BOTANIC NEWS

FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE INC.

SPRING 1995

Friends and RBG Host World-renowned Naturalist

A capacity audience was treated to an absorbing illustrated lecture by Sir David Attenborough on 16 August, arranged by the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens. Sir David not only showed extracts from his new TV series *The Private Life of Plants*, but gave those present an insight into how the series was made and the problems which were encountered.

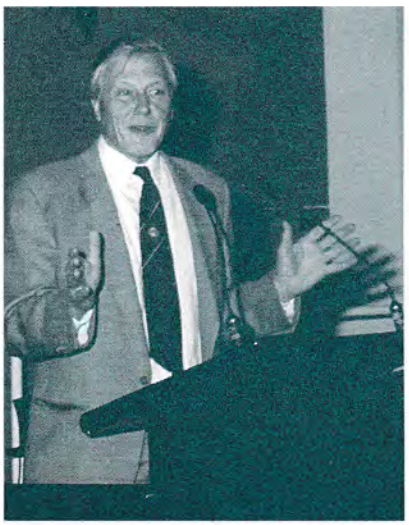
A hut in Oxfordshire was used for long sequences of time-lapse photography as it would have been impossible to have someone stay for weeks on end with an on-site camera out in the wilds of Borneo or the veldt of South Africa. The waters of the Amazon were re-created in a bathtub with a load of manure from a neighbouring farm supplying the required nutrients and plastic sheeting overhead providing the necessary humidity. Even with the state-of-the-art equipment all was not plain sailing as the surface of the water was sometimes disturbed by bubbles of methane gas or reflected the plastic sheeting.

Sir David' s infectious enthusiasm and engaging personality were evident throughout the evening. An added bonus was his willingness to answer questions and then sign his book afterwards. Pleasing too was his praise of Australian scientists. A very special event for the Friends!

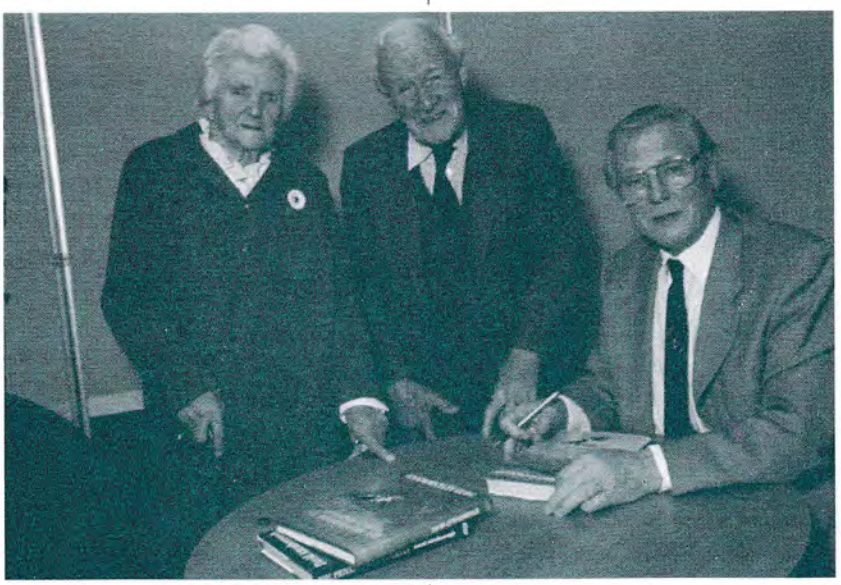
Sir David signing copies of his books for Jim and Mavis Willis
Photos by Skip Watkins

Sir David made a flying visit to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Cranbourne on the afternoon of 16 August. Accompanied by the Director, Dr Philip Moors, he flew by helicopter from the City to Cranbourne, on the way gaining aerial views of both the Mel - bourne and Cranbourne Gardens.

