BOTANIC NEWS

WINTER 1991

FROM THE PRESIDENT

As Friends will know the exhibition "Our Botanical Heritage" ran very successfully from 3 May to 26 May. This will surely prove to be the highlight of the Friends' year. The exhibition was opened on Thursday 2 May by the Hon. Barry Jones MHR and there was a large number of guests and Friends present.

The exhibition was very well received and highly commended in the media. In particular, it received special commendation from Mr Jones who described it as an exhibition of international standing, long overdue, not to be missed and he lamented the short duration of just over three weeks.

In place of my usual President's remarks my introductory address - neccssarily abridged – is quoted below:

> It is a great honour for me as President of the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Incorporated to welcome you all here to this exhibition opening tonight.
>
> When in May of last year, Dr Jim Ross, the Manager of the National Herbarium, approached the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens about assisting in the organising and presenting of an exhibition of the "Treasures of the Herbarium" – as it was then named – changed to "Our Botanical Heritage" later, we were delighted and proud to be associated with the Herbarium and Royal Botanic Gardens' staff in presenting such a valuable exhibition of the early discovery and classification of Australian flora.
>
> The responses to our approaches for support of this exhibition within the time constraints put on us of twelve months between the time Dr Jim Ross approached us at our bimonthly Council meeting in May last year, has been quite remarkable. In these tough times it is all the more extraordinary. To mention the key characters who have made light of this gargantuan task is essential tonight, modest though they want to be. Their 'behind the scenes' workload has to be acclaimed – Beth Higgs and Golda Isaac with the backup of Eve Brunner and her Activities Committee and Pat Wales and the Catering Committee . . . It is the dynamism of Beth's and Golda's personalities and their refusal to accept nothing but success which has convinced our sponsors to get behind their enthusiasm and support the Herbarium staff to propagate tonight's botanical blockbuster.
>
> Our great thanks to Alcoa, Associated Pulp and Paper Mills, Australian Chemical Industry Council, Greening Australia, the Maud Gibson Trust, the Howard Norman Trust, the Sydney Myer Trust, the State Bank of Victoria and of course, the Friends.
>
> The designer of this exhibition, Philip Ellis, is to be especially thanked. Without his professional expertise we couldn't be so proud of "Our Botanical Heritage". . . We are most grateful.
>
> The State Bank as well has exceeded all our expectations in the quality of detailed finish this exhibition illustrates.
>
> The work of the elected Council of the Friends is, for the most part, a "back room" involvement of planning, organising and fund management in the interests of the members . . . Members owe much to the very great time and considerable skills contributed over the years by Council members and other volunteers.
>
> We, as Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, must feel proud that we have been involved in the presenting of this remarkable exhibition – the first of its kind in Victoria.

D.R. Wilkinson
President

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday 22 October 1991

Further information in the Spring *Botanic News* and in a separate mailing.

NOMINATIONS FOR COUNCIL

Following the Resolution at the Annual General Meeting on 22 October 1990 whereby the Council was expanded from four to six ordinary members, there will be vacancies for Council positions at the 1991 Annual General Meeting.

Should you consider nominating, application forms for nominations to Council are available upon request from the Friends' Office, telephone 650 6398.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Enclosed with this *Botanic news* is a renewal of subscription notice for the year 1 July 1991 to 30 June 1992. Members will note a small increase in subscription. Council is conscious of the current difficult economic climate, however increased costs have to be met in order to ensure the continuing financial security of the Friends. The increase in subscription has been kept as low as possible given these circumstances.

MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES

BOTANICAL ART WORKSHOPS

11 June, 9 July, 13 August

Our group of artists continues under the guidance of Anita Barley from the Herbarium to produce some fine work and also to encourage beginners in this exacting art form.

Unfortunately the workshops have been temporarily disrupted by the long awaited renovations to the "Weights and Measures" board room we use each month. We look forward to getting back to work in much improved surroundings when those renovations are completed.

FILM/LUNCHEON

Wednesday 19 June at 11.00 am at the Trak Cinema, 445 Toorak Road, Toorak (Melway Map 2M 6E).

Peter Weir's highly commended romantic comedy "GREEN CARD", set in New York, commences at 11 am and will be followed by lunch (sandwiches, cake and tea or coffee). BYO wine if desired.

The Activities Sub-Committee has undertaken to sell 80 tickets, so please bring your friends.

Members: $11.00 Others: $12.00

RSVP on enclosed booking form by 14 June. Parking at rear of cinema in Jackson Street.

