

BOTANIC NEWS

FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE INC.

AUTUMN 1998

FROM THE PRESIDENT

As we plan our activities for the new year, it is also a pleasure to look back to the last few weeks of 1997. In late November, an exhibition of oil paintings by Marjorie Gillespie was held in Mueller Hall. The unique qualities of her large canvases will stay vividly in the memory of all who were fortunate enough to see them. The proceeds of the exhibition opening and the sale of paintings amounted to more than \$13,000. We warmly congratulate Marjorie on a wonderful exhibition and thank her for her great generosity in initiating this event in support of the Friends.

In early December, the Council of the Friends held a cocktail party in Gardens House. This function was both happy and useful, as it enabled members of the RBG Board (most of whom are relatively new appointees) to meet some of our members and learn about the Friends. It also provided an important opportunity for Friends to have personal contact with those in charge of the direction of the Gardens.

Finally, our Christmas Dinner, held on 11 December in the restaurant by the lake, was an outstandingly successful occasion. We were blessed with a perfect summer evening and the beautiful setting was appreciated by a large gathering of enthusiastic diners. Stephen Ryan was a lively speaker.

We were delighted to see in the Australia Day honours that Carrick Chambers' work had been recognised by the award of an A.M. Carrick, a former Professor of Botany at the University of Melbourne and until recently Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney, has been associated with the Melbourne Friends from the very earliest days. Most recently he delivered the keynote address to the Conference of the Association of Friends in April 1997. Our heartiest congratulations are extended to Carrick.

It's almost time for the Association's 1998 conference, being held at Mildura on 2 and 3 May, and I hope that a large contingent will attend from Melbourne. The gardens, formerly known as Sunraysia Oasis Botanic Gardens, truly are an oasis. They are full of contrasts, having flourishing rose beds, exotic species from around the world, Mallee habitat, arid plantings and an area evaluating salt-tolerant species. The Friends of

Photo by Judy Baillieu



Marjorie Gillespie with David Wilkinson at the opening of her successful exhibition in Mueller Hall

these Australian Inland Botanic Gardens have played a leading role in their development over the past 10 years. Conference details appear elsewhere in *Botanic News*.

I am glad to report that our membership, though fluctuating, is constantly being augmented. A welcome to our new members is held twice a year, and on 19 February our most recent members were entertained in Mueller Hall and introduced to the variety of activities that are available to them. As usual, the Voluntary Guides led special walks around the Gardens after the welcome.

You may be wondering if the garden of our future home, Observatory Lodge, is being transformed into a nursery. No...it's a holding area for plants which will make up the Gardens' mini-rainforest at the International Flower and Garden Show in April at the Royal Exhibition Building.

In February the Growing Friends celebrated their 10th anniversary. Since very humble beginnings in a shed in 1988, using the leftover seed germinations from the International Seed Exchange, the Growing Friends have raised over \$300,000 and built two nurseries. A lunch in Mueller Hall was attended by many people who contributed to the Growing Friends' efforts over the years. Our warmest congratulations to them.

John Harper

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Those Friends who have been along Birdwood Avenue recently or have visited the Friends' office will have noticed all the construction activity on the Observatory site. Our builders, L U Simon Pty Ltd, are making excellent progress on the project. After four years of planning and fundraising, it is now most rewarding to see the new building taking shape and the heritage buildings being restored. Construction is due for completion in August, and we plan to have the official opening in December.

Much work so far has been underground – replacing and up-grading the water lines, drains and service connections. All power lines are being placed underground, and the unsightly poles and cables removed. The foundation slab for the Visitor Centre was poured in January and the metal framework for the walls and roof erected in February. Modern internal partitions and additions to the historic buildings are being demolished, revealing the original spaces and appearance of these attractive structures. Other restoration works under way include replacing damp courses, repairing plaster and installing new wiring and plumbing.

The RBG Board is grateful to have received recently a significant capital donation to Observatory Gate from the National Australia Bank. This is a most helpful boost for our funding program seeking to bring the project to full completion.

The City of Melbourne and the National Trust have selected a proposed new site for La Trobe's Cottage about 50 metres from its present position. Later in the year it is intended to move the cottage (much of which is a mid-1960s replica of the original structure) across Birdwood Avenue to a site near the northwestern boundary of the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art. This new position retains the cottage's setting amongst trees, but recreates more closely the style of its original outlook in Jolimont.