After a low-level circuit over the bushland and wetlands, the helicopter landed near the main entrance to RBG Cranbourne. Sir David was then taken on an hour-long tour of the heathlands - with the spring wildflower displays just showing some wonderful colour - and wetlands. The wet winter had raised water levels in the Perched Swamp so much that he had to don gumboots to wade out onto the viewing platform! Along the way Sir David showed great interest in the wildflowers, bushland, birds and orchids.



After surveying the gardens and surrounding countryside from the Trig Point Lookout, Sir David met the media for photos and interviews. He particularly praised the far-sightedness of the Maud Gibson Trust and others who ensured that the land was set aside for the gardens over 25 years ago. He also emphasised the importance of conserving one of the last remnants of this type of heathland landscape, saying 'we should be proud that this area had been kept intact to develop the botanic gardens'.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

What a memorable night was the Friends' gathering in the ABC Auditorium on Wednesday 16 August for the address by Sir David Attenborough! And what a pleasure it was to experience a witty and cultivated mind at work, and to share some of his wide knowledge of the Private Life of Plants. It was a full house and a real coup for the Friends to arrange his only speaking engagement in Melbourne. Many thanks and congratulations to Heather Ironmonger for her initiative, and to the whole group for the very successful arrangements.

The best news is that the Government is prepared to spend greatly increased amounts of money on the development and improvement of the Gardens, both in Melbourne and at Cranbourne. The Friends welcome the plans for a new Entrance and Visitor Centre near the Herbarium, which will complement the many other exciting projects in the Gardens recently.

The new plans also involve a further move for the Friends' office, this time into the old Observatory Lodge, which has been inspected and appears highly suitable. We expect to make the move early next year.

The new Seed House which the Friends have presented to the Gardens has now been completed, and will be formally opened on 22 September as a valuable addition to the Gardens' infrastructure.

It will soon be time to think about our Annual General Meeting on Monday 13 November. It will feature an address by Mr John Landy, which will be of surpassing interest, and gives us the opportunity to review the year's activities and reflect on the future. Some people tend to avoid AGMs, but I would prefer that we regard them as a valuable forum where members can have their say and offer constructive ideas about our present and future role and opportunities. I am particularly interested in new ways to involve our members and provide real benefits from that involvement.

The Friends continue to make a vital contribution to the development of the Gardens. This is achieved by the energy and devotion of many members in a variety of ways. We have a hard-working and conscientious team, and I deeply appreciate the time and effort that they contribute to our many successful enterprises and as outstanding supporters of our Gardens.

Sir Rupert Hamer
President

The Private Life of Plants

Sir David Attenborough's book is on sale at the Gardens Shop for $45 less 10 per cent discount for Friends.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Preliminary studies have been completed for the developments - given the working title of The Garden Gate - to take place on the Observatory Site. The main focus of the developments will be an expansive landscaped forecourt leading to a new main gate for the Gardens. The forecourt will be opposite the Shrine of Remembrance and will feature the existing telescope houses and historic buildings.

A new building will be constructed towards the rear of the site between the Astronomer's Residence and the Observatory Building. It will accommodate visitor information facilities, exhibition areas and the Gardens Shop. A cafe is planned for part of the Observatory Building opening on to the forecourt, and education facilities will be located in the Astronomer's Residence. We are seeking a Government grant to restore all the historic buildings on the Observatory Site.

Architectural and landscape planning will begin in September and construction should commence in April 1996.

An important priority in planning The Garden Gate has been to find a permanent 'home' for the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens. The Friends' Council has accepted our offer to move into Observatory Lodge on Birdwood Avenue, immediately opposite the Shrine. This is a prominent location beside the new entry forecourt, which will give the Friends a high profile with the many thousands of visitors to The Garden Gate.

The Lodge was built in 1901-02 and was occupied for many years by the caretaker of the Observatory and his family. In recent years RBG staff lived in it. The building requires some minor repairs and refurbishment before the Friends' office can be moved in.