PERENNIAL BORDERS AND AUSTRALIAN PLANTS

Tuesday 25 June 1991 at 10.15 am at the National Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.

Mr Rodger Elliot is a noted author and an authority on Australian plants. For over 30 years Mr Elliot has been involved with Australian plants in the Nursery as well as with landscape design and the construction side.

He is co-author of the *Encyclopaedia of Australian plants suitable for cultivation*. Currently Mr Elliot operates a small wholesale nursery.

Morning coffee/tea will be served.

Members: $3.00 Others: $4.00

RSVP 21 June 1991 on enclosed booking form.

GROWING FRIENDS PLANT SALES DAYS for Friends only

Friday 28 June and Friday 26 July. Please note there will be no plant sales on the last Friday in August.

HISTORIC FILM

Wednesday 10 July 1991 at 8.00 pm at Merton Hall, Anderson Street, South Yarra.

Come and join us in viewing a most wonderful film which is set in the Victorian era at Chiltern, Berks, U.K.

The film is narrated by Peter Thoday and lasts one and a half to two hours.

The restoration of the garden took two years so that we see the garden as it was in Victorian times with a life style of great affluence. We see the growing methods of the day which include many hints for those using organic methods today.

In May there is 'The Planting', in August 'The Harvest', then there is 'The Preparation of the banquet' with its elaborate table decoration and finally 'The Preparation of "the feast" in the kitchen'.

Supper will be served.

Members: $4.00 Others: $6.00

RSVP Friday 5 July on enclosed booking form.

Please note venue

HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF PORCELAIN

Wednesday 24 July 1991 at 10.15 am at the National Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.

Mrs Patricia Begg (McNair) will speak of the history of the development of porcelain from 900 A.D. to present day with an emphasis on floral paintings.

Mrs Begg is a highly regarded, stimulating and informative speaker. She will have about 40 sample pieces on display.

Morning coffee will be served.

Members: $3.00 Others: $4.00

RSVP 22 July 1991 on enclosed booking form.

BOTANY AND THE MODERN ZOO

The modern zoo consists of habitat base exhibits and is therefore almost as much a botanical collection as a zoological collection. In his lecture, "Taking the Botanical to the Zoological : Naturalistic Exhibits in the Zoo" Professor Mitchell will discuss aspects of the modern zoo with its major conservation emphasis.

Professor Graham Mitchell, an entertaining speaker, is the new Director of the Royal Melbourne Zoo. He has spent twenty five years in medical research at the Walter & Eliza Hall Institute. He is also Professorial Associate of the Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Melbourne

Wednesday 28 August at 8.00 p.m. at the National Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.

Supper will be served.

Members: $3.00 Others: $4.00

RSVP 26 August on enclosed booking form.

THE TRADESCANT FAMILY

Wednesday 11 September at 10.15 am

We are pleased that Mrs Sibely May will speak to the Friends and show slides about the noted Tradescant Family of the 17 Century in England.

The Tradescant father and son were reputed to be the leading gardeners of 17th Century England. The father was gardener to Sir Robert Cecil, the first Earl of Salisbury and laid out the gardens at Hatfield House. Later he became gardener to the Duke of Buckingham and finally to King Charles 1. He was responsible for creating the Tradescant Nursery at Lambeth. At the end of the Elizabethan reign great stately homes were built and the Tradescants – England's first two plant explorers – travelled abroad to bring back new trees and flowers to enrich the gardens of Royalty and of the nobility.

Mrs Sibely May, a microbiologist by profession, has been keenly interested in flowers and plants all her life.

Morning Coffee/Tea will be served.

National Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.

Members: $3.00 Others: $4.00

RSVP 6 September on enclosed booking form.

CENTRAL WESTERN GOLDFIELDS TOUR
with DR JIM WILLIS

Thursday 12 September to Monday 16 September 1991

This five-day springtime tour will take us to a number of botanic gardens, the private garden of Buda in Castlemaine, museums, art galleries, and many favourite haunts of our inimitable guide, Dr Jim Willis. An all-day outing for a tour of Whipstick Scrub when the wild flowers should be at their best will be a highlight.

Staying in three star accommodation, we stay one night in Castlemaine, two nights in Bendigo and one night in Maryborough.

On one evening in Bendigo we dine at the famous Shamrock Hotel and this will be followed by one of Jim's famous slide evenings on native flora of the area. On our return journey we visit the School of Forestry at Creswick where Jim commenced his career in botany and we see the State Forest Nursery.

