



BOTANIC NEWS

AUTUMN 1992

FROM THE PRESIDENT

On each gate of the Gardens is a Planning Permit Application to Melbourne City Council publicly advertising the proposed alterations and additions to the Kiosk. A permit is being sought by the lessee O'Brien's Catering, to enlarge and alter the existing building to the betterment of serving food and refreshments to the Public. The drawings can be inspected at the Melbourne City Council Planning Office. Our Friends' Shop is affected in that it is enlarged to about half as much floor area again as we now have, and is to be moved to a more central position between take-away and restaurant – still looking west out over the lake.

The Financial Crisis on the front page of *The Age*, Thursday 13 February, has brought to a head the miserable state of neglect in which the Gardens are at present. I was speaking on the 3LO Ranald MacDonald program on that day and was very aware from the talk-back callers that Victorians are devoted to our Botanic Gardens and integrally involved in their future successful ongoing development in this Garden State.

With the seven board members of the Royal Botanic Gardens to be named this month and the Board to take control of the Gardens on 1 July 1992, the funding issue is absolutely critical. How can a Board be expected to run the Gardens successfully when the current management is so stretched in these straitened circumstances? It is not just the Botanic Gardens themselves but also the Cranbourne Gardens and the Government House Gardens which are all involved in this dilemma.

D. R. Wilkinson
President



Vanilla planifolia Vanilla Orchid

MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES

BOTANIC ART WORKSHOPS

10 March, 14 April, 12 May

We have 41 members enrolled for the workshops this year, obviously a popular project. Workshop members will have the opportunity to exhibit their work in an Exhibition of Botanic Art to be held in the Herbarium Hall 10 - 27 September 1992.

Enquiries to Louise Coronel - 827 5910.

NORTH BORNEO TOUR

11 March to 1 April

These fortunate 'trippers' will be packed and ready to go. We hope to hear about their trip later on.

HISTORIC FILMS

18 March, 13 April

The entire series of the highly successful and remarkable historic film depicting a walled 'Victorian kitchen garden' set in Chiltern, Berks., U.K. is available to the Friends. The first series of the set will be shown on Wednesday 18 March at 8.00 pm at Merton Hall, 86 Anderson Street, South Yarra.

The second series will be shown on Monday 13 April at Merton Hall at 8.00 pm.

The last two series will be shown later this year.

Supper will be served.

Members: \$5.00 (per series) Others: \$8.00 (per series)

RSVP: First series 16 March) on enclosed booking form.
 Second series 10 April)

Please note that numbers will be limited to 120.

PENINSULA DAY TRIP

Tuesday 24 March 1992

A bus trip to the garden of Shipway Lodge at Sorrento. Special access to Romantic Cottage Gardens Nursery, Dromana and a visit to Solace at Somerville.

The extensive garden of Shipway Lodge is situated on the site of and includes the original Sullivan's Bakery which was built in 1875. The property was purchased by Alfred Bright in 1909. Today, the garden is immaculately presented by Primmy Bright whose choice of planting for the long mixed border, the orchard and the quality of the vegetable garden, are a delight to see. Morning tea will be served.

Graham Cook's Romantic Cottage Gardens Nursery has expanded rapidly throughout Australia over the past few years because of the demand for this selection of perennials and very interesting 'old' rose varieties. This is a lucky opportunity to gain access at this time of the year. Coffee will be available to enjoy with your B.Y.O lunch.

The entrance to Solace is dominated by huge cypress and pine trees which protect the delightful country garden that has been ever

expanding into the surrounding landscape due to the enthusiasm and tasteful choice of plants by the owner, Susan Banks.

Afternoon tea will be available. Please bring a mug with your lunch.

Cost: \$18.00 Members Others: \$20.00

Departure: 8.30 am sharp
from the National Gallery of Victoria, St. Kilda Road

Return: we hope to return to the National Gallery at 5.00 pm.

RSVP: on enclosed Booking Form by 17 March.

GROWING FRIENDS' AUTUMN PLANT SALE

The Growing Friends are offering some unusual perennials, also Hydrangeas and bulbs at their Autumn Sale on **Saturday 28 March** from **10.30 am to 3.00 pm** on the lawns of the Astronomer's Residence, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.

Those who have purchased plants at the October Sale will appreciate this opportunity to buy more of the interesting plants offered by the Growing Friends – just in time for Autumn planting.

Friends are reminded that sales continue at the nursery every Friday between 10.00 am and 12.00 noon.



Dampiera stricta

DAY GARDEN TOUR TO YEA

Tuesday 7 April 1992

The Melbourne Friends are planning to join forces with the Benalla Friends on a one day tour in the Yea area visiting three private gardens.

