

## ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS

**GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP**

NEWSLETTER No. 9

May 1995

Study Group leader/editor: Diana Snape

Treasurer/membership: Peter Garnham

Dear Members,

Thank you for not writing to tell me I put 1994 on the February newsletter; I hope you have all corrected it for me. The theme of small trees in NL 8 has raised interest and your comments are still welcome. There has also been, not quite a flood, but a goodly flow of mail on this NL's theme of *water in the garden*. Again, if you didn't quite get around to sending your ideas in, or are stimulated by what you read now, please don't hold back. 'Feedback' is really appreciated. Also this is the last NL for the 94-95 financial year, so please note Peter's comments just below - we don't want to lose you!

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

FINANCES - Bank balance at 12/4/95 is \$1090.98

MEMBERSHIP - has now risen to 186 (172 individuals and 14 groups)

The list of members who have already renewed their membership for 1995/6 is given on the last page. Subscriptions must be paid by 30th June, 1995 to ensure your uninterrupted receipt of the Newsletter. This is the final reminder prior to that date, so please send your cheque NOW (\$10 for individuals or a family at the one address; \$5 for full-time students, pensioners or unemployed people). Make cheques payable to ASGAP Garden Design Study Group, print your name and address on the back and mail to me at the above address.

**Peter Garnham.****INDEX**

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### Extracts from members' letters

"A year has now passed since the event that changed our lives. (This was the fire that completely destroyed John & Sue Knights' home at Batemans Bay, as well as John's initial work developing the Botanic Gardens there. DS) A long year, full of frustration and at times despair. Not at our own situation, although we are sometimes haunted by the past, but despair that Council will make a decision and stick by it... despite Council's guarantee, given personally by the Mayor, that funding for the Gardens will continue. I'll write again with details of our project here and request help in a couple of areas... A formal garden using indigenous plants will take some planning." John Knight NSW

"In contrast to much of the University, Wesley College has a strong commitment to the use of native plants. The framework of the grounds is basically European in style, and that is an inheritance of the period in which the College was built, but that has not put us off (so to speak). About 10 years ago, Merele Webb suggested the initial plantings of native plants, and these are now looking very good. I have planted a couple of hundred native plants since being here, attempting to build on her work.

After reading your article on the "collectors vs designers" approach, I reflected a bit more on my work here. Your article somehow struck a chord; I feel that I am very gradually getting a feeling for working with native plants in design, but it comes slowly and with on-going experience. (Of course there is always the temptation to buy some beautiful-looking plant when I visit Sydney Wildflower Nursery!) So I think joining the Group may be beneficial to further design considerations in the garden here, and perhaps the college may be able to take part in any projects/activities organized by the Group." Louise Gore, the Gardener, on behalf of Wesley College, University of Sydney NSW.

"My garden 'The Sorn' is in the Australian Open Garden Scheme. It is approximately 98% Tasmanian natives (with some mainland ring-ins). It has been in the Scheme since its inception in Tasmania. I teach full-time at Hobart TAFE (Horticulture) in the area of Landscape Design and Construction. I think Tasmania has something unique to offer design given its unique climate and environment. Some of the gardens I know are already reflecting this in the use of alpiners and cold climate species. Could be the start of a new style!" Lindsay Campbell Tas

"The article on Hibiscus and Hibiscus-like plants was a good read although I only grow H. diversifolia, H. splendens and H. huegelii. I would be very hesitant about growing Pavonia hastata because:

1. It is a very prolific seeder and will take many years to eradicate (if at all) from a garden. This characteristic has given it (in Sydney) near weed status. 2. Being cleistogamous means you wait many months until the flower buds actually open for you to see the flower. Why perpetuate this characteristic?

Am I alone in my negative comments on this plant?" Jeff Howes, NSW

"I was most excited to find that you are running a Study Group on the design of native gardens. This is definitely my area of interest, being a designer not a botanist, and it is indeed very hard to find inspiration in the gardens I see around me (although the Roads Authority are doing some exciting things along NSW's new highways!).

We have developed a small native garden at Roseville but we also have an acre of land at Bundanoon in the Southern Highlands of NSW which we are landscaping entirely with natives. These need to exist entirely on their own as we visit the land only spasmodically and so far we have lost hardly a plant out of thousands of tube stock which we have planted. The Southern Highlands are renowned for their gardens and it's been exciting to find that natives do just as well there as exotics.

A lot of my design mistakes have come from using plants that look spectacular in the books which focus on the flower but the shrub itself turns out to be uninteresting. I'm sure in the Study Group this is where we can all help each other - to identify the most rewarding shrubs and trees from a design point of view and to exchange ideas on which plants look spectacular together." Barbara Meyer NSW

"I have recently bought my first home and I am attempting to redesign and rebuild my garden. This is the first time I've owned a garden and it's great fun making plans to change it from a 1930s cottage garden full of weeds and roses to a native garden. There is currently only ONE indigenous tree (well it's more of a bush) - so, as you can imagine, my plans will keep me busy for some time!" Alison Dredge Vic

"I garden two separate 5-acre blocks, one on sand and one on laterite - both have a lot of natural bush. I am an immigrant from South Africa - (now 20 years here) - and have given talks on basic garden design. My great wish is to see a truly Australian garden style develop... not an adaptation of English and American styles... and a greater variety of Australian plants being made available to the public and the shapes and textures of all these plants being explored." Shirley Fisher WA

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### Cranbourne Botanic Gardens, Victoria - exciting news!

The following news item by Anne Latreille, Garden Editor, appeared in 'The Age', Melbourne, 25/2/95. For members in other States, the Cranbourne B. G. have been in the past a distant (and neglected?) annexe of the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne. They are devoted entirely to Australian plants and contain a significant natural area.

"An exciting team of consultants has been chosen for the new Australian display garden at the Cranbourne Botanic Gardens, Victoria. The team is led by landscape architects Kevin Taylor and Kate Cullity and plant expert and designer Paul Thompson. It includes Marion Blackwell, the renowned Western Australian environmental scientist and landscape designer; Greg Burgess, architect for the award-winning Brambuck Aboriginal cultural centre at the Grampians; and the environmental artist/urban designer Maggie Fooke.

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The display garden is a former sand quarry taking up 25 hectares of the 350-hectare Cranbourne site, which opened to the public as a bush reserve six years ago and for which a new master plan was released earlier this week. The display garden will be the first point of contact for most visitors to the Cranbourne gardens. It is hoped it will express "the nature of Australia" not only through plant material and ecology but also through individual gardens, audio-visual displays and artwork.

Taylor and Cullity like to create their landscapes in association with design professionals such as architects and sculptors. Recent projects include the Box Hill Community Arts Centre, the Uluru National Park Aboriginal cultural centre in the Northern Territory and the new Healesville Sanctuary platypus exhibit. Paul Thompson, an occasional contributor to these pages, has operated his own design and construction firm for the past 25 years, with work ranging from small private gardens to large industrial complexes, but always focusing on innovative use of Australian plants."

Congratulations to Paul Thompson and this talented team. The GDSG is proud to have Paul as a member. With others including Rodger Elliot and Marilyn Gray (GDSG members), I attended a recent discussion meeting at which Kevin Taylor and Paul Thompson presented the preliminary site development and design options of the team for the Australian Garden. I was most impressed with the scope of the project and the thought and creativity which has already gone into the three initial option masterplans presented. DS

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#### **George Pentland Botanic Gardens, Frankston, Victoria**

Work is also progressing on the redevelopment and redesigning of the George Pentland Botanic Gardens in Frankston. The following Mission Statement has been developed for the 7.39 hectare Gardens: *To provide a sanctuary for Australian native plants and in particular Mornington Peninsula and South-eastern Australian species with the aim of providing an accessible, educational and scientific botanical display in an aesthetically attractive environment which provides for passive recreational enjoyment by all.* A Landscape Master Plan, including extensive species lists for recommended plantings and planting themes, was published in October 1994. GDSG member Bev Courtney has been a member of the (hard working) Working Group which has been involved in these developments. *A very worthwhile effort, Bev!*

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#### **SGAP Garden Visits**

AH SGAP GDSG members are encouraged to attend SGAP garden visits arranged by District Groups. Why not check up on these in State Newsletters and attend when you can, for enjoyment and new ideas. You might also be able to take photographs or write a brief report on an interesting garden you visit, to help the GDSG achieve its aims,

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**GDSG SLIDE LIBRARY** **Doug McIver Vic**

We are establishing a library of slides to illustrate aspects of garden design. These slides will be available for reference, discussion and presentations. Sometime in the future we may be able to undertake the task of producing a publication to support the objectives of the group, and we may want to draw on the slide library for photographs for reproductions. So far we have received 56 slides. We are planning to set up a computer data base to manage the slides and to make it possible to readily select appropriate slides to illustrate particular topics.

All members are invited to donate slides to add to the collection. This applies to NSW members too, as Dennis Marsden has recently resigned as the slide librarian for NSW. We want the submission of slides to be as easy as possible but it is necessary to get certain information with slides being donated. We have revised the submission forms to simplify them. Three forms are required:

1. The first form is a copyright agreement by which the donor gives the Garden Design Study Group permission to use the slides for study and presentations, and to make copies of them for such use. Additional copyright approval will be sought if specific slides are ever wanted for publication. A donor need only provide a copyright agreement once - the first time he or she donates slides.
2. The second form provides the identification and description of each garden. The identifying information, name and address etc., must be completed in full, but just once for any particular garden. The descriptive information should be completed as best the donor is able, without taking too long over it. Just write in what you know at the time.
3. The third form provides a description of the slide. One Slide Description form is required for each slide.

Again, just write in what you know at the time. Most of the detail on this form can be provided just by ticking the characteristics of this slide, on the long list provided. Copies of these three forms will be provided to members who wish to donate slides and may then be photocopied as needed. Please write to me at 13 St James Ave Mont Albert Vic 3127 or phone (03) 890 3149. I'll also send a list of the gardens for which description information has already been received. There is no need to duplicate this information.

We are dependent on the slides our members can donate to make the slide library a success. Please review your own collections with a view to making a contribution. You can send us copies of your slides if you prefer, or you can send originals with a request that we copy them and return the originals to you. When you are photographing a garden and using slide film, you might consider taking two photos of an appropriate subject, with a view to sending one to the slide library. We will be very grateful for your help.

Perhaps we are biased - but we believe that the genus *Dryandra* contains the most diverse and attractive foliage in the Australian flora. As well, there are species for almost every place or purpose in the garden.

In addition to the foliage, several other features make dryandras worthy of consideration in garden design. Dryandras are a large group of over 120 species and range from flat, prostrate plants through small clumping species and mound-forming shrubs up to rigid, columnar specimens and even small trees. The variety and diversity of shape and form, the range of leaf colours from pale to dark green and on to a strikingly intense blue-green in some species and even the variety of flower shapes and sizes provide much interest in a garden. In common with other members of the Proteaceae, a charming feature of many species in the spring and early summer is the colourful new growth. Species with fern-like foliage such as *Dryandra nervosa* and *D. shanklandiorum* have new leaves that resemble furry fern-fronds of orange, pink or rich purple-pink. Regrettably they are still relatively uncommon in nurseries but we will list some species that we have found to be reasonably hardy in cultivation and encourage you to try them. The only proviso is that you ensure that the bed is well drained and give them a sunny spot - in common with many other Australian plants, dryandras do not grow well in shade.

