

ISSN 1039-9062

ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS.



GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP

Newsletter No. 52

November 2005

Study Group Leader/Editor: Jo Hambrett

Treasurer/Membership: Bryvan Loft

ABN 82 428 110 028

Dear Members,

What a wonderful avalanche of correspondence and articles for this newsletter - ask and ye shall receive, certainly proved to be correct! There are certainly enough suggestions of street plantings for recommendation to councils now. Do read the Correspondence and catch up with the myriad of exciting and interesting things members are doing and thinking. Barbara Buchanan's suggestion of using our "book money" to start an Australian Garden Preservation Fund is an excellent one, deserving of *very* careful consideration by members. We will need *regular discussion* in order to make the best decision possible. A goal could be for us to reach a decision and begin implementation by this time next year. We can mull over it whilst working out the e-NL v. the hardcopy debate! Thanks to those members who sent in their thoughts on that as well. Shirley Pipitone may need fellow members' help as she investigates ways in which urban dwellers may be encouraged to engage in more ethical environmental behaviour as well as the value Australians place on the natural landscape. Her list of Canberra drought busters will be of great interest as rainfall continues to be generally below average in most places. I am looking forward to hearing from lucky members who attended any or all of the three conferences on this spring; the Australian Landscape Conference in Melbourne- see Diana's and Caroline's reports this issue, the ASGAP Conference and the Australian Garden History Society conference, both in Perth.

Since the drought and the establishment of our website I have had a number of enquiries from people wanting contact details of garden design professionals and nurseries specializing in Australian native plants; should we have a list of these members on our website to make it easier for people to contact them? More food for thought whilst enjoying your Christmas pudding! Wishing you health and happiness in the New Year. Meetings; Melk MovJTth Sydney **May** 28th 06 NE Vic. Nov. 19*

INDEX

CORRESPONDENCE

DESIGN

<i>More on the Formal/Informal garden Question</i>	Chris Laridn
<i>Report on the Australian Landscape Conference, Melbourne</i>	Diana Snape
<i>Australian Landscape Conference, a Gardener's Response</i>	Caroline Gunter
<i>More on Gardening Ethics and Formal Design</i>	Diana Snape

PLANTS and DESIGN

<i>Suitable Trees for the Streetscape</i>	Maree McCarthy, Leigh Murray, Michelle Pymble, Gordon Rowland.
---	---

PLANTS

<i>Climbers Continued</i>	Leigh Murray
---------------------------	--------------

SNIPPETS

<i>Margaret Preston a modernist artist of place</i>	
---	--

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

<i>Garden Reports and visits</i>	
&	
<i>Upcoming meeting details</i>	
&	
<i>Membership renewals</i>	

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Jo,

You will soon get our latest ME newsletter, but this is in response to yours.

Some groups already have differential! subs for email or snail mail! NLs.! think this is fair enough. I get mine snail mail still because i don't look at the email every day, but i am using e more and more and am thinking of taking it up. Save you people a lot of effort once it is set up.

Money from the Book fund.

Perhaps f am influenced because i have just been to Paul Kennedy's garden again and i started thinking - what happens to such gardens once the makers have gone? Burrendong and Myall Park am other cases, i gather Myall Park is safe but I am not sure about Burrendong. I wondered about APS setting up a Garden Preservation Fund which hopefully collects people with expertise to decide where and how to act. It would need to Eease with other sources of money, donations and government because there needs to be a permanent supply for maintenance Now our little fund could be used as seed money to start the main fund off. There would have to be serious thought go into aims and rules and backing from APS generally. Preservation of Habitats rightly gets plenty of money now, not all necessarily wisely spent which is always the bugbear with these things, administration can swallow the money. Exotic gardens also get funds to preserve them, its time Australian ones did too. Maybe as part of the Garden History or what ever it is now. Our gardens may not qualify as the tops for design but they are generally not bad, and it is the collections they are so valuable for. Botanic gardens in miniature.

In view of this, the preservation I wish for Australian gardens at this point in time is as *collections kept in the spirit of the makers ideas*, but not limited to the plants he/she had available or necessarily keeping those very unsuited to the situation

Formality as raised by Jeff Howes.

To me the definition of formality also includes regularity and strict symmetry of structure and plants. However thinking on from his idea of controlled plants, the forma! garden is set, fixed, year after year. Plants being living things, they will change, but very slowly, so that the idea of preserving or re-making a classic garden is realistic. A natural garden even with some clipping changes quite quickly and the idea of preserving it or re-making it is a no-go.

Thought s dashed off in rush, but you would *never* get them otherwise

Cheers,

Barbara Buchanan VIC

Jo

I haven't written for the newsletter for such a long time. Study commitments have been my main excuse. Last year I finished my Master of Landscape Architecture and I have established a small business in landscape design and consultancy which is yet to generate any real income. Apart from my study passion, I am sort of retired. You know the sort.

My main interest is in research. I want to investigate the way Australians value the Australian "natural" landscape and whether this is related to their preferences for garden and landscape design styles (both domestic and public) and their* actual lifestyle and gardening behaviour. In other words I want to find answers to the kind of issues Chris Larkin raised in the August NL: Does a greater sense of environmental responsibility tend to be associated with growing native plants/ a preference for less formal gardens/ a dislike of shrubs pruned into geometric shapes/ no desire for manicured edges/ having picnics in the bush/ visiting National Parks/ preferring large expanses of lawn to shrubs and groundcovers/ preferring bush with messy understorey etc?

Are there any special demographics associated with the way people value the bush? For example, several recent surveys suggest that concern for biodiversity is decreasing among young people, in spite of the strong interest shown by small activist groups which ANPS Canberra Region has seen in some of our outreach activities. Clearly they are in a minority. Have young people given up because environmental problems seem so immense, are they just ignorant or are they simply too busy getting on with their lives in a consumerist society to care?

I am not very optimistic about a citizen-led environment revolution. The very terms citizen, ethics, and social and environmental responsibility have little currency in a society motivated by fear and self-interest, more interested in mobile phone ring-tones and choosing the best broadband internet deal, and little concerned with issues of honesty and integrity in our politicians and business leaders. But I diverge a little.

My research will be quantitative. Many writers such as Tim Flannery, David Horton and more recently George Seddon, have made pronouncements about Australians needing to learn to live with our environment not work against it. Some research in rural areas is investigating attitudes towards biodiversity and the environment and much research into land degradation and salinity issues is encouraging ecological restoration in agricultural areas because of its economic value. However, most Australians live in cities and there is little research aimed at getting detailed data about what urban people actually believe. Without such quantitative data, we cannot begin to devise ways to encourage urban people to engage in more ethical behaviour, to be more understanding of the difficulties faced by rural people, to support scientific research and evidence-based action, and to demand stronger policies and action from governments.

My research will investigate people in Canberra and a large rural town in the region, and will look at sub-groups including the general population, members of Australian Native Plants Societies, members of other environment organisations, members of other garden groups or horticulture societies, and also landscape architects and garden designers. I consider that landscape architects have a particular responsibility to provide leadership in

environmentally responsible practices, rather than merely following the wishes of their clients. I recently said to a landscape architect Mend that we should use the small forms of *Crocea* in place of English Box and her response was "if you can get them to grow." *Crocea* self-sow freely in Canberra!

It is all very daunting and I have yet to seriously start looking for a team of supervisors and the most appropriate university to enrol in, although I have a lot of background information. When I am devising questionnaires and getting ready to gather data, I may come to GDSG members for comments or to take part in pilot studies!