The design masterplan for the Australian Garden at RBG Cranbourne has been completed by Taylor and Cullity with Paul Thompson. The designers have created plans for expansive landscapes, innovative gardens and imaginative displays of Australian flora. The central theme of their design is the expression of the relationship between Australians and our landscape and plants. The garden will be constructed in stages, with a target date for completion in 2001. Site works will begin in spring, together with planting to create the structural framework of woodlands for the garden.

Still at Cranbourne, our plans to construct two dams and wetlands on Wylies Creek have been temporarily thwarted by the wet weather. However, once the ground dries out later this year, we shall build these and two other dams. The Wylies Creek wetlands will be a major feature in the southern section of RBG Cranbourne, where in time we shall be displaying habitat collections of native plants.

W.R.M. Irvine
Chairman

SPRING ACTIVITIES

FROM MADRASA TO CHURCH. GARDEN DESIGNS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN CLIMATE.

Illustrated talk by John Patrick
Tuesday 19 September at 8.00pm
National Herbarium Hall

We are delighted to announce that John Patrick, well known landscaper, popular broadcaster and RBG Board member, will speak to the Friends on Tuesday 19 September in the National Herbarium Hall. John has just returned from three months on a Churchill Fellowship studying xeriscape, or low water maintenance plants, visiting North America, Morocco and other countries.

In his usual enthusiastic style John will tell us of the highlights of his travels, so a good evening is assured.

Supper will be served
Admission: Friends $8.00
Others $10.00
RSVP 18 September on enclosed booking form

ALBURY/CANBERRA/BOWRAL TOUR
27 September - 3 October

This spring trip includes:
A visit to the Rossiter garden in Wangaratta
A guided tour of Albury Botanic Gardens
Two visits to the spectacular Floriade display in Canberra
Tour of Parliament House
Dinner in Members' dining room at Parliament House
Tour of Government House Gardens
Lunch and garden tour of beautiful Milton Park, Bowral
Visit to the Kennerton Green garden at Mittagong (time permitting)
Visits to: Mt Ainslie lookout; National Library; High Court of Australia; National Gallery
A guided tour of National Botanic Gardens with Canberra Friends
A visit to Esdale - property of Barbara and David Hamer (subject to road conditions)
A guided bus tour of Canberra's trees
The National Film and Sound Archive
Cockington Green (time permitting)

COST: Including accommodation in Albury and Canberra, all lunches (apart from first day, which will be a BYO), all dinners, entrance fees - $750.00, plus single accommodation (limited) - $150.00. To ensure a place on the tour, please book by telephoning the Friends' office **immediately** and sending a cheque for the full amount.

For any further information please contact the Friends' office (9650 6398) or Eve Brunner (9818 5954).

RARE AND INTERESTING PLANTS OF SPRING

Talk by Stephen Ryan
Wednesday 4 October at 8.00pm
National Herbarium Hall

Those who remember the brilliant assortment of shrubs and trees Stephen showed us at an autumn meeting will be eager to see his spring selection. A plantsman extraordinaire from Dicksonia Rare Plants Nursery at Mt Macedon and an ebullient speaker, Stephen has an astounding knowledge of unusual plants. An evening not to be missed!

Supper will be served.
Admission: Friends $8.00
Others $10.00

RSVP: 2 October on enclosed booking form

AN INVITATION FROM THE GROWING FRIENDS

Only Friends have the privilege of purchasing rare and interesting plants from the Growing Friends nursery on Friday mornings. So take advantage of your membership, visit the Nursery on Fridays between 10.00am and 1.00pm. There are always lovely temptations. Even if you do not want to buy, come anyway and look and talk about plants with the Growing Friends. The Nursery is at the back of the Astronomer's Residence. Follow the driveway off Birdwood Avenue opposite the Shrine of Remembrance.

The Growing Friends are getting ready for the Spring Sale. The recent spell of warm weather after such a wet winter has stimulated growth, and the plants are starting to burst out of their pots.

There has been colour in the nursery all through winter, particularly from the salvias. These wonderful plants seem to love our sunny conditions and some even seem to thrive on a little neglect and lack of water. These are worth getting in the ground now to be ready for a wonderful display next season. The dainty apricot alonsoas that we commented on in the last *Botanic News* as flowering since Spring, are still going! And we have some left.

