



Botanic News

FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE INC.

A12827T

AUTUMN 2001

FROM THE PRESIDENT

This year has been designated as the International Year of Volunteers, and volunteering is surely the lifeblood of the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens. In this they represent an eminently Australian virtue. The Australian Bureau of Statistics tells us that almost three million Australians — many of them in their 50s, 60s and 70s — serve as volunteers with organisations, contributing 434 million hours of voluntary work each year and representing one of the highest volunteering rates in the world. In what is often described as an excessively materialistic society it is worthwhile occasionally to be reminded of, and for Governments to remember, the important part that volunteers play in our society.

Not only is this the Year of Volunteers, it is, of course, Federation's centenary year. The home of one of the outstanding founding fathers of our Federation, Alfred Deakin, (*Llanarth* at 206 Walsh Street) overlooked the Botanic Gardens and from his first floor study windows he could look down on Guilfoyle's masterly planting of lawns and trees. One likes to think that, great walker as he was, Alfred Deakin solved some of the many problems of federation in walks through the Gardens.

In this centenary year, it is interesting to note the only recorded association of the Gardens with Federation. The Duke and Duchess of York and Cornwall (later King George V and Queen Mary) each planted a *Cedrus deodara* during their visit to Melbourne for the opening of the Commonwealth Parliament in 1901. These century-old trees, planted by the Duke on 12 May and by his consort on 7 May, still stand proud on the Hopetoun Lawn.

Another significant anniversary this year is marked by the Separation Tree near the Ornamental Lake. It bears a plaque recording the celebration which took place beneath it in 1851 when Victoria was granted independence from the Colony of New South Wales. That 150 years ago that river red gum was large enough to accommodate a celebration beneath it says something of the age of the other, larger, river red gum still thriving nearby.

All these trees, historic landmarks, are part of our Gardens' rich heritage.

Special events in this quarter include the Growing Friends' Plant Sale and talks by two important overseas visitors. Do take part!

Sir Ninian Stephen

THE GOVERNOR AS PATRON

We are delighted that Governor John Landy has accepted the Friends' invitation to serve as our Patron.



We noted with interest the following words from the Governor at the beginning of his term of office. "Volunteers serve without question; they share without reservation; they listen with compassion; and they enrich our community beyond measure. I look forward during my period of office to working closely with the volunteer groups of all sections of the community."

Botanical Illustrators Reap Rewards for the Friends

With all the accounts in and paid, we are delighted to report the financial success of *The Art of Botanical Illustration 2000*. The exhibition in October/November returned a profit to the Friends of \$26,771 compared with \$22,500 from the 1998 exhibition. With expenses down and profits up, everyone involved should be congratulated. Interestingly, our single largest expense was \$2,558 — the fees due to the bank for the large number of paintings purchased on credit cards.

Thank you and congratulations to all involved for your skills, generosity, dedication, goodwill and good humour: artists, sponsors, raffle donors, selection panel, administration volunteers, sales volunteers, picture hangers, caterers, publicist, office staff and Gardens staff.

This event now involves more of our Members than any other run by the Friends, and offers a wonderful opportunity for so many to make a contribution in support of our Gardens. It also provides an outstanding vehicle for the promotion of the work of our talented artist Members. Well done, everyone!

Louise Coronel, Convener

Autumn Activities

CHOCOLAT: FILM LUNCHEON **Wednesday 14 March at 11.00am** **Palace Balwyn Cinema**

Chocolat stars Juliette Binoche, Lena Olin, Johnny Depp and Judi Dench.

In a small town in France in 1960, Vianne Rocher and her daughter open up a chocolate shop at the beginning of Lent. The town's small-minded mayor can't accept this and does his best to close the business, but Vianne's warm personality and incredible chocolates manage to win over many townsfolk.

Join us to view this happy film and have a light basket lunch afterwards. Bring a friend or two or come on your own.

Cost: \$14 per person, including film and lunch.
RSVP by Friday 9 March on booking form.
Balwyn Cinema is at 231 Whitehorse Rd, Balwyn.
Melway map 45 C7, conveniently situated on tram route 109 running between Port Melbourne and Mont Albert.

Plant Craft Cottage **20th Birthday Celebrations** **Sunday 25 March at 10.00am**

Join the Friends in helping the Plant Craft Cottage celebrate its first 20 years. We will meet at Gate Lodge, the Friends' headquarters on Birdwood Avenue, at 10.00am. After morning tea (in our new garden if the weather is kind) we will walk through the Gardens to the Cottage.

