

BOTANIC NEWS

FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE INC.

SPRING 1996

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The 150th anniversary year of the Gardens has rolled on in style, the highlight of the winter, of course, being the Grand Ball at Government House on 28 June. The Friends were accorded a rare privilege in being able to stage this event as a double celebration of the 100th anniversary of the death of Baron von Mueller and the 150th year of the Gardens in the superb surroundings of the Government House ballroom.

The Ball was managed by a sub-committee of the Activities Committee under Eve Brunner, and, in particular, by an active and innovative sub-committee under Judy Ann Stewart. It was a brilliant success, thoroughly enjoyed by all. The members of these committees deserve our highest praise and gratitude for organising an outstanding occasion.

One feature of the Ball was the number of sponsors who agreed to support the Friends by contributing various items in kind, thus saving considerable expense. This generosity was largely instrumental in allowing the Friends to pass on the proceeds of the Ball, about \$45,000, to the Gardens. To those sponsors we owe our grateful thanks.

The membership of the Friends stands at just over 1400. We would always welcome new Friends to assist our efforts to help make our magnificent Gardens even finer. If you know of anyone to whom we could send our membership brochure with a view to their joining us, please let Margaret Howes or Helen Fahey know. The number to ring is 9650 6398.

The development of the Observatory area as the new entrance precinct for the Gardens is proceeding, with some demolition and clearing. Your Council is having discussions with the Gardens staff and architects about the renovation of the Observatory Lodge, to which the office of the Friends is to move in due course. This fine old building, right at the new entrance to the Gardens, will serve us well in the future. It will increase our ability to support, in many diverse ways, the efforts of the Board and staff to enhance the Gardens of which we are all so proud.

Sir Rupert Hamer
President



Sir Rupert Hamer, at his 80th birthday celebration, chats with Vice-President John Harper.

MARGARET STONES — A SPECIAL EVENT

Thursday 24 October at 10.00am for 10.30am
Motor Works Gallery, Arnold Street, South Yarra

Internationally-renowned botanical artist and illustrator Margaret Stones will be visiting Melbourne for the opening of her retrospective exhibition at the National Gallery, which runs from 17 October to 20 December.

Margaret was born in Melbourne and began her outstanding career here, producing her first works of botanical art in 1945.

She left Melbourne in 1951 to pursue her passion and develop her career in England, where she became an artist at Kew Gardens in London. Her works now feature in major collections around the world.

It is our great pleasure to have the opportunity to meet Margaret and to hear her speak while she is here in Melbourne. We are grateful to Melbourne Grammar School for giving us the use of their Motor Works Gallery for this function while Mueller Hall houses *The Art of Botanical Illustration*.

Morning coffee will be served.

As our numbers are limited to 60, this function is for **FRIENDS ONLY**.

Admission \$8.00

Entry by entree card only

RSVP by 18 October on enclosed booking form.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The 150th Anniversary celebrations of the Royal Botanic Gardens have continued with great success. A recent highlight has been the Grand Ball held at Government House on 28 July. This occasion celebrated both the sesquicentenary of the Gardens and the life and work of Baron Ferdinand von Mueller - who himself greatly enjoyed socialising in the great Ballroom at Government House.

The RBG Board greatly appreciates the hard work and outstanding achievements of the Ball's Organising Committee enthusiastically led by Eve Brunner and Judy Ann Stewart. Many months ago the Friends accepted the invitation to organise the Ball, and their Committee created a memorable evening. The splendour of the ballroom was enhanced by the wonderful floral displays, the music - including pipers to commence the dinner - and the table staff in period costume.

Not only was the Grand Ball a superb evening of enjoyment for the 400 guests present, but it also raised \$45,000 for the Royal Botanic Gardens. I thank all who contributed to arranging such a splendid evening and such a large donation to the Gardens.

Many visitors have enjoyed the two exhibitions staged in the past couple of months. More than 30,000 people viewed Annemieke Mein's exhibition 'The Fabric of Nature' in the Mueller Hall at the Herbarium in June and July, and large numbers attended Sotheby's Decorator Showhouse in the Observatory Building in August.

The exhibition in the Observatory Building, and the associated refurbishment of the Observatory Lodge as a temporary coffee shop, enabled many people to explore these fine heritage buildings for the first time and also gain an appreciation of the improvements which the Observatory Gate Project will bring. Our architects have now completed the design and documentation of the landscaping and building works, including restoration of the historic buildings. The joint fundraising campaign with the Rotary Clubs in Melbourne and the Committee for Melbourne has begun, and we are confident of gaining the final funds which are needed to allow the project to proceed.

