



Botanic News

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FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE INC.

WINTER 2001

Friends' Grant to Help Shape Potter Children's Garden

Consider the prospect of creating a garden tough enough to withstand intensive use by thousands of children, while appealing to their imagination and stimulating their curiosity.

Andrew Laidlaw, Landscape Architect at the Royal Botanic Gardens, is facing this exciting challenge. Thanks to the generosity of The Ian Potter Foundation which donated \$650,000, and those who responded to a public appeal, the RBG will be the first botanic garden in the Pacific region to create an environmental garden specifically for children.

The Friends, welcoming the opportunity to participate, is granting \$11,000 for Andrew to attend a major symposium and visit eight children's gardens in the USA in July. The American Horticultural Society's conference at Michigan State University is based on the theme 'Gardening Beyond the Boundaries'. Andrew is particularly keen to hear about long-term sustainability and the integration of technology into these gardens. It's foreshadowed that he'll be able to learn about the mistakes as well as the achievements of the most skilled practitioners.

Christine Joy, RBG Education Co-ordinator, will also be attending.

Andrew envisages our garden to be natural — certainly unlike the usual children's playground with brightly-coloured prefabricated equipment — but acknowledges that an element of interactive technology is likely to be included. The 4-H Children's Garden, host for the Michigan Symposium, is the national leader in the integration of technology into a garden experience. It is also described as the premier children's garden in the nation, 'the most imaginative half acre in America'.

Melbourne's Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden will occupy all the grassed area surrounding the *Magic Pudding* sculpture (about 5000 square metres). Its design development phase is just beginning, with construction likely to start about March 2002. Andrew leads a project team of David Wong, Annette Warner, Roslyn Semler, Christine Joy, Izabella Meraviglia-Crivelli and Lauren Sichta.

Continued overleaf

A \$24,500 Smile



Before the crowds streamed in for the Autumn Plant Sale, the Growing Friends and some helpers took time for a cup of tea and a group photo.

Back row from left: Hanna diBella, Bronwyn Morris, Brendan 'Spud' Murphy, Virginia Morrison, Anne Sinha, Lucille Strachan, Bronwen Merrett, Ruth Funder, June Cherrey, Margaret Howes, Elaine Brumley

Middle row: Joan Hardy, Wendy Henderson, Catherine Watson, Dorothy Smith, Jocelyn Houghton,

Pat Williams, Don Allison, Sandy Edlin, Colin Herbert

Front row: Ann Miller, Pauline Morrison, Sharon Beaman, Anne Weber, Wendy Wilson, Rosemary Ball

Photo by Duncan Ironmonger

Children's Garden continued

They are assisted by a reference panel of experts consisting of Ian Harris from the City of Melbourne; John Raynor from Burnley Horticultural College; Bruce Echberg, a landscape architect; Marylou Jelbart, art critic and journalist; Mary Featherston, whose expertise is in the area of early childhood development; Carolyn Blackman, a garden designer who is also active in the horticultural media; and Kath Murdoch who lectures in primary education at the University of Melbourne.

As the father of four young children, Andrew has his own reference panel at home. He knows the pleasure kids derive in free play from tunnelling, climbing, playing with water, getting lost in a maze of dense planting, building things, raising seeds, exploring what's in the earth, rolling down mounds...these are the sorts of activities to be offered in The Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden. Adventurous play and observation promotes learning about nature.

Virtually everything in the garden — for instance seats, shelters, animal sculptures, perhaps a bridge — will be made or derived from plants, the more interesting and unusual the better. There'll be a mixture of natives and exotics.

It's expected that the garden will be used by children up to 12 years of age, and will cater for the distinct stages of child development. The Education Service will frame curriculum-based programs for the garden to supplement, but not replace, the wide range of subjects already taught around the Gardens for 3-18 year-olds.

Andrew will provide the Friends with an account of his two weeks' tour in the USA at an illustrated lecture in Mueller Hall on Tuesday 18 September.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

We want your membership of the Friends to be a rewarding and valued experience. It is important for us to know of your interests and availability so that we can plan a program of activities to meet your expectations. We were able to act upon many of the Members' suggestions following a survey in 1998, and feel it is time to consult you again. We'd especially like to hear from those who have joined us in the last few years.

A survey form is enclosed with this copy of *Botanic News*, and we hope you will take time to express your views to assist our planning.

As you know, the Council of the Friends has been engaged in lengthy discussions about our future directions, especially bearing in mind our decreased financial viability following the closure of our Shop.

Our first priority is to increase our membership, which currently hovers around 1500. Another is to develop closer links with the Gardens administration, improving communications and the flow of information in both directions. A positive step is the appointment of two RBG staff — Cate Brown and Stephen Paterson — to our new Operations Committee. This committee brings together those who manage the various 'arms' of the Friends — catering, Growing Friends, membership etc — and streamlines the function of the Council.

At our Annual General Meeting in November, we'll propose that the position of RBG Director should be represented ex-officio on the Friends' Council. We're also exploring ideas to change the form of Friends' publications. Remember we always welcome your comments and suggestions about the operation of our organisation.

Finally, I'd like to express our thanks to Andrew Laidlaw and his team of carpenters, plumbers and gardeners from the RBG, who have carried out the landscaping of the grounds around Gate Lodge. We've already used the space for a couple of functions, and will look forward to seeing our garden grow!

Ninian Stephen

Friends' office staff Helen Fahey, Jean Woodger and Virginia Henderson are photographed beside the curved bench seat, an attractive feature of our Gate Lodge garden.

Photo by David Plant



Winter Activities

BRIDGE AND CARDS

**Thursday 21 June, 10.30am to 3.00pm
1089 Malvern Rd, Toorak**

Calling all players of Bridge, Solo and Five Hundred! You are invited to the delightful Victorian home of one of our Members. Make up a four; bring your cloth, cards, scorers and pens (tables provided).

The day will start with a light morning tea. Then play cards until we serve you a delicious basket-style lunch and a glass of wine at your tables. Play will continue until 3.00pm.

You'll find this home on the northern side of Malvern Road, just west of Glenferrie Road.

Please do take this opportunity to join us for a great day. Numbers will be limited, so please book early to avoid disappointment.

