Winter 2004

# BOTANIC NEWS

FRIENDS *of the* ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS MELBOURNE INC.

## FEATURE

Putting Australian Fungi on the Map

# FROM THE PRESIDENT

In late March, the Friends lost a true and special friend — Honorary Life Member, Past President and serving Council Member, Sir Rupert Hamer. We will miss his friendship, support and wise and commonsense counsel enormously. On behalf of all our Members, I extend our deepest sympathy to Lady Hamer, (who we've always been delighted to welcome to our functions) and his family. (See page 6 for a tribute to Sir Rupert.)

Despite our dry, albeit beautiful, Autumn, the Growing Friends' sale was most successful, raising $23,000. We congratulate the Growing Friends on the superb quality of the splendid range of plants offered for sale and thank them for all their hard work. Thanks too to everyone else who so willingly offered time and effort to make the sale such a special event. The Spring Sale will be held on 9 and 10 October — do note these dates in your diary.

Over the years Friends' activities and functions have always been noted for the delicious food offered to all those attending. This high quality fare is prepared and served by the talented members of our Catering Committee. With the revision of Government regulations concerning food safety standards, the Friends' catering activities have been scrutinised and the kitchens from which the food is served have been inspected by a representative from the City of Melbourne together with representatives of the Friends. In order to comply with food safety standards the Friends had to meet various administrative and other requirements and, in addition, install an industrial dishwasher in the Herbarium kitchen. The Friends gave the Gardens a grant of $4,320 to purchase this large and splendid machine which washes dishes in three minutes! Members and guests will be glad to know that they may continue to eat with pleasure knowing that the food served meets the high standards set out in the regulations.

*Photo: Meg Miller*

On a beautiful late afternoon in February, Members of the Friends' Council were very pleased indeed to welcome Members of the Cranbourne Friends' Committee to the Gardens. Following guided walks to look at trees, Long Island and progress in the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden, we all enjoyed an informal meal together. Further developing a close and rewarding relationship between our two groups is seen as a very important priority by all concerned.

Many Members will remember the celebration of the Friends' 20th birthday in March 2002. To commemorate the occasion, our founding Convener, Beth Higgs, and then President, Sir Ninian Stephen, planted with great aplomb a fine specimen of *Abies delavayi*, a fir tree normally found in China. Sadly, and despite much loving care, 'our tree' did not survive. After considerable thought and investigation by Gardens' staff, it has now been replaced by an Engelmann Spruce (*Picea engelmannii)* which, I am glad to report, is looking in fine health. An informal ceremony was held in February at which Beth and Sir Ninian re-dedicated 'our tree' which can be found on the Hopetoun Lawn south of the Algerian Oaks planted by Lord Hopetoun and his family over 100 years ago. May the Spruce give many generations of visitors as much pleasure as the Oaks have done over the last century.

Also, due to good water management by Gardens' staff, the Gardens have maintained their attraction for the public, judging by the numbers seen enjoying their Easter Sunday here.

*Irwin Newman*, ***President***

## Notes From Gate Lodge

Wanted! The Friends are seeking the following items:

- A bar fridge or small fridge to store perishable items for students attending Botanical Illustration classes in the Whirling Room studio.
- A colour computer monitor for one of our computers.

The only requirement is that both these items need to be WORKING.

If any Members are able to assist, please contact the office on 9650 6398.

# FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

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*The fungus pictured on the front cover is Trametes versicolor, or Rainbow Bracket Fungus, common on dead wood, especially stumps.*

Photos: Meg Miller

## Australian Garden Progress

Work on the Australian Garden is progressing well and has been keeping staff at RBG Cranbourne and RBG Melbourne very busy. The construction layout for the four Exhibition Gardens has been completed, and design development is now under way for the Exhibition Gardens, whose themes will include a Home Garden, a Low Water Use Garden and a Horticultural Future Garden.

Recent work at the Australian Garden site includes the completion of the concrete work for the Rockpool Waterway. The hard landscape for the Eucalypt Walk and Dry Riverbed was completed in April, and planting began in late May. About half of the detailed irrigation installation has occurred and a number of major paths and roads have been completed. The landscape is really shaping up well and it is exciting to be able to watch the progression of the Garden.

## New RBG Volunteers

The RBG has recently been recruiting new volunteer guides for RBG Melbourne and the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden. A series of information sessions was held in March/April to alert people to the range of opportunities available. The new guides will attend training sessions between May and September 2004, with the aim of having trained guides ready for the opening of the Children's Garden. During the training sessions, they will be addressed by horticulturists from RBG Melbourne, experienced guides and other staff. We hope that the result of the process will be a new group of enthusiastic voluntary guides who are passionate about plants.

## Dr Gene Likens

RBG staff have recently been fortunate to meet and attend lectures given by distinguished environmental scientist Dr Gene Likens. Dr Likens is President, Director and G. Evelyn Hutchinson Professor at the Institute of Ecosystem Studies in Millbrook, in up-state New York. With his research colleagues, Dr Likens was the first to document the link between the increasing acidity of rain and the burning of fossil fuels in North America, and the long-term consequences of this development.

Dr Likens was in Australia for several months earlier this year as the University of Melbourne's Miegunyah Fellow. He was sponsored by ARCUE and the School of Botany and worked with the Director of ARCUE, Assoc. Prof. Mark McDonnell, as well as ARCUE staff and students during his visit to gain further understanding about the ecology of Australian cities and the role of science in addressing human-accelerated environmental change.

In mid-March Dr Likens presented the Miegunyah Lecture entitled '*Human-Accelerated Environmental Change: Ecosystem Science in the 21st Century*' at the University of Melbourne to a large audience including members of the public. He also taught a short course on '*Scientific Communication and Ethics*', for ARCUE and School of Botany staff and students. In addition, he addressed members of the RBG's Director's Circle in February 2004 at an evening function, where he led a stimulating discussion on '*Environmental Challenges in the 21st Century*'.

