Spring 2006

BOTANIC NEWS

FRIENDS *of the* ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS MELBOURNE INC.

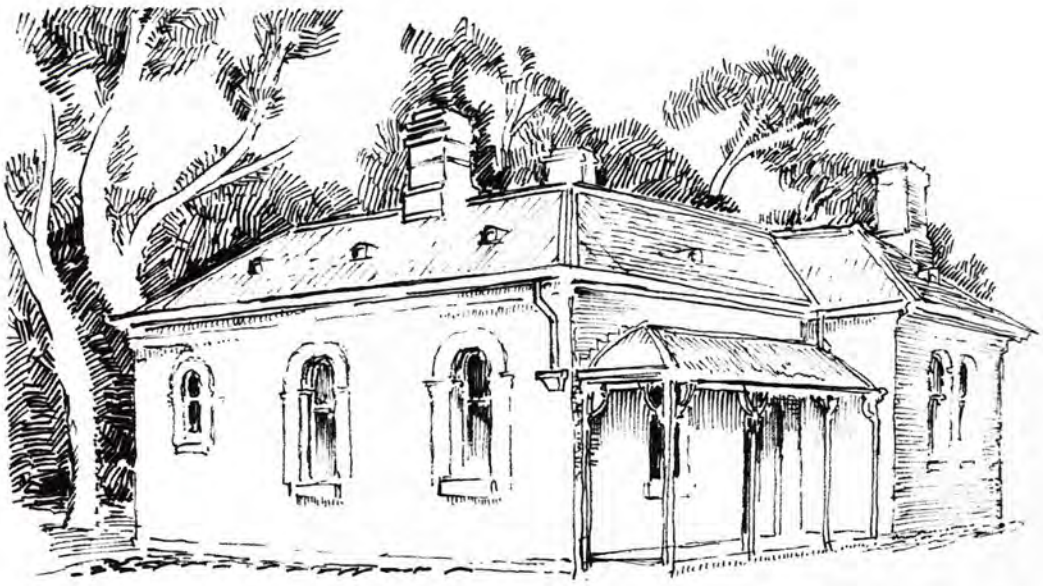
Growing Friends' Plant Sale
7–8 October 2006

The Art of Botanical Illustration Exhibition
11–26 November 2006

FROM THE PRESIDENT

All those who knew him were saddened to hear of Philip Ayton's death in May. Philip joined the Friends in 1984 and soon became a member of Council, involving himself in many aspects of the Friends' operations. Totally committed to the well-being of the Friends, Philip's business background was invaluable, particularly in his role as Convener of the Projects and Finance Committee. Philip retired from the Council in 1996 and was made an Honorary Life Member in recognition of his major contribution. On behalf of Philip's friends in the Friends I extended our sympathy to Elvala, his wife, and his family.

As I am sure many would attest, it is no easy matter running a successful Friends' group. I believe that all of us need to connect with and share experiences and ideas with other Friends' groups, even seemingly unrelated community groups, as well as with Garden managements. The value of such networking should not be underestimated. With this in mind, the Melbourne Friends are increasingly developing relationships with other groups. I have no doubt that this will benefit us all. If you are not already registered, do consider attending the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens' conference being hosted by our Cranbourne colleagues on 17-18 September. These conferences are always interesting and enjoyable and are attended by Friends' groups from most Australian states and territories. Registration forms are available at the Friends' Office.



The Council recently decided to link the Friends with the Botanic Gardens of Australia and New Zealand (BGANZ) as an Associate Member. This will bring us into closer contact with the management of many botanic gardens and other garden-minded people; BGANZ is an initiative of the Council of Heads of Australian Botanic Gardens. It is an incorporated not-for-profit association based in Canberra. Its objectives are:

- to represent the interests of botanic gardens in Australia and New Zealand
- to promote the interests and activities of botanic gardens generally, and
- to enhance the state of botanic gardens for the benefit of the community.

The BGANZ governing Council was appointed in October 2005 with Dr. Philip Moors, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, elected as inaugural President.

October and November are busy months for the Friends. I urge Members to take advantage of the opportunity to purchase a range of superbly propagated plants at the Growing Friends Spring Sale on 7 and 8 October. Also not to be missed is the Botanical Illustrators' Exhibition which runs from 11-26 November. These exhibitions seem to go from strength to strength and are becoming well known internationally. See page 4 for information about the Exhibition and its many associated activities.

On behalf of Members I extend a warm welcome to Dr David Cantrill, who took up his appointment at the RBG in late June as Chief Botanist and Divisional Director, Plant Sciences and Biodiversity.

This is the last time I shall write this column because my term as President will finish at the end of this year's Annual General Meeting in November when your new President will be elected. I would like to thank all the Friends for their help and support over the past four years. In particular I would like to acknowledge the contributions of my fellow councillors, our administrative staff at Gate Lodge and Dr Philip Moors, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, and his staff.

Irwin Newman

Annual General Meeting

The Friends' Annual General Meeting will commence at 8.00pm on Monday 13 November 2006. Nominations for Council may be made by obtaining a nomination form from the Friends' office. Council members are elected for two years. This year Irwin Newman (President), Maurice Castro (Treasurer), Catherine Trinca (Vice President) and John Hawker, David Plant and Ann Weber (Ordinary members) are due to retire.

All but the President are eligible for re-election. Nominations are to be lodged with the Secretary by Friday 13 October.

FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

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Front cover: Detail from Anita Barley's Erythrina acanthocarpa, *the featured painting for this year's FRBG Melbourne Christmas card. Photo: Greg Hoxley.*

Back cover and inside back cover photos by Jennifer Marshall.

Photo: Janusz Molinski

Photo: Meg Miller

Opening Of The Australian Garden

The Premier officially opened the first stage of the Australian Garden on 28 May. A much bigger crowd than expected visited the Garden during the course of the day, and several thousand watched the opening ceremony and associated 'Awakening the Garden' by community performers. There was a total attendance of around10,000 people. Feedback about the Garden and its landscapes has been highly positive and many have visited since its opening.

