

ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS
GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP



NEWSLETTER No. 34
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Treasurer/Membership: Bryan Loft

Membership renewal form enclosed

Dear Members,

Here in Melbourne we are rejoicing after rain - it seems like the much longed for autumn break. We have been in drought for four years, so the garden needs more water still. It is really amazing that most plants have survived this long, dry period and not so surprising that we have lost a few. With recent scientific forecasts of a change in climate giving warmer, drier weather here, we may have to adjust our expectations more permanently. A couple of articles in this Newsletter consider aspects of this. The change (or possible change) in weather patterns may be another factor which our garden designs have to take into account. Further north, in NSW and Queensland, the opposite may be true, at least in terms of rainfall. How have members fared there and what would it mean for gardens if those regions became wetter ?

In early April, I visited the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show. Almost all garden displays were courtyard gardens dominated by hard landscape, with just a few varieties of exotic plants repeated. Many included a water feature. With increasing house sizes and decreasing land and garden areas, I wonder whether this will be the way of the future, at least in towns and suburbs. It was all just a little depressing. A water-conserving garden of Australian plants designed by Roger Stone for South East Water cheered me up - a real Australian garden with real plants! Of course a courtyard garden designed with Australian plants can look beautiful - Jeff Howes' garden in Sydney is one example.

My apologies for the typos in the last Newsletter - I'm sorry that the checking wasn't as thorough as usual. There was almost no response to this last NL - are you all still out there?? Please keep in touch and let us know what is interesting you - your current thoughts, questions, ideas. It's the 'bits and pieces' that members write that makes the NL appealing and they are sadly missed when they don't come in.

NEXT MEETINGS

Please see details of these meetings on pages 18 & 19

MELBOURNE: Sunday May 6 - Shepherds Bush Botanic Garden

SYDNEY: Sunday May 6 - please contact Jo Hambrett

NE VIC: Sunday June 3 - provisionally at Jan Hall's

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CORRESPONDENCE extracts

"At the moment I'm flat out finishing a survey for Telstra - I've found a few rare plants but lots more outbreaks of serious weeds, including Texas Needle-grass, Serrated Tussock, etc - rather sad to see our grassland remnants being swamped with weeds.

At home I have just completed my water garden in the courtyard - it has come up quite nicely so far. Now to wait for all the sedges, lilies, etc. to become established!

All the very best with the book - I cant wait to see it." Neil Marriott Vic

"Autumn has decided to appear in Buenos Aires. We are all quite happy because the summer was very hot and humid. I enjoyed Newsletters 30 - 32 very much. I got my box of books that I bought at Florilegium during the summer and had a great time reading some and studying others. I found Glen Wilson's 'Landscaping with Australian Plants' most practical and very useful. It is clearly written and opens the eyes as towards how to observe nature's distribution patterns, to combine in a more "naturalistic" manner. Of course, all I think of are in terms of my own native flora, so I have to "translate". Excellent! Can you suggest any others in that same line? Thank you. Best regards." Elsita Boffi de Schulte Argentina

Do you have any special suggestions of books for Elsita? DS

A letter from the west

Margaret Moir WA

You must find it as amazing as I do that more WA people aren't in these SGs. Of course my original thinking in joining the SGs was as a country person who doesn't have the opportunity to attend gatherings in the city; it was a way of making a connection with other members. I am going to try to attend the State Conference in Perth this year and I may find more about what makes them all tick. I've been wondering if the focus in WA is more on the botanical than the growing.

I've included a page from a WA newspaper which I thought might make you smile as it did me. I rather cynically wonder if that isn't the average person's real concept of a desert garden. . . . native violets and paperbarks! In terms of the populist view of gardening, certainly at least here in the west, we have a long way to go in terms of public education about Australian native plants. The so called 'tropical hybrid' grevilleas are the extent of most people's acquaintance or interest.

I enjoy Lynne Boladeras' articles in the NLs. I was born and grew up in the Goldfields in WA and my childhood was made magic by Salmon Gums, eremophilas, mallees, moorts, marlocks and mulgas. . . . and all the other wonderful desert woodland plants. I love to see them used in gardens; they never were in the fifties when I was a child. Rather the gardens had Pepperinas and Sugar Gums. Fortunately Kalgoorlie had at some point (I think the twenties but I'm not sure) a superb person responsible for street tree planting and the streets are still a miracle of indigenous and other eucalypts - torquata, Torwood, gimlets, etc.

Before this deteriorates (if it hasn't done so already) into a nostalgic ramble, I wanted to give you a quick update on the summer's-end state of my 'boronia' garden. It's a joy! I have *B. pinnata*, *B. heterophylla*, *B. denticulata*, *B. megastigma lutea*, *B. molloyae* and *O. muelleri* 'Sunset Serenade' planted through and amongst an overstorey of *Chohlaena quercifolia* and a variety of pink bottlebrush. . . . a number of plants of each of Candy Pink, Perth Pink, *C. phoeniceus* 'Pink Ice', Injune and cream *C. saligna*. A little 'stream' of *Isolepis nodosa* runs thro', incidentally providing excellent shelter from wind for the boronia as the area is very exposed - early days for the garden yet, the callistemons not tall enough to provide shade.

Pale pink croweas bloom through summer along with local astarteas, also palest pink and white. *Thomasia quercifolia*, with lovely foliage, also seems to bloom almost non-stop in an appropriate bluish-pink shade. There is another local thomasia there with amazing rust coloured foliage shaped like arrowheads and *Acacia cognata* dwarf is at the front of the bed.

There are clumps of dampieras, *D. linearis* and *D. trigona*, some *Hypocalymma angustifolia* which matches the pinks of the boronias, *Hypocalymma cordifolium* var. and *Philothea (Eriostemon) myoporoides*. For verticality and tufties there are orthrosanthus and some native grasses including *Eragrostis curvula*, *Poa labillardiera* and *Cymbopogon obtectus*.

The pinks and creams blend into the next grouping which are *Callistemon* 'Pink Champagne' underplanted with *Correa* 'Marion's Marvel' and *C. 'Dusky Bells'*. *Grevillea* 'Superb' is on one side of this. It makes a lovely blend of creams and salmon pinks, right through to coral shades. There are some brown foliage carex (non native), good patches of *Selliera radicans* and some miniature brown flaxes. I often find these salmon pink and coral shades difficult to fit into the garden but these have worked perfectly and look very well with browns and rusts and all the new growth of the plants which has so much copper in it.

I hope my ramblings have been of some interest to you!

More than just a little interest! Margaret's combinations of plants sound inspirational - pinks and creams; coral, rust and brown. I hope as her shelter and shade develop over time she can keep the sunny areas and the colour.