Meanwhile I continue to lavish neglect on my long-suffering garden. But I certainly know which plants thrive, as opposed to survive, without water! My absolute treasures are *Scaevola humilis* which self-sowed in gaps in the paving while receiving no water at all, *Pelargonium rodneyanum*, *Crocea exalata*, *Philothea verrucosa*, and some forms of *Platysace lanceolata*. They all have a deceptively delicate appearance especially *Platysace lanceolata* which remains bright green yet flowers during the hottest and driest months. Others I have found really hardy include *Hibbertia obtusifolia*, *Indigofera australis*, *Prostanthera scullaroides*, *Rhodanthe emthemoides*, the *Brachyscomes*, *Bracteanthe bracteata* fine leaf forms, *Wahlenbergia communis*, most *Correas* (but not *mannii*), *Dianellas* and *Lomandras* of course, *Grevilleas* Pink Lady and Jubilee, and *Ricinocarpos pinifolius*. The white flowers of *Ricinocarpos* are so intense that its foliage seems to disappear into the background leaving the flowers to float in space.

At the Biennial Seminar, I will get together other GDSG members for an informal chat and also I will attend the Study Group Leaders' Meeting on your behalf.

Shirley Pipitone ACT

Shirley, you may be interested in the words of Michael McCarthy, Professor of Landscape Architecture, University of Melbourne in his Forward to "Great Gardens-Australia the Beautiful" 1983.

"Perhaps the attraction of gardens is that they are places we can understand: through their structure and form we are able to recognize their dynamic beauty. The seasons, the birds that become apart of the garden or the way light filters in and out at different times of the day, all make our experience of it special. To perceive the garden as a vast network of life changing factors is to have recognized beauty and, more, to have grown with the garden to have become one with it. Judith Wright remarked that the landscape could be seen as a place to dominate or a place to cherish; further how we see the landscape probably says something about us as people [Preoccupations in Australian Poetry. OUP 1965] It is an important question, this question of how people see their landscape. Equally as important, on a broader scale, is how people might come to know themselves as a nation through reflecting on their attitudes towards the land. I believe this has much to do with gardens and is related to the liveability of the whole country.

This is an impressive site to buy native plants from. However it is a bit costly and unfortunately not a great range of plants either hmmm, Diversity Plants, the native specialists, 96276371. Their site <http://www.koalanativeplants.com.au/index.htm> is worth a look. Also www.diversityplants.com.au

Jeff Howes NSW

Marie and I moved into our new house last March, and have since planted 700 tubestock trees, with another 1500 to install over the next three years. Let me know when you're visiting this region. We're close to three national parks, three lake systems and dozens of sandy beaches. I'd love to show you the lagoon/wetlands we've constructed and the other things we're doing to create a wildflower garden and wildlife oasis

Gordon Rowland NSW

Dear Jo

I was inspired by the conference to write my report immediately before I forgot everything. It is hard to capture the magic though. The conference was very good indeed - and it was nice to catch up with lots of people including Tim Jackson and Carolyn Gunter. Sorry you weren't there!

Diana Snape VIC

Hi Jo,

On Saturday I visited 3 Australian Native Gardens open as part of the Open Garden Scheme, all at Westleigh and one belonging to our fellow member, Jeff Howes and his wife Glennis. I felt Jeff's garden had a feeling of serenity. The front garden features a stunning hybrid Grass tree and a big range of native grasses under established trees. The first thing I noticed on arrival was lots of bird calls. I was also inspired by the use of many native orchids and LechenauMas in pots.

In the garden of Brian and Carol Roach the nature strip and front garden have a stunning variety of Grevilleas and other unusual plants. My favourite was a Grevillea hookeriana, not the hybrid variety but the original, grey foliage with black flowers which would look stunning in a contemporary garden.

The garden of David & Jenny Chandler is a great use of Sydney sandstone flora, mostly obtained through the North Shore Group of the Australian Plant Society and features a rain forest garden with 2 frog ponds.

I wondered if these were the gardens Maureen and Norm Webb planned to visit in September (see Aug.05 Newsletter)

Looking forward to seeing you at Cootamundra in October,

Michele Pymble NSW

DESIGN

MORE ON THE FORMAL/INFORMAL GARDEN QUESTION

In the article called *How Formal Should Your Garden Be?*

Jeff Howes links the level of maintenance undertaken in a garden to "the degree of formality or neatness of the garden". I must say I'd never thought of formality in terms of maintenance, although I take Ms point that to some extent the neatness of a garden contributes to its manicured and formal appearance. I think that maintenance is needed in both formal and informal gardens but the maintenance regime will necessarily have its differences. Both gardens will need to be kept weed free but some kinds of pruning will occur exclusively, or almost exclusively, in a formal garden - and this type of pruning results in hedges and topiary.

Jeff Howes identifies something that gives an element of formality to any garden - lawn. Mind you if the lawn was replaced by paving or gravel then this would increase the formality as these hard surfaces are even further removed from what is naturalistic. Jeff thinks what happens where a garden bed meets the lawn - the maintenance of the edge of the garden bed - whether the shrubs are clipped to the edge of the lawn - is a "key factor" in how formal a garden is. To me what makes a garden more or less formal is the choice, and most particularly the arrangement, of plants in geometric shapes and straight lines. The pruning regime then assists in keeping the formal shape and order.

Formal gardens seem to be an extension of the built environment - they relate more to building structures than to nature. They are also generally simpler - usually there are fewer plant varieties used and there will be a great deal of repetition and massing of plants to achieve simple lines - straight or curved - and shapes. There is quite a static element in a formal garden which may in the best examples make a garden restful, in a Zen kind of way, but too often the designs are simplistic, the choice of plants predictable and the result is dull and boring. I often feel that once you have seen a formal garden you have seen it and there is no reason to go back for seconds as nothing will have changed. For me it is really not a question of should we have formal Australian plant gardens as some people will choose to use Australian plants to create a formal garden. The interesting question is whether it is possible to develop an identifiable formal Australian design style, or will any Australian plant garden merely be imitative of e.g. an Italian garden style. Is it possible that our courtyard gardens, connected to inner urban living and outdoor eating/entertaining, are producing, or could produce, a unique Australian garden style - that is, if Australian plants are employed for the purpose.

Chris Lallan VIC

Australian Landscape Conference 2005

"Creative Processes for Design Excellence"

This Conference was fascinating, the more so because of the many different approaches to the topic - very different I think it was the most stimulating I have attended and each night went home with both mental and visual overload. Most speakers were landscape architects or designers who generally created landscapes on a grand scale, for very wealthy clients. Hard landscape was significant; both the colour green and large lakes predominated, not very relevant for much of Australia. Only once during the whole weekend was the word maintenance mentioned. The key overseas speakers talked again on the second day - a good idea, giving them time to present their design ideas more fully.

The following are just some of my impressions from the weekend and do not do justice to any of the presenters. Sadly all the wonderful pictures are missing (each worth more than a thousand words). You may think this is a long article - but compare it in your mind with 16 lectures over the course of two days and you'll see you've got out of it lightly!

Penelope Hobhouse from England spoke first, about "Training the eye: the art of garden design". She showed many formal gardens with manicured shapes and lots of clipped hedges, beautiful but to my eye static, based on control over nature. (She was very disparaging of the idea of a native garden.) She spoke of *the garden as process and as theatre*, saying even a historic garden should not be stuck in a time warp. She told us of her different gardening phases, including an Italian one - how Italians think of cubic space. She has now lost interest in fleeting flower colour and is in an Islamic phase. (Apparently in the Koran the word garden is mentioned 104 times!) We saw striking photos of a walled oasis garden, isolated in forbidding Iranian desert.

Rick Darke's first title was "Creating the liveable landscape: an ethic for ecological gardening". His approach was almost the opposite to that of Penelope Hobhouse, seeming to consider the whole of our environment as potential garden and looking for beauty everywhere. For example he showed exquisite lichens first on a tree trunk and then on the rusting metal of a car wreck, the latter in close up looking equally (or even more) beautiful. He seemed to advocate acceptance of what is around us and designing within the existing framework (very relevant I think with respect to our suburban gardens). He showed a series of dozens of photos taken from the one spot of a scene in Ms local landscape, to illustrate the continuing and quite spectacular changes occurring over time. He talked about developing "Visual acuity" and "places that make the heart sing". I found Ms lectures thought-provoking.