At Cranbourne, the landscape design for the Australian Garden received two prestigious awards recently from the Victorian and Tasmanian Chapters of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, including their 1997 Award for Excellence. We are delighted that our design consultants, Taylor and Cullity with Paul Thompson, and the RBG staff who have assisted them, have received this recognition. It is further confirmation of the quality and skilful innovation shown by these exciting designs.

Work on the preliminary earthworks for the Australian Garden will commence in autumn. The planning permit issued for the project last year by the City of Casey has recently been confirmed after the Administrative Appeals Tribunal rejected objections from local groups seeking to stop the Garden in favour of an arterial road along Ballarto Road. We can now proceed to carry out the earthworks and begin to see the landscape take shape.

David Adam
Chairman

AUTUMN ACTIVITIES

Melbourne Wholesale Market Experience

Melbourne Wholesale Markets

Wednesday 18 March at 6.15am

Meet at 542 Footscray Rd, Footscray

For the early risers! Our one-hour tour will begin at the wholesale fruit and vegetable market on the market train, the "Tutti Frutti Express", to see the huge variety of fresh fruit and vegetables on sale. (It will be possible to buy at wholesale prices but only in case lots, so perhaps friends might like to share in a purchase.) Then on to the NATIONAL FLOWER CENTRE to walk and talk with the growers. See, smell and experience the incredible variety of cut flowers on offer; you may buy a bunch or two, but not purchase a large quantity.

Breakfast is available afterwards, from \$8.00.

The Markets are approximately 5km from Melbourne CBD, and are not open to the general public.

Cost: \$15

RSVP on enclosed booking form by 11 March

Maps and directions will be provided when you book (a stamped self-addressed envelope is essential).

GROWING FRIENDS AUTUMN SALE

Saturday 21 March, 10.00am - 4.00pm

Sunday 22 March, 10.00am - 3.00pm

Inside 'E' Gate on Birdwood Avenue

The great variety of plants includes the old favourites and some that are new to the Nursery. Most are propagated from material from the RBG and many are rare and unusual; there is something for every garden type. The plants listed on the enclosed flyer will be kept for the sale, but all others are available to members who want to shop on Fridays between 10.00am and 1.00pm. Please note that the Nursery will not be open on Fridays 13, 20 and 27 March, when the Growing Friends will be preparing for, and recovering from, the sale.

The Nursery site has proved to be extremely hot during summer, for both people and plants. Shadecloth on rollers has provided an excellent remedy.

Sharon Beaman, Convener

FILM LUNCHEON

OSCAR AND LUCINDA

Tuesday 31 March at 11.00am

Trak Cinema, 445 Toorak Road, Toorak

Gillian Armstrong's ambitious film is based on Peter Carey's novel. Lucinda loves glass and Oscar loves God, so Lucinda bets her future on a most daring enterprise - Oscar's attempt to build a glass church in the dangerous and remote north of Australia.

Lunch (sandwiches, cake and tea/coffee/drink) follows the film. Parking in Tintern Avenue or Safeway carpark.

Admission \$11.00

RSVP 25 March on enclosed booking form

CHURCHILL FELLOWSHIP TOUR

Illustrated talk by Rod Dunstan

Tuesday 7 April at 8.00pm

Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

Rod Dunstan, now at Scienceworks, and until recently Education Officer at the Gardens, was one of the staff members with whom many Friends had close contact. We are particularly pleased that he's agreed to give us an account of the three and a half month's study tour he took at the end of 1997 as a Churchill Fellow.

Rod will describe innovative public education programs at botanic gardens he visited in the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany. He'll also highlight some of the botanical and horticultural features that particularly impressed him.

Supper will be served.

Cost: Friends \$8.00 Others \$12.00

RSVP by Friday 3 April 1998 on enclosed booking form

EDIBLE AND MEDICINAL PLANTS OF ALASKA

Illustrated talk by Janice Schofield

Wednesday 15 April at 8.00pm

Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

Janice Schofield will introduce us to Alaska - its natural history, lifestyle and its spectacular variety of plants and animals. She is the author of several botanical books including *Discovering Wild Plants, Alaska's Wild Plants* and will soon release a book devoted entirely to *Urtica* (nettles).

Janice serves on the University of Alaska rural faculty and regularly flies to native communities presenting edible and medicinal plant classes (quite a role reversal). An avid naturalist and bird watcher, she has escorted a number of nature tour groups into some of Alaska's most beautiful natural wonders (you could get details of

her next expedition by phoning toll-free 1300 307 317).