## Director's Circle - New Membership Level

As a result of feedback from a sample survey, the Director's Circle has recently undergone a restructure. A second increased annual donation level of $4000 for Director's Circle supporters has been introduced, in addition to the existing annual support level of $1000. The two donation levels have been given the names of Banksia for $1000 supporters and Acacia for $4000 supporters. Both names were selected following a competition amongst RBG staff to come up with the names of indigenous plants that would appropriately reflect the two donation levels.

The new program of events for all Director's Circle members will include Twilight Evenings to be held in the warmer months of the year (the two evenings for 2004 were very successful and were well received by our donors), talks, walks and the end of year Supporter's Function. Acacia supporters will be invited to attend additional special functions including the Director's Dinner.

For further information about the Director's Circle, please contact Aviva Feiglin of the Development Branch on (03) 9252 2311.

## Name Change For Theatre Lawn

As a result of visitor feedback, the name of Theatre Lawn has recently been changed to Southern Cross Lawn. Visitors were finding the name 'Theatre Lawn' confusing, given that neither the Australian Shakespeare Company nor Moonlight Cinema run their productions on Theatre Lawn. 'Southern Cross Lawn' was seen as a fitting title, considering the lawn's proximity to the Old Melbourne Observatory. The name change will not affect the use of the lawn or the irrigation system which was generously funded by the Friends.

*Philip Moors, **Director***

Photo: Meg Miller

*Southern Cross Lawn facing Gate Lodge.*

## Gary Shadforth

From his own schooldays, Gary remembers a Biology teacher whose office and teaching area were always full of interesting bits and pieces – all to do with making the subject exciting. Gary himself grew up interested in animals, plants and the environment, but without a clear idea for a career. He took Biology as part of his degree and enjoyed the subject immensely, but observed that those planning a career in this discipline were specialising more and more as their studies became more serious.

Gary preferred to work in a wider field and so decided on a teaching career where he had the opportunity to enthuse and interest others in an understanding of biological sciences as part of their lives. For many years he taught subjects such as Horticulture, Agriculture, Biology and Environmental Science in the Technical School system. There was a great opportunity for 'hands on' teaching which, as he tells it, was fun for all concerned. With the advent of school amalgamations in Victoria, and in spite of a Science curriculum based on practical work, the range of subjects dwindled as High Schools sought to become competitive in offering the VCE, and so Gary began to look for somewhere where he could again enthuse and delight students who enjoy finding out for themselves outside of the classroom. For the last 18 months this has been as Manager of the Education Services Branch of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, after two years as an Education Co-ordinator.

Gary manages the education programs for primary, secondary and tertiary classes during school term time and for mainly pre-schoolers during school holidays. He and his team plan programs in response to relevant VCE requirements and Curriculum and Standards Frameworks as set out by the Education Department. Their busiest times are from March to May and October/November, and last year they dealt with about 22,000 school students and about 240 youngsters during the Peter Rabbit holiday program early this year. In fact, demand was so great for this program that another 240 were turned away and 500 enquiries were received! The emphasis is on finding out without using text books and technical jargon. Gary hopes the participants are stimulated to make further enquiries into the subject material when they leave the Gardens at the end of the session.

Another of Gary's responsibilities is to recruit and train casual teachers who help during peak session times. Two such programs for the near future are the *Belonging* exhibition of Jeannie Baker's work in Domain House, and the use of the kitchen garden in the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden (IPFCG). For the Domain House exhibition, professional development sessions for school teachers will focus on growing things and looking after the environment. Programs aim at encouraging students to roll up their sleeves and enjoy themselves.

Photo: Meg Miller

The Education team has had input into the planning of the IPFCG since its inception, including development of the Garden, program planning for school groups and planting themes. They are enthusiastically watching the Garden take shape ready for the opening later this year.

In the meantime Gary, a one-time collector of insects and spiders both dead and alive, is a keen gardener and a rabid Richmond supporter.

*Meg Miller*

# FUNGIMAP

## Putting Australian Fungi On The Map

Fungimap commenced in 1996 as a mapping scheme for Australian larger fungi, jointly supported by Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria. The initial aim was to rapidly improve the coverage and quality of information on the distribution of Australian fungi, a subject previously much neglected. Distribution and ecological data has been compiled for a set of 100 target species, which are all readily recognisable in the field, such as the vivid blue Mycena interrupta (Pixie's Parasol).

More than 15,000 records of the target species have been submitted. This data provides a much better picture of distribution than is available from Herbarium specimens. It turns out that many of the target species have very wide distributions, with some species found in both eastern and western Australia. This pattern was quite a surprise, and contrasts with that for flowering plants, where numerous species are restricted to particular regions (or even particular mountain ranges), such as occur, for example, in the south-west of Western Australia. The wide distribution

*Distribution of Mycena interrupta in south-eastern Australia and Tasmania.*
***Above:** Herbarium records (from Australia's Virtual Herbarium),*
***Below right:** Fungimap records.*

of fungi is good news for conservation, since habitat loss in one part of the range of a species will not be so devastating to the species as a whole. Intriguing questions remain, however, about the patchiness of distribution within the wider ranges, and what is different about the few fungi that are restricted.

The value of Fungimap has been recognised by arrangements to supply data to the Australian Heritage Commission, so that fungi can be adequately represented in biodiversity databases. The database is also proving valuable in detecting rare and restricted species and supporting nominations to conservation schedules. There are very few fungi listed on State or Commonwealth conservation schedules, mainly due to a lack of information about distribution and threats. Fungimap data has been used to support the recent nomination of Hypocreopsis 'Nyora' (Clasping Hypocreopsis) under the Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act, the first fungus to be so nominated. In addition, Fungimap establishes baseline data against which to measure effects of factors such as pollution and climate change.

Volunteers are vital to Fungimap. The records come from a network of hundreds of recorders across Australia. There are also voluntary Regional Co-ordinators in most states, including RBG's Honorary Associate Katrina Syme from Denmark, WA, whose splendid artwork was included in the recent *Nature's Art Revealed* exhibition in 2003. Fungimap has produced an award winning CD-ROM guide to the target species and a guidebook is in preparation, both largely put together by volunteers. Volunteers also assist in the Fungimap office with data entry and correspondence.

