

## ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS.



GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP  
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Dear Members,

Some of the articles in this newsletter follow on from those introduced in the May edition .Drought hardy plants, pruning and shaping to better prepare our plants for their environment and the seasons and the and waterwise gardening are important considerations when designing and planting an Australian garden.

Chris Larkin brings up that subject close to many an Australian plantspersons heart - the designer v. the collector! .Glenys has some great queries for members to get their teeth and creative instincts into, the Nov.NL .should be chockablock with ideas! Judging from the feedback from Death of a Garden, I thought members may be interested in the process of protecting and preserving an important property so I have reprinted an article on Betty Maloney's garden and house sale. I feel it is up to groups and societies such as ours to be vigilant and proactive in this area. Sadly native gardens are more threatened than their exotic counterparts as the mentality of the majority seems to be — if it's exotic it's a garden, if it's native it's bush - the wrong conversation with our landscape again..

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## NEXT MEETINGS

Melbourne: August 10<sup>th</sup> and Nov. 21<sup>st</sup>\*,

Sydney: .August 10<sup>th</sup> and Sept. 14<sup>th</sup>

N.E.Vic: August 16<sup>th</sup>.

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## CORRESPONDENCE extracts

- ✿ *Great to receive the Newsletter — congratulations on your number one. It looks good, I'm looking forward to sitting down with it this afternoon. Diana Snape*
- *Congratulations on an excellent first issue. Bryan Walters*
- *I received the newsletter just before I went on holidays, so I took it away with me. I am not back and just wanted to let you know, I thought it was a terrific effort. There were lots of interesting articles. Did you see the article about Diana and Brian's garden by Holly Kerr Forsythe in the Saturday Australian? Jennifer Borrell*
- ✿ *Regarding the lovely garden next door, sad and a classic case of why you never look at your house once you sell and move out. John Evan (ofgrevilliafame) who lived at Pennant Hills had a lovely garden containing many rare and native plants and when he sold, the new owners got a bobcat and removed it all. The Trunk Garden sounds fine. The Euc. Haemastoma I planted when I first moved in grew at a rapid rate. I suggest you either plants three in a metre circle to give a multi-trunk effect or keep pinching out the top to force a single tree to be a multi trunk specimen. Jeff Howes*
- *Sad to read the story of the garden next door. It was so delightful. There should be restraining orders on precious gardens much like those on architectural gems. Caroline Gunter*
- *I am in no doubt whatsoever that the good will, esteem, love and affection that Diana gleaned from the membership will flow to you as time goes on. Arthur Dench*
- *Congratulations on a most impressive newsletter. I found the newsletter made interesting reading, especially Lawrie Smith's 230 years since Sir Joseph Banks. {I enjoy reading about early Australia). Snowgrass and Spinifex Tussocks — these days it is very rare to see articles about native grasses. This article was of real interest to me as I am turning a small area of my garden to native grasses. Peter gave me some new ideas. I enjoyed (I do not know if it is the*

*right word to use/reading your picturesque description of "Death of a Garden ".Keep up the good work. P.S. In regards to your question - has anyone noticed interesting plant or animal behaviour which helps them predict weather patterns?In our area you can tell most of the time when it is going to rain by the call of the currawong. If the call is short it is going to be a short rainy period and if more drawn out it is a longer rainy period. Also more currawongs are active at the same time. Throughout the dry summer we never heard a currawong call until the recent rainy period. **Charles Farrugia***

You may be interested in the website of the Australian Biological Resources for more information on a book and CD on Australian grasses. *JH*

**[www.ea.gov.au/biodiversity/abrs/publications/flor\\_of\\_australia/vol43.html](http://www.ea.gov.au/biodiversity/abrs/publications/flor_of_australia/vol43.html)**

*Having seen the beautiful Bruce Mackenzie garden next to yours and then it's subsequent destruction, I think it's death amounts to murder! So often people come to a beautiful natural environment [or a long established naturalistic one] only to then destroy it We can do very little to prevent this and recovery from such a disaster is slow.*

*Some related ideas are:*

*Keep a good record of the life of a garden, especially through photographs, in addition to written descriptions, etc. All gardens change over time, of course, so this is a good general rule anyway. I'm glad there are a few pictures of this garden in our book, but wish there were more.*

*Continue with the work of the GDSG, to educate more people as to the beauty of Australian gardens. For example, the Open Garden Scheme is very important in this regard, any other opportunity to have people visiting.*

*Where possible, influence local residents and local councils to appreciate such gardens and even introduce restrictions as to land clearing, removal of trees etc.*

*Write articles for local papers on the importance of indigenous plants for 'sense of place' and for habitat*

*Keep the thought of such a tragedy in mind when designing a garden, so that if the worst does happen at some stage, a screen is partly in place already, though in the meantime the borrowed landscape is enjoyed for as long as possible.*

*These ideas don't help much now, I'm afraid!*

*I'll look forwards to hearing more about your 'trunk garden'. Diana Snape.*

Dear Jo,

I enjoyed your first newsletter. I appreciate your taking on the responsibility of leading the group. Set out below are some comments and questions for the next issue if you think they are relevant.

- Thank you to those who responded to my question in a previous newsletter about indigenous versus exotic Australian natives. I have decided to have at least half of my garden in indigenous plants, and after that to choose any plant which suits my climate and soil, regardless of country of origin, with the important proviso that will not become invasive. Does this sound sensible?
- I love the seasonal change in gardens planted with European plants. The progression through spring bulbs, summer perennials, autumn leaf colour and then a garden at rest gives you interest throughout the year. Most Australian natives are showy in late winter to spring, but after that there is not much change, so how can I get my garden to be dynamic all year without a gladioli or two?
- Having experienced my first summer drought as a serious gardener, I now have a lot of respect for those plants that came through without too much pampering. I plan to concentrate on the tough ones, and accept brown lawns as part of the seasonal change I enjoy. But I like to spend a lot of time outdoors in summer, so I still want colour and greenery around decks and patios. Which Australian plants can supply this, or do I have to plant exotics in these areas?
- What is the best way to rejuvenate my front garden, which consists of tall trees? At present they give privacy and shade the house from the western sun, but alas I have several which are getting too tall, and a pittosperum which should not be there. Is it possible to renew such an area gradually, by removing a tree or two and replanting that small area, or is it better in the long run to cut the whole lot down at once and start afresh?
- I was horrified to read Jo's *Death of a Garden* in the May issue. I walk among my little trees and bushes saying 'grow grow grow' so that I can block out the presence of neighbours' back yards, and here is a beautiful, full-grown garden which has been chopped down. I'll cross my fingers for either the new screening plants to be quick-growing, or the replacement garden to be sympathetic and tasteful.
- Diana's book is the best I've read. Its combination of inspirational design ideas and plant knowledge make it much much more than a coffee table book. I am keen to try and create a 'walkabout garden' incorporating open areas where my productive garden is emerging, and secluded areas where I can pretend I am in the bush. All I need now is enough years and enough energy to get it all into the ground and growing.

Best wishes,

Glenys Eskdale

## **Water-wise Garden Design & Management** John and Helen van Riet.

Originally the front garden consisted of sweeping lawns to the kerb, no front fence and garden beds 1 metre wide skirting the house, side fence and path to the front door. Main species were roses, oleanders, gardenias, azaleas, camellias and rhododendrons. The back garden was similar.

In March 2002, the present owners commenced re-modeling the garden. A lot of water was being wasted on a fairly uninspiring landscape. The APS Garden Design Study Group was invited to consult with the owners, and new plans for the front garden developed. Apart from a few shrubs retained from the original plantings, all new plants were to be Australia. There was to be no lawn, replaced with winding gravel paths with weed mat underlay. A boundary fence was put in place.