The page from the WA newspaper Margaret sent did make me smile a little but at least the garden did

use Australian plants, though generally inappropriate ones for an 'outback' garden, including 'lush ferns' as well as vblets. (This may have been the reporter's term rather than the designer's.) I did like the choice for a small garden of terracotta-salmon-pink for the brick paving and walls. Such colours are very different from the range of neutral colours we usually associate with hard landscape in our gardens. DS

Letters from friends

"I'm a bit erratic in working through my reading pile which is why I've only just got to the Nov 2000 newsletter of the Garden Design Study Group. I found several snippets of interest but I particularly enjoyed Paul Thompson's piece "Growing designs". I liked his comments on the importance of reliability - it seemed like something our society as a whole would be interested in, so I would like if possible to reproduce it in a future issue of our Journal. It is relatively short so I would be looking to reproduce it in full.

I was also interested in Penny Munro's comments on Scaevola albida - I have been spending most of the summer admiring rry 2 plants, both blue form - they are in full sun for much of the day, we've had a long, hot, dry summer, and they have been almost covered in flower for months. S. albida is indigenous to my area (although I have no idea if these plants were local provenance) and maybe that helps to explain their happiness in my garden. I shall look carefully for seedlings - I will be more than happy to find some more of these treasures." **Linda Bowing** Journal Editor Australian Plants Society, SA Region

"The Blue Mountains Group produces a series of leaflets 'Introducing Native Plants'. We have completed over about six years 36 titles out of a projected 40 and I would very much like to include one on the topic of blending native with exotics. I have gathered quite a bit of information but thought you might have some additional sources. Here in the Mountains it is important that we respect a wide range of gardening interests and designs. Our own garden is not all native though we have taught our other plants, predominantly camellias, azaleas, maples - all acid loving as our natural environment is - and conifers, to believe they are. In several years of water restrictions an azalea garden planted under eucalypts before we bought that part of the property survived without any losses.

Those who know our garden now would probably be surprised that a lot of careful planning and design went into it at the outset. We were avid collectors and devourers of books. Now that Merle has retired we hope to get back to more deliberate nurturing. I am very interested in your current correspondence about related plantings as we started out with our initial choice of plants based on the foliage associations in Glen Wilson's Landscaping with Australian Plants. In most areas we were planting in the natural bush conserved during building by an interested and accommodating building supervisor.

We adapted Glen Wilson's lists, comparing our plants with 'look-alikes' - for instance our beloved Persoonia acerosa had foliage akin to Banksia ericifolia for which he gave 'associatbns'. I think we took his ideas to limits he'd never thought of but the results in the first instance were most enjoyable, especially areas such as our 'fine-leaf garden'. These areas have been difficult to sustain more recently because the natural build-up of leaf litter eventually causes moisture loss. We now have to work to reduce the build up and find ways of revitalising the plantings.

We also developed thematic areas such as our Tasmanian garden (till the white bauera went feral) and our white and gold entrance garden. How often however did associations and themes break down when some plant with which we had fallen in love at some show or nursery looked forlornly pot bound and had quickly to be found a place! There is nothing like the temptation of a plant you must have!"

Lyn Thompson NSW State Membership/Subscription Officer/Study Group Liaison Officer

I don't know any good reference materials dealing with gardens blending Australian and exotic plants. Do members have any suggestions?

I think it comes back to Glen W/son's ideas, in addition to using plants which like (and are adapted to) similar conditions. As well as 'bok-alike' foliage there are other possible links such as foliage colour. There can also be the inclusion of as much variety as can occur in natural areas. When there is variety, it's the balance, proportions and harmony of (say) large-leaf and small-leaf plants that has to be assessed.

I know the temptation of lovely plants in nurseries. I think the important thing is to have a well designed framework and indulge oneself only when it doesn't damage the design as a whole. DS

Rosalind Smallwood's house and beautiful, landscaped indigenous garden '**Half a Chance**' at Point Lonsdale, Victoria, advertised in the last NL, have been sold.

DESIGN

Advantages of lining pathways

Cherree Densley Vic

Quite a while ago (NL 21 p7), Diana raised the question of whether lining pathways with rocks (or whatever) in a regular fashion was a good idea. I don't recall anyone responding to this but, at the time, I did write some notes in reply but didn't ever get around to actually sending them in, (*I'm sure you're not the only one who does that, Cherree! DS*) so here goes now. Most of the points made below relate to practical issues based on experience and 'my style' of laying out the beds of the garden here at Killamey.

- Firstly, using rocks, short pieces of logs, old bricks, sandstone pieces (all of which I have used) gives definition to design lines whether it delineates between beds and paved areas, along pathways, between garden beds and grassed areas or along driveways. The idea of using mixed hard landscaping materials does sound 'itsy-bitsy', but it is a large area here. I'm also a bit of a scrounger and prefer to re-cycle materials rather than buying in new materials.
- Lines of stones or logs placed directly on the ground to delineate garden beds has allowed pathways to be dug down below the level of the edging on one side. Soil is then provided for the other side, with which to build up the garden beds without resorting to purchasing expensive and often undesirable soil. (Purchasing soil can mean the introduction of new weed species and/or make definite levels between different soils thus making it difficult for roots to penetrate.) Making quite wide pathways and to the depth of a spade head - plus a bit more - has meant a considerable amount of soil can be added to garden beds providing better drainage which is needed for Australian plants. The larger the edging material, the deeper you can dig out the soil. In this way, you create ups and downs to an otherwise flat piece of ground.

When we first moved here, Ian demolished a cattle loading ramp which had been built with lovely old moss covered sandstone blocks - they quickly found their way into my garden, as did a number of bluestone pitchers found when we demolished what was possibly stables. Likewise, when the branches of a very tall *Eucalyptus gomphocephala* (Tuart Gum) began to crack and had to be removed before they crashed through a shed, I asked Ian to cut them in about 1m (3') lengths which I used to line the original beds. These logs are now about 18 years old and are mostly in good order, although some were replaced just this year with new pieces of branches removed from the same tree! Only once or twice have I had problems with getting my feet wet along these sunken pathways - and both after prolonged heavy rain. The accumulated water quickly drained away. The most serious flooding occurred when a pond constructed near a pathway also overflowed after very heavy rain, allowing goldfish to swim up and down the low pathways - until I

rescued them.

- The use of edging looks purposeful and 'neat', although some of us don't like being too 'neat'. Others, however, strive constantly for it.

- As the edging weathers and groundcovers spill over it, original harsh edges soften.

- Permanent edging holds and settles soil, thus preventing erosion - essential on even a slight slope. Some soil slumps more easily than others. Fine sandy loam can quickly slide onto pathways if not held back. The black volcanic soil here in Killarney has almost a plastic quality; it quickly slides back to the lowest level, especially if it is dry.

- Moisture is retained right up to the edges of garden beds and planting areas and a cool root run is provided for edging and groundcover plants.

