



GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP

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Dear Members,

In this edition Lawrie Smith gives us an in depth article about pre war immigrant, architect and Art historian, Dr Karl Langer whom Lawrie credits with changing his focus from architecture to landscape architecture. Austria's loss was Brisbane's gain and the city post war benefitted greatly from his skill and experience. Chris Larkin looks at her mature garden and is happy now that the hard landscaping and choice and placement of plants both allow for easier and less pressured maintenance now that she seeks a different life balance.

Jeff Howes is short, sharp and pithy as ever and will hopefully tempt you to reply to his many thoughts and experiences.

Annette Houseman is delighted by the fragrance of the various native species as she travels temporarily through her garden at a much reduced pace. Diana talks about one of my personal favourites, that of change within a garden. Didn't make ANPSA conference in October but I did get to the Australian Garden History Conference in Maryborough Qld and the bi annual Landscape Conference in Melbourne....some pearls from both in the February newsletter.

I draw your attention in Correspondence to next year's FC Rogers seminar - it is all about Garden Design and I urge as many members as possible to attend. We have been given 12 months notice so hopefully there will be a big roll up from this very active Study Group. Now, I could get no nibbles with UK garden writer Stephen Anderton throwing down the gauntlet quote last newsletter so, undaunted, here's another less confrontational snippet from the BBC gardening blogshall we send them a list - good publicity?!

*And in case you were thinking deer and rabbits were your worst garden nightmare: how about wallabies? One turned up in a Dorset **garden** earlier this week, powerful enough to hurdle the next-door-neighbour's fence, though it was eventually **caught**. The RSPCA says several live wild in Britain: they make good lawnmowers, I'm told, but I wonder who's going to be first draw up a list of wallaby-proof **plants**?*

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CORRESPONDENCE

I would like to write a original Grevillea book for Japanese people.
 If possible, I would like to select suitable plants for Japan's climate and people's taste as much as is possible.
 I still don't know enough number of species/hybrids to write a book yet.
 This is why I'm asking help from Australian friends to complete my project.
 At least 100 or more plants will be needed to publish a technical book, I guess.

I'm sure that Grevillea experts/garden designers/gardeners in Australia know much more about the plants than I do.
 Probably they can advise me which species/hybrids would be suitable for Japan.

Kind regards,

Koji Japan.

A few photos from the garden from when we had it open last year for the open garden scheme. *These terrific photos of TREETOPS at Cootamundra NSW are up on our photo gallery on the website*

What's flowering?

1) IMG 2622

Philotheca myoporoides
Rhogodia spinescens
Rhodanthe species - WA
Eremophila Interstans
Dianella revoluta
Corymbia Citriodora

2) IMG 2609

Rhogodia spinescens
Rhodanthe species - WA
Acacia Pravissama
Corymbia Citriodora

3) IMG 2612

Philotheca

Rhodanthe species - WA

And note sprinkler for fire control

IMG 2618

Hakea Bucculenta

Hakea Multilinea

4) Hardenbergia 2011 Self sown about 3 years ago – now about 4 metres

Win and Jim Main NSW

FJC Rogers Seminar – 10/11th November 2012

This is early notice of the next FJC Rogers Seminar which is being arranged by APS Victoria's Growth & Development Subcommittee, and will be held in metropolitan Melbourne on the 10th and 11th November 2012.

The theme for the seminar is 3 D Gardening – Dream it! Design it! Do it!

Our theme is inspired by the marvellous success the Melbourne Royal Botanic Gardens – Cranbourne had with their gold medal winning display at Chelsea Flower Show in May this year.

Stage 2 of the RBG Cranbourne is expected to be open prior to our scheduled seminar date and we are including them as a planning partner organisation. As we work through the day, the talks will progressively downsize the gardens and address issues for landscapers, designers and gardeners.

We plan to begin with basic practices in garden design, have a short workshop using the information presented, and then have a talk by RBG Cranbourne staff member/s on reducing the RBG Cranbourne to a small garden.

Other topics covered will include attracting wildlife, vertical and rooftop gardening, container plants, small gardens, designing suburban gardens from scratch and converting existing gardens to native gardens. During the evening we will have a speaker who will introduce a range of gardens through imagery.

On Sunday an excursion is being planned to the RBG Cranbourne with a behind the scenes tour/s included.

All members of the Garden Design Study Group are invited to come along to this seminar which follows in the successful tradition of FJC Rogers Seminars.

Nicky Zanen, APS Vic. Hon Secretary

DESIGN

Dr Karl Langer (1903-1969)

Architect and town planner, he was born on 28 July 1903 in Vienna, only son and elder child of Karl Langer and his wife Magdalena. Karl senior's manual and technical skills fostered his son's interest in design. Young Karl attended the Government Trade School in Vienna until 1923, then worked for various architects and became a member (1926) of the Austrian Guild of Architects. Professionally and intellectually restless, he undertook further study and entered architectural competitions. He consolidated his skills through his association with several leading progressive architects planning significant public housing projects which established the socialist credentials of 'Red Vienna' in the turbulent postwar years.

Peter Behrens, pioneer modernist and director of the Wagnerschule, had admitted Langer (in 1923) to his renowned school of architecture within the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts. Langer's work appeared in the catalogues of a school exhibition which toured Europe in 1926. He graduated in 1928. That year Behrens employed him to head his architectural offices in Vienna. Langer was responsible for some celebrated buildings attributed to Behrens, most notably the massive tobacco factory at Linz and additions to the historic St Peter's group at Salzburg. In his spare hours Langer studied at the Technical University of Vienna for the qualification of civil architect (1931) and at the University of Vienna for his doctorate in art history (1933).