Supper will be served.

Cost: Friends \$8.00 Others \$12.00

RSVP on enclosed booking form by Thursday 9 April

VISIT TO WILSON BOTANIC PARK, BERWICK

Saturday 18 April

Barbecue lunch 12.30pm

Here is an opportunity to visit an emerging botanic park, and to meet the Friends who are involved in its development. The first plantings were made at Wilson Botanic Park in 1988, and it was officially opened in 1992. For the previous 100 or so years, the site had been a quarry. Mr George Wilson, grandson of the original owner, donated the northern section of the quarry to the local community for use as a botanic park; subsequently the former City of Berwick (now Casey) purchased the remainder.

Covering about the same area as RBG Melbourne, it features both native and deciduous trees, two lakes, some spectacular views and even a children's playground. The Society for Growing Australian Plants maintains the area around the carpark.

Botanic Magazine Vol. 7 described some important discoveries of fossils and pollen at Wilson Botanic Park; these are detailed in an Information Centre display.

A rose garden adjoining this Centre was donated by the noted 'rose family', Brundretts, of Narre Warren North. You may like to visit their nearby nursery in Brundrett Road (Melway 108 G9) en route to Wilson Park.

The Friends of WBP will be holding a working bee on the day of our visit, and will join us for lunch, after which we will explore the park.

BYO barbecue food; we will provide tea/coffee and cake/biscuits.

This is planned as a self-drive excursion, as we believe it will appeal particularly to families. If you would like a lift, or are willing to provide transport for someone else, please indicate this on the booking form and we'll try to make arrangements. We could book a minibus if there is sufficient demand.

Wilson Park is well signposted; turn left into the drive off Princes Highway as you approach Berwick.

Cost: \$5 per person or \$15 per family

RSVP by 16 April on enclosed booking form, but you will still be welcome if you come on the day without booking.

TAPESTRIES AROUND TOWN

Bus tour

Wednesday 13 May 10.30am - 12.30pm

Those who joined our inspections of the Victorian Tapestry Workshop in February were so inspired that we have arranged a bus tour to see more tapestries hanging in city buildings. These are at Casselden Place, St Vincent's Hospital, Telstra's corporate building, the Commonwealth Bank, Owen Dixon Chambers and Bourke Place. The tapestries are based on works by Roger Kemp, Dale Hickey, Murray Walker and Michael Meszaros. The Tapestry Workshop will provide a guide.

Our bus will leave from outside the National Gallery in St Kilda Rd at 10.30 sharp, ferry us around the city, and return us to the Gallery.

Cost \$15 per person

RSVP by Thursday 7 May on enclosed booking form

BOTANICAL EMBROIDERERS

The next classes with Wanda McPherson of the Victorian Embroiderers' Guild will be held on 16 March, 6 April and 11 May in the Whirling Room from 1.00 - 3.00pm. Second term begins on 15 June. New members are very welcome. Bring basic sewing kit.

Please phone the Friends' office, tel. 9650 6398, for further details.

BRIDGE AT GARDENS HOUSE

Wednesday 10 June, 10.30am - 3.00pm

Gardens House. Enter from Dallas Brooks Drive, beside the National Herbarium

Back by popular demand! Everybody loved our first Bridge day last October, in the elegant setting of Gardens House.

Please organise a group of four - Bridge, Solo or Five Hundred players are all welcome - and bring your cards and scorers. We will provide a basket lunch and wine. The space available in Gardens House limits our numbers, so please book early to avoid disappointment.

Cost: Friends \$15 Non-members \$20

RSVP by Thursday 4 June on enclosed booking form

GARDENS TO VISIT

The Friends intend to arrange a visit to several Melbourne gardens late in 1998. If you could suggest any gardens to us, or offer your own, this may provide some unexpected delights - properties not on the list of beautiful but regularly-open gardens. We'd appreciate a phone call about any possibilities to the Friends' office, tel. 9650 6398.

"Mallee Magic's Contribution To The Next Millennium"

The Friends of the Australian Inland Botanic Gardens at Mildura will host the 1998 conference of the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens (Vic.) Inc. on 2 and 3 May.

This meeting presents Melbourne Friends with an opportunity to visit this unusual botanic garden, hear some stimulating addresses, and tour some of the Sunraysia's notable attractions.

