

ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS

GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER NO. 4

February 1994

Dear Members,

In 1993 some members in northern Victoria experienced serious flooding and 1994 started badly in many areas of NSW with terrible bushfires. For some it was disastrous. John and Sue Knight lost their home in Batemans Bay with virtually all their personal belongings. I extend my deepest sympathy to them and to anyone else who was directly or indirectly affected and suffered loss through fire or flood. I hope that there will not be a backlash after the fires against Australian plants and native gardens, as a few people look for someone or something to blame.

I am sure we'll see growth in all the activities of our Study Group this year. A Sydney group will be meeting (see p21 for details) and having that focus will stimulate interest there. Wherever you live, do make contact with nearby members (or encourage someone who's interested to join). Also please let us know what you're doing. Send in plans or descriptions of gardens and ideas you have about garden design for the next newsletter, to help us achieve a satisfactory balance of practical and philosophical articles.

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MEMBERSHIP is now 136:- 67 individual members in Victoria, 27 in NSW, 17 in Queensland, 5 in the ACT, 4 in Tasmania, one in S.A. and two in W.A.; there are 13 group memberships.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

All members who joined during 1993 and early this year, no matter when, have received copies of all three 1993 newsletters and this one. The cost of these is covered by the initial subscription. The normal time to renew membership of a Study Group is 1st July. I can see this is going to be quite a hassle for me if people leave it to the last minute to renew (or even forget), so I'm making a request: please send your \$5 renewal subscription for 1994-5 early - in fact as soon as you can! What month you joined doesn't really matter. All members will receive one more 1994 newsletter after this one, but then no more if the subscription has not been received by 1st July. (There will be a final reminder in the next newsletter.) If renewals come early I will have a chance of keeping lists up to date, so I hope you don't think my request is unreasonable.

FINANCES \$567.37 in the bank. I would like to acknowledge the generous donation of Dennis Marsden from NSW towards the establishment of a GDSG slide collection (see page 8).

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Extracts from members' letters

"I'm pleased to be the first member in W.A. and I hope there'll be a lot more to follow. We have moved into an old 1920s house which needs a lot of work done to the small backyard. I need to find out the resources required for garden design and just ideas on different types of gardens. Initially I would like to keep mostly to W.A. natives as I think too often people don't feel native gardens are pretty enough. W.A. has so much wonderful native flora and we should learn more about what we have. I am interested in indigenous gardens that attract birds and other wildlife and particularly interested in water conserving gardens, especially as we pay for all our water in W.A. as of 1994." Tracey Allen (W.A.)

"I include natives in all my garden designs and landscapes - often I nearly have to sneak them in but I haven't had any complaints about the result - usually delight in their rate of growth and the birds they attract!" Sam Matthews (Qld)

"We would like to test the limits of the numbers of species we can grow in our own area. We would also like to help introduce new species that prove worthwhile to the wider garden community." Royce and Jeanne Raleigh (Vic)

"I have found the newsletters this year most informative, particularly the list 'Natives to replace exotics'. I hope that this list will become a regular feature of the newsletters, and perhaps reach a size sufficient to warrant separate publication. I look forward to the establishment of a Sydney chapter of the GDSG. Although I am a little too pressed for time to organise such, regular meetings would be a joy to attend." Dennis Marsden (NSW)

"I would like to see more formal gardens as opposed to collector types as I feel this may help to better promote our native plants to more people." Tony Drylie (Vic)

"There are so many ideas and observations to put pen to paper re landscaping: - *One for feedback is the natives popularly used 40 or 50 years ago - aren't the Grevillea robusta beaut at the moment? *Success with mulches and pitfalls - I tried washed river sand, about 7 or 8 inches thick, and it is ideal for weed regeneration - a very high maintenance area now. *Hedging plants - the pruned Cootamundra Wattle near work - hope to send a photo soon." Nicky Rose (Vic)

"Thank you so much for Newsletter No 3. It came in the only mail we have received in the last fortnight, due to the dreadful floods we are still experiencing. It has been a time of high tension and much hard work the creek which is usually low and slow looks like Sydney Harbour right now - no boats though!.... I feel very excited about Barbara Buchanan's suggestion of the GDSG meeting for a weekend near Wangaratta - that would be great!" Phyllis Hawkey (Vic)

"I've really enjoyed getting my study group notes. It's quite a high. It puts me in touch with a lot of ideas and information, but also hope for the future. ... I've especially enjoyed reading extracts from members' letters. It gives one a good idea of what others are doing. ... I think the main benefit is that the Group has opened up and broadened the debate on the "big picture" ... This means the Society as a whole is benefitting through invigorated debate and renewed interest and a new way of looking at things. I think gardening is the ultimate art." Janet Woodroffe (Vic)

"My wife Julie and I have a nursery called 'Spirit of the Rainforest'. We produce rainforest trees in 40 litre grobags. We live on a 100 acre property about 1/2 hour inland from Nambucca Heads; have been here 5 years. In that time we have done a lot of planting - 99.9% of plants being rainforest-derived. Our largest planting is about 2 acres - it has a long way to go but eventually should resemble a mini-rainforest. This planting is on an exposed NE facing paddock.

The gardens immediately surrounding the house have done quite well in the last few years. Many of the trees are now flowering. Originally I chose plants for leaf shape and variation. Now we need to add plants for colour - Julie finds the green a bit monotonous (I love the gardens as they are)." Nick Hockey (NSW)

"One banksia I like using is B. spinulosa. Its fine foliage blends well with any "bush" design and provides a strong visual highlight when in flower. I have also found it to be very hardy and adaptable in Sydney, on heavy soils. I am not happy with your policy of including common names after the botanical name. I do not think it is necessary and it tends to distract me as I read." Jeff Howes (NSW)

(This is the only comment I've received either way - do others agree or disagree with Jeff? DS)

"We have been planting various Australian plants in our garden, alongside the usual exotic ones and the result is quite pleasing to us. However I know that it could be much more interesting, and we are quite enthusiastic about using more natives. But I know there is more to an attractive Australian garden than just buying a few native plants and putting them in! Hopefully I can learn from the Garden Design Study Group." Wendy Evans (NSW)

"After our recent heatwave I have come to the conclusion that my garden needs reorganising so massive amounts of water aren't needed to keep it going. Some of the areas look after themselves but a large part needs watering. Perhaps more hardy plants in interesting combinations. ... My garden is on clay

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and has been a lot of trial and error but I find Grevillea sericea and Acacia subulata have been very hardy and long flowering - up to 6 months of the year." Carol Bentley (NSW)

"I believe the art (as distinct from the science) of gardening is seeing the image. Producing the image in real life is the horticultural challenge. ... Something I'd love to create is say three pictures, all very different (e.g. formal, eclectic and naturalistic) using the same plants in each. The only variation permitted would be the arrangement and pruning of the plants - i.e. three totally different effects created from the exact same materials." Grahame Durbridge (NSW)

Extracts from friends' letters

"I will certainly ask our members for a list of which dodonaeas have garden design value. The problem will be which are available at nurseries - this is very few indeed - most nurseries have none. I think it's partly due to the fact that they don't have colourful flowers. The latest 'Australian Plants' may improve this situation." Jeanette Closs (leader, Dodonaea S.G.) (Tas)

"Hakeas are very hardy plants and although there are areas where they are hard to establish due to some local conditions, in our records we have no species that are listed as difficult. ... The main requirements needed to grow them successfully are light (not necessarily full sun) and reasonable drainage. ... Acquiring plants can be extremely difficult as hakeas have never been taken up by the general nurseries except for *laurina*, *suaveolens*, *salicifolia* and *petiolaris*, all tall shrubs or trees. ... I can think of many categories in garden design where hakeas would shine." Hazel Blackney (leader, Hakea S.G.) (Vic)
(We hope to have a list of recommended hakeas in our next newsletter. DS)

Ms soon as I get time I will go through the previous letters from members and try to correlate who grow what, where and in what soil types etc." Col Cornford (leader, Melaleuca & Allied Genera S.G.) (Qld)

"I am at present working, together with some other SGAP NSW members, on a display to go on our SGAP display boards. ... I envisage it in two sections: one on design and the other on choosing plants. As well as aesthetics, the display will include good environmental practices such as slowing down runoff in urban areas, saving water, using less fertilizer, etc. (but done subtly and showing it can be done within a beautiful garden design). ... I would be appreciative of any suggestions or literature and advice on a source of photographs, or any other useful material." Val Williams (president, North Shore Group of SGAP NSW)

(I have written to Val, but Sydney (or NSW) members who have ideas or could help might also like to contact her. DS)

"I share your concerns about the small number of gardens included in the (Australia's Open Garden) Scheme which concentrate on Australian plants. We have always pursued a policy of trying to represent all gardening traditions in Australia and so have been anxious to find good examples of gardens which contain predominantly Australian plants. However, with notable exceptions, we have so far not met with great success in discovering new and well-designed native gardens around the country.

Perhaps your Garden Design Study Group and the Society for Growing Australian Plants would be prepared to put forward names of gardens throughout Australia that may be available to the Scheme, gardens where the owners have demonstrated skill and imagination in bringing together either exclusively Australian plants or Australian plants used sensitively with exotic plants.

....I would warmly welcome a response from you and in particular suggestions of gardens which you believe to be of sufficiently high quality to be included in our program." Neil Robertson (National Executive director of Australia's Open Garden Scheme)(Vic) Now there's a challenge for us! DS

Australian gardens. Australian plants?

"One thought I have had - the word 'native'. ... Is there any chance we could take the big leap forward and claim the word 'Australian' for our gardens (and leave the others to find appropriate words to describe their gardens?)" Janet Woodroffe (Vic)

"Re Janet's suggestion that 'Australian' garden can mean 'Australian native' - it simply can't ever, in my opinion, for the general public - look at all the book titles. We could so define it for our own shorthand ... but it would only confuse not help matters. ... I think gardens as a whole will gradually assimilate natives and what we are really trying to do is have them accepted by the general public and especially the serious gardeners who get into books such as Sarah Guest's." Barbara Buchanan (Vic)

I think (like Barbara) that the term 'Australian garden' is so widely accepted to mean a 'garden in Australia' that it can't be restricted to Australian native gardens - we could possibly use 'all-Australian garden'. I'd like to try to establish the universal use of 'Australian plant' (as Neil Robertson has in his letter) instead of 'Australian native plant'. There is no real sense in the term 'Australian plant' meaning any plant which happens to be in Australia, though I suppose a variety of an exotic plant developed in Australia could provoke discussion. Diana Snape

Do you have any comments on 'Australian gardens', 'Australian plants'?

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OBJECTIVES of GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP

The following objectives were put forward and discussed by members present at the Melbourne meeting in December 93, identifying short-term and longer-term goals of the Study Group.