In Vienna on 14 May 1932, Langer married a fellow doctoral student Gertrude Fröschel; they were to remain childless. He left Behrens' firm in 1934 and began a small practice, assisted by his wife. His work, modest in scale, was well reviewed in Austrian and British journals, however it was not an auspicious time to launch himself as an architect. The rise of Nazism generated a cultural climate unfavourable to creative expression and this threatened the Langer's personally. He was a social democrat; she was Jewish. In November 1938 Nazi propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels announced (Kristallnacht) the government-sanctioned reprisal against the Jews and this confirmed their determination to emigrate from Austria. This was a difficult task for Karl who was eligible for military service. Adopting a ruse, they traveled to Greece then sailed for Australia - they reached Sydney in 1939.

There was little demand for *avant-garde* architects in Sydney, though Langer's peers received him cordially. He found temporary employment with the architects Cook & Kerrison in Brisbane, where he and Gertrude settled. Under wartime manpower regulations, he was soon transferred to a mundane post with the Queensland Railways. Brisbane was then a mixture of provincial city and strategic centre. The Langers' modernist achievements and sophistication contributed considerably to the city's cultural life, and a youthful literary and artistic group gathered around them. Karl lectured part time in architecture and architectural design at the University of Queensland, studied the local landscape and flora, and published his short but influential *Sub-Tropical Housing* (1944). Gertrude gave public lectures for the Queensland Art Fund and later became art critic for the *Courier-Mail*.

In 1944 the Brisbane City Council offered Langer the position of assistant town planner. His selection in preference to a returned serviceman became a political issue and wartime manpower controls were invoked to block his release from his railways job for the duration of the war. The protracted, nationwide publicity attending this episode brought him an impressive waiting-list of Australia wide commissions that ranged from revising the town plan for the city of Mackay to advising on the site for a civic centre in Perth.

Langer also obtained a consultancy with the Cumberland County Council (the planning authority for Sydney) which commissioned him in 1947 to examine the development of the city, and advise on a comprehensive list of civic and regional planning issues. He was involved in this work for two periods in 1947 and 1948, totaling four months; his fee was set at six guineas (\$6.60) a day, plus a guinea (\$1.10) a day for living expenses. His proposals included a plan to replace the Fort Macquarie (Bennelong Point) Tram Depot with an Opera House. On his way to Australia, one of the last places in his beloved Attica (Athens region) that he had visited and sketched was the ancient temple of Poseidon on the tip of Cape Sounion—a combination of landscape and landmark which remained with him when he thought about the Sydney Harbour of the future.

Projects for Darwin, Ingham, Toowoomba, Yeppoon, Kingaroy, Mackay and Mount Isa, Queensland, and for the National Capital Development Commission, Canberra, were among Langer's other town-planning tasks. He advised the Senate Select

Committee on the Development of Canberra (1954-55) and the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Australian Capital Territory (1957-68). In the controversy over where the new Federal Parliament House should be located, Langer advocated the Capital Hill site: in *Architecture in Australia* (1959) he pondered over the problems of placing a building there, particularly how to make the flagstaff topping [Walter Burley Griffin](#)'s design appear significant in the scale of that landscape.

Other commissions which Langer undertook included economical domestic buildings, the first Gold Coast canal developments and several coastal tourist projects. The best known of these was Lennons Hotel (1956) at Broadbeach, Gold Coast, then the only building generously set in a sand dune wilderness between highway and beach. His favourite building was the chapel (1966) at St Peter's Lutheran College, Indooroopilly, Brisbane. Built on the edge of a small hill, it embodied the lessons he had learned from classical Greece.

Langer's reserve and courtesy accompanied a deep belief in community responsibilities, particularly in cultural matters. His campaigns for more creative use of the Brisbane River as a civic asset, for a Queen Street mall and a pedestrian spine linking Central Station with the river through the GPO and St Stephens Cathedral as well as other inner city facilities for pedestrians were rejected, not always politely; when several were later adopted, others received the credit.

He was active in the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, first president (1952) of the Queensland division of the Royal Australian Planning Institute, a founder and chairman (1966-68) of the Queensland Association of Landscape Architects and a member (1963-69) of the National Trust of Queensland. The Queensland Art Gallery Society elected him its president for 1961-62 and 1967; Gertrude held the same office in 1965-66 and 1974-75.

At the University of Queensland, Langer lectured in town planning and architecture; he also taught at the Queensland Institute of Technology. Both institutions were to award student prizes in his memory. In 1968 he was appointed to the Australian Council for the Arts and elected vice-chairman of its music board. He died of a heart attack (myocardial infarction) on 16 October 1969 in Brisbane. Following a service at

St Peter's Chapel, he was cremated at Mount Thompson crematorium, another of his buildings. His wife survived him.

The Langer House

The Langer House at St Lucia survives as a fine example of the work of this important and influential architect. It is an inventive and pioneering solution to the problem of domestic design in Brisbane under post-Second World War building restrictions. Through the decorative restraint evident in the facade detailing and composition and the efficient but spacious planning of the house, Karl Langer introduced to Brisbane, aesthetic ideals and social concerns drawn from his experience of European modernism.

