



Botanic News

FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE INC.

1128271

AUTUMN 2000

FROM THE PRESIDENT

As many of the Friends will have heard, there has recently been much discussion between the Friends' Council and the Gardens about the future of the Friends' Shop by the lake.

At a recent meeting of the Council of the Friends, the Chairman of the RBG Board and its Director made it clear that the Board intended to co-ordinate all the Gardens' retail outlets and that this would involve the Gardens in assuming responsibility for the management of the Friends' Shop. The members of the Friends' Council expressed strong opposition to this proposal, doubting that this would do anything to increase the Shop's earning capacity. It would, they believed, deprive the Friends of a very visible presence in the Gardens which was itself a great aid to recruitment of new Members. Also, it would seriously deplete the Friends' source of funds, and the major opportunity we offer our Members for voluntary work. (Some volunteers have been with the Shop for more than 16 years.)

Despite these strongly-voiced objections at what proved to be a lengthy meeting of the Council, no agreement could be reached about the future of the Shop. After the representatives of the Board withdrew the Council resolved to continue to oppose the proposed action.

However, in a subsequent exchange of letters, the Council has been informed that the change will occur

and that the Shop will cease to operate as the Friends' Shop. Currently, it is likely that the change will take place on 1 July 2000. The Friends have no legal tenure of the Shop premises and in those circumstances have no alternative but to accept this decision of the Board.

The Shop has been a significant part of the activities of the Friends since 1983. Its staff, with the invaluable assistance of no less than 45 volunteer members of the Friends, have made the Friends' Shop a great success. In the year ending 30 June 1999, the Shop provided 44 per cent of the amount added to the Friends' funds. This in turn helped to fund the running cost of the Friends and contributed substantially to the funds which the Friends donated for projects in the Gardens.

The Board has put forward certain proposals that would assist the Friends. The development of these proposals is to be discussed between the Friends and the Director at meetings of a working group over the next few months.

However, many will share our sadness that the Shop will cease to be an integral part of our activities. The Friends have long regarded their establishment and management of the Shop as a major contribution to the Gardens. I take this opportunity to thank the staff and the devoted band of volunteers who, over the years, have worked so hard and with such effect to make the Friends' Shop the success it has been.

Ninian Stephen



In happier days.....staff, regular volunteers and others associated with the Friends' Shop, at their 1999 Christmas picnic.

Management of the Shop by the Lake.

The RBG Board's Position

When I spoke to the Annual Meeting of the Friends last year, I spoke of the review of the Friends' relationship with the Gardens, and the activities of the Friends, which we felt was desirable in the light of changes which had come about over many years. One of those activities was the Shop, which, with great dedication, the Friends had established and been managing since the beginning.

On the basis of advice from recognised experts in the field of retailing, the Board had concluded that the opportunities for revenue generation in the Gardens could only be maximised, if the retailing activities were combined under one management. This was necessary, for economies of scale, for efficiency in management of stock, finance, administration and staffing. We as a Board believed that we would not be carrying out our duties properly if we were to reject the advice, as quite large amounts of revenue for the operation of the Gardens were at stake.

We also believe that the various benefits which the Friends concerned with the Shop believe flow from their management of it, could be provided more effectively in other ways. I am speaking of the need for increased profile of the Friends within the Gardens, both to make the Friends and their activities known and to assist with recruiting. As well, there is the desirability of the Gardens being able to call on volunteers in suitable areas, and of providing opportunities for Friends to join in this if they wish to do so. There is also the need for Friends to have sufficient resources to expand their membership and contribute to the growth and development of the Gardens, as they have always done. Our suggestions in these and other areas have been put in to the Council, and we hope to discuss them in detail soon.

The Board is keen to maintain and grow a strong body of Friends, and to make membership increasingly satisfying. We are sorry that our decision in relation to the retailing activities has caused distress to some members, but strongly believe that, in the long term, what we felt we had to decide will be best for all.

The Friends established the Shop when the Gardens had no authority to do so itself and needed the funds. We will always be grateful to those who have been involved, and believe they are justly proud of their achievements.

