectly flat surface was better than an irregular mulched surface to resist frost in frost-prone areas. I suppose the irregularities act as focal points for ice to crystallize on and this matters if close to plants. (Mulch can be added or removed at times to change its effect.) Your report from SW America is very interesting. I'm sure mulch would be needed during days with such high temperatures. It's probably relatively light frost we're talking about in most of Australia. Really heavy frost or deep snow would be another matter, I think, with thick mulch providing some insulation against cold for the soil below.

Ground cover plants could certainly be a snake hazard where children play (as could grass). DS

"A recent summer meant a change of style in the front garden. Gone are my naturalistic plantings of grasses and sedges, Paper Daisies, brachyscomes and Kangaroo Paws of 3 years ago. They were starting to look a bit unhappy in the shade of mallee eucalypts, which are starting to form graceful young trees with a lot of character in their windswept trunks.

One of the resident Blue Tongue Lizards is none too happy with the sudden disappearance of his cover and no doubt he will retire to the wood heap or the patch of Blady Grass (Imoerata cvlindrica) along the

4

drive to sulk. I am making a new and wider path as part of the make-over but have yet to decide on the final design. New plantings include Brevnia sp. (with coloured foliage in the olive to burgundy range and red fruits)." Ian Percy NSW

'Make-overs' are a special challenge. I think it's wise to be brave and take the plunge when a section of a garden no longer satisfies, or when we have a new vision for our garden (or part of it). DS

"The modern tendency is to minimise debate or controversy in the written word. In times past, opinions were made more frequently and forcibly not only in science but in other aspects of life such as gardening. It is not necessary that only good or bad design should be debated but other aspects such as materials used, experimental designs or the pathway to a particular effect. In these days when news is instantly communicated and just as quickly forgotten, controversy is also truncated. Often statements are accepted without any thoughts of possible opposing views. This is rather a pity as debate may lead to a better understanding of a subject.

With regard to Australian garden design, examples may be the pros and cons of drought resistance, or the growing of hybrid plants such as grevilleas in gardens where escape into surrounding bushland could be undesirable. I suggest that members of the GDSG be invited to submit points for debate, initially without comment or explanation, and that subsequent letters be the means of communicating members' thoughts on the item - whether the comments are for or against, denigrating or supportive, or just a gardener's experience relevant to the subject." Geoff Simmons Qld

I'm all for debate but not the controversy often 'beaten up' by the media. I'm certainly happy to include in the NL any letters or articles which raise possibly controversial ideas, and subsequent responses. However I doubt it's necessary to try to specifically introduce such ideas. What do other members think? DS

"This article on 'Framework - long-lasting plants' is from 'Native Plants' (NSW APS Journal) April 2000. It's quite a good idea. I must say I was cheered to read of plants which I have growing which will live for a long time. It is very discouraging to have to replace 'holes' in the landscape." Jennifer Borrelli NSW

I am currently looking at design categories of Australian plants for the book and 'framework' plants constitute one such category - reliable/ hardy/ long-lasting plants. I'll try to include an extract of the article and the list Jennifer sent in the next NL. DS

Carol Bentley NSW sent me a copy of the following letter which appeared in the May edition of *Gardening Australia*. This letter is a good advertisement for what our Study Group is trying to do!

A stranger in a strange land

"May I challenge gardeners and landscapers in Australia to stop their digging for a while and tell me what they are up to?

Having visited Australia a number of times to gather material for a book on plants of the Southern Hemisphere, I gained the impression that, beautiful as many of your gardens are, almost all local gardeners look to European layouts for inspiration. Nostalgia rules; innovation and imagination are noticeably rare.

As far as I can see, Australians lag behind gardeners in New Zealand and South Africa when it comes to using local plants - all of which are distinctly different from those of Western Europe. The attractions of roses, camellias and herbaceous perennials speak for themselves in a land where, with ample water and tender loving care, they can thrive. Surely the time is overdue to move away from the 'English' to the first glimpses of the 'Australian' garden.

I shall be in Australia again next September and would be happy to discover that this is a country

5

where garden opportunities (and problems) are bring met with imagination and a willingness to break through restrictions imposed by inappropriate practices inherited from an increasingly distant past." **Peter Thompson** Shropshire, Britain

My first response is 'Hear, heart!' However I do wonder whether sometimes visitors from Europe may still find it hard to 'see' the beauty they are looking for in gardens so different from their own.

I met Peter Thompson in 1998, when he visited Australia to take photos for a book he was writing. He took photos in our garden and also in some that Paul Thompson had designed as well as spending some additional time with Paul. I don't know how many other 'Australian' gardens he visited. I received a letter from him recently about two prospective visits to Australia. Peter is interested in coming to a GDSG meeting in Melbourne next year if the timing fits in with his visit. DS

Special interests

Ros St Ciarr Vic "All year flowering, but plenty of cheerful flowers in autumn and winter to avoid the winter blues. Now, due to a recent move, I am interested in gardening under established endemic trees."

An appealing characteristic of Australian plants is that many flower in winter, and some in autumn (banksias and correas do both). ("Grow What Where", published by Nelson in 1980, has helpful lists.) In past NL we have had suggestions for planting under established eucalypts. DS

Neil Marriott Vic " The successful blending of a 'collectors garden' with good landscaping principles to create an aesthetically pleasing 'natural' looking garden. The creation of an aesthetically pleasing garden from a single genus collection (grevilleas)."

Who better to achieve what Neil is trying to do? And what better genus is there to achieve his second aim? DS

Peter Cuneo NSW "Designing with native annuals; mallee eucalypts and proteaceae."

Peter is the Horticultural Development Officer at Mount Annan Botanic Garden. Members who have had the opportunity to visit this garden will have enjoyed seeing some of his work there. Peter was also instrumental in establishing the use of Australian annuals in the planting for the Olympic Games. DS

Pat & John Webb Vic "Informal gardens; structure of plants; ease of maintenance; renewal and refurbishment; not too much of the "theory" - practical issues."

All interesting aspects of design - and a good reminder of the importance of practical issues. DS

Answers to questions from NL 30, pages 13 & 14

Olive Mellor and 'Woodend Bent'

Ian Percy NSW

I was interested to read the article about Olive Mellor, horticulturist and landscape architect, I treasure her book *Complete Australian Gardener Illustrated* (undated, published by Colorgraveure Publications, five years in the writing) particularly for some of the photos and drawings which give an indication of how the modernist art movement from the 1920s and 30s was influencing garden and design. Her chapter on hedges and hedge plants includes many Australian plants and is still hard to beat.

Mr Leslie Brunning in his sombre tome *Australian Home Gardener* (1950) gave her equal billing with Edna Walling as a designer. For more information on Olive Mellor, I am sure the Australian Garden History Society will have something on their database and would be happy to share it.

The 'Woodend Bent' grass was possibly a commercial name for a form of *Agrostis palustris*, a popular addition to lawn seed mixture of the time. It was perhaps not as popular as 'Duncan's No. 23', a re-selection of *A. canina* which was given 'star' treatment as the lawn grass for the War Memorial Shrine in Melbourne.

What is 'Woodend Bent'?