W R M Irvine
Chairman



THE GRAND BALL

The Grand Ball on Friday 28 June was a huge success and everyone had a wonderful time. The Ball was the culmination of many months of hard work by a dedicated committee ably assisted by the Friends' office. With generous donations from many sources, the evening was a most successful fundraiser.

Government House ballroom was a gracious setting for such an evening, and we were very privileged to be granted the use of it. Guests who arrived in the cold and rain were greeted by the Diamond Valley Band playing valiantly outside the entrance (fortunately they were under cover). After drinks in the drawing room, guests entered the magnificent ballroom which had been transformed into a botanical bower - all the foliage and fruit gracing the candelabras were picked from the gardens of Government House. Those who were there will agree the effect was stunning.

A delicious dinner was accompanied by a variety of entertainment, starting with the Victoria Police Band, followed by Janet Healey of the Victoria State Opera, and finally the Brian Fitzgerald Band ensured that the dance floor was always crowded.

Formality was kept to a minimum - the Governor, Mr Richard McGarvie, welcomed us and then Sir Rupert Hamer and Mrs Judy Ann Stewart spoke briefly. The rest of the evening was 'just like a private party' as one guest noted. It was a delight to see so many Friends amongst the crowd enjoying what was a truly elegant and memorable evening.

THANKS

The Royal Botanic Gardens Board and the Friends greatly appreciate the generosity of the sponsors and their heart-warming support, which were largely responsible for the splendid financial result. The sponsors who contributed in various ways were: Amcor Ltd, Aberdeen Hire Service, Bell Securities Ltd, Coles Myer Ltd, Craftsman Press Pty Ltd, Creative Brands Pty Ltd, C.U.B. Ltd, Diamond Valley Band, Gandel Charitable Trust, Harry the Hirer Pty Ltd, Hudson Conway Ltd, Kevin O'Neill Florist, Kuranga Native Plant Nursery, Mercedes Benz (Australia) Pty Ltd, Peter Rowland Catering, Select Vineyards Pty Ltd, Shell Australia Ltd, Sidney Myer Trust, Stuart Alexander & Co. Pty Ltd (Lindt), Tattersalls', Tigerprint, Tomasetti Paper Pty Ltd, Victoria Police Band, Victoria State Opera and Westfield Trust.

The active, imaginative and hardworking committee members were: Eve Brunner, Judy Ann Stewart, Heather Biggart, Marian Brookes, Douglas Butler, Lesley Clark, Olga Cook, Caroline Cornish, Ann Hyams, Sara Maroske, Prue Myer, Sandy Nicholas, Robyn Tymms and Noey Webb.

SPRING ACTIVITIES

GARDEN ORNAMENTS

Illustrated talk by Stephen Ryan

Thursday 19 September at 8.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

Come and enjoy listening to one of our ever-popular speakers, Stephen Ryan, talking about Garden Ornaments. We should come away with lots of new ideas for our gardens!

Supper will be served.

Admission: Friends \$8.00 Others \$10.00

RSVP by 16 September on enclosed booking form

**IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF
FERDINAND VON MUELLER**

Illustrated talk by Sara Maroske

Monday 23 September at 8.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

Following the highly successful *Gardens of Europe - a tribute to Baron Ferdinand von Mueller* tour, run earlier this year by the Friends, Sara Maroske will speak on her findings and experiences as a member of the group returning to the birthplace of the Baron.

Sara began her researches for the Mueller Correspondence Project in 1988 and is now one of the editors of that project. It is co-ordinated in the Department of History and Philosophy of Science at The University of Melbourne.

Supper will be served.

Admission: Friends \$8.00 Others \$10.00

RSVP by 20 September on enclosed booking form

**THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN
An Overview with Dr Jim Grimes****Wednesday 16 October at 8.00pm**
Stonnington, McInerney Room 212,
336 Glenferrie Rd, Malvern (Melway 59 C5)
(Parking available within the grounds)

Dr Grimes, the first Mueller Fellow appointed to the National Herbarium, is a member of staff at the New York Botanical Garden.

Supper will be served.