- Edging provides more room for even more plants - thus allowing planting right to the edges, especially good for tiny treasures such as lilies and herbs.

- Edging deters blackbirds scratching things out as they can't seem to get a toe-hold along the edge of the garden bed and thus have to scratch back into the garden, not bringing soil and mulch onto the pathways.

- Regular and solid edges along garden beds allows for easy maintenance of pathways. It is very quick to do a rake-up or sweep of leaves, twigs or bark to maintain a neat look.

- If the edging material is too even in size or shape or too straight a line is made, the effect becomes too hard, formal and contrived. Instead, break up the line by occasionally putting shorter logs on their ends or, if using rocks, place three or four large rocks followed by a couple of smaller ones or one huge one followed by smaller ones. The master of the use of landscaping materials, Ellis Stones, sometimes used combinations of sleepers and huge rocks in a beautiful and irregular fashion which suited the use of Australian plants. (*Gordon Ford used to call poor imitations of this style morse code' - dots and dashes across the landscape. DS*) Plenty of examples of clever use of edging material can be seen in books on landscaping, if you look for them. The best examples are unobtrusive and look 'just right'.

- Edging provides an efficient low barrier to contain mulching materials, restraining them from sliding off or getting pushed off when one walks on the garden beds.

- However, edging material provides good cover for snails, slugs, slaters, lizards, frogs and toads, worms, soil hoppers, spiders and ants. The little echidna who visited for three days last October concentrated its efforts just along the edges of pathways picking off lots of good little things to eat on the logs.

- I'm sure other members could contribute to this issue - what do you use to shape garden beds? Or do you prefer none at all?

Cherree has presented a very strong case for the use of edging materials. I hope we hear from other members with their ideas. I expect some important factors are likely to be the size of garden, availability of materials and where the garden style lies in the range from formal to naturalistic, i.e. the degree of formality required. DS

GARDENS

What is an Australian garden?

Diana Snape Vic

The following was broadcast on Sunday April 8 as a talk on Radio National's Ockhams Razor. A couple of members have asked me about it and, although it is not strictly on garden design, I thought other members might also be interested to read it.

What is an Australian garden?

When I was a child in Sydney, four plants in our garden were special to me. Down the back, beyond my father's beloved roses, a tall Lemon-scented Gum perfumed the air. Closer to the house, one shrub was covered with bright crimson bottle-brushes and a beautiful Geraldton Wax survived tennis practice against its north-facing wall. In the front garden grew a magnificent Fire-wheel Tree, given to my mother in the false belief that it was a shrub. It took me many years, many bush walks and several gardens of my own to realize the full significance of those four Australian plants in my childhood garden.

Most Australians (70% in a recent survey) enjoy gardening. They tend to follow their parents' example when designing their gardens, as they have done for 200 years. So traditional styles, such as English cottage and formal, still dominate. We have inherited the legacy of various overseas movements, and American 'designs for outdoor living' have also affected contemporary styles here. The first identifiable Australian garden style appeared in the 1960s with the creation of 'Bush Gardens', heavily influenced by nature. In garden design, as in all other art forms, styles evolve and tastes change. 'Bush Gardens' went out of fashion after the 1970s, largely due to the misleading myths of 'no pruning' and 'no maintenance'. Now the vague term 'bush' would be interpreted more accurately - in Australian Coastal or Arid Area Gardens, Grassland or Woodland Gardens, and so on.

In another survey, 60% of landscapers said a distinctive Australian style was emerging. Features of this 'natural' approach include an emphasis on the use of groundcover plants and rainforest flora. There's also the use of rocks, the inclusion of informal ponds, and a less verdant appearance than other styles. There has been a gradual shift away from high-maintenance lawns and immaculate flower beds. Grevilleas and Lilly Pillies topped the list of popular Australian plants used frequently by landscapers.

So what is an 'Australian garden' today? This term is currently used to mean any garden situated in Australia. I think this is a pity - a waste of a good term. 'Japanese garden' and 'English garden' suggest certain styles, not just their location within a particular country. So an 'Australian garden' should belong in this country in a way that gives it a recognizable style. It should be in sympathy, not conflict, with its local environment, its soil and climate. Such a garden should be able to survive the vagaries of our seasons, in particular coping with drought without squandering precious water.

Despite its highly urban population, Australia is still defined by its landscape, the 'outback' and the 'bush'. Like many other Australians, I enjoy travelling throughout our country, and I appreciate the beauty of its 'wilderness' areas - our natural landscapes and their plant communities. Our garden styles seldom reflect this beauty. Skill and artistry, as well as knowledge, are required to translate it into the design of functional, distinctive Australian gardens.

I would like to ask William of Ockham how a garden could be given an authentic Australian 'look'. I am sure he would answer that it should at least contain Australian plants. Trees are the most dominant and conspicuous ones, so these certainly should be Australian. Our flora is unique - the drift of the continent from other land masses millions of years ago resulted in the evolution of many unusual and beautiful plant forms. For example tree-ferns, grass-trees, bottle-trees and banksias have arresting, sculptural forms to rival any. They belong here and nowhere else in the world, while showy exotic plants and flowers are as widespread as Big Macs. The spectrum of Australian flowers is amazing - some like waratahs large and obvious, others like thryptomene small but charming; seen close up, many are exquisite. The enormous variety of Australian plants - about 25,000 species - and their versatility offer great scope for the design of gardens for every purpose and location.

I think William of Ockham would agree that it's important to include in an Australian garden some plants indigenous to the area, appropriate for their local conditions. These provide habitat - food, shelter and

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breeding sites - for birds, insects and other native fauna in a way that no introduced plants can. Interrelationships between organisms and the environment they share are precariously balanced. Birds are good indicators of the ecological health of an area. Sparrows, starlings, Indian mynahs and feral pigeons rarely visit Australian gardens, which welcome an array of colourful native birds. (Blackbirds cross the divide.) Ecological principles can be applied in soil enrichment, pest control, water conservation and recycling through composting and mulching. Even a small Australian garden, with a safe birdbath, will automatically support a mini native ecosystem and so help 'green' our cities and suburbs. A garden lacking Australian plants leaves a hole in the ecological landscape.

Since moving to Melbourne many years ago, I have visited gardens in all our States. I've found that the 'look' of an Australian garden differs in each. Because the climate varies so much - from lush tropical regions to arid desert areas, from low coastal to high alpine altitudes - we could not expect precisely the same style of garden throughout the whole country. The density of vegetation differs. In coastal heathlands, plants are crowded and many species are mixed; in inland areas there's a smaller variety of plants, more widely spaced. An Australian garden will reflect its own region and its own 'spirit of place'.