David Adam
Chairman

FRIENDS' GRANTS TO THE GARDENS

The Friends' Council has recently approved four major grants to support projects at RBG Melbourne. The first project – restoring the Central Lake – will be a beneficiary from the bequest made last year by the late Helen Johns. The Central Lake was not cleaned out in 1983, when the main lake was renovated, and it has suffered for many years from unsightly 'mud banks' built up from silt carried down the Fern Gully stream. The situation worsened in late December, when torrential rain washed more silt into the lake. The renovations will cost some \$100,000 and are planned to commence in late autumn.

♦ The National Herbarium of Victoria holds an internationally important legume collection containing many thousands of specimens obtained from around the world by Ferdinand von Mueller and his collectors and collaborators. Most of these specimens have not been mounted on herbarium sheets, nor have their collection details been added to the Herbarium database. Legume specialists will be attending the Fourth International Legume Conference in Canberra in June 2001. This meeting is being co-hosted by the RBG, and we expect many overseas botanists will wish to examine our collections while they are in Australia. A grant of \$48,900 over the next 12 months will enable these collections to be properly curated and recorded so that botanists can make the best scientific use of them.

♦ The National Herbarium is Victoria's oldest scientific institution and in 2003 will celebrate its 150th anniversary. Helen Cohn has begun writing a history of the Herbarium and its staff to be completed in time for the anniversary. The Friends have made a grant of \$66,200 over the next year to enable Helen to work full time on the project without affecting the day-to-day operations of the Library. The history will be an important record of the Herbarium's role in documenting and studying Australia's remarkable flora.

♦ The fourth project responds to a contemporary environmental issue – waste recycling. For some time we have been developing a scheme to enable visitors to put their rubbish into recycling bins. Grants from Eco Recycle Victoria and the Friends (\$19,200) will allow the scheme to proceed in the next few months. Rubbish recycling 'stations' will be installed in the Gardens, with the bins hidden from view by specially designed screens. The recycling of visitors' rubbish complements our highly successful recycling of green waste – also supported by Eco Recycle Victoria. Virtually all of the mulch used on our garden beds now comes from our own composting facilities.

These are four key projects at the RBG, and I am delighted that they will be able to proceed during 2000 as a result of this remarkable level of financial support from the Friends. The RBG Board and I, together with the staff, are most grateful for all this vital assistance.

Philip Moors

These grants bring to \$678,157 the money donated by the Friends to the Gardens since October 1985.

THE 'BACK ROOM' VOLUNTEERS

At the Friends' Christmas party on 14 December, four Members were honoured for their long-standing, reliable and devoted voluntary service.

As the President Sir Ninian Stephen said in presenting Certificates of Appreciation, they have supported the paid office staff by undertaking tasks which are often repetitious and not very interesting.

The 'back room' office volunteers honoured were Mary Meadley, Elizabeth Fincher, Rosemary McMeekin and Joan Murphy.

Mary Meadley: For well over ten years Mary has come regularly to package the four issues of *Botanic News* each year, the Annual Report and *Botanic Magazine*. In addition, when she first started Mary assumed responsibility for taking the many boxes of *Botanic News* to the Post Office. Not only is Mary reliable but she is usually the first to arrive, works almost twice as fast as anyone else and is cheerful into the bargain.

Elizabeth Fincher: Elizabeth is another long-standing volunteer who is willing to undertake essential, though not particularly glamorous, jobs for the office. Using her experience with CML she established a filing system for membership forms which she then adapted when the Friends adopted a twelve-month membership system. The fact that this system has withstood the test of time, and also the auditors, is an indication of its suitability and reliability.

Elizabeth has also been extremely willing over the years to caretake the office when staff are on leave, and, sometimes at short notice, when they have been ill. In addition she assists with mailouts.

Elizabeth also works as a volunteer in the Friends' Shop — a general all-round volunteer!

Rosemary McMeekin: In addition to assisting with mailouts and as a volunteer receptionist, Rosemary's major voluntary contribution to the Friends has been on Friday mornings when she comes into the office to process the bookings, membership renewals etc. that have come into the office during the week. This exacting task involves balancing numerous columns of figures and ensuring that Members are sent membership cards and/or function cards.



