Botanic News

FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE INC.

A12827T

WINTER 2000

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Friends' Shop ceased trading on 25 March, earlier than anticipated because of the rundown of stock. The Council held a lunch for staff and volunteers on Monday 3 April to mark the winding up of this successful venture and to thank everybody for their efforts. I was very pleased to meet these many Friends, and especially to hear, as we all did, of their work over the years from the setting up of the very first sales outlet in 1983. Certificates of service were presented to staff members and to volunteers who were associated with the Shop over the years.

Patricia Quinn, the RBG's Human Resources Manager, was very helpful in arranging counselling and employment advice for our shop staff, and I'm glad to report that some have already moved on to other jobs. Dr Moors is investigating opportunities which might interest some of our Shop volunteers in other areas of the Gardens.

Now that Heritage Victoria has given approval, we are able to proceed with some works to enhance our occupation of Gate Lodge; the kitchen is to be renovated, and we may now fit hanging tracks for artworks and notice boards in the office. The honour boards recording those who have given 10 years voluntary service, removed from the Shop, will now be proudly displayed on our walls in Gate Lodge. Our outside space is shortly to be landscaped also, with the assistance of the RBG's Andrew Laidlaw. Plantings will follow the general style of those at Observatory Gate. The lilly pilly hedge will be continued along Birdwood Avenue, and trees will be planted outside the Theatre Lawn fence to provide summer shade and privacy for the office on the north side of Gate Lodge.

The Council continues to explore with the Director his views on future directions for the relationship between the Friends and the RBG. One matter of general agreement is the desire for more members of the Friends. *The Art of Botanical Illustration* exhibition always results in a membership surge, one of many reasons for us to look forward to this event, which opens in October. Many of our artist Members are heavily involved in its organisation.

Before then, we'll have the exceptional privilege to view an exhibition of Celia Rosser's Banksias in Mueller Hall during July. Celia, who was made an Honorary Life Member of the Friends last year, will exhibit the final 28 paintings of her 25-year project.

Sadly, we must bid farewell to Cathy Hossack, who plans to return to her native Virginia, USA, at the end of June to be closer to her father and brothers. After Cathy joined the Friends' Activities Sub-committee in 1993, her catering skills were much in evidence. Since our last annual meeting, she has convened this group and also served on the Council, demonstrating exceptional organisational talent. We thank Cathy for her contribution to the Friends, and wish her well.

Ninian Stephen

Aspects of the RBG's brilliant display at the International Flower and Garden Show in April which was judged the Most Outstanding Exhibit and awarded a Gold Medal for Design.

Photos: Lesley Skinner (left) and David Cash (below)

Winter Activities

THE MARVEL OF PERENNIAL PLANTS
Illustrated Talk by David Glenn
Thursday 15 June, 5.30pm for 6.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

David Glenn runs the famous Lambley Nursery at Ascot near the old gold mining town of Clunes. He has developed and planted magnificent display gardens which his artist wife Chris Canning designed with particular attention to the blending and contrast of colours. David regularly sources new plant varieties from overseas and propagates seed collected for him in Spain, France, Italy, Greece and Turkey. All must be tested here for several years to ensure they do not have potential to be invasive. The nursery grows about 1200 varieties of perennials, 30 ornamental grasses and 30 silver foliage plants. The talk will be illustrated with wonderful slides of the garden beds.

Refreshments will be served prior to the talk.
Cost: Friends $10 Others $15
RSVP by Tuesday 13 June
on enclosed booking form

Asphodeline lutea by Anita Barley

STORIES ABOUT NEW ZEALAND PLANTS
Talk and Walk with Izabella Meraviglia-Crivelli
Wednesday 21 June at 10.30am
Meet for refreshments in the Mess Room, RBG Works Yard; enter between E and F Gates

Izabella has worked at the RBG as a gardener since 1984 and has curated the New Zealand Collection since 1987. This is the best example and oldest collection in Australia of NZ forest plants, and will benefit from the visit in May of Rob Lucas, a noted NZ authority; he provided advice on its improvement and redevelopment. This area was William Guilfoyle's last major landscape development in the RBG.

