Botanic News

FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE INC.

A12827T

SUMMER 2002-03

THE LAKES

The Lake System of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne includes the Central Lake, Fern Gully, Nymphaea Lily Lake and the Ornamental Lake.

The Ornamental Lake is significant in that its origins are from a remnant natural water body in RBG Melbourne, pre-dating European settlement; it is also an integral part of the heritage landscape as designed by Guilfoyle. Other points of importance include provision of:

- habitat for indigenous aquatic flora, water fowl, fish, turtles and other aquatic organisms
- linkage of landscape components through vistas and reflection
- a display for aquatic aspects and flora of the living collections
- significant drainage basin for storm water run-off in RBG Melbourne, and from adjacent land
- revenue, as a landscape backdrop to functions and theatrical events

While all the water bodies of the Lake System are eutrophic (nutrient rich), the Ornamental Lake is especially prone to blue-green algae problems.

These problems were noted for action in the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne (Royal Botanic Gardens) 1997-2002 Corporate Plan, which directed the preparation of a **Strategic Management Plan** to improve the quality of the Lake System and its associated habitat.

The current planning is based upon the knowledge of RBG Melbourne staff, available literature and the support of experts knowledgeable in water quality and aquatic ecosystems. Given the complexity of the issues, a broad management approach to the whole Lakes System will be necessary.

However, our research to date has generally found there is inadequate information about the effective management of lake systems in urban environments. To progress any remediation of the blue-green algae issue in the Ornamental Lake, further scientific and applied research is required. Staff from Monash University Water Studies Centre have expressed strong interest in supervising an Honours Student Project on the Ornamental Lake blue-green algae issue (with the RBG Melbourne as co-supervisor) from early 2003.

Although we still lack adequate information to support the effective management of the Lake System, there are many areas where we can make improvements or prevent further problems occurring. Some of these include:

- networking with water quality experts and scientists
- providing signage warning the public
- limiting fertilising programs, where required, by using low or zero phosphorus
- establishing and reviewing an aeration program
- reducing and preventing the feeding of birds
- monitoring algal populations
- increasing the diversity and numbers of wetland and aquatic plant species
- gathering and collating chemical and biological data on the Lakes System and its ecology
- investigating suitable research and funding programs for the Lakes System.

The current draft **Strategic Management Plan** comprises two parts. Firstly, it provides a broad scope of objectives, strategies and actions to improve the ecosystem quality of the RBG Melbourne Lake System. The second part contains appendices to support the broad scope of the plan. In developing the plan, it was recognised that the frequent and severe occurrence of blue-green algal blooms in the Ornamental Lake was an ecological indicator of its poor condition and that the Lake ecosystem as a whole would benefit from any strategic improvements that reduced algal problems.

The plan is to provide a healthy, balanced and functioning ecosystem that supports a diverse range of aquatic plants, animals and other organisms within the RBG Melbourne heritage landscape.

It is therefore important for us to have a draft **Strategic Management Plan** suitable for implementation by early December 2002.

Peter Symes, Senior Curator, Horticulture

INTRODUCING OUR NEW PRESIDENT

We are delighted to welcome Irwin Newman as our new President.

Irwin was born in Queensland, the son of a mining engineer and one of identical twins . He was educated in Sydney and Brisbane, graduating in electrical engineering from the University of Queensland and subsequently completing a graduate apprenticeship in England with English Electric.

In the late 1960s Irwin joined Mt Newman Mining Co. Pty. Ltd. This was an exciting time in Western Australia where the iron ore industry was transforming the state. He was initially responsible for all the engineering and construction work at Mount Newman. Later, as General Manager, he oversaw the operations and expansion of the company, and participated in the marketing of the iron ore.

With this background of experience, Irwin went on to become General Manager of OK Tedi Limited, taking up the challenging responsibility of building a huge gold and copper mine in one of the most remote parts of New Guinea. In 1990 Irwin and his wife Judith decided on a complete change, going to live in England and France. There, amongst other things, he became a consultant for many aspects (particularly those in the too-hard-basket) of the construction of the Channel Tunnel. He is now an independent consultant in general management and engineering and slowly coming to terms with retirement.

While living in England, the Newmans took the opportunity to visit many beautiful gardens. On their return to Melbourne, they joined the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens. Irwin says he is not really a gardener - his enjoyment comes from admiring what others have created! We hope that he will also enjoy his association with the Friends as our President and we look forward to making him and Judith welcome.

President Irwin Newman (left) and Treasurer Maurice Castro at the Friends' AGM in November. Photo by Meg Miller

COUNCIL MEMBERS FOR 2003

President: Irwin Newman
Immediate Past President: Sir Ninian Stephen
Vice-Presidents: David Plant, Janet Thomson
Secretary: Richard Smith
Treasurer: Maurice Castro
Susan Brookes; Sir Rupert Hamer; John Hawker; Judy Jarman; Dr Richard Kirsner; Dr Philip Moors; Cathy Trinca; Anne Weber

Both Sir Ninian Stephen and David Baumgartner have retired:

Sir Ninian Stephen. We were greatly saddened in August 1998 by the death of our then President, John Harper, but were particularly pleased when Sir Ninian Stephen agreed to take his place, despite his numerous other commitments. Sir Ninian has now retired after four years as President, during which he has presided over many of the Friends' functions, as well as the meetings of the Council and occasional discussions with the Chairman of the RBG Board and the Director of the RBG. We warmly thank him for his contribution to the life of the Friends.

David Baumgartner became the Friends' Treasurer in November 1994 and, after eight years, has now retired. In those years he has been able to make his professional knowledge available to the Friends, not only in regard to the financial affairs of the Friends, but also in regard to other matters in which he has experience. We are pleased that he is willing to continue to provide advice if asked to do so. We thank him also for his very valuable help to the Friends over so many years.

Introducing Treasurer Maurice Castro

Our new Treasurer, Maurice Castro, is a local South Yarra resident who, with his wife Jill, regards the RBG as almost an extension of their own garden. They are frequent visitors to the Gardens and are keen to contribute through the Friends.

Maurice is well-qualified for the role of Treasurer. He has a Master's degree in Economics from Sydney University and is a Certified Practising Accountant.

Maurice's career has spanned the insurance industry, Federal Treasury, Industry Commission, Bureau of Statistics, and Finance Manager and Strategic Planner with Australia Post. Now largely retired, he is a consultant for the UN Postal Union in Switzerland.

Maurice and our retiring Treasurer of eight years, David Baumgartner, have already had discussions on the Treasurer's role with the Friends and Maurice has welcomed David's generous offer to continue providing professional support through his accounting practice.

