



BOTANIC NEWS

SPRING 1986

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Spring in the Gardens this year promises to be a busy and most enjoyable period with a host of interesting, colourful and stimulating events to be shared by Friends and visitors alike. We look forward to you joining us on many of these occasions and particularly commend the Botanical Art Exhibition and festivities associated with the opening of the new Herb Garden.

Frank Phillips.



INCORPORATION OF THE FRIENDS

Now that the Friends have become firmly established, the Committee is considering the desirability of incorporating the Friends under the Victorian Associations Incorporation Act. The main advantage would be to free the Committee and members from the present unlimited liability in case of a legal award of damages. It is hoped that a firm proposal can be put to members before the end of the year. It has been suggested to us that, if we proceed, the Plant Craft Cottage Group might become part of the incorporated Friends, and discussions about this possibility are continuing. Members will be kept informed of developments.

Lawrence Cohn
Secretary.

MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES

THE SYSTEM GARDEN AT UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

Guest Speaker on Tuesday September 9 at 5.30 p.m. in the Herbarium Auditorium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra will be Dr Sophie Ducker, former Reader and now Senior Associate in the Botany School, University of Melbourne.

We invite you to join us on what promises to be a stimulating and enjoyable evening.

Wine & Cheese 5.30 p.m. Lecture 6.00 p.m.

RSVP	September 5	Tickets at door:
Joan Nesbit	211 8979	Members & Guides \$3.00
Agnes Fulton	836 9183	Non-Members \$4.00

BESLER BOTANICALS

A talk by Erica Mooney, Research Director of the well known Antique Print and Map Gallery, Spencer Scott Sandilands, will introduce members to their exciting, forthcoming exhibition of 'Besler Botanicals'.

Tuesday September 30 at 5.30 p.m. at the Herbarium Auditorium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.

Basil Besler (1561-1629) was responsible for one of the most impressive of all the early seventeenth century florilegia, *Hortus Eystettensis*. It was published under the patronage of the Prince Bishop of Eichstätt in whose garden most of the plants were grown. The exhibition will feature beautiful copper-plate engravings from this important work.

Wine & Cheese 5.30 p.m. Lecture 6.00 p.m.

RSVP September 26

Beth Higgs 850 5908

Joan Nesbit 211 8979

Tickets at door:

Members & Guides \$3.00

Non-Members \$4.00

EXHIBITION OF BOTANICAL ART

The Friends are mounting an Exhibition of Botanical Art in the Auditorium of the National Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra during the period Saturday October 11 to Saturday October 18, 1986. The work to be exhibited is that of Mr Collin Woolcock, who was associated with the publication *Flora of South Australia* and Mrs Jenny Phillips, who illustrated Tom Garnett's book *Stumbling over melons*.

The Exhibition is to be officially opened by the Hon. Joan E. Kirner, Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands, on Friday October 10 at 5.30 p.m. at a special ceremony in the Auditorium.

Hours of opening:

Saturday & Sunday 10.30 a.m.-4.00 p.m.

Week-days 11.00 a.m.-4.30 p.m.

Admission \$2.00

Concession \$1.00

Friends are invited to attend the official opening of the Exhibition and the Cocktail Party to be held immediately following. An invitation is enclosed.

THE HERB GARDEN AND TOUCH WOOD EXHIBITION

We are delighted that the new *Herb Garden*, for which the Friends provided \$2,500 for plants and labels, will be officially opened by the Hon. Joan E. Kirner, Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands on Wednesday November 5.

The day will be celebrated with displays of crafts, folk music and dancing by primary school children on the Oak Lawn. The festivities will continue for ten days with special displays around the Gardens including examples of spice plants in the Display House. The Plant Craft Cottage will be open on the weekends (November 8-9 and 15-16) as well as during the festive week. Friends are invited to attend the Herb Garden opening and any of the subsequent events. Volunteers from the Herb Society will be in attendance at the Herb Garden on weekends throughout Spring to show visitors around and to answer questions.