Speakers, mostly scientists and horticulturists, include Dr Brian Morley, Director of Royal Adelaide Botanic Gardens; Dr Jolyon Burnette, CEO of the Nursery Industry of Australia Association; and Rodger Elliott, noted authority on Australian flora.

The distinguished former Governor-General Sir Ninian Stephen and Lady Stephen are foundation members of the AIBG Friends; Lady Stephen, their Patron, will open the conference, and Sir Ninian will speak at the dinner.

A cruise on the Murray River will wind up proceedings on the Sunday afternoon. The Friends have arranged a tour of interesting private local gardens on the following day, and we (the Melbourne Friends) are proposing a Tuesday tour to the World Heritage Area, Mungo National Park, with professional Aboriginal guides, to make the most of our stay in this fascinating region.

Please phone the office on 9650 6398 for details of the conference and post-conference tours.



Photo by Ruth Duggleby

Pam and John Nichols during the Friends' visit to their home, Manoah, at Flinders in January

BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATORS



THE ART OF BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION EXHIBITION

This year's exhibition of members' work will be held in Mueller Hall from 23 October to 8 November, opening on the evening of Thursday 22 October.

An information sheet including conditions of entry is available from the Friends office or by mail; please include a self-addressed stamped envelope together with the appropriate details completed on the functions booking form. Entry forms will be available by application through the next (winter) edition of *Botanic News*. Selection will be held in mid-September.

Note: All exhibitors must be financial members of the Friends at 30 June 1998. Enquiries to Convener, Louise Coronel on 9827 5910.

ONE-DAY ETCHING WORKSHOPS AT THE AUSTRALIAN PRINT WORKSHOP

210 Gertrude St, Fitzroy

Sunday 24 May, 10.00am - 4.00pm **OR**

Tuesday 26 May, 10.00am - 4.00pm

For those more used to pencils and brushes this is a wonderful opportunity to experience an art form long associated with the traditions of botanical illustration.

The Australian Print Workshop's reputation and world-class facilities attract many of Australia's leading artists. Our workshops will encompass practical instruction on a variety of etching techniques, particularly hard ground etching. By the end of the session, each participant will produce a print using hard ground etching on a plate size 15 x 12 cms.

The session tutor will be professional printmaker and artist Ros Atkins, who currently supervises the Workshop's Access studio. These workshops, in groups of 10 to 12, have been specially designed for our members and represent a considerable saving on the usual cost.

Participants will need to bring a suitable finished line drawing of maximum size 15 x 12cm on tissue or tracing paper to transfer to the etching plate. All other materials will be supplied. BYO packed lunch.

Numbers are limited; preference will be given to Friends.

Cost: \$60 for Friends \$70 Non-members

RSVP by Tuesday 19 May

DIANNE EMERY'S CLASSES

Dianne's Term 1 classes have just resumed; there's room for one or two more on Tuesday evening or Wednesday morning. For the autumn term, the Tuesday night class (2-1/2 hours) will commence on 28 April; Wednesday morning class on 6 May at 9.30am, and Friday morning class on 8 May at 10.30am. Daytime classes (3 hours) run for an eight-week term and cater for both beginners and more experienced students.

For further details, phone Dianne on tel. 9523 5397.

JUDY ROBERTS 1944 - 1997

Judy Roberts, a founding member of the small group of artists which later became the Friends' Botanical Illustrators, died in December. This is an excerpt from Marguerite Hancock's tribute.

As a botanical painter, Judy Roberts combined 'the eye and the hand of the artist' with the scientific understanding of a trained horticulturalist. She studied painting at RMIT after leaving school and, as a mature age student, completed a Certificate of Horticulture at Burnley, where she also studied botanical illustration with Anita Barley and first exhibited her work in 1991.

The Royal Botanic Gardens bought Judy's watercolour of *Papaver somniferum* for its State Botanical Collection in 1996. Her skilful draughtsmanship is best seen in the pen and ink drawing of a peony which the Botanical Illustrators adopted as their emblem.

Judy's love of painting was equalled, and perhaps surpassed, by her passionate interest in gardening. She and her husband John bred and sold peonies - both the tree and herbaceous varieties - on their cattle property at Upper Beaconsfield in the foothills of the Dandenongs. It was here that Judy transformed a sheep paddock, burnt out by the Ash Wednesday bushfires, into a romantically beautiful private garden.

