



Botanic News

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FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE INC.

SUMMER 2001/02

FROM THE PRESIDENT

It seems to happen at this time of the year — a vigorous burst of fund-raising by the Friends! First the Growing Friends Spring Plant Sale; just think how many plants were propagated and potted to make up those proceeds of \$26,758. Then there were two illustrated talks which filled Mueller Hall to capacity and raised almost \$3000: Peter Valder speaking on Paris Gardens and Sarah Guest with Simon Griffiths discussing their sumptuous new book on modern Australian gardens. I'd like to congratulate all who worked very hard to achieve these results, and to thank the speakers who were so generous in sharing their time and knowledge. The Gardens are the inspiration for all this effort.

The Friends' Trust Fund has agreed to give \$10,000 towards the cost of the next 12 months of the Mueller Correspondence Project and Lawrence Cohn, our retiring Secretary, has been appointed as an Honorary Research Assistant for this project.

Following the formalities of our Annual Meeting on 12 November, we were addressed by the CEO of Volunteering Australia, Ms Sha Cordingley (above).

She stood in at very short notice when the Minister for Environment and Conservation was unable to attend. After detailing a host of significant events and crises over the past century at which volunteers played a crucial role, Sha spoke of a practical and constructive agenda that has been set out for presentation to all levels of government as this International Year of



Volunteers draws to a close. The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimated that there were 4,395,600 volunteers aged 18 years and over, contributing 704.1 million hours, in the year 2000. It is certainly an essential sector in Australian society and, close to home, one where the Royal Botanic Gardens benefits from the efforts of many dedicated volunteers.

My wish for all Friends and their families is that the Christmas season and the New Year is a time of peace.

Ninian Stephen

TWENTY GREAT YEARS: The Friends will celebrate their 20th anniversary on 14 March 2002. We plan a late-afternoon tree planting ceremony in the Gardens, followed by a party at which our first President, Beth Higgs, will add to the special occasion by recalling how the Friends came into being. Please note the date in your diary and see the details in the Autumn *Botanic News*.

We'd be very interested to learn of any early photographs of the group's activities, particularly for the years 1982-1993. Kindly phone the office on 9650 6398 if you have photos we could borrow for copying.



The Autumn 2002 Plant Sale will take place on 13 and 14 April.

It's a case of all hands on deck for Growing Friends on sale days.

Despite being somewhat hampered, Linda Floyd and June Cherrey played their part as usual.

Photo by Anna Denton

Summer Activities

VISIT TO THE JOHNSTON COLLECTION AND AN EAST MELBOURNE GARDEN Wednesday 12 December

The Spring/Summer Extra edition of *Botanic News* gave a brief advance notice of a planned visit to the Johnston Collection. This produced an immediate response, with all 22 available places being reserved and a waiting list established. The curators set this limit on group numbers for the protection of the Collection, and we regret that we cannot accept any further bookings. However, in response to your interest, we will arrange another visit next year.

A BUS TRIP TO GARDENING DELIGHTS IN THE YARRA VALLEY

Wednesday 23 January 2002

Leaving from outside the Victorian Arts Centre, St Kilda Road at 9.00am sharp

Towering eucalypts, elegant tree ferns, sweet birdsongs and gently flowing streams — these are natural features you'll enjoy in the Yarra Valley on a summer's day. We've added cultivated delights in the form of three gardens and two nurseries.

Our first stop will be the well-known Lillydale Herb Farm, where we'll have morning coffee with herb scones, a brief talk and a chance to buy plants.

Next we'll call in to Bob Fletcher's amazing fern nursery at Seville. He'll guide us around his collection of ferns, palms, cycads and bamboos — many of them rare species from such places as Central America, New Caledonia and closer to home, Fraser, Norfolk and Lord Howe Islands. He'll be able to answer all your questions about their care.

Phillipa and John Moore have an immaculate property, Marion Park, blessed with rich soil and plentiful water at Warburton East. It is distinguished by a magnificent Dawn Redwood, 28 species of maples, species hydrangeas (some available for sale), and wonderful beds of massed perennials that thrive in dappled shade. Behind the house is a rainforest area with ferns and a stream.

We'll eat our lunch at this 40-year-old garden before going on to an impressive two-year-old property at Warburton. As it adjoins a golf course, the owners have taken full advantage of the view provided by the greens and the mountains beyond. A swiftly-flowing creek on the side boundary lends a soundscape to the garden — altogether there's a feeling of serenity, with choice plants and subtle colour.

Our third garden, at Gruyere, is home to a Friend, Meg Bentley, who holds the *Salvia* Collection for the Ornamental Plant Collection Association of Australia. She has an extensive range of salvias from Morocco, China, South Africa, Southern USA, Europe and Russia, and many will be in flower. You'll have an opportunity to buy plants that Meg has propagated. Although salvias are the specialty, there's much more to be seen including herbs, perennials and native plants. This is a dry garden in a rain shadow, but with careful planning and plant selection, as well as plenty of mulch, there are blooms well into winter. Lessons here for all of us!

On our return journey we hope to fit in a visit to the Yarra Valley Dairy at Yering, home of magnificent farmhouse cheeses. We should be back to the Arts Centre by 5.45pm.

BYO lunch and a cool drink. We will provide tea and coffee at Marion Park.

Cost: \$49 covers bus transport (with seat belts), morning coffee and a donation for guided tours of the fern collection and gardens.

RSVP by Wednesday 16 January on booking form.

BURNLEY COLLEGE AND HAWTHORN GARDENS SELF-DRIVE BYO PICNIC and GARDEN TOUR

Thursday 14 February, 2002

Meet at 10.30am at Burnley Gardens,
500 Yarra Boulevard, Richmond.

Come and see some hidden garden treasures. We will meet at 10.30am at the historic Burnley Gardens that surround Burnley College. There, we will be met by the Friends of Burnley Gardens and have morning tea. Dr Greg Moore, the College Principal, will give us a talk about its fascinating history and its magnificent century-old gardens. The names of many leading horticulturists grace its Honour Boards; also, the college was notable for its early admission of female students.

We will then be taken on a guided tour of the beautiful gardens, followed by a picnic lunch 'alfresco' — BYO or you can purchase food in the Burnley café.

After lunch it is a short drive over the river to 'Tay Creggan' in the St James Park area, to view this grand old garden. Another private garden in the

same area will be opening especially for us. A relatively new garden at a Victorian terrace house, it will show how you can create an interesting landscape on a long narrow block.

As numbers will be limited at these gardens, please be sure to book early to avoid disappointment.

Cost: \$18 Friends \$15

RSVP by Thursday 7 February on booking form. We'll send details of the meeting place and parking advice when you book.