Izabella worked at the Wellington Botanic Gardens on a three-month exchange, and in October 1999 attended a conference organised by the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture on Native New Zealand Plants. (This trip was part-sponsored by John Feruglio, alias The Flaxman, and RBG Melbourne.) Izabella will share some of the knowledge gathered at this conference, and will tell us about the New Zealand Collection that has existed in the Melbourne Gardens since 1906. The New Zealand flora's Gondwanan links make it especially important and interesting.

Tea, coffee and biscuits will be served.
Cost: $6
RSVP by Monday 19 June on enclosed booking form

Izabella Meraviglia-Crivelli, who will lead our walk around the New Zealand Collection on 21 June, with Rob Lucas. Rob presented an outstanding instructive and reflective talk, with superb photos of NZ landscape and plants, in May. His book* The Native Garden. Design themes from wild New Zealand, *is available in the Gardens Shop.
See p.7 for more about NZ plants.

Photo by David Cash

ONEGIN. FILM LUNCHEON
Wednesday 28 June at 11.00am
Cinema Como,
cnr Chapel St & Toorak Rd, South Yarra

Onegin, which was adapted from the famous work 'Evgeny Onegin' by Aleksandr Pushkin, offers both beautiful cinematography and stunning performances.

Onegin, the bored St. Petersburg aristocrat who inherits his uncle's large estate, is played by Ralph Fiennes. Tatyana, the neighbour and later love interest of Onegin, is played by Liv Tyler. The film marks the debut of Ralph's sister Martha as a director.

A basket lunch including sandwiches, cake and coffee/ tea will be served after the film. Parking under Como shopping centre is provided at a reduced rate if you validate your parking ticket at the cinema.

Cost: $12
RSVP by Friday 23 June on enclosed booking form

The Banksias Vol. 3 EXHIBITION

8 July to 6 August
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

To coincide with the publication of *The Banksias Vol. 3*, Monash University and Nokomis Publications will exhibit the 28 original watercolour paintings in Mueller Hall from 8 July to 6 August. This is the final volume in a notable series of monographs by Alex George with illustrations by Celia Rosser.

The exhibition will be open daily from 10.30am to 5.00pm. Limited edition bound and loose-leaf portfolios, and limited edition prints, will be for sale.

The Friends are delighted to be able to offer special viewings of the exhibition with Celia Rosser and the opportunity to win a framed copy of *Banksia canei*, one of Celia's illustrations from Vol. 3.

Friends' viewings: Sunday 23 July; Wednesday 26 July; Thursday 3 August

Celia Rosser has offered to take Friends on a series of personal viewings of her *Banksias*. Although the exhibition will be free to the public, for a small charge ($9 incl GST) we are delighted to be able to give our Members the exclusive opportunity to visit the exhibition in company with Celia, who will have a story to tell for each of the works on display, and give an insight into the creation of this unique body of work. Specially signed copies of Vol. 3 prints will be available for sale to Members on these occasions.

Start at 10.30am by meeting with Celia and having a cup of coffee in the Baracchi Room in the Observatory Building (enter last door on the right, before the car park). Select your preferred dates from those listed and complete and return the relevant booking form by Monday 3 July. Places will be limited, so book early.

EXTRAORDINARY TREES

Winter walk with Dr Tom Neales
Thursday 20 July at 10.30am

Rug up and join us, rain or shine, for a bracing Winter Walk in the Gardens.
We will meet at 10.30am in the Observatory Building's Barrachi Room (enter last door on the right, before the car park) for morning tea/coffee and will depart promptly at 11.00am to begin our walk. We will be led by Voluntary Guide Tom Neales, who is in charge of the 'trees walks' in the Gardens. Special attention will be focused on trees that have special qualities such as being tall, small, old or misfits, or have special stories behind their names, plantings or growing patterns. We will form small groups, so whether you bring a friend or come alone, there will be plenty of interaction.
Cost incl.GST: Friends $7 Others: $9
RSVP by Friday 14 July on the enclosed booking form

