

Spring 2003

BOTANIC NEWS

FRIENDS *of the* ROYAL BOTANIC
GARDENS MELBOURNE INC.



ILLUSTRATORS

A Sneak Preview of FRBG's Christmas Card

FROM THE PRESIDENT

I hope you enjoyed the Winter issue of *Botanic News* as much as I did, with its new colour design. On your behalf as well as myself I thank Meg Miller, the editor, designer Dianna Wells Design, and all the Friends who contributed. You will be interested to hear that we have had very good feedback from Members letting us know that they like what we are doing - that is indeed heartening.

Members will remember that last year the Friends pledged to fund the much-needed extensions to the Botanic Gardens' Automatic Irrigation System, which when completed will put the Gardens in a far better position to deal with water restrictions. Stage 1 of this project - the irrigation of Theatre Lawn adjoining Gate Lodge and hydraulic adjustments necessary to almost double the system's flow capacity - has now been completed. Grants of \$26,995 from the Friends and \$20,000 from our Trust Fund have now been made to cover the cost of this work.

The interests of our Members are many and varied, posing quite a challenge for the Activities Committee, the members of which work so hard to arrange each quarter's activities program. Most of the Winter activities proved very popular - a number were booked out and John Patrick willingly agreed to give his talk 'Gardens, Villages and Chateaux of the French Riviera, Provence and the Dordogne' twice to meet the demand.

We thank John very much for doing this. Thank you and congratulations to the Activities Committee who richly deserve such success. The program for this quarter is a very exciting one offering a large number of things from which to choose.

In this issue you will also find invitations to several art exhibitions (including requests for volunteers to help run these), and more news about the work of the Herbarium. The rest of this year promises to be very busy for all of us and I commend the many opportunities to support the Gardens to all Friends. There is much available to us to enrich our lives.

Irwin Newman, President

Annual General Meeting

The Friends' Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday 10 November 2003.

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 Janet Thomson (Vice-President), Richard Smith (Secretary) and Susan Brookes, Judy Jarman, Dr Richard Kirsner, (Ordinary Members) are due to retire but are eligible for re-election. Nominations should be received by 10 October 2003.



Notes from Gate Lodge

While most people hibernate during winter, quite the opposite occurs in the Friends' Office, with volunteers turning out come hail, come shine to service the large number of renewals. When the Friends first came into being, membership fell due in June, and it wasn't until quite recently that it was decided to make membership valid for a year from the month of joining, thus giving better value to Members while spreading the renewals throughout the year. As a consequence, more than one quarter of our Members still renew their memberships during June and the sight of the Australia Post van heralds an overflowing letterbox. Joan Murphy and Rosemary McMeekin come in each Friday to attend to the bookwork associated with all these renewals before Elizabeth Fincher diligently files away the forms which provide a valuable reference source for our office staff.

Other volunteers also provide great support on an irregular basis in the office completing time-consuming but nevertheless essential duties. The mailing of *Botanic News* requires a great deal of preparation. After volunteers have labelled all the envelopes, Joan Murphy sorts them into postcode order and groups them into manageable bundles. Without this work the Friends would be unable to receive the substantial discount from Australia Post. Finally, our wonderful group of packing volunteers spends a morning packing newsletters into the labelled envelopes for despatch to Members.

Our volunteers are great company. They are a wonderfully cheerful, willing and enthusiastic group of people and on behalf of the Friends, my heartfelt thanks go out to each and every one of them.

Virginia Henderson

FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

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Cover: Detail from *Erythrina crista-galli* by Anita Barley

Photos: Meg Miller



Flying-foxes

I'm pleased to report that the Royal Botanic Gardens has continued to remain free of flying-foxes since the dispersal program commenced, and signs of recovery and regrowth are evident in Fern Gully. Through the continued efforts of contractors and dedicated volunteers a second flying-fox dispersal program commenced in mid-June to encourage bats away from CBD parklands and towards Horseshoe Bend. Large-scale dispersal will cease at the end of July ahead of the onset of the flying-fox breeding season, but dispersal will be maintained at RBG Melbourne to prevent the colony being re-established.

The support and commitment of the Melbourne Friends has been invaluable and greatly appreciated by the Royal Botanic Gardens.

Australian Garden

We are at a very exciting stage in the development of the Australian Garden, with the landscape design recently finalised and tenders received. It is anticipated that landscape construction will commence in early Spring and take approximately 12 months to complete. Construction of the Entry Orientation Shelter was recently completed, providing a fantastic meeting point and information source for the Australian Garden, and the design of the Visitor Centre is in its final exciting stages. Meanwhile, plant production has continued and planting will occur progressively over the next nine months.

ARCUE Symposia and Workshops

Following ARCUE's symposium entitled *Comparative Ecology of Cities and Towns: Opportunities and Limitations*, held as part of the International Association of Landscape Ecologists (IALE) World Congress in Darwin, ARCUE also organised and hosted an international workshop held at the School of Botany, involving leading urban ecologists (supported by the Baker Foundation and the U.S. Geological Survey) to facilitate further discussion and comparative research. The series was wrapped up in July with a public open forum held at The University of Melbourne to raise awareness amongst students, policy makers and the general public of the role of ecological science in contributing to sustainable development.

National Herbarium of Victoria's Sesquicentennial Celebrations

The Herbarium's sesquicentennial year is proving to be a very busy one, with several conferences being held in celebration of this milestone.

The **Second National Fungimap Conference** held at Rawson in May was a great success, with 90 attending from around Australia and overseas. The conference extended over five days with presentations, fungi forays and workshops, further strengthening the community-based mapping project.

Joint conference celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the Herbarium 29 September to 3 October, 2003

In celebration of the sesquicentennial anniversary of the Herbarium and of systematic botany in Australia, this joint conference is held under the auspices of the Royal Botanic Gardens, the School of Botany at The University of Melbourne, the Australian Systematic Botany Society, and the Australasian Mycological Society.

