

BOTANIC NEWS

FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE INC.

WINTER 1996



Sir Rupert Hamer cutting the cake (generously donated by Paterson's Cake Shop) at the Garden Party that launched the Friends' 1996 celebrations. Mandy Murphy, the city milliner whose beautiful hats added much to the festive occasion, is seated beside her display; Pauline Humphries (left) is a great grand-niece of Baron von Mueller.

NEW MEMBERS FOR RBG BOARD

The Victorian Government has appointed three new members to the Royal Botanic Gardens Board. They are Mr Rodger Elliot, well known for his publications and horticultural knowledge of Australian plants; Mrs Sarah Guest, who is chair of the Victorian Open Garden Scheme and a horticultural writer; and Mr David Adam, who has extensive business experience and is currently Chairman of Colonial Mutual Life Assurance. The Friends welcome these new Board Members and the special skills they each bring to the Gardens.

We thank and farewell the three members stepping down at the conclusion of their terms of appointment: Mrs Marian Brookes, who was also Deputy Chairman of the Board, Mr Frank Phillips, and Mr John Patrick. They have each made significant contributions to the revitalisation of the Gardens during the past four years.

The new Deputy Chairman is Professor Pauline Ladiges, Head of the School of Botany at the University of Melbourne.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Recently I had the pleasure of attending a gathering at the Herbarium to welcome new members of the Friends.

The purpose of the meeting was not only to make them welcome, and thank them for joining us in supporting the Royal Botanic Gardens, but also to inform them of the wide range of activities of the Friends and to invite them to take part in any which aroused their special interest.

It is a matter of great pride and satisfaction, as well as a tribute to the conveners and other busy organisers of these activities, that the Friends can offer so many and varied opportunities; whether you are interested in selling in the Friends' Shop, drawing or painting with the Botanical Illustrators, attending tours, lectures or events arranged by the Activities Committee, creating embroidery with a botanical theme, catering for our social functions or assisting in the Friends' office, all can be accommodated. There's deep satisfaction in knowing that you are contributing to the knowledge and welfare of our natural environment, and particularly of our special Gardens. (The popular Growing Friends, whose numbers must be limited for reasons of space, is the only group with a waiting list.)

Celebrate the Gardens' 150th anniversary with the Friends' special label wine from Chateau Tahbilk. See enclosed leaflet.

Membership of the Friends stood at 1431 in mid-May, an all-time record, and more are joining all the time. Our objective ought to be at least 2000, and if any Friends can suggest others who might be interested, please let us know and we can invite them to join us.

The recent success of the Growing Friends with their Autumn sale, and of the Friends' Shop in consistently beating their monthly sales budget, is clear evidence of the vigour of the Association and the dedication of its members.

Sir Rupert Hamer President

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Starting with Foundation Day on 25 February - when more than 50,000 people enjoyed the delights of the Gardens - celebrations are well under way for our 150th Anniversary and the centenary of Mueller's death.

Descendants of past staff and directors, retired staff, representatives of current staff and guests gathered at Gardens House on 21 March to honour the work and achievements of our staff since 1846. More than 120 people attended, including descendants of John Arthur and John Dallachy, our first two Curators. Sir Ninian Stephen formally launched a special issue of the journal of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria containing a series of articles on the history of the Royal Botanic Gardens. In the evening Professor Weston Bate gave the first lecture in the history series organised by the Friends and the RHSV. The five lectures have now been delivered, giving the audiences a picture of the rich history of the Gardens.

Deliveries of plants from the Flora for Victoria project have been completed. Over 3,000 plants of 800 species were distributed to 35 botanic gardens in Victoria to commemorate the distribution network established by Mueller (he supplied many tens of thousands of plants to gardens around the State). The project was formally launched at St Kilda Botanical Garden on 29 March. It has received substantial sponsorship from the Federal German Government, Gas and Fuel, Linfox and the Trust Company of Australia.

Other recent Anniversary activities include the Plant Craft Cottage's "Winds of Change" exhibition, Sundays Live in the Gardens - a program of free music and theatre - special walks by the Voluntary Guides, and plant talks by Royal Botanic Gardens staff.

