



Botanic News

FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE INC.

SPRING 2001

The RBG heads for Bourke Street Mall

In an imaginative collaboration, the Gardens are 'value-adding' this spring to the always-stunning annual flower display in David Jones. *Botanica: Nature at its most spectacular* will be staged in the Women's Store from Monday 3 to Sunday 16 September, with the following RBG attractions:

MALI MOIR will demonstrate the principles of botanical illustration.

Noon-2.00pm. 2, 4, 6, 11 and 13 Sept.

RBG HERBARIUM VOLUNTEERS will mount plant specimens

Noon-2.00pm. 3, 5, 7, 10, 12 and 14 Sept.

RBG HORTICULTURISTS will host morning tea in-store walks

10.00am-noon. 3, 5, 7, 10, 12 and 14 Sept.

GUEST SPEAKERS: Gallery on Six
MARCO DURETTO on Plant Conservation
11.30-noon. 4 Sept.

RICHARD BARLEY on Water Saving Techniques
2.00-2.30pm. 7 Sept.

ANDREW LAIDLAW on RBG Landscape Design
2.00-2.30pm. 6 Sept. 11.30am-noon. 13 Sept.

RICHARD BARLEY on 'Scarlet Blaze'
2.00-2.30pm. 12 Sept.

TERRY SMYTH on Southern Chinese Plants
11.30am-noon. 11 Sept. 2.00-2.30pm. 14 Sept.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Many thanks to all those Members – about 360 – who responded to the survey sent out with the Winter *Botanic News*. It has provided a good indication of what it is that people value most about their membership and the activities they find most enjoyable, with great support expressed for our publications. All this furnishes very useful material for the planning of the future activities of the Friends.

It is clear that we have a number of 'sentimental' members, who live interstate and overseas, have cherished memories of the Gardens and really want to keep in touch. Perhaps I may quote one very special comment: "At age 91, though still alert and reasonably active, it would be pointless for me to 'tick the boxes'. My real reason for being a Friend is

that I was born in Observatory House and lived there until I went off to the War. All through my life the Gardens and the Domain have been an enchanted land for me, rich in treasured memories, and I still wander there whenever it is possible."

Details of the survey's findings are on page 11. We're very grateful to Christine Harris, a new member of the Activities sub-committee, who word-processed individual handwritten comments and suggestions, and to Duncan Ironmonger, who undertook data processing and statistical analysis of the responses. Each of them devoted many hours to those tasks. We are grateful, also, to about 50 Members who volunteered to help the Friends in various ways. These offers will be acknowledged in all cases where a contact phone number was given.

Respondents to the survey voted 'talks' the most popular activity, and they are certainly excellent fund-raisers. Since February, talks by Diana Morgan, Judith Zuk, Prof. Guan Kaiyun, Michael McCoy, Marguerite Hancock, Margaret Corrick and Bruce Fuhrer have raised \$4150 for the Friends. Many of you also include generous donations to the Trust Fund when renewing membership. For these we are most grateful; \$6335 in tax-deductible donations was received with the influx of June renewals.

Recently, in turn, the Friends have donated \$169,000 to projects in the Gardens. This brings to more than \$1,000,000 the sum donated to the Gardens from the Friends' Trust Fund and our fund-raising efforts.

This *Botanic News* includes notice of the Friends' annual meeting on 12 November. I hope many of you will come along to show your support for this wonderful organisation. Our guest speaker this year will be the Minister who has political responsibility for the Gardens, the Hon. Sherry! Garbutt.

There will be vacancies for the Friends' Council at the Annual General Meeting. If you're interested in considering a nomination, please contact the Friends' office on 9650 6398. The Secretary, Lawrence Cohn, Vice-President Heather Ironmonger and Louise Coronel are retiring and not seeking re-election.

Council members are elected on a rotating basis, and this year Richard Kirsner and Richard Smith are due to retire but are eligible for re-election.

Ninian Stephen

Spring Activities



THE HISTORY OF AUSTRALIA'S FLORAL EMBLEMS

Illustrated talk by Dr Sophie Ducker
Friday 14 September at 10.00am for 10.30am
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

Appropriately, as we celebrate the centenary of federation, Dr Sophie Ducker will trace the botanical history of Australia's floral emblems, starting with the earliest exploration of this continent. Can you list them all? Do you know who discovered them? How were they named? When were they chosen as the

emblems for the nation and the states?

As many Friends will know, Dr Ducker has lived through more than nine decades of the 20th century. A former Professor of Botany at The University of Melbourne, her knowledge is unparalleled; we can look forward to a very interesting talk.

Refreshments will be served from 10.00am.

Cost \$16 Friends \$11

RSVP by Tuesday 11 September on booking form

Australia's Floral Emblem,
Golden Wattle, *Acacia*
pycnantha.

Illustration by Marion
Westmacott.
Courtesy Australian National
Botanic Gardens.

U.S. LESSONS FOR OUR POTTER CHILDREN'S GARDEN

Illustrated talk by Andrew Laidlaw
Tuesday 18 September at 5.30 for 6.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

A grant from the Friends enabled Andrew Laidlaw, the RBG Landscape Architect, to attend a major symposium, investigate education programs and visit a number of gardens in the U.S. in July. His focus is on children's gardens as he prepares to design the RBG's Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden.

In some cases Andrew was inspired; in others, just as usefully, he saw examples of what he does *not* want to implement. Of great interest was the behind-the-scenes operation of these gardens, with particular reference to staffing levels, resources, storage of equipment, materials, and the involvement of volunteers. Many valuable contacts were made at the Michigan conference, and at visits to notable gardens, including the Cleveland (as photographed, right, *Floating Deck*), New York and Brooklyn Botanic Gardens, together with Longwood and Winterthur gardens in Pennsylvania.

Join us to see and hear about Andrew's trip and to learn about his philosophy for our very natural Potter Children's Garden. He's full of ideas!

Refreshments will be served from 5.30pm

Cost: \$16 Friends \$11

RSVP by Friday 14 September on booking form

BUS TRIP TO ANGAIR WILDFLOWER SHOW, AIREYS INLET AND GEELONG BOTANIC GARDENS **Saturday 22 September**

Our bus will leave at **9.00am sharp** from outside the Victorian Arts Centre in St Kilda Road. We will visit the celebrated spring wildflower show at Anglesea Memorial Hall, which has been a drawcard for native plant enthusiasts for nearly 30 years. Besides orchids and other indigenous flora at its peak, the display will include Australian plants gathered from local gardens and a wildlife experience 'alive and up close'. Native plants, art and craft items will be for sale.

A member of ANGAIR (Anglesea and Aireys Inlet Society for the Protection of Flora and Fauna) will join our bus for a guided tour of the nearby heathland, much of which is now protected after a continuing and successful environmental campaign.



We'll also spend time at the large garden of Netta and Ian Leslie — active members of ANGAI and the Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens — at Aireys Inlet. We'll eat lunch there, in an imaginative landscape combining native plants with heritage roses and perennials.

On our homeward journey we'll pause for a guided walk at the Geelong Botanic Gardens, which are celebrating their 150th birthday this year. In 1995 a Master Plan for the 21st century was adopted to rejuvenate and extend the Gardens. This is an excellent opportunity to see their existing treasures, (for instance, the ancient *Ginkgo biloba* and the monumental Chilean Wine Palm), established in an era of plant introduction, and to learn about the 21st century garden which will emphasise local relevance, conservation, ecosystems and education. Work is underway.

BYO lunch including a drink. The bus should return about 5.30pm.

Cost: \$43

RSVP by Monday 10 September on booking form, together with a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

SPRING BUS TRIP SPECIALIST NURSERIES AND GARDENS IN THE DANDENONGS Wednesday 3 October

The day promises some exciting contrasts. Our bus will depart from outside the Victorian Arts Centre at **8.45am sharp**. *Please note:* Due to construction at the National Gallery, the bus departure point has been moved north and is now outside the Victorian Arts Centre.

We will call in to the home and garden of a Friend of the RBG, Sue Keon-Cohen, at Emerald. Sue and husband Chester have now made Emily Hill Farm their home. In a very beautiful setting they farm organic blueberries and have an area devoted to growing advanced trees. The productive herb and vegetable garden is surrounded by a choice collection of native trees and shrubs. We'll have morning tea there before continuing to Cloudehill gardens and nursery at Olinda.

Jeremy Francis has designed and established a Lutyens/Jekyll-inspired modern garden of extraordinary vision. It incorporates the existing mature Japanese maples and copper beeches. The most impressive pair of herbaceous borders are colour co-ordinated with perennials and grasses, and include such treasures as *Crocasmia* 'Lucifer', *Cosmos atrosanguineus* and dahlia 'Bishop of Llandaff'. In contrast there's a joyous meadow land of soft grasses and delicate bulbs. Hedges of

hornbeam, rhododendrons and cedar give the garden strength.