Further information is available on the Royal Botanic Gardens' website at: <http://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/conferences/index.html>

Associated events of the conference include:

- **Orchid Conservation Forum II** at Mueller Hall, RBGM, 25 – 27 September, 2003. The forum will focus on the progress made in recent years in the field of orchid conservation in Australia, including the increasingly diverse programs of research and improvements in management practices of natural orchid populations.

Further information is available on the Royal Botanic Gardens' website at: <http://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/conferences/orchidforum/index.html>

- **Seventh Australasian Bryophyte Workshop** at Rawson, 4 - 9 October, 2003, in conjunction with a workshop being held by the Australasian Mycological Society, both of which are supported by the Royal Botanic Gardens.

FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

Australia's Virtual Herbarium Milestone

Yet another significant milestone for the Herbarium this year is the databasing of the 500,000th specimen in July. The AVH project is making fantastic progress, and is well on its way to providing access via the internet to the wealth of information held in the NHV's collection, and also in the collections of Australia's other major herbaria involved in the collaborative project.

Botanic Gardens of Australia and New Zealand (BGANZ) Inaugural Congress 2003

The BGANZ Inaugural Congress, *Botanic Gardens: Engaging Their Communities*, will be hosted by the City of Greater Geelong and Council of Heads of Australian Botanic Gardens, 24 – 28 October, 2003, in Geelong.

The congress will examine the contemporary issues facing Botanic Gardens and Arboreta in Australasia today in order to maintain their relevance to their communities and importance in the 21st century. Four streams will form the basis of the congress:

- Heritage Planning and Protection
- Conservation and Science
- Community Networking
- Horticulture and Arboriculture

Key-note speakers include Dr Peter Wyse Jackson, Secretary General of Botanic Gardens Conservation International; Ray Tonkin, Director of Heritage Victoria; Dr Gregory Moore, Principal and Head of Burnley College of the Institute of Land and Food Resources, University of Melbourne; and Dr Pamille Berg.

Philip Moors, Director



Simply Delicious

Our catering committee members are sharing some of their favourite 'Morning Tea' and 'Savoury Treats' recipes. This small recipe book with an easy wipe cover will provide you with many delicious ideas. Cost: \$10 per copy, available from the office and at our functions. This would make a great Christmas present!

STAFF PROFILE



Photo: Meg Miller

Judy Ryan

Choosing a favourite plant is a difficult decision for Judy Ryan, Volunteers' Co-ordinator at the National Herbarium of Victoria. Judy sees more plant species in a year than most people would see in a lifetime. Responsible for managing 40 volunteers who between them mounted 18,000 specimens last year alone, Judy finds inspiration in this dedicated group of people. With a great variety of experiences and backgrounds, they faithfully return each week, and in recent times have risen to the challenge of mounting a certain quota each week as they assist the Australian Virtual Herbarium (AVH) team which is mounting and recording on a database the entire Australian section of the Victorian State Collection housed in the Herbarium.

Judy, who was born in New Zealand, started her career as a primary teacher before travelling overseas and working mainly as a nanny. A visit to a friend in Australia changed her life when she met her husband Graham and settled in Melbourne. More travel followed when Graham obtained a job for five years on Ocean Island, a phosphate island in the Central Pacific. Here Judy worked as a relieving teacher whilst enjoying the tropical lifestyle. After two years back in Australia, they were off again for three years to live on Christmas Island, another phosphate island in the Indian Ocean. This time Judy was employed as an information officer for a mining company.

Finally back in Australia and choosing to live at Queenscliff, Judy decided to pursue her long-held interest in plants by working in a nursery at Wallington on the Bellarine Peninsula. During this time Judy studied part-time for the Certificate of Applied Science (Horticulture) at Burnley College. After seven years at the Wallington nursery, Judy moved to a nursery in Geelong and then moved on to Stoneacres nursery in Drysdale.

During this time Judy became a volunteer at the Herbarium, and after three years joined the staff as a part-time mounter for the JT Reid Program. When an opportunity arose to relieve the Volunteers' Co-ordinator, Judy applied successfully and not long after was appointed to the position when it became vacant. That was 15 months ago and Judy is still in awe of the diversity and volume of the Herbarium's collection, the age of the specimens and the links to the early botanists and plant collectors.

When Judy is not at the Herbarium she enjoys life in Queenscliff, pottering around in the garden surrounding her Victorian house, riding her bike, snow skiing or curling up with a good book.

Wendy Dwyer

THE REDS ARE COMING!

Photo: Rob Cross



Doryanthes excelsa FLOWERING IN BUSHLAND NEAR GOSFORD, NSW

Developing *Doryanthes excelsa* as a stunning new cut flower crop

One of the most spectacular Australian plants you'll see growing anywhere is the Gymea Lily, otherwise known as *Doryanthes excelsa* Corrêa; a member of the Doryanthaceae family which is most closely related to the Iris family Iridaceae. It is indigenous to the New South Wales central coast between Newcastle and Wollongong and there is even a population north-west of Coff's Harbour. *D. excelsa* is one of two species, the other being *D. palmeri* which looks remarkably similar in appearance. *D. excelsa* differs from *D. palmeri* because its flower spike, called a scape, is upright whereas in *D. palmeri*

it is arched. It is the inflorescence which makes *D. excelsa* so spectacular. Rising above the sword-shaped bright green leaves between June and November are long scapes measuring four or more metres in height, upon which

aboriginals roasting the inflorescences for eating, and roasting the roots for use in a "sort of cake" which was eaten cold. In the early twentieth century, scientists investigated the species for paper and fibre manufacturing

planted in Sydney's public landscapes and Olympic sports facilities to be admired by the athletes and sports enthusiasts. Individual inflorescence spikes have been sold for as much as \$80 a piece, reflecting an international interest in Australian flora and the beauty of this species in particular.