Cost: Friends \$25 Others \$30
RSVP by Friday 15 June on enclosed booking form

THE WIVES OF VICTORIA'S GOVERNORS 1839—1900

**Illustrated talk by Marguerite Hancock
Wednesday 27 June at 5.30pm for 6.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium**

Our first Lieutenant-Governor, Charles Joseph La Trobe, and his wife, Sophie, held parties in the Gardens. Lady Loch became a friend of William Guilfoyle, who provided pot plants to decorate the bare rooms of the new Government House. There have always been neighbourly relations between Government House and the Botanic Gardens.

Marguerite Hancock has written the stories of 11 governors' wives in *Colonial Consorts*, newly published by Melbourne University Press. Appropriately the book was launched at Government House by the latest in the line, Mrs Lynne Landy. Mrs Jean McCaughey, one of the three governors' wives for whom Marguerite worked as secretary, also spoke at its launch.

The 'colonial consorts' came from very different backgrounds. Some longed constantly to go home; others found unexpected pleasures in their vice-regal duties, and recorded detailed and sometimes humorous reflections on their lives. They ranged in age from the early twenties to the early sixties. Sophie La Trobe set up house in a prefab. cottage,

while Lady Brassey arrived in Victoria on her husband's private yacht. All were expected to underpin their social duties by supporting charitable, cultural and sporting pursuits.

Marguerite made extensive use of letters, diaries and family papers found in Australia, Switzerland and Scotland in conducting research for the book, which is the latest in the highly-regarded Miegunyah series. We'll have copies for sale at a special price at our meeting.

Refreshments will be served from 5.30pm
Cost: Friends \$11 Others \$16
RSVP by Friday 22 June on enclosed booking form



Marguerite Hancock (left) with a line-up of Vice-regal wives at the launch of her book: Mrs Jean McCaughey, Mrs Lesley McGarvie, Mrs Lynne Landy and Lady Anna Cowen.
Photo by Don Hancock

WILDFLOWERS OF VICTORIA

**Illustrated talk by Margaret Corrick
and Bruce Fuhrer
Thursday 5 July at 5.30pm for 6.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium**

Margaret Corrick, long associated with the National Herbarium, and Bruce Fuhrer, who has an equally long connection with Monash University, will share with us their unparalleled knowledge of Victorian wildflowers — not a structured address, rather an informal conversation. They've spent a lot of time botanising and photographing over many years, and *Wildflowers of Victoria* is a crystallisation of their experience.

Published to great acclaim by Bloomings Books late last year, it filled a huge gap because its predecessor, *Flowers and Plants of Victoria*, first published in 1968, had been out of print for many years.

Bruce, a well-known and much-published botanic photographer, is responsible for most of the 840 colour illustrations. Margaret is the recognised expert on the genus *Pultenaea* — the bush pea. Their previous collaboration, *Wildflowers of Southern Western Australia*, was sold out at publication in 1996.

It will be very interesting to hear how they decided what plants to leave out of the book. (Incidentally, the RBG Cranbourne Friends presented a copy to Judith Zuk, CEO of New York's Brooklyn Botanic Garden, when she visited here in April.)

This talk will set the scene for our day trip to the Angair wildflower show in September.

Refreshments will be served before the talk.

Cost: Friends \$11 Others \$16
RSVP by Monday 2 July on enclosed booking form

EXHIBITION AND SALE

Handmade and Glazed Botanical China and Decorative Objects

by Rebecca Trinca

Thursday 26 July at 10.30am

1089 Malvern Road, Toorak

Rebecca Trinca has worked in the antique and decorative art world for a number of years. She has always had an interest in botanical items, and has now produced a beautiful range of hand made and richly glazed earthenware, following a botanical theme.

The range includes fruit and vegetables: pears which look great on a large platter; small lidded apple bowls; pumpkins inspired by French antiques; a useful lidded pumpkin pot; artichoke book ends and individual walnuts. There is a classical urn perfect for flower arrangements, as well as topiary mugs, sheep, a bee canister, pretty petal and hibiscus dishes and vine leaf plates which will serve a multitude of purposes. There will be a large variety of pieces on sale and something for everyone. Items are available in either cream or a superb dark green glaze; any of them would make a beautiful gift.

Join us for a 'Friends' morning tea in the delightful surroundings of the Victorian home of one of our Members, shortly before Glenferrie Road as you drive east from the city. Rebecca will be there to talk to us. While some of these ceramics are available in retail outlets, Rebecca has set a **special price** for us, and will also donate to the Friends a percentage from each item sold.

You can preview some of the range at Rebecca's website — www.users.bigpond.net.au/decorative

This function is available exclusively to Members. Book early as numbers will be strictly limited. The cost of \$5, to cover morning tea and price list, is refundable from any order over \$25.

RSVP by Friday 20 July on enclosed booking form; this is essential as admission is by entrée card only.

FILM LUNCHEON:

CAPTAIN CORELLI'S MANDOLIN

Monday 30 July at 11.00am

Dendy Cinema, 26 Church St, Brighton

Please note the new venue

Advance notice of a very special film, with beautiful on-location settings. Do join us, bring some friends, see the film and then have a light lunch in the foyer of the cinema. Here is a brief synopsis of the film, which stars Nicolas Cage and Penelope Cruz.

'The idyllic Greek Mediterranean coast has been invaded by Italy. Captain Antonio Corelli, an officer with a jovial personality and a passion for the mandolin, initially alienates a number of villagers. The daughter of the village doctor is at first offended by Corelli's behaviour, but slowly warms to his charms. Her beauty and intelligence capture his heart, and his fondness for the village causes him to question his reasons for fighting. As the war grows closer, difficult choices will have to be made between their love and their allegiances to their countries.'

For those who couldn't put down Louis de Bernieres' book, this will be a 'must see' film. For all who attend, a treat is in store.

Film luncheons can no longer be arranged at the cinemas we've previously patronised in Toorak and South Yarra, but we're sure many of you will find Brighton a convenient location. You may park for three hours for \$2 in the Dendy Plaza carpark, entering from St Andrews Street. Or catch the train to Middle Brighton Station, with just a short walk down Church St.