Close by, the delightful elevated garden setting of Coonara Springs is our choice for a light lunch. Spend some time just enjoying the atmosphere or visit Gentiana opposite. This specialist nursery has been recently taken over by Craig Wilson and has been recommended to us because of its wealth of rare and unusual alpine bulbs and small rock garden shrubs.

Finally, Invermay Farm at Olinda, the home of Ron and Margaret Lambert. Nearly three hectares, this garden of terraces, mass plantings and diverse plant material will delight designers and plantspeople. David Austin roses, formal herbaceous borders, the lilac hedge, a grove of chestnuts, the persimmon walk — just some of the joys to experience.

The bus should return by 5.15pm.

Cost: \$55. Includes entrance to two gardens, morning tea and lunch.

RSVP by Tuesday 25 September on booking form, with a stamped self-addressed envelope.

WHAT DO OUR BOTANISTS DO? Illustrated talk by three RBG botanists Thursday 11 October at 5.30 for 6.00pm Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

Come and hear, in a relaxed informal setting, three of our Herbarium botanists — Neville Walsh (Senior Conservation Botanist), Liz James (Conservation Geneticist) and Frank Udovicic (Molecular Systematist). They have kindly offered to talk for about 20 minutes each, in a round table format, about their work.

Neville's work focuses on the identification, monitoring and rescue of rare or endangered native plants. Liz investigates the genetic diversity of populations of threatened plants by using various genetic fingerprinting techniques. Frank's research aims to improve classification of plant groups by DNA sequencing. Much of the genetic research is done in the recently-constructed Maud Gibson Trust Molecular Laboratory. This important work brings together advances in genetics and taxonomy with society's concern for conservation and the environment.

With interest expressed by many Members in learning about some of the work undertaken at the Herbarium, we hope your support will lead to further similar events.

Refreshments will be served before the talk.

Cost: \$16 Friends \$11

RSVP by Monday 8 October on booking form.

**GROWING FRIENDS
SPRING PLANT SALE
Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 October
See page 6**

**SPRING QUARTERLY WALK
BEHIND THE SCENES WITH THE RBG
EDUCATION SERVICES
Tuesday 23 October
Meet at Gate Lodge at 10.00am**

Have you ever witnessed the excitement of a school's visit to the Gardens? Have you ever wondered what the young visitors experience? Did you know that the RBG has over 12,000 kinds of plants located at its two sites? To make the best use of this fabulous resource the Gardens Education Services cater for teachers and for students of all ages from pre-school to tertiary level. Special programs include *Introducing the Gardens*, *Living Together – Plants and Animals*, *Plant Diversity and Adaptation*, *Inspired by Nature*, *Minibeasts* and *Stars of Melbourne*.

Learn all about this thriving activity — more than 39,000 students participated in RBG programs in 1999-2000 — by joining us for this Insiders Walk. Jane Liefman, the Manager, will give us an overview while we have morning tea at Gate Lodge, and then lead a tour of the Education Services area in the Gardens. A school visit should be in progress.

This walk will be restricted in numbers.
Cost incl. GST: \$9 Friends \$7
RSVP by Wednesday 17 October on booking form

**PARIS GARDENS
BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT
Illustrated talk by Dr Peter Valder
Wednesday 31 October at 5.30 for 6.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium**

Spending a month in Paris at a friend's house last year, Peter Valder used his time very constructively. He visited most of the gardens open to the public in and around Paris, photographed them, and listed directions for reaching them by public transport.

So if a trip to Paris is on your itinerary, you'll find a copy of Peter's notes invaluable. If you're an armchair traveller, you'll still gain enormous pleasure from Peter's light-hearted talk. He says that many of France's most beautiful and historically interesting gardens are found in this small area; he includes examples from the 15th Century to the present day.

Peter's previous talk to us, dealing with the plants of China, was memorable; we are delighted to welcome him back.

It's impossible to do justice to Peter's distinguished career in a brief paragraph. Here are some recent highlights: *The Garden Plants of China* won several international awards, and he's currently writing a book about Chinese gardens. His 1995 book about the genus *Wisteria* also won great acclaim. In 1996 Peter was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in recognition of his contribution to botany and horticulture in this country.

Refreshments will be served from 5.30pm.
Cost: \$16 Friends \$11
RSVP by Friday 26 October on booking form

**SELF-DRIVE SPRING PICNIC:
CRANBOURNE WILDFLOWERS AND
BEVERLEY SUTHERLAND SMITH'S GARDEN
Friday 2 November
Meet at 10.30am at 29 Regent St, Mount
Waverley (Melway Map 70 Ref: G2)**

After our very successful combined talk with the Cranbourne Friends in April, Lesley Clark, their President, entreated us to visit them in the Cranbourne Botanic Gardens at the peak of their wildflower time. Come on a spring self-drive picnic. First we will meet at Beverley Sutherland Smith's home to have a delicious morning tea and see a garden filled with flowers and fragrance, as well as edible delights that reflect the owner's passionate interest in food. Containing an English-style potager, plus meandering paths to areas filled with foliage and perfume, Beverley Sutherland Smith's garden is a delight. We will see this garden at its peak, a week before opening for the Open Garden Scheme.

Then it is a half-hour drive to the wonderful RBG Cranbourne to see the wildflowers and catch up with our Cranbourne Friends. Take the Princes Highway to Dandenong and then the South Gippsland Highway to the Gardens (Melway Map 133). Take the Ballarto Road exit and drive to the Gardens entrance, then to the Stringybark Picnic Area and car park. We will be met by the Cranbourne Friends, who will host a barbecue lunch for us. Lunch plus tea/coffee will be provided (BYO any other drinks). Following this, the Friends will organise guides to take us on a tour of the Gardens to see the wildflower highlights and other points of interest. Please wear comfortable walking shoes.

Cost: \$21 \$18 Friends
RSVP by Monday 29 October on booking form

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Monday 12 November at 7.30pm for 8.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

First refreshments, then a brief business meeting, to be followed by a talk from the Minister for Environment and Conservation, the Hon. Sherryl Garbutt. This is our one free event each year. Do come! A formal notice and a copy of the Annual Report will be sent to you towards the end of October.

GARDENS IN AUSTRALIA

**Illustrated talk by Sarah Guest
 and Simon Griffiths**

Wednesday 14 November at 12 noon
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

Whatever her subject, Sarah Guest is witty, informative and stimulating. On this occasion, we'll have double the pleasure as Sarah will appear in tandem with Simon Griffiths, the photographer particularly noted for stunning images of gardens, travel and food.

They have collaborated on a stylish, inspirational volume interpreting modern gardens. Fiona Brockhoff's Sorrento garden epitomises this philosophy, having a strong architectural design, minimal water use, and an emphasis on conservation. Another triumph is a clever Sydney garden in a light well! Yet another is Prof. George Seddon's garden in Fremantle, displaying a tremendous awareness of the local environment.

We'll also hear about flourishing roses in Adelaide, country gardens which embrace the surrounding landscape, town gardens and grand gardens. Sarah assures us 'absolutely no half-hour makeovers as seen on TV; it's about people who love plants'. Sarah and Simon have selected 25 gardens to present the 'flavour' of Australia.

Join us for lunch and wine at noon, followed by the talk.

Cost: \$20 \$15 for Friends

RSVP by Thursday 8 November on booking form



*The author of
 Wildflowers of
 Victoria, Margaret
 Corrick, leaving the
 hall with Terry
 Smyth*

Photos by Duncan
 Ironmonger.

**DISPLAY AND SALE OF BOTANICAL
 ART. DEMONSTRATION BY ARTISTS**

For one day only

Tuesday 27 November from 10.30am to 3.00pm
Baracchi Room, Observatory Building

With no major exhibition for lovers of botanical art to enjoy this year, we are offering this opportunity for our Members and their friends to view and purchase a number of smaller inexpensive works. Without undergoing a selection process, they will represent the wide diversity of skills of our students and more experienced and professional artists.

In an informal setting in the Baracchi Room at the far end of the Observatory Building (situated to the left of the Visitor Centre/Observatory Café when entering from Birdwood Avenue opposite the Shrine), a variety of subjects and styles of works will be presented for sale. They will be in mounts but **unframed**, ideal for Christmas gifts or for your own collection.

You will also be able to watch artists at work and see how these fine and detailed works come to life through the pencils and brushes of our talented artist Members. There will be no entry charge, but refreshments will be available throughout the day at a small cost.