One of the main Mueller commemorations was the collecting expedition to the Northern Territory, a project supported most generously by the Friends.

I understand the Friends will be given a detailed account at a meeting in August.

The RBG's participation was also sponsored by Hoechst Australia and *Australian Geographic*. The expedition planned to visit the Victoria River region of the Gregory National Park. However, cyclonic rains made the area inaccessible at the last minute and a new site was selected about 100 km further north. This area provided equally rich botanical collecting, with more than 2,500 specimens being brought back for Darwin and Melbourne Herbaria. Many new plant distribution records were made, and at least two new species found (3 *Hibiscus* spp, 1 *Eucalyptus* sp and 1 *Melaleuca* sp).

Specimens brought back from the trip are being painted by Anita Barley, who together with two expedition artists and a photographer, will hold a public exhibition in November.

I am very pleased to report that RBG Cranbourne will be enlarged soon. Eleven hectares of land have been purchased by the Maud Gibson Trust with the aid of substantial donations from the R E Ross Trust, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch and her family, and the Sidney Myer Fund. The land is on the southern boundary of the gardens. It affords expansive views to the north across the Wylies Creek wetlands, and provides a different soil type and topographical aspect from most of the present landscape. These attributes will enable a wider range of plants to be displayed there in the future when the Botanical Collection is developed. A ceremony to mark the donation was held at the site on 14 March and attended by the Minister for Planning, the Hon. Rob Maclellan.

W.R.M. Irvine Chairman

ANOTHER Important Birthday!

It's hard to believe, but our President, Sir Rupert Hamer, will celebrate his 80th birthday on 29 July. The Friends will honour him with a special party on Thursday 25 July at 8.00pm in Mueller Hall at the National Herbarium.

This occasion will also launch the Friends' anniversary wine from Chateau Tahbilk. Mr Alister Purbrick, the managing director of this family company, will introduce our wine and tell us about the Estate's history...needless to say Chateau Tahbilk is much older than Sir Rupert, but only a little younger than the Gardens.

Sir Rupert, the 'father' of the Garden State, is a great lover of the Botanic Gardens, and the Friends have been very fortunate to have him as our President for a four-year term. It will be a very special evening, with live entertainment, perhaps a display of paintings and other surprises...party food, of course!

See page 3 for details.

PS. You may collect your order of anniversary wine on 25 July from the Astronomer's Residence between 7.00 and 7.45pm. We'll have a trolley to assist you.

BOTANIC NEWS
WINTER ACTIVITIES

**ANOTHER PRIVATE VIEWING OF THE
ANNEMIEKE MEIN EXHIBITION**

Friday 14 June 5.30pm - 7.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

Many people were unable to be accommodated at our preview of the Annemieke Mein exhibition on 30 May, so we are delighted to announce a second private viewing. A prompt response is advised.

The artist was understandably but unfortunately unable to attend our preview, as it clashed with her daughter's graduation. However, she is hoping to be present on 14 June, and to talk informally with us about her unique textile art.

This exhibition, *The Fabric of Nature*, is a highlight of the Gardens' 150th anniversary activities, and will attract large crowds. So here is another opportunity for you to view these inspirational works in comfort.

Cost includes drinks and refreshments, entry and catalogue.

Friends \$12 Others \$16

RSVP by Monday 10 June on enclosed booking form.

Friends' Winter Walk in the RBG

Sunday 23 June at 11.15am

Join us for an informative and exhilarating walk in our Gardens with the Voluntary Guides. Jean McEncroe will be the Leader. The walk will last from 1 to 1½ hrs (your choice). Meet at 'F' Gate, adjacent to the Herbarium in Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra at 11.15am.

No charge, but please ring the office if you have booked but are unable to attend.

RSVP by 17 June on the enclosed booking form.

**THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS
GRAND BALL**

Friday 28 June at 7.15pm

**At Government House in the presence of His
Excellency the Governor and Mrs McGarvie**

The organising committee is pleased to report that the Premier, the Hon. Jeff Kennett, and the Minister for Conservation and Land Management, the Hon. Marie Tehan, will also be present.

