Botanic News

FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE INC.

A12827T

SPRING 2002

GO-AHEAD FOR AUSTRALIAN GARDEN AT RBG CRANBOURNE

The Australian Garden at the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne is to become a reality thanks to $5.3 million in funding from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, and $2.1 million each from the Colonial Foundation and the Community Support Fund.

Its creation has started, following the announcement of financial support. The design masterplan by Taylor Cullity Lethlean, with plant designer Paul Thompson, was finalised in 1996 and won awards from the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects Australia in 1998. The Australian Garden will celebrate Australia's remarkable flora by displaying it in an artistic and often dramatic style.

Plants and natural landforms

The first eleven hectares of the Australian Garden will be completed by 2005. It will transform a former sand quarry into a Sand Garden, Rockpool Waterway, Eucalypt Walk and a series of Exhibition Gardens. The Sand Garden will present visitors with scenes that are typical of the Red Centre landscape and its flora. The Rockpool Waterway will explore the role of water in shaping the Australian continent. The Exhibition Gardens will provide a variety of garden displays showcasing Australian plants in new ways, such as special environmental themes, or the suitability of plants for backyard gardens. These exhibits will change over time, thus presenting fresh ideas and information to visitors.

Visitor Centre

An important element in the project is the $1.5 million Visitor Centre. Melbourne architect Kerstin Thompson has been announced as the winner of the design competition for the Centre. The building has been designed to blend into the existing landscape and to provide a gateway into the Australian Garden. It has an elevated position amongst the existing mature eucalypt trees, and will provide a panoramic view of the Sand Garden.

The building will include an indoor and outdoor café area, a gift shop, a separate reception area for school groups and an information desk that will be attended by Gardens staff.

Planting

The Australian Garden will require the planting of more than 1,500 species, including almost 2,000 advanced trees. Collecting trips have been undertaken, or are planned, to Western Australia, South Australia, southern New South Wales and the Blue Mountains, as well as East Gippsland, the Grampians and the Murray-Sunset country in north east Victoria. Much of the plant propagation will be carried out at RBG Cranbourne, but commercial nurseries will assist in producing the large volumes required. A noted authority on Western Australian plants, Marion Blackwell, has visited the site with Paul Thompson to review the plant selection. In addition, the plant list has been reviewed by a panel of experts to assess the weed potential and future management of each species.

Continued overleaf

GROWING FRIENDS SPRING SALE
19 and 20 October

Hippeastrum
Dianne Emery

THE ART OF BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION EXHIBITION

24 October to 10 November Mueller Hall

WATER WORKS, WATER WISE

Peter Symes, photographed by Helen Fahey

At the launch of the Friends' ***Water Works, Water Wise*** project, Peter Symes explained that the effectiveness of the RBG Automatic Irrigation System was the sum of all its parts: technology, infrastructure, the people who work with it, and those who support its development. That statement clearly spells out the shared interest between the horticultural staff and the Friends, who have pledged to raise $47,000 to extend the system to Theatre Lawn.

Peter (RBG Senior Curator, Horticulture) who manages the system and Dr Philip Moors were speakers at the excellent function which marked our adoption of this project on 20 June. They expanded on the issues canvassed in the Winter *Botanic News*:

* the long history of an inadequate water supply for the Gardens

* the transformation achieved by the installation in 1994 of the centrally-controlled automatic system

* the priorities for extending the system to the remaining 2ha not yet covered, and the reasons why Theatre Lawn is the most critical.

Looking to the future, Peter referred to the increasing focus on conservation within the Gardens, and on the implementation of best irrigation practice.

Continuing research (e.g. how plants extract water from the soil), refining (e.g. use of soil moisture sensors) and auditing of the system ensured its efficiency was maximised. Another element was better education of staff in water management. Landscape planning was taking more account of sustainable water use, and the use of warm-season grasses such as Kikuyu had a potential for water saving of up to 25,000 kl per annum.

Peter reported that the Gardens are investigating alternative sources of water and have been involved in a pilot trial to assess the use of sewage water with the City of Melbourne and Melbourne Water (in the Domain). Some supply issues such as storage and water pressure have yet to be resolved. The RBG has also conducted a preliminary trial to assess the quality of the recycled sewage water on the growth of seedlings. 'It will be a big advantage if we can cut down use of drinking-quality water from mains supply, both because of water conservation and possible future increases in costs for potable water', Peter said.

THE AUSTRALIAN GARDEN continued from page 1

Marketing, Education and Tourism

The Australian Garden will enhance opportunities in Victoria's fastest-growing urban area, which is under-supplied with quality recreation space (more than one million people live within 20 minutes' drive). It will also provide education opportunities for the hundreds of thousands of school students within 50 km of the RBG Cranbourne.

Educational programs and interpretative material for the Australian Garden will explore the need to conserve natural habitats and explain the consequences of declining biodiversity. Care will be taken to provide for people with disabilities. It is anticipated that the Australian Garden will appeal both to the local residents of Melbourne and to international visitors.

Already, approximately 70,000 people visit these Gardens each year. This number is expected to rise to 200,000, with visitation to the Australian Garden expected to be 40,000 in the first year, increasing to 132,000 within 10 years of its opening. The Gardens are ideally placed to capture the passing tourist traffic to Phillip Island.

Next Steps

The RBG Cranbourne has been preparing for this project while awaiting the major funding. Extra horticultural staff have been appointed, and the nursery has been equipped with a new large glass house, a soil sterilisation building, a large shade house and soil bins. The landscape consultants Taylor Cullity Lethlean are preparing contract documents — a complex task involving engineering, irrigation, hydrogeology, interpretation and planting design. It's 'all systems go'!

FROM THE PRESIDENT

In this edition of *Botanic News* we farewell Heather Ironmonger as our editor. Heather joined the Friends just over 10 years ago following her retirement from the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands. She immediately took over the editorship of *Botanic News* and has produced all but one quarterly edition since — a remarkable achievement. Heather was also involved in other facets of the Friends as a Council member, (serving as Vice-President), and as a member of the Activities sub-committee.

Working within the considerable constraints of a very low budget and minimal computer publishing facilities, Heather has taken *Botanic News* from a single folded sheet to a very professional 20-page newsletter. Such a publication does not appear right on time each quarter without an enormous amount of hard work, commitment and time.

Concurrently, Heather produced four editions of *Botanic Magazine,* demanding a great deal of thought, time, effort, persistence and skill. This publication had wide appeal, covering as it did a vast range of topics, both historical and contemporary.

Heather's keen eye and ear for news, her high standards of editorship and presentation, her willingness over the years to contribute many thousands of hours of her time, and her extremely thoughtful and skilful approach and total dedication to all that she does have been invaluable to the Friends and the Gardens. She has given us all the fruits of a rare gift and we acknowledge and thank her for it. We wish her well, and look forward to seeing her frequently at our functions.

Heather has played a leading role in developing a new, upgraded design for *Botanic News,* with plans yet to be finalised.

Meg Miller will become our new editor. Meg worked on the editorial committee of *Lab Talk*, the magazine of the Science Teachers Association of Victoria, the last four of those years as editor. For this edition of *Botanic News* Meg has worked alongside Heather, learning about the Friends and the RBG, and the people involved in both organisations. Meg hopes to work with an editorial committee in the future, and would be grateful to hear from anyone interested in joining her.

Gratifyingly, the Friends' visit to the State Library of Victoria to view Celia Rosser's 'Banksias' exhibition and the talk on *Gardens in China* were both booked out very early, as was the Insiders' Quarterly Walk with Andrew Laidlaw. All three activities gave Members great pleasure and interest.

During the winter quarter the Friends' *Water Works, Water Wise* project was launched. The Friends have pledged $47,000 to extend this project to Theatre Lawn, and we'd be very grateful for offers to help raise this amount. It has been heartening to again receive donations accompanying membership renewals during the year.

As I am retiring from the presidency at the Annual General Meeting, I take this opportunity to thank all members of the Council as well as all the staff of the Friends who have made my term as President such a rewarding one.

Ninian Stephen

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

As this is my last *Botanic News* as editor, I send greetings to my readers and have many people to thank. With Julie Maddock at the computer, we made a happy start. Since February 1985, the dedicated, patient and persevering Helen Fahey has shared with me the stress of deadlines, deciphering the trail of the editorial red pen and coping with often-recalcitrant technology. *Botanic News* has been a hand-crafted publication. We always felt it was miraculous when it all finally came together, after we'd trimmed lines here and there, or redesigned a few pages to make everything fit.