Photo by Jean Woodger

Rosemary McMeekin

As the Friends grew so did the volume of bookings and renewals. After **Joan Murphy** retired from the Royal Historical Society, she joined Rosemary and they became a great team. They organised themselves to come in to the office together or separately, depending on the number of items to be processed. Their record for the amount of money processed in one day is approximately \$5000 in September 1999. Joan also takes major responsibility for the postcode sorting of the envelopes for mailouts according to instructions from Australia Post to enable the Friends to get the best possible discount.

GROWING FRIENDS

The Growing Friends send greetings for this new year to all other Friends. Over the holiday period they have worked assiduously to provide their usual exciting array of plants for the **March Sale**. This will be on the weekend of **18 and 19 March, 10am-4pm on Saturday and 10am-3pm on Sunday**.

With this copy of *Botanic News* you will find a flyer detailing just a few of the plants which will be for sale. Although Members are reminded that they may come to the nursery on any Friday morning except 10, 17 and 24 March, generally speaking the plants mentioned on the flyer will only be available on sale days. But if you come on 3 March you can see and purchase from our wide range: *E. caesia* Silver Princess, succulents, lacecap hydrangeas, winter-flowering scented iris and 'Congo Cockatoo' impatiens, to name but a few. Those who visited Lesley Clark's garden last year will be delighted to learn that they can now purchase *Mackaya bella* from the Growing Friends.

We're always grateful to have extra help on the check-out for Growing Friends plant sales. Any Members who could assist for a couple of hours — perhaps some of our younger Friends who are busy on weekdays — are asked to phone the office on 9650 6398.



FROM THE FRIENDS' SHOP

Dear Friends,

Just into stock from the Melbourne Trade Fair. Delicately floral 20-piece dinner sets, a new supply of washable cotton summer sun hats and some interesting new books on food and gardening. See you in the Shop.

**Jill Swann
Manager**

AUTUMN ACTIVITIES

FILM MORNING AND
LUNCH AT COMO CINEMA*The End of the Affair*

Monday 20 March at 11.00am

The End of the Affair received six Golden Globe Nominations, including Best Motion Picture, Drama; Best Performance by an Actress in Drama (Julianne Moore); Best Director and Best Original Score. The movie also stars Oscar nominee Ralph Fiennes (*The English Patient*).

Set in England as life is slowly returning to normal after World War 2, the brilliant and visually stunning story of love, betrayal and jealousy is based on a powerful semi-autobiographical novel by Graham Greene. This memorable film is due for release in Melbourne early in March.

Bring a friend or two, or come on your own. After the film a light basket lunch will be served.

Cost: \$12 per person, including film and lunch.

RSVP by Wednesday 15 March on enclosed booking form.

Please note: Parking is available at reduced rates in the carpark under Como Centre (enter Chapel or River Street). However, you must validate your parking ticket when you check in at the theatre ticket office.

Our regular venue, Trak Cinema, has discontinued film luncheons; however, the Como Centre is even more convenient for public transport and car parking.

BIRDS, BEASTS AND
PLANTS OF THE
SUBANTARCTIC ISLANDS

Illustrated Talk

by Philip Moors, Helen Cohn
and Lawrence CohnWednesday 29 March
5.30pm for 6.00pm
Mueller Hall

Last November, Dr Philip Moors, Friends' Secretary Lawrence Cohn and RBG Library Manager Helen Cohn took part in a 10-day expedition to the Subantarctic Islands on board the Russian vessel *Akademik Shokalskiy*. We extracted a promise that they would share this experience with the Friends; now we can have the benefit of slides and stories without the pain of stormy seas and icy temperatures in the Southern Ocean.

They visited three New Zealand islands and Macquarie Island, the Australian Antarctic Division Base. Flora and fauna of the islands and the sea, including several species of penguins, albatrosses and many other birds, were memorable sights they were able to capture on camera.

Refreshments will be served before the talk.

Cost: Friends \$10 Others \$15

RSVP by Monday 27 March on enclosed booking form.

The intrepid trio with New Zealand Elephant Seal at Macquarie Island



AUTUMN TOUR

BEECHWORTH & BRIGHT

12—14 APRIL 2000

North-eastern Victoria is famous for its autumn beauty, glorious landscape and historical associations. We have tailored a bus tour to encompass all these delights in tandem with Bronz Discovery Tours. Jane Calder, a Friend, botanist and keen gardener will be our guide.