The Spring Sale is on 14 and 15 October. The Nursery will be closed to visitors two weeks prior to the Spring Sale and the week following - these dates are 6, 13 and 20 October. On these days we are totally involved in putting plants in boxes, moving plants to the sale site and then returning them to the Nursery.

Full details of the Spring Sale are in the accompanying brochure. Please note that some of the 'Terrific Temptations' on the reverse of the brochure will not be available prior to the sale.

BY BUS TO THE TOOLANGI FOREST AND THE 'SINGING GARDENS'

Wednesday 25 October

For an exhilarating day in the rainforest country, come with the Friends to Toolangi. There we will experience the total forest story at the new Forest Discovery Centre, unravelling some of the secrets of a dynamic and complex natural world. After morning tea at the Centre, enjoy 'Wirrawilla Walk', a short and easy walk in the Toolangi State Forest.

The 'Singing Gardens' at 'Arden' are across the road, and here we will walk with the 'Sentimental Bloke' - C J Dennis - in his garden, enjoying the masses of rhododendrons and beautiful European trees that he loved and knew so well. We'll have lunch in the 'Singing Gardens' Tearooms, then take a leisurely guided stroll through the gardens which were developed by 'Den' and his wife Biddy.

Before leaving for home, we'll make a visit to Toolangi Pottery, noted for the crystalline ceramics of David Williams. David's work has been exhibited in the National Gallery of Victoria and Parliament House, Canberra.

The bus will depart at 9.00am sharp from outside the National Gallery in St Kilda Road and return at approximately 5.30pm.

A pick-up point has been organised for 9.20am sharp at the car park in Surrey Drive; turn off Canterbury Road just east of Elgar Road traffic lights (Melways 47 12B). Please tick box on booking form if you require a pickup at this point.

Morning tea, lunch, transport and entrance fees are included in the cost of $33.

RSVP 16 October on enclosed booking form.

WEEKEND OF ROSES

28 and 29 October 1995

Leaving Tullamarine at 9.45am, we will fly to Mildura with Southern Australian Airlines (Qantas). We will start this tour with a visit to the Sunraysia Oasis Botanic Gardens which have only been established since 1983. Overcoming problems of rabbits, kangaroos, lack of water etc., the Gardens now flourish. The rose garden contains 1600 bushes and there are salt-tolerant plants as well as other species from Europe, America and Africa. We will stay at the Grand Hotel on the Saturday night after a Murray-Darling River cruise.

On Sunday we will travel to Renmark by bus, and plan to visit a private garden before joining David Ruston on his 11ha property for lunch. David is a rosarian of note, the recipient of many awards (including the Order of Australia in 1988) in recognition of his contribution to the development of the industry. He is the immediate past President of the World Federation of Rose Societies, and was recently awarded the Dean Hole medal for service to the rose. He has travelled extensively overseas lecturing, demonstrating flower arranging - one of his hobbies - and leading tours of rose gardens in Europe and England. Almost 50,000 rose bushes of nearly 4,000 varieties grow on David's landscaped property, from which blooms and buds are sent all around Australia.

We will fly back from Mildura, arriving in Melbourne at 9.45pm.

Cost: $390 twin share accommodation
$15 single supplement
(Includes air and bus transport, all main meals and cruise)

RSVP immediately on enclosed booking form with $100 deposit. The tour is limited to 19 people.

BIRDS OF THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS - MELBOURNE AND CRANBOURNE

Talk by Dr Philip Moors
Tuesday 31 October at 8.00pm
National Herbarium Hall

Come and enjoy an evening with RBG Director Dr Philip Moors, who will give us an illustrated talk about the wonderful birdlife in our Royal Botanic Gardens in both Melbourne and Cranbourne.

Philip is well-qualified to speak on this subject as he is a keen naturalist and was Director of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union prior to his appointment to the Royal Botanic Gardens in November 1992.