1 - 2 year period

1. to establish a classification system for different styles of native gardens to facilitate description, recording, assessment and comparison of gardens
2. to establish the use of forms designed for keeping consistent written records of gardens visited by members
3. to establish a system of keeping a record of photographs of gardens taken by members and garden owners
4. to initiate a number of garden design projects in which GDSDG members collaborate with other gardeners who have a strong interest in garden design
5. to establish a reference list of books and articles on garden design with written reviews of books considered by members to be particularly useful
6. to write articles on aspects of garden design for our and other newsletters and gardening magazines
7. to increase the awareness of garden design within SGAP, and garden design with Australian plants within the general public, by speaking to groups and publishing articles

5 - 10 year period

1. to build up substantial records (written records, photographic records and plans) of gardens, garden design and garden design projects
2. to help a greater number of well designed native gardens become available for public viewing, for example in the Australia's Open Garden Scheme
3. to widen the 'repertoire' of Australian plants used successfully by SGAP members and the general public in garden design
4. to overcome the general public's view of native gardens as straggly and increase their awareness of the many different styles of native gardens which are possible
5. to be involved in whatever way is possible in any setting up of Regional Botanic Gardens, sections of City Botanic Gardens and other comparable projects
6. to publish a book on garden design using Australian plants

Please let us know if you have any comments or suggestions regarding these (or other) objectives.

The Essence of Garden Design

Nicole Lenffer Vic

(with reference to "*Gardens for Living: a Framework for Garden Design*" by Helen Lockhead)

What makes a garden design? What is the element, the quality that makes a design work? One that is "alive", that satisfies people's emotional needs, improves the quality of the surroundings and becomes an integral part of people's lives? It is hard to pinpoint one characteristic or formula that makes a good design. It is more than just a collection of plants. A good design is a series of different elements which, when put together, form a cohesive, emotionally satisfying and visually appealing environment.

One person who has tried to define this elusive quality is Christopher Alexander, with his colleagues at the Centre for Environmental Structure in Berkley, California. Alexander examined and analysed significant environments that have special qualities, and the way people used these environments. He discovered that they could be broken down into a series of different elements or "patterns" as he called them. When all these patterns were combined, they formed an environment that was "alive", that is, used by people. Essentially it was a study of the reasons why people did or did not use an environment.

Each pattern, in effect, develops as a result of a design problem; in resolving a design problem, a solution or pattern is formulated. One pattern could not work in isolation but a successful design is a combination of a number of patterns. "*The Timeless Way of Building*" and "*A Pattern Language*" were published by Alexander and the Centre for Environmental Structure, explaining the ideas and design theory behind the "pattern language". These theories are meant to challenge many aspects of presently used design methods.

An easier book to read and a simpler form of the pattern language, based upon Alexander's theory, has been developed by Helen Lockhead in "*Gardens for Living: a Framework for Garden Design*". Her basic and simple framework for garden design 'can be used to create an environment that is satisfying and appropriate to each particular situation'. An example from Lockhead's book is the chapter on 'A Garden for Outdoor Living', which defines the physical feature of a place and sets the context for the pattern. The problem - the need to create an outdoor environment to suit the range of needs and interests of the people who will use it. The solution or pattern helps to resolve the problem. She explains why it is effective and describes the physical characteristics or key factors required to solve the stated problem. Specific guidelines are stated to help achieve each pattern.

For the chapter on 'A Garden for Outdoor Living' (p 99) the group of patterns that achieve the stated aim are:

- * Planning Places for People
- * Half-hidden Garden
- * Path as an Event
- * Shaping Places with Plants
- * Garden Boundaries

Example:- Half-hidden Garden p107 'When the entire garden is totally exposed to view, our enjoyment of it will be limited.'

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Solution:- "Places in the garden which are partially hidden from view suggest there is something beyond and invite exploration. The suggestion of something just out of view can entice us into and through the garden, from one part to another, so the whole garden is gradually revealed as a series of different places and events."

Example:- Shaping Spaces with Plants. p119 Plants in the garden can be more than decorative.

Solution:- "Vegetation which gives enclosure and shelter to the spaces in the garden can also give shape, form and character to a range of places which people can use." Two gardens which use the theory behind patterns quite effectively are the Botanic Gardens, Melbourne and the Snapes' garden in Hawthorn. As related patterns are linked, one can be integrated with another and so on, establishing a framework for garden design.

Other examples of gardens that work can be found in these books:-

Australian Native Gardens: Putting Visions into Practice - Diana Snape

Ideas from Private Gardens - Natalie McMaster and Jane Edmanson

Living in the Garden - Australian Style - Rick Eckersley and Lisa Stafford

The gardens mentioned in these books are successful either as a whole or part of the garden. There are repeated elements in different forms, colours, etc. in all these gardens that make the design successful. The design does not necessarily have to be based on patterns, or the fact that the designers themselves were aware of patterns, but the designs are fundamentally based upon the knowledge of what it is that makes people enjoy and use a space and how this knowledge contributes to a good design. The books mentioned above feature Australian gardens and landscapes and include the use of Australian plants.

Finally, rather than looking at a garden or a landscape as a whole or as a collection of plants, dissect and analyse the environment. Consider the separate elements that go together to produce a cohesive and enjoyable environment that people will use, and how you can incorporate these elements into a successful garden design!

Booklist suggestions from Jeff Howes (NSW) and Paul Thompson (Vic)

Crittenden, Victor (1979) *The Front Garden* Mulini Press ACT

Mansfield, Darren (1992) *Australian Rainforest Plants for your Garden* Simon & Schuster, Australia

National Trust of Australia (1980) *First Garden History Conference* Melbourne (includes talk by David Yencken)

Niran, Rosa (1987) *Landscaping Your Garden - a step by step guide for Australian Gardens* Penguin Books

Price, Suzanne (1980s) *The Urban Woodland* Trewhella House Daylesford

If you are looking for rare and secondhand gardening books, Wendy Langton in Adelaide is recommended as being very helpful. Her address is 3 Lois Ave Torrens Park S.A. 5062 and her phone number is (08) 271 4981.

Two thoughts from China from *The Eternal Garden* by Caroline Davies

In China before and during the 4th century A.D. very bright shrubs were labelled 'noisy' and shunned in landscape design. Flowers however were important for decorating their courtyards.

"A mown and bordered lawn, while no doubt pleasing to a cow, could hardly engage the intellect of a human being." Chinese garden expert visiting England in 1920

Australian Rainforest Plants for your Garden by Darren Mansfield

(published by Simon and Schuster Australia)

reviewed by **Jeff Howes NSW**

Australia's rainforest plants are unique. Hidden in rainforest around Australia, these colourful plants with striking flower, foliage and fruit have largely been overlooked by Australian gardeners and landscapers; yet they can be successfully grown anywhere in Australia and in any garden, large or small. What has been needed is a book which combines plant descriptions with practical information regarding cultivation and garden designs. Darren Mansfield's book fulfills that requirement.

Australian Rainforest Plants for your Garden is the fifth book in the Mount Annan Botanic Garden Native Plant series. It includes: special features of rainforest plants; cultivation; designing with rainforest plants; A-Z listing of rainforest plants showing the diversity of form, colour and shape (tall and small trees, shrubs, climbers, palms, ferns and orchids); and native plant nurseries around Australia. Darren Mansfield has many years involvement with Australian rainforest plants. He has been designing and building gardens in Sydney since completing a degree in landscaping from the University of NSW in 1983. Darren is director of Beltrees Nurseries Pty Ltd (which has now moved from Dural to the North Coast) and supplies plants to nurseries throughout NSW.

Of particular interest to GDSG members is the designing with rainforest plants chapter. This chapter of 22 pages explains the importance of site analysis and with the aid of many excellent site plans shows what plants can be used to create formal and informal gardens in small, narrow or large gardens. Darren Mansfield gives many examples in this chapter of how to use rainforest plants with or in place of exotic plants thus contributing to an Australian landscape identity.

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Australian Rainforest Plants for your Garden will give you the enthusiasm and confidence to include more rainforest plants in your own garden and garden designs you undertake.

Creating an Australian Garden by John M. Hunt (Kangaroo Press in association with SGAP-NSW Ltd) reviewed by **Helen Morrow Vic**

In the first chapter the author asks 'Why do we want to grow plants?' and answers 'to create an aesthetic, pleasurable and interesting environment which is the garden'. The book describes the author's ideas and experiences in creating his own garden.

The garden has been designed to provide a 'well drained situation' and for the economical use of water, thereby achieving favourable growing conditions for a wide variety of plants. 'Mounding and Channelling', the technique used to landscape the area, is mentioned constantly throughout the book. Chapter 2 deals with the construction of the garden beds and gives reasons why this method of landscaping was chosen. The inclusion of many diagrams show how the contours were formed. Following chapters deal with ideas on 'Soil' and 'Mulching'. In the chapter on 'Landscaping' the author states that he does not work from detailed plans or have a basic layout drawn. Their absence from the book makes it difficult to understand how the basic design was conceived.

The last section of the book is taken up with 'Plant Usage'. There is an abundance of colour photos showing views of the garden, contours of the mounded beds and plant combinations. They give us an idea of the scale and diversity of the garden. Unfortunately the reproduction of colour and clarity of some of the printing is not good.

I understand the book is out of print but it would be of interest to those who have heard of John Hunt's garden and wish to learn about the 'Mounding and Channelling' technique, and to those who have visited the garden or may get the opportunity to do so.

GARDEN VISITS

John Hunt's garden

Helen Morrow

As part of the ASGAP Seminar held in early October 1993 I joined a large group of SGAP members in a visit to John Hunt's garden. Here are a few impressions of the visit.

A few facts

The garden is in Kenthurst on Sydney sandstone.

Designed and landscaped by the owner.

Originally a 5-acre bush block of which approximately 2.5 acres have been cleared and turned into a formalistic native garden.

Orientation: a south-facing slope to the back

The garden started in 1980.

First impressions were of a very showy and colourful garden, semi-formal in style with two lawn areas leading up to a Tudor style house. There is a diverse collection of plants used throughout the garden and many were in full flower for our visit. The garden beds are mounded and much of the natural sandstone is exposed; this has been used to great effect, with curved paths between the mounds.

Medium to tall shrubs at the front of the house visually separate the two lawns. A few of the original trees such as *Eucalyptus haemastoma* (Scribbly Gum) and *E. sideroxylon* (Red Ironbark) remain in this area. Behind the house there is a swimming pool; the planting is generally low and a large area is planted with *Rhodanthe chlorocephala* subsp *rosea* (formerly *Helipterum roseum*).