GREEK LANDSCAPES, WILDFLOWERS AND GARDENS

**Illustrated talk by Caroline Davies
Tuesday 19 February 2002 at 7.30 for 8.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium**

Caroline Davies is a passionate gardener and amateur botanist with a background in writing and editing. Speaking and reading the language, she has strong links with Greece; her mother was born in Corfu. With partner David Martin, Caroline spends her life travelling, first researching then accompanying groups on tours which feature private houses and gardens, wildflowers and walking, sites of antiquity, architecture and contemporary art. One of her favourite countries is Greece—botanically, the richest in Europe.

In this illustrated talk, Caroline will reveal the wide diversity of wildflowers in both spring and autumn, and show courtyard, pot and Mediterranean gardens in a variety of settings. Scenic areas include the dramatic mountains and gorges of Epirus with the traditional villages of Zagoria, the softer olive groves and vineyards of Attica, magnificent Mount Parnassus of Delphic Oracle fame, and the contrasting islands of rugged, mountainous Crete and lush, verdant Corfu.

Refreshments will be served from 7.30pm

Cost: \$16 Friends \$11

RSVP by Friday 15 February on booking form

SUMMER QUARTERLY INSIDERS WALK BEHIND THE SCENES TOUR OF RBG AND GROWING FRIENDS' NURSERIES

Friday 22 February at 10.00am

Over the past six years, the Friends have given grants to the Gardens to improve their nursery — first a new seed house and most recently a new propagating glasshouse. These are wonderful 'state of the art' facilities. Acting Nursery Manager, David Robbins, will take us on a guided tour of the Gardens Nursery

so we can see where and how our grants have been spent. Our Growing Friends' Nursery is located in the same area. As we will be visiting on a Friday when the Growing Friends will be at work, they will show us around their facilities and explain how they produce all the plants for their twice-yearly sales. There will also be an opportunity to buy plants at their nursery while we are there.

We will meet first at Gate Lodge for morning tea and a brief talk before walking through the Gardens to the nurseries. Please call the office if it's wet on the day to learn where we'll have morning tea.

Cost: \$9.00 (Friends \$7.00) Bookings essential as numbers will be limited

RSVP by Wednesday 20 February on booking form

RYAN IN IRELAND

**Illustrated talk by Stephen Ryan
Thursday 28 February at 10.30 for 11.00am
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium**

Considering his surname, it was probably inevitable that Stephen, Mt Macedon nursery owner and plantperson extraordinaire, would do the 'roots' thing at some time. In his case it would seem to have as much to do with flowers and leaves as roots!

He will regale us with the plants and gardens he visited as well as the scenic beauty from Dingle to Donegal and all stops in between. Visit Rowallane and Mount Stewart to see historic gardens and a contemporary town garden in Dublin. For the fun of it, we will see ancient ruins and learn how to turn yourself into a modern ruin with a few glasses of Guinness. If you enjoy the feeling of envy and inadequacy that comes from seeing Tibetan blue poppies taller than a basketballer and hostas you can't leap over, don't miss this talk!

Morning tea/coffee from 10.30am

Cost: \$16 Friends \$11

RSVP by Monday 25 February on booking form

GOVERNMENT HOUSE OPEN DAY *Australia Day: Saturday 26 January 2002*

John Landy, AC, MBE, the Governor of Victoria, and Mrs Lynne Landy will open the doors of Government House on Australia Day between 10.00am and 4.00pm. Admission is free, and the last entrance to the House is at 3.30pm. Visitors will be able to view the State Apartments, the Private Apartments and the Governor's Study. Many of these rooms are not normally open to the public.

Refreshments will be available or you may picnic in the grounds, as well as enjoying varied entertainment.

GREAT GROWING, FRIENDS!

Another successful sale! The weather favoured us—not too hot, not too wet. After GST the total proceeds exceeded \$26,000. The Growing Friends work very hard for these results, but they are helped enormously by many others and could not achieve this success without such help. These helpers include office-bearers and members of other groups of the Friends, volunteers from the general membership and gardeners from the Gardens. The media — print and radio — co-operate in publicising our sales to reach a large number of customers. The Growing Friends are very grateful to all these people.

In an unexpected and delightful gesture, the gardeners invited us to morning tea a couple of weeks after the sale. We always have good relations with the gardeners and we really enjoyed the opportunity to mix socially with them.

Just before the sale, many Friends taking advantage of the offer of free fertiliser also visited the Growing Friends' Nursery — some of them for the first time. They bought nearly \$1000 worth of plants; perhaps this should be counted as part of the sale proceeds.

We have a number of well-grown trees and shrubs in the nursery. When plants such as these get too big, they become too heavy for some customers to carry from the sale. This will be the case if we still have them at the time of the Autumn Sale. We are prepared to let these go at reduced prices to Friends who come to the nursery on Friday mornings.

Arisaemas in the nursery are coming into flower now. These are most unusual hooded flowers, and really fashionable. They were propagated from three varieties of seed collected by Terry Smyth in China.

Joan Hardy, Convener



Anna Denton and Cathy Trinca at the checkout.

Tree planting honours volunteers

A blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) will be planted by the volunteers on Central Lawn on Wednesday 5 December to celebrate the International Year of Volunteers.

I am delighted to have arranged this ceremony to acknowledge the wonderful contribution that volunteers make in many ways to the life of the Gardens. They devote thousands of hours to enrich the experience of visitors, raise funds and lend their individual skills to tasks behind the scenes. I am confident that they, in return, respond to the challenges and gain personal satisfaction from the work they undertake. Certainly at the RBG we are striving to provide leadership and training to encourage and motivate creative and skilled people to continue giving us their time.

I want to express my warmest appreciation to all former and present volunteers.

Invitations have been issued for 5 December to Council members of the Friends, the Voluntary Guides and Plant Craft Cottage Committees, the longest-serving Herbarium volunteers, representatives of the volunteers who work at the RBG library and in Records and Planning, and also from the Dahlia and Iris Societies.

Philip Moors



Helichrysum 'Helping Hand', the floral emblem of the International Year of Volunteers

Robert Brown Symposium

Robert Brown, the famous botanist who accompanied Matthew Flinders on his circumnavigation of Australia, landed in Port Phillip early 1802. To mark the bicentenary of this seminal event for Victorian botany, the RBG and the School of Botany at the University of Melbourne are organising a symposium which will be held on 18 April 2002. The venue is yet to be determined (possibly the University). The preliminary program includes papers dealing with Brown, his Victorian explorations, botanical collections and achievements, botanical art in the nineteenth century, and Brown's legacy to plant science in Victoria. The symposium will conclude with a public lecture on the present and future prospects for the native flora of the Melbourne region.

Philip Moors



Mrs Jessie Serle with Peter Valder before his October talk about Paris gardens. Photo by Cathy Trinca

What a treat we all had when the entertaining and engaging Peter Valder shared his Parisian adventures with us. Complete with 'Metro', bus and railway instructions, he took us on a five-star garden tour of Paris and its surrounds. We rode the tethered hot air balloons, saw sculptures and grass walls, long thin aqueduct parks, designer gardens and were overwhelmed by roses. This talk was completely booked out and we were sorry that some members missed out.