Your garden may be influenced by very different topography - mountains, hills, flat or rolling plains. If you are lucky enough to have local rocks in your garden they can look stunning - in Sydney, sandstone or shale; in much of Victoria, basalt or granite. Rocks are signatures of the landscape, producing the related soil type which supports the local flora and ecology. In some areas rocks occur naturally in architectural layers; in others there are rounded granite boulders, or oddly shaped conglomerates. I think an Australian garden can be designed to suit any block of land, and a house of absolutely any architectural style. Australian and exotic plants can be combined successfully too, as long as foliage size and colour are compatible. If different plants would not grow happily under similar conditions in nature, they probably won't look happy together in the garden either. Designers try to 'see' a plant in terms of both its appearance and its growing requirements.

As well as the visual impact of an Australian garden, there are evocative sounds - a magpie's call, wind whispering in casuarinas. There are the perfumes too - scent of eucalypt leaves, fragrance of a boronia; and textures to feel - papery bark of melaleucas, furrows in ironbark trunks. In an Australian garden, changes with the seasons are more subtle than in those of the Northern Hemisphere. Wonderful tree colour is provided in turn by buds, flowers, fruits and the magnificent new foliage of numerous species. When particular plants flower in sequence, I have seen the same natural area bathed in the yellow of acacias, white of tea-trees, or pink and purple. Summer features silver, golden or tawny grasses. Winter is not bare and bleak, but green and often colourful with flowers.

Our vision of the garden we want is influenced by our cultural background and personal experiences. We can gain inspiration directly from aspects of the Australian landscape - its peace and harmony; the light and space; its infinite variety of colours, often subtle; the sculpturing of the land surface; the massing, forms and patterns of rocks; the entrancing liquidity of water; and, of course, the plants. The same trees or shrubs could be arranged a thousand different ways; disappearing grey foliage and eye-catching white trunks; grasses which play with light; so many individual treasures.

40 years ago, we gardeners grew a number of Australian plants from cuttings or seeds, and experimented with their horticulture. Knowledge about cultivation is now amassed in reference books such as the *Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants*, so it's much easier to use our plants successfully in design. Nurseries now stock a range of many more species, especially exciting small plants. Horticultural investigation has expanded into the selection of special forms and cultivars, and also the recognition of provenance and ecological relationships. Today an Australian garden can be more obviously designed, and its design can even be strikingly formal. Reading and observation can contribute to new and varied design

styles. Many examples of imaginative public Australian gardens do exist, including two in Canberra in the National Gallery of Australia - the Sculpture Garden (from 1976) and the recently designed Fern Garden.

I have come to realize that a garden evolves through time and is never 'finished'. In garden design it may be impossible to create anything completely new, but each garden is unique - a product of its site, its 'sense of place', and the owner's experience and artistic sensitivity. We aim to achieve certain effects but, for our plans to work, nature must approve. Through our actions, we can easily alter what nature provides, but we cannot anticipate and control the reactions of nature. However many gardeners still try to deny the Australian environment, and to ignore its dynamic but delicate equilibrium.

What is an Australian garden? I think it is a proud statement of acceptance and appreciation of our place in this country.

Some European gardens

Nicky Rose Vic

I am having a lovely visit to Europe although so many of the parks and gardens are closed as a result of foot and mouth disease. It is very saddening. I spent a couple of days with my niece in Gwent, Wales, and came across the 'National Gardens Scheme' leaflet. The following descriptions I thought were worth including in the next Newsletter. I hope you enjoy them.

Castle House, Usk - romantic garden set around ruins of Usk Castle. Medieval herb garden, humorous topiary, herbaceous border, vegetable garden and some imaginative garden structures.

Cefntilla, Usk - rectangular Jacobean garden area extended with a circumambulatory in the 1850s.

Croeslianfro Farm - wide variety of plants concentrating on form and texture, and interesting focal points including grotto and folly.

Llwyn-y-Wen Farm, Crumlin - 1 acre of Welsh hillside garden with own spring providing large trout pond and bog garden. Many shade and damp loving plants on different levels and over 150 tubs and troughs. Additional fields with beautiful bluebell walks in May.

Tredegar House - series of C18 walled formal gardens surrounding magnificent late C17 house. Early C18 orangery garden with coloured mineral parterres. (C = century)

I hope you have enjoyed these descriptions. I am now in the Netherlands near the German border, and find that the Dutch really value each square inch of ground. In general, most UK homes really are not interested and I saw many front gardens which were totally concreted over in London. In England there were daffodils all over the place. The Dutch have much more variety.

Such descriptions remind me that the dimensions of time and history have not yet begun to contribute to the nature of our gardens of Australian plants, other than in a second-hand sort of way. Any old, well established gardens here are, to date, exotic in concept and execution. DS

A new garden

Chris Larkin Vic

Chris describes a garden started about 3 years ago.

The back garden is a most delightful cottage garden with great use of small plants. The contrast of yellow hibbertias with blue dampieras, repeated in key beds, is a favourite with me and looks most effective. This back garden has a level of formality with straight paved and concrete paths which have been softened by the planting. One rather large bed between 2 paths is of great interest. This has been approached with utter restraint. The owner is aiming to have a single tall plant *Myoporum floribundum* (Slender Myoporum) with the rest a groundcover of *Myoporum parvifolium* (Creeping Myoporum). The fine leaved form of *M. parvifolium* has recently been removed because it didnt give a good cover but the broad leaf one is dense and lush - a great lawn-like effect.

A narrow 'courtyard' garden**Diana Snape Vic**

For many years now we have had an awkward area outside our side door - a bng and narrow passage-way, running north-south, with a high garage wall (next door) on the eastern side and a large pine tree (next door) to the north, blocking sun. Our solution was to grow creepers on the paling fence - *Pandorea pandorana* (Wonga Vine) and *Jasminum suavissimum* (Sweet Jasmine). The latter also suckered lightly in the soil. *Pandorea pandorana* 'Snowbells' in particular gave us an ample covering of green but it was a rampant grower and, high up, vigorously grew back towards the house, blocking out still more sun. It needed very regular pruning. A few ferns and correas struggled in the narrow garden bed.

With our neighbour's agreement, the paling fence has gone, giving us 15cm (6") extra space in the garden bed (every little helps). The vines have been removed or cut right back. The brick wall has been bagged and painted in a warm coral shade similar to the tones in our bricks. Brian built a stub wall to separate the 'courtyard' from the garbage bin area and the clothes lines beyond and this is painted the same colour. The stub wall up the other end is exposed brick matching the house. In an attempt to emphasize the width rather than the length of the space, two posts will be put in as shown in the plan (see page 11), with angled beams to help indicate three 'separate' spaces.

Now this is where you can help. We'd welcome any suggestions you have. Where should we put pots - how many and how big? What plants for the garden and the pots? Should we concentrate again on ferns and correas? (The area still only gets midday sun.) For the two side 'panels', Barbara Buchanan has suggested treating creeper(s) in a formal way, like topiary in two dimensions. In the central 'panel', possibilities include a a formal pool, some vertical, flat, decorative feature, or possibly a significant plant.