Professor George Seddon spoke on "Adapting our gardens to our environment". He saw the constraints of designing in Australian conditions as a stimulus and a challenge, comparable with the restrictions placed on a poet writing in the sonnet form. He said the environment has design implications and a garden is both a cultural expression and an environmental response, *so garden design is inescapably hybrid*. Along with the obvious implications of water shortage and avoidable chemical use, he discussed the possible dangers of introduced plants. He detailed the high percentage of weed species in Australia and the value of including local plants in design. He also advocated frugality in design.

James Hiteiuassgfa - a lively and entertaining speaker - discussed "Glamour in the garden: naturalistic herbaceous plant communities". He too commented on the spectrum from nature to culture and also the comfort of familiarity. He likes colour and glamour in the garden, ""flower power"* He has worked for many years on producing mixtures of seeds to create various types of meadow gardens with successive flowering, from spring through summer to autumn. These are cut each year for hay and then regenerate the following year. The problem with change he says is that "one person's change is another person's bloody mess". People like to see evidence of care in a garden - "doing stuff creates meaning". I think these ideas are relevant in our naturalistic gardens.

Juan Grimm from Chile was handicapped a little by having English as a second language and by a bad cold. However he showed pictures of numerous superb landscape gardens he has designed in Chile and neighbouring countries. His own place typically was situated on the coast with mountains behind (good feng shui, I think), with many but not all indigenous plants - some Gondwana influence visible there. His designs are on a grand scale, featuring marvellous use of form, colour and water, usually complemented by wonderful scenery. Hard landscape was not dominant but looked very expensive, for example three or four large, wavy-edged lakes on different levels going down a slope. This looked marvellous. In each garden there were many places that would "make one's heart sing".

Rob Watson from NZ also used many attractive indigenous (Gondwana) plants in his designs. He thought the journey through a garden was important - a path should lead people around. This contrasted strongly with the front garden of Kate Cuffity's garden, which is based on desert landscapes. Here there is no set pathway and you have to walk around little square gardens with different contents or formats, as a reference to spinifex clumps or well spaced desert plants. After George Seddon's talk, I found Kate Cullity's was the next to have specific import for Australia. Entitled "Working with the poetics of the Australian landscape", she took us away from all that lush greenness and water to some aspects of our harsher environment. She showed details such as the intriguing dry creek or river beds where water once flowed but now is absent; the effect of a plant dying in the desert - first an upright silvery skeleton, then its gradual collapse until it is like a shadow of its previous self, lying on the ground. Kate showed some of her award-winning sculptural constructions, for example one illustrating the role of fire in a eucalypt forest in a dramatic and beautiful way.

Among the locals was Andrew Laidlaw from the RBG Melbourne, his subject "Defining the landscape through plants". (It was nice to hear someone putting plants first) Andrew was filled with obvious enthusiasm when he spoke about the new Children's Garden at the RBG. His pictures showed small children, faces filled with delight as they experienced the child-oriented landscapes and plant material of that garden. Another local, Professor Jim Sinatra, spoke at a GDSG weekend some years ago. He and PMn Mnrphy spoke on "Art sculpture and the landscape". They are involved in 8 number of interesting design projects in consulMion wife aboriginal people, requiring a completely different approach.

Landscape architect Vladimir Sitta revels in his work for Sydney clients, having worked previously in Czechoslovakia and West Germany. He believes private gardens retain highly individualistic and specific character unlike public landscapes with concepts

homogenised to pulp by public authorities, bean counters, conspiring lawyers and oh, so inspiring public consultation.

This gives an impression of Ms own lively and individualistic attitude. His clients often seem to enjoy harbour views and his designs feature swimming pools with one invisible (level) edge and dramatic, inventive hard landscaping with complementary planting- Christopher Bradley-Hole from England is definitely a landscape architect and Ms career is international. His first talk was "The urban garden: crafting a modern style", his second "The wider landscape: country gardens and public landscapes". He lays stress on *identifying the inherent geometry of a garden before beginning his design*. Whether the garden is small or large, he looks for geometric links to existing buildings or other aspects of the environment He is very conscious of proportions and ratios. His lovely gardens are very ordered, though he does like ambiguity - glass screens, reflections and so on. He too mentioned Islamic gardens (with a photo of that same iconic example) and said the urban environment might be considered a desert in which a garden could be an oasis. This idea had some resonance as we drove home through the suburban streets to our own modest little oasis.

Diana Snape Vic.

Gardening ethics

I agree with Chris's comments in her article on gardening ethics, N.L.51. Our direct dealings with other people are a principal concern of ethics. However, as Tim Flannery points out, what we do and how we live today impacts strongly on future generations and this should not be ignored. I think ethics also involves a concern for other living organisms - animals, even plants? - and certainly for conservation of the natural environment. Can we choose plants to grow in our gardens and forget about their shrinking and damaged homes in the wild? I'd join Chris in recommending Tim Flannery's 'The Future Eaters' for his perspective. After reading that, try Jared Diamond's 'Collapse', especially the chapter on Australia. It makes very sobering reading.

Probably our initial impulse in gardening (and garden design) is just to create something beautiful, obviously doing no harm to anyone in the process. Then other considerations emerge, such as those listed by Chris, making the process of design more complex and maybe more challenging and stimulating. I think we mostly do the best we can. We change as the parameters change but it gets difficult to alter an old garden which has become rafter set in its ways. I remember when, 30 years ago, we began work on altering the house we had bought, it was illegal to have a water tank in the garden. Also the use of grey water was not even on the horizon. Now we would almost need to bulldoze and rebuild the house to change significantly its water catchment and distribution. Much of the roof water drains into a pipe which goes right under the house. If only we were starting again now.....

A formal garden ?

I agree with you that Jeffs suggestion of including in the NL copies of what members write about their gardens for the Open Garden Scheme is an excellent one. They often detail both the motives and methods which have helped create those gardens.

Jeffs 30 years' gardening experience on clay soils has given him many valuable insights. In answer to his question, "how formal should a native garden be?", I would say in general as formal as the owner wants it to be. The degree of formality is a matter of personal taste and I think there's no right or wrong. I do agree with Jeffs suggestion that we want visitors' opinions to be positive when they see our gardens. This probably means a certain degree of tidiness - at least an impression of tidiness - but not necessarily too much. It can be in the hard landscape or framework of the garden rather than the planted areas.

I can think of two ethical questions we might ask about having a formal garden. The first is whether it necessitates the use of more water and I don't believe this has to be true. The second would be concerning wildlife habitat and this one could be more difficult to resolve, as a very formal garden with everything trimmed and tidy is likely to provide minimal habitat (as in Chris's comment about "minimalist gardens and box hedges"). Otherwise I see no reason why an Australian garden has to try to mimic 'the bush'. Restoration of a natural area with indigenous plants is a most worthwhile activity but it's at one end of the spectrum of creating a garden. Using indigenous plants in a formal design is different again. In the middle of suburbia, your informal Australian garden may stand out in a conspicuous way from the rest of the street does this matter?

Diana Snape Vic

As always Chris Larkin can be relied upon to introduce thought provoking and contemporarily relevant issues into our newsletters.

For yet another take on gardening ethics, read Val Plumwood's "Decolonising Australian Gardens: gardening and the ethics of place."

<http://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/AHR/archive/issue-July-2005/09plumwood.html>.

This paper criticizes the popular ideal of all the native garden purified of exotic elements and proposes an alternative - the adaptive garden.....

Comments please members? JH

AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPE CONFERENCE 10th - 11th September 2005
A Gardener's Response

This was the sixth international landscape and garden design conference held in Melbourne and I was lucky enough to be given a registration. I imagined it would be seriously landscape oriented and landscaper attended but the lure of international and Australasian speakers talking about garden design and their "Creative processes for design excellence" I knew would be relevant.