Leaving from outside the National Gallery at 8.30am on Wednesday 12 April, the bus will take us first to Jane and Malcolm Calder's garden *Blackwood Hill* at Steels Creek. After morning tea there, we'll continue north to the lovely autumn garden *Forest Hills* in the Strathbogie Ranges for a picnic lunch and tour.

Beechworth will be our base for two nights. On one evening we'll dine at the elegant *Bank* restaurant. Garden visits will include the *Garden in a Forest* at Stanley and the fascinating *Black Springs Bakery*, where Rob Cowell has restored a cluster of granite farmhouse buildings dating back to 1870. He has recreated the countryside of Provence, with lavender, a quince walk, an olive grove, a decorative vegetable garden and a parterre. It's all framed by a stunning Australian landscape looking towards Mount Buffalo and the Buckland Valley.

We'll see an important part of historic Beechworth — the Town Hall Gardens with many trees donated by Baron Mueller — as well as relics of its hey day in the gold mining era. We'll also visit the Beechworth campus of La Trobe University, where heritage gardens initiated in 1867 promise magnificent autumn displays.

On Friday 14 April we'll travel via Myrtleford to Bright, where a tour of the town will include significant trees.

On to the serene Wandiligong Valley, a landscape classified by the National Trust. There we will hear from a local guide as we eat lunch, followed by a tour and a visit to a private property where chestnuts and hazelnuts will be available. We should arrive back in Melbourne about 6.15pm.

**Cost: \$475 per person twin share
\$50 single supplement**
(based on a minimum of 20 people)

The tour includes all meals, morning and afternoon teas, all entry fees, travel by a comfortable touring coach with an experienced driver, and the knowledgeable co-ordination of Jane Calder.

If you'd like to know more, call the Friends' Office on 9650 6398 and we'll send you an itinerary. Full payment must be made no later than Friday 17 March. See enclosed booking form.

**ROB LUCAS: NZ PLANT
EXPERT, LANDSCAPE
DESIGNER AND
PHOTOGRAPHER**

**Illustrated talk in Mueller Hall,
National Herbarium
Thursday 11 May
5.30pm for 6.00pm**

Rob Lucas is an expert in New Zealand plants and lectures in horticulture at the Open Polytechnic of NZ, specialising in the horticultural uses of NZ plants and plant pests and diseases.

His passion includes landscape design and captivating photography of exotic plants and inspiring gardens. Rob has been widely published and one of his most popular works, *The Native Garden, Designs and Themes from Wild New Zealand*, describes how the rhythms and patterns of nature are reflected in gardens.

His collaboration on *New Zealand Coast and Mountain Plants* resulted in the book winning the Natural Heritage Section of the 1997 Montana Book Awards. He has a fourth book coming out this year titled *A Field Guide to New Zealand Forests*.

Rob will be visiting Melbourne during this week as a guest of the RBG, which has the oldest collection of New Zealand forest plants in Australia. In June, we plan to follow up Rob's talk with a talk and walk led by Izabella Meraviglia-Crivelli, who has curated the RBG's NZ Collection since 1987.

Refreshments will be served before the talk.

Cost: \$10 Friends, \$15 others

RSVP by Monday 8 May on enclosed booking form.

**IT'S ALL HAPPENING
AT THE ZOO WITH
JOHN ARNOTT**

Tuesday 23 May at 10.00am

John Arnott, Curator of Horticulture at the Melbourne Zoo, is very excited by the innovative direction that horticulture has taken in the Zoological Gardens.

The Zoo has a long and established history of displaying its animals in a botanical setting. However, in recent years the nature of the horticultural environment has been linked more specifically to particular species of animals, and the landscape is an attraction in its own right.

We will assemble at 10.00am at the main entrance gate, after which we hope to meet some Friends of the Zoo over a cup of coffee/tea. John Arnott will give us an illustrated talk, followed by a walk, including some behind-the-scenes areas not open to the public.

Although we will focus mainly on horticulture, John thinks that you may even see the occasional animal! We will be limited to a group of 50.

Cost: \$15 per person including entrance fee and light morning refreshments.

RSVP by Thursday 18 May on enclosed booking form.