The early start is necessary as the first garden 'Seaton Vale' is two hours' drive from Melbourne but we are privileged to have the opportunity to see this garden along with the other two. 'Seaton Vale' (Yarck) owned by Susie and Ross Sutherland is beautifully described by Sarah Guest in her recent book *Gardens of Australia*.

The garden includes a maze of small paths heavily planted with trees, shrubs, perennials and bulbs with a large lawn sloping away from the house to a ha-ha. Merging beautifully into the landscape it has a view across the valley to the Strathbogies.

'Murrundindi Station' is the next stop. An historic garden dating back to 1881 with some sections classified by the National Trust. Owned by David and Joan Adams it is recorded by Peter Watts in his book *Historic Gardens of Victoria*. Broad views of natural landscape provide a stunning contrast to the clipped hedges and colourful beds. A group of oaks approximately the same age as the house is spectacular, the huge canopy extending over the lawn and original swimming pool. The Switzerland Ranges and Mt. Broughton are in the background. The garden is traversed by inviting pathways with a vine walk leading down to the hedged enclosed Rose Garden.

The final garden 'Erimbali', Glenbourn, owned by Prue and Jim Plowman, is a charming country garden with many English exotics in an Australian setting. It is screened at the entrance by a group of English Oaks underplanted with a medley of shade loving plants. It is essentially a friendly family garden with secluded garden seats and a selection of unusual plants.

Cost: \$28.00 Members \$30.00 Non members

Includes transport, entry to the three gardens and morning and afternoon teas. Lunch is BYO but the tea/coffee will be provided. Bring your own mug!

Departure: 8.15 am sharp
from the front of the National Gallery of Victoria,
St. Kilda Road

Return: Approximately 6.00 pm

RSVP: on enclosed booking form by 1 April

AFTERNOON TEA WITH FRIENDS OF THE RBG, SYDNEY

Sunday 12 April at 2.45 pm

The Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, will be touring country Victoria in April. After a guided walk conducted by the Melbourne Voluntary Guides, the Sydney Friends will join Melbourne Friends for afternoon tea at 2.45 pm at the Astronomer's Residence, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.

If you can join us, please contact Margaret MacGregor at the Friends' Office, telephone 650 6398.

HISTORIC FILM

Monday 13 April

Second series to be shown at Merton Hall, 86 Anderson Street, South Yarra at 8.00 pm.

See above for details.

AUTUMN TOUR WITH DR JIM WILLIS

Friday 24 - Tuesday 28 April 1992

This five-day tour with Dr Jim Willis should be fascinating when historic places such as Beechworth, Chiltern, Rutherglen and Yackandandah will be explored.

A comfortable motel in Beechworth will be headquarters and autumn colours should be spectacular. Visits to various places such as Bright, Harrietville, the Albury Botanic Gardens, private gardens, several wineries and a cruise on the Goulburn River are included in the itinerary.

Only a few vacancies exist and preference is taken on order of receipt. Numbers limited to 24. Cost: \$450 twin share, \$522 single (all inclusive), deposit \$100 now, balance by 31 March.

For further enquiries - Lesley Clark 807 3984

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, SYDNEY

Mount Tomah, Mount Annan

Members of the staff of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne – Stephen Forbes, M.E. Olifent, M. Burston, R. Hewatt, T. Smyth, S. Glissman-Gough, C. Pratt – will speak of their recent visit to the Sydney Botanic Gardens, to Mount Tomah, to Mount Annan and also to Macarthur's Camden Park.

The Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne are proud to have given financial support for this project for staff members of our beautiful Gardens; we look forward to hearing of their impressions and of the various aspects of these interesting, historical and fascinating gardens. Slides will illustrate the talks.

Tuesday 12 May at 8.00 pm at the National Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.

Members: \$4.00 Others: \$6.00

RSVP: by 8 May on enclosed booking form.

FILM/LUNCHEONS

Our Film Selection "Committee" – Lesley Clark and Judy Woodful, attended a preview of films and have chosen two for the Friends.

The first one is "City Slickers", a comedy starring Billy Crystal. Three friends from New York venture to the wild west to join a cattle drive as a remedy to mid-life crisis in this hilarious contemporary comedy.

The film commences at 11.00 am, followed by lunch (sandwiches, cake and tea/coffee) at approximately 1.00 am.

Tuesday 19 May at the Trak Cinema, 445 Toorak Road, Toorak (Melway Map 2M 6E). Parking is available in Tintern Avenue (unrestricted) or in Safeways Car Park.

Members: \$11.00 Others: \$12.00

RSVP: by 14 May on enclosed booking form

"GARDENS OF EUROPE '92"

Tour is fully booked – mostly by Sydney Friends.