The international speakers lineup was as excellent as it was varied and they all made reference to their creative processes (early horticultural experiences, study, climate, soil and site analysis and plant selection decisions) in their first lecture and their second focussed on their applications in their work. Their own illustrative slide and audio selections were delightful.

I have quoted information from the conference brochure which I found made such sense after the event!

Penelope Hobhouse spoke first on "Training the Eye: the art of garden design". She told of her early gardening, her writings and her more recent research in gardening history, garden styles and discovery of Persian oasis gardens. One of her earliest books was about colour in the garden and she confesses now she's far more charmed by simplifying and reducing decorative planting. Her second lecture on "Nature and Art in the Garden" and led to her expounding on her new love of open paved areas, subtle water features and structural tree patterning. She spoke of our gardens being our attempts to make a paradise on earth and that these would be the paradise we would find eventually. Not being involved in that line of thinking I was rather fearful of the prospect!

From the US was Rick Darke, described as "a design consultant, author and photographer focused on landscape design, restoration, planning and 'enhancement'". His lectures were titled "Creating the Liveable Landscape: an ethic for ecological gardening" and "The Woodland Garden: capturing the spirit of the forest". Both were superbly illustrated and beautifully depictive of north-eastern US in all seasons, both his personal garden and the woodland and gardens in that area. I felt his major message was to open our eyes, to view things differently, to seek out subtlety and to leave only a gentle impression of our existence.

James Hitchmough, a Professor in the Department of Landscape in the University of Sheffield had spent several years in Melbourne as a lecturer at Burnley College before returning to the UK. His topics were "Values and Meanings in our Gardens: the great debate" and "Glamour in the Garden: naturalistic herbaceous plant communities". I'm not so sure about "glamour" but he spoke amusingly and realistically about establishing plant communities and planting failures. His current work is in naturalistic herbaceous vegetation, planting green meadows with a mix of native and compatible wild grasses and flowers. His suggestion for "meadow" planting in Australia gave an example using kangaroo grass *Themeda australis* a great favourite of his, teamed with hot pokers, *Kniphofia spp*, a non invasive agapanthus and a daisy form (I'm a bit vague here). He was adamant that *Echinacea spp* in Australian paddock conditions would be a dud, said with a Sheffield accent rhyming with wood!

It seemed to me that there was a lot of time through winter and early spring that these British meadows were not at their best but that in Australia we had much better prospects for year round satisfaction.

Christopher Bradley-Hole, also from the UK, trained and worked as an architect before "his fascination for plants and gardens led him to refocus on the broader landscape". His lectures were titled "The Urban Garden: crafting a modern style" with examples of his Chelsea Flower show entries displaying "pared down simplicity... .executed with a sharp eye for both rigorous design and harmonious planting" and "The Wider Landscape country gardens and public landscapes". He described his architectural visions inspired by mathematical perfection, the rectangular blocks of colour in the Mondrian style art and Fibonacci series which he then interprets in bare stonework or exuberantly plants with perennials and grasses. His problems-solving techniques with moving people through his landscapes were impressive.

The last international landscaper was Juan Grimm from Chile who, apart from suffering from the flu, was anything but grim. His presentations were titled "The Landscape of Chile: a vision of nature and for design" where he introduced us to the broad range of areas and their natural landscapes across the length of Chile, and "Garden Design in Chile: challenges and opportunities" where he showed us many of his fabulous private and public design works. They were indeed brilliantly related to the landscapes and made great use of the indigenous vegetation teamed with exotics that would support and mould to the forces of nature in a similar way. He lovingly showed us *Puya chilensis* a grey/green leafed bromeliad that stars along the northern and central coastline, a great favourite of his. I would recommend members seek out his book. Most of the gardens we saw were large (one was 32 acres!) and impressive but were never tasteless extravaganzas.

A landscaper originally from Czechoslovakia but now designing in Sydney is Vladimir Sitta, who spoke on "Exploring the Edge: does our construction ability intimidate our ideas". He was wonderfully disrespectful and outrageous and says he "does not see the private garden as a place of naked confrontation and dispute with nature... Unlike our public landscapes with concepts homogenised to pulp by public authorities, bean counters, conspiracy lawyers and oh, so inspiring, public consultation". That quote sums Mm up delightfully. He feels "private gardens retain their highly individualistic and specific character". His certainly do! Think black caned bamboo, pebble surfaces and shallow black marble pools, or fabulous arrangements of cacti, succulents and grasses in angular coloured walls and you have some idea of the scope of his designs.

From New Zealand came Robert Watson, a lawyer who turned to landscaping and is based in Christchurch. "He does private, commercial, tourist, urban and rural design projects" and he had wonderful slides to show some of the variety of Ms work. His lecture titled "New Directions from New Zealand" showed us some of his work like a small courtyard garden, city gardens and sweeping landscape patterns on the Canterbury plains. One of these, now 10 years old, was planted to wrap the proposed house and surrounding garden from the driving winds. It still is without a house even though the shelter-belt is well established. This, or another there, is planted only with native or New Zealand-bred plants in astounding foliage and growth habit patterns.

The delightful Professor George Seddon, a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Studies of Australian Literature, University of WA spoke on "Adapting our Gardens to our Environment". His theory on successful gardening is to not choose a plant and then attempt to provide the conditions for it to survive. "This is the wrong way around and we should accept what our environment offers, then make our plant and design choices accordingly". This was the material of his scholarly lecture and we all need these reminders! For those who saw Gardening Australia on 8th October you had the combined delight of meeting this thoughtful person and viewing his delightful Mediterranean garden where he has put his design and ecological principles into practice.

Kate Cullity, a landscape architect from WA spoke on "Working with the poetics of the Australian Landscape." She works with a team which "undertake investigations into the poetic expression of the Australian landscape" but as this is mostly what the GDSG is all about it was a bit waffly for me. The work involves installations and designs to represent/ make people notice/ draw attention to/ the beauty of our natural landscapes.

Professor Jim Sinatra and PMn Murphy delivered a dual address titled "Art, Sculpture and the Landscape". "Their creative process includes 'landscape paintings' which developed from working with inspiring landscapes and indigenous people." They seem to experiment with form and shapes and apply these to the landscape in forms like the giant banners and "tracky dacks" that march across featureless new subdivisions or moulded reflective pillars in a park - amusing and light-hearted design.

Andrew Laidlaw is the landscape architect for the RBG Melbourne. He was an inspired and inspiring speaker but I will quote the brochure entirely for this summary of his works and the illustrations he showed. "He was principal designer for the Perennial Border, Species Rose Garden, Water Conservation Garden, Long Island (RBG) Indigenous Garden, two stands at the International Flower and Garden Show (2 gold medals) and the new Children's Garden. He consulted with co-workers in the gardens for their input in his designs.

All these speakers were brought together through the efforts of Warwick and Sue Forge and the audience and the speakers were adeptly controlled by John Patrick. They presented a varied but cohesive and entertaining event. Inspiration came from the consistent call to use materials suited to the site, to look anew at arrangements, ecological considerations, colour and planting possibilities and to experiment with combinations of native and like-minded exotics.

They had also arranged a Pre-conference Designer Gardens Tour for the Friday when delegates toured 6 gardens and had a chance to talk with most of the owners. I was not able to tour but heard reports of it being a great success.

The event was definitely not heavily loaded to the professional and there were many "home gardeners" among the audience seeking new ideas. It costs were approximately \$500 per person, accommodation of course extra, but very much worth the effort. The tour was \$95 for the day.

There was a lot to dream about and to ponder. Reality hit when I returned to my personal, small, still working up to paradise, suburban lot with plantings a mix of natives, flowers for cutting and organic vegetables. I enjoy the efforts and the changes I have to make and the economies I have to apply but I was overwhelmed by the thought of all those thousands of dollars that had been spent in making extravagant paradises for those who had the resources. Perhaps some of those resources could be funneled off to planting plans for needy countries.