Supper will be served.

Cost: Friends $8.00
Others: $10.00

RSVP: 30 October on enclosed booking form

NEW ZEALAND–NORTH ISLAND
4 - 19 NOVEMBER 1995

Just a few vacancies exist for this personally-conducted tour of New Zealand's North Island. An itinerary is enclosed for you to see the exciting things offered, and all to be done at a leisurely pace. A new attraction is an arrangement for private farmhouse accommodation for two nights in the Hawkes Bay area.

Unavoidably, because of a rise in air fares and a change in exchange rates, the cost is now $3,400 twin-share. $598 remains the same for single supplement.

Please respond quickly with a deposit of $100 to secure your booking.

BUS TRIP TO BALLARAT GARDENS

Sunday 12 November

The Friends of the Ballarat Botanic Gardens have very kindly invited the Melbourne Friends to join them for a light luncheon and a tour of their Gardens and Robert Clark Horticulture Centre on Sunday 12 November.

This will be an opportunity to see the wonderful developments, officially opened in March, which resulted from the donation of $2 million to the Ballarat Gardens by Robert Clark. He made this donation in memory of his grandfather, Robert Clark, who was the founder of the *Ballarat Courier*.

Following afternoon tea we will have an opportunity to take a ferry trip on Lake Wendouree on the Begonia Princess, which takes approx. 45 minutes.

The bus will leave from outside the National Gallery in St Kilda Road at 9.00am sharp. We will arrive back in Melbourne at approximately 5.00pm.

Cost:	$28.00
Optional ferry trip:	$3.00

RSVP by 2 November on enclosed booking form

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday 13 November

Our Annual General Meeting will take place at the National Herbarium Hall on Monday 13 November 1995 at 8.00pm. We invite all Friends to join us.
Our guest speaker will be Mr John Landy, a public figure respected as a sportsman, author and environmentalist. Further details will be sent later.

NEWCOMERS' WELCOME

Thursday 16 November. 5.30 - 6.30pm, followed by a walk in the Gardens.

A personal invitation will be sent to recently-joined members. However, as previously announced, a twilight welcome has been arranged especially to suit people whose work commitments have prevented them from attending our daytime Newcomers' functions. If you fall into this category, please call the Friends' office and we'll be happy to send an invitation.

After refreshments, Voluntary Guides will lead a Gardens walk lasting about one hour.

THE CHEMICALS IN PLANTS: POSSIBLE NEW DRUGS, POSSIBLE POISONS

Illustrated talk by Dr Claude Culvenor Tuesday 21 November, 8pm National Herbarium Hall

As a CSIRO scientist, Dr Culvenor spent years studying plant constituents with possible beneficial uses as drugs, and others with harmful effects on animals and humans.

Now retired, he will outline a broader view of chemicals in plants, and discuss ways in which the search for new drugs in conducted. Dr Culvenor will explain how the rigidity of government controls on access to plant material hinders some aspects of the research effort.

Supper will be served.
Admission: Friends $8.00
Others $10.00

RSVP by 20 Nov. on booking form

Dr Culvenor very kindly agreed to a change of date for this talk to enable Sir David Attenborough to speak on his only available night in Melbourne. We notified this change on the reverse side of our special single-sheet edition of Botanic News. ***Would people who booked for the original date kindly confirm their intention to attend on 21 November. If this date is not suitable, and you have already paid, we'll send you a refund.***

CHRISTMAS DINNER Friday 15 December

This year our Christmas Dinner will be held in the Garden Room at Leonda by the Yarra, Hawthorn.

Save this date and enjoy a pleasant social evening with other members of the Friends and their friends. Invitations will be mailed later.

Botanical Embroiderers' Workshop

This enthusiastic group continues to produce beautiful work under the guidance of Wanda McPherson from the Embroiderers' Guild of Victoria. Beginners are welcome to join in. Next classes: 1.00pm on Monday 11 September; 2 October; 6 November and 4 December at the Astronomer's Residence, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.
Cost: $10 payable at each class.