Admission: Friends \$8.00 Others \$10.00

RSVP by 14 October on enclosed booking form

**THE ART OF BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION
EXHIBITION OPENING AND PREVIEW****Wednesday 9 October, 6.30pm to 8.00pm**

See Botanical Illustrators section

**THE ART OF BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION
EXHIBITION INTRODUCTION AND SPECIAL
VIEWING WITH THE NAT. GALLERY SOCIETY****Thursday 10 October at 10.00am**

See Botanical Illustrators section

**DAY TRIP TO BARUNAH PLAINS AND
STRATHBRAE****Monday 21 October**

On this day we will visit two very different gardens in the Geelong area. Leaving the National Gallery, St Kilda Road, at 9.00 am **SHARP**, we will first visit *Strathbrae* at Highton, a large and lovely town garden owned by Mrs Zoe Monotti. On arrival we will have morning tea/coffee. The 1880s farmhouse is surrounded by a garden totally created in the last 20 years. A keen plantswoman, Zoe has planned a romantic Victorian garden in keeping with the house. Colour planting for each season is an important part of the garden, together with an emphasis on foliage, bark and berries. Arches covered on perfumed roses and clematis, combined with perennials, old fashioned roses and border plants, have been chosen for an overall colour scheme. The garden strikes a balance between the informality of the flower beds and the more structured planting of the trees and shrubs, with many unusual species.

We then move on to *Barunah Plains* on the Hamilton Highway at Inverleigh, owned by Mr and Mrs Graham Mills. *Barunah Plains* is one of the notable Western District pastoral properties with great historical interest. Owned originally by the Austin family in the 1840s, and later by the Russell family, it was bought by Joan and Graham Mills in 1978. We will see the magnificent 30-room mansion set in 3 hectares of formal English garden and the original outbuildings made of bluestone quarried from the property.

The history of Barunah Plains mirrors the development of the pastoral industry from the beginning of white settlement. The property has blood lines from the original merino stud established in the 1840s. In addition, the Mills graze cattle, grow cereal crops and shear fine merino wool from over 10,000 sheep. It was once the largest sheep station in the state.

Cost: \$38.00, which includes all entrance fees, morning tea at *Strathbrae*, lunch at *Barunah Plains* and cup of tea/coffee before we leave. We should return to the National Gallery by 5.30pm.

RSVP by Friday 11 October on enclosed booking form

If you are unable to join a tour due to something unforeseen, such as ill-health, please notify the Friends' office on 9650 6398. You may leave a message up to 9.00am on the day of departure. This will enable the coach to leave on time.

MARGARET STONES

Thursday 24 October at 10.00am

See Page 1 for details

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday 11 November

The Friends' 10th Annual General Meeting will take place in the Mueller Hall, National Herbarium, on Monday 11 November 1996 at 8.00pm. Our guest and speaker will be the Hon. Marie Tehan MLA, Minister for Conservation and Land Management.

Further details will be sent later.

BUS TRIP TO WEST GIPPSLAND Thursday 14 November

Leaving the National Gallery at 9.00am **SHARP** and travelling to Neerim South and Nayook, we will visit three gardens and a nursery, beginning with Goosenoodle Cottage, a modern garden where we will have morning tea, then on to La Neuville, a garden begun in the 1920s and a farm orchard.

Lunch at the Neerim Junction Community Centre will be provided by local volunteers to aid charity.

After lunch, Wensley Farm Gardens and Country Farm Perennials, a nursery with rare perennials, herbs etc.

Finally, Thorngrove, an old district garden begun in 1871, with original farmhouse kitchen, wells and cream house.

Return to National Gallery at 5.00pm.

Cost: \$33.00

RSVP by 4 November on enclosed booking form

SPRING WALK WITH THE VOLUNTARY GUIDES

Thursday 21 November at 6.00pm

Meet at F Gate. This walk is free and lasts approximately one hour.

RSVP by 14 November on enclosed booking form

If your name is down for the walk and you cannot attend, please notify the Friends' office on 9650 6398.

BOTANICAL EMBROIDERERS' WORKSHOP

Classes are held at the Astronomer's Residence with Wanda McPherson. Next classes are on Mondays - 9 September, 14 October, 11 November and 9 December at 1.00pm. Cost: \$10 per class.

GROWING FRIENDS

The Growing Friends' Spring Sale is to be held on Saturday and Sunday, 12 and 13 October.

At this sale we are featuring camellias. All of them have been grown from cuttings taken in the Royal Botanic Gardens. There is a wide selection - some originated at the RBG, some are Australian bred, some are more than 100 years old. There are camellias for tubs, espalier, scent, hedging, and small and large areas.