The massive number of visitors demonstrates unequivocally the extent of community interest in landscapes with Australian plants and in gaining ideas and information about growing them in home gardens. This response augurs well for the future of the Australian Garden. Do be sure to visit in Spring to see the displays – and come back regularly to see the Garden grow and mature in the years ahead!

Creating the first stage of the Australian Garden has involved staff from all parts of the RBG, especially staff at RBG Cranbourne. The passion, dedication and plain hard work by staff and volunteers has been exemplary, and I thank everybody for their contributions. It's been a privilege for us all to be part of such a special undertaking.

Staff

Dr David Cantrill took up his appointment as Chief Botanist and Divisional Director, Plant Sciences and Biodiversity, on Monday, 26 June. We welcome David and his family back to Melbourne after living for many years in Britain and Sweden.

Ms Cate Brown left her position as Manager, Development on 31 May. She has moved to Sydney, where her husband recently took up an appointment.

Conclusion Of Australia's Virtual Herbarium Project

The Australia's Virtual Herbarium (AVH) Project finished on 30 June. This five-year national project has been a collaboration between Australian capital-city herbaria, and I am very pleased with the benefits it has brought for curating the collections in the National Herbarium. At its height, the project employed 18 staff in databasing, mounting and identifying specimens.

Since commencing in September 2001 the AVH team has databased some 450,000 specimens, bringing the total number of records on MELISR (the National Herbarium database) to over 750,000.

RBG Melbourne achieved all the objectives set by the national AVH program. In addition, we completely databased the Type specimens of higher plants (the largest such collection in Australia, approximately 14,000 specimens) and the large majority of Australian fungi, mosses and lichens. Staff and the Herbarium volunteers mounted all the databased specimens onto archival paper.

The wide-ranging benefits of the AVH project are evident from the steady increase in the usage of the RBG AVH website http://www.rgb.vic.gov.au/avh/ Requests for data through the website have increased two-fold over the past two years, with more than 40,000 requests serviced in 2005 (an average of 3,400 per month).

ARCUE Funding Successes

Dr Michael McCarthy, Senior Ecologist at ARCUE, has recently been successful in sharing in two major multi-year research grants from the Federal Government. The grants will enable three post-doctoral fellows to work at ARCUE for three years. The first grant for one post-doc. has been received through Prof. Mark Burgman's Australian Centre of Excellence for Risk Analysis at The University of Melbourne. The other grant for two post-docs has been received in association with Prof Hugh Possingham at The University of Queensland. These funds continue ARCUE's success in recent years in winning major external research grants.

Chagual Botanic Garden, Santiago, Chile

In April I travelled to Santiago, Chile, to advise on the planning and development of Chagual Botanic Garden. This will be the city's first botanic garden, and it will display a significant collection of Australian plants in support of its overall theme of flora from

the world's Mediterranean climate zones. Associated with this trip I also visited Easter Island to discuss with conservation authorities a re-introduction program for *Sophora toromiro* (photo below of a painting by Jenny Phillips), a tree extinct on the island but growing in RBG Melbourne and a few other botanic gardens. I'll be mentioning this in my illustrated talk to the Friends on 17 October about Easter Island and Tristan da Cunha.

New Public Toilets At RBG Melbourne

The new toilet buildings in RBG Melbourne are now open for use. The renovation and extension of the Zelkova toilet block by the Oak Lawn has started and should be completed in a month's time. Everything in the building will be renewed including new roof and extension to provide an Accessible Toilet together with baby-changing facilities. Concurrently the old pair of toilets on the Tennyson Lawn will be demolished, and the area on which they stood will be returned to landscaped gardens.

Philip Moors, ***Director***

Photo: Greg Hoxley

In 1990, a small group of local botanical artists, most of whom had attended botanical art classes run by Anita Barley and, later, Jenny Phillips, were looking for a suitable venue where they could meet and paint. The Friends of the RBG offered these artists a home and so they congregated weekly to paint, discuss their works-in-progress and to support and encourage each other in their artistic endeavours. From these small beginnings, the Botanical Illustrators group was born.

Two years later the group presented its inaugural exhibition, *The Art of Botanical Illustration*, at the National Herbarium of Victoria. One hundred and forty selected works by thirty artists were displayed to the public. This first exhibition not only promoted the talents of the artists involved but also demonstrated how botanical illustration plays a key role in the scientific and horticultural identification process. The exhibition was a resounding success and inspired many more people to take botanical art classes. *The Art of Botanical Illustration* has been held biennially ever since and such is the reputation it has earned that it now attracts entries from interstate and overseas in addition to an ever-increasing number from local artists. This prestigious event has now become one of the major fundraisers for the Friends of the RBG.

The selected works must meet the following criteria: they should have been completed in the two years since the previous exhibition; they should accurately represent the form and botany of the chosen subject; they should adequately convey the characteristics of the species or variety; and they should be represented as an artistically pleasing, balanced and considered work of art. All works must be identified and named accurately according to standard botanical practices. This ensures that the final 150 or so paintings chosen from the vast number of those submitted represent the very best work available in Australia at this time.

Many pieces have been purchased from these biennial exhibitions for inclusion in the State Botanical Collection held in the National Herbarium of Victoria. In 2001 the Botanical Illustrators established the Friends' *Illustrated Garden Collection* to create a Florilegium of significant plants growing in the RBG. From the exhibits, illustrations are considered and selected for

Camellia Reticulara *by Helen Burrows. Photo: Greg Hoxley*

inclusion. This 21st Century florilegium is held digitally and photographically; the original works are not acquired but remain on offer for sale. Artists are asked to assign reproduction rights to the Friends for the purpose of raising funds for the RBG. Since the advent of the Internet Catalogue, many works have been sold to overseas collectors.

In 2002 a decision was made to award a medal to an artist whose exhibited works are judged to be exceptional in some way, and so the *Celia Rosser Medal* came into existence. Celia Rosser was the Botanical Artist at Monash University where, amongst other things, she painted all known members of the *Banksia* genus over more than 25 years. The medal was named after Celia because her work is exquisite as well as being technically accomplished, scientifically accurate to the highest degree and aesthetically pleasing. Award-winning works must also reflect these elevated standards. Anita Barley, Dianne Emery and Mali Moir were

Passionfruit *by Joan Mason. Photo: Greg Hoxley*

awarded Celia Rosser medals in 2002 and, at the 2004 exhibition, the medal was awarded to Dianne Emery with honourable mentions to Rita Parkinson, Alison Gianangeli and Fiona McKinnon. Celia Rosser herself is hoping to have a painting completed for this year's exhibition.

