



BOTANIC NEWS

FRIENDS of *the* ROYAL BOTANIC
GARDENS MELBOURNE INC.

Summer 2004-05

FEATURE

Having fun in the Ian Potter
Foundation Children's Garden

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Having recently returned from overseas, I've been catching up on all the exciting things which have occurred in my absence.

Increasingly, attention is being focussed by botanic gardens and nursery industry organisations around Australia on the propagation of plant species which are considered to have environmental weed potential. These environmental weed concerns prompted the RBG to request the Growing Friends to remove certain plants from their stock for the Spring Sale. Despite a stock reduction of some 400 specimens the Growing Friends excelled themselves, raising a net amount of \$28,482. Such success does not just happen. It is the result of continuous dedication, thought, skill, knowledge and extremely hard work. My congratulations and thanks go to every member of the Growing Friends on this fine outcome. Thanks also to everyone else who helped with the Sale.

There is no doubt the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne will be enhanced by the addition of the splendid Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden. Many Members had the opportunity to explore the Garden before it was opened and were delighted by its inspirational design and innovation. Now that it is opened, I am sure that the cries of joy and the excitement of the children taking advantage of all that it has to offer, will give much satisfaction to those who designed and created it. We would like to thank Andrew Laidlaw who was most generous with his time,

showing and explaining the Garden to our Members and we extend the warmest congratulations of the Friends to everyone who was involved in bringing it to fruition.

It gave me great pleasure at the Friends' Annual General Meeting to present 10, 15 and 20-year Volunteer Service Badges to a number of Members in recognition of the time they have and continue to contribute to the Friends. See page 5 for a list of names of Friends who were eligible. In the past the Friends have recognised the outstanding contributions of Members by nominating them for Honorary Life Membership; nineteen Members have been rewarded in this way but until now length of service has not been properly recognised and the Council wished to redress this situation. Organisations such as ours survive and prosper due to the contribution of time and the talents of our volunteers, whose hallmark is their dedication and enthusiasm.

Once again the Friends has made a grant of \$3,000 to the RBG to enable it to purchase works of art from the Art of Botanical Illustration Exhibition for the State Botanical Collection. One hundred and fifty-six works representing seventy-six artists were chosen for the Exhibition with the Selection Committee being very impressed indeed with the overall high standard of all works submitted for selection. The exhibition, which



ran from November 6 to 21, was opened by our Patron, Governor John Landy, on 5 November. There will be more to say about the Exhibition in the next edition of *Botanic News*. I would like to thank the Botanical Illustrators (all Friends) and their convener Edyta Hoxley for the splendid Exhibition.

May I remind Members that there is still time to purchase the Friends' beautiful Christmas cards which feature the very striking waratah, *Telopea speciosissima*.

With Season's Greetings to all Friends, readers and their families and best wishes for a happy New Year.

Irwin Newman

Notes from Gate Lodge

Virginia, Helen and Jean would like to wish all our Friends a very happy Christmas and thank them for their support in so many ways. Please note that the Friends' office will close on Christmas Eve and reopen on 4 January 2005.

Baskets of Fun! Win a Gardens Shop Hamper

To get into the Christmas spirit the Gardens Shop is offering you the chance to win one of three beautiful hampers made up of a variety of Gardens Shop treats.

Simply spend \$50 or more at The Gardens Shop between now and December 20, mention that you're a Friend of the RBG and fill out an entry form to be in the running to win one of these fantastic hampers! You will automatically go in the draw to win one of the following:

The Friends' Hamper (exclusive to Melbourne and Cranbourne FRBG) includes a variety of Gardens Shop products.

The Gardens Deluxe Hamper includes a large range of botanically-inspired gifts.

Children's Curiosity Kit to coincide with the opening of The Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden – includes a range of new products which are designed to encourage children to take an interest in plants, gardening and the environment.

FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

Contents

A Staff Profile	4
Members	5
Ian Potter Foundation	6
Children's Garden	
Growing Friends	8
Activities	9
Illustrators	10
Book Reviews	11
Gardens	12

Front Cover: *Eucalyptus erythrocorys* growing near the Temple of the Winds.

Photo by Jennifer Marshall

Photo: Matthew Hinn



Photo: Jennifer Marshall



The Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden

The official opening of The Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden was held on Saturday 23 October 2004. The Garden was opened by Deputy Premier John Thwaites, who is also Minister for Environment. Lady Potter, Life Governor of The Ian Potter Foundation, was also in attendance and addressed guests about the vision for the Children's Garden and why The Ian Potter Foundation supported the project.

Family activities on the opening day included a dance performance through the Garden by the Mangala Dance Studio and fun and games with children's puppet performers Polyglot – with Butterfly, Crane and Dinosaur enchanting children. There were also planting activities for children; pot-pourri and string making; music at the Storytelling Tree; and floating races in the rill. Overall, a wonderful day was had by big and small children!

It is extremely gratifying to see the hard work of RBG staff, the outside contractors and volunteers come to fruition, and to see children of all ages and their families enjoying the Children's Garden, playing hide and seek in the Plant Tunnels and building cubby-houses in the Rainforest/Ruin Garden. Another area of much fascination is the Children's Kitchen Garden.

The plants featured in the Garden include the ebonised ancient Red Gum, estimated to be between 5000 and 10,000

years old, Golden Spray, Walking Fig/Banyan trees, five Queensland Bottle trees, Timor Giant Black Bamboo, Cabbage trees and Flowering Cherries. The Friends are encouraged to come in with their children and grandchildren and join in the fun and we thank the Friends for their generous financial support for this landmark project.

Belonging Exhibition

From June to early September 2004, the RBG hosted the very successful *Belonging* exhibition, featuring the works of well-known children's author and artist, Jeannie Baker. The exhibition, which featured a series of detailed and exquisite collages, was held in Domain House, which the RBG uses as a gallery and education space. Attendance figures at *Belonging* exceeded expectations, and many school groups enjoyed the accompanying educational programs. *Belonging* is a national touring exhibition which commenced at RBG Melbourne.