Drama at Mueller Hall

The Friends' 5 July meeting on *Wildflowers of Victoria* was well underway; the audience was marvelling at Bruce Fuhrer's slides when suddenly the calm was shattered by the fire alarm.

With no sign of smoke or flames, we wondered if it was a false alarm. But when firemen arrived, they detected a fault in a circuit board in the Herbarium basement. Fortunately no damage was done, the audience was evacuated into the rain, and Bruce Fuhrer has promised to give the Friends another talk next year.

**FRIENDS' CHRISTMAS
COCKTAIL PARTY AT
GARDENS HOUSE
Thursday 29 November
6.00pm to 8.00pm**

The Friends are delighted to be returning to the magnificent Gardens House for their festive celebration this year. Do join us in this elegant setting — for many years the Director's Residence — for what promises to be a wonderful party.



Catch up with familiar Friends, meet some new ones and take part in the celebrations. There will be a Christmas raffle with great prizes to be won. As with all functions at Gardens House, Peter Rowland will provide the refreshments. We look forward to seeing you there!

Cost: \$40

RSVP by Thursday 22 November on booking form

**NEW MEMBERS WELCOME
Wednesday 10 October at 10.00am
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium**

Invitations will soon be sent to all recently-joined Friends to come to our next 'Getting-to-know-you' gathering. We look forward to meeting you and welcoming you to the Friends. We will serve morning tea, have 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 those who have joined the Friends since our last Welcome in March, and those who have already requested an invitation to a morning Welcome, will automatically receive an invitation. If you have not been able to attend a previous New Members Welcome and would like to come this time, please call our office (9650 6398) and we'll make sure you are invited.



THE IRIS BED on Western Lawn is seen at its best in October and November. This is a good time to take note of your favourites, as the Growing Friends' autumn plant sale always has a good selection of rhizomes from this bed in the Gardens. It is maintained by the Iris Society of Victoria whose annual show will be held on 4 November at the Mount Waverley Community Centre.

Growing Friends Spring Sale

Saturday 13 October 10.00am — 4.00pm

Sunday 14 October 10.00am — 3.00pm

Entry from E Gate in Birdwood Avenue

Greetings from the Growing Friends. Our main efforts over the last few months have been devoted to preparing plants for our Spring Sale on Saturday and Sunday, 13 and 14 October. A reminder that Members are welcome to visit our nursery (near the Works Yard) and buy on Friday mornings. By coming then you can have the pick of the plants before they go to the sale. Please note, however, that we will be closed for sales on Friday 5, 12 and 19 October as we prepare for, and recover from, the sale.

The enclosed flyer details some of the delights that will be available for sale and we would particularly recommend the many varieties of *Aquilegias* and *Ajugas* as well as *Cerinthe major* 'purpurescens'. Members will be delighted to learn that the supply of succulents will be almost back to full strength. *Sedums* are to be particularly recommended; they include the grey pink form, *Sedum rebrotinctum*, creamy yellow *Sedum arctic ice*, and *Sedum spathulifolium* with its silver-grey foliage.

Variegated agapanthus will be on sale, as well as a small purple agapanthus with flowers resembling a small bunch of grapes. *Iris germanica* 'Nepalensis', the lovely old-fashioned iris with purple scented flowers, will also be well-represented. Species camellias and the rare winter flowering shrub *Luculia sudetica* will be readily available.

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

It was with great regret that we said farewell to Nadia Polikarpowski. We wish her well in her new appointment at the Herbarium and are most grateful for the time and effort she has put into supporting the Growing Friends. She supervised the taking of cuttings from plants in the Gardens on many Fridays.

The Growing Friends celebrated their ten-year anniversary some years ago and have decided to put together a pictorial record of their history. One of our members, Ann Miller, is in charge of this project and has requested that any Friend, particularly a former member of the Growing Friends, who has photos of the Growing Friends in action, should contact her on 9818 6012 or the office on 9650 6398.

**Joan Hardy
Convener**

NOTES FROM THE GARDENS

Well – at last we have arrived at the light end of the wintry tunnel – after wandering around muttering ‘If winter comes, can spring be far behind?’ we have an answer in the affirmative.

A lot of people have been saying that spring is actually arriving earlier each year – and that plants have become ‘confused’. It’s a little hard to quantify ‘plant confusion’ as a factor, but we do know that the ‘heat island’ effect of the central business district of the city has modified the minimum temperatures locally, and that frosts, for example, are now a rarity. The mildness of the microclimate of RBG Melbourne allows us to grow an immense diversity of plants without glasshouse protection or other artificial means, and this has been a critical factor since the establishment of the Gardens in the development of the ‘house style’. Plants from the tropics, Mediterranean climates, rainforests, cool temperate forests and arid prairies to name a few, thrive in the Gardens, and contribute to the richness of their botanical fabric.

It would be unfair, though, to suggest that winter has been dull in the Gardens. The character of the landscape adjusts with shedding of autumn leaves, and the emergence of the framework of the deciduous trees. The bright scarlet and orange aloe flower spikes stand out against the (all too often) dull grey skies, and impressive flowering displays of the Camellia and Magnolia Collections provide colourful highlights. With the arrival of spring, however, the palette of flowering plants expands greatly. Almost day by day, another batch of plants comes into bloom, releasing new scents into the heady mixture already wafting through the Gardens.

Particular features to keep a watch on this spring include the newly-planted Long Island development. Over 20,000 indigenous plants have already gone into the ground (and water) so far, and the second (and final) stage, which includes path works and further interpretation, has received funding approval through the Parks Victoria grants program. Following sponsorship by Esso, some works will be undertaken around the Temple of the Winds and Grey Garden, to provide physical and visual access to additional planted areas below the Temple. An immense improvement has already been achieved by the Curator of this area – Alison Rice – and the Gardens North team; they have removed the rampant weed growth along much of the rocky outcrop above the Tan Track near H gate, and established an arresting array of ground covers and low shrubs. Without doubt, this improvement has brought comfort and joy to many joggers struggling for oxygen as they make their way along the Tan – providing as it does the perfect excuse to pause and study the plant composition and appreciate the demonstration of horticultural skills.

Selected plants within the Species and Heritage Rose Collection on the ‘Upper East Side’ of the Gardens start flowering from late winter. Notably, the small yellow flowers of *Rosa xanthina* ‘Canary Bird’ appear as early as July, on bare reddish stems. By mid-spring the collection displays a vast array of flowering roses, allowing the visitor to trace the development of ‘modern’ roses from their ancestor species. The plants in the Herb Garden and the other newly-created Kitchen Garden at the rear of the Observatory Café enter phases of rapid growth, once the soil temperatures increase. Both of these gardens are well worth visiting in the spring flush of growth. The Californian Garden and Perennial Borders gather momentum as spring heads towards summer, and the Water Conservation Garden is certain to attract much attention, with the apparent drought and consequent focus on minimising irrigation in the home garden.

A favorite activity during spring is meandering across the Oak Lawn, and noting the sequence by which the oaks come into flower, and into leaf. The bright yellow, almost fluorescent shoots of the Daimyo Oak hybrid (*Quercus dentata* x *Q.sp.*) near the Zelkova Bed has already started to move – I think I can almost hear the rest jostling in line!

Richard Barley



The Friends visited Long Island on 1 August.
Photo by Cathy Trinca

Botanical Illustrators

BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATORS SEASONAL PROGRAM

THE ROSE GARDEN

with Anita Barley

Tuesday 11 September

Meet at the Whirling Room
at 10.00am

Cost: \$5.50 (incl. GST)

Pay on the day, but RSVP

to Friends' office, Tel. 9650 6398



Just Joey
by Mary Gregory

At 10.15am, Anita will take us to the new Rose Garden bed to meet one of the gardeners, and look at the flowers and buds in detail. Afterwards we'll return to the Whirling Room to draw and paint. It will not be possible to have specimens from the Gardens this time, so please bring some roses from your own garden. BYO lunch.

DISPLAY AND SALE OF SMALL WORKS OF BOTANICAL ART

Baracchi Room, Tuesday 27 November (see page 5)

All artist Members are invited to participate in this pre-Christmas sale of Members' work, open for one day only, for Members and their friends to attend.

If you wish your work to be included in this sale please note the following conditions and instructions.

1. Open to all Members; work will not be subject to selection process.
2. Work will be left at owner's risk. The Friends will not take responsibility for any loss or damage.
3. Works up to and including A3 size only will be accepted.
4. Works must be mounted and covered—shrink wrap or cellophane.
5. On reverse side of each work must be a label with artist's name; address; phone number; sale price inclusive of commission of 30% (which includes GST).
6. Works to be delivered to the Baracchi Room in the Observatory Building after 9.30am but before 12 noon on the day of the sale. Note that the sale will begin at 10.30am.
7. Unsold works must be collected by 4.00pm, or if necessary between 10.00am and 1.00pm the following day from the Friends' office.
8. If you have time to help on the day, please let us know. Phone Louise Coronel on 9827 5910 for offers of help and more information after 12 September.