Garden bed boundaries were dug 'ditched' to give good runoff, and 25 cubic metres of topsoil were mounded on to the newly defined garden beds. The garden bed edges were defined with a mix of logs, rocks and sawn natural timber.

The old lawn watering system was re-vamped, with pop up lawn sprays replaced by a network of drippers.

Australian drought-tolerant shrubs, trees and groundcovers were planted in September 2002, and the area was heavily mulched with 6 cu metres of eco-mulch.

In the establishment phases, plants were watered by hand held hose, until the drip system was completed. Then the drip system operated for 30 minutes, twice a week, from 2am. It now operates once a week for 30 minutes, from 10pm.

There have been some plant losses (approx 15% of the plantings) and some replacements. When replacements have been done in hot weather, they are watered with a watering can every few evenings for the first couple of weeks, then the drip system is their only source of water.

In autumn, 'scoops' of the verge, next to the kerbside will be planted with Australian native grasses, and the remainder of the verge topped with rock dust to provide a good pedestrian surface.

Following the completion of a house extension, a small court-yard garden will be established.

### **Back Garden**

Poisoning of the rampant English ivy is in progress, before replanting the back fence area with Australian native shrubs and ground covers, similar to the front landscape.

Vegetable boxes have been built and connected to the automatic sprinkler system. Other sprinkler heads have been blanked off.

The first of three raised garden beds has been constructed, and the watering system connected.



The remainder of the back garden will retain two small areas of lawn under two significant trees, and the remainder will be paved or gravel. The bulk of the back lawn will be revamped as a raised garden bed, with a small water feature. A new pergola, fernery and outdoor entertainment area will be constructed on the south side of the garage.

### **Grey Water Re-use**

A connection to the air conditioner overflow is directed to the back lawn and shrubs.

A connection to the bathroom spa reuses water similarly.

A bypass from the laundry trough utilizes washing machine and all other laundry water for the trees and lawn. The use of wide diameter piping directly from the laundry trough ensures there is no strain on the washing machine pump and there is no water back-up in the laundry trough.

### **Rainwater**

The rainwater tank was installed in the late 1980s and is tapped to the laundry sink for hand-washing and other laundry uses. It has a ball valve at the tank. Rainwater is used in the garden for hand watering.

### **Back Garden Watering**

The fernery and plant nursery area, together with the vegetable plots in hot (30C and over) weather receive 15 minutes of spray watering nightly. When the owners are at home, these three circuits are often turned off at the control box and the various

All areas of the garden are heavily mulched.

### **Rain**

In times of rain, the auto system is turned off completely.

### **GARDEN DESIGN AND THE COLLECTOR by Chris Larkin**

One of the most interesting and hopefully instructive discussions you can have regarding designing with Australian plants concerns whether a collector's garden can also be a well-designed garden. Not too long after Diana Snape's book was published I visited Tony Cavanagh's home in Ocean Grove (Vic). He had reviewed Diana's book for the Vic Newsletter 'Growing Australian' (Dec 2002). In the review he was critical of 'the brevity of the discussion on theme gardens and collectors gardens' and he followed this by saying the he was 'sure that many APS members would like to know more about how to indulge their passion for collecting native plants and still make a designed garden'. As I wandered around his garden this issue came up again as he asked me how I thought it was possible for a collector have a well-designed garden?

In Newsletter No 41 Diana wrote in response to Tony Cavanagh's criticism that the book didn't deal in depth with issues for theme and collector gardens because she felt 'it difficult to reconcile the concept of a true collector's garden with a designed garden'. I guess this could depend on what you like to collect — a select or narrow range of plants or 'everything'. It possibly also depends to some extent on the size of your garden in relation to the size of what it is you like to collect. Visiting a friends beautiful suburban size garden recently I said to her - in my mind you are certainly someone who is concerned with creating a designed garden. Her reply was - oh, but I'm a collector too! Before this discussion went much further, however, she added - but most of my collection is in pots!

I have to say that I am inclined to agree with Diana. The struggle is to find a way of explaining why the two - the collector's and the designer's garden - are largely incompatible. One way of beginning to appreciate the difference is by examining the motivation behind the choice and placement of plants in the garden.

First of all let's consider choice of plants. What do you think about when you choose a plant to buy? Do you give consideration to how you might use the plant in the garden? Are you thinking about where you might plant it and how it might work in with other plants for size and structure as well as foliage colour, size and texture? When you have gaps to fill in the garden, or you're reworking an old section or planning a new one, do you decide that you need specific plants because they are correct for the design you have in mind? In other words they will have the right growth habit and dimension. Do you frequently buy several of the one plant or a quite similar type of plant with an eye to using repetition of e.g. strap plants or grey foliated plants to bring cohesion and a restful feeling into the garden?

When the plant sales come along even the most disciplined gardeners will buy more plants than they know what to do with. This isn't such a silly idea as plant sales are few and far between and it can be very useful to have a palate of plants to draw on when it comes time to plant. What then becomes important is how you use the plants, or even if you use the plants.



The second motivation that's of interest to examine is what are you thinking about when you are trying to decide where to place a plant in the garden? Do you try to find out as much as you can about the growing conditions and structure of a plant before using it? Do you consider its relationship to the plants around it - complementary or contrasting foliage and the role - height and shape - it will have, not just in that garden bed, but also in the design of the overall garden? Are you thinking about ways in which to frame views and vistas? Do you think about ways of achieving an open space feeling in parts of the garden?

There are a couple of other things that distinguish the way a designer might approach gardening to the collector. For a start a designer will tend to look at a garden in an entirely different way to a person primarily interested in individual plants. They will be looking at the bigger picture - the effect of having placed a selection of plants in a particular arrangement in a particular hard landscape setting. Conversely *'in* dealing with their own garden a designer will be constantly asking questions about how they can achieve certain effects - e.g open space feel, framing, visual highlights. In fact the attempt to control what a persons sees, and therefore their garden experience, is the stuff of design.

To sum up - what I am proposing here is that there is a fundamental difference in approach between the collector and the designer. A designer will be consistently asking the kinds of questions I raised earlier in this article. Certainly the way for a collector to improve on the design of their garden is to apply design thinking as much as possible and to start to look at their own garden and other people's gardens in terms of their form and function. If the collector starts to ask and answer design questions then they may be able to bring more structure and discipline to the development of their garden, but at the end of the day with limited space it may come down to what comes first collecting or designing. Individual plants can be enjoyed for their beauty or interest but the designed garden is more than the sum of the parts it is what you see when you look up and take in the bigger picture. How often have you seen keen Australian plant gardeners visiting a garden - heads bowed moving from examining one individual plant to the next and never looking up! The full garden experience also means looking at the garden from different angles - traveling the garden paths in more than one direction.

Garden design books attempt to highlight the range of issues to be considered by a designer and in the last 12 months we have had 2 very useful ones become available to help the designer. Paul Thompson's latest book, 'Australian Planting Design' takes a very analytical approach to planting design and then, of course, there Diana's book on 'The Australian Garden'.

## **HOW TO GET A 'FRESH' LOOK AT YOUR OWN GARDEN by Chris Larkin**

There are great benefits to having an intimate knowledge of your own garden. In many respects familiarity can increase your pleasure. If you have constructed a garden for your own enjoyment then you will be looking at features that give you pleasure. For instance, if you have framed a view then you will probably stop to look at it regularly. If a visitor has access *to* the vantage point then the view is there for them to enjoy if they take the time to look. On a subtler level, however, there may be any number of plants growing in the garden that are unlikely to be noticed by a casual visitor whereas your knowledge of your own garden puts you at a great advantage in being able to discriminate and appreciate all the individual plants that you have positioned with such care.