The disadvantage of creating a formalistic garden with mounded beds in a bush area is that it will destroy the natural bush, so there is a conflict of interest. It would be good to see more blending of bush and garden at least on the boundary. The garden has been created to grow a wide variety of plants and does this most successfully. It has won awards as a native garden and would be worth seeing by anyone interested in garden design.

An Indigenous, Coastal garden

Diana Snape

Last November I visited and recorded a number of gardens which I hope to write about for future newsletters. One, a small, young garden I found particularly interesting, belongs to Graeme and Wilma Tribe.

A few facts

The garden (less than 0.1 hectare) is on reasonable topsoil in Ocean Grove, Victoria.

Designers: the owner & Graeme Stockton of Westcoast Indigenous Nurseries (who supplied the plants)

The block, recently filled and graded, was surrounded by kikuyu and couch grasses.

Orientation: the block faces west and there is a slight slope from the house.

The garden started in June 1991.

The front garden is quite low and already well established, one benefit of using indigenous plants. *Atriplex cineria* (Coast Saltbush) and *A. paludosa* (Marsh Saltbush) have attractive silver-grey foliage; the former predominates in a tallish, narrow front hedge which provides valuable shelter from salt winds. Key species repeated behind this screen are *Leucophyta brownii* (Cushion-bush) and two Tussock-grasses, *Poa poiformis* (Coastal) and *P. labillardiera* (Large). The emphasis of this garden is on foliage colours and textures and the combination of these looks very beautiful, especially from the long upstairs balcony of the elegant modern house.

Other species in smaller numbers provide interest and variety, for example Dwarf She-oak (*Allocasuarina pusilla*), *Rhagodia baccata* (Seaberry Saltbush) and *Acaena anserifolia* (Bidgee Widgee) as a groundcover. Tufted plants included are *Dianella revoluta* (Spreading Flax Lily), *Isolepis nodosa* (Knobby Club-rush) and the splendid *Lepidospermum gladiatum* (Sword Sedge). Seaweed (eelgrass) is used for mulching along with natural mulch from vegetation; shell grit serves both as a mulch and an appropriate surface for paths.

Earlier photos show spaces in the garden with shell grit "framing" the plants in nice proportion. Now plants have spread to meet and poas are regenerating vigorously in any gaps. The garden is virtually weed-free, probably helped by salt introduced with the eelgrass. The only maintenance necessary is to keep an aesthetically pleasing balance both of plants and open space, and of the different foliage types.

Joseph Banks Native Garden, Kareela Gordon Rowland NSW

These reduced black and white photocopies of Gordon Rowland's coloured prints (taken in June) certainly do not do justice to his photos. However this glimpse may encourage you to visit this garden in a southern Sydney suburb to see it for yourself.

The garden includes some natural sandstone bushland which has been enhanced by additional planting. It features attractive ferns and palms, and the waterfall, pond and creek shown in the top photo. Paths, steps and bridges make it easy to explore the garden. Gordon says he has some concerns about 'enriching' bushland, but that the whole garden is very beautiful.



Good Native Gardens & Nursery

Wendy Evans NSW

Newcastle Botanic Gardens, Pacific Highway, Tomago NSW

Shortland Wetlands Centre, Sandgate Road, Shortland NSW

Newcastle Wildflower Nursery, 45 Pacific Highway, Bennett's Green NSW 2290

Last year at the ASGAP Conference, participants were given a copy of "The SGAP Traveller's Guide to NSW". This contains useful lists of Gardens/Parks with "significant native plantings" and also Nurseries which concentrate on Australian plants, compiled from information obtained from NSW District Groups. Those who attended the Conference would have copies and SGAP NSW might still have some. (The addresses of private gardens to visit should be obtained from the relevant Group Secretary.) DS

Lessons from a Mediterranean Garden notes from the R.H.S. Journal 'The Garden'

Barbara Buchanan Vic

In his description of 'La Casella', 30 miles inland from the Cote d'Azur, Fred Whitsey points out that Mediterranean gardens have traps for those used to the English climate. One of the greatest contrasts, which we in southern Australia share, is the long dry summer. The English owner of La Casella quickly found he had to adapt his ideas. Very sensibly he went to as many local gardens as he could gain entry and was dismayed to find only about 15 basic, genuinely dependable plants with which he could confidently stock his garden.

One of the few English touches which survives at La Casella is level, lush green, fine grass lawns, which Whitsey claims impart an aura of calm and serenity unfamiliar to Mediterranean gardens. What would Whitsey make of our Bush gardens which we see as so peaceful? Yet I feel there may be a kernel of truth somewhere there — or maybe I have been conditioned by my pre-Bush garden upbringing. One terrace, of the eight which make up the garden, has been allowed to retain its native grass spangled with the wild flowers of the region. How I wish it was as easy to establish a native flower spangled grassland here.

The final summing up is worth repeating. The chief lesson of La Casella is to first "work decisively on the architecture, using the plants found by nearby example to flourish". This is followed by a point most of us would gladly use if we could - "exploit the qualities of the local stone". We will just have to be content with dependable plants for our architectural framework. Finally "when the all-important water question has been settled for good, dally with plantmanship. Then the garden will give the illusion of belonging to the climate and seem filled with romance". Plant collectors (especially one B.B.) take heed.

A 'Japanese' Garden featuring Australian plants at Warrnambool, Victoria

Cherree Densley has given me details of this exciting project. The site of the proposed garden is a disused limestone quarry and the garden is being designed by Peter Brennan. It will not be Japanese in a 'twee' way but will be influenced by traditional philosophies of Japanese landscape design. The use of both rocks (30 or so named, e.g. Happiness and Prosperity Rock) and water (two ponds, a creek and a wetland marsh) is significant and symbolic. Two elements of the design are a beautiful forest of *Angophora costata* (Smooth-barked Apple) between the parking area and the traditional entrance gateway and a 'whispering' grove of *Casuarina cunninghamiana* (River Oak). I hope the project proceeds smoothly and swiftly.

Development of a GDSG slide library

We are planning to develop an extensive slide library showing all aspects of garden design using Australian plants. The slides will be stored in archival quality containers and their details entered on a data base. The first substantial expenditure of the GDSG will be purchasing a program for this because, without a suitable database, slides cannot be accessed and there is no point starting a slide library. The slides can be used to illustrate talks or articles and to prepare audiovisual displays for SGAP (and other) groups. We hope that GDSG members who take good photographs (but not on a professional basis) will be happy to contribute slides which can be used with appropriate acknowledgment. We'd appreciate donations of your spares or copies: alternatively slides can be sent to the slide librarian & we'll copy selected ones. Slides shouldn't be under copyright (e.g. used already in a book) or have technical faults. Most should show good design rather than bad, though some contrasting 'before' & 'after' and 'good' & 'bad' photos would be welcome. We'll need certain information about each slide and a form will be included in the next newsletter for you to photocopy. Some information will be marked as essential, some optional.

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The information includes:- photographer, garden owner, designer;
month (or season) & year when taken; size, age and locality of garden;
names of key plants, if significant (a maximum of say 3 or 4);
style(s) - refer to Newsletter No. 2 for recommended classification scheme;
growing conditions, if relevant - climate, soil, aspect, topography.

If you have a slide collection, please start checking it now. DS

Rocks in Garden Design

Jeff Howes NSW

A reminder to all GDSG members to use as little as possible or, better still, *no* bush rock in their garden design. There is no doubt that bush rock can add to the appeal of a garden, but removing the rock from its natural setting can have devastating effects on native plants and animals. In the Sydney sandstone area (where most of our bush rock comes from) the plants and animals are adapted to a rock strewn environment. The rocks prevent the soil drying out and provide a barrier to sudden climate changes. The rocks also provide shelter for many small animals, including centipedes, earthworms, slaters, snakes, spiders, lizards and small mammals.

There are many equally attractive and cheaper (bush rock is expensive) alternatives available for GDSG members. Quarried rubble, sawn stone and stone flagging can all be given the natural weathered appearance of bush rock. Very small amounts of natural ochre can be rubbed into them to vary their colour and the growth of algae and lichen can be promoted by sprinkling a little watered milk on the rock. Some well rotted manure or compost can also be rubbed into the rock to promote algal growth. Leaving wet eucalyptus leaves on the rocks will effectively stain them.

Perhaps my ideas are not on the GDSG's charter but this topic is never the less part of garden design and should in my opinion be considered.

Soon after, Jeff sent a copy of an article from the Sydney Morning Herald, 22/11/93. It describes the constant problem of the illegal removal of surface bush rock from national parks in Sydney and the Blue Mountains. The article explains that each rock is in itself an ecosystem, protecting a whole range of animals such as geckos and a rare little snake being studied by a Sydney herpetologist. DS

"Rocks are lovely to touch, to sit on, to look at.They are a backbone - part of the sculpture of your garden." Geoff Sitch

If you want to use big rocks and can't obtain them from an appropriate source, one solution is :-

Making 'Rocks': Geoff Sitch's rock recipe from Bendigo Native Plants Group newsletter

Collect materials - rubble, sand, cement, aggregate, mortar colourings, wire mesh.

Heap the rubble into a pile roughly the size and shape of the rock you want. Pack sand in and around the pile and compact as hard as possible. Cover with wire netting, overlapping by 10cm where necessary and tying. Dig a trench about 10cm deep around the perimeter of your 'rock' so the concrete ends up below ground level.

Cover with 5cm of concrete (4/2/1 mix) and allow to set overnight. Decide whether you want a 'granite' or 'sandstone' rock. Next day, mix a mortar (2/1 mix) to suit - granite sand for granite, colour for sandstone. Add a little black colour to granite mix. Apply mortar 3cm or so thick and, as it hardens, use a piece of lambswool to smooth out trowel marks. As it hardens, spray with a fine spray of water to wash off excess cement and expose the granite sand.

For six months or so, you may be disappointed - but in a year you will have a weathered looking 'rock'. (Jeff Howes' suggestions for obtaining a natural weathered appearance would help.)

Help with new gardens

A number of members have said they would like help from the GDSG as they begin to plan a new garden, sometimes on a large property. If you are in this position, please send us the following details and we'll do our best to help:-

*a plan of the whole area (e.g. copy of a Water Board or Council plan) showing size

'any major features marked on the plan (buildings, views, wind directions, existing trees, rocks outcrops, etc)

'aspect, slope and soil type

'your own ideas and priorities in the development of garden areas

Panoramic photos are a great help too. We'll look forward to hearing from you.

Problems & requests

Planting under established eucalypts

Jeff Howes NSW

My main problem with garden design is selecting plants that will grow and flower successfully under the 'drip line' of established gum trees without excessive water. I have come to the conclusion that a gum tree is not the most suitable tree for suburbia as most grow too large and, in Sydney at least, suffer from continual insect attacks. On paper some of the 5 - 8 m rainforest trees appear much more suitable.