Eleanor Handreck SA

Eleanor Handreck, until recently editor of S.A. APS Journal, kindly tried to find out the answer to this question. She also identified *Agrostis* species, although not the same ones as Ian. From Eleanor's findings, the most likely candidate seems to be *Agrostis stolonifera* (Creeping Bent), one of three exotic Bent grasses used in lawns, bowling greens and golf courses. The other two are *A. capillaris* (Browntop Bent), and *A. gigantea* (Redtop Bent). All three are widely naturalized in almost all States, so when the article was written *A. stolonifera* may have been thought to be an Australian grass occurring in Woodend.

Two other indigenous grasses seem unlikely possibilities. *Deyeuxia quadriseta* (Reed Bent Grass) is widespread, a tufted perennial which can be propagated by seed or division of clumps. *Agrostis avenacea* (Blown Grass) is indigenous to Australia, an annual with loose spreading seedheads blown by the wind.

Eleanor's references were: '*Australian Grasses*' revised (1984 or later) by Nancy Burbidge and '*Grasses of Temperate Australia*' (1990) by Lamb, Forbes and Cade.

I checked also in '*A Handbook to Plants of Victoria*' Volume 1 by Jim Willis (1970, 2nd edition) and '*Flora of Victoria*' Volume 2 (1994). I could find no reference to Woodend or Woodend Bent in either book. Most indigenous *Agrostis* and *Deyeuxia* species seem to be alpine grasses. DS

The Harbinger of Spring

Stefanie RennickVic

Stefanie writes that the Harbinger of Spring is Early Nancy, *Wormbea* (formerly *Anguillaria*) *dioica* - four different names for one pretty little plant! (I knew 'Early Nancy' but I should have known that one too.)

Stefanie also says an Olive Mellor was Head Prefect of MacRobertson Girls High School in Melbourne in 1933 or 1934 - probably the same lady who planned and wrote the description of the garden.

GARDEN* DESIGNSTUDY GROUT

GARDENTPHoWcOMPEfrfION

As you know, an editorial committee of the GDSG 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 photo library.

We've already received the first entries for our photo competition, so it's off to a good start. APS NSW were very enterprising to print the following article on photographing gardens in their latest NL. It is not easy to photograph gardens well, so this article should be helpful. I'm hoping as many GDSG members as possible will enter the competition, with photos of their own garden or another one they visit.

7

Photographing gardens

Helen Moody NSW

These extracts are taken from an article ('Photographing plants and gardens') in 'Native Plants for NSW July 2000'. The article appeared originally in the 'Sydney Morning Herald' in July 1999.

Photography, like gardening, is a skill and an art form that takes practice. While equipment plays an important part, good equipment alone will not produce a stunning photograph. It is composition and lighting that will raise your picture a peg above the ordinary.

A basic requirement is a manual (or auto with manual over-ride) 35mm SLR (Single Lens Reflex) camera with a standard 50mm lens. A serious photographer should regard a tripod as a necessary piece of equipment. With a tripod you can lower shutter speeds to achieve small apertures (eg f16 or f22) that will give you greater depth of field. Choose a sturdy but lightweight tripod, for they aren't the easiest things to lug around.

The most universally recommended attachment to fit over the lens is a polarising filter that removes glare, reduces haze, enriches colours and gives more definition. Experts agree that slow, fine-grained film (ASA 25-50) will give you sharpness and maximise colour saturation. Professionals tend to favour Fuji Velvia although Kodachrome 64 has its fans, particularly for its archival potential.

Some personal tips

From Iw Hansen

- Choose a garden or section where plants are in prime condition.
- Seek out a strong composition or design and leave out extraneous things. Try to create a strong vertical or horizontal composition.
- If including the tops of trees have a blue sky for a good strong background; if shooting lower in the garden, overcast conditions will remove heavy shadows.
- To blur the foreground or background use a fast shutter speed and a large aperture (eg f2.8 or f4). To fuzzle the foreground, focus on the background; to achieve the reverse, focus on a plant in the foreground.

From Lorna Rose (also a professional garden photographer) on creating mood

- Photograph very early or very late in the day when the shadows are longer and softer. Be prepared, especially in summer, to shoot before sunrise.
- Strong light will add drama, which is good for plants with an architectural effect, or if you include a strong line of a building.
- For the reverse effect use a soft or fog filter, or shoot on an overcast day without too much sky; the latter will make your plants look glowing.

From Jim Lawler (who won the APS photo competition in 1999) on close-up photography (*but still relevant for gardens*)

- Home in on the subject and simplify the subject matter.
- Achieve contrast by focusing sharply on the subject and keeping the background out of focus.
- Avoid harsh shadows and contrasting light. Use a reflector if necessary - newspaper or tin foil will do.
- If there is a breeze, wait (patiently) for a lull.

I think it is important to have good photographs to record lovely gardens designed to show the special beauty of Australian plants. I would support the value of using a tripod. This gives you a chance to check carefully for any objects in the wrong place in your photo (reflecting metal, labels, garden tools, twigs or leaves, hands or feet, etc.) and remove them while the shot is still 'set up'. You can also make very precise adjustments, or take good photos in dim light. DS

8 DESIGN

An Australian style garden

Jo Hambrett NSW

(This is the talk that Jo gave earlier this year in Sydney. Remember to try to picture the illustrating slides.)

It is easy to conjure up pictures in our minds' eye of Italian, Mediterranean, Japanese, English or Californian style gardens but what do we "see" when we think about an Australian style garden?

Australia is a vast island continent with a huge array of climates, soils and ecosystems. Many of the ecosystems are under threat from a multitude of factors such as urban sprawl, feral animals, weeds, water, soil and air pollution, deforestation and so on. Water conservation and management is a major issue for Australia. Australia is a multicultural society and our differing cultural heritages will influence our concept of what makes a garden.

I feel strongly that, on the threshold of the 21st century, it is important to bear in mind the following facts when discussing an Australian style garden. Fundamentally there are two styles in garden design, formal and informal, and one garden can contain elements of both design styles. The formal garden tends to straight lines and circles, controlled planting and hard landscaping. It reached its peak in the European gardens of the Renaissance and Baroque periods. The informal style is influenced by Nature, therefore the planting is less controlled, the lines more asymmetrical and landscaping intervention 'softer'.

As creators of gardens we should consider the various roles a garden can play in our everyday lives - it should be more than a place for plants and gardening and the provision of recreational space. Gardens should be an extension of the surrounding natural environment, forming part of the 'green corridor' to link remnant bushland. They should also be a microcosm supporting a variety of plant and animal life no matter how small and, lastly, they should provide an aesthetic space which is a pleasure to both be in and look at.

Descriptive, non-horticultural phrases such as "contemplative spaces"; "a temple without walls"; "energy flowing through space" and "a celebration of light" have all been used to describe a garden and its impact upon the observer and occupant.

Patterns, smells and sounds are as important as colours, textures and shapes in gardens and garden design. The art of garden design is practised in four dimensions of space and time and the fundamental principles of design hold good for all gardens irrespective of size and type.

When you are creating an Australian style garden there are three important points to consider: -

1. make an intelligent site assessment - reinforce the spirit of the place
2. use predominantly Australian and indigenous plants
3. use garden furniture or art that is suitable and sympathetic

In order to make an intelligent site assessment treat the whole living space, that is dwelling, garden and surrounding land-, sea- or city-scape, as parts of the overall design. Gardens that echo their setting have an underlying logic that is visually satisfying.