Karl Langer's observations and research of local climate and landscape carried out when he first arrived in Brisbane, pioneered the field of climatic design and led to the incorporation of specific architectural design principles and an innovative approach to garden design including a suburban rainforest garden and experimental gardening in the Japanese style. The rainforest garden was established at the rear of the house, a unique undertaking at that time, using indigenous plants such as ferns, native violets, cunjevois, walking stick palms, myrtle bushes, ground orchids and rainforest trees. The front garden was a more formal arrangement with a hedge and fish pond designed in the Japanese style. The home of Gertrude and Karl Langer from 1950 until their deaths - the house and garden are the creation and embodiment of a partnership which had a significant impact on cultural life in Queensland. It is an excellent example of the invigorating contribution to Australian culture made by 20th century migrants.

Based on research by Ian Sinnamon FRAIA

My Personal Relationship

Dr Karl was a significant influence on my career from the commencement of my studies in Architecture at the University of Queensland in 1962. My first contact with Dr Karl was from the first semester where his deep insights into landscape design from throughout the world immediately changed my focus away from architecture to the significant potential of a career as a landscape architect. The six year Architecture degree was completed (1968) so that I could immediately enter the post graduate diploma course in Landscape Architecture at the QIT (1972). From that first meeting until his death, it was a privilege for me to associate regularly with Dr Karl, as well as other early landscape architects, at Institute meetings and

other social occasions. Karl imparted a special understanding of the value of the interrelationship between the arts, design, environment and social benefit in the planning and design of buildings as well as community open space facilities. This philosophy has formed the basis of my professional career as a landscape architect for more than 40 years.

Lawrence S Smith AM ARAIA FAILA

Landscape Architect **QLD.**

As Time Goes By

I've done the sums. There's something about clocking over a decade that makes you reflect – and in my case do the sums. I've not long turned 60 (wonder how long I can hang on to that phrase!) and in pondering on my life, (sounds better than morbidly reflecting on the fact that there is certainly less life in front than in the past), I realise that I've been toiling away on this hillside for one third of my life. Twenty years is a reasonable length of time but relating it to my age puts it in sobering perspective. No wonder I've seen so many plants come and go – or more correctly grow for whatever period and die.

Over 20 years the garden has been evolving. An old shack of a house and other outbuildings on a an acre of north facing hillside, with nothing one could call a garden, has gradually, incrementally, over 29 years turned into a hillside of terraced gardens, a small orchard and vegie garden with a lovely house somewhere round about the middle of the block. I started the garden 12 months after shifting into a not-quite-yet finished house after spending 8 years living in the shack. The garden expanded as money, time and inspiration allowed. After changes made last year to 'correct' a somewhat unsatisfactory part of the garden I feel all major design faults have now been ironed out. The future will be more about changes to the plant design as I respond to the challenges of an ageing garden and climate change and I continue to experiment with new plants and different plant design ideas.

In the last 18 months the garden has proved to be resilient and rewarding. Let me explain. I went overseas for 6 weeks from mid May until the last week in June. After I returned I didn't have the time and then the weather turned wet so it was another 2 weeks before there was any real opportunity to get out into the garden – but there was no urgency as the garden was still looking good. In fact in the last 3 months I have been able to garden in quite a leisurely fashion. How is this possible you may ask!

There are several reasons. The hailstorm in March 2010 did a lot of damage, mainly short-term, and a great job of pruning. The hailstorm also forced me to scrutinize and do a follow up prune on almost every plant in the garden. The work the storm

caused was immense but it left no room for procrastination; the job that had to be done was clear and unavoidable if I cared about my garden. As a big generalisation native plants like a good prune and they respond well – some may say too well. When good rains follow on a good prune as they did then there are all the ingredients for rapid growth that was not interrupted last summer by lack of rain or extreme temperatures.

Before I left for Europe I made sure the garden was neat and tidy – and most importantly weed free. While I was away I employed someone for 2 days to maintain the garden. The person spent one day weeding and the second day picking up after a nasty wind storm. I use organic mulch in the garden and in the mature sections of the garden ground-covers and small plants have spread out and protect the soil from evaporation and leave little room for weeds to take hold.

It was so heartening to come home to a good looking garden that far from needing any immediate attention was a joy to behold. Before I came home I was thinking – here we go again, I will have to put on the work saddle just to get the garden looking reasonable again, or seriously think about shifting. I love the work of gardening but I also want to be freer of its demands so that I can pursue other interests and even enjoy a less pressured time when I am working in the garden. I do think I am closer to getting a greater balance in my life with much of this due to improvements in the design of my garden – the design of both the hard landscape and choice and placement of plants.

Chris Larkin Vic.

What makes an Australian Garden?

I am sure that others may be able to put their thoughts together better than I can, however perhaps I can start the process.

I was thinking about what is so attractive about a typical Australian garden after looking at very formal large gardens as the world famous Butchart gardens in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

This garden is about to celebrate its 100th anniversary and I admire the work the original owner Mrs. Jenny Butchart undertook to create a garden from a quarry that yielded the limestone and clay for her husband's nearby cement manufacturing plant. While it attracts millions of admiring visitors each year, it was far too formal for me. The lawns were so bright green and weed free, there were no dead flowers on the annuals, gardens were finely tilled and no fallen leaves anywhere - it was just immaculate. The spring growth on the trees was very bright and colourful and a many of the trees had large leaves that formed a dense canopy that prevented little

sunlight to reach the ground beneath them. It was this denseness (if there is such a word) of the trees that was most un-Australian.

In my opinion, the most striking aspect of the Australian landscape (not rainforest) is that you can see the sky through the trees – there is that interplay of light and shadow, especially with the wind blowing. This openness and subtle smells of the oils contained within a lot of the leaves makes for the uniqueness of an Australian garden – is this what we are trying to create?