Caroline Guster

PLANTS and DESIGN

Suitable trees for the streetscape.

I think such a list is much needed. I also think we have looked at this in the past so it might be worth checking old NLs. It will depend so much on the particular area of course. Another aspect could be considered too. I am always annoyed by the futility of planting trees which will obviously grow far too tall underneath power lines. Symmetry is not achieved with the same trees on both sides of the road when those on one side have to be horribly lopped. It's extra, unnecessary work. So as well as a list of trees I think we also need a list of small trees or large shrubs suitable for under those pesky powerlines. (If only they were underground. It is 45 years since Robin Boyd wrote his book 'The Australian Ugliness' and those powerlines are still there, and often worse. I'm in danger of becoming a grumpy old woman!)

Diana Snape VIC

Here is a list of my favourite trees for street and park planting:

First favourite for street planting is the Paper Bark (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*). An Australian icon.

It's surprising that NSW Christmas Bush (*Ceratopetalum gummiferum*) is not used more. Also, Ivory Curl Tree (*Buckinghamia celsissima*)

Water Gum (*Tristania laurina*)

Rough barked apple (*Angophora floribunda*) and *Callistemon viminalis* all stand out.

Unfortunately *Syzygium* species and Blueberry Ash (*Elaeocarpus reticulatus*)

are probably unsuitable as street trees because of their berries which may be an Occupation Health and Safety issue but they would obviously work well in parks.

Michele Pymble

Acacia glaucescens

Acmena hemilampm Acmena smiths!

Backhousia myrWdia (Nutmeg Myrtle)

Callistemon 'Kings PanX Special'

Cryptocarya triplinervis (Brown Laurel or Three-veined Laurel) 8m. Takes salt winds.

The oily fruit are important for some birds. (Attracts Blue Triangle Butterfly and so is an alternative to Camphor Laurel)

Cupaniopsis anarogliodes (Tucteroo)

Melaleuca siyph&fiodes (White paper bark, excellent small habitat tree)

***Elaeocarpus mtf cuiatus* Blue Berry Ash

Eucalyptus curtisii

Eucalyptus eximia 'Nans'⁸

Eucalyptus ficifolia (Grafted)

Eucalyptus ptyhocarpa

Evodia elteriana

Jacksonia scoparia (only about 3m though)

Leptospermum madidum subsp. *sativum* 2-3m. Like a miniature, fine-seeded willow with smooth bark like a Gum. Very weepy and beautiful. Silver form or Green forms. (Often incorrectly sold as *L. brachyandrum*) Frost tender

Macadamia

Melaleuca decora small tree to 6m or bushy shrub to 3m. White papery bark. Profuse white flowers Spring to Summer. Very hardy in most soils but likes moisture. Good screen plant. Insects attracted to flowers encourage birds. Frost tolerant to -7°C.

Melaleuca siphoclioides Variable height 3 to 10m tall. White papery bark with dense foliage. Excellent habitat tree. Frost tolerant to -7°C.

Melaleuca viridiflora 'Weeping' form or 'Upright' form -8m flowers pink, purple or red, with gold tips. Silvery new growth. White papery bark.

Pittosporum phyllanthoides

Podocarpus elatus - timber for boat-building. Fruit like purple snowmen. Frost tolerant to -10°C.

Podocarpus grayae slow-growing tree that is wonderful as an indoor plant. Red fleshy fruits about 1.5cm long. Shiny leaves hang down from branches.

Stenocarpus sinuatus Fire-wheel 6-8m, narrow, slow-growing tree. Large, showy red flowers in shape of a wheel. Glossy dark green foliage.

Syzygium leuhamii

We also might add that a speaker at a *Birds Australia* AGM, Geoff Barrett, gave some very interesting statistics that can be disseminated to the wider public in the interests of bird habitat creation and/or preservation:

there is a 43% increase in diversity of bird species if trees planted are local to the area;
there is a five-fold increase in exotic birds if exotic trees are planted.

Maree McCarthy NSW

The healthy establishment and growth of street trees is limited by several factors, of which compaction, drought and low soil oxygen are the most significant.

One way of mitigating the adverse effects of these factors is through regular maintenance. With increasing costs - including water costs - and inadequate public funding, this approach is no longer practical. (No doubt it ever was.)

An alternative approach is to grow selected forms or ecotypes of desired species, especially those indigenous to the same locality or bio-region.

Many Australian rainforest trees are resistant to compaction, surprisingly drought tolerant, and both beautiful and long lived. They also exhibit wide genetic variation. Plant breeders may need to develop selected forms or ecotypes with the most desired characteristics for urban planting.

Most commercially available species are propagated from stock originating in high rainfall coastal areas. With the recent introduction of Level 3 water restrictions in Sydney, and the likelihood of permanent restrictions and escalating water costs, it will be easier and less expensive to establish the same species propagated from low-rainfall ecotypes.

Research has shown that trees tolerant of waterlogging are usually resistant to compaction too. As a number of Australian rainforest species thrive in and between the extremes of well-drained sands and *Meiaieuca* swamps, it is important to select individual plants from stock appropriate to the conditions in which they are to be installed.

The ultimate aim is to select forms tolerant of all conditions likely to be encountered. A VCAH Burnley research project that started in 1992, involved 90 forms of 29 species, with seed collected between Cairns in Queensland and Wilson's Promontory In Victoria. The species included: *Backhousia sciadophora* (Shatterwood), *Brachychiton discolor* (Lacebark), *Cupaniopsis anacardioides* (Tuckeroo), *Elaeocarpus obovatus* (Hard Quandong), *Ficus rubiginosa* (Port Jackson Fig), *Flindersia australis* (Australian Teak), *GIOGhidkm ferdmandi* (Cheese Tree), *MeHa azedarach* var. *ausrtalastica* (White Cedar), *RftocfosptaeiB rhodanthera* (Tulip Satinwood), *Tristanraps/s collna* (Mountain Water Gum), *Tristaniopsis iaurina* (Water Gum), *Wateriousea fkmbunda* (Weeping Lilly Pilly). *flindersia australis* was propagated in five different forms, from 'dry' rainforest to wet subtropical rainforest.

One of the researchers, Geoff Williams, states:

"in respect to specific characteristics such as drought tolerance, ignoring the differences between populations can be equivalent to ignoring the differences between species.

*"Australian rainforest trees are an under-utilised genetic resource for use in urban horticulture. In relation to the many forms we already have in cultivation, many species require improvement in only one or two genetic characteristics to become reliable urban trees of the highest quality, capable of succeeding in even the most hostile urban sites." **

'Elite' Native Trees

As some species of native trees, notably *Eucalyptus* species, cannot be vegetatively reproduced, they are propagated by seed, the progeny often displaying wide variations in leaf form and flower. Commercially produced trees are also liable to decline in vigour through inbreeding.

A number of studies involving *Eucalyptus* species have shown that seed orchards of between thirty and fifty trees, grown together in isolation, are needed to ensure adequate cross-pollination and genetic diversity, thus preventing such decline.

In 1992 the Institute of Plant Sciences and the Melbourne City Council agreed to co-sponsor a project to develop 'elite' native park and street trees. Some were vegetatively propagated from stock of known origin, while those that have to be propagated from seed were produced in 'elite' seed orchards.

Selected species included: *AHocasuarina torutosa* (Forest Oak), *A. vertidllata* (Drooping She-Oak), *Angophora costata* (Sydney Red Gum), *Brachychiton popuineus* (Kurrajong), *Cattistemon saffignus* (Wiow Botttebrush), *CaMris rtsomboidea* (Port Jackson Cypress), *Corymbia citriodom* (Lemon-scented Gum), *C. fidfoiia* (Red-flowerin§ Gum), *C. maculata* (Spotted Gum), *Eucalyptus ieucoxyion* (Yellow Gum), *£ nkihollii* (Small Leaf Peppermint), *£ sooparia* (Wdlow Gum), *Persoonia tewis* (Broad-leaf Geebung), *Tristaniopsis collina* (Mountain Water Gum), and *T. iaurina* (Water Gum).