My thanks are due to contributors, especially RBG staff, and our ever-helpful printer, Gill Miller Press.

Lawrence Cohn was a meticulous proof– reader and adviser for *Botanic Magazine*, and in recent years Pat Williams has proof-read *Botanic News*. My husband Duncan made valuable suggestions, undertook the final check of contents and cheerfully accepted that, one month in three, *Botanic News* took priority over our domestic life.

Yes, it has been very time-consuming, but in the course of writing I have met many talented and interesting people and learned a great deal. It has been a privilege to fill such a satisfying volunteer role in support of the wonderful Royal Botanic Gardens.

Heather Ironmonger

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Friends' Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday 11 November. If any Member is interested in considering nomination for Council, please contact the Friends' office on 9650 6398. Council members are elected on a rotating basis, and this year David Plant, David Baumgartner, John Hawker, Cathy Trinca and Anne Weber are due to retire but are eligible for re-election. Nominations for the office of President are also invited.

Spring Activities

SPRING QUARTERLY INSIDERS WALK
Guided Tours of the National Herbarium
Wednesday 25 September

We are very fortunate that the Friends will have an opportunity to take guided tours of the Herbarium, which is not open to the public. We will see the State Botanical Collection and some of the 'special' collections, such as the Legumes, the mounting of which was assisted by the Friends.

One of the highlights will be a chance to visit the Library and talk with Helen Cohn, its Manager. Helen is currently working on a history of the Herbarium, a project partly financed by the Friends. We will also learn how the Herbarium Volunteers help in mounting specimens.

Numbers will be limited to 15 Members in each group, so book early to avoid disappointment.
Four groups will be able to go through the Herbarium:

1. 10.00am-11.00am	3. 1.00pm-2.00pm
2. 11.30am-12.30pm	4. 2.30pm-3.30pm

Please meet at the back entrance to the Herbarium 10 minutes before your starting time.

Cost: $10 **Members only**.
RSVP by Friday 20 September on enclosed booking form with payment and a stamped addressed envelope. Unfortunately, we cannot offer a choice in tour times. Tours will be filled as bookings are received. Your booking and tour time will be confirmed and mailed to you.

GARDENS OF THE GALAPAGOS
Illustrated talk by Michèle Adler
Friday 27 September at 10.15 for 11.00am
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

Michèle Adler, lecturer in Horticulture at the University of Melbourne, has recently returned from working on the Galapagos Islands. She has been involved in a number of projects associated with the Charles Darwin Research Station.

People usually think of the Galapagos Islands as a remote place in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of South America, with animals and birds found nowhere else in the world, and that is true. However, while most of the Galapagos archipelago is uninhabited, there are some human settlements and some unusual gardens.

Michèle will introduce us to the artistic coastal township of Puerto Ayora, capturing the highlights and energy of imaginative gardens in one of the most protected and remote places in the world. She will also show the process of designing a domestic garden for the Director of the Research Station.

Morning tea/coffee will be served before the talk.
Cost: $17 Friends $12
RSVP by Monday 23 September on booking form

SPRING GARDENS IN THE DANDENONGS
Bus trip on Saturday 12 October
Leaving from Arts Centre (theatres building) at 9.00am sharp, returning about 5.00pm

Enjoy a day out visiting four diverse gardens and having a leisurely lunch.

Otto Fauser's *Doshlong La* at Olinda is a very personal garden, intensively planted throughout its informal terraces and rockeries which flow down the steep hillside, linked by tiny steps, moss-covered rocks and pathways. Rare alpines, bulbs, perennials and shrubs are grown from seed hunted down from all over the world. The garden houses over 150 species of rhododendron. The selection of plant material is superb, with expanses of exquisite ground covers, slipper orchids, iris, cyclamen and the hellebores that Otto has bred. He enjoys sharing his wealth of knowledge with others.

Fernhill at Kallista is an English-style country garden featuring shrubs, perennials, bulbs and ornamental grasses. A silver foliage bed, woodland areas and bulb beds with many rare alpines are divided by formal hedging. Carol Ross will guide us through her garden where we will see early Spring perennials – astrantia, silene and trilliums.

Enjoy a casual lunch at Kenloch among the awe-inspiring sequoias, cedars and pines planted by Baron von Mueller in 1867. The 15-acre garden, landscaped by William Guilfoyle, has some fine examples of rhododendron that will be at their peak.

Elspeth and Garry Jacobs will greet us at their five-acre property in Montrose. This is divided into three separate areas: the natural bush, the former nursery and growing area, and the garden of Australian plants. Each area has a prime purpose: the preservation, cultivation and appreciation of Australian plants. The bush is one of the few remaining areas of natural vegetation around Montrose, with over 100 species having been identified.

Cost: $60 (includes morning tea and lunch)
RSVP by 2 October on booking form

THE VALUE OF TREES IN MELBOURNE'S PARKS, GARDENS AND STREETSCAPES

Illustrated Talk by Dr Gregory Moore
Tuesday 15 October at 10.15 for 11.00am
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

Be prepared! Dr Greg Moore, Head of Burnley College (part of the University of Melbourne's Institute of Land and Food Resources) is a dynamic speaker — his enthusiasm for a wide spectrum of topics relating to horticulture is infectious and rousing. Arboriculture is his special interest.

We will hear how trees set the whole tone of Melbourne, making it 'the world's most liveable city'. He will also point out the threat to Melbourne's trees and discuss how they are to be maintained and what their future will be.

Dr Moore has contributed to the Australian Standard of pruning and tree evaluation, and was inaugural President of the International Society of Arboriculture for Australia. He was involved with the National Trust's Register of Significant Trees, and has written extensively on tree management.

Refreshments will be served prior to the talk.
Cost: $17 Friends $12
RSVP by Friday 11 October on booking form

HERITAGE ROSES AND COMPANION PLANTING

Illustrated talk by Diana Fickling
Thursday 14 November at 6.15pm for 7.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

Diana Fickling is a self-confessed rose-aholic and passionate gardener. She is the former Secretary of the Rose Society of Victoria, is currently Publicity Officer for the Society, and is also a member of Heritage Roses in Australia. Her special interests are heritage and shrub roses, companion planting and photographing roses. For the past three years she has done a monthly 'rose segment' on 3MP with Jane Edmanson. Diana has over 200 roses in her cottage garden in Mount Waverley, which has been open twice for Australia's Open Garden Scheme.

She will speak to us and show slides about Heritage Roses, their link to the modern David Austin Roses, and associated companion planting.

Refreshments will be served before the talk.
Cost: $17 Friends $12
RSVP: Monday 11 November on booking form

FESTIVE FLORAL DECORATIONS with Chloe Fournier

Monday 18 November at 10.00am — Christmas Wreath Workshop

Monday 25 November at 10.00am — Festive Floral Decorations

Whirling Room, Great Melbourne Telescope Building (rear of Observatory Gate)

Chloe Fournier, the French florist who produced the stunning floral arrangements with Delbard roses, has agreed to run two workshops for the Friends in the lead-up to the Christmas season.

On 18 November Chloe will hold the workshop **Decorating a Christmas Wreath**. All materials will be provided and each participant will make a wreath to take home for the front door. On 25 November Chloe will create some **Festive Floral Decorations.**

Morning tea is included and will be served at 10.00am before each session starts. Numbers will be limited so book early to avoid disappointment.

Cost includes materials.
18 November: $45 Friends $40
25 November: $40 Friends $35
RSVP by Tuesday 12 November on booking form.
Payment must accompany booking.

ORIENTAL DELIGHTS

Illustrated talk and walk with Terry Smyth
Thursday 21 November at 10.00am
Baracchi Room, Observatory Building

We are delighted to present a talk and walk with Terry, the curator of the RBG's Southern Chinese Collection. She will lead us on a visual tour through the forests and gardens of Yunnan and Sichuan and will also introduce us to some of the weird and wonderful, rare or more familiar plants she has collected and enjoyed in China. We'll see many of them growing in the Gardens, when Terry takes us on a tour of the Collection.

We'll also learn about the collaboration between artist Susan Purdy and Terry (see story on page 15).

Our catering Friends will serve morning tea at 10.00am. The talk will commence at 10.30am and the guided walk should finish by 1.00pm.

Cost: $20 **MEMBERS ONLY.** Payment must accompany your booking.
RSVP by Friday 15 November on booking form.

