BOTANIC NEWS

FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE INC.

AUTUMN 1993

FROM THE PRESIDENT

1992 was a great year for the Friends – much activity, excellent financial results, many enduring benefits donated to our superb Gardens – but above all, much enjoyment of mutual pleasures. Let's see if we can make 1993 even better!

For a start we have the 12 major projects being fully financed by the Herald/Sun Appeal. Some brief details of these are given elsewhere in this newsletter. The important thing is that they are already underway and the Gardens are feeling the benefit. The first major project to be completed is the Californian Garden, which will be officially opened on 4 March and named after its major sponsor, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch. Others are being planned in detail, and as you know the Friends have a direct hand in four of them.

Then we will see the first stage of the new watering system for the Gardens, and the rebuilding and enlargement of the Kiosk.

In the six months to 31 December 1992 contributions to the Friends' funds have included $14,500 from the Friends' Shop, $19,000 from the Botanical Illustrators, $20,000 from the Growing Friends and $9,000 raised by functions and tours. This income represents an enormous amount of voluntary time and effort, for which I thank many dedicated Friends. We have given a further $22,000 to the Gardens, making a grand total of $239,765 contributed by the Friends projects.

With a new Board and a Director, these are challenging and exciting times for our Gardens, in which the Friends will play a vital part. Our membership has now reached 1,216; let us aim at 2,000, with everyone making an effort to introduce an ever-growing number of supporters to a love and understanding of this great heritage of international fame and importance.

Sir Rupert Hamer

FROM THE BOARD

The Board has recently initiated the preparation of two plans which will guide many of our activities in the years ahead. One is the Royal Botanic Gardens' first Corporate Plan, an undertaking being led by Dr Jim Ross. This important document sets out our objectives and priorities for the next five years. It will deal with all aspects of our work, from research in the Herbarium to the management of the Gardens at South Yarra, further developments at Cranbourne, building up our information services, and strengthening our financial base. Ideas and comments on the contents of the plan are being sought from RBG staff and from support groups such as the Friends. The Board expects to finish the plan by June.

The second plan maps out in detail how the Gardens at South Yarra will be managed over the next 5-10 years. The plan recognises the need for careful rejuvenation of some of the older sections of the plantings, and builds on the Conservation Report received last year. This report identified key historical, cultural and scientific aspects of the Gardens which should be protected. The new masterplan will ensure that this happens, and that future developments are consistent with the overall objectives of the Gardens. A draft plan will be available for comment later in the year.

The Board has also been involved in a variety of other matters. We have commissioned an investigation of how the Observatory site and its associated buildings, including the former Director's Residence, can be used in the future, while bearing in mind their considerable historical importance.
The Board is most concerned about proposals to construct a four-lane arterial road along the northern boundary of the Cranbourne Botanic Gardens. This road would affect the development of the Australian Garden at Cranbourne, as well as two of the major wetlands there. We are ensuring that we participate fully in all discussions and official enquiries relating to the siting of this road.

Finally, field trials are being conducted to test designs and equipment for the new automatic watering system. The unseasonally wet summer has not helped the trials, but we expect installation of the first section of the system to begin by May this year.

W.R.M. Irvine,
Chairman

REMINDER

Join us at the Herbarium on 4 March at 5.30pm for the naming of the Californian garden in honour of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch. See previous invitation for details.

AUTUMN ACTIVITIES

PLANT PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS: 9, 23 March; 6, 20 April; 4 May.

THE PLACE OF TREES & ARBORICULTURE IN A BOTANIC GARDEN

Dr Greg Moore, Principal of the Victorian College of Agriculture & Horticulture at Burnley Campus, will be our guest speaker in the Herbarium Hall, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra, Wednesday 17 March at 8.00 pm.

Dr Moore is well qualified to speak about trees. He wrote a PhD thesis on tree physiology and has published a book entitled 'Tree Care for the Home Gardener'.

