



Autumn 2004

BOTANIC NEWS

FRIENDS *of the* ROYAL BOTANIC
GARDENS MELBOURNE INC.

FEATURE

The Ian Potter Foundation
Children's Garden

FROM THE PRESIDENT

On Australia Day, a distinguished Honorary Life Member of the Friends, Beth Higgs, received a Medal in the General Division of the Order of Australia (OAM) for service to the community, particularly through the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne. In 1981, as a committee member of the newly formed Plant Craft Cottage Group, Beth was asked to undertake the challenging task of setting up a Friends' group and chairing the initial steering committee. Since those early days when Beth's drive, hard work, tremendous enthusiasm and charm helped to lay the wonderful foundation stones on which our organisation rests today, she has continued to support us in many ways, including, in 2000, as a member of the Future Directions Committee which recommended some restructuring of the Friends' administration and priorities for the coming years. On behalf of all Members, I extend to Beth our warmest congratulations on this richly deserved honour.

I know many Members enjoyed the all-too-short season of *Nature's Art Revealed*, and congratulations must go to the curators, Helen Cohn and Jill Thurlow, and to the designers for mounting such a beautiful, interesting and informative exhibition. Many who saw it have been inspired to join our Botanical Illustrators' classes. Forty-three Members staffed *Nature's Art Revealed* and I am sure your efforts were richly rewarded. Thank you all for volunteering to do this.



As always the summer is a wonderful time to visit the Gardens and enjoy, despite lack of rain and the water restrictions, the fresh green lawns and trees. The RBG's ability to use water economically, earning it exemption from the restrictions, was aided last year by the Friends' support of the *Water Works, Water Wise* project and this year we are supporting the extension of this program into the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden. We look forward to your help in meeting this challenge.

Don't forget that Members may visit the Growing Friends' nursery between 10.00am and 1.00pm every Friday with the exception of the three Fridays before a sale and the Friday following a sale. Entry to the nursery is through the Gardens' works gate, between Gate E and the Herbarium. The next Plant Sale will be held on 20 and 21 March if you are unable to get there on Fridays.

Irwin Newman

Conference of the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens

Gardens for Pleasure, Plants for Survival is the theme of the Conference of the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens to be held in Canberra from 16-18 April.

These gatherings are always most enjoyable and rewarding, combining a program of stimulating talks, the chance to meet Friends from many other Gardens and, this year, the opportunity to see Canberra in all its autumn glory.

For further information contact the Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens on (02) 6250 9548 or ask the Friends' office (03) 9650 6398 for a conference brochure.

Notes from Gate Lodge

If you are moving house soon, please do not forget to add the Friends to your list of people to notify of your new address. It is a tedious job to remember all the places from which you receive mail but we do get quite a number of copies of *Botanic News* returned because Members forget to inform us of their move. So, add us to the list and let's stay in touch!

Likewise, if you are associated with any of our Members who have recently died, please could you let us know? While we try and keep our eyes and ears open, occasionally we are unaware and feel concerned when someone needs to return mail.

Virginia Henderson

FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

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Cover: Single canna detail from the RBG's stunning display



BROCHURE DETAIL
REPRODUCED BY KIND
PERMISSION OF BETTY
CONABERE AND RBG

Australian Garden

The major earthworks for the Australian Garden at RBG Cranbourne commenced in September 2003. We can now see the vision of the Garden's designers beginning to take shape. The 'celebration of commencement of construction' of the Australian Garden was held in November 2003. The Honourable John Thwaites, Minister for Environment, and the Honourable John Pandazopoulos, Minister for Tourism, along with several other Federal, State and local politicians, attended the celebration and addressed our guests on the features and benefits of the Australian Garden.

The landscape at RBG Cranbourne is changing almost daily. Recent work at the site includes the installation of power and water services and the completion of the irrigation mains. Soil amelioration has begun in the Eucalypt Walk and Dry Riverbed, and the Rock Garden within the Eucalypt Walk has been laid and is looking marvellous. Work has begun on the Rockpool Waterway, one of the exciting features of the central promenade of the Garden, with most of the slab for the Rockpool Waterway having been laid recently. Over the next few months, detailed irrigation installation will take place, a number of major paths and roads will be built and planting will commence, adding further dimension to the landscape. A real bonus for the RBG is that the ABC TV program *Gardening Australia* will feature progress on the

Australian Garden this year. That means we will all be able to watch the Garden grow. The first segment was filmed in early February 2004.

RBG Summer Student Program

Two short-term Jim Willis Studentship scholarships are being undertaken at the National Herbarium of Victoria in 2004. The first of the studentships was undertaken recently by Kristin Sicha, who has just completed Honours in Conservation Biology and Ecology at LaTrobe University. The Jim Willis Studentships, which honour the late Dr James Hamlyn Willis, are generously supported by Friend Roger Riordan, and we anticipate that a second student will benefit from one of these studentships early in 2004. Kristin's project involved determining the number of species of *Calostoma* (pretty mouths fungus - a false puffball), and how these Australian species relate to species around the world. This project was co-supervised by Teresa Lebel and Tom May.

A third scholarship offered over summer, to Ray McMahon, who has completed his Bachelor of Biological Science at LaTrobe University, was the inaugural Esma Salkin Studentship. The late Esma Salkin had a long record of interest in Australian daisies, and the studentship was generously supported by the Australian Daisy Study Group. Ray studied the rare daisy *Cratystylis conocephala*

(Blue-bush daisy), and aimed to confirm the sex of the Victorian plants and to investigate whether the plants are separate individuals or all clones. He also investigated whether these plants could be propagated by cuttings in the nursery glasshouse. The results of Ray's project will help to guide conservation actions for the species. Ray was co-supervised by Neville Walsh and Liz James.