Australian plants provide beauty and interest all year round with their flowers, leaves, trunks, textures and overall shapes. Now advances in horticultural science make many of these plants even more "garden friendly". There is a greater choice than ever for the gardening public, conscious of choosing more wisely for their garden in particular and the environment in general. Whilst a broad knowledge of Australian plants increases the range of options in a garden, there is an increasing awareness of the advantage of using plants indigenous to the area as a general matrix. These plants have evolved to suit the soil and climate and are the basis of the naturally occurring ecosystems in the area.

Many exotics can be mixed with Australian plants quite happily - when you do this, group plants of a similar appearance and the same horticultural needs together. This reduces maintenance and is visually

more appealing.

To my mind the Australian garden responds to both the primitive and the modern. Both these styles adequately reflect the subtlety and fragility of the landscape and the quality of the light. In the late 20th century we have rediscovered our need to live harmoniously with the earth and the extent of our alienation from it. The Australian garden style can provide both the symbolic and aesthetic expression of this need and be a part of the practical solution. If successful it will truly be a garden style of its time.

(Jo's paragraph on garden art was included in NL 30. DS)

A collection of thoughts

Penny Munro NSW

I debated long and hard what I should do with the following collection of thoughts (a bit of a ramble) - put it in the bin, or write it down. Here goes!

You know, we Australians are a funny lot. 95% or so live along that narrow coastal strip, yet it seems to me our spirit, our soul, our being, that essence that makes us Australians comes from that vast area beyond the coastal strip, a land of blue, blue sky (most of the time), red dirt, grey, silver bushes, a horizon that reaches to infinity. It is this gulf between the coastal strip and the inland that we seem to want to bridge, to bring to our gardens, a reflection of our spiritual heart when what we have created becomes one with our environment; the plants we use, the placing of rocks, the use of water, all come together to capture our 'Outback' wherever we can.

I'm glad Penny didn't "put it in the bin". I'm sure my spiritual heart is in inland Australia but my garden grows in a coastal strip environment - there is certainly a gulf to bridge. DS

Tranquillity or challenge?

Geoff Simmons Qld

Newsletter 29 (April/May 2000) lists a number of points to be considered in judging an Australian native garden. The heading of this contribution could be relevant to the first item on this list, 'pleasing spaces to look at and be in'. In my view the cardinal point, especially in large gardens where trees and shrubs are dominant, is the production of an atmosphere of tranquillity. A few facets to produce this are set out below.

The opposing view that gardens should be challenging no doubt has equally strong advocates. Juxtaposition of contrasting (discordant) colours or specialization to the extent of ignoring design are two that come to mind. While one may admire the zeal and knowledge of one who creates a garden consisting of cacti and succulents, there are limitations to this approach to gardening.

The significant feature of the first point is 'pleasing to be in' and it is interesting that this aspect is also expressed in the last item - 'appeal to the senses'. So what are factors that result in a tranquil garden? And do any of these have a special role in the design of an Australian garden?

1. A lack of any impediment to movement. If you have to fight your way through a garden there is little if any tranquillity, only challenge. This is so even if branches or foliage is sparse and wispy. Leaves, particularly those at eye level, are a nuisance. If recent rain or watering bends branches over paths, not only wetness but hindrance to progress may result.
2. Much has been written about finishes for paths. Uneven surfaces and abrupt changes in direction are two of the adverse situations. The placing of rectangular paving stones contrary to the direction of progress is challenging and does not result in a peaceful atmosphere.
3. Placement of physical structures is another point. A seat sited so that the occupant is surrounded by pleasant vegetation and not cut off in a dead end is probably a better choice.
4. Type of plant - does the Australian flora contain species that can be classed as peaceful or non-

peaceful? Previous Newsletters have noted that groves of casuarinas have a peaceful ambience.

5. Lack of noise - undoubtedly this is a desirable feature if tranquillity is the aim, although a soothing sound may also be appreciated. In my experience vegetation is not a good sound suppressor of traffic noise and other sounds unrelated to the garden surrounds. Has any one any views on what species of trees or shrubs produce too much noise?

It is obvious that there is a great challenge in producing either a tranquil/harmonious or challenging/noisy garden using Australian plants, australiana and the Australian environment. I think many gardeners would not design with this aspect as a major part of their thoughts. The ultimate judgement is on what one feels in the garden - not on its content.

GARDENS

Starting a new garden

Debbie & Rudy Youssef Vic

Site description

House sitting on an excavated site in a paddock (6.7ha), adjacent to a large area of remnant bush (32ha). Slope at the rear of the house up to 4m at highest point. Clay soil. West facing.

Plan on page 11.

Points to consider

- views
- fire risk (need to be aware of this)
- snakes! (we have young children so no water features or hollow logs)
- no water available at this stage (a future project)
- exposure to wind (from all directions!)
- bird attracting

Specific areas

- (1) The garden so far - small area (2m x 2m) with low shrubs and groundcovers (to retain views)
- (2) The bank on the north and east sides of the house. Low retaining wall and drainage completed. Back-filled behind the wall with sand. Slope is clay with a layer of original topsoil. This area is ready to plant. We had planned to make use of some rocks in this area.
- (3) Ideas needed! Need to keep low to retain views. Will have a path across front under verandah.
- (4) Limited area. Plenty of summer sun but not winter sun.

I think Debbie & Rudy have started very well by their own analysis of their site and requirements.

Please send in for the next NL any suggestions you have to help them and I will forward your ideas to them.

You could also phone Debbie and Rudy directly

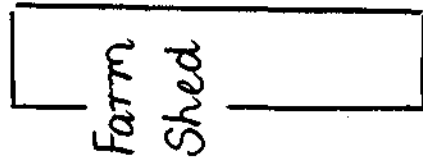
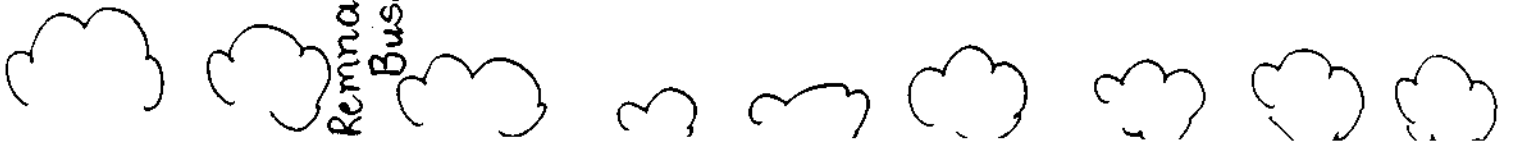
to give them a quicker response. DS

Norm & Maureen Webb's garden

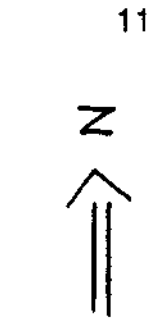
Jo Hambrett NSW

The house separates the informal and formal areas. From the front, the house could be set among natural bushland. The backyard is much larger than the front area but it has to house the aviaries for injured wildlife, the garage and the worm farms and compost heaps - the practicalities of gardening life!