One ‘Must Know’ Principle of Gardening

For many years I have been growing native plants, reading gardening books, listening to garden gurus, advising people on what native plants to grow in their gardens and listening to other peoples gardening problems. During this time, I have come to the conclusion, that there is only one important garden principle that one must endeavour to obey to maximise your gardening success and it is:

Principle: Do not fight your site.

The plants natural growing conditions must closely match your site to maximise results. Failure to do this, results in plants that grow far below their best and eventually require removal.

Your site environmental factors, will determine how successful a plant will or will not grow. Try to accurately assess the important factors, such as:

- * Amount of light – full sun, no sun, morning or afternoon, shady etc.
- * Soil types -- heavy clay, sandy or somewhere in between.
- * Soil water retention -- evenly moist, boggy or does it dry out quickly due to root competition from nearby plants.

Once you have assessed your site the following are examples of miss-matching conditions:

- * Trying to grow a plant that needs full sun in a shady position -- you will have a plant that grows weakly, flowers poorly and is susceptible to scale. Not a good look.
- * Trying to grow a plant that needs a shady/dappled light position in a full sun position -- the plant will, at best wilt because it is too hot and at worst burn and die.
- * Trying to grow a plant that needs a moist position in a dry position -- you will need to continually water it just to keep it alive.

* Trying to grow a plant that needs a dry position in a moist to wet soil -- you will need to provide additional drainage or add soil to raise the planting position.

* Not selecting plants correct soil type. Plants that grow naturally in lighter, sandy soils often do not have a strong enough root system to establish themselves in heavy, clay loam. To grow a plant in this situation requires it to be staked and watered often. Conversely, plants that grow naturally in heavy clay loam, will establish in any soil as they usually have a stronger root system and are more adaptive.

Over the years, I have seen many examples of plants deciding their most suitable position in one's garden, especially if they self-seed i.e. moving away from a sunny dry position to a more suitable shadier and moist position.

If your site does not suit the plants on your 'wish list' then all is not lost. Plant them in a suitable size pot. This way:

- * They can be moved around to maximise sun and shade requirements.
- * You can provide the right soil and water requirements.

To conclude --- know your site and learn to live with its limitations.

A Cottage Garden Theme - or a few words on colours

The idea of a cosy cottage garden, with herbaceous borders of annuals and perennials against a backdrop of shrubs and (maybe) a small tree or two, is becoming popular again especially as gardens become smaller. Remember, plants that self-seed in a garden can easily become weeds in nearby bushland. By introducing native plants, especially local (i.e. indigenous) species - you will reduce your garden's weed potential and make it more attractive to flora and fauna.

The principles of colour

Australia has more native plants than any other country in the world. There are many low growing annual and perennial Australian plants and shrubs that can be used in a massed display to create a cottage garden. There is a huge range of colours and we are particularly fortunate to have an abundance of blues to choose from.

You can use a colour wheel to choose colour harmonies or just go for a riot of colour – the choice is all yours and will be reflected in the character of your garden.

C.Roach



Colour helps to create moods. When choosing flower colours it is important to remember:

- ❖ Warm colours – red, pink, orange and yellow, give a sense of fun and activity; they tend to come to the fore ground and thus appear larger.
- ❖ Cool colours - blues, greens and some blue-violets, give a feeling of space and serenity; they tend to recede from the eye and can appear smaller.
- ❖ Neutral colours - white, grey and black. Grey is an excellent “linking” colour, be careful with white and black, both can appear as “holes” or spaces in a colour scheme. Both work well as highlighters of other colours.
- ❖ Limit the amount of contrasting colours. They are high impact so use them sparingly to create a focal point in your garden. Use more of the harmonious colours. They lie next to each other on the colour wheel; they relate to one another and do not clash.

The last three articles were all by

Jeff Howes NSW

PLANTS

Go Smell the Natives

Most people say “smell the roses” or smell the “magnolias” but I say “smell the natives”. Gardeners have been creating scented gardens since the medieval times when they created special places, usually enclosed, to mask the odours of unwashed bodies and filthy clothes.

Have you considered designing your garden with scents or pleasant aromas purely for you and your friends' pleasure?

I admit the closest I have come to deliberately designing an olfactory garden has been a complete failure. Many years ago I bought a large beautiful (and expensive) brown and yellow flowering Boronia. It was *Boronia megastigma* (Brown Boronia). I sniffed the blooms for weeks indoors before pruning the dead flowers and carefully planted it near the front door in a shady part of the garden. A few weeks later it died.

In similar fashion, year after year another *Boronia megastigma* was planted and died. Last year one lived, neglected in our rainforest for nine months before curling up its roots. Growing Brown Boronia in a pot is not an option. Maybe it is only happy

in Victoria or its home state of W.A. Perhaps, if I can acquire an improved variety, I might have some success.

For my next attempt I plan to plant it adjacent to a healthy *Boronia umbellata* (Orara Boronia) opposite my front door. *Boronia umbellata* has dainty pink petalled flowers and trifoliate leaves with a spicy repulsive odour that appears to repel most insects so maybe that is not such a good idea.

Recently when I returned home from hospital, (after having a successful 5 hour hipoperation), I was slowly walking in our garden with the aid of crutches, when I was overcome by the beautiful perfume. I instantly recognised it as *Syzygium anisatum* (Aniseed Tree). I breathed in deeply enjoying the perfume thinking how different it was from hospital smells. With one hand I managed to break off some small branches and take them inside where I could crush them and smell them to my lung's delight.

On my garden crutch walk the next day, between showers, I slowly and carefully smelt the leaves of some different members of the "Lilly Pilly" family. I was surprised to find how different each one smelled. I can hardly wait until I can walk again without walking aids in the rainforest area to do some more "research" smelling other Lilly Pillies.