"THE GARDEN FESTIVALS OF EUROPE TOUR" 1-22 MAY 1992

Colin Campbell, the noted Australian gardening authority is conducting this tour. The tour takes you to Holland to visit the famous flower markets and nurseries and, of course, to the World Horticultural Exhibition "FLORIADE '92" held only once every 10 years. After one week in Holland the tour then moves on to England where many wonderful gardens are visited over the next two weeks.

If interested please contact the Friends' Office 650 6398 for a brochure.

WEEKEND SEMINAR – PROVINCIAL GARDENS

23-24 May 1992

At the highly successful inaugural weekend seminar for Friends of Victorian Botanic Gardens and other support groups in May 1991, it was decided that there should be another such seminar this year. It will be held over the weekend 23-24 May based at the National Herbarium.

We hope that Melbourne Friends will show support by attending some, if not all, of the sessions. For further details please see the enclosed letter.

THE "GREY GARDEN"

Dr Roger Spencer, Thursday 18 June at 10.15 am

We are delighted that Dr Roger Spencer, Horticultural Botanist at the National Herbarium, has agreed to speak to Friends about Grey Gardens and in particular the Grey Garden in our Royal Botanic Gardens. Roger explains that the Grey Garden is a way of coping with difficult sites. Roger began working at the RBG 18 years ago as a gardener in the Conifer Section and he experimented with the shallow and impoverished soil around the Temple of the Winds and the Grey Garden is the result. The Grey Garden is situated in an exposed, hot and dry area, with poor soil which holds very little water or nutrients. Grey foliated plants adapt readily to such an area and are termed "xerophytes". This type of garden could be the solution to such a problem area in your own garden.

For those members who wish to see the Grey Garden, the Voluntary Guides will conduct them to it after Roger's talk.

Members: \$4.00 Others: \$5.00

RSVP: by 16 June on enclosed booking form

FILM/LUNCHEON

Monday 24 August at 11.00 am.

Trak Cinema, 445 Toorak Road, Toorak (Melway Map 2M 6E)

The second film chosen by Lesley and Judy is: "The Doctor" with William Hurt

Further details in the *Winter Botanic news*.

BOTANIC ART EXHIBITION

10 September - 27 September 1992

The Exhibition will coincide with the Melbourne Festival of Arts.

The artists who will be exhibiting, professional and amateur alike, have all had association with the "Friends' Botanic Art Workshops".

Further information in the *Winter Botanic news*.

THE CAPE PROVINCE & NAMIBIA NATURAL HISTORY TOUR

As there has not been a lot of interest shown in this proposed tour for September/October this year, the Activities Committee has agreed to postpone it for the time being.

We hope that a tour to the botanical paradise of the Cape Province and Namibia can be arranged in the near future.

THE GRAMPIANS & LITTLE DESERT IN THE SPRING

Thursday 1 October - Wednesday 7 October 1992

This seven day tour in the height of the Spring Season takes us to The Grampians where we have the great privilege of being guided by Rodger and Gwen Elliott, both specialists in Australian Flora. We stay in comfortable motel accommodation in Hall's Gap.

On the fifth day we proceed to Whimpey's Little Desert Lodge near Nhill where Whimpey and his staff will show us, proudly, their part of the world.

As well as Whimpey's famous Mallee Fowl he now has rare silky desert mice and sugar gliders which we will see.

Numbers are limited to 24.

Twin Share: \$625.00

Single : \$785.00

The above amounts are all inclusive. Note that at the Little Desert Lodge there are only four single rooms available. Reservations are in order of application. Deposit of \$100 and balance by 1 September 1992.

Further information from Lesley Clark 809 3984

RECENT ACTIVITIES

Botanic Art Workshops 13 December.

Christmas Dinner at Kiosk in RBG 13 December.

Peninsula Day Trip 10 January – The Briars-Mount Martha, Elgee Park-Merricks North & Dame Elisabeth's 'Cruden Farm' at Langwarren

Wind in the Willows in the Gardens 20 January.

Japan Revisited – Beth Higgs & de Lacy Lowe 6 February.

Botanic Art Workshops 11 February.

A Midsummer Night's Dream 17 February.

Simpson Desert & Georgina Channels – Helen Aston 19 February.

My Kind of Garden – David Hicks 20 February.

North West Tasmania Tour 22 February to 1 March.