BOTANIC GARDENS – AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Illustrated talk by Gwen Elliot
Wednesday 16 August, 5.30pm for 6.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

Gwen Elliot is known mainly as an author of numerous books on Australian plants, and as a regular broadcaster on the 3CR Gardening Program. Gwen is very actively involved in the Friends of RBG Cranbourne (she's also an RBG Melbourne Friend) and her husband Rodger is an RBG Board member.

In 1998 Gwen and Rodger visited South Africa and attended the 5th International Botanic Gardens Conservation Congress, which was an exciting and stimulating experience, hosted by the Botanic Garden at Kirstenbosch in Capetown. Botanic Gardens Directors, staff and Friends from around the world gathered together with the prime purpose of considering their role in plant conservation. Congress tours enabled visitors to see some of the best areas of native flora in South Africa.

Gwen and Rodger will attend the 6th Congress of BGCI this June in Asheville, North Carolina. At our August meeting, Gwen will share experiences from both the South African and US meetings, describe some of the exciting plants from both regions and mention something of the work of the Botanic Gardens Conservation International.

Refreshments will be served from 5.30pm
Cost incl.GST: Friends $11 Others $16
RSVP by Friday 11 August on enclosed booking form

'EVERYTHING (ALMOST) YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT IRISES'

Illustrated talk by Ann Jackson
Tuesday 29 August, 10.00am for 10.30am
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

Iris kaempferi Anita Bailey

Ann Jackson is the Immediate Past President of the Iris Society and, with her helpers, is responsible for the planting and maintenance of the Iris Bed in the RBG — in the Western Lawn, behind the Herbarium.

Although Ann grows many species of Tall Bearded Irises, her particular interest is in other Irises, and she grows approximately 80 different species, many of which will be illustrated during her talk.

Tea/coffee will be served at 10.00am
Cost incl.GST: Friends $11 Others: $16
RSVP by Friday 25 August on enclosed booking form

GROWING FRIENDS

10% OFF

Pre-GST SALE
Friday 23 and 30 June
10.00am to 1.00pm

A special sale for Members is being held on the last two Fridays in June in our nursery (enter between E and F Gates)

A 10 per cent discount is being offered on all pots. Amongst the special attractions which are looking particularly stunning are:

- *Felicia heterophyllus*, originally from South Africa. It is a low bush, perennial with intense blue solitary daisy flowers in the Spring. Needs sun and well-drained soil and does not care much for the frost.
- Lots of red-hot pokers *(Kniphofia)* all waiting to go straight into the garden. They can take sun or part shade and are perennials.
- *E. caesia* 'Silver Princess': this is the much-admired beautiful weeping silver-trunked small (5.0m) Eucalypt in the Water Conservation Garden. It has beautiful glaucous pendulous branches with flowers of strong pink stamens tipped gold, flowering from June to November. Likes full sun, good drainage and protection from the wind. Available in tubes and pots.
- *E. crenulata* has small, grey foliage, much used in the cut flower trade.
- *Haloragodendron bauerlenii* has red stems and profuse white conspicuous flowers in the summer. It likes its roots kept cool and good drainage.

Numerous succulents to choose from, including *Aeonium aboreum* originating in the Canary Islands. Stems are crowned by rosettes of narrow succulent green leaves and they have golden pyramids of flowers. They like sun and good drainage.

In addition there are *Haworthia* of various forms and contrasting colours, and *Cotyledon orbiculata* and *undulata*, all three coming from South Africa.

- *Cosmos diversifolius* will provide immediate colour as they are running rampant with lovely pink flowers.
- *Viola corsica* should not be overlooked. They will have lovely purple-blue flowers.