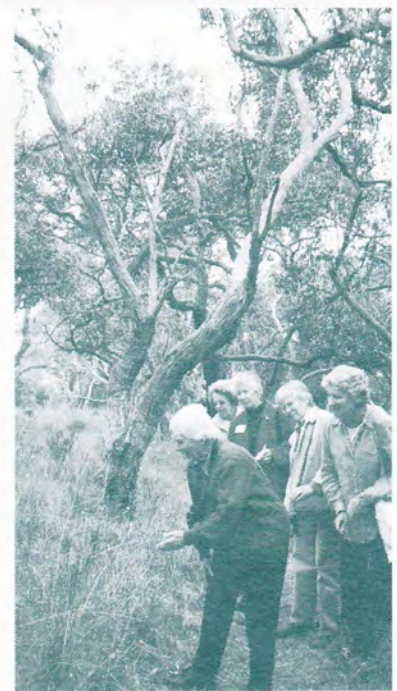
David Plant (left) with Neil Robertson, CEO of the Australian Open Garden Scheme, who previewed the 2001-2002 season for us in August.

Photo by Cathy Trinca



Sprigs of Epacris impressa, Victoria's floral emblem, were given to Dr Sophie Ducker (with Beth Higgs, left) when she addressed us about the botanical history of all the Australian emblems.

Photo by Cathy Trinca



Gwen Hall of ANGAIR leading Friends around the Edna Bowman Reserve at Anglesea in September.

Photo by Jean Williams



When Andrew Laidlaw gave the Friends an account of his study tour of US children's gardens, we welcomed his parents, Judy and Clyde Laidlaw, as well.

Photo by Cathy Trinca



Virginia Morrison, Dale Mc Donnell and Lucille Strachan after Dale's fascinating talk about Hellebores in August.

Photo by Cathy Trinca

Botanical Illustrators

ILLUSTRATORS SUB-COMMITTEE

Early in September a committee was formed to represent and co-ordinate all botanical illustration activities for the Friends. We have met twice since then, and are enthusiastically looking forward to a busy year.

As the convener of this group I would like to introduce the new Illustrators Sub-committee: Convener, Edyta Hoxley; Secretary, Pam Habersberger; Treasurer, Louise Coronel; Editor, Dianne Emery; FRBG Liaison, Judy Jarman; Committee, Merle McIntyre, Rita Parkinson, Judith Sear.

By the time you read this we will already have held our first sale of small, unframed artworks and cards produced by our members, and may organise a similar event next Autumn.

We are keen to establish a list of all active illustrating Friends so that we can keep you informed of any last-minute exhibitions, sales or other activities which may come up. If you wish to be added to this list, or know of someone else who does, please leave your name, address and phone number at the Friends' office or with me directly.

I would also be pleased to hear from Members who have a love of botanical art and skills we could use, such as computing, finance, administration, public relations, writing and organisation.

The Art of Botanical Illustration 2002 Exhibition, to be held from Wednesday 23 October to Sunday 10 November, is already being planned. Dates for your diary are:

Delivery of artwork for selection:

Monday 16 September

Collection of artwork after selection:

Thursday 19 September

Delivery of selected artwork for Exhibition:

Monday 21 October

Finally, we have great plans for the Illustrators' page on the FRBG website, which will include up-to-date newsletters, feature artists and a gallery of members' work — so keep checking to see our progress.

Edyta Hoxley

Phone 9761 9711 (Ehoxley@netlink.com.au)

CHRISTMAS PARTY. Tuesday 11 December

Botanical Illustrators are invited to meet at the Whirling Room at 11.00am for a walk in the Gardens, followed by our end-of-year Christmas party at 12.30pm. Please bring a plate of food to share.

Cost: \$5.50 (incl. GST)

RSVP: Friends' office, tel. 9650 6398

THE ILLUSTRATED GARDEN.....

The creation of a permanent record of botanical art by the Botanical Illustrator members of the Friends.

The aim of this project is to further the relationship of our artist members with the Gardens by using the magnificent resource of the RBG's Collections to produce a valuable illustrated record of some of the Gardens' most significant plants. We envisage their use for future publications. All members are invited to participate.

The project has made a fine start with the generous assistance of RBG Horticultural Technicians who have helped us to compile a master list of the most significant plants held in 25 of the RBG Collections. Orchids, roses, Californian plants, aquatic plants, grasses, bamboos, the Grey Garden plants, and of course the magnificent collection of trees are all included. It is such a large and varied list that it will take us many years to make an adequate record of these highlights of the Collections, but with a selection like this there is certainly something to inspire everyone.

Some members have already begun illustrations for this project and we hope to be able to feature selected works in our next exhibition. Copies of The Illustrated Garden plant list are available from the Friends' office for \$2.

Where are these books?

A small collection of books belonging to the Friends is kept in the Whirling Room for the use of Members who attend Dianne Emery's classes and paint botanical subjects. The following books are missing:

Clarke, Ian and Lee, Helen. *Name that Flower: The identification of flowering plants.*

Melbourne University Press, 1987.

Vellacot, Helen (ed.) *Some Recollections of a Happy Life: Marianne North in Australia and New Zealand.* Edward Arnold, Melbourne, 1986.

Holmgren, Noel and Angell, Bobbi. *Botanical Illustration: Preparation for Publication.*

N.Y. Botanical Garden, 1986.

It would be appreciated if these and others listed in the Borrowers' Book could be returned to the FRBG Office by 10 December.

Isobel Allan

WHIRLYBIRDS: The Tuesday Painters provides an opportunity for all Botanical Illustrator Friends to work in an informal group, meeting in the Whirling Room Studio. Join them to share ideas and technical information in a supportive atmosphere. Ring Rita Parkinson on 9821 5883 for further information.

Botanical Illustrators

SUMMER WORKSHOPS

FOUR-DAY BEGINNERS WORKSHOP WITH DIANNE EMERY

15,16,17,18 January 2002
10.00am-3.30pm (flexible finish)

This intensive course is aimed at those interested in an introduction to botanical art. Such people might like eventually to join a class, but have had no experience with the specific drawing and painting skills involved.

Over the four days students will begin to develop skills in outline drawing and foreshortening, tonal work and the rendering of surfaces, basic colour work and paint application.

The cost will include paint, watercolour paper and brushes, although students will be asked to provide drawing materials. Classes will be held in the Whirling Room Studio, Observatory Gate.

Cost (incl. GST and painting materials): Friends \$160, Others \$180.

FOUR-DAY ETCHING WORKSHOP FOR BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATORS

We are proposing to run a four-day etching workshop in association with the Victorian College of the Arts.