GROWING FRIENDS

SPRING SALE

SATURDAY 19 OCTOBER, 10.00am – 4.00pm
SUNDAY 20 OCTOBER, 10.00am – 3.00pm
Entry from E Gate in Birdwood Avenue

The Nursery will be closed to Members on 11, 18 and 25 October as we prepare for, and recover from, the Plant Sale.

Proceeds from our sales go into the funds of the Friends and have been used for various projects in the Gardens. The current project is to assist in extending the watering system. The Friends have previously contributed to the installation of automatic watering in some parts of the Gardens and this will be a continuation of that project.

In June the bulb garden in the Central Lawn was dug up. Many of the bulbs were given to the Growing Friends and will be for sale. Unfortunately, some bulbs and rhizomes have weed potential — agapanthus and watsonia for example — and cannot be sold. We must exercise care when we offer plants for sale to ensure that we are not creating problems of this sort. We do not know where plants will finally be planted and some that are perfectly well behaved in a Melbourne suburb may go berserk in the countryside or in coastal areas. We must err on the side of caution in this matter. Incidentally, the viminarias that we withdrew from sale last time because we feared that they had weed potential turned out to be a different species from the Queensland one that had naturalised in some parts of Victoria; we can therefore offer viminarias for sale again.

We will have a larger selection of bulbs than before, but this will depend on the progress they make between now and the sale. Our bulb expert says, 'Purchasers of plants should realise that of all the matters connected with the purchase of a plant, the root system is the most important. They should realise that they are primarily buying a root system; other issues are less important.'

The succulents include many interesting plants with strap-like leaves — Ochagavia, Agave, Aloe, Bromeliads, Yucca — and many strikingly beautiful examples of colours and shapes. With recent dry conditions gardeners are becoming more conscious of the value of succulents and other dry-tolerant plants.

We will have a big selection of irises, and trees, shrubs and perennials — both native and exotic — many propagated from the Gardens. We are also branching out into herbs, in response to requests.

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.

Colin Herbert (pictured when Growing Friends dug up the bulb garden) is taking over as convener. I am retiring after two-and-a-half years.

Joan Hardy, Convener

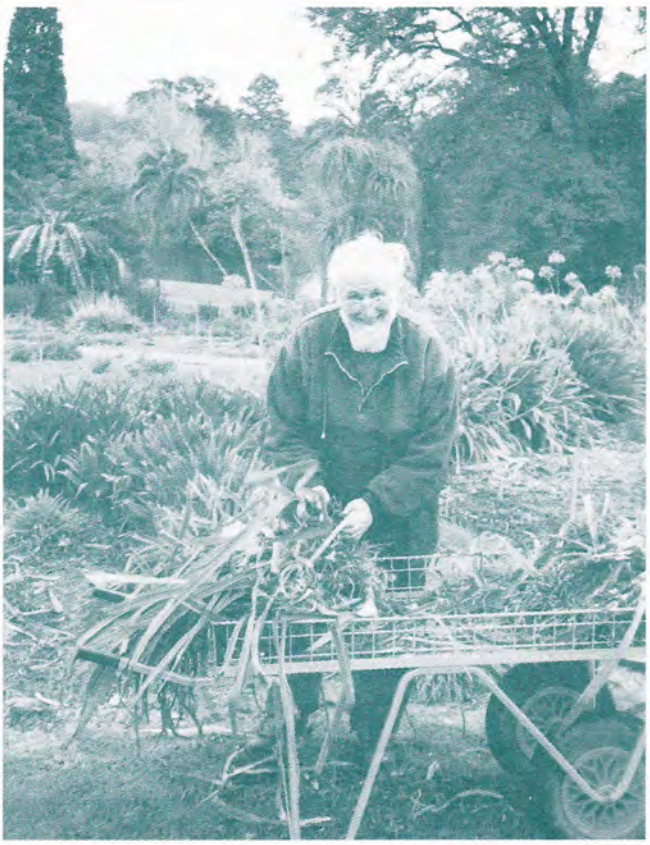


Photo by Virginia Henderson

During Joan Hardy's period as Convener there have been considerable changes to the facilities within the Mousehouse (the Growing Friends' office), and to the way in which the Growing Friends are organised. The layout and efficiency in this office have been improved: a computer with a new purpose-designed database has been installed, which has enabled more efficient recording and processing of nursery stock, as well as the printing of plant labels. Through delegation, the day-to-day responsibilities of running the nursery have been spread with the formation of two committees. These changes have been well-received and have assisted the Growing Friends to achieve continued excellent results at the Plant Sales.

Virginia Morrison and Anne Weber

The Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne Inc.
present

THE ART OF BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION 2002

SIXTH BIENNIAL EXHIBITION
featuring

§ The Celia Rosser Medal for Botanical Art §

and
the first works in *An Illustrated Garden*,
a collection of illustrations of
Royal Botanic Gardens significant plants

Veltheimia viridifolia
by Mary Gregory

Mueller Hall, National Herbarium of Victoria

24 October to 10 November
10 am to 5pm daily
Entry free

Schlumbergera x buckleyi
by Beverley Graham

Opening Reception Wednesday 23 October, 6.00pm to 8.00pm

Recent selected original artworks by accomplished artist members of the Friends from around Australia will be on display. This is an opportunity to buy or just enjoy viewing examples of some of the finest botanical art available in Australia today.

Presented by the Friends to promote the work of these talented artists and to raise funds in support of the Gardens, the exhibition will appeal to admirers and collectors of fine art as well as gardeners and plant lovers. Prices start at around $200.

THE CELIA ROSSER MEDAL FOR BOTANICAL ART

The 2002 *Art of Botanical Illustration* exhibition sees the Friends introduce an award for botanical art to commemorate the significant achievements of Melbourne botanical artist Celia Rosser. The medal celebrates Celia Rosser's contribution as a technically accomplished artist, as an artist who has produced work of the highest degree of scientific accuracy and for her commitment to a long-term body of work of international significance. It is our intention that the award should reflect these achievements, and be presented to exhibiting artists whose works show excellence in one or more aspects of the artform.

We are honoured that Celia has allowed her name to be associated with the Friends' *Art of Botanical Illustration* exhibitions and has agreed to make the presentation of the medal at our opening reception.

Celia is best known for her exquisite illustrations for *The Banksias*. Described as one of the finest collections of botanical painting the world has known, the Monash University project *The Banksias* is a three-volume monograph of the entire 76 species of the genus Banksia. With text by Alex George, it is a unique scientific and artistic achievement — the first time in the world that a genus of this size has been painted by a single artist and published.

Celia was instrumental in the establishment of the biennial Art of Botanical Illustration exhibitions and the Botanical Illustrators group of the Friends, through which she has encouraged many aspiring botanical artists with her willingness to share her knowledge, experience and expertise. She was made an Honorary Life Member of the Friends in 1999.

OPENING RECEPTION
and
EXHIBITION PREVIEW
Wednesday 23 October, 6.00pm to 8.00pm
Marquee adjacent to Mueller Hall

This is your opportunity to preview the exhibition and purchase works before the doors open to the public. The inaugural *Celia Rosser Medal for Botanical Art* will be presented.

Cost: $20 per person includes catalogue and refreshments

Book by 21 October on booking form

AN ILLUSTRATED GARDEN

Among the works on display at the exhibition will be the first illustrations selected as part of our recently-established *Illustrated Garden* collection.

The *Illustrated Garden* project was established in 2001 by artist members of the Friends to create an illustrated record, or florilegium, of significant plants growing in the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne. Participating artists have access through the Friends to a master list compiled specifically for this project by horticultural staff of the Gardens. Artists can choose subjects for illustration from the Gardens' major collections.

Works selected for the Friends' collection will continue the centuries-old tradition of botanical illustration which records plants accurately and artistically. Identifying characteristics of their structure, form, flowers, fruits, leaves, bark and root systems will be represented.

Our 21st century florilegium will be held digitally and photographically by the Friends; the original artworks will not be retained. This should encourage submissions from a wide pool of artists by dispensing with the more usual practice of expecting the original artwork to be donated. Instead, artists will be asked to assign reproduction rights to the Friends for the purpose of raising funds for the Gardens through the sale of cards, prints, calendars and other publications. Reproductions of the illustrations will be accompanied by a description of the plant and its significance to the Gardens. We hope to have the first of these illustrations reproduced as cards and available for sale at the exhibition.