Cost \$15 per person, including film and lunch.
RSVP by Tuesday 24 July on enclosed booking form.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Gate Lodge has not moved, but the Friends has a new address! As the RBG wished us to make separate arrangements for delivery of our mail, we now have a letter box and mail should be addressed as follows: Friends of the RBG, Gate Lodge, 100 Birdwood Ave, Melbourne 3004.

**WINTER QUARTERLY WALK:
LONG ISLAND REVEGETATION
PROJECT**

**Wednesday 1 August
Meet at Gate Lodge at 10.00am**

Have you wondered what has been going on down in the Long Island area of the gardens? Join our walk!

Andrew Laidlaw, the RBG Landscape Architect, will guide us on this walk to the recently revegetated Long Island. This area is being developed and replanted to display the native vegetation characteristic of the Lower Yarra wetlands before European settlement. Indigenous trees, including River Red Gums and Yellow Box, have been planted. This has been a huge project for the Gardens and should make a fascinating walk.

Join us at the Friends' home, Gate Lodge, in Birdwood Avenue opposite the Shrine. Our clever caterers will serve coffee and cake, and Andrew will talk about the project before leading us through our beautiful Gardens to inspect the transformation of the Long Island area.

This walk will be restricted in numbers.
Cost incl GST: Friends \$7 Others \$9
RSVP by Wednesday 25 July on booking form

HELLEBORES

**Illustrated talk by Dale McDonnell
Tuesday 14 August 10.30am for 11.00am
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium**

Dale was one of the foundation members of the Growing Friends, and for many years held the collection of Hellebores, or winter roses as they are sometimes known, on behalf of the Ornamental Plant Association. While she holds a collection Dale will illustrate the wide variety within the genus. Because they flower in the winter, can have so many variations in their flowers, and have such attractive leaves, they are enjoying a great resurgence of interest among gardeners.



Illustration by Anita Barley

Conservation of Australia. no longer large of species, draw on her knowledge experience of delightful show slides

Refreshments will be served before the talk.
Cost: Friends \$11 Others \$16
RSVP by Friday 10 August on booking form

**THE OPEN GARDEN SCHEME FOR
2001-2002**

**Illustrated talk by Neil Robertson
Wednesday 22 August at 5.30pm for 6.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium**

Neil Robertson is an author, keen amateur gardener of Westport at Gisborne and lover of all types of gardens; he was also an early Member of the Friends.

Neil has been with the Open Garden Scheme since 1989, and was one of the principal movers to expand it into a national organisation. As the scheme's Chief Executive Officer, he travels a good deal around Australia and has seen literally thousands of gardens in all sorts of situations. Having opened his own garden, he knows only too well what's involved in preparing a garden to be at its peak on its appointed weekend. Last year a book was published featuring some of the most beautiful gardens that have been shown.

Neil will give us an illustrated talk on the Open Garden Scheme in general and highlights of the coming season. Nearly half of the 750 gardens are going to be 'first-time openers'. How do they do it? There will be some very interesting surprises amongst them.

Do come to be inspired! Bring all your garden-visiting friends as well. Copies of the new guide, to be launched in Victoria earlier this day, will be for sale on the night. The usual tempting refreshments will be served before the talk.

Cost: Friends \$11 Others \$16
RSVP by Friday 17 August on booking form

**BUS TRIP TO VISIT ARTIST CRISS CANNING
AND LAMBLEY NURSERY
Tuesday 28 August. See p.7 for details.**

A Look Ahead

Activities planned for spring include a visit to specialist nurseries and gardens in the Dandenongs, and a day trip to the Angair wildflower show in Anglesea, with a guided tour of the heathlands and some local gardens. We also look forward to hearing from Dr Sophie Ducker on 14 September about the floral emblems of Australia and each State. And thinking ahead to the festive season, we will hold a late afternoon party at Gardens House on Thursday 29 November.

There'll be full details in the next *Botanic News*.



A SCARLET PHENOMENON

It's not quite a Wollemi Pine story, but intriguing and dramatic nevertheless — the discovery of a red flowering wattle and its forthcoming promotion as Victoria's floral emblem for the Centenary of Federation.

In 1995, some bushwalkers chanced upon a single Cinnamon Wattle (*Acacia leprosa*) plant with blood-red flowers. Realising this was a rare 'freak of nature', they took it to the Royal Botanic Gardens. Normal tip and stem cuttings were subsequently propagated there by Michael McNabb, Nadia Polikarpowski and David Robbins, who nursed them along, producing 100 or so plants.

Although the original parent plant found in state forest north-east of Melbourne has since perished, its family tree will flourish and is bound to achieve horticultural fame. The Gardens contracted Plant Growers Australia to propagate *Scarlet Blaze* on a commercial scale, and it will be launched in spring, when in flower, through the nursery industry. The RBG will receive royalties from all sales.

The Gardens Education Service is conducting a program until December called 'Blazing Trail — Celebrating Federation', through which each participating school will receive a Scarlet Blaze plant. A display panel has been set up in the Visitor Centre at Observatory Gate.

Each State was asked to nominate an ornamental plant to be released in the Federation Centenary year; (New South Wales produced a flannel flower, Western Australia a kangaroo paw). Victoria's red wattle will be a dramatic emblem, with its exploding gold-tipped balls of fire.

U3A OPPORTUNITY FOR FRIENDS

The Voluntary Guides are presenting, for the second time, a program about the Royal Botanic Gardens for the University of the Third Age. It is not open to the general public, but the Guides have generously offered some places to Members of the Friends — whatever their age!

The course begins on Wednesday 5 September (Jenny Happell on the Camellia Collection) and continues weekly until 24 October, covering many aspects of the Gardens' plants, wildlife, history and future. Sessions run from 10.00am to 11.30am.

The eight-week program costs \$27.50 incl. GST. Bookings are taken at the Visitor Centre, tel. 9252 2429, on a 'first come first served' basis.

Growing Friends

We are very grateful to all those Friends and Botanic Gardens' staff who assisted us at our recent AUTUMN SALE. We were delighted with the amount raised—\$24,500—and realise that this couldn't have been achieved without their help. Our helpers included the Gardens' staff who organised the setting up and dismantling of the sale, and provided information on the day; the Education section who lent their trestles and chairs; the Friends who took the money and counted it; and the 'extras' who assisted where required. All were an essential part of the success of the sale and we thank them.