The Autumn Sale has come and gone, and we thank all those Friends who supported us and those who assisted with the taking and counting of money. Also we thank the Gardens staff who assisted with the setting out and clearing up of the Sale, and the Education staff who provided the trestles and chairs. On such a busy weekend this support is much appreciated. Numbers, and consequently sales, were down on last year's but even so we can be proud of takings close to $20,000.

OF BATS AND BINS

The autumn influx of Grey-headed Flying-foxes to the colony in the Gardens has boosted their numbers and increased damage to trees and palms in Fern Gully. We have begun implementing the management plan for the flying-foxes approved by the Government and the RSPCA, and are continuing to act on expert advice about controlling the animals.

Within the next month or two, visitors to RBG Melbourne will be able to dispose of their rubbish in recycling bins. The battered rubbish bins used until now will be replaced with purpose-built bins and screens, thanks to funding from EcoRecycle Victoria and the Friends. The recycling stations have been specially designed to fit the Gardens setting while still being accessible and visible to visitors. RBG staff will soon be constructing concrete bases and kerb ramps for the stations — the component of the project supported by the Friends. *Philip Moors*

Anonymous Gift

We have received an anonymous donation of a copy of Peter Valder's 'Garden Plants of China' from a Friend. We appreciate this generous gift and have lodged the book in the Growing Friends' library, as the National Herbarium already has a copy.

VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED

We are calling on Members who may be able to spare a few hours a week between 8 July and 6 August to sell raffle tickets on behalf on the Friends at the *Banksias* Exhibition. If so, please give your name and contact number to the Friends' office.

We would also appreciate the help of one or two Members who could assist, on a regular but short-term basis, with administration tasks for *The Art of Botanical Illustration 2000* Exhibition — the processing of application forms and collation of selection details as they come in. Basic computer skills would be an asset. If you can spare a few hours a week between June and October please contact the Friends' office, or Louise Coronel 9827 5910.

THE BANKSIAS VOL. 3 RAFFLE

A framed limited edition print from Vol. 3 has been specially selected to raffle during the *Banksias* exhibition on behalf of the Friends.

Banksia canei (J.H.Willis), named after William Cane (beekeeper and nurseryman 1911-87), occurs in sub-alpine regions of the Great Dividing Range between the Snowy Ranges, Gippsland, and Tuross River, NSW.

Valued at $690, this prize has been generously donated and beautifully framed for us by Nokomis Publications. Tickets will be for sale at $5 each; books of 10, $50.

BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATORS

See pages 3 and 4 for details of Celia Rosser exhibition, raffle and call for volunteers.

Artists, students and other interested members are welcome to attend our second-Tuesday-of-the-month sessions held in the Whirling Room studio (in the Great Melbourne Telescope building) unless otherwise notified, as below. Coffee, tea and biscuits available from 10.30am. Presentation/speaker at 11.00am.

Tuesday 13 June: **Visit to the Helene Wild Botanic Art Gallery**, Gate 3. 21-43 Barnes Rd, Altona. We will visit the CRT Resource Centre, the offices of the Habitat Trust and the Helene Wild Botanic Art Gallery, and look at the Basaltica Waterwise Garden that features indigenous species from the basalt plains of Melbourne's West.
Bring your lunch and, if you wish, your painting materials and current works for show and tell.
No need to book — $5 cash on the day.

Tuesday 11 July: Our Illustrators group will have a special opportunity to view the *Banksias* exhibition in Mueller Hall. First, we will meet Celia Rosser at the Baracchi Room (in the Observatory Building) at 10.30am for coffee. Then she will take us around the paintings and talk about each.
Cost $9. RSVP on enclosed booking form.

Tuesday 8 August: General painting day, and current works for discussion.
No need to book — $5 cash on the day.

DIANNE EMERY'S CLASSES

Term 3 begins 11 July for beginners or experienced artists.

Introduction to Botanical Art one-day workshops: Saturday 1 July AND Wednesday 5 July from 10.00am to 3.30pm. All materials provided.
Cost: $66 for Friends, $77 for others, incl GST.
For more information contact Dianne Emery on 9523 5397.

