



BOTANIC NEWS

FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE INC.

SUMMER 1997/98

FROM THE PRESIDENT

We had an excellent Annual General Meeting on 17 November. The large attendance was a tribute to the four Friends who had been proposed for Honorary Life Membership, and acknowledged the importance of the RBG Master Plan about which Andrew Laidlaw spoke.

The 'business' part of the meeting was smoothly dealt with: Heather Ironmonger was duly elected as Vice-President and Lawrence Cohn was re-elected as Secretary. The Council membership of Caroline Cornish and David Plant was renewed, and we welcome Janet James as a new Councillor. Janet has succeeded Lesley Clark as Convener of the Activities Sub-Committee.

Honorary Life Membership was bestowed upon Lesley, Lydia Bartlett, Gillian Kirk and Sir Rupert Hamer in recognition of their immense contributions to the Friends; these are detailed elsewhere in *Botanic News*. It is interesting to note that Lydia and Gillian are the first members who have not served on the Friends' Council to be honoured in this way. Their work has been practical, at the potting bench!

Andrew Laidlaw, appointed four months ago as Landscape Planner at the Gardens, gave us a very clear idea of what is set out in the Master Plan. He stressed that it is not a new design, rather a way of directing and managing the changes that will occur inevitably over the next 30 years. It will be flexible enough to accommodate unforeseen happenings, and will be looked at every five years. It sets priorities to avoid inefficient ad hoc reactions, and details improvements in pathways, lighting and positioning of toilets that will all promote public safety and security.

Andrew convinced us that the inevitable loss of over-mature trees over time will also have benefits; a reduction of the dense canopy will open up garden beds to light and sunshine, allowing the cultivation of many new and different plants. He described exciting projects to create a Lower Yarra River habitat on Long Island, to develop Guilfoyle's 'volcano' reservoir, which has been closed to the public for many years, and to redesign the perennial border.

Andrew has been 'wrapping up' the Master Plan since the public consultation process; following its presentation to the RBG Board in December it should be

published in February. This is the first Master Plan to be devised for any Australian botanic garden, and I'm confident it will be of great benefit.

As David Adam has written about the serious possibility of road construction through the Cranbourne Gardens, I won't do more than endorse his remarks and urge you to support our Cranbourne Friends by sending a letter in response to the EES. Telephone the Friends' office if you would like some information to help you compose an objection to the road plan.

There's just time to book for our Christmas dinner on Thursday 11 December, and I hope to see many of you there. Besides the magical setting of the Reception Rooms by the Ornamental Lake, we can be assured of a delicious meal and some fascinating anecdotes from the inimitable Stephen Ryan.

To all our Friends, my warmest greetings for a happy and peaceful Christmas season.

We look forward to making Observatory Lodge a wonderful and permanent home for the Friends next year.

John Harper

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

More than two and a half years after commencing it, VicRoads has released its report for the Environmental Effects Study (EES) of the proposed East-West Road Link at Cranbourne. The EES examined three sets of options for a four-lane arterial road to be constructed south of Cranbourne. The first option involves improvements to the existing road network, including making Sladen Street (an existing arterial route) into a six-lane road. The second option involves three potential alignments in the Ballarto Road 'corridor', all of which would seriously affect RBG Cranbourne. The final option is for a road passing south of the Gardens through rural land. VicRoads has identified Option 2 (Ballarto Road) as its preferred route.

As the Friends will already be aware, the RBG Board is strongly opposed to any road being constructed along the Ballarto Road corridor. The Board believes that none of these options can avoid the destruction and serious degradation of critically important areas of the Gardens,

putting at risk the conservation of species and habitats which are rare and of regional or State conservation value. The Ballarto Road alignments would also pass within metres of the new Australian Garden, bringing noise, visual and air pollution, and diminishing the enjoyment of future visitors.

The need for a new road is not proven. VicRoads itself in July 1996 concluded that "proposals for an east-west route in the Ballarto Road corridor ... can be abandoned" provided the existing road network is improved. The report also admits that the analysis of future traffic needs "do not, on their own, present a clear case for or against ... a new east-west link".

The EES report is now open for public comment, and submissions have to be lodged with the Department of Infrastructure by 22 December 1997. The Board will be making a full submission and will be seeking to bring to the Government's attention the unacceptable consequences of putting a four-lane road through part of the Cranbourne Gardens.

I understand that the Friends' Council also strongly opposes the Ballarto Road options, and that it will be distributing information about the issue to members. Please take up your opportunity to comment on the EES before 22 December.