There is a real downside though to being so familiar with your own garden. To some extent at least it blinds you to what there is to see! Expectation - what we know about a garden - informs our view of it and literally effects what we see since seeing is the brain's interpretation of the images it receives plus a little extra. Here's what 'a little extra' might be. Not too long ago I had to caption a picture I'd taken. The picture was a view looking out across my front ponds. I started to describe the scene - 'view of front ponds' - I wrote. Then I suddenly realized that you couldn't actually see the ponds in the picture. What I 'saw' initially when I looked at the slide was informed by what I know about the garden. The ponds were in the field of view but because of the picture angle they remained out of sight. Peripheral vision is another problem when it comes to looking at your own garden. It almost acts to dilute the direct, narrower experience.

Eliminating peripheral vision can be easily achieved when you look at a picture of your garden but getting a fresh look at your garden is much more difficult because the brain gets in the way. Have you noticed that after coming home *from* a holiday there is a moment or two of seeing things a little bit more objectively and enjoying that experience? As a designer - or someone trying to 'design' your own garden - it can be very useful to see the garden in a new way. I can think of a couple of ways of doing this that may be useful for you to consider if you haven't happened upon them for yourself. Firstly it is instructive to have other people photograph your garden as they will stand in different places and take quite different shots - shots that you'll never take because of habitual approaches to looking at your garden. And then there is the trick of reversing the slides you have taken of your own garden in a viewfinder. This mirror image will confuse the brain for a time but I suspect if you did it too often these pictures too would become stale and familiar.

## Wind-taught Pruning - Leigh Murray

This is what I've learnt in four years:

To withstand wind, plants have to have strong trunks and branches, not much soft growth to act as a sail, and be fairly vertical. Pruning helps achieve this. It also helps plants withstand drought, flower more and longer, grow more densely and fit into tight spaces.

**TIP PRUNING:** As soon as new plants are obviously growing, I pinch out the top pair of leaves on each branch( starting with one, next time a couple, next time more) doing this as often as necessary to keep soft growth to a minimum and train the plant into a compact form. And when plants are bigger, frequent tip pruning encourages more flowers and a longer flowering period.

**GENERAL PRUNING:** As plants grow, I cut back soft growth (to just above a node) sometimes cutting shrubs back by up to a third after flowering - although if I tip prune enough, or cut back slightly and often, usually don't need to cut back harder. Until I get experience with each species, I prune only a little (maybe a branch or two, or a few tips) and watch how the plant behaves.

**LEANING PLANTS:** I try to prevent plants leaning away from prevailing winds or towards the light. Sometimes I remove entire branches (near the trunk, just above the swelling at the trunk junction). Usually I just remove leaves or branchlets dragging the trunk over, looking at the results of each cut before doing the next, assessing how much the plant has moved upright. If a tiny leaning plant doesn't yet have side branches, I trim off half of any leaves weighing down the stem. Each pruning helps the plant stand more upright, and it's repeated until the trunk is near vertical.

**DESTRUCTIVE FORCES:** Last year a mini-tornado hit Tuross with winds clocked at over 150 km/h. The garden stood up well, mainly by good luck, and slightly by good management (lots of pruning). A 4 metres *Eucalyptus lansdowneana* lost 2 metres off the top; a *E. leptophylla* was blown over. Both trees had just had a growth spurt and were in need of yip pruning - the wind beat me to it. Only light pruning was needed to tidy up the *E. lansdowneana*. It's now fine, if slightly lopsided. We cut off the *E. leptophylla* near its base. It soon shot lots of new growth. But after surviving the drought for months on only small servings of 'grey water', it succumbed. One trip, we arrived to find a trail of devastation along part of our east boundary. Large branches were broken off the 6 *Melaleuca nesophila*, 3 *Banksia integrifolia* and 4 *Acacia implexa* that screen that area. The biggest tree, a 5 metre *Acacia implexa* with a trunk of over 100mm diameter, was decapitated and bent over at 90 degrees about a metre above the ground. While I was clearing other branches, my partner sawed it off just under the bend, leaving only bare wood (I'd intended to ask him to leave a little foliage). Thinking the tree was a goner, I used it as an in situ for a bird bath. But a month later later, in the midst of the drought, it burst into leaf, all the way up that bare woody trunk — so his pruning was ok after all.

**COPPICING:** We planted a *Eucalyptus bridgesiana* with the intention of coppicing it so that it retained its gorgeous juvenile foliage (heart shaped silvery leaves). It grew so rapidly that we had to do this only a year after it was planted, to control its height and to cut off the adult foliage that was starting to show. We sawed it off about 100mm above ground level. It soon sprouted a flush of juvenile leaves. In the two years since, we haven't needed to coppice *it* again — its been pruned often enough to keep it low and juvenile. Another eucalypt we've had to coppice was a 3 year old *E. sideroxylon rosea* that was found knocked over. We cut the trunk off

about 70mm above the base. It now has several trunks (I removed a few) and it's growing strongly. I've planted eucalypts on our northern boundary, smack bang in the view. Mainly mallees, they were chosen because if they get too big they can be coppiced. Eucalypts with a lignotuber (a swelling at the base of the trunk) can be coppiced once they're established, and this is a good way to achieve a lower, multi-trunked tree or shrub. Banksias often have lignotubers too. A few eucalypts are said to respond poorly to coppicing, eg: *E. astringens*. **RESENTS PRUNING:** Very occasionally a book entry states that a plants 'resents pruning'. Some examples are the closely related *Eucalyptus rhodantha* and *E. macrocarpa* (which are said to dislike ordinary pruning but accept coppicing happily), *E. gracilis* and *Myoporum floribundum* (which should be pruned as little as possible). **DEADHEADING:** To attract wildlife to our new, smallish garden, every flower counted. So I began to deadhead (remove old flowers) especially on long flowering or repeat-flowering plants such as *Grevillea* 'Honey Gem', *G.* 'Superb', *Callistemon citrinus* and *Brachyscome multifida*. With other plants deadheading seems to make little difference, eg: *G. arenaria*; it is tip pruning that inspires them to produce more flowers. Following expert advice, I also cut off the stems of fading *Anigozanthos* flowers (close to the base, along with nearby leaves) to improve future flowering. **TRAINING:** With pathways close to our side boundaries, there's only a narrow space for screening plants. *Melaleuca nesophila* was chosen for one of these areas because it's described as suitable to espalier (i.e., training flat against a structure). Basically, these plants can be pruned to suit the space. Ours are flourishing with frequent pruning. I'm also hoping to train *Myoporum floribundum* to a flat shape by removing unwanted branches while they're small. Some shrubs can be trained into small trees by removing lower branches to leave a clean trunk (thereby taking up less ground space); I've done this with *Grevillea shiressii* and *Acacia rubida*. **HEDGING:** Some plants form dense shrubs with regular pruning, making ideal hedges. We have an informal hedge of four *Grevillea* 'Coastal Glow'- a splendid wind-breaking screen 2.5m high and wide, 6m long. It's a mecca for birds because with frequent tip pruning, it's in flower for most of the year. We also have the broad leaf of *grevillea arenaria*, which would make a marvellous, bird attracting hedge of about 2m high; it only needs a little tip pruning. The more vigorous *G.* 'Coastal Glow' needs pruning a few times a year with secateurs or, if time is short, hedge shears - as does *Westringia* 'Wynyabbie Gem', another good hedging plant. **PRUNING FOR DROUGHT:** Following the advice of John Knight (curator of the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens) that plants should be pruned to reduce their moisture needs during drought, I cut off most of the new growth on our shrubs and smaller trees; this greatly reduced wilting. I didn't cut back harder because I couldn't water well afterwards (owing to water restrictions). **TOOLS:** I have a small armoury of pruning tools; secateurs, hedge shears, pole pruner, saw and ladder, plus finger and thumb, for tip pruning. I use secateurs for general pruning, hedge shears for the vigorous plants (some grevilleas, melaleucas, eucalypts) and the pole pruner for the tall stuff (with ladder if necessary). My partner does big branches or trunks with an ordinary jack saw (we steer clear of pruning saws now - they can bounce back and 'bite'). **DON'TS:** Things I don't do: leave stubs at eye level, remove *all* of the foliage on a branch, prune heavily when a plant *is* stressed or can't be watered afterwards, and cut back damaged stems before an ailing plants recovers (I tried this a few times, with only bad results).