Cost per person: \$150.00 including \$100 tax deductible donation.

As we have had an overwhelming response we regret that there are very few, if any, places left.

FILM LUNCHEON

JANE EYRE

Thursday 4 July at 11.00am

Trak Cinema, 445 Toorak Road, Toorak

Only just released, this film is based on Charlotte Bronte's classic 19th century novel, and tells the story of an orphaned girl who survives cruelty and hardship to find love and happiness with one of literature's great romantic heroes, the brooding Edward Rochester (played by William Hurt).

Lunch (sandwiches, cake, tea/coffee) will follow the film. Parking in Tintern Avenue or Safeway carpark.

Admission: \$11.00

RSVP 28 June on enclosed booking form

Botanical Embroiderers

The June meeting has been cancelled, so the next workshops with Wanda McPherson will be on 8 July and 12 August at 1.00pm in the Astronomer's Residence. New Friends are welcome to join the group, for which a charge of \$10 is payable at each class. Ring the Friends' office on 9650 6398 if you'd like further details.

ANOTHER Important Birthday!

Thursday 25 July at 8.00pm

Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

This is a multi-faceted function, unlike anything previously presented by the Friends. Wine, history, art, live theatre and a toast to an honoured guest.

* Mr Alister Purbrick will launch our anniversary label wine, and explore the fascinating history of Chateau Tahbilk Estate.

* We hope to display some beautiful watercolours of the Royal Botanic Gardens painted in the early decades of this century, and to hear about the artist from a family member.

* Glen Elston's irreverent, racy *150 years history of the Royal Botanic Gardens told in 30 minutes* will round off the evening's entertainment. This is a theatrical time trip presented by five versatile performers, who bring to life both famous and infamous characters who left their mark on the Gardens.

Do come along and have fun, fill the hall and join us in expressing our best wishes to Sir Rupert. Drinks and supper will be served. Remember you can collect your order of anniversary wine on this evening.

Cost \$20

RSVP by Wednesday 17 July on enclosed booking form.

**SOTHEBY'S DECORATOR
SHOW HOUSE '96
In the Observatory Building
Sunday 28 July at 4.30pm**

The Friends have arranged a *private viewing* of this event, which will see the neglected Observatory building spectacularly transformed by 36 of Melbourne's most acclaimed interior designers, landscapers, antique dealers and artisans.

Drawing rooms, studies, bedrooms, cellars and lofts will be created by Christine Saunders, Stuart Rattle, Ralph Chalmers, Ian Archibald and young, up-and-coming design groups. Michael Jann from Country Road will create an urban cottage, while landscapers Paul Bangay, Murray Collins, John Patrick and Andrew Secull will delight us with winter garden spaces.

The Observatory was built between 1861-63, and occupied by the Government Astronomer from 1863 until 1944.

Friends who saw the first Decorator Show House at Villa Alba in Kew in 1994 will know that we're in for a treat of sumptuous furnishings, antiques and flowers. That event raised more than \$100,000 for various charities.

This year the Show will run between 27 July and 16 August, with 70 per cent of the proceeds to be donated to the Botanic Gardens (although our private viewing will raise funds for specific Friends' projects).

On Sunday 28 July, we'll greet you at the entrance to the Observatory building with drinks and savouries. You'll be free to view the exhibition in comfort (after it closes to the general public) until approximately 6.00pm. The approach to the Observatory building is diagonally opposite the Shrine in Birdwood Avenue.

Admission \$15.
RSVP by Tuesday 23 July on enclosed booking form.

**THE BOTANICAL ART COLLECTION OF THE
ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS**
Tuesday 30 July
See Botanic Illustrators section

VISITS TO TAPESTRY WORKSHOP
Tuesday 6 and Wednesday 14 August
at 11.00am or 2.00pm

Tattersalls are funding a tapestry to adorn the new visitor centre at Observatory Gate as a gift for the Gardens' 150th anniversary. Measuring 2.27 x 3.75 metres, it has been planned in consultation with the architect to take pride of place in the new building.

