

ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS
GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP



NEWSLETTER No. 39
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Study Group Leader/Editor: Diana Snape

Treasurer/Membership: Bryan Loft

Dear Members,

In late May and early June I attended the Conference of APS S.A. which this year was held at Alice Springs, and then I spent a few weeks in that general area. The Conference was most enjoyable and extremely well organized, with quite a few visitors from other States experiencing the different conditions and flora of the Inland. One memorable descriptive quote about these areas was "where rivers run dry or ten feet high". How can one cope with the difficulties of gardening with this variation (and how can plants manage)? The rainfall is completely unpredictable throughout the year and the 'average' rainfall is really meaningless. It is appropriate that local plants are widely used in the public landscapes of Alice Springs, giving this town a stronger 'sense of place' than I remember in any State capital, and looking wonderful. Local plants have a chance of surviving these testing conditions. (This links to the report on page 13.)

Prevalent outside Alice Springs were burnt areas, some quite recent but already showing signs of regeneration - shoots appearing around the base of dead woody stems, hakea fruits split open with all seeds dropped, burnt spinifex grass re-shooting. The appropriate frequency of burning is crucial to maintain the ability of plants to regenerate - too frequent and a species can die out completely in that area.

One of the highlights for me was our visit to the Desert Park in Alice Springs. I've written more about this wonderful Park on page 10. If any of you are planning to visit Alice Springs do make sure you spend time there and allow most of a day to do it justice. I'll say a little more about the beauty of Central Australian scenery and its plants on the last page (I'm trying to be quite restrained). It's a unique environment with plants tailor-made for the special conditions.

The latest news about 'the book' is given on page 5.

NEXT MEETINGS

Please see details of these meetings on pages 18-20

MELBOURNE: Sunday August 11 - Chris Owens' then Chris Larkin's

NE VIC; Saturday August 17 - Jacci Campbell's

SYDNEY: Sunday August 25 - Arthur Dench's

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CORRESPONDENCE extracts

I mentioned in the last NL that one of our members lived in the Blue Mountains in NSW. I rang Deirdre Morton to find out whether she was affected by the bushfires. You can see a photo of her fascinating house and indigenous garden in 'the book'. DS

"Although we were not directly in the line of fire it was a tense time. Our home has a concrete roof and floor, mud brick walls and a flourishing native garden on the roof (which I would hate to see burnt). I think our house and garden design would probably give us protection but was glad not to put it to the test this time.

It is interesting to watch the bush regenerate after the fires on our favourite walks. The eucalypts and

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xanthorrhoeas are the first to show signs of green, now the banksias are growing from seed and lignotubers well. There is not much bird life in the burnt bush as yet.

Re groundcovers: I have growing large patches of ~~Viola hederacea~~ (Native Violet) close to the house. I planted it to give me pleasure but our local swamp wallaby has developed a taste for the flowers and delicately picks them all, not touching the leaves at all, and this also gives me great pleasure; a garden is a combination of many joys. Our roof garden and 'managed' bush block is 99% natives and certainly too messy for garden schemes but any members who are in the Blue Mountains would be most welcome to look at an old lady's attempt to live in harmony with the locals." **Deirdre Morton** NSW

A kind invitation to GDSG members - and Deidre doesn't sound at all 'old' to me. DS

"I always look forward to receiving your Newsletters and am really looking forward to the new book. In the near future I would like to be able to set aside some time to correspond regularly.

I am searching for a landscape designer for our partially cleared 40 acre bush block 1/2 an hour from Windsor (about 1 1/2 hours from Sydney). We need some advice re landscape planning and siting of a house, shed and yards for our 3 horses. I don't have any trouble coming up with ideas when looking at existing gardens but terrible at starting from scratch.

We want to maintain the character of the area using as many indigenous plants as possible. We are fortunate to share our place with a big mob of kangaroos and the obligatory brush tail who all share our passion for gardening, although their talents are culinary. At least we don't have to worry about pruning!

All the landscapers whose designs are exactly what I'm looking for derive from Victoria, for example Gordon Ford, Bill Molyneux and now I have discovered Paul Thompson's designs. I would like to contact Paul and have searched for his details on the internet but unfortunately can't find a reference. Are you able to provide me with his contact details?

Is there anyone else you could suggest who could advise us. Any help would be greatly appreciated." **Barbara Frawley** NSW

I agree with Barbara about maintaining the 'sense of place' by using indigenous (& endemic) plants, at least as a framework. I suggested that Barbara might like to contact Jo Hambrett for possible ideas of NSW designers. If you have any suggestions for Barbara you could also contact Jo on 9651 1827 to pass them on. (Indigenous plants occur naturally in that place; endemic plants occur naturally only in that place.) DS

"I was interested in Jan Hall's comments in NL38 that she requires gardens to show seasonal changes. That is an interesting point and one that I had not considered before as I have always expected or assumed that gardens would have seasonal colour. I have always striven to have flowers and colour at some part of my garden all year round, especially in winter as it lifts my spirits. In future, when I look at gardens, I will now consider if they do, or do not, have season colour as part of their design. I also thought hard and long on why we do garden. Is it for the joy and exercise it gives us OR to impress the neighbours? As Barbara Buchanan, wrote "another topic", indeed!

I have just sent off an article I wrote for the 'Australian Plants' regarding what I have learnt from 25 years of growing native plants. Some of it may relate to design and be suitable for this NL" **Jeff Howes** NSW

Please see extracts from Jeff's article on page 9. I myself find it difficult to believe that keen gardeners would work so hard and enthusiastically just to impress their neighbours. I think exercise too is a by-product, not the main aim, which for me is certainly joy. DS

"I have been meaning to send in some notes for the Newsletter for ages. A friend recently asked if she could write an article on our garden for her journalistic course. I suggested she aim one at a newsletter article. So here it is with a few corrections from us. Would you like a map to go with this?"

At the moment I am running a course on basic garden design as requested by some youngish environmental trained women! It has been great fun and I can't help pushing the local plant theme." Shirley & Graham Fisher W.A.

Please see the article (and map) on page 6 (and 7). Shirley & Graham's garden sounds very exciting. It's another reason to look forward to a trip to W.A. when Brian and I can manage it. DS

"Did you enjoy your trip to Central Australia? We have just come back from 4 days in Alice Springs. It was our first trip there.

Our local authorities and planners could learn a lot from their pride in their indigenous plant species with eremophilas, River Red Gums, Sturts Desert Pea, Ruby Saltbush, Blue Mallee (Eucalyptus aamophylla) and Shiny-leaved Mallee (E. lucens), acacias, etc. adorning roadsides, the airport, hotel gardens, tourist attractions and other public places. It was great to step out of the plane and see local plants which I had only ever seen before in photographs. This is aside from the Desert Park with its various desert ecosystems landscaped with the plants (and birds) found in them.

We called in to a nursery where they had a large section devoted to endemic plants. I resisted the temptation to bring back seeds from the 2 beautiful mallees. I know they would not be happy living in our humid climate." Barbara Frawley NSW

I agree heartily with Barbara's comments. DS

(Part of) a letter from London to APS Victoria, extracted from Nicky's letter in *Growing Australian* June 2002

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is sponsoring a show garden at this year's Chelsea Flower Show with an emphasis on demonstrating how to turn a garden into a habitat in which birds can live most of their lives. This means turning a back on traditional horticultural practices which keep gardens weed and pest free, and allowing 'controlled untidiness'.

In an article about bird friendly gardens, common ivy is highly recommended as it blooms in late summer through to autumn, attracts swarms of late insects and the berries ripen over winter when few others are available. This would send a shudder through every Aussie Weedbuster!" Nicky Rose

Things are different over there on the other side of the world! But the RSPB is surely heading in the right direction. DS

"The Newsletter is very interesting and informative although it is geared to south-eastern conditions. I usually read it at least twice. I'm always hoping for something inspirational about rainforest or seasonally dry rainforest which we have here. Sorry I'm not experienced enough yet to contribute - much appreciate Colleen Keena's and Geoff Simmons' contributions." Joy Stacey Qld

The contents of the NL reflect the distribution of GDSG members. We need more from Qld! However I do think articles can often be 'translated' for other conditions. DS

I shall not be renewing my subscription this coming year for the GDSG, although I have enjoyed my membership. Your Newsletter has certainly widened my knowledge, ideas, and made me laugh many times at the wide variety of views on gardening with Australian plants - all gardeners tend to be passionate about

their plants and ideas!