I'm looking forward to hearing your ideas and I don't mind how 'way out' they are!

BOOKS, MAGAZINES & THE INTERNET**Book reviews please!**

We haven't received any (or many) book reviews for a while. Please do send in your comments on any book you find interesting and relevant to garden design. It doesn't matter if the book has already been reviewed in an earlier NL - you may have a different viewpoint and it's helpful to be reminded about good books.

Royal Horticultural Society Journal**Barbara Buchanan Vic**

I was interested to read that the heather garden at Wisley (RHS) has to be replanted about every 10 years. We just don't consider having to do it, but we should. One day we'll know enough about our plants to plan in the same way.

Reading further into the RHS Journal was very rewarding. An article on how to organize the garden to benefit blackbirds. It is all relative isn't it? They are on the British Trust for Ornithology amber list as having declined 33% between 1972 - 96.1 really feel stirred to write a letter to the editor offering a few spare ones.

The, next article was on ivies and different ways of using them. It would be good to find a suitable Australian substitute and I wondered about *Aphanopetalum resinolum* or one of the Cissus. Jan Hall has a great Cissus which travels a long distance to festoon the front of the car ports and has to be cut back very severely at times. The pandoreas and kennediyas with divided leaves probably wouldn't clip very well. I have seen some plants I have always thought of as groundcovers forced by lack of space to climb, for example *Hibbertia empetrifolia* responds well to cutting back. There are other climbing hibbertias but I don't know how well they clip.

It might be worthwhile trying the pandoreas, even with their leaf form, and also possibly clematis. DS

When I read some issues of this journal I quietly despair - scarcely a mention of an Australian plant, apart from Gwen Elliot's wonderful, regular segment. This issue did better, with the following articles.

~~Billardias: Australia's ideal light climbers~~ by Gwen Elliot and ~~Container plants~~ - see 'Plants in design' p 16.

~~Saving Australian waterways with lona stem tubestock~~

This article described a revolutionary method, pioneered by Bill Hicks, of planting tubestock of one metre tall Australian plants along river banks - deep planting, with only the top few centimetres of the plant exposed. The developing plants have been kept supplied with water and nutrients but their roots are air-pruned and their stems and foliage toughened by sun and wind. This method has been successful for callistemons, casuarinas, eucalypts, lilly-pillies, melaleucas, water gums and wattles, with establishment rates close to 100% for more than 50,000 trees - a great innovation for planting in often difficult conditions.

Taking a welcome green approach

Marilyn Sprague's indigenous plant nursery, Goldfields Revegetation, has won a Keep Australian Beautiful award. This retail and wholesale nursery caters for revegetation projects and a growing demand for plants indigenous to central and northern Victoria. Seed of local provenance is collected. Water is recycled in the nursery and is featured with dramatic rocks created by Geoff Sitch. **An interesting note which may be a glimpse into the future** - Goldfields Revegetation offers Hyco cells grown to order (40 per tray); e.g. *Myoporum pannifolium* (indigenous to the area) is being used increasingly as a lawn substitute for many Bendigo nature strips.

The progress of garden thugs

An excellent article by Kate Blood of Weeds CRC (Cooperative Research Centre) outlines the problems of weed proliferation (mostly exotic but some Australian too) and strategies being implemented to fight these problems. Even at the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show some of the worst weeds (or thugs) are sometimes visible in display gardens.

The Top 20' list of weedy Australian plants in Victoria by Geoff Carr of Ecology Australia includes 8 wattles (including *Acacia bailey ana*), 3 hakeas, *Kunzea ericoides* (Burgan), *Leptospermum laevigatum* (Coast Tea-tree), 3 melaleucas, *Pittosporum undulatum* (Sweet Pittosporum) and *Sollya heterophylla* (Bluebell Creeper). We need to be aware of the potential 'thugs' in our own particular area when we design.

DESIGN IDEAS

Designing for the dry

Chris Larkin Vic

This following extracts are based on a report by Chris Larkin, published in the Foothills newsletter.

The business of watering, or not watering, is complex and somewhat speculative. Plants can look extremely refreshed after only very light showers or superficial watering. Why? Is it that the humid conditions created allow for transfer of moisture through the stomata and possibly even the stem pedicel? This won't replace deep watering and the need for moisture to roots but may give some temporary assistance. Superficial watering, of little more than the mulch, may help preserve a cool root run but the benefits have to be weighed against producing too many surface roots; hence a water dependent plant and one that has a weakened structure below ground.

There is general agreement that there is a need to watch carefully - and most certainly water, if necessary - any young plants during dry spells for the first couple of years. One member established her garden with a drip system to individual plants that she then removed after 2 years. During the recent dry she

lost one crowea but all other plants survived. Another member lost some plants that she watered while those (including some of the same species) she didn't water survived. If you are going to water there needs to be a consistent pattern to this (working in with rainfall) over the entire period.

A pamphlet from South East Water on 'Water efficient plants' suggested that plants should be pruned before summer to reduce the leaf area which will be responsible for moisture loss. I have read that plants should be spaced to reduce root competition for water, however close communities of plants seem to benefit from shaded root zones. People are advised to group indoor plants together so that they can 'work together' to produce a more humid microclimate, which, of course, lessens moisture loss. On the other hand, as a rule eremophilas grow in a rather solitary fashion in inland areas.

We need to be cautious about making too many generalizations. Life and nature is not that simple - there are complex adaptations within as well as between species to climate and soil variations. There is a commonly held belief that the faster a plant grows the quicker it will die. When much of this garden was developed the earth was moved around and this allowed for very good water penetration, which led to rapid plant growth and, in some cases, particularly prostrate grevilleas, a relatively quick death. These plants probably died because the conditions they started off life in were not sustained. In stark contrast several hybrid grevillea shrubs, which were planted in undisturbed dry conditions, have grown slowly but steadily without watering. There is little doubt in my mind that changing conditions in the garden - the changing micro-climate, rather than the weather - are responsible for a number of casualties. As a garden grows and 'matures' larger shrubs and more particularly trees, will take large amounts of water from the soil and create 'rain shadows'. At the same time some of the garden that was sunny and made sun-loving plants happy may now be shaded causing these plants to become 'leggy', stressed and unhealthy.

Touah plants in the dry include:

lasipetalums e.g. *L. micranthum*, *L. macrophyllum* (Shrubby Velvet-bush), *L. floribundum* (Velvet-bush) (all ground covers) and *L. behrii* (Pink velvet-bush), persoonias e.g. *P. chamaepeuce* (possibly *P. oxycoccoides*), *P. recedens*, (groundcovers), *P. pinifolia* (Pine-leaved Geebung); kunzeas, *Grevillea lanigera* (Woolly Grevillea), atriplex, plectranthera, *Melaleuca nesophila* (Showy Honey-myrtle), bracteanthas, pultenaeas, sennas.