On a much more positive note, the Board recently appointed L U Simon Pty Ltd as builders for the Observatory Gate project. Work has commenced, and is due for completion in August 1998. This is the most important capital project at the Gardens for more than 60 years, giving us much-needed new visitor facilities and refurbishing heritage buildings.

The Board was most grateful recently to receive confirmation from the Friends' Council that the Friends will grant some \$85,000 for the restoration of Observatory Lodge as part of this project. Victorians owe a debt of gratitude to the Friends for helping to preserve this special part of the State's heritage. The Board looks forward to the Friends having the Lodge as their permanent base at the Gardens.

Now that the builders are working on the site, staff and visitors must park north of the Observatory Building on the open spaces around and near the Great Melbourne Telescope building. The road entrance past Observatory Lodge is being used jointly by RBG and construction traffic.

David Adam
Chairman

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

CHRISTMAS DINNER

Thursday 11 December 1997

at 7.00pm for 7.30pm

Royal Botanic Gardens Reception Centre

Please note that the time has been changed from that on your earlier invitation

This will serve as a reminder if you have not already booked for our special function to wind up the year's activities. Your family members and friends will be very welcome as well. Enjoy a three-course dinner and drinks in this beautiful setting by the lake.

Stephen Ryan, of Dicksonia Rare Plants at Mt Macedon, never fails to amaze with his encyclopaedic knowledge of plants. On this occasion, he'll share the fun of finding new and different species, including details of his recent trip to South Africa. He's had comical experiences, and also has sad tales to relate. Stephen will bring some rare and surprising specimens to illustrate his talk.

Cost: \$52 per person

RSVP: Telephone 9650 6398 by Wednesday 3 December

DAY TRIP TO TWO BEAUTIFUL GARDENS - *CRUDEN FARM* at Langwarrin and *MANOAH* at Flinders

Thursday 22 January

Our bus will leave the National Gallery at 10.30am sharp and travel through scenic Mornington Peninsula country to Flinders, where we will have a hot lunch at the Flinders Hotel.

Following lunch we will visit *Manoah*, the 27-acre property of Pam and John Nichols, where you will be inspired by the breathtaking views, the lovely garden and the design and unique interior of their home. You will find yourself thinking and talking about this property for a long time after your visit!

We will then move on to the magnificent *Cruden Farm*, owned by our Friend and the Patron of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch. It is a few years since we visited this famous garden, so it will be wonderful to see it again, then have our picnic tea on the lawns. **BYO picnic tea.**

We should return to the National Gallery by 7.00pm.

Cost: \$40

RSVP by 16 January on enclosed booking form

VISITS TO TAPESTRY WORKSHOP
Wednesday 11 February at 2.00pm
Thursday 12 February at 11.00am

Here's your chance to see *Shoalhaven Forest* in the making. This is the tapestry on the loom at the Victorian Tapestry Workshop, funded by Tattersalls to mark the Gardens' 150th anniversary in 1996.

Irene Creedon began weaving this 2.27 x 3.75 metre work about two months ago, and should be more than halfway through her task by the time of our visit. The tapestry will adorn the new visitor centre to be built at Observatory Gate.

Although our visit will focus particularly on this work inspired by an Arthur Boyd oil painting, it will also be interesting to see other works in progress, including a large John Olsen bound for Canberra, and a small tapestry portraying Australian Christmas bush.

Our guide will introduce us to the history of weaving and the development of the workshop, which is now internationally acclaimed as a Victorian treasure. She will discuss all the commissions currently on the looms.

Meet at the Workshop, 260 Park Street, South Melbourne. Our visit will last about one hour. You may like to combine it with a lunch at one of the excellent local cafes.

Cost: \$8.00
 RSVP by Friday 6 February on enclosed booking form

NEWCOMERS WELCOME
Thursday 19 February at 5.30pm

Individual invitations will be sent to Members who have joined since May, and to those who indicated previously that they would prefer to attend a twilight function.

ILLUSTRATING THE FLORAS
Tuesday 24 February from 10.00am
See Botanical Illustrators section

FROM SEA TO SPRINGS
Illustrated talk by Helen Aston
Thursday 26 February at 8.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

Helen Aston, an Honorary Associate at the Herbarium, has spoken to the Friends several times over the years, and her talks are both popular and of absorbing interest - partly because she traverses country that is unknown to most of us. Helen is an excellent and observant photographer, also.

On this occasion she'll present snippets of the Australian landscape, vegetation, birds and history as experienced on off-the-bitumen outback travels, chiefly

from Broome, Western Australia to Dalhousie, South Australia.