It is encouraging to have such support from those who attend our sales, and the Growing Friends enjoy coming out of the relative isolation of their nursery and discussing matters horticultural. As usual, the queue began forming an hour before opening and numbered at least 150.

With the nursery depleted after the sale, it seemed an appropriate time to make some arrangements which may help to share the heavy load carried by the Co-ordinator. To this end we have established two committees. One has responsibility for all the administrative tasks necessary to any organisation, including the control of the database on our computer. (Following the acquisition of a new computer and printer last year, the establishment and maintenance of our database has been very time-consuming; several members have worked at the computer on extra weekdays as well as our usual Fridays. The computer has also enabled us to produce printed, rather than handwritten, plant labels.)

The other committee provides horticultural advice and is also charged with the task of looking at our stock of plants and planning the introduction of new species. Obviously this involves a long-term strategy as we are often preparing plants for one sale whilst potting up others for the next one in six months' time.

Like everyone else we welcomed the April rains and wish you all pleasant hours in the garden preparing for the spring. Remember we do have plants throughout the year and that, as a privilege of membership, Friends may visit on Friday mornings (10am to 1pm) to browse and purchase. Walk into the Works Yard (entrance between F and E Gates), and turn left immediately.

Our spring sale will be held on 13 and 14 October.

Botanical Illustrators

BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATORS SEASONAL PROGRAM LICHENS WITH KATH RALSTON

**Tuesday 12 June. Morning tea at 10.00am,
talk at 10.30 am**

Meet at Whirling Room

**Cost: \$5.50 (incl. GST) Pay on the day
RSVP to Friends' office on 9650 6398**

Kath Ralston, the Honorary Associate Lichenologist at the National Herbarium, will give us an illustrated talk on the very interesting group of composite plants known as The Lichens, each of which is a mixture of fungus and alga.

If you wish, bring in a piece of lichen from your own garden.

BYO lunch and stay to draw and paint any specimens.

An invitation from artist Criss Canning and Lambley Nursery Day trip by bus, Tuesday 28 August

A very special trip has been arranged to visit artist Criss Canning in her studio at Lambley Nursery in Ascot near Ballarat, where her husband David Glenn grows a vast range of unusual perennials and grasses. Many of her remarkable oil paintings include studies of some of the more dramatic flowers from the landscaped gardens Criss and David have designed.



Criss captures the life, colour and vibrancy of the flowers as well as including considerable botanical detail. She will have over 20 of her finished paintings for us to view. We are privileged to be able to see this recent work by Criss, which will be included in her solo exhibition at the Philip Bacon Galleries in Brisbane in October. (Her two previous exhibitions in Melbourne and Sydney were completely sold out.)

Although the borders at Lambley will not be at the height of their colour and drama at this time of the year, there will be spring bulbs— snowdrops, daffodils and crocus— in flower; also, this is the perfect time to buy perennial plants for our own gardens. Check out the extensive Lambley catalogue before you go, on www.lambley.com.au



Lambley birds

Criss can accommodate only 10 at a time in her studio, so we'll take turns to visit. While some are there, David will escort others in the party around the gardens and nursery. We anticipate the most perfect of spring days to enjoy a **BYO picnic lunch**, but if it's wet and cold we can be accommodated inside; hot tea and coffee will be provided.

Although this trip has been organised for Botanical Illustrators in particular, it will be of wide interest and other Friends will be very welcome.

The bus (with seat belts) will leave at 10am *sharp* and should return by 4.00pm.

PLEASE NOTE: Due to construction at the National Gallery, the bus departure point has been moved north, and is now outside the Victorian Arts Centre.

Cost incl. GST: \$35

RSVP by Tuesday 21 August on booking form

WHIRLYBIRDS

The Tuesday Painters provides an opportunity for all Friends who are Botanical Artists to continue working in an informal group which meets in the Whirling Room Studio at Observatory Gate. Join other illustrators to share ideas and technical information in a supportive atmosphere. Ring Rita Parkinson on 9821 5883 for further information.

Yellow Banksia by Criss Canning

Dianne Emery's Classes

Term 3 will start in the week beginning 23 July, with four classes as follows:

Tuesday evening, 6.15-8.45

Wednesday morning, 10-12.30

Wednesday afternoon, 12.30-3.00

Friday morning, 10.30-1.30

Beginners and experienced artists are all welcome.

Please call Dianne on 9523 5397 for more information.

We will also be offering a program of workshops throughout the remainder of the year. Our flower dissection and microscope workshop with Mali Moir is proving so popular that we are considering running a further one — **An Introduction to the Microscope and Plant Dissection using pen and ink and watercolour** — plus an extended or more advanced class for those who are interested. Times and dates are yet to be finalised but expressions of interest will be taken. Further information will be given upon enquiry.

Rita Parkinson's **Gouache Workshop** will now be held on Monday 18 and 25 June, 10.00am - 3.30pm. (Note change of date). Some materials provided. Cost will be \$135 for the two days. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn, from a very talented illustrator, the age-old technique of using opaque watercolour on white or coloured backgrounds.

Next term we will also offer **Mosses, Liverworts, and Ferns: A workshop for painters and illustrators**. These picturesque and fascinating plants are subjects commonly overlooked. Dr Karen Beckmann, who is a specialist in Liverworts and a keen illustrator, will head a series of workshops dealing with their biology, structure and dissection. This will be a hands-on workshop concentrating on drawing with the aid of dissecting microscopes and hand-held lenses.

Cost \$125 for three days — Monday 23, 30 July and 6 August, 10.30am-2.00pm. Further information upon enquiry.

We are also offering an **Introduction to Botanical Art and Illustration**, a two-day workshop for those who are interested in finding out a little more about the subject and would like to try some of the techniques associated with it.

Cost: \$120. All materials will be provided. Monday 9 and Tuesday 10 July, 10.00am-3.30pm

We are also taking expressions of interest in a lithography workshop in association with the Victorian College of the Arts, covering four days — 9,10,16 and 17 July — in the mid-semester break.

Ring Dianne Emery on 9523 5397 for more information or to book for any of the workshops or classes.