Plants which may be touchy include

Crowea exalata, *Correa pulchella*, *Anigozanthos* 'Green Machine'.

Plants which appear to be susceptible to dry include

banksia, boronia and tetraetheca. In the case of boronias it was not clear whether the losses were the result of dry or watering after dry.

Plants which members watered because they showed signs of stress included spyridiums, prostantheras and *Pomaderris aspera* (Hazel Pomaderris).

I will now aim to create a garden utilizing tough species. Sentiment has no place in a water wise garden.

Plants' adaptation to drought

Margaret Guenzel Vic

This article by Margaret Guenzel was published in the Foothills newsletter and reminds us of the practical basis of grouping plants from similar environments in the garden.

A couple of months ago "The Age" carried an article by Tom Neales which dealt with plants' adaptation to drought. The most interesting point was that recent research has discovered when the soil around a plant's roots begins to dry out, the roots send hormonal signals to the leaves, which results in the

partial closure of the leaves' stomata. A multi-perforated surface (in this case the leaf with its stomata) loses as much water vapour to the air as a water surface completely open to the air.

For a plant to reduce water loss is not just a matter of closing its stomata because the main purpose of the stomata is gas exchange for photosynthesis which is only possible in sunlight. A second reason why stomata cannot just be closed up during the daytime is that complete closure would result in overheating of the leaf, because evaporation also provides cooling. So plants have adapted in a number of ways to minimise water loss. Here are just some examples. The mechanisms are often quite complex.

1. Plants can grow lots of surface hairs which trap water molecules close to the leaf surface thus minimising further evaporation.
2. Some plants deliberately "wilt" i.e. they adjust the water saturation inside the leaf which may only be 50% to reach an equilibrium (I found this in some of my thomasias). Some succulents and cacti almost stop photosynthesing and close up shop.
3. Many eucalypts position their leaves parallel to the sunrays to expose as little as possible of their surfaces to the sun.
4. Some plants reduce the size of their leaves during the hot summer months i.e. the leaves produced later in Spring are smaller than their earlier ones.
5. Some eucalypts photosynthesise only during the cooler morning hours.

Some plants sacrifice surplus growth and die back a bit to save themselves, others drop a lot of their leaves during drought and "make do" with a minimum. I am sure you all know of a few more examples.

To come back to the article in "The Age", there are trials in progress in S.A. in vineyards. Only one side of the root system of the plants is watered so some of the roots will still signal to the leaves that a drought is coming and evaporation must be reduced. This is supposed to save water but not affect yields. It is called PRD or partial root drying.

Maybe it would work for us. I have often wondered whether we don't nullify some of these mechanisms of our plants by watering them too often and so make them more likely to die from heat stress. Maybe we should group our plants better, restrict ferns and rainforest plants to smaller spots and plant more dry area plants together and leave them be.

Plan first, plant later

Nicky Rose Vic recently sent me a magazine article by Gilleen Dunk from *Homestyle* Outdoors, called 'Plan first, plant later' - very good advice. Among key points this article made were the following:

- Be practical about the eventual height and spread of planned trees and shrubs, the patterns of sunlight and shade.
- Pay attention to perspective, especially the farthest point over which you have control so you can make a feature of that.
- Harmony of colour and form are essential to feelings of peace and tranquillity (think of a Japanese garden).
- Keep foliage plants similar in the shape, size and colour of both their growth and their leaves and, if you diverge, do it boldly and deliberately, as if you meant it.

Pond ecology

Chris Larkin Vic

Chris's article is based on a talk given at an APS meeting by Chris Owen.

Chris Owen has two main areas of interest that he is passionate about and wants to promote - gardening with indigenous plants and establishing frog-friendly ponds. Information he provided should enable me to

better understand what is going on in my own ponds and work towards a balanced, healthy, frog-friendly and yes, beautiful pond environment.

What did I learn from Chris's talk?

- Ponds, like gardens, must be actively managed to achieve an ecological balance.
- Frog friendly ponds will need to be free of fish, have an easy way for newly emerging frogs to leave the pond (or they will drown), contain aquatic plants for food and shelter, and have cool, damp areas close by that the mature frogs can live in i.e. a fernery.
- To avoid your pond becoming quickly choked by vegetation think long and hard about which plants you introduce into your pond.
- Aquatic plants like azolla and duck weed that float on the water's surface may spread quickly but they are easily removed - just scoop out.
- Some aquatic plants will grow from 'cuttings' that are thrown into the pond. In my pond myriophyllum has colonized in patches around the pond a long way from where the original plant was introduced. Other plants be introduced in pots or planted directly in or around the margins of the pond.
- There is no need (unless for appearance) to put soil/washed river sand in the base of a pond. Plants will grow and spread using broken down vegetation of the aquatic plants themselves, leaves, mulch etc. that fall into the pond.
- Oxygenating plants are important and any plant with foliage below surface level will do the job with the possible exception of reed type plants. (Breezes, waterfalls etc. also oxygenate)
- Permanent water will enable a balanced ecosystem to establish with a range of invertebrates consuming mosquito larvae e.g. the larvae of the dragonfly and water boatmen.
- Algae is caused by nutrient build-up (decaying plant matter and animal waste), sunlight and warm weather. Removing excess plant growth and detritus will help.
- Mosquitoes will have more success breeding in temporary water.
- When removing algae take it away from the site (put it in the compost) or at least place it where the nutrients can't just 'bleed' back into the pond.

In addition to a reasonably large range of plants that will grow either in water or on the margins of a pond where they will sometimes be submerged, there are other plants like brachyscomes, *Lomandra longifolia* and Tussock-grasses e.g. *Poa morrisli* & *P. labillardieri*. He also suggests using plants like *Dichondra repens* and *Viola hederacea* around the edge of ponds to 'hold' the mulch in place or soften and disguise the edge of the pond. (These 2 plants may be very useful for this purpose but once introduced to a garden they may quickly grow out of control and be difficult to eliminate in the future so plant with caution.)

PLANTS in DESIGN

Container plants

I always like to see Australian plants featuring in general gardening information, as they did recently in two articles on container plants. This gives an indication of the information reaching gardeners in general. One article by Melanie Kinsey was in 'Australian Horticulture' April/May 2001. The plants mentioned, with brief descriptions and photographs, were:

<i>Helmholtzia glaberrima</i> (Stream Lily);	<i>Rhododendron iochae</i> ;	<i>Lomandra confertifolia</i> ;
<i>Cordyline petiolaris</i> (Broad-leaf Palm-lily);	<i>Banksia spinulosa</i> 'Birthday Candles';	
<i>Acacia pravissima</i> "Kurunga Cascade ¹ ;	<i>Scaevola aemula</i> 'Purple Fanfare';	
<i>Baloskion tetraphyllum</i> (formerly <i>Restio tetraphyllum</i>) (Tassel Cord-rush).		