### Ground Covers and Rockery Plants

There are more than 20 species in this group, some of which form small clumps while the prostrate form of *D. tenuifolia* can

spread to more than three metres. This latter has long, thin almost entire leaves on long trailing branches. The very attractive flowerheads resemble small proteas. Whether in a rockery or on a bank or slope, they can make fine specimen plants.

Most of the remaining prostrate species have underground stems, upright leaves and flowers that emerge from the ends of branches, under the soil around the perimeter of the plants. A couple of recommended species are:

*D. obtusa*. This has very attractive, rigid, glossy dark green leaves and flowers with long, colourful bracts. In good conditions it can spread to about a metre.

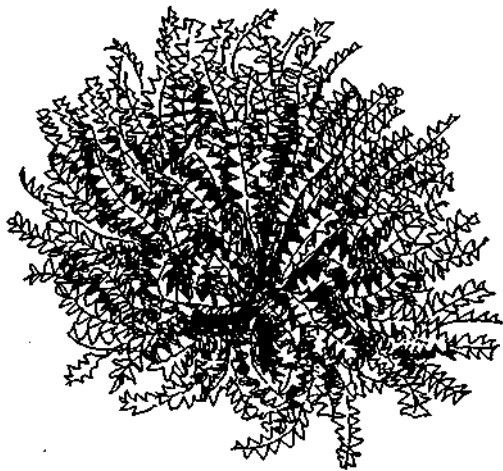
*D. calophylla*. The leaves are dark green, white on the reverse side. Numerous small brown and white "striped" flowerheads are produced around the perimeter of the plant from below the soil. In growth habit, it resembles some of the prostrate banksias and can spread to two metres.



Ground Cover

As rockery plants, some of the numerous forms of *D. nivea* take a lot of beating. Commonly, they form a small clump or low shrub with medium to long triangular-lobed leaves and most interesting flowerheads which are cup or urn-shaped and range in colour from pink through orange to deep red. Their common name is "honey-pots", a reference to the large amount of nectar they secrete and which is an important source of food to small mammals such as the honey possum. A closely related species is *D. arctotidis* which, however, has more finely lobed leaves which form a distinct "V" to the midrib. They are long-lived, some plants in cultivation being over 15 years old.

### Dense Mound-shaped Shrubs



Mound-forming *D. drummondii*

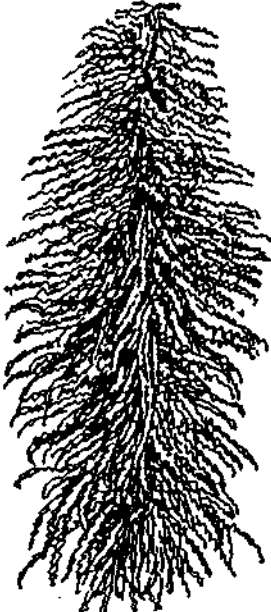
Some of the loveliest dryandras for foliage form neat, dense, rounded shrubs which often hide their flowers within the bush at the base of the leaves. These "mounds of leaves" are totally unlike any other proteaceae and are always a talking point in a garden.

The best known and longest lived is *D. nervosa* (formerly known as *D. pteridifolia*). It has long, tangled, fern-like leaves, soft not prickly, and forms a solid mound about one metre by one metre. The cream and light brown flowerheads are quite large but usually hidden within the plant. New growth in spring is a lovely purple-pink, sometimes orange-pink.

A group of plants which we have found worth growing for variety of leaf form and shape are plants from the *D. drummondii* complex. Leaves are usually long and wide and may be light green or, in the case of a form called "Big Red", a dark blue-green. The latter may be more than 0.5 metre long and are popular in floral arrangements; they were also exported to Japan. The orange or red flowerheads form at the base of the leaves building up in successive years into a neat, rounded mound about one metre by one metre.

There are a number of others which form mounds including several of the *D. nivea* complex. Regrettably, some of these have proved difficult in the garden which is a pity as they have very long, thin graceful leaves and orange-yellow or red "honey-pot" flowerheads which are believed to be pollinated by small marsupials. Yet another blue-green species is *D. brownii* which, while shy to flower, always causes comment in a garden. It will also tolerate some shade.

### Columnar Shrubs



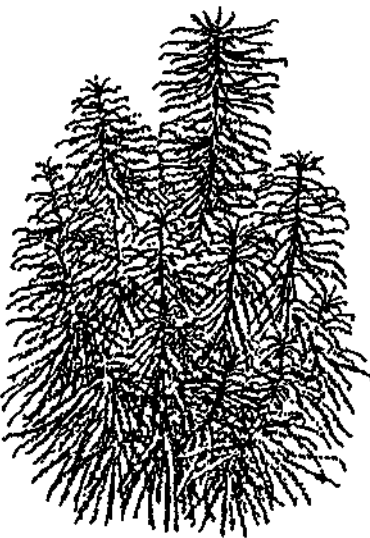
Typical Columnar Shrub

There are several species which resemble the European pencil pine and thus have great potential in landscaping. They are usually less than two metres high but often only 0.3 to 0.4 metres wide. In another characteristic of dryandras, they are densely foliated, with long, narrow reflexed leaves giving them a "shaggy" appearance. The flowerheads while numerous are mostly inconspicuous.

Undoubtedly the most characteristic of this group are the various forms of *D. seneciifolia*. In a planting which the Dryandra Study Group maintains at Cranbourne, the most fascinating set of plants is a row of a *D. seneciifolia* form which stand like rigid sentinels guarding the other species. So unworldly are they that a recent publication by the Department of Conservation and Land Management in Western Australia refers to a similar plant as the truffid-like *D. seneciifolia* !

Another one in this group is probably one of the hardiest dryandras, *D. conferta*. In the wild it is found in about half a dozen forms including a very rare form with fine blue-grey leaves. The common specimens are typically up to two metres with very dense foliage and numerous bright yellow flowerheads crowded along the stems.

### Medium to Large Bushy Shrubs



Medium-large shrub *D. baxteri*

There are quite a number of good foliage dryandras with long leaves which form bushy shrubs ideal for screening a fence or providing a "hedge" effect. They branch from low on the plant and often their long leaves droop to the ground. Some like *D. nobilis* can become very untidy as they grow older and are more of interest to enthusiasts, but those listed below have a special charm which makes them worthwhile considering for feature plantings.

*D. baxteri* has the distinction of having the softest foliage of all dryandras. The leaves are long and narrow, dense and the stems are covered with fine, whitish hairs giving a somewhat ghostly appearance to the plant. Flowers are numerous but a dull red-brown.

*D. mucronulata* is reasonably fast growing but may be short lived, especially in dryer areas. Its foliage is good for picking and flower arrangements. Less common but again proving its hardiness in both dry and semi-shade positions is *D. foliosissima*. It reaches about two metres with its very long, dense foliage turned downwards to give the bush a classical "shaggy" look.

The dryandra species discussed above represent only a few of the many available. As is typical of all genera, a number are of interest only to enthusiasts but we believe that at least some of the hardier species have a place in the garden. Their greatest assets are considerable variation in leaf shape, form and colour with consequently interesting foliage contrasts, and a size and shape of plant to suit most garden situations. While flowers are important in the garden, it is the foliage which is with us for 12 months of the year. By judicious choice of plant, we can add that extra dimension to the garden, the interest that foliage contrasts and unusual or even bizarre plants can give. Dryandras can help you do this.

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### Indexing?

As we approach the end of our second year, Jane Calder and Doug McIver have both suggested it would be useful to have each year's Newsletters indexed for easier reference. As the number of Newsletters grows and the amount of material increases it does become more difficult to locate an article or reference one remembers seeing somewhere. Melbourne members agreed that this is a good idea but... does any member have experience or expertise in indexing (plus some spare time)? If so, we'd love to hear from you!

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# WATER IN THE GARDEN

## The value of ornamental ponds

Paul Thompson Vic

(This article was first published in 'The Age', Melbourne, on 16/11/93.)

When it moves, reflects, splashes and cools, water changes and positively affects any garden space, from tiny terrace to rural homestead. People can be soothed, absorbed and mesmerised by ripples, bubbles, changes of colour and by the life that water attracts, like little birds and friendly fish.

For thousands of years, ancient gardens had water at their centre. Desert cultures focused dwellings inwards towards the relief offered by ponds, fountains and falls. Placement was purposeful, considered, simple, selective.

While a pond itself is rarely gaudy, its reason for being may be inappropriate and ill-fitting and the detailing unnecessary, complicated and fussy. Place naturalistic water at rest, low to the field of view. Formal ponds may be raised but rarely over 60 centimetres. Make the water accessible physically and visually. Add sound to your space, the sound of a trickle when small, or a gush when expansive. Allow light to catch water droplets, waves, ripples, reflections.

Gardens change with the seasons and with the light of the day. Ponds extend that change, adding more dimensions than even the inquisitive may have considered. The reasons for installing ponds can be many. For one gardener with restricted mobility, a raised pond near the living area of the house provides daily fascination and activity. It is easy for him to observe the antics of fish and birds and be delighted by the patterns and reflections.

Elsewhere, a simple clay pond of some 40 square metres has become the focus of attention for another gardener and three neighbours, all of whom enjoy the pleasures the new pond freely offers. Three weeks ago, a mother duck and her seven newly hatched, fluffy ducklings were noisily attempting to break down an obstructive wire fence to reach the pond. Snip, snip from the obliging neighbour and now the ducklings constantly display their swimming skills. Butterflies of many colours have gravitated to this pond and the newly retrieved native grassland associated with it. Simple pleasures to balance the busy working week.

Proportion and shape are important. The bigger the pond, the easier maintenance becomes. Four thousand litres is a reasonably sized pond, yet the permanent water in an eye-level bird-bath may be all you require. Fish need a depth of at least 45 centimetres, while little birds enjoy shallows in which to frolic.

Protection of pond life from predators needs consideration. Safety for people is a big issue for some. When attention and care are given to all of these aspects, the pond project will be successful. It is not difficult to find an exciting pond plan or water detail for your garden. Careful thought, thorough research and a clear picture of what is possible are needed. If in doubt, you can enlist specialist assistance.

Ponds can be for plants, as well as for fish and frogs. Water lilies (*Nymphaea* species) are popular, yet require a lot of space; one square metre of water per plant is most common. Domestic ponds up to eight square metres are too small for lilies. Never cover more than one third of the water surface with foliage. *Villarsia reniformis*, *Nymphoides crenata* and *Otella ovalifolia* have dainty flowers and a non-dominating habit. Sedges like *Carex gaudichaudiana*, from Bruny Island, or the rush *Chorizandra enodis* add striking texture and durable form. Some nurseries advise that all ponds require oxygenating plants. This is a fallacy. Many of these species offered are pests that you may regret introducing. Use plants with restraint and consult the literature before the nursery. Particularly read '*Water Plants in Australia*', by Nick Romanowski.

Maintenance is always an issue. Simple rules are never to allow nutrients or pollutants to accumulate from fertilizers, pavements or decaying vegetation. Don't be too concerned about algae; mostly, it isn't a problem. Keep the water open, free of excessive floating foliage. Keep the area light and bright and the water moving.