Fungimap started as a mapping scheme, but has grown to become a national organisation linking people with an interest in Australian fungi, especially from the point of view of conservation. There are now several regional fungi groups (such as the WA Fungi Study Group), and the activities of these groups are publicised and supported by Fungimap. Successful national Fungimap Conferences were held in 2001 and 2003. There is a free Fungimap Newsletter, with a recent issue (No.20) including a colour supplement illustrating target and other interesting species of fungi. There is also an extensive website (http://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/fungimap/) providing details of target species and other information. RBG Melbourne hosts the Fungimap office and Co-ordinator. Recent generous funding from the Friends will assist with continuation of the Co-ordinator position, a key role in organising Fungimap projects, volunteers and data.

If you would like to become involved in Fungimap, please contact:
Fungimap Co-ordinator
Royal Botanic Gardens
Melbourne
Private Bag 2000
South Yarra, Victoria 3141
fungimap@rbg.vic.gov.au

*Tom May*
***Fungimap Convenor***

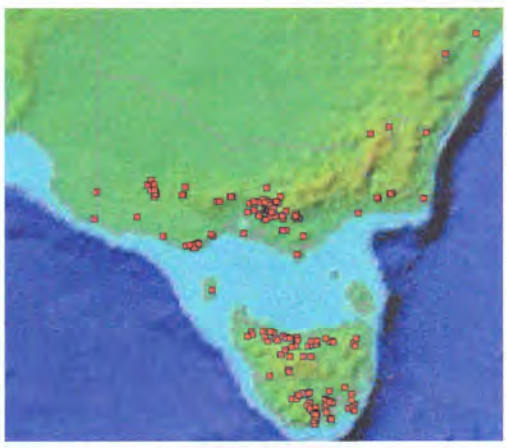


Photo: Meg Miller

## Vale Sir Rupert Hamer

When serving as Premier, Rupert Hamer was the inspirational 'father' of the Garden State, so it was most appropriate that in 1992 he became President of the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens.

He said at that time "I have loved these Gardens since I can remember anything, and they are without question one of Melbourne's proudest showplaces".

Sir Rupert, Premier of Victoria from 1972 to 1981, died on 23 March at the age of 87.

Early in 1992 he became chairman of a trust established by the *Herald-Sun*, resulting in a very successful fund-raising campaign to revitalise the Gardens. The RBG was in a period of transition. It had just achieved independent status with its own board and a new Director, and an urgent community drive was gaining strength to reverse the severe financial strain affecting the Gardens.

Sir Rupert's four years in office included the very busy 150th anniversary of the Gardens in 1996 — a period when the Friends achieved a heightened profile and a record membership. In July of that year the Friends held a lively party in Mueller Hall to celebrate Sir Rupert's 80th birthday. Then, as on many occasions, we were pleased to welcome Lady Hamer as well.

Sir Rupert was accorded Honorary Life Membership of the Friends in 1997, and was still serving as a member of our Council at the time of his death.

> "I have loved these Gardens since I can remember anything, and they are without question one of Melbourne's proudest showplaces".

He was an enthusiastic advocate for the role of the Friends, never more strongly than when he argued for our retention of the lakeside shop. Long-time Secretary Lawrence Cohn described Sir Rupert as "an exemplary President, interested in sticking to the rules, whose wise counsel was of great benefit". He will be fondly remembered as approachable, a brisk but tactful chair at Council meetings who was skilled in uniting people, and who often asked questions that revealed his vision and keen interest in the Friends. He was proud of the projects we undertook for the Gardens.

Director Dr Philip Moors has paid tribute to Sir Rupert's major contribution to the Gardens through his leadership of the Friends. "He showed great enthusiasm over many years for the Gardens as an important Melbourne cultural institution", he said.

Dr Moors, Friends' President Irwin Newman, Immediate Past President Sir Ninian Stephen and a number of Friends attended Sir Rupert's State Funeral on 30 March.

At the service a quotation from Tennyson's *Ulysses*, read by Sir Rupert's daughter Mrs Sarah Brenan, included these words:

"How dull it is to pause, to make an end, to rust unburnished, not to shine in use!"

Sir Rupert shone in use, brilliantly.

*Heather Ironmonger*

*(Heather was Editor of* Botanic News *and a Council Member during Sir Rupert's presidency.)*

## Calls For Volunteers

Can you spare some time? **Extra caterers** are sometimes necessary for large functions. If you are interested in joining this exalted band, please contact the Friends' office on 9650 6398 for further information.

Volunteers are also needed to help staff an exhibition of the collage artwork from Jeannie Baker's new children's book *Belonging*. The exhibition will be held in Domain House from 25 June to 7 September. Those interested are asked to contact the Friends' office on 9650 6398.

## HISTORIC TASMANIA – WINE AND ROSES

Would you like to join the Friends on a six-day trip to Tasmania, specifically designed for people who love gardens, private historic mansions, roses, gourmet food and wine, plus beautiful places to stay and at a leisurely pace? Following the success of our W.A. Wildflower Tour, Merryle Johnson, of Country Farm Perennials, in consultation with the Friends, has designed a tour to Tasmania in November. Please look for the flyer enclosed with this newsletter; alternatively phone the Friends' office on 9650 6398 for further details.

## Australian Native Plant Tapestries

Margaret Stones, an Australian botanical artist of international renown, has designed two tapestries depicting Victorian native plants for Government House in Melbourne.

They were commissioned by Lady Marigold Southey AM, Victoria's Lieutenant-Governor, to honour Lady Delacombe. As the wife of Sir Rohan Delacombe, Governor from 1963 to 1974, Lady Delacombe suggested to Premier Hamer that a tapestry workshop be established in Melbourne; he made her vision a reality.

Now the collaboration between the internationally acclaimed workshop and the distinguished botanical artist has resulted in two striking, modern group flower portraits. Each measures 1.4m x 2.1m.