Supper will be served.

Cost: Friends \$8.00 Others \$12.00

RSVP on enclosed booking form by Tuesday 24 February

BOTANICAL EMBROIDERERS

Classes for 1998 with Wanda McPherson of the Victorian Embroiderers' Guild will commence on Monday 9 February, then on 9 March, 6 April and 11 May in the Whirling Room from 1.00 - 3.00pm.

New members are very welcome. Bring basic sewing kit. \$40 per term. Book on enclosed form.

TRAVELS

From the rolling Canterbury Plains to the rugged Mt Cook alpine region - experience Autumn in New Zealand's beautiful South Island with Friends. Our exclusive 14-day tour departing 27 March 1998 includes visits to New Zealand's own garden city - Christchurch, Mt Cook National Park, Dunedin and Milford Sound. Prices from \$3475.00 per person. Phone Diane Rawlings at Harvey World Travel (Midcity Melbourne) on 03 9650 4611 for further details.

Or you could head to California and Arizona with Friends of RBG Cranbourne, starting on 11 March. Gwen and Rodger Elliot will lead this tour of gardens and nurseries, forests and a world-famous aquarium. For details, write to the Friends of RBG Cranbourne, C/- PO Box 185, Cranbourne 3877, or phone 9879 1427.

COOKING FOR FUN AND APPRECIATION

It's almost time for New Year resolutions! How about resolving to join the Friends' catering group. They work happily together to provide the refreshments that are a special feature of our functions. All costs are reimbursed. If you're a new Member, it's a very good way to get to know other Friends. It's a minimal commitment, usually to provide one plate of cakes or savouries for a function, and to help serve tea and coffee.

The group's numbers are dwindling. Peg Jones, the 84-year old stalwart who has worked tirelessly with the catering group for many years, is hanging up her apron. And Margaret Campbell is taking leave while she recovers from a hip operation. Joan Jacoby is currently not well but we hope she'll be back with us next year. Julie Jeremic has also had to give up for the time being. Our thanks and best wishes to these Friends.

Offers of help will be welcome; please phone me on tel. 9885 9139 or talk to one of our caterers at any function.

Virginia Morrison, Joint Convener

BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATORS

ILLUSTRATING THE FLORAS

Tuesday 24 February from 10.00am
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

Author Roger Spencer and illustrator Su Pearson of the *Horticultural Flora of South-Eastern Australia*, together with the *Flora of Victoria* editor Neville Walsh and illustrators Enid Mayfield and Mali Moir, will discuss the process of producing the hundreds of meticulously detailed drawings used in their two RBG publications.

Morning coffee from 10.00am Talk 10.30am
 Cost: Friends \$8.00 Others \$12.00
 RSVP by 17 February on enclosed booking form

JANUARY WORKSHOPS

Dianne Emery will break new ground by presenting botanical art workshops in the Whirling Room Studio during the summer holidays. They provide an opportunity, particularly, for people who are not free to attend regular daytime classes.

SATURDAY ONE-DAY WORKSHOP FOR BEGINNERS - 5 hours.

An introduction to Botanical Art: An introduction to the equipment and techniques of portraying botanical subjects in pencil and watercolour. **All equipment and materials provided.** Limited numbers.
 Saturday 10 January, 10.00am - 3.00pm.
 Cost \$60 for Friends \$70 for others

4-DAY WORKSHOP FOR BEGINNERS - 16 hours

An introduction to the art of botanical illustration involving sketching, detailed pencil drawing, tonal work, composition, maintaining the viability of your subjects, the basic techniques of watercolour painting and colour mixing, slides and a trip to the Herbarium library.
 Tuesday 6 January - Friday 9 January, 10.00am - 2.00pm
 Cost \$110 for Friends \$130 for others

4-DAY INTENSIVE WORKSHOP - 16 hours

For those with some experience. This workshop will concentrate on a few of the aspects of botanical art and the concerns of the artist.

- * A structural approach, dealing with perspective and foreshortening
- * Drawing the larger subject, working from life in the Botanic Gardens
- * Guest speakers
- * Art/botany - getting the balance

Students may also wish to work on current projects in preparation for the 1998 exhibition.

Wednesday 14 January - Saturday 17 January,
 10.00am - 2.00pm

Cost: \$110 for Friends \$130 for others

Please contact Dianne Emery on 9523 5397 for further information and bookings.

Normal (weekly) term classes for 1998 will commence in February. Day and evening classes are available. For information please ring Dianne Emery on 9523 5397.