RBG Development Branch - Bequests Officer Position

RBG Melbourne welcomes its recently appointed part-time Bequests Officer, Judy Dunster, who will work in the Development Branch. Judy comes to the RBG with valuable experience from the Red Cross. The Bequests Officer position is a new, two-year grant-funded position which is being supported by the Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation.

Judy will work to encourage bequests to the RBG Foundation, with the aim of increasing the Gardens' discretionary income. Potential donors will have the opportunity to meet Judy and learn more about the Gardens and the benefits of making a bequest. She would be happy to meet Members of the Friends and she can be contacted at the Development Branch on 9252 2303. A copy of the RBG's current bequests brochure can be obtained by contacting the Development Branch on the above telephone number.

Flying-foxes

The flying-fox colony is still happily ensconced at Yarra Bend Park, and as a result RBG Melbourne remains flying-fox-free. Early morning patrols are still being carried out to ensure that the colony does not attempt to reestablish itself at the Gardens, but so far the relocation program has been a great success. Visitors are free to explore and enjoy Fern Gully in peace once again.

And finally, I am delighted to report that the music theatre production *Love, Death, Music and Plants - A musical infringement on the life of Baron Ferdinand von Mueller*, held in Mueller Hall in mid to late November 2003, was an outstanding success and that all twelve shows were sold out. We hope that many of the Friends had the opportunity to go along and enjoy what was a most creative and dramatic production.

Philip Moors,
Director

Photo: Rachelle Roberts



Izabella Meraviglia-Crivelli

Passionate about gardening and about the Royal Botanic Gardens, Izabella is currently employed as a Horticultural Technician responsible for the New Zealand Collection. She has enjoyed the varied opportunities afforded her at the Gardens. Working on the design team for The Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden is a project she has found particularly stimulating.

Izabella, her parents and sister came from Poland to Australia in 1966. They settled in East Doncaster where Izabella went to school. Her interest in horticulture began when she undertook a gardening course offered to the young unemployed. During the course Izabella was offered a gardening apprenticeship at Swinburne. It was in 1984 that Izabella joined the staff of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne. She started working in the Australian Border and soon moved to the New Zealand Collection. While working at the Gardens Izabella has obtained a Certificate of Landscape Technology, has partly completed an Associate Diploma of Applied Science from Burnley College and has taken a Plant Identification course. In 1990-91 Izabella participated in an exchange program with the Wellington Botanic Gardens and several of the plants she collected while in New Zealand are now growing in the RBG collection.

At present Izabella and Andrew Laidlaw are redesigning the New Zealand Collection, in order to increase its diversity. Further development will require plant collecting and sponsorship. Izabella says awareness and assessment of weed potential is an important aspect of her work given New Zealand's warm temperate climate.

Many changes in work practices have occurred since Izabella joined RBG. She



The sensory experience of the elements, the wind, the sun, the rain and the cold are important to Izabella's enjoyment of gardening and her sense of well being.

remembers the tedious time-consuming task of sweeping up leaves with Bangalow palm fronds and then gathering them up into wheelbarrows. A positive change she has noted is the recognition of the professional expertise of the horticultural staff that has led to their involvement in the design of their particular areas following collection policy guidelines. This has led not only to intellectual stimulation and professional development but also to a sense of ownership and greater job satisfaction.

Izabella shares her home with her ageing cat Magda. Her outside interests tend to be artistic and she is a passionate traveller.

The sensory experience of the elements, the wind, the sun, the rain and the cold

are important to Izabella's enjoyment of gardening and her sense of well being. She believes that being work-fit is a personal responsibility and to this end she runs and uses weights. She speaks enthusiastically about her goals of becoming a better gardener and gardening until she is 90 plus because she says 'gardening has given me such inspiration, such beauty, pleasure, sweat and toil, especially in the RBG environment'. In turn Izabella has given much of herself and her craft to the RBG.

Carolyn Tomkins



Photo: Meg Miller

It has certainly been a long gestation period, but finally the construction of The Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden has begun, with the Children's Kitchen Garden taking priority. Services including main lines for the irrigation, electrical supply and communication have all been put into place, as well as all the pipe work for the water features. We must thank the RBGM Friends for the funds provided for irrigation through their *Water Works, Water Wise* program.

The Kitchen Garden is nearing completion and has been planted with a summer crop. It comprises a series of raised beds of different heights. These have been designed to provide children of different ages and abilities with access. Capping has been installed on some of these to provide seating for small groups to gather. Such was the enthusiasm of some gardeners that the summer crop was literally being planted as the garden beds were being completed. The planting schedule has been carefully devised to ensure continued cropping right through until the whole Garden is officially

opened in October 2004. At present there is a mix of summer vegetables including tomatoes, pumpkins, beans and potatoes and a green manure mix including leaf amaranth, soya beans, lucerne and French white millet. Once the weather cools a little, fruit trees, berries and herbs will be planted around the perimeter of the Garden.

The Kitchen Garden also provided the perfect place to stage the RBG Melbourne Holiday Program which is all about Peter Rabbit and his adventures in and around Mr McGregor's garden. The Holiday Program finished on 22 January and proved very popular, with over four hundred children attending.

2004 should be a very exciting year for The Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden.

Andrew Laidlaw
Landscape Architect



Peter Rabbit's Garden - Holiday Program

Peter Rabbit's Garden was a journey through the story of Beatrix Potter's Peter Rabbit, exploring the landscape of the Gardens through Peter's eyes, ears and nose.