There is, however, a problem with the increasing demand for Gymea Lilies; bush harvesting is totally unsustainable and at present, the majority of inflorescences are picked from the bush. Although Gymea Lilies are currently not endangered, the demand for flowers and the loss of native habitat through urbanisation does put pressure on the *Doryanthes* populations. Illegal harvesting and theft of seed is also an ongoing problem. Plantation

The foliage of this species can be as tall as 2 metres and the plant can reach about 2 metres in width

rests up to 150 bright red flowers. The foliage of this species can be as tall as 2 metres and the plant can reach about 2 metres in width.

There has long been interest in *Doryanthes excelsa*. In his travel diary published in 1836 as *A Narrative of a Visit to the Australian Colonies*, James Bakehouse observed

as well as for its saponin content. Today, it is of interest for its floricultural potential.

In recent years the flowers of the Gymea Lily have been sought for the international cut flower market for use in large floral displays in hotel foyers and shopping centres. Prior to the last Olympic Games, hundreds of Gymea Lilies were

THE REDS ARE COMING!

Photo: Rob Cross



FLORAL DETAIL of *D. excelsa*. THE INFLORESCENCE CAN HOLD UP TO 150 FLOWERS.

establishment is required. To ensure that they have the uniform crop that the market demands, horticulturists often plant clones. Asexual propagation of *Doryanthes* can be achieved through the division of plants but this is

environment on an artificial agar-based medium *in vitro*. It is a relatively inexpensive way of propagating large numbers although it is a more complex procedure than traditional propagation methods. The amount of

The ideal way to clone *Doryanthes* is through a process called micropropagation.

a difficult and very slow process because of the large size and deep root system of this species. The ideal way to clone *Doryanthes* is through a process called micropropagation.

Micropropagation is a laboratory-based technique where disease-free clones are propagated in a controlled

source material required to initiate the process is small in comparison to traditional asexual propagation techniques. But critically, it allows the horticulturist to control most aspects of the environment more precisely.

Experiments have been conducted at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne

in the pursuit of a satisfactory micropropagation method for *Doryanthes excelsa*, initially for an Honours project and now as part of my PhD studies at the Institute of Land and Food Resources (ILFR) at the University of Melbourne. The research is supported by the Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation (a Commonwealth government agency) and the Royal Botanic Gardens.

So far developing the micropropagation method has been challenging with unpredictable instances of success, an experience shared with other growers. Future trials to develop a reliable and reproducible method will assess the use of carbohydrates and hormones in the micropropagation medium, and environmental variables such

as light and gaseous exchange in the culture tubes. The use of propagation material sourced from different parts of the plant will also be examined.

In aid of the species' conservation, a second component of the project is aimed at assessing the genetic diversity within and between wild populations of *Doryanthes excelsa*. An understanding of the diversity of this species will assist in the management of the remaining natural populations. This research may have taxonomic implications as well.

If the Gymea Lily can be rapidly propagated, it will allow for the establishment of large plantations of this beautiful and potentially high-value crop. This would enable Australia to export significant volumes of cut flowers, which would create jobs and support rural industries. And just as importantly, it would protect the wild populations from future commercial and illegal exploitation so that coming generations can also enjoy the spectacle of seeing hundreds of Gymea Lilies in flower amongst the gum trees in our native bushland areas.

Adam M. Dimech

Adam Dimech is a PhD student at the Institute of Land and Food Resources, University of Melbourne. He is supervised by Dr. Paul Taylor and Dr. Rebecca Ford (ILFR) and Mr. Rob Cross of the Royal Botanic Gardens. Adam can be contacted via email at: a.dimech@adonline.id.au

ACTIVITIES



Gardens, Villages and Chateaux of the French Riviera, Provence and the Dordogne

REPEAT ILLUSTRATED TALK

by John Patrick

Thursday 18 September
at 6.15 for 7.00 pm.
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium
Cost: \$20.00 Friends \$15.00
Bookings essential
RSVP by Thursday 11 September
on enclosed booking form

John will retrace the journey he took in May this year and introduce us to the extraordinary diversity of natural and human landscapes of Southern France, from the rugged, sun-drenched Riviera coast to the deep gorges and

craggy hilltops of the Dordogne. John's accompanying slides will reflect the visual feast he experienced, which was enriched by encounters with the owners of the private gardens and estates.



Heathlands at Cranbourne

Self-drive BYO picnic and tours
Wednesday 24 September at 10.30 sharp
Oasis Horticulture, 2320 South Gippsland Highway, cnr North Road, (Melway Ref: 143 C1)
Cost: \$20.00
RSVP by Wednesday 17 September
on enclosed booking form

Friends of both Melbourne and Cranbourne have combined to host this picnic and tour timed to coincide with the flowering of the heathlands at Cranbourne.

We will meet at Oasis Horticulture, a wholesale nursery that is a major supplier of seedlings and bloomer pots, where we will be shown their operation.

Next we'll drive to the RBG Cranbourne (Melway Ref: 134 A10) where, after parking, we

will meet in the Stringybark Picnic area. (BYO picnic or barbeque. Cranbourne friends will provide after lunch tea, coffee and slices.) During lunch Chris Russell, the General Manager of RBG Cranbourne, will talk about the Gardens and the development of the new Australian Garden. We will then be taken on a tour of the heathlands and to the site of the new Australian Garden.