Now John and I live with a very tiny garden; ideas and plans for any future design not applicable! We are enjoying our involvement with 'Growing Friends' at RBG Cranbourne, and visiting Karwarra occasionally to work and wander in a lovely, larger garden.

With our best wishes for the future of the Group." Pat Webb Vic

Thank you, Pat & John, for your past contributions - enjoy your change of lifestyle. DS

Our book's new name is 'The Australian Garden: Designing with Australian Plants'.

(It was formerly 'Garden Design with Australian Plants'.)

The publisher decided that a more challenging name would be better, so the emphasis is now on the main title '**The Australian Garden**'. We are happy with this, as we think it puts more emphasis on the end product - the garden - and it is also an ambit claim for the term 'Australian garden'. To give a garden an Australian character, we believe that Australian plants must be included and must also be dominant.

The book will be available in mid-September. It is based on the work of the Study Group over the last nine years, so anyone who has contributed to the Newsletter in any way during that time has contributed to the book. I am sorry that there were too many people involved to have everyone's name included individually in the acknowledgements, but nevertheless everyone's contribution is greatly appreciated.

I am also sorry that many beautiful photos that GDSG members (and other APS members) sent in missed out on being used. The final choice depended on the designer, then the publisher, and also the distribution of photos between one chapter and the next. It's not easy. However I hope you will agree that the designer has shown great flair in her work, so the book will appeal to non-enthusiasts too.

The book will be available from APS, at some Open Garden weekends of members, from all good book-shops, or directly from the publisher, Blooming Books, email <warwick@bloomings.com.au> phone (03) 9427 1592, fax (03) 9427 9066. I hope you will enjoy it (and consider it when you think about Christmas presents for family and friends).

DESIGN

WWW - factors in garden design

Geoff Simmons Qld

Most people are aware of those three words - the 'world wide web' of this computer age - even someone who doesn't use this web, such as myself. However there are factors that I must take into account when I think about my garden and these factors can also be summarised in WWW. They are weeds, water and wallabies.

How are they related to my garden design? Firstly the situation must be defined and I am sure that some or most will apply to other gardeners.

Near a substantial township where rural activities and bushland steadily disappear with encroaching subdivision and housing, the pluses and minuses become crucial factors. For example, a reticulated water supply minimises dependence on rainfall and tanks. Just what changes this chlorine treated water stored from a more distant area makes to land previously only subject to rainwater is unknown. A similar situation may be surmised in the case of diminishing bushland.

But to return to the three Ws:

Weeds: Besides the existing weeds such as Blady Grass and bracken, virtually every year a new weed appears - Natal Grass and several that appear to have been introduced for pasture purposes. Birds assist the spread of nuisances such as Umbrella Trees, a native, and ochona, an exotic plant for gardens.

Other seeds may come from native and exotic palms. (*In some States, blady grass and bracken are not regarded as weeds. DS*)

~~Water~~: A sub-tropical climate means that evaporation is quite high and rainfall is mainly in the hotter months. There may also be considerable variation in yearly totals. This feast or famine phenomenon was described in a previous Newsletter. This needs to be considered in choosing Australian species.

~~Wallabies~~: Marsupials that I have experienced both in Brisbane and at the present location called for extra ingenuity to secure plants. In the Brisbane area the acre block of land had occasional visits from kangaroos. However rapid urban development meant the disappearance of these animals. My present 2 hectare block of land with some surrounding bush has wallabies living in the area. This has meant that wire netting guards and raised beds are necessary for protection against mobile marsupials, especially when dry conditions induce them to seek food over a larger area. Although I still see an occasional wallaby after 16 years of occupation, I have no doubt the Brisbane experience will be repeated as more traffic and development occurs.

These are just three factors that apply to transitional states when garden design is involved in short or long term planning.

I am sure we all have our own version of Geoff's WWW factors. The weeds of different districts vary, but all districts have them. Some environmentalists even think that in the broader landscape weeds are Australia's greatest ecological threat. Water too is of increasing general concern. In Melbourne (and Sydney) suburbs we don't have wallabies but we certainly do have possums. DS

GARDENS

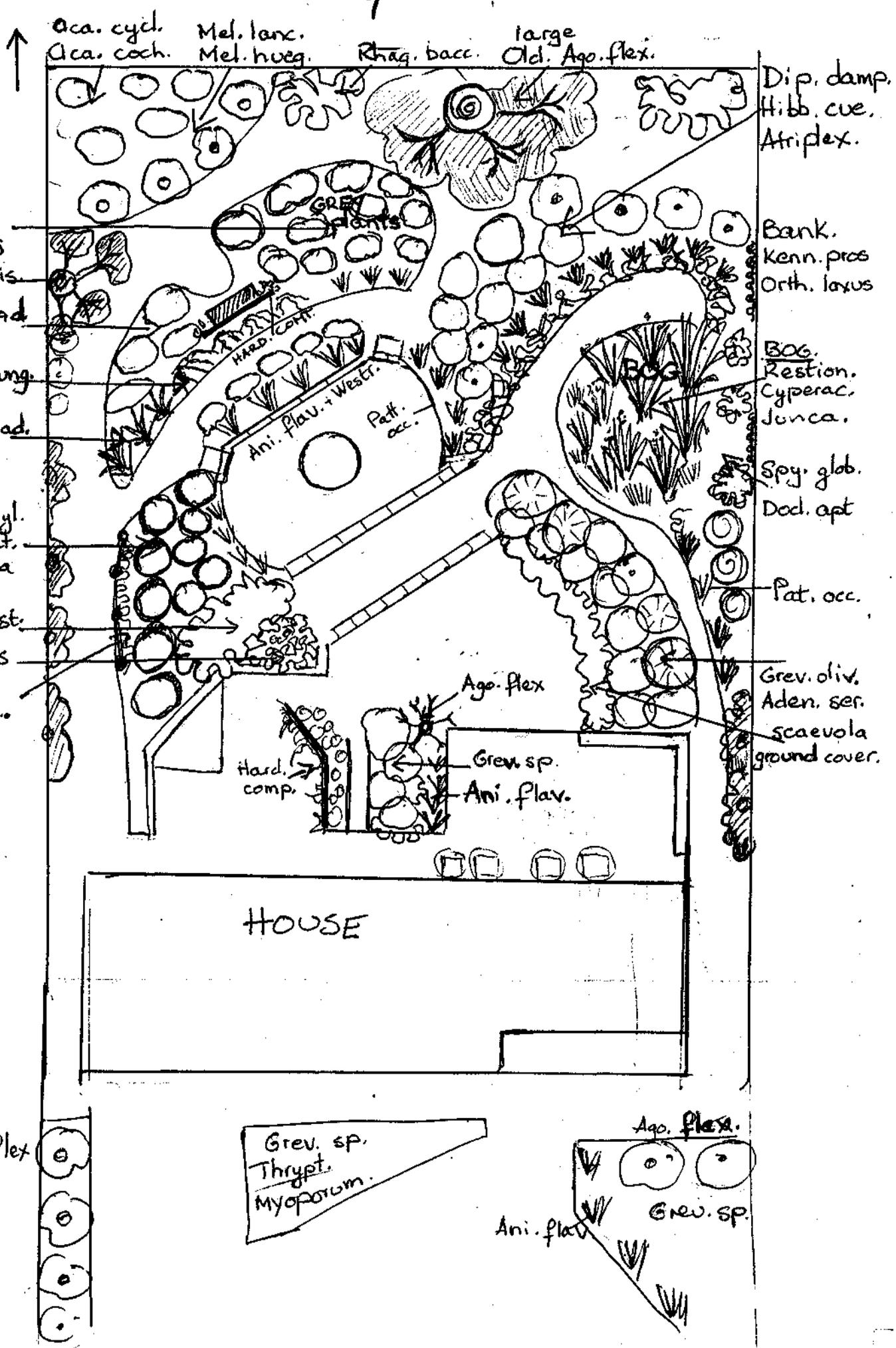
Shirley and Graham Fisher's garden

The use of WA coastal native plants and a garden designed with a good bone structure were the keys to the work carried out by Shirley and Graham Fisher in making a garden at their newly acquired house in the city of Bunbury on the coast of WA. (Please see the plan on page 7.) They had almost a clean slate to write on, as previous owners had done no more than establish perimeter plantings of the Bunbury stalwarts -oleander, hibiscus, mirror-leaf coprosma and NZ Christmas Bush, with the standard kikuyu and couch lawn to hold down the sand. None of these were to stay.