Beatrix Potter's illustrations reflected her great skill as a naturalist who observed and recorded the wildlife and plants around her home, Hill Top Farm, at Sawry in the Lake District early last century. As a conservationist ahead of her time, she was able to use the sales from her books to buy great stretches of land in the Lake District to ensure its conservation and the conservation of its ecology.

Literature in the Landscape

The landscapes within the RBG that set the stage for Peter and Mr McGregor include the Children's Kitchen Garden, the Herb Garden and Oak Lawn. The story is also rich with plant references; chamomile tea is given to Peter after his ordeal with Mr McGregor. In Mr McGregor's Garden 'he ate some lettuces and some French beans; and then he ate some radishes; and then feeling rather sick he went looking for some parsley'.

With Peter's eyes children are able to see the herbs and vegetables growing, feel them and with his nose smell them (and they feel for Peter too as they see him running off with them).

As in all good stories and certainly in Potter's stories there is no shying away from the truths of the natural world. Interactions between plants and animals (including humans) are dealt with in humorous but honest ways. Mr McGregor didn't catch Peter, this time, to put him in a pie, but he did 'hang his jacket up for a scarecrow to frighten the blackbirds'. There is no coyness about who's who in the food chain! Perhaps it is partly this integrity, based on a fascination for the natural world, that has led to the long-lasting popularity of Potter's work.

Food for the Imagination

With Peter's eyes children can explore Oak Lawn looking for possible rabbit holes (animal homes) between the roots of old trees: 'they lived with their mother in a sand bank, under the root of a very big fir tree'. Here it is the child's imagination that creeps down between the roots looking for a home where the ceiling is hung with onions and bunches of herbs.

Children's observant eyes then find the parts to their own stories (using landscape, they add to the original story), the water in the roots between the trees becomes the place 'where Peter had a drink', marks on the ground are Peter's digging, and 'here is some grass for Peter to eat'. Children are using stories to make discoveries about the world they live in. The richer the natural environment is, the richer the children's imaginary

world can be and the more sophisticated the level of discovery that can be made.

Food for Us

As Peter and Mr McGregor teach us in their 'garden war', vegetables and herbs are worth fighting over. At any rate, they are worth growing and eating. Children learn the simple horticultural technique of sowing radish seeds and how to care for them. They see how delightful it is to explore a garden full of scents and tastes. They learn that plants are healing; that sensible Mrs Rabbit and even naughty Peter know the medicinal qualities of chamomile and parsley! Children have the opportunity to use small gardening tools to have the satisfaction themselves, of digging, scratching and raking, just as Mr McGregor does.

Natural Treasures

Children collect natural materials from the ground for their treasure bags just as Peter might, but with their 'treasures' they make a Peter Rabbit mask (pine needles make great whiskers!). Finding 'treasures' and using them creatively encourages observation, exploring at new levels (exploring at Peter's level), using the senses and the imagination.

Peter Rabbit is a great explorer, a risk taker. He teaches us that exploration should be physical, imaginary, emotional, practical; that you can 'collect' things along the way – all things that make a great holiday program for pre-school children too.

*Chris Joy,
Manager, Education*

PETER RABBIT AND FRIENDS



The Gardens Through an Artist's Eyes

All 60 of Anne Marie Graham's paintings of the Royal Botanic Gardens will be shown together for the first time when they are exhibited at the George Adams Gallery in the Victorian Arts Centre from 6 April to 30 May.

Anne's first, and major, representation of the Gardens was the triptych *The Garden for All Seasons*, painted in 1983, which hangs in the Arts Centre. Then between 1994 and 1999 she must have been one of the Gardens' most frequent visitors while undertaking the full series.

With gentle, often wry, humour and a great eye for detail, the artist enlivens her depiction of magnificent landscapes and horticultural profusion by painting the people - working, playing, snoozing, marrying, studying,

sketching, picnicking, even potting...(the Growing Friends).

Several of the images will be enlarged for use as backdrops for a children's dance festival during the exhibition.

Dame Elisabeth Murdoch purchased the first 40 paintings and presented them to the National Trust, which is seeking a suitable permanent home for the collection.

Now 79, Anne began her art education in 1932 in her birthplace, Vienna. She will talk about her series on Wednesday 21 April at 11.00am in the gallery. Members of the Friends are very welcome to attend; there will be some seating.

A colourful poster reproducing 37 of the paintings is available from the Friends' office for \$19.95

Heather Ironmonger

Photos: Meg Miller



EXHIBITIONS



New Branches on an Old Tree

Members will recall articles from previous editions of *Botanic News* about the result of a fruitful collaboration between an artist, Susan Purdy, and the curator of the RBGM

A year in the making, this exciting contemporary art project depicts dramatic photograms.

Southern Chinese Collection, Terry Smyth. A year in the making, this exciting contemporary art project depicts dramatic photograms. Susan is a Victorian artist whose research was funded by Arts Victoria and Monash University.

During 2002 Susan's creation of 36 new art works built a fresh context for the Southern Chinese Collection. New Branches on an Old Tree is a remarkably beautiful suite of images in which both the symbolic and the actual nature of Chinese plants has been

explored. The result is an exhibition of ghostly and dramatic images.

Susan kept a journal chronicling her visits to the gardens each month. The following passage is an extract from her August entry: "The precious treasure

of August is indisputably the Peony. There is one bloom for me to take. I read that the Chinese character for peony translates as Male Red. This is the perfect pair to the Magnolia of last month symbolizing the feminine which I have toned blue to imply moonlight. This harmonious occurrence fits beautifully onto the Chinese principle that symmetry creates balance. Peonies are supposedly the most Yang of flowers and a symbol of prosperity."