My third garden adventure was to walk carefully to the front gate to smell the *Backhousia citriodora* (Lemon myrtle). It was worth the effort. The aromatic leaves have been proved to have anti-viral, antibiotic and anti bacterial properties. The hand and body lotion, bought at the local Wauchope Farmers Market, helped me get rid of post hospital depression. It was almost as good as the natural aniseed perfume.

On my next walk I graduated to a wheeled walker complete with brakes and padded seat. What luxury! I was able to refill rabbit holes with the aid of a long handled trowel and throw some blood and bone around to deter the bunnies. As I progressed I smelt the grevilleas. I didn't have to get close to notice the sweetscented *Grevillea triloba* with its delicate white flowers. With some other grevilleas it was difficult to detect any aroma. Banksias are my favourites as most varieties have their flowers at head height enabling me to smell their different fragrances with ease.

The flowers in the lower sections of the garden away from the house will be neglected until my hip improves. The eucalypts in this section are home to two Tawny Frogmouths. The mint bushes are not flowering at present. As I don't like minty fragrances I am not disappointed. The only magnolia at 'Torwood' (our home) is a *Magnolia ambalis*. It is a living picture with its pink & white blossoms; however, the faint odour is foul.

John and I are off for a week's holiday to Perth next month, where we hope to find and smell *Franklandia triaristata* (Chocolate bush?) which is an erect lignotuberous shrub, native to an area south of Perth. I can hardly wait to smell the chocolate.

Go, smell the natives!

Annette Houseman NSW

Change of Species over Time

Recently I've been checking back through my garden records and I've been intrigued by the change of plant species over time in many of our garden beds. When I stop and think, I can picture how different some beds looked in years gone by, as a part of the garden's 40-year history. It started me thinking about the various reasons for change (and which ones might perhaps be avoided).

Widely recognized is the development of shade as trees (or large shrubs) grow to full size, so sun-loving species such as eremophilas and grevilleas suffer. Can this be avoided? If we want full sun in an area, then we can only include trees if they are well to the southern side of that area. We can omit trees altogether and retain full sun (but I couldn't bear to do that in a quarter-acre garden). I think it's both impractical and expensive to plant trees large enough to mean that there would be little change in size in the future. So, in our garden, there was no alternative but to adapt to increased shade when it became necessary. Species such as correas, phebaliums, thomasias and prostantheras liked semi-shade. Some gardeners might decide from the start to have no trees in an open area to keep it sunny and possibly trees and shade elsewhere in the garden.

Another change might be an extension or alteration to the building or some part of its hard landscape, including carports, drives, paths, etc. This may mean a change in the position, size or shape of a bed and, again, the amount of shade it receives. We put in a carport, wider than the drive that had been there previously, so most of a small garden disappeared. (I remember a beautiful *Grevillea bipinnatifida* that had to go – the only one we have ever grown well.) Ideally, one would not need such alterations.

The actions of neighbours can bring about changes. There can be loss of shade (and increase of wind) when a neighbour removes trees growing beside a side fence and additional screening may be needed. I think not much can be done to prevent this. We've had this happen recently and actually lost two large old shrubs (*Grevillea endlicheriana*) that had leant right over to reach some sunshine. The extra sunlight and fewer intruding roots are now advantages and we've replanted a section of the bed with a new suite of plants.

Plants all have a natural lifespan, though we often forget this. We can help plants grow well but we can't prevent a natural death. As a very general rule, with numerous exceptions, the larger the plant the longer it is likely to live. (There are some short-lived trees, such as a small proportion of wattles and myoporums, and numerous long-lived small plants.) Many shrubs live long lives but, over 40 years, there will be some deaths. Then the question is whether to replace with the same species or choose a new plant, maybe one not previously available. If you replant with the same species, you reduce change (except for size). I think I usually prefer to

try something new, for a new effect. I believe, in design, there are often a number of equally pleasing possibilities, rarely just one perfect plant for a certain position.

Some smaller plants have shorter life spans, as do many harder-to-grow plants. Their deaths will initiate changes. We can decide to make life easier for ourselves by not growing either of these types in our garden (but think of the fun we'd miss out on). With quite a few small plants, propagation (and so replacement by the same plant) is easy, so there's no change really, just a small amount of work. One good change that can result is the repetition, in different areas of the garden, of the little plants you have propagated (or larger plants, here and there).

When we started our garden, the importance of indigenous plants was not widely recognized, while nowadays it is. Also few were then available in nurseries. If possible, for a new position, we consider indigenous plants first, so that's really a policy decision leading to change. Similarly when considering the probable effects of climate change, though that's a quite subtle and difficult problem.

Another reason for change is the appearance of beautiful new plants in nurseries (or in friends' gardens). With a static formal garden, there'd be no excuse to even visit a nursery, let alone buy something there. That would be such a shame. In the early years of our garden, I barely knew eremophilas existed and the wonderful cultivars of many genera hadn't yet appeared. Think of the new cultivars among grevilleas, chamelauciums, thomasias, leptospermums, anigozanthos and many others. There are also the dwarf and prostrate forms of many species, plus delightful little plants, like double wahlenbergias. Our gardens today would be poorer without these introductions.

I've come to the conclusion that change of plant species in a garden can partly be avoided but, in general, I think it is to be welcomed. We can continue to enjoy our established plants but then there's the thrill of the new. A garden grows with the gardener(s) and we grow too, as we (and our neuroplastic brains) learn new things. However it does make it a challenge to record a garden which will change considerably over time.

Diana Snape Vic.