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Suggestions (from DS) *Other suggestions from members are welcome.*

* There are a number of small eucalypts suitable for suburban gardens. I hope we'll have an article on them later this year.

* Plant close to the trunk of a tree (in between main roots) where there aren't surface roots and where some water is obtained from runoff down the trunk.

* 'Grow What Where' (Nelson) lists a large number of plants suitable for 'shady, dry conditions'. These are grouped in three categories: prostrate to 1 m (well over 100 species listed); 1 to 2 m (about 80 species); over 2 m (more than 60 species). I'm sure not all these species would be appropriate, depending on soil, climate, etc. as well as their reliability, but such a list could be a starting point. *"Please let us know any plants you have found do well in these conditions.*

A landscaping problem

Vanessa Elwell-Gavins NSW

A hot clay bank where almost nothing seems to 'take' (in Queanbeyan)

Suggestions (from DS) *Other suggestions from members are welcome.*

* On top of the bank (& on the bank if it's not too steep), heavy mulching (held in place by dead branches) to shade roots

* Use of suitable indigenous plants

* 'Grow What Where' (Nelson) - combine the lists for 'heavy & clay soils' and 'plants tolerating dry conditions'. A computer program is available now to do this for you. ***Please let us know any plants you have found do well in these conditions.*

Indigenous plants for Norman Park. Brisbane

Bernadette Flynn Qld

"I have recently moved into a house in Norman Park in Brisbane — I am interested in pursuing an indigenous local garden and am trying to find out about species that would have grown in the area. I'm fairly close to mangroves, with a heavy clay soil. I suspect that it may have been Casuarina glauca and melaleuca species, or open forest. Could any members help?"

Pleasing plant combinations

Linda Floyd Vic

1. For shade:

Colocasia esculents (Native Taro)

Arceae

Very large leaves, 12x18 inches (30 x 45 cm) on dark purple stems to 4 feet (1m). Yellow arum-lily like flowers in spring and summer. This swamp/water plant is very hardy given summer watering.

Wtexas trifolia 'Purpurea'

Verbenaceae

Shrub to 6 feet (2m), greyish foliage, lilac on underside of leaves. Blue flowers followed by black berries.

Viola betonicifolia

Violaceae

Small tufting plant to 8 inches (20 cm) with deep blue violet flowers in winter and spring, which are carried above the foliage. (It seeds readily.)

2. For semi-shade (all have grey foliage):

Acacia iteaphylla

Mimosaceae

Shrub to 16 feet (5m) with weeping foliage; a good screen plant. Yellow fragrant flowers in autumn.

Cassia artemisoides

Caesalpinaceae

Shrub to 6 feet (2m) with very fine foliage. Yellow flowers winter and spring.

Plectranthus argentatus

Laminaceae

Herbaceous plant to 2 feet (0.6m), with soft velvety leaves. Blue flowers in spring.

Oreomyrrhus argentatus

Umbelliferae

Alpine tufting plant to 3 inches (8cm). Small white hairy flowers in spring.

3. For semi-shade:

Acacia boormannii

Mimosaceae

Suckering shrub to 8 feet (2.5m) with fine foliage; forms a copse. Yellow flowers in winter.

Baeckia linifolia

Myrtaceae

Shrub to 12 feet (4m) with fine pendulous foliage. Profusion of white flowers in summer.

Prostanthera 'Poorinda Ballerina'

Laminaceae

Small shrub, 3-4 feet (1m) covered in pale pink flowers in spring.

Pleasing combinations for a small garden

A satisfying group in my garden this summer has been *Scaevola albida* (white) with a seeding dianella. The contrast of enamel blue berries against the white was eye catching. Carol Bentley (NSW)

Last spring the blue flowers of *Orthrosanthus multiflorus*, cerise flowers of *Tetratea ciliata* and mauve *Brachyscome multifida* looked beautiful together. A second combination I like in our garden is:

three plants with soft blue-grey foliage, *Zieria pilosa*, *Rhodanthe (Helipterum) anthemoides* and *Poa australis*, with purple-blue flowers & fine green foliage of *Parahebe arenaria* 'Cottage Blue'. Diana Snape

HARDY, RELIABLE PLANTS

One person's "hardy plant" is not always another's, even in the same area with similar soil, but I hope members will find the following lists helpful. Thank you to those members who have already taken time to assess their 'hardy plants' for us.

Sydney; 10 cm of loam over clay**Jeff Howes NSW**

Groundcovers

Brachycome multifida, *Grevillea* Bronze Rambler', *Helbhrysum* "Diamond Head', *Myoporum parvifolium*

Small

Baেকেa astarteoides, *Correa reflexa*, *Crocea* 'Festival', *Darwinia citriodora*, *D. fascicularis*,*Melaleuca thymifolia*, *Micromyrtus ciliata*, *Olearia microphylla*, *Ziera* 'Pink Crystals'

Medium

Callistemon subulatus, *Cassia artemisioides*, *Chorizema cordatum*, *Eriostemon myoporoides*, *Grevillea* 'BoongalaSpinebill', *G. dimorpha*, *G. oleoides x shiressii*, *G. 'Robyn Gordon'*, *Melaleuca* 'Snowstorm', *Pimelea ferruginea*,*Prostanthera rotundifolia*, *Thryptomene* 'Paynei', *Westringia linifolia* 'Wynyabbie Gem'

Large

Acacia iteaphylla, *A. linifolia*, *Banksia spinulosa*, *Callistemon* 'Captain Cook', *C. 'Hannah Ray'*, *C. viminalis**Calothamnus quadrifidus*, *C. villosus*, *Grevillea* 'Coastal Glow', *G. 'Ivanhoe'*, *G. 'Misty Pink'*, *G. 'Ned Kelly'**Indigofera australia*, *Leptospermum petersonii*, *Prostanthera incisa*, *P. ovalifolia* 'Rosea'**Sydney; free-draining loamy soil****Gordon Rowland NSW**

Our courtyard garden is situated on fairly high ground on the Balmain peninsular, originally an area of Hawkesbury sandstone. Prevailing easterlies are sometimes a problem, although most of the garden is shaded and protected by buildings to the north, south and west, and by a light canopy formed by our neighbour's *Eucalyptus saligna* and our own *Jacaranda mimosifolia* (I couldn't bring myself to remove this attractively gnarled, albeit exotic, old specimen tree). The small front garden faces south, receiving sun mostly above the roof line.

Since 1984 we have replaced most of the exotics with natives. It took me a while, though, to discover that most 'bushland'/dry sclerophyll plants are unsuited to these conditions, and that rainforest plants tend to fare much better.

This is my list:

<i>Adiantum aethiopicum</i> (Common Maidenhair)	<i>Acrhontophoenix cunninghamiana</i> (Bangalow Palm)
<i>Asplenium australasicum</i> (Birds Nest fern)	<i>Callicoma serratifolia</i> (Black Wattle)
<i>Callistemon</i> 'Captain Cook', <i>C. 'Rose Opal'</i>	<i>Clematis aristata</i> (Austral Clematis)
<i>Cordyline petiolaris</i> (Palm Lily), <i>C. stricta</i> (Slender Palm Lily)	<i>Cyathea cooperi</i> (Scaly Tree-fern)
<i>Cymbidium</i> and <i>Dendrobium</i> orchids	<i>Davallia pyxidata</i> (Hare's Foot Fern) (hanging baskets)
<i>Dianella caerulea</i> (Paroo Lily), <i>D. laevis</i> (Smooth Flax Lily), <i>D. revoluta</i> (Spreading Flax Lily)	
<i>Dicksonia antarctica</i> (Soft Tree-fern)	<i>Elaeocarpus reticulatus</i> (Blueberry Ash)
<i>Eucalyptus maculata</i> (Spotted Gum) and <i>E. saligna</i> (Sydney Blue Gum) (both next door)	
<i>E. scoparia</i> (Wallangarra White Gum) (front garden only)	
<i>Grevillea banksii</i> (Red or Dwarf Silky Oak), <i>G. robusta</i> (Silky Oak) (pot grown)	
<i>Hardenbergia violacea</i> (Purple Coral Pea)	<i>Jasminum suavissimum</i> (Sweet Jasmine) (pot grown)
<i>Kennedia rubicunda</i> (Dusky Coral Pea)	<i>Lomandra longifolia</i> (Spiny-headed Mat-rush)
<i>Pandorea jasminoides</i> (Bower Climber), <i>P. pandorana</i> (Wonga Wonga Vine)	
<i>Pittosporum undulatum</i> (Native Daphne)	
<i>Platynerium bifurcatum</i> (Elkhorn), <i>P. superbum</i> (Staghorn)	
<i>Polystichum proliferum</i> (Mother Shield Fern)	<i>Prostanthera ovalifolia</i> (Mint-bush)
<i>Viola hederacea</i> (Native Violet)	

The following, all rainforest species planted within the last 12 months, also seem to be thriving:

<i>Austromyrtus dulcis</i> (Midgen Berry)	<i>Ceratopetalum apetalum</i> (Coachwood)
<i>Eupomatia laurina</i> (Copper Laurel)	<i>Lepiderema pulchella</i> (Hop-bush family)
<i>Libertia paniculata</i> (Iris family)	<i>Lomandra hystrix</i> (a Mat-rush)
<i>Melastome affine</i>	<i>Polyscias elegans</i> (Celerywood)
<i>Randia benthamiana</i> (a Native Gardenia)(pot grown)	<i>Rhododendron lochae</i> (Native Rhododendron)
<i>Syzygium wilsonii</i>	<i>Viola betonicifolia</i> (Mountain Violet)

Melbourne; clay soil**Paul & Barbara Kennedy Vic**

Banksia aemula (Wallum B.), *B. canei* (Mountain B.), *B. ericifolia* (Heath B.), *B. integrifolia* (Coast B.),
B. oblongifolia (*asplenifolia*) (Fern-leaved B.), *B. robur* (Swamp B.), *B. spinulosa* (Hairpin B.)