Less than 500 metres from the beach, wind is a feature that has to be designed for - pleasant sea breezes in summer become south-west storms in winter. But the movement of wind in the trees was part of the appeal of this particular block - because over the back fence is a backdrop of the local coastal trees, WA Peppermint or Willow Myrtle (*Agonis flexuosa*) and Tuart (*Eucalyptus gomphocephala*) rising up the side of a steep sandy hill.

The main part of the garden is behind the house. A uniting theme evolved as it took shape with structures built from local stone and recycled timber that Graham always has on hand. A jarrah timber/limestone motif emerged -jarrah timber for screens and limestone for paving and retaining walls. The latter delineate the bones of the garden, with the low limestone block walls defining three platforms of planted beds, contoured across a gentle slope. A broad diagonal axis is formed by two sawdust-packed platforms (jarrah again) and shallow limestone-paver steps that lead the eye from the back patio to the far corner of the block and the bush backdrop.

A large saucer shaped bird bath CO sits on a slab in a centre of the diagonal and beyond that a sculptural jarrah screen, covered in self-sown Native Lilac (*Hardenbergia comptoniana*). This was Graham's solution to the distracting and ugly view of a crumbling coffee rock wall and a fibro fence beyond.



Aca. cycl. Mel. lanc. large
 Aca. coch. Mel. hueg. Rhag. bacc. Old. Ago. flex.

Dip. damp.
 Hibb. cue.
 Atriplex.

Grey plants
 Coll. preis.
 Cal. quad

Bank.
 Kenn. pros
 Orth. laxus

Hem. pung.
 lep. glad.

BOG.
 Restion.
 Cyperac.
 Junca.

Pitt. phyl.
 Temp. ret.
 Dianella

Spy. glob.
 Dod. apt

Grev. vest.
 Aca. liss
 Hard. comp.

Pat. occ.

Grev. oliv.
 Aden. ser.
 scaevola
 ground cover.

Hard. comp.

Ago. flex

Grev. sp.
 Ani. flav.

HOUSE

Ago. flex

Grev. sp.
 Thrypt.
 Myoporum.

Ago. flex.

Ani. flav

Grev. sp.

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The lawn demolished (2) and the bones established, a trickle irrigation system was laid (a combination of drip and small spray) and good compost added. A strong design statement has been made by massing plants at each level. This is not a garden of plant specimens, for although Shirley's knowledge of Western Australian native plants is legendary and plant propagation is a passion, the garden is a design for living, not a botanic park. Shape, mass, line, texture and hidden aspects are the words Shirley uses to describe her style of gardening. Flowers are a bonus. Graham's absolute design prerequisite was "No lawn."

Many of the local plants chosen are not available in commercial nurseries, but were available through the community nursery where local species are grown for Landcare revegetation projects. Shirley is an active committee member of this volunteer-run nursery and well-known for leading seed collecting excursions.

Hardy grevilleas were planted next to the paved outdoor living space spanning the living room and kitchen doors (*G. olivacea* and the hybrids thereof), along with *Adenanthos sericea* (Woollybush), large stands of Kangaroo Paw hybrids (*Anigozanthos flavidus*) and the small cushioning scaevola to edge it. One strong-stemmed WA Peppermint was placed to provide future shade for the patio.

The primary viewing point for the garden is the north-facing back patio outside the living room doors. But to see what lies behind each bank of shrubs, you must get up and investigate. One of the surprises is a developing bog garden. This is to indulge Shirley's love of sedges and rushes and to provide her with an accessible seed store for the community nursery. Here you will find *Leptocarpus diffusus*, *Tremulina tremula*, *Lepidosperma tetraquetrum*, *Baumea articulatum*, *Schoenoplectus vavidus* and *Juncus pallidus*.

Since the house is occupied only part-time, easy living meant restricting the choice of plants to those Shirley knew would survive on a sand hill with minimum water. Most of these are local coastal species, but if it survives (and is not a weed), Shirley will use exotics too. For example, limestone pots of variegated *Pittosporum* are placed on the patio to relieve the glare.

In placing the chosen sand dune shrubs, the less spectacular went at the back effectively hiding the awful fibro fence, such as Rottnest Teatree or Moonah (*Melaleuca lanceolata*), Rottnest or Slender Cypress Pine (*Callitris preisii*), Chenille Honey-myrtle (*Melaleuca huegelii*), Common Net-bush (*Calothamnus quadrifidus*) and Basket Bush (*Spyridium globulosum*). Here also the in situ saltbush *Rhagodia baccata* has been allowed to seed itself and ramble where it pleases.

The coastal *Grevillea vestita* with its light green foliage and *Acacia lasiocarpa* with darker green form another bank of planting. A grey massed planting has been achieved using *Olearia axillaris*, Cushion Bush (*Leucophyta brownii*), *Eremophila glabra* and Grey Cottonheads (*Conostylis candicans*).

The more floral species to the fore are Cocky's Tongue (*Templetonia retusa*), *Diplolaene damperii*, Cutleaf Guinea Flower (*Hibbertia cuneiformis*), Coastal Honey-myrtle (*Melaleuca sensa*, formerly *acerosa*), Rice-flower (*Pimelea ferruginea*), Rigid Wattle (*Acacia cochlearis*), Coast Hop-bush (*Dodonea aptera*), Morning-flag (*Orthrosanthus multiflorus*), *Dianella divaricate* and *Patersonia occidentalis*.

To cover the banks, Snakebush (*Hemiandra pungens*), Running Postman (*Kennedia prostrata*) and *Brachysema praemorsa* have been used. A fence lines one side path which is now covered in *Hardenbergia comptoniana*. This needs controlling to stop it covering all nearby plants! For contrast, the shiny green leaved Sea Box (*Alyxia buxifolia*), the weeping *Pittosporum phylliraeoides* and the strap-like leaves of the Sword Sedge (*Lepidosperma gladiatum*) have been placed to add interest.

Demolition of the lawn on the street frontage caused some initial alarm with the neighbours. They must be relieved to see the end result — paved off-street parking with shrubberies that will screen the front windows. Hardy grevilleas and *Adenanthos sericeus* with a solid edging of *Anigozanthos flavidus* are the mainstays of these beds. Along the street boundary and the outside of the drive is the groundcover *Grevillea obtusifolia* and over them, well-staked against the prevailing wind, are advanced specimens of the

lovely WA peppermint (Willow Myrtle). In a few years they will frame the house with shade and movement.

All this activity took place only a year ago, and pruning is happening already. The 10 cm high seedlings from the community nursery have shot up to nearly one metre and the creepers are cascading over the retaining walls. As more time passes, Shirley and Graham say they will be able to reduce the watering (now set to every 3 days in summer) and have a truly sustainable garden in coastal sand.

(1) Building a big enough bird bath

First shape a circular basin 1.2 metres across and about 200mm deep in damp sand. Smooth the sand with a simple cardboard or wood shape. Place and smooth a one inch layer of cement, lay & flatten overlapping segments of fine chicken wire then five circles of fence wire, the last at the rim, cover the wire completely with as little cement as possible, about one inch. Leave 2 weeks to dry then dig a slope and slide it up, rocking the rim. Fill the hole and slide onto a slab. Easy, simple and elegant.