The Art of Botanical Illustration Exhibition 26 October – 12 November 2000

Selection of works for this exhibition will be held on 19 September in Mueller Hall, National Herbarium. **Entry forms for those wishing to submit works for selection will be available from 3 July.** Collect in person from the Friends' office or send a business-size stamped s.a.e. marked 'TABI Entry Form'.
Completed entry forms must be returned to the FRBG by 4 September.

TUESDAY PAINTERS (The Whirly Birds)
This informal painting group will continue to meet in the Whirling Room studio on most Tuesdays. Cost is $2.50, plus GST after 1 July, per session. Enquiries welcome. Contact Mary Gregory 9836 8587.

BOTANICAL ART AT BENALLA

The Benalla Regional Art Gallery will be showing a small exhibition of Botanical Art when it reopens in June following extensive renovations. Aptly titled 'Town and Country', it opens on Saturday 10 June for four weeks and will feature works by four artists from Melbourne and four from Benalla.

The Melbourne artists are Anita Barley, Dianne Emery, Beverley Graham and Mary Gregory and, from Benalla, Jean Dennis, June Roberts, Melanie Schneider and Hilary Sutherland. This will be an opportunity to see some fine botanical art and to visit the beautiful, refurbished Benalla Art Gallery.

Welcome to New Friends

9 March

Photos by Anita Simon

Left: Brigitte and John Brand, Simon Perry

Above: Jan Lewis and Tessa Killmister

Right: Nicholas Scott and Trevor Stephens

RBG CRANBOURNE

Rangers lead a free bushwalk every Sunday at 1.00pm. Also, every Tuesday in August, you can join a free walk at 10.00am.

School Holiday Program between 26 June and 7 July includes Junior Ranger, Fungi and Possum Prowls.

Other special events: World Environment Day Monday 5 June; free walk and talk. National Tree Day Friday 21 July; fun for pre-schoolers. Australian Koala Day Friday 28 July; search and celebration, free. Contact: 5990 2200.

Friends of RBG Cranbourne Lecture Series
Sunday 25 June at Mueller Hall. Program includes talks by Helen Richards (Victoria's orchids) and Jane Edmanson (Importance of Growing Australian Plants)

Sunday 30 July at Murrumbeena Bowls Club. Program includes talks by John Arnott (Aus-Bush at the Zoo) and Rodger Elliot (Successful Cultivation of Australian Plants)

Sunday 27 August (Venue to be confirmed): Program includes talks by Trevor Blake (Central and Western Australia) and Neil Marriott (Grevilleas).

Bookings and details: 5990 2200

GST

For all Friends' events from 1 July onwards affected by the impact of the GST, we are obliged to increase our charges. In the main, this will apply to meetings, walks, film luncheons etc. However, when there may be cost reductions (eg. in the cost of hiring a bus) these reductions will be passed on accordingly.

Annual subscriptions are now subject to the GST.

FOR SALE

We have for sale some items from the Friends' Shop: children's and adults' plasticised aprons, polo tops, tee shirts and tea towels, all bearing the logo of the Friends or the RBG. We will have them for sale at our various activities, but in the meantime enquiries can be made through our Office.

RBG SEASONAL NOTES

CAMELLIAS are the pride of the Gardens in the winter months, as highlighted by Anita Barley's drawing of *The Czar* on our masthead. Sasanquas and some species camellias are flowering now, while japonicas and reticulatas will burst into bloom during July and August. See them in the Camellia beds and within the Southern Chinese Collection.

In the Mounds, near the Arid Garden, look out for the Brugmansia (formerly named Datura), which is laden with white trumpet lilies. Enjoy the fragrance and delicate pink flowers of Luculia gratissima in the bed near Princes Lawn. For a bolder display, see the Kniphofias in the bulb garden, as well as Agaves and Aloes in the Water Conservation Garden.
And enjoy the crunch of fallen leaves as you wander across the Oak Lawn.