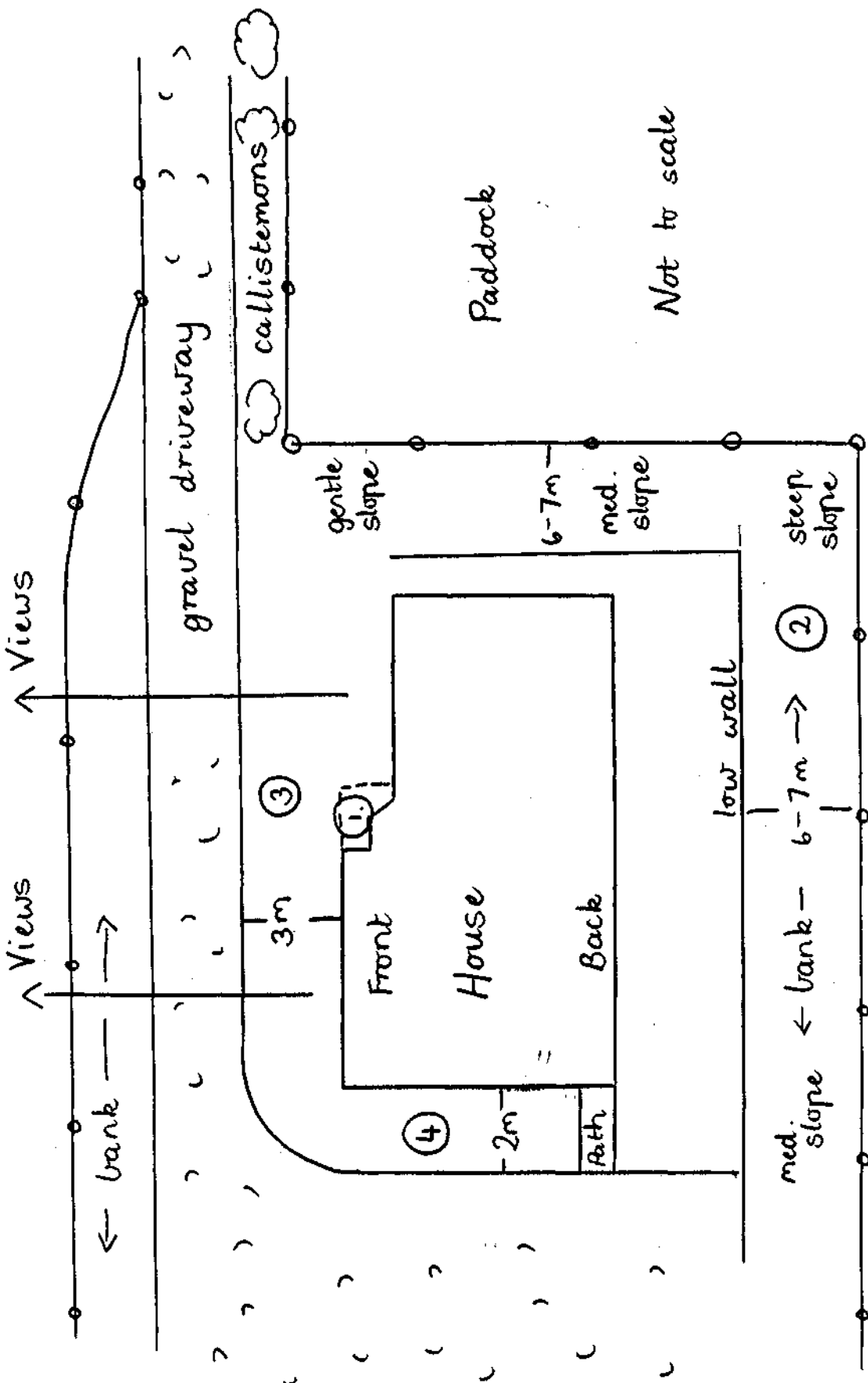
The Webbs' garden was enchanting to be in; the bold curved red path echoed the grevillea flowers and the large silver wattle about to burst into bloom hung heavy over the pale blue garage - a perfect colour combination. Many of the plants used have a combination of vertical and horizontal elements which have the effect of splitting the space into more spaces, making it seem larger and more intricate and therefore more interesting. The odd rounded shrubs matched the curve of a wall or the sweep of the path and Norm's beloved Grass-trees spilled the sunshine back into the garden. Old melaleucas arched horizontally over the path, echoing the strong horizontal lines in the garden and helping to 'widen' the rectangular block.



Farm Shed



Paddock



Views

Views

← bank →

gravel driveway

callistemons

gentle slope

6-7m med. slope

steep slope

3m

Front

House

Back

2m

Bath

low wall

6-7m →

med. slope ← bank

fence line

Paddock

Not to scale

Remnant Bush

(Continued from page 10)

Maureen's ancestors provided a very unusual and discussion-provoking piece of 'garden art' as did the resident Bower Bird. The garden works very successfully when viewed from the verandah above the garden or, much higher up, the study. The design is strong enough to work from both angles. I think close planting, lots of TLC and clipping/pruning help here when one is viewing a garden from above. We thoroughly enjoyed our meander through the Webb garden.

Our garden

Norm & Maureen Webb NSW

(Extracts from a description supplied to Jo Hambrett before the garden visit.)

Our garden was started in 1990. We had both always leant towards a natural garden that would be a habitat for native birds and animals. Whereas our front garden could be called a 'natural garden', there is no way the back garden could. There is definitely an inclination towards formality, with a touch of wildness in the bracken fern and climbers.

We have learnt a great deal from our time with the APS (SGAP). We now believe strongly it is necessary to plant local plants to supply food and habitat for local wildlife. The smattering of indigenous plants in our garden is definitely drawing birds and other wildlife. We have recorded many native bird species in our garden - a Whip Bird and a Wonga Pigeon this year, an Eastern Yellow Robin and Jackie Winters in the area. The resident Bower Bird's bower has a wonderful array of collected blue pegs, bottletops and whatever. We have daily visits from our favourites, small birds that use our bird bath (filled regularly through the day), Grey Fantails, Brown Thornbills and wonderful Superb Blue Fairy Wrens.

Whilst the garden was planned for birds and wildlife, we also believe that a garden should be designed. Australian plants need to be displayed in a way that would entice non-native gardeners to find that Australian plants are beautiful as well as supplying habitat for local wildlife.

Some special features of the garden

The bower: The Bower Bird is about 9 years old, as they do not mature until 6 years and he has been around for over 3 years in his beautiful black-blue plumage. This is the third bower built in this position (it has been demolished twice by a rival).

The gravestone of Maureen's great great grandparents who travelled from Ireland to Australia on the Golden Empress, arriving in Australia on 18th January 1864. It's probable they met on the ship and married at Milton in 1868. Maureen is now living in fairly close proximity to her ancestors' Australian beginnings.

Opening a garden

Penny Munro NSW

In 1998, I was approached by the Coolamon Rotary Club to open my garden, together with a friend who has a typical exotic garden (roses, camellias, etc), to raise money for the Westmead Childrens Hospital, Sydney. We had about 1500 people through during the weekend, raising about \$5000. People were quite amazed that a 'native' garden could look so pretty and colourful - all the scaevolae were flowering. Since that weekend, I have been approached by many local garden clubs, church groups, special interest groups and fundraising committees for various charities, including the Cancer Council, to open the garden. On all occasions I have been more than willing and, again, the reaction is surprise - "I didn't think a 'native' garden could look this good." Visitors are also served morning teas with quandong jam from my own trees, a real treat for the older generations who can remember the fruit from their childhood.