22-23 January and 29-30 January 2002
10.00am-4.00pm (flexible finish)

Following the success of last January's workshop, we have decided to offer another that will extend the skills of those who attended in 2001, but also introduce the basics for those who are new to etching. Those who attended our earlier workshop may like to further develop their knowledge of the medium by using aquatint, mezzatint, dry point and colour.

Beginners will be taken through the basics of preparing plates, preparing drawings, drawing on the plate, etching and printing. We will split this workshop into two two-day sessions to allow the necessary drawing time in between.

All materials will be provided and are included in the cost. These will include copper plates, grounds, drawing needles, aquatint, acid, printing inks and printing papers, plus expert tuition from the Victorian College of the Arts printmaking department.

Cost (incl. GST, equipment and materials): \$325.00

TERM CLASSES will recommence in the week beginning 11 February.

For dates, times and costs plus detailed information about these classes and the workshops please contact the Friends' office on 9650 6398 or Dianne Emery on 9523 5397.



Photo by Judy Jarman

VISIT TO CRISS CANNING AND LAMBLEY NURSERY

On 28 August, 40 Botanical Illustrators and other Friends travelled by bus to Ascot, north of Ballarat, to visit Criss Canning in her studio at Lambley Nursery. We were able to see paintings ready for her solo exhibition at the Philip Bacon Galleries in Brisbane. The walls of Criss's studio, in the original living room of the 1870 house, are lined with exotic pieces of materials, trays and vases of all shapes and colours, which she incorporates in all her paintings with flowers from her garden. She works in oils, standing up to seven hours a day in front of a large wooden easel, working slowly and taking up to a month to finish each stunning work.

While we visited the studio ten at a time, others in the group walked around the garden, ate lunch and bought plants from David Glenn's wonderful range of unusual and rare perennials.

Judy Jarman

A NEW HONORARY LIFE MEMBER



Photo by Anna Denton

JANET THOMSON was elected an Honorary Life Member of the Friends at our Annual Meeting. Lawrence Cohn declared 'I am honoured, as my last public duty as your Secretary, to move this resolution'. Lawrence said that Janet's contributions to the Friends and the Gardens have been and continue to be outstanding, and her willingness to be a Vice-President — an office to which she had just been elected — was one more example of her contribution.

Janet had already been a Voluntary Guide at the Gardens for almost two years when she joined the Friends in February 1991. She was the convener of the guides for two years in the mid-1990s, and continues as an enthusiastic member of this group. In 1996 she was elected as a member of the Friends' Council, and soon took on the task of giving illustrated talks about the Friends and the Gardens to various groups, often at night and in distant suburbs.

Lawrence praised Janet as an active and thoughtful contributor to the affairs of the Friends, particularly to those of its Council. As Convener, she has continuously brought this thoughtfulness to the benefit of the Future Directions Sub-Committee, formed two years ago; she has also taken on the responsibility for those who undertake different voluntary tasks for the Friends. In a wider sphere, she is a committee member of the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens.



VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS BUSH
Prostanthera lasianthos

A flower for the festive season
Illustrated by Anita Barley

NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS

Two new members were elected to the Friends' Council at the Annual Meeting on 12 November.

SUSAN BROOKES has always had a keen interest in gardens and gardening. Her first career was in conservation and restoration of ceramics. Later, with a young family, she studied Horticulture at Burnley. In the last 15 years Susan has built two gardens from scratch, the first of which was open for the Australian Open Garden Scheme on two occasions. Her primary interest is in plants and their use in garden making. She has a small business advising on planting designs. Susan comes to the Council with a great depth of knowledge and energy.

JUDY JARMAN joined the Friends in 1988, working at that time as a physiotherapist in the community health area. She was involved in the formation of the Botanical Illustrators two years later, and has been an active member of that group ever since. Judy has participated in all five of *The Art of Botanical Illustration* exhibitions as an organiser, publicist and exhibitor.

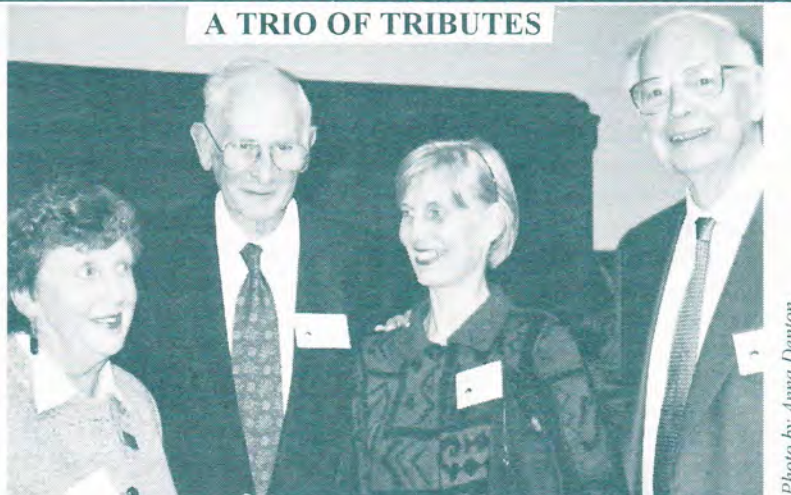
The Friends' Seat Program

With 2001 being the International Year of Volunteers, one of the seats ordered for the Friends' Garden Seat program is of particular interest. Like many other organisations, Birds Australia (formerly The Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union) relies on volunteers for much of the work carried out in the National office as well as conservation and survey activities in the field throughout Australia.

To recognise this valuable contribution made by the many volunteers at Birds Australia, Sue Robinson, Volunteer Co-ordinator at Birds Australia, was successful in obtaining a grant from the International Year of Volunteers Committee to place a seat in the Royal Botanic Gardens. A small ceremony to dedicate the seat will take place on Wednesday 12 December.

Seventy-nine seats have been placed in the Gardens since 1993, thanks to a Friends' initiative to attract donations through this scheme. It is administered through the Friends' Trust Fund. Most seats are memorials for a loved one, but some people donate a seat simply in appreciation of the Gardens and happy times spent there. Contact the office if you'd like further information.

A TRIO OF TRIBUTES



Heather, Lawrence, Louise and Sir Ninian

At the Annual Meeting, Sir Ninian Stephen paid tribute to three people who, although eligible for re-election, had chosen to retire from the Council of the Friends. Nevertheless, as Honorary Life Members, they will retain close links with the Friends.

LOUISE CORONEL, in 1982 a young mother and relative newcomer to Melbourne, found it a joy to work with the fledgling organisation, and as assistant treasurer was involved with the Shop sub-committee and the Growing Friends. Later in the 1980s she attended botanical art classes at Burnley run by Anita Barley and instigated their move to the Gardens. With Louise as Convener, the Friends' Botanical Illustrators group was formed in 1990 and has held five wonderful biennial exhibitions of their work. Under Louise's leadership and with expert teachers the group has become known Australia-wide, achieving ever-higher standards.