Images include the grass tree, various orchids, violets, bluebells, buttercups, daisies and billy buttons. At the suggestion of one of the weavers who has a horticultural background, Margaret incorporated the Latin and common names of each plant in her design. She took about three months to create the design, and then three weavers worked at the looms for another four months to produce the tapestries.

Margaret spent 50 years in London undertaking commissions from leading botanical institutions all over the world. After retiring to Melbourne almost two years ago she joined the Friends of the RBG.

Initially she rejected Lady Southey's commission; she felt it would be very different from anything she had done before, and was somewhat intimidated by the prospect. Fortunately, she had second thoughts, accepted the challenge and designed two strong works that, with a degree of artistic licence, interpret wonderfully the colour and beauty of Victorian wildflowers.

*Heather Ironmonger*

*This photograph was taken while the tapestry was still a work in progress*



The Autumn sale on 20 and 21 March was a pleasant surprise. Despite continuing worries about the drought, sales were up on the corresponding sale last year, netting $23,000. The Succulents and 'Aussies' were the stand-out performers. Buyers were very interested in water-wise plants and we expect that interest to continue.

The success of the sales is due to the efforts of many contributors, notably the gardeners and other volunteers. The Gardens' staff assist with the transfer of stock to the sales area and the return of unsold plants to the nursery; they also do the layout of the various areas and provide staff for the information desk. Without their help sales would be virtually impossible. The sales tent volunteers do a difficult job with efficiency and good humour. Their assistance is invaluable.

*Photo: Meg Miller*

The Spring sale is scheduled for 9 and 10 October 2004.

As mentioned previously, the Growing Friends Horticultural Committee advises on materials suitable for propagation. The main criteria are saleability, the avoidance of plants with weed potential, varietal rights prohibitions or collected in the wild.

The proposed selection is presented to the Herbarium. Staff advise on which plants on the list have weed potential. This aspect of our operation is becoming increasingly important as we learn more about the damage done to the environment by weeds. We no longer stock some old favourites because they have proven weed potential.

Imported seed is vetted by the same process and, if it passes, imported through the normal plant quarantine.

I relinquished the job of Convener on 31 May. May I take the opportunity to record my thanks to the Members of the Growing Friends for their friendship and support during the last two years. The group is strongly focussed on the primary goal of gaining funds for the Gardens and its activity is characterised by great industry and cheerfulness.

We are deeply grateful to the staff in the Friends' office, the Friends' committee members and their groups and the horticultural staff of the Gardens.

I will be writing a few less reports and getting my hands dirty more often at the potting benches. Sounds great to me!

*Colin Herbert, **Convener***

# ACTIVITIES

## Winter Quarterly Insiders' Walk: A Visit to the Historic Plant Craft Cottage

Thursday 24 June at 10.00am sharp.
Meet at Gate Lodge (opposite the Shrine)
Cost: $10 Members Only.
Payment must accompany booking as this is a restricted number event.
RSVP by Monday 21 June on enclosed booking form

The Plant Craft Cottage, built in 1851, has a unique historic position in the RBG. It is on the Victorian Heritage Register for its historical and architectural significance – "the oldest building in public gardens in Victoria".

On this walk we will hear all about the history of the cottage and the range of crafts using plants as their basic materials, which are offered in various workshops and view samples of the work. The Mueller Resource Centre, an excellent library and the pretty cottage garden will also be of interest.

A Voluntary Guide will escort the walk to and from the Plant Craft Cottage. A delicious morning tea will be served at Gate Lodge prior to the walk.

*Photo: Mark Schapper*

## Trust For Nature

**ILLUSTRATED TALK**
by Dr Michael Looker
Thursday 8 July
at 6.00 for 6.30pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium
Cost: $15 Friends $10
RSVP by Monday 5 July on enclosed booking form

Join us for a glass of wine and savouries before the talk.

Ecosystems in Australia have been heavily disturbed and fragmented since European settlement. In Victoria, more than 65 per cent of land is privately owned. Of this, only five per cent is natural bush, isolated remnants or islands of habitat within a sea of cleared land. Many endangered animals and threatened species exist in these remnants, disconnected from larger areas of habitat.

Broadening our horizons and thinking beyond isolated remnants of bush has been the focus of Trust for Nature's recent planning and work. Emerging from this process is a new vision for Victoria's landscapes. Come and hear Dr Michael Looker, Director of *Trust for Nature*, expand on this vision to ensure the protection of the Victorian environment as a whole.

## The Edible Garden

**TALK**
by Beverley Sutherland Smith
Well known chef, food writer and raconteur
Wednesday 28 July
at 10.30 for 11.00am
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium
Cost: $20 Friends $15
RSVP by Friday 23 July on enclosed booking form

A delicious morning tea will be served before the talk.

Beverley Sutherland Smith has been running a cooking school in Melbourne for 38 years. Her entire career is food related, with 27 cooking books published plus over 20 years of working in print, radio and television. Her garden is a new passion. Known as 'The Edible Garden' it has been developed to show the variety of produce which can be grown, while keeping a beautiful vision of greenery, flowers and herbs for those who may think a vegetable garden is productive but dreary. As well as a Mediterranean section, heritage crops are grown and there is now an Asian section.

Hopefully the garden not only appears beautiful, but creates inspiration in the kitchen. Beverley will bring along a number of unusual herbs plus some products made from the garden such as rose petal vinegar, oils and other delicacies.

# ACTIVITIES

## Winter Fit Friends Ramble: Tapestries, Treasures of the City

Tuesday 10 August at 9.30am sharp
Meet in the Foyer of St Vincent's Hospital
Victoria Parade, East Melbourne
Cost: $10 Friends $5.
Limited numbers, so book early.
Payment must accompany booking
RSVP by Thursday 5 August
on enclosed booking form

The Friends have already visited the Tapestry Workshop where weavers work with a palette of 370 different shades to create monumental works of contemporary art. For those with a love of tapestries and walking, join us on a tour of seven tapestries in the heart of Melbourne. We will view designs by Murray Walker, Marie Cook, Michael Meszaros, Albert Tucker and Roger Kemp, whose artistic talents have been skilfully woven into magnificent tapestries. We will stop and take morning tea (at own expense) during the walk near the Block Arcade. We will be walking all morning so please wear comfortable shoes and be prepared for all weather conditions (public transport will be taken if weather very inclement). We should return to the vicinity of St Vincent's by 1pm.