(2) Getting rid of an unwanted lawn of kikuyu and couch

The technique used was to spray with Roundup in summer. Leave without water for two months, turn over with a hired rotary hoe in April - and finally fork over 3 times by hand to remove remaining runners.

Plant details

Tuart *Eucalyptus gomphocephala* (from the Greek - referring to the club-like flower cap)

Tuart is one of the earth's rarest trees. It grew in a 320 km strip of limestone country separated from the sea by dunes, from Moore River in the north through Perth and Fremantle to Dunsborough in the south. It was one of the first WA species to be exploited on a large scale. They have a natural lifespan of 400 years or more. The giants described by the colonists (at over 49m tall and with a 7 m circumference) are gone and the Tuart is barely known.

Tuart was prized as timber because it is hard, tough, rigid, durable, termite resistant and not liable to dry rot. From colonisation through to the early part of the 20th century it was used among other things, for bridge piles, ship's beams, railway trucks and carts.

WA Peppermint: *Agonis flexuosa* *Aboriginal name; Wanil* Also called Willow Myrtle. Flexuosa, meaning lull of bends' refers to the zig-zag stems, which change direction at each leaf node.

With spreading branches and weeping foliage, this thick trunked tree up to 10 metres tall, occurs near the coast of WA. The leaves and gum were used medicinally and ceremonially by the Aboriginal population. These trees are popular in parks and gardens for their drooping foliage, though when planted as street trees in Perth they are often savagely hacked back.

This coastal tree has taken over the space formerly occupied by Tuarts, and foresters regard it as a weed. Its biggest use in the early days was for firewood. It is a favourite habitat, providing hollows and cover for the western ringtail possum (*Pseudocheirus occidentalis*). Although this species has been on the threatened list it survives in suburban Busselton because of a predominance of peppermints.

Information from *The Trees that were Nature's Gift*, by Irene Cunningham, 1998

Leaf and Branch: Trees and Tall Shrubs of Perth by Robert Powell, 1990

Growing Australian plants for 25 years on clay soils

Jeff Howes NSW

Following are some of the points, including many practical aspects of garden design, that Jeff made in an article he wrote for 'Australian Plants'. You will be able to see the full text there. DS

Jeff discusses such factors as the use of gypsum, raised beds, watering and mulch. He says "I go out at night with a torch to inspect the garden for bugs and other creepy crawlies. You will be surprised how many you find. It will be advisable to explain to your neighbours what you are doing and that you are harmless (in my case I am)."

- Maintenance/pruning - this is an individual thing and you will need to decide on how much time you

have and how neat and tidy you like the look of your garden. One thing is for sure, your garden will reflect the outcome of these decisions. The degree of maintenance will determine the degree of formality that is created. There is no doubt that regular pruning prolongs the life of a plant, makes it look much better and promotes more flowers. Care must be taken not to prune into "old" wood, especially on grevilleas, as you will often get no new shoots. How old is old? - you will learn.

- Try to group plants that like similar conditions of light and especially water together. A basic statement, but one that is easy to break and will lead to plant losses through under or over watering.
- Landscaping - this raises many questions, some of these are: What style are you trying to create, is it formal, informal, rambling, collector or a family garden, or should you worry? Are you going to have lawn or paved areas or both. If so how much of each? To create unity in my garden I repeat plants of like foliage and texture, especially ground covers. If you select plants that agree with your local environment you will find that they grow strong and healthy and are less likely to be attacked by too many predators. This will also reduce or eliminate the need for toxic sprays to control them.
- Select plants carefully to ensure that you have some flowers all year round. This is not as hard as you think and really makes the garden better to look at. I try to get away from having all my plants flowering in spring. Winter flowers are a great way of lifting your spirits.
- A weed is only a misplaced plant - frequent decisions will need to be made as to whether to retain self-sown native seedlings. My decisions are based on what they are and where they are growing, especially if they are something special like Flannel Flowers.
- My garden, and I am sure yours, is continually evolving and will always be two years behind your lifestyle.
- Gardening is an on-going exercise and never at any one time can I say that my garden is finished and there is nothing more to do in it.

Jeff then lists many of the plants that he has had long term success with (eight years or more) in his Sydney garden. It's good to hear details of another's experience gained over many years, especially someone with an interest in design. DS

The Desert Park, Alice Springs

Diana Snape Vic

This superb Park depicts three desert ecosystems, with typical plants and birds of each ecosystem. (The birds are in large and well vegetated but enclosed aviaries.) I'm not sure just how many plants have been planted, but the Park is partly a natural environment with a magnificent mountain backdrop and partly a created one. These blend seamlessly. The detailed signs in the Park are educational but also attractive and appealing (to kids of all ages).

In (1) the desert rivers section, the ubiquitous and magnificent *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* (River Red Gum) is the principal tree. Its widespread distribution links many areas across Australia. I think a natural river or creek ran there (remember the "dry or ten feet high" - what **is** a river or a creek in that country?).

(2) To create (red) sand country. I think a lot of sand must have been moved. This area included a claypan and a saltpan, with their typical vegetation. There's something about that red sand as a background for silver-grey, blue-grey, grey-green, lilac-mauve and also the occasional green plant (e.g. the widespread Hop-bush *Dodonaea viscosa* with its surprising shiny green).

(3) Woodland included a variety of small trees and shrubs - many wattles and some beautiful small eucalypts such as *E. gamophylla* (Blue Mallee). Hakeas such as two Corkbarks, long-leaved *H. suberea* and spiky *H. eyreana*, both have a characteristic rugged, woody appearance. Desert Grevillea (*G. pterosperma*) is

one of a number.

One area grades into another - the three mentioned above plus mountain crags, gullies, shrubby grassland and grassland. Flowering shrubs include Sturts Desert Rose (*Gossypium sturtianum*). At ground level are grasses, especially spinifex (*Triodia* spp.). There are many daisies and wahlenbergias.

It will be fascinating to see how the Desert Park is maintained into the future and how much fire is used in its ongoing management.

An integrated garden

Jan Simpson ACT

Brief notes from an article in the June Journal of the ANPS Canberra Region

Jan refers to two methods of integrating exotics into an Australian native garden. The more obvious is the separation method, keeping them in separate sections of the garden - i.e. not *really* integrated at all. The more challenging is the blending method and Jan analyses aspects of this. There are two main principles in blending - to play up similarities and tone down differences. For example, the pretty pink diosma from South Africa has small leaves and small flowers that could belong to a baeckea or astartea. (*leant help thinking 'why not use a baeckea or astartea ?' DS*)

Some specifics

a) Check that the flowering times of adjacent exotics do not coincide with the Australian plant's which, if smaller, will be overwhelmed by the usually larger flowers of the exotic. Jan illustrates this with several examples.

b) Check leaf sizes or colours of adjacent plants. These factors are more commonly recognized, with different leaf colours such as greyish-green, acid green and dark green. Small leaves (and the 'disappearing leaf trick') can be used to advantage for contrast and backdrops.

c) Similarity of flower shapes. One example is that of epacris and ericas which combine both as 'bells' and as lovers of overly acid, damp peaty soil.

d) The single flower colour option, which works best in a separate bed. This could for example be a garden of 'true blues', or 'yellow-golds'. Whites can be planted in among them to tone down the differences. (*The separate bed then needs to be integrated into the total garden scene. DS*)

e) The thin blue line principle is an application of both single colour and 'repeating' to tie separated places together. A border of one colour could be planted around all the garden visible in one sweep.

f) The 'now you see me - now you don't' flower to match the 'disappearing leaves'. This means using green flowers which disappear into the foliage but provide nectar for insects and birds.

g) Similarity of foliage also works as in (b)

h) Continuity of form can also help, for example using strap-leaved plants as a bridge or a unifying and repeated feature.

i) Talking daisies. You can mix and match any of the soft-petalled daisies as long as there is no more than 4cm difference between the smallest and largest flower sizes. The big, bold and brassy bracteantha varieties blend well with other Mediterranean climate plants from Mexico, Africa and the Canary Islands.

j) Pine replacements. Native pines (callitris) can be used to blend with those neighbouring conifers. To replace those with weeping needles, use the allocasuarina species.

k) Understated fillers are another option, downplaying the differences. Use non-challenging plants such as thryptomene, astartea, shorter baeckea, or cryptandras. Lower down, use small-flowered scaevolae, Native Violets, *Frankenia pauciflora* or *Rulingea hermanniifolia*.