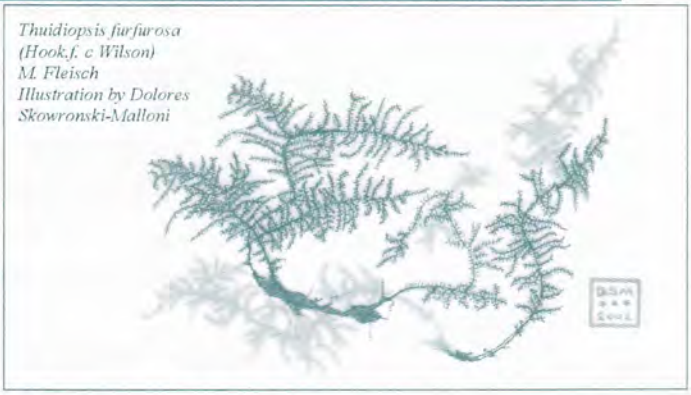
Illustrations of RBG plants for this project are to be submitted for selection in September together with all other works for the exhibition. Selected works will be professionally photographed and the colour transparencies held by the Friends. The original works will be included in the exhibition and available for sale to astute collectors!

CATALOGUE ON THE WEB and CD

We are planning to have an illustrated version of the *Art of Botanical Illustration 2002* catalogue on www.rbg.vic.gov.au, accessible from 24 October to the close of the exhibition. CD copies will also be available for sale.

REMINDER TO EXHIBITING ARTISTS

Completed entry forms must be returned by 6 September.



Thuidiopsis furfurosa (Hook.f. & Wilson) M. Fleisch
Illustration by Dolores Skowronski-Malloni

BRYOPHYTE WORKSHOP

(Mosses, Liverworts and Hornworts)
Monday 23, 30 September, 10.30am-3.00pm

The 7th Australasian Bryophyte Workshop will be held in conjunction with the 150th anniversary of the National Herbarium of Victoria from 18 September to 14 October 2003. An exhibition of Bryophyte illustrations will be held before the Workshop.

As a prelude to this exhibition, Karen Beckmann will conduct two workshops dealing with the botany of Bryophytes and the requirements for illustrating them. Plant material and some microscopes will be provided. Please bring your own microscope if you have one. Hand lenses and magnifying glasses are also useful. There will be time for drawing, so please bring your illustration equipment and lunch.

We plan another workshop dealing with the painting of Bryophytes to be conducted by Mali Moir; it will include composition, enlargement and general artistic presentation of these subjects. It will be held on Monday 7 and 14 October from 10.00am-3.00pm.

Cost for each two-day workshop is $110.
More information: Dianne Emery on 9523 5397

BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATORS QUARTERLY MEETING
Tuesday 3 September at 10.00am
in the Whirling Room Studio
Cost: $5.50 (incl GST) Pay on the day, but RSVP to Friends' Office, tel. 9650 6398

As it is a week before your forms are due, this meeting is your chance to ask questions about the forthcoming exhibition, to talk to other artists and discuss the future of the group with the committee.

WHIRLYBIRDS: The Whirling Room Studio is home to a group of Botanical Illustrators, who meet weekly, to work together in an informal group. Any Botanical Illustrator who is a Friend is welcome to join in and work in this supportive atmosphere, sharing ideas and technical information, painting techniques, design etc. Ring Rita Parkinson on 9821 5883 for further information.

BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION CLASSES

Dianne Emery's Term 4 classes will commence in the week beginning 14 October: Tuesdays 6.15–8.45pm Wednesdays 10.00am-12.30pm and 12.30pm-3.00pm Fridays 10.30am-1.30pm.

Saturday classes conducted by Mali Moir will commence on 19 October from 1.00pm-3.30pm.

For information contact Dianne on 9523 5397.

MARGARET STONES — A new Friend

We welcome a very distinguished new Friend, botanical artist Margaret Stones, who recently returned to live in Melbourne after calling London home for the past 50 years. She's busily settling into a house in Hawthorn and remaking the garden.

Born in Colac, Margaret showed talent and enthusiasm for art as a child. She studied at Swinburne Technical College and the National Gallery Art School and made a living as a commercial artist (a term seldom heard these days!) before World War II intervened. She became a nurse. By a strange quirk of fate, the fact that she contracted tuberculosis in 1945 and was hospitalised (and bored!) for 18 months was a path to her later fame. Her drawings of wild flowers brought by hospital visitors came to the notice of Daryl Lindsay, and led to her first solo exhibition at Georges Gallery. Professor John Turner encouraged Margaret to attend Botany lectures at the University of Melbourne and kindled her interest in botanical illustration.

During her career as a freelance artist, Margaret received commissions from leading botanical institutions all over the world, notably RBG at Kew and Louisiana State University. She exhibited widely, and published more than 400 illustrations in Curtis's Botanical Magazine. Her prodigious output includes an Endemic Flora of Tasmania (six large volumes) and a Flora of Louisiana.

The RBG Library has about 40, mostly early, paintings in watercolour and sepia by Margaret Stones, including works of Victoria's Bogong High Plains, and others commissioned by The Maud Gibson Trust for the Basalt Plains series. Six of these paintings were loaned to the National Gallery of Victoria in 1996 for the 'Beauty in Truth' exhibition (and we acknowledge its catalogue for some of the information in this portrait of the artist).

Question: does an artist ever retire, or are some works of art yet to come from the brush of Margaret Stones?

Celia Rosser telling the story of her 77th Banksia at the State Library exhibition. *Photo by Duncan Ironmonger*

When Celia Rosser led Friends around the exhibition of her superb Banksia paintings at the State Library of Victoria, she gave us an idea of her steep learning curve working with field botanists: enduring 45.5°C in the shade, for instance, and finding butchers in remote WA willing to store plant specimens in their cool rooms.

Celia saw all but two of the species she painted growing 'in the field'. She explained that an important part of the artist's endeavour was to choose a specimen that conveys the character of a plant, as well as having spontaneous appeal. On one occasion, it took 1½ days to locate a particular banksia in flower during a drought. In another case she had to wait eight years for a specimen of a plant that had been wiped out in a bushfire.

Celia collected a *Banksia serrata* in Sydney from the spot where Joseph Banks went ashore in 1770. However, the best specimen she could find was pronounced 'not typical' and her painting had to be abandoned. With time running short her own painting of a *Banksia serrata*, collected from Wilsons Promontory, was published as No.1 in Volume 1 of the Monash Collection.

Thus it transpired that Celia owns No.1 and No.77 of the paintings that were displayed at the Library. No.77, *Banksia kirkalocka*, was discovered last year in an arid, still-secret location in WA, too late to be included in Vol.3. The drawing in the photograph above depicts some dried flowers of this very rare plant; it is yet to be recorded in all its glory.

The exhibition attracted an attendance of more than 27,000 viewers — fantastic! Many people said they were overwhelmed and paid a return visit.

Notes from the Gardens

SPRING! Just the very sense of all that sap being on the rise... it's enough to push a person to the brink of curious verse:

'Lenten ys come with love to toune, with blosmen and with briddes roune...'

I suppose we can excuse the creative souls of the 13th century for their adventurous spelling, but the sentiment remains – spring is definitely a time for taking the lead from nature and bucking up the spirits well and truly. Not to mention blosmen, and speaking of which, one of the highlights of the spring blossom display is *Prunus* 'Elvins', a cultivar of *P. cerasifera* bred in Hawthorn (the place, not the Crataegus) by Ms Elvins in 1940. The blossom is characteristically carried along the length of the straightish twigs for about 50cm, giving it the appearance of having creamy-pink fingers when viewed from a distance, or perhaps through half-squinted eyes.

Further on the blossom theme – the delicate pendant spikes of yellowish flowers on the Winter Hazel (*Corylopsis spicata*) will still be hanging around, even though it is now officially Spring, with any luck. Look no further than the eastern side of the Magnolia Bed for some good specimens. The huge golden-yellow chalice flowers of *Solandra maxima* (Cup of Gold) appear during September, and continue through much of Summer. This vine, which I note has been described in the literature as 'one of the world's most spectacular climbing plants' is leaning up against a palm in the Cassine Bed, between the Oak and Princes Lawns. The fragrance of these amazing yellow flowers is akin to the more appetising sun-tan creams – coconut, tropical fruits, with a hint of apricot.