Mosquitoes cannot breed where frogs or fish may eat them. If you already have mosquitoes, I doubt whether a pond would noticeably increase the population.

Cool water contains more oxygen than warm water. Wind action and falls and spouts incorporate desirable oxygen. The chemistry of ponds is always changing according to growth and season. Maintaining about a neutral pH ought not to require adding chemicals, just clean practices and regular monitoring of change.

Insects such as water boatmen, caddis nymphs and hovering dragonflies add fascination. Mudlarks looking for nesting materials and wattle birds diving from on high contrast with deep swimming cormorants or the gentle duck. The balanced life of a living pond is a measure of the health of your area, and an example for the way of the world.

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## Water in the garden at "Denbly", Killarney

Cherree Densley Vic

Now here is a subject I think I know something about. Even though my landscape design qualifications are nil, my experiences in installing water features may be more expansive than most. By writing of my experiences I may be able to help other members of the Study Group who are unsure where to best site a water feature, or which method of lining the pool/pond/feature is best or worthy of trial.

Others more eloquent than I will no doubt discuss in their articles for the GDSG the benefits of water in the overall design

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of the garden. However I have found that a good expanse of 'reflecting space' of clear water will double the designing space. And from an environmental point of view, water and the increased humidity that it provides are desirable for wildlife and the plants surrounding it. I have installed heaps of ponds in other gardens before we moved to Killarney and now need no convincing of the benefits of water in the landscape. Here, at the latest count, there are six water features, five bird baths and at least six lizard/skink drinking dishes as an integral part of the design of our Australian plant garden. The largest yet, my 'wetlands' is being laboriously dug at present in the former 'ram's paddock' 1/2 acre expansion to 'Denbly'. More about this one at a later date, perhaps.

Now for the existing features. The two smallest ponds are made from fibreglass and were sunk into the ground by just digging a hole large enough to fit the purchased shapes. Both of these ponds are frog/tadpole habitats and as such are kept free of fish. Other wildlife includes water snails, dragonfly larvae, waterbeetles and heaps of other little water animals (no mosquitoes though). I have both of these ponds adjacent to pathways so that children can see the tadpoles easily and be safely supervised. These ponds are planted with waterweeds, ornamental American waterlilies and an Australian native rush, *Juncus radula*. Growing constantly in water, the juncus is probably not as vigorous as if it had periodic water and dryness as its natural habitat would provide. It does supremely well as a frog spawning raft and, from a design point of view, gives height to take the eye upwards to the surrounding garden bed. Another plant which weeps down into the water and helps tie the pond with its surrounds is the Knobby Club-rush, *Isoeipis nodosa*. I have noticed frog spawn on these 'leaves' too.

One of these fibreglass ponds is surrounded by largish, fiat volcanic rocks and these provide a sheltering area for small frogs. Under one of the largest, at present, is a froth of spawn of the Striped Marsh Frog (*Limnodynastes peroni*) which called right below our bedroom window constantly for two days and nights before, much to our relief, he attracted a female and the resulting mass of foam and spawn is already wriggling with baby tadpoles. From an aesthetic point of view this pond is more pleasing because the fibreglass rim cannot be seen and so the pond does look like a natural cavity in the ground filled with cool water. I have taken care to vary the size of the rocks and as well the amount which protrudes over the edge. At one end I have placed a one metre tall hollow stump, planted at its base with a grass and *Dianella tasmanica* which comes to the water's edge. The side in the most shade has been planted with *Pterostylis pedunculata* and *P. nutans* (Greenhood Orchids). I have tucked several small ferns into the pockets between the rocks, but these are slow to spread. (Perhaps the constant traffic of the frogs flattens them.)

I did think of using *Restio tetraphyilus* (Tassel Cord-rush) adjacent to this pond, but seeing how tall it gets in its natural habitat I decided that it just would be too dominant for the size of this pond. I will definitely be considering its use in the new 'wetlands'. Another plant which trails into this pond is *Hibbertia dentata*. It is far from vigorous and flowers very sparsely but has an interesting leaf colour. The white form of *Brachyscome multifida* brightens the sunnier end and, of course, there is a correa too. The 'right' one for this spot is a prostrate *Correa alba*. Incidentally, correas are my 'recurring theme' throughout the entire garden and I am fascinated by the way they can be used for any landscaping purpose. (I can't grow them tall enough for shade tree purposes though, not yet anyway.) From an installation point of view, one must be careful of not standing on the rim of these fibreglass ponds as they appear to be fragile and would easily snap and crack. My 'Australian garden icon' (refer to Geoff Simmons' article GDSG NL 7, p13) is a concrete long-necked tortoise painted in dark greens and brown. The use of a potted variegated ficus helps to lift one dark edge. Too ornamental? The photo (reproduced below) may counteract your criticism.

One pond is concreted and this one is placed to provide humidity in a dry shady area of the garden. This pond needs the most attention. Eucalyptus leaves and twigs from overhanging branches constantly fall into and foul the water. Unfortunately too this pond gets smothered with duckweed. However it does a good job of providing humidity to the surrounding ferns. The other three ponds are lined with a double layer of black plastic. These are the largest of the ponds, one being 4 metres long and about 1.5m wide. They were dug to a depth of at least 0.8m, with some sand below to cushion the plastic from the rock bed - yes, down to the hard layer of tuffa volcanic rock which can be found fairly close to the surface of our rich, black, volcanic soil. The oldest pond is 10 years old and has never leaked. As with the others I have used rocks around the edges and have heavily planted the surrounds to shade any plastic which may have shown between the rocks. It is essential to make the surrounds level to the level of the water so the plastic doesn't show.

All six ponds are 'ornamental' and, whilst they have organic shapes, are formal in design. The two largest can be viewed closely from the bridges which take you from one area of the garden to another across the water. These 'bridges' are made from huge slabs of flat cypress wood cut by Ian with a chainsaw from 100 year old trees from a local farmer who was going to burn the fallen timber. The wood has also provided us with three magnificent rustic seats & several round seats placed in a shady area of the garden.



## 8

Even though I have now made at least 10 ponds in gardens over the years, I am still frustrated enormously in my efforts because I have not managed yet to create the look I'm after. Whilst most visitors rave about the ponds and gish over the lilies and bridges they walk over, I know there is something lacking. I can't get my ponds to 'look natural'. Even the plantings are far too ornamental. I did try with one of the ponds to restrict all the planting to Australian plants. But they were too successful. They grew so fast that there was no free water left; they completely filled the available space with the rampant growth of roots and leaves. Getting fed up with cutting back all the time, I yanked the lot out and made mulch of them. The area has been replanted with American waterlilies and Californian irises. (I can hear the shudders from here.)

My ponds have not the artistry of Kath Deery's water features at Karwarra Australian Garden or the superb water feature at the Kuranga Nursery in Ringwood. Nor have I managed to create the contours necessary for a simulated dry creek bed such as can be found at Maranoa Gardens in Balwyn. Another excellent water garden is a new one near the Alcoa Smelter at Portland. This extensive landscape was designed by students from Adelaide University, funded by Alcoa and installed by a landscaping firm. It has numerous and connected waterways, interconnecting paths with thousands of tonnes of local rocks forming the basis for the water features. The area has been planted with thousands of plants of indigenous species. Even in its infancy, this landscape is worth a visit.

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**Gardening in the Southern Highlands of NSW (Part 2) Vanessa Elwell-Gavins NSW**  
(Part 1 of Vanessa's article was in GDSG NL 6, August 94)

### The pond area

At the western end of the house, outside our southern bedroom window, at the bottom of the bank and flush with the long verandah is a pond which my husband and two step-sons excavated in January 1993 from the lawn. During rain the water always built up here. The pond is about three metres long and two metres wide, roughly kidney-shaped, lined with butyl rubber and surrounded by flat reddish rocks. A waterfall off the infamous clay bank where it curves around the house is nestled between some large local rocks and provides interest at the western end.

Under the shade of the verandah, *Viola hederaceae*, *Viola* 'Baby Blue' and grey-leafed form of *Ranunculus* (Buttercups) are flourishing. At the overflow point, *Goodenia tenella* and *Isotoma fluviatilis* have merged in a happy blending of continually flowering blues and yellows. These all combine to give the pond a very well-established look. Plantings along the edge on the sunny side have been less successful, but include *Helichrysum scorpioides*, *Crocea* 'Bindalong Compact', *Scleranthus biflorus*, *Brachyscome* 'Break-of-Day' and *Westringia* 'Wynyabbie Gem'. On each side of the waterfall are a couple of terraces built up with sleepers. These are planted with *Dampiera diversifolia*, *Brachysema latifolium*, *Leucophyta (Calocephalus) brownii*, *Grevillea lanigera* Mount Tamboritha form and a scaevola. On the top level I attempted to plant some tall backdrop plants. Of these *Baeckea virgata* is thriving, as is *Calothamnus rupestris*, although the latter is still very small.

in the pond itself are a *Restio tetraphyllus* and some local reeds, unspecified (but definitely not bullrushes), and an unknown blue flowering water lily which is just recovering from a recent repotting, following depotting a couple of months ago by the neighbour's aquatic puppy. I suspect it's not native. I love sitting on the lawn by the pond in the shade on summer afternoons when I have work to do at home. It is sheltered from most winds, provides beautiful reflections from the surrounding plants and the taller *Eucalyptus rossii* beyond, and the waterfall is a great attractor of birds of all sizes (including crimson rosellas and wrens). The fish (unfortunately not native) also make for some lively entertainment during the warmer months.

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### **Water - a precious resource in an Australian garden**

**Diana Snape Vic**

Extracts from a long article published in 'The Australian Garden Journal' Autumn 1995

Most people who grow Australian plants in their gardens are water sensitive, in terms of both its conservation and aesthetic use. I have long suspected that water in a landscape appeals to ancient tribal memories imprinted in our genes. We depend on fresh water for our survival, as have our ancestors for countless generations, and its presence is deeply reassuring. The pool in our garden (or even the watertank) may not be essential now for our survival but it's still a potent symbol of security.

Very large pools or lakes can replace grass as the major component of the open landscape, offering a serenity grass cannot really match. Other practical benefits include reduced fire risk and low maintenance. The shape of a large water area can be asymmetric, imitating the complexity of nature. How many square dams with heaped up ridges of earth on two or three sides could have been transformed with a little thought and planning (and not too much money) into a beautiful created 'lake'? The ridges can be turned into wider, more gentle slopes which echo the natural landforms; the surrounding land can be shaped to produce depressed areas for inlets and an overflow, and edges with different slopes for different plant and bird habitats. Vegetated islands are valuable as sanctuaries for birds, and useful structures such as a simple bridge or jetty add character. If a lake is allowed to follow the seasons its water level will fall over a dry summer to rise again after the autumn 'break'. Exposed muddy edges are not very beautiful but, as a compensating reward, they can attract hundreds of wading birds.

Most of us live on the atypical coastal fringe of our continent, where water and comparatively luxuriant green foliage belong in the landscape. However 90% of our country is arid inland and there it's often feast or famine - drought or flood. Water areas are usually rare, though they tend to feature more prominently in travellers' photographs than the vast arid landscapes which surround them.