At the bottom of the Gardens, i.e. between the Ornamental Lake and Kiosk, you will find *Touch Wood*, an enchanting exhibition depicting some of the folk-lore, customs and traditions that have surrounded plants through the ages. The exhibition opens on Saturday November 8 and continues over the Summer period into the first term of the new school year. It will be open on week-days from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. and on week-ends from 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

To celebrate the new Herb Garden and Touch Wood the Voluntary Guides have devised a special walk *In Touch with Plants* which illustrates our use of plants both yesteryear and today. For further information please contact Miss Eva Best 569 8777.

VISIT TO MOUNT MACEDON GARDENS

On Saturday November 15 Friends are invited to visit 'Hascombe', the home and garden of Sir Thomas and Lady Ramsay, and 'Alton', the property of Mrs Shirley Nicholas at Mount Macedon.

Mr Nigel Lewis and Mr Richard Aitken (Nigel Lewis & Associates, Architects and Conservation Planners) who have recently completed a conservation study of the Mount Macedon area, including these two properties, have kindly agreed to be present to interpret the gardens.

A bus will leave the Herbarium at 9.45 a.m., returning at about 4.45 p.m. Please bring your own lunch and thermos.

Cost:

Members & Guides \$15.00
Non-Members \$17.00

RSVP Monday November 10 to: Ticket Secretary, Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, National Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra 3141, with cheque/money order made payable to *Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens* and enclosing stamped, self-addressed envelope. (Numbers limited to 45).

THE STATE OF THE GARDENS

A Seminar to be held on Saturday 22 November from 2.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m. in the Herbarium Auditorium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.

The Seminar is being held to discuss broad strategies for the future management of the Gardens. It will do this by taking an historical approach. The development of the three broad functions of a botanic garden — conservation (including scientific and landscape aspects), education and recreation — will be examined from the founding of the Melbourne gardens in 1846 to the present day. Speakers will then consider the future directions the Gardens might take in continuing to serve the community up to the 21st century.

The Seminar will be of interest to those concerned with planning, landscape, horticulture, education and recreation and historic gardens. Speakers from the Royal Botanic Gardens will be followed by specialist commentators and general discussion.

Panel of speakers:

Conservation

Mr Peter Lumley, Principal Horticultural Scientist, R.B.G. and Miss Christina Fitz Simon, Landscape Designer, R.B.G.

Education

Dr Roger Spencer, Horticultural Botanist, R.B.G. and Ms Eve Almond, Interpretation Officer, R.B.G.

Recreation

Mr John Taylor, Manager R.B.G.

This part of the program will be followed by discussion led by invited speakers including Miss Pat Fieldman, Mr Nigel Lewis and Mr John Patrick.

We are delighted that Dame Elizabeth Murdoch, O.B.E. has accepted our invitation to chair the Seminar.

Refreshments will be served.

Admission: \$2.00.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA IN THE SPRING

The Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney invite the Melbourne Friends to join their exciting ten-day tour from Friday October 10 to Sunday October 19 1986. Shirley Stackhouse M.A.I.H., noted garden writer and John Morris, former director of the National Trust of Australia (N.S.W.) will lead the tour. Inquiries to F.R.B.G.S., Mrs. Macquarie Rd. Sydney, N.S.W. 2000.



CHRISTMAS PARTY

Our Christmas Party will be held at 7.30 p.m. on Friday December 12 in the Kiosk at the Royal Botanic Gardens. Always a highlight of our calendar and a most enjoyable evening. Do make a note of the date in your diary, further details will be provided nearer the time.

FRIENDS' SHOP AT THE KIOSK

A sub-committee is hard at work preparing plans for a much-enlarged Shop at the Kiosk. It would need to be under the control of a part-time manager, and it is intended to seek applications for the position by public advertisement. At the same time, if there is any member of the Friends who would be interested in managing the Shop, either for a fee or as an unpaid service, we would be glad to know by letter addressed to David Wilkinson, Vice-President, who heads the sub-committee.

Exciting new stock will be available in the Shop in time for Christmas, including two attractive new Letter-Cards and Tea-Towels, one of which features herbs in celebration of the opening of the new Herb Garden.