Keep an eye out also for the deep-violet inflorescences of *Wigandia caracasana* atop these spreading shrubs with their peculiarly large, rough leaves. We have used this species here and there around the Gardens, and indeed it is its spreading nature which has recently caused us to pause and take stock... in fact take stock right out of some locations. I think it still earns the right to being planted in the appropriate location – but needs to be well contained, maybe with a root barrier. Another large-leafed species whose flowers present well in the purple shades is *Bartlettina sordida*; you'll usually find it where there's good morning sunlight. *Melianthus major* (Large Honey-flower) starts to flower on tall russet-red stems, and this, too, has striking large compound foliage, more in the grey-green tones and with saw-tooth edges for added textural effect.

Spring would not be spring without the wattles, and one which is always worth taking in is the Gold-dust Wattle (*Acacia acinacea*). There are several fine specimens growing in the woodland area at the entry to the Observatory Site. Also worthy of note is the national flower of Peru *Cantua buxifolia* (on the north side of the Gleditsia Bed in Princes Lawn). This colourful twisted flower is from the family Polemoniaceae, which also presents us with the ever-twining *Cobaea scandens*, the various Phloxes, and of course *Polemonium* (Jacob's Ladder).

This is, of course, a small selection of all that is wonderful about Spring. We have given scant attention to the *briddes roun*, but such is the need for editorial brevity and focus. Another time, perhaps.

Richard Barley

EUPHEMIA AFLOAT

Dallachy Island has been rejuvenated over recent months through the generous support of Lindsay and Paula Fox, and the Fox family. Extensive plantings of both native and exotic species have replaced a number of weedy species, while decking and a boat ramp were also constructed to accommodate *Euphemia*.

Euphemia Henderson, although betrothed to Ferdinand Mueller, never became his wife, but now she has been immortalised in the Royal Botanic Gardens. Her name has been bestowed upon the 13'6" dinghy launched in July for duty as a 'pleasure craft' (rather than a work boat) on the Ornamental Lake.

The Fox family also funded *Euphemia*, and they will be carried in her when they visit the island to view the developments.

Craig Blunt, a fifth generation Williamstown boat builder, worked closely with Richard Barley on details of the dinghy. She's blue and white, of traditional design, built from salvaged Huon pine from Tasmania, kauri and blackwood. And she's expected to have a very long life.

Photo by Carmen Greenway

Philip Moors and Craig Blunt were oarsmen when some of the Fox family had their first trip on **Euphemia.**

Botanic Birds

On being thankful for small mercies:

Winter in the RBG is not a great time for bird enthusiasts. The birds are, generally, much quieter and less active, although the Bell Miners seem to chime merrily all the time. Yet there are still small wonders to see and hear: it's all a matter of being in the right place at the right time.

It was the noise that first attracted us. On a sunny mid-afternoon in late June we were walking towards the Lych Gate when the squawking and screeching in the large red gum outside the gate told us that something special was occurring. The tree was in full bloom and clearly had reached a peak of succulence as the Red and Little Wattle Birds were heading for it from all directions. The Musk and Rainbow Lorikeets were already there, a few White Plumed Honeyeaters buzzed in and out, and within five or ten minutes there were more than 100 raucous birds feasting in the blossom. To the bird observer it was a great winter's day.

The Bell Miners are generally seen high up in the eucalypts and less often on the lower branches. We were surprised one day to find a group of about a dozen birds on and around the path on the northern side of the Gardens near A Gate. They were feeding on a couple of Agapanthus blooms, taking it in turns to sip the nectar, and seemed totally oblivious of our presence. Mind you, they are feisty little birds, as we mentioned last issue, and seem to have spread even further in the last three months. It has also been pointed out that not only has the number of White Plumed Honeyeaters decreased, but so also has the number of Willy Wagtails. Are the Bell Miners responsible for this?

Heard but not seen: Golden Whistler, Spotted Pardalote. Also present at various times: Tawny Frogmouth (Oak Lawn, E Gate), Kookaburra, Black Faced Cuckoo Shrike, Grey Butcherbird, Hoary-headed Grebe, Great Cormorant, Brown Goshawk.

One advantage of winter is that the Rufous Night Herons often sit in trees that have shed their leaves, making it much easier to admire them. A favourite spot is in the trees near the northwest corner of the lake and it is possible to see perhaps 15 birds in about a 50 metre stretch there. Seven of these birds have been roosting in full view in a Highland Linden on the edge of the lake near the monument to RBG Directors.

The number of Pied Currawongs around metropolitan Melbourne seems to be on the increase. These birds are well known thieves and scavengers and they can become a nuisance if they arrive in force. They are far more intrusive than the Ravens and, like the Bell Miners, force other birds from the area. The Melbourne branch of the Bird Observers Club of Australia is also collecting breeding records of these birds in the Melbourne area and odd birds occasionally visit the RBG. So it was a bit of a worry to see two birds heading towards the Gardens at the end of June.

Tony Delves

The Plants of The Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden

The two-acre site is fenced off and the bulk earthworks commenced in July. The first planting, about September, will be the Bamboo Forest, where 100 two-metre high clumps of *Phyllostachys heterocycla pubescens* – Moso are to be established. This giant cool climate bamboo grows to 20 metres in height and the culms are 18cm in diameter!

The plant selection process is a rigorous one. Plant beauty and value are pitted against a range of safety aspects such as whether the plants are poisonous, prickly, and/or susceptible to insect attack and, if so, whether they will require spraying with insecticides. The estimated 37,000 plants also need to tie in with the Royal Botanic Gardens Living Plant Collections Policy. It is very important that these plants are able to withstand the pruning, picking and shaping by all those tiny hands and feet belonging to the playful children!

Izabella Meraviglia-Crivelli

NEW MEMBERS WELCOME
Wednesday 9 October at 10.00am
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

Invitations will soon be sent to all recently-joined Friends. Following morning tea, we will present a short information slide show, a welcome by the Director of the Gardens, and brief talks by our committee leaders. The Voluntary Guides will then take you on a guided tour of the Gardens.

Those who have joined the Friends since our last Welcome, and those who have already registered for a morning Welcome, will automatically receive an invitation. If you have not been able to attend a previous Welcome and would like to come this time, please call our office (9650 6398).

Tendrils

MICHAEL BOURKE, announced in the last *Botanic News* as a new RBG Board member, has just moved from City West Water to be Executive Chairman of the Environment Protection Authority.

On the 'top ten' list of bestsellers published by Melbourne University Press is NAME THAT FLOWER, written by Herbarium scientist Ian Clarke with Helen Lee. First published in 1987, it is frequently reprinted and a second revised edition is to appear next year. More than 20,000 copies have been sold, and the book is now reaching international markets. Ian works in the area of plant identification, and is of great assistance to the Friends' botanical illustrators. He is currently on long service leave.

Three important new books due within the next two or three months are eagerly awaited: the eighth volume of the ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF AUSTRALIAN PLANTS by Rodger Elliot and David Jones, THE OXFORD COMPANION TO AUSTRALIAN GARDENS edited by Richard Aitken and Michael Looker and THE AUSTRALIAN PLANT DESIGN BOOK by Paul Thompson. A monumental 700 pages, the Companion is the first comprehensive reference book to cover all aspects of Australian gardens, and the history of gardening and garden design in Australia. Meanwhile, Roger and David are busy compiling the final volume of their encyclopaedia. Paul Thompson has an impressive record as a designer of landscapes using Australian plants, and is closely engaged in developing the Australian Garden at RBG Cranbourne.

The Voluntary Guides' special Winter Walk CHOCOLATE AND SPICE was such a stirring success that the scheduled offerings were quickly consumed and five extra helpings were served. The walk is now available for group bookings. The appealing menu was devised by Natalie McMaster, Ruth Harris, Margaret Hilditch and Carolyn Tomkins. Walkers were intrigued to find a cinnamon tree, a bay laurel, a cacao tree and a coffee tree growing in the Gardens, as well as cardamom, the shrub that produces star anise, and the vines from which black pepper and vanilla beans are harvested.

A glass of hot spiced chocolate, cinnamon-flavoured biscuits and recipes featuring spices were further special ingredients in this clever mix of history and horticulture, cooking and commerce.

The Friends of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide, the oldest-established Gardens' Friends group in Australia, are preparing to celebrate their 25th anniversary in November, and Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens reached their 20th birthday in April. There's another milestone coming up in November: the TENTH ANNIVERSARY of the appointment of Dr Philip Moors as Director of RBG Melbourne...10 eventful years we'll survey in the next *Botanic News*.

KIAH MARTIN, RBG's Senior Arborist, contested five events and was runner-up overall in the Women's International Tree-Climbing Championships in Seattle in August. Congratulations! A fantastic achievement.