As well as our large selection of perennials, trees, shrubs and bulbs, we have some small-growing bamboos, an interesting range of succulents and plenty of bargains.

Put the dates in your diary or visit the nursery on Fridays between 10.00am and 1.00pm.

The nursery will NOT be open on Friday 4, 11 or 18 October.

Please note that plants listed on the back of the enclosed flyer are not available until the Spring Sale weekend.

TAKE A WALK IN THE GARDENS WITH THE VOLUNTARY GUIDES

In Memory of Mueller - Australia's greatest botanist:

This walk marks the centenary of the death of Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, the Gardens' first director and one of the most significant botanists of the 19th century. The Walk explores his scientific achievements, his exploratory trips collecting plants within Australia, and his place in the society of mid to late 19th century Melbourne.

22, 26 and 29 September; 8 and 10 October, 10.30am - 11.30am, starting from F Gate.

Bushland to Botanic Gardens:

Trace the early development of the Gardens from its bush beginnings to the first ornamental plantings. Find out about the vegetation that existed here before the establishment of the Gardens and how it was used by aboriginal people and early settlers.

20 and 22 October, 1.00pm - 3.00pm, starting from the Separation Tree Shelter.

Twilight Walks:

Explore the Gardens in the quiet of the evening when birds are roosting and the sweet fragrance of perfumed plants fills the air. Pack a picnic to enjoy in the Gardens afterwards.

6, 13, 20 and 27 November, starting from D Gate at 6.00pm.

Regular Walks:

Free guided walks leave from the Gardens Shop (corner Birdwood Avenue and Dallas Brooks Drive) at 11.00am and 2.00pm daily, except Monday and Saturday. Bookings are not required, except for groups of six or more.

BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATORS

THE ART OF BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION

10 October to 5 November 1996
Open every day 10.00am - 6.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium of Victoria

Admission: \$3.00

The Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens proudly present this exhibition of selected works by our members, who include Victoria's most accomplished contemporary botanical illustrators, together with works by invited artists from around Australia in celebration of the Gardens' 150th anniversary. All works on display will be for sale.



The Friends acknowledge the generous support of Esso Australia, and the invaluable contributions from Becton Corporation, Brough Peterson, Expohire, Harry the Hirer and Wingara Wines Group towards this year's exhibition.

EXHIBITION OPENING AND PREVIEW

Wednesday 9 October, 6.30pm to 8.00pm
Mueller Hall and adjoining marquee,
National Herbarium

To be opened by Professor Pauline Ladiges, Head of the School of Botany, The University of Melbourne, and Deputy Chair of the Royal Botanic Gardens Board.

Admission: \$12.00

Entrance by entree card only, strictly limited to Friends

RSVP by 1 October on enclosed booking form



Fiona McKinnon Apple *Malus x pumila* var. 'Jonared'

EXHIBITION INTRODUCTION AND SPECIAL VIEWING FOR OUR MEMBERS TOGETHER WITH THE NAT. GALLERY SOCIETY OF VIC.

Thursday 10 October at 10.00am for 10.30am

Introduction by Ian Clarke, botanist at the National Herbarium and member of the selection panel.

Includes morning coffee in marquee and entry to exhibition.

Admission: Friends \$8.00 Others \$10.00

Entrance by entree card only.

RSVP by 3 October on enclosed booking form

NATIONAL GALLERY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION SPRING LUNCHEON - Thursday 17 October

Guest Speaker: Renowned botanical artist Margaret Stones

Cost: \$55.00 per person. Tables of eight.

Enquiries: Julie Reid 9822 9454

Members are reminded that we request a stamped self-addressed envelope to be sent with your booking if you wish your entree card tickets to be posted by return mail. Otherwise your name will be recorded on a list available at each function to verify your payment.

TALKING PLANTS: Nursery Collections
Thursday 5 September at 10.00am
Saturday 7 September at 2.00pm

Join the Royal Botanic Gardens' Nursery Manager for a tour of the Nursery's orchid and bromeliad collections, which are not normally open to the public. The fascinating adaptations of these plants will be highlighted. Then find out about the Gardens' research work into the micro-propagation of orchids.

Talking Plants has been developed as part of the Gardens' 150th anniversary celebrations.