For the first time in the history of *The Art of Botanical Illustration*, the Friends of the RBG has invited an International Guest Artist to exhibit. Pandora Sellars is an outstanding English artist with a global reputation. She has participated in many British and overseas exhibitions, has staged a solo exhibition at the Kew Gardens Gallery, UK, and her drawings and paintings have been reproduced in numerous botanical publications and books about botanical art. Her work is held in the Natural History Museum, UK, and The Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, UK. Visitors to the Eighth Biennial *The Art of Botanical Illustration* should be prepared to be stunned, for Pandora Sellars' work combines highly detailed botanical accuracy and amazing technique with a strong sense of design. Her work has been described as 'botanical theatre'! Although she is unable to travel to Australia for the exhibition, Pandora will be sending some works for sale. Discerning collectors of botanic art will have an opportunity to purchase these during the course of the exhibition, although they are advised to 'be there' on the opening night, 10 November from 6.00 to 8.00pm. Tickets are available from the Friends' office. (See Activities, p.8)

The Art of Botanical Illustration 2006 will include works by approximately 70 artists from around Australia and overseas. The exhibition is recognised as the most prestigious and comprehensive exhibition to display and promote works of this kind in Australia.
All works are for sale.
When:11–26 November 2006.
Open daily from 10am-5pm.
Where: Domain House Gallery, Dallas Brooks Drive, South Yarra. 3141.

Enquiries: Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Gate Lodge, 100 Birdwood Ave., MELBOURNE Vic 3004.
Tel: 03 9650 6398
Fax: 03 9650 7723
E-mail: friends@frbgmelb.org.au
Website: www.rbg.vic.gov.au/friends
Convenor:Edyta Hoxley
Tel: 03 9761 9711
Helene Wild

Ed: Helene may be contacted on 03 9398 2617, or email helene.wild@optusnet.com.au

Focus on Botanical Art November 2006

Saturday 11 November
12.00noon–2.00 pm
in the Whirling Room Studio.
Free event

An open invitation to all artists, local and interstate, to an Artists' Lunch in the Whirling Room. This is a great opportunity offered by the Friends of the RBG Melbourne Botanical Illustrators' Group for all artists to meet others working in the same field.

Saturday 11 November
10.00am–5.00pm
Sunday 12 November
10.00am–5.00pm

Botanical Art demonstrations will take place over the weekend at The Gardens Shop, Observatory Gate. This is a chance to see how various botanic artists approach their subjects.

Monday 13 November
10.00 am
$15.00 Members only

Join a group for morning coffee, tour and discussion of the exhibition with Louise Coronel.

Monday 13 November
2.00 pm Domain House
$12.00 Members only

Join a group to visit the Herbarium Library. This is an opportunity to see some original artwork not seen before by the Friends.

Thursday 16 November
10.00am–12.00noon
Baldwin Room, Observatory House
$15.00. Members only

A session with Celia Rosser, who will bring along some preparatory work and discuss her methods and arts practice with a small group.

For activities on 13 and 16 November, see enclosed booking form.

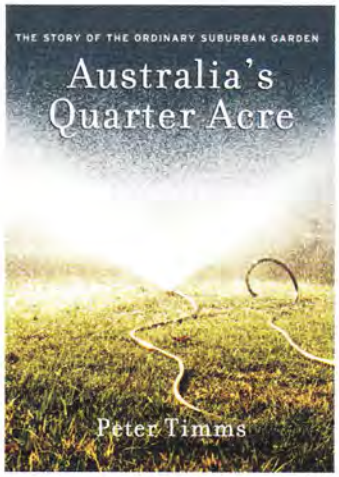
We Need Help

The Growing Friends Spring Sale will be held on Saturday 7 and Sunday 8 October. Volunteers are needed to help in the exit tent.

Volunteers are also needed to staff the *Art of Botanical Illustration* 2006 Exhibition which will be held from 11 to 26 November.

Prospective helpers are asked to contact Gate Lodge on 9650 6398.

ACTIVITIES



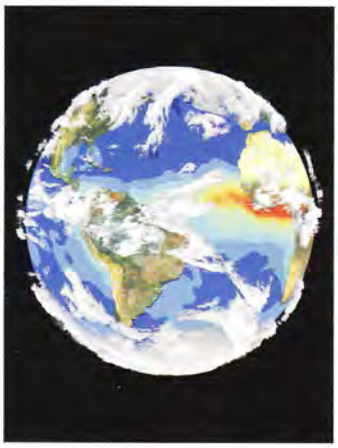
Australia's Quarter Acre: The Story of the Ordinary Suburban Garden

ILLUSTRATED TALK

by Peter Timms
In conjunction with Australian Garden History Society
Tuesday 5 September
at 6.00 for 6.30pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium
Cost: $20 Friends $15
RSVP by Friday 1 September on enclosed booking form
Please join us for a glass of wine and savouries before the talk

In this fascinating and detailed look at the ordinary suburban block, Peter Timms traces the development of its design, its plantings and its hidden meanings, explaining how we have used our gardens for pleasure, relaxation and food production. Dogs and chooks, woodsheds, lavatories, fruit trees, fences and even the illuminated Santa Claus at Christmas – Timms has something new and surprising to say about them all.

Peter Timms was born and educated in Melbourne and from 1971 until 1988 was employed in a number of museums and public art galleries in Victoria and New South Wales. He has been a freelance writer since 1988, including periods as art critic for *The Age* and as editor of *Art Monthly Australia*. He writes regularly for publications both in Australia and overseas, and has written several books. We'll have signed copies of this book for sale after the talk.