## Summer iii||he garden

In last summer's issue of the Friends newsletter, I offered a suggestion on how you might develop a small colourful garden with an emphasis on attracting butterflies. This year's suggestion will follow a similar theme, but with a shady corner in mind. An intimate area where one could sit quietly, and relax with a good book.

The type of shade suggested is not that provided by a Eucalypt canopy, rather the shade of Lilly Pilly, *Acmena smithii*, a small, heavy canopied tree which should grow to about 8m. in full sun, with a rounded shape, somewhat tropical in appearance. To provide our relaxing spot, the tree needs to have the lower branches removed to a clean trunk. Plant 3 or 4 about 3m apart in an informal triangular shape.

In the deep shade, ferns will thrive and add a cooling effect. Background height is obtained with the easily grown Rainbow Fern, *Calochlaena dubia*, which reaches 2m high and spreads by a strong underground rhizome. When it reaches the sun, fronds become smaller, often taking on a yellow-green tinge, and the plant is less vigorous. Another tall, easily grown fern for heavy shade is the Bat's Wing Fern, *Histiopteris incisa*, which is much less vigorous, and has light green fronds. An interesting but not so easily obtained fern is Black-stem Maidenhair, *Adiantum formosum*, which grows in rainforest gullies. It has large, light green fronds, and black stems. *Pteris tremula*, Tender Brake, grows to 1.5m, with erect, tufted rhizomes holding large triangular light green fronds, and is easily grown.

*Polystichum australiense*, Shield Fern is like a small tree fern in habit, growing to 1m high on a short tufted rhizome. It is very hardy, and once established will tolerate sun shine. As with other shield ferns, young plantlets develop on the tips of old fronds, and when these fronds touch the ground the young fern will take root. Blechnums are hardy, and easily grown. Young growth is often attractively coloured, from deep red to light pink. *Blechnum nudum* Fish-bone Water Fern develops a small distinct trunk, topped with spreading fronds, and will reach 1m. One of our hardiest ferns is *Blechnum cartilagineum*, Gristle Fern. It will grow in heavy shade or sun, its size determined by its position. The leathery fronds are light green, but often new growth varies from tan to deep pink, and is a most attractive feature.

Smaller ferns such as the Prickly Rasp Fern, *Doodia aspera* should be allowed to meander through the garden, providing interest with pink new fronds turning dark green. Alpine water fern, *Blechnum penna marina*, is often prostrate, with short fronds to 15cm. It is quite vigorous in ideal conditions, and will cover the ground quickly. Good drainage is essential, as it is with all ferns, and it likes an open soil through which the slender rhizome can move through easily.

No shady corner is complete without Maidenhair Fern, *Adiantum aethiopicum*. Often sentenced to a miserable existence indoors, Maidenhair is easily grown outside and provides a lacy foil for some interesting tussocks, such as *Libertia paniculata*, Branching Grass-flag, which has white flowers on stems to 60cm tall. Butterflies find the flowers an attractive food source through spring.

*Dianella tasmanica*, Tall Flax Lily, grows strongly with strap leaves to 90cm, and produces long stems of blue-mauve flowers in spring, followed by large purple berries. The Nodding Blue-lily *Stypandra glauca* is a shrubby perennial with very attractive grey blue foliage and blue flowers. It is often found in dry shaded situations, and is easily grown provided the drainage is good. The tiny Lilac Lily, *Schelhammera undulata* inhabits shaded moist sites, and is quite common though often overlooked due to its diminutive stature. Despite its small size, it bears large pink star flowers, up to 25mm across, and can flower for some months through spring and summer.

Some clumps of *Hierochloe ranflora*, Holy Grass, will provide feed and nesting material for smaller birds. Blue wrens and Thornbills find this grass attractive, and it is easily grown but not as invasive as other grasses. The common name refers to the European habit of strewing the leaves of the fragrant H. coumarin on the steps of churches during holy festivals. Taller clumps, such as *Poa labillardiera* Tussock Grass flowers in summer and provides seed during autumn.

Don't forget to leave some space for your chair. Spaces between a few bricks to provide a firm surface could be planted with the blue flowered *Pratia pedunculata* or *Isotoma fluviatilis*, both of which are prostrate, suckering plants.

Who said shady places are not interesting gardens ?

**Montrose Fire Safety Garden** displays ideas about creating a garden that is safer in fire prone areas. The 25 by 65m. site contains remnants of a residential garden with some native plantings. The normal principles of landscape architecture governed the selection and sizes of plants used; height versus distance from the dwelling must be considered to minimize fire risk as well as the sizes and spacing of plants, chosen where possible, on the basis of established aerodynamic principles for effective windbreaks and ember barriers.

Layout: is an essential part of creating a safer surrounding for your house. The aims are to reduce the intensity of a wildfire by minimising fuel, shielding radiant heat, slowing wind and reducing the spread of embers. Your garden can act as a green shield if you - do not place plants close to or touching the house

- install hard surfaces next to the house, especially North and West sides.
- develop a heat shield [ stone wall, earth mound or hedge of fire retardant shrubs ] on the North side.
- place a pool, vegetable garden or other safe surfaces between the house and the expected fire direction.

Maintenance: is a key factor in minimizing fire risk. Leading up to and during the fire season you should be doing the following - remove ground litter close to the house,

- water regularly to keep plants and lawns green.
- Selectively prune to keep shrub foliage separated from trees
- Keep grass close to house short
- Locate wood pile away from expected fire direction.
- Use low flammability mulches on garden beds.

Choosing Plants: look for ones that have - high moisture content of leaves

- low oil content.
- Broad leaves
- Smooth or tight bark texture
- Low amount of dead leaves and twigs left on plant.
- Thick bark protecting sap flow and dormant buds

A list of plants used in the garden can be found on the website [www.montrosecfa.com.au/garden/mfgplants.html](http://www.montrosecfa.com.au/garden/mfgplants.html)

## Improvement of Ornamental Eucalypts Margaret Sedgley & Kate Delaporte

The eucalypt improvement program at the University of Adelaide has been underway for over ten years, with the aim of producing interspecific hybrids with ornamental merit for the amenity horticulture and floriculture markets and to provide information on breeding systems and compatibility between species.

The foliage of eucalypts has long been accepted on both local and international markets as a standard foliage filler. Species with waxy blue foliage eg; *E. gunnii*, *E. globulus*, *E. cinerea*, *E. kruseana* and *E. gillii* are grown here and overseas and the gumnuts of *E. tetragona* are rising in popularity, especially for the Christmas market.

Improvement programs with eucalypts can succeed because of international demand for novel products. Many species have interesting buds and flowers, with variations in size shape and colour. There have been numerous reports of both natural and manipulated hybrids, but no previous specific breeding programs for improving ornamental characteristics have been undertaken.

### Yanderra News JoHambrett

As members will no doubt be aware there has been much planting in the garden of late, and all to do with screening and hedging - blocking out in general! As well as creating some lost habitat. I thought you might be interested in the species I have used and of course comments and opinions on these or other species are very welcome.