By playing up similarities while minimising or buffering differences, you can have a lovely blended garden.

JOURNALS

Australian Horticulture April-May 2002

American vision well worth considering

Diana Snape Vic

Julia Berney reports an investigation carried out by **Tinka Sack** from the University of Western Australia, in which she compares Fountain Hills, an outer suburb of Phoenix, Arizona U.S.A., with Perth's satellite city of Joondalup in W. A.. The description of Fountain Hills is inspiring, while that of Joondalup is depressing (and reminiscent of so many Australian developments).

In Joondalup, the vision of the original planners was somewhat similar to that in Fountain Hills. To begin with, the authorities were creative but this vision did not last long. Developers and councillors soon followed a 'scraped earth' policy, and then most home-owners planted mainly exotic plants. In public space, Western Australian plants are not used imaginatively. Tinka Sack says "It's all about blanketing with tubestock. . . . Why can't we create a contemporary designed landscape with endemic species?" This is what has happened over the seas in Fountain Hills.

Here there are similarities - Fountain Hills has migrants, many from more northerly American states, and also has water restrictions. However planning authorities have adopted a sophisticated, strict and sensible approach. Residences and civic squares all embrace, in some manner, a desert landscape. "There's an acknowledgment that they are of a particular region." The "desert aesthetic" is imposed on them, and gardens are entirely composed of Sonoran Desert plants surrounded by gravel. "Everything is incredibly prescriptive. That's how they protect property values - and that's why people want to live there."

The desert plants have been presented in designed landscapes in such a way that "people find them appetising, desirable, sexy even. They've seen that you can make neat, orderly gardens from these plants - and so the beauty of the desert has been given commercial value". Home-makers are allowed to grow one or two exotics near their houses, but use of local flora is encouraged by both their availability and appealing use in display gardens.

In public spaces there are both patches of retained desert and designed landscapes that cannot easily be distinguished from nature. To protect existing vegetation on blocks, owners can build on only a small portion - an 'envelope' - of their land while the rest remains undisturbed. Large feature plants such as Saguaro cacti are set aside and transplanted back into the garden when the building is finished. In hard landscaping, muted or certain dramatic colours are used but white is avoided because of glare.

The article concluded with Tina Sack's assessment of what was needed to change attitudes in W.A.

- eliminate the element of 'cultural cringe'
- show people new and, until now, unimagined ways of designing with W.A plants
- show the attraction of plants other than green lawns and colourful flowers
- accept brief seasonal shows & dormant periods, with trees giving permanent structure to the garden
- Improve the combination of hardscaping and planting
- have more prescriptive planning rules to reflect more of what a natural W.A. landscape looks like
- landscape architects and managers take on more responsibility for this
- home gardeners learn that local species are desirable as well as hardy and environmentally sound
- help gardeners learn how to care for local species
- have available grafted stock and plants in larger sizes
- "put public and private landscapes in touch with their encompassing bio-region".

How long before we have a comparable, inspiring development in Australia? Or are we just too independent to ever accept being told by the authorities what we can or cannot do?

'Landscape Australia' Feb/Mar/April 2002

The Feng Shui Model

Michael M.Y. Mak

The following are extracts are taken, with permission, from an article about Feng Shui which relates to broadscale landscape. It is particularly applicable to macro built environments, including site selection and design of cities. I found it fascinating and I'm sure it has some relevance to garden design generally - especially large gardens. Even in small gardens, many of us place significance on the use and location of water and mounds or rocks in our gardens. DS

"Feng Shui is an ancient Chinese wisdom related to architecture and built environment. Primitive knowledge of Feng Shui was based on the observation of three sources: astronomical and natural phenomena, and human behaviour. These sources developed into Chinese astronomy, geography and philosophy, which combined into Feng Shui (meaning Wind and Water in Chinese)."

"Most of the major cities in China conform to the criteria of this ideal Feng Shui model, for example Beijing, Nanjing and Xian." "14 out of the top 20 major cities in the modern world conform perfectly", including Tokyo, New York, Paris and London.

The important elements of Form School (one category of Feng Shui) are "the shape of mountains and hills, the direction of water and the relationship between hills and water". Five geographical factors are dragon (mountain ridge), sand, water, cave (best location) and direction. . . . An empirical survey was conducted with architects in Sydney and Hong Kong to establish whether their perception coincided with the ideal Feng Shui model. . . . This survey used four scenarios of surrounding environment, . . . composed of different spatial combinations of house, hill, ponds, open space, trees and paths."

"For Sydney participants scenarios were reversed from south to north to represent the different orientation in the Southern Hemisphere. The participating architects were requested to rank these four scenarios from 1 to 4, with the first choice of 1 and the last choice of 4." The following table (page 15) shows the four scenarios and the results of the surveys.

I found the general agreement between the surveyed architects in Hong Kong and Sydney fascinating - and also the slight differences. DS

'GUMNUTS'45 & THE INTERNET

"Savanna Burning" is a new book that may be of interest to subscribers

This 140-page book describes how fire affects all aspects of the savanna landscape; it also provides some guidelines on how fire can be used to achieve multiple aims. It is designed as a concise, readable account of our current knowledge, and also as a general reference relating to fire management in the savannas of northern Australia. It is illustrated throughout in full colour.

Further details will be in the June 2002 issue of Australian Plants online, but the following chapter headings will give an idea of the scope of the book.

Chapter 1. Introduction	Chapter 2. Savanna landscapes
Chapter 3. Savanna fire regimes	Chapter 4. Effects of fire in the landscape
Chapter 5. Using fire in savanna management	Chapter 6. Burning operations
Chapter 7. Monitoring fire regimes	Chapter 8. Global trends and fire management
Chapter 9 The future	

An order form and more information about the book is available on the Tropical Savannas CRC website at: <http://savanna.ntu.edu.au> (Then look for the "Publications" section)

Figure 4.
Four scenarios
of surrounding
environment, with
descriptions
(Adapted from
Yu 1998: 58).