New Branches on an Old Tree will be exhibited at the Centre for Contemporary Photography in Fitzroy from 11 March to 14 April and at the Albury Regional Gallery in September. For more information try www.ccp.org.au or www.susanpurdy.net

Anita Barley

Admirers of Anita Barley's work will be interested to know that there will be an exhibition of her work at a new gallery - Woodbine Art, 2644 Daylesford Rd, Malmsbury, from Sunday 14 March to Friday 30 April. During this time there will be a luncheon at Cope Williams Winery, on Saturday 27 March. At 10.30am on this day Anita will give a demonstration of her work and John Patrick will give a lecture. Enquiries to 5423 2065.



ACTIVITIES



New Members Welcome

Wednesday 3 March at 5.30pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

Invitations will soon be sent to all new Friends, and those of you who haven't yet been able, to come to our next 'Getting-to-know-you' gathering. We look forward to meeting you and welcoming you to the Friends. After savouries and a glass of wine we will present a short information slide show, a welcome by the Director of the Gardens, and brief talks by our committee leaders. Following this the Voluntary Guides will take you on a

guided tour of the Gardens.

All who have joined the Friends since our last Welcome, or who have already requested an invitation to an evening Welcome, will automatically receive one. If you have not been able to attend a previous New Members Welcome and would like to come this time, we would like to meet you, so please call our office (9650 6398) to ensure your invitation.



Sensuality In The Garden

ILLUSTRATED TALK

by David Kirkpatrick

Tuesday 9 March at 6.30 for 7.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium
Cost: \$20 Friends \$15
RSVP by Friday 5 March
on enclosed booking form

David Kirkpatrick is a leading Australian landscape designer who has been featured on radio and in numerous press and magazine articles.

David's philosophy is that the designed garden needs to be a reflection of your personal tastes and practical requirements. With a garden you are free to be fanciful, creating spaces that are functional, romantic and imaginative, enticing interest and the possibility of further spaces to explore.

His landscapes are beautiful and emotionally restorative and often include a well-designed and constructed water feature.

Join us for a glass of wine and share some of David's philosophy together with beautiful photographic examples of his work.



Norgates, Lavandula and Lambley

BUS TRIP Tuesday 23 March
Meet at Vic. Arts Centre
(outside State Theatre) St Kilda Road
Leaving 9.00am sharp, returning
approx 5.45pm
Cost: \$59.00
RSVP by Tuesday 16 March
on enclosed booking form

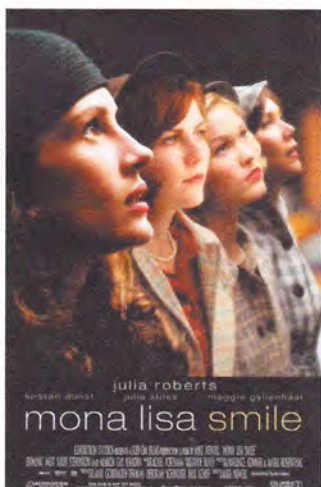
First stop will be Norgates of Newbury, growers of one of Australia's largest selection

of perennial plants. The property consists of ten acres of field-grown perennials and seven acres of display gardens that hold a unique collection of more than 3000 species and varieties of trees, shrubs, perennials and bulbs grown in thematic areas. A short talk will be given on arrival and morning tea will be served.

Then on to Lavandula Lavender Farm near Daylesford for a delicious lunch of gourmet sandwiches, coffee and

their famous lavender scones. From this culinary treat we move on to internationally-recognised Lambley Nursery at Ascot where nurseryman David Glenn grows perennials, ornamental grasses and silver foliage plants displayed in glorious herbaceous borders, cottage gardens and five acres of flower fields. More than a thousand varieties make this a floral oasis in the surrounding dry grass plains.

ACTIVITIES



Mona Lisa Smile

FILM LUNCHEON

Wednesday 24 March at 11.00am
Dendy Brighton Cinema
26 Church Street, Brighton
Cost \$18 per person,
including film and lunch
RSVP by Friday 19 March
on enclosed booking form

In 1953, novice art history teacher Katherine Watson (Julia Roberts) accepted a teaching post at the prestigious all-female Wellesley College. In the 1950s women's roles were rigidly defined and the Wellesley women were torn between the repressive mores of the time and their longing for intellectual freedom. Free-spirited Watson challenged the institution, and encouraged and inspired her students to look beyond the image of

what is and consider the possibilities for a better future.

Parking, entrance in St Andrews Street, \$2 for up to 3 hrs on presentation of cinema ticket. Or catch the train to Middle Brighton Station, then just a short walk up Church St.



The Flower Hunter: Ellis Rowan (1848-1922)

EXCEPTIONAL BUS TRIP

Thursday 15 April
Meet at Vic Arts Centre
(outside State Theatre)
St Kilda Road
Leaving 9.00am sharp,
returning approx 5.00pm
Cost \$45.00 BYO lunch,
tea and coffee provided.
RSVP by Thursday 8 April
on enclosed booking form

From the collection of the National Library of Australia, works of Ellis Rowan will be viewed at the Castlemaine Gallery. Rowan made a significant contribution to the botanical knowledge of Australian and international flora using painting and other media. While viewing this exhibition, a talk will be given by Peter Perry, Gallery Director, followed by morning tea.