Increased use of native trees, especially in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne, has dramatically increased the number and diversity of native birds. It has also resulted in improved tree health due to the increase in birds that feed on insects. #

References

* Geoff WHfams (1983) 'Selection can improve amenity of rainforest trees.' Australian Horticulture (12) pages 53-57

David Beardse!!, Peter Yau and Peter Harrison (1993). 'Elite native trees for streets and parks' Australian Horticulture (8) pages 48-53

Gordon Rowland NSW

Street Trees cont

From Gumnuts 54: Peter Vaughan has had an interest in street trees for many years and he was asked to provide some thoughts about appropriate trees for Newcastle City Council as part of a submission to Council by the Newcastle Group of APSoc. I thought others might find Peter's ideas both interesting and useful, so here's what he had to say.....

"Street trees are something I feel strongly about. A few quick ideas are:

The best Eucalypt is *Eucalyptus robusta* (Swamp Mahogany). It is not a tall tree, it flowers spectacularly, and the nectar appears to be higher in protein (for reasons stated below) as the bee keepers reports it builds up hive strength, but more importantly the birds such as the Regent Honeyeater (one of Australia's rarest and most endangered birds) migrate to flowering *E. robusta*. Regent Honeyeaters spend much of the year in the Capertee Valley (Mudgee area), but migrate to the coast each year. They have been reported in the lower Hunter region a number of times and as the recovery plan for the Regent Honeyeater improves their numbers (assuming they don't go extinct) we can expect to see more Regent Honeyeaters in our region. The Swamp Mahogany has the historical significance of being the first street tree planted in Australia, and some of the original plantings are still alive and growing in Sydney Botanical Gardens.

Another Eucalypt is *E. curtisii*. There are a few growing as street trees. It is a maliee that can be grown under power lines and never need trimming. It flowers every year, is hardy. It is really a great plant.

Elaeocarpus - *Elaeocarpus obovatus* and *E. reticulatus* - both great trees to keep bower birds, figbirds, orioles and larger honeyeaters in urban areas. Both have great flowers and easy to grow. They are not attractive to fruit bats which may make them more user friendly.

Native Frangipant - great tree but short lived, expect about 10 years, is that acceptable?

Palms - we should be growing the local species, the Cabbage Tree Palm and Bangsiow Palm (but the Alexander Palm is acceptable if desired, it does appear to grow stronger). If the site is correct they will do well. Palms are important as a number of fruit pigeons are nomadic following the fruiting of palms, in particular the Cabbage Tree Palm. We should not be planting date palms or Washington Fan Palms.

Lilly Piflys are important trees. Councils have the concept that we should live in the valleys, and preserve the bush on the ridgelines for scenic beauty. Nature wants it the other way around. The nutrients, ie soil and fallen leaves, wash down into the gullies, and so this is where the best trees grow, and on the ridges few animals can survive, in

the valleys the trees receive enough nutrients so they can afford to give some away with their nectar and fruit. Therefore the trees from valleys are sought after by fruit and nectar eating birds and these are the important conservation areas (proven in studies by NSW Forestry). However we have cleared the valleys, consequently to compensate we should be planting some of these trees in our streets. Very important local species are the Lilly PiStys, and there is a wide range of forms now available. They can be grown from cutting so the size and form can be pre determined.

Cupartopsis - *Cupaniopsis anarvardioides* is another great tree for local birds. The figbirds migrate to our area when they fruit. It is a species that tolerates and grows well in poor soils and harsh conditions.

Brachychiions should also be considered of course, but not the flame tree. Perhaps the lacebark, but I would suggest hybrids for improved form. I would recommend lacebark rootstocks and grafting hybrids on top. This is a very easy procedure and I would readily supply the hybrids and teach the council nursery staff how to graft. Perhaps they may wish to try with about 10 plants, and then review the results after a few years.

White Cedar is ideal for car parks because of its umbrella shape. Please use local sourced plants, not the common plant grown that is Indian or Chinese in origin. The local plant appears to have smaller fruit, and so is more attractive to local birds. Importantly, the White Cedar should not be mulched around as this allows the leaf stripping caterpillar to attack it. The caterpillar lives in the mulch during the day and eats the leaves at night. I have watched the trees next to the Newcastle Museum and they are not mulched and the caterpillars do not seem to be able to survive to attack them (but I haven't been in there this year, so a check wouldn't hurt). Therefore if you grow White Cedar, have bare earth around them. They perform very well in the hot dry situation that car parks provide. Council may worry that the fruits of the White Cedar may attract birds that will crap on the cars in car parks. However the White Cedar fruits ripen when there are no leaves on the tree, which means the birds don't hang around in the tree but eat their fill and go and sit somewhere safer. Also the fruits are rather large, so the birds cannot eat many anyway, and have to move on. The tree is using the old gambit "don't put your fruits all in the one bird" as that bird may get eaten and they never know where the seeds will end up!

Also note that Council seems to like *Grevillea* 'Robyn Gordon'. Inform them that *Grevillea* 'Superb' grows much better and should replace 'Robyn Gordon' on Council's lists."

PS. from Leigh Murray. To his suggestions, I'd add *Eucalyptus viridis* (small, very hardy indeed, flowers profusely in summer, attracts insects). I don't grow *E. robusta* but it certainly sounds ideal. I do grow *E. curtisii*, and I second his views on it. I love eucalypts and would like to see small ones used as street trees and in home gardens. And I like his other suggestions, especially the Cabbage Tree Palm (*LMstona ausfrat/s*), the Uity-pillies and *Elaeocarpus*.

Leigh Murray NSW

Climbers Continued

Some of my experiences with vines/climbers have been similar to the maintenance headaches described by Paddy Lightfoot in 'Native Vines - Friend or Foe?'* in the April 2005 *Native Plants*. I grow, or attempt to grow, climbers on a rocky ridge at Qaeanbeyan (with poor soil, hot summers, cold winters and frequent frosts down to about minus 7)

and at Tuross Head, which has a much milder climate and better soil (granite based) but also gale-force winds, sometimes salt-laden.

Pandorea pandorana is our most rampant climber. I planted a single *P. pandorana* 'Snowbells' near a strong steel support at Tuross Head. Within a year it was on the way to covering the 5m x 2m screen. It now requires a light prune weekly or fortnightly to keep it within bounds. This effort is worthwhile for the splendid screening it provides. However, maintaining it would be a nightmare if it were on a boundary fence with access only from one side. (Even a half-metre gap between fence and screen allows pruning from both sides, and a pole-pruner makes the job easier.) On this same support (some metres away) a *P. jasminoides* 'Lady Di' is not nearly as strong a grower, yet it too needs frequent light pruning to control its direction. Like many climbers, they head up, leaving bare, untidy areas at the bottom of the screen. *Billardiera scandens* and a climbing form of *Einadia nutans* are beginning to fill the gaps.

We have two plants of *P. jasminoides* from different sources growing slowly on a mesh fence. One of the plants has more beautifully coloured flowers than the other, which is the better grower. Neither did well until I managed to improve their watering. In Queanbeyan we planted a *P. pandorana* 'Golden Showers' about 20 years ago under large eucalypts, and it just mooched along until a year or two ago when I began to water some nearby plants. It's now grown considerably to reach maybe 4 metres up into adjoining shrubs and trees. In flower, it looks terrific. *P. jasminoides* has barely survived there. *Kennedia ruhicunda* is indigenous at Tuross, and several eventually popped up around the garden, all of them in convenient spots. One died during the drought (it was under one of our two large Norfolk Island Pines, a very tricky area for young plants). *K. retrorsa* didn't survive the winds and drought at Tuross. It thrived at Queanbeyan for years until renovation forced its removal; our only problem with it was the tons of dead leaves held within the vine. *K. macrophylla* is growing strongly under the Norfolks at Tuross, not needing much maintenance in that spot.