Nature's Survivors: The Secret Life of Ferns

ILLUSTRATED TALK

by Dr Terry Turney, FTSE, FRACI

Tuesday 7 October at 10.30 for 11.00 am.
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium
Morning tea will be served before the talk
Cost: \$17.00 Friends \$12.00
RSVP by Friday 3 October
on enclosed booking form

Dr Turney, Director of the CSIRO Nanotechnology Centre, has had an interest in fern growing and taxonomy for more than 20 years and was formerly Vice President of the Fern Society of Victoria.

Ferns and their allies have thrived for more than 300 million years. About 12,000 species currently occupy niches in most parts of the earth. Terry's talk will look at the

reasons behind their success story. The greatest challenge to their survival comes from current habitat clearance. However they are often easy to grow and propagate and, with some care, a wide range can readily be cultivated in Victoria.

ACTIVITIES



New Members Welcome

Thursday 9 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. After 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.

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, 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, you are warmly invited as well - please call our office on 9650 6398.



Yarra Valley Garden and Winery Tour

All-day Bus Tour
Tuesday 28 October 9.00am sharp, returning approx 5.30pm
Leaving from outside the Theatre Complex, Arts Centre
Cost: \$55.00
RSVP by Monday 20 October on enclosed booking form

First, we'll visit the Nieuwesteeg Rose Nursery in Coldstream, holder of the Ornamental Plant Conservation Association of Australia's representative Alistair Clarke collection in a marvellous garden setting including 100,000 roses for your enjoyment. Morning tea will be served here.

The next visit is to the Wallace garden showing clipped hedges of *Rosa rugosa* 'Scabrosa' among their delights. The Wallaces market

daffodils and salad sprouts. A sandwich lunch will be provided at this stop.

After lunch we will visit Meg Bentley's garden which features the OPCA Salvia collection. The garden contains many unusual perennials and some of these will be offered for sale at this stop. Then, before heading home, we will visit the De Bortoli winery for a tour and tasting in their delightful garden setting.



The Challenge and Application of Conserving Biodiversity in Melbourne

ILLUSTRATED TALK
by Mark McDonnell,
Director of ARCUE

Thursday 30 October at 10.15 for 11.00 am.
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium
Morning tea will be served before the talk Cost: \$17.00 Friends \$12.00
RSVP by Thursday 23 October on enclosed booking form

The preservation and sound management of urban natural areas are crucial to maintaining biodiversity. Urban growth has already produced significant environmental impacts, with dozens of plant species from the Melbourne region now locally extinct. In addition, it has resulted in the creation of new types of habitat and has changed the flux of nutrients and energy.

Dr Mark McDonnell is a pioneering researcher into the ecology of urban and

suburban environments. He has been the Director of the Australian Research Centre for Urban Ecology (ARCUE), a Division of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, since it was created in 1998. Dr McDonnell will speak on the work being undertaken by ARCUE staff and students and how this aids the management and conservation of biodiversity in and around Melbourne.

ACTIVITIES



Rose Gardens in Mount Waverley

Self-drive garden visit
Saturday 15 November
at 2.00 pm sharp
'Haddon' 28 Bruce Street
Mount Waverley
Cost: \$25.00 FRIENDS ONLY.
Limit: 30 people
RSVP by Monday 10 November
on enclosed booking form

Two Friends' gardens are on private view, both of which have previously opened for the Australian Open Garden Scheme. At 'Haddon' Diana Fickling will show us around her cottage style garden planted with more than 200 roses. Diana's special interests are heritage and shrub roses, companion planting and photographing roses.

Next we'll drive to 'Arcadia' at 61 Kemp Avenue, where, following afternoon tea, Murray and Val Pile will conduct us around their garden with more than 200 roses, clematis, perennials and bulbs and a formal topiary.



The Long River of Ikebana

Thursday 20 November
at 10.30am sharp
Kazari Gallery,
290 Malvern Road, Prahran
Cost: \$15.00 FRIENDS ONLY
Limit 20 People
RSVP by Monday 17 November
on enclosed booking form

Beth Higgs, founding President of the Friends and an ikebana authority, is organising an exhibition tracing the history of ikebana at the Kazari Gallery. Ikebana, the ancient art of Japanese flower arrangement, evolved over centuries as a response to natural forms, incorporating

both Buddhist and Shinto beliefs. Selection and placement of individual elements such as cut stems, leaves and flowers transforms them from nature to art. Beth invites us to a special morning tea, overview and guided tour of the exhibition.



Fit Friends' Ramble Birrarung Marr and Federation Square

Wednesday 26 November
at 9.30 am sharp
Gate Lodge, Birdwood Avenue
Cost: \$20.00 Friends \$15.00
RSVP by Wednesday 19 November
on enclosed booking form

Join the newly formed Friends Walking Group, created to take advantage of some of the fantastic longer walk opportunities Melbourne has to offer. All walkers must wear good walking shoes, and be fit enough to keep up a reasonable pace.

We will meet at Gate Lodge and walk through the Gardens to the Yarra, follow the river to the Swan Street Bridge and

cross over to Birrarung Marr, Melbourne's first new major parkland in more than 100 years. At Federation Square we can purchase morning tea, followed by a tour of the four Indigenous Galleries in the Ian Potter Centre. You may leave the walk at Federation Square. The main group will return to Gate Lodge through the Domain by 1.30 pm.

ACTIVITIES



Spring Quarterly Insiders Walk Herbarium Anniversary Tours

Friday 28 November
at 10.30 am, 10.45 am and
11.00 am (Meet 10 minutes
before tour departure time)
Visitors' Centre,
Observatory Gate Site
Cost: \$7.00 FRIENDS ONLY

The Voluntary Guides have developed a tour to recount the history of the Herbarium and botany in Victoria in celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Herbarium. Special exhibits from the Herbarium collections will trace the advances in botanical science from von Mueller's day to the present.

Each of the tours is limited to 10-12 people. Tour times will be assigned in order of bookings received.