*Grevillea banksia alba* [4m.] *Acacias terminalis* [my favourite], *cultriformis*, *suaveolens* and *cardiophylla*. *Hakeas dactyloides*, *decurrens* "pink lace" and *teretifolia*. *Callitris columellaris* is a slow coach but should look good when the others have gone to God - he will also blend well with the nearby *allocasuarinas* in colour and texture and *H. teretifolias* in form. *Rulingea dasyphylla* [Kerrawang] and *Lomatia silaifolia* take pruning well and are good fillers, the *R. dasyphylla* is a tall shrub and has a very attractive horizontal growth habit which makes it a good foil for lower specimen plants as well as providing strong form in the garden year round. Its grey green felty leaves blend well with the various hibiscus species and contrast against dry rainforest species such as NSW Christmas bush *Ceratopetalum gummiferum* and Blueberry Ash *Elaeocarpus reticulatus*. Plant combinations I'm happy with are the kangaroo grass and *Allocasuarina torulosa*, both have beautiful tones of gold and purple in winter and the *Persoonia pinifolia* underplanted with *Isopogon anethifolius* works well as their texture [leaves thin and needle like to look at but soft and fuzzy to feel] and foliage colour, a light yellow green rather than a grey green, harmonize perfectly.

Every winter I am reminded of what wonderful garden specimens our rainforest species are as they clothe themselves in their beautiful new leaf growth ranging from cream to palest green to vivid red, all this before their spring blossoms and fruit - they are the best!

Has anyone come across *Acacia armata*? It sounds a great plant for a hedge - I believe it's called "kangaroo thorn" in Victoria. I'd like to try some up here. The last word on hedges [for this N.L. anyway] - we are planting a double row of turpentines, *Syncarpia glomulifera*, in the horse paddock along our communal fence, these beautiful trees if in full sun tend to be triangular shaped and carry their foliage low to the ground, cream blossoms and a deeply furrowed rough barked trunk are extra bonuses. Apparently the Victorians {Age not State} associated their sombre grey green foliage and stately rather dignified bearing with the afterlife - anyone else heard this? Drought busters in the garden over last summer proved to be: *Doryanthes excelsa*, *Allocasuarina torulosa*, *Lomandara longifolia*, *Dianella sericea*, *Indigophora australis*, *Phebalium squamulosum*, *Eriostemon myoporoides* and *Angophora costata*.

### Betty Maloney's Garden - Christa Ludlow

What happens when an important item of our environmental heritage comes on the market? Is there any way of ensuring that it will go to a sympathetic new owner, or does a change of ownership always mean heritage goes to the highest bidder?

The National Trust tackled these issues late in 2002 when the house and garden of well known botanical artist and native plants expert Betty Florence Maloney (1925-2001) was put up for auction following her death. Betty Maloney was the illustrator of *Proteaceae of the Sydney Region* and the author of *Designing Australian Bush Gardens* and *More about Bush Gardens*. She was an important figure in popularising Australian native plants among gardeners and with her sister, Jean Walker in the 1960s, developed a landscape design consultancy with the philosophy of 'naturalness with order'.

On becoming aware of the pending auction of the site, Trust officers began to examine ways in which the significance of the property could be preserved following its sale. The family did not wish to see the garden razed for development but at the same time there was a natural desire to realise the value of the property.

Where a special property with heritage significance is for sale, the ordinary auction process may not be the best method of selling. There is little time between advertising and auction. The vendor has no way of knowing the bidder's intentions for the property. Potential bidders who might be able to preserve the property may not hear about the auction in time or might need more time to arrange finance and partners. Following a meeting of interested community members, family members and heritage and garden experts arranged by members of the Trust's Parks and Gardens Conservation Committee, it was agreed to explore a tender process whereby potential buyers could be asked to put forward a bid documenting their willingness to participate in a conservation plan, their future plans for the site, and whether they would be willing to open it to the public in future.

A tender document was drafted and circulated. Unfortunately there was little time left by then before the auction was to occur. The family decided that the tender process was not



the best way for them and the auction went ahead. However, in the meantime, a great deal of interest in the garden's heritage significance had been stimulated by the Trust's actions and the property went to a bidder who was a keen gardener and intends to keep it well maintained.

This story illustrates the need for vigilance when a heritage property comes up for sale. The usual reaction is to go to auction, but there are other options which can benefit both the vendors and the public who would like to see heritage preserved in private hands.

*Following the catastrophic events next door I rang the National Trust and spoke to a heritage officer there .She advised me that providing the property was 30yrs. or older the Trust could assess it and if it Jits certain criteria it could be placed on a list- she stressed that the N.T.has no statutory powers — it is a list which has no legality, only the local Council has statutory powers and as such it is much safer for the property to be on their heritage list. Her advice for younger properties was to contact the Royal Institute of Architects, they may inspect it, list it and then it has more chance with Council. One could get depressed, but it's worth us all chipping away at this in order to change [eventually Jthe rather depressing outcomes. Has anyone else noticed a tremendous increase in clearing going on in their area since the bushfires ?We live in a semi-rural area (fustjand the tree felling andunderscrubbing, mainly by people new to the area, is truly horrific. Icannot understand the mentality, there are so many places already ruined- why not live there? Council is terrified [ they say] of litigation and our Mayor actually told me that they could chop everything down if they replaced it with fruit trees! That is a by-law in a rural area! Rising Frustration get behind me — and there appears to be not one body, Govt. or otherwise who will go into bat for privately owned bushland; despite all the rhetoric about greening Australia and green corridors etc.-We appear to have learnt little in the past two hundred years — it is only our lip service that has improved.*

## **MY ACACIA FIMBRIATA AND ME**

by Caroline Gunter

For the last ten years or thereabouts our garden was lit and perfumed by a parasol of golden *Acacia fimbriata* blossom through July and August, the bleakest of the winter months. Alas no more.

It had been shaped as a parasol to let light in around its trunk where our vegetables grew in filtered shade during summer, and it was planted in the vege patch to provide a bonus for said vegetables from its nitrogen fixing roots. In true permaculture directives it achieved three, even four, needs.

But there was a failure in this scheme. I'd planted it too near my neighbour's pool and the winter westerlies would regularly spread the finished blossom all over the water's surface. Every couple of days I'd scoop them out, and empty the fluffy contents from the skimmer box. It was well worth the effort.

But like all short-lived acacias, it began to die. Leaves started to fall and last years blossom was much reduced. The trouble in the pool was a mixture of blossom and now, leaves.

So in late October I was still doing my pool duties, removing almost the last of the leaves.

I was demonstrating my skills, chatting and failing to concentrate on the task. The extended handle of the scoop became entangled in the boughs of my fig and I was levered into the pool awkwardly. I twisted and cut my toes and grazed my left shin and my right inner thigh on the pool edge. It stung and it bled, but I showered and applied antiseptic cream and thought no more about it.

That evening I felt a bit wrung out by 9.30 so went early to bed.

About midnight I started to vomit and continued until all I could bring up was bile.

Diarrhoea started shortly after. My husband manfully tried to keep up my fluids and, as I am an insulin dependent diabetic, my glucose requirements, for some sort of stability. By dawn, 18 hours after my fall, neither he nor I could cope any longer. He took me to North Shore Emergency and there they set about saving my life.

I was admitted with acute toxic shock causing renal failure.

A massive infection had entered my blood stream and overwhelmed by body.

The first day in casualty I was fitted with masses of devices that would help them monitor my blood, heart, lung and kidney levels and adjust what they could as they searched for the source of the infection. I was immediately started on broad-spectrum antibiotics while they assessed my semiconscious responses and my husbands more considered ones and ruled out ingested infection. Lab. results on the second day pinpointed the upper thigh graze had given access to a streptococcal infection that had, most probably, resided on my skin.

My husband was warned that some people do not recover from these attacks and that my having diabetes was another complication to overlay it all.

I was admitted to Intensive Care where staff struggled to stabilise me, find the right antibiotic and keep me alive.

I spent the week struggling to make sense of my family's concerns and my ghastly hallucinations.