There we will view the exhibition which highlights the group's achievements from 1981 to 2001. Their plant crafts include papermaking, natural dyeing, fibre-making, plant cards, basketry and pot pourri. We will also be able to walk around the informal demonstrations of all these crafts near the Rose and Clematis Pavilions.

The Friends had its origins in the Plant Craft Cottage, whose immediate aims in 1981 were to undertake crafts with plant materials and to provide voluntary guides for the Gardens. The formation of a Friends' group, announced in the first printed brochure of the Plant Craft Cottage, was subsequently undertaken by a steering committee headed by Beth Higgs.

Cost: \$3 donation on the morning
RSVP by Wednesday 21 March on booking form

GROWING FRIENDS' AUTUMN SALE

Saturday 17 March, 10.00am – 4.00pm
Sunday 18 March, 10.00am – 3.00pm
Entry from E Gate in Birdwood Avenue

Thanks to the dedication of the Growing Friends, who have worked assiduously through this hot summer, and a good watering system, there will be the usual wonderful array of plants for sale on 17 and 18 March, on the lawns by the Dahlia beds. Those Members wishing to visit our nursery on Friday mornings should note that we will not be open on 9, 16 and 23 March while preparing for, and then recovering from, the sale.

The enclosed flyer describes just a few of the plants available. There will be a display area for dry shade plants for that corner where nothing seems to grow.

A good selection, as usual, is available in the Native Plant section. Members looking for a climber should consider *Hibbertia scandens*, a drought-tolerant climber with large yellow flowers for the whole year, combined with glossy, green foliage. The plant tolerates moderate frost and is a good soil binder. Those who have admired the plants around the Magnet House, *Homoranthus flavescentis*, will be delighted to know that there will be a good supply at the sale. The spring flowers are pale yellow-green, with beautiful grey-green foliage.

The hanging baskets have flourished in the Shade House and will be an attractive addition to your verandah or patio — the varieties of plants available are set out in the flyer.

Lovers of succulents will be delighted to know that some have been released from quarantine and will be available for sale. There are also good quantities of Irises, particularly *Iris germanica megalensis*, which flowers in late winter and early spring, and *Iris unguicularis*. The latter flowers in winter, tolerates drought and frost and is suitable for borders, as it will take sun or shade.

Extra help from Members not involved with the Growing Friends on a weekly basis is always most welcome at the sale. Areas of need are at the checkout, selling raffle tickets, and assistance with the catering for those working fulltime on both days. Please phone the office on 9650 6398 if you could spare a couple of hours to assist.

AUTUMN BUS TOUR TO DAYLESFORD AND CRESWICK

Tuesday 3 and Wednesday 4 April

This tour will offer autumn colour, insights into our botanical heritage and a more sustainable future, and a visit to an outstanding perennial nursery.

We'll begin at Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens at Daylesford, where the Friends will provide morning tea and a tour. The gracious 19th century character of the Gardens owes much to the conifers provided by Ferdinand von Mueller, and the stately elms.

We'll have lunch at the famous Convent Gallery before visiting Wombat Park, a wonderful private estate founded in 1851; some of its towering trees are registered as significant or rare specimens. A tall 'tapestry' hedge is an outstanding treasure.

Ian Huxley of Hilltop Cottage at Guildford holds the OPCA Collection of species roses. A visit to his garden and nursery offers us an unusual opportunity to see hundreds of these and other interesting old roses, together with cottage perennials.

We'll have dinner in an art deco hotel in Hepburn, and spend Tuesday night in the 4-star Hepburn Springs Motor Inn. (Please book as soon as possible because accommodation is much sought-after in this popular tourist area.)

On the following day we'll visit Lambley Nursery at Ascot, relaxing for morning tea amid the superb herbaceous borders; they are notable for their artistic colour blending and range of unusual plants.

At the Landcare Centre at Creswick, we'll learn more about this very important, new and successful approach to land management. There's also a Koori garden, an indigenous seed bank and a Landcare trail.

The La Gerche Walking Track interprets the story of Creswick's first forester and leads to Sawpit Gully Plantation where John La Gerche began raising seeds and transplanting trees in 1883. His legacy remains. We'll see marvellous old trees here and surrounding the School of Forestry at Creswick, associated so strongly for RBG Friends with the early life of Dr Jim Willis. Ron Hateley, who has been at the School since 1966 as student and lecturer, will be our guide.

Our bus, fitted with safety belts, will leave from outside the National Gallery in St Kilda Road at 9.00am on 3 April, and return there the following day about 5.00pm.