Well done, Penny. There's nothing like an open garden to show people (literally thousands of them!) what can be achieved with Australian plants. Don't forget to take some photos of scenes in your garden (maybe when all those scaevolae are in flower). DS

13

Garden openings

The ~~Wawarra Grevillea Park~~, is reputed to have a wonderful display of grevilleas (and other Australian plants). It's open (from 10 am to 4pm) only a few times each year and the remaining opening times for this year are: Saturday 16 & Sunday 17 September; Saturday 23 & Sunday 24 September

The Park is located at the rear of Bulli Showground, a short walk from Bulli railway station. Turn off the Pacific Highway at the Woonona-Bulli Sports Club Gust south of Slacky Creek). Admission \$3 (accompanied children free).

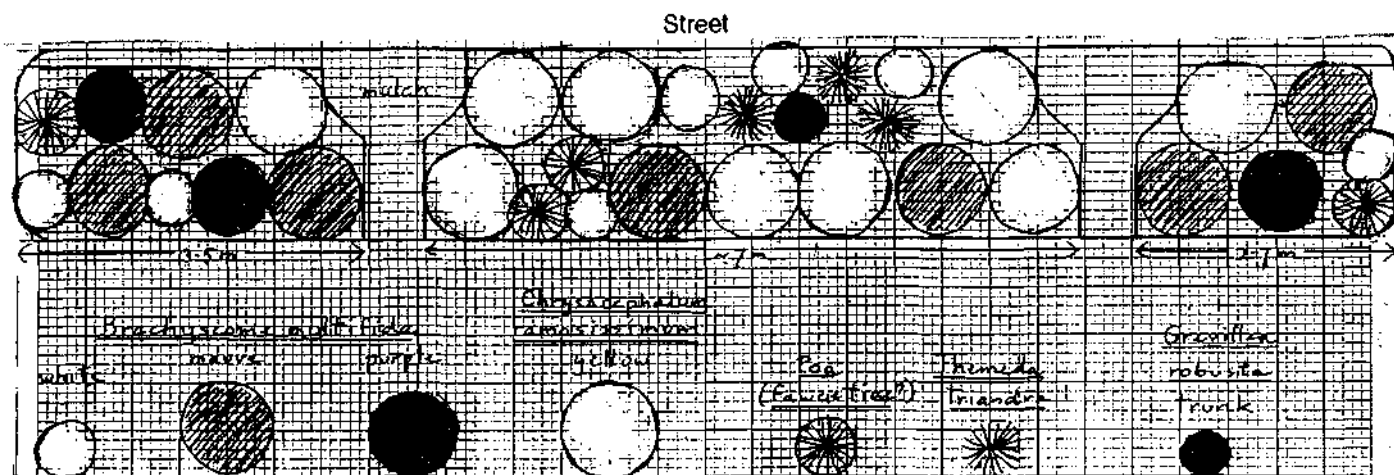
The Waaaa SGAP Group is holding an Open Garden Day on Saturday September 2nd 2000. There will be four gardens, all different, all worth seeing. \$5 entry, plant sales, demonstrations, advice, etc. Also a Wagga Group member Matthew Hurst has his garden in the Open Garden Scheme 21 & 22 October 2000.

I've rather lost touch with the Open Garden Scheme this year but I expect the book for the next season will be coming out soon. Please let me know of any Open Gardens featuring Australian plants. DS

Gardening a 'nature strip'

Diana Snape Vic

For a long time we have intended to replace the grass of our 'nature strip' (the only grass remaining in our care) by a low garden. After killing the grass (two sprayings with 'Roundup') and waiting for the autumn rains that never came, we have planted it at last this winter. We used two favourite species of daisies - Yellow Buttons (now suffering as *Chrysocephalum apiculatum* ssp. *ramosissimum*) and *Brachyscome multifida* in mauve, purple and white. There are two species of grasses, *Themeda triandra* (Kangaroo Grass) around the one central street tree, *Grevillea robusta* (Silky Oak) and a poa, probably *P. fawcettiae* (originally *P. 'australis*). The plan shows the layout with garden and two pathways, all heavily mulched. Until the plants are established we'll leave a mini fence of low stakes and cords around the garden sections.



BOOKS, MAGAZINES & THE INTERNET

Viridans CD ROM biological database

Stefanie Rennick Vic

Stefanie reports that Paul Gullan (from Viridans biological database firm) is preparing a series of databases on all aspects of indigenous Victorian wildlife - plants (including mosses and weeds), fungi, butterflies, birds, animals, etc. She is most excited about the one on Victorian indigenous plants, which is being kept up-to-date and can be accessed by district - a most valuable resource. This is especially true when local vegetation is still being lost through ignorance and lack of care of the relevant authorities.

Stefanie thinks the same is being done by at least some other States. Could members from other States please let us know details if this is so?

On the Internet

Colleen Keena Qid

The following site may be of interest:

<http://aardening.about.com/rtomegarden/aardening/msubmenu2.htm>

The following is by John Mason, Principal, Australian Correspondence Schools
Designing a new home garden

<http://www.acs.edu.au/aardnews/article4.html>

DESIGN IDEAS

More about mulching

Jennie Lawrence Tas

As I do not own a car to take prunings to the tip, I deposit all the fleshy young growth in one of the 4 compost bins; the woody bits are left on the ground, defoliated small branches on the paths. Very big prunings are used to hold up the soil, as my garden is on top of a hill and sloping down. That leaves only the in-between stuff which I occasionally burn in the incinerator.

The result of all this natural mulching is that not many exotic weeds or grasses from neighbours take a hold and these days I spend little time removing weeds, which in the past took ages.

Mulch in natural and unnatural environments

Diana Snape Vic

Since **Geoff Simmons'** original article (NL29 p14), I have been thinking about the use of mulch in our gardens. One common reason for using mulch is to suppress weeds (as in Jennie's garden, and ours). Those of us who live in 'developed' areas, close to other people and their different horticultural tastes (e.g. ivy), contend with weed seeds carried by wind, water, birds or ants into our gardens. Our environment is quite unnatural and we have to work with what we've got. What a contrast with truly natural areas where weed seeds barely exist (unless transported there by human intervention). If mulch does not occur there naturally, it is not part of the natural scene and is not needed there. It's different in suburbia!

A warning

Penny Munro NSW

Be wary of using too much eucalyptus mulch. Up here (Coolamon) the white ants love it and will attack grevillea species, their root systems, also hakeas in the same areas. I use a pine - eucalypt mulch.

Ornamenting the garden

Penny Munro NSW

Garden ornaments can add another dimension to a garden - they can be practical, like seats, etc. I had some old ones, painted them bright purple/blue and they look fantastic, a splash of colour like the flowers of an eremophila, the flash of a crimson rosella. I have a sundial, on top of a tree stump, lots of terracotta which matches the red dirt, looks great with grey and silver. Terracotta dishes on stumps for birdbaths, black metal figures (not Grecian) - black, terracotta and silver foliage really work well together.

The local council were doing some roadworks and had to move some very large granite rocks and asked me if I would have some use for them. If not they were going to be blasted, so of course I yelled 'yes'. They are going to become a meditation area, a place of reflection, of contemplation. That's my idea, whether it will work or not I don't know. All my ideas look great in my head but getting them to look like that is the hard part.