Number limited to 30 people

$100 deposit now, balance by 6 August.

$485 twin share; $523 single supplement (includes accommodation, all meals and transport)

EXPLORING JAPAN

Sunday 27 October to Saturday 16 November 1991

A few vacancies exist for this wonderful autumn tour through central Japan. If you are interested please contact the Friends' Office for an itinerary. Enquiries to Lesley Clark on 807 3984 or Beth Higgs 850 5908.

SYDNEY/BLUE MOUNTAINS TRIP

Thursday 10 October to Thursday 17 October 1991

This eight day tour should be most exciting. We spend four days in Sydney visiting the Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens and meet with members of their 'Friends' and Voluntary Guides, take a day bus trip to Ku-ring-gai Chase and the Gosford area, spend a day viewing beautiful private gardens around Sydney. We then take the train to Leura where we stay at the luxurious Fairmont Resort with its magnificent views. The Spring Garden Festival will be on so we have an opportunity to see these gardens at their best. One day will be spent visiting Mount Tomah Botanic Garden, also private gardens in the Mount Wilson area – such as that of Dr Peter Valder. We also plan to have a day trip to the Jenolan Caves.

Number limited to 20 people.

Cost - $1,206	Deposit - $200 now
(includes return air fare, accommodation, transport, all breakfasts & lunches in the Blue Mountains, and entrance fees to gardens)	Bal. by 30 August Enquiries: Lesley Clark 807 3984

TARRA - BULGA NATIONAL PARK

Friday 8 November to Sunday 10 November 1991

Spend a weekend exploring this magnificent National Park in the eastern Strezlecki Ranges, well known for its giant mountain ash trees and beautiful fern gullies.

Ian Fisher, horticulturist, will guide the tour, and accommodation will be at Fern Valley Guest House, Balook, East Gippsland.

Leaving by train from Spencer Street at 6.14 pm on Friday and returning on Sunday at 8.40 p.m., the tour includes accommodation, transport, all meals on Saturday and two meals on Sunday. A dining car is available on 'The Gippslander' both ways providing light snacks.

Number limited to 20 people.

Cost - $120 single and twin share
Limited singles.

Enquiries Ian Fisher
427 1413 (AH) or
Lesley Clark 807 3984

NORTH BORNEO TOUR

Wednesday 11 March to Wednesday 1 April 1992

The North Borneo tour in 1990 was so successful that another tour has been organised for 1992. Slight variations have been made to the previous itinerary. It is an exciting tour and one that you can make as energetic or as relaxed as you wish.

An itinerary is enclosed with this newsletter.

GARDENS OF EUROPE

Friday 15 May to Friday 5 June 1992.

This tour is being combined with the Friends of the Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens and will be something very special. See enclosed itinerary.

Please return booking form to Destination Management in Brisbane if you are interested.

Viola hederaceae

RECENT ACTIVITIES

Victoria's Big and Little Deserts 7 March. Mr Garry Raynor spoke and showed slides to the enthusiastic audience.

Botanical Illustration Workshops 12 March, 9 April and 14 May. An enthusiastic, talented group.

Rare and Threatened Plants 20 March. Dr Peter Wyse Jackson.

Growing Friends Plant Sales Days (for Friends only), 22 March, 26 April, 31 May.

Portland Tour Reunion 23 March. A very happy time was spent at the home of Peg Jones when the group gathered to share photographs and to reminisce. Dr Jim Willis showed his slides which made us feel we had made a return trip. Many thanks Jim, and special thanks to Peg.

Ornamental Plant Collections Association 27 March. Rob Cross.

Autumn Mallee Parks Tour - Big Desert and Little Desert 12 to 16 April. Led by Dr Terry O'Brien. The tour was a great experience – a chance to learn about Mallee plants and the harsh soils in which they survive Terry O'Brien and Whimpy (host of Desert Parks Lodge) made a great team – each contributing his own humour and expertise.

Launching of Our Botanical Heritage 2 May by the Hon. Barry Jones.

Our Botanical Heritage Exhibition 3 May to 26 May

Weekend Seminar for Friends of Victorian Country Botanic Gardens 18 and 19 May.

Volunteers Morning Coffee 22 May

Guilfoyle and the Sub-Tropical Garden 29 May. Mr Paul Fox (conjointly with the Australian Garden History Society).