Cost: \$185 per person includes everything except dinner (allowing you an a la carte choice). Single supplement \$25.

RSVP on enclosed booking form no later than Tuesday 13 March. Contact the office on 9650 6398 for a more detailed tour plan.

COMMUNITY HORTICULTURE

Illustrated talk by Judith Zuk **President and CEO, Brooklyn** **Botanic Garden, New York** **Tuesday 17 April** **at 10.00am for 10.30am** **Mueller Hall, National Herbarium**



We realise that Easter Tuesday morning is an unusual time for a Friends' function, but we are extremely honoured that Judith Zuk will make a special one-day trip to Melbourne for this meeting, thanks to her friendship with Gwen and Rodger Elliot. She is visiting Australia as a keynote speaker at the Gardens 2001 Congress in Canberra. The Friends of RBG Cranbourne will co-host the occasion.

The Brooklyn Botanic Garden's programs in Community Horticulture and Education have great relevance for the future development of our Gardens at both Melbourne and Cranbourne. The Community Horticulture Program is now the world benchmark for similar projects, following the marvellous results from developing community gardens on derelict sites in Brooklyn. The BBG Education programs have a strong emphasis on attracting students from many ethnic backgrounds. Rodger comments that the Brooklyn Garden's ability to think and act on issues outside its own boundaries is somewhat unusual and could well be on the agenda for all botanic gardens.

Judith Zuk, as one of the leaders of American horticulture, is renowned for her work in many professional and civic organisations.

Refreshments will be served from 10.00am
Cost (incl. GST) Friends \$11 Others \$16
RSVP by Tuesday 10 April on booking form

The Horticultural Plants of Yunnan

Illustrated talk by Professor Guan Kaiyun **Tuesday 24 April at 11.30am for 12 noon** **Mueller Hall, National Herbarium**

The Friends are sponsoring the visit of Professor Guan Kaiyun to Australia, and are delighted that he is able to talk to us. He'll be in Melbourne after addressing the Gardens Congress in Canberra.

Prof. Kaiyun is Director of Kunming Botanical Garden in Yunnan Province, South-west China. There is already a close link between us; RBG gardener Terry Smyth worked for him at Kunming in 1998 under Friends' sponsorship, and her account of that experience is well-remembered as one of the Friends' most fascinating meetings. Now we can hear more about horticulture in Yunnan.

As Professor Kaiyun is not available for an evening meeting, we have planned this function for the lunch

hour to enable some RBG staff to attend.
A light lunch will be served from 11.30am, with the talk to begin at noon.

Cost (incl. GST) Friends \$11 Others \$16
RSVP by Friday 20 April on booking form

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE WALK WITH A BUSH FOOD MORNING TEA Thursday 3 May at 10.00am

For those who have not yet taken part in one of Dean Stewart's absorbing Aboriginal Heritage Walks or wish to go again, here is your chance.

Meet at Gate Lodge, headquarters of the Friends in Birdwood Avenue opposite the Shrine. Have special morning tea with a touch of 'bush tucker' in our newly-landscaped garden before joining Dean on our autumn quarterly walk to learn of the customs and rich heritage of the Bunurong and Woiwurrung people. Discover the ancestral lands that the RBG now occupies. Explore the traditional uses of plants for food, medicine, tools and ceremony. Let your Aboriginal guide take you on a journey.

The Friends were proud to make a donation of \$15,536 in 1998 towards the development of the Aboriginal Heritage Walks, which have received great acclaim.

This walk will be restricted in numbers.
Cost (incl. GST) Friends \$10 Others \$13
RSVP by Monday 30 April on booking form

English Gardening Writing in Australia — Inspiring or Irrelevant?

**Illustrated talk by Michael McCoy
Thursday 17 May at 7.30pm for 8.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium**

The coffee tables of Australian home gardeners are strewn with glossy garden books from the UK, while many professionals sneer at their appropriateness for our climate. Do they have anything to say to us in our largely hot, dry country, or is their value purely purely escapist?

Michael McCoy worked and lived for an English summer at Great Dixter, the home of renowned garden writer Christopher Lloyd. An avid reader and a thoughtful plantsman, he has recently released his own coffee table book, *Michael McCoy's Garden*, based on his experiences at Woodend. Come along and hear

Michael express his views on this challenging issue.
A lively discussion should ensue!