Why Grow Australian Plants

For their:

- ❖ Spectacular flowers eg: Grevilleas, Banksia, paper daisy, bottlebrush.
- ❖ Unusual flowers eg: kangaroo paw, eucalypt (gum trees), gymea lilly.
- ❖ Interesting habit, foliage, bark, aroma eg: fig, hakea, eucalypt, mintbush.
- ❖ Associations. Australian plants have a richness of association with the people, places, literature and history. Whatever you grow, whether it is waratah, wattle,

saltbush or Sturt's desert pea, natives will bring these associations to your garden.

Because they:

- ❖ Extend your choice of garden plants.
- ❖ Are adapted to the climate and soils (local plants only).
- ❖ Attract native birds and animals to the garden to bring your garden alive.
- ❖ Provide habitats for native animals, including small ones such as frogs, skinks, ants and crickets.

To help:

- ❖ Provide green corridors for fauna moving between patches of bushland.
- ❖ To help bring back the bush.
- ❖ Create a sense of place, the character of your region, in gardens, street trees, parks and rural areas.

By Growing Australian plants you will:

- ❖ Contribute to the conservation of bush flora and threatened species.
- ❖ Explore the diversity, beauty and peculiarity of Australia flora.

Beyond the garden, Australian natives are grown for:

- ❖ Research into the place of Australian flora in the ecology.
- ❖ Selection of superior varieties for commercial uses such as forestry, shelter belts, fodder, cut flowers, pharmaceuticals and bush foods.
- ❖ Development of plants for export industries.
- ❖ Display and education in botanic gardens, schools and parks.

.... **and most importantly:**

By growing Australian plants you will discover the beauty of our native flora, bring history to your garden and help conserve the biodiversity of our continent.

Jeff Howes NSW

BOOK REVIEW

Gardeners: Encounters with Exceptional People. Diana Ross 2009

This is a fascinating book, full of quotable material, without a single coloured picture. Bit by bit the author comes across as extremely widely read, with an interest in gardens and what moves their makers exceeded only by her interest in people.

The chapters are meetings with people who garden, some famous names in the English gardening world, others known for their activity in other fields. My copy comes from our library, but I will certainly buy the book if I get the chance, if only to use as starting points for essays to contribute to newsletters.

Take the distinction in approach between designers and collectors expressed succinctly. The former asks 'why am I growing that plant?' the latter 'why am I **not** growing that plant?'

Of course we all fall somewhere in the middle, I know I do, sometimes more of a collector, sometimes leaning towards the total design. We need both approaches, the collector to introduce new plants, tame them for wider use by careful experimentation in different conditions.

Despite the soundness of the rule to choose plants to suit the conditions based on their natural habitats, there are surprising exceptions where some will flourish in a very different situation. Collectors are prepared to risk losses and gaps for the satisfaction of success when it comes. It helps to have plenty of space for plenty of experiments.

In a small garden, which is all most people have time for during a working life in our towns and cities the designer's approach becomes more important.

Plants have to earn their keep all year round to warrant their space.

To become part of the wider garden scene our own plants have to face stiff competition and have a better chance of acceptance if they are part of an attractive display.

So all denizens of small gardens of any pretension must continually face the question, 'why am I growing that plant?' If the answer is not satisfactory on all counts, the delinquent gets the boot or maybe the axe.

MEETINGS

ANPSA Conference in Adelaide

Attendance: 18 people, including for a period Geoff Lay (Study Group Coordinator)

Reported by Ben Walcott (Treasurer) that our current membership is 120

Discussed the possibility of adding to the Membership Form a question about whether it was okay to circulate a member's name to other members – not the contact details, just the name and the location. This would allow members to get to know each other better. All present in favour. Is this okay under the 'privacy legislation'?

Discussed the possibility of extending membership period to five years as the small membership fee is a problem for some. Ben said it would be fine with him, as he has a spreadsheet which allows him to project five years ahead.

Discussed the Newsletter – everyone appreciates Jo's efforts with the Newsletter. We think we have the best Study Group Newsletter! Ben brought up the need for photographs accompanying articles in the Newsletter. Brian Walters can put accompanying photographs up on our website, but there needs to be a notification in the Newsletter with the article that there are accompanying photographs on the website. It also needs to be done in a timely fashion and Ben said he was quite happy to receive photographs from members for the

Newsletter, process them and send them to Brian for loading onto our website. These photographs may also prove useful for the book. The members present were in favour of compressing the articles in the Newsletter as much as possible for economy of printing. Most members who receive electronic Newsletters already reformat their Newsletter before printing to save paper.

Discussed the proposition raised by Geoff Lay in the ANPSA Council meeting of changing the name 'Study Group' to 'Interest Group'. The reason for doing this was to encourage people to join the groups. Many members are put off by 'Study Group' and feel that they would have no expertise to offer such a group. It would also give us a great acronym GDIG! All those members present were in favour of the change to 'Interest Group'. Shirley Pipitone will draft an amendment for the next Council Meeting. Geoff Lay was canvassing the opinion of other Study Groups.

Nicky Zanen reported that the next FJC Rogers Seminar would be held 10-11 November 2012 in Melbourne and would focus on garden design. Angus Stewart would take part and RBG Cranbourne would be used to demonstrate some principles of garden design.