Summer Programs/Activities

Moonlight Cinema will be back in its usual spot at the Gardens this summer, starting on 14 December. The Australian Shakespeare Company will be presenting *Much Ado about Nothing*, and *The Wind in the Willows* will also be back.

A new and exciting addition to our summer program will be the first Royal Botanic Gardens Market. The "Markets in the

Gardens" will feature a range of stalls selling products derived from plants, including crafts, value-added food products such as olive oils and jams, and garden decorations.

The first market will be held on Saturday 19 December on Observatory Lawn. The next market will be on Saturday 12 February, in the same place and the third and final market will be held on Saturday 12 March in the area surrounding the Terrace Tearooms. We hope to see many of the Friends supporting this new venture. For more information about the market and the type of stalls that will be featured, or to find out how to set up a stall, the website is:

www.marketsinthegarden.com.au

Weed Strategic Plan and Risk Assessment Procedure

Over the past year, a working group of RBG staff representing each of the divisions at RBG Melbourne has been developing a Weed Strategic Plan (WSP) for 2004-08. The WSP, which sets out goals and directions for the RBG's management of and approach to weeds, has recently been approved by the RBG's Corporate Management Group, and a series of information sessions for staff and specific workshops for horticultural staff will be held.

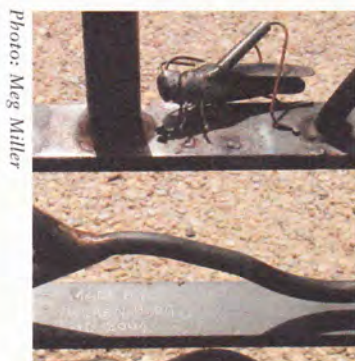
A draft weed risk assessment procedure (WRAP) has also been developed, which sets out methods for determining which plants pose an actual or potential economic or environmental threat. The

consensus at RBG Melbourne was that the WRAP and other related issues would best be dealt with and developed more fully at a national level, with the involvement of the Council of Heads of Australian Botanic Gardens (CHABG) and the staff of other Australian botanic gardens. This proposal has recently been supported by CHABG. The Weed Cooperative Research Centre has agreed to provide financial assistance for a workshop to be held in Melbourne for representatives from the key Australian botanic gardens, to explore on a national level the issues surrounding weeds.

RBG Regulations

The proposed new RBG Regulations are very close to being finalised, and should commence operation in December. The public consultation period ended recently, and only a handful of submissions was received. The Friends will be able to continue their current range of activities under the proposed Regulations via appropriate 'written authorities' to be granted by the Board.

Philip Moors, Director



Detail on one of Darren's gates

Great interest has been generated by the two new gates leading to the kitchen garden section of the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden. The gates are welded steel and feature stylised garden tools and common garden insects. They were built from steel rod by Darren Borg. The basic design idea came from Andrew Laidlaw, but Darren added the insects and realised the design into a really intriguing feature.

As a result of the positive interest generated, Darren, who is a member of the RBG maintenance staff, has received many requests for similar gates and fences and other steel works of art. He says 'Since completing the gates I have opened up my own small 'after-hours' business called "Sculpted Steel" which will be focussing on custom metal-work. My wife is an architect so I will be utilising her architectural design experience to help fabricate any project that may come our way.' He has taken over the mezzanine floor of his brother's hot rod car works.

Darren grew up in Altona in a family of three boys who attended Altona North Technical College (no longer in

existence). Their father was an office worker whose sons decided they preferred the practical life and so they took up trades. Darren's training was as a fitter and turner and toolmaker at the Chamber of Manufacturers' School in Richmond and later as an apprentice. At the end of his course, and newly-married, Darren could not find work, so he and his wife decided to take some time to travel overseas. When they returned, Darren set up a property maintenance business which he ran for four years. The difficulties of running



such a business and having to depend on late settlement of customers' accounts forced Darren to look for salaried employment and as luck would have it, his current job became available. This entails looking after buildings, fences, tools, security and Occupational Health and Safety. He has



Photo: Meg Miller

nothing to do with making things grow, or plant sciences, but is very grateful to be working in such beautiful surroundings. However, without him and the other members of the maintenance team, the infrastructure of the Gardens would not function and those of us who enjoy visiting here would find the experience very disappointing.

Darren's current hobbies are four-wheel driving, fishing and indoor soccer, but he used to coach junior teams in outdoor soccer and played in the State league, where he met his wife whose brother was also in the team. They have a five month old son who now occupies much of Darren's spare time so that outdoor soccer is no longer important. Instead, the new business of fabrication of artworks in steel will impinge on his time. Some of Darren's work will be available at the RBG's market which is planned for Saturday 11 December.

When enjoying the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden, look for Darren's gates to the kitchen garden.

Meg Miller

Central Photo: Jennifer Marshall

MEMBERS



The Christmas Gift That Lasts All Year

If you're looking for a very special Christmas gift – you've just found it. Membership of the Friends includes a whole year of relaxation, exploration and discovery, wrapped up in the perfect package. Even better, you don't have to brave the Christmas shopping crowds.

Your gift will provide the recipient with the opportunities available to all Friends: notification of a variety of interesting events; discounts at a variety of nurseries and supporting businesses; access to the Growing Friends' nursery on Fridays to buy rare and interesting plants and the chance to be involved with one of Melbourne's most beloved institutions - the Royal Botanic Gardens.

All you need do is complete the Gift Membership details on the form at the back of this magazine, download an application form from the Friends' website or call the Friends' office.

The Gift Membership pack(s) complete with greeting card will be sent either directly to the lucky recipients or to your address so you can send them on with your own special greeting attached.

Lorna Downey



Robert Dunster and David Plant chat at the New Members' Welcome.



New members enjoying the excellent morning tea provided by our Catering Committee.