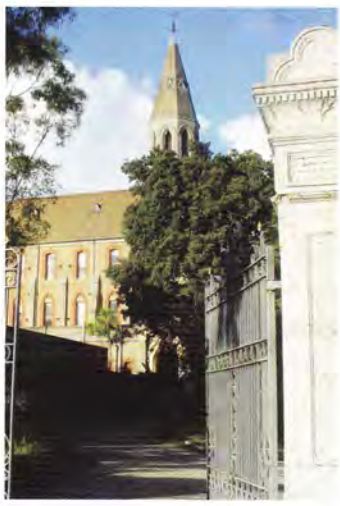
Climate Change - Susceptible to Calamity

ILLUSTRATED TALK

by Peter Fisher
Thursday 21 September
at 6.00 for 6.30pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium
Cost: $20 Friends $15
RSVP: Friday 15 September on enclosed booking form
Please join us for a glass of wine and savouries before the talk

The recent past period of recorded human history has been characterised by relatively stable climates. However, changes largely of our own making are underway as global warming threatens. And are we prepared?

The frequency of heat-stress days will increase, as well as more extreme stormy weather conditions combined with a rise in sea level. An early start needs to be made on climate-proofing Australia's cities and towns as Hurricane Katrina and Cyclone Larry have underscored their vulnerability. The future for urban communities and ecosystems could be grim. Extremes of climate are a fact of life and we should be better prepared for them, warns Peter Fisher, an environment industry specialist who teaches environmental management at Central Queensland University.



Spring Fit Friends Ramble

STUDLEY PARK BOAT HOUSE TO ST.HELIERS CONVENT ABBOTSFORD

Wednesday, 27 September
at 9.30 am sharp
Meet at Studley Park Boat House carpark (near Kane's Bridge)
Melways MAP 2D F8
Cost: $15 Friends $10
RSVP by Friday 22 September on enclosed booking form
Please wear appropriate clothing, good walking shoes, bring a water bottle and, as always, be able to keep up a good walking pace.

We will depart from near Kane's Bridge and walk to the north side of the Yarra via Dights Falls, taking in the vistas of eucalypts, acacias and the Green Link Tree Projects revegetation, birdlife and past geological outcrops.

Coffee will be available at Lentil As Anything cafe within St Helier's Convent. We will then take a guided walk around the historic convent garden (in a clockwise direction, as the nuns once ambled) to see the very old trees and progressive restoration of this garden.

In 1863, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd established a convent and agricultural community on land which belonged to the Wurrundjeri people. The Abbotsford Convent Foundation now works to preserve its historic buildings and to create an arts and educational precinct.

ACTIVITIES

Photo: Bruce Sandie

Spring Quarterly Insiders' Walk

BIRD WALK

with David Plant
Tuesday 10 October at 10.00am
Meet at Gate Lodge (opposite Shrine)
Cost: $10 MEMBERS ONLY
NUMBERS LIMITED
RSVP by Friday 6 October
on enclosed booking form

Join us for morning tea and a brief information session at Gate Lodge, before the walk.

A Voluntary Guide at the RBG, David has also conducted bird walks in the Gardens for the last eight years. He is a member of the Friends' Council and has been a guest speaker for the Friends in the past.

David has had a lifelong interest in birds and has 'birded' in many parts of Australia. He is a member of Birds Australia and the Bird Observer's Club of Australia. During morning tea he will talk to us about the numbers and types of birds found in the Gardens and the birds that we should see during the walk.

David will take us for a leisurely stroll to the lake and back across the lawns, hopefully encountering the elusive powerful owl on our travels.

Photo: Philip Moors

Tristan and Easter: Islands Beyond the Horizon

ILLUSTRATED TALK

by Philip Moors
Tuesday 17 October at 6.00 for 6.30pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium
Cost: $20 Friends $15
RSVP Thursday 12 October
on enclosed booking form
Please join us for a glass of wine and savouries before the talk

Tristan da Cunha and Easter Island are the world's remotest inhabited islands, one in the South Atlantic and the other in the South Pacific. Both are remarkable places well off the beaten track for most tourists. In February this year Tristan's 280 residents celebrated the discovery of their island 500 years ago. Easter Island was colonised even earlier – probably 800 years ago – by Polynesian voyagers. They gave rise to a unique culture that created the famous stone sculptures. Philip Moors recently visited both these islands and explored their fascinating human and natural histories. In an illustrated talk, hear him speak about volcanoes and Potato Patches on Tristan, and extinct palms and lost civilisations on Easter Island.

Peonies – The Queen of Flowers

ILLUSTRATED TALK

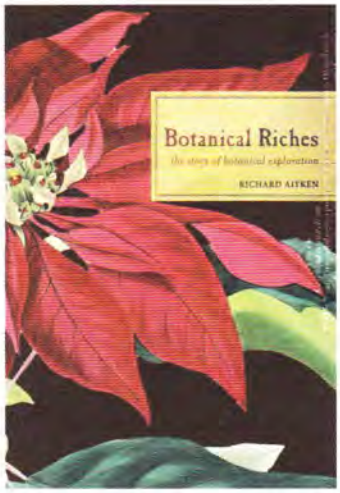
by Jan White
Wednesday 25 October
at 10.00am for 10.30am
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium
Cost: $20 Friends $15
RSVP:by Friday 20 October
on enclosed booking form
Please join us for morning tea before the talk.

Peonies are sometimes called 'Queen of the Flowers'. Few garden plants are surrounded with as much mystique as the peony. Herbaceous peonies are most beautiful plants, with a multitude of delicate petals wrapped into large tight flowers. They are relatively easy to grow, providing you have a good cold winter. For situations where the weather is not cold enough, tree peonies are more suitable.

For Jan White peonies have become a life-long obsession. She began growing them as a means of rehabilitation from a serious illness. *Paeonia lactiflora* is the species that she mostly grows because the plants have good long, strong stems suitable for the cut flower market, which she supplies.

There will be hand-painted peony cards available for sale on the morning.

ACTIVITIES



Botanical Bling

Botanical Riches: Stories of Botanical Exploration

ILLUSTRATED TALK

by Richard Aitken
In conjunction with Australian Garden History Society
Tuesday 31 October
at 6.00 for 6.30pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium
Cost: $20 Friends $15
RSVP Friday 27 October
on enclosed booking form
Please join us for a glass of wine and savouries before the talk

For centuries, intrepid plant hunters and botanists travelled to exotic climes, collecting seeds and specimens. Searching for plants with economic value, medicinal benefits, or purely for lavish display, these explorers carried their treasures home to their own lands.