## Houses and Gardens of the English West Country

**ILLUSTRATED TALK**

by Caroline Davies
Thursday 2 September
at 6.30 for 7pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium
Cost: $20 Friends $15
RSVP by Monday 30 August
on enclosed booking form

Caroline's talk will focus on the rural counties of Devon, Somerset and Cornwall – an area filled with history, and rich in houses and gardens where some families have lived continuously for centuries. Many of these are private estates which do not open to the general public and belong to fascinating and eccentric individuals, as well as talented gardeners.

To give balance, Caroline will discuss smaller gardens which have much to offer in the way of diverse plant material, design and individuality. Also included are some of her favourite well-known gardens, including Trebah in Cornwall, East Lambrook Manor, created by the legendary Margery Fish, and Marwood Hill, the late Dr Jimmy Smart's masterpiece in North Devon.

Join us for a glass of wine and savouries before the talk.

## Spring Fit Friends Ramble

**WILDFLOWER WALK AND PICNIC**

at the RBG Cranbourne
Thursday 16 September
at 10.00am sharp
Cost: $8 Friends $5
RSVP by Wed 8 September
on enclosed booking form.
Payment must accompany booking
Please wear comfortable walking shoes and bring hats, drinks and morning snacks.
A reasonable level of fitness will be necessary as the walk is long.

Join us on this self-drive ramble to see the Cranbourne Botanic Gardens at the peak of their wildflower time, and catch up with our Cranbourne Friends. We plan to meet first at the Visitor Pavilion near the Stringybark Picnic Ground. The Cranbourne Friends will guide us on a walk that will encompass the beautiful Spring wildflower highlights as well as viewing the construction and changes to the new Australian Garden. On our return to the picnic ground we will be treated to a BBQ picnic lunch by the Cranbourne Friends (BYO drinks). After lunch you may return home at your leisure, taking further walks in the Gardens if you wish.

To get to the RBG Cranbourne take the Monash Freeway/South Gippsland Highway through Cranbourne to the Gardens (Melway Map 133). Take the Ballarto Road exit and drive to the entrance to the Cranbourne Gardens. From there drive to the Stringybark Picnic Area and park in the car park adjacent to the entrance.

# ILLUSTRATORS

## Botanical Illustrators Quarterly Meeting

**ATTENTION ALL ARTISTS**

Tuesday 10 August at 10.00am
Whirling Room Studio
Cost: $5.50 Pay on the day
RSVP Friends' office, 9650 6398

You are invited to come to an informal meeting with paintings being prepared for the forthcoming *Art of Botanical Illustration 2004* exhibition.

This is your chance to discuss your work, ask questions about the forms, to talk to other artists and hear about future plans.

## Whirlybirds

say "thank you" to our retiring librarian, Isobel Allan, who has so diligently catalogued and cared for our reference books over many years.

Meeting each Tuesday in the Whirling Room Studio, the Whirlybirds are a group of Friends who gather in a relaxed and supportive atmosphere to paint and share ideas, information and the joys of botanical illustration.

If you would like more information regarding this group, ring Miriam Blight on 9583 6098.

## Classes

**TERM 3 CLASSES**

will commence the week beginning 19 July 2004. Classes will be held on Tuesday evenings and in the daytime on Mondays, Wednesdays (two sessions), Fridays and Saturdays.

Prices range from $195 per 8-week term.

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

Wildlife Art Society Of Australasia Inc (WASA) Annual Exhibition 2004
2-10 October at Victorian Artists Gallery, 430 Albert St, E Melbourne.
WASA is keen to increase representation of botanical artists as exhibitors and Society members.
Enq: Beverley Graham 9571 3886 (ph/fax) after 10.00am

## The Art of Botanical Illustration Exhibition 2004

6 - 21 November
New Venue – Domain House

Selection of works for this exhibition will be done from **27 - 30 September** in Mueller Hall, National Herbarium. **Please note: these dates differ from those previously advertised.**

Entry forms for those wishing to submit works for selection will be available from 1 July. Please collect these 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 10 September.

**Prospective exhibitors please note carefully that some requirements have changed since the last exhibition:**

We encourage artists to submit works for selection **unframed** rather than framed, for ease of handling in the selection process, to reduce the risk of damage to the framing and to allow selected artworks to be photographed prior to framing.

Interstate and overseas artists may submit quality 35mm slides of their work for selection.

All selected works for this exhibition will be available for viewing and for sale on the Friends' website.

A reminder: exhibitors must be financial members of the Friends before the commencement of the exhibition and should join, at the latest, when presenting works for selection.

There will be an entry fee this year of $15 per person.

Preview and opening reception will be held on Friday 5 November.

## Two-day Drawing Workshop

With Mali Moir 7 and 8 July.
10.00am - 3.00pm
Cost: $120 (Friends $100)

This drawing workshop is developed from the teachings of Nicolaides, wholly consisting of exercises to help you draw, feel and understand your subject and not simply 'get the idea' and 'finish' a drawing. The aim of these lessons is to try to develop artists' abilities. Suited to beginners and advanced students of any medium and style, exercises cover contour, gesture, weighted and modelled drawing.

## Botanic Birds

It is now winter and all the birds are quiet, gathering strength for the coming Spring. There is one group of birds that is seldom talked about except in a disparaging way. They are the exotics. The introduced birds. The birds which, with few exceptions, are absolute pests.

The early settlers found Australia quite alien. Everything was different. There were no recognizable trees and shrubs and they pined for a familiar bird song, for they had yet to appreciate the glorious carol of the magpie and lovely song of the warblers.