Photos: Meg Miller



The beautiful floral arrangement by Robyn Tymms which graced both the Friends' AGM and the Art of Botanical Illustration 2004 exhibition

Friends' Council 2004-05

Following the AGM on 8 November 2004, the Friends' Council now comprises:

President: Irwin Newman

Vice-presidents: Janet Thomson and Cathy Trinca

Secretary: Richard Smith

Treasurer: Maurice Castro

Immed. Past President:

Sir Ninian Stephen

Councillors:

Susan Brookes; John Hawker;

Judy Jarman; Dr Richard

Kirsner; David Plant; Dr Philip

Moors and Mrs Anne Weber.

Congratulations and best wishes to the new Council.

Volunteer Service Badges

Badges for service of 10, 15 or 20 years are awarded to current financial members of the Friends undertaking voluntary work on a consistent and ongoing basis. These badges were first awarded by the President at the end of the AGM in November 2004.

The following Members were eligible:



Lydia Bartlett, Iona Christianson, Lawrence Cohn, Louise Coronel, Naomi McConchie, Mary Meadley and Pauline Morrison



Sharon Beaman, Lois Brunt, Jan Cheyne, Sandy Edlin, Elizabeth Fincher, Geoff Hardy, Jocelyn Houghton, Gillian Kirk, Ann Sinha and Lucille Strachan



Marina Albert, Isobel Allan, Don Allison, Joanna Brownell, Anna Denton, Linda Floyd, Mary Gregory, Wendy Henderson, Heather Ironmonger, Janet James, Judy Jarman, Phyll McLean, Rosemary McMeekin, Dorothy Smith and Robyn Tymms.

IAN POTTER FOUNDATION

After three long years of intensive planning and hard work the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden is finally open. It is available for public visits from 10.00am to 4.00pm Wednesdays to Sundays and for school groups from 10.00am to 4.00pm on Mondays and Tuesdays. The pictures on this page give some idea of the interest and excitement generated by the garden. We suggest that visitors crouch down at times to give themselves some idea of the children's perspective.

Although the opening day was overcast and marred by some drizzle, young visitors made the most of the facilities and the entertainment provided, showing just how apposite the planning has been.

Permanent decoration includes tie-dyed Balinese flags and mosaics of flowers, all made by various visiting children's groups as part of the 'plant magic' program. It is interesting to note that most of the plants in this garden are of the clumping variety which seem to withstand rough handling quite well.

Meg Miller



Activities in the kitchen garden



Microscope activity



Friends' Council member David Plant with Doug and Pat Hocking



The dramatic wire sculptures opposite the entrance gate



Tanderrum - a smoking ceremony to welcome visitors to this country - the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden

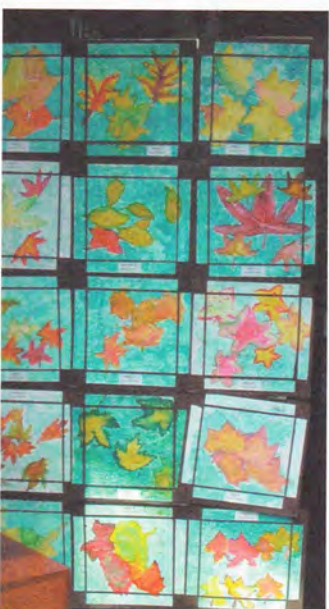


Heather and Duncan Ironmonger look for fairies in the kitchen garden



Below: Dr Philip Moors, Mr Charles Goode, The Hon. John Thwaites, MP, with his son, Lady Potter and Mr David Adam

CHILDREN'S GARDEN



Plantmagic 2004

In the Garden – Mosaic Gazing Balls Lilydale Primary School

A group of six level four children were involved in the creation of these beautiful Gazing Balls. The balls were made over the term as part of the schools extension art program. The children were instructed in the mosaic technique and firstly made a simple mosaic tile, featuring a pattern of their choice. Careful planning followed, with attention being given to overall design and colour combination. The results were stunning! The children were thrilled with the finished product and were keen to pursue further activities in this area. A fantastic outcome for a worthwhile project.



*All their own work:
Celebrations of the creativity
of the children visiting this
Garden.
Centre bottom:
Big kids enjoy it too!*

*Photos on both pages by:
Matthew Flinn, Jennifer
Marshall, Meg Miller and
Janet Thomson*



Christine Joy, of the RBG Education section, is asking members to collect interesting plant materials from their own gardens (not the bush or the seaside) for use with school groups during their visits to the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden. The materials could be left on the front verandah of Observatory House for Chris and her team.

GROWING FRIENDS

Never a dull moment! Our 2004 Spring Plant Sale is behind us and the Growing Friends' team is now spending its Fridays introducing a new range of stock and potting up the shadehouse 'babies' in preparation for our next sale on Saturday 2 and Sunday 3 April 2005.

A reminder that over a period of several years, with the valued assistance of the Royal Botanic Gardens and the Herbarium, the Growing Friends have withdrawn a number of plants from their propagation schedule and sales. We are progressively avoiding plants that have the potential to significantly impact on the environment and threaten Australia's ecosystem and native biodiversity.

Looking at the remaining 90 per cent available, however, there are many plants that we can propagate.

We are all hoping that the *Camellia japonicas* and *C.sasanquas* will have matured

sufficiently for the Autumn sale. The extensive range of camellias in the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne was initiated in 1875. Under careful guidance, our *Vireya Rhododendron* list has expanded to include some spectacular varieties. *Vireya Rhododendrons* are mainly tropical and have waxy trumpet-shaped or tubular flowers. If you find a blue or mauve one, let us know.

Each week we are inevitably greeted by the flowering of one or more of our plants, particularly during Spring and Summer. While the Growing Friends has built up an extensive photo library of plants that travel through the Nursery to our customers, it is continually frustrating when sale time comes – the flowers have usually just finished or are not quite ready and we haven't a sample to show you. One example is *Epacris longiflora*, Australia's Native Fuchsia. The flowers on this plant are long, tubular and



Photo: Diana Snape. *Epacris longiflora* from her book The Australian Garden

bright red with crisp white caps. They travel up the branches and are quite spectacular. Not being familiar with the plant, you would probably walk right past it in a pot – and you certainly would not see the tiny Eastern Spinebill feeding on its nectar at our sales. The little honeyeater would probably just watch the plant's buyer and quietly follow them home.