A meeting has been called to elect a committee to co-ordinate all aspects of botanical art activities within the Gardens and to elect a sub-committee to run the biennial botanical art exhibition.

**To be held on Tuesday 11 September
At 12.30pm in the Whirling Room, RBG**

The June seasonal meeting of Botanical Illustrators proved to be a particularly interesting one, with a lively discussion after the speaker canvassed issues about the future of the group. It was decided to co-ordinate the various activities of the Botanical Illustrators, which include Dianne Emery's classes, the seasonal meetings and the Whirlybirds. This will ensure that everyone will be informed about future events, exhibitions and other matters relating to botanical art and the Gardens.

The first step was to establish a steering committee which has put together a list of objectives for the Botanical Illustrators sub-group of the Friends of the RBG. The steering committee has also organised a meeting for all interested Friends to elect a more formally-constituted committee which will represent them and enable them to meet their objectives in practical ways.

A copy of the draft objectives of the Botanical Illustrators sub-group can be obtained from one of the contact people listed below. In summary, the objectives relate to furthering the practice and promotion of fine botanical art in a way that supports the RBG. The biennial exhibition and sale will continue to be a major part of the efforts of the group.

Anyone wishing to be nominated for a position on either the general illustrators committee or the exhibition sub-committee may do so by contacting the following members of the steering committee prior to the September meeting.

Dianne Emery Ph. 9523 5397

Edyta Hoxley Ph. 9761 9711
(Ehoxley@netlink.com.au)

Judith Sear Ph. 9882 5466

THE FRIENDS' COLLECTION— THE ILLUSTRATED GARDEN

An exciting new project for our artist Members.

Every two years for the past 10 years the Botanical Illustrators group has held a very successful exhibition of Members' work — *The Art of Botanical Illustration*. To build on this success, the artists wish to create a more permanent record of their work by illustrating significant plants held in the Gardens' various 'living' Collections.

The intention is to retain colour transparencies of the selected works as a valuable resource for the exclusive use of the Friends, in support of the Gardens, that could be used for publications and merchandise including cards, posters, and web pages. The project is expected to run over several years, with the intention of exhibiting the first available works in our next exhibition in October 2002.

RBG horticultural staff have drawn up lists of plants considered significant from each of the Gardens' Collections, and grid references of their positions in the Gardens will be made available, along with other relevant information.

As information and completed plant lists become available, they will be accessible during regular Tuesday painting days and during class times in the Whirling Room.

All illustrators interested in participating in this project will be able to obtain project guidelines and completed plant lists from the Friends' office by sending a business-size stamped self-addressed envelope marked 'The Illustrated Garden'. So that country and interstate Members will be able to participate, it will not be essential in every case to access actual Gardens specimens.



Birds nest fern
Asplenium australasicum
Illustration by Rita Parkinson

Dianne Emery's Classes

Term 4 will start in the week beginning Monday 15 October. Please phone her on 9523 5397 for information.

In response to demand, a further series of workshops has been arranged with Mali Moir —

An Introduction to the Microscope and Plant Dissection using pen and ink and watercolour.

There will be four weekly sessions each of four hours, suitable both for beginners and more advanced artists. Dianne will provide further information, 9523 5397.

Melbourne Artists for U.S.

Eight botanical artists (from more than 70 Australian submissions) have been accepted to exhibit at the Hunt Institute in Pittsburgh in October, and they are all from Melbourne: John Armstrong, Beverley Ednie, Mali Moir, Fiona McKinnon, Anne O'Connor, Jenny Phillips, Heather Rankin and Celia Rosser. The Hunt Institute is considered the world's premier gallery for botanical art.

The Institute holds a three-day conference and exhibition every three years. Beverley, Celia and John will attend, and Jenny is leading a tour group that will go on to look at botanical art collections elsewhere.

Beverley, an active member of the Friends' Botanical Illustrators, is holding a sale of her own work, as well as botanical art (some birds also) dating back to 1790, on 8 and 9 September. Call her on 9830 2012 for details.

'TOWN AND COUNTRY' BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION EXHIBITION 2001

The first biennial exhibition of Botanical Illustration at the Benalla Regional Art Gallery, Bridge St, Benalla, will be held between 10.00am and 5.00pm from 10 November to 9 December. Twenty five of the RBG's Botanical Illustrators have been invited to exhibit. The show coincides with the Benalla Rose Festival.

WHIRLYBIRDS

The Tuesday Painters group provides an opportunity for all Friends who are Botanical Artists to continue working in an informal group which meets in the Whirling Room Studio at Observatory Gate. Join them to share ideas and technical information in a supportive atmosphere. Ring Rita Parkinson on 9821 5883 for further information.

FREE SPRING BOOST FOR YOUR GARDEN

Neutrog Australia Pty Ltd, manufacturer of organic fertilisers and one of the Royal Botanic Gardens' generous sponsors, is pleased to offer all Members of the Friends a free 5kg bag of its Spring organic fertiliser, *Rapid Raiser*.

Rapid Raiser is an organic pelletised fertiliser based on blood and bone. It is high in nitrogen and, once applied to the soil, the nutrients are immediately available to the plant. Being organic, it has the advantage of fertilising the plants as well as improving soil structure and drainage and increasing earthworm and microbe activity. It is great for vegetables, citrus trees, flowerbeds and is particularly good for roses and other heavy feeding plants.

To add your name to the list of orders for free samples please call the Friends' office on 9650 6398 **before** 15 September. Collection will be from a designated area in the Gardens at a later date.

Dallachy Island

If you've visited the Ornamental Lake recently you will have noticed all the activity at Long Island. Soon, nearby Dallachy Island will also be rehabilitated, thanks to a grant by Lindsay and Paula Fox, the Fox family and Linfox Transport. In appreciation of this substantial gift, the Fox family will have the opportunity to visit the island.

The site analysis has already been done and work is under way to produce a blueprint for planting. The weedy clutter that currently lends the island an unkempt, ragged appearance is to give way to a landscape that will cleave more closely to Guilfoyle's original design. A small landing will be built.

Dallachy Island has an area of 410 square metres. One of six islands in the Ornamental Lake, it was named for Scottish-born John Dallachy who worked as a curator at the Melbourne Botanic Gardens from 1849, and served as superintendent from 1857 until 1861. Before coming to Australia he had worked as a gardener at Kew.

It was Dallachy who first attempted to create a lake from the original lagoon at the Gardens, which he did by forming a margin and planting it with shrubs and flowers. He also put together the Gardens' first catalogue of plants in 1852. Over many years, Dallachy collected plants for von Mueller in Queensland, Victoria and NSW; the Baron named many species after him.

Christine Niven
with acknowledgment to RBG Archives.

MOUNTING AND COUNTING

Senator Hill, Federal Minister for the Environment, announced on 14 June that a joint federal-state project entitled 'Australia's Virtual Herbarium' will proceed over the next five years at a cost of \$10 million. Victoria has committed funding for year one and will be seeking the remaining state funds in the 2002 budget. The project, and this year's funding (some of which is being provided directly by the RBG), will enable work to continue databasing the extensive collections of Australian flora in our National Herbarium. Once completed, a national 'virtual herbarium' will be created by linking the various state databases via the Internet. The value of this information is yet to be fully realised. However, this resource has the potential to contribute significantly to research and conservation efforts around Australia, particularly Landcare, Bushcare and Coastcare-type projects, by providing essential information on plants and plant communities, including the occurrence of endangered and threatened species and the identification of vulnerable habitats.

The project builds on the excellent progress made at the Herbarium over the past 18 months with the databasing project funded by the John T. Reid Charitable Trust. Many of the staff working on the *Scientific Treasures of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne* project will continue with the new project. In addition, we have received approximately \$240,000 from The William Buckland Foundation for a three-year project to continue mounting specimens.

We are now making significant inroads on the many thousands of specimens needing to be databased and mounted as a result of the funding support received in recent years – from the Friends of the RBG Melbourne for the Legume Collection, the Hermon Slade Foundation and the Reid Trust, and now from the Buckland Foundation and the national databasing initiative.

Philip Moors

SOLANDER EXHIBITION

The RBG has lent precious dried Herbarium specimens, such as *Banksia dentata* and *Banksia serrata* collected by Daniel Solander and Sir Joseph Banks in 1770, to Melbourne's Post Master Gallery for an exhibition entitled *Botanical Venus*. Engravings from the RBG's State Botanical Collection are also on show, together with priceless items from other libraries, museums and galleries.