Marco Duretto, Manager, Plant Sciences at the RBG, will give two talks at a seminar from 2-4 November which bears the aromatic title BORONIAS, CORREAS AND OTHER FRAGRANT FRIENDS. Boronias were the subject of Marco's PhD, and he is engaged in preparing an account of East Coast and Tropical Boronias for the *Flora of Australia*. 'We know of 149 species of boronia, and new ones are turning up all the time', he says, 'most recently from Tasmania and near Brisbane'. It is the tenth largest genus of Australian flowering plants. Marco has concentrated on collecting new species in the tropics, including Arnhem Land and the Kimberley. Many of the specimens he's describing have been lodged at the Herbarium.

The seminar for the Australian Plant Society will include lectures, practical horticultural advice, visits to four gardens and a field trip to West Gippsland. Contact Marilyn Gray, Curator of Karwarra Garden (9728 4256) for details.

Four staff members from RBG Melbourne and three from RBG Cranbourne will attend the 5th conference of Botanic Gardens Conservation International in Sydney in September. CONNECTING WITH PLANTS — LESSONS FOR LIFE is the very apt title for a meeting of those involved in education programs in botanic gardens in 110 countries. There's bound to be much interest in the RBG's plans for the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden. Gary Shadforth, one of the RBG Melbourne Education Co-ordinators, will deliver a presentation on Alien Invaders, RBG's project about environmental weeds.

ADVANCE NOTICE
FRIENDS' CHRISTMAS DINNER
Thursday 12 December 2002

At the end of this our 20th birthday year, the Friends are delighted to be returning to the gracious surroundings of the Lyceum Club for our festive celebration. Make a note in your diaries now! Be wined and dined in style and be entertained by our after dinner speaker — Elaine Canty, the new Deputy Chairman of the RBG Board.. You are most welcome to bring guests. Further details will be available in our next *Botanic News*, but you may make advance bookings on 9650 6398.

Rob Nahon, Richard Miller, Sandra Hodge and Therese Turner donned waders to secure aquatic plants on the bed of Ornamental Lake, part of the Long Island development. Photo by Helen Fahey

Photos by David Robbins

A BRIEF BLOOMING

There was an unprecedented queue of 20 people waiting for the RBG's tropical house to open at 10.00am on Saturday 3 August, after news broke that the tongue orchid was flowering for the first time in more than 30 years. The rare Papua New Guinea orchid, *Bulbophyllum fletcherianum*, attracted hundreds of people during its burst of glory. Its foul smell also attracted blowflies, as is nature's way to ensure pollination which results in the production of seed pods.

Some of the Friends' botanical illustrators seized the opportunity to record this spectacular plant in bloom.

As *Botanic News* went to press, the smell had dissipated and the flower was shrivelling. However, nursery co-ordinator David Robbins believes that even the orchid's leaf, one metre long, is worth a look.

Long Island Project Stage 2

The Long Island Project in the Ornamental Lake is now in its second stage. Funding from Parks Victoria has permitted the installation of a pump to regulate the level of water in the billabong, the re-laying of the main path on the Island and the construction of an Aboriginal bora (meeting place). Landscaping and replanting with indigenous plant species have also taken place. The Island has been closed to the public during this construction work.

The area surrounding the main path is being replanted with indigenous plant stock and mulched. Plants have been ordered from external suppliers and work should be finished by the end of August.

Human and animal tracks have been laid on the main path and will be interpreted to visitor groups by Dean Stewart, the Aboriginal Liaison Officer, when Long Island re-opens.

Bronwen Merrett

FREE SPRING BOOST FOR YOUR GARDEN

Neutrog Australia Pty Ltd, a generous RBG sponsor, has once again offered free bags of its Spring organic fertilisers, *Rapid Raiser* and *Upsurge*, to the Friends.

Rapid Raiser is pelletised fertiliser based on blood and bone. It is recommended for vegetables, citrus, flowerbeds, roses and other heavy feeding plants. *Upsurge* can be applied to lawns.

The fertilisers will be available on weekdays from outside Nursery Lodge and the Growing Friends' nursery (same position as last year) from Monday 9 September onwards, on a 'first come, first served' basis. Members are requested to take no more than one sample bag of each product.

At the launch of **Water Works, Water Wise:** *Dr Philip Moors, David Plant, Elaine Canty and Janet Thomson.*
Photo by Virginia Henderson

OLD MELBOURNE OBSERVATORY

Recently, two interpretive exhibitions, 'Shooting the Stars' and 'Transits, Tea and Trigonometry' were opened in the Old Melbourne Observatory buildings, as part of the final stage of the Observatory's restoration.

The 'Astrograph Project' is commemorated in the 'Shooting the Stars' exhibition, which also tells of the observatory staff who trained as 'human computers' completing the calculations associated with the mapping.

'Transits, Tea and Trigonometry' continues the story of the Transit of Venus, the sun and planets of our solar system in the South Equatorial and Photoheliograph Houses.

The Old Melbourne Observatory played an essential role in the development of this city, and contributed to worldwide scientific knowledge. The history, mystery, human stories and objects associated with the Observatory are revealed in these exhibitions.

You may make a self-guided tour or arrange a group booking on 9252 2429.

The exhibitions were made possible with donations from the Helen McPherson Smith Trust. The Friends provided funds for four telescopes and 15 pairs of binoculars.

WEBSITES for the Friends of RBG Melbourne and RBG Cranbourne are part of the RBG'S new user-friendly website which was launched in July. It is structured on the basis of user-defined subject areas rather than the organisational structure. To ensure accessibility, a separate text-only version has been included; this is important for country areas where telecommunications infrastructure is poor, and also for the use of screen-readers by the visually-impaired.

Friends' activities are linked to the 'What's On' and 'Support Us' sections, which will provide greater exposure for both Friends' groups.

The address is www.rbg.vic.gov.au. Then, for the Friends, go to 'Support Us', 'Support Groups', then 'Friends of RBG Melbourne'.

The Friends are most grateful to Heath Rudduck and his team at Squib for donating their time to the design of our original site. His skill launched us onto the World Wide Web. However, the Council feels that it is an appropriate time for the Friends to be part of the RBG site, further cementing our ties.

At Peter Valder's talk on **Gardens in China:** *Terry Smyth; Gil Teague from Florilegium, the book's publisher; Peter Valder and Robyn Tymms, who arranged the wonderful selection of flowers, berries and grasses from RBG's Southern Chinese Collection. The function raised more than $1400.* *Photo by Meg Miller*

Cranbourne's Last Call for your Books

Have you been intending to check your shelves for books that could be donated to the appeal being conducted by the Friends of RBG Cranbourne? They ask you to procrastinate no longer! Plenty of time is needed to process donations. There are drop-off points in Melbourne, Surrey Hills, Murrumbeena, Mt Waverley, Heathmont and Cranbourne; phone 9879 1427 for details.

The Friends are delighted at the response so far. They have received a wide range of gardening, natural history and environmental publications. Selections are being made for the RBG libraries at Cranbourne and Melbourne.

Items not required for the libraries will be available for purchase at BOOKFEST 2002, to be held in Mueller Hall on 19 and 20 October. You're urged to browse among the books when you are visiting the Friends' Spring Plant Sale on the same weekend.

New Branches on an Old Tree

A project focusing on the RBG's Southern Chinese Collection is linking its curator, Terry Smyth, with artist/photographer Susan Purdy, putting a contemporary perspective on plants from an ancient civilisation. The experience has made Terry look at plants differently, and especially to be aware of their translucence.

Susan is using an old photographic technique called photo gram to assemble an archive of images of botanical specimens. As in botanical illustration, a photo gram provides a method of exact rendering of form; a light source is passed through the specimens to record their shadows on light-sensitive paper. It is made without a camera.

A lecturer in Visual Arts at Monash University, Susan has a 12-month grant from Arts Victoria, and plans to hold an exhibition next year.

It's clear that artist and mentor are enjoying a rewarding, creative collaboration. On one Friday morning each month, they meet to discuss and select plants and cut samples. Susan then spends two days in her darkroom to print three specimens in a long and exacting procedure. Leaves, flowers, fruits and branches have all been used. Knowledge that the Chinese endow plants with associations such as health, happiness and longevity adds an extra layer to this botanical artistry.

If you would like to view some of Susan's work from previous projects, please visit www.susanpurdy.net *Botanic News* will publish more about Susan's project as it draws to a close.