FRIENDS' SHOP

Do call into the Shop and see our latest additions. We would like you to see our very own aprons and carry bags. They are a rich dark green with a bright green primitive art logo of the Gardens. Aprons are suitable for outdoor use in the garden or indoors for kitchen/laundry etc. Both apron and carry bag are PVC coated — just a wipe over with a damp cloth to keep clean.

And, of course, we are always adding to our range of quality items suitable for sending or taking to friends overseas.

The natural garden, Ellis Stones . . . his life work by Anne Latreille – we have a number of signed copies of this most interesting book. Also there are just a few copies left of The Garden lover's journal, 1943 - 1946 by Jean Galbraith. These are selling at the very special price of $9.95 each. These two books would be excellent to have on the coffee table for browsing through during the coming winter months.

GROWING FRIENDS

The Growing Friends are working hard toward the next Spring Plant Sale to be held on Saturday 12 October and Sunday 13 October.

We have expanded the size of the nursery to include a shaded holding area for the Vireya rhododendrons and other shade loving plants.

Following the guidelines set down by Stephen Forbes, Acting Superintendent of the Royal Botanic Gardens, we are taking cuttings of plants in the Gardens which may not be available commercially and are considered by the head gardeners to be the best in their area.

We hope eventually to have one hundred different species, the first of which will be available at our Spring Sale, and will be identified by a distinctive label.

We remind you that Friends are invited to purchase **selected** plants at our nursery on the last Friday of June and July.

SPECIAL BENEFITS TO FRIENDS

The following nurseries and bookshop offer special discounts to Friends on production of their current membership card:-

Fryers' Nursery, 589 Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn

Idaho Nurseries, 410 Waverley Road, East Malvern

The Gardener's Bulleen Nursery, 105 Bridge Street, Bulleen (10% off potted plants and 5% off seedlings)

The Arts Bookshop, 1067 High Street, Armadale.

FRIENDS' OFFICE

The Friends' Office is located in the Astronomer's Residence in Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra and is open from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Messages can be left on the answering machine at any time - telephone number 650 6398. Cheques for Friends' functions should be made out to "Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Inc.".

Correa bauerlenii

FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

Falling leaves and the approaching dormancy has not slowed the pace of events at the Gardens and Herbarium.

Roger Spencer, Horticultural Botanist, and Warren Worboys, Horticultural Development Officer at Cranbourne, have recently returned from a very successful collecting trip to the Big and Little Deserts and the Sunset Country the Florieu Peninsula outside Adelaide; and Kangaroo Island. Cranbourne will receive most of the plant material collected on this trip, including a large number of mallee eucalypts which will feature in the Arboretum. A rare member of the Proteaceae family, *Hakea aenigma*, which can only reproduce by suckering was also photographed and collected. Donations of other rare and endangered plants from Kangaroo Island were also received after Roger and Warren paid a visit to the Black Hill Flora Centre in Adelaide.

Slightly further afield, Senior Gardener Warren Penna left in May for a three month exchange to Huntington Botanical Garden in California. Stephen Forbes, Acting Superintendent, will join him in June for a collecting trip to Mexico where they hope to find material to supplement the Arid Garden Collection. While in California Warren will also gather information and, hopefully, plant material for the Californian Garden being developed north of the species roses, near C Gate.

Plant names, the second in the Ornamental Plants series has recently been published. This excellent guide clearly sets out the correct way to write plant names and demystifies problem areas such as spelling, name changes and pronunciation. The third booklet in the Ornamental Plants series (to be published shortly) is a guide to the identification, diseases and management of elms. Both of these booklets have been funded by the Friends.

A step towards a strategic plan to guide the management of the Gardens has been taken with the production of the first draft of the Conservation Analysis. The final draft will be available at the beginning of June.

Speaking of management, you may have noticed a few changes occurring in the Kiosk, which is now being managed by Conservation Catering Ltd. No substantial alterations to the building are planned in the short-term although more major changes are envisaged in the future.

The Herbarium and Gardens' staff bid a fond farewell to botanist, Helen Aston, who retired on April 12 after 34 years working in the Herbarium. Helen has contributed much to the growth of the Herbarium over these many years, including writing the only available reference on Australian freshwater plants. In her retirement Helen has taken up the position of Honorary Research Associate and will continue her research into freshwater plants in this position.

Finally, in an effort to increase efficiency, the Gardens has had installed a direct-dial telephone system, enabling each staff member to hold a separate line. The new general Gardens number is 655 2300.

Roslyn Semler
Interpretations Officer

This brochure is printed on recycled paper.

"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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