MONTHLY BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION WORKSHOPS

Whirling Room Studio in the Great Melbourne Telescope Building, 10.00am - 3.00pm.

Workshops for illustrators of all levels will be held on the second Tuesday of every month from 10 February to 8 December inclusive. *Please note:* school holiday dates, i.e. April, July and September, to be notified.

If you are interested in joining this group of enthusiastic artists please register your name with the Friends' office, tel. 9650 6398, in case we have vacancies.

Cost \$120 for 11 workshops. Continuing members should confirm and send payment with enclosed booking form.

RSVP by 30 January

MEDAL FOR MARY

One of the Friends' most talented botanical artists, Mary Gregory, has won a Silver Gilt (just one brush stroke below Gold) Medal at the Royal Horticultural Society's Exhibition in London. She submitted nine paintings of the family Bignoniaceae. We look forward to hearing more details when Mary returns from overseas. In the meantime, congratulations on achieving this honour.

STATE LIBRARY

Friends who marvelled at the ancient volumes of botanical art during our visits to the State Library in August will be pleased to know that our entrance fees of \$500 will be devoted to rare books in their collection - in particular, to repair the binding of Pierre-Joseph Redouté's *Jardin de la Malmaison* edition published 1800.

Interpretation Award

- The RBG received the 1997 National Interpretation
- Australia Award for Excellence for our interpretation
- for the Australian Rainforest Walk. The award was
- presented to Roslyn Semler and Wendy Williams on
- 30 September, during the Interpretation Australia
- Association Conference in Gatton, Queensland. The
- RBG received a prize of \$500, publicity for the project
- and interpretive signage, and a year's membership of
- the Association.

Earlier this year the Friends donated a Global Positioning system, costing \$17,000, to the RBG. Recently, Sabine Glissman-Gough, Manager of Records and Planning at the Gardens, showed Friends' Council members how the equipment works. It is linked to the RBG database and is capable of identifying within half a metre the position of any plant in the Gardens.

SHOW YOUR CARD, PLEASE

Friends making purchases at the Friends' and Gardens shops are reminded that they must produce their membership card to receive a discount.

You will appreciate that shop staff do not like to refuse the benefit; however, it is only fair for us to play our part. Also, the card should be presented before the transaction is entered on the till!

GIFT MEMBERSHIP

A gift of Friends' membership would make an ideal Christmas present for someone on your list.

Phone the Friends' office on 9650 6398 and we'll arrange to send a membership card with your greeting.

RENEWALS

With this edition of the *Botanic News*, renewal notices will be included for those Members of the Friends whose subscriptions fall due at the end of the months of May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December 1997 and January 1998. Please check your envelopes if applicable.

Also, please ring the Friends' office if an error has been made. We do like to know about our errors so that we can rectify them as soon as possible.



SUMMER THEATRE SEASON

One perennial favourite, *Wind in the Willows*, and a new Shakespeare production, *The Taming of the Shrew*, will feature in the summer season of outdoor theatre in the Gardens. As well, Moonlight Cinema will return with a new bunch of arthouse, classic and cult films. Details are available from RBG reception, tel. 9252 2300, and will also be advertised in the daily press.

ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF BOTANIC GARDENS 1998 CONFERENCE

Try to plan a visit to the Sunraysia district next autumn, taking in this Friends' conference on 2 and 3 May. The Friends of Australian Inland Botanic Gardens at Mildura-Wentworth have arranged an interesting panel of

speakers, and look forward to showing off their fairly new Gardens. They would welcome suggestions of topical subjects for a discussion session. We'll have more information in the next Botanic News.



Newly trained Voluntary Guide Bary Dowling (left) and Friends' Councillor David Plant shared their ornithological expertise with members of the public attracted to special guided walks in the Gardens during Bird Week. David has just produced an up-to-date bird list for the Gardens which is available at the Herbarium entrance foyer.

SUMMER 1997/98 BOTANIC NEWS
BOOKING FORM

CHRISTMAS DINNER
at RBG RECEPTION CENTRE

Thursday 11 December 7.00pm for 7.30pm

No..... @ \$52.00 each

TOTAL: \$

RSVP by phone by 3/12/97

BUS TRIP TO MANOAH AT FLINDERS
AND CRUDEN FARM AT LANGWARRIN

Thursday 22 January 1998

Leaving National Gallery at 10.30am sharp

No..... @ \$40 each

TOTAL: \$

RSVP by 16/1/98

BOTANICAL EMBROIDERERS' WORKSHOP

Term commencing 9 February \$40 \$

Please return the relevant section of this form with remittance and stamped addressed envelope to: Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens, National Herbarium, Birdwood Ave, South Yarra 3141.