COMMENTS AT THE GARDEN SHOW

The sculptures are amazing, so beautiful. We could do something like this at home.

I have seen the whole exhibition and am quite disappointed, but the entrance fee was worth it just to see the RBG display. This looks real!

Congratulations on such a fantastic display; it must have taken a lot of people a long time to construct it.

You have some very clever, hardworking staff.

Let me congratulate you, it is just amazing. You must be very proud.

Beth Higgs spoke of the Friends' first sales outlet -- a table in the kiosk manned at weekends -- at the lunch which farewelled staff and volunteers from the Friends' shop on 3 April. Others in this group include Lady Valery Stephen (far left) and (right) Sylvia Churchill, Golda Isaac and Seema Isaac. About 60 were present, including some of the 'originals'.
Photo by Richard Kirsner

FRBG On-line

Members will be interested to know that the Friends' website is expected to be up and running before the end of June. After this time, you will be able to check out our website at the following address: www.frbgmelb.org.au. We would like to thank Heath Rudduck, the brother of one of our Members, who has so generously donated his time to the setting up of this site. Heath has recently established his own digital agency, Squib, and we appreciate the effort he has made at this extremely busy time in his life. At the moment we have a temporary email address. The official email address will be announced in the next *Botanic News*.

Virginia Henderson

ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

Approximately 85 people attended the Conference of the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens (Vic.) in April. It was hosted by the Friends of Albury Botanic Gardens.

Originally the Association had been limited to Friends' groups in Victoria or within 50km of the border, but interstate interest led to other groups being admitted as 'associate members'. At this conference, the possibility of enlarging the scope of the Association to be Australia-wide was canvassed, and is to be further explored. Of the 21 gardens represented at Albury, five were from interstate.

A talk by Dr Kingsley Dixon from Kings Park and Botanic Gardens, Perth, included some thought-provoking examples of volunteer participation there.

The Geelong Friends will host the next Conference in June 2001; it will be a special event of the Geelong Botanic Gardens' 150th anniversary.

* * * * *

The fledgling **Gisborne Botanic Gardens**, whose Friends attended the Albury conference, are based wholly on New Zealand flora. The plan is to recreate some facets of the rugged NZ landscape on a 12-acre site, so the May visit of Rob Lucas to their Gardens was of great assistance. Melanie Kinsey (5428 6057) invites those who enjoyed the recent talk by Rob Lucas about NZ plants and landscape to RBG Friends to call her for more information about the Gisborne venture.

ELM TREE REGISTER

Dutch Elm disease, which has destroyed millions of trees in Europe, parts of Asia and most of the USA, is not yet in Australia.

The Elm Pests and Disease Task Force has been established to provide a contingency plan to co-ordinate efforts to prevent and combat the disease should Dutch Elm Disease arrive in Australia. A key part of that plan is the establishment of a register of all known elms in Australia. The Friends of the Elms have undertaken this project, with support from Agriculture Victoria and Melbourne City Council; this is an enormous task for a small voluntary organisation.

IF YOU HAVE AN ELM, please phone the hotline 0409 870 860 to obtain a registration form, or to provide the address of other elms of which you are aware so that a form can be mailed to the owners. Alternatively, register your elm tree on-line by visiting the website at http://www.vicnet.net.au/-fote/.

Garden Tours

Friends of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide have arranged a 21-day tour of English gardens, departing 27 August. Call our office, 9650 6398, if you'd like a brochure.

Rodger Elliot is organising a tour to South Africa for the Friends of RBG Cranbourne in October 2001. If you'd like to receive information on the tour as it takes shape, please record your interest with Rodger on 9879 1427.