Lunch will be eaten at the Botanical Gardens, where Trish Addis of the Castlemaine Friends will relate their history.

We are delighted to be able to visit the private garden of "Forest Hall" (an historic home of 1867) which has been open for the Castlemaine Festival. This semi-formal garden demonstrates the owners' sensitivity to wise drought-resistant planting at the same time offering surprising and beautiful vistas of exotic plants.



Treasure Trove Of Plants From Eastern Europe

ILLUSTRATED TALK

Display And Sale Of Plants
By Merryle Johnson
Thursday 22 April at 6.30 for 7.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium
Cost: \$20 Friends \$15
RSVP by Monday 19 April
on enclosed booking form

Merryle Johnson of Country Farm Perennials, hosts Garden Lovers Holidays as well as running a perennial plant nursery. During an exotic tour last June to the extraordinary cities of Prague and Budapest, the countryside of Hungary, Austria and the Czech Republic, plus private estates in Southern Germany, Merryle discovered an amazing range of Eastern European plants. She will talk to us about this treasure trove of plants, as

well as bringing many of them for display and sale.

A glass of wine and savouries will be served before the talk.

ACTIVITIES



Autumn Quarterly InsidersWalk: Magnificent Trees, Magnificent Wood

Wednesday 28 April
at 10.00am sharp
Meet at Gate Lodge
(opposite the Shrine)
Cost: \$10 MEMBERS ONLY.
Payment must accompany booking
as this is a restricted number event
RSVP by Friday 23 April
on enclosed booking form

The purpose of this walk is to look at some of our Australian native trees and their valuable timbers that are used for structural, industrial, domestic and ornamental purposes. Samples of wood from most of the trees will be on display. The RBG Melbourne has historically taken a leading role in the field of economic botany and is a great source of reference today.

A delicious morning tea will be served beforehand.



Trends In Floral Art

By Barbara Watson

Award-winning floral artist and
Chelsea exhibitor
Tuesday 11 May
at 10.30 for 11.00am
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium
Cost: \$20 Friends \$15
RSVP by Friday 7 May
on enclosed booking form

Barbara Watson is the first Australian to win a Gold Medal at the Chelsea Flower Show, in 1995, for her floral art. Barbara is also an Australian Horticultural Judge, judging at the Melbourne International Garden Show as well as overseas at Hampton Court.

Following morning tea, Barbara will take us through a number of floral arrangements. She will talk to us about the influences that led

from flowers in a vase to new techniques involving innovative and creative thinking. Barbara will also talk to us about the World Association of Floral Art, and about exhibiting at the Chelsea Flower Show.



Autumn Fit Friends Ramble: History And Bushland Along The Yarra

Thursday 20 May, 9.30am sharp
Fairfield Boathouse tearooms
Park in Fairfield Park off Heidelberg
Rd Fairfield (Melway 30 J12)
Cost: \$8 Friends \$5.
Limited numbers
RSVP by Monday 17 May
on enclosed booking form

Come and ramble with the Friends along the Yarra, through bushland close to the heart of Melbourne. There are fascinating rock formations to be seen, birds and native animals, as well as a good selection of native vegetation, indicative of what grew over much of Melbourne not so long ago.

We will meet at the historic Boathouse, then take the Discovery Trail over the Pipe Bridge and along the Yarra.

We'll return for morning tea at the tearooms (purchase own) where you can view a display of the pictorial history of the area. Afterwards we will take the path along Merri Creek to Dights Falls, returning to the carpark by about 1pm.

Please wear sensible walking shoes, hat, sunscreen and please also bring a water bottle.

ILLUSTRATORS



Quercus robur 'Atropurpurea' by Judy Jarman

The Illustrated Garden

This project was established in 2001 by artist members of the Friends of the RBGM to create a permanent record, or florilegium, of plants growing in the RBG Melbourne. The Friends hold this 21st century florilegium digitally and photographically.

At the sixth *Art of Botanical Illustration* Exhibition in 2002, six illustrations were chosen to add to the collection, which has already proved to be a valuable resource. *Cedrus libani* by Dolores Skowronski-Malloni, and *Erythrina crista-galli* by Anita Barley were used for our 2002 and 2003 Christmas cards. Last year when the *Botanic News* updated its format and went to full colour, we were able to feature artists' profiles and images. These included Terry Napier, Marta Saloman, Mary Gregory and Dolores Skowronski-Malloni. We look forward to the collection providing images for the cover of future editions of *Botanic News*.

In 2003 we initiated a specific project to document

the Gardens' magnificent collection of Oaks, and currently 14 artists are participating and working on full-page illustrations that include diagnostic features. We hope those under way will be completed and selected for inclusion in the collection this year.

The illustration shown here is a detail from a painting by Judy Jarman of the *Quercus robur 'Atropurpurea'*. The image highlights young leaves and a magnification of young male and female flowers.

Preparations for the 2004 *Art of Botanical Illustration* exhibition are under way, and once again illustrations of any plant can be submitted for selection. Illustrations of any plant in the RBGM collection may be submitted for selection for The Illustrated Garden project and those selected will be professionally photographed and the colour transparencies held by the Friends. The original works will be included in the exhibition and available for sale.

Rita Parkinson

Whirlybirds

The Whirlybirds are a group of Friends who meet in the Whirling Room Studio on Tuesdays and join in a convivial, relaxed atmosphere to share the joys and challenges of botanical illustration. One of these challenges is to partake in the painting of the oaks in the Royal Botanic Gardens. This project has produced some wonderful results to date.

If you would like to join the Whirlybirds, ring Miriam Blight on 9583 6098 for more information.