BOTANY FOR GARDENERS

Many gardeners, while achieving great satisfaction from flowers, fruits, vegetables and trees, have only hazy knowledge of the mysteries behind their growth. So many questions arise: What happens inside a seed after it is planted? Do plants measure passing time? Why do stems and roots grow in opposite directions? What does each part of a flower do?

The language of science is, perhaps, a deterrent to laypersons. This book, *Botany for Gardeners*, by Bruce Capon, will serve as a readable, valuable introduction and guide. It is profusely illustrated with diagrams, line drawings and coloured photographs. Already internationally acclaimed, it is now available in Australia through local publisher Blooming Books. The English author, Brian Capon, who was Professor of Botany at California State University, Los Angeles, has written with clarity but not oversimplification, and included a Glossary which also serves as an index.

Interestingly, Prof. Capon describes a garden as an artificial habitat in the sense that it is a product of human judgement, having no relevance to natural selection which determines the composition of flora in the wild. Gardens are among mankind's most praiseworthy accomplishments, he says; under natural circumstances such geographically-mixed communities of plants would never exist.

His introduction to botany acknowledges the pioneering work of countless scientists, gardeners and plant lovers over hundreds of years. He closes the book with some thought-provoking words about botany in the 21st century, envisioning mass production of custom-made plants. From start to finish, it is a great guide to the reader's journey of discovery.

Botany for Gardeners, an Introduction and Guide by Brian Capon. Paperback, 220 pages, published by Blooming Books. RRP \$39.95.

GARDENING AT GATE LODGE

Now that planting of the Gate Lodge garden is well advanced, it has been agreed that the Friends can share responsibility with Gardens' staff for its maintenance.

Following the precedent set by the appointment of Leanne Barnes to work in the Perennial Border, we are seeking expressions of interest from Friends who may wish to make a regular, voluntary commitment for this task.

In the first instance, please phone the Friends' office on 9650 6398 for a job description.

AUTUMN GUEST SPEAKERS



Terry Smyth with Professor Guan Kaiyun, whom she has come to regard as her mentor on all aspects of Chinese plants. Over many years, Terry has sourced material, and cared for, the RBG's Southern Chinese Collection.

Photo by Geoff Hardy

Mueller Hall was filled to overflowing for talks in April by two distinguished overseas visitors: Judith Zuk, President and CEO of Brooklyn Botanic Garden, New York, and Professor Guan Kaiyun, Director of Kunming Botanical Garden in Yunnan Province, South-west China.

We were delighted to share the organisation of Judith Zuk's visit with the Friends of RBG Cranbourne, and look forward to further joint meetings. It was also a pleasure to welcome RBG staff to both talks.

Judith Zuk described her Garden's inspiring community outreach, while Prof. Guan showed enchanting slides of his region's remarkably diverse and beautiful flora and landscape. In a 'thank you' email, Judith Zuk said it was particularly gratifying to have such a keen and enthusiastic audience to hear about her work.



It was an occasion for Celia Rosser to show prints of her Banksia paintings to Judith Zuk and Rodger Elliot.

Photo by Lesley Clark

Right: Michael McCoy with Leanne Barnes (left), a Friend who works as a volunteer in the Perennial Border each week, and Sandra Hodge. Sandra is the RBG gardener responsible for that area. See p12 for an account of Michael McCoy's talk.

Photo by Duncan Ironmonger



Robyn Tymms (left) used a wonderful array of plants from the RBG's Southern Chinese Collection to decorate Mueller Hall for Prof. Guan's talk. Cathy Trinca is with her.

Photo by Geoff Hardy

Banksias from RBG Cranbourne were on show for Judith Zuk.

Photo by Lesley Clark



LONG ISLAND PROJECT

The Long Island Project in the Ornamental Lake is progressing well. The area is being developed and replanted to display the native vegetation characteristic of the Lower Yarra wetlands before European settlement. Plantings with local Lower Yarra genetic stock have taken place on neighbouring Baker Island — an unfamiliar name to many—and are under way on Long Island and the ‘mainland’ opposite. This includes swamp paperbarks (*Melaleuca ericifolia*) and 15 River Red Gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) propagated from the Separation Tree. Several Moreton Bay fig trees on Long Island, shown to be only 41-51 years old and therefore not of historic significance at the site, were removed to make way for the indigenous planting.

The new boardwalk and paths are taking shape, and two low weirs have been constructed to create an enclosed wetland beside the island. Constructing the weirs became quite a difficult job because of the seemingly bottomless silt on the lake bed left from the time when the Yarra actually flowed through part of what is now the Ornamental Lake (the river was straightened in 1899, enabling Guilfoyle to create the current lake landscape). Levee walls were constructed which will enable the water level in the wetland to be raised and lowered, as with the ecological process in a natural wetland. The walls are being planted with aquatic plants and will collect silt, forming a more permanent feature. One of the species planted on Baker Island—*Carex gaudichaudiana*—is considered rare to the Melbourne region. Other species planted are *Eleocharis sphacelata* and *Schoenoplectus validus*. More than 14,000 aquatic plants have been planted so far at Baker Island, Drinking Fountain Bed and around Long Island itself. Netting protects these plants from predation and damage by water birds.

Students from six local schools planted at Long Island on 18 May and a community planting day followed on 19 May, International Plant Conservation Day. (Both fell within Arbor Week.) It is hoped to organise opportunities for planting by RBG staff in June.

Stage 1 of the project should be completed by the end of June, with more plantings scheduled for winter next year. November 2002 is the likely official ‘launch’ date of the Long Island project development.

This project has been an excellent collaboration between RBG works, arboriculture, nursery, design and horticultural teams and an enthusiastic group of Green Corps trainees, who undertook much of the vegetation clearing and subsequent planting during their six-month placement at the RBG. The project has been funded by Parks Victoria’s Agency Grants Scheme.

You can keep up to date with Long Island news by visiting www.rbgmelb.org.au/LongIsland/index

A guided inspection of Long Island has been arranged for the Friends for Wednesday 1 August.

Thanks to Philip Moors, Peter Symes and Stuart McIntosh for this report.



Everything is on a grand scale at Wombat Park, Daylesford, which the Friends visited in April: the famous Tapestry Hedge, for instance, and a 140-year-old Douglas fir. Ian Huxley, in his Guildford garden, delivered some good advice and unorthodox views on rose culture.