Telephone Lesley Clark on 807 3984 for further information.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

If your membership subscription was due on 30 June 1995 and is not yet paid, then you will have a blue form in your envelope.

If your membership is due at the end of August, September or October then you will find a yellow slip. Prompt renewal and a stamped self-addressed envelope would be appreciated.

If you are uncertain whether you are financial, please check the expiry date on your membership card. Don't hesitate to ring the office if you need further advice.

KATHLEEN PULLAR

The Friends are sad to report the recent death of Kath Pullar, a longtime and loyal Friend of the Royal Botanic Gardens. We extend to Kath's relations and friends our loving sympathy.

Friends of Kathleen have been invited to send gifts in her memory to the Trust Fund of the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, and some donations have already been received.

Botanical Illustrators

A CELEBRATION OF PROTEACEAE

Illustrated talk by Dr Andrew Douglas
Tuesday 21 November from 10.00am
National Herbarium Hall

The Proteaceae family includes macadamia, grevillea, banksia, telopea, hakea and many other genera of interest to botanical artists and all plant lovers.

Dr Andrew Douglas's second talk to the Friends this year will highlight the diversity of the plants within the family and will be illustrated with inspirational slides of proteaceae from around the world, along with Australian specimens. In 1994, Andrew was appointed Pacific Dunlop Fellow to the Royal Botanic Gardens where he continues his enthusiastic study of Proteaceae.

Artist members are invited to bring their Proteaceae illustrations for display.

Morning tea/coffee from 10.00am
Dr Andrew Douglas talk 10.30am

Admission: Friends $5.00
Others: $10.00

RSVP: 17 November on enclosed booking form

Illustration: Anita Barley

A RE-ARRANGEMENT OF ORCHIDS

We apologise to our members for the disruption to our 15 August talk 'The Orchids of Victoria' which had to be re-located to St Johns Hall, Toorak.

At very short notice - on Friday 11 August - we happened to learn that Birdwood Avenue and surrounding streets would be closed for the day on 15 August for VP Day parade.

Cancellation seemed inevitable, but fortunately we were able to make alternative arrangements and contacted all people we could locate who had booked for the meeting. We also notified police etc. at the Birdwood Avenue barriers, and staff at the Herbarium reception. We apologise for the inconvenience the change may have caused, and to anyone who missed the talk because of it. We were delighted that 45 people were present in St John's Hall.

Informal Wednesday Painting Group

Some vacancies are available for this informal painting group. If you would like to paint and draw in the company of other artists once a week on Wednesdays, please contact Mary Gregory on 9836 8587 for details. Held at the Astronomer's Residence, the cost is $50 paid in advance for a 12-week term.

THE ART OF BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION EXHIBITION 1996

The 1996 exhibition of members' work will run from Thursday 10 October to Tuesday 5 November, opening on the evening of Wednesday 9 October.

Entry forms will be available for exhibitors approximately three months prior to the opening. Artists wishing to show their work in this exhibition must be financial members of the Friends as at 30/6/1996.

We have established an exhibition committee, but also hope that many other members will be able to contribute in some way to what will be one of the Friends' major events scheduled for the Gardens' sesquicentenary year of celebrations.

Enquiries to Louise Coronel - 9827 5910.

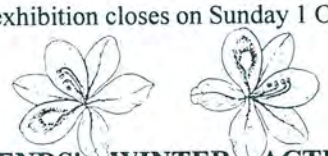
EXHIBITION OF BOTANIC ART

Friends are welcome to attend the opening by Jenny Phillips of an exhibition by 30 of Victoria's leading botanical artists on Sunday 10 September at 2.00pm. It is being staged at the Eltham Wiregrass Gallery, 559 Main Road, Eltham. (tel. 9439 1467).

Jenny is being married the previous day to Rob Crompton, and has delayed her honeymoon to keep this engagement.