We have grown most of these but not so far in containers.

The other article by Nancy Brewer was in 'Melbourne Weekly Magazine'. The writer said:

- *Dwarf lilly pillies such as 'Lilliput' and Tiny Trev' are proving very reliable and are often used in place of English Box. The dense evergreen foliage looks impressive in a formal setting or as a background for other container plants.*
- *Pittosporums now include a new dwarf form, P. tobira, with dark, glossy leaves and a variegated version. Keep these neat, compact shrubs trimmed to a rounded shape of about 75cm. They are tough in sunny spots. P. argentea nana 'Shorty' is a lovely contrast plant with small, silvery green leaves on dark stems. Trim to about 60cm.*
- *New Australian natives suited to containers include Agonis flexuosa 'After Dark', a compact weeping shrub with fine purple-black leaves and Acacia cognata 'Green Mist', a beautiful plant with soft, bright green foliage growing in a rounded shape. Try cascading prostrate wattles from tall, built-up containers.*

We have found dwarf lilly pillies to be deservedly popular. We haven't tried any dwarf pittosporums and these two are not listed in the Encyclopaedia - please let us know if you have. We have grown the normal dwarf *Agonis flexuosa* in a large container and found it to be very hardy - the 'After Dark' form would be interesting to try as a contrast in foliage colour. Our two *Acacia cognata* 'Green Mists' were very beautiful for the first 3 or 4 years but have now become sparse in the centre and I have been reluctant to prune heavily as I suspect they would not like it. (*Pratia pedunculata* is now growing in one container for additional green.) The acacias are still attractive but in a more leggy way so the time may be coming for a 'do or die' effort of pruning. I would be quite prepared to start again with them as the early years were so worthwhile. DS

Billardieras: Australia's ideal light climbers

Gwen Elliot Vic

The following are very brief extracts from Gwen's article in 'Australian Horticulture' April/May 2001.

Billardieras are a group of plants which has been neglected for far too long in horticulture and is worthy of much wider appreciation and use in gardens. Most are light climbing or twining plants, well suited to use in gardens.

Their flowers can be bell-shaped or starry, in a range of colours including white, cream, green, yellowish, apricot to orange, pink, red, blue or deep purplish-blue. In some species the flowers combine more than one colour, with striped markings or different shades on the inner and outer surfaces of the petals. The fleshy elongated berries have led to the common-name of apple-berry.

If you were thinking of growing Sollva heterophylla (Bluebell Creeper) but are now concerned about its environmental threat, there are six or so species of billardiera available in nurseries as a possible replacement. DS

Suggestions for street trees (via 'Gumnuts')....depending on conditions of course....

I find ideas for street trees interesting because they should belong to our category of small trees (6m or less) and so suit small gardens. Let us know of any you have actually seen in a street or think might go well. DS

Indigenous species should be given priority. Other suggestions - *Banksia* 'Giant Candles'; *Eucalyptus* (*Corymbia*) *ficifolia* (Red-flowering Gum), *E. forrestiana* (Fuchsia Gum), *E. leucoxyton* 'Rosea'. Many smaller rain forest trees are adaptable outside natural conditions (as the Native Frangipannis (*Hymenosporum flavum*) in Dubbo testify): the Cheese Tree (*Glochidion ferdinandi*); Ironwood (*Backhousia myrtifolia*); Kanooka or Water Gum (*Tristanbopsis laurina*); Coachwood (*Ceratopetalum apetalum*); Black Wattle (*Callicoma serratifolia*) and some of the smaller cryptocarays. One problem noted is that it's easy to get quick growing eucalypts established but more difficult for slower growing species which may be better in the

long run. Also nurseries may deliver quickly grown, lush plants that are prone to water stress as they settle in. Eventual size will depend on local conditions.

The 'bottom line' for Australian plants

Geoff Simmons Qld

Most people pay heed to the "bottom line", i.e. amount of profit, when contemplating investing or otherwise disposing of money. Recently advocates of economic rationalism have begun to realise that society wants to take into account factors other than numbers of dollars, so a good quality of life may be experienced by the population as a whole. This raises a question - what are the factors that make up the 'bottom line' in respect to Australian plants?

The following are some aspects of this question.

1. Economics The use of Australian plants to make money is probably in its infancy. For many years, trees such as eucalypts have been a source of wood, fibre for paper making and charcoal for cooking fires. More recently the production of flowers for domestic and overseas trade has occurred based mainly on the beauty and unusual characteristics of Australian plants. Even more recently, attention has turned to using selected species for food. Chefs have recognised that they can introduce new tastes as well as producing a novel dish.

The following aspects are less concerned with economics.

2. Patriotism Nowadays the great mobility of people to and from overseas countries and emphasis on multiculturalism has meant that the word patriotism has lost value and to some extent has been forgotten. However, pride in Australia as the home of beautiful and unique flowers such as the waratah can still warrant consideration. Every garden could patriotically have at least one Australian plant.

3. Individualism The Australian gardener has a prime opportunity to design a garden different from the usual garden based on exotic plants. Unfortunately, the urging by APS members for greater use of native plants and individual efforts have a difficult task to increase awareness of Australian plants among gardeners in general. Paradoxically, the more these plants are used, the less their origin is realised. Plant labels may not even mention that they are attached to a plant of Australian derivation.

4. Diversity Brightly coloured new growth to autumn tints, alpine to tropical; monocots and dicots, conifers, cycads and carnivorous plants and grass-trees - all are present in Australian plants and many are only found on this continent.

5. Survival In most cases survival of a species is looked upon as a desirable aim and a society such as APS (SGAP) has a special interest in this.

6. Historical The recognition of the existence of the Wollemi Pine has received much publicity and rightly so. The history of plants can be seen also in plants such as *Idiospermum australiense* (Ribbonwood) of north-eastern Queensland and the speciation of banksias in Western Australia.

Whichever way one looks at it, the 'bottom line' for Australian plants has many and varied rewards.

SNIPPETS

Trees - a snippet from 'Gumnuts' from Peter Vaughan NSW

"Trees do take a while to grow. One of my favourite quotes comes from an Indian politician. A company had clear felled an area of old growth forest, trees that were quoted as being thousands of years old. The company argued that the forest could not be restored and therefore they should develop the land. The politician responded by saying that if it takes one thousand years, they had better start immediately (the actual quote is in the book 'Tiger Haven')."

MEETINGS**Melbourne meetings**

Next meeting: Sunday May 6 - 2pm at Shepherds Bush Botanic Garden. Bryan Loft is the Manager of the Garden for the Friends of Dandenong Valley Park Inc and will be our host.