Richard Aitken is a Melbourne-based architect, curator, and historian. He has prepared conservation plans for many of Australia's most significant historic gardens, including the botanic gardens of Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney. Richard's publications include *The Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens* (2002) and *Gardenesque* (2004). His latest book is *Botanical Riches*, a colourful history of botanical exploration, which is magnificently illustrated.

Signed copies of the book will be on sale after the talk.

The Art of Botanical Illustration 2006 Exhibition

OPENING RECEPTION AND COCKTAIL PARTY

Domain House Gallery,
Dallas Brooks Drive, South Yarra
Friday 10 November 2006
6.00-8.00pm
Cost: $25 Friends $20
RSVP by 3 November
on enclosed booking form

Keen art lovers and discerning collectors should seize this first opportunity to view and purchase works by Australian and international artists prior to the public opening of the eighth biennial Exhibition on 11 November.

Talented botanical illustrators whose works will be on sale include Celia Rosser and Pandora Sellers (UK).

For those unable to make the most of this special occasion, the catalogue will be available in print and on CD at the Exhibition and, as for previous Exhibitions, may be viewed on the Friends' website: www.rbg.vic.gov.au/friends after 11 November.

The Exhibition will be open daily from 10.00am-5.00pm until 26 November.

The Art of Botanical Illustration 2006

MORNING TEA AND COMPREHENSIVE TOUR

with Louise Coronel
Monday 13 November at 10.00am
Meet at Gate Lodge (opposite Shrine)
Cost: $15 MEMBERS ONLY, LIMITED NUMBERS
RSVP by Friday 10 November
on enclosed booking form
Payment must accompany booking as this is a limited number event.

Louise Coronel, Honorary Life Member of the Friends and founder of the Botanical Illustrators group, will lead a visit to *The Art of Botanical Illustration* 2006 Exhibition.

This comprehensive tour will be an opportunity to discover some of the intricacies of design and technique used in botanical illustration and the demanding selection criteria to be met before exhibiting. The exquisite and detailed works on display cover a huge range of subjects and artistic styles; Louise will encourage you to observe and understand these differences.

We will meet first at Gate Lodge for morning tea and a brief introduction to the history of the seven previous biennial exhibitions presented by the Friends. Louise will then walk us over to the Domain House Gallery to view the exhibition.

ACTIVITIES

Spring 'Talking Plants' Morning:

HERBS

Friday 17 November at 10.00am
Meet at Gate Lodge
opposite Shrine
Cost: $15 Friends $10
RSVP by Monday 13 November
on enclosed booking form

The Spring 'Talking Plants' theme will be 'Herbs'. The morning will be held in Gate Lodge and will be an informal gathering of Friends with a common interest in plants and gardening.

A knowledgeable person will discuss the morning's topic and have some useful suggestions for us.

All those attending are invited to bring, show and share information about a piece of a favourite plant, suitable to the topic if possible.

Refreshments will be served during the morning. Following the gathering there will be the opportunity to visit the Growing Friends' Nursery for plant purchases.

Photo: Danny Kildare

The Chelsea Experience

ILLUSTRATED TALK

by Wes Fleming, Nurseryman
Thursday 23 November
at 10.00 for 10.30am
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium
Cost: $20 Friends $15
RSVP by Friday 17 November
on enclosed booking form
Please join us for morning tea
before the talk.

Judges at *Chelsea 2006* named the Fleming's Nurseries *Australian Garden*, by the team of nurseryman Wes Fleming and designer Dean Herald, as a Gold Medal Show Garden winner. The win is the third Chelsea Medal for Wes Fleming. "This prestigious award makes us very proud of Australian design and horticulture, and reaffirms we do possess great talent at an international level. I am ecstatic our team has won this award," he said. As a third generation nurseryman, Wes's aim is to showcase the Australian horticulture, design and landscaping industry at an international level. Fleming's was the driving force behind *Australian Inspiration*, the first-ever Australian show garden at Chelsea in 2004, which won a Silver-Gilt medal. In 2005, Fleming's returned to Chelsea with *Float* and won Gold, the first Australian show garden to ever win the prestigious award.

Photo: Jennifer Marshall

Advance Notice: Christmas Cocktail Party at Gardens House

Tuesday 28 November
from 6.00pm to 8.00pm

The Friends will return to Gardens House for their Christmas celebration this year.

Booking details will be available in the Spring/Summer single-sheet newsletter which accompanies the annual report.

Please make a note of this date in your diary.

ILLUSTRATORS

Helen Burrows is an established botanical artist in Melbourne Her passion for gardens and horticulture has found expression in her botanical painting, and she specialises in the Australian cultivars of the Camellia.

Helen works from her studio, Camellia Cottage, which has a garden full of Camellias, including rare and unusual specimens collected by enthusiasts. Encouraged by the late Dr Bob Withers and Camellias Victoria (of which she is a member), Helen has published two limited-edition volumes of the *Theaceae Camellia*.

A professional graphic designer, Helen has worked in both secondary and tertiary education sectors teaching art and lecturing in Design and Graphic Communication. Her love for teaching, sharing and nurturing skills continues in botanical illustration workshops between painting commitments.

Helen began Botanical Illustration at a Friends' class at RBG in 1994 and since then her work has been consistently exhibited in the biennial *The Art of Botanical Illustration*. Her painting selected for the State Botanical Collection was exhibited in *Celebrating 150 Years* at the National Herbarium of Victoria. In 2004 her painting of *Camellia japonica* 'Paul Jones' (at left) was selected for the *Illustrated Garden* Collection of the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne.

Helen attended the American Society for Botanical Art Conference in 2000 where her work was on show. In addition she has been represented with much success in the USA by Expressions Botanica.

Helen's botanical illustrations are represented in the State Botanical Collection; The National Library of Australia; The Huntington Library (California); the Hunt Institute of the Carnegie Mellon University (Pennsylvania); the Lindley Library, Royal Horticultural Society (London); galleries and private collections throughout Australia and overseas.