Photos by Lesley Skinner

FLYING FOXES

Friends will be only too aware of the continuing flying-fox crisis at the Royal Botanic Gardens and its coverage by the media. The bats – which reached peak numbers of 20,000 during February and March – have continued to damage the Gardens. Community opinion is overwhelmingly in favour of the management actions taken by the RBG to stop the damage and protect the Gardens.

Earlier plans to relocate significant numbers of the flying-foxes to the colony at Dowell Creek in East Gippsland did not proceed because of excessive costs, uncertainty about the chances of success, and local opposition. Following Minister Garbutt's decision not to relocate any bats, I confirmed in late March that the RBG would undertake a limited culling program, using humane methods acceptable to the RSPCA, to reduce the numbers of resident flying-foxes.

My announcement resulted in public threats by pro-bat activists to destroy trees in the Gardens in retaliation for each flying-fox culled, and in personal threats. These threats have been taken seriously, and security considerably increased at RBG Melbourne during both day and night. Nevertheless, several acts of vandalism have been committed, the worst of which has been the destruction and damage of several large cacti in the Arid Garden. Pro-bat activists have trespassed in the Gardens on numerous occasions at night and have twice conducted noisy demonstrations outside my home for the benefit of TV cameras.

Because of the threats against the RBG, the actions of the protestors, and the major security risks associated with these activities, I will not be making public any information about the operational details of the culling program.

Flying-fox numbers decreased during April, encouraged by the falling autumn temperatures. Even so, at the beginning of May there were still about 9,000 present in the Gardens, a total similar to the maximum number present in any previous years. At the colony's peak, flying-foxes were roosting in up to 40 per cent of the Gardens, with large numbers on Oak Lawn, along the northwestern margins of the Lake, on Central Lawn and in Fern Gully.

Our concern now is to ensure that none of the transients invading the Gardens in February-March remain to become over-wintering residents, which are concentrated in Fern Gully. We are therefore implementing a variety of disturbance and deterrence measures against the remaining transients from the summer influx, which are mainly now in areas such as the Oak Lawn.

A Task Force has been formed by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment to investigate establishing an alternative roost site for the flying-foxes in the Melbourne area. RBG staff are participating in this study. In addition, a new survey of the extent of damage caused by the flying-foxes has been carried out. Arboriculture staff has removed damaged limbs from trees on Oak Lawn and felled several dead trees and palms in Fern Gully. They have left some severely damaged trees so that the bats can still roost on the dead branches and ease the pressure on the remaining plants.

Many Victorians – and many Friends – have written, emailed, phoned and returned postcards to the RBG giving their support for the management program. I am most appreciative of this massive endorsement of our actions and the importance of protecting the Royal Botanic Gardens.

Philip Moors

A FLURRY OF FUNGI

Dr Tom May, a Senior Botanist at the RBG and fungal specialist, has been in constant demand for media interviews in recent weeks, with the mushroom season raising questions about poisonous specimens. Public education about poisonous fungi is an important role carried out by RBG staff, with RBG Melbourne being one of the few centres in Australia with mycologists on staff.

Fungimap, an Australia-wide community mapping scheme initiated by the RBG and the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria, has just released a CD-ROM Guide to the 100 Fungimap target species. This consolidates information collected over five years, and includes maps and more than 700 colour illustrations. Phone the RBG Visitor Centre on 9252 2429 for an order form if you'd like to purchase a copy (cost \$15 +\$3 postage).

University of NSW Press has just released an updated and fully revised 4th version of *Common Australian Fungi* by Tony Young. Sub-titled *A Bushwalker's Guide*, it is a handy size for use in the field, and is well illustrated with colour photographs, watercolours and line drawings.

An Artist's Impressions of the Gardens

Remember that the Friends has for sale copies of the poster depicting 37 of Anne Marie Graham's lively paintings of Gardens scenes. It would certainly add colour and interest to an office, a schoolroom or a doctor's waiting room. It also makes a great gift to send interstate or overseas.

You may see and buy a poster at the Friends' office; the cost of \$19.95 includes GST, a mailing tube, postage within Australia and a donation of \$6 from the artist to the Friends.



Tendrils

Whenever we invite top garden designer and writer Michael McCoy to speak to the Friends, we can confidently expect stimulating ideas and wonderful photographs. On 17 May, we had that and more. Michael recounted that, while staying at Great Dixter, the home of Christopher Lloyd in Sussex, he was enchanted to spend evenings by the fireside, with the great man reading aloud. Michael repeated the pleasure for us, with amusing gardening writing by a surprising clutch of authors including A A Milne and Captain W E Johns (of *Biggles* fame).

Michael showed slides of wonderful gardens — the kind of scenes we admire in English books and magazines — declaring them irrelevant to Australians because most of the plants were either unobtainable or unsuitable to our climate. Very frustrating. Then, after a brief quiz with Mintie rewards, he revisited these slides. Michael pointed to both subtle and striking colour combinations we could emulate, noted the softening effect of grasses, said that the gravel gardens of Beth Chatto, requiring little or no water, were totally relevant to us, and showed us the value of vertical 'exclamation points' in massed borders. Slides of Michael's garden at Woodend demonstrated that the 'substitute' plants available here also produced stunning flowerbeds.



For the first and probably only time, all 76 of Celia Rosser's Banksia paintings are to be exhibited together. They will be shown at the National Library in Canberra from 14 June until 5 August.

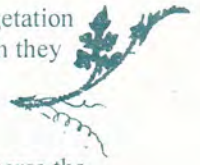
Celia has been 'liberated' after 35 years of Banksias! She has designed two postage stamps for Christmas Island, depicting fungi, and has also completed an unusual commission for the Victorian Tapestry Workshop. She has illustrated the floral emblems of Australia, the States and Territories to be integrated with Bruce Petty cartoons of Heidelberg School artists in one of the Federation tapestries.

If you'd like to see this tapestry in progress, the weavers will be working on it at Heide Museum of Modern Art from 2 June.



The plants produced by the Growing Friends at RBG Cranbourne are in great demand. Besides propagating those needed for the Cranbourne site, the group sold plants at the South East Water Bushfest 2001 held at the Gardens in March and at some Garden Scheme openings, and gave a plant to every guest at their annual dinner in May. In addition, they've held discussions about the possible provision of 2700 plants of local provenance for revegetation of the recently laid water pipe line in Cranbourne, and have been contacted by the managers of the adjoining

horseracing training complex about the revegetation on the Gardens' northern boundary, for which they require about 7000 plants.