The Victorian Tapestry Workshop has been commissioned to create the work from an Arthur Boyd

painting of Shoalhaven saplings, and the artist has spent some time with the weavers, discussing its translation from oil into wool.

The Friends are fortunate to have been able to arrange some viewings of the work in progress, with a limit of 25 in each group. The visit will last about half an hour, and we'll collect the \$3.00 charge on the day. Meet at the Workshop, 260 Park Street, South Melbourne.
RSVP on enclosed booking form.

**THE MUELLER COMMEMORATIVE
EXPEDITION**

Illustrated Talk by Marco Duretto

**Monday 19 August at 8.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium**

We are delighted that Marco Duretto, a research scientist at the National Herbarium, will give an illustrated talk about this April expedition in which he took part. The Friends have a particular interest in this Northern Territory venture, having donated \$25,000 towards its cost.

In all, three botanists and two herbarium co-ordinators from Melbourne, six people from the N.T. Herbarium, many rangers, zoologists and ecologists from National Parks, local Ngarinman people, two artists from Melbourne (Lin Onus and John Woleseley), and a journalist and photographer from *Australian Geographic* pooled their resources and made the expedition an exciting, informative and very successful venture. Both flora and faunal surveys were completed in areas that have never before been surveyed or were surveyed for the first time since Mueller collected in the area.

Supper will be served.

Admission: Friends \$8.00 Others \$10.00
RSVP by 16 August on enclosed booking form

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Thursday 19 September at 8.00pm
GARDEN ORNAMENTS**

Illustrated Talk by Stephen Ryan of Dicksonia Rare Plants, Mount Macedon

Two bus trips are planned for the Spring:

Monday 21 October to Barunah Plains, west of Geelong, and another garden

Thursday 14 November to three gardens and a nursery in West Gippsland

Details in the Spring newsletter

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

BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATORS

THE BOTANICAL ART COLLECTION OF THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS

Tuesday 30 July from 10.00am
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

Dr Don Foreman, Collections Manager in the Research and Herbarium Division of the Royal Botanic Gardens, will detail this exquisite collection of botanical art dating back to the time of the Gardens' first Director, Dr Ferdinand Mueller. The collection includes the works of contemporary artists Celia Rosser and Anita Barley, who were featured in the 1994 Melbourne International Festival of the Arts Exhibition, *Classifying Nature*.

Dr Foreman will be presenting this talk to an international seminar on Botanical Illustration sponsored by the Royal Horticultural Society at the Ulster Museum, Dublin in August.

Morning tea/coffee from 10.00am
 Talk 10.30am

Admission: Friends \$ 5.00 Others \$10.00

RSVP by 26 July on enclosed booking form.

ENTRY FORMS FOR THE ART OF BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION EXHIBITION
 10 October to 5 November

Entry forms are now available to members who wish to show their work in this exhibition.

Please send for an entry by completing the slip on the enclosed booking form. Return it with a self-addressed stamped business-size envelope. Your completed entry must reach the Friends' office by **Friday 23 August 1996**. Forms may also be collected from the office.

Information about the sale of artists' cards at the exhibition will be included with the forms.

Illustrators with Arts Victoria

At the recent International Flower and Garden Show held at the Royal Exhibition Buildings, Arts Victoria invited our Botanical Illustrators to exhibit four paintings on their stand, together with works by other noted Victorian artists.

Works by Anita Barley, Fiona McKinnon, Mali Moir and Celia Rosser were chosen and greatly admired by the visitors, especially those attending the trade preview.

Through the Arts Victoria stand, we were able to distribute a large number of brochures about the Gardens' 150th celebrations, the Friends and our forthcoming exhibition.

JENNY PHILLIPS

We were sorry to farewell Jenny Phillips, who held her popular classes in the Observatory building until Easter. This accommodation was no longer available, and is currently being made over for the Sotheby's Decorator Show House opening on 27 July.