Quarterly Meeting:

WORKING ON VELLUM WITH TERRI MACDONALD

Tuesday 10 October
10.00 for 10.30am in the Whirling Room Studio
Cost: $5.50, pay on the day
RSVP: Friends' office on 9650 6398

Many of the early botanical artists worked on vellum. Terri will talk to us about this medium and how to deal with its unusual properties.

She will bring some examples of vellum and her work on it.

Classes

Term 4 will start in the week beginning Monday 9 October 2006

Classes will be held on Tuesday evenings and in the daytime on Mondays (two sessions), Wednesdays (two sessions) Fridays and Saturdays.
2.5hr classes: $245 (incl GST)
Friends $205 (incl GST)
3hr classes: $280 (incl GST)
Friends $240 (incl GST)

Focus On Nature IX

Talented botanical illustration class tutor Mali Moir was one of 69 illustrators selected to exhibit in *Focus On Nature IX* in 2006, a juried exhibition begun in 1990 with 23 artists and held biennially at the New York State Museum. This year's exhibition, whose goal is to demonstrate the important role illustration plays in natural science research and education, included works by three Australian artists.

Mali was one of seven artists whose work was purchased by the Museum as part of the *Focus On Nature IX* $US 10,000 Purchase Award. Her painting of *Doryanthes palmeri*, (Spear Lily), a plant endemic to a small region in coastal Eastern Australia, will now become part of the permanent collection of the Museum – the first Australian painting to be included.

Works for the exhibition were selected by a five-member jury of artists and scientists from a pool of 500 entries by 157 artists, representing 18 countries. The criteria included the scientific accuracy, educational value, and artistic qualities of the illustrations.

Mali says of the *Doryanthes palmeri*: "This was the biggest flower I have ever picked. We cut it with a saw at the RBG Melbourne and drove it in the buggy to my car. In the studio it was suspended with ropes from the curtain rails and propped up with wooden planks. I took copious photos which became vital as it kept growing, still flowering weeks later and producing pools of nectar – our Wattle birds loved it. My favourite part of the painting is the scratch marks on the fruit left by the birds as they grip tight while feeding on the nectar."

Whirlybirds

The cold winter mornings have not deterred our Botanical Illustrator members from attending our meetings in the Whirling Room. It is an informal gathering, where we have an opportunity to share ideas and advice while working on our paintings. Most members are working on submissions for *The Art of Botanical Illustration* 2006 Exhibition.

If you would like to join us on Tuesdays please contact Sandra Sanger on 9598 9532 for further information.

Botanica 2006 Masters Exhibition

Several of Dianne Emery's botanical illustration students were lucky enough to be among the invited guests at the opening of *Botanica 2006 Masters* Exhibition held recently in Sydney by the Friends of the Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens.

One of Australia's Living Treasures, artist Dr Margaret Olley, opened the exhibition of paintings by 18 internationally renowned botanical artists from Australia. Most of the invited artists are represented in the collections of institutions as well as in private collections. Victoria was well represented by Anita Barley, Dianne Emery, Fiona McKinnon, Mali Moir, Jenny Phillips and Celia Rosser.

It was wonderful to see all this work as well as two other exhibitions at galleries located within the area of the Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens.

Undoubtedly the highlight of our trip was seeing the work of our Victorian botanical artists – it was superb.

Barb Student

Photo: Mali Moir

Celia Rosser and Beverly Allen at the Botanica Masters Exhibition

Gumleaf photos: Chris O'Brien

The 'Art of Eucalyptus' Auction

On a cold, wet Sunday afternoon at the end of April, a large group of people assembled at the University of Melbourne for an auction of painted gum leaves held to raise funds for the School of Botany Foundation, which supports research and the training of students in the School.

There were strong links with the Royal Botanic Gardens. The Head of the School of Botany and guiding force behind the auction, Professor Pauline Ladiges, was an inaugural member of the RBG Board, who recently retired as Deputy Chairman after fourteen years of service. Three of the contributing artists who donated their paintings are also members of the Friends of the RBG: Anita Barley, Beverley Graham and Pat Hancock. All these artists have shown their work in *The Art of Botanical Illustration* exhibitions, and Anita has held botanical illustration workshops for the Friends. They all attended the auction, sitting together nervously in a row. One described the experience as 'like waiting for the gallows'. As it turned out, each sold their paintings for impressive amounts. In an inspired piece of casting, the well-known South Yarra real estate agent Philippe Batters was invited to be auctioneer. With great good humour, he teased and cajoled the audience into making far higher bids than they had ever intended, with eighteen leaves being sold for some remarkable sums.

The greatest price of the day was brought by Beverley Graham's work, 'Blue Gums and the Golden Mean', which raised $2050 after some extremely brisk bidding. Both Anita Barley's and Pat Hancock's leaves were bought by the same person, who appreciated their whimsical charm and fine detail. His collection of painted gum leaves was begun at the previous fundraising auction held on Herring Island three years ago. Anita's painting of bushland sprites had the witty title 'Beyond Beleaf', while Pat was inspired by a pun to paint a little girl under an umbrella, calling it 'Blue Gumboots'.

Nineteen contemporary artists were represented at the auction, some of whom had contributed more than one work. They included distinguished painters such as Charles McCubbin and Allan Mitelman. There were also two examples of antique leaves, both Victorian landscapes painted around the turn of the twentieth century by an unknown artist by the name of J. Wadsworth, whose identity eluded even the best efforts of the La Trobe Picture Librarian at the State Library of Victoria. Not all the leaves were sold at the 'live' auction. Another eight were reserved for the silent auction held later in the afternoon, which made a fine sum as well. In all, together with donations, the 'Art of Eucalyptus' raised more than $30,000. Professor Ladiges may well have shouted 'By gum!' when she was told this news, but perhaps she just sighed with releaf.

Marguerite Hancock

GARDENS

Photo: Richard Barley

In these times of computers and digital-based wizardry, I wish to pose a question: 'What is it about good paintings that they hold our interest to a far greater extent than the most cleverly manipulated photographs?'