Supper will be served.
Friends: $4.00 Others: $7.00
RSVP by 15 March on enclosed booking form.

GROWING FRIENDS PLANT SALES DAY

The Growing Friends are working very hard in the heat to achieve a good result at the Plant Sale on Saturday 20 March – 10am to 4pm.

Remember, your membership entitles you to come along to the Nursery any Friday morning to purchase plants – and so miss the crowds of Plant Sales Day.

Do look at the enclosed dodger – it lists some very special plants.

WESTERN DISTRICT GARDENS TOUR

Thursday 25 March to Sunday 28 March 1993
Visit wonderful gardens, galleries, historic places and meet other Friends' groups.
A few places remain for this exceptional tour. For full details please see our Summer Newsletter or ring either Margaret or Julie at the Friends' Office (03) 650 6398.

THE CANNING STOCK ROUTE – WESTERN AUSTRALIA
Helen Aston

Wednesday 31 March at 10.30am at the National Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.

Extending for nearly 1900 km from Wiluna to Halls Creek, and crossing varied terrain including the sand ridges of the Great Sandy Desert, the Canning Stock Route provides a stimulating experience in both human and natural history and in scenic appeal. As an active and long-time ornithologist, botanist, traveller and public speaker, Helen Aston will introduce the Route and present highlights of a five-week camping trip with naturalists last year, illustrated with colour transparencies.

After a long and distinguished career of 34 years as a botanist with the National Herbarium of Victoria, Helen Aston retired in 1991. Over the previous few years the administrative duties of being Curator of the Herbarium had pushed her taxonomic and other interests to one side. Miss Aston welcomed the opportunity to relinquish these duties and is currently an Honorary Research Associate of the National Herbarium, where she spends most weeks continuing her aquatic plant research.

As members will recall, Miss Aston has spoken previously to Friends' groups on such subjects as "The Birds in the Royal Botanic Gardens" and "The Simpson Desert and Georgina Channel".

From previous experience this is an event not to be missed. Morning tea will be served.

Admission: Friends $4.00
Others: $6.00

RSVP by Monday 29 March on enclosed booking form.

ASSN OF FRIENDS OF BOTANIC GARDENS (VICTORIA) INC.

Week-end Seminar, 17 and 18 April 1993 in Ballarat.
See separate item for further details.

SYDNEY FRIENDS

Join the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, for a basket lunch on Monday 19 April at 12.30pm, between their walk with the Guides and their visit to Government House gardens.

The Sydney Friends are on an autumn tour of Victorian Gardens.

Lunch will be at the Astronomer's Residence, cost $7.00. RSVP by Monday 12 April on enclosed booking form.

GREVILLEA

Illustrated talk by Bob Makinson. Wednesday 21 April 8.00 pm in the National Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.

Melbourne University/ Miegunyah Press has just published this significant volume on Grevillea Proteaceae – the first definitive scientific survey of this genus for more than 100 years.

Fig. 23: *G. myosodes.*

This publication crowns a life's scientific endeavour by Don McGillivray, now retired from the National Herbarium of NSW.

Bob Makinson, Curator of the Herbarium at the Australian National Botanic Gardens in

Canberra, assisted the author as editor and compiler of this taxonomic revision. The Friends are most fortunate that he will visit Melbourne to speak to us about this landmark publication.

Grevillea is the third largest Australian flowering plant genus. In addition to more than 250 species that occur naturally throughout Australia, hundreds of artificial hybrids and cultivars have been developed. Details of 53 new species and 34 new subspecies are fully treated for the first time in this 480-page book, which contains more than 170 full colour photographs.

Books will be available on the night. The publishers are offering Friends a 10 per cent discount on the RRP of $225.00. (For a brochure about this special offer, please contact Tim Mitchell at Melbourne University Press, tel. 347 3455).

Supper will be served. Friends: $4.00 Others: $7.00
RSVP by 19 April on enclosed booking form

HYDROPONICS

Hydroponics is the art of growing plants without soil.