Penny's description really brings those colours to the mind's eye - who would want green? I'll look forward to hearing (and seeing a photo of ?) how her meditation area works out. DS

'Top 10' plants (via 'Gumnuts')**Jeff Howes NSW**

'Gumnuts', the APS (SGAP) Email Newsletter from Brian Walters, NSW, includes responses to his 'Top 10' request - readers' lists of 10 (or more) attractive, reliable plants that are growing well, sent to Brian at sgap@ozemail.com.au. The following is from Jeff, a GDSG member.

In my opinion asking readers for their top 10 plants does not prove too much. Before I considered using any plants from readers' 'top 10', I would need to know other vital information such as: where in Australia is the garden situated, what is the soil type the plants are growing in, what aspect are the plants in - morning sun, afternoon sun or dappled light etc. Also, are the top 10 plants ones that I can grow or wish I could grow?

Having said all that, I will now list my top 10 plants. They are all ones that I am growing, in a 5 to 10 cm deep soil over a clay base on a relatively flat block in the Pennant Hills area, NW of Sydney. They are attractive in and out of flower or are good for cut flowers, pest free or low maintenance.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 <i>Crowea</i> 'Festival' (my <u>too one</u>) | 2 <i>Senna artemisioides</i> (Silver Cassia) |
| 3 <i>Banksia spinulosa</i> (Hairpin Banksia) | 4 <i>Hibbertia serpyllifolia</i> |
| 5 <i>Grevillea speciosa</i> (Red Spider Flower) | 6 <i>Prostanthera ovalifolia</i> 'Rosea' (Oval-leaved Mint bush) |
| 7 <i>Pimelea ferruginea</i> 'Bon Petite' | 8 <i>Micromyrtus ciliata</i> (Fringed Heath Myrtle) |
| 9 <i>Lambertia formosa</i> (Mountain Devil) | 10 <i>Melaleuca thymifolia</i> (Thyme-leaved Honey-myrtle) |

It's interesting that almost all the plants on Jeff's list could be contenders for my "top 10" list in Melbourne, on another clay-based block. I'd be likely to include 1, 3, 4, 6, 8 & 10 (all growing in my garden now, though not the particular forms). I have also grown 2 & 7, but not 5 & 9 which I probably think of as characteristically Sydney plants. Jeff's plants are all relatively small, the largest being Banksia spinulosa (one of my very favourites) and Prostanthera ovalifolia.

Jeff's comments about the usefulness (or not) of lists of 'top 10' plants - and these also apply to any plant recommendations - have to be met by suggesting that gardeners always need to look up about recommended plants before they try growing them in their own garden (unless they are real gamblers). This is the approach we'll probably have to take in our GDSG book, aimed at a very wide geographical readership. There are so many variables to consider, even within the same suburban street (or garden!). The same advice about looking up plants applies also to the following three lists by professional designers. DS

My favourite Australian plants**Bev Hanson Vic***(Bev lives in Melbourne.)*

When I thought about this topic, some of the exquisite Western Australian plants came to mind first, like the deep rich blue dampieras or leschenaultias, etc, but perhaps a more useful list would be those which are very hardy, long flowering and useful as features in the landscape.

Trees

- *Eucalyptus mannifera* ssp *maculosa* (Red Spotted Gum) - its striking trunk and mottled grey and pink bark with drooping foliage make it an ideal feature tree.
- *Melia azedarach* (White Cedar) - it is deciduous and therefore most useful where shelter from the hot summer sun but opening up to winter sun is important, but it grows to 10 metres!

Shrubs

16

- Grevilleas - the hybridised 'Superb' and 'Robyn Gordon' varieties flower year round.
- Correas- *C. bauerlennii* & *C. ref/eva* forms.
- *Epacris longiflora* and *E. impressa* (Heaths)
- *Prostanthera* sp. (Mint-bushes)
- *Persoonia pinifolia* (Pine-leaved Geebung)
- *Pimelea ferruginea* (Rice-flower)
- *Erlostemon myoporoides* (Long-leaf Wax-flower)
- *Acacia boormanii* (Snowy River Wattle)
- *Thryptomene saxicola* (Rock Thryptomene)
- *Phebalium squamulosum* (Forest Phebalium)
- *Calytrix alpestris* (Snow Myrtle)

~~Tufted or strap-leaved plants~~

- *Anigozanthos* sp. (Kangaroo Paws)
- *Orthrosanthus multiflorus* (Morning Flag)

~~Groundcovers~~

- *Brachyscome* sp.
- *Scleranthus biflorus*
- *Pratia pedunculata* (Pratia)
etc.!
- *Scaevola* 'Mauve Clusters' (Fan-flower)
- *Chrysocephalum apiculatum* & *C. ramosissimum*
(Golden Buttons, Yellow Buttons)

'Top 10' Australian plants

Ian Percy NSW

(Ian lives on the south coast of NSW.)

1. *Breyenia* ssp 'Iron Range' is definitely in my list of Top 10' - it is deciduous in winter and forms a network of delicate fine stems.
2. *Acmena hemilampra* (Broad-leaved Lilly Pilly) for the glossy foliage and it lends itself to soft shaping with shears.
3. *Themeda triandra (australis)* (Kangaroo Grass) - I like the colour changes through the year and the delicate seedheads. It looks stunning against gravel or mulch.
4. *Eucalyptus obstans (obtusifolia)* (Port Jackson Mallee) - my 'giant' Bonsai shaped tree.
5. *Syzygium paniculatum* (Magenta Cherry) dwarf form, the best for hedges and topiary.
6. *Eucalyptus caesia* - never stops flowering.
7. *Correa* - all! can't get enough of them!
8. *Callistemon polandii* for the richly coloured flowers which are a very special 'tapestry' red color (and it makes a great hedge and hide for little birds).
9. *Acacia podalyriifolia* (Mt Morgan Wattle) - wonderful perfumed flowers say Winter to me.
10. *Banksia spinubsa* (Hairpin Banksia) for the honey-coloured flowers and as a nicely shaped shrub and bird perch.

(Of course there are lots of others!)

Favourite indigenous plants

Jan Hall Vic

Jan lives in Yarrawonga in northern Victoria, where growing conditions can be difficult with clay soil, frost and a flat site (plus several years of drought!).

- *Acacia acinacea* (Gold-dust Wattle) is the most attractive of our local wattles. Its smaller size (especially the dwarf form) is acceptable to many gardeners and can be pruned.
- *Enchylaena tomentosa* (Ruby Salt-bush) has two forms, one prostrate with green foliage and the other rounded silver, both with red berries. Its self-seeding habits have helped to fill spaces in difficult dry spots. (It has become a bit too willing now and needs weeding out of special areas.)
- *Brachyscome basaltica* var. *gracilis* (Basalt Daisy) - I've had so many disappointments with short-lived

17

glamorous cultivars, but the local just dies down during the dry, or keeps going if I water it. Specially suited to poorly drained, winter-wet positions.

The acacia and brachyscome are also indigenous to the Melbourne area and are among my favourite locals too. Ruby Salt-bush is, I think, a marvellous plant for many tricky soil and climate conditions. It is long-flowering and the berries can age from yellow to dark red. DS

Feature plants

Jan Hall Vic

Trees

- *Brachychiton discolor* (Lacebark) - shade eventually, lovely pink flowers and distinctive among the predominating eucalypts here. *B. rupestris* (Bottle Tree) is also a feature.
- *Angophora hispida* (Dwarf Apple) - small, angular framework, leafy, and lovely red buds and tips.
- *A. bakeri* (Narrow-leaved Apple) - another attractive small tree, finer leaves
- *Eucalyptus cordata* (Heart-leaved Silver Gum) - surprising blue-grey, dense foliage. Why surprising? I didn't expect it to be so drought and clay tolerant, plus the leaf colour really shows out.