Rivers and pools in the inland areas of Australia are breathtakingly beautiful. Colour schemes are different there - rocks and gravel in strong hues of ochre, orange, terracotta and slate combine with grey or blue foliage tones of plants



such as acacias and eremophilas. Rivers are on a grand scale, whether running or waiting for 'the wet' (no garden models here). Permanent pools may be in rocky sections of a river bed or tucked away in fortuitous sheltered spots among rocky hills, their water a wonderful blue or mysterious and dark. These scenes and colours might well provide inspiration for a small or large oasis - simple, dramatic - in a dry area garden (or a formalistic garden nearer the coast). Its feeling could be reminiscent of still water in a moat against an old stone wall. A swimming pool could share this feeling but these are generally more closely allied to the house than the garden. Most owners prefer to see the bottom (and any other occupants) of a tiled pool.

Lastly, the joy of moving water in a garden. It's a real challenge to create an artificial creek and avoid its looking contrived, even when it follows a natural drainage course. There's the question of where it comes from as well as where it runs to - a need for the suspension of disbelief, as in the theatre. A fall of 1 in 100 is enough for water to flow but it gets more exciting on a steeper block. Rocks, real or simulated, seem essential in the design, probably because natural creeks tend to erode soil away until rock is exposed - skilful placement of these demonstrates both art and science. If different sized rocks and pebbles are sculptured and smoothed as by constant water movement, this strengthens the illusion of belonging.

A bonus is the soothing sound of moving water - again that reassuring presence. We forget the evaporation and the hidden pump doing the recirculating and enjoy the lively, tumbling water in rapids or a waterfall, a celebration of abundance. A fountain, with no pretence of being natural, dances with light and lifts the spirits in a similar way. Perhaps with all these we should follow the example in the film "Mon Oncle" and turn the pump on just for special occasions. We could also look at the combination of sculpture or lighting with water, but let's finish by imagining the peaceful sound of water trickling gently from a fine pipe (borrowed from a Japanese garden) and the rhythmic croak of a 'pobble-bonk' frog.

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### Water in a sandplains garden, W.A.

Shirley Fisher WA

With no streams or rockpools here on the coastal sandplains of W.A. we have to come up with other ideas to bring water into the garden. A farmer friend has developed a delightful feature in her garden by placing a collection of log stumps and terra cotta trays in amongst her native plants, the trays filled with water for birdbaths.

The water trays are at different heights and some stumps are free. Small birds prefer the tucked away lower trays and the larger birds like a substantial landing platform before venturing to the higher trays of water. Finally a large tray was placed on the ground for the roos and wallabies.

Apart from adding form to a bed of native plant the bird baths have given hours of pleasure as it can be viewed from the dining room table allowing the birds to be watched without being disturbed.




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### A thought and a question about ponds

Barbara Buchanan Vic

Earlier, reading "Wild Flower Gardening" by John Chambers (but English wildflowers) I found this. "Ponds can be a difficult feature to fit satisfactorily into a garden. So many are set in the middle of an open manicured lawn with hard, rectangular edges. . . . (and) rarely harmonise well with the average garden. To be really successful, ponds need to be rather secretive, quiet places which blend in naturally with the rest of the garden. This often means leading gradually from the sunny border through semi-shade and the mini-marsh to the pond itself. A really well established and sited pond will usually appear to be quite a normal feature of the landscape - as though nature would have put one there in the first place but somehow had not got around to it."

Alan is thinking about getting a stock trough to use as a pond out the front. Also something will have to be done about the old tank out the back. It takes water from the old building and it seems a shame not to use it somehow. I'd like a seasonal pond - marsh with appropriate plants which die back but am afraid of weeds taking over, so put it in the too hard' basket for the moment. I would like to hear if someone is managing this successfully; in fact I'm hoping there will be some inspiration in the 'Water' Issue.

*We'd like to hear from anyone with experience in establishing and maintaining over a number of years a marsh or bog area. I suspect this may be something of a challenge. (In Eucrovia, the Journal of SGAP Tas, Vol 11, March 1995 p4, there is an article My Boo Garden by Jeanette Closs. This bog garden has now been established for four years.) DS*

The recent drought has been both severe and extended. For those outside town limits, tanks have run dry and farm dams have emptied. For those with access to reticulated water, water reservoirs have dropped to record low levels and the installation of water meters has heightened awareness of the cost associated with water use, particularly as it has been emphasised that much of the water currently being treated to the standard required for domestic consumption ends up being either flushed away or poured onto gardens. While no-one wishes to see another such drought, the last four years have forced a new understanding upon those who have experienced the prolonged dry period: the availability of water cannot be guaranteed and treated water comes at a price. This has already started to impact upon gardening with a recent book as well as articles in garden magazines noting ways to design water-efficient gardens. Australian species have been included but no publication that I have seen has been devoted exclusively to the use of local species.

The drought then has forced a re-examination of the use of water in the garden. This has coincided with an awareness of the advantages of locally occurring species as well as with an enhanced interest in rainforest species. A request for assistance with designing a "rainforest" that would receive only natural rainfall gave impetus to applying knowledge that had been slowly increasing over the last decade. This article has as its focus the learning that has enabled the establishment of a flourishing rainforest garden under severe drought and extreme weather conditions. No attempt has been made to describe the design concept in detail.

The 1986 publication of John Hunts book entitled *Creating An Australian Garden*<sup>(1)</sup> described the advantages of mounding and channelling. Advantages cited include "artificial watering is not required except in times of extreme drought; soil temperature remains cooler due to increased moisture level; plants will flourish and last longer than plants grown with more artificial watering". This was the first concept to be incorporated in the no-water rainforest.

Experience with mounding and channelling suggested that, although this is a necessary component of a water-efficient garden, something further appeared to be required. More recent publications include a discussion of the advantages of deep-ripping<sup>(2,3,4,5)</sup>. Some sites, e.g. steep creek banks, are unsuitable but where deep-ripping is possible, plants benefit from the release of soil nitrogen which occurs and assists in establishing seedlings<sup>31</sup>. As well, finely cultivated soil improves both the growth rate and the survival rate as it allows the plant to produce the maximum number of feeder roots<sup>7</sup>. Soil preparation, including deep-ripping, therefore appeared to be the second important element of a no-water design especially as rainforest species do not have the aggressive root systems of the open forest plants and have an unsatisfactory survival rate if the root system is not adequate to sustain the plant after planting<sup>8</sup>.

The third vital component appeared to be the inclusion of species from dry rainforests, locally occurring if possible as "local native plants will be most likely to handle local climatic extremes"<sup>(4b)</sup>. There is a wide range occurring in the local area. Some of these local species have been used extensively as street trees in Brisbane, e.g. *Brachychiton acerifolius* and *Harpullia pendula*. Other local dry rainforest species have been widely cultivated and survived the current drought, e.g. *Brachychiton discolor*, *Flindersia australis*, *Grevillea robusta*, *Hymenosporum flavum*, *Melia azedarach* var. *australasica*, *Pittosporum rhombifolium*, *Syzygium australe*. Others can be seen growing locally, e.g. *Ficus fraseri*, *Glochidion ferdinandi*, *Hibiscus heterophyllus* and *H. splendens*. Sometimes plants from the same family as local species were chosen for inclusion, e.g. *Brachychiton bidwillii*, *Grevillea hilliana* and *Syzygium oleosum*. The planting was predominantly of local species, though species not known to occur locally were also included, e.g. *Buckinghamia celsissima* as it is reliable as a street tree locally and is a favourite of the owner of the garden. Where the planting merged into neighbouring properties, trees and shrubs from forests were included, e.g. *Acacia fimbriata*, *Hovea purpurea*, *Lophostemon confertus*. "Faunascaping" was not ignored, with species such as *Ficus coronata*, *Harpullia pendula*, *Lomandra bngifolia*, *Lophostemon confertus* and *Stenocarpus sinuatus* included as food plants for butterflies and their larvae, and plants such as *Ficus fraseri*, *Glochidion ferdinandi*, *Grevillea robusta*, *Hibiscus heterophyllus*, *Stenocarpus sinuatus* and *Syzygium sp.* to attract birds.

The site formed a triangle, with equal sides of approximately 50 m and a slope of about 30 degrees.

A plan was drawn to indicate where the beds should go. The beds were designed to intercept surface flow and allow it to soak into the ground, control run-off and erosion and direct surplus water into a dam. As well the planting was arranged so each plant received adequate sunlight. The soil varied from red soil to sandy loam. After deep-ripping, mounding and channelling, planting took place in mid-October with plants obtained from a local rainforest nursery specialising in south-east Queensland species. Rants were in pots of 125 mm or more to ensure a satisfactory survival rate. The owners planted 1.5 to 2 metres apart and then mulched as much as possible with an organic mulch. The drought affected availability of mulch and some beds have not as yet been mulched. These have required weeding as the growth of rainforest plants is adversely inhibited to an even greater extent than other plants by grass and weeds<sup>w</sup>.

As well as indicating the layout of the beds, the plan indicated the species to be included in each section but the owners decided on the placement of each plant. Design characteristics of rainforest plants were exploited for aesthetic purposes<sup>m</sup>, particularly colour and texture. White is a favourite of the owner and so white plants were included where possible, e.g. the *Hibiscus heterophyllus* plants were white rather than yellow. Texture was an important design element. Plants closest to the house verandah were chosen for the large leaves expected of rainforest plants whereas plants backing onto the eucalyptus forest behind the garden were selected to blend into the background, e.g. *Lophostemon confertus*. Even in the beds closest to the house, plants were chosen both to blend, e.g. *Grevillea hilliana* and *Buckinghamia celsissima* and to contrast, e.g. *Grevillea hilliana* and *Grevillea robusta*.

From mid-October until mid-February, only very occasional, very light showers occurred. Temperatures at times reached well over 40 degrees Celsius. No plant received more than **three** buckets of water throughout this entire period. An inspection of plants prior to the mid-February arrival of rain showed only one unmulched plant drooping slightly. The only plants which died were damaged in a severe windstorm just after planting and were mostly the smallest plants that had been planted. These were replaced and the replacements have grown well. The owners have been so impressed with their "rainforest", they have dug up even more lawn and today their neighbour who is tired of watering his acreage was on a tour of inspection\*. The drought certainly has provided the impetus not only to re-evaluate attitudes to use of water in the garden but also to implement strategies to ensure a water-efficient garden, even one comprised of rainforest species.

## 11

Much has been written about minimising water demand. To this should be added the knowledge of those who have specialised in growing "native" species, for example:

the mounding and channelling of John Hunt<sup>m</sup>,  
the deep-ripping advocated by Peter and Ann Radke and Garry and Nada Sankowsky of Yuruga Nursery in *Growing Australian Tropical Plants*<sup>m</sup>,  
the deep-ripping and use of local species described in *Putting Back the Forest, A Landcare Guide for Brookfield, Pullenvale and Moggill* by Bryan Hacker, Rona Butler and Rae Rekdahl<sup>3></sup>,  
the deep-ripping, water traps, mounds and use of local species advocated by DPI Queensland in *Tree Note B18 and Tree Note B23*<sup>\*\*\*</sup>,  
the deep-ripping and mounds illustrated by Ralph Bailey and Julie Lake in *Creating an Australian Rainforest Garden* (reviewed by Neil Marriott in *GDSG Newsletter 7*, pp6)<sup>s</sup>.