An Acclimatisation Society was formed with the idea of bringing to Australia certain birds and animals which would be "useful, and in the case of the birds, their song, would provide a nostalgic link with 'home'".

The following exotic birds are found in The Royal Botanic Gardens:

**Mallard:** Introduced into Victoria in the 1860s and occasionally recorded in the RBG, but rarely seen now. Interbreeds with Black Duck and is regarded as a threat to the Australian species.

**Domestic Duck:** In Victoria from earliest times. A single bird has been resident in the RBG for some years now and is occasionally joined by two or three others.

**Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon):** Brought to Australia by the earliest settlers but not recorded in the RBG until pre-World War II.

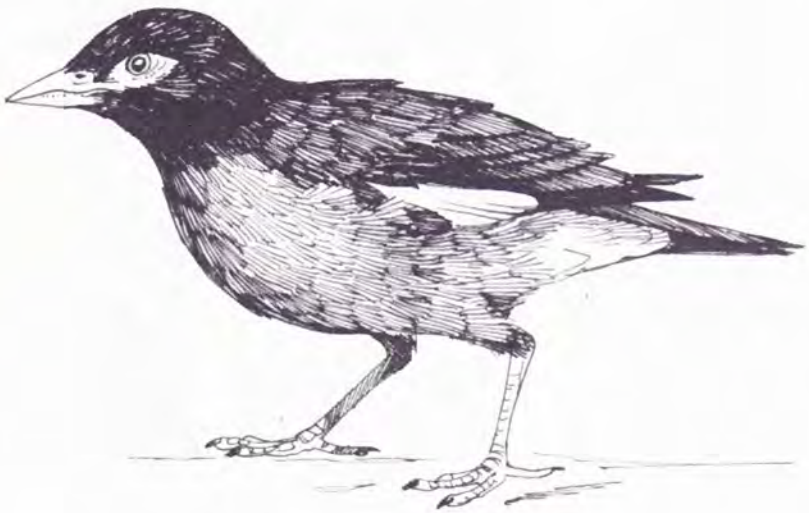


*Illustration of Indian Myna by Andrew Plant*

**Spotted Turtle Dove:** Native to south-east Asia, this bird was also not recorded in the RBG until pre-World War II. There is now a widespread established population in the Gardens.

There is one group of birds that is seldom talked about except in a disparaging way.

**House Sparrow:** This common Sparrow is native to Eurasia and northern Africa. The RBG population is active, especially around the Tea-house and the Observatory Cafe. It was not seen here until pre-World War II. Its close relation, the Tree Sparrow, was once quite common but has not been noted for some years now.

**European Greenfinch:** Again not recorded in the RBG until pre-World War II. There is a small colony located around the Hopetoun Lawn, although it is rarely sighted during autumn and winter.

**European Goldfinch:** Native to Eurasia and northern Africa, the Goldfinch is an infrequent visitor to the RBG.

**Red-Whiskered Bulbul:** Native to south-east Asia, this bird was introduced to Melbourne in 1915. There was a small resident population in the RBG for many years. However it has not been recorded since 2001.

**Common Blackbird:** The Blackbird was introduced to southern Victoria in the 1850s. It was not, however, recorded in the RBG until some years later. There is now a strong population in the Gardens which can usually be seen on most of the lawns.

**Song Thrush:** Also introduced to Victoria at the same time as the Blackbird (and not recorded in the RBG for some years). Its musical springtime call rings through the RBG.

**Common Starling:** Also introduced to Victoria at the same time as the Blackbird (and not recorded in the RBG for some years). Native of Europe and western Asia. Generally regarded as a menace by all and sundry, as is the Common Myna.

**Common Myna:** Native of India and southern China, also introduced to Victoria at the same time as the Blackbird (and not recorded in the RBG for some years). Again, a relatively small population in the Gardens.

*David Plant / Tony Delves*

I have an appalling nose. I don't mean that in the vigneron's sense, nor necessarily in the actual appearance ('distinctive' is a descriptor that I prefer to use).

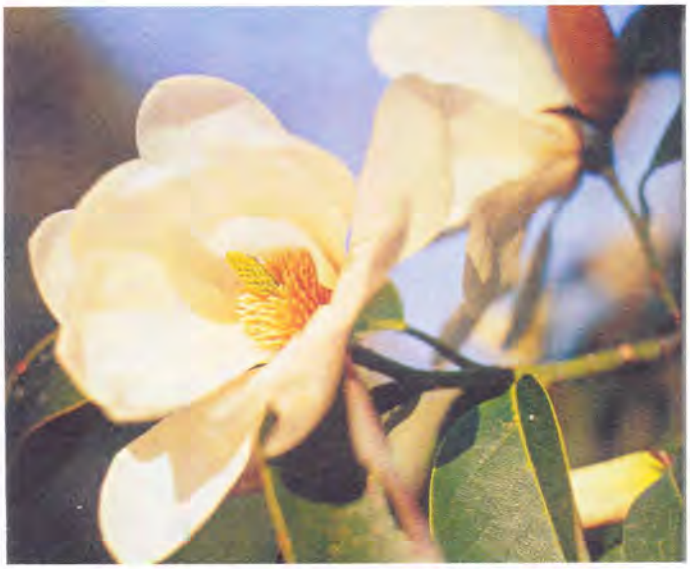
I mean that I don't have a particularly acute sense of smell. Fragrances at the subtle end of the scale by-and-large escape my attention. I may even pass through some of the more pungent eye-wateringly powerful smells with little more than a slight twitching of the nostril. This can be a great asset in life – the removal of the festering remains of a possum in the roof, for example, could only be carried out with good humour by one for whom the olfactory experience is kept to a minimum. Unfortunately this does rather leave one open for immediate preselection for such tasks, for the reasons I have mentioned. A reputation for being the one to deal with such things is not easily forgotten, sadly.