Shrubs

- *Grevillea leucopteris* (White-plumed Grevillea) for the larger garden, a feature here.
 - Eremophilas for silver foliage - *E. compacta*, *E. bowmanii* (Bowman's Emu-bush), *E. glabra* (Fuchsia-bush) upright and prostrate, *E. latrobei* (Crimson Turkey-bush) & others not readily available but will be eventually.
 - *Grevillea insignis* - holly-type leaves and lovely deep pink flowers.
 - *G. thyrsoides* - silver leaf, pink flowers. Good prostrate in the right spot, and good grafted standard.
-

Golden Penda (*Xanthostemon chrysanthus*) - a feature plant

Annette Houseman NSW

Golden Penda is an attractive, many-branched tree with dark green glossy leaves and reddish new growth. Although a native of the Queensland coastal rainforest, it flowers best if planted in full sun. In its natural habitat it can grow very tall, however in cultivation judicious pruning after flowering will keep it to a manageable size. 'Fairhill Gold' (or 'Expo Gold') is a superior form said to grow only 3m tall and 1.5m wide. The golden stamens, after which the genus is named, are 2-3cm long and most eye-catching. Nectar-feeding birds are attracted to the large, dense flowerheads in autumn and winter.

I keep thinking - so many marvellous rainforest plants! We are only just beginning to get to know them, especially down south. DS

Some favourites

Penny Munro NSW

Feature plants UP this way: *Eremophila nivea* - touch it, smell it, look at it, grow it.

As to planting *Eucalyptus caesia* 'Silver Princess' in a clump, well I did, about 3-4 years ago, 3 trees and it looks stunning. Also *Eucalyptus woodwardii*, 3 trees underplanted with *Acacia iteaphylla* dwarf form.

Shade tree: *Etaeocarpus reticulatis* (Blueberry Ash) - evergreen, rather slow but long lived, doesn't attain its rainforest/temperate forest height in the inland.

Many members' suggestions for **successful plant combinations** and **favourite groundcovers** have come in already. These will be very helpful as examples to illustrate certain chapters in the GDSG book. I'll aim to include a selection in the next Newsletter, though how many will depend on space. More recommendations of plant combinations or plants in any of the categories mentioned - hardy framework plants, feature plants, shade trees, groundcovers - are still welcome. DS

Garden photos

Black and white does not do these photos justice but it does give an impression



A flourishing garden designed by **Lynne Boladeras** for an area Mining Camp garden in W.A. Taller shrubs are *Callistemon* Gawler River Hybrid (red flowers) and *Hakea francissiana* (red-pink). Lime green low shrubs are *Melaleuca* 'Golden Gem'¹ and the groundcover is *Grevillea thelemanniana*.



Front entrance garden re-designed by **Doug McIver** after a GDSG visit in February 1999. The small formal lawn is bordered by brick paving and yellow Kangaroo Paws (*Anigozanthos*) edge the verandah. Past the *Grevillea* *Robyn Gordon*¹ on the left a 'wallaby track'¹ leads round to the more naturalistic side garden

19 SNIPPETS

Pollen and allergies

An article in a recent *New Scientist* (June 3) stated that the rise in allergies in modern times is related to the increasing use in landscaping of trees which produce large amounts of wind-borne pollen for long periods. Asthma, for example, is now much more common than say 20 years ago and the writer says that this corresponds to the increased use of such trees (and other plants).

To quote: *Insect-pollinated trees are used less and less. Wind-pollinated cultivars are used more and more. . . . If trees are separate-sexed, they usually plant only males. Female trees shed 'litter': old seeds, seedpods, messy fruit."*

This article was written in the Northern Hemisphere - I wonder whether it applies here. Do we need to be wary of those magnificent male casuarinas? I'll ask member **Catherine Drew** when she returns home from studying such things in the USA. DS

Little mounds, not flat-tops

Stefanie Rennick Vic suggests not cutting grasses flat to ground level (when imitating a kangaroo or bushfire in winter) but instead trimming them back into neat little mounds for a more attractive appearance. They will grow away just as happily. Stefanie uses her local Wallaby Grass (*Danthonia racemosa*, a soft vertical grass, to combine well with *Microlaena stipoides* (Weeping Grass) in a 'lawn'.

Wallaby tracks

I think it was **Geoff Simmons** who introduced this term, for those narrow, minor but useful paths wandering through the garden. I have used it often since and **Merele Webb** tells me that a number of her clients also like the term. So remember, if it's not a wide, major pathway, it may well be a 'wallaby track'. DS

MEETINGS

Melbourne meetings

Report of meeting on Sunday July 2-at Linda Floyd's

Linda's mature but ever-changing garden was the perfect place for a meeting with the theme of decorating or ornamenting the garden. Linda is an artist and sculptor and her garden is a living studio where she puts her ideas into practice. Her design is bold and assured, unlike the hesitant design of many (most?) of us, as she makes sculptural use of plants as well as structures. Linda pays scant attention to flowers but concentrates her attention on plant forms and, in addition, their foliage, seed pods and other materials (both alive and dead). Description of individual parts of this garden does not convey the character of the whole - a visit is the only way to appreciate fully this truly unique garden, which Linda describes as "surreal".

A quick discussion of favourite groundcovers resulted in a list (see next NL). Then we looked at slides or prints showing a variety of examples of ornamentation of gardens (both Australian and overseas) brought by a number of members - Diana Snape, Peter Garnham, Nicky Rose, Merele Webb, Bryan Loft and Joan Barrett - to complete a stimulating meeting.

Next meeting: Sunday September 3- 2pm start

She'll have a sign out.

The focus of this meeting is on Chris's garden - situated on a site that slopes to the north, so is sunny and well drained as well as having excellent soil - a treat in store if you haven't yet visited it!

Please phone Diana _____ to indicate whether you can come.

Special end of year meeting: Sunday December 3 at the beautiful garden of **Trevor & Beryl Blake**, recognized for its environmental significance in the Ringwood area. Details in next NL - note the date now.

NE Vic Branch**Report of meeting on Sunday June 18 at Barbara Buchanan's**

This was the third of four meetings to follow one garden through the seasons. May had average rainfall so finally water was penetrating through the soil and the garden was looking perky. Late May also brought snow and wreaked a lot of damage in the form of broken boughs and flattened shrubs - those growing out towards the light gave a surface for snow to collect on and went down. Some were split beyond repair, others lost their centre which gives them a chance to survive if they are not too mis-shapen. There was plenty of colour to be found - correas and croweas were major contributors, along with *Banksia spinulosa* forms and a magnificent inflorescence on the 'Lemon Glow' cultivar. Hakeas and grevilleas had a few flowers starting and *Stenocarpus sinuatus* (Firewheel Tree) was a mass of buds and flowers. The snow losses added to earlier drought ones leave a lot of scope for planting.