Especially we draw your attention to the introduction of our Gardener's Notebook. Bound in gold and cream vinyl, the notebook contains 112 pages featuring illustrations by Anita Podwyszynski, the Botanical Illustrator at the National Herbarium. An attractive and very useful acquisition for any gardener, the notebook will make an ideal present. There is also our usual stock of Posters, Guide Books, Post-Cards, Greeting Cards, Maud Gibson Flower Prints, Guide Brochures, Children's Package and Activity Sheets from which to choose.

CAN YOU HELP?

Art Exhibition October 10-19

Help is needed with security for the October Exhibition of Botanical Art. Please contact Iona Christianson on 870 3940 if you can be of assistance.

The Friends' Shop

Volunteers are needed to enable Brenda Owen 560 4414 to complete Shop rosters, particularly important too as extra staffing needed during the Touch Wood Exhibition from the beginning of November to end of April 1987, when the shop will be operating in conjunction with the Exhibition.

Touch Wood Exhibition Guardians Required

In order to open Touch Wood on week-ends, volunteers are urgently needed to oversee the exhibition. The Gardens simply cannot afford the overtime bill that would result from employing staff. Yet week-ends are our busiest times, especially for family groups for whom the exhibition is particularly appropriate.

If you are able to help, with even a couple of hours on a Saturday or Sunday, from November until the end of April, please contact Eve Almond or Wendy Williams NOW, on 63 9424. (Unavailable on Mondays or Wednesdays.)

SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

A red star on your *Botanic news* indicates that your subscription, due March 1, is overdue. Unfortunately, we will be unable to send further literature to those members who continue to remain unfinancial. Your subscription to the Friends is a means of assisting in the preservation of Melbourne's finest natural heritage, our beautiful Royal Botanic Gardens.

A reminder that the Friends' H.Q. in the Astronomer's Residence is staffed between 11.00 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. each Tuesday. Tel. 63 9424 Ext. 234.

SPECIAL BENEFITS TO FRIENDS

Fryer's Nursery, 589 Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn and Idaho Nurseries, 410 Waverley Road, East Malvern, offer special discounts to Friends on the production of their current membership card.

THE SPRING WALK

The Spring Walk starts from the Herbarium, and takes us around the southern end of the Gardens. It is designed to show the public the interesting plants and flowers which are looking their best at this particular time of year.

The walk begins with the Western Lawn area which is opposite the famous Oak Lawn. The Lawn has a number of round beds on it, one of which is planted with annuals (*Viola*), designed and maintained by the apprentices of the Gardens.

The Oak Lawn is still looking majestic, however, most of the oaks (*Quercus*) have lost their leaves. A tinge of yellow daffodils in the distance helps to brighten the view.

Beds surrounding the Oak Lawn are also looking a picture at this time of the year with many azaleas in full bloom.

The walk now takes the right-hand fork in the path near the ladies toilets and heads down towards the Princes Lawn. To the left, a tall (6 m) specimen tree can be seen, *Paulownia fortunei*. This is a popular tree with large leaves and startling flowers with an unusual purple throat.

To the right the triangular bed is also looking a picture. This year polyanthus have been planted. These plants require heavy feeding but flower in a multitude of bright and varied colours in Spring.

Continue the walk along the right hand side of the annual bed with the lovely camellia group on your right in full bloom. The walk continues and strolls past the Magnolia Bed where a *Magnolia* × *soulangiana* is now looking magnificent.

Turn 90° right and walk towards the Australian Border and 'E' Gate. Notice again the camellias to your right in flower, with the green back-drop of the Lilly Pilly (*Acmena smithii*) hedge. Walk over the Australian Border path and, opposite the residence, a small *Epacris longiflora* is in full bloom, with eye catching small tubular red flowers.

About face and walk along the Australian Border towards the Ellis Stones Rockery. Once there wander amongst the plants and discover a small unusual *Anigozanthos* 'Dwarf Delight' (Kangaroo Paw) which is also flowering.

Back to the Australian Border towards 'D' Gate (Nareeb Gates) and the conclusion of the walk. At this gate a collection of *Prostantheras* has been planted. These plants vary in both flower colour and fragrance and make a fitting highlight with which to conclude our walk.

M. Amerena

R.B.G. Apprentice