After she became ill with cancer she fought tenaciously for three-and-a-half years and, despite severe pain, never complained. Her courage and strength of character will continue to inspire everyone who knew her.

MONTHLY WORKSHOPS

These painting workshops continue in the Whirling Room Studio on the second Tuesday of the month from 10.00am - 3.00pm. The program planned so far is:

10 March: Peter Neish, botanist and a member of the workshops, will talk about flower structure and will demonstrate the use of microscopes.

14 April: Anita Barley will return for a full-day workshop (NB. Further workshops with Anita will be on 7 July, 6 October and 8 December)

12 May: Ian Clarke, who works in the Identification section of the Herbarium, will discuss botanical aspects of botanical illustration in an informal question and answer format. Ian was on the selection panel for our 1996 exhibition.

The cost of the workshops is \$30 a quarter, commencing March/April. Anyone interested in attending should contact the Friends' office on 9650 6398.

Tuesday Painters Group (The 'Whirly Birds'): This group, which met formerly on Wednesdays, will now meet on two or three Tuesdays of each month. It is informal, with no tuition, and costs \$2.50 for the day. New members are welcome, and anyone interested in joining should telephone Mary Gregory on 9836 8587.

OVERSEAS TOURS

Although Lesley Clark has retired from the Council of the Friends and its Activities sub-committee, she has offered to continue her role as overseas tour organiser. It should be noted that travel agents make a donation to the Friends for each tour they organise, (usually between \$100 and \$250 per participant), so our travellers can have this added satisfaction while enjoying exotic sights. The Friends have benefited by many thousands of dollars from overseas tours conducted in past years.

Greek Islands Tour: Crete, Santorini, Paros, Mykonos, Delos, Chios. Departs 16 June 1998

This is a three-week tour looking 'behind the scenes' on some of the most spectacular of the Greek Islands.

It is more than an ordinary island-hopping tour. It will be a relaxing journey. Our members will be fully escorted with an English-speaking guide who will give us an insight into the Greek way of life, both past and present. Local guides will meet us on each island. Meet potters making huge amphora by hand, visit an olive oil mill, an ouzo distillery, sites of antiquity (including the Lost City of Atlantis) and even see 'mastic' trees, from which comes the original form of chewing gum.

Accommodation on the tour is a mixture of beachside resorts, traditional village domatia and small hotels which exude great Greek character.

Cost: \$6,980 twin share.

**Japan Autumn Gardens Tour
Departs 7 November 1998**

Koyto, ancient capital of Japan, is our base for this unusual nine-day tour of exploring gardens, castles and rural countryside, seeking the wonderful colour of autumn leaves. All seven nights of accommodation will be in The Miyako, a 5-star hotel where Prince Charles and several American presidents have been guests.

Using local electric trains, trams, buses and the famous Bullet Train, we will explore areas around the rural outskirts of Kyoto such as the terraced rice paddies of the Ohara Hills and Arashiyama with its bamboo forest. We will visit Himeji Castle as well as the ancient shrines, temples and parks of Nara.

Our hotel is located at the foot of Higashiyama, a forest-clad sanctuary of birds and botanic wonders with pathways leading from the hotel into the forest.

Many of Kyoto's best gardens will be featured in this programme, as well as a tea ceremony, a private home garden visit and a welcome talk and slide presentation by Zen garden master, Professor Masao Fukuhara.

Cost: \$4,550 twin share (\$750 single supplement)

**For information about both these tours, contact
Destination Management on their toll-free number
1300 307 317**

SPEAKERS WITH SLIDES

A reminder! The Friends can provide speakers free of charge, to address groups or organisations about the Royal Botanic Gardens and the role of the Friends. Please contact Janet Thomson on 9571 9448 or the Friends office, 9650 6398, for further information.

HELP NEEDED

The Friends need help in setting up the seating in Mueller Hall for our meetings, and ensuring that the public address system and projector are ready for use. (Help is not needed to move the seating afterwards.) Is there anyone with sufficient technical know-how willing to fulfil this task? Of course, we'd prefer a volunteer, but are willing to pay a small sum, perhaps to a student. Offers or suggestions, please, to the Friends' office on 9650 6398.

MEMBERSHIP

Our new system of 12-month subscriptions means that renewals have to go out quarterly. We now show your renewal date on the envelope. Forms are enclosed for those who have not renewed and whose subscriptions fell due at the end of August, September, October, November and December 1997, and January, February 1998. If your membership falls due in March, April, May 1998 you should also find a renewal form in the envelope. Please check and renew if appropriate.