Another stunning plant, only in bud at Sale time, is *Cuttsia viburnea*. This native elderberry has beautiful evergreen foliage and is suitable for dark, difficult areas in the garden. It has sensational large panicles of white fragrant flowers. Then, of course, we have *Correa 'Ivory Dancer'* with its cream, bell-shaped flowers that look like a ballerina's tutu and *Grevillea banksii* (another of the Eastern Spinebill's favourites) with its red flowers. The list of beauties goes on and on.

The message is simply that, while we try our best to have photographs of flowers at the sales, we can only suggest that your vision will take you on the journey with some of our stock. The true colours of the few mentioned, or indeed all of our

plants, will not be seen until they are planted in your garden. Also, with the plants on offer changing annually, the catalogue provided at the sales is a helpful resource for buyers. Undoubtedly, every one of our plants possesses merits carefully researched by a Growing Friend or highly recommended by Gardens' staff. Nurtured correctly, they will all reward you.

Throughout the year, the Growing Friends depend not only on the contribution of each of its Members, but on organisations who assist our operations in a number of ways. This year, Norwood Industries donated plastic sheets for our sale 'special price tags' and Hi-Tech Industries kindly donated their time and expertise in updating our sale banner. We thank these businesses for their support.

Most importantly, we would like to thank the Gardens' staff for their highly valued collaboration and encouragement throughout the year. We wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Pam Eames, Convener

Photo: Meg Miller



RBG gardening staff enjoying a well-earned morning tea on sale stock moving day.

ACTIVITIES



Summer Fit Friends Ramble

THE YARRA RIVER AT TEMPLESTOWE

Wednesday 2 February
at 9.00am sharp
Cost: \$8 Friends \$5
RSVP by Friday 28 January
on enclosed booking form
Meet at Finns Reserve car park
at the river end of Duncan Street,
Templestowe (Melways Map 33 B4)
Please wear comfortable walking
shoes and bring hats and drinks.

This walk will take us along parts of the middle reaches of the Yarra River, passing under the canopy of magnificent river red gums and manna gums with an understorey including acacias, olearias, and tree violets along the river banks. It is remarkable to get the feel of being in the bush so close to urban development.

On leaving Finns Reserve, we will cross, and continue overlooking, the river into Westerfolds Park. There may

be an opportunity to see some birds in the bush close to the river, before we climb the hill to the Mia Mia Gallery where, at this mid-point of the walk, we will have time to visit and buy a cup of coffee.

Depending upon the weather, some of the way may be on narrow dirt tracks. If you wish to have lunch in the area after the ramble, there are barbeque/picnic facilities at both Finns Reserve and Westerfolds Park.



Summer 'Talking Plants' Morning

Friday 11 February at 10.30am
Meet at Gate Lodge (opposite Shrine)
Cost: \$5 MEMBERS ONLY
RSVP by Friday 4 February
on enclosed booking form
Morning tea will be served.

The Friends are pleased to invite members to the inaugural 'Talking Plants' Coffee Morning which will be held in the Gate Lodge garden (weather permitting). These events are intended to be informal gatherings of Friends with a common interest in plants and gardening.

Without a formal structure, the mornings will have a focus on a particular theme or plant with a knowledgeable person discussing the morning's topic

with us. All those attending are invited to bring a piece of a favourite plant, in flower, to show and share information about with the other members.

Following each Coffee Morning we will visit the Growing Friends Nursery to peruse and perhaps buy plants.



Summer Quarterly Insiders' Walk: Preservation of Historic Trees in the RBG

Friday 18 February
at 10.00am sharp
Meet at Gate Lodge (opposite Shrine)
Cost: \$10 MEMBERS ONLY
RSVP by Monday 14 February
on enclosed booking form
Payment must accompany booking
as this is a restricted number event

On this walk, Kiah Martin, Senior Arborist at the RBG Melbourne, will share her arboricultural knowledge and discuss the latest industry innovations in the areas of tree protection, preservation and restoration.

She will point out several cable brace support installations which can lengthen the useful life expectancy of ageing trees and make them safer for visitors.

Kiah, a prize-winning tree-climber, is a very enthusiastic, skilled arborist and an articulate speaker, so this should be an exceptionally informative Insiders' Walk.

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

ILLUSTRATORS



The Art of Botanical Illustration Exhibition 2004

A stunning display of over 150 original botanical paintings and drawings selected from nearly 300 entries was presented during November at our new venue, Domain House Gallery, in Dallas Brooks Drive. Many thanks to all members of the committee, and the artists who worked so hard, especially in dealing with the RBG's newly-acquired gallery space.

Our Patron, John Landy, Governor of Victoria, opened the exhibition. Celia Rosser was introduced and awarded her eponymous medal to Dianne Emery, as an outstanding exhibiting artist. Honorable mentions were awarded to Alison Gianangeli, Fiona McKinnon and Rita Parkinson. Three works were purchased for the State Botanical Collection. The Friends' Council again made a grant for

the purchase of James Hobill's *Banksia speciosa*; Ruth Jackson's *Allocasuarina littoralis*; Sandra Sanger's *Viola dissecta*; and Jennifer Wilkinson's *Vitis vinifera* var. *pinot*. The RBG purchased Robin Goding's *Epacris impressa*. Works chosen for the Friends' Illustrated Garden collection included:
Debra Bartlett: *Viburnum plicatum*
Miriam Blight: *Agapanthus praecox*
Helen Burrows: *Camellia japonica* - Paul Jones Supreme
Alwynne Fairweather: *Corymbia calophylla*
Alison Findlay: *Stenocarpus sinuatus*
Edyta Hoxley: *Isopogon anemonifolius*
Bernadette Lim: *Lilium candidum*
Terry Napier: *Dendrobium kingianum*
John Pastoriza Pinol: *Arisaema griffithii*
Dolores Skowronski Malloni: *Ipomoea cairica*

Once again, an illustrated version of the catalogue was presented on the RBG website at www.rbg.vic.gov.au/friends/art and CD copies of the catalogue sold at \$10 each. Remaining CDs are on

Classes

Term 1 will start in the week beginning 7 February 2005.