For those interested in designing with rainforest plants, Darren Mansfield in *Australian Rainforest Plants for Your Garden* (Mount Annan Botanic Garden Native Rant Series)<sup>w</sup> starts with site analysis and functional requirements and includes architectural uses, engineering purposes, climate control, aesthetic reasons and appreciation and identification of the plants themselves. The next section includes small space design, large space design, narrow space design, formal gardens, naturalistic, bush tucker and there is a section entitled "using rainforest plants with or in place of exotic plants".

Designing for drought can be achieved with Australian rainforest species. Establishing a water-efficient garden can be successful, even in extreme weather conditions. This project has given a new dimension to my understanding of use of water in the garden. The owner of the garden laughed when he read the first draft of this article and commented "a three bucket rainforest. Yes, and that's all it will ever get!"

\*P.S. The neighbour has started digging!

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### BOOKS and book reviews

"*Water Conservation through Good Design*" (1986) W.A. Water Resources Council (a Guide for Architects, Landscape Architects, Planners and Land Managers) available from the John Tonkin. Water Centre 629 Newcastle St, Leederville W.A. 6007 phone (09) 420 2928 recommended by Paul Thompson as excellent.

"*Your Guide to Tree Planting near Powertines*" available in Victoria tree from the SEC & worth obtaining for interest. The following two books (for garden design, especially the sections indicated) are recommended by Colleen Keena Qld *Australian Horticultural Correspondence School, Vic - The Native Plant Expert*: John Mason (1989)

Chapter 5: Landscaping design. This discusses principles such as unity, balance, proportion, harmony, rhythm, contrast; qualities of the components such as line, form, mass, space and texture. Also creating effects, planning, plant lists.

"*The Bush Handbook*" Vic Cherkoff (1989, 93) Bush Tucker Supply Aus. Pty Ltd, NSW. Details of garden plan p71,72

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### *Water and wetland plants for southern Australia* by Nick Romanowski (Lothian) 1992

reviewed by Bruce Muir Vic

This book discusses Australian and non-native water plants, which the author defines as "those which are naturally associated with water and are adapted to spend at least a part of their life cycle in fairly wet conditions". He begins with chapters on the construction of ponds and dams, and the ways of establishing plants in and beside them. He also writes about wildlife associated with ponds - an essential part of their ecology. There is much detail here, obviously based on his own experience.

Next are chapters on suitable plants. Australian genera are separate from non-Australian and most of those listed are well known water plants. There are a few surprises e.g. *Banksia*, *Grevillea* and *Epacris* all have a few species which are tolerant of wet conditions. The author has shown that he will take pains to ensure accuracy with the names of the plants he grows and sells. He has written a reliable reference book, and also a very interesting one - stimulating as well. In fact I think it is time my front garden had a well constructed pond.

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### *Water in Your Garden* by Paul Thompson (Lothian) 199 reviewed by Mark Fountain Tas

(This review was first published in *Eucryphia* (the newsletter of SGAP Tas) March 1995.)

This book will prove to be a useful handbook for those wanting to learn more about the use of water in the Australian landscape. The initial chapter on *Water on your land* is not so much about the creation of water features but is more critically, in our dry land, about ways of conserving the water we have. The author discusses briefly soil improvement techniques and methods of irrigation including water harvesting (ie the collection and use of surface run-off from hard surfaces around your house). He also emphasises watering our plants wisely using the philosophy of infrequent deep waterings.

The second chapter, *Ponds pools and puddles*, discusses the siting of water in the landscape and the forms the water feature might take. The placing of naturalistic pools in the landscape so they belong is stressed. The location of any water in the garden, formal or informal, is deemed critical and the gardener is asked to consider the values of water; such aspects as the micro climate effects of water as well as its visual uses such as decoration, reflection and its psychological uses like contemplation and relaxation. The ways that water can be used are discussed, from pools through to creeks and waterfalls and the forms a waterfall or rapids might take. The lovely sound of moving water is not forgotten. Also mentioned are bridges, fountains and swimming pools and the humble, but not to be overlooked, bogs and soaks used as fullstops in an active water harvesting system.

## 12

The possibility of lighting your water feature is also considered and the need for subtlety and planning if this is to be successful. The chapter on pool construction is sound advice put simply by one of the most experienced practitioners in Australia and with the functional illustrations would be a real resource for the gardener contemplating doing it themselves. In this and the following chapter, ground surfacing, the various ways of treating the gardening areas immediately adjacent to the water feature, from rocks to paving, is considered. A short and practical section on the use of water pumps is followed by a chapter on pond life and the need for a natural balance to create a healthy pond. A pond will attract birds and amphibians and perhaps even larger wildlife, if you are lucky.

The very important aspects of choosing plant material for planting on, around and in your water feature are well covered. The need to make sure the plants chosen are visually appropriate for their waterside positions and the scale of the plants in relation to the size of the pond are two points mentioned. A useful list of plants for water and bog is also included though not all the plants are Australian. An additional more comprehensive list like SGAP's *Grow What Wet* would be valuable used in conjunction with this book. The author finishes with a list of ten common questions asked about water in the garden.

If you are considering adding water to your garden this little book will answer most of your initial questions in a simple and practical way. The visual stimulus of the many photographs within the book will add impetus to your watery project.

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### Classification of gardens

Diana Snape Vic

I've been thinking a lot about this subject and how we might clarify our original scheme (GDSG NL2, July '93). Using similar terms, I propose the following grid system (on the next page) for your comments.

Three basic styles (described very briefly above the name) are naturalistic (probably the most common), formalistic or formal (rare!). Naturalistic gardens can have categories (eg heathland, woodland, etc) depending on their inspirational source in nature and also the type of plants being grown.

The overall plant content is specified in a similar way to that suggested by Geoff Simmons, for use by GDSG members. I like the way 'A' represents 'Australian garden' and 'AA' means 'all-Australian garden'. AA+ and AAA show significant percentages of indigenous plants. This raises the question 'how indigenous?'; for the moment let's say as local as possible. (Specification of overall plant content could be extended by noting % trees, shrubs, groundcovers, etc.)

Different themes may also be identified, under various styles and with different plant contents.

In eclectic gardens (the fourth and most common style of all?) either the garden as a whole is classified, or each distinct area of the garden is classified separately, as above.

If you think this scheme is feasible, try using it when you next want to describe a garden and let me know how you find it.

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### (SMALL) TREES in GARDEN DESIGN

#### Recommended trees for Sydney

Betty Rymer NSW

Betty Rymer comments that much of the information on plants in the NL comes from Victoria and many of the plants do not grow very successfully in Sydney. With any lists of plants we're trying to help members extend their range of acquaintances (their palette or repertoire of reliable/ useful/ attractive plants) and this will generally reflect where writers come from. It is always important for members to check their own local sources and local information about which plants do well - conditions for plants can vary considerably even within the same area. We are really trying to suggest plants as examples of some aspect of garden design.

Betty included a list of "small" trees which she grows successfully in Sydney. They are beautiful trees and I think all do well in Melbourne too. When I applied the (too?) stringent limits of 'a maximum of 6m = small, a maximum of 12 m = medium', I found that they all qualify as medium or large. For people with large blocks this is no problem at all, but for those with a small suburban block some consideration is needed of their potential size when mature.

#### Betty's recommended trees for Sydney:

Angophora bakeri 10-20m (medium to large on our definition)- seed taken 4 years ago; plants malleed & bloomed this year

Angophora hispida 3-10m (small to medium on our definition)- Central Coast Group have found a pink-flowered form

Banksia integrifolia 10-20m (large)

Brachychiton discolor 10-30m (large) flowers every year and the bees love it as well as the birds

Ceratopetalum gummiferum 3-10m (medium) lovely forms available

Elaeocarpus reticulatus 8-15m (large) - white ones so pure white, pink I find a bit dowdy unless close to the flowers

Hymenosporum javanicum 4-20m (large) - flowers well and lovely perfume

Syzygium luehmannii 15/30m (large) - new growth, flowers and fruit - a real bonus to grow

Syzygium oleosum 20m? (large) - interesting blue-purple fruits

#### Larger trees:

Three beautiful acacias which are no problem:

Acacia binervia (glaucescens still in the nurseries) 15-20m; A. fimbriata 5-8m (medium); A. prominens 5-20m.

Not recommended, though once popular, is A. howittii 4-8m (medium) - Betty comments "the worst for borer; blow down in winds, break large branches and are really a nuisance." (We've not had these problems with A. howittii in Melbourne. DS)

Angophora costata 10-25m - superb bark colours and shape

Grevillea robusta 10-30m - not so good on sandy soils. Keep it away from your car - nectar drops and is very tacky.

**GARDEN Classification**

'Accidental design' which occurs in nature, appreciated as a garden for its natural beauty. (This term is not used for a created garden.) fluid,

Influenced by nature, informal, asymmetrical, low maintenance & water use, ecological, peaceful, regenerating, unmanicured, harmonious,

More formal than naturalistic style, less symmetrical & less rigid than formal. Use of curvilinear lines in contrived & controlled manner.

Symmetrical, geometrical, regular, repetitive, disciplined, rigid, patterned, controlled, powerful, obvious, maintained, manicured.

Style →	Natural garden NN	1. Naturalistic garden N	2. Formalistic garden F	3. Formal garden FF
Plant content ↓				
>95% indigenous 'air-indigenous garden' AAA	restricted to untouched existing "bush"	a planted indigenous g. inspired by natural gardens		
>55% indigenous >95% Australian 'all-Aus g' AA+	whole garden can't be NN but sections may be	can be a <u>natural plant community</u> g or an <u>ethos</u> g or "enriched bush"		
>95% Australian 'all-Australian garden' AA		can be a <u>natural plant community</u> garden or an <u>ethos</u> garden		
> 55% Australian 'Australian garden' A		(whole garden can't be N but sections may be)		

Categories include:  
 alpine  
 coastal  
 dryland  
 heathland  
 mallee  
 rainforest  
 savannah  
 wetland  
 woodland

Categories:  
 as under NN

Themes include:  
 collector's colour  
 perfume  
 sculpture  
 water  
 wildflower

Themes include:  
 collector's colour  
 cultural  
 functional  
 idiosyncratic  
 perfume  
 portable  
 productive  
 sculpture  
 water  
 wildflower

Themes:  
 as under F

**Style**

**4. Eclectic garden E**  
 Design elements are drawn freely from various sources.

**Ii**  
**(i) integrated**  
 the main style and themes of the whole garden are identified

**Es**  
**(ii) segregated**  
 each different area of garden will be classified separately

I have finally (in the past few years) 'seen' White Cedar (*Melia azedarach* var. *australasica*). The street in Perth I grew up in was lined with 'Cape Lilac', presumably the South African form of *M. azedarach*, and I simply did not like it. It was messy, dropping sticky berries, and the only recollection I have of its foliage is drab (I think the Perth summer was too dry). So for years when I found an attractive tree with a bright green canopy turning brilliant gold in autumn with those sticky berries underneath, I turned off, and have only slowly come to realize what I've been missing. We need shade in summer and sun in winter, eucalypts generally giving a rather 'thin', dappled shade. If there are enough of them the shade is adequate but it does seem to get thicker in winter, and we just can't afford to have too many dose around the house for both fire risk and leaves in the gutter getting into the tanks. The White Cedar has an ideal shape for useful shade (the umbrella) and a tall, clean trunk (high canopy) to allow planting or movement under it. Judging from the increase in seed and fruit eating birds here the berries will be much appreciated - we even have rosellas cracking open the cherry seeds on the ground, so I hope the berries won't be a nuisance. The young plants do get cut back by frost but there are plenty in the district to prove they can survive, once they get up a bit. I'm sure they appreciate a bit of feeding and watering to grow fast and look their best but they survive the droughts.

