



BOTANIC NEWS

AUTUMN 1987

FROM THE PRESIDENT

May I extend to all members of the Friends my very best wishes for 1987. As you can see from the contents of this Newsletter your Committee has a most active program underway for the year. In terms of the Friends' organisation the Committee structure has been varied with an Executive Committee of your nine elected representatives meeting every other month, with the larger Liaison Committee plus various working parties meeting approximately monthly. This will ensure, we believe, that activities can be co-ordinated at the same time as policy matters are addressed and appropriate mechanisms put in place to assist the Friends during what looks to be yet another year of expansion.

Our shop is going from strength to strength under the successful management of Mrs Iona Christianson, assisted by an activities sub-committee convened by David Wilkinson and most ably complemented by our many hard-working volunteers. Congratulations to all concerned. We must always remember to encourage our various contacts to make use of the shop as a source of gifts for all occasions.

It is also expected that the Friends will become incorporated shortly. In this connection I do hope members attended on February 10 if that were possible but at any rate do try to be present at our Annual General Meeting on May 4.

Your Committee is encouraged by the support and enthusiasm of all members and we look forward to your help in significantly building from our existing 400 plus membership base so that by this time in 1988 we will have broken the 1,000 barrier!

Looking forward to an exciting year of events.

Frank Phillips

SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1987 ARE NOW DUE for everyone not holding 1987 membership. Please fill in the enclosed subscription form and return with your payment as soon as possible. Membership Card will be forwarded with A.G.M. notification, however should you wish to receive your card immediately please include stamped, self-addressed envelope with your payment.

CAN YOU HELP?

Would you like to search for information on the Botanic Gardens at the Public Records Office, Laverton? If so, please contact Peter Lumley on 63 9424.

MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES 1987

HERB LUNCHEON

Wednesday March 4, 11.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. at Garden House, the home of the Director, Dr and Mrs David Churchill, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.

As advised in our Summer edition Mrs Ann Sandie, well-known herb specialist, speaker and caterer, is providing a Herb Luncheon with an informative talk on the uses of herbs to follow. Herbs, plants, fragrant sachets and herb vinegars may be purchased.

Admission:

Members & Guides \$10.00

Non-Members \$12.00

RSVP Friday February 27 to Ticket Secretary, Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, The National Herbarium of Victoria, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra 3141 with cheque/money order made payable to 'Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne', and enclosing stamped self-addressed envelope. (Numbers limited to 70).

RAIN FORESTS

Guest Speaker on Wednesday April 8 at 10.30 a.m. in the Herbarium Auditorium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra will be Mrs Kay Fairley, an enthusiastic and knowledgeable horticulturist and Voluntary Guide with the Gardens. Because of the large number of tropical trees in our Gardens Kay has become very interested and has devoted much time to the ecology of Rain Forests; she hopes to interest others as to why and how we all should be involved. This is a joint function with the Voluntary Guides.

Morning Tea will be served.

RSVP Monday April 6

Peg Gray 509 1052

Agnes Fulton 836 9183

Tickets at Door:

Members & Guides \$3.00

Non-Members \$4.00

OTWAY RANGES AND WESTERN DISTRICT GARDENS TOUR 1987

Four days: Saturday April 25 to Tuesday April 28.

This year the Friends' Autumn Gardens Tour combines one day in the Otway Ranges with three days looking at gardens in the Western District not seen on last year's trip. Overnight stops include one night in Camperdown and two nights in Hamilton. Ten gardens have been selected, each with a special point of interest and in most cases associated with an important historic house. We are very fortunate to have permission from the owners to make these visits and regard the occasion as a special privilege. In the Otways, Geoff Bielby (Conservation, Forests & Lands) will join the bus and guide us through Turton's Track, the experimental conifer plantation in Aire Valley and the rain forest at Melba Gully.

The gardens to be visited vary widely and include one attributed to Guilfoyle, 'Talindert' (Camperdown) and two to Edna Walling, 'Ardgarten' (Grassdale) and 'Narringal' (Wallinduc). 'Narrapumelap' (Wicklyffe) has been included although it is a derelict garden. The Hamilton Branch of the National Trust has decided to care for it because of its great historic interest and Dennis Belcher will be there to tell us of the plans for restoration. At 'Murndal' (Hamilton) very little formal garden remains but garden and landscape are one with many hundreds of acres planted with exotic trees. Different again is 'Lanark' (Bransholme), where garden and farm have been created by John Fenton, conservationist, on open gravel plains that formerly supported only a few spindly pines. Colourful country gardens much loved and well maintained include 'Bassett' (Bransholme), 'Koorong' (Streatham), 'Mt Myrtoon' (Mt Myrtoon) and 'Stony Point' (Darlington), the latter being largely a tree and shrub garden.

On Sunday April 26 a special dinner has been arranged at Alexandra House where members of the newly formed Friends of the Hamilton Botanic Gardens will join us for the evening.

The cost of the tour, including transport, is \$260.00 for twin share, single supplement an additional \$15.00 per night. Only ten single rooms are available. With the exception of dinner on the last evening of the trip all meals are included in the cost. The bus will leave the National Herbarium at 8.00 a.m. on Saturday April 25. Detailed notes on gardens to be visited will be provided.

The tour was booked out very quickly last year so do not be disappointed, mail your application early, with payment in full. Bring a friend if you wish but we suggest they join the Friends as priority will be given to members. *The closing date for bookings is March 20. (See enclosed booking form).* A detailed itinerary of the tour will be forwarded with your receipt.