At the beginning of the year a detailed examination of the membership list showed that nearly 200 Members whose subscriptions fell due in the months of March to July 1997 were unfinancial. All these Members have been sent a letter with a renewal form and also a questionnaire, with a s.a.e.; we felt it would be instructive for us to learn why they had not renewed. The replies and some renewals are now coming in to the office and the results will be summarised in the winter edition of *Botanic News*.

It should be added that we welcome Members' suggestions for activities or improvements to the Friends. So if you have any ideas please contact us, as it is important that the organisation is responsive to Members' needs.

ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Proceedings of the 1997 Conference of the Assn of Friends of Botanic Gardens (Victoria), hosted by the Melbourne Friends, are now available.

The title of the conference was 'Conservation, Collections and Community'. Speakers included Professor Carrick Chambers, who spoke on 'Capturing the Passing Trade! An Educational Challenge for Botanic Gardens', Dr Philip Moors on 'Towards 2001: future directions of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Melbourne and Cranbourne' and many others both on the staff of the RBG and from other organisations. Included also is a list of significant trees in Victorian Botanic Gardens.

If you would like a copy, please send in \$5.00 with your name and address.

FRIENDS' SHOP

Dear Friends,

The *Yucca filamentosa* are in full bloom! We have five magnificent specimens in the garden bed by the umbrellas and tables. Otherwise known as Adam's Needle, Spanish Bayonet, Candle to the Lord or Spanish Dagger, they are well worth a look if you're in the Gardens.

Outside the Friends' Shop we have a new card rack full of wonderful Australian photo cards by Sue Bland; largely outback scenes, but also including Fairfield Boathouse, the beach at Williamstown and Australian wildflowers and wildlife. These photos of places many of us will never visit draw a continuing stream of comment and interest. Price \$2.50 each.

We would all like to wish Pat Mills a very happy retirement; she has been on the Friends' Shop staff for nine years and will be missed for her energetic and cheerful help by everyone here.

Jill Swann

VOLUNTARY GUIDES' THEME WALKS

March

12, 26: Twilight Walks; 6.00pm; D Gate

15: *In Memory of Mueller* (Gardens Foundation Day); 10.30am; F Gate
22: Senior Citizens Sunday. Information booth at Separation Tree Shelter and FREE half-hour informal walks; 10.30am - 12.30pm

April

5, 9: *Bushland to Botanic Gardens* (Victorian Heritage Festival); leaving at intervals between 1.00pm and 2.00pm from the Separation Tree Shelter

May

14, 17: Trees (Arbor Week); 10.30am; F Gate
17: Bird Walk; 9.30am; F Gate
19: Bird Walk; 10.00am; F Gate

Except for Senior Citizens Sunday, bookings (tel 9252 2300) are preferable and a small charge is made for walks: \$4.00; \$2.00 conc.; children under 16 free.

RBG SEASONAL HIGHLIGHTS

If you're visiting the Gardens in March, look out for the Hybrid Tea Roses, the Perennial Border, Cannas and *Stenocarpus sinautus* in the Rainforest Walk. In both March and April the Nymphaea Lake is at its best and the Viburnums are bright with berries; hips on the Species Roses are spectacular in April. In April also, *Ginkgo biloba* presents a blaze of gold in the Magnolia bed. Species Camellias come into bloom, followed by Camellia sasanqua in May. Towering tree dahlias can be seen in the rhododendron bed. May is a good month to visit the tropical glasshouse, and of course autumn is a magic season to relax on the Oak Lawn.

GARDEN WORKSHOPS

RBG horticulturists will conduct the following workshops with the Council for Adult Education:

Rainforest Plants for your Garden: Saturday 21 March, 9.30am - 12.30pm at RBG with Annette Warner and Nadia Polikarpowski, Horticulturists. \$50

Growing and Using Herbs: Saturday 28 March, 9.30am - 12.30pm at RBG with Therese Turner, Herb Garden Curator. \$50

Growing Native Plants from Seed and Cuttings: Saturday 4 April, 9.30am - 4.00pm at RBG Cranbourne with Warren Worboys, Horticulturist. \$85, Concession \$72, Seniors Card \$77

Enquiries: 9652 0733 or 9652 0624

Banksia Hill - a new benefit

A 10 per cent discount on bed and breakfast accommodation is being offered to our members by new Friends and Botanical Illustrators, Jan and Peter Grenfell. *Banksia Hill* is a 10ha property at Quantong, 10 minutes west of Horsham. More than 50 species of Banksia are among the extensive plantings of natives. RACV rating * * * * 1/2

Details: RMB 5349, Horsham 3401. Phone/fax (03) 5384 0264

BENEFITS FOR FRIENDS

Both the Friends' Shop and the Gardens' Shop offer a 10 per cent discount on members' purchases over \$20.