FROM THE PAST PRESIDENT

It has been a privilege to have served as President of the Friends for the past four years. Those years have seen remarkable changes at the Gardens with the transformation of the formerly neglected old Observatory site to its new role as a splendid feature of the Gardens. One incidental, but much appreciated, consequence for the Friends has been the acquisition of new premises for our office, now at Gate Lodge.

Our secretariat has also changed, Margaret Howes retiring and being succeeded by Virginia Henderson. Another change, at the time regretted by the Friends, was the taking over by the Royal Botanic Gardens of the Friends' Shop within the Gardens, which has to some extent led to the primary focus of the activities of the Friends changing from fundraising to more general support and promotion of community awareness of the Gardens.

What is unchanged is the work of the various groups of the Friends: Caterers; Activities; Growing Friends; Botanical Illustrators and Volunteers, whose members have all continued to make outstanding contributions. Without their splendid work the Friends would be unable to continue to support the Gardens as we do.

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Proceeds from activities have been used in a great variety of ways, including support of the visit of Professor Guan Kaiyun from Kunming Botanic Garden, Andrew Laidlaw's attendance at a Children's Gardens symposium in the USA and of Dr Tom May and Dr Teresa Lebel at overseas congresses, the purchase of representative paintings from *The Art of Botanical Illustration* exhibitions, telescopes and binoculars for the Observatory Building, the setting up of the Aboriginal Heritage Walk, for the cataloguing of the Jim Willis archives, for the consolidation of the Herbarium Leguminosae Collection, the publication of a history of the Herbarium, for curtains and lighting in Mueller Hall and for aspects of the Gardens rubbish recycling system.

From the Trust Fund, the Friends have purchased and maintained garden seats - now being undertaken by the Royal Botanic Gardens - and have funded certain new Nursery facilities and the desilting of Central Lake. The main focus of the Friends' fundraising activities in 2002-2003 is the *Water Works, Water Wise* Project, planned to upgrade and extend the automatic irrigation system.

These activities apart, there have been notable changes with the Royal Botanic Gardens in the past four years, such as the planning and initiation of the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden.

The unfailing support and enthusiasm of the Board of the Friends which I have experienced will, I know, ensure a rewarding term of office for my successor, Irwin Newman.

Ninian Stephen

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Welcome, all new members of the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne!

You have joined an energetic and enthusiastic group of about 1700 people whose activities provide direct support to the Gardens. Recently the Friends pledged to raise $47,000 to extend the automatic sprinkler system to the Theatre Lawn, as part of the wider *Water Works, Water Wise* Project.

As a Friend you will receive *Botanic News* quarterly and are eligible for discounts at a number of retail outlets. You can also enjoy a variety of advertised events. These include talks and tours, some of which - such as our forthcoming visit to the gardens of Government House - are exclusive to the Friends, and classes (botanical illustration is particularly well attended and the groups exhibit regularly).

Should you wish to become more actively involved in the work of the Friends, talk to Virginia, Helen or Jean at the Friends' office in Gate Lodge about the role you would like to play. There are the busy Membership, Catering and Activities Committees, a group that produces *Botanic News*, another that provides administrative assistance at the Office and the Growing Friends (there is a 12 month waiting list) who propagate the plants for the biannual sales.

Whatever your interests, your membership and participation are assisting to maintain and develop our wonderful botanic heritage. Enjoy being a Friend and 'spread the word'!

Pamela J. Eames, Convener

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CHRISTMAS is coming. The Council of the Friends wish all members and their friends a happy and safe Christmas holiday, and a productive 2003.

If you are looking for Christmas gift ideas, may we suggest a gift membership, or plants from the Growing Friends nursery. Should you choose to give a gift membership, we will send a membership package direct to you or to the recipient with a gift card bearing your message. Contact the Friends' office on 9650 6398.

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Summer Activities

CHRISTMAS DINNER
Thursday 12 December at 7.00 for 7.30pm at the Lyceum Club, Ridgway Place, Melbourne

The Friends are very excited to be returning to the gracious surroundings of the Lyceum Club for our Christmas celebration, at the culmination of this our 20th birthday year. Following a sit-down festive dinner, we will be addressed by Elaine Canty, radio personality, AFL tribunal member and the new Deputy Chairman of the RBG Board. There will be a bumper Christmas raffle. You are most welcome to invite family and friends to join us for this celebratory end to our birthday year.

The cost of $65 includes GST, a festive three-course meal, pre-dinner drinks and wine with dinner, plus a Lucky Door Prize.

Enter Ridgway Place from Little Collins Street, between Spring Street and Exhibition Street, or you can walk through underneath 30 Collins Street, if you come by tram. There is a convenient carpark in Little Collins Street.

RSVP by Friday 6 December on booking form .

FASHION IN TODAY'S GARDENS
Illustrated talk by Carolyn Blackman
Wednesday 5 February, 10.15 for 11.00am
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

Once again we are lucky to have celebrated garden designer and radio garden show presenter Carolyn Blackman to talk to us about fashion in today's gardens, contemporary garden styles and plants currently in vogue.

Carolyn, with her landscape designer husband, runs Vivid Design and Vivid Promotions, undertaking design commissions for a wide range of domestic and corporate clients. They have been awarded numerous gold medals for their exhibits at the Melbourne International Flower and Gardens Shows since 1996. Members who have heard Carolyn's lectures - her last talk to the Friends in 2000 was about the impact of colour in garden design - will know her enthusiastic and energetic approach to garden design, and will not want to miss this talk.

Refreshments will be served before the talk
Cost incl. GST: $17 Friends: $12
RSVP by Friday 31 January on booking form

GUIDED TOUR OF GOVERNMENT HOUSE GARDENS
Tuesday 11 February at 10.00am
Meet at Gate Lodge (opposite the Shrine)

Government House, because of its commanding position, has been part of the city's consciousness since its construction. Its tower can be glimpsed from a variety of locations in the inner suburbs. From high-rise buildings in the city the full splendour of its location adjacent to the Royal Botanic Gardens can be appreciated. The Governor of Victoria is our patron, and we are delighted that he and Mrs Landy have given their consent to a guided tour of the beautiful Government House gardens for our Members.

We will gather first at Gate Lodge at 10.00am, from where we will walk as a group to start our tour of the Gardens at 10.30am. The tour of the gardens should last about an hour. Morning tea will be served on our return.

This walk is restricted to Members only. Numbers are limited so book early to avoid disappointment.

Cost incl. GST: $10
RSVP by Tuesday 4 February on booking form.

SUMMER QUARTERLY WALK
WATER WISE GARDENS
Thursday 20 February at 10.00am
Meet at Gate Lodge (opposite the Shrine)

At this time of the year, with high summer temperatures and lack of water ravaging our gardens, we know there must be plants that require less water while still looking good. We will take a tour of three areas in the RBG that show us how this can be done.