I don't mean to offend the many quite decent photographers and digital manipulators among the readership. Of course I enjoy a good photograph, about which I make no bones. But... even the most exquisite of images captured on film or digital-based-chippery just simply doesn't (for me) hold the lasting enchantment of a well-composed and executed drawing or painting.

Quite recently, a feasible answer to this question was provided by the home editorial committee (Mrs Barley), who, it must be noted, knows a thing or two about Art. "The thing is," she mused "that in photographs, there is no room for the viewer." Dash it, I wish people didn't talk in riddles. "There is no place for the imagination in the photographic image," she continued. This started to make some sense.

She quite reasonably pointed out that many of the great artworks in the world have sections which are not complete in their detail, or which conceal an aspect of the view, or somesuch. By doing this, they are leaving the door open for our imagination to wander into the painting, to find its place. "Crikey," one thought, "there's something in that."

Perhaps there is no better example than a JMW Turner landscape painting. Amid all that swirl of cloud and land and water and steam and ... whatever, the mind can run free. That something is, of course, of great relevance and importance when this thought is translated to landscapes. Why is it that some landscapes sustain our fascination, while others, although they may be executed in the greatest detail or with the finest symmetry, or the grandest harnessing of perspective, don't? One could argue that there is nowhere for our imagination to take us in the landscape. They are not landscapes of mystery, visual intrigue, a hanging landscape sentence – an expression of what might be, not just what is.

It seems to me that right there is the essence of one of the greatest qualities of our beloved landscape at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne. For whatever reason – creative design, smart plantsman-or woman-ship or clever planting – this is an artful garden of sustained suprises and continuing mystery. The nature of the continuously curving paths means that views are constantly opening up, and just as surely closing off. Long vistas appear, and the eye is drawn perhaps to a distant feature outside the garden, then something catches the attention in the middle ground – or there is the hint of an enticing proposition around the next bend.

This was precisely what William Guilfoyle foresaw when he described his ideas for the development of the Gardens' landscape in his first monthly report to Government in 1873:

"*Nothing can excel the glimpses afforded by the openings between naturally formed clumps of trees and shrubs, whose height and contrast of foliage have been studied. At every step, the visitor finds some new view – something fresh, lively and striking especially when tastefully arranged. Where long sombre rows of trees are planted, and a sameness of foliage exists, the very reverse is the case. Nature's most favourable aspects then seem sacrificed to art, and that art often produces but a chilling effect.*" (from RTM Pescott's book: *W.R. Guilfoyle 1840-1912. The Master of Landscaping*)

Those long, sombre rows of trees were the very legacy of Mueller's planting within the Gardens – and Guilfoyle moved with alacrity to redistribute many of these trees to new locations within the site, with an eye to the 'naturally formed clumps'.

Some of the guiding values which underpin the design of The Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden – the sense of mystery, the scope to explore, the chance of discovery, and the use of plant textures and curious form – are the very same as those which are employed in the larger landscape across the Gardens. The 'big garden' clientele may (or may not) be older and more mature, but the result is a landscape which allows a place for the imagination, and therefore a place for the viewer in the picture.

I noticed a young lady some years ago who was at work on an oil painting, perched on an easel near the Nymphaea Lake (no, sorry – she wasn't perched on the easel, the painting was). It was late summer when I first

Photo: Richard Barley

GARDENS

saw her, and she was seeking to capture the view across the lake and thence the Canna Bed, the Magnolia Bed and beyond to the west. Her progress was not fast, and over a period of many weeks she would reappear in the same spot to continue her artistic endeavour. Sadly, though not surprisingly, the view changed considerably week by week, as leaves turned gold in autumn, some things flowered, then stopped flowering, set fruit and so forth, as things do. The artist stuck to her task in a workpersonlike fashion, but I fear that she never really caught up with the season.

But there you have the work of that other great variable in landscapes – time. The visual form of the landscape is constantly being drawn and redrawn by the hand of time. The scene will never be the same from one day to the next, let alone across months or seasons. So the garden that we cherish and appreciate is quite ephemeral and yet at the same time substantial. The landscape is all planted up, and yet it is never completed. There is no finish line.

The persistent artist may, for all I know, still be planning to finish the painting of the view over Nymphaea Lake. I just hope that she leaves enough of it undone to allow us a place to access the mystery.

Richard Barley

Photo: Jennifer Marshall

Photo: Greg Hoxley of painting Passiflora macicata *by Dolores Skowronski-Malloni*

New Members' Welcome

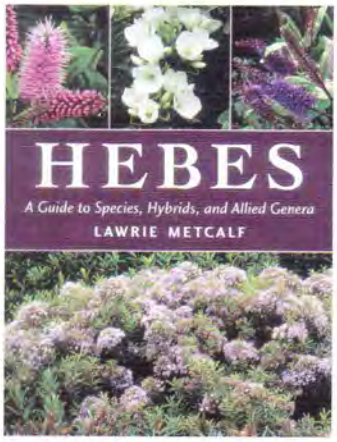
Thursday 19 October at 10.00am
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

Invitations will soon be sent to all recently-joined Friends and those who have already requested to attend 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, several Voluntary Guides will lead a guided tour of the Gardens.

If, despite our best efforts, you have not been given the opportunity to attend a New Members' Welcome, please call Gate Lodge on 9650 6398.

BOOK REVIEWS



Hebes A Guide to Species, Hybrids and Allied Genera

Lawrie Metcalf
Timber Press 2006. RRP $69.95

Laurie Metcalf has had a very long involvement with the genus *Hebe* in its many forms.

Hebes and other New Zealand mountain flora were the impetus for his joining the Canterbury Mountaineering Club in his late teens. As often happens, one thing led to another and he found himself the international registrar of cultivar names for *Hebe*. Lawrie was also responsible for compiling a register of all known cultivar names of the genus. No small task! He modestly claims that since the publication of the *International Register of Hebe Cultivars* in 2001, he has an undeserved reputation as an expert on hebes, but after that pedigree, if he can't own that reputation, who could?