*White Cedar is not Australia's only deciduous tree, though it loses its leaves more thoroughly and for a reliably longer period than most. 'Grow What Where' lists three others - Brachychiton aceritoliis (Flame Tree, from NSW, Q), Nothofagus gunnii (Deciduous Beech, from Tasmania) and Toona australis (Red Cedar, from NSW, Q). In Volume 3 of the Encyclopaedia, under the heading 'Deciduous Plants', several other trees including Ficus virens (Deciduous Fig, from Q, NSW, WA, nt) are mentioned. A number of trees (including eucalypts) indigenous to northern Australia lose their leaves in winter, in response to 'the dry' not the cold, and this dormant cycle may persist when they are cultivated. Volume 2 of the Encyclopaedia tells us that all brachychiton species are "desirable subjects for cultivation" and most are partially deciduous. An interesting topic for further investigation? DS*

One small to medium evergreen tree that Barbara recommends is *Ailocasuarina littoralis* (4-8m). Barbara describes it as a most attractive tree and beautifully shaped, although it can be sparse.

### A Flowering Acacia and a Flowering Eucalypt for Every Month?

Cherree Densley Vic

When Gillian McDonald of the Orange District in NSW wrote in GDSG NL 5 (pp 18) about trying to have an acacia in flower for every month of the year, my memory was stirred to try to recall where I have seen a list not only of acacias but eucalypt species listed month by month through the calendar year of when they would be flowering. It has taken about a year to getting around to finding those lists and studying them in any great depth. The lists appeared in my early 'Bible' of gardening: Ernest E. Lord's '*Shrubs and Trees for Australian Gardens*'. There have been a few name changes in the acacias and experience has shown me that some of Lord's listed flowering times were just not right so here is my version, based heavily on Lord's list of a 'Monthly succession of flowering gums and wattles'.

#### An Acacia for every month

	<u>species</u>	<u>common name</u>	<u>size* in metres</u>	<u>classification</u>
JANUARY	elata	Cedar Wattle	10-20x5-10	medium tree (to large)
FEBRUARY	tuteola	-	1-2x.5-1	small shrub
MARCH	implexa	Lightwood	5-15x4-10	small tree (to large)
APRIL	retinodes	Wirilda	4-8 x 3-7	small tree (to medium)
MAY	blakelyi	-	1-3x1-3	small shrub
JUNE	podalyriifolia	Mt Morgan Wattle	3-5x3-4	tail shrub
JULY	baileyana	Cootamundra Wattle	5-8 x 5-8	small tree (to medium)
AUGUST	pycnantha	Golden Wattle	3-10x2-6	medium shrub/tree
SEPTEMBER	prominens	Golden Rain Wattle	5-20 x 2-6	medium tree (to large)
OCTOBER	saligna	Golden Wreath Wattle	3-10x3-6	small tree (to medium)
NOVEMBER	mearnsii	Black Wattle	8-25x6-10	medium tree (to large)
DECEMBER	brevifolia	-	1-2X.5-1.5	small shrub

#### A Eucalyptus for every month

	<u>species</u>	<u>common name</u>	<u>size* in metres</u>	<u>classification</u>
JANUARY	lansdowneana	Crimson Mallee	3-10x4-8	medium mallee
FEBRUARY	calophylla rosea	Marri	13-25x10-13	medium tree (to large)
MARCH	gummifera	Red Bloodwood	20-30x10-15	large tree
APRIL	kruseana	Book-leaf Mallee	2-6 x 3-6	small mallee
MAY	sideroxylon	Red Ironbark	10-30x10-20	medium tree (to large)
JUNE	leucoxydon rosea	Yellow Gum	4-9x5-10	medium tree
JULY	diversifolia	Soap Mallee	3-10x3-10	small tree (to medium)
AUGUST	caesia	-	4-10x3-8	small tree (to medium)
SEPTEMBER	preissiana	Bell Fruited Mallee	2-5x3-10	tall shrub/small tree

## 15

OCTOBER	nutans	Red Flowered Moort	2.5-4 x 2-5m	small tree
NOVEMBER	pulverulenta	Silver Leafed Mountain Gum	6-10 x 2-5m	small tree (to medium)
DECEMBER	macrandra	Long Flowered Marlock	3-8x4-10m	small tree (to medium)

\* sizes taken from Elliot and Jones, *Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants* Vol 2 and 4

The idea of having a succession of flowering acacias and eucalypts in the garden, landscape or shelter belt is certainly a great one and worthy of putting into practice. It not only satisfies a landscaping purpose by adding interest and surprise in the garden, but provides the essential food and nectar for the insects, wasps, beetles and birds which feed on the nectar or the insects or both.

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### Small trees/large shrubs

Jeff Howes NSW

No. 8 was once again an enjoyable newsletter, especially the article on small trees in garden design. This article made me think why large shrubs are not grown more often as small trees by pruning off the lower branches to expose the trunks, thus allowing the shrub to develop as a tree "look-alike". The only explanation I can offer is that we are conditioned to keep plants looking "good" by pruning foliage from the top - be it tip pruning or in larger chunks. Perhaps we need a fundamental paradigm shift in what is a shrub and what is a small tree?

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### Trees from 'LANDSCAPE PLANT MANUALS' Burnley Volumes 1 - 4

Some time ago, **Margarete Lee** extracted a list of all the Australian plants in these Manuals, which were compiled & edited by Jill Kellow for James Hitchmough.

Recently, I extracted from Margarete's list the 135 plants classified in the Encyclopaedia (or other references, for plants after 'M') as trees or shrub/trees. (This list of trees or shrubtrees is available for any member who would like a copy.)

The statistics on size (that is, size for small gardens) as shown in the table below were interesting. There is a marked predominance of large trees and a dearth of small ones; also a high proportion (41%) of tree/shrubs, some large. Among the 29 eucalypts listed, 21 were large, 7 medium and only one was small - *E macrocarpa*, a tree/shrub (or just a shrub).

	SMALL (< 6m)	MEDIUM (6-12m)	LARGE (>12m)	TOTAL
TREES	0	15	65	80(59%)
TREE/SHRUBS	<u>10</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>55 (41%)</u>
TOTAL	10	52	73	135

Anne Pye tells me that the Manuals are currently being revised. DS

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### Coppice Gardening - adopting an old Forestry Practice

Barbara Buchanan Vic

Coppicing is the practice of cutting back trees or shrubs close to ground level to encourage the production of new shoots from the cut stumps. Traditionally English woods were cut on a five to ten year rotation, producing a crop of poles for all manner of farm and light construction purposes. Some woods were coppiced for hundreds of years and developed a very rich associated flora and fauna in the resultant mosaic of habitats, in different stages of regrowth and with different amounts of light reaching the forest floor. Some were 'coppice with standards' in which large single-stemmed trees were left among the coppice stools.

I have long been aware of the technique being used by growers of eucalypt foliage for the cut flower trade in England to ensure production of juvenile foliage and have half-heartedly tried it with some *E. sieberi* (Silvertop Ash) from Gippsland, which has a wonderful mix of grey blues, purples and reds in the leaves and stems of saplings. I was inspired by a hillside regenerating after fire but find it very hard to apply the saw. Last year I was most impressed by Gloria Tomlinson's garden in which she has regenerated her gum trees (*E. leucoxylo*) most effectively, keeping them within the scale of her suburban backyard. Then my current March '95 copy of 'The Garden', Journal of the RHS, really set me thinking with an article on 'Coppice Gardening' by Nigel Dunnett. Here, as with the pruning away of the low growth of large shrubs, is a way to have trees in the garden but not letting them take over.

Further, in larger country gardens such as I have, here is a way to have the colourful but shade intolerant smaller shrubs and herbs, denizens of natural grasslands while still having shade in the garden. Once parent plants have been established there should be a supply of seed for their descendants to move around the coppiced area as light and shade dictate. Has anyone tried this? I'd certainly welcome pointers on the way to succeed - appropriate species, rotation times and so on. Meanwhile it is something cheerful to contemplate while waiting for an autumn break to relieve the drudgery of hand watering, as a substitute for that mallee woodland I had planned but have been disappointed in. The mallees do not thrive and even die out here - this is real forest country.

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**A good question** A recent visitor to my garden said to me "Yes, I must include trees in my new garden - but where should they be planted?" Someone might like to have a go at that one.

Cherree Densley Vic

## DESIGN IDEAS

## Useful terms

Fred Young ACT

I don't know if this is of any use, but I started listing the use of the word "visual" to describe design elements, eg:

visual break	visual witticism;	visual pull;
visual impact;	visual role;	visual solution;
visual satisfaction;	visual excitement;	visual cohesion;
visual strength;	visual link;	visual full stop;
visual reference;	visual weight;	visual success.

Perhaps these may assist some to better verbalise their thoughts when planning/describing gardens.

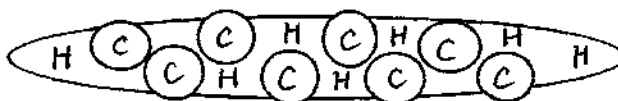
## Street planting of callistemons Anne Pye S. A. (Vic)

Red flowering *Callistemon* eg 'Hannah Ray'

underplanted with a deep purple form of

*Hardenbergia violacea* in equal

proportions on an island bed.



## A few ideas that appealed

Grahame Durbidge NSW

\* Paul Thompson's term "self regenerative, sustaining landscape". Incorporating this element into a garden design is challenging and exciting.

\* Diana Snape's "succession style" i.e. several plants of the same species but of different ages. It does look good and to some extent ties in with the "self regenerative, sustaining landscape".

\* Geoff Simmons' comment on relation to windbreak trees "Given the variability in growth these heights and spacings can be considered as only 'potential outcomes'". A term that is useful when translating a garden design into real life planting.

\* Diana Snape's describing small trees - yes, it works, but maybe a drawing of the style with a key to match. Say it looks like (a) or (b) or (c) and so on, and you look at the corresponding drawing. A picture always speaks a 1000 words. (*Barbara Buchanan agrees with Grahame's preference for diagrams.*)

\* Please do print a list of the plants severely pruned at the National Botanic Gardens. Any idea how old the plants were? It seems as though you can nearly always hard prune a callistemon of any age, but cutting into grevillea hardwood is rarely regenerative.