Jenny is now conducting her classes at her own premises at 460 Punt Road, South Yarra, and can be contacted on 9867 3055.

We thank Jenny for a long and enthusiastic association with the Friends, and wish her well for the future.

Whirling Into Art

The Botanical Illustrators have a new home in the Whirling Room of the Great Melbourne Telescope House, right at the back of the Observatory site. This lovely, if sadly neglected, old room was built onto the south end of the original Telescope House in 1904, when the building was taken over by the Weights and Measures Branch. The Whirling Room housed a whirling apparatus for testing air meters, and the equipment for checking standard weights and measures.

The room will be for the use of the Friends' artist members until the building is restored and renovated as part of the long-term redevelopment of the Observatory site. We hope to take advantage of this by offering more workshops, classes and painting groups here once the workload of the exhibition has passed.

The artists on their first day in their new 'whirling' studio



MUELLER TOURS

Bookings for the Mueller Tours announced in the last Newsletter will close on 15 July. These tours will retrace some of Mueller's Victorian expeditions to recapture his experiences and discover the breadth of his botanical observations in areas including Far East Gippsland, the Grampians to the Murray, Mount Buffalo and the Warby Range, and the Victorian Alps.

Full itineraries may be obtained and reservations made by calling Australis Nature Tours on (03) 9888 6081 or fax (03) 9888 6082.

MEMBERSHIP

Since Members were advised that we had established a new Class of Members - Life Members - four have taken the opportunity to change to that class by commuting all future annual subscriptions. Enquiries to the Friends' office about Life Membership will be most welcome.

At the end of April the number of financial members - 1,375 - was just over 100 more than at 30 June 1995, the end of our financial year. In that time more than 250 new Members have joined the Friends but, sadly, about 130 Members have failed to renew their membership.

At its latest meeting the Council accepted a recommendation from the Finance Sub-committee that the annual subscription should be increased by \$2.00 in each class, beginning on 1 July 1996. The annual subscription for an Ordinary Member will then be \$28.00. It is several years since the subscription rates were last increased.

*** MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL ***

Friends whose membership is due for renewal (from January 1996 through to August 1996) should receive a renewal notice with this *Botanic News*. Please check inside the envelope in case there is a renewal notice for you.

FRIENDS AUTUMN ACTIVITIES

Film Luncheon. *Sense and Sensibility* - 14 March
 Historical Lecture Series - 21 March (Prof. Weston Bate);
 17 April (Mr Richard Aitken); 23 April (Ms Eve Almond); 8 May (Mr Darren Watson); 20 May (Dr Andrew Brown-May)
 Begonia Festival in the Robert Clark Conservatory, Ballarat Botanical Gardens - 25 March
 Autumn at Emerald, Sassafras and Tecoma - 22 April
 Autumn Walk in the R B G - 2 May
 Botanical Illustrators. *Creating the Esso Rainforest* - 21 May
 Annemieke Mein Preview - 30 May

ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF BOTANIC GARDENS (VICTORIA) INC.

The 6th Annual Conference of the Association was held at Narre Warren during the weekend of 27 and 28 April. The Friends of Wilson Botanic Park (Berwick) arranged and conducted a very successful Conference on behalf of the Association. Several of our Friends were present, with others from within Victoria and from interstate. Representatives attending for the first time came from Daylesford and Wollongong. The Conferences have not been restricted to persons representing only Victorian botanic gardens.

During the Conference those present heard speakers on a variety of topics, ranging from the Mt Annan annex to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney to the record of atmospheric temperature changes exhibited by Tasmanian Huon Pine tree rings (*Lagarostrobos franklinii*) over 3,500 years. They also had opportunities to visit both the 'fledgling' Wilson Botanic Park and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Cranbourne.

Mr John Harper, a Vice-president of the Melbourne Friends, was elected President of the Association for the next year.

The 7th Annual Conference will be held in Melbourne on 19 and 20 April 1997, and will be arranged and conducted by the Melbourne Friends.

BOTANIC MAGAZINE

We have re-printed Botanic Magazine Volume 6 to meet the unexpected demand for copies.