RSVP by 21 November on enclosed booking form. Payment and a stamped addressed envelope must be enclosed. Your booking and tour time will be confirmed by post.



Nature's Art Revealed

150 Years of Botanical Art
at the National Herbarium
of Victoria 1853-2003
Wednesday 10 December
at 10.00 am sharp
Gate Lodge, Birdwood Avenue
Cost: \$15.00 FRIENDS ONLY
RSVP by Wednesday 3 December
on enclosed booking form

As part of the celebration of the National Herbarium's 150th anniversary year, the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, presents an exhibition of works from the State Botanical Collection at Domain House, formerly the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art. Some of Australia's finest botanical art, with works dating from the 18th Century, will be on show

for the first time. The exhibition will highlight the important role botanical artists play in the conservation and preservation work undertaken by Herbarium staff.

Morning tea will be served at Gate Lodge before a guided tour of the exhibition



ART LOVERS Appeal for Volunteers to Staff Two Exhibitions of Botanical Art

Interested volunteers should contact the Friends' office on 9650 6398 to join the rosters for these exhibitions.

ZEN SALAD:

30 September to 12 October
An exhibition of botanical illustrations highlighting the beauty of mosses and other bryophytes will be displayed in the Eastern Transit Room from 30th September to 12th October, 2003. This exhibition is being held by the Friends and the VIIth Australasian Bryophyte Workshop as part of the joint Botanical Conference for the 150th Celebration of the National Herbarium of Victoria.

NATURE'S ART REVEALED:

26 November to 17 December
Some of Australia's finest botanical art from The State Botanical Collection will be on show for the first time at a very special exhibition being held to mark the 150th anniversary of the National Herbarium. The exhibition will be on display in Domain House from 20 November to 17 December.

ILLUSTRATORS



The Illustrated Garden

Marta Salamon's wonderful painting of *Telopea speciosissima* (Waratah) was selected to be included in the Friends Illustrated Garden collection.

In her work Marta aims to represent plants throughout their seasonal cycles. After her visits to Perth, Western Australia's intensely brilliant kangaroo paws and graceful Gungurra eucalypts engendered a deep enthusiasm for painting and drawing indigenous flora. The sculptural form of the Waratah and its rich colour is a favourite.

Marta Salamon first stumbled upon botanical illustration when she was a Fine Arts student at Melbourne University. It wasn't until 1992, however, when she saw the finesse of paintings in the Friends' biennial *Art of Botanical Illustration* exhibition that she was encouraged to discover more about this art form.

Inspired, Marta spent many diligent yet enjoyable hours studying plants and the techniques of botanical art with her teacher Jenny Phillips. She now exhibits her work biennially in the Friends' exhibition, and has also exhibited at the Eltham Wiregrass Gallery, The Geelong Regional Gallery and at the The Botanical Art School of Melbourne. Two of her works were reproduced in the 2001 National Trust Diary.

2003 has proved to be a busy year for Marta: she has so far participated in an exhibition of Botanical Art at the 'Mill' as part of the Castlemaine Festival, exhibited in the prestigious Dominique Segan Drawing Prize and in north-east Victoria's Autumn Festival.

Marta doesn't have to venture far from home to be inspired, however. The local botanic gardens in her hometown of Williamstown are an invaluable source of ideas.

In September, Marta will combine her interest in art history, indigenous flora, knowledge of botanical art and years of teaching experience to present a series of four botanical art workshops at the Melbourne Museum. These will include a historical overview of Botanical Art and some drawing and painting, featuring plants in the Museum's Malari Garden.

Rita Parkinson

Dianne Emery's Term 4 Classes

Will commence in the week beginning 13 October:
Tuesdays 6.15 - 8.45pm;
Wednesdays 10.00am - 12.30pm and 12.30pm - 3.00pm;
Fridays 10.30am - 1.30pm;
Saturdays 1.00pm - 3.30pm;
(conducted by Mali Moir)
Please note that there will be a small increase in term fees, effective Term 4 as follows:
2.5 hr classes: \$220 incl. GST, Friends \$195 incl. GST
3 hr classes: \$260 incl. GST, Friends \$230 incl. GST
For further information and enrolment, ring Dianne on 9523 5397

Learn to Paint Floral/ Botanical on Silk

These classes will be conducted by Mali Moir on Mondays beginning 13 October for eight weeks, from 10.00am - 12.30pm.

This class is designed for beginners and botanical artists who want either a challenge in a new medium or to relax with a freer painting style. Beautiful finished work can be achieved quickly. Make exquisite scarves, artworks for framing, colour your own pieces for patchwork and dress lengths.

Cost incl. GST: \$220 (Friends: \$195) plus approx \$50 for materials. For more information please contact Mali Moir on 9822 8198 or the Friends' office on 9650 6398

Computer Botanica ILLUSTRATED TALK

by Marina Albert

Tuesday 14 October at 10.00 for 10.30 am
Whirling Room, Great Melbourne Telescope Building
Observatory Gate Site, Birdwood Avenue
Morning tea will be served before the talk
Cost: \$5.50
RSVP to Friends' office on 9650 6398

Marina Albert, one of our Botanical Illustrators, will talk about the new technologies that can be used by botanical artists. Using examples, she will demonstrate how these tools can offer the artist new approaches to the selection, recording, planning, composition and production of their works.

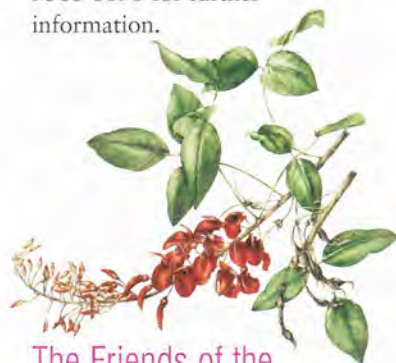
Whirlybirds

The Whirlybirds are a group of botanical artists who meet each Tuesday in the Whirling Room Studio.