Light refreshments will be served and **participants will receive an orchid propagated from the Gardens to take home.**

Cost: \$20.00 Pensioners \$15.00
 Bookings and information about the series:
 9252 2358 weekdays.

BEYOND THE FLORAS
Professor Sir Ghilleen Prance

The completion of a flora does not mean that the work of taxonomists has finished. There are many spinoffs and many further aspects to be worked upon. At a public lecture on 3 October Professor Sir Ghilleen Prance, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew will enlarge on this and other aspects of taxonomic research, including the suggestion that more taxonomic effort should be directed to fungal floras, given that most areas of the world have five times more species of fungi than vascular plants.

Sir Ghilleen's lecture will use many examples, and will be couched in lay terms. It will be held in the **Copeland Theatre at The University of Melbourne** at 8.00pm on Thursday 3 October. Admission is free.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wednesday 18 December
FRIENDS' CHRISTMAS DINNER

In this year of the 150th birthday of the Royal Botanic Gardens, the Friends will hold their Christmas dinner at the Tea Rooms in the heart of the Gardens. Please mark this in your diary *now* so you don't miss it.

1 - 18 August 1997
COSTA RICA TOUR

This exciting tour is being arranged by the Friends of the RBG for 1997. Please contact the travel agency, Destination Management, to express your interest. Details of the tour are enclosed in this newsletter.

November 1997
NEW ZEALAND SOUTH ISLAND TOUR
 Spring tour of New Zealand's South Island with Rosalind Harker of N.Z. Nature Expeditions Ltd.

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE
1996 COMMEMORATIVE CONFERENCE

Planning is well under way for this Conference, to be held at The University of Melbourne from 30 September to 5 October 1996. The Conference is being held to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the Gardens and the centenary of the death of Victoria's first Government Botanist and Director of the Gardens, Ferdinand von Mueller. We have an exciting program and delegates will be addressed by international and local experts on a diverse and fascinating range of topics.

A highlight of the Conference will be the dinner on Tuesday 1 October when the guest speaker will be Baron Ferdinand von Mueller. There is a limited number of places available for the dinner and members of the Friends are invited to join us on this celebratory occasion. Here is a once-only opportunity to hear what the Baron thinks of the Gardens 100 years on.

When: Tuesday 1 October, 7.00 pm
 Where: University House, University of Melbourne
 What: Scientific Savant Conference Dinner
 Cost: \$40 per head
 Information: Helen Cohn (9252 2320) or Sara Maroske (9252 2382)
 Bookings: Michael Sullivan, Conference Management, University of Melbourne, Parkville 3052. Cheques should be made out to 'The 1996 Conference', and bookings should be clearly marked as being for the Scientific Savant Conference Dinner.



FRIENDS WINTER ACTIVITIES

Annemieke Mein Repeat Viewing - 14 June
 Winter Walk in the RBG - 23 June
 Film Luncheon. *Jane Eyre* - 4 July
 Another Important Birthday - 25 July
 Sotheby's Decorator Showhouse - 28 July
 Botanical Illustrators. *The Botanical Art Collection of the RBG* - 30 July
 Visits to the Victorian Tapestry Workshop - 6, 14 August
Northern Territory Expedition. Marco Duretto - 19 August

MEMBERSHIP
RENEWAL

Friends whose membership is due for renewal (from April to November 1996) should receive a renewal notice with this *Botanic News*. Please check inside the envelope in case there is a renewal notice for you.

FRIENDS' SHOP

Dear Friends

The office and all available space is completely filled with wonderful new stock:

Hand-stitched tapestry pillows, large tartan design overlaid with bunches of flowers, bright red and beautiful.

Hand-carved timber ducks and also cats, dogs, pigs, wombats and cows.

Australian made and designed fine china mugs, an outstanding selection showing Australian birds and wildflowers.

Thick dark green calico aprons. Gardener's hand soap, hand cream, leather gloves, and fly nets for the summer.

A BIG selection of stationery.

Wicker picnic baskets, very tastefully fitted out with heavy duty outdoor melamine picnic ware.

That's why my office looks like a warehouse, but it's fun and we are really looking forward to showing you.

Jill Swann, Manager



Observatory Gate

The Gardens' plans for the new Observatory Gate are expected to result in invitations to tender for Stage 1 of the work being called before Christmas. That stage will include the refurbishment of Observatory Lodge, the future home of the Friends' office. While the work is going on during 1997 the office will be moved temporarily to the Great Melbourne Telescope building, which will be included in Stage 2 of the development of Observatory Gate.