In 1989 Louise became a member of the Activities sub-committee and was elected to the Council, serving as Vice-President since 1996. Her ability to think creatively made her a valuable member of the working group between the Council and the Gardens administration, and more recently of the Future Directions Sub-committee which has been reviewing every aspect of the Friends' operations.

LAWRENCE COHN, an actuary by profession, joined the Friends in 1983 after retiring as Deputy General Manager of the National Mutual Life Association of Australasia Ltd. He brought with him a wealth of experience and wisdom. A member of the steering committee, he was appointed as Secretary, a position he has held ever since. He had a major input into the drawing up of our constitution, and has acted as CEO unofficially, in an unobtrusive but vital way. Whenever changes were suggested, Lawrence's standard reply was 'Let's see what the rules say'; if the proposal was sound and the rules didn't fit the circumstances, he set the process in motion to amend the rules. He steered us through

incorporation and the complexities of the introduction of the GST. He represented us at many meetings with the management of the Gardens and served on many committees.

Lawrence, with his meticulous approach and eye for detail, has invaluable editorial and proof-reading skills, evidenced also by the way he has overseen our membership records. He will remain as a Trustee of the Friends' Trust Fund set up in 1986, and as Secretary of the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens Inc.

HEATHER IRONMONGER joined the Friends and the Activities Sub-committee in 1992 following her retirement from the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands. She immediately took over the editorship of *Botanic News* — at that time a single folded sheet — and has produced all but one quarterly edition since; the last was 20 pages. She also edited four volumes of *Botanic Magazine*, which also thrived as a result of long hours of very hard work.

Heather joined the Council early in 1994 and has been Vice-President since 1997. Her involvement with the Activities Sub-committee included the organisation of the Historical Lecture Series and the celebratory wine bottling that marked the 150th birthday of the RBG. In referring to Heather's organisation of functions, tours and two surveys of our membership, Sir Ninian also thanked her husband Duncan for his active partnership role in these activities, and also for serving as photographer on many occasions.

In acknowledging the gift of their time and the dedication of Louise, Lawrence and Heather, Sir Ninian said that the Friends, and also the Gardens, had been lucky to have them. 'We thank you and salute you in this, the International Year of Volunteers', he said.

GREY-HEADED FLYING-FOXES
The continuing saga

In early October, the Victorian Government announced that the preferred site for establishing a new Melbourne roost for Grey-headed Flying-foxes is at Horseshoe Bend in an isolated part of Wilson Reserve on the Yarra River at Ivanhoe. This will be the first time that a flying-fox campsite has been created artificially, and because of this it will be an urban wildlife management experiment with international significance.

Flying-foxes are attracted to Melbourne because of the high quality food resources available in recent decades from extensive garden and parkland plantings, aided also by the city's increasingly warmer climate in winter. Sustainable long-term management of the bats involves protecting RBG Melbourne from damage, while providing elsewhere a campsite which is acceptable to the community. This balancing act involves choosing an alternate roost for the flying-foxes, rather than having the flying-foxes move themselves to another unsuitable area.

Scientific experts examined a large number of potential sites on public land within a 20-kilometre radius of RBG Melbourne. The criteria used in assessing the sites were: distance from the Botanic Gardens; the amount of shelter available; the structure of the overstorey vegetation; the understorey microclimate; size of the area; potential for expansion; impact on and distance from human use; current site use; security; and services to the site. On this basis, Horseshoe Bend at Ivanhoe was clearly the best choice. A detailed report on the site selection process is available from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment by calling their Customer Service Centre on 136 186 or visiting their website www.nre.vic.gov.au

This urban wildlife management trial aims to establish an alternative roosting site for the flying-foxes inhabiting Fern Gully and other parts of the Gardens. DNRE, Melbourne Zoo, the RBG and community conservation groups will collaborate to attract the flying-foxes to the new site using caged bats and habitat improvements, and deterrents at the Gardens to induce flying-foxes to leave. The animal welfare aspects of the project will be approved and monitored by the RSPCA.

Flying-foxes will be trapped at the Gardens and housed in temporary enclosures at Horseshoe Bend. Because of their gregarious and highly social nature, it is expected that the caged animals will attract free-flying animals who will set up a new roost. The habitat quality at the site will be made more attractive to flying-foxes by planting trees and shrubs, increasing the humidity of the understorey and

bringing in leaf litter and other materials from the campsite at the Gardens.

At RBG Melbourne we are undertaking trials firstly of a deterrent spray applied to trees and palms to keep the flying-foxes away, and secondly of two electronic systems for generating disturbing noises. The trials are being conducted jointly by RBG staff from the Australian Research Centre for Urban Ecology (ARCUE) and scientists from Monash University.

We are working with DNRE to have the alternative roost site available before the expected seasonal influx of itinerant flying-foxes in February-March.

Philip Moors

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

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

Annual membership fees are:

Household	\$47
Individual	\$33
(Country, Interstate, Overseas)	\$24
(Full-time Student or Pensioner)	\$24
(validation required)	

OR phone the Friends' office, 03 9650 6398, for an application form. (It also has details of Corporate, Group and Life membership.)

OR visit our website: www.frbgmelb.org.au

Please make cheques or money orders payable to Friends of RBG Melbourne.

If paying by credit card, state card number, expiry date and name on card.

Post to: Friends of RBG Melbourne
Gate Lodge, 100 Birdwood Avenue
Melbourne Vic 3004

RAFFLES

Pat Dodge won first prize — a magnificent specimen of the newly-discovered Scarlet Blaze wattle (*Acacia leprosa*) in the raffle at the recent Growing Friends' sale. The second prize winner, Sheila Howell, chose *The Field Guide to Orchids in New South Wales and Victoria*. Third prize — the pot containing succulents — was won by Richard Smith. We are grateful to the donors of the prizes and to those who bought tickets, resulting in useful proceeds of \$321.

Jennifer Edmanis won the copy of the newly-published Royal Botanic Gardens book, which we raffled at the Peter Valder talk. The book was kindly donated by Allen & Unwin, and the raffle raised \$86.

Notes from the Gardens

'Bright, Elastic and Green'

It only takes a few extra degrees on the thermometer on the back porch, and the notion of a picnic at the Gardens becomes a popular choice for many Melburnians. The success or otherwise of the picnic can depend upon many variables – not the least being the weather (and let's face it, Melbourne *is* Melbourne). One thing that we know contributes greatly to the whole picnic scenario is the quality of our turf – the 'bright, elastic and green' as Guilfoyle very neatly put it.

The Gardens has a dedicated turf curator and currently an apprentice working each day on managing and maintaining the turf. With the Co-ordinator of Gardens North, Neil Perkins, they are responsible for presenting it in the best possible condition for visitors.