An informal and supportive atmosphere is enjoyed by all who spend the day painting, sharing ideas and solving problems arising from their common interest - botanical illustration.

If you are a botanical illustrator Member of the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens and would like to join this group, you will be very welcome.

Contact Miriam Blight on 9583 6098 for further information.



The Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne 2003 Christmas Card.

This is the second illustration to be published as part of the Friends' *Illustrated Garden* collection featuring specimen plants from the Royal Botanic Gardens. The elegant card features a full colour detail from an illustration by artist Anita Barley of *Erythrina crista-galli* growing near the National Herbarium on the Western Lawn. See enclosed flyer for more information.

ILLUSTRATORS

Painting: Karen Dix



Bryophyte

ZEN SALAD: An Exhibition of Botanical Illustrations Highlighting the Beauty of Mosses and other Bryophytes

Eastern Transit Room
Observatory Building,
Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne
30 September until 12 October
Open: 10.00am until 4.30pm every day

The title of the exhibition is drawn from the appreciation and culture of moss in Zen gardens for over 1000 years. Bryophytes - including mosses, liverworts and hornworts - may well have started out as invaders of simple, symbolic rock gardens but they have grown on and become incorporated as a bit of Zen Salad, subtle enough to season the austerity of the dry rocks. Too often in Western gardens mosses and other bryophytes have been regarded as weeds and, with a few notable exceptions, are rarely given a second glance, if they are tolerated at all.

In order to highlight the beauty and importance of this much overlooked group of plants, this exhibition is being held by The Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and The VIIth Australasian Bryophyte Workshop, as part of the joint Botanical Conference for the 150th Celebration of the National Herbarium of Victoria.

The Bryophytes will be celebrated with a collection of exquisite, original artwork by some of Australasia's finest Botanical Illustrators, including Celia Rosser who illustrated "The Mosses of Southern Australia" before embarking on her monumental work on the genus *Banksia*. Many of the works have been produced specifically for this exhibition. The plants depicted are tiny, challenging subjects and the artwork exhibited is a credit to the skill and dedication of the artists. It is hoped that through their eyes the viewers of these illustrations will see these plants in a new light, both on the large and small scale, and recognise them as important contributors to the ecology of the diverse habitats they occupy, not only where they are obvious in the lush carpets they form in our wettest forests but also in the nearly invisible components of the soil crusts of the arid zones of Australia.

Celia Rosser will open the exhibition at a reception to be held on Monday 29 September from 6.30pm until 8.30pm.

A gold coin donation would be appreciated; most work will be for sale.



Display and Sale of Small Works of Botanical Art

Eastern Transit Room,
Observatory Building
Sunday 23 November
from 10.30am to 3.00pm

Once again, the Botanical Illustrators are presenting a display and sale of small mounted, but unframed, works in a variety of subjects and styles for Members and their friends to view and purchase. They will represent the wide diversity of skills of our students and more experienced artists and would be ideal for Christmas gifts or for your own collection.

The works will be shown in an informal setting in the Eastern Transit Room of the Observatory Building (situated at the left of the Observatory Café when entering from Birdwood Avenue opposite the Shrine.)

Notice to Artists

We invite all artist members to participate in this one day sale of unframed work. If you are including work please note the following conditions and instructions:

- there is no selection process
- work is left at owner's risk. The Friends will not accept responsibility for any loss or damage
- all work up to and including A3 in size will be accepted
- mount and cover work in shrink-wrap or cellophane

- label each work on the reverse side with the artist's name, address, phone number and sale price, inclusive of 30% commission
- deliver work to the Eastern Transit Room in the Observatory Building after 9.30 am but before noon on Sunday November 23
- collect unsold work by 4.00pm on Sunday or, if necessary, between 10.00am and 1.00pm from the Friends' office the following day.

If you have time to help on the day, please let us know. Phone Edyta Hoxley on 9761 9711 after 6 October for offers of help, and more information.

Nature's Art Revealed

150 Years of Botanical Art at the National Herbarium of Victoria. 1853-2003

Thursday 26 November to
Wednesday 17 December from
10.00am to 4.00pm

Domain House (formerly Australian Centre for Contemporary Art),
Dallas Brookes Drive, South Yarra

The exhibition will feature some of Australia's finest botanical art, with over 100 items on display. It will include original artwork never before displayed to the public, and also showcase original artwork by some of Australia's finest contemporary botanical artists including Anita Barley, Betty Conabere, Enid Mayfield, Mali Moir, Su Pearson, Margaret Stones, Celia Rosser and Helene Wild. A series of guided walks will be held during the exhibition to highlight the relevance of botanical art to the scientific and conservation work of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne.

Membership

From early March of this year, The Terrace Tearooms and Reception Centre by the lake has been under new management. Members received a flyer in our last issue of Botanic News with a special introductory offer. Sean Zajac, the new Manager, has confirmed that Members of the Friends will be welcomed to the Tearooms with the *extraordinary price of \$1.70 for tea or coffee* and a 10% discount off other purchases on presentation of a current Membership Card. Well worth the stroll! Sean has also offered this magnificent venue at special rates to Members wishing to book mid-week functions or winter weddings. Of interest to Member 'social secretaries' is that The Tearooms are expanding their catering expertise to provide hampers for onsite or offsite morning and afternoon teas and lunches. As the Friends are hoping to 'spread our berth' (figuratively speaking) we would welcome younger Members joining. If you know any young romantics, impoverished students or are seeking good value, The Terrace Tearooms' support is worth noting. Don't forget to present your Membership card.