THANK YOU

The Friends thank the following companies and individuals for their support which helped make our Christmas Party at Gardens House, attended by about 170 people, a tremendous success:

- Marjorie Gillespie, who allowed us to exhibit her beautiful painting
- Going Going Green and the Friends' Shop for donating raffle prizes
- Peter Rowland Catering and Hamish Little of The Marquee People, for generous pricing for their services
- Activities Sub-committee for their hard work and expertise, and above all
- Our Members who attended in record numbers to support this event on a beautiful evening.

We were fortunate in 1999 to have many successful events, including several that were 'sold out' well in advance of the RSVP date. The Activities Sub-committee urges Members to book as early as possible to guarantee a place, thus avoiding disappointment. Also we request that you make every effort to arrive on time at events as a courtesy both to our guest speaker and to fellow Members.

The Activities group would always appreciate assistance from Members in running meetings and other events; for instance, to check people off the list as they arrive at the door, or to help pass around plates of food. If you would like to volunteer, please contact the office and leave your name, phone number and the event at which you could help and someone from the committee will return your call. This provides a great opportunity to meet others in our organisation. You will be warmly welcomed.

Lastly, we try to provide varied talks, trips and other activities to cater for the interests of all our Members. We always appreciate suggestions, so please pass on your ideas.

**Cathy Hossack
Convener**

BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATORS

This year the Botanical Illustrators will run their activities a little differently. We hope we will see more artists, students and other interested Members at our *second Tuesday of the month* sessions in the Whirling Room studio (in the Great Melbourne Telescope Building). Each month we will have a presentation or talk by an invited guest.

Artists are welcome to stay longer to use the studio facilities for painting and for informal discussions with other Members.

Coffee, tea and biscuits available from 10.30am.

Presentation/speaker will be at 11.00am.

Cost per session: \$5.00. It is not necessary to book.

Payment is to be made by CASH only, at each session in the Whirling Room.

Tuesday 14 March

Herbarium artist **Mali Moir** is at present working on a series of pen and ink drawings to illustrate a new work by Dr Jim Ross on the WA pea family *Bossiaea*. Mali has also embarked on painting a series of eight large watercolour studies of *Grevillea* to exhibit at the next R.H.S. winter exhibition in London, as well as undertaking various commercial commissions. Mali will bring a selection of her *Bossiaea* drawings together with working drawings and colour detail studies of the *Grevilleas*.

Tuesday 11 April

Terry Napier teaches Botanical and Bird Illustration at Park Orchards, where he and his students hold an exhibition each November. The group, known as The Park Orchards Native Artists, has recently been awarded a grant by the Maroondah City Council to illustrate the birds, flora and fungi of the '100 Acres Reserve', a park of native bushland which has been a source of inspiration for much of their work. Terry has much to tell about this project and will bring examples of his own and his students' recent works.

Terry is also the artist responsible for the bird and flower illustrations featured on the labels of Buller Wines Collector Edition vintage ports, now up to 22 in the series. He will bring some of these too, just to see, not sample!

Tuesday 9 May

Herbarium mycologist **Dr Tom May**. *Collecting and painting fungi*. A talk sure to interest many Members. Tom will explain why illustrations of fleshy fungi are important in taxonomy, and provide a historical background to this plant species. He'll describe the basic structure, pointing out the important characteristics. Tom will give us his expert advice on collecting fungi and preparing dried voucher specimens. In addition we will learn of the Fungimap project – a community mapping scheme for fungi by which people can help to broaden knowledge of the distribution and ecology of local fungi.

STOP PRESS. On 16 March, Monash University will confer an honorary Doctorate of Laws upon Celia Rosser

Margaret Castle Painting Workshop

Margaret, one of our Members, is offering a two-day painting workshop for students of botanical art and others who are interested in extending their experience with watercolours. If you have been working for a while and would like to try something a little freer and more spontaneous, this will be an enriching experience!

Proposed dates: Thursday 13 April and Tuesday 18 April. 10.00 – 3.00pm each day. **Cost \$120.** Bring your own materials. Whirling Room studio.

To enrol, call Dianne Emery on 9523 5397.

DIANNE EMERY'S CLASSES

Term 2 begins in week commencing 1 May.

Beginners and the more experienced are welcome.