We've heard the following suggestion to disperse the flying-foxes in the Gardens: simply hire a hot-air balloon to make swoops over the bats on a regular basis for a week or two and they should soon be looking for a more peaceful home. Several weeks ago a balloon came in very low over the Oak Lawn until it found the upward draught and soared heavenwards. Apparently the bats were greatly surprised and took flight very quickly.



Peter Symes, Senior Curator, Horticulture, has reported that the rainfall recorded in the RBG for January and February 2001 was 19.9 mm, compared to 44.4 mm in the same period last year, and that evaporation was about 19 mm greater for January and February this year.

One result of the prolonged dry and hot weather was the growth of Blue-green algae in the Ornamental Lake. This remained a problem well into the autumn, in the absence of rain to flush out the lake. It is probable that nutrients reaching the lake from the flying-fox colony and other wildlife also exacerbated the algal bloom. In consultation with external advisers, the bloom is being managed by continuing the aeration of the lake.

Sadly, a large and ancient oak at the Tasmanian section of the Australian Rainforest Walk succumbed to the extremes of summer.



Diana Morgan, who spoke to the Friends about succulents, with Cathy Trinca, Convener of the Activities sub-committee. Photo by Geoff Hardy

**WINTER 2001 BOTANIC NEWS
BOOKING FORM**

BRIDGE and CARDS

Thursday 21 June at 10.30am
1089 Malvern Rd, Toorak

No.... of Friends @ \$25
No.... of Others @ \$30

TOTAL: \$ _____

RSVP BY 15/6/01 _____

THE WIVES OF VICTORIA'S GOVERNORS

Wednesday 27 June at 5.30pm for 6.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

No.... of Friends @ \$11
No.... of Others @ \$16

TOTAL: \$ _____

RSVP by 22/6/01 _____

WILDFLOWERS OF VICTORIA

Thursday 5 July at 5.30pm for 6.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

No.... of Friends @ \$11
No.... of Others @ \$16

TOTAL: \$ _____

RSVP by 2/7/01 _____

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

Please return the relevant section of this form with remittance and stamped self-addressed envelope to: Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens, Gate Lodge, 100 Birdwood Avenue, Melbourne 3004. Telephone: (03) 9650 6398

Cheques/postal orders payable to: Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

**WINTER 2001 BOTANIC NEWS
BOOKING FORM**

EXHIBITION & SALE, BOTANICAL CHINA

Thursday 26 July at 10.30am
1089 Malvern Road, Toorak

No..... @ \$5

TOTAL: \$ _____

RSVP by 20/6/01 _____

FILM LUNCHEON:

CAPTAIN CORELLI'S MANDOLIN

Monday 30 July at 11.00am
Dendy Cinema, 26 Church St, Brighton

No.... of tickets @ \$15

TOTAL: \$ _____

RSVP by 24/7/01 _____

WINTER WALK:

Long Island Revegetation Project

Wednesday 1 August. Meet at Gate Lodge, 10am

No.... of Friends @ \$7

No.... of Others @ \$9

TOTAL: \$ _____

RSVP by 25/7/01 _____

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

Please return the relevant section of this form with remittance and stamped self-addressed envelope to: Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens, Gate Lodge, 100 Birdwood Avenue, Melbourne 3004. Telephone: (03) 9650 6398

Cheques/postal orders payable to: Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

**WINTER 2001 BOTANIC NEWS
BOOKING FORM**

HELLEBORES

Tuesday 14 August at 10.30 for 11.00am
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

No.... of Friends @ \$11

No.... of Others @ \$16

TOTAL: \$ _____

RSVP by 10/8/01 _____

THE OPEN GARDEN SCHEME

Wednesday 22 August at 5.30pm for 6.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

No.... of Friends @ \$11

No.... of Others @ \$16

TOTAL: \$ _____

RSVP by 17/8/01 _____

**BUS TRIP TO LAMBLEY NURSERY/
CRISS CANNING**

Tuesday 28 August

Leaving Vic. Arts Centre at 10.00am sharp

No..... @ \$35

TOTAL: \$ _____

RSVP by 21/8/01 _____

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

Please return the relevant section of this form with remittance and stamped self-addressed envelope to: Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens, Gate Lodge, 100 Birdwood Avenue, Melbourne 3004. Telephone: (03) 9650 6398

Cheques/postal orders payable to: Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

SPECIAL EVENTS IN THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE

JUNE 2001

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE WALK

Thursdays and Fridays at 11.00am
Sundays 10 and 24 at 10.30am
Groups by arrangement.

GARDENS HIGHLIGHTS GUIDED WALK

Sunday to Thursday, 11.00am and 2.00pm
Fridays at 2.00pm

OBSERVATORY TOUR

STARS, COWS AND SPIDER WEBS
Wednesdays at 2.00pm

THE NIGHT SKY EXPERIENCE GUIDED TOUR

Tuesdays at 7.30pm

SNAPSHOTS OF FEDERATION

During May, the Voluntary Guides led some special walks, linking today's Gardens with scenes depicted in historic photographs and postcards. These walks may be repeated in June. Telephone 9252 2429 for information.

PLANT CRAFT COTTAGE

PLANT CARD WORKSHOP

Saturday 23, 10.00am
Bookings with Margaret 9889 7249 or Patricia 9889 7999

CARDS FOR KIDS

Tuesday 26 to Friday 29 continuously between 10.30am and 2.00pm. Cost \$2 per child.

JULY 2001

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE WALK

Thursdays and Fridays at 11.00am
Sundays 8 and 22 at 10.30am.
Groups by arrangement.

GARDENS HIGHLIGHTS GUIDED WALK

Sunday to Thursday, 11.00am and 2.00pm
Fridays at 2.00pm

OBSERVATORY TOUR

STARS, COWS AND SPIDER WEBS
Wednesdays at 2.00pm

THE NIGHT SKY EXPERIENCE GUIDED TOUR

Tuesdays at 7.30pm

Gardens Highlights Guided Walks do not require prior bookings except for large groups. Meet at the Visitor Centre, Observatory Gate.