K. nigricans is our second strongest climber at Tuross (like other kennedias except *K. retrorsa* it gets frost-bitten at Queanbeyan). Two plants have covered dividers of about 10 metres long and 2 metres high, doing the job in a few years. I think they'd prefer more water but the Norfolks have the drinking rights; this has kept them in check, and they need little care. *Hibbertia scandens* is one of our favourite climbers. It's not suitable for Queanbeyan (it can't handle frosts) but it does well at Tuross where it often bears a large yellow flower or two, and sometimes berries follow. It has not, so far, become anything like rampants being easily controllable. It grows naturally nearby, and it isn't rampant there either. We grow it on a mesh fence under the Norfolks and also on a timber structure where it has climbed up amongst espaliered *Melaleuca nesophila*, increasing the screening density. All existing plants of another Tuross climber, *Hardenbergia violacea*, disappeared during building, and no new ones surfaced. It's proved fairly hard to establish. Only one plant, *H. violacea* 'Happy Wanderer', is doing well (covering 6m x 2m); it needs a good prune. Various other forms (both bushy and climbers) have struggled in the dry and windy conditions. Recently planted, *H. violacea* 'Free 'n Easy', a white climbing form, is looking promising. At Queanbeyan a different, very tough, form of *H. violacea* grows on our land and along rocky roadsides, as a frost-tolerant ground cover. Climbing forms haven't done well there out in the open. Now I'm trying some under tall trees where they'll be protected from frost. *H. comptoniana* has been much

easier to establish at Tuross than *H. violacea*, forming a lovely light screen that needs little attention. A year-old plant in Queanbeyan was burnt by frost and looked tatty until recovering nicely in *spwxg*. *Clematis aristata* grows naturally at Tuross. Seven years ago, I planted out 5 plants from seed I collected. One, planted under the Norfolks, died. The other four (three males and one female) are strong growers, not (?yet) rampant. The white fluffy seedheads of the female look gorgeous, so we were upset last year when it looked like she'd died in the drought. Then she seeded all over the garden and, to our delight, revived. I'm wondering if the seedlings will be a problem long-term (though they're easy to pull up). I've struggled for years to grow *Clematis microphylla* at both places. Until established they seem to need more water than I usually give them, and when peeved drop all of their leaves, growing new ones only when they feel happier. Several plants are thriving at Queanbeyan where they are beginning to cover a fence. Five given up at Tuross. So, not ail climbers are rampant in our conditions. They are not, however, low-maintenance plants. They all need training through and up supports, and tip pruning from an early age. And because the more vigorous ones need frequent pruning to control their wild wanderings, these should never be planted where the pruner does not have good access, or when pruning won't be done regularly, or where they could escape into neighbours' plants.

Lei^i Murray NSW

SNIPPETS

"Remember that one of your aims must be to lift people, if only for a moment, above their daily preoccupations. Even a glimpse of beauty will enable them to make a healing contact with their own inner world. It is one of the most valued reasons and justification for gardens and gardeners".

*Russell Page
U.K. gardener extraordinaire*

*Now that its vines and flowers are
Named and known, like long-fulfilled desires
Those first strange joys are gone.*

*My search is further,
There's still to name and know
Beyond the flowers I gather
That one that does not wither —
The truth from which they grow. Judith Wright*

In Sydney we have been lucky enough to have had a major Margaret Preston retrospective on at the Art Gallery of NSW; as well as a smaller one, concentrating on her time spent at Berowra, north of Sydney on the Hawkesbury, at the Macquarie University art gallery. Both are a must see; although she apparently loathed gardening [!] her work and accompanying philosophy should stimulate and inspire Australian plant lovers

interested in design. *"I want to capture this harsh simplicity in our landscape. I want to continue the basic work of the aborigines. By trying in my work to start at the beginning and not at the finish. By this I mean that I'm trying to work with my cultivated knowledge to do away with all copying- imitativeness of the past great masters of the world I want to start afresh and at the beginning and so I lean heavily on the masters of the Kakadu tribes."* Like Miles Franklin she believed in the ideal of a cultural nationalism - *"I'm aiming for work that can eventually become a national Australian art."* Her work in both art and craft, in various media - woodblock prints, pottery, basket making, watercolour, oil and fabric - is at once, strong, beautiful, decorative, graphic, adventurous and domestic. Her continued interest in the applied arts reinforced her belief that design was at the corner stone of nationalism. She felt that a national design could be explored and expanded within the applied arts, particularly within a domestic context, in preference to painting. Among the many interesting facts that emerged at a botanical lecture at the University Art Gallery was that a general nursery in Epping in 1912 stocked 35 species of native plants, increasing by 1938 to 104! Could we now call into a local non specialist nursery and see so many species of Australian plants?

The following quote from Arthur Rickard's "Beautiful Berowra" 1910, was used in the exhibition. His description of the Hawkesbury Sandstone environment makes it easy to understand the profound effect her surroundings had upon her oeuvre.

"Bloodwoods, stringybark and white gum rear their heads proudly over the lesser shrubs, sassafras, titree, geebung or ash. Here and there in the distance can be seen the ha2y blue of the distant hills. Charred stumps now and again bear mute testimony to the ravages of bushfire. Soon the track traverses an area strewn with great boulders. Huge terraces black and burnt overlook precipices which fall hundreds of feet to the valley beneath. In and out along the edge of the mountain meanders the road. Conspicuous are the great red heads of the waratah and the soft white of the flannel flower.. the tiny wild daisies, bluebells and violets and wild clematis and the paler shades of the eriostemon contrast with the bright yellows, reds and blues around. Tree ferns and banksias supply a sober background to the colour scheme.

JH

GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP NORTH-EAST VIC. BRANCH.

SEPT-OCTOBER 05

The next meeting will be Nov. 19* 1§3§ for 11am at Barbara Allen's

Barbara will have a blank plan and a list of questions. We will inspect the site before lunch, discussions will be over lunch and then we head off for the Barton's in Myrtleford. Frances sent me a mud map before setting off for W.A and while I can't put my hand on it now.....

I was asked by one of our newer members *what the purpose of the grotq) is and it is perhaps a good time to reflect on it and what we have actually been doing.*

We began with the inspiration of creating Australian plant gardens that would appeal to anyone, even the most hardened exotic grower, and so encourage the more widespread use of Australian plants. Some of us had been able to attend a few meetings of the Group in Melbourne and realized the benefits of being able to exchange ideas and discuss problems with like minded people. There were sufficient members of the Group living in the area to form a nucleus which is largely still with us.

We began with all levels of theoretical design knowledge and practical experience. Well not all levels, we had no real experts and all of us learnt as we went along. One way of achieving this was to set little tasks and problems for the group which would form the basis of discussion at the next meeting, along with items of interest from the main NL. Generally the problems were derived from the host garden, i.e. the garden where we were meeting. In those early days we all came along to the next meeting with something on paper which the relevant member could then mull over. We soon found that some members were able to present their work pictorially while others were happier putting it into words. Moreover the recipient benefited from the exercise of stating the problem and then usually found some ideas which could be used in the group offering.

After some happy years we began to run out of new gardens and offered to visit anyone and throw ideas around for them to pick and choose from. This works very well in private gardens but has not yielded such useful results in public ones, we have put a deal of work into several projects only to have a change of persons in authority and have it all forgotten. So unless we are seeking problems as a theoretical exercise I would be reluctant to become involved too far in ventures with committees as the responsible entity. This last year or two we have had plenty of new members and fresh fields to exercise our imaginations on but we are not getting the same level of solutions on paper. I think it would be good if we all had a go at producing at least one idea for each garden we see. I am as guilty as any one else, I've got a bit lazy on it. Possibly the newer members look on the old nucleus as experts, and some are inspirational, but 10-12 years ago we were nearly all beginners. We don't know it all yet, but contributing something to each meeting meant we had to think and make decisions, a sound way to learn.