First, to the Grey Garden, created in the 1980s, a visually arresting Garden featuring plants chosen for their grey and white foliage. Most are hardy species which survive well in dry conditions. This garden surrounds the delightful Temple of the Winds, and provides a sweeping view across the Yarra River to the city.

Then, learn how to become a water-wise gardener! The Water Conservation Garden teaches ways to conserve this precious resource while creating a pleasing display of flowering and foliage plants, which will thrive with minimum watering.

Lastly we will visit the Arid Garden. Nature has

created some bizarre and extraordinary plants, and none more so than those which grow in the desert regions of the world. This arid landscape has been recreated, displaying an extraordinary assortment of cacti, aloes, agaves and bromeliads in a setting which could be straight out of your favourite 'Western'.

We will meet in the Friends' own garden at Gate Lodge, where we will hear briefly about the walk. Our caterers will provide a delicious morning tea before we set off.

This walk will be limited in number, so book early.
Cost incl. GST: $10 Friends: $8
RSVP by Thursday 13 February on booking form

THE HISTORY OF LANDSCAPE DESIGN AND ITS EXPRESSION IN THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE

Illustrated talk by Andrew Laidlaw, RBG Landscape Architect
Wednesday 12 March at 10.15 for 11.00am
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

The work and vision of Andrew Laidlaw are vital to the Royal Botanic Gardens. Through the history of landscaping within the Gardens, Andrew will discuss pre-European history (why this site, and what was here), the early years (referring to Arthur, Dallachy, von Mueller and Guilfoyle), the middle years, the Master Plan (the agreed vision) and current projects.

Andrew has a diploma from Burnley College, a degree from RMIT and the preliminary year of Master of Landscape Architecture from the University of Melbourne. He has been Landscape Architect at the Royal Botanic Gardens for five years. Previously he had his own practice, lectured at Burnley College and appeared on *Gardening Australia* as well as many radio gardening programs.

Refreshments will be served prior to the talk.
Cost incl GST: $17 Friends: $12
RSVP by Friday 7 March on booking form

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

18 March. *Up the Amazon without a Paddle* - Illustrated talk by Sarah Guest.

27 March. *Western Visions* - Early autumn bus trip to Williamstown, Newport Lakes, 'Basaltica' and beyond.

29/30 March. Growing Friends' Autumn Plant Sale

BOOK WEEK BOOK FEAST 2002

Sunday 18 August, 2002, Observatory Site

Book Week Book Feast was a very successful partnership between the Children's Book Council of Australia (Victoria) and the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne. It was a fun, focused, interactive one-day celebration of Australian children's books including shortlisted books from the CBCA Book of the Year Awards.

An important objective of the day for the RBG was to connect children to the RBG - its staff, plants and landscapes – through the medium of literature. This was very successfully achieved through fun, hands-on, exploratory activities run by Public Programs staff with the assistance of Horticultural staff and the Plant Craft Cottage. Highlights included tunnel-making with bamboo; *Ducky's Nest* story-telling, exploratory walk and nest-making; the making of a giant mermaid mural to connect with *Mermaids Most Amazing*; and ponding activities at Long Island that linked with Graeme Base's story, *The Waterhole*.

CBCA activities included storytelling, craft activities, a lucky-dip, face-painting, an exhibition of artwork from Kim Dale's *Eyes in the Dark*, an illustrator's studio and book signings.

The Gardens Shop sold a range of the listed books. Both the large number of sales and feedback from customers indicated that it was a very successful day. The Friends' display attracted interest and awareness and provided an opportunity for members to chat about the activities and work of Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne.

All in all Book Week Book Feast was a great day marked by many satisfied, smiling faces of both children and adults.

Roslyn Semler

Photo by Greg Hoxley

Haemanthus coccineus - Blood Lily by Beverley Allen

Botanical Illustrators

BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATORS QUARTERLY MEETING

Jean Dennis on Brachychitons
Tuesday 11 February at 10.00 for 10.30am

Jean Dennis, our intrepid artist traveller, will talk about her recent three months trip to the Northern Territory, far north Western Australia and Queensland to continue her search-and-illustrate mission for every Australian Brachychiton.

Jean and her husband John travelled through some very rough and remote country, and she has many interesting stories to tell. She will also show us some of the resulting paintings.

Morning tea will be served before the talk.
Cost incl. GST: $5.50. Pay on the day.
RSVP to Friends' Office on 9650 6398

SUMMER WORKSHOPS

FOUR-DAY BEGINNERS WORKSHOP WITH DIANNE EMERY

14,15,16,17 January 2003
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 drawing materials - paint, watercolour paper and brushes - and morning and afternoon tea. Classes will be held in the Whirling Room Studio, Observatory Gate.

Cost (incl. GST and materials):
Friends $180 Others $200.

BOTANICAL ART, PRINTMAKING AND ETCHING SUMMER WORKSHOP

29, 30 January and 5, 6 February

Victorian College of the Arts School of Arts and the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens will be conducting a four-day Summer workshop on printmaking and etching for botanical artists. Classes will be held in the etching studio at VCA and the Whirling Room Studio at the Observatory site.

The class will be for both beginners and more experienced students, and will introduce hard ground, soft ground and aquatint processes in etching.

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

All printmaking materials, copper plates, grounds, drawing needles, aquatint, acid, printing inks and papers, plus expert tuition from the Victorian College of the Arts printmaking department will be supplied. Students are advised to bring drawing materials and an apron.

Cost (incl GST and materials):
Friends: $350 Others: $375

TERM CLASSES will recommence in the week beginning 10 February 2003.

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.

Celia Rosser with medal recipient Dianne Emery
Photo by Greg Hoxley

WHIRLYBIRDS. The Whirling Room Studio is home to a group of Botanical Illustrators who meet weekly to work together in an informal group. Any Botanical Illustrator who is a Friend is welcome to come along and work in this supportive atmosphere, sharing ideas and technical information, painting techniques, design etc. The studio will be open until Tuesday 10 December.

Ring Rita Parkinson on 9821 5883 for information.

THE ART OF BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION

2002 EXHIBITION

Congratulations to all Members and artists who worked so hard to present, once again, a very successful and stunning display of 148 original botanical paintings and drawings selected from over 250 entries.

Sir Ninian Stephen opened the exhibition, and introduced Celia Rosser who awarded the first of the Celia Rosser medals to three outstanding exhibiting artists (see *The Celia Rosser Medal*).

Five works were purchased for the State Botanical Collection. The Friends' Council again made a grant which purchased: Mali Moir (*Grevillea asparagoides*) and Pam Habersberger (*Spinifex sericeus*)
RBG funding permitted acquisition of: Merle McIntyre (*Punctelia subrudecta* and *Hypogymnia subphysodes* on *Banksia integrifolia* fruit) and Alison Gianangeli (*Araujia sericifera* - Kapok Plant)
The Director's Circle provided funds for: Anita Barley (*Erythrina crista-gallii* - Cockscomb Coral Tree.