CHRISTMAS DINNER 1991

Would the winner of the luncheon for two to the value of \$30 at the St. Kilda Pier Kiosk please contact the Friends' Office (650 6398). The Friends wish to extend their warm thanks to the donors of the raffle prizes:-

City Gardener	The Arts Bookshop
Kevin O'Neill, Florist	Lynch's Restaurant
Coonara Springs Restaurant	Rae Anderson
The Cafe Opera	Royal Botanic Gardens Tea-room
The St. Kilda Pier Kiosk	The Royal Botanic Gardens
Growing Friends	Friends' Shop

PERSONAL

The Friends lost by death, two loyal and very involved members.

Mrs Edna Mendelsohn was a founding member of the Friends and will be sadly missed. We extend to her family our sincere sympathy.

Mr Roy McNaught who died on 6th February this year was also a founding member. We shall miss him, especially on our Tours. To Hazel and other family members the Friends offer their deep sympathy.

DR JIM WILLIS

Friends are delighted to learn that our Dr Jim Willis was awarded Life Membership of the Australian Conservation Foundation in December last. Congratulations Jim!

FRIENDS' SHOP

The Friends' Shop is having a "little sale" of selected items on 7, 8, 9 March – the long weekend.

Two new Royal Botanic Gardens T-shirts will be on sale for the first time about now.

We thought you might like to know that the Shop has been trading exceptionally well – January 1992 was the third best earning month since the Shop opened.

Just a reminder that the hours of business are 10.30 am to 4.30 pm on weekdays and 10.30 am to after 5.00 pm at weekends.

QUESTIONNAIRE

The Activities Sub-Committee would like to thank those members of the Friends who completed and returned the questionnaire. We appreciated suggestions for activities in the future and were encouraged by the overall positive response. Thank you.

SPECIAL BENEFITS TO FRIENDS

The following nurseries and bookshop very kindly offer special discounts to Friends. *It must be pointed out, however, that current membership cards must be shown in order to receive these discounts.*

Fryers' Nursery 589 Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn	5% off plants only
Idaho Nurseries 410 Waverley Road, East Malvern	10% off plants only
The Gardener's Bulleen Nursery, 105 Bridge Street, Bulleen	10% off potted plants 5% off seedlings
Town and County Gardens 1280 Malvern Road, Malvern	10% off everything
The Arts Bookshop 1067 High Street, Armadale.	

FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

The Gardens and Herbarium were sad to farewell Peter Lumley who resigned from the Gardens in January of this year. Peter worked for the Gardens for 15 years contributing enormously to its direction, planning and rejuvenation. Some of the major facets of the Gardens' operations that he had involvement in were: the records system (which he helped to set up in a computerised form), writing of publications such as "The Elms" and "Plant Names", research into plant genera such as *Callistemon*, the identification of cultivated plants, the Ornamental Plant Collections Association, the Growing Friends, and, of course, the planning and developing of the Cranbourne Botanic Garden. His interest in and knowledge of the Gardens' history has also been invaluable and has helped to establish the Gardens as a centre for garden history. Peter's deep understanding and extensive knowledge of plants will be greatly missed as will his gentle but witty sense of humour. The Gardens and Herbarium wish him well in all his future pursuits.

Several areas of the Gardens are currently undergoing changes. Landscape work on the Californian Garden opposite the Species Rose Garden is now underway, and should be complete by the end of April. This garden will eventually display plants from several different Californian habitats – hot dry areas, cool moist forest and woodland areas. Plants from the Channel Islands off the coast of California will also be represented. The initial landscape work is being sponsored by Dame Elisabeth Murdoch.

A sprinkler and misting system has just been installed at the western end of the Australian Border. Funded by the Friends, this watering system will provide the best conditions for moisture-loving Tasmanian plants to grow in this area. Plantings have begun and will continue throughout autumn.

Towards the end of autumn work will begin on a new "xeriscape" garden to be placed next to the present cycad bed. This new bed will display readily available garden plants which have low water requirements. Melbourne Water initiated the project and is donating \$50,000 towards it over 1992-93.

The Gardens' Education Officer, Marion van Gameren has just completed a new V.C.E. Biology Kit for the Cranbourne Botanic Garden. It focuses on the 200 hectares of natural bushland at Cranbourne and contains field-work activities and materials for use at the site. Although written for Biology, much of the kit has relevance to Environmental Studies and Geography. An excellent resource for teachers, it is available now from the Visitor Centre. It has been funded by the Maud Gibson Trust.

The Cranbourne Friends group is going well and has had several successful activity days. The next event on 14 March will be a special evening walk focusing on the animal and bird life of the area. Melbourne Friends are welcome to attend and further activities will be organised after the first annual general meeting to be held in late March.

Roslyn Semler
Public Programs

This brochure is printed on recycled paper.

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

Printed by Universal Printing Services, 39-43 Stawell Street, North Melbourne 3051
Registered by Australia Post, Publication No. VBH 5419 ISSN 0817-550