Anyway – be that as it may, I have found that having a dysfunctional sense of smell has led me to appreciate all the more those plants that do manage to penetrate the family nose, delivering their message of atmospheric appeal despite the challenges. One of the delights of wandering in the Gardens is that, throughout the year, there is always something of seasonal prominence to hang one's hat on. I have previously sung the praises of *Michelia champaca* for its late-summer fragrance (and continue to do so), various *Rosa rugosa* cultivars (such as *R. 'Rosariae de l'Hay'*) produce the goods through spring and summer, and it is hard not to be impressed by the winter contribution of various Luculias such as *Luculia gratissima* or *L. grandifolia*, and the charms of *Chimonanthus praecox* (Allspice). One of my personal favourite smells is that of the native Mint-bush (*Prostanthera melissifolia* or *P. lasianthos*) after a shower of rain – the quintessential bush smell, in my book!

The sweet tropical aromatic luxury of *Solandra maxima* (Golden Chalice Vine) lends some credence to the folk-tale that it is one of the world's most powerful aphrodisiacs. While this last point has not yet been verified, it certainly focusses the attention of visiting secondary school groups, who upon hearing this reference address the species with new respect.

I had a particularly memorable experience late last summer when I poked the problematic proboscis into a fresh flower of *Magnolia grandiflora*. The spicy-lemon-sorbet fragrance was almost too good to believe. I would have stayed a lot longer, just enjoying the sensory moment, had I not become the object of attention from a fairly forthright bee, and then the main amusement for some tourists, apparently impressed by my evasive manoevres.

One of the aspects of the Magnolia that really took me was that it wasn't just a 'plain' lemon fragrance. That is not to say that there is anything inferior about things which taste or smell of lemon. A number of plants exhibit



lemony-ness. *Backhousia citriodora*, for example, could not be more lemony. Various pelargoniums are similarly lemonate. I remember one of our Garden's horticulturists responding to the demanding enquiry of a home gardener about selecting a plant that smelt of lemon. "I know of such a plant", the staff member noted... "it's called a *lemon*!"

But it is the Lemon-scented Gum (*Corymbia citriodora*, which used to be *Eucalyptus citriodora* until it fell victim to taxonomic adjustment) which I really wish to highlight. I have been working for the past few weeks in Observatory House, which is adjacent to the Observatory Gate and Visitor Centre. In the course of coming and going through the northern door at the rear of the building, I have been passing by a young specimen of Lemon-scented Gum. We planted this one when the landscape was redeveloped in 1998-99. It is now already about ten metres tall, and growing terrifically well. Early on it had looked a bit miserable, and it was only the threat of removal and replacement with a more enthusiastic contributor that seemed to goad it into vigour.

The real pleasure is to pass by this tree each day, and to experience the aroma for which it has been named. A quick scan of the internet (is there any such thing as a quick scan?) tells me that the chemicals which deliver the goods in this department are a mixture of cis - and trans-p-methane-3,8-diols, which look something like $C_{10}H_{20}0_2$. "Of course", I hear you say, "what else would you expect?" A little further research reveals that while one may have thought that the Lemon-scented Gum was a native of south-east Queensland, various other parts of the world claim it as their own. One can purchase small vials of *C. citriodora* oil from 'wild populations' in India, and also in Brazil! How naïve of me to think it was just Australian!

As a child, I remember being advised that the leaves of

the Lemon-scented Gum when crushed up and rubbed on the skin act as a first-class mosquito repellent. I have employed the services of leaves for this purpose many times, and I can vouch for its effectiveness. Some other plants with similar 'citronella' fragrance also seem to work in this way.

Leave aside the aromatic accomplishments of the Lemon-scented Gum for a moment, and stand back for a look at the contribution this species makes within the landscape. Around Melbourne there are a number of outstanding examples: in the roundabout at the top of Swanston Street near the Melbourne Cemetery, at the bottom end of Flemington Road near the junction of Mount Alexander Road, in the area behind the student amenity building at Burnley College, and behind the carpark at the rear of the Observatory Building, to name just a few. Each of these trees is aesthetically intriguing and characteristically individual. Throughout the year, the colours of the smooth bark change, from pinks to creams to light salmon-orange tones, providing a striking complement to the built features of the city. Their sinuous branches become adorned with whitish flowers though the middle of Winter, adding the symbolic icing to what is already a very satisfactory offering from the botanical kitchen.

The Lemon-scented Gum has brought pleasure to many for its fragrance, looks and anti-mosquito stance. Its scent has penetrated the family nose, and I am much happier for it.

Certain parties keep insisting that one should have the nose 'fixed', and perhaps I should... but who amongst us would then rally to the call to dispatch the decomposing possum in the roof?

*Richard Barley*

Photo: Meg Miller

*The Corymbia citriodora in the Observatory carpark - a beautiful tree*

## The Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden

The opening date for the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden is expected to be late October. Information about the activities planned for the opening will be included in the Spring edition of Botanic News.

The first Children's Kitchen Garden crop is thriving, and some pumpkins and gourds have now been picked and are looking very tasty. The bamboo plant climbing frame through the Kitchen Garden has been completed, and planting of perennials and herbs which will be mature at the time of the Garden's opening has commenced in the Kitchen Garden. The landscape contractors left the Children's Garden site in May, and the irrigation contractors returned to the site around the same time to continue the lateral pipework and the sprinkler fit-off for the irrigation system. Then Gardens' staff gained access to the site to continue the enormous task of planting, gravel paving, erection of the external fence, completion of the potting shed and erection of the glasshouse. We continue to be grateful for the Friends' generosity in donating the funds for the irrigation system.

Adult visitors may feel a twinge of jealousy when admiring the Bamboo forest and the *Phormium* tunnel where children can hide successfully (but temporarily) from those in authority. Those who asked about the coloured paper hanging from the bottle trees will be pleased to know the strips were a contractor's *aide-memoire* so that drivers of heavy machinery could avoid damaging the trees.