Among the works on display were the first chosen to form part of the Friends' *Illustrated Garden* Collection. They were: Beverley Allen: (*Haemanthus coccineus* - Blood Lily); Anita Barley: (*Erythrina crista-gallii* - Cockscomb Coral Tree); Mary Gregory: (*Liriodendron tulipifera* - Tulip Tree); Terry Napier: (*Nepenthes coccinea* - Tropical Pitcher Plan); Rita Parkinson (*Agave americana* - Century Plant); Marta Salamon: (*Telopea speciosissima* - Waratah); and Dolores Skowronski-Malloni: (*Magnolia liliiflora* 'Nigra').

The *Illustrated Garden* is a project established in 2001 by artist members of the Friends to create a digital and photographic record of selected and significant plants growing the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne. Participating artists assign reproduction rights to the Friends for the purpose of fundraising.

Another first this year was an illustrated version of the catalogue on the RBG website (www.rbg.vic.gov.au/friends/art); copies of the CD Rom are available for sale at a cost of $10 from the Friends' office. In this way you can still enjoy the stunning artwork which was displayed.

In keeping with past tallies of sales from the Exhibition, 57 per cent of artists' works have been sold to date.

Judy Jarman

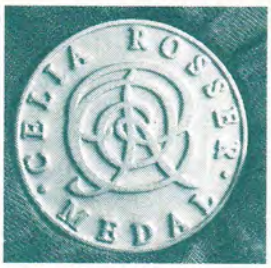

Photo by Greg Hoxley

The Celia Rosser Medal

As mentioned in the Spring 2002 issue of *Botanic News*, the Celia Rosser medal (pictured) has been struck and the inaugural presentation made at the opening of the sixth *Art of Botanical Illustration* exhibition on Wednesday, 23 October.

This medal is intended to reflect the contribution Celia has made to the status of botanical illustration, in particular as a technically accomplished and creative artist, whose work is of the highest degree of scientific accuracy. Celia has successfully committed herself to a long-term body of work of international importance. The medal will commemorate and honour artists whose works are selected for inclusion in these exhibitions, and who show excellence in one or more aspects of the art form.

In selecting works to hang in this exhibition, we aspire to choose those which fit a set criteria: they must accurately represent the form and botany of the artist's chosen subject, must convey the characteristics of the species or variety of plant material, and must be presented in an artistically pleasing and balanced way. Among the works hung are illustrations which go well beyond these requirements. The paintings have reflected the artists' acute observational skills and understanding of the plants' environments. This knowledge is essential in capturing the essence of the artists' subjects.

The award is made at the discretion of the exhibition selection panel, with a final review by Celia, who presented this year's awards to Anita Barley, Dianne Emery and Mali Moir. Their beautifully observed and scholarly works invite long and close inspection by appreciative viewers. A fine standard has been set for others to follow.

Mali Moir, medal recipient, with Celia Rosser
Photo by Greg Hoxley

PHILIP MOORS: *THE FIRST TEN YEARS*

In this issue we help Dr Philip Moors (pictured left) to celebrate 10 years as Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens. The appointment included responsibility for both Melbourne and Cranbourne Gardens and the National Herbarium and asked for applications from people with experience in Science administration. Dr Moors was eminently qualified for the position, having achieved a BSc (Hons) in Zoology, working in the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, and amassing a solid background in ecological science, through work in New Zealand for the New Zealand Wildlife Service and the NZ Department of Conservation, thence on to the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union (now Birds Australia). His interest has developed in botany and garden history. Philip feels that there have been many highlights during his time at the gardens. He rates as one of the most exciting the setting up, at his initiative, of the Australian Research Centre for Urban Ecology, (ARCUE), based at the School of Botany, at the University of Melbourne. This body, supported by the Baker Foundation, is researching all aspects of the impact of urban development on the ecology of Melbourne's natural areas - bushlands, grasslands, heathlands - and supports a staff of seven and six research students at its headquarters. The aim is to provide natural and developed open spaces to ensure the continuing healthy growth of the ecology of specific areas around Melbourne.

The development of the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne has also provided Dr Moors with a gratifying sense of achievement. It has taken eight years for the planning of the first eleven hectares of the Australian Garden to be realised and this stage is expected to be completed in another three years. The creation of the Australian Garden has been the major highlight for Dr Moors - most directors only ever dream of building a new botanic garden of such quality and size from scratch. Add to this the time needed for the plantings to reach maturity and one begins to grasp the enormity of the task and the amount of patience required to see the project through.

Other highlights during this ten years have been the 150th celebrations in 1996, the growth in education programs, the development of Observatory Gate, the reinvigoration of the landscapes at RBG Melbourne, and the flowering once more of the scientific work of the National Herbarium. The Ian Potter Foundation's Children's Garden is now being realised and will be a marvellous place for the youngest Gardens visitors to develop an affinity with nature.

Efforts to bring entertainment to a large cross-section of Melbourne's population are paying dividends in making the Gardens accessible to all. Many thousands enjoy theatre and cinema in the Gardens on summer evenings, and countless children have delighted in *Wind in the Willows*.

In this ten years the Gardens' net revenue has increased from about $200,00 to about $1.3 million. Add to this the Government grants for staffing and administration - nearly 80% of the running costs of the Gardens- and one begins to understand the importance of fund-raising and of revenue from commercial operations.

Unexpected problems such as the fireblight infestation which occurred during 1997, the plan (happily stopped!) to construct a four-lane Ballarto Road through RBG Cranbourne, and the continuing problem of the flying foxes ruining the trees and making Fern Gully an unpleasant experience, have all tested Dr Moors' mettle.

During this time, too, the relationship between the Gardens and Friends groups has evolved. It is becoming obvious that financial support should no longer be the primary aim of the Friends; instead, Dr Moors would like to see a program of support and advocacy for the Gardens using the vast resource of Volunteer commitment available to the Friends.

We wish Philip every success in his future endeavours in the development of Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens.

Meg Miller

Botanic Birds

In 1869 Dr Ferdinand von Mueller reported to the Zoological Society of London 'a list of birds permanently occurring in, or periodically visiting, the Botanic Gardens, Melbourne'. He listed 114 species and it is understandable that many species present then are not present now, given the changes to the river and vegetation since that time.

Almost 50 species listed by von Mueller are no longer to be seen in the RBG, including snipe, bronzewing,

cockatiel, brown treecreeper, New Holland honeyeater, chat, sitella, chough, pipit, Cape Barren goose, quail, spotted harrier, grey goshawk and brolga. At this distance in time we can also wonder if he did in fact see the mangrove whistler (generally far north of Australia), splendid wren or crested bellbird (birds of drier country), although he would have been familiar with these species from his extensive travels.