## Plants which take heavy pruning

"Severe pruning has been successfully used as a management technique for the rejuvenation of native species at the Australian National Botanic Gardens in Canberra over a number of years and for a range of reasons." Michael Looker

Select list of taxa severely pruned at the Australian National Botanic Gardens

compiled by Stewart Donaldson  
and staff of ANBG

Key reason for pruning severely: R - rejuvenation; S - suckers; P - pest management program; F - damaged by frost

Acacia boorarii S;	A. buxifolia R;	A. dealbata S;	A. implexa P;	A. saligna P;
AHocuarina nana R;			Astrotriche ledifolia R;	
Astartea fascicularis R;			Baeckea linifolia R;	B. virgata R;
Banksia integrifolia R;	B. robur R;	B. serrata R;	B. serratifolia R;	B. spinulosa R;
Bedfordia salicina P;			Brachsema lanceolatum R;	
Bursaria lasiophylla R;			Callicoma serratifolia F;	
Callistemon spp. (many) R;			Calothamnus quadrifidus F;	
Calytrix tetragona R;			Cassia artemisioides R;	
Casuarina cunninghamiana R;			Ceratopetalum gummiferum R;	
Coprosma quadrifida R;			Correa backhousiana P;	
Crowea exalata R;			Cuttsia viburnea F;	
Dampiera rosmarinifolia S;			Darwinia fascicularis R;	
Daviesia latifolia R;			Dodonaea viscosa S;	
Eriostemon myoporoides R;			Eucalyptus species (many) R;	
Goodenia ovata S;			Goodia iatifolia S;	
Grevillea spp. (many) R;*			Hakea sericea R;	
Hardenbergia comptoniana F;	H. violacea R;		Helichrysum semipapposum R;	H. viscosum R;
Hibbertia aspera R;	H. stricta R;		Indigofera australis R;	
Kennedia nigricans F;	K. rubicunda F;			
Kunzea ambigua R;	K. ericifolia R;	K. parvifolia R;		
Lambeartia formosa;			Leptospermum spp. (many) R;	
Lomatia myricoides;			Maytenus sylvestris S;	
Melaleuca species (many) R;			Micromyrtus ciliata R;	
Myoporum debile R;	M. insulare R;	M. parvifolium R;		
Olearia floribunda R;	O. phlogopappa R;		Oxylobium ellipticum R;	
Parahebe perfoliata R;			Persoonia pinifolia R;	



Phebalium rotundifolium R; P. squameum R; P. squamulosum R;  
 Pimelea ligustrina R; Pittosporum revolutum R;  
 Podocarpus lawrencei R; Pomaderris species (many);  
 Polyscias sambucifolia R; Prostanthera spp. (many) R;  
 Rhagodia spinescens R; Solarium species (many) R;  
 Swainsona galegifolia R; Thryptomene saxicola R;  
 Viminaria juncea R; Westringia fruticosa R;  
 Zieria arborescens R; Z. smithii R.

\* A comment on pruning of Grevillea cultivars by Michael Looker

Several Grevillea cultivars (at La Trobe University) have been severely pruned with differing responses. G. 'Canberra Gem' rejuvenates strongly following hard pruning but others such as G. 'Crosbie Morrison' have not responded to this technique. Generally age has been found to be important, with plants cut back from an early age responding better than those first cut back as older shrubs. G. 'White Wings' responds quickly to heavy pruning and shrubs pruned to 300 mm of the ground reach up to a metre within three months following pruning. More lateral growth of branches has been observed, G. curviloba has responded similarly to G. 'White Wings' and both are regularly cut back every two to three years.

### Low hedges (continued)

My choice of Bev Courtney's list of plants for a low hedge to replace *Buxus sempervirens* would be *Melaleuca hypericifolia*. It looks similar and its longevity might just be OK. Definitely worth a try. **Grahame Durbidge NSW**

Geoff Simmons' *Graptomytum excelsum* is replacing *Buxus sempervirens* by the sound of it. A lot of the plants Bev found could be used for low informal hedges but I can't think that any are replacements for the Box as it is used - slow growing, tiny leaved, hardly ever has to be clipped and yet is neat and formal. It is used in a way most of us don't really want to use a plant.

**Barbara Buchanan Vic**

Barbara makes two suggestions for a reasonably low hedge (but a lot more substantial than Buxus!): *Melaleuca bracteata* 'Golden Gem' and *Melaleuca armillaris* 'Green Globe'. What do members think about using either of these as a hedge plant? (From my experience, *Melaleuca bracteata* 'Golden Gem' is a very vigorous plant which responds amazingly well to really hard pruning. DS)

### Possible hedge plants?

**Betty Rymer NSW**

My husband has been on a cutting back session and to my horror had cut a Geraldton Wax back to hard wood. I was sure it would die but no, after a couple of weeks little green shoots are appearing from the woody stems. I'm so pleased as it is not that easy to grow in Sydney except in the sandy soils. *Leptospermumpolygalifolium* 'Cardwell' is beautiful when dwarf and mine grows up and really becomes a standard shrub to a couple of metres. I then get the saw and cut it back to ground level and off we go again, repeating the process.

### A new and different GDSG Project?

**Barbara Buchanan Vic**

After writing the comment above, Barbara Buchanan noticed that the current issue of Australian Horticulture has two ads (with colourful photos) for dwarf Lilly pillies. "Blaze' grows no bigger than 150cm, has fine foliage and compact bushy growth, can be pruned to any shape so is perfect for hedges, topiary and borders. A tough native, disease resistant, responds well to regular pruning and also provides luscious bush tucker." Claimed to be the 'True Dwarf Lilly Pilly'. Local supplier Faceys, Cranbourne.

Then there is 'Lillyput', the 'Classic Dwarf Lilly Pilly'. Grows 1.5 - 2m full sun or light shade, naturally dense growth, white flowers followed by edible pink berries, magnificent garden specimen, beautiful tub plant, can be pruned to a variety of shapes, ideal hedge plant, grows vigorously and easily pruned for the formal garden., a proven performer in all environments from Cairns to Perth - shaping up to be the pruning plant of the 1990s. P.V.R. local supplier Warner Nurseries, Burwood.

Barbara asks if it's worth getting a batch wholesale to be spread around the group for testing as a replacement for Box. She predicts 'This is the way replacements of exotics for garden design will happen - selection of special forms of (unlikely) species. What about a real slender pencil to replace the Italian cypress ? I've been looking for years.'

*Are members interested in participating in this new and different GDSG Project? If so, please contact me. DS*

### Plant combinations

**Cherree Densley Vic**

Driving to a meeting in February, I observed a wonderful plant combination near Barwon Heads, Vic. In full flower was a floriferous dark red *Eucalyptus ficifolia* and in front of this an *Acacia balleyana* 'purpurea' - not flowering of course at this time of year. The combination of dark red and purple was outstanding - certainly very trendy too. Falling into the small (or medium) tree category, this could be an ideal roadside planting or used in windbreaks or shelter planting.

In my own garden here in Killarney (February), where daisies take the eye in late summer, it was a total surprise to see an unplanned corner of the garden 'come to life' with *Melaleuca nesophila* smothered in soft mauve pompoms blending so well with a *Banksia verticillata* in full flower. This banksia has tall prominent candles of golden-yellow flowers - gold and purple look special together. These two shrubs would fall into the tall shrubs category. This melaleuca is enjoying its best flowering for many years and is one used in this district in very harsh conditions, even in pure sand coping with the full force of sea winds as a wind break on the Port Fairy Golf Course. The banksia suits our conditions extremely well. It is reliable and fast growing, has neat green foliage and a heavy, if somewhat short lived, flowering season.

I was asked by the Council of the RAOU (Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union) if I would design a small front garden for their new headquarters for Bird Research in Camberwell (Melbourne). There were volunteers for planting and also for watering until the plants had settled in. Soil level was raised a little throughout and soil mounded to 0.5m.

The main criteria for selection of plants (not in particular order of priority) were:

- # hardiness (H) - the site is on the south side of the building, exposed to wind and open to the footpath and a busy street
- # indigenous (i) - where possible (though, in the end, not very many plants were indigenous)
- # bird-attracting (or useful for birds) (B) - an obvious one, to encourage use of such plants in gardens  
(The actual usefulness of the last two are limited by the current comparative isolation of this garden.)
- # foliage (F) interest and form (f) - to look pleasant all year round
- # colour (C) - to go with the dominant terracotta/rust colour of both one wall and the large RAOU logo
- # various heights to suit aspects of the facade, eg screening the view of road & traffic from 'one-way' windows but not blocking light, able to be pruned (P) if necessary (next to the footpath)
- # a reasonable variety of plants, for interest and to satisfy the above criteria

These are the plants chosen and the attributes which were the main reasons for their inclusion. (To me, all have attractive foliage, so I've just noted foliage for a few which are very special.) They are numbered as on the plan.

Trees 1. Eucalyptus leucoxydon: medium size, i, B, cream-white (& lots of character)

Large shrubs (small trees?) (>3m)

2A. Banksia spinulosa: i, B, C golden flower-heads (& lots of character)

2B. Baeckea virgata: H, P, B (butterfly, insect), white

3. Melaleuca lateritia: P, B, light green F, C orange-red

4. Correa lawrenciana: shade-tolerant, P, B, C cream/green

Small shrubs (1m) 5. Correa bauerlenii: H, shade-tolerant, P, V, F, C green

6. Chorizema cordatum: H, shade-tolerant, a scrambler, B, C orange & deep pink

7. Grevillea rosmarinifolia: i, prickly foliage for bird shelter, B, C cream/lime green

8. Correa pulchella: B, C orange-red

9. C. reflexa: i, B, C clear red & green

Low shrubs/aroundcovers (<0.5m)