Boronia mollis (Soft Boronia)*Brachychiton acerifolius* (Flame Tree)*Callistemon* 'Reeves Pink', *C. speciosus* (Albany Bottlebrush)*Correa* 5 species*Darwinia citriodora* (Lemon-scented Myrtle)

Eucalyptus caesia, *E. citriodora* (Lemon-scented Gum), *E. eximia* (Yellow Bloodwood), *E. macrandra*
 (Long-flowered Marlock), *E. scoparia* (Wallangarra White Gum)

Grevillea alpina (Mountain G.), *G. banksii* (Dwarf Silky Oak), *G. 'Firebud'*, *G. 'Pink Surprise'*,

G. rosmarinifolia, *G. "Robyn Gordon"*, *G. victoriae* (Royal G.)
Hakea cinerea (Ashy H.), *H. "crassinervia"*(*H. petiolaris* x?), *H. elliptica* (Oval-leaved H.),
H. nitida (Shining H.), *H. petiolaris* (Sea Urchin H.), *H. verrucosa*
Hibbertia scandens (Climbing Guinea Flower)
Kennedia rubicunda (DuskyCoral-pea)
Melaleuca fulgens (Scarlet Honey-myrtle)

Highfields, NSW

Banksia 'Giant Candles'
Baeckea virgata
Callistemon Captain Cook'
Grevillea 'Honey Gem', 'Misty Pink', Sylvia
Leptospermum petersonii
Viola hederacea (although it does tend to take over)

Wendy Evans NSW

In Newsletter No.3 we included a list of reliable Australian daisies. Here we offer
SOME IDEAS ABOUT DAISIES

The First Step

Barbara Buchanan

So you are making a new garden, full of enthusiasm and determination to get it just right. Take my advice and begin by collecting daisies, lots of daisies. *Brachyscome multifida* in all its forms and colours, shapes and sizes; buy it in the supermarket or grow bits from your own and your friends' plants. There are also lots of forms of *B. angustifolia* and *B. formosa* (Pillaga Daisy) widely available and many others (*B. diversifolia*, *B. nivalis*, *B. nova-anglica*, *B. spathulata* to name a few) in specialist nurseries, or available as seed from the Daisy study group. The lovely paper Daisies, Baby, Cascade and Star, forms of *Rhodanthe anthemoides*, can be found everywhere. The annuals now with terribly long names, *Rhodanthe chlorocephala* ssp *rosea* and *Schoenia filifolia* ssp *subulifolia* that I used to know as Pink and Yellow Everlastings and *Bracteantha* hybrids and forms are all freely available as commercial seed. Sow them as directed and prick out into pots with two or three plants in each. It need not cost a lot of money to collect 50 or more pots depending on the size of the new garden.

While all your seeds and cuttings are growing you can work out the details of your plan and select the permanent plants. Control that collectors' urge which wants to try a bit of everything no matter if its shape, size and stamina are unknown and concentrate on plants which are likely to give a desired effect. Think of the foliage, its colour, density and shape and the form of the mature plant and then if, as so often happens, that beauty you have read of is not in the nursery it is easy to choose a substitute. This is also the time to prepare the bed, but I do not recommend starting to plant before you have masses of daisies ready.

When the great moment finally arrives and you are putting in your permanent plants, take due note not only of height but also of the width the plants can be expected to reach. If you are using a group of the same species they can be a bit closer than the ultimate width, but otherwise the full distance should be observed. The new plants look so tiny in the big, bare spaces (or they should, if you have bought small plants) that the temptation to plant closer is almost irresistible and this is when your daisies will save the day. They will fill the spaces quickly providing colour and help you avoid the all too common mistake of overplanting. In a few years time when the plan is coming to fruition, the daisies may be crowded out but you will have been growing new plants from them for the next area to be tackled, to fill in where there has been a death, or a plant has not read its label and not reached its allotted size or shape - there will always be need and room for these little charmers. The annuals will self seed if the surface is sandy, otherwise you may need to collect seed and re-sow. If in spite of good intentions you are planting before the daisies are sufficient to fill the spaces it is still possible to scatter a packet of seed on sandy soil and control slugs and snails, to do a similar job.

Overplanting is a trap we all fall into and so lose our carefully designed effects. Using daisies is not only an easy way to avoid this but has the benefit of providing colour and ground cover from the start. There is a wide range of colours available these days to fit in with the overall scheme - whites, 'apple-blossom' pink and white, pinks, yellows, mauves and bluish-mauves. There are other plants which could be and are used, but daisies have the virtue of being readily obtainable, cheap and easy to grow in the amounts needed and they are always useful around the garden. In fact they are worthy of a place in their own right as are the shrubby daisies, but that is another story.

I am even following my own advice - I have always potted up the little bits broken in weeding and cutting back but now I also try to have a few seedlings coming on 'just in case'. There is a tray of the lovely golden *Brachyscome* aff. *curvicarpa* ready to be pricked out now.

Barbara has written about the valuable role daisies can play in keeping us honest when we plant out designed garden beds, filling those large, empty spaces and providing colour. Such a role may be temporary but daisies can also, of course, fill permanent niches in the garden. Many add a little welcome colour to a depleted summer garden. In open bushland and along roadside corridors *Chrysocephalum* (formerly *Helichrysum*) species are natural groundcovers, spreading over many square metres. *C. apiculatum* (Common Everlasting) is as beautiful as it is common, with a hundred local variations upon a theme of grey foliage and gold flowers - some robust, some more delicate. *C. ramosissimum* (Yellow Buttons) and *C. semipapposum* (Clustered Everlasting) have similar appeal. Not all forms will spread to cover a large area, though a number will, but in an open area of any size they are far more interesting and attractive than grass - a combination of species could look good too. They are quite hardy in sunshine or partial shade and flower for many months of the year, so the colour scheme of the area has to accommodate shades of yellow.

I haven't seen it tried yet, but a whole area devoted to the different coloured forms of *Brachyscome multifida* (Cut-leaf Daisy) would be most attractive. Imagine a patchwork of different mauves, the more vigorous and spreading forms, possibly accented with a choice of pink, white and cream. Flower sizes vary too and the colours can intermingle at the edges; you can tread a pathway through this daisy "lawn". *B. multifida* offers flowers all year round and, like other brachyscomes, is easy to propagate from cuttings - irresistible.

Many brachyscomes have white flowers - there is something specially appealing about a white daisy. Check out your local ones to see what belongs in your area. For a border, rockery or garden of small plants, a pot, hanging basket or raised bed where it can spill over, indeed in any odd spot, try a white brachyscome. They do not grow large (maybe 50 cm by 50 cm) and are never dominant, but always fit in as quiet plants which look natural and at home. Basalt Daisy (*B. basaltica*), Tall Daisy (*B. diversifolia*) and Lord Howe Island Daisy (*B. segmentosa*) are just three with lovely white flowers, less commonly in summer though. There are other coloured brachyscomes too - *B. angustifolia* (pink, mauve or blue) and Swan River Daisy (*S. iberidifolia*) (mauve, purple, blue and white), the latter an annual which self seeds readily. Another dainty white daisy is *Rhodanthe (Helipterum) anthemoides* (Chamomile Sunray), charming and widely popular, again with a variety of forms.

Not all daisies have the typical single head composed of disc florets surrounded by ray florets or bracts, and some daisy plants are shrubs which may either enjoy the partial shade of trees or prefer a more open, sunny bed. *Ozothamnus* (formerly *Helichrysum*) species have large clusters of tiny individual flower-heads and these attractive shrubs are generally long-lived. *O. ledifolius* (Kerosene Bush) which grows to a metre or so has assets of colourful foliage, terracotta buds and soft, white flower-heads. *O. diosmaefolius* (Sago Flower) is somewhat taller with white or pale pink buds opening to handsome white heads in spring or summer. While reminiscent of 'the bush' they can be pruned to achieve or retain a compact, ordered shape.

Olearia species are larger shrubby daisies which may grow to 2 m or more and they too respond well to pruning. *O. phlogopappa* (Alpine Daisy-bush) has greyish foliage and (most commonly in nature) white flowers; shades of mauve and pink are now available from nurseries at least as frequently as the white. A massed group of these in any combination is a lovely sight. Another olearia, *O. ramulosa* (Twiggy Daisy-bush), has a slightly different colour range of white, lilac or blue ray florets. The flowering times of olearias vary and may include summer. They grow quickly but are not always long-lived, often lasting two or three years; they can easily be propagated from cuttings. This is also true of a summer-flowering shrub, *Ixodia achillaeoides* (Mountain Daisy), which can grow to a similar size and benefits from pruning. It has many distinctive variations in form, leaves and white flower-heads with different coloured centres.

Silvery foliage can be most attractive in the garden. As well as the chrysocephalums mentioned earlier, *Calocephalus citreus* (Lemon Beauty-heads) and *C. lacteus* (Milky Beauty-heads) are small, pretty ground cover plants with silver-grey foliage and lemon or cream globular flowerheads. Both stems and foliage of *Leptorhynchos tenuifolius* (Wiry Buttons) are tenuous and silvery; its little summer flower-heads are bright yellow. It's not obvious that *Leucophyta* (formerly *Calocephalus brownii*) (Cushion-bush) is a member of the daisy family. This plant is popular and quite outstanding for its distinctive, silvery-white branching stems which interlock to form a wonderful 'cushion' up to a meter in diameter; the little matching leaves and cream flowerheads are inconspicuous.

I think of yellow, blue and white (or silver) as summer colours - probably beach colours: sand and sun, water and sky, surf and clouds. There are few really blue native daisies, so add Bluebells (*Wahlenbergia* species), halganias and *Parahebe arenaria* 'Cottage Blue' to the garden for shades of blue. Scaevolas and dampieras, like daisies, tend more to mauve-blue and in summer the heavenly *Lechenaultia biloba* has probably finished flowering. Yellow and gold daisies abound. There is Showy Podolepis (*P. jaceoides*) with its lovely fringed flower-heads and several equally showy species of *Bracteantha*. *B. bracteata* (a name that lacks imagination - it used to be *Helichrysum bracteatum* and I now prefer Golden Everlasting or Yellow Paper-daisy) is still a winner. There are many varieties and cultivars, mostly perennial and abundantly floriferous in every shade of yellow and gold. Picking the flowers extends the plant's life, but take cuttings (or collect seeds if you welcome variations) for security. Commercial seed of 'Strawflower' annuals has *B. bracteata* as one parent (though the other's a foreigner) but these are not just shades of yellow - the range of colours offered is wonderfully riotous with apricots, oranges and reds too.

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We have a huge number and choice of perennials; I think annual Australian plants such as daisies deserve more attention. A certain amount of space needs to be set aside but the return is quick and rewarding. Bright 'Strawflowers' and cool-coloured Swan River Daisies both flower through spring and summer into autumn. Pink and White Everlastings (still *Helipterum roseum* to me) with soft green foliage and delicate flower colours provide a beautiful display in spring - fill whatever area you can spare. There's a more restricted range of pinks in spring when *Scoenocassia cassiniana* (Pink Cluster Everlasting) flowers; I've seen fields of it growing naturally in W. A., but not seen it very often in cultivation here. So choose a daisy, annual or perennial - keep the snails away - then add two or three more -

Daisies in a Victorian coastal garden

Diana Snape

A friend with a garden near the coast has had great success with a large, raised, sloping bed of mixed daisies. The bed always looks attractive with foliage interest including grey tones and white (silver) and some flower colour. Gold, yellow, cream and white flowers predominate, with brachyscomes contributing shades of mauve and pink. The following is a list of species which she has found have done well there. Several more (such as *Brachyscome formosa* (Pillaga Daisy) and *Podolepis neglecta*) are still being trialled, as is the extent and timing of cutting back required for some species.