On the other side of the ledger, there are more than thirty species present now that were not recorded by von Mueller. These include introduced species such as blackbird, common myna, song thrush, house sparrow, starling and red whiskered bulbul. But the silver gull, Australasian hobby, spotted turtle dove, sulphur-crested cockatoo, red wattlebird, magpie lark, grey butcherbird, clamorous reed warbler and silvereye were not recorded then, although they are now all common birds in the Royal Botanic Gardens. The rainbow lorikeet was listed by von Mueller and over 100 years later by Helen Aston (1993) and Rex Buckingham. It now breeds in the RBG and around Melbourne and is quite common. The powerful owl was also recorded by von Mueller in 1869, by Helen Aston in 1964 and 1989, and by Mike Hurst in 1992. It has been reported as present at various times in four of the past five years.

In a memo in 1972 Helen Aston, then Senior Biologist, also notes the 'decrease in waterbird species since destruction of the natural tea-tree and sedge swamps'. She refers to a bird list compiled from 1884 to 1937 by Mr Percy St John, a long-time member of the Gardens' staff, which included avocet, little bittern, spotted crake, marsh crake, crested grebe, freckled duck, musk duck, black-fronted dotterel, double-banded dotterel, glossy ibis, azure kingfisher, banded plover, banded land rail, water rail, Australasian snipe, painted snipe, banded stilt and Caspian tern.

Is it possible that we will see the return of some of these species with the extensive replanting of Long Island and other areas with native flora? Already we have the return of the little grassbird after an absence of many years (it has also returned to Albert Park Lake) and red-rumped parrots have been seen feeding on grass seed on Long Island.

Have you seen? Crested pigeons have become far more common in the south of Victoria and in metropolitan Melbourne over recent years. For the last three or more years they have been resident on the Albert Park Golf Course. Yet, as far as I know, they have not been recorded yet in the RBG. So keep an eye out please, and let us know if you see any.

Tony Delves

Notes from the Gardens

Summer is upon us, and with any luck it will be accompanied by some deliciously warm days. Some of us, and we may be in the minority, prefer the mercury to be on the positive side of thirty degrees, and indeed don't bother coming out of hibernation until summer shows us a gesture of good faith with a warm day or three. As a rule, of course, the Melbourne summer has no rules. Scorching days followed by thunderous changes and cold winds that cut right through the foolishly flimsy summer shirt... then there is always (and it *is* always) the complete wash-out of the Boxing Day Test at the MCG.

All of this might not be everyone's cup of tea when it comes to summer recreation, but the conditions certainly seem to be enjoyed by a diversity of plants in the Gardens. From the reliably colourful Perennial Border displays, to the Water Conservation Garden or the Canna Bed, there are hot-spots of colour and drama. These spirited contributions are held within the general green lushness of the site, ready to leap forward when one approaches around the bend in the path. Such is the cleverness of the layout of the paths and beds, that surprises can be held back from the visitor, to be revealed at the last moment, or offered a little at a time to prolong the mystery, and to provide

Erythrina crista-gallii Cockscomb Coral Tree by Anita Barley Photo by Greg Hoxley

the maximum return on the horticultural investment. For the visitor who is willing to take a closer look at some of the tree specimens in the Gardens, there are also hidden delights in the forms of curious flowers, and exotic fruits. Through much of summer the long sprays of bright-red pea-like flowers of *Erythrina crista-gallii* (Cock's-comb Coral Tree) persist, partially hidden among the leafy shoots. Visitors will be familiar with the style of pollarding of these trees within the Gardens, which in winter gives them a

characteristic sculptural quality. The leaf shoots, when they appear, grow quickly and have small but extremely nasty hooked thorns along the stem, which have the capacity to render a reduce a grown person to tears (both sorts).

One of my favourite curiosities grows at the rear of the Works Yard sheds, near the Lilly-Pilly Lawn. This is *Chiranthodendron pentadactylon*, which also goes by the common name (take a deep breath…) Macpalxochiquahuitl. For the less adventurous, Devil's Hand or Monkey's Hand will do, but really you're shirking the issue, and should feel ashamed. As the name suggests, the flower is in the shape of a sinuous hand, which is bright crimson.

The glossy black fruits of *Planchonella australis* (Black Apple or Bush Plum) litter the ground during summer. The specimen on the Guilfoyle Lawn near D Gate is particularly productive. The pink fleshy flowers of *Brachychiton discolor* (Queensland Lacebark) can form a thick carpet under the trees in late summer, quite a sensation between the bare toes!

The senses can be seduced by the sweet fragrances of heavily-laden flowering Tilias (Lindens). The bees certainly get quite a kick out of the Tilia flowers. Apparently they become quite intoxicated, and then weave here and there, before heading to the all-night diner for a souvlaki. *Michelia champaca* is another of the very fragrant summer flowering trees, not as over-powering on the olfactory senses as its close relative *Michelia doltsopa*, which has well and truly done its flowering by mid-spring.

The long, balmy warm evenings of summer in the Gardens are very special. Sauntering is the ideal pace of travel. The picnic basket and rug should get a darned good work-out, and then of course one could stay around for the theatre and cinema. I pity the poor folk who think it necessary to go away for the summer holidays!

Results of the* Art of Botanical Illustration *2002 exhibition raffle:

1. **D Morgan**: Celia Rosser framed, signed and numbered print
2. **H Page**: Beverley Graham signed Giclee limited edition print
3. **M Hutton**: Set of 80 Pablo pencils donated by Micador
4. **R Irving**: *Gardens in Australia* donated by The Gardens Shop
5. **R Chantler**: Bowl of succulents donated by the Growing Friends
6. **P Burridge**: *Royal Botanic Gardens Melb.* donated by The Gardens Shop
7. **M Irvine**: Helene Wild botanically illustrated porcelain plate

RBG STAFF PROFILE

David Robbins, Nursery Co-ordinator

David grew up in Williamstown, and had his own small plot in the family garden. This was the beginning of his fascination with growing plants; his professional horticultural life began in 1981 when he was employed as an apprentice gardener at the Royal Zoological Gardens.

In 1985 David started as a qualified gardener at Government House. During this period he began studying for an Advanced Certificate of Horticulture at Burnley College. The amalgamation of horticultural responsibilities for Government House and the Royal Botanic Gardens led to the start of David's work at the RBG. In 1986 he was invited by the then-superintendent to look after the newly-created Grey Garden. This, together with the Canary Islands Collection, was David's major responsibility until 1991 when he successfully applied for a position in the nursery, taking charge of the seed collection and its propagation, and the care of the Research Plant Collection. In 1994, while working in this capacity, he enjoyed a satisfying trip to wild-collect New South Wales rainforest material for the Rainforest Border. In December 2001 David was promoted to Nursery Co-ordinator, where he and his staff look after all aspects of plant propagation within the RBG.