CONFERENCE OF ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF BOTANIC GARDENS

Living Gardens – Gardens for Life is the theme of the Conference of the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens to be held in Ballarat from 1-3 November.

These gatherings are always most enjoyable and rewarding, combining a program of stimulating talks with a chance to meet Friends from many other Gardens. The dinner, with a light-hearted speaker, is a splendid occasion — and then there are tours — in this case tours of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens and Wetlands; Buninyong Botanic Gardens; Daylesford-Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens and Castlemaine Botanic Gardens.

There are no formalities, and anyone interested in botanic gardens will be welcome for the whole meeting or just one day. You may call Joan Garner on 9553 6461 for further information, or ask the Friends' office (9650 6398) for a conference brochure.

GEELONG'S 21ST CENTURY GARDEN

This spectacular garden, designed by Chris Dance as an extension to the 151-year-old Geelong Botanic Gardens, is a celebration of contemporary design, native and exotic plants adapted to dry conditions, local ecology, the seaside environment, the commitment of Friends and staff, and the place of the Wathaurong people. It's claimed that the design 'breaks the mould', advancing the way the world views botanic gardens. The 21st century addition provides a dramatic contrast to the layout of the original Garden, yet respects its heritage. Those involved with Geelong Botanic Gardens declare 'We're proud of its past and engaged in its future'.

A sense of high energy and goodwill unites the enthusiastic Curator, John Arnott, his eight Gardens staff, the designer, the much-appreciated Friends and the supportive City of Greater Geelong. 'Relevance to the community' is another oft-heard phrase.

The area of the gardens is effectively doubled by its expansion into Eastern Park, and whereas the entrance has been virtually hidden for many years, now it is linked to the Geelong waterfront with magnificent views across Corio Bay.

The new landscape incorporates an entrance driveway which showcases regional flora, and has grand steps leading to a broad walkway surrounding an elliptical sunken garden.

The Governor of Victoria is to perform the grand opening on 6 September.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

If you're seeing this newsletter for the first time and would like to join the Friends, here is some basic information. Annual membership fees are:

Household	$52
Individual	$36
Country, Interstate, Overseas	$26
Full-time Student or Pensioner (validation required)	$26

Phone the Friends' office, 03 9650 6398, for an application form — it also has details of Corporate, Group and Life membership — **OR** visit the Friends' page on the RBG website: www.rbg.vic.gov.au

Please make cheques or money orders payable to Friends of RBG Melbourne. If paying by credit card, state card number, expiry date and name on card.
Post to: Friends of RBG Melbourne
Gate Lodge, 100 Birdwood Avenue, Melbourne 3004

Members are reminded that they must be able to produce their current membership card when seeking discounts and member benefits.

GARDENS IN CHINA

Peter Valder's new book *Gardens in China* is an elegant companion to his acclaimed 1999 volume *The Garden Plants of China*. Resulting from prodigious research and 10 visits to China over 20 years, it exemplifies the author's easy conversational grace and understated sense of humour that has become familiar to the Friends. The book is authoritative yet accessible.

Gardens in China is a 'must read' for anyone who has travelled or who plans to travel in China. It will also appeal to those interested in people, history, garden style or plants, art, culture, religion, philosophy or science. It is well-referenced for readers wanting more information. The first chapter entitled 'Through Western Eyes' surveys written accounts, poems, photographs, maps, paintings and woodcuts — an illuminating exploration of how Chinese culture and garden history developed over more than 2000 years. We learn, for instance, that Chinese buildings developed their characteristic appearance in the first millenium BC, when a bracketing system was introduced which enabled heavy tiled roofs with upturned eaves to be supported. It becomes clear that monks played a vital role as horticulturists. A bookmark attached by silk thread provides a ready reference to the Chinese dynasties. This scholarly chapter sets the context for the detailed descriptions of five regions that follow.

Letters written by early travellers in China provide an insight into a vanished world. While some appear surprisingly sensitive to Chinese sensibilities, others do not understand Chinese style at all. Some are quite humorous. Equally interesting are extracts from early Chinese texts; a 1631 manual , for instance, cautions against bad taste in building gardens.

The book describes more than 200 places: imperial gardens, tombs and ancient temple courtyards as well as the many public parks and botanical gardens that have mostly sprung up since 1949. Peter traces the social and political upheavals that have occurred over the centuries, and alludes to the modern commercial vulgarity that's beginning to emerge...'qualities such as restraint and felicitous taste fail to make an appearance here'; 'vendors of distressing souvenirs'...

The photographs reveal how nature mingles with artifice in the form of rocks, stone figures and animals, pavilions and elaborate paving. It is fascinating to compare old images with contemporary photos. There are beguiling word pictures too: The Palace of Tranquil Longevity; The Wisdom Assistance Temple; the Pavilion of Admirable Fragrance; The Garden of Exuberant Spring, even The Temple of Universal Penetration. Some of the 500 colour photographs depict curiosities, such as an Edgeworthia with its stems tied into knots, and a 500-year-old crepe myrtle whose branches have been woven into a basket-like structure. Peonies, camellias, magnolias and prunus blossom look stunning.

For aspiring or accomplished Chinese language readers, it would have been useful for the names of temples and gardens to have appeared in Chinese characters as well as in English. But this is a small quibble. *Gardens in China*, published by Florilegium, is a great accomplishment.

Heather Ironmonger and Terry Smyth

This photo by Peter Valder in **Gardens in China** *depicts a classical stone bridge at the head of the lake in Qiyuan garden. A rose with clusters of single white flowers climbs over an old tree.*

Gardens in China is available in the Gardens Shop. Remember your Friends' discount!

SPRING 2002 *BOTANIC NEWS* BOOKING FORM

SPRING QUARTERLY INSIDERS WALK
Guided Tours of the National Herbarium
Wednesday 25 September (Friends only)

No.....of Friends@ $10 **TOTAL: $_____**

RSVP by 20/9/02

GARDENS OF THE GALAPAGOS
Friday 27 September at 10.15 for 11.00am
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

No..... of Friends @ $12
No... ... of Others @ $17
TOTAL:$_____

RSVP by 23/9/02

SPRING GARDENS IN THE DANDENONGS
Bus trip on Saturday 12 October
Leaves Arts Centre at 9.00am sharp

No..... @ $60
TOTAL:$_____

RSVP by 2/10/02

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 _____

TELEPHONE: _____

SPRING 2002 *BOTANIC NEWS* BOOKING FORM

THE VALUE OF TREES IN MELBOURNE
Tuesday 15 October at 10.15 for 11.00am
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

No..... of Friends @ $12
No..... of Others @ $17
TOTAL:$_____

RSVP by 11/10/02

THE ART OF BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION 2002
OPENING RECEPTION & EXHIB. PREVIEW
Wednesday 23 October from 6.00—8.00pm
Marquee adjacent to Mueller Hall

No..... @ $20 **TOTAL:$_____**

RSVP by 21/10/02

HERITAGE ROSES
Thursday 14 November at 6.15 for 7.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

No.....of Friends @ $12
No.....of Others @ $17
TOTAL: $_____

RSVP by 11/11/02

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

NAME _____

TELEPHONE: _____

SPRING 2002 *BOTANIC NEWS* BOOKING FORM

FESTIVE FLORAL DECORATIONS
Whirling Room Studio, GMT Building

Christmas Wreath Workshop
Monday 18 November at 10.00am

No.....of Friends @ $40
No.....of Others @ $45
$____

Festive Floral Decorations Workshop
Monday 25 November at 10.00am

No.....of Friends @ $35
No.....of Others @ $40
$____

TOTAL: $_____

RSVP by 12/11/02

ORIENTAL DELIGHTS
Thursday 21 November at 10.00am.
Members only
Baracchi Room, Observatory Building

No.....of Friends @ $20

TOTAL:$_____

RSVP by 15/11/02

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 _____

TELEPHONE: _____

SPECIAL EVENTS IN THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE

SEPTEMBER 2002

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE WALK
Thursdays and Fridays at 11.00am
Sundays 8 and 22 at 10.30am
Groups by arrangement.