Enquiries to:

Jenny Phillips

(054) 22 1496

Beth Higgs

850 5908

Golda Isaac

817 5640

(To avoid complications for our hard working office staff please do not include membership or other payments with your tour payment).

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE

Monday May 4 1987 at 8.00 p.m. in the Auditorium of the National Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.

Prior to commencement of the Meeting, between 7.00 p.m. and 8.00 p.m., Desserts, Coffee and Port will be served. Come and help us celebrate the important developments of the past year. We need your support to ensure our continued success.

RSVP Thursday April 30

Joan Nesbit 211 8979

Agnes Fulton 836 9183

Charge for refreshments:

Members & Guides \$5.00

Non-Members \$6.00



SOME FUTURE ACTIVITIES

'Spring on Kangaroo Island'.

Sunday September 20 to Sunday September 27, 1987.

Enjoy Spring on Kangaroo Island — fly to Adelaide on Sunday September 20, spend five days on Kangaroo Island, two and a half days in beautiful Adelaide. Return home on Sunday September 27. Approximate cost \$750, including transport, accommodation and most meals. Only 30 places available. Contact Lesley Clark — 277 3984 — for further details.

In August Bini Malcolm, an Oriental Rug consultant from Woollahra has kindly offered to talk to the Friends on Persian Gardens and Garden Carpets. Bini has travelled and lectured in many parts of the world and her talk will be extremely interesting. Details later.

Beth Higgs will review the 'Ikebana International' World Convention which she attended in Japan last October. Details to come.

PAST ACTIVITIES

Mount Macedon: as expected the visit in November to 'Hascombe', the home and garden of Sir Thomas and Lady Ramsay and 'Alton', the property of Mrs Shirley Nicholas was a joy, and of great interest to us all.

The State of the Gardens Seminar on November 22, chaired by Dame Elizabeth Murdoch with speakers from the Royal Botanic Gardens and Mr Nigel Lewis, proved of great interest, so much so that we are hoping to plan a similar one in the future.

Our Christmas Party on December 12 was an exceedingly happy and successful end of year activity and very much enjoyed by all who attended.

To those diverse people both Friends and otherwise who in so many ways helped to make the above events so successful we offer our sincere and grateful thanks for wonderful co-operation and assistance. A special thank you to Newmans Chocolates for the model of the Wm Tell Shelter and to Roy McNaught for the two Oak trees donated for the raffle at the Christmas Party.

THE FRIENDS' SHOP

We have had great fun this Summer in our new Shop with an increasing range of goods for sale and a constant stream of people through the open door. Most of our customers are visitors from interstate or overseas looking for small gifts which are related in some way to the Gardens or Victoria. Amongst items we are bringing into stock are new postcards and a selection of slides taken from photographs of the Gardens.

The shop is also a place where people come for information of all sorts about the Gardens and it is becoming evident that all the volunteers serving in the Shop need to keep well informed themselves! Since we opened in November the Shop has been closed only on Christmas Day and nearly 50 members of the Friends have worked in it. A day in the Shop can be strenuous but is always interesting and one meets so many people from all over the world.

Remember that currently financial members of the Friends and of the Plant Craft Cottage, and staff of the Gardens and Herbarium receive a 10% discount on purchases amounting to \$20 or more. The Shop is open 7 days a week, between 10.30 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. Telephone 820 1125.

Iona Christianson
Manager

The Shop is situated by the Kiosk in a most attractive setting. A delight to visit and a must for all members seeking beautiful gifts reminiscent of our beautiful Gardens.



Ginkgo biloba —
Maidenhair tree

SPECIAL BENEFITS TO FRIENDS

Fryer's Nursery, 589 Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn, Idaho Nurseries, 410 Waverley Road, East Malvern, and The Arts Bookshop, 1067 High Street, Armadale offer special discounts to Friends on production of their current Membership Card.

AUTUMN HIGHLIGHTS IN THE GARDENS

Although the autumn tonings of deciduous trees in Melbourne are not as spectacular as those in the Dandenongs or at Mount Macedon, the Royal Botanic Gardens is still lovely at this time of the year. The Oak Lawn trees with their reds, oranges and yellows are a central attraction. Look also for the enormous *Liquidambar styraciflua* next to the large *Quercus canariensis*, Algerian Oak, planted by Lady Loch nearly 100 years ago. There is a second large Liquidambar on the Western Lawn and another huge Algerian Oak at the entrance to the Director's House. That one was planted by William Guilfoyle when he became the Director of the Gardens in 1873. The Algerian Oaks will retain their yellow autumn leaves right through until Spring. A little way down the path is a lovely *Zelkova serrata*, Japanese Zelkova which colours bright yellow.



Liquidambar styraciflua —
Liquidambar

As you take the left-hand fork down to the Fern Gully, you will pass the crimson coloured *Parrotia persica*. Around the other side of that bed are several Japanese maples, again with brilliant autumn foliage. Nearby in the Magnolia Bed is a golden coloured *Ginkgo biloba*, Maidenhair Tree. This specimen is a female and produces vile smelling fruit similar in appearance to apricots. However in parts of Asia the fruit kernels are considered to be delicacies.

While many of the northern hemisphere plants are losing their leaves, some of the Australian plants are coming into flower at this time of the year and so the Australian Border is another interesting area to explore. For a complete contrast the Grey Garden, near the Temple of the Winds, is also worth a visit in the next few months. There, silver and grey foliated plants are shown to advantage.

Eve Almond
Interpretations Officer

'The Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne has been formed to stimulate further interest in the Gardens and National Herbarium and to support and assist them whenever possible.'