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

For further information on classes contact the Friends' office on 9650 6398

Workshops

Four-day Beginners Workshop with Dianne Emery

4, 5, 6, 7 January 2005

10.00am-4.00pm

Cost: \$250 Friends \$210

This intensive course is an introduction to Botanical Art via pencil and watercolour. Over the four days, students will begin to develop skills in outline drawing and foreshortening, tonal work and rendering of surfaces, basic colour work and paint application.

The cost includes drawing materials, paint, watercolour paper and brushes, and morning and afternoon tea. Classes will be held in the Whirling Room studio, Observatory Gate.

Plant Dissection and Microscope Workshop with Mali Moir

12, 13 January 2005

10.00am-1.00pm

Cost: \$120 Friends \$80

Suitable for both beginners and more advanced artists. Basic botany and plant dissection for illustration will be covered. Choose your medium – pen and ink,

graphite pencil or watercolour. Students will need to apply for a materials list.

Drawing 2-day Workshop: An Interesting Approach with Mali Moir
19, 20 January 2005

10.00am-3.00pm

Cost: \$150 Friends \$110

Drawing exercises to develop personal skills and bring out the inner artist.

Ongoing Beginners Workshop with Dianne Emery

24, 25 January 2005

10.00am-4.00pm

Cost: \$130 Friends \$110

For those who have completed a Beginners' Workshop and would like to advance their skills a little further in a friendly and supportive atmosphere.

For further information on workshops contact Dianne Emery on 9523 5397 or Mali Moir on 9822 8198.

Whirlybirds

The Whirlybirds have had another inspiring and productive year, with much interest and participation in *The Art of Botanical Illustration 2004* Exhibition and the compilation of the collection of paintings of the Oaks in the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne.

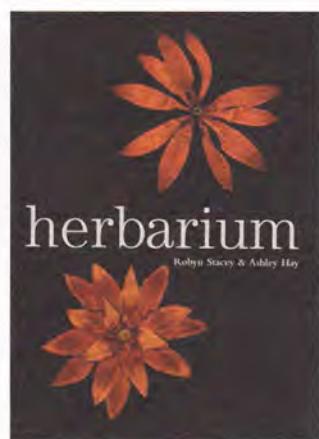
We will break from 14 December 2004 and resume our meetings on 1 February 2005.

If you are a Member of the Friends and interested in Botanical Illustration, perhaps you would like to join this group. Please contact Miriam Blight on 9583 6098 for further information.



Celia Rosser, Governor John Landy and Dianne Emery, this year's Celia Rosser Medal winner, in front of the winning paintings.

REVIEWS



Herbarium

Robyn Stacey and Ashley Hay
Cambridge University Press.
Hardback rrp \$79.95

Every once in a while a book comes along which fires the imagination and delights the eye. In *Herbarium*, Robyn Stacey and Ashley Hay have produced such a book.

After three years of meticulous research in the

One such collector, Wilhelm Bauerlen, while collecting in the Northern Rivers region of NSW in the 1890s, wrote after being troubled by rain and leeches "I find it necessary to drink wine every day in order to keep up my strength so as to make blood again".

Collecting plants is as old as civilisation and many amateurs, botanists and scientists, ancient and modern, have gathered a 'Hortus siccus' – a dry garden – in order to identify, classify and name specimens and to further the knowledge of their specific medicinal and agricultural aspects. It is from such work that herbaria have evolved.

From the 1890s, under the influence and hard work of its Director, J H Maiden, and through exploring, botanising and obtaining some original material from the British

A valuable feature of this unique book is the linking of each photograph with its collection...

National Herbarium of NSW and encouraged by Frank Howard, a former Director of the Sydney Botanic Gardens, Robyn Stacey has chosen a selection of specimens and photographed them in a unique, imaginative way. Her photographs are complemented by essayist Ashley Hay's excellent, descriptive text tracing the lives of the intrepid collectors and explorers who traversed Australia in search of new and extraordinary plants. She describes their privations, failures and successes.

Museum, the National Herbarium of NSW gradually developed into the superb collection held there at present.

A valuable feature of this unique book is the linking of each photograph with its collection and the accompanying scientific notes.

To anyone interested in the history and romance of plant collecting, this beautiful book *Herbarium* is highly recommended.

Olga Bartak

Gardenesque

A celebration of Australian gardening
This is the title of an exhibition and book by Richard Aitken.

The exhibition (free) is in the Keith Murdoch Gallery of the State Library of Victoria until 27 February 2005. The book (rrp \$45) is published by the Miegunyah Press and the State Library. Richard Aitken, landscape architect, historian, author and member of the Australian Garden History Society contributed to, and co-edited, the recently-published *The Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens*. During research for the *Oxford Companion* and the establishment of the Garden History Archive in the State Library, the Library yielded a rich lode of treasures relating to all sorts of aspects of gardens and gardening. This prompted Suzanne Hunt to initiate *Gardenesque*. Paintings, photos, posters, plans, pamphlets, manuscripts and books – one for each year from 1800 to 2004 – are published in the book, and about half are displayed in the exhibition.

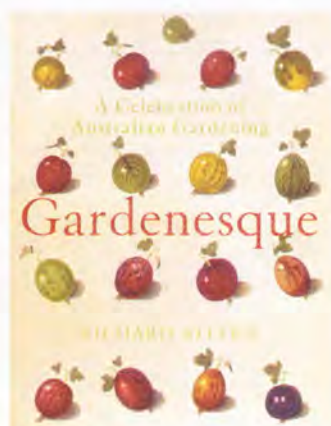
Particularly in these times of pernicious privatization, it is important to acknowledge the value of public institutions like Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens and State Library, and I am delighted that the very first guided tours of the *Gardenesque* exhibition were for Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens.