For the statistically-minded, there are around 17 hectares (42 acres) of turf in the Gardens. It takes the best part of four days for one person to mow all of this – though during spring, Monday's cut can look a bit shaggy by the end of the week! The task is now a bit less daunting than it was up until 1948, when the horse-drawn mowers were replaced by motorised gadgets. Where is the challenge now, you may ask!

We are increasingly using 'warm season' grasses such as Kikuyu in our main lawns, rather than the traditional 'cool season' varieties. The warm season grasses are at their most robust from spring to autumn, when the Gardens have their greatest visitation. This is also the period when the extra-curricular activities on the lawns are most prevalent, so a resilient turf is most important. The turf generally receives a dose of organic fertiliser once each year. The current choice is 'Upsurge', produced by Neutrog, a company which provides sponsorship support to the Gardens.

Generally we try to minimise the application of agricultural chemicals to the turf, preferring a more environmentally responsible integrated approach to turf health. Occasionally you will see a brownish patch on the turf in a favoured picnic location. This is usually caused by either a rubber-backed picnic rug (please don't use these on the lawns on hot days), or by someone emptying out ice from the esky — cold can be just as damaging as the heat.

So – next time you are wandering the cool green-ness of the Gardens' lawns with your posse of picnickers, looking for that perfect position, take a moment to reflect on the work of our turf team, and then please enjoy the product of their labours.

Richard Barley

Aboriginal Interpretation at Long Island

Acknowledgement and appreciation of the indigenous vegetation is a prime element of the Long Island Project and the revegetation of this site is progressing well. However, intrinsically meshed within this indigenous natural heritage is an obvious need to acknowledge the indigenous cultural heritage of the local Aboriginal people and society. The site was a traditional camping ground and meeting place for the Boonwurrung and Woiworung communities. RBG Aboriginal Liaison Officer Dean Stewart believes that Long Island provides the opportunity for a living, breathing, reconciliation of plants, land, people and time. He sees the completed project as creating a vista into what was, what is no more, what is being done to heal our respect for the land and its people, and lastly, something to strive for in the future.

Already a Boonwurrung Elder has conducted a smoking/cleansing ceremony with about 80 staff present. An historically significant event, this was the first formalised Aboriginal ceremony by a Boonwurrung Elder back in this special part of their ancestral country.

Other initiatives likely to be implemented shortly to facilitate indigenous cultural interpretation as part of the site include recreated middens and a Bora site (Meeting Place) which will act as both the functional and symbolic focal point for visitors to Long Island. It is hoped the Bora will provide the opportunity for some local Aboriginal artistic expression, to reflect the significant spirit of this place. An example would be engraved eucalyptus Moiety poles (totems) displaying traditional and contemporary images. In collaboration with the Melbourne Museum, tracks of animals such as emu and wallaby will criss-cross the new paths, establishing both a new interpretive experience and a poignant memorial to those species that once called this place home.

The site also offers an excellent opportunity for the enhancement of education programs by providing myriad local study themes with obvious connections to a much broader context.

The merging of indigenous remnant vegetation and indigenous culture is one of the keystones that make up this unique Long Island Project, as is the appreciation and conservation of both elements. The completion of this project with the second grant from Parks Victoria will create a living, lasting sanctuary for future generations of animals, people and plants.

Wendy Dwyer

**NOTES FROM RBG ANNUAL REPORT
2000-01**

Almost two million people visited the Gardens in the last financial year, and 70,000 visited RBG Cranbourne — a pleasing rise. The education program attracted 34,355 students.

A survey of all RBG employees indicates an overall satisfaction rate of 87 per cent. It was commissioned from external consultants in preparation for the third RBG Corporate Plan and the Certified Agreement 2002. The staff profile at 30 June 2001 indicates a total of 214 (123 female, 91 male; 133 full-time, 22 part-time and 59 casual). This is an increase of 48 over two years.

The first Corporate Bonus was paid to all employees, as negotiated through the RBG Certified Agreement 2000. Due to staff concerns in regard to salary parity, the RBG engaged consultants to determine the parity of RBG salaries with similar public and private sector organisations. Results indicated that RBG salaries are significantly below those of other areas of Victorian public sectors. One of the main budgetary objectives of the RBG's Triennial Financial Plan is to increase resources to address salary inequalities.

Dr Anne Astin, Mr John Gough and Dr Brian McNamee retired from the RBG Board during the year. New appointees were Mrs Janet Halsall, a former Mayor of the City of Casey and Ms Elizabeth O'Keeffe, Executive Director Land Victoria in the Department of Natural Resources and Environment and Chair of the Melbourne Parks and Waterways Board.

Amendments proposed to the Royal Botanic Gardens Act 1991 include one to remove the restriction that prohibits the Board from carrying on a business of selling plants. The change in the Act would enable the RBG to have a plant shop at Cranbourne — probably operated by a lessee.

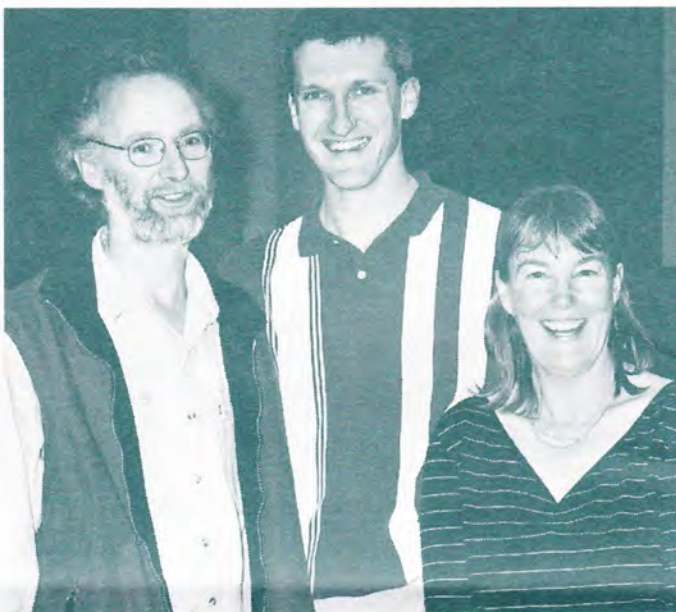
A *Sponsor a Tree* program will be established before the end of 2001. This new annual giving program will enable people to support the Gardens, with supporters being given an insight into trees and plant collections, and an appreciation of their care.

Another development this year will be the introduction of new interpretive displays at the Old Melbourne Observatory site. A grant of \$100,000 by the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust will provide for soundscapes, discovery areas, signage and artefact displays revealing the human stories of work and life at the Observatory as well as its scientific importance.

RBG Melbourne will undertake a major project to collect and conserve seeds and living plants of about 60 plant species threatened with extinction within Victoria by urban expansion and land degradation. Long-term storage is intended to safeguard their on-going survival and help maintain the biodiversity of the greater Melbourne region.

Approximately 72.04 per cent of the RBG's recurrent annual budget is provided by the Victorian Government — a grant of \$7,728,405.