A reminder that the Growing Friends recently introduced Gift Certificates as presents for Members to give to relatives or friends. The certificates may be of interest to you next time you are visiting the Nursery (open to Members on Fridays between 10.00am and 1.00pm). While the Nursery stock changes between Public Sales, there are consistently rare and

unusual plants available for the more discerning gardeners. Guidance is available for all gardeners. Plants in stock include tough, drought-tolerant species and those conducive to xeric planting.

We hope you enjoy Spring in Melbourne. Don't you love this city? With the enthusiasm of a new season's growth, remember to 'spread the word' and recommend a splendid friend to The Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Inc.

Pamela J. Eames
Membership Committee

Travelling Birds

On Wednesday 11 June, courtesy of Hopscotch Films, Friends filled the Rivoli Theatre to see an advance screening of 'Travelling Birds'. This astonishing film, which took three years to make, documents the biannual migration of birds across the globe. Cameras mounted on hot air balloons, ultra-light aircraft and remote controlled gliders captured birds in flight over seven continents and made us feel we were sharing the dangers of their long journeys. We looked down on the land and seascapes below as the birds followed their courses over deserts, mountains, sweeping plains and icy wastes. We witnessed extraordinary courtship dances and the hazardous life of the fledglings. The restrained and unobtrusive commentary allowed us to feel we were really there. The evening was a wonderful experience and we left the theatre feeling quite exhilarated.

Judy Jarman



Growing Friends

The Growing Friends Spring Sale will be held on Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 October and will feature many drought tolerant and hardy succulents, natives, iris, trees, shrubs and perennials. We look forward to seeing you there. Remember that Friday morning sales are now embargoed from 19 September until two weeks after the sale.

After the Autumn sale we donated sixteen boxes of unsold plants to the Gardens for stock replenishment and enhancement and were pleased to be able to make this further contribution to the Gardens.

Our nursery is situated between gates E and F off Birdwood Avenue and is entered to the left of the Gardens' service and storage area, called the 'Trades Entrance' in Melway's. The plant stock is raised by a group of 32 volunteers. Although the Gardens remains our primary

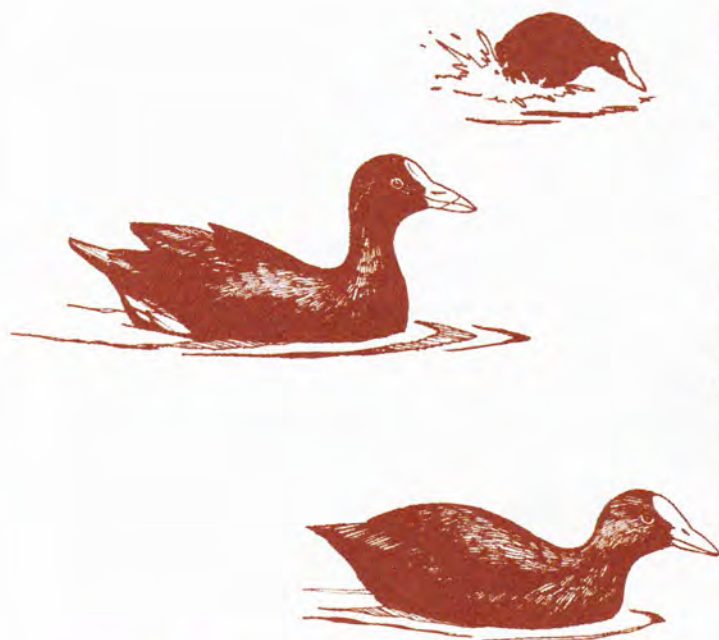
source of propagation material, other sources are important in aggregate. A recent donation of some carnivorous plants has been nurtured and should be ready for the Spring Sale.

We would welcome similar donations from private collections of rare and unusual plants. Offers should be directed to the Convenor, Growing Friends, at Gate Lodge. The material would be assessed by our Horticultural Committee which is concerned with issues such as:

- Exact identification of material entering the nursery
- Requirements of these plants and the best methods of caring for them
- Weed potential of the plant in Australian conditions
- Possible plant rights problems
- Any wild-collected royalty implications

Thus our quality and standards are maintained.

Colin Herbert, Convenor



Illustrations: Andrew Plant Photo: Meg Miller



Botanic Birds

Following a request from Peter Symes, Senior Curator, Horticulture, the Friends have joined in a long term study of water-bird species and numbers on the Lake System of the Royal Botanic Gardens. The aim of the project is to keep track of the numbers of birds throughout the year, and to identify changes in the population over an extended period of time. Preliminary counting began in March this year with three counters. This has grown to five and we would welcome additional volunteers to help with this work.

Ideally, counting should take place at fortnightly intervals, and our experience so far suggests that it takes about an hour. This might take a little longer in the summer when, hopefully, the bird population increases. The Friends' office can supply forms for recording purposes.

Since the boundaries of the Royal Botanic Gardens have remained unchanged for the past 150 years, it is the ideal place to survey changes to flora and fauna and recent management strategies for the Lake System aim to improve its biodiversity and water quality. As part of this, significant areas of indigenous and aquatic planting are being established. They will provide habitat for a diverse range of fauna including birds.

Positive signs include the first appearance for many years of the Little Grassbird and the return of Red-rumped Parrots.

Although it is early days, it is obvious that the continued drought and low water levels have had an impact on water-bird life. For example, numbers of ducks and duck species seem well down at present and swans did not breed at all in the last breeding

Positive signs include the first appearance for many years of the Little Grassbird and the return of Red-rumped Parrots.

season. The "staple" population of Black Duck seems very low with only two birds seen on a recent count, yet the appearance of a Musk Duck on a couple of occasions is particularly unusual and the poor conditions may have contributed to its presence. Whilst the numbers of most bird species have decreased, as we would expect in winter, the numbers of Dusky Moorhen and Austral-

asian Coot remain strong.