Dr Brian Hanger, formerly with the Department of Agriculture and currently a consultant to the hydroponic industry, will give an illustrated talk to the Friends on this so topical subject on Monday 26 April at 8.00pm at the National Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.

Dr Hanger is regarded as a hydroponics 'guru' and has attended many world conferences on the subject. His talk will precede our visit to the home of Dr & Mrs Struan Sutherland on 16 May where we will see a functioning hydroponic garden.
Supper will be served.
Admission: Friends $4.00 Others: $7.00
RSVP by Friday 23 April on enclosed booking form

GARDEN DESIGN USING AUSTRALIAN NATIVE PLANTS

Thursday 29 April 1993 at 8.00pm

at the National Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.

An illustrated talk by Diana Snape

Diana's interest in gardening goes back to her childhood and for a long time has focused on Australian plants. Recently she has travelled through the four south east Australian States and the ACT, visiting more than 50 native gardens and carrying out research. Thirty of these gardens are described and investigated in her beautiful, recently published book *Australian Native Gardens: Putting Visions into Practice.*

Initially little was known about the response of many plants to garden conditions, and native plant growers tended to give more attention to horticultural knowledge than to garden design. Large gardens such as the Royal Botanic Gardens, with ample space, did not experience the problems which exuberant growth often caused in small suburban gardens.

In the last 15 years a vast amount of knowledge about native species has become accessible, for example through the publication of the first five volumes of the Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants. An enormous range of possibilities is now open to gardeners using our native plants, and the special place of indigenous plants is becoming more widely recognised.

Supper will be served.
Admission: Friends $4.00 Others $7.00
RSVP by 27 April on enclosed booking form.

RBG Director Dr Philip Moors with Gardener Robert Hewat in the Nursery. Robert has been propagating rainforest material he collected from the wild in northern NSW and southern Queensland. Specimens such as the ones they are inspecting will be planted into the Rainforest Border within a few months.

VOLUNTEERS "THANK YOU" MORNING COFFEE

Wednesday 12 May at 10.30am Separate invitations.

BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATORS

Tuesday 18 May
10.30 am to mid-afternoon featuring Celia Rosser and *The Banksias* .
See separate item for details

Details of future activities are continued on page 6

BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATORS

Our 1993 programme will hopefully go some way towards catering for the enormous interest in the subject of botanical art.

Every three months we'll hold a meeting in the Herbarium Hall, open to all Friends, with speakers and an opportunity to show and view artists' work.

We are also offering a number of weekly classes for those wishing to develop their own skills in this art form.

Autumn Meeting. Tuesday 18 May 10.30am to mid afternoon.

Featuring ***CELIA ROSSER*** and ***'The Banksias'***
Many of you will have seen Celia's work exhibited in Melbourne. In September, her superb paintings for Vol. I and II of *'The Banksias'* will be exhibited at Kew Gardens in London. We will have a wonderful opportunity to hear and see how Celia approaches painting these masterworks. She is currently working on the illustrations for Volume III.

Artists of all levels are invited to show examples of their work in the afternoon; Celia is most interested to see this display. Work will be set out on benches so will need to be well protected and able to be handled, preferably in folios.

Morning coffee and afternoon tea will be provided but we request **BYO lunch.**

Cost: $5.00 members $12.00 non-members
RSVP by Friday 14 May on enclosed booking form.

CLASSES FOR BEGINNERS

Ten half-day workshops for beginners every Thursday for 10 weeks from 29 April to 1 July inclusive. In two groups of 12, with Mary Gregory 9.30am to 12 noon and Judy Roberts 1.00pm to 3.30pm.

Mary Gregory and **Judy Roberts** will continue with these weekly classes begun by Mary in March. Both these artists are experienced and highly regarded members of our group and we are thrilled they have this opportunity to pass on their expertise to others. Mary's work is particularly fine and sensitive, while Judy is renowned for painting the superb paeonies she grows commercially.