Discussion time was brief. Jan Hall showed illustrations of the Cranbourne display which had been described in the NL. We then went to Maisie and Stan Enders' property - Maisie is well known locally for her animal refuge and I am afraid it was her wards who stole the show. Apart from one Australian section (which Maisie has plans to rejuvenate and extend) the garden is exotic. We were met under a Ginkgo which was a blaze of gold in the afternoon sun, from the fallen leaves to the sparse remaining cover seen against a clear blue sky. It was enough to seduce the stoutest heart but overall there was little else in the garden to see. I think seeing the two gardens in the one day showed the value of our own plants - they won hands down. Or am I prejudiced?

Next meeting: Sunday September 3 at Buchanans' 10.30 am. Topics NL and formal/natural divide.

Please phone Barbara () to indicate whether you can come.

Following meeting: **Sunday November 12** at **Glenda and Bernie Datsons'** Albury.

Svdnev branch

Report of last meeting held on May 27/28

Maureen & Norm Webb NSW

Jo Hambrett asked us to write about the two gardens we visited in Vincentia, near Jervis Bay National Park.

1. Reg and Nance Eading's garden had won 2nd place in the Jervis Bay Garden Competition (overall section). It is pleasing to the eye, draws in many wonderful birds and is definitely a habitat garden. It is on a steep site with many of the original *Eucalyptus sclerophylla* (Scribbly Gum) intact. The front section has no lawn and the garden is built around a steep driveway with a mixture of Australian and exotic species. My eye was caught by Grass-trees, and crowea and thryptomene species flowering well.

The large rear garden has a pleasing mixture of Scribbly Gums, some standing alone but others intermixed with garden plots cut from neat Buffalo Grass lawn. At the rear is a raised assortment of large bush rocks made into a naturalistic garden. Plants such as the small weeping leptospermum from Darwin, the unusual form of *Eucalyptus sideroxybn* with a long, long trunk and wonderful weeping branches of cream flowers, as well as *Syzygium coolminianum* combined to form an unusual and interesting display.

2. On a similar steep site is a garden which won 1st prize in the native section of the Jervis Bay Garden Competition. Two thirds of the block is taken up by natural bushland beside a densely foliated creek (some bricked). The house has been built to blend in with the surroundings with open glassed rooms to take advantage of their private bush views. Adjacent to the glassed interior are outdoor living areas which blend with the buffer zone of lawn, retained by concrete feature block walls and cultivated Australian plant gardens. After a visit to the Jervis Bay N.P., final comments on gardening and design were running thick and fast, and queries about the next area to be visited. We hope all are looking forward to the next GDSG NSW outing.

21

Next Sydney meeting: Sunday November 19

This meeting will be held at ~~Fembrook Garden and Art Gallery~~ at Kurrajong Heights. Jo Hambrett says that the woodland and rainforest gardens are supposed to be very beautiful. They were created by horticulturist Les Musgrave and the art gallery is the working studio of botanic artist Elaine Musgrave. The garden entry fee of \$5.50 per person includes tea, coffee and biscuits.

Please phone Jo to indicate whether you can come.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Peter Garnham Vic

Volunteer(s) needed

Peter Garnham has told me that after being Treasurer and Membership Officer for six years he feels it is time to hand over to some-one else. Peter has done a fantastic job and I'm sure it will be difficult to replace him. If any member would be able to assist with these Jobs please let me know.

The two jobs are closely linked but could be done by different people. The busy time of year for the Treasurer is membership renewal time in June/July. The Treasurer then has to let the Membership Officer know which members have renewed. This could be done by phone, fax or email.

The main times for the Membership Officer are when the quarterly Newsletters are posted out. The membership list is checked each time and address labels have to be run off, so computer skills help here. Of course I need the address labels to mail out the Newsletter. **Linda Floyd** Vic. has been helping Peter by doing the address labels for the past six years but is unable to continue doing this.

I think it would be preferable (but not essential) to have Melbourne member(s) in these positions for easier and quicker contact with me. I hope that another GDSG member(s) will feel able to volunteer.

Thank you very much to Peter and also Linda for their work over the past six years. DS

FINANCIAL STATEMENT - Quarter ending 30/6/2000

<u>Receipts</u>		<u>Expenses</u>	
Subscriptions	1080.00	Postage	260.34
Donations	10.00	Photocopying	503.25
Interest	4.69	Donations	45.00
		Bank fees	<u>1.61</u>
	<u>\$1094.69</u>		<u>\$810.20</u>

<u>Balance in bank</u> 23/5/00	\$3567.54
Cheques & cash in hand 30/6/00	<u>395.00</u>
Total funds 30/6/00	<u>\$3962.54</u>

MEMBERSHIP

142 subscriptions for 2000/2001 financial year paid as at 15/8/00 - approximately 172 members.

A reminder that renewals for 2000-2001 are now overdue

Because of the earlier NLS this year many members renewed early (which was great) but we still haven't hear from a number of members.

Please send in your subscription straight away if you wish to continue your membership - we hope you will! Cost has not changed - overseas member \$20; individual (or 2 members at one address) \$10; pensioner \$5.

22

New members

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

Margaret Moir

Barry Nilsson

Ros St Clair

Mary Ward

Change of address

Laurie Dunn

Judith Hunt

Membership renewals

Thank you to all these members who renewed promptly - it is much appreciated. Apologies to any members who had renewed but whose names weren't included in the last A/L. Please let me know if your name doesn't appear in the next NL after you've paid.

Ingrid Adler, Joan Barrett, Shirley Bloomfield, Leeanne Brockway, Jacci & Robert Campbell, Shirley Cam, Rosemary Cumming, Peter Cuneo, Jennifer Davidson, Wendy de Carolis, Kay Dempsey, Catherine & Jeremy Drew, Laurie Dunn, Judith Dykes, Gloria Freeman, Christine & Angelo Gaiardo, Peter & Wilma Garnham, Ron Gornall, Jan Gough-Watson, Marilyn Gray, Caroline Gunter, Robyn Hartley, Anthony Heawood, Bev Kapernick, Barbara & Paul Kennedy, Pam King, Jo Kopp, Pat & Ron McKeown, Penny Munro, David Oakley, Jonathan & Georgina Persse, Ross Smyth-Kirk, Julie Sliferski, Margaret Stanton, Gloria Thomlinson, Annette Warner, Pat & John Webb, Carol & Frits Wilmink

APS SA, APS Tasmania, SGAP Canberra, SGAP Qld

Life seems very busy at the moment, probably in contrast to that relaxed holiday feeling. Now this Newsletter is finished The Book is dominating again. With spring almost here comes the opportunity to photograph gardens in their spring finery. However it always manages to surprise me how many trees and shrubs have flowers (as well as buds) showing in winter. It's certainly not a drab time of year here as it is in many Northern Hemisphere countries. Foliage is often particularly beautiful in winter. We talk often of the importance of form and foliage rather than flowers but it's difficult to take good photos of garden vistas based on foliage alone. I think form is essential - if a garden is designed with form firmly in mind, it will contain pleasing vistas and will provide good photographs whatever the season. Colour is a pleasant addition but it's rarely the primary thing and then often only for a short time of the year. Enjoy it in your garden this spring!

I hope there will be another Newsletter this year, probably in November, but it will depend on the progress (or otherwise) of The Book. It's difficult to concentrate on both at the same time - at least it is for me. The book is well underway now and we have two potential publishers. I'll let you know when a decision is finally made. We are hoping that it will be published in October next year, in time for the 2001 Christmas market - at least that's the aim!

Best wishes from



Diana Snape