FRIENDS' BENEFITS

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

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

Idaho Nurseries
410 Waverley Rd, East Malvern
10% off plants only

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

Town and Country Gardens
1280 Malvern Rd, Malvern
24 Whitehorse Rd, Balwyn
10% off everything

The Arts Bookshop
1067 High St, Armadale

Holmesglen College of TAFE
585 Waverley Rd, Glen Waverley
20% off everything

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

Collectors Corner
Springvale Rd, Keysborough
10% off all plants

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

Burwood Garden Patch
1418 Toorak Rd, Burwood
10% discount

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

The Cottage Garden Nursery
Cnr Macedon Ave & Doncaster Rd
North Balwyn.
10% disc, also 8 punnets for $20

The Garden Walk
199 New Street, Brighton
10% off plants only

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

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

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

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

Patron:
His Excellency the
Hon. Sir James Gobbo, A.C.

President:
The Rt Hon. Sir Ninian Stephen

Vice-Presidents:
Louise Coronel
Heather Ironmonger

Secretary:
Lawrence Cohn

Treasurer:
David Baumgartner

Editor:
Heather Ironmonger

FRIENDS' OFFICE
Virginia Henderson
Helen Fahey
Jean Woodger

Gate Lodge
Birdwood Avenue
South Yarra Vic 3141
Tel: (03) 9650 6398
Fax: (03) 9650 7723

Print Post Approved
PP 3458420025
ISSN . 08170-650

Printed on 100 per cent recycled paper
Australian made

Printer:
Gill Miller Press Pty Ltd
110 Franklin Street
Melbourne Vic. 3000

FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

We have been celebrating the great success of the RBG's exhibit at this year's Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show. Tens of thousands of visitors streamed through it, admiring the colours, textures and shapes of the plants. The display made innovative use of native flora in landscape design and gave a tantalising sample of the design approach to be used in the Australian Garden at Cranbourne — the soft greens, the dense vegetation and peaty water of a Cranbourne wetland led into the bold forms and strong colours of an inland landscape highlighted by scarlet showers of Sturt's Desert Peas. Beyond was a contemplative pool reflecting tower-like artworks composed entirely of intricate layers of leaves, gumnuts, banksia cones, flowers, ferns and other plantlife. Together the three components of the display celebrated the rich diversity of Australia's flora and demonstrated exciting new ways of designing gardens with Australian plants.

The RBG display received the Award of Excellence for the Most Outstanding Exhibit at the show, and also a Gold Medal for Design. Over 40 RBG staff, including most of those from Cranbourne and many from Melbourne, contributed their skills and hard work to designing, constructing and installing the display, sourcing and propagating plants, preparing signs and information sheets, and obtaining financial and in-kind support.

For those of you captivated by David Wong's artworks in the display – or for those who missed visiting the show – six of the 'sculptures with plants' have been reassembled as a temporary exhibit on the Pacific Dunlop Plaza at Observatory Gate.

As reported elsewhere in *Botanic News*, The Friends' Shop closed in March. I am sorry that the decision to transfer management of the shop to the RBG has upset some Friends, but I strongly believe that the change is in the best overall interests of the Royal Botanic Gardens. I acknowledge with gratitude the achievements of the many volunteers and staff who ran the Friends' Shop for so many years. New and increased opportunities for Friends to contribute to the RBG as volunteers are being considered in discussions by the Working Group, comprising representatives from the Friends' Council and the RBG, about the future development of the Friends. On 8 April the new Gardens Shop — Lakeside opened its doors.

Work on cataloguing the Jim Willis Archives is entering its final stages. The diversity and importance of this collection continue to grow as documents, photographs and papers are collated by the archivist employed under the Friends' grant.

Andrew Grant, Divisional Director at Cranbourne, left the RBG on 5 May to take up his appointment as Director of Environmental Services at Arthur Andersen Consulting. Paul Cholodniuk, Manager of Information Technology, has also resigned, taking up a position with the RACV Club. Patsy Vizents, Co-ordinator of Customer Service and Volunteers, has moved to the National Trust to help implement an interpretation plan for Como and Rippon Lea, and to work with their Volunteer Guides. Andrew, Paul and Patsy made important contributions to the growth of staff and activities in their branches of the RBG, and we wish them success in their new appointments.

Philip Moors