Under the directorship of Dr (not yet Baron) Ferdinand Mueller in the 1860s, Melbourne's (not yet Royal) Botanic Gardens were scientific

rather than 'gardenesque'. Henry Gritten's 1867 painting depicts part of the Gardens and an 1865 plan shows Mueller's taxonomic garden-beds and the names of trees, including many which William Guilfoyle would later relocate with 'gardenesque' in mind. The book includes a plan of the Gardens under Guilfoyle from his 1909 *A descriptive guide to the Botanic Gardens*. Guilfoyle's 1881 plan for Hamilton Botanic Gardens is exhibited. You may be intrigued by a short guide to 'Victoria the Garden State' which was published in 1907!

There is so much more to see and think about – eg Redouté's delicate portrait of an Australian bottlebrush from French Empress Joséphine's garden, and Edna Walling's Australian gardens. Do visit and re-visit the exhibition, and buy the book for yourself or a garden-loving friend.

Linden Gillbank
Gardenesque guide and botanical historian



Well, if ever you doubted that it is impossible to sneak any slight flexibility with The Truth past the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne Inc., then doubt no longer. No sooner had I commented in the last edition on the origins of *Prunus* 'Elvins' – specifically that it was named for Mrs Elvins – than I received a detailed and authoritative salvo from the office of the Friends, advising that the plant is in fact named after Miss Myrtle Elvins as distinct from Mrs Elvins.

It would appear (in other words, I've been Told) that the original plant grew in Miss Elvins' garden in Hawthorn, but that after the introduction on *Prunus* 'Elvins' to the horticultural trade in the 1950s (by Mr Reginald Sparks of Sparks and McAlpine Nursery in Box Hill), her garden was subsumed by the Hawthorn Football Club ground. Sadly, the original plant met its end in the process. I am, however,

advised that the Hawthorn Football team was once known as 'The Mayblooms'. I suppose 'Septemberblooms' would have been too much of a mouthful, but it would have been a nice gesture to the origins and demise of the original *Prunus* 'Elvins'. It just shows you though – one day you're out pottering under the blossoms of your favourite tree in the garden, trying to convince a few snails to find homes elsewhere, then in the blink of an eye someone has decided that a football ground would be a far better use of the space than it being your garden, and

landscape has benefited greatly from its visual association with the water bodies. If you doubt this, then try the mental exercise of picturing the Gardens without the water. Not only does one lose the very useful horizontal plane which performs so well as a visual foil for the trees and shrubberies surrounding it, but with it goes the calm reflective surface and the habitat for a swag of bird life (and some vital scenes in *Wind in the Willows*!) to name but a few qualities.

Having established that the lakes are a pretty vital part of the landscape, it is then not

'Fickian diffusion' and 'phosphorus fluxes' are now part of the tea-table vernacular (try for a sentence with all three in it).

Exciting new developments include some close-up work on the beneficial role of Benthic algae ('good algae') on the silt surface, and the discovery of a new record of an aquatic macrophyte (*Vallisneria americana*) in the Ornamental Lake. Both of these have the potential to 'tie up' a quantity of phosphorus in the lake water, and therefore reduce the amount available for blue-green algal growth.

At the operational level, the Gardens staff have been implementing some basic changes to our operations, such as using zero-Phosphorus fertilizers to avoid adding nutrient-rich runoff to the lake system. The successful relocation of the roosting colony of Grey-headed Flying-foxes from the Fern Gully may also have reduced the amount of high-P nutrients entering the system. It was a very positive sign that the last summer's algal bloom was considerably shorter than in previous years, even though the climatic conditions were ripe for a seriously long bloom.

Some of us will recall the important fund-raising role performed by the Friends of the RBGM in the 'Save the Lake' appeal of 1983. The Friends raised a significant amount of money to support the renovation of the Ornamental Lake, specifically: draining it, removing the Cow Lily (*Nuphar lutea*) which had all but choked the water surface, and removing tons and

One of the great assets of the Gardens is the lake system...

what was once your back lawn is now the half-forward flank. This really underlines how fortunate we have been at the Royal Botanic Gardens to have remained with a consistency of use of the site (and indeed expansion of its boundaries and acreage) without undue incursions from Progress.

One of the great assets of the Gardens is the lake system, which comprises the Ornamental Lake, Central Lake and Nymphaea Lake. No doubt the presence of the old lagoon and backwaters played an important part in the selection of this site by Charles Joseph LaTrobe in 1846, and ever since then the quality of the planted

surprising to find that certain Gardens staff spend a considerable amount of time and effort working closely with water science experts in seeking to improve the health and quality of the lake system – particularly seeking to avoid (or minimise) the occurrence of blue-green algal blooms. These 'bad algae' have been occurring from early summer through to early autumn for the last ten or so years, in our memory.

Through the agency of our Senior Horticultural Curator Peter Symes, we have developed a close association with the Water Studies Centre at Monash University. Several projects focussing on the nutrient load in the Ornamental Lake, its relationship with the sediment layer and the interaction with blue-green algae have now been completed. More will follow, while 'porewater peepers',



Historic snap of Miss Elvins with 'her' tree.

GARDENS

Photo: Meg Miller



tons of silt from the lake base. This was a very large undertaking of some months' duration, but it was successfully completed and the lake's appearance was very much enhanced by the works.

In parts of the Ornamental Lake, however, the silt remained unexcavated and in other parts it has again built up to a considerable degree in the twenty-one years since the lake was 'saved'. Donning a pair of waders and stepping gingerly into the silt in some parts of the lake can bring on a rising sense of panic, as one descends steadily downwards through the stinking stuff. Images of a hat left floating in the water, surrounded by a few gaseous bubbles spring to mind as one battles to remain at least semi-calm. At some point (perhaps chest-deep!) the descent stops, but not before giving one pause for thought and a darned good scare!