Meanwhile my back and legs ached through lack of movement, my bottom was raw from diarrhoea as a result of the antibiotics and my husband was desperate at each visit as he'd scan my monitors and view the absent look in my eyes.

My endocrinologist, hospital renal specialists, microbiologists and the amazing staff in that unit endured my out-of-character rudeness and my body's ups and downs.

I was rude enough to insist that I leave for a normal ward, and my endocrinologist, having enough faith in the now recovering me, convinced the rest of the team that I'd be O.K.

Here I was in a normal ward where the lights would be out at night, catheter and monitors removed, and nursing staff had to fit me into their already busy schedules.

I spent the next two weeks coming back to somewhere near normal.

I no longer needed dialysis, my bed sores started to heal, medication was stabilised, fluid balances assessed, my bloated peeling skin started to recover and my kidneys very slowly got back to function.

Before discharge I had to practise walking, climbing stairs and general self care and was advised it would take me a long time to recover from the trauma my system had suffered. Indeed it did.

I was very weak and slept twice a day, very unusual in my usually active lifestyle. Standing holding the hose was fatiguing.

I had to adhere to a low potassium diet until kidney function came near to normal.

And I still had a suppurating site on my thigh and a large area of swollen necrotic tissue that surrounded it. It required many courses of massive doses of antibiotics to bring under control and wasn't deemed safe to stop taking them until three months after the event.

The last of the scab peeled away shortly after, the thigh tissue is tight and drawn and the scar looks like a shark bite.

The point of sharing this tale with you is don't let this horror story become a reality to you or your families.

Whenever you are *grazed* or injured, a particular hazard in the horticultural industry, clean the wound well and observe your reactions.

If vomiting or diarrhoea start, go straight to your doctor or emergency unit for assessment. It's fine if they report your blood levels are correct and send you home.

But if they find things are amiss you are in the right place to commence treatment straight away.

*Poor Caroline, what an incredible tale and a timely reminder for all of us gardeners; so glad you are fit and well again. Hopefully your next article will be on something a little less adventurous! Who says gardening isn't an extreme sport? JH*

### **G.D.S.G. Book News - Bryan Loft.**

The authors of the GDSG book, "The Australian Garden", were all delighted by its success and the rapid sellout of the first printing [ 6000] copies. Their delight was only exceeded by that of the Treasurer as it meant that we were able to pay off our loan from APS Victoria very promptly indeed!! Hopefully this should encourage more of such ventures by APS. The sellout also justified the faith of publisher Warwick Forge [ Bloomings Books] in our project. He put a lot of time and thought into realizing what we hoped to achieve. Early this year the publisher decided to reprint the book [5000], hard cover and at the same price; 1000 copies were also published by the prestigious UK publisher, Antique Collectors Club, under their Garden Art Press imprint who market to the UK and USA. It will be interesting to see how sales go there. Warwick thinks it is the only book on Australian gardens to have been published in the UK. No figures yet but Warwick reports it is selling well in all three countries. The really pleasing thing about the sales of the book here is the indication of the interest there is in the community in the concept of the Australian garden. This ties in of course with one of the main aims of APS.

## Resources on the Internet - Cas Liber

This is a brief list of information new (and not so new) users may find online. It took me months to find them all, finding out from newspapers, search engines (which search their databases, not the web, as some might think, i.e. they can only find what they have been alerted to find) and word of mouth.

Starting off, our national, state and a few district groups (Mandurah, Eastern Hills) have websites. The state and national addresses are given at the front of the Newsletter, with links from both sites to the district groups, some of which are in the process of moving addresses. Also from the national website is the place to sign up to receive Gumnuts, a monthly online newsletter from Brian Walters with assorted news and views.

For people who wish to ask and answer questions, there are several options, either online forums or e-mail based discussion groups (you join a group and will then receive any e-mails addressed to the group as a whole. I find this works best for specific groups, where you can choose what you are interested in to save e-mail overload, e.g a banksia discussion group with 1 email every 1-2 days as opposed to a general Australian Gardening group with several emails a day. Others may feel differently.)

So far, all the discussion groups I know of are at Yahoo! Groups, and you must register with Yahoo (don't worry, it's free) to join a group. Groups (with home addresses include:)

Banksias <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/banksias>

Hakeas <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/hakeas>

Grevilleas <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/grevilleas>

Isopogons & Petrophiles [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Isopogons\\_Petrophiles](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Isopogons_Petrophiles)

Rutaceae (including boronias, correas & allied genera)

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/rutaceae>

Bushfoods <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bushfoods>

Gum Trees <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Eucalyptus>

Stylidium <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Stylidium/>

Australian carnivorous plants <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/aus-cps>

General discussion on Australian Plants (can be chatty)

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/australianplants>

another general native plant discussion group

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/nativeplantsofaustralia>

Ideally, I envisage each study group having an online discussion group in the future. What has been great is some of the Study Group leaders joining and getting involved (Marilyn Gray (boronias) & Maria Hitchcock (Correas) on

the Rutaceae forum, and Peter Olde on the grevillea forum, from time to time.

There is an online discussion forum at <http://www.au.gardenweb.com/forum/oznative> for questions on Australian plants (good idea but questions are deleted after about 6 months or so)

TV shows with sites include Burke's Backyard at <http://www.burkesbackyard.com/facts.html> and Gardening Australia at <http://www.abc.net.au/gardening/default.htm>.

There is an online gardening magazine called Global Garden at <http://www.global-garden.com.au>, where I've seen some useful stuff on natives.

Another resource is a local plantlist to a particular area. I reproduced one of the Cooks River Valley online from Missing Jigsaw Pieces at <http://www.ozemail.com.au/~casliber/cooksriverflora.html>. Also on that page I've listed links to some other local lists from all over Sydney. Local area websites can be found Australia Wide, such as for the Kwongan at <http://www.kwongan.asn.au>, which includes a guide to Banksias of the Kwongan. Greening Australia WA has a list of Perth Plants for your garden at [http://www.greeningaustralia-wa.org/education/perth\\_plants.htm](http://www.greeningaustralia-wa.org/education/perth_plants.htm).

Some nurseries are developing online guides; probably the best I've seen is from Fairhill Nursery in Queensland at <http://www.fairhillnursery.com> with informative species lists (and they have cheap mail order too!). Many others, such as Lullfitz's (at <http://www.lullfitz.com.au/index.htm>) are starting too and will no doubt grow. Unluckiest online name must go to Mole Station nursery, whose internet address is [www.molestationnursery.com](http://www.molestationnursery.com) (oops), <http://www.greengold.com.au> is another nursery site with notes on growing native gardens that some may find helpful.

The botanic gardens are great online resources. Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens at <http://www.rbgsyd.gov.au/default.htm> has a list of all wattle species, among other things, and the ANBG has an extensive online photo library: <http://www.anbg.gov.au>. King's Park is also online at <http://www.kpbg.wa.gov.au/> and there is a florabase of WA plants developed by the WA Herbarium/CALM at <http://www.calm.wa.gov.au/science/florabase.html>

Lastly, Warren Sheather, who was Gardening Australia's Gardener of the Year in 2001 ( <http://www.bluepin.net.au/vallaroo> ) and I ( <http://www.ozemail.com.au/~casliber/garden.html> ) have put our gardening experiences online. I'd be dead keen to see more personal websites, especially from other parts of Australia.

Gardenweb forums are primarily US-based and as such there are a wealth of forums which are pertinent to the US - some, however, below may be of use in terms of design tips and garden aesthetics rather than plant related - the following may be worth a look:

Balcony Gardening - discussion of gardening on balconies and with windowboxes

<http://forums2.gardenweb.com/forums/balcony/>

Cottage Gardens - This forum is for the discussion of informal, country-style gardens, commonly known as cottage gardens

<http://forums.gardenweb.com/forums/cottage/>

Garden Accoutrements - This forum covers everything from fountains to furniture, including sculpture, ornaments, flamingos and, need I say, gazing balls!