GARDENS DISCOVERY TOUR
Sunday to Friday, 11.00am and 2.00pm

OBSERVATORY SELF GUIDED WALK
Monday to Friday, 10.00am to 4.00pm

THE NIGHT SKY EXPERIENCE GUIDED TOUR
Tuesdays 10, 17, 24 at 7.30pm

FLORA EXPLORER
Thursdays 12 and 19, Fridays 13 and 20, at 10.30am

CAMELLIA WALK
Thursdays 5 and 26, Sunday 15, Fridays 27 at 10.30am

SPECIAL EVENTS AT RBG CRANBOURNE

Bookings essential on 5990 2200

SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAM
WILDFIRE FIGHTER
Tuesday 24 and Thursday 26 September at 10.00am.
Wednesday 25 at 1.00pm
For 6-10 year olds

NIGHT PROWL
Wednesday 25 September at 7.00pm
For adults and children over 6.

WILDFLOWER WALKS
Sundays 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29 September at 1.00pm

BUSHWALKING AT THE RBG CRANBOURNE
Every Sunday in October and November at 1.00pm

OCTOBER 2002

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE WALK
Thursdays and Fridays at 11.00am
Sundays 6 and 20 at 10.30am
Groups by arrangement.

GARDENS DISCOVERY TOUR
Sunday to Friday, 11.00am and 2.00pm

OBSERVATORY SELF GUIDED WALK
Monday to Friday, 10.00am to 4.00pm

THE NIGHT SKY EXPERIENCE GUIDED TOUR
Tuesdays 1, 8, 15, 22 at 7.30pm
Tuesday 29 at 9pm

FLORA EXPLORER at 10.30am
New Zealand Collection: Thursday 17 and Friday 18
Southern Chinese Collection: Thursday 24 and Friday 25

BRUNCH WITH THE BIRDS
Sundays 20 and 27 at 9.00am

EXTRAORDINARY TREES
Sunday 27 at 10.30am

PLANT CRAFT COTTAGE
FIBRE WORKSHOP.
Saturday 26 at 10.30am

NOVEMBER 2002

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE WALK
Thursdays and Fridays at 11.00am
Sundays 3 and 17 at 10.30am
Groups by arrangement.

GARDENS DISCOVERY TOUR
Sunday to Friday, 11.00am and 2.00pm

OBSERVATORY SELF GUIDED WALK
Monday to Friday, 10.00am to 4.00pm

THE NIGHT SKY EXPERIENCE GUIDED TOUR
Tuesdays 5, 12, 19, 26 at 9.00pm

FLORA EXPLORER
Fridays 15 and 22 at 10.30am

BRUNCH WITH THE BIRDS
Sundays 3, 10, 17 and 24 at 9.00am

EXTRAORDINARY TREES
Fridays 1 and 29 at 10.30am
Tuesday 12, Thursday 21 and Sunday 24 at 2.30pm

PLANT CRAFT COTTAGE
WEEKEND CRAFT DEMONSTRATIONS
Throughout the Gardens
Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 from 10.30am to 2.30pm

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 2429****.*

Please appreciate that, after Botanic News *goes to press, it is likely that additional events may be arranged for late in the quarter.*

THE GARDENS SHOP

The Art of Botanical Illustration
During this exhibition, running from 24 October to 10 November, The Gardens Shop at Observatory Gate will be supporting the Friends in their endeavours. The Gardens Shop has an extensive range of botanical art books and now a range of Faber-Castell watercolour pencils. Castell 9000 Art series lead sketching pencils and Studio soft pastels.

We will have mini-exhibitions of artists' works with demonstrations by botanical artists. Information on details and times will be available from the shop. We look forward to seeing you during this period. Don't forget your Friend's discount.

Product Development
We have some exciting new products under development that will be available at The Gardens Shop later this year: The Oak Range of chocolates from Ernest Hillier; The Gardens Umbrella developed with images sourced from the Herbarium Library; The Royal Botanic Gardens of Australia 2003 Calendar; The Royal Botanic Gardens of the World 2003 Calendar; The Gardens Stationery beautifully designed from Redouté rose and Australian native imagery. There are many more products planned, including wood items produced from RBG timber and linen, china, napkins and wine which will all be available from The Gardens Shop.

RETURN TO THE JOHNSTON COLLECTION 17 December
Last December we had a very successful Christmas visit to the Johnston Collection in East Melbourne. As it was immediately booked out, we promised to repeat the visit in 2002, and have arranged this for Tuesday 17 December. Places will be very limited, so please call our office promptly to make a booking. Further details will be available in our next newsletter.

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 Melb.
589 Glenferrie Rd, Hawthorn
5% off plants only
Berna Park Nursery
cnr Park Rd/Paul St, Cheltenham.
5% discount on plants
Bulleen Art and Garden
6 Manningham Rd West, Bulleen
10% off plants, 5% off other goods
Town and Country Gardens
1280 Malvern Rd, Malvern
24 Whitehorse Rd, Balwyn
10% off plants over $20 only.
Holmesglen Nursery
585 Waverley Rd, Glen Waverley
10% 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% discount,
also 8 punnets for $22 (GST incl)
The Arts Bookshop
1067 High St, Armadale
Banksia Hill B & B
RMB 5349, Horsham, 3401
10% discount on accommodation
Feldspar at Trentham B&B
via Daylesford. Ph: 5424 1821
10% discount on accommodation
Killarney Cottage B&B
Sorrento Ph: 5984 1970
10% discount on accommodation
Blackwood Lane Gallery
24 Blackwood Lane, Gembrook
10% off paintings, prints and commissions
***Botanical Creations**
122 Grange Rd, Glenhuntly
Disc. on mthly Garden Club items
***denotes newcomer to list**

Notes from Gate Lodge

Because most of our Members' subscriptions fall due in June, we have just completed the busiest time of the year in the Friends' office. It seems therefore an appropriate time to thank our loyal volunteers. Joan Murphy and Rosemary McMeekin come in on a regular basis to process membership renewals, new memberships and activity bookings. This saves our office staff hours of time thereby reducing staff costs for the Friends. Elizabeth Fincher also attends on a regular basis to file away Members' renewal notices. These records provide a valuable reference source for our office staff. Other volunteers in the office are still proving an invaluable support on an irregular basis, completing time consuming but nevertheless important duties.

Each quarter Joan Murphy also completes the task of sorting the envelopes into postcode order for the *Botanic News* prior to mailing. This ensures we obtain the maximum discount from Australia Post and contributes to a substantial saving. To complete the process, our wonderful group of packing volunteers spend a morning dispatching the *Botanic News* to our Members.

I would like to say a special thank you to all these volunteers. They are always willing, cheerful and fun to work with. We really appreciate their support.

Virginia Henderson

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

Flying-Foxes

I am pleased to report that significant progress is being made towards establishing an alternative roosting site for flying-foxes. With various management plans, contingency plans and agreements finalised, a number of flying-foxes were recently captured and transferred to the new roost site at Horseshoe Bend, Ivanhoe. The flying-foxes underwent veterinary checks at the Royal Melbourne Zoo prior to their relocation, and will continue to be cared for by Zoo staff at the new roost site. Meanwhile, ARCUE staff have continued to conduct trials of non-harmful deterrents for use in RBG Melbourne.

The Gardens, in partnership with the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Melbourne Zoo, the City of Banyule and Parks Victoria, will continue to develop the site and hopefully create a viable roosting alternative for Melbourne's flying-foxes.

As a result of the colder winter weather and the departure of transient flying-foxes, the colony at RBG Melbourne has reduced significantly from the unprecedented numbers recorded in late summer, with the fly-out count in July totalling 7,900 bats.

7th International Mycological Congress

Through the generous assistance of the Friends, Dr Tom May (Senior Mycologist) and Dr Teresa Lebel (Mycologist) recently flew to Oslo, Norway to present their research findings at the 7th International Mycological Congress, which is held only every four years.

Dr May informed delegates about his work on the conservation of fungi, and also of the FUNGIMAP project. Dr Lebel presented her vital research into the taxonomy and systematics of Australian truffle-like fungi.

On their travels, Dr Lebel also presented her research at the Mycological Society of America Conference, while Dr May visited the Herbarium at the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, which holds significant collections of Australian fungi received from Ferdinand von Mueller in the 19th Century.

Dr May and Dr Lebel look forward to sharing details of the Congress and other aspects of their travel with the Friends on their return.

Seat Sponsorship Program

The seat program is a very popular way to pay tribute to a family member or friend, however the program's increasing popularity has placed significant demands on its administration by the Friends. After initiating and managing the successful seat program for over eight years — more than 80 seats have been placed in the Gardens — the Friends Council recently transferred the management of the program to the Development Branch, Royal Botanic Gardens.

I look forward to the popularity and success of the program continuing to thrive, as it did under the successful management of the Friends.

Philip Moors
Director