Brachyscome angustifolia (Stiff Daisy), several forms of *B. multifida* var *dilatata* (Cut-leaf Daisy), *B. parvula* (Coast Daisy)

Bracteantha bracteata (Golden Everlasting) 'Diamond Head', *B. viscosa* (Sticky Everlasting)

Calocephalus c. freus (Lemon Beauty-heads), *C. lacteus* (Milky Beauty-heads)

Chrysocephalum apiculatum (Common Everlasting), *C. ramosissimum* (Yellow Buttons), *C. semipapposum* (Clustered Everlasting)

Leucophyta brownii (Cushion Bush)

Rhodanthe anthemoides (Chamomile Sunray)

Experiences with daisies

Jeff Howes

There are three daisies I use repeatedly as linking plants in my garden. These are *Brachyscome multifida*, *B. multifida* 'Breakoday' and *B. angustifolia*. Once established they are able to survive with little extra watering and are able to flourish in my heavier type soils.

Pruning Options with Callistemons and Melaleucas

Diana Snape

Scarlet Bottlebrush (*Callistemon macropunctatus*) comes alive in spring with gold-tipped, dark red brushes. Smaller than many of the more widely planted bottlebrushes, it grows to an appropriate size (three metres or so) for a fence screen in a suburban garden. Ours is eighteen years old and with careful pruning we have shaped it to arch a little over a side path. In recent times, though, I wondered about its appearance when there were no flowers to distract the eye. Its foliage is neat and I like the woody seed capsules clustered along the stems, but the shrub as a whole lacked form - you could even call it blobby. The other main problem was that the bottom branches tended to fight with adjacent low shrubs. The screen can be made denser by tip-pruning to produce more foliage, but this would tend to increase the difficulty.

The solution was simple. Low branches (up to a metre or so above ground level) were pruned back to the two main trunks and the strong side branch belonging to one. (Three is a satisfying number.) The beautifully textured papery bark, previously hidden, was now revealed extending from the trunks up to quite small branches. The shrub - or small tree? - is elegantly fan-shaped and much more attractive, while the fence is still inconspicuous. Neighbouring plants can attain their individual shapes without being overwhelmed by their tall companion.

The name 'paperbark' generally refers to large melaleucas but a number of callistemons also have superb, papery trunks. Smaller melaleucas (often called honey-myrtles) are usually floriferous shrubs with pretty foliage. Light pruning can encourage denser foliage but the different type of pruning we used for *Callistemon macropunctatus* would be successful with many callistemon and melaleuca species and it provides a useful option. Recently we pruned the lower branches of a mature *M. fulgens* ssp. *steadmanii* (Scarlet Honey-myrtle) in this way. Again it emphasized the interesting lines and textures of multiple 'trunks' and transformed a somewhat shapeless shrub into a much more elegant one. *M. incana* (Grey Honey-myrtle) and *M. lateritiia* (Robin Red-breast Bush) also respond well.

A third option of course is to not prune at all but let nature take its course, and enjoy the natural size and form which results.

Melaleucas in Sydney

Jeff Howes

I planted *M. erubescens* and *M. decussata* as hedge plants and found them to be unsuccessful due to caterpillars and sparse open growth.

M. thymifolia is reliable and disease-free but it must be pruned back after flowering.

M. incana is also reliable and is a good skinny/tall plant. However it is prone to the webbing caterpillars.

M. elliptica is one I have had growing for many years and is, again, reliable. It would look better if it had more sun. It has attractive burgundy coloured flowers in late spring.

Overall I tend not to have too much faith in melaleucas and they are not my preferred plant species.

DESIGN AND SITING GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT IN HOT ARID ZONES

Nicole Lenffer Vic

adapted from an article on INFORMATION ON HOUSE SITING AND LANDSCAPE TREATMENT Forest Department, W. A. kindly sent to us by Yvonne and Don Wignall W.A.

These guidelines can be used as a basis for any landscape design and can be helpful in plant selection, siting and design.

Introduction

The guidelines provide basic landscape planning and design principles for the hot arid zones of W.A. and can also apply for other hot arid zones within Australia. The zones covered are essentially low rainfall, hot, drought-prone areas, with limited access to fresh water supplies. Plant selection and landscape design within these zones should be based on naturally occurring arid zone plant species and water harvesting techniques.

Siting and Design

The existing site conditions including climate, slope and soils and the existing landscape character can influence the site planning and design. Elements borrowed from the landscape - colours, forms, lines, textures - can also be reflected in the landscape design.

Site Analysis

An understanding of the elements of the site can provide opportunities &/or constraints for the development of the site.

Slope and Soils

The slope of the land, the soil type and availability of water will all influence the type of planting.

Existing Vegetation

Existing vegetation should be retained wherever possible to maintain a micro-climate and shade around buildings and within the site. Existing vegetation also stabilizes the soils.

Plant Selection and Siting Guidelines

Most plants which grow in arid areas can be readily adapted to the urban landscape. Functionally beautiful gardens can be created by using these plants, provided that there is appropriate site preparation and the right plants are chosen for the location and to fulfill the requirements of the site.

Plant Selection

Identify the existing character of the surrounding environment and use it as a guide to plant selection. Select plants that reflect the native colours, textures and forms so as to blend any structures and landscape design with the natural surroundings. Group plants according to their watering and horticultural requirements.

Plant Siting Guidelines

The spacing and grouping of selected plants depends on their function. Ornamental or feature area plantings will require plants of different heights and forms to provide an attractive arrangement of foreground, midground and background views. Groundcover species can be sited in foreground situations where achieving a human scale is important, or planted in masses as a substitute for large lawn areas.

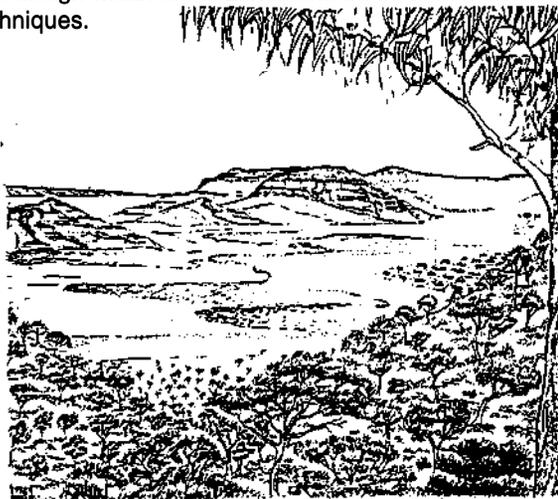
Trees with clear boles and dense foliage are ideally suited for providing shade in pedestrian areas whereas in areas removed from intense human use, less formally shaped mallee type species may be used. The mature height of trees is an important siting characteristic and the location of trees in relation to over-head lines, underground services etc. must also be considered. Avoid placing tall trees closer to buildings than 6 metres.

Plant textures and colour (including leaf, flower and bark colour) must be considered as important factors used to achieve harmony in planting design.

Maintenance

The maintenance requirements of an arid zone garden will be less than that required for moisture-loving plants; however any garden should be maintained in a healthy and functionally aesthetic condition. The maintenance required for a healthy and functional garden is:-

- control weed growth
- install an irrigation system and check that all drippers are functioning; install a timer on taps to control the amount of water used
- prune after flowering to increase foliage density and remove unwanted growth - arid zone plants can become 'woody' and generally misshapen in the artificial environment of the garden.
- replace organic mulch as necessary



VIEWES OF THE AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPE - 1 Introduction and the Dutch explorers

Tony Cavanagh Vic

Today we accept the Australian landscape for what it is - sometimes harsh and uncompromising, sometimes beautiful, shaped in many areas by the aboriginal practice of firing the land so that the plants have developed to live in harmony with fire. Yet to the first European observers, conditioned as they were to the "green and pleasant" lands of Europe, Australia was indeed an alien country. The west, northern and southern coasts they visited were mostly arid and barren; even the eastern coastline, clothed in great forests, was regarded as "dreary", "monotonous" and "depressing" by many explorers

and early settlers. Some of these people left descriptions or impressions of the landscape and I have included a selection of their comments below. Although recent writers like Proudfoot and Powell have considered the development of the understanding of the Australian landscape from a more philosophical and imaginative point of view, the views I present represent empirical observations of practical mariners and trained scientists. As such, they may be of interest to members of the Garden Design Study Group in giving an historical context to our treatment of the Australian landscape today.

Although most of us learned at school about James Cook and the discovery of the east coast of Australia, the part played by others, possibly the Portuguese and notably the Dutch, in discovering and exploring the Australian coast has been sadly neglected. Yet according to Gunter Schilder's researches, between 1605 and 1756 the Dutch visited our shores on at least 17 occasions. Even more intriguing is the fact that by 1645-6 when Jan Blaeu drew his famous maps, more than 60% of the Australian coastline had been mapped as a result of their explorations. Considering that this is a composite of observations over 40 years, it is remarkably close to the known outline of Australia. What did these early explorers think of Australia? How did they describe the landscape?

Landfalls on the Australian coast were made as a result of planned expeditions on behalf of the Dutch East India Company or due to navigational miscalculations. Little was published as a result of the former; only fragmentary reports and letters exist from the latter but they all paint a grim picture - in 1616 "a red muddy coast"; in 1622, the land north and south of present-day Cape Leeuwin was described as "(low) land with dunes and above trees and bush"; in 1623, we have the first detailed description of any part of the Australian coast (the west coast of Cape York Peninsula) when Jan Carstenz wrote - "The land between 13°S and 17°S (ie between present-day Pera Head and the Staaten River) is an arid and poor tract of land without any fruit tree or anything useful to man; it is low and monotonous without mountain or hill, wooded in some places with bush and little oily trees; there is little fresh water and what there is can only be collected from pits specially dug - -." Even the two voyages of Tasman in 1644 and 1646 during which he discovered much of the south coast of Tasmania and also explored new Zealand produced nothing favourable - "found nothing profitable, only poor naked people walking along the beaches; without rice or many fruits - -".