<http://forums2.gardenweb.com/forums/accout/>

Gardening with Stone- This forum is for those exploring the use of stone and rocks as both structural and design elements in the garden.

<http://forums.gardenweb.com/forums/stone/>

Japanese Gardens

This forum is for the discussion of all aspects of designing, creating and maintaining Japanese gardens—including plant choices, design elements and historical information.

<http://forums.gardenweb.com/forums/igard/>

Happy Surfing,

Cas Liber

## REPORTS ON LAST MELB MEETING - Garden on Hilary and John Hirst

### Report No 1 by Tony Roberts

My first impression of this garden walking in from Tindals Road was how lucky the owners were to inherit those lovely Eucalyptus polyanthemos (Red Box). Perhaps I was jealous as four or five year ago Joy and I started a new garden on 3 acres which was completely bare except for trees we had planted about 20 years ago around the perimeter. I liked the wide gravel natural pathways and the use of rocks in this area together with the mulch over the mounds area beneath the eucalypts. The enthusiasm of the owners is obvious and I thank them for allowing us to visit their garden.

On the other hand I had some concern about quantity of water which must be used by the various sprinkler and dripper irrigation systems. Again this feeling is influenced by our own experience of having lived on a property without water mains for the last 33 years - and also on some other properties in northern Vic before that.

As we are members of a garden design group I thought it appropriate to not describe the garden in detail but instead to suggest various questions to stimulate discussion at our next meeting on the design aspects of the garden. (Here I must thank Trevor Blake for his suggestions.)

- Was the house sited to make best use of the sun and the glorious vistas of the 17 acre property?
- Can the grandchildren in the swimming pool be observed from the house?
- On such a large block could more use be made of drifts of the same species, or a greater use of indigenous plants to compliment the local flora?
- What are your comments on the choice of plants in the various sections of the garden?
- Would indigenous grasses (Poa, Danthonia, Microlaena) and clumping plants be more appropriate in times of drought than a green lawn?
- Bearing in mind the scale of the garden were the steps of appropriate size?
- How well were the rocks placed?
- Will these questions stimulate discussion?!

Finally I draw your attention to the "design criteria for judging gardens for competitions" (newsletter No 29, p 7) as reported by Diana Snape following a "brain storming" session at the previous meeting of the GDSG Melb. Some of these criteria I used for this discussion but there are others which could also have been included.

### Report No 2 by John Armstrong

A large garden - some 7 acres or 3 hectares I believe - that has been developed over many years, using 6 different designers. This has resulted in different parts that don't flow or merge happily or cohesively together and yet aren't physically separated or compartmentalized. This gives the impression of experimentation rather than a homogenous whole.

The mounded natural water controlling and retaining area at the entrance is a wonderful idea but it is executed as a small, lumpy, finicky garden not related, or integrated in scale, to the huge unsculptured golf course green lawn on the other side of the house. And there is ample space on either side of the house for the two areas to flow together.

The 'borders' to the green lawn are reminiscent of a 1/4 acre suburban backyard, (except in scale), screening a fence line and giving no form or shape to the area. Completely neglected is the vast potential for imaginative vista control and space enhancement available. Integration with the natural remnant surroundings is dismissed by the use of too many different and 'foreign feeling' species - even though they are Australian native plants.

Rockwork is used by each of the designers in quite different ways. In some cases as isolated ornaments much like 'Victorian era' features rather than natural outcrops which the setting demands and is captured by the Gordon Ford area.

Although plenty of opportunity exists for the swimming pool fence to be non-intrusive, no real thought other than safety has been given to the enclosure. There is no useable space within the compound and the fence is far too close to the water giving a cramped uncomfortable feeling really destroying the space and feeling of many of the vistas within the garden.

Planting generally interrupts views from the main terrace by being too thick and too high and tends to isolate the garden and prevent the terrace users and those inside the house from enjoying the wider space and views. The planted garden at the rear does not relate to or fade into the original remnants of the wider natural environment. Consequently there is a contained and restricted feeling rather than being expansive and yet secluded.

So much for these observations by an intruder that doesn't know the circumstances behind the design briefs. In speaking with the owner he said 'this is my heaven who would ever want to leave all this?' This is their perfect heaven and the outsider needs to understand how the family *live*, interact and use their garden before a real judgment can be made. But for me this garden had so much potential and appeared to make so little use of it.

### MELBOURNE MEETINGS FOR 2003

Sorry about the change of dates but the ones agreed to at our previous meeting clashed with other meetings

- August 10 - please meet at 1.30pm at the home of Tony and Joy Roberts,

There will be the opportunity to look at Tony and Joy's garden which was designed by Bev Hanson. Tony and Joy will be able to explain the brief they gave to Bev and give us some idea of what parts of the hard landscape existed before she commenced work.

Unfortunately Bev is unable to attend. Over afternoon tea, please bring a little plate, discussion will be of the last garden visit (2 reports in this newsletter), the article in this newsletter on 'Garden Design and the Collector' and any other matter of interest to members.

- November 2<sup>nd</sup> - Two new gardens designed by Roger Stone, who is expected to attend, and a Christmas afternoon tea. Please meet at the home of Shirley Cam at 1.30pm

Afterwards we will make our way back down the hill (10mins) to the home of Bev Fox. Afternoon tea at Bev's place - please bring a small plate. Discussion will revolve around the differences in the designs of these two gardens.



## SYDNEY MEETINGS for 2003

**SUNDAY AUG. 10<sup>th</sup>** — Ian & Tamara Cox's at 1 lam. And onto Leanne & Graeme Ezzey's after lunch. Details of the gardens appeared in the May NL. Please let Jo know by Aug.3<sup>rd</sup>. if you are coming. It promises to be a very pleasant day in the Hills looking at two beautiful 5 acre gardens with views to the Blue Mts.

**SUNDAY SEPT. 14<sup>th</sup>**. — Michael Suckling and Judith Geary's garden,  
This is a young garden on 1.5 acres featuring water harvesting and exclusively indigenous species. The owners are professionals who use the garden experimentally to trial Australian trees, shrubs and grasses for future landscape use. A kitchen garden and herb garden provide edibles.  
Afterwards we will lunch in the park - BYO Everything!

At 1.00 we will visit The Wolery, the garden of Cathy & Mike Gorman  
..... This garden is an Australian native garden [ with a few exotics which "fit" a country garden] set amidst indigenous forest; ponds are created by harvesting the roof water via a storm water storage system and rainforest planting for cooler summers continues. The house is a mud brick construction, made from earth on the site.

Thank you to the garden owners for generously giving of your time and also to Maureen Webb for organizing the day. Please support both these days, let me [JH] know by Sept.?\*. if you are coming to our Sth. Coast day.

## N.E. VICTORIA MEETINGS AND GARDEN VISIT REPORTS

### GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP NORTH-EAST BRANCH

Next Meeting: Aug 16 at 10.30 for 1 lam at Buchanan's,

Report on meeting of May 31.

This was a crowded meeting which took in 3 gardens and a brief discussion time. We began in the van Riet's front where we were able to see the transformation from the bare block with lawn killed by herbicide in the photos to the mounded beds and gravel paths of today, 9 months later. No wonder the co-ordinator of Pangerang Neighbourhood house wants to produce a similar effect.. A great deal of labour shifting trailer loads of soil, logs and gravel has led to a very attractive front, with the plants radiating health and contentment, thus creating favourable attention from passers-by in a conservative country town. The back yard is work in progress, an interesting patterned brick paving being the newest addition. Lawn is disappearing here too as garden beds take over, including built up vegie and herb beds and a shaded area for ferns. A good example of ingenuity of the van Riets is the old wire bed base used as a climbing plant support, another the clear plastic lidded boxes with easily moved shade cloth covering that are currently acting as mini propagating houses producing healthy

new plants from seed and cutting. Plans include a more permanent structure but the expedient is working very well with lots plants produced.