Term Classes will commence the week beginning 26 April 2004. Classes will be held on Tuesday evenings and in the daytime on Mondays, Wednesdays (two sessions), Fridays and Saturdays.

For further information on classes, contact Dianne Emery on 9523 5397 or Mali Moir on 9822 8198.

Botanical Art in the Rare Book Collection of the RBG Library

ILLUSTRATED TALK

by Helen Cohn

Tuesday 11 May
10.15 for group 1
11.15 for group 2

Meet at the Whirling Room, Great Melbourne Telescope Building Observatory Gate Site, Birdwood Avenue.

Cost \$5.50 Friends only
RSVP to Friends' office on 9650 6398 and please indicate your session preference.

This is a rare opportunity to see some of the RBG Library's precious books at close hand. Each session will be limited to a maximum of 15 people to ensure a good view of the material presented.

At 12.30pm, following the talks, there will be a full meeting of the Botanical Illustrators group in the Whirling Room to discuss progress to date and future plans. BYO lunch.

MEMBERS

Membership

A warm welcome is extended to new Members who have recently joined us. We hope you enjoy your association with the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne and thank you most sincerely for your support. Remember to thoroughly read through your copy of the *Botanic News*. Friends are provided with up to date news from within the Royal Botanic Gardens in both Melbourne and Cranbourne through informative articles provided by the Director, Dr. Philip Moors, and other members of the management and staff caring for the Gardens. Stretching across nearly 40 hectares in the heart of Melbourne, this icon's heart and soul lies not only with its magnificent flora, fauna, history and landscaping, but with the people within. Through *Botanic News* you will gain an insight into their knowledge, wisdom, personalities and passions and with each you will smile, laugh, despair and share a part of their lives. Slowly, but surely, you will become a member of a significant Melbourne 'family' bonded by one of the most beautiful Botanic Gardens in the world.

On a more down to earth level, the Friends' Activities list for the quarter is also provided to Members in each issue of the *Botanic News*. Friends' activities are organised by a thoroughly creative committee within an educational, scientific, inspirational and culturally consistent

framework. They are always informative and immensely enjoyable. Note the booking schedule and enjoy (especially those which are uniquely supported by the Friends' Catering group).

Are you interested in Botanical Illustration? If so, please don't hesitate to contact Gate Lodge for details on classes. All levels of expertise are catered for, including classes for beginners - including, we repeat, beginners. If you have an artistic hankering, but hesitate for any number of reasons - don't. You will undoubtedly astound your friends and family with a talent unleashed by some of the very best instruction available in Melbourne.

As the President has advised, and all good Melbourne gardeners know, the Growing Friends' Plant Sale is coming up - rare and unusual plants not often found in your standardised nurseries of today. An insider's tip is the Terrific Temptations leaflet - you'll find it in this issue. Don't despair if you miss the TTs on the Saturday - on Sunday there is a variety of other meticulously selected plants that are available for the most discerning of gardeners.

Have a wonderful Autumn and don't forget to visit the Terrace Tearooms by the Lake for lunch or a cuppa - show your membership card for privileged rates.

Pamela J. Eames
Membership Committee



Vale Joan Hardy

Joan Hardy died on Saturday 13th December, having been diagnosed with leukaemia 14 months ago.

Her love of gardening led her to join the Growing Friends in 1995, and in the year 2000 she reluctantly agreed to become our Convener, and led the group through five very successful plant sales.

Joan had led an interesting and productive life: she was Senior Lecturer in politics at RMIT, and very actively involved in several Teachers' Unions, including the NTEU of which she was the first President. She achieved real change and better conditions for her workmates. She was a life member of the ALP, and an active committee member in various roles during her 40-plus years there.

Although she refused to be classified as a feminist, she was a strong defender of women's

rights, and a role model for young women. She was a member of the Fabian Society, Emily's List, Amnesty International, and also very involved in her local council (Glen Eira, then known as Caulfield Council) and community groups such as the Caulfield South Community House and the Glen Eira Residents Action Group.

But we knew her as a gardener, a lover of plants (but not Bromeliads), a good organiser, a mentor for new members, a woman of indefatigable energy, who, whilst still suffering the after effects of chemotherapy, would be at the Gardens by 8 o'clock on a Friday morning ready to work. We watched as she looked paler each week, and was obviously tired, but she never complained and still managed to harry us to get the allocated tasks completed for the week. She will be missed by us all.

Jan Cheyne

GARDENS

The season of autumn seems to strike people in different ways...one person's 'golden leaves of glorious autumnal hues' can be another's (or specifically P B Shelley's) 'pestilence-stricken multitudes'. John Keats' 'Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness' is the very same autumn which moved Paul Verlaine in his *Chanson d'automne* to reflect: 'The long sobs of the autumn violins infect my heart with a monotonous languor' (or words to that melancholic effect, but in French).

Mon dieu! Paul – it can't be that bad! As we Melburnians know, autumn in this town renders us the pick of the year's weather: balmy warm days with light (if any) breezes are the regular offering from the boys at the Bureau. The angle of the sun in the sky has changed by autumn also – being about half way between the peak of the summer solstice and the lowest angle at the winter solstice. The combination of calm days and lower sun angle adds subtlety and richness to the appearance of the Gardens' flora and

vistas, bringing depth to colours and greater textural definition. All in all, a very pleasing prospect. It is therefore no surprise that autumn is one of the more popular times of year to visit the Gardens.

A number of individual species wait for autumn to really show their wares – some with spectacular flowering displays, and then others with the more predictable (but nevertheless wonderful) displays of leaf colour change as the nights cool down.