Refreshments will be served prior to the talk.
Cost (incl. GST) Friends \$11 Others \$16
RSVP by Monday 14 May on booking form

THE FRIENDS' GARDEN

The 'hard' landscaping at the rear and side of Gate Lodge was completed in January, with planting to be undertaken in March. It forms an attractive and useful extension for our cottage, with grey paving and stepping stones, and sand-coloured topping on the drive and path. In addition, there is now a pleasant setting for the seat donated by the Friends in memory of our former President, John Harper.

Rainforest material will be planted at the back, surrounding the Moreton Bay fig, and climbing roses along the side fence. Crepe myrtles and flowering perennials will fill the bed inside the fence, while succulents will be grown in the driveway's 'squares'. In time, the Gardens may plant several larger trees on 'their' side of the fence.

The RBG carpenter Geoff King, who used to occupy our cottage before its renovation, constructed the handsome curved bench seating and jarrah landing outside the back door. Needless to say, he took great personal pride in the job!

Andrew Laidlaw, the Gardens' landscape planner, did his usual excellent work in designing and supervising this project. Its total cost of approximately \$20,000 is regarded as another donation from the Friends to the Gardens; it certainly enhances the overall appearance of Observatory Gate.

ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS CONFERENCE 15—17 June

The Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens will celebrate their Gardens' 150th anniversary by hosting the annual conference of the Association of Friends.

Please call our office (9650 6398) for a program. Outstanding events include a keynote address from the Director of the Golden Gate National Parks Authority, San Francisco, and an after-dinner address about Daniel Bunce, Geelong Gardens' first curator. Geelong Art Gallery will stage an exhibition of historic photographs in conjunction with the Friends, and also botanic art by Jenny Phillips and her students.

These Association conferences enable us to exchange ideas with Friends from other botanic gardens, and are always most enjoyable. You can choose to attend just for a day or the whole weekend.

Botanical Illustrators

Through the eyes of an artist

Autumn: *The Perennial Border with Anita Barley*

Tuesday 13 March

Meet at the Whirling Room at 10.00am

Anita will take us over to the Perennial Border to meet one of the gardeners and look in detail at the plants and flowers. Afterwards, we will return to the Whirling Room to draw and paint specimens from the Garden. BYO lunch.

Cost (incl. GST): \$5.50. Pay on the day.

RSVP to Friends' office, tel 9650 6398

Dianne Emery's Classes and Workshops

Classes will resume in May for second term:

Evening classes on Tuesday 1 May, and day classes on Wednesday 2 and Friday 4 May.

Both beginners and more experienced artists are welcome. Please call Dianne on 9523 5397.

We also have some exciting workshops coming up.

FLOWER DISSECTION WORKSHOP

Mali Moir will conduct a series of classes on the dissection of flowers and painting those dissections. Topics will include: working with fresh specimens, working with re-hydrated pressed specimens, dissecting and painting /drawing larger flowers, the technique of pen and ink, pen and water colour. She will also demonstrate how to use microscopes for dissection, viewing and drawing/painting small flowers, cross-sections of leaves, using line and colour to depict plant parts.

Numbers will be limited. Dates and costs are yet to be finalised but the class will be held on Mondays. This is a wonderful opportunity to work with and learn from a talented and experienced botanical illustrator. Mali is well known for her work on the *Flora of Victoria*.

GOUACHE WORKSHOP

A second workshop will deal with application of the traditional technique of Gouache (opaque watercolour) to Botanical Art. Those of you who attended *The Art of Botanical Illustration* Exhibition in October last year will remember Rita Parkinson's dramatic paintings of succulents (one of which was purchased for the State Botanical Collection).

Rita will conduct this workshop on Wednesday 11 and Thursday 12 April, from 10.00am to 3.30pm both days. Some materials will be provided.

Cost will be \$135 for the two days.

Forthcoming events (dates to be finalised):

* Ferns, mosses, liverworts with Karen Beckmann

* 2-day beginners' introductory workshop

* Margaret Castle painting workshop

* Lithography workshop during mid-year break in association with the Victorian College of the Arts.

Please call Dianne Emery on 9523 5397 for further information on any of these workshops.

Special congratulations to two Botanical Illustrators: Anne O'Connor was awarded a gold medal for her paintings of Vireya Rhododendrons, and Jean Dennis a silver gilt medal for Brachychitons by the Royal Horticultural Society, London, at its November exhibition.

TUESDAY PAINTERS (The Whirly Birds)

offers an opportunity to work with other botanical artists in an informal group which meets most Tuesdays in the Whirling Room Studio at Observatory Gate. This group enjoys sharing ideas and techniques in a supportive atmosphere.