Tuesday Painters (The Whirly Birds)

This informal painting group will continue to meet in the Whirling Room studio on most Tuesdays.

Cost is \$2.50 per session. Enquiries welcome.

Contact Mary Gregory 9836 8587.

Good News! The parking along Birdwood Avenue adjacent to the Whirling Room is to be increased to 4-hour, which should allow more time for artists using the studio and students attending classes.



Photograph by Lesley Skinner

Jill, Duchess of Hamilton (left), attracted an overflow audience to Mueller Hall when she spoke on a very hot evening in December. Jenny Gold (right) guided her around the RBG to locate specimens of Australian plants which were painted by Pierre Joseph Redouté from the Empress Josephine's *Jardin de la Malmaison*. The Duchess floated a 'dream' of a Redouté Trail in the RBG, featuring all these Australian plants.

Proceeds from the function exceeded \$1860, a marvellous result for the Friends.

ALBURY CONFERENCE

ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF BOTANIC GARDENS (VIC.) INC. CHALLENGE OF 2000 & BEYOND

The program is now available for this annual weekend conference, to be officially opened by the Hon. Tim Fischer on Saturday 8 April. Andrew Smith from Hobart will deliver the keynote address entitled *Friends and Botanical Guardians*.

An interesting innovation is a series of simultaneous workshops on Fundraising, Community Participation, Media and Communications, Special Events and Family Activities, with compiled outcomes to be sent to all Friends' groups.

Varied pre-and post-conference tours have been arranged for Friday 7 and Monday 10 April for those able to extend their visit.

For further details of the conference, please telephone the Friends' office. It is always most enjoyable and informative, providing an opportunity to learn about other gardens and to meet other Friends. Bookings close on 17 March.

RAFFLE REMINDER

The Friends of Albury Botanic Gardens have organised a raffle to help fund this 10th conference.

The prize, valued at \$4000, is a complete travel package:

A 7-day stay in Perth for two people, tour of Kings Park and local attractions, return airfares, luxury accommodation and meals.

2500 tickets are for sale at \$10 each (\$2 for Friends of RBG Melbourne for each ticket we sell). Contact the Friends' office **before Wednesday 8 March** if you would like a ticket.

BUSHFEST

RBG CRANBOURNE

Sunday 19 March 11am – 4pm

This family day is being organised by the staff and Friends of RBG Cranbourne, and City of Casey.

The Friends will be running an art exhibition of Australian flora and fauna along with plant sales and free bush food tastings. Also, free children's entertainment, a grass maze, guided bush walks and other fun environmental activities.

AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

Congratulations to three Friends whose work was recognised in the 26 January Honours List:

AM. Member, General Division

Dr Robin Sharwood (a Trustee of the Friends' Trust Fund) for service to the Anglican Church.

Mr Bill Thomson for service to the welfare of children and youth in Victoria.

OAM. Medal, General Division

Ms Nina Crone for service to education. (Nina, formerly headmistress of Melbourne Girls Grammar School, shares with Janet Thomson the task of fulfilling requests for talks about the Friends.)

MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FLOWER AND GARDEN SHOW 12 – 16 April

In 1998 the Royal Botanic Gardens won a gold medal for its splendid exhibit at this show in the Exhibition Gardens. RBG's display this year is even more ambitious, occupying a double site, close to the lake in the north-east corner. It will feature RBG Cranbourne as it is today (including a wetland with fringing vegetation, sand dune vegetation and a boardwalk) together with a sculptural element to introduce the Australian Garden of the future.

Andrew Laidlaw is the principal designer, but the display represents a major commitment by many staff across the whole organisation.

Be sure to look out for it if you visit the show.

PERTH BED AND BREAKFAST

Jane Tucker, a former RBG Voluntary Guide, now presides over a B&B in Perth, *Caesia House*, and offers Friends a ten per cent discount. Contact Jane at 32 Thomas St, Nedlands 6009. Tel. 9389 8174.

FRIENDS' BENEFITS

The Friends' Shop and Gardens' Shop offer 10 per cent discount on Members' purchases over \$20. The following businesses kindly offer discounts to Friends on PRIOR presentation of their signed current membership cards, which are not transferable.