Telephone: (03) 9650 6398

Cheques/Postal orders payable to:

Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Inc.

NAME

ADDRESS

TEL:

SUMMER 1997/98 BOTANIC NEWS
BOOKING FORM

VICTORIAN TAPESTRY WORKSHOP

260 Park St, South Melbourne

Wednesday 11 February 1998 at 2.00pm

No..... of tickets @ \$8.00 \$

OR

Thursday 12 February 1998 at 11.00am

No..... of tickets @ \$8.00 \$

TOTAL: \$

RSVP by 6/2/98

ILLUSTRATING THE FLORAS

Talk in Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

Tuesday 24 February 1998 from 10.00am

No..... of Friends @ \$8.00 \$

No..... of Others @ \$12.00 \$

TOTAL: \$

RSVP: 17/2/98

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

Please return the relevant section of this form with remittance and stamped addressed envelope to: Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens, National Herbarium, Birdwood Ave, South Yarra 3141.

Telephone: (03) 9650 6398

Cheques/Postal orders payable to:

Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Inc.

NAME

ADDRESS

TEL:

SUMMER 1997/98 BOTANIC NEWS
BOOKING FORM

FROM SEA TO SPRINGS

Illustrated talk by Helen Aston

Thursday 26 February at 8.00pm

Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

No..... of Friends @ \$8.00 \$

No..... of others @ \$12.00 \$

TOTAL: \$

RSVP by 24/2/98

MONTHLY BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION
WORKSHOP

Fee for 11 Workshops 1998

for continuing Members \$120

RSVP by 30/1/98

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

This will enable the coach to leave on time.

Please return the relevant section of this form with remittance and stamped addressed envelope to: Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens, National Herbarium, Birdwood Ave, South Yarra 3141.

Telephone: (03) 9650 6398

Cheques/Postal orders payable to:

Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Inc.

NAME

ADDRESS

TEL:

IN PRINT

A stunningly illustrated 24-page souvenir booklet has been produced for the Gardens, and is on sale for \$6.95 at the Gardens and Friends' shops and the Plant Craft Cottage. Revenue from the Gardens Shop funded its publication.

Writer Anne Latreille and photographer Neil Bartlett have captured the essence of the landscape. The booklet makes no attempt to present detailed information as did Joan Law-Smith's 1984 guide book, but meets a pressing need for a simple publication that will allow people to retain images and relive the experience of a visit to the Gardens.

HORTICULTURAL FLORA OF SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA VOLUME 2

This impressive reference volume covers 74 families of flowering plants including such garden favourites as magnolias, rhododendrons, azaleas, camellias, hibiscus and begonias - rich scope for the 65 colour photos it contains. Many tree groups, including oaks, elms, birches and beeches, are also covered.

The book is edited by Dr Roger Spencer, a Senior Botanist at the Royal Botanic Gardens, and published by University of New South Wales Press. Within its 620 pages, more than 1000 line drawings aid identification, while the text provides information on botany, cultivation and propagation, ecology, origins and uses.

See this volume in the Gardens Shop, and remember that your Friends' membership entitles you to a 10 per cent discount.

ROSE GARDENS OF AUSTRALIA

published by Viking

Any new rose book by Susan Irvine arouses interest; with this one she has excelled herself and will inspire readers by her passion and knowledge. It's a large format volume covering more than 400 roses, all available in Australia. Its special appeal lies in the fact that the roses are described 'in situ', growing in 30 or so private gardens. Almost half are Victorian gardens, ranging from expansive country landscapes such as *Nareen* to a sophisticated inner city property in Melbourne, *Heide's* potager and *Cruden Farm's* 'picking garden'. We learn about the gardeners' philosophy as well.

You'll be beguiled by Simon Griffiths's gorgeous photographs of roses hugging arbours, scrambling over stone walls, shining among perennials or standing formally in beds. A select list of roses for Australian gardens is included.

Both shops in the Gardens have stocks of this book (rrp \$60), and many other gardening books suitable for Christmas gifts. Remember that your membership of the Friends entitles you to a discount of 10 per cent for purchases over \$20.

FRIENDS' SHOP

Dear Friends,

We have a Blue Wren family that has taken over the stone troughs outside the shop. They arrive every evening at 5pm led by the father in all his bright blue finery, mother and babies follow; they feed amongst the euphorbia, bathe in the stone bird bath, usually flicking water all over our stock, and finally preen and dry off perched on top of the calendar rack.