This fascinating exhibition about Daniel Solander in New Holland includes objects of natural and material history as well as art and special stamp issues. **It closes on 9 September.** The gallery is at 321 Exhibition Street.

About Us

Our June survey has revealed a Friends' membership of very busy individuals who have a great love for the Gardens; even some in their 80s find it hard to make time for Friends' functions! Some long associations were mentioned...a grandfather who worked for many years in the Herbarium; a father who worked at the Gardens for 35 years; an interest since the late 1940s when the Member taught at the Girls' Grammar School; another who said the Gardens had been an important place for her family for three generations. Sentiments such as these remind us of the rewards that we gain from our involvement with the Friends; they provide a sense of continuity and can inspire us to support the Gardens towards an even better future.

Talks were the most popular activity, followed by walks and day trips, then social events and behind-the-scenes visits. Of Members under 60, 43 per cent listed as a reason for belonging 'to learn about botany and horticulture'; 28 per cent listed the Botanical Illustrators as their reason for belonging. Admiration was expressed for their classes and exhibitions, for the Growing Friends (with their helpful advice) and for publications. The newsletter was particularly appreciated by Members living interstate and overseas and for elderly Friends no longer mobile.

Fifty per cent of respondents (69 per cent of those under 60) said that practical workshops/courses (e.g. propagation, photography, botany) would appeal. There was also strong interest for talks on botany and environmental topics.

We appreciate the many suggestions for talks and trips, ideas to attract Members and possible sources of discounts. The Activities sub-committee will give them close consideration.

A number of respondents suggested the Friends should embark on programs with schools. It should be explained that as the Gardens' staff are very active with students, we feel the Friends' rather slender resources should not extend to this area.

As to the timing of our activities, it is clearly impossible to please everybody all the time. Not surprisingly, over 60s and out-of-town Members expressed a strong preference for daytime events on weekdays, while younger Members with jobs found evenings or early evenings most convenient, (although even between these two times strong likes and dislikes were expressed). We schedule some after-dinner meetings during daylight saving, but in this case we hear from Members who prefer not to drive at night, find parking difficult, and public transport inconvenient. There was some interest in morning and afternoon events at weekends. We plead for your understanding and will continue to schedule activities at various times in the hope that everybody can attend some of them.

The major value of the survey will come from a detailed assessment of the feasibility of the suggestions made to improve the appeal of the Friends, and for talks, trips and other activities. We are always short of people to help organise Friends' activities, so we are pleased to note promises of involvement after impending retirement. We also appreciated a pledge from a Member 'to march with others if the Gardens were under threat'.

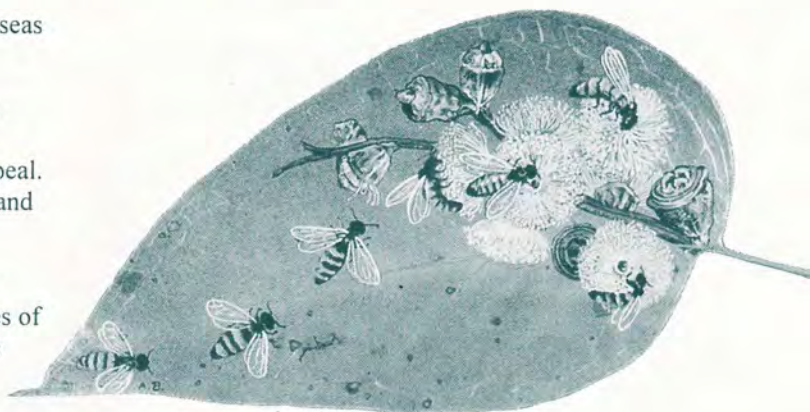
To end on a cheerful quote: 'I think you all do an excellent job; the best thing I ever did was to join the Friends.'

THE STORY OF GUM LEAF PAINTING

by Sophie Ducker

Published by the School of Botany at The University of Melbourne

Available in the Gardens Shop for \$22.95



'Bees and Blue Gum' by Anita Barley.

This slender publication, with colour illustrations, describes the little-known art of gum leaf painting, dating back to the 1860s.

During World War I it was popular to send gum leaves with messages or paintings to soldiers overseas. A South Yarra landscape by Frederick McCubbin, painted for a gum leaf war effort sale in 1915, is reproduced in the book.

The tradition has been revived by the School of Botany Foundation, which has held a fund-raising auction and, more recently, mounted an exhibition at Herring Island. Many well-known contemporary artists painted dried leaves and donated their work. The Foundation hopes to hold another gum leaf exhibition in 2003.



Tendrils

The RBG's Aboriginal Heritage Walk has received the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Award* in the Victorian Tourism annual awards. It recognises the Walk's communication of culture and Land to the public, and the role the AHW takes in fostering reconciliation and in educating indigenous tourism students beginning tourism operations in their own traditional lands. This follows an earlier National Award of Excellence from the Interpretation Australia Association.

The RBG Aboriginal Liaison Officer, Dean Stewart, who developed the Walk, is now very involved in Stage 2 of the Long Island Project.

Gwen and Rodger Elliot were showered with congratulations after each was awarded membership of the Order of Australia (AM) in the Queen's Birthday Honors. The citation read 'for service to the horticulture of native plants, particularly through the Society for Growing Australian Plants'.

In a gesture typical of their generous nature, Gwen and Rodger have arranged an informal afternoon tea at Karwarra Australian Plant Garden at Kalorama on Sunday 28 October between 2.30 and 5.00pm. They would be happy to see any Friends of the RBG who are able to share in the celebration.

Please let them know if you'd like to join them by phoning 9879 1427 or writing to Box 655, Heathmont 3135.

In a delightful setting for our *Botanically-inspired china* morning on 26 July, we enjoyed refreshments, chatting with many Friends and a chance to hear Rebecca Trinca tell us how she creates these beautiful decorative objects. There was a wonderful display of her work ranging from glossy dark green leaf plates to the perfect simplicity of cream classical urns and artichoke book-ends. Many sales were transacted; Rebecca had set a special Friends' price, with a percentage of each purchase coming to the Friends. We enjoyed the morning so much that we look forward to repeating the experience when Rebecca has added some new items to her already extensive range.

For those who missed out, Rebecca has her work on her website: www.users.bigpond.net.au/decorative/, and would be happy to take orders. Just mention the Friends and she will give you a special price.

Louise Pelman, Anna Denton and Rebecca Trinca at the sale which has raised about \$870 for the Friends.

Photo by Cathy Trinca

A great time was had when Andrew Laidlaw led an 'insiders walk' to the Long Island Revegetation Project on 1 August. On a wet and cold morning, 35 brave souls arrived well rugged-up. With such a large number, morning tea was relocated from Gate Lodge to Mueller Hall, where our caterers provided welcome warmth. Andrew then spoke to us eloquently and extensively about this huge project for the Gardens.

Between rain showers, he led us down to the site where we could see the tremendous amount of work that has already been done. Work continues on the site and we look forward to Stage Two.

The RBG Guides will celebrate their 20th birthday on 8 October. A contingent will attend the national conference of Botanic Gardens Guides — appealingly titled 'Botanic Gardens Sharing the Pleasures' — in Canberra from 29 October to 2 November.

Stonnington Council will hold a *Spring into Gardening* day at Victoria Gardens, High St, Prahran, on Sunday 7 October between 11.00am and 4.00pm. It draws on the local community who are collectively well-known for their prize gardens and the preservation of the City's many picturesque parks and reserves. The first official EcoRecycle Victoria Waste Wise Event for Stonnington, it will include the many horticultural, designer and outdoor specialists based in the City.

The Friends will have a booth at this event, particularly to publicise our Growing Friends Sale.



Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne The Book

The Gardens hold a special place in the life of Melbourne and have done so since they became one of the first public gardens established in 1846. This lavishly illustrated life and times of the Gardens paints a picture of the land before white settlement, then tells the stories of the Gardens' plants, buildings and the characters whose genius and foibles have shaped the way the Gardens look today.

Deborah Morris's story focuses on the people — the gardeners, the Directors, the people who have lived within the Gardens' grounds, and the scientists engaged in a range of fascinating tasks — for example, propagating endangered species and identifying rare plants.

Greg Elms has produced a stunning photo essay, taken over a 12-month period, of people interacting with the Gardens over the four seasons — Sunday afternoons, performances, special events and all the secret nooks and crannies each of us remembers. See p.20.