Gills Nurseries (all branches)

1 Centre Rd, East Brighton
390 Balcombe Rd, Beaumaris
cnr Bay/Graham Sts, Pt Melbourne
589 Glenferrie Rd, Hawthorn
5% off plants only

Idaho Nurseries

410 Waverley Rd, East Malvern
10% off plants only

Bulleen Art and Garden

6 Manningham Rd West, Bulleen
10% off plants, 5% off other goods

Town and Country Gardens

1280 Malvern Rd, Malvern
24 Whitehorse Rd, Balwyn
10% off everything

The Arts Bookshop

1067 High St, Armadale

Holmesglen College of TAFE

585 Waverley Rd, Glen Waverley
20% off everything

The Gardeners Corner Store

190-192 New St, Brighton
10% off all plants

Collectors Corner

Springvale Rd, Keysborough
10% off all plants

Kew Nursery

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

Burwood Garden Patch

1418 Toorak Rd, Burwood
10% discount

Garden of Eden Nursery

33 Ferrars St, Albert Park
10% discount off everything

The Cottage Garden Nursery

Cnr Macedon Ave & Doncaster Rd
North Balwyn.

10% disc, also 8 punnets for \$20

The Garden Walk

199 New Street, Brighton
10% discount off plants only

Piccolo Gardens

356-360 Punt Rd, South Yarra
10% off all items (park in Lang St)

Banksia Hill B & B

RMB 5349, Horsham, 3401
10% discount on accommodation



BOTANIC NEWS is produced quarterly for 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
Hon. Sir James Gobbo, A.C.

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The Rt Hon. Sir Ninian Stephen

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FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

The new year, century and millennium are with us now – without any Y2K problems for the Gardens! – and already autumn is approaching. This is a beautiful season in the Gardens, with burnished colours, crackling leaves under foot on the Oak Lawn, and a special quality to the light.

The Gardens looked marvellous over the summer months, and were enjoyed by large numbers of visitors, who also appreciated the attractions at Observatory Gate and the theatre and cinema. The Perennial Border, in its second summer after the 1998 plantings funded by the Friends, has displayed a glorious exuberance of colour and foliage. The new Rose Garden near B Gate has been fully planted, with the species roses blooming vigorously. The hybrid 'Victoria Gold' developed for the centenary of the Australian Rose Society also put on a vivid display. The new collections in the Southern Chinese bed are growing-on strongly. The plant labels and interpretation are due to be installed during the autumn.

During the summer RBG staff have redesigned and replanted the Water Conservation Garden, a project sponsored by South East Water. The renovated garden and its information signs demonstrate how an attractive low-water garden can be created using Australian and exotic plants which are well adapted to Melbourne's climate. This impressive new garden was opened on 2 February by The Hon. Sherryl Garbutt, Minister for Environment and Conservation, during her first official visit to the RBG. Later the same day she also visited RBG Cranbourne for a briefing about our plans for the Australian Garden and Woodlands recreation area.

Characters from Norman Lindsay's much-loved children's book *The Magic Pudding* will be celebrated in a sculpture for the planned new Children's Garden at the RBG. The bronze sculpture is being created by Louis Laumen, whose recent works include the 'Weary' Dunlop statue in Benalla and the *Widow and Children* at the Shrine of Remembrance. *The Magic Pudding* is a project of the Future Focus Group within the Committee for Melbourne, and the Group has arranged sponsorship from Aspect Computing, a major Australian computer company based in Melbourne.

Andrew Laidlaw, the RBG Landscape Planner, and other RBG staff have been working on plans for the Children's Garden, which will be sited between Observatory House and the Herbarium, close to Observatory Gate. It will combine horticultural displays and environmental education programs focusing on the role of plants in the environment. The Children's Garden will greatly extend the RBG's ability to provide education activities for children of all ages in a safe, natural outdoor setting. *The Magic Pudding* is planned to be a 'magnet' for children, in a similar way to the *Peter Pan* sculpture in Hyde Park, London.

The Hon. Peter Howson retired from the Maud Gibson Trust last month, and was honoured with a lunch at Gardens House, hosted by the RBG and the Trust. A nephew of Maud Gibson, Peter has been a member of the Trust since 1961 and Chairman since 1986. He has been closely involved with the development of RBG Cranbourne since its earliest days.

Philip Moors
Director