Would members who joined the Friends early this year and did not receive the magazine at that time please ring the office on 9650 6398, as we can now provide them with a copy.

RBG TALKING PLANTS SERIES

Tuesday 2 July at 10.00am

Saturday 6 July at 2.00pm

Architectural and Sculptural Plants

A walk and talk with Gardens' horticultural and scientific experts exploring the use of plants with striking shapes and forms in garden design. Light refreshments will be served, and you will be given a plant propagated from the Gardens.

Cost: \$20; \$15 concession.

A discount is offered if you book four or more talks - pay only \$15 per session.

Bookings and information: Tel 9252 2358 weekdays

FRIENDS' SHOP

Dear Friends,

Now about our 150th anniversary gifts –

Single gold and silver coasters with the Friends' logo etched on them. Individually packed. A tasteful present for overseas friends – \$5.50 each.

Friends' 150th spoons and fridge magnets. We're only 150 once and everyone in the whole world collects spoons!

Greeting cards, post cards and postcard folders. A wonderful range showing the RBG at its very best.

Rosewood boxes inlaid with brass. A great present for the man who has everything. And cuff links etc. and the most beautiful large square hand-blocked silk scarves, flower design, hand rolled edges – best of all, made in Melbourne. \$40 each.

We look forward to seeing you.

*Regards,
Jill Swann, Manager*

FRIENDLY SEATS

The number of seats donated to the Gardens through the Friends' scheme continues to increase steadily. When all current orders are fulfilled there will be 25 seats dotted around, providing welcome seating and reminders of those who loved the Gardens, or which serve as tokens of support from current members. Of particular interest to the Friends will be a memorial seat to Jim Willis which will shortly be placed near the Herbarium. This seat has been donated by Mavis Willis. Members are reminded of the Jim Willis Fellowship Fund, donations for which can be sent to Dr Jim Ross at the National Herbarium. If any member would like to donate a seat then please do ring the office on 9650 6398. The seats cost \$1,000 which includes the cost of the plaque and long-term maintenance.

CATERERS

We would like to welcome some more members to the Catering group. If you enjoy cooking and have a little spare time, do join the happy band...perhaps for two occasions only during the year, or for as many functions as you could manage. The Friends reimburse you for the cost of ingredients! For information and/or to offer yourself as a potential member of the Catering sub-committee, please ring the Friends' office on 9650 6398.

TALKING HISTORY

The history lecture series staged by the Friends with the Royal Historical Society of Victoria was highly successful, thanks to outstanding speakers and large, interested audiences.

You can learn more about Gardens' history from two special anniversary issues available from the Gardens' shop at the Herbarium: the *Victorian Historical Journal* and the *Garden History Journal*.

Remember, too, that the Voluntary Guides are presenting special walks in 1996: *Postcard Promenade*, *Bushland to Botanic Gardens* and *In Memory of Mueller*.

THANKS TO NASHUATEC

The Friends wish to express their appreciation of the generosity of Nashuatec in demonstrating their support for the Royal Botanic Gardens. As a result of a company takeover, Nashuatec became responsible for servicing the Friends' photocopier. They have agreed to waive the proposed 'basic charge in advance', keeping the charges of servicing our photocopier to those in the original contract; also they will not increase the charge per copy. This means a considerable saving to the Friends and hence more money available for projects.

Grateful thanks for Nashuatec for such support.

SPECIAL BENEFITS TO FRIENDS

Remember that your Friends' membership entitles you to some worthwhile discounts.

The Friends' shop adjoining the Gardens' Tea Rooms and the Gardens' Shop in the Herbarium both offer a 10 per cent discount on purchases exceeding \$20.

The following businesses very kindly offer special discounts to Friends.

Current membership cards must be shown in order for you to receive these discounts.

