



Seasonal Changes at Yarrawonga - Gardening in Harmony with Nature

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I have been pondering on the question of seasonal changes noted in the exchange with Glenys [N.L.43]. We have recently sold our house and garden of 29 years, but I can reflect on the many seasonal happenings of that rural garden where conditions were often quite harsh. People often commented on how interesting it was at times when little was to be seen in the way of flowers. A young garden depends more on floral display but as it ages trees and vistas become more important. Seasonal change was also evident in the comings and goings of wildlife and the presence or absence of water and rainfall. It seems to me that enjoying the changes in Australia has a lot to do with gardening in harmony with nature.

Spring: Floral displays changing month by month - drifts of pink and white everlastings with a touch of yellow ; the purples and pinks and whites of *Alyogyne huegii* and *Eremophila nivea*. Lovely this year after good rain at last.

Late Spring into Summer: *Brachychiton discolor* (and other brachychitons) and *Grevillea robusta* shedding leaves prior to their wonderful flowering time. Wildflowers in the garden and bush.

Summer: The first really hot day heralds the shedding of bark by the eucalypts to reveal lovely smooth white, pink and bronzy trunks. Flowers on the plants which revel in full sun, *Isotoma axillaris*, some daisies and *Hibiscus trionum* (if this is now declared an exotic its too bad because of its use in Summer, I'm sticking to it!) Many *Eremophila* and *Grevillea* spp. plus summer flowering acacias and eucalypts. The flowering heads of grasses in the dry grassland contrast with the cool greenery of the rainforest and woodland plants on the shaded southside of the house. A water feature and the birdlife are viewed from the house.

Autumn: A very dry time here. The silver and greys of the current season's growth on many eremophilas and saltbush spp. In fact new foliage on everything before winter when the cold and frosty weather dulls their appearance. Special flowers on *Eucalyptus erythrocorys* and *Callistemon recurvus* 'Tinaroo'. Saltbushes fruiting with subsequent bird activity. Weird and wonderful fungi appear as winter starts.

Winter: Winter rains mean new growth and greening of grasses, reemerging native lilies ,eg; *Arthropodum* and *Bulbine* spp., spreading seedlings of wildflowers such as *Pelargonium australe* and monitoring the progress of other self seeders - used or removed as required. New basal growth on brachyscomes and other plants which can finally be pruned after the long dry months. *Eucalyptus leucoxylon* and *E. sideroxylon* flowering - with frenetic bird activity. Winter flowering shrubs such as hardenbergas and acacias provide a 'wattle extravaganza' through to spring.

Study Group Leader's note: Reading Jan's evocative descriptions of her garden through the seasons reminded me again of how different our Australian gardens are throughout the continent. In Sydney our dry spring with its wild winds knocks the new growth around and dries the soil and pruning is late summer/autumn as is the rainfall. It would be great to hear from our Western Australian, South Australian and far north Queensland members on this topic. As gardeners interested in design we should be aware of not only the prevailing conditions but the seasonal responses of the various local plants - foliage, fruiting bodies, colour etc. so those features can be utilized in the design. Jan's point about the presence or absence of wildlife and water is a good one - worth thinking about in a design context also.