One of the issues to overcome is the artificial feeding of birdlife, which can harm the birds, reduce the water quality and increase populations of only a few species to the detriment of overall diversity.

If you are able to assist with counting, even on a casual basis, please contact David Plant on 9857 6006.

Tony Delves & David Plant

Cranbourne Friends

CHRISTMAS BREAK-UP

The Cranbourne Friends' Christmas break-up will be held on Sunday, 14 December, commencing at 4.30 pm.

As with the past two years, this will take the form of a BYO barbeque or picnic tea, and we will again have the popular 'Jazz Doctors' playing. Please join us...

FEATHERED FRIENDS

You are invited to come along and learn about the birds of Cranbourne. We meet on the second Saturday of every month, at 9 am, at the Stringybark picnic area, and we finish at about noon. BYO binoculars and something to drink.

To make a booking, ring Dawn Neylan on 5996 3073 or the Cranbourne Gardens Office on 5990 2200.

THE PRESS GANG

Collect, press and mount specimens of all plants found within the Cranbourne Gardens. They welcome any Friends who might enjoy collecting and studying plants, and practising the fine art of botanical mounting. Linda Moon's group meets on the second Sunday of every month from 9.00 am-1.30 pm approx. and is still short on numbers. Call Linda Moon on (h) 5996 9759 (w) 9251 7472

Nola Foster's Weekday Group meets on the first Monday of every month from 9.00 am-1.30 pm approx. Call Nola Foster on (mobile) 0438 548 296 for more information.

THE GROWING FRIENDS

The Cranbourne Growing Friends have regular work sessions on the third Wednesday of every month; sessions are generally between 10.00 and 2.30 pm. You are very welcome to join in; no experience is necessary and you can learn a lot about propagating Australian plants. Come to our nursery which is situated alongside the Gardens administrative area. For further enquiries, ring the Gardens office on 5990 2200.

Dates for your Diary

Nature Personified

An exhibition of watercolours by Helen Leitch Friday 19 September to Sunday 19 October
Gordon Gallery, Geelong

Basaltica Water Wise Garden Open Days 2003

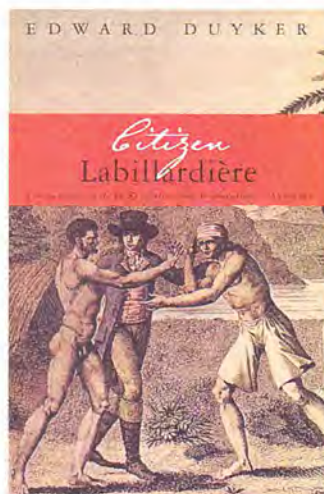
Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 October
11am – 4.00pm each day
Gate 3, 21-43 Barnes Road, Altona North (Melway Map 54, J4)
Admission Free

Road Trauma Support Team 8th Annual Open Rose Garden Weekend

Saturday 15 and Sunday 16 November, 9.00am to 4.00pm each day
Nieuwesteeg's Rose Nursery, 4 Tarrawarra Road, Coldstream (Melway Map 276, B6)
Admission \$5.00 Adults, \$2.00 children, \$3.50 pensioners

Advance Notice

Melbourne Friends' Christmas Cocktail Party
Thursday 4 December from 6.00pm to 8.00pm.
Please make a note in your diaries that the Friends will be returning to Gardens House for their Christmas celebration this year.
Booking details will be sent with the Annual Report.



Citizen Labillardiere: A Naturalist's Life in Revolution and Exploration (1755-1834)

Edward Duyker

Melbourne University Press 2003.
rrp \$59.95

Reading this account of the life and times of Jacques-Julien Houtou de la Billardiere reminds me that so much of what happens in one's life is a matter of luck. Of being at the right place at the right time!

The life of the naturalist who travelled with La Perouse and collected and named much of our own Australian flora, is a case in point.

He travelled far and wide when travel was slow and uncomfortable, under conditions unimaginable to the 21st century mind, and visited cities such as Damascus that few Europeans to that point had seen. He had a need to be free and he put himself into situations befitting an adventure story where he risked his life and limb.

His connections with the world's great naturalists meant he could have conversations with, and receive travel tips from, people like Joseph Banks.

He lived during times of social upheaval – the French Revolution – and the great growth of learning, when he could discover plants, animals and new societies, and codify them. Although he preceded Darwin by several decades, his work and collections, and those of others like him, provided the foundations for the later study of evolutionary ecology. We still use what he discovered to make sense of our world. To him we owe the name and description for the genus *Anigozanthus* – Kangaroo Paw. He also gave his name to a number of Australian animals, such as the Tasmanian scrub wallaby (*Thylogale billardieri*). The plant genus *Billardiera* that was named in his honour contains some thirty Australian species.

Edward Duyker provides fascinating details when describing plant collecting expeditions to volcanoes in the Canary islands, sea voyages in leaking boats, landscapes previously unseen by Europeans and Labillardiere's incredible thirst for discovery and knowledge. His large collection and library today form a part of the *Museo Botanico* at the University of Florence.

Travel and living conditions aside, I would love to have been this man.

Terri Kay

FRIENDS' BENEFITS BOTANIC NEWS

The Gardens Shops offer 10 percent 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
5% 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
10% discount

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: 5989 2729. 10% discount on
6-person self catering
accommodation

Blackwood Lane Gallery

24 Blackwood Lane, Gembrook
10% off paintings, prints and
commissions

Botanical Creations

122 Grange Rd, Glenhuntly
Discount on monthly Garden
Club items

BOTANIC NEWS is produced quarterly for Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Inc. which was formed to stimulate further interest in the Gardens and the National Herbarium and to support and assist them whenever possible.

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Growing Friends

Colin Herbert

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Pamela Eames

Volunteers

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