From the Country

Tommy Garnett contributed a weekly column to *The Age* under this title from 1980 to 1995. Often provocative, it roamed beyond gardening to natural history, native flora and wildlife, drawing on his 'habitat' — the English countryside — as he absorbed the environment of his adopted Australia. Tommy Garnett was well known as Headmaster of Geelong Grammar School and later as the creator of the fascinating Garden of St Erth at Blackwood.

Bloomings Books has published a collection of 75 of these essays, with 'scraper-board' illustrations by John Turner, who held the Chair of Botany at The University of Melbourne for 35 years. There are many references to the RBG and regional botanic gardens. Commentaries by George Seddon — highly respected authority on landscape architecture and the environment — illuminate Garnett's text.

The Friends are assisting with the book launch by Anne Latreille on 3 September.

BOTANICAL GARDENS OF AUSTRALIA *Murray Fagg, Jan Wilson and Lesley Lockwood*

This book will present about 80 botanical gardens, the majority being in Victoria and NSW. It will include historical background for each and some old illustrations, as well as current descriptions and visiting details.

It will include about 90 colour photos by Murray Fagg, who is Director of Visitor Services at the Australian National Botanic Gardens in Canberra. It is due in October from New Holland Publishing.

FLORA OF MELBOURNE by Australian Plants Society Maroondah (2001). Hyland House, paperback, 393 pages, rrp \$55

Reviewing what is the bible on local native plants for *Botanic News* is a little like reviewing the New Testament for *The Jewish News*. How many of us have, or want, bush gardens? When I began landscaping in the early 1960s I planted only exotics but, within a year, was converted to 'native gardens' which then meant 'Australian plants'. I never planted a blue gum in front of a terrace house but some gardeners did. I was guilty of planting out-of-area Australian species which have gone feral and caused permanent problems to the local bush, e.g. coastal acacia, sweet pittosporum and *Sollya heterophylla*. Now, as anything dies in my garden, I replant only with species local to my area—indigenous.

I do not blush at my own development but grow red with frustration that, as a community, we do not build upon the past. We still do not *see*, let alone grow, local plants — look at the new houses with exotic gardens, or the clearing of native bush, then think of what we know about butterflies and salinity, for a start.

But purism is not only silly, it is fatal. Many of us can, and do, wave our lovely camellias farewell as we go bush to appreciate the local scene. But what are these plants growing beneath our feet, twining into the understorey, or shading and overwhelming us? *The Flora of Melbourne, A Guide to the Indigenous Plants of the Greater Melbourne Area* tells all.

2001 brings us the long-awaited third edition of *FOM*, with an addendum on name changes and alterations, and another on 'new species' which seems to embrace fine tuning as much as novelty.

Botanically, I cannot live without *FOM*. When I go bush locally it identifies that which I do not know. It throws a net over Melbourne from Cranbourne to Silvan, Coldstream, Hurstbridge, Craigieburn, Sunbury and Toolern Vale and down to Werribee. Many, perhaps most, of the species netted live happily elsewhere in Victoria. Each plant is listed with its habitat, foliage, flowers, requirements, propagation and distribution. There are pieces on the soils of Melbourne and Regeneration of a House Block.

The author of *FOM* is the Australian Plants Society of Maroondah, but this nom-de-plume hides the illustrators, editors, the many volunteer contributors and beavers who have made this most important work possible. Let us salute them all.

Bary Dowling

ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS GEELONG CONFERENCE

The conference of the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens, held in mid-June, was superbly organised by the Geelong Friends. More than 150 attended, including interstate representatives from Adelaide, Albury, Canberra, Eurobodalla, Orange and Wagga as well as many from Victorian gardens.

Opening the conference, Minister Sherryl Garbutt said that volunteers reaped rich personal rewards while helping to achieve a robust community. Friends groups should never be taken for granted, she added, and quoted a government 'motto' for 2001: encourage, celebrate and strengthen.

Partnerships

The keynote address was given by Brian O'Neill, Director of the Golden Gate National Parks Authority in San Francisco. With inspiring, almost evangelical enthusiasm, he shared his wisdom about how not-for-profit groups can establish partnerships in a community. 'You need to have community investment and not just a government cheque' he said. 'There exists a "circle of engagement" whereby a corporate entity, for example, can be introduced to the work you are doing. Through exposure comes awareness and understanding. This translates into caring about a resource or project which then develops into an attitude of protection and commitment. Advocacy for this resource soon will follow.'

He emphasised the need to gain relevance; when people felt an ownership they would contribute and participate, strengthening the volunteer base. 'You need to be innovative and the foundations need to be built on constructive concepts, on creative financing and on solid building practices. It is incumbent upon us to become pro-active and to attract individuals from a diverse community', he exhorted the Friends. He urged us to consider how the broader public perceived the botanic gardens, how we should promote them and "hook" supporters in to extend our support base. 'In relation to botanic gardens, who knows who we are, what we do, who we serve and why it is important?' he asked. Much food for thought there!

Three short presentations from Louise Player (Geelong), Melanie Kinsey (Gisborne) and Neal Creagh (Wilson Park) echoed these messages in discussing Friends' groups and successful partnerships.

Other speakers were Gwen Elliot (an international perspective of botanic gardens); John Arnott (the diverse collection at the Geelong Botanic Gardens); Andrew Laidlaw (the dynamics of managing our heritage and landscape) and Jeff Floyd (a botanic gardens trail).



Jayne Salmon, President of the Geelong Friends and of the Association of Friends, was among those who led guided walks at the conference.

She is photographed beside the venerable Ginkgo biloba and two of Geelong's famous bollards near the Gardens' entrance: Young woman with stolen Sturt's Desert Pea, and Daniel Bunce, the first curator.

Photos by Duncan Ironmonger



GEELONG CONFERENCE *continued***A challenge**

Rob Small, General Manager of Environment & Recreation Services at the City of Greater Geelong, challenged us to achieve outstanding and noble outcomes for our communities and our gardens. As a relative newcomer to Australia, he had sensed a lack of direction in many Victorian botanic gardens, with the former glory of a once-rich cultural asset being eroded by ignorance and a lack of focus. He observed that some had been relegated to the town's amenity park, while in the worst instances they had become caravan parks or playlots. He had adopted as a mission the task of inspiring people to define a direction, including reviving a scientific function for botanic gardens. 'The primary reason that this role has diminished is a lack of appreciation of this as a function of gardens, diminishing community funding, and until recently a failure to grasp the potential of these gardens as a collective entity for education, recreation and tourism' he explained.

After tracing the history of gardens as plant zoos or plant libraries, then as expressions of a community's wealth and cultural maturity, Rob saw the next shift from botany to amenity horticulture as a logical embrace of local interest, engaging support. He believed that all smaller gardens could and should participate in the latest trend — the promotion of conservation biology and protection of biodiversity. He also discussed recent surveys related to the role of gardens in meeting leisure needs. He suggested that gardens must change to meet people's need to be engaged, stimulated, informed, educated and provided with a sense of ownership.

Looking ahead

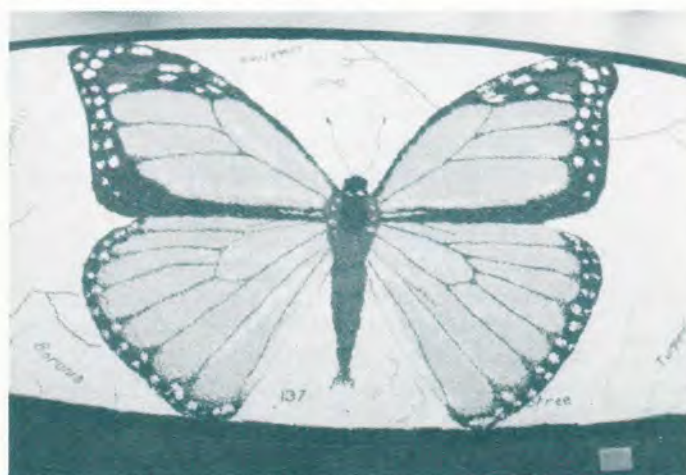
Looking further ahead, he said that conservation efforts should be maximised by being integrated, at least within the State. 'I think for smaller gardens, the imperative will be to display and interpret gardening in terms of the horticultural laboratory and outdoor classroom that will engage gardeners and inspire students' Rob suggested. As for the larger gardens, he forecast that botanical research was more likely to be driven by collaborative partnering with tertiary institutions. He also saw the involvement of private enterprise. 'The biogarden models will also probably come from courageous alliances and partnerships that, having overcome the more elitist barriers of professionalism and conservatism will be more exciting than any theme park you can imagine.' He ended dramatically: 'unless you gain this focus some of these great gardens will disappear as surely as the dinosaurs'.