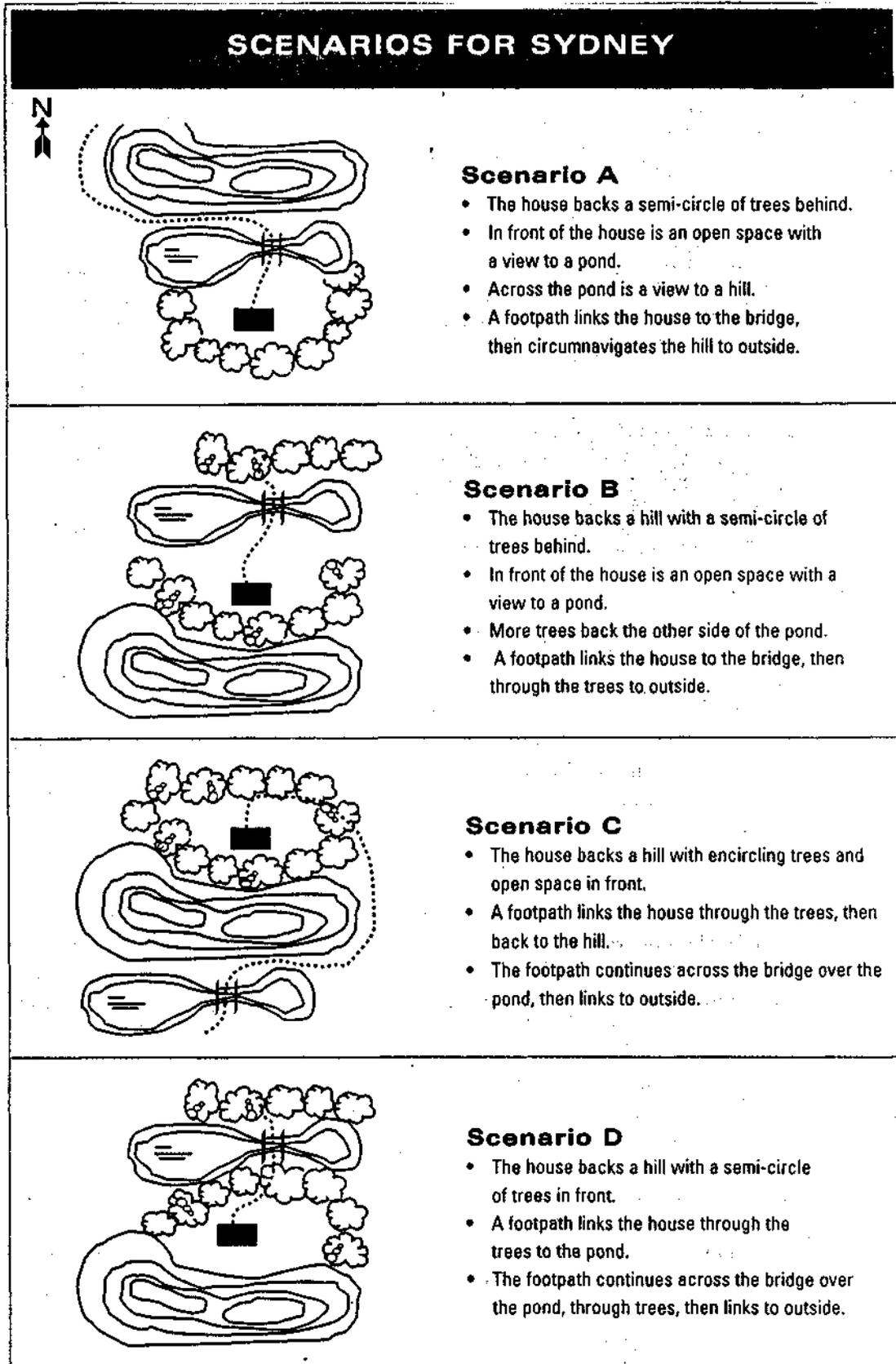


Table 1. Preferred choice of surrounding environment.

	Percentage of First Choice			Average Ranking	
	Yu's Result (n=87)	Sydney (n=76)	Hong Kong (n=46)	Sydney	Hong Kong
Scenario A	10.3%	9.2%	0.0%	2.45	3.17
Scenario B	72.4%	89.5%	97.8%	1.12	1.02
Scenario C	3.4%	0.0%	0.0%	3.88	3.61
Scenario D	5.7%	1.3%	2.2%	2.55	2.22

Five Geographical Factors	Criteria	Scenario			
		A	B	C	D
Dragon	Backed by hill		✓	✓	✓
Sand	Surrounded by trees	✓	✓	✓	✓
Water	Water in front	✓	✓		✓
	Water view in front	✓	✓		
	Path in front	✓	✓		✓
Cave	Open space in front	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Open view in front	✓	✓	✓	✓
Direction	Sunshine in front		✓	✓	✓

Table 2.
Components of the four scenarios, according to the five geographical factors of Form School Feng Shui.

DESIGN IDEAS

Freshly dug soil

Jeff Howes NSW

From my limited understanding, freshly dug soil (Cherree Densley in NL38) does make plants grow more quickly as it allows more room for the roots to grow easily through the open pores in the soil. As well, oxygen travels down through these pores faster than through more compacted soils. The only water that is of any value to plant life is the water passing through the soil, so an open soil makes this easier and, conversely, heavier soils slow and sometimes stop this passage of water (often with fatal results to the plant). This flow of water often brings nutrient that have been washed out of the soil down to the plants' deeper feeder roots, thus aiding faster growth. In Sydney an excellent cheap, weed-free and readily available soil substitute for native plants is crushed sandstone. The seven domes of the Sydney Olympic site, which are supposed to represent the Southern Cross from the air, are crushed sandstone topped with the also readily available bio sludge and planted with native grasses.

That sounds an excellent soil substitute, Jeff. DS

PLANTS in DESIGN

Dead-heading banksias?

Diana Snape Vic

This topic came up at the May Melbourne meeting, when we were looking at one of Helen Morrow's photos of an APS courtyard design at the IF&G Show several years ago. *Banksia* 'Birthday Candles' in pots, closely packed and in full flower, had been used to create a wonderful display. I commented that when we bought our first *Banksia* 'Birthday Candles', in full flower, we were disappointed the following year when it did not flower (at all, from memory). Someone then told us to 'dead-head' the little shrub and the next year it again flowered well. (I had previously never thought to do this because I like the banksia cones.) **Chris Larkin** commented that she grew *Banksia* 'Golden Candles' and did not need to 'dead-head' for it to flower each year. What have other members found with these two shrubs, or other banksias? We tried partly dead-heading a normal *Banksia spinulosa* and I think this did make a difference, too, but it was not clear just how beneficial this had been for the next year's flowering. Even treating two similar plants differently might not be conclusive, because other factors (amount of sun, water, cussedness) could influence the result.

Part of garden design is knowing about the maintenance required to get (and keep) the effect we want to achieve in our garden. I have seen very little written about techniques such as dead-heading which might be worth considering. There's also the best time to cut back grasses, divide and/or dead-head tufted plants, etc. The time can vary for different grasses and tufted plants.

If you have made any observations from your own experience, or if you have any questions that others might be able to answer, or that the GDSG should investigate, please let me know.

In a recent Newsletter of the Friends of the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens, the Curator John Knight, a member of GDSG, writes about hardy callistemons and melaleucas. It's good to be reminded of these beautiful and tough shrubs. I suspect the melaleucas (he mentions four shrubs) are slightly less well known than the callistemons. The following are extracts from his writing.

- *M. hypericifolia* (Red Honey-myrtle), a large, easily grown shrub of 3 - 4m, which can be pruned with a chainsaw if necessary, but would be better if more regular maintenance was undertaken. It makes a most architectural shrub if pruned up on a trunk and the branches allowed to twist and gnarl, as often occurs where it grows on windswept coastal dunes.

(We have the *M. hypericifolia* *Vladulla Beacon* form, which grows to just 60cm as an attractive low, spreading mound with dense foliage. It can be pruned to shape if required. A lovely plant. DS)

- *M. capitata* A dense shrub of 1.5 to 2m is easily maintained. Late spring offers lightly perfumed, cream pom pom flowers, attracting many and varied butterflies and beetles. Foliage is grey green.
 - *M. squamea* (Swamp Honey-myrtle) is an erect shrub to 2m, with a spread of only 1 to 1.5m. with small, pink mauve bottlebrush flowers. Plants are naturally dense to the ground and, with regular clipping, a stiff hedge of this plant could be easily maintained at 1 to 1.5m high.
 - *M. squarrosa* (Scented Paperbark) A taller plant with a similar erect habit, but growing to 3m high, with cream flowers during spring. The foliage is dark green and the plant would make a good screen to disguise a fence or shed. Hard pruning will encourage strong growth and maintain a dense habit.
-

Green paving

Extracts taken from an article in *Native Plants for NSW*, April 2002

Leigh Murray NSW reported on three low groundcovers intended to be suitable for light foot traffic and able to cope with hard, dry granite soil. Here are the results:

- *Dichondra repens* (naturally occurring). Aerating the ground with a garden fork proved essential; watering and pruning (e.g. with a whipper snipper or lawn mower) helped, but the dichondra isn't flourishing.
- *Phyla nodiflora* was easy to establish; does better with some water than in very dry spots. Its clover-like pink flowers attract grass butterflies and sometimes bees, which don't seem to be a problem with nearby flowering grevilleas. (One catch is I understand *Phyla nodiflora* is now thought not to be an Australian plant. DS)
- The local glycine (possibly *Glycine clandestina*) mixes in with both the others. It only occasionally needs minor trimming of upright pieces and it copes well with light foot traffic, its small purple flowers are beautiful.