On Sunday afternoons, artists will give painting demonstrations at the Gallery at 2.00pm; Heather Rankin, Marg Castle and Dianne Emery, all members of the Friends' Botanical Illustrators, will provide this added attraction.
The gallery is open from Wednesday to Sunday and on public holidays between 11.00am and 5.00pm.

The exhibition closes on Sunday 1 October.



FRIENDS' WINTER ACTIVITIES

Nature's Experiment in Flowering: Proteaceae - Dr Andrew Douglas - 29 June
Film Luncheon: Only You - 24 July
The Orchids of Victoria - Gary Backhouse, Jeffrey Jeanes and Helen Richards -15 August
The Private Life of Plants - Sir David Attenborough - 16 August
Botanical Illustrators - classes and workshops with Jenny Phillips and Anita Barley
Botanical Embroiderers Workshops

GARDENS OF EUROPE '96.
A tribute to Baron Ferdinand von Mueller.
6 - 27 May 1996 $7,770

This three-week tour has been planned by the Friends as a pilgrimage to Baron von Mueller's birthplace, as well as a visit to magnificent gardens and cities in central and eastern Europe. We'll see Budapest, Vienna, Prague, Dresden, Berlin, Lubeck and Rostock, which was the Baron's birthplace.

The Botanic Gardens of Kiel University will be visited, also Husum on the west coast of Schleswig Holstein, and Tonning where the von Mueller Society is situated and where Mueller's house and its plaque can be seen. A special social evening has been planned with members of the von Mueller Society. The tour then moves on to Hamburg, Hanover, Bremen and Amsterdam.

Accompanying the tour will be Sara Maroske who has been engaged on the Mueller Correspondence Project for the past seven years. She will give talks at various points along the way.

All air travel will be with KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, and other touring by private luxury charter coach.
Itineraries can be obtained from the Office of the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens.

Cost: $7,770 twin share accom.
$700 single supplement
The tour is filling up, so hurry and make sure of your booking.

HORTICULTURAL FLORA OF SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA

A firm publication date of 14 November has now been set and, rather than the pre-publication offer we had expected, it seems that the best way for Friends to obtain a copy is to purchase one from the Gardens Shop at the usual 10 per cent discount.

FRIENDS' SHOP

Like everywhere in Melbourne, things have been very soggy around the shop; our most regular visitors over the last few weeks have been hungry swans and ducks.

I have just been to two Trade Fairs and we have a lot of new stock for Spring. I think my best find was a wonderful collection of hand-carved wooden ducks in a range of sizes, including several large pairs. The most interesting new idea: picnic sets in shoulder packs, containing a two-place setting complete with cutlery, wine glasses and a tiny cutting board.

In September we will have cane picnic baskets decked out with Redouté rose-patterned plates, cups etc. These will make a really stylish present.

Several of my volunteers have been unwell this winter, in particular Peg Gray. Staff member Pat Mills had major back surgery as did my husband. All the above are recovered and back in full working order.

Stay warm and dry! We look forward as always to seeing you here.

Jill Swann
Shop Manager

BENEFITS

Going interstate? The Friends have membership affiliation with the Australian Federation of Friends of Museums Inc. which offers reciprocal benefits to members of the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens who are travelling outside their own city or town of residence.

If you would like to take advantage of these benefits and, for example, use the Members' Lounge of the Friends of the National Library, Canberra, then write in to our office with a stamped self-addressed envelope and you will be sent a list of these benefits.

SPECIAL BENEFITS TO FRIENDS

Remember that your Friends' membership entitles you to some very worthwhile discounts.

The Friends' shop adjoining the Gardens' Tea Rooms and the Gardens' Shop in the Herbarium both offer a 10 per cent discount on purchases exceeding $20.

The following businesses very kindly offer special discounts to Friends.

Current membership cards must be shown in order for you to receive these discounts.