Lawrie Smith reported on his recent meeting with Jo Hambrett about the upcoming book. His report elicited much discussion. Several members stressed that to determine the focus of the book was crucial before going any further with the design and planning. Who is the audience for this book? Are we preaching to the converted or trying to attract a new audience into using natives? What do we want to this book to achieve? How best can we fulfill our aims for the book? One suggestion was to go away from the general distribution book towards a newsagency distribution with a smaller, simpler book. The mass distribution newsagency book could be an extract of the larger glossier edition. Everyone agreed that high quality photographs and/or line drawings were a must. Most members were doubtful that lists of plants would work well, as the Australian climate is so variable and areas of Australia so different from one another. One suggestion was to have three or four different photos of a similar design principle with different sets of plants for different areas. Something like the vegetable zones in *Gardening Australia*. There was also discussion of putting a shortened version of the book on our website both for information and to advertise the charms of the larger book. Ingrid Adler mentioned Glen Wilson's *Landscaping with Australian Plants* published by Lothian Books as one that she still uses regularly.

SGAP Queensland Region Council will consider a request and most likely approve a reimbursable loan to aid GDSG in the publication of the new book. Other members agreed to ask their respective societies to consider similar advances.

General discussion ensued on the rather dismal rate of book buying in recent years. Many readers are moving towards purchasing online books only. This should be considered relative to the proposed new book.

Lawrie circulated photos from Queensland of some local garden examples for consideration in the planning for the book. Many more examples are yet to be obtained. He urged all those members who have photos of well designed small spaces in gardens to submit them to Jeff Howes.

Submitted by Rosalind Walcott, GDSG Leader, Canberra Region

CANBERRA

GDSG Canberra Garden Visit, Wamboin

'Cockatoo', Wamboin

Mark and Jodie Durrant (and their two dogs) have just moved to a property in the beautiful Wamboin valley, south of Canberra, on 40 acres of bush and pasture. The property has an established garden with both native and exotic plantings, lawn, and of course, many eucalypts. The challenges they face are incorporating the existing garden and infrastructure into their future plans, creating some sense of continuity in the design, enjoying the views, and managing the plentiful roos.

Ten hardy souls turned up on a chilly Canberra day (top temperature 7 degrees for about one minute!) to walk the property with Jodie and Mark and to give their impressions for a course of action. The property is at 800 metres elevation, 200-300 metres higher than Canberra, although Jodie feels that the frost is no worse than in Canberra, and being on a hill, somewhat milder than in some frost hollows in the city. There is a lot of infrastructure already on the property, a pool, gazebo, a dam, bore, septic tank, raised beds faced with local stone, paths, stables, sheds, fenced horse yards, and a sand ring for horse jumping (possible future eremophila garden?). The main driveway is gravel in good shape, lined with silver wattles. Some of these are worse for the drought and could be removed, as there are plenty of suckers to take their place. Also along the road are many different indigenous plants that some of our members were able to identify. As the horses were not allowed to graze this area and there were no other grazing animals on the property this area has been relatively undisturbed and many really interesting plants have grown there. Jodie and Mark are keen to encourage these plants, such as local species of *Daviesia*, *Hibbertia*, *Dillwynia*, *Lomandra*, *Hardenbergia* and *Goodenia*.

Our first impression when we walked into the house was of the magnificent view north down the valley, which must be enhanced, framed and opened up. Some cypresses, exotic fruit trees, etc. have been planted inappropriately blocking part of this view and it should be relatively easy to decide which of these should be removed. The prevailing winds are from the west and the previous owners planted a windbreak of casuarinas, acacias and hakeas to ameliorate the effects of the wind. Some of these trees have thrived while others need attention or removal and replacement. The soil is high in clay, but around the house a lot of top soil has been added during various projects, so the soil is better quality than would be expected in this region.

Jodie and Mark are extremely fortunate to have Reedy Creek, an ephemeral waterway, running across their property. Access to water, even if periodic, enhances the variety of wildlife on the property. While there are some blackberries and a few willows along the creek, infestation by introduced exotics is surprisingly lacking. There are some olive trees and an old fruit orchard planted on the property, which could be considered for future removal.

The dam is large and most attractive, surrounded by clumps of local grasses. It has an exuberant frog chorus which we all enjoyed. All of us agreed that the view to the dam from the house should be opened up and exploited. To do this would involve cutting off the lower branches of birches near the house to see to the dam more easily. The birch trees are healthy at present, after 2010's high rainfall, double the

usual 500-600 mm for Canberra region. In future years these birches may not appreciate a drier climate and some could then be considered for removal. The raised beds now full of roses will be ideal for future plantings of native plants with the warning that much high phosphorus fertiliser may have been used on the beds. These extensive beds are well drained and in full sun. There are existing plantings of *Westringia*, *Acacia*, *Grevillea*, *Callistemon* and *Banksia* which could mostly be retained. Jodie has already planted *Eucalyptus lacrimans*, camphora, and *stellulata* 'Little Star'; *Banksia ericifolia* and *marginata*; *Acacia leprosa* 'Scarlet Blaze' and *beckleri*; *Myoporum bateae*; *Dianella* 'Emerald Arch' and *Tristaniopsis laurina*.

Mark and Jodie will wait a year or so to explore the existing garden before removing too many plants. They have a marvellous opportunity to create a native plants garden in a beautiful setting.

Following the visit we repaired to Bungendore Woodworks Café for lunch.