About the time we were scratching for new gardens to work on we mooted the project of collecting some of the ideas in a book so that we could spread the word. We had a few exercises such as notes on prominent groups of plants and attractive plant combinations

which were to be starting points for our book. We were especially keen to provide information for inland conditions and our region in particular. As you know the focus of the book shifted to waterwise practices, which are very relevant to our area, partly because of the funding sources and partly because in limited space it seemed the logical thing as a first move. Design is included, but rather sketchily and ongoing maintenance and its role in design have even less mention. There is plenty left for the next book, perhaps a real book. The booklet is to be released on Sat 15th Oct. at park Lane TAFE as part of a sustainable gardening day.

So I would like to set you an exercise. Just what do we mean by/include in, garden design?

And please, now that it is spring, look for those winning combinations and if possible photograph them. If we do do another book I would like to do it slowly so that we have photos to illustrate the text, not just accompany it. Of course it is not just spring flowering that is important but that seems to be when most of the plants that smother the foliage come out. Combinations without any flowers are even better.

Glenda has also set you an exercise and supplied the plan of her block. It will be difficult for those who were unable to see it to fully appreciate it. However one area where she is especially appealing for inspiration is the treatment of the entrance area of the house. From the front door one looks straight through the entrance lobby and a glass wall to the corner of the block and reserve beyond. Because of the reserve they will not need to plant any more Eucs, but may need some north shade in summer. A lot of the exotic trees existing are marked with green paint for removal. The ground falls away to the north so that the balconies on that side have room for fern gardens under.

We argued amiably about whether the balcony behind the entrance lobby should be kept clear so that all attention was focused on what happens beyond, or whether pots could be used to break up the walls. Perhaps while the drama beyond is growing the pots could be a temporary measure? Glenda tells me they have chosen 'Joey' and 'Drover's Hat*' as their exterior paint colours. It hasn't helped me much, bring a sample Glenda. Jot down any ideas, as any I Me bit may mesh with someone else's. The heavy lines on the house walls are glass.

I have described our original formula because I was surprised how far we have strayed. I think we could benefit from a return but our increased numbers may mean some adjustment. Anyway the final exercise is 'What do you want from the group?' One tiling will be constant, the chance to see lots of different gardens, perhaps we should be analyzing them a little more as to where their appeal lies.

I look forward to all your ideas

Barbara Buchanan

Last Melbourne Meeting - visit to the Jacobs

I am sorry to say I have not had the time to make a report on this visit. I do however have the time to thank Elspeth for her generosity in letting us visit. Elspeth said that she was liberated by not being in the Open Garden Scheme; removing plants that needed to be and not hesitating to prune, prune, prune. The result was the garden looked fantastic - in fact I thought it had never looked so good. Now, here is a lesson for anyone who has their garden open to the public!

Nest Melbourne Meeting - Nov 27th - Home of Pam and Jim Yarra

The last meeting of the year will be held at the home of Pam and Jim Yarra:

Pam has been a member of the GDSG for a number of years now and she has written an article in the Newsletter on 'Change in the Garden' where she informed us that her and her husband purchased a bush block about 26 years ago and built a house designed so that they could retain most of the bush. Pam is interested in us looking at the neighbours property too (she has their OK) so that we can see her garden in a bigger context made possible by a lack of boundary fences. The 'change in the garden' Pam referred to has happened as a result of children growing up and leaving home. Pam describes her garden as 'dry shady' and she acknowledges that this presents many challenges.

As this will be the last meeting of the year it will be a lunchtime meeting and social occasion. Please bring along a self catered lunch; tea and coffee will be provided. There is also no need to bring a mug or a seat. I hope to see you there.

Chris Larkis

Report on Sydney meeting

We continue to meet and liaise with residents and management at Hopetoun Retirement Village. The first phase is well under way with Ian and Tamara Cox and Jeff Howes ably supervising and assisting in planting out the Entrance and car park areas. We are ready to begin phase two, with some alterations in our plant palette, as soon as management give us the go ahead. Resident feedback has been positive - I wish now we had taken some before and after shots! There will be a full report when the project has been completed. All in all a very worthwhile community exercise for the group to be involved in. Our next meeting will be by the sea in May next year; at member Ros Andrews magnificent garden at Bayview and hopefully a visit to the new owners of Betty Maloney's garden at Frenchs Forest. More details Feb. NL.

A full report of our fabulous Cootamundra weekend will appear next Newsletter.

JH

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

I have received subscriptions for 2005/08 from the people/groups listed below, surnames are given first to help members find their names easily. Anyone who has paid but is not listed should contact me.
Bryan Loft, Treasurer

Adler Ingrid, APS Armidale & District, APS Blue Mountains Group, APS Maroonah Group, APS SA Region/APS Tasmania, ASGAP (Mary Flattery), Bent My Carol, Berenyi Dora, Buchanan Barbara, Butter Bale, Aust Native Plants Soc Canberra Region, Clark Dianne, Crosson Ruth, Davidson Jennifer, Davtes Gillian, Dempsey Kay, Densjeir, Cherree, Dentort Betty, Etigerton Jo^ce, Farrer Jennifer, Finger Pamela, Fox, Beverly T Samilmi^ter & Wiimar Gigitto Antonior Aprotll' Bo D. Graham Mary, Gray Marilyn, Gunter Caro Sine, Hanson Beverley, Harrts^ueffen & Brian, Herrmann Monika, Howe S Jeffery, James ffargaret, Kapemiek Bev, Koczkar-Faleiry, Larklfr Chris, Lau Moiiie, Loft Bryan, Long Geoffrey & Ann, McCarthy Tne^a, Mills Ann & Ray, Moore Breda & Tony, Morris Gillian, Morrow-Helen, Murray Leigh, Neid mm, Jdtsson Barry, Patframati Neil, Pipitone^irfey, PymbSe Michete, RenCruf Pam, Rlgg Mar&n /Leggatt Diana, Roberts Tony & Joy, RosW Pniip & Julia, Rowland Gordon, Sanders (Men, Schaffer Kris, SGAP Queensland Region, Sharpiey Celia, Simpson-Lee Shiela, Snape Diana & Brian, St Clair Ros, Stocks Irene, Sullivan Hazel, Towelf Jennifer, Vafi Reft John & Helen, VGrbeeterT^bsemary, Wadey Christine, Wallace Jeff, Watson Jim & Pat, Webb Mereie, Wh^ter-Catt Leanne, Yarra Pam,

We are v^ll down on numbers from last year. We *don't* want to lose you; if your name is not on our list above and you *would* like to continue your membership please get in touch with Bryan ASAP. As you can see, a certain Hambrett Jo has been very tardy, it can happen to the most organized of us!!

A BELATED WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS.....

Carol Hogg, Vic. www.nativeseeds.com.au "your source for Australian native grass
*'Tee3s*17iMonio Giglio Vic., Celia Sharpiey Vic, Joan Knight Vic, Paul Godwin WA and Margaret James Vic, who writes: "My interest in garden design dates back to 1969 when I bought a house on the Elliston Estate in Rosanna. The estate was named after Ellis Stones, who was retained by the developers, Merchant builders to landscape the gardens. The then Heidelberg Council also retained Stones to landscape the adjoining parkland, but unfortunately he died before his work could be completed. Despite the heritage overlay on the estate ami the park, the integrity of the original design has been altered by homeowners who prefer exotic plants and the local council which appears to have very little understanding of the landscape. Residents have recently been disappointed by a VCAT decision to permit the construction of paths in the park, despite expert advice that the existing dirt trails are more appropriate. Despite this discouraging context, there is still much to admire in the surrounding environment of my home. Since my retirement, I have been working to create and maintain a garden of Australian plants, including indigenous ones, with the aim of preserving and extending the original design. Diana Snape's book, The Australian Garden, is a great inspiration.*