So bad was Tasman's report that it took another 50 years before the Dutch ventured here again in the well-equipped Van Vlamingh expedition of 1696-7. With three ships, he made landfall on Rottneest Island where the crew were fascinated by the marsupial quokkas and the woods (trees) "the most beautiful in the world, the entire island was filled with the smell of it" - possibly eucalypts. In mid-January, 1697 they explored the Swan River and collected the first known specimens of Australian plants - *Acacia truncata* and *Synaphea spinulosa*. After a chequered botanical history (they were originally thought to be ferns from Java), they were correctly diagnosed by Australian botanists and now occupy pride of place as our first botanical "exports".

To be continued in the next newsletter - **the English explorers**

Acknowledgement: Much of the information and quotations come from the excellent book *Terra Australis to Australia* (ed. by Glyndwr Williams and Alan Frost, Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1988), a project for the Australian Bicentenary. All chapters are of very great interest and provide a superb introduction to many facets of the coming of Europeans to the southern hemisphere.

The importance of Australia's indigenous plants

Diana Snape

This is the full text of a talk I gave which was broadcast on Radio National's Ockham's Razor program (hosted by Robyn Williams) in April last year. Although it is rather long, some Study Group members have asked for the text to be included in a newsletter, so here it is. Not directly concerned with garden design, it does however reflect my underlying philosophy.

In an Ockham's Razor talk last year, Rob Morrison pointed out the devastating lack of knowledge and concern most Australians have about our small marsupial mammals. All attention is focussed on a few large, conspicuous ones (such as the red kangaroo), which have become token symbols. We have more emotional involvement with animals than with plants, so I think there is an even greater problem with our native plant life. Almost everyone in Australia knows of eucalypts and acacias (or gum trees and wattles), but not that there are over 700 different species of each. Flowers such as grevilleas, banksias and boronias are popular, but there are thousands of native plants of all shapes and sizes, of which most Australians are profoundly ignorant. Does it matter if people are more "at home" with exotic plants than native plants? I think it does, for a range of reasons.

The first concerns our sense of national identity. We live in a land of space and open horizons: the emptiness, the dryness, the majesty of its vast interior are intimidating. Inland vegetation is adapted to harsh conditions which do not permit compromise, but most of us live on the well-watered coastal fringe with its relatively lush vegetation. For example the small state of Victoria occupies a mere 3% of Australia's total area, but a quarter of Australia's population lives there (and most are in Melbourne).

There is little unity of experience between any contact with wilderness or 'the bush', the soul of our country, and everyday life in the artificial environment of our towns and suburbs. This can result in a sense of alienation - a feeling of insecurity.

Voss, in Patrick White's book, says "I will cross the continent from one end to the other. I have every intention to know it with my heart." I think today many Australians are in sympathy with Voss's aim, but others fail to see that wilderness areas like the inland deserts with their finely tuned plants have their own beauty. Many people still regard even eucalypts and acacias as "primitive landscape elements - unfamiliar, strangely primeval - which must be eradicated from the home environment". This description comes from Robin Boyd's book, 'The Australian Ugliness', written in 1960. This ugliness, he said, "begins with fear of reality, denial of the need for the everyday environment to reflect the heart ...". I think this fear and denial still exist, and they begin with our own Australian landscape.

The second reason for knowing our plants is related to the first, but has a more practical slant. Plants are the basis of any ecosystem. Our native mammals depend on the plants they have evolved with to provide for their needs - food, shelter, habitat. A few toughies survive change (the large kangaroos in rural areas, possums in the suburbs), but the majority of animals succumb to the destruction of their natural environment, for building, mining, farming or whatever. If we want to save our native animals, we must first retain our native plants in large enough areas to be sustainable. Just over 5% of Australia's surface is now reserved as wilderness areas or national, state and forest parks. (95% is not.) These areas vary greatly in spacing, size and integrity; many are threatened by feral animals and introduced weeds. All those where natural ecosystems still exist are valuable beyond any price. They must be preserved and if possible extended. Each could be thought of as a vital nucleus, from where threads of native vegetation could be drawn out through the countryside to provide a network or web of corridors of natural habitat. The web would be sparse in inland Australia, but denser in more fertile areas. Even rainforest is surprisingly tough and resilient, except to fire and bulldozers.

Since the Aboriginal people first started using fire here thousands of years ago, the Australian landscape has been modified by people. Eucalypts and acacias thrived under the regime of fire and, because major changes were slow, animal populations had time to adjust. During the last 200 years, however, plants and their ecosystems vanished rapidly from huge areas of Australia. Some clearing was inevitable, but much was carried out in ignorance of the possible consequences. An excess of zeal resulted in the enormous problems of soil erosion, dryland salting and habitat loss we face today. In the last ten years, Landcare programs and Greening Australia have begun the fight to combat these problems, and a third compelling reason emerges for knowing and appreciating our native flora. Trees are being replanted - not just any native trees, but mixtures of those indigenous to an area, the real locals. Plantings are carried out in pockets on properties and around their boundaries, along creeks, by roadsides, on waste land. At the same time as senseless clearing still occurs in some places, corridors of the plants that belong are gradually returning to many areas of Australia. Slowly these corridors creep through the countryside, ideally to link ultimately with those which could spread from wilderness areas and parks. This healing web is just beginning to bind Australia together again, though it's more difficult to restore the total mix of plants, the ground flora as well as the trees and large shrubs.

What about the cities and sprawling suburbs where most of us live? In his book, Robin Boyd castigated Australians for the ugliness of the featurist urban landscape, and Australian architecture for its chief characteristic of inconsistency. He wrote "Absurdly proud, alone in a vacuum, each new Australian building sets out to create an isolated, competitive grain of beauty". Part of the problem is that these criticisms apply equally to our use of plants, where featurism and inconsistency do nothing to visually link those individual buildings together. 30 years on we have made a little progress with the hard landscape - garish buildings and features are less prominent - but street trees are still regularly mutilated to accommodate powerlines strung between poles. The beauty we could have in our soft landscape remains a distant dream. Many gardens grow in the suburbs, with abundant plants, so superficially everything looks quite nice, but have you ever had a really good look at the plantscape you live in? Usually it has no coordination and certainly no Australian theme; it's just a random mixture of plants - exotic, introduced native and indigenous. I think these plants do not all have equal rights in Australia. Some introduced ones like blackberries and weeping willows are as destructive in their own way as feral animals.

How can our urban landscape be made more beautiful and more appropriate for Australia? We need a vision, a plan to counter the lack of cohesion. Many local councils are showing the way. They are using indigenous

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plants in urban forests, in reserves, in parks and gardens, beside creeks and in street plantings. This must be an essential part of the answer - to use indigenous plants wherever possible to link us to our land and give us a sense of place. There are precious, isolated patches of remnant bushland in the suburbs, where some of those small marsupials have managed to survive. These oases need corridors to link them and extend the indigenous network. Street trees are obviously very important, but far too often they are exotic. A whole street of deciduous trees does look superb for a short time in autumn, but not so nice in winter. If a smaller number of deciduous trees were set against a background of native evergreens, the corridor would be maintained and the autumn beauty too. We could even use clusters of native trees rather than have them widely spaced in neat rows.

Ideally in landscapes around commercial and industrial buildings (as well as in government or council-controlled open space) a framework of indigenous plants would be used. Other natives would be chosen next, before exotic plants. Trees, shrubs, groundcovers, creepers, ferns & cycads, lilies & grasses - there are native plants suitable to achieve almost any effect that is required in a landscape, even a formal landscape where buildings dominate. If we can't accept a natural environment of Australian plants in our local streets, parks and gardens, how can we ever come to terms with life in this southern continent? Surely using the enormous variety of our own plants successfully is the starting point for Australian landscape design. Native plants are often different in form, foliage and character from exotic plants. Their use in landscaping depends on appreciation of them for themselves, their balance of subtlety and boldness, their natural associations. For years a few landscape architects and designers have been creating landscapes with indigenous and other native plants, but many have not. What constraints have delayed the wider use of Australian native plants in both public and private landscapes? Several obvious ones can be identified.

Initially, knowledge of the requirements for their cultivation was limited and not very accessible, it accumulated slowly, as reflected by the number of books written about Australian plants. In the 50s and 60s only a handful of books were published. Interest in growing Australian plants expanded, but misinformation led to mistakes which discouraged all but enthusiasts. The rush of books began in the 70s and became a deluge in the 80s, when over 50 books appeared, including the first four volumes of the Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants. The first constraint, lack of horticultural knowledge, is fast disappearing.

Another need is for more nurseries prepared to stock a wide variety of native plants. Pioneer nurseries have been specializing in natives for many years, and more recently some have begun to supply plants indigenous to specific areas. However most nurseries still have a very limited range of native plants, or none at all. The third constraint is to me both surprising and disturbing. As far as I have been able to find out, Australia has no tertiary institutions such as horticultural colleges which have any course on horticulture and landscape design using Australian native plants. (If there is one I should love to hear of it.)* These last two constraints must inhibit the development of truly Australian landscape design.

In the last few years I have visited every Australian state, looking at both natural landscapes and gardens, and everywhere I have found people consciously growing indigenous plants in their own gardens. Recently the book "Flora of Melbourne" was published, describing all those plants which originally grew in the Melbourne area. With such information available, we can work towards re-introducing natural ecosystems into home gardens, bringing the sounds and perfumes of the bush. Indigenous plants benefit native birds, lizards, butterflies and other insects, and they don't preclude growing other plants too.

This concern about our plants is not all selfless and altruistic. Tourism is now the highest-earning export industry. Visitors are attracted by our clear skies, our wide open spaces and our unique ecology. The Australian landscape and its plants are different from those of other countries, and we must make more effort to keep it that way. I don't think we should be unreasonable about it, but if indigenous or other native plants are suitable for a job, why use exotic plants? Can we have national self-respect when the courtyards of our Parliament House in Canberra are landscaped with silver birches? We seem to exhibit the cultural or colonial cringe even in our gardens.

I suspect if we were truly at home in our own small patch of Australia, familiar with its landscape and its indigenous plants, perhaps with a few such plants in our gardens, then we would feel more at home in all of Australia. Our disparate suburbs could be coordinated by an attractive matrix of indigenous plants, part of the network extending throughout the country. Those small marsupials should have more chance too, and more of us would learn the difference between a house mouse and a hopping mouse.

* Not strictly a tertiary institution, *The Greater Garden School* opened in Sydney on January 31, 1994. This exciting initiative is being coordinated by Michael Bates, a GDSG member. It offers mainly 9-week courses on a variety of gardening and environmental topics - one is 'Indigenous Plantscaping'. (Postal address P.O. Box 846 Rozelle NSW 2039; phone (02) 891 1321)

A course at Melb. Univ. 'Plant Materials and Planting Design for Melbourne' by Jeremy Pike & Virginia Brook focuses on garden design with Australian plants (6-9 pm Tues. & Thurs. 1-24/2/94, \$150) Details for the 'Gardens for Tomorrow' Conference in Melb. 10 - 13/3/94 were in Newsletter no.3

Colour- what's in a name?