The next Association Conference will take place in spring 2002. It is being organised by the friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens, with some neighbourly help from the Friends of Buninyong, Castlemaine and Daylesford Gardens.

Leguminous Art

Having donated almost \$50,000 towards the mounting and databasing of the Herbarium's *Leguminosae* collection, the Friends had a passing interest in the recent International Legume Conference in Canberra. This interest was heightened with news of an associated exhibition *The Secret Life of Plants*. The link between legumes and art sounded intriguing.

The organiser, Clare Martin, explained: 'I thought it would be good to present "a different take" on the world of plants. Some of the works involve a dialogue about legumes and others refer to plants in general. Most are site specific and the show includes small sculptural objects, installations, images, a book, and herbarium specimens. In keeping with the title, many of the works are subtle installations secreted around the building. Most bring some kind of poetic element to meet the scientific world.' It would appear that the show carried political messages about the environment while displaying great imagination, humour, sadness and artistic talent.



Here's a sample, above, a work by Ex de Medici and Christine James — an astonishing Monarch butterfly formed from dried lentils, laid out on the boardroom table of the Academy of Science; it carried a reference to genetically modified plants. It was set on a dahl map of Jervis Bay which named indigenous flora.

Inspired by recollections of solid models from university lectures on plant morphology, Clare Martin gave them sensual life by creating giant Wettex pea pods and sprouting seeds.

Leeanne Crisp filled 10 herbarium boxes with colourful, almost luminous illustrations of flowering legumes, a world away from dried herbarium specimens.

Thanks to Clare and Leanne, we have images and catalogue information in the Friends' office if you'd like to know more.

MARKING FEDERATION

Australia's new Governor General, Dr Peter Hollingworth, is to plant an oak, *Quercus dentata*, on Tennyson Lawn on Wednesday 5 September. The tree planting, to commemorate the Centenary of Federation, is being jointly hosted by the Gardens and the Royal Horticultural Society of Victoria.

Meanwhile, a specimen of Victoria's Federation emblem, *Scarlet Blaze*, is to be planted in the Gardens in early spring, and there are plans for a Ministerial launch. This red wattle normally flowers in September and October, but our mild winter has coaxed some specimens into bloom in August in the RBG nursery. Plants will soon be available in many commercial nurseries.

Notes from Gate Lodge

As most of our Members' renewals fall due in June, we have just completed our busiest time of the year in the Friends' office. I would like to thank our regular volunteers Rosemary McMeekin and Joan Murphy who give their time so generously to process membership renewals, as well as new memberships and activity bookings. Our thanks also go to Elizabeth Fincher who completes the process by filing away our Members' details. This is a painstaking but nonetheless essential reference for our office staff. Our volunteer receptionists continue to contribute to the smooth running of the office and are always willing to complete any tasks, however menial!

Joan Murphy and Cate McKern provide the invaluable service of sorting our envelopes into postcode order prior to the mailing of the *Botanic News* to ensure that we get the maximum discount from Australia Post. To complete the task our wonderful group of packers get together every quarter to make sure all our Members receive their *Botanic News* on time.

Everyone in the Friends' office was saddened to hear of the death of Mawrene Melbourne early in August. Mawrene was an active and enthusiastic member of the catering group, and also assisted us as an archivist. She will be sadly missed and our kind thoughts go to her husband Jack and family.

Virginia Henderson

And from the Editor, an opportunity to acknowledge the help of Pat Williams, a Growing Friend, who makes a great contribution each quarter by proof-reading *Botanic News*.

Packing Day for Winter *Botanic News*



From left: Dorothy Hart, Mary Hicks, Doreen Schofield and Mary Meadley.



Miles Schofield and Joan Baumgartner.



Elizabeth Fincher



From left: Virginia Henderson, Rosemary McMeekin and Yvonne Doig.

Photos by Virginia Henderson and Margaret Howes

**SPRING 2001 BOTANIC NEWS
BOOKING FORM**

HISTORY OF AUST. FLORAL EMBLEMS
Friday 14 September at 10.00 for 10.30am
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

No..... of Friends @ \$11
No..... of Others @ \$16

TOTAL: \$ _____

RSVP by 11/9/01

U.S. LESSONS FOR OUR CHILDREN'S GARDEN
Tuesday 18 September at 5.30 for 6.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

No..... of Friends @ \$11
No..... of Others @ \$16

TOTAL: \$ _____

RSVP by 14/9/01

ANGAIR, AIREYS INLET and GEE LONG
Saturday 22 September. Bus leaves at 9.00am

No..... @ \$43

TOTAL: \$ _____

RSVP by 10/9/01

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

Please return the relevant section of this form with remittance and stamped self-addressed envelope to: Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens, Gate Lodge, 100 Birdwood Avenue, Melbourne 3004. Telephone: (03) 9650 6398

Cheques/postal orders payable to: Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

**SPRING 2001 BOTANIC NEWS
BOOKING FORM**

DANDENONGS NURSERIES and GARDENS
Wednesday 3 October. Bus leaves at 8.45am

No..... @ \$55

TOTAL: \$ _____

RSVP by 25/9/01

WHAT DO OUR BOTANISTS DO?

Thursday 11 October at 5.30 for 6.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

No..... of Friends @ \$11
No..... of Others @ \$16

TOTAL: \$ _____

RSVP by 8/10/01

SPRING WALK: EDUCATION WALK IN RBG
Tuesday 23 October. Meet at Gate Lodge at 10.00am

No..... of Friends @ \$7
No..... of Others @ \$9

TOTAL: \$ _____

RSVP by 17/10/01

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

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NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

**SPRING 2001 BOTANIC NEWS
BOOKING FORM**

PARIS GARDENS BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT
Wednesday 31 October at 5.30 for 6.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

No..... of Friends @ \$11
No..... of Others @ \$16

TOTAL: \$ _____

RSVP by 26/10/01

CRANBOURNE WILDFLOWERS PICNIC
Friday 2 November. Meet at 29 Regent St, Mt Waverley
No..... of Friends @ \$18

No..... of Others @ \$21

TOTAL: \$ _____

RSVP by 29/10/01

GARDENS IN AUSTRALIA

Wednesday 14 November at 12 noon
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

No..... of Friends @ \$15
No..... of Others @ \$20

TOTAL: \$ _____

RSVP by 8/11/01

CHRISTMAS COCKTAIL PARTY
Tuesday 29 November at 6.00pm. Gardens House, RBG
No..... @ \$40

TOTAL: \$ _____

RSVP by 22/11/01

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

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Cheques/postal orders payable to: Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

SPECIAL EVENTS IN THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE

SEPTEMBER 2001

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE WALK

Thursdays at 11.00am
Sundays 2, 16 and 30 at 10.30am
Groups by arrangement.

GARDENS HIGHLIGHTS GUIDED WALK

Sunday to Friday, 11.00am and 2.00pm

OBSERVATORY TOUR

STARS, COWS AND SPIDER WEBS
Wednesdays at 2.00pm

THE NIGHT SKY EXPERIENCE GUIDED TOUR

Tuesdays at 7.30pm

FLORA EXPLORER. WALKS WITH RBG STAFF

Fridays at 10.30am:
7/9: Propagation techniques
14/9: Camellia Collection
21/9: Southern Chinese Collection
28/9: Viburnums

SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAM

INSPIRED BY PLANTS. Suitable for 5-10-year olds.
25, 26, 27 at 10.00am and 1.00pm. Bookings 9252 2358

PLANT CRAFT COTTAGE PAPERMAKING FOR KIDS

Wednesday 26 to Friday 28. 10.30am and 1.00pm
Cost \$6 per child. Primary school age.
Bookings: Marion 9481 2885

BOTANICAL PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION

By Louisa Flander. Mueller Hall, National Herbarium.
6-9 September from 9.00am to 5.00pm

CHAMBER MUSIC PERFORMANCE

By Victorian College of the Arts. Mueller Hall
Wednesday 19 from 1.00pm to 2.00pm

IKEBANA EXHIBITION

Mueller Hall and Eastern Transit Room
26-30 September from 9.00am to 5.00pm

OCTOBER 2001

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE WALK

Thursdays and Fridays at 11.00am
Sundays 14 and 28 at 10.30am.
Groups by arrangement.