Fryers' Nursery

589 Glenferrie Rd, Hawthorn
5% off plants only

Idaho Nurseries

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

The Gardener's Bulleen Nursery

105 Bridge St, Bulleen
5% off seedlings

10% off potted plants

Town and Country Gardens

1280 Malvern Rd, Malvern
10% off everything

The Arts Bookshop

1067 High St, Armadale

Holmesglen College of TAFE

inc. the Victorian Schools Nursery
585 Waverley Rd, Glen Waverley

10% off everything

The Gardeners Corner Store

190-192 New St, Brighton

10% off everything

Collectors Corner

Springvale Rd, Keysborough

10% off all plants

Kew Nursery

Cnr High & Gladstone Sts, Kew

10% off all plants

Wolf Tools

675 Canterbury Rd, Surrey Hills

10% discount

Burwood Garden Patch

1418 Toorak Rd, Burwood

10% discount

Green Gables Nursery

1039 Whitehorse Rd, Box Hill

(opposite Town Hall) 10% discount on all items except specials.

Does not apply to Frequent Buyer cardholders

Garden of Eden Nursery

33 Ferrars Street, Albert Park

10% discount off everything



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

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

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His Excellency the
Hon. Richard E. McGarvie
**President of the Council
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Sir Rupert Hamer
Vice Presidents:
Eve Brunner
John Harper
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Print Post Approved
PP 3458420025
ISSN No. 08170-650

Printer:
Ellikon Fine Printers
324 Napier Street
Fitzroy Vic. 3065

Printed on
100 per cent recycled paper
Australian made.

FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

Preparations are progressing well for the developments on the Observatory site. The Royal Botanic Gardens Board has now accepted a new working title for the project - OBSERVATORY GATE rather than the Garden Gate - following professional marketing and advertising advice.

The Board recently approved the building and landscaping plans, and the architects and other consultants are now busy preparing the detailed documentation of these designs. The Rotary Club of Melbourne and the Committee for Melbourne have joined forces to undertake a major fundraising campaign for the project. Their enthusiastic support for our plans is greatly appreciated and will help ensure that the Gardens gain the impressive new facilities.

Trees and shrubs have been removed from several parts of the Observatory site in preparation for the construction and landscaping later in the year. The trees removed were mainly 20th-century growth without historical significance, or were specimens in poor health or an unsafe condition. Trees thought possibly to be 'indigenous remnants' have been retained.

Several buildings not registered by Heritage Victoria are destined for demolition. These include the T-Shed, Zeiss House and several lean-to structures. The Ecology Building (previously occupied by Greening Australia) has been moved to RBG Cranbourne, where it has become the main office accommodation.

The Victorian election on 30 March has brought several significant changes in our links to government. Our new Minister is the Hon. Marie Tehan, Minister for Conservation and Land Management. She is one of two Ministers with portfolios encompassing a new Department of National Resources and the Environment. DNRE includes the old Department of Conservation and

Natural Resources, together with the Department of Agriculture, Energy and Minerals, the Surveyor General, Valuer General and Registrar of Titles. The other Minister in the DNRE portfolio is the Hon. Pat McNamara, Minister for Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Work has started to repair and renovate E-Gate Lodge for use as office accommodation for staff from Public Programs and Development Division. The weatherboard section at the rear of the lodge was infested with termites and has been demolished under permit from the City of Melbourne. A replacement weatherboard extension will provide office/meeting space and staff facilities. The construction will be undertaken as supervised work experience by students from the Holmesglen College of TAFE. It is expected to be completed in September.

The roof over the old section of the Herbarium is being replaced. For several years we have suffered leaks and water damage, especially in summer thunderstorms. The gutters and drains will be enlarged as part of the works. Please be patient with the crashing and banging in the Herbarium until mid-June - it's all in a good cause!

There have been several staff changes recently. Dr Philip Short left on 10 May to take up his appointment at the Northern Territory Herbarium in Darwin. Peter Jobson, one of our collectors for AMRAD, has moved to Sydney and finished at the RBG on 30 April. Don Thompson retired at the end of March, having spent the past 12 years as a gardener at the RBG. Michael Rogers, a member of the RBG tree crew, has accepted a position in the private sector. Stephen May commenced as Business Development Manager in late February, and Jacki Mitchell as Sponsorship Manager in March.

Philip Moors
Director