He has now produced a comprehensive volume on the plants – the native habitats, preferred growing conditions, cultivation, and the history of hebes, as well as an A-Z guide to all the known species and most horticulturally available hybrids. He has also included many hebe relatives.

There is great variety within this group of plants of more than 100 species and subspecies of medium sized to dwarf evergreen shrubs – some pictured growing out of a fissure in a rock face, and other beautiful ground covers.

This book graphically illustrates that hebes are a great deal more than the somewhat dusty specimen we had in our garden when I was young.

Terri Kay

Flora of the Otway Plain and Ranges

Enid Mayfield
Linton Press 2006 RRP $45.00

This is the first of two volumes featuring the petaloid monocotyledons of the area. The book is beautifully illustrated by Enid with paintings of many rare, threatened or endangered plants in the Otways.

Dr Philip Moors will launch the book on 15 September and the artworks included in the book will be on display from 15 September to 15 October at the Geelong Art Gallery, Little Malop Street, Geelong.

The Growing Friends Spring Plant Sale

Saturday 7 October, 10.00am–4.00pm
Sunday 8 October, 10.00am–3.00pm

The Nursery will not be open for Friday morning sales to Members of the Friends on 6 and 13 October to allow us time for sale preparation and inventories.

We will have a Plant Sale to satisfy all your planting requirements. Additional detail is available from our enclosed 'Terrific Temptations' flyer. The full Sale Catalogue can be purchased at the Entry Tent from 9.30 am on the Saturday. For the early birds, our Aussies section will have a limited number of *Chamelaucium uncinatum var. magna* from Western Australia. This large flowering form of Geraldton Wax has lemon-scented leaves and pink flowers. It is adaptable to areas with dry summers. One of Australia's most famous wildflowers, it is a very popular export in the cut flower trade (particularly Japan); the flowers last very well in a vase. From Queensland, we will have *Backhousia citriodora*. A small tree providing profuse bunches of white flowers during summer and autumn, this lemon-scented myrtle has aromatic foliage, is internationally renowned on a variety of fascinating levels and undoubtedly a valuable addition to the domestic garden. Available to Members during the year – and selling out quickly – was the rarely cultivated *Camellia japonica* AW Jessep. This historically significant cultivar was named for Alexander Jessep, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens from 1941-1957. On hand for this Sale, we are fortunate to have a small number of *C. japonica* Dorothy Jessep, named for his wife.

Something to look forward to during our 2007 Plant Sales is the introduction of a select group of plants currently placed within the framework of the 1992 Convention of Biological Diversity. From the collection of the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne we will be releasing limited numbers of rarely cultivated plants available exclusively for domestic planting. With international restrictions placed on their commercialisation, they will be an exciting addition for the savvy gardener.

We warmly welcome Julie Horsfall as the Growing Friends' Convener from 15 September 2006. In bidding you 'adieu' as Convener, may I take this opportunity to thank you for your support during my term. I vacate this position as a wiser (but still learning) member of the extraordinary Growing Friends.

Pam Eames, **Convener**

Backhousia citriodora blossom detail

Vireya 'Kisses'

The Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens are financing an improved watering system for the Vireya Bed in the RBG. It is hoped the Collection of these beautiful plants will be greatly improved and become a delight to all.

Vireyas are of the genus Rhododendron. They are distinguishable from rhododendrons by several features – scale on leaf surfaces; two-tailed seedpods; flowers tending to strengthen in colour while ageing; flowering more than once a year; and several varieties are perfumed. Variety names such as Hot Tropic, Fireball and Tropic Glow indicate the dazzling intensity of colour in many varieties.

Unlike Rhododendrons, Vireyas are frost-tender but grow successfully under cover during frost periods. They require plenty of light but not the hot western sun. Summer watering is essential but dry periods during Winter can be tolerated. Many grow well in containers, being epyphitic in their natural state. In garden situations, shallow planting is essential in well-drained soil. Early pruning and shaping of young plants assists in producing good leaf cover and compact bushes. Light feeding is beneficial twice a year.

The Growing Friends have a good collection of young plants and many will be on sale during the Spring Sale on 7 and 8 October.

Anne Weber

2006 Friends Christmas Card

This year's card features a full colour detail from Anita Barley's exquisite painting of *Erythrina acanthocarpa*, which features on the cover of this newsletter and is being used to promote our eighth *Art of Botanical Illustration* exhibition where the painting will be included in the display. This remarkable tree is growing on the Cape triangle in the Gardens, details of which will be included on the reverse of the card, together with a complete reproduction of the painting.

For more information and to order cards see enclosed flyer.

FRIENDS' BENEFITS BOTANIC NEWS

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

RBG Cranbourne Australian Garden
Entry $6.75 for Members. (Non-Members $9.00)

Gills Nurseries (all branches)
1 Centre Rd, East Brighton
390 Balcombe Rd, Beaumaris
cnr Bay/Graham Sts, Port Melb.
5% off plants only

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

Town and Country Gardens
1280 Malvern Rd, Malvern
24 Whitehorse Rd, Balwyn
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The Gardeners Corner Store
190-192 New St, Brighton
10% off all plants

Collectors Corner
Springvale Rd, Keysborough
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Kew Nursery
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Burwood Garden Patch
1418 Toorak Rd, Burwood
10% discount

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33 Ferrars St, Albert Park
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Botanical Creations
122 Grange Rd, Glenhuntly
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Cultivate Nursery & Gifts
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North Balwyn.
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89 Olinda-Monbulk Rd, Olinda
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Lister Teak Garden Furniture
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Ph: 9735 4010. Free 100-page colour catalogue of Cotswold Furniture Collection.
Ask for the Members' surprise

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Blackwood Lane Gallery
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10% off paintings, prints and commissions

Sculptured Steel Custom Metalwork
mail@sculpturedsteel.com.au
Ph: 0433 121 848
10% off custom-made pieces

Terrace Tea Rooms & Reception Centre, Royal Botanic Gardens
10% discount on all purchases

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Multiple sheets - POA
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Contact the Friends' office 9650 6398 for details

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Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced classes available

Growing Friends Nursery

Open to Members only on most Fridays
Advance notice of sale dates and Terrific Temptations

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are always welcome.
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