10. Baeckea virgata 'Dwarf': Ff, H, B (butterfly, insect), white

11. Lasiopetalum macrophyllum: F with C rusty tones

12. Homoranthus flavescens: Ff, C pale yellow-green

13. Austromyrtus dulcis: F with C reddish tones, white

14. Spyridium parvifolium (prostrate): Ff, pale bracts

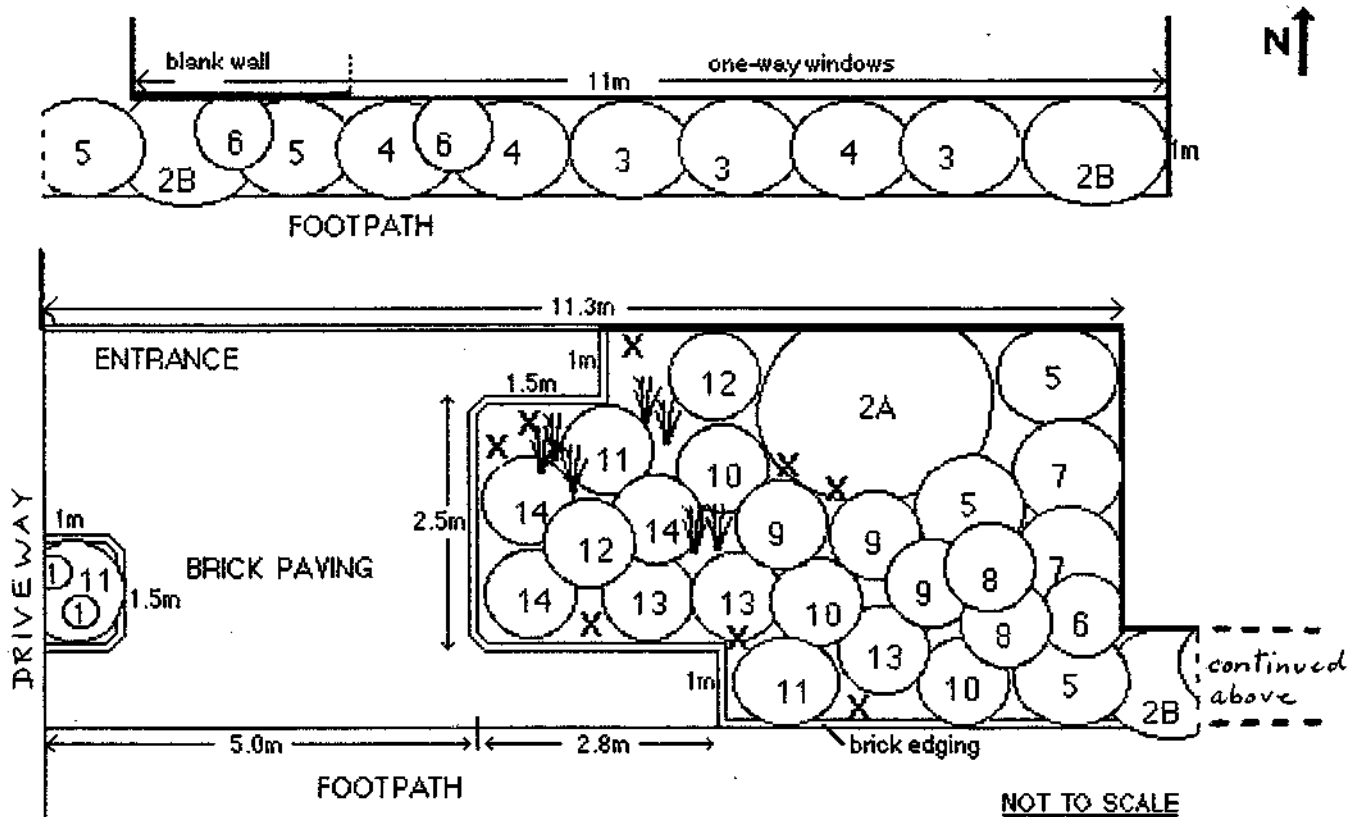
X. Brachyscome multifida (white)! (but not this form?), B (butterfly), white

X. Rhodanthe anthemoides: F, B (butterfly), white

Accent plant . Anigozanthos 'Bush Ochre': f, B, C orange-red

Note: If one of the small shrubs or groundcovers does not thrive, it would be replaced by more plants of another species already in use, increasing repetition; for the anigozanthos, however, one species of lomandra (or poa) instead.

**Plan**



## WHAT'S NEW?

This is the first of a new section to bring us up to date with recently released plants, gardening tools, computer programs (please specify PC or Mac), books etc and particularly and especially your own ingenious inventions and labour-saving ideas. To start us off:

Paul Thompson reports of many interesting plants undergoing trials at Facey's Nursery, Cranbourne, Vic. These include an absolutely prostrate syzygium, a compact lophostemon which forms a spherical shape, and a very floriferous hardenbergia suitable for hanging baskets. These are not yet available but they did release in March, 1995, *Syzygium australe* 'Blaze', which is dwarf (up to 1.5m), compact, and suitable for topiary, hedges, borders and tubs. Its foliage colour varies according to temperature, from green through bronze to a fiery red. And its fruit is edible!

Please send your contributions to: **Linda Floyd,**

### **Sydney news**

Gordon Rowland has recently resigned his position as leader of the Sydney group due to increased pressure of work. Many thanks to Gordon for his valuable contribution and all his work for the GDSG during his time as leader.

**Jo Hambrett** has volunteered to take over this role and would welcome your suggestions and ideas.

Her address is

**Sydney meetings** -1995 dates and suggested venues - please contact Jo Hambrett for further information.

Sunday 14 May: Mount Annan Botanic Gardens

26 or 27 August: Possibly Mount Annan Botanic Gardens

Sat & Sun 12 & 13 August 1995 Wildflower Festival at the Nursery Industry Association, 344 Annangrove Road, Rouse Hill. Further information: Duicie Buddee,

*I'll be visiting NSW in early spring and speaking at meetings while I'm there. Talks at two SGAP meetings will be presentations, with slides, on 'Garden design with Australian plants'. I hope some of you may be able to attend one of these SGAP meetings and also our GDSG one (which will not be a formal talk). Their dates will be:-*

Wed 6 September 8pm: Newcastle Group of SGAP, at the Shortland Wetlands Centre, Sandgate Rd, Shortland.

Fri 8 Sept 8pm: North Shore Group of SGAP, at Willow Park Community Centre, 25 Edgeworth David Ave, Hornsby.

Saturday 9 Sept: GDSG meeting at 3 pm at Gordon Rowland's place, *This will be my first, informal meeting with Sydney members and I'll look forward very much to seeing you there if you can come. Diana Snape*

### **Thoughts from our new NSW leader, Jo Hambrett** (extracts from a letter)

The Newsletters cause me much reflection and philosophizing. Geoff Simmon's articles are always enjoyable; I too struggle with the problem of finding suitable inanimate structures with which to decorate a modern Australian garden. Were there a much larger bank balance I would unhesitatingly patronize any number of our talented artisans who work with stone, metal, clay or wood; unfortunately for the impecunious gardener it's back to birdbaths, sundials, fountains and seats, all with a distinctly European or Asian look to them. Janet Woodruff's article "Identity" (NL 7, Nov 94) served to remind me that a large part of an individual's response to art is initially instinctive rather than intellectual, ie what memories, feelings does it stir within them. It is very important that one approaches garden design with this (as well as a myriad of other things!) in mind, as creating a great garden is surely about creating a work of art.

It is important that the GDSG apply itself to 'cottage' and formal design concepts with Australian plants as it is these types of designs which contain particular application to inner city and suburban gardens where, for a variety of reasons, a bushscape look is not wanted, if our plants can perform in these areas and gain exposure to the general public at the cutting edge (so to speak!) of some design trends then maybe, one day, 'westringia' will roll off the popular tongue as glibly as 'azalea' does now. I think we should be quite radical with training Australian plants as well - see 'Training plants' by Michael Looker (NL 8 Feb '95) - topiared angophoras, pleached White Cedars, hedged Lilly Pillies, westringia, pittosporum, etc. One would hope that some of our plants will show that they can stand the rough and tumble the exotics have been copping (or should I say coppicing?) for years. I would like to commend the beautifully written article by Mirabel Osier in the Autumn 1992 Hortus where, in the U.K., she tries to give her 12 *Eucalyptus gunnii* "the Gallic treatment" to achieve "airy spheres no taller than 4 feet (1.2 m) high, ethereal and beautiful".

Of course, a huge added bonus of using Australian plants in a garden design in smaller areas is that, with the addition of some fresh water, it automatically will support a mini native ecosystem and thus truly green our cities and suburbs. The trick will be to win converts by "show me" rather than "tell me", ie show me that these plants are - strong, sturdy and reliable; - fragrant, longlived, versatile; and (hardest of all) show me great gardens of predominantly Australian plants. Whilst decrying our horticultural cringe I do think we have to guard against an "all or nothing", "us and them" approach as well. The juxtaposition of aspects such as local character, a sense of place or 'genius loci' and cultural heritage can be artistically and environmentally valid. I do think it gives our cause(?) a much broader base from which to work if we can demonstrate exotic plants blending and harmonizing within a predominantly native garden framework.

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i think it is imperative that we, as a group, address our minds to the thoughts and writings of other gardeners and designers, especially those not of the same opinion and mindset as most of us. . . . Being a native plant gardener/enthusiast is not, I have learnt, for the faint hearted. . . . Today however, homeward bound, I drove along a valley floor. On the left, the river fringed with mangoes and long tressed bog grass, snaked lazily by. On my right, rising quite steeply from it, the rugged sandstone slopes covered with thick tussocky Kangaroo Grass glistening in the dappled sunlight and greenly trembling in the long autumnal shadow cast by the small eucalypts balanced precariously up the slope. A glossy black coated wallaby stopped grazing long enough to watch me and hop slowly, higher up the hill. It is a great wish that I can somehow extract the peace, the spirit, the harmony of that scene and put them into my garden.

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**Melbourne meetings** *Please mark 1995 dates and venues in your calendar now!*

~~Evening meeting~~ on 30th March

About 60 members of the GDSG, SGAP and friends attended our first evening meeting in Melbourne and showed great enthusiasm and interest in Jane Shepherd's talk 'influences acting on Australian garden design today'. I hope to include a report or abstract of this talk in the next Newsletter. We plan to hold another evening meeting later in the year.

Meetings: first Sundays at 1.30 pm (planning), 2.30 pm (garden design); all members welcome for either or both parts.

Sunday ~~7 May~~ at Bev Hanson's

Sunday ~~4 June~~ at Wilma & Peter Garnham's

Sunday ~~2 July~~ at John Armstrong's

Sunday ~~6 August~~ at Diana Snape's :

**SGAP Melbourne Wildflower Show** Sat & Sun 12 & 13 August at the Ringwood Convention Centre. This will again include a GDSG display. Please contact Nicole Lenffer (ph (03)898 6170) or Diana Snape if you can help.

**ASGAP CONFERENCE** at Bailarat, Vic ~~23 - 29 September~~. Theme: 'The Brilliance of Australian Plants'.

Mon 23 'in the Australian Garden'; Wed The Local Environment' & Fri 29 'People Power/ Your Society'. Tues 24 & Thurs 26, tours of nearby areas. Pre- and post-Conference tours are available. Register by July (by June for the tours).

Enquiries /payments to Paul Kennedy, (until May '95).

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**New members** ("professional qualifications &/or practice) Welcome to our Study Group to all new members from four different States - it's particularly good to see more members from W.A.:-

Mark Burns

Karen Clarke

Steve Fielke

Shirley Fisher

Linda Green

Julie Jones

Wendy McClelland

Allan & Judy McKechnie

Barbara Meyer

Peter Shannon

Julie Slifirski\*

Stuart Taylor

Change of address

Patrea Cook

Laurie Dunn

Anne Pye

Members who have already renewed for 95-96 *Thank you for early renewals.*

Joan Barrett, Bev Courtney, Mary & Brian Dacy, Cherree Densley, Laurie Dunn, Grahame Durbidge, Wendy & David Evans, Wilma & Peter Garnham, Ron Gornall, Colleen Keena, John Knight, Danie Ondinea, Gordon Rowland, Betty Rymer, Geoff Simmons, Rosalind Smallwood, Diana Snape, Spencer Wilson

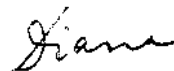
**Next Newsletter** (due August 95)

Main theme - Australian wildf lower gardens (or Australian flower gardens or cottage gardens if you prefer).

Please send in your ideas by 30 June (earlier if possible) for the next Newsletter, or else just any time. I think members generally like having a theme for each Newsletter. The November one will either be indigenous gardens OR formal gardens and plants, depending on the amount of interest shown.

Thank you to all members who have contributed to this Newsletter and apologies to those whose contributions have been held over, through lack of space and/or to fit in with a coming theme. I'll look forward to receiving your ideas on any aspect of garden design with Australian plants though, not just the main themes.

Best wishes



Diana Snape