This year Nursery staff conducted an interesting, practical and very informative Plant Propagation Course for a number of Friends of the RBG. David's cheery personality and helpful guidance is also enjoyed by the Growing Friends with whom he liaises. He and his staff direct the Growing Friends' collection and propagation of RBG material for the Spring and Autumn sales which raise considerable funds each year.

David enjoys a busy private life. His hobbies include photography - his trick photography has reorganised many a face - and music. He enjoys listening to music and plays both piano and mouth organ. The latter is much enjoyed by his dogs, Bella and Shed, who show their appreciation by accompanying the mouth organ with some singing of their own. Somehow David also finds time to study Infotechnology at night at VUT.

Carolyn Tomkins

GROWING FRIENDS

Once again, our spring sale was a great success! The terrible weather on the Friday caused us concern and anxiety, as well as making the job of laying out the plants a difficult one in gale force winds. Nevertheless Saturday dawned calm, warm and beautiful, and the plants looked spectacular.

Although we had considerably less stock than last year, we still raised a profit of $25,375 from the enthusiastic crowd that lined up, some as early as 9.20am. The tireless work of the Growing Friends was augmented in no small part by the team in the sales tent, RBG staff and assistants in the sales area.

Among the successes of the sale were the terracotta pots at 'two for a dollar, regardless of size' - they will continue to be available for sale to Friends on Friday mornings between 10.00am and 1.00pm. As well as other treasures, we will soon be selling some bulbs that were not ready on the sale day.

The fame of the Growing Friends and our achievements has spread far and wide. In early September we were visited by representatives of the Benalla Botanic Gardens, who bought many plants from us. The co-ordinator of the Growing Friends of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens stopped by during the sale for a useful exchange of ideas. We were also interviewed by a reporter and photographer from the Herald Sun, which featured a double-page spread on the sale.

The Growing Friends' Nursery uses a mixture of classical and more modern methods, and we are constantly looking to streamline our management systems and processes. Cuttings are struck in community pots, then transplanted into tubes and later to a succession of pots for sale. Accession numbers are assigned as they leave the tube; this is recorded in an accession book together with the provenance of the plant. The recording is done manually, and will continue to be so. Other procedures are more automated, which raises both our accuracy and productivity. We are examining the possibility of adding a bar code version of the accession number to the label and scanning it at point of sale, which should aid the flow in the sales tent during busy sale times.

After many years of hard work, Ruth Funder, Elaine Brumley and Hein Ritman have retired from the group. They will be missed. We will be inviting three people from our long waiting list to join us in the near future.

Our next Autumn Sale date is 29 - 30 March, 2003.

Colin Herbert, Convener

Growing Friends Raffle Winners:

1. **L. Baxter** chose the Helmholtzia; 2. **M. Black**, the Clivia; and 3. **W. Wilson**, the succulents bowl.

"It must be nearly 10.00 am" ....A good-natured queue awaits the opening of the Growing Friends' Spring Sale.
Photo by Meg Miller

BOOKFEST 2002: 19-20 October

BOOKFEST 2002 was organised by the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Cranbourne and culminated in a 2-day sale held at Mueller Hall on October 19th and 20th.

The main aim of BOOKFEST 2002 was to assist in the establishment of a new library at the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne. Many books on plants, gardening and natural history were gratefully received from individual and institutional donors. From these, about 750 publications were selected for the Cranbourne Library, a very significant figure if translated into dollar value. The Library at RBG Melbourne chose several books, together with a number of journals that filled gaps in their collections. Publications were also made available to the Library of the Australian Research Centre for Urban Ecology, a division of the Royal Botanic Gardens based at the University of Melbourne School of Botany.

Surplus items were then offered for sale to the public on the weekend 19-20 October. Money from the sale, plus subsequent sales of left-over items yet to be finalised, promises to add a significant figure to assist in the establishment of the new Cranbourne Library.

Several people enquired as to whether BOOKFEST was likely to be repeated, as it appears many Friends have bulging bookshelves and would be happy to donate some titles to our Botanic Gardens. No decision on future Bookfests has yet been made, but if you would like to be notified of a similar event, please call Rodger or Gwen Elliot on 9879 1427.

Rodger Elliot

Tendrils

For those of you who are eagerly awaiting our new design and layout, we must apologise for its non-appearance with this issue. Due to problems beyond our control the planned revamp has been postponed and will hopefully occur with the Autumn 2003 issue. In the meantime, grateful thanks to those enthusiastic Members and RBG staff who have contributed to this issue, to say nothing of the invaluable help given by the Friends' office staff.

Members are invited to join the RBG Cranbourne Friends for their Christmas break-up. *Jazz in the Gardens* BYO BBQ is open to all, at the Stringybark Picnic area, with music by The Doctors of Jazz.

CONGRATULATIONS to the Friends of the Botanic Gardens in Adelaide Inc., the first of such Friends' groups in Australia, which celebrated its 25th anniversary in November 2002. The founding of the Adelaide Friends coincided with the opening of Mount Lofty Botanic Garden. FRBG Melbourne wish our Adelaide Friends every success for the next 25 years.

On 31 July, the Friends held a highly successful exhibition and sale of small works of botanical art, along with Rebecca Trinca's botanically-inspired china. Mueller Hall was buzzing. Beautifully decorated stalls and artists demonstrating their work, plus the friendly atmosphere of 'Café Mueller' made for an exciting day.

In August, 15 lucky Friends took part in the inaugural combined Friends/RBG Propagation course, run by RBG Nursery staff. Running over four weeks, the course covered reproduction in plants, soils and growing media, seed raising and vegetative propagation. The enthusiasm and knowledge of the Nursery staff was fantasic and the course was greatly enjoyed by all who attended.

Two groups of Friends were treated to a very interesting and informative tour of the Herbarium in September. As always the Herbarium staff made a huge effort to ensure the success of the tours. Our thanks go to Katy Sommerville and Helen Cohn who ran these fascinating tours.

Members will be saddened to hear of the death in August of Mavis Willis, 96, widow of famed RBG botanist Jim Willis, and a long-time Friend.

The family invited donations to the Jim Willis Foundation in memory of their parents, and the response so far has been very favourable. What a fitting tribute to a well-loved and respected Friend.

A visitor to one of the RBG Voluntary Guides walks wrote a three-page letter of appreciation and reflection which included the following: "The stunning sun-filled sweep of the Perennial Border , with its great variety of winter colour and its adjacent extensive lawn, is a fine example of open, yet protected and well-defined space." The letter also included a tribute to the Guides, particularly the one who led the walk.