I mention this to give the appropriate and well-earned credit to Peter Symes and the various students who have

been undertaking the lake projects. This is not overly-glamorous work (and sometimes it's downright wet, cold and smelly!) but if it leads to a partial or complete reduction in the occurrence of 'bad' algal blooms, then it will have been invaluable. I'm sure the various bird-life and other fauna which make the Ornamental Lake their home would also join in a gesture of thanks with a verse from Ratty's poetic contribution, *Duck's Ditty*, from *Wind in the Willows*:

All along the backwater
Through the rushes tall
Ducks are a-dabbling
Up tails all!

Richard Barley

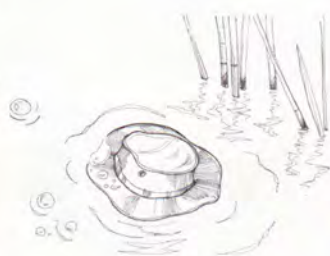


Illustration: Andrew Plant

Advance Notice: Pruning Course in the Royal Botanic Gardens

Session 1: June 2005, morning
Session 2: November 2005, morning
In conjunction with the RBG Horticultural Staff, we will offer a two-part Basic Pruning Course. This will be kept to a maximum of 12 people, and will involve both classroom-style learning, and hands-on practical instruction by RBG staff, and participants should acquire a good basic grounding in pruning.

Session 1: Theory on the principles of pruning including why and how, plus hands-on pruning of evergreen shrubs.

Session 2: Revision on the principles of pruning, plus hands-on tuition in pruning deciduous shrubs.

Please note: The course will only be available as a two-session package.

Cost: \$60 for TWO sessions including morning tea.

MEMBERS ONLY

Please ring the Friends' office on 9650 6398 with expressions of interest. When the dates are finalized a separate booking sheet will be sent.

Lawn Maintenance

For about the next three months, you may note the turf of the RBG Melbourne exhibiting some moisture stress at times through wilting and yellowing, as we 'transition' to warm-season grasses that will use much less water (see photo below). A seasonal turf strategy has begun, to shift dominance of Winter Bluegrass to more water-efficient warm-season grasses (up to 30% less) such as Kikuyu. This strategy involves minimising irrigation frequency so that Winter Bluegrass is put under stress to provide a competitive edge to Kikuyu and Couch grasses.

While Winter Bluegrass performs an acceptable functional and aesthetic role over the cooler months, it is less tolerant of hot and dry conditions. To keep this turf in good condition over summer would require excessive rates of irrigation and would only be successful in certain areas.

If you are interested, more details can be found on the RBG website at www.rbg.vic.gov.au/turf_management

Peter Symes



GARDENS

In 1869, at a meeting held at the Zoological Society of London, a "communication was read from Dr. F. von Mueller, F.R.S., C.M.Z.S., containing a list of birds permanently occurring, or periodically visiting, the Botanic Gardens, Melbourne". The list contained 114 species of birds, of which three cannot be recognized by their scientific names. One, the Mangrove Golden Whistler, a northern Australian bird, was included as well as the local Golden Whistler.

At that time, indigenous vegetation at the northern end of the Gardens was dominated by river red gums, tea-tree and kangaroo grass. Previous occupiers included the Wurundjeri people, who used it as a camping and hunting site, and later European squatters and quarrymen.

The presence on Mueller's list of Southern Emu-wren, Little Grassbird, White-fronted Chat and two waders – Great Knot and Curlew Sandpiper – indicates that the lake area originally contained low damp scrub and mud flats. This is further borne out by their inclusion in a list of various crakes and rails, Blue-billed, Freckled and Musk Duck, dotterel, snipe and other water birds compiled by P.R.H.St John, who worked in the Gardens for 54 years. Mueller's list also contained Brown and Little Quail, Richard's Pipit and Rufous Songlark, Dusky and White-browed Woodswallow plus some larger raptors such as Brown and Grey Goshawk and Spotted Harrier, all suggesting that the

Gardens contained considerable open space.

Perhaps there was a severe drought in Victoria at about that time, because Mueller recorded dry-country birds like Crested Bellbird, Black-backed Wren, White-fronted Honeyeater, Cockatiel, and Budgerigar.

It is surprising that some relatively common native birds now found in the Gardens were absent in Mueller's day. These include Chestnut Teal, Little Pied Cormorant, Australian Hobby, Silver Gull, Galah, Sulphur-crested

Common Starling and the House Sparrow. On the other hand the glorious territorial songs in the early spring of the Blackbird and Song Thrush are unforgettable. It is interesting that the Red-whiskered Bulbul thrives in Sydney gardens, but has rarely been seen in the Gardens here. Perhaps it is our colder climate. Ornithologist, Robert Hall wrote:

"72 Mallard or English Wild Duck were liberated in southern Victoria in 1871 in one lot, 80 in a second. They reproduced themselves in the Botanic Gardens, but

browed Scrub Wrens, and the gardeners' activities in digging gardens and spreading compost attract the Blackbird and Song Thrush.

Early in 1990, Bell Miners were seen in the parkland outside the Gardens near the Eucalypt Lawn area at Gate D. As time went by they spread, and their tinkling call is now a feature throughout. This year the flowering native shrubs attracted large numbers of Eastern Spinebills, and Rainbow Lorikeets can again be seen screeching through the treetops and feeding nosily in the flowering gums.

Near the Tea Rooms, water birds regard humans as a wonderful never-ending source of food, and children of all ages love to feed the swans, ducks, moorhen and coot in the Lake; even the eels know of this bonanza. On land the gulls vie with the sparrows and pigeons for the same bounty. Gardens' management is now actively encouraging visitors to desist from feeding the birds in the interests of the health of both the creatures and the Lake.

References:

- Proceedings of Zoological Society of London 1869
- Birds of the Royal Botanic Gardens*. Eve Almond & Roslyn Semler, Public Programs, Royal Botanic Gardens. Melbourne 1991
- Dr. Helen I Aston to Dr. P. Moors 1997
- Robert Hall. *The Useful Birds of Southern Australia*. T.C. Lothian 1907
- Pers. com. Dr. P. Moors 1997
- David Plant

Illustration of Willie Wagtail by Andrew Plant



Cockatoo, Red Wattlebird, Magpie Lark and Silvereye.