For green paving in a heavy traffic area, large (300 x 400 mm) concrete tiles ("holey tiles") sometimes called *frfr* pavers, can be used. The raised surfaces take the brunt of the traffic while plants are grown in the lower sections.

Perhaps we should be experimenting with plants local to our areas (like the glycine) for "green paving". Have you tried my unusual plants for this? DS

SAWPPETS

An Australian Landscape Conference is going to be held in Melbourne September 21 & 22. You may remember those of a few years ago. There will be both Australian speakers and some from overseas, Information is available - phone (03) 94271592, fax (03) 9427 9066, www.bloomings.com.au. The Conference Director is Warwick Forge, email <warwick@Woomings.ajm.au>

There is a chance our book may be launched at this Conference, which would be great.

Not exactly a snippet - **an apology**, to the director of plant sciences at the Royal Botanic Gardens (Sydney, I assume), **Tim Entwistle**, for spelling his name incorrectly in the last NL.

A GDSG badge?

Ruth Crosson of Qld, whose interest is landscaping for the Qld coast, north of the Tropic of Cancer, has suggested having a GDSG badge, like the logo design. Similarly I have wondered about a GDSG T-shirt (as the Daisy Study Group have) but I've been doubtful that enough members would want to buy one to make it worthwhile. Please let me know if *you* would want to buy either of these and, if so, which.

Ground birds? Against a side wall we have creepers climbing up a wire screen. The other morning we saw two white-browed scrub-wrens there and one was hopping vertically up the screen at a height of 2 or 3 metres above the ground - a vertical garden indeed.

Beautiful leptospermum cultivars. Looking quickly through the June 2002 HMA News, I noticed a page of pictures of recognizably Australian plants and thought aha, Geraldton Wax. When I checked, they were forms of *Leptospermum* 'Aussie Blossom' - white with a pink centre (Martin), creamy white with just a touch of pink (Emily), very pale pink (Joy) and a deeper pink (Naoko) - masses of beautiful blossoms.

MEETINGS

NE Vic Branch

An extra meeting was held on July 4 at the home of Wangaratta APS members Helen and John van Riet, who have returned to town and are revamping their garden. We offered to come and throw ideas around for them to consider in their development.

Report of meeting at Jan Hall's Saturday April 20

Barbara Buchanan Vic

We began by watching a tape of a recent Gardening Australia program devoted to design. Not many of the gardens used had much appeal to our group, as only one considered Australian plants. They were all from the coastal fringe and seemed to be approached from a landscape architect/designer viewpoint rather than a gardener's. The emphasis was on design, not plants, and the wide range of conditions to be met due to site, client preference, usage, etc. gave us an insight into a professional designer's problems. The basic need for structure in the garden to be related to the architecture of the house was firmly put, yet the emphasis was decidedly on the current trend for minimalism in the garden. I hope I have made an accurate summary of how we saw the show. (*It sounds convincing, Barbara. DS*)

Glenda pointed out that whether we like it or not, minimalism is here and likely to stay for certain city gardens and lifestyles and we should find Australian plants that can be used in courtyards etc. We feel there is a great need to develop a local look for gardens, to avoid the blurring of the differences which tourists travel to see, and for our own sense of belonging.

Is it possible to develop an Australian atmosphere without eucalypts? So we discussed the growing of eucs. especially majlees in big pots for the courtyard scene. Banksias and casuarinas were also suggested. We finished with a challenge to ourselves to grow a large, typically Australian tree in a pot, not as a bonsai exactly and not excessively trained but decently shaped, perhaps kept small by growth regulators. A suggestion is that regular fertilizing will restrict root growth and stop root ball formation while enabling plentiful leaf production.

We would like to see a commercial nursery specialise in producing such trees. It was reported that a

guru in Queensland believes our gardens could be the future for much of our wildlife, which highlights the need to grow native.

Discussion also turned to the recent Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show where a refreshing return to plant life was seen. This has since been reported from other sources. Our group felt APS could well devote some more money to aiding the display mounted by our volunteers as those who shared manning the stall felt it furthered the cause of Australian plants with the general public.

I agree that APS money would be well spent aiding the display at the MIFG Show. We need to raise our profile. Please see my comments about the 'free in a pot' idea on page 22. DS

Next NE Vic meeting: Saturday August 17 at Jacc! Campbell's Caniambo at 10.30 am for 11.
(Barbara is sending a map to members who regularly attend NE Branch meetings. If any other members would like to attend this meeting, please contact Barbara for this map. DS)

Please phone Barbara Buchanan to indicate whether you can come.

Further meeting provisionally **October 12** at Gloria Thompson's but this date will be decided at the August meeting.

Melbourne meetings

Report of meeting on Sunday May 5 at 2 pm at Diana & Brian Snape's

On a beautiful autumn afternoon, a substantial group of members gathered for an afternoon of vigorous discussion. The focus of the meeting was the International Flower and Garden Show (or, as one member said, the International Flower and Landscape Architecture Show, as - agreeing with **Jan Hall** - we thought there was little in the way of gardens). **Helen Morrow** had taken photos both last year and this year of a number of the courtyard garden designs, and these had been scanned and printed at A4 size so they could be passed round the group. (Thank you, Helen & Tim.) There was general agreement that last year's designs were even more minimalist than this year's, with much hard landscape but few plants. They were really just like outdoor 'rooms', obviously designed for outdoor eating or entertainment. This year the plants have become rather more significant, and several of the designs were admired and Australian substitutes were considered for the exotic plants used. Such designs are relevant to many gardens, as the area close to the house can often be a transition or interface between the hard surfaces of the house and the softness of the planted garden. In the past we may have taken too little interest in these areas and we can try to make more of them.

This led to a discussion of the lack of courtyard (garden) designs at the Show featuring Australian plants. (See article page.) The APS display inside the building is popular but there should also be eye-catching designs outside, which must be of professional standard. It was suggested that APS Victoria might think seriously about organizing and paying for such a display at the next Show. The last time this was done, with a professional rather than an amateur approach, it took a week or so to set up and a few days to take down. The professional designer involved made the major sacrifice. Volunteers (including GDSG members) can help but someone with professional expertise should be paid for their time.

Again in regard to publicizing APS and Australian plants, it was suggested that we should have a coloured, glossy leaflet available to interested people, for example at the Show, or gardens in the Open Garden Scheme. We noted the strong showing of our members in the Scheme this year - 5 gardens in the Melbourne area, three for the first time. One new member, **Charles Hrubos**, who has a new but already partly established garden, is already aiming to have his garden in the Scheme in a few years time. It would be great if more APS members were able to take this opportunity for publicity. It's a worthwhile challenge.

Next meeting: Sunday August 11 at 1 pm at Chris Owens'

~~Please note early start~~ Chris will show us and tell us about frog ponds, a different and fascinating topic. He also concentrates on using indigenous plants.

After the visit to Chris Owens', we will move on at **2pm** for the rest of our meeting at **Chris Larkins'** place nearby, We'll see Chris's recent work in her garden in preparation for her Open Garden weekend. (If you cannot come to this meeting but plan to go to the Open Garden weekend, please see page 12 for the different address for parking.)

~~Please phone Diana Snape as soon as possible~~ to indicate whether you can come to the August meeting. I would like to have an idea of the numbers. If we share cars it will make parking easier at both venues.

Later meeting this year:- **November 10** at Charles Hrubos' place. Details in next NL.

Sydney branch meetings

Next Sydney meeting: Sunday August 25 at Arthur Dench's place

Arthur has a large property near Mt Annan Botanic Garden - low rainfall, fauna habitat, lots of experimenting with indigenous plants.