Casual fees per session: \$2.75 (incl. GST).

All enquiries welcome; contact Rita Parkinson on 9821 5883.



Carolyn Blackman (centre) with Cathy Trinca and Geoff Hardy; she gave an absorbing talk about colour in garden design.

Photo: Duncan Ironmonger

Gardens Poster

Many of you will remember Anne Marie Graham's lively paintings of scenes in the Gardens — one adorned the cover of *Botanic Magazine* Volume 7.

The artist now has an elegant poster reproducing 37 of these paintings, and is generously donating \$6 to the Friends for every poster we sell through our office. You can see it in Gate Lodge or at our functions. The cost of \$19.95 includes a packing tube and postage within Australia.

The Friends, the Future and You

A great deal of thinking and planning is currently being undertaken to ensure that the achievements and successes of the Friends will be built upon and enhanced in the future.

Our top priority is to increase our membership. To be able to do this, the support and assistance of Members is needed on our Membership Sub-committee. Our Activities Sub-committee also needs help to organise the marvellous talks and outings etc. which are a feature of our program each year.

Be part of the action and of our future by supporting the Friends with your skills and some of your time. This will help us to ensure that our organisation continues to be forward-looking, energetic and vibrant, meeting the needs of Members and the Gardens. We urge you to give the office a call on 9650 6398 for more information and to offer your help. By supporting the Friends you will be supporting our beautiful Botanic Gardens.



Carmel McPhee (left) with some of the party she led on a weekend trip to Mt Buffalo in January. Photo by David Plant

Owl Steals the Show

The Gardens' occasional resident Powerful Owl made a cameo appearance at *Romeo and Juliet* one January evening. RBG staffer Stuart McIntosh reported that the owl flew into the Liquidambar beside the Herbarium and sat on a low branch above the path for half an hour before moving to a higher branch, and moved its head from side to side according to the action on the stage! It also flew above the audience. Its silhouette in the night sky, with Gardens House in the background, cast the owl as a fascinating extra in the drama.

DONATIONS TO THE FRIENDS

Friends are reminded that donations to our Trust Fund are tax-deductible, and are devoted to Friends' projects in the Gardens.

More details from the office, 9650 6398.



A surprise was in store for Kevin Heinze at the Friends' Christmas dinner where he was our guest speaker — he was reunited with boyhood friend Peter Whitehead. Valma Whitehead is a Friends' volunteer. More than 80 people greatly enjoyed this function, held at the Lyceum Club.

Kevin worked in the RBG between 1949 and 1954.

Photo by Duncan Ironmonger

Gardens Congress

The first national Public Gardens Congress is to be held in Canberra between 17 and 24 April. I have had some involvement in its organisation, along with several other RBG staff and representatives of gardens around Australia. About 20 staff from across the RBG will attend this Congress, which will address almost all aspects of gardens activities from public programs to horticulture, to management and plant sciences. It is hoped that the Congress will result in a statement of a united vision for the future of public gardens in Australia.

Several international speakers will be in attendance, including Dr Peter Raven, Director of the Missouri Botanical Garden, Ms Judith Zuk, CEO of Brooklyn Botanic Garden, and Professor Guan Kaiyun, Director of Kunming Botanical Gardens in Yunnan Province, China.

Philip Moors

FLYING-FOXES

The Scientific Advisory Committee under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* advertised its Final Recommendation on 10 February that the species should be listed as threatened in Victoria. The Minister has 30 days to consider the recommendation. I have been advised by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (NRE) that listing under the *Flora and Fauna Act* does not necessarily preclude management of the species, including its culling.

Flying-fox experts from Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, together with RBG staff, officers from NRE and other land and wildlife managers, met at the Gardens on 24 January to consider how to proceed in stopping the damage to the Fern Gully by reducing the numbers of bats.

Following this meeting, the RBG has commenced planning for animal experts to relocate significant numbers of the flying-foxes currently roosting at the RBG. They will be trapped unharmed in a large harp net and moved to another established colony site at Dowell Creek east of Mallacoota in East Gippsland. I expect the relocation to commence in March. I attended a meeting in Mallacoota on 16 February to brief community representatives, and it is unlikely that the relocated animals will cause any impact.

Relocation is intended to give a quick reduction in bat numbers because I'm convinced that the RBG can't wait any longer before taking some real steps to protect the Fern Gully.