In 1991, the Public Programs Department of the Royal Botanic Gardens produced an excellent booklet listing 55 species of birds commonly found in the Gardens. Some rarely-seen species were not included. The Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens have updated this list, which contains eleven species that were certainly not on Mueller's list. These are the introduced birds, most of which have become absolute nuisances. This is especially true of the Common Myna,

eventually flew away and became lost". This pest became established in the wild, and can occasionally be seen swimming on the Lake.

Birds wasted no time in adapting to the physical changes in the Gardens. The open lawns supply all sorts of easily-obtained insects for birds large and small. On the Oak Lawn a pair of Willie Wagtails dance around the feet of walkers as they stir up flying insects, and on the Central Lawn a pair of Magpie Larks behave in much the same way. Leaf litter supplies food for the increasing number of White-

The Gardens Shops offer 10 per cent discount on all Members' purchases.

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

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 off plants

Bulleen Art and Garden

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

Town and Country Gardens

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

Holmesglen Nursery

585 Waverley Rd, Glen Waverley
5% off everything

The Gardeners Corner Store

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

Collectors Corner

Springvale Rd, Keysborough
10% off all plants

Kew Nursery

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

Burwood Garden Patch

1418 Toorak Rd, Burwood
10% discount

Garden of Eden Nursery

33 Ferrars St, Albert Park
10% off everything

Cultivate Nursery & Gifts

Rear 91-93 Doncaster Rd
North Balwyn.
10% off everything

The Arts Bookshop

1067 High St, Armadale
10% discount

Banksia Hill B & B

RMB 5349, Horsham, 3401
10% discount on accommodation

Feldspar at Trentham B&B

via Daylesford. Ph: 5424 1821
10% discount on accommodation

Killarney Cottage B&B Sorrento

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

Blackwood Lane Gallery

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

Botanical Creations

122 Grange Rd, Glenhuntly
Discount on monthly Garden
Club items

Simply Panoramic

Landscape Design & Maintenance
Ph 9859 3610 Michael Seeley
10% off garden consultations

Terrace Tea Rooms & Reception Centre RBGM

Complimentary Tea or Coffee with
meals, scones or cakes

Lister Teak Garden Furniture

22 Industry Court, Lilydale,
Ph: 9735 4010. Free 100-page colour
catalogue of Cotswold Furniture
Collection.
Ask for the Members' surprise

Cloudehill Nursery

89 Olinda-Monbulk Rd, Olinda
10% off all purchases

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

Patron

John Landy, AC, MBE,
Governor of Victoria

President

Irwin Newman

Vice-Presidents

David Plant
Janet Thomson

Secretary

Richard Smith

Treasurer

Maurice Castro

Immediate Past President

The Rt Hon.
Sir Ninian Stephen

Council

Susan Brookes
John Hawker
Judy Jarman
Dr. Richard Kirsner
Dr. Philip Moors
Catherine Trinca
Anne Weber

Editor

Meg Miller

COMMITTEE CONVENERS

Activities, Catering and Events

Catherine Trinca

Botanical Illustrators

Edyta Hoxley

Growing Friends

Pamela Eames

Membership

Lorna Downey

Volunteers

Janet Thomson

FRIENDS' OFFICE

Virginia Henderson
Helen Fahey
Jean Woodger

Gate Lodge
100 Birdwood Avenue
Melbourne Vic 3004
Tel: (03) 9650 6398
Fax: (03) 9650 7723
Email:
friends@frbgmelb.org.au
Website:
www.rbg.vic.gov.au/
friends

Print Post Approved
PP 345842/10025
A12827T

ISSN 08170-650

Printed on 100 per cent
recycled paper
Australian made

Printer

Impact Printing

ADVERTISING

DL and A4 inserts will
be accepted in Botanic
News at a rate of \$380
plus GST and \$450
plus GST respectively.
For ease of handling,
DL size is preferred.
Material advertised
should be of interest to
the membership of the
Friends of the RBG.

Contact the Friends'
office, 9650 6398,
for details



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

- ☐ **Household** \$57
(two adults living at same address)
- ☐ **Individual** \$39
- ☐ **Pensioner, Student, Country** \$28
- ☐ **Interstate or Overseas** \$30

Subscription rates are subject
to annual review

Trust Fund DONATIONS

(Tax deductible, receipt issued)

TOTAL ENCLOSED

Cheque/Money order enclosed
OR please charge my

- ☐ Bankcard ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa

..... / / / /

Signature

Expiry Date

Please tell us about yourself (please print):

Name(s)
(Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms / Dr)

Address

Postcode

Telephone: ()

Age Group

- ☐ Under 25 ☐ 25-39 ☐ 40-59 ☐ 60 and over

I would like details of:

- ☐ Gift membership ☐ Life Membership ☐ Bequests & Wills

Please make cheques payable to: Friends of RBG,
and post with this form to: Gate Lodge,
100 Birdwood Ave, Melbourne 3004



FRIENDS of the
ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS
MELBOURNE INC.

We invite you to join the Friends and help us grow
(see adjoining application form). Subscribing
Friends support the work of the National
Herbarium and the Royal Botanic Gardens,
Melbourne. Benefits include:

Discounts on purchases from

The Gardens' Shops
Terrace Tearooms
Selected B&Bs
Specialty Bookshops and Gallery
Selected Nurseries

Regular issues of

Botanic News
Floreo

Members Activities

Learn about gardens, gardening,
botany, horticulture and
Botanical Photography.
Attend talks, lectures, behind-the-
scenes visits, guided walks,
social events, day trips and
extended tours.

Botanical Illustrators

Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced
classes available

Growing Friends Nursery

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

Volunteers

are always welcome.
Contact Gate Lodge for details.