The City of Melbourne's Free Summer Fun in the Parks program runs from mid-November until the end of March. This program includes activities for all ages and can be accessed on www.thatsmelbourne.com.au

Responsible gardeners are becoming concerned about the weed potential of some plants. There are several books for sale regarding this subject, and one of the best for us in Victoria is a book produced by the Co-operative Research Centre for Weed Management Systems.

The book is titled *Environmental Weeds - A Field Guide for South Eastern Australia*, (ISBN 0 957 9086 01). Remember, if you dispose of waste material from these plants properly, they may never become a problem.

An interesting website is www.farrer.csu.edu.au/ASGAP/APOL27/sep02-5 One of the articles addresses the problems associated with weed control through use of poisoning.

5th BGCI International Education Congress

Phillip Moors, Richard Barley and six Public Programs staff from the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and Cranbourne attended the Congress. The main themes explored were *Novel Methods in Interpretation and Communication, Multicultural and Indigenous issues, Linking Science and Sustainability* and *Forming Partnerships*.

Mark Loveday (Education Coordinator at RBG Cranbourne) presented a workshop and paper on using art as a medium to understand and appreciate plants;
Dean Stewart (Aboriginal Liaison Officer at RBG Melbourne) participated with other aboriginal interpreters in sharing the significance of indigenous culture in the understanding of plants and the environment;
Gary Shadforth (Education Coordinator at RBG Melbourne) delivered a paper on the 'Alien Invaders' program that involves schools being active in investigating environmental weeds in their own areas.

The Congress included a tour of the Mt Annan and Mt Tomah Botanic Gardens and the Blue Mountains. A pre Congress workshop was conducted on the use of stories to communicate facts more effectively.

Gary Shadforth

Orchid Symposium

The great diversity of terrestrial (ground) orchids, found particularly in the south-eastern and south-western parts of Australia, is at risk, with many of our Australian species threatened. However, over the past decade, a spirit of co-operation has developed between a number of organisations, particularly in Victoria, and their pooled resources have been applied to increasing our knowledge about the orchids themselves, and their management.

The Royal Botanic Gardens, in conjunction with the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Royal Melbourne Zoo, Alcoa, and the Australasian Native Orchid Society, hosted the *Mutual Gains* symposium in October. The three-day symposium proved very successful with over 90 scientists, land managers and other professionals attending. The symposium addressed a number of topics, including ecological aspects of orchid conservation; on ground management of orchid populations; recent taxonomic work; horticultural research and advances in orchid cultivation techniques; understanding orchid-mycorrhizal relationships; community participation in orchid conservation projects; and conservation genetics and molecular biology.

Find abstracts for the symposium on the RBG website at www.rbg.vic.gov.au/mutualgains

Philip Moors and Rob Cross

ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS CONFERENCE

The conference of the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens, held at the beginning of November, was hosted this year by the Ballarat Friends in association with Friends of the Castlemaine, Buninyong and Daylesford-Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens. More than 100 attended, including representatives from Darwin, Canberra, Albury and Eurobodalla as well as many from Victorian gardens.

The theme of the conference *Living Gardens and Gardens for Life* was addressed in various ways by the group of notable speakers. They included Ken Allan, formerly on the staff of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and currently Garden Manager at the Garden of St. Erth; Rod May, organic farmer and Chairman of the Organic Federation of Australia; Chloe Munro, Secretary, Department of Natural Resources and Environment; garden designer Michael McCoy; well known gardener and horticulturist Sarah Guest; Ian Rossiter, Manager of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens and Peter Shepherd, Chief Executive Officer of the Creswick School of Forestry.

On the Sunday, delegates visited Buninyong, Daylesford-Wombat Hill and Castlemaine Botanic Gardens, enjoying the wonderful hospitality of their Friends' groups and exploring the Gardens and their collections in the company of John Hawker, Heritage Victoria and a member of our Friends' Council, who shared with us his vast knowledge of the trees, their histories in the gardens we were visiting and the locations of other specimens around Victoria.

The Gardens involved are to be congratulated on the excellent conference and the friendship and warmth extended to all those who attended. The next Association Conference will take place from 16 – 18 April 2004 and is being organised by the Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens, Canberra.

Janet Thomson

Photo by John Hawker

Happy Friends in a Living Garden *at the Ballarat Conference*

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE RATHOUSE

Most Friends know the first home of the Growing Friends as the Rathouse. However, for much of its life it was actually the Observatory Clinic.

Constructed in 1949, the Observatory Clinic of the Mental Health Authority was a general purpose outpatient psychiatric clinic. In 1953, 3189 new patients - children, families and adult patients after hospitalisation - visited its psychiatrists. During the 1950's the Clinic conducted many activities such as child therapy, art therapy, discussion evenings, presentations to the Australasian Association of Psychiatrists, Council for Adult Education classes and instruction to trainee kindergarten college teachers. They also developed a social club for adults and fitted up a large room as a lecture hall and social club.

In line with psychiatric practice of the time, the Clinic applied to administer ECT and ether abreaction but experienced some difficulties conducting treatments in the presence of children. To overcome these difficulties and the shortage of rooms for treatment, the Mental Health Authority constructed a treatment block, the Bristol building.

By 1958 the clinic was extremely busy and had a waiting list. They conducted group therapy, including sessions for a group of adult male stammerers. The child guidance centre grew. Their work with families emphasised the role of fathers. In addition they were administering sub-coma insulin treatments, ECT and later in 1961, EEG. The clinic was busy looking for other venues – partly to keep the children away from the noise of the physical treatments. Several prefabricated buildings were organised nearby so that industrial therapy sessions could be conducted, the children could be moved and an artist's studio and a carpentry workshop could be provided.

In May of 1971 the Clinic was transformed into a child and adolescent treatment centre charged with training child psychiatrists and allied professions. More than 1000 adult patients were transferred elsewhere. The Clinic provided outpatient care for children and youth with emotional disturbances; psychological assessment through standardised tests, interviews and play situations; and consultation services to school medical service and various community social agencies concerned with children and youth. They established a day centre for pre-school children and conducted programs for the education and training for professionals.

During 1972 the Clinic consisted of a number of buildings at the site. The workload grew. In 1973 they conducted 12,076 interviews with groups, individuals, and couples. In 1974 the renovated Astronomer's Residence was prepared for use as a normal kindergarten day care centre for pre-school children. In 1976-77 the Clinic was mainly used as a training facility. It would appear the patients were reassigned – possibly to the Bouverie Clinic.

Shortly thereafter the Clinic closed down and the Gardens assumed responsibility for the buildings. The Rathouse seems to have lain empty for some years during which time the condition of the building deteriorated markedly and by 1984 when Maggie McNamara was its sole occupant there were only small traces of its former life remaining. These included a hole in the floor through which she could see children's toys.