Please phone Jo Hambrett for details of this meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Bryan Loft via

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 1 July 2001 - 30 June 2002

Bank Balance 30 June 2001	<u>\$ 3804.78</u>	<u>Less EXPENDITURE</u>	
<u>Plus INCOME</u>		Newsletter Expenses:	
Advance Royalty on Book	\$1,000.00	Printing	\$976.10
Loan From APS Vic	\$16,500.00	Postage	\$372.95
Bank Interest	\$ 0.81	Envelopes	\$35.54
Donations	\$38.60		\$1,384.59
2001/2002 Subscriptions received	\$1,050.00	Sub to Friends of RBG Cranbourne	\$ 25.00
2002/2003 Subscriptions received	\$650.00	Sub to Friends of Kawarra Gardens	\$ 20.00
2003/2004 Subscriptions received	<u>\$120.00</u>	Sub to Illawarra Grevillea Park Soc	\$ 25.00
TOTAL	<u>\$ 19,359.41</u>	Sub to Eurobodalla Botanic Gardens	\$20.00
		Bloomings Books	\$19,500.00
		BAD Tax	\$4.20
		Bank fee for returned cheque	\$ 9.50
		Secretarial Expenses	\$ 24.20
		Mail out to Sydney Members	<u>\$47.30</u>
		TOTAL	<u>\$21,050.21</u>
<u>Balance 30 March 2002</u>	<u>\$2113.98</u>		

If you want to, remember for your convenience you can pay a subscription for 2 years (i. e \$20 for the normal subs, \$10 for concession). This will reduce cheque/bank fees associated with subscription payment by cheque.

I can keep track of this on the database. Bryan Loft

MEMBERSHIP

Renewals for 2002-2003

Thank you to all these members for their prompt renewals. (• = renewed for 2 (or more) years)

•Ingrid Adler, Jacinta Allen, Ros Andrews, \Joan Barrett, Sharon & Craig Beeching, Ted Belcher, Trevor & Beryl Blake, Lynne Boladeras, Judy Boldiston, «Ian Bond, Jennifer Borrell, Leeanne Brockway, Barbara Buchanan, Maree Burgoyne, Jane Calder, Jacci Campbell, Dianne Clark, -Yvonne Coventry, Ian & Tamara Cox, Ruth Crosson, Brian & Mary Dacy, Glenda & Bernie Datson, Sandra & Kim Davey, Gillian Davies, Kay Dempsey, 'Arthur Dench, Cherree Densley, Betty Denton, Catherine Drew, Joyce & Tom Edgerton, Rodger & Gwen Elliot, Shirley & Graham Fisher, 'Linda Floyd, Barbara Frawley, Christine & Angelo Gaiardo, Barrie Gallacher, Marilyn Gray, Caroline & John Gunter, Cheree Hall, 'Beverley Hanson, Robyn Hartley, 'Monika Herrmann, John Hoile, Annette & John Housman, Jeff Howes, Brenton Isted, Mark James, Julie Jones, Allan & Helen Joyce, Bev Kapernick, Catherine King, Pamela King, Faleiry Koczkar, Nadia Lalak, Chris Larkin, Mollie Lau, Diana Leggat, Margaret Lee, Bryan Loft, Geoffrey & Ann Long, Alexander Mackenzie, Neil Marriott, Margaret & Ken Milburn, Margaret Moir, Gillian Morris, Deidre Morton, Anne Neild, Barry Nilsson, David Oakley, Linda Parlane, 'Alison Payne, Jonathan & Georgina Persse, Thelma & Don Peterson, Michele Pymble, Ian Radford, Anne Raine, Lynette & Peter Reilly, Pam Renouf, Martin Rigg, Tony & Joy Roberts, Gordon Rowland, • Nicky Rose, Gwen Sanders, Theres Scales, Janet Schapper, Peter Shannon, Maureen Short, Geoff Simmons, 'Rosalind Smallwood, Diana Snape, Joy Stacey, Elspeth Swan, Stephen Thomas, Philip Tow, Annie Treasure, 'Rosemary Verbeeten, Christine Wadey, Mary & Patrick Ward, Merele Webb, •Tim Wilson, Debbie & Rudy Youssef, Alik Zouliou.

ANPS ACT, APS NSW, APS SA, «APS Tas, APS Armidale & District, APS Foothills Group, APS Geelong, APS Hawkesbury Group, APS Maroondah Group, Library Aus. National Botanic Gardens,

New address

Jacci Campbell

Joyce Edgerton

Alison Payne

Thelma & Don Peterson

Ann Raine

Gordon Rowland

Please let Bryan or Diana know if your subscription has been sent in but not acknowledged, either in this NL or the last. If you have not sent it in yet, please renew straight away if you want to receive more NL. This is the first one for the 2002/2003 financial year.

There is no change in the subscription: \$10 for one or two members at the same address; \$5 for pensioners; \$20 for overseas members. Please send your cheque, made out to the Garden Design Study Group, to Bryan Loft (address on page 1).

IMPORTANT - MISSING NL

Three folded NL were returned to me by Australia Post minus any envelopes, which I assume were ripped open in the sorting process and so spilled their contents. So I assume (at least) 3 members did not receive their last (May) NL Please check with friends who are members to make sure they received theirs.

The envelopes we've been using have a 'zip strip' down one side which could be pulled open quite easily, so perhaps we may have to try a new type. However this is the first time this has happened (I think!).

You should expect to receive four NL each year - in **February, May, August** and **November**, or in the last week of the preceding month. If **you do not**, please contact me in case it has gone astray.

My observations and reactions in the inland may have no direct relevance to coastal gardens but for me they widen the Australian landscaping or garden design 'vocabulary'. To me they are more relevant than ancestral memories of the green European countryside. Picture these plants against a soft apricot soil colour, or else intense orange-red. There were characteristic dark grey-green Desert Oaks (*Allocasuarina decaisneana*) with their immature 'schmoos' so different in appearance (are you old enough to remember 'schmoos'?). Sometimes the desert oaks had an understorey of a beautiful wattle (unidentified), about 2m high, with rounded form, green foliage and early winter flowers. In other places there were just these wattles and spinifex - everywhere, spinifex. There are apparently 10 species of triodia - an attractive one we saw widely had neatly rounded mounds beneath its tall fine spikes.

Beautiful small to medium eucalypts included mallees such as Round-leaved Mallee (*E. orbifolia*), Red-budded Mallee (*E. pachyphylla*) with pink and pale yellow buds and flowers, and *E. oleosa*. Acacias are abundant. *A. murrayana* has beautiful fine white trunks (another possible Silver Birch alternative). Mulga (*A. aneura*) was widespread, with the simple, subtle pattern of its foliage. In contrast, Gidgeeas (*A. cambagei*) lined waterways - with darker trunks often a bit twisted, their foliage having a distinctive smell, and darker in colour, more solid and clumped. Bell-fruit Trees (Native Poplars) (*Codonocarpus continifolius*) were quite common but usually somewhat sparsely scattered. They have a delicate appearance and grow quite quickly but do not live for very many years. Sturts Desert Pea is always spectacular and other intriguing groundflora include rather fragile-looking ptilotus species.

We enjoyed beautiful fine, sunny days in Central Australia but very cold nights. Melbourne's mild to cool weather was a contrast to come home to. Now it's time to start working in the garden in earnest for our Open Garden weekend in September - we can't put it off any longer!

New project(s)?

Now our first book is finished, we should consider what project(s) we might concentrate on next. We could focus on special interests noted by members, such as the use of indigenous plants wherever possible; the blending of Australian and exotic plants; having water areas in gardens for bird and wildlife habitat; and the blending of construction elements or found objects in the garden design. In what direction(s) do you think we should head?

I think it is an excellent idea to take up the challenge from NE Vic Branch to try growing a large, typically Australian tree such as a eucalypt, a banksias or a casuarina in a substantial pot. I have seen an old banksia which had just been left in a pot and I think it had become a natural bonsai, a metre or more high. I don't know whether it had been fertilized. I must ask the Bonsai Study Group for any suggestions they may have to help us. If every member of the GDSG tried one tree and kept records throughout their trial, we would collect useful data. It will take a while of course to get our results but if we don't start....

I hope you enjoy spring as it begins to push winter aside. I suspect it will start early this year, at least in those places where winter has been milder than usual. (It's tempting to generalize, but a great mistake.)

Best wishes,



Diana