Barbara Buchanan Vic

The Dec. 1993 issue of 'The Garden' (Journal of the R.H.S.) has an article on the history of Colour Theories by Brent Elliott, librarian and archivist to the R.H.S. I was very surprised to learn that much of our colour vocabulary is relatively recent. In 1629 Parkinson described the orange as a tree with red fruit ... both pink and orange only came into use in the late 17th century. Now I don't feel so bad about being uncertain of the precise meanings of many colour terms e.g. all those shades of red. English is comparatively rich in colour names - some other languages only distinguish black and white!

Colour charts were first produced by horticulturists in 1905 to enable precise colour description by number. The Daisy Study Group purchased the most recent R.H.S. colour chart which comes in sets of fans, four colours to a strip with a hole in the middle of each colour to underlay with the flower, but there are still problems due to different textures and reflectivities.

It was only in the 19th century that colour arrangements were discussed in the gardening literature, and it seems that what we regard as 'natural' colour harmonies are in fact subjective, influenced by fashion and our past experiences. Gertrude Jekyll is famous for her pastel borders, but in fact she used brighter and more 'garish' colours than is generally credited. She also recommended touches of other colours as punctuation marks in otherwise one-colour schemes. Vita Sackville West's interpretations of the Jekyll style at Sissinghurst have probably led to the current misconception and to the fashion for all pastel and monochrome borders in English style and cottage gardens today.

As well as the subjective nature of 'attractive' colour combinations, colours alter in value depending on adjacent shades. A greenish-blue is green against blue and blue against green. Gardeners can have a further problem with soil conditions and even sometimes temperature. I propagated a 'small Myrtaceae, bright red' from a friend's garden which has just flowered pale mauve! A label mixup or different soil? Oh well, it all adds to the challenge and interest of gardening.

Finishes for Open Spaces

Geoff Simmons Qld

Paths and open spaces can be developed using weed control mats covered with the appropriate material. For paths I have used 10 mm pale pink gravel. Only a thin layer is required over the mat so labour and material costs are reduced. If any weed seeds germinate on top, they are easily spotted and removed before their roots penetrate the mat too densely. To produce a different effect for pathways, a mixture of fine hoop and slash pine bark can be used as a topping. This can be considered a long acting fertiliser as the fine bark pieces probably have a coating of their dust and the bark itself breaks down. With rain the breakdown products soak through the mat to become fertiliser for neighbouring plants. It needs topping up - if there is a lot of rain, possibly every 6 months but, if relatively dry, the topping may last for a year or so. As it is light in weight it is easy to spread.

For an open space area within a garden bed, a surface that is mainly maintenance-free can be produced by covering weed mat with a larger grade of bark - in my case 50 mm hoop pine bark was used initially but subsequently 25 mm bark that decomposes faster but is easier to distribute. The depth was only 25-50 mm. It is important not to cut holes in the mat to put in plants because of the risk of the mat strangling the plant. The mat should be placed so that trees are beside the edges or ends.

The movement of water through the bark and mat produces good water retention hence benefitting the plants. The soil of the open space is gradually enriched as the bark decomposes. This composite surface covering has the advantages of easy weeding and low on-going cost but for me, a retiree, minimal physical effort is involved.

P.S. One only has to watch TV garden shows to realise that barks vary between localities.

Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne

Recent large donations to the RBG have enabled an extensive program of rejuvenation and modernisation to be undertaken there; currently a landscape planner is being selected to devise a framework for this. Paul Thompson (a GDSG member) is involved in the renovation of the Australian Rainforest Border but, apart from this exciting project (and some magnificent old Australian trees in the Gardens), Australian plants are

not widely represented there. Recently I spoke to the Director, Dr Philip Moors, about the possibility of having more Australian areas in the Gardens in which the GDSC (and SGAP generally) could become involved. Philip appreciated our interest and said we could meet with the landscape planner and the senior manager of the Gardens, and also the person working on a masterplan for the Australian sand-flora Garden at Cranbourne - a most encouraging response. At Cranbourne a 'short visit site' of demonstration gardens with a representative cross-section of Australian flora will be planned, which could well become part of the Phillip Island tourist circuit.

MORE-LOGO-DESIGNS'

Thanks to members who commented on the first group of logo designs. Almost all supported the idea that it should show a combination of plants; E was the most favoured followed by a modified B. Here are five more designs. If you like one of these (or one of the last group but haven't yet let us know) please ring or write. Our decision gets closer! Remember you can suggest slight alterations for the designer's consideration.

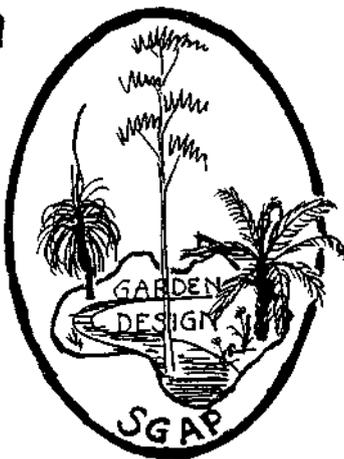
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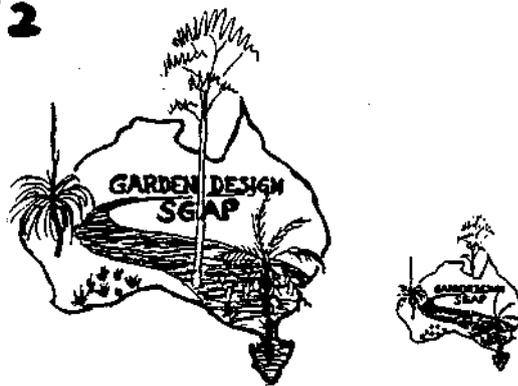
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H1



H2



J



Whether it is an archway, canopy for a seat or an espaliered plant against a wall, there is need to assess native plants for this type of feature. My experience has been with *Pandorea jasminoides* variegated form 'Charisma'. Single plants at each end of a structure shading a stone and concrete seat have grown rapidly and indicated that this plant is suitable in terms of growth and habit. The cream and green leaves are other admirable characteristics. Ends of the bower are 25 x 50 mm mesh so the pandoreas can be trained to thread their way up the mesh. Nipping out the ends of the branches was done to encourage more foliage. Once over the top at each end, the stems grow skywards so stones and pieces of wood were used to bend them down. The top is wire mesh covered with fawn shade cloth so the branches have nothing to twine around until they meet. The pink trumpet-shaped flowers add to the charm of *Pandorea jasminoides*.

Requests to members

A reminder of some ways in which members can contribute to the work of the GDSG:

- * talk about it to others, especially SGAP people and keen gardeners
- * be involved in a garden design project; send in a plan of a section of a garden
- * tell us your experience &/or ideas about any aspect of garden design
- * write out your list of:- reliable plants; native plants to replace specific exotics; successful combinations of a small number of plant species
- * raise any questions or problems about garden design (general or specific)
- * photography of aspects of garden design
- * report sheet/description of the design of a garden - if a description, please check that the owners would not mind the publicity of their garden being featured in this newsletter
- * review a book or article

Pledge help in any way you can - remember you are the Garden Design Study Group!

The **next Melbourne meeting** will be on Sunday 6th March at 2 p.m.

Hawthorn. I hope you can come.

Program of Melbourne meetings for this year

Melbourne meetings are held most months on the first Sunday at 2pm, usually at my place but sometimes at other members'.

The remaining dates for this year are: no meeting in April (Easter Sunday); 1st May; 5th June; 3rd July (not certain); 7th August; GDSG weekend in September (details below); 2nd October (not certain); 6th November; 4th December.

Please ring me, or another regular attender, to check details of later meetings when they do not follow a newsletter. DS

A meeting of Sydney (or NSW) members is being organized by Gordon Rowland and will be held on Monday, 21st February at 7.30 for 8 pm at Gordon's place.

Please contact him if you are interested in attending meetings in Sydney. I hope there is strong support!

Garden Design Study Group weekend at 15 Mile Creek Camp in Victoria

The weekend is going to be the first in September, from Fri. 2nd (after 4 p.m.) to the morning of Mon. 5th. The cost per person (including evening meals on Sat. & Sun.) will be \$40 - \$50 depending on numbers (BYO breakfast & lunch). Sleeping is dormitory style or in bunk rooms, or in a van or caravan (if you have one); some billets will be available. (The nearest motels are at Benalla and Wangaratta, 35-40 km away, and there is a hotel at Whitfield about 15 km away.) We plan to look at a number of gardens, have workshops on garden design, a slide night and speakers (probably from among our own members with expertise).

We hope members from NSW (& more distant states) may be able to attend and meet with Victorian members. It should be a very stimulating weekend! Please let Barbara Buchanan or me know as soon as possible if you are coming, either definitely or possibly. We'll send more details to those who are interested. You can send me a \$20 deposit now if you are definite, or after the next newsletter if you are not yet sure. Do come if you can. Husbands and wives are welcome too. (We don't expect to have to limit numbers unless we are inundated with a flood of applicants!)

New Members of GDSG (*professional qualifications &/or practice)

Tracey Allen
Merrin Barrett
Brian Bell*
Carol Bentley
Beryl Birch
Sharon Brown
Simone Chappie
John Coath
Tony Drylie*
Grahame Durbidge*
Wendy Evans
Bemadette Flynn
Margaret Goding
Marilyn Gray*
Lindy Harris & Grant Molyneux
Joan Henderson
Monika Herrmann
Nick Hockey
Jeff Howes
Jen Johnston
Faleiry Koczkar
Bryan Loft
Neil* & Jane Marriott*
Samantha Matthews*
Christine Maxfield
Craig McLennan
Max Preece
Royce* & Jeanne Raleigh*
Nicky Rose
Gwen Sanders
Jane Weyand (our 100th member)
Jane* & Phil Williams*
Change of address
Fred & Joy McKew

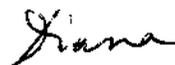
Robyn Hartley
Toni Peadon

SGAP Canberra Region & SGAP Tasmanian Region have subscribed, so all states/regions now subscribe.
Don't forget to let me know if there are any errors or omissions.

Please send in your membership form if you have not already done so - it makes it much easier for me to keep track of our growing membership and it's often helpful to have phone numbers.

Two potential GDSG members of the future arrived last year - Stephanie Heinemann, born 27th July, and Blake Winder, born 18th October. Warmest congratulations to Jeanette Heinemann, Jacque Winder and their husbands.

My thanks to all contributors to this newsletter and very best wishes to all members for 1994.



Diana Snape
leader Garden Design Study Group