Fryers' Nursery
589 Glenferrie Rd, Hawthorn
5% off plants only

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

The Gardener's Bulleen Nursery
105 Bridge St, Bulleen
5% off seedlings
10% off potted plants

Town and Country Gardens
1280 Malvern Rd, Malvern
10% off everything

The Arts Bookshop
1067 High St, Armadale

Holmesglen College of TAFE
inc. the Victorian Schools Nursery
585 Waverley Rd, Glen Waverley
10% off everything

The Gardeners Corner Store
190-192 New St, Brighton
10% off everything

Collectors Corner
Springvale Rd, Keysborough
10% off all plants

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

Wolf Tools
675 Canterbury Rd, Surrey Hills
10% discount

Burwood Garden Patch
1418 Toorak Rd, Burwood
10% discount

Green Gables Nursery
1039 Whitehorse Rd, Box Hill
(opposite Town Hall)
10% discount on all items except specials. Does not apply to Frequent Buyer cardholders

Botanic News is produced quarterly for the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Inc.

The Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Incorporated has been formed to stimulate further interest in the Gardens and National Herbarium and to support and assist them whenever possible

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His Excellency the Hon. Richard E. McGarvie

President of the Council of the Friends:
Sir Rupert Hamer

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Eve Brunner, Durham Smith

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FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

The marvellous new Seed House funded by the Friends is finished. The substantial brick, metal and glass structure doubles our space for germinating and propagating plants. This will greatly benefit the Gardens and the Growing Friends.

The Seed House incorporates the latest technology for controlling plant growing conditions. All the benches are heated, and the main central bench moves laterally to make the most efficient use of space. Temperature and light sensors linked to a computer automatically control the conditions within the glasshouse - cool or warm air can be blown in, side and roof panels opened or closed, and 55 per cent shade cloth extended or retracted across the roof.

The builders, Ron and Justin Walmsley, were quick and skilled. We will be arranging a formal opening of the Seed House shortly - but already Nursery staff are making excellent use of the facilities. We all greatly appreciate this major gift from the Friends.

Two grand old trees - Dame Nellie Melba's Golden Poplar and a camphor laurel on the Western Lawn - have had to be removed recently. Despite special arboricultural care for several years, old age and disease had continued to take their toll in both trees, weakening limbs and making them a safety hazard. Their removal highlights the fact that botanic gardens are living, changing places and that old trees don't live forever. In the years ahead we shall have to deal with the senescence of many fine trees in the Gardens. The detailed census of trees conducted in 1994 will assist in planning for this task, which will also be an important topic in the RBG Masterplan. The good news for Dame Nellie's Golden Poplar is that a sapling propagated from the original tree will be planted on the Eastern Lawn in September by her grand-daughter, Lady Vestey.

During the next couple of months you will see new signs appearing in the Gardens. These are the outcome of much planning, designing, investigating and testing. The elegant and simple design has been created by Brian Sadgrove and Associates for use everywhere in the Gardens - from plant labels to the large information boards at each entry gate.

The Victorian Government, through the Community Support Fund, and Pacific Dunlop Limited have generously funded the design and installation of the new sign system. By the beginning of our 150th Anniversary celebrations next February, new signs will be in place at each gate, directional signs will be installed on Garden paths, and information signs will be telling visitors about 30 or so of our major plant collections. Other signs and many plant labels will be installed progressively during 1996. Not only will visitors find their way more easily through the Gardens, but they will also learn much more about our wonderful array of plants.

Ms Jenny Hoysted has taken up her appointment as Visitor Programs Manager at the RBG. Jenny has extensive experience in visitor programs and educational services, most recently at the Zoo.

Shortly RBG will welcome a second teacher seconded full-time from the Directorate of School Education. The appointee will be working with Rod Dunstan and Jenny to continue and extend the educational programs which have been so successful during the last two years.

A grant from ANZ Trustees has enabled major improvements to be made to projection facilities in the Herbarium Hall. A large new motorised screen has been installed, which will allow simultaneous use of two projectors. Our slide projectors have been upgraded with new lenses which enable the projectors to be placed at the rear of the Hall, where they will not block anybody's view of the screen. These improvements, together with those already implemented with new sound speakers, will greatly benefit lectures in the Hall.

Philip Moors
Director, RBG