PLEASE NOTE that most events incur a charge and require prior booking. It is important that you contact the appropriate phone number. Unless otherwise noted, the number to ring for all listings is 9252 2300. Please appreciate that, after Botanic News goes to press, it is likely that additional events may be arranged for late in the quarter.

AUGUST 2001

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE WALK

Thursdays and Fridays at 11.00am
Sundays 5 and 19 at 10.30am.
Groups by arrangement.

GARDENS HIGHLIGHTS GUIDED WALK

Sunday to Thursday, 11.00am and 2.00pm
Fridays at 2.00pm

OBSERVATORY TOUR

STARS, COWS AND SPIDER WEBS
Wednesdays at 2.00pm

THE NIGHT SKY EXPERIENCE GUIDED TOUR

Tuesdays at 7.30pm

RBG CRANBOURNE FRIENDS WINTER LECTURE SERIES

Sunday 24 June at noon

Alan Reid and Dr Mark McDonnell
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

Sunday 29 July at noon

Ken Simpson and Cherree Densley
Karwarra Australian Plant Garden

Sunday 26 August at noon

Malcolm Calder and Leon Costermans
RBG Cranbourne

Optional tours at 10.00am at each site
Information and bookings,
Tel. 5990 2200

MEMBERSHIP

At 30 June last there were 1495 Members whose subscriptions were then paid up to date. We regret that 10 of these Members have since died and 16 have resigned. However, 200 new Members have joined the Friends since 30 June 2000; unfortunately this is balanced by an almost similar number whose membership has lapsed. We strongly urge you to renew your membership so as to keep the Friends as a vital support to the Gardens.

NEW MEMBERS' WELCOME MARCH 2001



Christine Harris and Graham Ellis (above) and Valerie and Ronald Cummins (below) were among 50 new Friends welcomed in Mueller Hall and taken on a guided walk in the Gardens.
Photos by Geoff Hardy



ASSOCIATION OF FBG

The Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens (Victoria) Inc. has become simply the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens Inc., reflecting the fact that its membership now includes Friends groups from South Australia, New South Wales, Tasmania, Queensland, the Northern Territory and the ACT. It was inaugurated by the Melbourne Friends nine years ago.

The Geelong Friends would still welcome the enrolment of more Melbourne Friends at the Association conference they are hosting in mid-June. You could obtain further information by phoning 5222 6053.



The Gardens Shop
ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS MELBOURNE

GARDENS SHOPS

The above image is our new 'brand' for The Gardens Shops, one which we hope will identify them to all Melburnians and entice customers. We are also proud to announce that we have taken delivery of, and are now displaying, our first branded merchandise.

The greeting card range consists of 30 cards in three designs. We have sourced them from rare books in the Herbarium Library and have produced a stunning range using images from Joseph Paxton, Joseph Redouté, and Curtis's Botanical Magazine. All cards are available at both the Lakeside and Observatory shops and are very reasonably priced. I invite you to view the range and help The Gardens Shops support the RBG.

Over the next couple of months you will see a continuous addition to our branded range, including apparel, skin care, a coffee table book, postcards, bookmarks, food and many more items. We hope to see you all soon; don't forget the 10 per cent discount we offer to all Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens.

Fiona Jury, Retail Business Manager

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 plants only.

The Arts Bookshop
1067 High St, Armadale

Holmesglen Nursery
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% discount,
also 8 punnets for \$22 (GST incl)

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

Essendon Garden Centre
1060 Mt Alexander Rd, Essendon
10% off plants only



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.

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FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

Public Gardens Congress

The first national Botanic Gardens Congress was held in mid-April in Canberra. It was an outstanding success, with more than 260 people attending from gardens all around Australia, including 21 staff from the RBG. Several keynote speakers came from overseas, and two of them — Judith Zuk, President of Brooklyn Botanic Garden in New York and Prof. Guan Kaiyun, Director of Kunming Botanical Garden in Yunnan, China — also visited Melbourne to see the Gardens and present lectures.

Camellia Award

Following Prof. Guan's address on 24 April, his friend and fellow camellia expert Dr Ross Hayter presented an award from the International Camellia Society to RBG Melbourne, recognising it as an International Camellia Garden of Excellence. The Award recognises the outstanding quality and high standards of maintenance of the large camellia collection in our Gardens. The Society has given this award to only three other gardens worldwide — two in the United States and one in Germany. We are honoured to have this recognition for the wonderful collection established and nurtured by past Directors, especially William Guilfoyle and Alexander Jessep. It is cared for now by RBG staff and several volunteer camellia experts, especially Jenny Happell and Dr Bob Withers. In 1996 the Collection was named as the Australian National Reference Collection by the Australian Camellia Research Society. The RBG has about 800 camellias, some dating back to 1875.

Distinguished German Visitor

The President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Dr Johannes Rau, visited the National Herbarium on 4 May, and showed deep interest

in the Mueller collection.

Two displays were mounted for him — one including the Baron's medals, some publications and letters, and his microscope. Another, of Herbarium mounted specimens, included the first specimens von Mueller collected in Australia and the last one he was studying at the time of his death; some sent to him from Germany and others collected here by German botanists.

Prof. Rod Home explained the scope of the Mueller Correspondence Project and presented the President with a copy of Vol. 1 of von Mueller's selected letters. Vol. 2 should be published in August, and work is proceeding with Vol. 3.

Staff

The revised structure of the Melbourne Gardens Division is now in place, with the following staff appointed: Manager, Infrastructure, Stephen Paterson; Co-ordinator, Facilities, Colin Walker; Co-ordinator Works, Laurie Zarafa; and Senior Curator, Horticulture, Peter Symes. Michael McNabb will be Manager, Horticulture until November.

New Propagation Facilities

Finally, I expect work to commence soon on the excellent new propagation facilities to be constructed at RBG Melbourne with funds from the Helen Johns Bequest and a grant from the Friends' Trust Fund. The propagation house and new work areas will greatly improve our capabilities for raising seedlings, and will also assist the Growing Friends in propagating plants for their sales. Stock propagated by the RBG and the Growing Friends have recently contributed to the planting-out of the new garden around Gate Lodge.

Philip Moors