Inside the shop, assorted overseas visitors watch enraptured (and go mad with the camera!) so we keep a few Blue Wren gifts on hand now. A lovely lilac shaded T-shirt with wrens on the front - \$29.95; embroidered hankies with the little wren on the corner at \$3.95; some beautiful greetings cards and several framed pictures - the best by Greg Postle showing the wrens in a huge staghorn fern.

For children up to six years old we have school cases in bright colours red/bluegreen/cerise/ green/yellow and white called Educases, covered with animals, plasticised inside and out to wipe clean at \$15.95.

Masses of tea towels made in Australia with animal and floral designs; Irish linen tea towels printed with owls, cats, sheep and wonderful pansy china.

And last, as usual at Christmas, books, books, books - gardening, adventure, cooking, birds, decorating and a wonderful children's selection. If you call us on 9820 1125, we can always arrange postage.

So from us all here - the staff, the volunteers and me - to all of you, a thousand Christmas blessings and a very happy summer.

Jill Swann, Shop Manager

SPEAKERS

From time to time groups or organisations contact the Friends seeking a speaker to address them about the Royal Botanic Gardens and the role of the Friends. The Friends would welcome more such requests, recognising the potential for increased publicity and the possibility of obtaining new members as a result.

Anyone who'd like to hear from us should contact Janet Thomson, 9571 9448, or the Friends' office, 9650 6398, for further information or to make arrangements.

DAHLIA SHOW

28 February and 1 March 1998

The National Dahlia Society of Victoria invites RBG Friends to its annual State Dahlia Show (which includes floral art, begonia and fern displays), to be held at the Mount Waverley Community Centre, corner Miller Crescent and Stephensons Road, Mount Waverley. If you show your current Friends' membership card, the Society will discount the admission price by 50 per cent.

Enthusiastic members of the Society maintain a bed of Australian-raised dahlias within the Gardens, and Friends are invited to view it between late January and early April. It's close to the glasshouses near E Gate.

TRIBUTES TO HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

Philip Ayton supported the nomination of SIR RUPERT HAMER, who was President of the Friends between 1992 and 1996 and continues his association with the Council as Immediate Past President. He outlined Sir Rupert's distinguished military and political career, and noted his involvement with an amazing range of cultural, environmental and community organisations. The role of Lady April Hamer in providing support was acknowledged.

As the father of the Garden State concept for Victoria, Sir Rupert was a most appropriate leader for the Friends. He came into office soon after the Gardens achieved independent status with its own Board. The Gardens was under severe financial strain at the time, and Sir Rupert acted as Chairman of the Herald-Sun Revitalisation Appeal which resulted in the funding of many improvements to the Gardens.

During Sir Rupert's Presidency, the Friends donated approximately \$150,000 to the Gardens, with substantial additional sums given from the Friends' Trust Fund.

Judith Woodfull worked with LESLEY CLARK in both the Voluntary Guides (which Lesley convened in 1983-84) and the Friends over many years.

In supporting Lesley's election as an Honorary Life Member, Judith praised Lesley, a former Vice-President of the Council, as an enthusiastic and committed member of the Friends' Activities Sub-Committee over 14 years. She devoted an enormous amount of time and energy, was a good listener for ideas and suggestions, and worked well with all groups within the organisation.

Judith said that Lesley initiated excellent interstate and overseas tours. "Her attention to detail on these tours made them very special, as it did with all the various functions and events under her leadership. The Botanical Embroiderers' group is another highlight of Lesley's endeavours. Her concern is for the interest and knowledge of members and to ultimately create a strong interest in the Royal Botanic Gardens themselves."

Judith acknowledged Lesley's husband Ralph, also, for supporting and helping whenever the need arose, as general 'dogsbody', taxi, carrier and photographer.

Sharon Beaman, current Co-ordinator of the Growing Friends, praised GILLIAN KIRK, the first leader of this group, as an unassuming, friendly person with an enormous knowledge of plants. "If the Friends had not had Gillian with her tenacity, persistence and perseverance, the Growing Friends would not be the successful group that it is today", she said.

Sharon recalled that meetings were held between the Friends and the Gardens in 1988 to see if seeds excess to

requirements in the Seed Exchange system could be turned into revenue. Gillian volunteered to get the project off the ground. There were no pots, no soil, no benches. RBG's Nursery Manager helped with equipment and demonstrations on how to prick out tiny leafed seedlings.