Shepherds Bush Botanic Garden**Bryan Loft Vic**

Our meeting on May 6 will be a design exercise at the Shepherds Bush Botanic Garden of local plants. This garden is located at the end of Shepherds Road, Glen Waverley (Melways 71 J3) in an area which also houses the administrative offices of Parks Victorias South Eastern Metropolitan District, and the Dandenong Valley Parklands.

By providing labelled specimens of the local plants, the gardens have two main aims (a) to act as an aid to identifying plants in their natural state and (b) to encourage people to use local plants in their gardens. The main concept was that being able to identify the plants they saw would increase peoples enjoyment, appreciation and care of the bushland areas in the Dandenong Valley Parklands and elsewhere. The gardens also act as a seed source for revegetation programs in the parklands.

The gardens are being developed in stages and presently occupy a quarter of the site.

The small first stage was constructed during 1991 by the Friends of Dandenong Valley Park primarily as an educational tool. Originally used almost daily by school groups the gardens are now open to the public on the first Sunday of the month when the Friends provide guides.

The second stage in 1993 continued the plant identification theme and trebled the original size to give sorely needed room for multiple specimens of each species. The design was closer to the public expectation of a botanic garden while maintaining a natural character.

The Friends have a concept plan for the whole site and would like GDSG help with a design and planting plan for the third stage aimed at demonstrating the local plants used in conventional garden settings. We might also consider the Gondwanaland Garden intended to be the fourth stage.

How to get there

To reach the gardens turn east into Shepherds Road from Gallaghers Road and follow it down the hill towards the Dandenong Creek. At the end of the bitumen turn left into the Gardens site and continue straight on to the Car Park. We will meet on the verandah of the cottage-like building labelled District Office opposite the garden. After a site inspection we will move into the Park Office for the design activity and usual proceedings.

Please bring a mug and a plate of afternoon tea.

Please phone Diana Snape or Jan Fleming to indicate whether you can come to the May meeting.

Sydney branch**Next Sydney meeting: Sunday May 6**

We hope this meeting will be held at Fembrook Garden and Art Gallery at Kurrajong Heights, where 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 Hambrett at once, if you have not already done so after the last NL, to say whether you'll be able to come to this meeting.

NE Vic Branch**Report of meeting on Sunday March 18****Barbara Buchanan Vic**

Our March meeting began at Martin Rigg and Diana Leggat's 16 acre block at Yackandandah. They have not yet built their home but Martin has started landscaping works in preparation with 3 dams in the hollow of the creek line that bisects the property. Some of us are envious of the dams and all the water they promise. The whole setting is enviable with a glorious prospect and a good cover of native grasses and some remnant trees. With 16 acres to play with we hoped that some of this original vegetation would be retained and incorporated into the ultimate garden. Those who saw it will present further thoughts at our next meeting.

We then moved on to Dot and Bob Stelling's place just out of Beechworth where we ate our lunch in the wonderful gazebo built to disguise an underground rainwater tank but a great feature in its own right, overlooking the plains to the north. The Stellings inherited a largely exotic garden but under the influence of their daughter Fleur have been steadily adding Australian and especially indigenous plants. The soil is very thin and stony with granite not far from the surface, erupting in a great outcrop close to the house. I caught background mutterings of the terrific potential to develop and incorporate this in a natural garden. Establishing any sort of garden has been hard work so that Dot is reluctant to remove anything exotic or otherwise that has been established. It is a lovely rambling garden, not looking its best late in a dry March but we are well used to making allowances and appreciate the soft greenery round the house.

Unfortunately we have not been able to make a formal leave-taking of our co-founder **Margaret Garrett** who has moved to the Blue Mountains. We wish her every success in her new garden and will miss her contributions to our discussions. Margaret brought a rational, logical viewpoint, often showing a new angle for consideration.

Next NE Vic meeting: Sunday June 3 provisionally at Jan Hall's

Most of us will be involved at Geoff Sitch's rock making workshop to be held at Hall's Patanga Nursery, Yarrowonga on April 28th and 29th. We set aside Sunday June 3rd for our next regular meeting, provisionally also at Jan Hall's to inspect the results of the rock making. However it is possible the venue and activities will change to enable us to look at and offer thoughts on a new garden near the Warbys. We hope to know by the workshop but keep the date clear.

Please Phone **Barbara Buchanan** to indicate whether you can come.

MEMBERSHIP***Please remember to renew your subscription In the next two months.***

There is no change in the subscription.

Send your cheque, made out to the Garden Design Study Group, to Bryan Loft (address on page 1).

Our current membership in the 2000/2001 financial year (which finishes on June 30) is 202.

New members

A warm welcome to the following new members of the Study Group. We hope you enjoy your membership and we look forward to sharing ideas.

Peter Haynes

Tarn Kendall

Theresa Scales

New address

Doug & Margaret McIver

TREASURER'S REPORT

Bryan Loft Vic

I'm sorry I omitted the following line from Bryan's report in the last NL DS

BALANCE 1 October 2000 \$ 3,604.51

Financial Statement- Quarter ending 31/3/01

BALANCE 1 January 2001 \$3,652.43

Plus INCOME

Less EXPENDITURE

Subscriptions received \$125.00

Postage \$99.80

Photocopying \$ 220.00

\$319.80

BALANCE 31 March 2001 \$ 3,457.63

In her notes on the *Royal Horticultural Society Journal*, Barbara Buchanan raises an interesting point in her comments on the regular replanting of the heather garden at Wisley in the UK. Barbara says: "We just don't consider having to do it, but we should. One day we'll know enough about our plants to plan in the same way."

For designing (and continuing to design as we maintain) a garden, a display garden for the Open Garden Scheme or one just for our own satisfaction, it would be helpful to know, for example:-

- * the average lifetimes we should reasonably expect from different plant species; we may well decide it is worthwhile to include some short-lived or less tough species for the pleasure they give for a while.
- * the best time to prune different species, whether gently or heavily; how ruthless we can be;
- * when to divide, or transplant; to replant species;
- * the range of possible times to do these things and when it is not a good idea at all;
- * the effects of 'dead-heading' and whether this promotes flowering in some genera or species;
- * how to encourage flowering in different species when we would like to have it.

Such things are likely of course to vary from place to place and season to season. A lot of this information is probably known already but not all of it and certainly not collated - a possible future project over time for the Study Group ?

Do you have a particular interest in the use of any particular plant (or genus or species) in garden design? Or plants for different areas or conditions - not necessarily difficult conditions, which we sometimes seem to focus on. What are some of your 'must have' plants and how do you like to use them in your garden design?

I'm looking forward to hearing about your design challenges, achievements or triumphs, whether on a small or large scale. Please share them with fellow members.

Best wishes



Diana