Too detailed to summarise, the report also includes an impressive list of honours and post-graduate students co-supervised by RBG staff, publications, theses and presentations, research grants, awards and representation on external committees—all evidence of scholarship and achievement. This demonstrates that there is so much more to the RBG than the landscape that is its public face.



Neville Walsh, Frank Udovicic and Liz James Photo by Geoff Hardy

One point that emerged strongly from our mid-year survey of Members was a desire for talks on botany and particularly about RBG research. On 18 October the trio of Herbarium scientists photographed above presented thought-provoking insights into their work to a lay audience that appreciated their efforts to make the subject matter accessible.

We learned from Neville of a growing focus on the conservation of threatened plant species, and of the more abstract techniques employed by Frank (a molecular systematist) and Liz (a conservation geneticist) in their research. We look forward to arranging further talks of this nature.

Modern Gardens in Australia

On 14 November author Sarah Guest and artist photographer Simon Griffiths collaborated to deliver a witty and discerning commentary on *Gardens in Australia*, their newly-published book (with its absolutely gorgeous design by Guy Mirabella). Some pointers: flowers in shades of ochre and rust and bronze foliage look wonderful in the Australian landscape; perennial borders are most successful with broad 'waves' of plants rather than the usual European style 'dotty' splashes of colour; very few modern gardens have lawn, using paving, raked gravel or native grasses instead; humour is creeping into outdoor sculpture while 'found' and recycled objects make arresting plant containers (a Tasmanian blubber boiler, a craypot, succulents in a bleached mallee root).

'It's all about doing what you can with what you've got – creating illusions' said Sarah. There could be no better example than the brilliantly-planted King's Cross light well. It's all in the book....

The Waterhole at Long Island

The timing was perfect. The book and the billabong were made for each other. Graeme Base's new picture story book *The Waterhole* was launched at Long Island on 25 November as wood ducks landed gently on the water, frogs called, stately swans and their cygnets strolled along the banks and one exhibitionist swan almost stole the limelight by remaining bottoms up throughout the proceedings.

The book, with Base's characteristic exuberance and mystery, focuses on the precious nature of water and its relationship to plant and animal life.

The RBG Education Service has chosen *The Waterhole* as the feature book for its Literature in the Landscape trail next year. At the launch, Education staff took 130 teachers and librarians on 'billabong walks' to demonstrate how they could use the RBG's Water Conservation Garden and Long Island in the school curriculum. When Terry Lane, an old friend of the author, launched the book at dusk, the audience was treated to a lively, teasing, humorous conversation between the pair.

Planting the Nation

Edited by Georgina Whitehead.

Published by the Australian Garden History Society

This book of nine essays explores Australian gardens and landscapes in the period leading up to and immediately following the federation of the

Australian colonies. The Society, noting that gardens had not featured in Centenary of Federation events, believed that this publication (partially funded by a Federation grant), would go some way to redress the imbalance. The essays offer perspectives on garden design, horticultural developments, city planning, architecture and social history. This period was marked by a great awareness of native flora and its representation as motifs in decorative arts. The profession of landscape architecture had not yet emerged, but the relationship between house and garden was being recognised by architects. A chapter sure to be of particular interest to Victorian readers is that by Suzanne Hunt entitled *Where the Sweet Australian Peas Bloomed: State School Gardens in Victoria 1901-1914*.

The essays are well researched, as evidenced by the numerous references, and are illustrated with fascinating vintage black and white as well as coloured photographs. Copies are available at a special price from the Society, which has a room at the Friends' Gate Lodge. Phone 9650 5043.

The Australian Flower Garden. Clive Blazey. Penguin Books Australia Ltd, 2001. \$29.95

The Australian Flower Garden might be seen as an expanded catalogue for The Diggers Club, but with excellent photographs and two introductory chapters, it is much more than just a list of plants.

The first section deals with a dilemma — 'Which garden style do you want?', and briefly discusses various types of gardens. It is interesting that, in the discussion and comparison of Australian and overseas styles, the greatest emphasis is on the United Kingdom, whereas there are many excellent models in other countries, and particularly in California, where the climate is similar to that in parts of Australia. However, this section is interesting and provides a framework upon which such a decision may be based.

The next section deals with planning a garden and covers such things as the blending of colours (at which the author excels at Heronswood), the choice of plants suitable for your climate, the care of soil and water conservation.

The final section illustrates in colour more than 500 plants, giving their botanical and common names, a short description and some cultivation notes. The range of plants demonstrates the 25 years of testing and introduction of new plants to Australia for which The Diggers Club is so well known. This is an attractively presented book which may well stimulate further reading.

Virginia Morrison

Tendrils

Stephen Forbes, who worked as an environmental botanist at our Herbarium between 1981 and 1994, took up the position of Director of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide in October. His most recent appointments were as Director of Botanic Gardens and Public Programs at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney, and Director of Living Collections and Natural Heritage at Kings Park in Perth. He has qualifications in Botany, Landscape Management, Environmental Education and Business Management.

For several years the National Dahlia Society of Victoria has maintained a dahlia bed in the Gardens, as a feature on the lawn where the Growing Friends Plant Sales take place. This space is to be used for outdoor theatre during summer since the bed has now been grassed over; selected dahlias will be planted in the bed currently occupied by hybrid tea roses.

Two recently-developed dahlia varieties have a special link with the RBG. There's a stellar-type 'of mixed pinkish hues' named *Dr Philip Moors* and a 'cheeky showy red' form dubbed *Izabella* after the horticulturist Izabella Meraviglia-Crevelli who conducted the liaison between the RBG and the Dahlia Society.

Although dahlias are probably regarded as rather old-fashioned in this part of the world, they're obviously hot favourites in Paris. Many of the gardens Peter Valder showed us at his 31 October talk featured masses of dahlias that looked wonderful. As Peter said, the secret of success is to blend the colours wisely.



The Hon. Peter Howson has been appointed the first Patron of the Friends of RBG Cranbourne, coinciding with the tenth anniversary of the group he helped to found. Peter was a major force behind the establishment and development of the Cranbourne Gardens through 39 years as a member, and later chairman, of the Maud Gibson Trust.

A group is being formed at Cranbourne to collect and mount botanical specimens of flora from the Gardens. Two Friends are currently undertaking initial intensive training at the National Herbarium in Melbourne, then they will pass on their knowledge to a larger group of volunteers. They aim to build up

two collections of dried specimens, one for the RBG Cranbourne and one for the National Herbarium in Melbourne.

A young man studying at RMIT sought casual work through a newspaper advertisement. A woman subsequently gave him a job, and was impressed by his aptitude for garden work. 'You're wasting your time studying Applied Chemistry', she said. 'You'd better speak to my parents' was his rejoinder. The young man was Rodger Elliot, his employer Edna Walling! So began a notable career in horticulture. Rodger recounted this serendipitous tale on 28 October when he and Gwen held a thankyou party for more than 250 friends, celebrating in particular their membership of the Order of Australia.