STAMP TO HONOUR FERDINAND VON MUELLER

In a joint issue with the German Bundespost, Australia Post is releasing a stamp featuring Ferdinand von Mueller on 9 October 1996. Joint issues are undertaken by postal administrations from time to time and feature a subject of relevance to both countries.

Participating countries use the same design, adding their own type to specify the denomination. The von Mueller stamp was designed in Melbourne by John Silitto and David Blyth of Pendulum Design. The engraving and printing are being carried out in Germany.

The stamp features a portrait of von Mueller and *Eucalyptus globulus* (Tasmanian Blue Gum). Although not a species he described, it is one that is very much associated with him, especially overseas. He disseminated the plant internationally and adopted it for his own personal coat of arms.

The Australian version carries a denomination of \$1.20 and the German stamp 1DM (roughly equivalent values).

Von Mueller previously featured on a stamp issued in 1948. The design incorporated his portrait and a sprig of Yellow Stringy Bark (*Eucalyptus muelleriana*).

The German Minister for Post and Telecommunications is planning to visit Melbourne early in December. Although past the issue date, an official launch ceremony will be held at that time in the Royal Botanic Gardens.

SPECIAL BENEFITS TO FRIENDS

Remember that your Friends' membership entitles you to some 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

Garden of Eden Nursery

33 Ferrars Street, Albert Park

10% discount off everything



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
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Sir Rupert Hamer
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Eve Brunner
John Harper
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FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

During July I had the good fortune to be able to visit 10 leading botanic gardens in Asia and Europe. Much of my travel was sponsored by Qantas as part of their support for the Royal Botanic Gardens in our anniversary year. The trip enabled me to gain information on the activities at these botanic gardens and to compare them with the operations and standards at RBG Melbourne and Cranbourne.

I visited a variety of gardens, from tropical botanic gardens in Singapore and Indonesia, to two of the world's oldest botanic gardens in Italy, and a selection of the best known ones in Britain. Highlights were the magnificent displays of enormous tropical trees in Bogor Botanic Garden in Java, and the remarkable garden in Padua, which has been growing in the same patch of earth since 1545.

It was most instructive to hear how these gardens are dealing with many of the same issues and opportunities which we face at the Royal Botanic Gardens. Pleasingly, my clear conclusion is that the general quality of our own horticultural management, administration, functions and events, visitor services and education is the equal of anything which I encountered. Nevertheless, we will benefit from the ideas, information and experience from these gardens as we strive to do even better here.

In my June report I mentioned that we were awaiting the outcome of a study of the colony of Grey-headed Flying Foxes in the Fern Gully. This study has now been completed and the results were publicly released in mid-July. They have confirmed that roosting bats have damaged a number of trees in the Fern Gully and that there is a significant long-term threat to the survival of those plants.

In response to the recommendations of the study, we have now begun testing methods to manage the Flying-fox population. Our aim is to maintain the core of the colony, while at the same time protecting threatened trees.

This is the first time in Australia that a project has aimed to manage, but not entirely disperse, a Flying-fox population.

Preliminary tests have involved placing monofilament lines between selected trees, in order to see if these will discourage Flying-foxes from roosting in those trees. This technique has been selected because it poses a minimum risk of injury to both the animals and the trees, and will make no visual or physical impact on the Fern Gully. Initial indications have been positive, but further tests are required.

Copies of the study's report, Grey-headed Flying-foxes at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, are held by the Royal Botanic Gardens' Library, and we invite those interested in viewing it to contact our Librarians on 9252 2320.

The inaugural Mueller Fellow, Dr Jim Grimes from the New York Botanical Garden, commenced on 15 July. He will be at RBG Melbourne until the end of October, and is studying the floral morphology and development of Acacia.

We are delighted that Education Officer Rod Dunstan has been awarded a Churchill Fellowship for 1997. He will visit botanic gardens in North America and Europe to study educational programs for schools.

The RBG's Sponsorship Manager, Jacki Mitchell, has taken up a marketing position with the National Trust. Nancy Staub has been appointed to the vacancy. Nancy will continue to work as a consultant and will undertake both the Sponsorship Manager role and management of the remaining 1996 events.

Don Foreman has recently left to spend the next 12 months on secondment as the Australian Botanical Liaison Officer at RBG Kew. His previous position as Collections Manager has been filled by Catherine Coles.

Philip Moors
Director