These workshops will include discussion on materials, and over the 10 weeks will concentrate on drawing from specimens and introduce the use of watercolours.

Materials to bring to the first class:

Pad or sheets of cartridge paper A4
1 each 2H, HB, B pencil
1 white eraser
1 Staedtler pencil sharpener

Cost: $150.00 for 10 workshops. BYO materials.
RSVP by 8 April on enclosed booking form.

All classes take place upstairs at the Astronomer's Residence, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.
Open to members of the Friends only.

WORKSHOPS WITH JENNY PHILLIPS

We are delighted to offer **two semesters** of **eight** half-day classes every Friday and Saturday with renowned botanical artist Jenny Phillips, now back from France.

These classes will cater for artists who wish to learn from Jenny's approach to pencil drawing, watercolour painting, perspective and composition in plant portraiture.

Jenny has exhibited since 1978, including a major exhibition presented by the Friends in 1986. She is the illustrator of T.R. Garnett's *Stumbling on Melons* and *A Gardener's Potpourri* and James Halliday's *Wine Atlas of Australia*. She is a winner of the National Print Award Gold Medal (1987).

Series A. From Friday 16 or Sat 17 April to 4/5 June
Series B. From Friday 11 or Sat 12 June to 30/31 July

Friday mornings from 9.30am to 12 noon.
Friday afternoons from 1.00pm to 3.30pm.
Saturday mornings from 10am to 1.00pm.

Materials to bring to first class:

pad or 6 sheets of butcher's paper/newsprint
1 each HB, 3B, 6B pencil
1 white eraser
Staedtler pencil sharpener
1 A4 spiral bound cartridge pad

Open to members of the Friends only.
Cost: $168.00 for 8 workshops. BYO materials.
RSVP: Series A by 30 March
Series B by 25 May on booking form.

Congratulations to our former tutor, Anita Barley, and her husband Richard (Acting Superintendent of the RBG) on the birth of Georgina in December. Anita has now resigned her position as Botanical Artist at the Herbarium, but hopes to rejoin **our** activities in the autumn.

ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF BOTANIC GARDENS (VICTORIA) INC.

During the Seminar on botanic gardens arranged by the Friends in May 1991 it was suggested that an 'umbrella' organisation be set up to represent Friends' groups throughout Victoria. The organisation's framework was approved during the May 1992 Seminar, and it was incorporated on 20 January 1993, under the name set out above. The inaugural committee members are: President – Philip Clingin (Ballarat), Vice-President – Margaret McOrist (Port Fairy), Secretary – Lawrence Cohn (Melbourne), Treasurer – David Taplin (Melbourne): other members – Philip Ayton (Melbourne), Neil Laird (Cranbourne), Jayne Salmon (Geelong) and Ethel Stephenson (Benalla).

1993 Seminar

The Association will hold a third Seminar, on 17 and 18 April 1993, at the Mid-City Motor Inn, Ballarat. It is being organised by the Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens, under Philip Clingin, the Director of Gardens and Parks of the City of Ballaarat.

Our President, Sir Rupert Hamer, will officially open the Seminar, which has the theme *What are Friends for?* John Wrigley, the former Director of the National Botanic Gardens, Canberra, will speak on *The value of botanic gardens to the community*; Adam Parrott, a landscape architect, and David Grant, arborist of the City of Ballaarat, will discuss *A consumer's guide to horticultural services for botanic gardens*; Peter Lumley, former Victorian Government Botanist, will speak about the National Ornamental Plant Collection; Philip Mountain, a fund-raising consultant, will ask *Who's got the cheque-book?*; Philip Clingin will talk about the Robert Clark Centre at the Ballarat Gardens; and Ian Rossiter of the Ballarat Gardens will speak about *Community nurseries and Growing Friends*.