Next stop Pangerang house where we met co-ordinator Maria and a member of her committee. We gave them copies of the base plan of their site the van Riets had prepared together with Jan's filled in copy and planting suggestions. These were presented as ideas as to the type of plant for each area followed by a few specific starting suggestions. The House representatives were most interested to hear our people (those who had not been before) assessing the possibilities, thinking aloud and tossing their thoughts about. They will now digest our proposals, discuss them in committee and then come back to us if they want more help. Wangaratta APS is prepared to help with plants. Although I have read several times that committees do not make great gardens, a great garden is not the aim here, just a pleasant environment that House members can enjoy and take pride in. Without their involvement and interest no garden will last long.

Final stop McCarthy home, close to the top of the Warby Range ridge. The area has suffered badly in the drought with some of Thea's older plantings being especially hit and needing replacing. A big conifer (exotic) near the back door is also earmarked to go, the fire risk is too great. We also discussed several old indigenous gums not much further from the house. The consensus was that their amenity outweighed the risks, but only Thea and Jim can decide if they can live with that. Since the grey water from the house has been diverted to the garden there is now an area below the house likely to be permanently moist and suggestions flowed for making a bog garden and other alternatives.

In our discussion we empathized with Jo Hambrett on the loss of her neighbouring garden and applauded the Pruning Guide for its clear statement of general principles which eliminate the mystery from pruning. Some of our members still wanted more; specific recommendations for individual species which led (by circuitous routes) to our setting of our task for the next meeting. We are each to take a genus (or family) and use our libraries to find recommendations for:

- o Planting,- when, where (soil, climate, sun etc..)
- o Watering,
- o Pruning, when and how,
- o Fertilizing, when and type,
- o Mulch.type
- o Other.

Only garden plantings to be considered, not windbreaks or revegetation. A list of sources is desirable, personal experience or communication from friends, or books used.

Those at the meeting selected, BK Correas, PK Hakeas and banksias, JD Acacias, TM dryandras, HvR Callistemons, GD Poaceae, JC Eremophilas, BB Phebaliums or Leptospermums.

Meanwhile I collected the contributions on Watering Points which I will attempt to co-ordinate and integrate for the next meeting, probably the night before. We had plenty of further talk around the topic and agreed that water needs for survival and for attractive growth and flowering are two rather different cases. On reading through the notes submitted I was surprised at how little overlap there actually was, everyone takes a different approach, which is probably why I have not done the co-ordinating yet.

Jacci produced her booklet "Planning a Drought Tolerant Garden" which she and her sister had produced for the Sheep Pen Creek Land Management Group. Restricted to

13 pages, 8 of them plant lists, it just has to be succinct and so sticks to the planning stage. Propagation is included as a record of their session with a local commercial indigenous propagator, but maintenance is not. The points to consider are listed and addressed clearly and should be of great value to their intended audience, local residents with little gardening background. They are also an excellent summary and reminder for experienced growers. It is an admirable model for any other local group wanting to produce useful basic material for their own area.

**2003-04 Subscriptions received from:**

Ingrid Adler, APS Maroondah Group, Noel Kerrison APS Tasmania, Library Aust Nat Botanic Gardens, Elsitia Boffi de Schulte, Joan Barrett, Carol Bentley, Ian Bond, Judy Boldiston, Jennifer Borrell, Elizabeth Brett, Leeanne Brockway, Barbara Buchanan, Dianne Clark, Yvonne Coventry, Ian & Tamara Cox, Ruth Crosson, Brian & Mary Dacy, Glenda & Bernie Datson, Jennifer Davidson, Kay Dempsey, Arthur Dench, Cherree Densley, Betty Denton, Judith Dykes, Rodger & Gwen Elliot, Glenys Eskdale, Wendy & David Evans, Theresa Feile, Pamela Finger, Linda Floyd, Julie Foster, Beverley Fox, Christine & Angelo Gaiardo, Barrie Gallacher, Peter & Wilma Garnham, Jan. Gough-Watson, Mary Graham, Marilyn Gray, Caroline & John Gunter, Cheree Hall, Jan & Alan Hall, Beverley Hanson, Monika Herrmann, John Hoile, Annette & John Houseman, Jeff Howes, Catherine Jordan C/o ANBG, Charles Hrubos, Mark James, Julie Jones, Allan & Helen Joyce, Bev Kapernick, Colleen Keena\* Catherine King, John Knight, Faleiry Koczkar, Nadia Lalak, Chris Larkin, Margaret Lee, Bryan Loft, Geoffrey & Ann Long, Alexander Mackenzie, Win Main, Thea & Jim McCarthy, Maree McCarthy, Doug & Margaret McIver, Neil Marriott, Margaret Moir, Brenda & Tony Moore, Gillian Morris, Deidre Morton, Alex Moutsatsos, Penny Munro, Leigh Murray, Leeane Neal, Anne Neild, Barry Nilsson, David Oakley, Alison Payne, Georgina & Jon Persse, Shirley Pipitone, Michele Pymble, Lynette & Peter Reilly, Pam Renouf, Martin Rigg & Diana Leggatt, Tony & Joy Roberts, Nicky Rose, Gordon Rowland, Paula Rumble, Karen & Geoff Russell, Gwen Sanders, Therese Scales, Dr Janet Schapper, Peter Shannon, Rosalind Smallwood, Lawrie Smith, Ross Smyth-Kirk, Diana Snape, Ros St Clair, Margaret Stanton, Irene Stocks, Ross & Elaine Sutherland, Elspeth Swan, Philip Tow, John & Helen Van Reit, Lesley Waite, Warnambool & District SGAP, Jim & Pat Watson, Peter Wauchope, Merele Webb, Maureen & Norman Webb, Tim Wilson, Pam Yarra, Debbie & Rudy Youssef, Alik Zouliou.

**2004-05 Subscriptions received from:**

Julie Foster, Bev Kapernick, Alexander Mackenzie, Neil Marriot, Anne Neild, Leigh Murray, Michele Pymble, Martin Rigg, Diana Leggatt, Paula Rumble, Maureen and Norm Webb, Barbara Buchanan, Carol Bentley, Shirley Pipitone.

***Unfinancial members will find an orange membership renewal form with their newsletter.***

## GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT 1 July 2002 - 30 June 2003

Balance 30 June 2002		<u>\$ 2113.98</u>
Plus INCOME		
Royalty on Book	\$24,963.00	
Book Sales	\$10,538.25	
Bank Interest	\$ 20.59	
Donations	\$ 55.00	
2002/03 Subscriptions received	\$ 580.00	
2003/04 Subscriptions received	\$ 902.64	
2004/05 Subscriptions received	<u>\$ 105.00</u>	
		<u>\$ 37,164.23</u>
Less EXPENDITURE		
Repayment of Loan From APS Vic	\$16,500.00	
Newsletter Expenses:		
Printing	\$ 993.85	
Postage	\$ 487.30	
Envelopes	\$ 40.70	
	\$ 1,521.85	
Sub to Friends of RBG Cranbourne	\$ 25.00	
Sub to Friends of Kawarra Gardens	\$ 20.00	
Sub to Eurobodalla Botanic Gardens	\$ 20.00	
Book Purchases	\$ 8,076.75	
Book Production/Promotion/Sales	\$ 1,178.14	
Gift to meeting hosts	\$ 30.00	
NE Vic Group Secretarial expenses	\$ 40.00	
BAD Tax	<u>\$ 15.80</u>	
		<u>\$ 27,427.54</u>
Balance 30 June 2003		<u>\$ 11,850.67</u>