For each of the last few years the specimen of *Buckinghamia celsissima* (Ivory Curl-flower) on the southern edge of the Proteaceae Bed has produced very striking displays of its creamy flowers from early March – each year seemingly more impressive than the last. Later in March and through early April the superb example of *Lagerstroemia subcostata* which grows in a small patch of turf between 'H' Gate and the Ornamental Lake comes into flower. It becomes covered in smallish whitish flowers,



Buckinghamia celsissima (Ivory Curl-flower)



Buckinghamia celsissima flower bract

in itself a worthy contributor on these grounds alone, but then follows up with an inspiring display of autumn foliage colour. Add to this a very shapely structure and interesting bark, and I think one could chalk *L. subcostata* down as a good thing. Its more lairy cousins – the various *L. indica* (Crepe Myrtle) cultivars take the cake for brightness of autumn flowers – in pinks, purples and.... pukes? These can be seen battling for ascendancy with each other between the Nursery and the Lilly-Pilly Lawn.

The rather bizarre *Haemanthus coccinea* (Blood Lily) from southern Africa are in flower during early April – their bright bloody red flowers (that should be 'blood-red'

surely!) emerging from the soil, to be followed later by the pair of large tongue-like leaves which peel back away from each other and rest on the ground. Speaking of red things – surely one of our most interesting native flowering trees *Stenocarpus sinuatus* (Firewheel Tree) presents its flowers from late summer though autumn into winter. The flowers have an extraordinary structure, and are great fun as a component of hand-made critters.

Another tree which steps up to the challenge from early autumn to winter is *Ceiba insignis* (used to be *Chorisia speciosa*), the Floss-silk Tree. This South American native bears a mass of hot pink flowers, later developing into



Haemanthus coccineus (Blood Lily) Painted by Beverley Allen

hard spherical pods with seeds in a kapok-like material. The trunks of this species alone are noteworthy – the smooth greenish bark becomes well-covered with conical prickles of various sizes, giving the trees a startling appearance. I suspect that the ancestors of the modern species at some point got thoroughly sick and tired of being rubbed against or climbed by some varmint or other, and calling on the agency of evolution, went spikey and unfriendly. There are several good specimens in the Gardens – at the Water Conservation Garden and outside the Tea Rooms are two examples.

It is worth keeping an eye

on the seasonal maturation of the Perennial Border – the fresh growth and flowering phases are overtaken by seed-set and accompanying dying back of the perennial stock. Rather than cut all this material back to keep it 'tidy', the curator of this collection, Don Henderson, will leave many of the seeding heads in place as part of the border's display, to carry its visual interest through winter.

The deciduous offerings of the Oak Lawn need no additional explanation or notes, other than to say 'come and enjoy the display', and kick through a few fallen leaves while you're there.

Richard Barley

Call For Volunteers

Growing Friends Sale

20 and 21 March. Areas of need for both days are at the check out tent and in the kitchen preparing lunches for all helpers. Please contact the office on 9650 6398 if you are interested.

2004 Art of Botanical Illustration Exhibition

Our successful exhibition will be on again later this year and we are looking for volunteers (non-illustrators) to help with a variety of administrative and organisational tasks. An exhibition such as this requires a lot of work and if our non-illustrating Friends can help, this leaves more time for the artists to produce the magnificent work which we all love to see.

No particular skills are required, just some enthusiasm and willingness to volunteer your time.

For further information please call Edyta Hoxley (convenor Botanical Illustrators committee) on 9761 9711, email ehoxley@tpg.com.au or leave your contact details at the Friends' office and we will get in touch with you.

Ornamental Plant Collections Association of Australia

CONFERENCE

Friday 12 March Mornington Peninsula Garden Visits

Saturday 13 March 2004, Lecture Program, Main Ridge Hall

Cost: \$120 OPCA members
\$145 non-members

Early-bird discounts
OPCA members \$110
non-members \$135

Enquiries:
Kathrin Woolf,
03 9650 5639, Tues & Wed
Sophie Adamson
03 5974 4833, daily

Botanic Birds

Following Spring and Summer - a special time of new growth for flora and fauna alike in the gardens - the birds have experienced a population explosion, especially on Long Island. The Gardens always provide a relatively desirable environment and a safe haven for nesting birds. This has been greatly enhanced by the very successful Long Island Project and there is now demonstrably increased habitat suitable for nesting as well as for food and shelter.