GARDENS HIGHLIGHTS GUIDED WALK

Sunday to Friday, 11.00am and 2.00pm

OBSERVATORY TOUR

STARS, COWS AND SPIDER WEBS
Wednesdays at 2.00pm

THE NIGHT SKY EXPERIENCE GUIDED TOUR

Tuesdays at 7.30pm

FLORA EXPLORER. WALKS WITH RBG STAFF

Fridays at 10.30am

SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAM

INSPIRED BY PLANTS. Suitable for 5-10-year olds.
2, 3 and 4 at 10.00am and 1.00pm
Bookings 9252 2358

BRUNCH WITH THE BIRDS

7, 14, 21, 28 at 9.00am

PLANT CRAFT COTTAGE

ADULT WORKSHOP: MAKING PAPER & DECORATIVE TREASURES
Saturday 13, 10.00am
Cost: \$40 (all materials provided)
Bookings: Marion 9481 2885

NOVEMBER 2001

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE WALK

Thursdays and Fridays at 11.00am
Sundays 11 and 25 at 10.30am
Groups by arrangement.

GARDENS HIGHLIGHTS GUIDED WALK

Sunday to Thursday, 11.00am and 2.00pm
Fridays at 2.00pm

OBSERVATORY TOUR

STARS, COWS AND SPIDER WEBS
Wednesdays at 2.00pm

THE NIGHT SKY EXPERIENCE GUIDED TOUR

Tuesdays at 7.30pm

BRUNCH WITH THE BIRDS

4 and 18 at 9.00am

FLORA EXPLORER. WALKS WITH RBG STAFF

Fridays at 10.30am

SPECIAL EVENTS AT RBG CRANBOURNE

Bookings essential, tel. 5990 2200
Wildflower Walk: 6, 13, 20, 27 Sept.; 4, 11 Oct at 1.00pm
Threatened Species Day: 7 Sept. at 10.00am (5-12 years)
School Hols Prog: Frog Frolic: 25-28 Sept. at 10.00am (6-10 years); **Bush Bonanza:** 2-4 Oct. at 10.00am (8-12 years)
Night Prowl: Wed. 26 Sept. and 3 Oct. at 7.00pm (Adults and children over 6yrs)
World Habitat Day: Create your own habitat garden. 6 Oct at 10am

Gardens Highlights Guided Walks do not require prior bookings except for large groups. Meet at the Visitor Centre, Observatory Gate.

PLEASE NOTE that most events incur a charge and require prior booking. It is important that you contact the appropriate phone number. Unless otherwise noted, the number to ring for all listings is 9252 2300. Please appreciate that, after Botanic News goes to press, it is likely that additional events may be arranged for late in the quarter.

BENDIGO PARKS

Friends of Bendigo Botanic Gardens have issued an invitation for us to discover Bendigo's parks on 13 and 14 October. During recent years, Bendigo Council has undertaken restoration works within Rosalind Park and the White Hills Botanic Gardens and have constructed a connecting linear park.

There are plans for two walks on the Saturday, a dinner and slide presentation of Bendigo's flora, and a Sunday morning drive into the Box Ironbark forest. Please contact Jane Cleary on 5448 4396 by 2 October for details.

MEMBERSHIP

We have been particularly pleased to welcome 227 new Members in the year to 30 June. In the same period 40 whose subscriptions were in arrears brought their subscriptions up to date. Unfortunately, 14 Members died, 24 resigned and 251 failed to renew their subscriptions during the year. This meant that the number of financial Members at 30 June 2001 was 1474, that is, 22 fewer than the number at 30 June 2000 (1496).

Maintaining your membership is essential for the Friends to keep on supporting the Gardens, so we earnestly urge those who are receiving subscription renewal notices with this issue of *Botanic News* to renew without delay.

WILDFLOWERS OF VICTORIA

As our evening in July with Margaret Corrick and Bruce Fuhrer was cut short by the fire alarm, we were unable to sell signed copies of their book as planned.

The special offer is now extended to all Friends. You may obtain copies for \$45 (RRP \$59.95) from which the authors will donate \$5 to the Friends. See a copy in Gate Lodge or phone the office on 9650 6398 to arrange a purchase.

FRIENDS' BENEFITS

The Gardens Shops offer 10 per cent discount on Members' purchases over \$20. The following businesses kindly offer discounts to Friends on PRIOR presentation of their signed current membership cards, which are not transferable.

Gills Nurseries (all branches)

1 Centre Rd, East Brighton
390 Balcombe Rd, Beaumaris
cnr Bay / Graham Sts, Port Melbourne
589 Glenferrie Rd, Hawthorn
5% off plants only

Idaho Nurseries

410 Waverley Rd, East Malvern
10% off plants only

Bulleen Art and Garden

6 Manningham Rd West, Bulleen
10% off plants, 5% off other goods

Town and Country Gardens

1280 Malvern Rd, Malvern
24 Whitehorse Rd, Balwyn
10% off plants only.

The Arts Bookshop

1067 High St, Armadale

Holmesglen Nursery

585 Waverley Rd, Glen Waverley
20% off everything

The Gardeners Corner Store

190-192 New St, Brighton
10% off all plants

Collectors Corner

Springvale Rd, Keysborough
10% off all plants

Kew Nursery

Cnr High / Gladstone Sts, Kew
10% off all plants

Burwood Garden Patch

1418 Toorak Rd, Burwood
10% discount

Garden of Eden Nursery

33 Ferrars St, Albert Park
10% off everything

The Cottage Garden Nursery

Cnr Macedon Ave & Doncaster Rd, North Balwyn. 10% disc., 8 punnets for \$22 (GST incl.)

Piccolo Gardens (park in Lang St), 356-360 Punt Rd, Sth Yarra
10% off all items

Banksia Hill B & B

Ph/fax 5384 0264
RMB 5349, Horsham, 3401
10% disc. on accommodation

*Feldspar at Trentham B&B

11 Falls Rd, Trentham, 3458
10% disc. on accommodation

*Berna Park Nursery

cnr Park Rd & Paul St
Cheltenham
5% discount on plants

*Denotes newcomer to list



The GARDENS Shop

15% DISCOUNT EXCLUSIVE OFFER FOR FRIENDS FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER

at the Gardens Shops
Observatory Gate and Lakeside

Do some early Christmas shopping, buy that book you have always wanted or buy a gift for a friend or yourself. Look out for:

- * The Royal Botanic Gardens of Australia 2002 calendar with images from Melbourne, Sydney and Hobart.
- * RBG coffee table book to be released in September.
- * The GARDENS range of 16 products: conserves, marmalades, sauces, chutneys and dressings. Available early September.

We are always glad to see you in the Shops.

Consignment products, book sale stock and customer orders are excluded from this special discount.

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

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

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FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

The Royal Botanic Gardens announced in a media release on 15 June 2001 that the limited culling of flying-foxes had ceased. Management activities over the last few months have focused on the investigation of alternative roosting sites for the flying-fox colony, with two RBG staff taking part in a Task Force co-ordinated by the Dept of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE). Information and analyses extracted from ARCUE's geographical information systems and databases have been used extensively by the Task Force. A report identifying suitable alternative roosting sites is currently in preparation. If a suitable site is identified and approved, it is intended that, by making Fern Gully less attractive through the use of repellents and disturbance, the flying-fox colony will over time desert the Gardens and take up residence at the new site.

As a result of the colder winter weather and the departure of transient flying-foxes, the colony has continued to decline from the unprecedented numbers recorded in late summer, with the most recent fly-out count in July totalling 5,600 bats. The colony is confined at present to the Fern Gully.

On a brighter note, the release of an exciting new range of products for the Observatory and Lakeside Gardens Shops earlier this year, including gift cards, panoramic postcards, calico bags and casual apparel, has proved very successful. The products were released under the new brand and logo of The Gardens Shop. To deliver greater revenue to the RBG, plans are under way to expand the existing range of

high-quality merchandise into other areas; some products may be distributed throughout Australia and worldwide.

A new range of produce, including sauces, conserves, dressings and chutneys, was also launched recently and distributed Australia-wide. It attracted considerable interest from local and international representatives at the Melbourne Good Food Show in June.

Also available in both of the Gardens Shops is a new Hallmark 2002 calendar featuring the picturesque landscapes of the three Royal Botanic Gardens of Australia — Melbourne, Sydney and Hobart. A calendar representing the six Royal Botanic Gardens of the World is being planned for 2003.

The Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne are also the focus of a new book due to be released in the next few weeks. This Allen & Unwin 'coffee-table' book provides a descriptive and pictorial record of the history of the RBG site from pre-European settlement to the present.

The RBG received excellent news in June with Minister Sherryl Garbutt approving a \$1.2 million DNRE grant, enabling the RBG to commence Stage 1 of the Australian Garden Project at Cranbourne. The grant will provide funding over the next 12 months for design consolidation, undertaking horticultural and propagation trials and finalisation of the contract documentation phase. This will place the project in readiness for construction, which will commence when future capital works funding is secured, planned for 2002.

Philip Moors