A dinner will be held on the Saturday evening at Sovereign Hill, to be followed by a *son et lumiere* performance called "Blood on the Southern Cross".

On the Sunday morning, participants will cross Lake Wendouree by ferry and inspect the Gardens before hearing a talk by John Patrick, a member of the Royal Botanic Gardens Board, on *Preservation, development and fashion in botanical gardens*. The Seminar will conclude with lunch.

This Seminar is not just for officials of the Friends' groups who have formed the Association, but will be of interest to individual members of those groups. It is hoped that the programme will attract as many as 200 people. The registration fee, including meals, transport within Ballarat and tours, but excluding overnight accommodation, will be approx. $100, a very modest sum for such a valuable occasion.

Enquiries should be made to Ian Rossiter, at the Ballarat Gardens, phone (053) 338 686, or to the Friends' office (03) 650 6398.

THE HERALD-SUN ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS REVITALISATION APPEAL

A progress report from the Trustees issued in January includes the following details of projects being funded by this appeal.

Elisabeth Murdoch Californian Garden. Planting, pathways and installation of an irrigation system have been completed. A second substantial planting is to occur in Spring 1995.

Australian Rainforest Border. An anonymous donation of $250,000 will enable redevelopment of this area to represent eight rainforest communities of Australia's eastern coastline.

Grass Garden. Relocated to its historical position on the Central Lawn, this garden will display ornamental grasses and illustrate their ecological relationship.

William Tell Group. A design for the redevelopment of this area of rockeries and conifers has been completed; works will commence in about 12 months, when replacement plants will be ready.

William Tell Shelter. Renovation of the roof and support structures to original condition will take place in early 1993.

Indigenous Promontory. Planning is underway to establish vegetation on the edge of the Ornamental Lake, and extend the indigenous vegetation near A-Gate. Works are to commence in the near future.

Government House Border. Rejuvenation will follow the removal of the existing grass garden.

Computer-Aided Drafting and Design System. Purchase of a Hewlett-Packard Plotter assisted the implementation of a computer mapping system to improve the accuracy of plant collection records.

Seed Propagation House. A contract will be let shortly to extend the Nursery facilities.

Large Lawn Mower. An unserviceable mower has been replaced, with the Herald-Sun Appeal meeting more than half the cost.

De-silting the Central Lake. Melbourne Water is donating a proportion of engineering staffing costs for an analysis of sediment depth and type, and an evaluation of methods for de-silting the lake. Recommendations will be made on a range of issues.

South African Garden. The renovation and extension of this garden is a medium-term project, funded by the Herald-Sun Appeal and a corporate sponsor.

Cash donations totalled $409,317.00, plus donations in kind valued at $44,000.

HYDROPONICS GARDEN

Dr & Mrs Struan Sutherland have invited the Friends to visit their garden at 6 Wallace Grove, Brighton (Melway 76E1) on Sunday 16 May at 10.30am. Mr Fred Funnell, the President of the Hydroponics Association and lecturer in Hydroponics at Holmesglen College of TAFE, will talk to us in the Sutherland's garden about this increasingly popular form of cultivation.

Struan Sutherland is a world authority on animal venom; he has published many books and more than 100 papers on venom research and patient care. However, his most recent publication, *Hydroponics for Everyone* , reveals another area of expertise.

Mrs Sutherland has kindly offered us morning tea/coffee.

Admission: Friends: $4.00
Others: $7.00
RSVP by 10 May on enclosed booking form

NEWCOMERS' WELCOME

Wednesday 19 May at 10.30 am
Separate invitation.

TERRY SMYTH

Wednesday 9 June at 10.30 a.m. in the National Herbarium.

Terry, an RBG Gardener, visited China in November in a group collecting seed in Yunnan Province. The Friends funded Terry's trip.