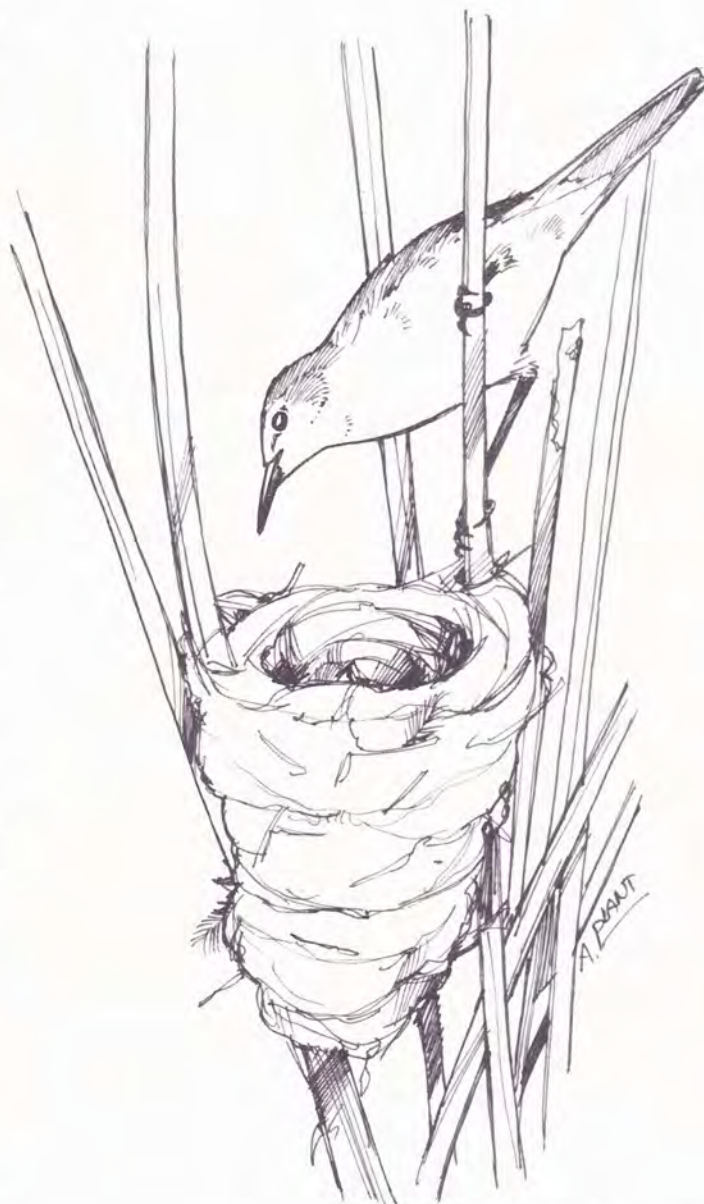
Rainbow Lorikeets nested in a hole in the River Red Gum on the north side of the Island and produced two or more progeny. In the Swamp Cypress on the southern side of the Island, Magpie Larks built a beautiful mud nest, and in a palm next to the west bridge a pair of Little Wattle Birds built a nest at eye level, giving onlookers a close-up view of frantic feeding. Another pair bred somewhere in the Southern Chinese section and one of that pair was particularly aggressive; it apparently thought it was a magpie and dive-bombed anyone loitering nearby.

A first for the Gardens was the successful breeding of five young Red-rumped Parrots in the Grey Box on the southern side of the Island. Willy Wagtails built a lovely, safe nest just above the water line in the *Populus alba* next to the Water Iris and birders were given great views as the family developed.

Purple Swamphens built a nest in the reeds near the jetty on the north side near the Red Gum. Two young were hatched and were paraded daily on the Hopetoun Lawn, but unfortunately both disappeared, presumably prey to predators. Subsequently the same pair produced another chick which they kept in the heavy grass on the north and west sides of the Island. This chick is now fully grown: another success story.

Reed Warblers were also successful in breeding after their re-appearance at the end of winter. Although it is not known how many nests or young were raised, numerous young birds were observed. Several broods of Black Duck were hatched around the Island. One produced eight chicks, of which three survived the many predators. Early in January nine young ducks were seen in the reeds on the south side of Dog Flat having reached a size beyond the predatory capability of eels or other nasties.

Although no nest was found, a pair of White-faced Herons were seen in the trees on the island with two young fledglings for a few days. From the clumsy, gangling nature of their flight adventures it was clear that the young were just out of the nest. A pair of Eastern Rosellas was seen around Long Island checking out nest holes for a couple of weeks, although it is not known if they bred. The Spotted Pardalote pair bred as usual in the rock wall. This pair seems to start nesting



Illustrated by Andrew Plant

before most other species as perhaps it takes them longer to prepare their long nest chamber in the rocks.

The ubiquitous Coot and Dusky Moorhen built numerous nests and produced large numbers of little balls of fluff with legs and loud squeaky voices. Finally, a pair

of Swans successfully bred one cygnet, and then subsequently another three. At the time of writing they seemed to be nest building again.

*Tony Delves and
David Plant*

FRIENDS' BENEFITS BOTANIC NEWS

The Gardens Shops offer 10 percent 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, Port Melb.
589 Glenferrie Rd, Hawthorn
5% off plants only

Berna Park Nursery

cnr Park Rd/Paul St, Cheltenham.
5% discount off plants

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 over \$20 only.

Holmesglen Nursery

585 Waverley Rd, Glen Waverley
5% 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

Cultivate Nursery & Gifts

Rear 91-93 Doncaster Rd
North Balwyn. 10% off everything

The Arts Bookshop

1067 High St, Armadale
10% discount

Banksia Hill B & B

RMB 5349, Horsham, 3401
10% discount on accommodation

Feldspar at Trentham B&B

via Daylesford. Ph: 5424 1821
10% discount on accommodation

Killarney Cottage B&B Sorrento

Ph: 5989 2729.
10% discount on 6-person self
catering accommodation

Blackwood Lane Gallery

24 Blackwood Lane, Gembrook
10% off paintings, prints and
commissions

Botanical Creations

122 Grange Rd, Glenhuntly
Discount on monthly Garden
Club items

Simply Panoramic

Landscape Design & Maintenance
Ph 9859 9330 Michael Seeley
10% off garden consultations

Terrace Tea Rooms & Reception Centre RBGM

Complimentary Tea or Coffee
with meals, scones or cakes

Lister Teak Garden Furniture

22 Industry Court, Lilydale,
Free 100-page colour catalogue
of Cotswold Furniture Collection.
Ask for the Members' surprise

Cloudehill Nursery

89 Olinda-Monbulk Rd, Olinda
10% off all purchases

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