Garden Design Study Group Garden Visit, Yass

Diamond garden, Yass

Robyn and Dick Diamond have built their own house on 3 acres about 50 minutes from central Canberra and are now turning their attention to the garden. At present the garden is pretty much a building site – lots of potential but in need of some really practical design ideas. Six interested members turned up on a golden spring day and walked around the property consulting the mud map that Robyn had produced for us. The predominant winds are from the west and the garden does have the start of a shelter belt in that direction. Most of the group thought that this shelter belt should be one of the first priorities in developing the garden and suggested a mixed planting of trees and shrubs to interrupt the prevailing winds. *Casuarinas* would be particularly suitable as the garden is surprisingly wet. Most of us had expected a very dry site but this is not the case. Rainfall is typically quite variable in this area with both wet and dry years. The Diamonds have a 20,000 gallon water tank on their property and are therefore somewhat independent of town water. Frosts are common during winter down to approximately minus eight degrees and as the site is very open at present without much shelter, frost hardiness is a big consideration in plant selection. While the site is open to kangaroos and wallabies, so far not much damage has been done by macropods. More damage has been done by the hares of the region who love to eat young plants. The soil is underlying clay but with about a foot of good soil on top, so the Diamonds are luckier than most. There are lovely views to both the north and west which should not be blocked out by future garden developments.

There is a section behind the house to the south which is somewhat protected and could serve as the more formal part of a future garden, with slightly raised beds planted with a variety of native plants, possibly with overhead mallee eucalypt protection. Robyn has a plan for a walkway to the future barbecue area through the middle of this area with oblong pools on either side. Pergolas will be added to the house very soon and these will soften the house's impact. There is a vegetable patch to one side of this area which is very productive. The Hills Hoist will be moved

out of this prime garden area in future and hidden behind the shed. There is a Biolytix septic system in ground and solar panels on the roof for both hot water and electricity generation. There is an extensive bank on the eastern side of the house in full sun, quite moist, but with excellent drainage, which could be used for a mass planting of banksias, grevilleas or grasses. To the west of the house there is another area which the group felt should be planted en masse, with hardy acacias perhaps, to reduce the amount of area to be mowed.

The Diamonds have an empty slate to fill with enticing possibilities.

Following the garden visit we all had lunch at the recently restored Bowning pub, about 10 mins from Yass.

Ros Walcott ACT

MELBOURNE

Report of Melbourne meeting held Sunday August 28

Our late winter / early spring meeting, held at Merele Webb's place, was very well attended. A lovely covered, partly enclosed area at the back of the house provided a delightful area for a relaxed lunch. Then we spent time exploring and enjoying the large garden (please see separate report), before returning to this area for the remainder of our meeting (and a generous afternoon tea).

After a lot of comment and discussion in the garden, little time was left for general discussion afterwards. Nicky Zanen told us about the Growth and Development Committee of APS Victoria and then the Fred Rogers Seminar being planned for next year. This will be held on November 11 & 12 and the theme is three-dimensional gardening. Topics will include the basics of design, downsizing, courtyard gardens, gardening in containers, designing for wildlife and Stage 2, RBG Cranbourne. It should be an interesting seminar for GDSG members. We also checked how those members who are recording gardens are going.

Our next meeting will be on **November 27** at the home of Brenda and Tony Moore, 62 Ennismore Crescent, Park Orchards (Melway 35D12). If you can, come for a picnic lunch at 1pm and the meeting starts at 2pm.

Gardens we may visit next year include Christine and Angelo Gaiardo's (preferably in spring), Bev and John Hanson's and Pam Yarra's (both not in winter) and Nicky Zanen's (in winter). We'll look at dates and ideas for next year at the next meeting.

Visit to Merele Webb's garden

There is a sweeping drive up from the gate that has, over time, been partly lined by weeping plants. One of these was a lovely specimen of *Acacia leprosa* 'Scarlet

Blaze', showing the first worrying signs of yellowing foliage. A few members commented on the short life span (4 or 5 years) they had experienced for this striking plant. The drive was once also partly lined by Kangaroo Paws (in place of agapanthus!) but these did not survive problems with drainage. Merele has since introduced sand and gravel to improve the drainage, particularly for W.A. plants.

There is an extensive garden on the left as you walk up the sloping drive, containing many beautiful, mature shrubs. One area has an attractive colour scheme of yellows (acacias, including *A. rigens*), cream and white (phebaliums), purple (beautiful hoveas, including *H. acuteifolia*) and lilac prostantheras. The large garden is subdivided by a network of 'wallaby trails' leading into and through the garden. A couple cross a little artificial creek that was running after recent rain.

A magnificent *Acacia melanoxydon* (Blackwood) dominates the open area close to the front of the house. Two interesting bush-food trees round the front were Davidson's Plum (*Davidsonia jerseyana*) and Illawarra Plum (*Podocarpus elatus*, also known as Plum Pine and Brown Pine).

In the garden near the house, herbs are planted in among low shrubs. Merele has selected a variety of really special small plants, (some from Philip Vaughan, others from a variety of nurseries). For example, currently in flower there were some excellent epacris and tetathecas, *Eremophila mirabilis*, with its very subtle tones and a *Thryptomene calycina* form in a gentle pink. I also admired the very deep colour of the splendid *Boronia* 'Purple Jared' and *Thomasia grandiflora*.

The back area of the garden is fairly open with many large trees (and the straight lines bequeathed by the previous owner). Among attractive smaller trees or large shrubs are *Acacia covenyi* (Blue Bush) and *Nematolepis frondosa* (Leafy Nematolepis). The latter is a tall, rare shrub from Gippsland, formerly known as *Phebalium frondosum*). Nearby, the related *Leionema* (*Phebalium*) *coxii* is a smaller shrub.

Merele said she has about 2,000 species of plants growing in her garden, which now is starting to become a little too much work for her to manage, especially the required pruning and weeding.

Diana Snape Vic.

SYDNEY

None to report.

If any NSW members have a good idea re places to go and gardens to visit, please contact me with your thoughts and recommendations.

Jo Hambrett NSW