Terry was one of eight people from Victoria, NSW, Tasmania and New Zealand in a group led by Bob Cherry on his 12th trip to the area. The Kunming Botanical Institute co-ordinated their activities. Terry collected seeds for alpine, temperate and sub-tropical plants – everything from ground covers to trees. Some were for medicinal plants that could ultimately find a place in the RBG Herb Garden.

She will describe her experiences in an illustrated talk entitled *White Rabbits and Happy Dreams* .

Morning coffee will be served.
Friends: $4.00 Others: $6.00
RSVP by 7 June on enclosed booking form.

SOLSTICE DINNER

with Mr Keith Dunstan on
Friday, 18 June 1993
See enclosed invitation.

This promises to be an outstanding occasion. Keith Dunstan, witty and wise, is a sought-after speaker; as a lover of the Royal Botanic Gardens, he is happy to be among Friends.

The Herbarium hall will be decorated, and the three-course meal with wine will be professionally catered for.

We're planning tables for eight, so if you wish to reserve a table with friends, please mention this on your booking form. Remember that firm bookings must be made by Wednesday 9 June.

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

Council Christmas Luncheon – 15/12
Friends Christmas Dinner – 18/12
McClelland Gallery & Cruden Farm Visit – 15/1
Wind in the Willows – 22/1
Voluntary Guides 'Bird Walk' – 28/1
North East Tasmanian Tour – 8/2 to 15/2
Twelfth Night — 15/2
A Day in the Dandenongs – 18/2
Botanical Illustrators – Introductory Day – 23/2
Plant Photography Workshops – first of six – 23/2

SPECIAL BENEFITS TO FRIENDS

Friends' Shop – Remember that Friends are entitled to a 10% discount on purchases totalling over $20.

The following nurseries and bookshop very kindly offer special discounts to Friends. *Current membership cards must be shown in order for you to receive these discounts.*

Fryers' Nursery
589 Glenferrie Rd, Hawthorn
5% off plants only

Idaho Nurseries
410 Waverley Rd,
E. Malvern
10% off plants only

The Gardener's Bulleen Nursery
105 Bridge St, Bulleen
5% off seedlings
10% off potted plants

Town and Country Gardens
1280 Malvern Rd, Malvern
10% off everything

The Arts Bookshop
1067 High St, Armadale

Holmesglen College of TAFE
inc. the Victorian Schools Nursery
585 Waverley Rd,
Glen Waverley
10% off everything

CAN YOU HELP?

We are seeking one or two voluntary helpers for the Friends' Office.

If you can spare half or a full day weekly, please phone Margaret or Julie on 650 6398.
Perhaps this opening would appeal to a young mother free during school hours.

Tasks would include handling applications for membership and Friends' functions, and mailing newsletters.

CANCELLATIONS

Last minute cancellations for functions have caused some problems recently. In cases where the Friends have to make a commitment for a firm number of guests by a certain date, we regret that we cannot give refunds for late cancellations unless in exceptional circumstances. We hope you will pass your tickets on to others if this situation occurs.

This policy relates to such events as dinners and trips where the Friends have to meet a financial obligation for services such as catering, bus hire or accommodation.

BOTANIC MAGAZINE

The next edition of the *Botanic Magazine* is in preparation. In order to achieve a high quality publication while minimising the Friends' expenditure on its production, we are seeking assistance from our members. If you can suggest the names of companies, nurseries etc. whom we might approach for sponsorship or advertising, please call Margaret or Julie on 650 6398 or send a note to the editor, Heather Ironmonger, C/- the Friends' office.

FRIENDS' SHOP

Major shop alterations are about to commence and for a while we will be operating with limited floor space.

We anticipate moving to our new location in the middle of the kiosk complex in about three months time.

In the meantime we look forward to your continued support and encouragement while the work rages around us.
Please remember we are happy to order any books you may wish to purchase.

Jill Swann, Manager

The Friends' group who toured North East Tasmania in February, with Peter Sims, who was the guide in the Cradle Mountain area (3rd from right in back row).

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Details in the Winter Newsletter.