As the sign writer for the Gardens, Maggie made the plant labels and other signage. She worked quite alone in the old dispensary until 1986. The closest people were working in a neighbouring 'portable'. She said it was an eerie place to work; it was dark in winter and cold. The toys would have added to the atmosphere. Even stranger would have been the couple who once came and asked where the children had gone.

The first nursery of the Growing Friends was situated alongside this, by now near-derelict, building. The Friends used the building to store their records and other equipment. Initially their conditions were very primitive. They were able to use a three pin plug on the wall outside to heat water, but had no shelter. Eventually they were able to use the toilet and the kitchen and one room as an office. In 1997 they moved to their current location.

In the Conservation Management Plan prepared for the Board of the Royal Botanic Gardens in 1996, the colourful story of the Rathouse came to an end. It was decided that this 'modern prefabricated building is of no significance and should be demolished'.

Terri Kay

Growing Friends' nursery stock ready for the first sale in 1988, with the Rathouse and other prefabs in the background.
Photo from the collection of Sue and Chester Keon-Cohen

OUR CATERERS' FAVOURITE RECIPES

If you have always loved the delicious morning teas, suppers and savouries that our wonderful catering committee provide at Friends' functions, then you will love what they have come up with: ***Our Caterers' Favourite Recipes***.

We have persuaded them to part with their best and most-loved recipes and share them with us.

Look out for this soon-to-be-published collection. It will be available from the Friends' office and at functions for a small charge.

Development of Royal Botanic Gardens Brand Merchandise

The Gardens merchandise has expanded significantly over the last few months with the release of several new ranges just in time for Christmas shopping. The Gardens *Skin and Body* range was released in September, and includes a light day cream with sunscreen, night cream, cleanser, hand and body lotion, and exfoliant. This was followed by the release of The Gardens *Hamper* range, featuring merchandise from The Gardens *Shop* and *Produce* ranges, and also the new Gardens *Chocolates* inspired by the RBG Melbourne Oak Lawn and produced by *Ernest Hillier*. The Gardens *Linen* and The Gardens *Studio* range of products will be launched early next year.

The impressive *Royal Botanic Gardens of Australia* and *Royal Botanic Gardens of the World* calendars are now available for the 2003 calendar year.

Philip Moors

FRIENDS' BENEFITS

Special Discount! 10 per cent with NO minimum purchase at The Gardens Shop, Observatory Gate and Lakeside, up to 30 December 2002

The discount normally offered to the Friends of the RBG in The Gardens Shops - Observatory and Lakeside - is 10% with any purchase over $20.
In the lead-up to Christmas, The Gardens Shops offer the Friends 10% off all purchases, with no minimum purchase value. This offer expires on 30 December, 2002.
NB: No discount is available on food items or consignment stock.

The Gardens Shop hosted demonstrations of the art of botanical illustration by artists Terry Napier and Graham Jantzen during the time of *The Art of Botanical Illustration 2002* exhibition. An extensive range of botanical art works from many of the exhibiting artists is available at the Gardens Shop, along with a great selection of art books, sketch books and Faber and Castell products.

The Gardens Shops offer 10 per cent discount on Members' purchases over $20 after 30 December 2002.

The following businesses kindly offer discounts to Friends on PRIOR presentation of their signed current membership cards, which are not transferable.

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

Berna Park Nursery
cnr Park Rd/Paul St, Cheltenham.
5% discount on plants

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

Town and Country Gardens
1280 Malvern Rd, Malvern
24 Whitehorse Rd, Balwyn
10% off plants over $20 only.

Holmesglen Nursery
585 Waverley Rd, Glen Waverley
10% off everything

The Gardeners Corner Store
190-192 New St, Brighton
10% off all plants

Collectors Corner
Springvale Rd, Keysborough
10% off all plants

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

Burwood Garden Patch
1418 Toorak Rd, Burwood
10% discount

Garden of Eden Nursery
33 Ferrars St, Albert Park
10% off everything

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

The Arts Bookshop
1067 High St, Armadale

Banksia Hill B & B
RMB 5349, Horsham, 3401
10% discount on accommodation

Feldspar at Trentham B&B, via Daylesford. Ph: 5424 1821
10% discount on accommodation

Killarney Cottage B&B Sorrento
Ph: 5984 1970
10% discount on accommodation

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

Botanical Creations
122 Grange Rd, Glenhuntly
Disc. on mthly Garden Club items

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

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FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

Storm Damage

The severe windstorms of early September caused significant damage to the Melbourne Gardens, keeping horticultural staff busy throughout September and October restoring the site. A number of mature trees needed to be removed, including the large cypress behind Plant Craft Cottage. Several significant trees also required major arboricultural repair work, including the tallest tree in the Gardens - the *Taxodium* (Swamp Cypress) located in Fern Gully – and the River Red Gum at the foot of Princes Lawn, which predates the Gardens. Extensive damage was minimised by the staff's skilful and effective tree management.

Australian Research Council Grants

The RBG received exciting news in October of four successful grant applications to the Australian Research Council, the main tertiary research funding body in Australia. The grants were awarded to Dr Kirsten Parris (ARCUE), Dr Mick McCarthy (ARCUE), Dr Frank Udovicic and Profesor Jim Ross, and provide vital funding for important taxonomic, ecological and conservation research. Congratulations to these staff for an outstanding result.

Irrigation Management

Water conservation is an important objective of the RBG's *Policy for the Conservation of Plant Biodiversity* and presents quite a challenge for the management of a 19th century English heritage landscape with intensive water requirements. The characteristic style of planting, varied topography and micro-climates that support a diverse range of species, and extensive lawn areas all present considerable challenges to reducing water use.

Nevertheless, improvements in irrigation management have led to a significant reduction in water use, with 42% less water used in 2001/02 compared to the first recording of irrigation in 1994-95, despite a larger area (extra 2.9 ha) now being irrigated under less favourable weather conditions (less rainfall and higher evaporation). This is a significant achievement for RBG Melbourne in water conservation and as a result, the Gardens have been granted exemption from Stage 1 water restrictions for watering of the living landscape and nursery stock.

RBG Melbourne is in the process of reviewing the existing Automatic Irrigation System (AIS) Contingency Plan.

The extension of the AIS to Theatre Lawn, funded by the Friends of RBG Melbourne, and a strong focus on AIS maintenance, fine-tuning of the Water Budgeting Model, and implementation of irrigation system audits over the next few years are expected to lead to further irrigation effectiveness and conservation of water resources. Effective mulching, choosing appropriate species for specific microclimates, grouping plants of similar water need, and reducing competition from weeds also ensure that valuable water resources are used wisely.

The RBG Melbourne also plays an important role in educating Victoria's horticulturists on minimising water use, through on-site interpretation of the Water Conservation Garden, and presentation to students of various horticultural courses, such as the University of Melbourne's (Burnley) 'Discovering Horticulture'.

Philip Moors