A small group worked from a shed behind the Astronomer's Residence and then wheeled trolley loads of tubes all the way out along Birdwood Avenue, through F Gate, past the Perennial Border, into Gardens House, around the back to the Lilly Pilly and the Mulberry. But there was no watering system and possums lived in the Lilly Pilly. Gillian her husband Neil came to the RBG every day and hand watered, and removed leaves and possum poo that were smothering the tiny plants.

The first sale six months later raised an astounding \$14,000. A shade house and fence went up in a corner of the Observatory site. But the automatic watering system didn't arrive until well into 1989, so the daily hand watering continued - a marathon task - seven days a week for more than 12 months.

Gillian retired as Co-ordinator of the Growing Friends after two years but continued to come every Friday until the recent illness of her husband Neil has meant her involvement is less intense, but still very supportive.

Terry Smyth, a Senior Horticulturist at the RBG, expressed admiration for LYDIA BARTLETT as a plantswoman and a gardener, with an excellent memory and a generous knack of passing on her knowledge.

Lydia has been a Friend for 14 years and was in at the beginning of the Growing Friends - in fact she was the first treasurer (for seven years!). When Gillian Kirk persuaded Lydia to take over as Co-ordinator, she took on the role with gusto. "I'm told she would take note of root growth rather than top growth, and she most certainly helped increase the diversity of unusual plant species available for the sales, and encouraged others to do so too," Terry said.

Lydia's five years as Co-ordinator included 10 plant sales; happily she continues as part of the Growing Friends team. Lydia is known as a great character who calls a spade a spade, and who is very definite in her ideas. Terry recalled occasions when Lydia had been very annoyed or upset when a plant was not treated well.

"Lydia gets on very well with Gardens staff. They enjoy her cheeky sense of humour, her warmth and her impressive plant knowledge. Colleagues have told me how they've found her very approachable, inspiring and easy to talk plants with, BUT at the same time she's kept us all on our toes", Terry said.



This Eucalyptus cypellocarpa (Mountain Grey Gum) listed on the National Trust's Register of Significant Trees, measures 10.8m x 59.6m x 21.5m. It was a highlight of the Friends' visit to The Hermitage, Narbethong, on 30 October.

GROWING FRIENDS

The Spring Sale was held on a new site around the Dahlia Bed, sheltered by a large Lilly Pilly hedge. Buyers had no trouble finding the new site within the Botanic Gardens - there was a queue of more than 150 waiting at 10.00am. The result of almost \$20,000 surprised us all because we had considerably fewer plants than for other Spring Sales. This was due to having an almost 'clean start' in the new nursery site, destroying plants of the genera susceptible to Fire Blight and having to hold back many good-looking plants because their root growth was too slow.

We greatly appreciated the Dahlia Society's donation of many tubers - wrapped and labelled - which sold extremely well. It is a pleasure to be able to interact with other voluntary horticultural organisations within the RBG. If the Dahlia Bed is in all its glory at the Autumn Sale, tubers will be in great demand and the Society might even get some new members!

Another occasion of great joy for the Growing Friends occurred at the AGM on 17 November, when Lydia Bartlett and Gillian Kirk were unanimously elected Honorary Life Members. Both have been involved with the Growing Friends from its inception in 1988. It is really pleasing that their hard work, foresight and talents have been recognised in this way. Congratulations!

The young plants in the nursery have finally decided to start growing at a great pace (making up for lost time). We hope we can look forward to some interesting collections to present for sale very soon. Members may visit the nursery and buy on Fridays from 10.00am to 1.00pm.

Gift vouchers are available from the Friends' office or the nursery. This could be your Christmas gift solution!

Sharon Beaman, Convener

THE RBG NOW HAS AN ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE WITH 6 DIVISIONS

Division	Assistant Director
Melbourne Gardens	Richard Barley
Cranbourne Gardens	Andrew Grant
Research & Herbarium	Jim Ross (Also Chief Botanist)
Corporate Resources	Jenny Steinicke
Public Programs & Development	Tracie Laws
Aust. Research Centre for Urban Ecology	Mark McDonnell

Dr Jim Ross has recently been appointed a Professorial Associate by the University of Melbourne - well-earned recognition of Jim's contributions to botanical science and to the teaching and training of research students.

BENEFITS FOR FRIENDS

Both the Friends' and Gardens Shops offer a 10 per cent discount on members' purchases over \$20.