In the short term, I hope a vigorous relocation plan can be the start of a successful solution for our Gardens. The public response to the issue has been overwhelmingly in favour of the RBG. I am most appreciative of the strong support of the Friends. Please continue to express your views publicly.

Philip Moors

FLOREO

With this edition of *Botanic News*, Members will receive the first issue of *Floreo*. (Its initial publication date of November was postponed until late February.) *Floreo* is produced by the Royal Botanic Gardens in limited numbers, mainly for Government and industry agencies, donors, tertiary institutions, trusts, etc. The Friends have paid for the printing of extra copies in this instance for distribution to all our Members.

Gardens Autumn Highlights

March: For a feast of colour take a stroll past the cannas on the Southern Lawn (opposite the magnolias). During the early 1800s cannas were highly sought after as foliage plants in European gardens. They were later cultivated for their flowers. The resulting hybrids display a great range of colours and tones. The hybrid tea roses (opposite the entrance to the Herb Garden) and the dahlias (opposite the Tropical Glasshouse) are also in flower.

April: Autumn is a colourful time in the Gardens as the leaves of many deciduous plants turn vibrant reds, oranges, yellows and purples. Oak Lawn is the highlight of the season. In Melbourne's mild climate, these oaks have grown to their current size in half the time it would take in Europe.

May: Displaying sub-tropical and tropical plants from around the world, the Tropical Glasshouse is a warm retreat on a cool day. Many of these plants are from rainforests. Most require the warm, humid conditions of the glasshouse to flower and fruit. You can find a selection of tropical rainforest plants in the glasshouse. Many everyday household products come from some of these plants: look out for the coffee, cocoa, pineapple and pepper plants.



FRIENDS' BENEFITS

The Gardens Shops 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 plants only. **Note Change**

The Arts Bookshop
1067 High St, Armadale

Holmesglen Nursery
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% off everything

The Cottage Garden Nursery
Cnr Macedon Ave & Doncaster Rd
North Balwyn. 10% discount,
also 8 punnets for \$22 (GST incl)

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

***Essendon Garden Centre**
1060 Mt Alexander Rd, Essendon
10% off plants only

***Denotes newcomer to list**



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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Governor of Victoria

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FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

The RBG is very pleased to announce that an exciting new play and learning area for children is to be developed in the coming year. In combination with funds contributed by many Melburnians in response to our public appeal, a generous grant of \$650,000 from The Ian Potter Foundation is enabling the development of this new feature on a two-hectare site in the Melbourne Gardens. The garden will be known as **The Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden** and is envisaged as a magical place where children of all ages can explore the wonders of plants and their importance in our lives.

The Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden will be situated close to the Visitor Centre and Observatory Café, with the Magic Pudding sculpture perfectly positioned to be its central feature.

Our staff are excited by the prospect of the new Garden. Our Education Manager, Jane Liefman, has said that it will be a place where learning about nature becomes an adventure, and will be Australia's first major environmental education garden for children.

I am also very pleased with the plans for the Garden. There are many outdoor spaces dedicated to children in Australia but this will be one where a sense of adventure will be found in the landscape and not in prefabricated play equipment. Children will be able to dig, build, create, hide, explore and discover. Our thanks go to the Ian Potter Foundation and to many of the people of Melbourne for making this project possible.

Long Island Restoration

Another exciting project which many Friends will already have noticed is the restoration of Long

Island. This project revolves around the reintroduction of indigenous plants that grew in the area prior to European settlement, including many species that are now rare and threatened. Long Island, in the north-western area of the Gardens, originally formed the southern bank of the Yarra River, so many riparian and wetland species are being used.

The island's transformation is taking place with the assistance of a Green Corps team of volunteers. The Green Corps program provides an excellent learning opportunity for young people as well as a valuable service to the community. We have welcomed the team to the Gardens.

A significant aspect of the project is that Long Island will be a place where the traditional custodians of the land that now forms the Gardens are acknowledged, and their relationship with the land recognised. I am confident that the RBG's visitors will be fascinated and moved as they walk among the beautiful plants that are native to the banks of the Yarra River. The project is expected to be completed by the middle of this year.

Desilting of Central Lake

The desilting of Central Lake has now been completed, thanks to the generous assistance of the Friends' Trust Fund. All the equipment and materials have also been removed from the site, so you will have noticed that the appearance of the lawns around Central Lake is largely back to normal. The project has been very successful: the desired quantity of silt has been removed, and the method used was environmentally sound. Importantly, the project also had minimum impact on the Gardens' infrastructure. The lake is looking much healthier and quite a lot deeper!

Philip Moors, Director