Fresh Water Filamentous Algae of Australia

Dr Tim Entwisle, 12 July at 8.00pm

Films: Sequoias and Redwoods of North America and **The Butchart Gardens (Canada)** Introduced by Mr Rob Cross, July or August

Charles Turner, Botanist and well known paper-maker 28 July at 11.00am Talk, demonstration and lunch.

Growing Friends Plant Sales Days – 9 and 10 October

Plants for Melbourne Climate Seminar, 15 and 16 October

Visit beautiful Mallacoota with Dr Jim Willis, 26–30 October

The Courtyard Gardens of South Yarra, 5 November. Nine private gardens open for inspection.

A Heritage of Roses. Mrs Hazel le Rougetal, 19 November

Christmas Dinner, 17 December

VISITOR ACCESS TO HERBARIUM BUILDING

New security measures have been introduced at the Herbarium building.

Visitors wishing to see a staff member must now obtain a Visitor Tag from reception. The nominated staff member will be requested to come to reception to 'collect' the caller.

RSVP

Members are reminded that we request a stamped self-addressed envelope to be sent with your booking if you wish your entree tickets to be posted by return mail. Otherwise your name will be recorded on a list available at each function to verify your payment.

FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

Botanic News is printed quarterly for the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Inc.

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

Patron: His Excellency the Hon. Richard E. McGarvie

President of the Council of the Friends:
Sir Rupert Hamer

Vice Presidents:
Eve Brunner, Lesley Clark

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Lawrence Cohn

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It is a time of great change and development at the Gardens and Herbarium.

The official opening of the Elisabeth Murdoch Californian Garden on 4 March marked the completion of two years of planning and hard work by the Gardens and Herbarium staff. This is the first major project to be developed since the establishment of the Grey Garden in the last decade. The plant material used in the garden has been obtained from the wild in California, and propagated in the Gardens Nursery. For this reason, most plants in the ground are still quite small. Planting will continue over the next five years.

This Autumn, plantings continue throughout the Gardens. Cultivars of the New Zealand Flax, *Phormium* species, will be planted in the annual bed near 'D' gate; Sayce Island is to be replanted with large-leaved foliage plants; and the Grass Garden, highlighting ornamental and native grasses, is also currently being established near the Fern Gully.

During March, the area of the Ornamental Lake around the Indigenous Promontory is to be planted out with native species of aquatic plants. Tyres will be used to form platforms of various heights to suit the needs of the different species used.

At Cranbourne, the boardwalks in the Aboretum area and around the Australian Garden are now complete. The Job Skills supervisor, Paul Abel, and the 12 Job Skills workers are to be congratulated on this project. Paul will be working at the site for another six-month period.

Marion van Gameren has recently left her position as the Education Officer at the Gardens. Over the past decade, Marion has developed the Education Service from the ground up and has contributed enormously to the development of environmental and biological education in Victoria. Thousands of teachers and students have benefited from her classes and publications, and she will be greatly missed by the Gardens and the Public Programs team.

Val Stasjic, who has been working diligently in the Plant Identification Service, is returning to university to continue his scientific studies. The Botanist David Albrecht will once again work at the Identification Service.

All staff are contributing to the development of the Corporate Plan, managed by Jim Ross with assistance from Judy Carrigan.

The fourth edition of 'A Census of Vascular Plants in Victoria' is now available at the Visitor Centre ($18.00, plus $5.00 for postage and handling). If you would like a copy sent to you, please write to the Visitor Centre and make cheques payable to 'The Royal Botanic Gardens'. Only a limited number of copies is available, so place your orders soon.

Another major achievement for the Herbarium staff is the forthcoming publication of the first of the proposed four volumes of 'The Flora of Victoria'. It will be available from the Visitor Centre from the beginning of May. This introductory volume includes chapters on vegetation types, soils and climate. It will be an invaluable reference for any keen plant person.

Adrienne Leith
Public Programs