The following businesses very kindly offer special discounts to Friends. *Please note: only a member presenting his/her signed current membership card may claim a discount. CARDS ARE NOT TRANSFERABLE.*

Fryers' Nursery

589 Glenferrie Rd, Hawthorn
5% off plants only

Idaho Nurseries

410 Waverley Rd, E. Malvern
10% off plants only

Bulleen Art and Garden

105 Bridge St, Bulleen
5% off seedlings

10% off potted plants

Town and Country Gardens

1280 Malvern Rd, Malvern
10% off everything

The Arts Bookshop

1067 High St, Armadale

Holmesglen College of TAFE

inc. the Victorian Schools Nursery
585 Waverley Rd, Glen Waverley
10% off everything

The Gardeners Corner Store

190-192 New St, Brighton
10% off everything

Collectors Corner

Springvale Rd, Keysborough
10% off all plants

Kew Nursery

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

Wolf Tools

675 Canterbury Rd, Surrey Hills
10% discount

Burwood Garden Patch

1418 Toorak Rd, Burwood
10% discount

Green Gables Nursery

1039 Whitehorse Rd, Box Hill
10% off all items except specials

Garden of Eden Nursery

33 Ferrars Street, Albert Park
10% discount off everything

The Cottage Garden Nursery

cnr Macedon Ave & Doncaster Rd
North Balwyn

\$20 per tray of seedlings
(8 punnets), 5% off all plants

FROM THE GARDENS
AND HERBARIUM

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

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

Patron:
His Excellency the
Hon. Sir James Gobbo, A.C.
President:
John Harper
Vice Presidents:
Louise Coronel
Heather Ironmonger
Secretary:
Lawrence Cohn
Treasurer:
David Baumgartner
Editor:
Heather Ironmonger

FRIENDS' OFFICE
Margaret Howes
Joan Baumgartner
Helen Fahey

C/- National Herbarium
Birdwood Avenue
South Yarra Vic 3141
Tel: (03) 9650 6398
Fax: (03) 9650 7723

Print Post Approved
PP 3458420025
ISSN No. 08170-650

Printer:
Ellikon Fine Printers
384 George Street
Fitzroy 3065

Printed on
100 per cent recycled paper
Australian made.

In October the Minister for Agriculture and Resources, Hon. Pat McNamara, ordered that all remaining plants susceptible to Fire Blight be removed from RBG Melbourne and from properties within approximately 250m of the Gardens. These include Government House, parts of the Domain, and 56 residential properties.

Contractors and RBG staff have now removed from RBG Melbourne all the targeted plants. These were mainly cotoneasters, hawthorns, Flowering Quinces (*Chaenomeles*), Flowering Pears (*Pyrus*) and Flowering Apples (*Malus*). Since the disease was detected at the Gardens in May 1997, approximately 600 plants have been taken out. Fire Blight bacteria have been confirmed in only three plants, all quickly removed in May. Since then no further evidence of Fire Blight has been detected during surveys.

Most of the plants removed have been shrubs less than 2m high, and their disappearance will have little visual impact. The removals enable us to make some horticultural improvements in line with the new Master Plan. Replanting has already started, and we have a list of more than 40 species to be planted. These include native species (some spectacular WA banksias, new viburnums for the OPCA national collection, and a range of South American species rarely cultivated in Australia).

The curatorial staff of the National Herbarium recently completed the first detailed estimate of the number of specimens held in the Herbarium. The results are as follows:

* Total number of specimens: 1.2 million. Of these roughly 100,000 are 19th century specimens of Australian plants, and roughly 300,000 are foreign specimens.

- * Approximately 60 per cent of the collection is Australian material.
- * Approximately 25,000 species (excluding lower plants and fungi) are represented in the collections, equating to about 10 per cent of the world's flora.
- * There are about 20,000 type specimens (ie specimens used in or relevant to the original scientific description of the species).
- * There are 4,040 species of rare or threatened Australian plants, c.80 per cent of the Australian total.

These results confirm the great national and international importance of the Herbarium's collections. They continue to yield unrecognised treasures. Dr Jim Grimes has been examining foreign legume specimens, including those collected in South America last century by the German botanist Martius (and presumably obtained by Mueller through the "German connection"). To Jim's astonishment, he unearthed material whose last known collections had been destroyed in Berlin during the Second World War. We now appear to be the only herbarium in the world holding this particular specimen.

Dr Mark McDonnell has been appointed as the inaugural Director of the Australian Research Centre for Urban Ecology (ARCUE) at RBG Cranbourne. Mark is currently Associate Professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Connecticut, and was a research botanist at the New York Botanical Garden between 1983-93. He is a leading US researcher in urban ecology. He will take up his appointment in mid-1998.

Philip Moors
Director