Rodger and co-author David Jones are currently finishing Volume 8 of their *Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants*, after which they'll embark on the series' final volume—a task they estimate will take three years' work.



Andrew Laidlaw, Richard Barley, Christine Joy, Ros Semler and Izabella Meraviglia-Crivelli revealed The Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden concept plan to the Foundation's Governors on 8 November. As this was the plan's first public airing, the design team was delighted to win the Governors' overwhelming approval.

As with the occasion of Andrew Laidlaw's talk to the Friends in September, there was some discussion about the need to challenge children without compromising their safety, at the same time not being over-protective. A fine balance to be achieved! As Andrew told the Friends 'The children bring the magic', referring to the essential imaginative ingredient in the philosophy for the Garden. The design team is now developing the plans further for a media and public presentation in February 2007.

The RBG has nominated Jayne Salmon for the *Volunteer Hero* award for her work with the Voluntary Guides in Melbourne and as a Friend and Voluntary Guide at the Geelong Botanic Gardens. The winner is to be announced on 2 December at a State Government celebration for volunteers in Carlton Gardens.

GARDENS' PRODUCTS

We have launched three new Gardens 'products'. In early September, our Minister, the Hon. Sherryl Garbutt, released for retail sale our famous red wattle – Scarlet Blaze (*Acacia leprosa*). This remarkable plant is Victoria's floral emblem for the Centenary of Federation, and is proving a quick seller at nurseries. In October we launched **The GARDENS Produce** range of 16 gourmet jams, chutneys, sauces and dressings. To complete the trio, on 22 October the RBG's Patron, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, launched the beautiful new Allen & Unwin book about the history of RBG Melbourne. Written by Deborah Morris and with superb photographs by Greg Elms, the book traces the story of the place and the people who have nurtured it – from the Boonwurrung and Woiwurrung to our current staff and visitors.

Philip Moors

PARIS GARDENS
by
PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Visiting Paris? Then you'll want a copy of Peter Valder's guide, *Paris Gardens by Public Transport*. Call in to the Friends' office, or send a stamped self-addressed envelope, with payment of \$5, to obtain this valuable resource.

SWANS FOR SALE

We are offering the last of the pure linen tea towels (RBG black swan design) for sale at the bargain price of \$7.00... a suggestion for those occasions when you just need 'a little something' for a gift, or to replenish your own supply. Collect from Gate Lodge or tel. 9650 6398 to have your order set aside.

FRIENDS' BENEFITS

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

Gills Nurseries (all branches)

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

Idaho Nurseries

410 Waverley Rd, East Malvern
10% off plants only

Bulleen Art and Garden

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

Town and Country Gardens

1280 Malvern Rd, Malvern
24 Whitehorse Rd, Balwyn
10% off plants over \$20 only.

NOTE CHANGE

The Arts Bookshop

1067 High St, Armadale

Holmesglen Nursery

585 Waverley Rd, Glen Waverley
10% off everything

The Gardeners Corner Store

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

Collectors Corner

Springvale Rd, Keysborough
10% off all plants

Kew Nursery

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

Burwood Garden Patch

1418 Toorak Rd, Burwood
10% discount

Garden of Eden Nursery

33 Ferrars St, Albert Park
10% off everything

The Cottage Garden Nursery

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

Piccolo Gardens

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

Banksia Hill B & B

RMB 5349, Horsham, 3401
10% discount on accommodation

***Feldspar at Trentham B&B**

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

***Berna Park Nursery**

cnr Park Rd & Paul St,
Cheltenham

5% discount on plants

*denotes newcomer to list



SAMPLE THE CULINARY DELIGHTS OF THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS WITH OUR COMPLIMENTS!

Simply spend a minimum of \$50 in The Gardens Shops (Observatory or Lakeside) and you could be one of 30 lucky people to win a picnic for two in the Royal Botanic Gardens in December, January and February.

The prize: a sumptuous lunch with a bottle of wine from the Observatory Café, and a taste of The Gardens Produce—Nature's Garden in a Jar. Winners will be announced at the start of each month. See the Gardens Shops for more details, or call 9252 2341 during business hours. (Conditions apply)



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

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

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Print Post Approved
PP 3458420025
ISSN 08170-650

Printed on 100 per cent
recycled paper
Australian made

Printer:
Gill Miller Press Pty Ltd
34 Stanley Street
Collingwood 3066

FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

The RBG Board has approved our inaugural Policy for Conservation of Plant Biodiversity. Its five key objectives relate to integrated plant conservation and research, provision of public and educational programs supporting conservation, sustainability of day-to-day operations, and building plant conservation alliances.

Recently two initiatives have been approved for action. The RBG will join the Wastewise Program, a statewide education and management program focusing on waste minimisation by 'reducing, reusing and recycling'. We are also participating in the Energy Smart Government program to co-ordinate RBG energy conservation and encourage an energy-saving culture. In addition, from November, five per cent of the electricity purchased by the RBG is now 'Green power' — electricity generated from clean renewable resources such as solar, wind, biomass or hydro power.

The working group implementing the policy has compiled a list of the existing RBG programs which foster plant conservation and sustainable practices. It is pleasingly extensive, ranging from our biodiversity research projects to development of our indigenous plant collections on Long Island, an array of educational and visitor programs, ARCUE's ground-breaking work in urban ecology, the Green Waste Recycling Centre, the recycling system for visitors' rubbish and for office paper and cardboard, and our use of integrated pest management methods to replace chemical sprays for many purposes.

The RBG is fundamentally a conservation organisation — and this will be the central theme of our new Corporate Plan now being developed for 2002-2005. Clearly we already have a substantial foundation on which to build important new initiatives.

Staff Changes

At RBG Cranbourne, Chris Russell (formerly Operations Manager) has recently been appointed to the position of General Manager, Cranbourne Gardens. Chris is the senior officer in charge of the operational and staff activities there and is a member of the RBG's Corporate Management Group. Jane Liefman (previously Manager, Education Services in Melbourne) has become Manager, Public Programs at Cranbourne, and Grant Cameron will soon commence as the Senior Project Manager responsible for the development of the Australian Garden.

Ms Fran Silvester has come from South Australia to take up the position of Manager, Public Programs at RBG Melbourne following the departure of Michelle Joy. Caroline Pitcher, who had steered RBG Marketing and Communications with great efficiency, has moved to the Collins Street office of Turtle Island Resort, Fiji. We have appointed a new Manager, Eleanor Bridges, who comes to us from the State Library, starting early in December.

Stuart McIntosh, who worked at the Gardens for more than six years, has also left us to try a different career direction. Stuart certainly made his mark on the RBG, having played a major role in the development of the Long Island project.

Philip Moors
Director