The following businesses very kindly offer special discounts to Friends. Please note: only a member presenting his/her signed current membership card may claim a discount. CARDS ARE NOT TRANSFERABLE.

Fryers' Nursery

589 Glenferrie Rd, Hawthorn
5% off plants only

Idaho Nurseries

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

Bulleen Art and Garden

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

The Gardeners Corner Store

190-192 New St, Brighton
10% off everything

Collectors Corner

Springvale Rd, Keysborough
10% off all plants

Kew Nursery

Cnr High & Gladstone Sts, Kew
10% off all plants

Wolf Tools

675 Canterbury Rd, Surrey Hills
10% discount

Burwood Garden Patch

1418 Toorak Rd, Burwood
10% discount

Green Gables Nursery

1039 Whitehorse Rd, Box Hill
10% off all items except specials

Garden of Eden Nursery

33 Ferrars Street, Albert Park
10% discount off everything

The Cottage Garden Nursery

cnr Macedon Ave & Doncaster Rd
North Balwyn
\$20 per tray of seedlings
(8 punnets), 5% off all plants

Banksia Hill B&B

RMB 5349, Horsham, 3401
10% discount on accommodation



Botanic News is produced 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.

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His Excellency the
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FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

VicRoads, the co-ordinators of the Environmental Effects Statement, received 513 submissions on the proposed Cranbourne East-West Road Link, of which more than 400 were objections to the road being built along the Ballarto Road corridor. As the Friends will know, the Royal Botanic Gardens Board has consistently and strongly opposed this option. The Board is most grateful for the equally strong opposition voiced by the Friends Councils at both Melbourne and Cranbourne, and for the willingness of many Friends to make their own views known.

A significant development occurred late in December. After reviewing the EES Report, the City of Casey (the local authority responsible for the Cranbourne region) concluded that the report's projections on future traffic volumes and population were grossly over-estimated. Consequently, the City's official position is that no new east-west arterial road is needed at all (let alone along Ballarto Road), and that traffic growth can be handled adequately by up-grading the existing road network. This outcome strengthens the RBG's case. We, too, consider that a new arterial road is not required and that this is the best way to avoid the grave environmental damage to the Gardens resulting from VicRoad's preferred option being built.

A three-member Panel has recently been appointed to hear the EES submissions and make recommendations to the Minister for Planning. The hearings begin on 17 March, and the RBG will be presenting its case.

In December the State Botanical Collection benefited from the addition of four important paintings

by the renowned botanical artist Marian Ellis Rowan. We were able to purchase one of them with funds generously donated by the Friends Council. The paintings show the varied style and subject matter of Ellis Rowan's artwork, and also her extensive travels – one depicts North American plants, and another Caribbean species.

We shall shortly be advertising for applications for the second Mueller Fellowship at the RBG. This four-month appointment enables interstate or overseas scientists to work in the National Herbarium with our own botanists and use our extensive collections. This project is also being supported by the Friends with a grant of \$12,500. I am most appreciative of this and the other financial assistance we receive from the Friends.

Early in February we regretfully farewelled Rod Dunstan. Rod had been a member of our educational staff for five years, during which time he had played a highly influential part in raising student numbers from under 4,000 to about 25,000 per year. Late last year the Department of Education changed the way in which it operates its extension education services: instead of seconding teachers to organisations such as the RBG, it decided to offer financial grants. This faced Rod with a tough choice – whether to remain an employee of the Department or to apply for an Education Co-ordinator's position at the RBG. After some soul-searching, Rod chose to stay with the Department. We thank him sincerely for his important and diverse contributions to the Gardens – and for the enjoyment he has given thousands of students – and wish him well in the next stage of his career.

We recently welcomed Patsy Vizents as our new Volunteers' Co-ordinator.

Philip Moors
Director