Earlier in the year the RBG took delivery of an ancient Red Gum trunk, estimated to be between 5000 and 10,000 years old. The tree was loaded via a delicate crane operation and has now been placed into its new home in the Rainforest/ Ruin Garden in the Children's Garden. The tree was donated to the RBG by *Australian Ancient Red Gum* and was sourced from a quarry site in the Albury region. It is believed to have been buried thousands of years ago, and was discovered during the mining of gravel and sand from the quarry. The Children's Garden will have a strong educative focus, and the story behind the ancient Red Gum will now form part of that focus.

Finally, the Magic Pudding Sculpture has been moved into its permanent home in the Children's Garden. The popular sculpture is currently hidden from view but can be enjoyed again when the Children's Garden opens.

*Philip Moors / Andrew Laidlaw*

# CRANBOURNE FRIENDS

## Friends Of The Royal Botanic Gardens, Cranbourne

### WINTER LECTURE SERIES

**DAY 1**

Sunday 30 May at 1.30 for 2.00pm
Venue: Mueller Hall, National Herbarium, Birdwood Ave, South Yarra (Melway 2G:A12)

Helen Richards, a renowned grower of Australian terrestrial orchids will inspire us with a talk on The Scented Donkey Orchid Recovery Program. A research student will accompany Helen and will be involved in the presentation.

Dr Beth Gott, Honorary Research Associate, Department of Biological Sciences, Monash University has spent many years researching Australian bush foods and has worked on projects with Koori people. Beth will talk on bush foods and their management.

**DAY 2**

Sunday 11 July at 1.30 for 2.00pm
Venue: City Of Casey Offices, Patrick Northeast Drive, Narre Warren (Melway 110 D 4)

Dr Wendy van Doek is proprietor of Water Efficient Landscapes and author of *The Water Efficient Garden: a Guide to Sustainability Landscaping in Australia.* Wendy has opened her garden to the public on many occasions. She will talk on sustainable gardening and landscape.

Dr Alan Yen is from the Department of Primary Industries and formerly of the Melbourne Museum and Department of Natural Resources and Environment. Alan is one of Australia's most knowledgeable people on an often misunderstood group of animals known as invertebrates. His topic for the day is *There is more to the world of insects than just Louey the Fly.*

**DAY 3**

Sunday 15 August at 1.30 for 2.00pm
Venue: Cranbourne Public Hall, South Gippsland Highway, Cranbourne (Melway 133: J 4)

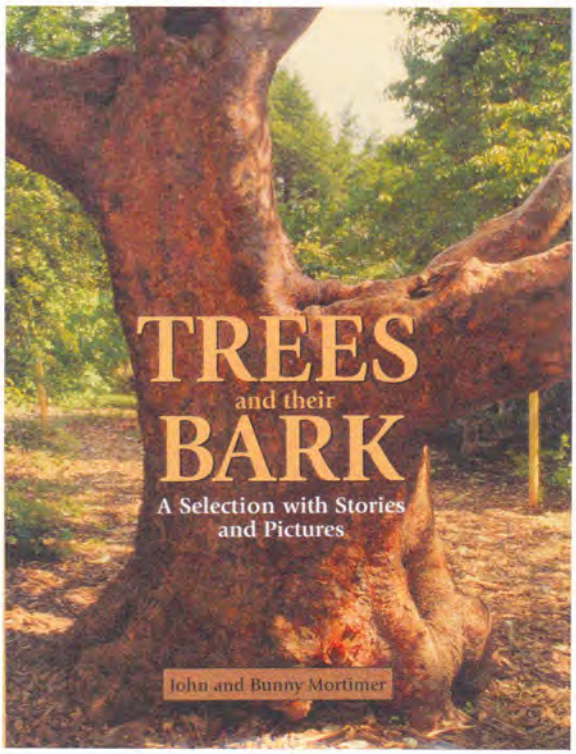
Gerry Marantelli from the Australian Amphibian Research Centre will enlighten us on the *Frogs Of Melbourne* and their incredible value for monitoring the health of urban areas. Gerry is recognised as one of Australia's foremost frog researchers.

Nick Williams, the Research Officer at the Australian Centre for Urban Ecology at RBG Melbourne and one of the co-authors of the recently published and highly acclaimed *Indigenous Plants of the Sandbelt,* will speak to us about Melbourne's Grasslands.

BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL
Contact Royal Botanic Gardens
1000 Ballarto Road, Cranbourne
9.00am – 5.00pm weekdays
Phone: 5990 2200
Email: rbgc@rbg.vic.gov.au
Cost per day: $12 per person
($10 for Members of Friends of RBG Cranbourne or Melbourne)
Cost per series: $30 per person
(payable at first lecture on 30 May)
($25 for Members of Friends of RBG Cranbourne or Melbourne)

All proceeds support projects at RBG Cranbourne

# BOOK REVIEW




## Trees and their Bark: A Selection with Stories and Pictures

John and Bunny Mortimer

Taitua Books, New Zealand, 2003
rrp $45.00

If you have ever waxed lyrical over the cinnamon coloured, papery bark of *Acer griseum*, (the paper bark maple), or planted a *Lagerstroemia* (Crepe Myrtle) for its bark as well as its flowers, this may be the book for you!

Many of us, when we look at a tree, are concerned primarily with its form. After dipping into this book and looking at the beautiful photographs collected by the authors on their travels around the world, bark may become one of things we look for — probably not a bad thing as it often tends to be a longer-lasting feature than flowers or some leaves.

The authors, who established the Taitua arboretum in Hamilton NZ, have conjured their collection of photos — from *Acer* to *Zelkova* — into this very beautiful book. They have supplemented these photos with a commentary about each particular tree that, while not overly technical, allows the reader to gain knowledge as well as enjoyment. A Photo Location Index helps the reader to identify the location of each.

Reading this book, I certainly gained a new perspective – I may never look at a tree the same way again!

*Terri Kay*

# FRIENDS BENEFITS

The Gardens Shops offer 10 percent 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, Port Melb.
589 Glenferrie Rd, Hawthorn
5% off plants only

**Berna Park Nursery**
cnr Park Rd/Paul St, Cheltenham.
5% discount off plants

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

**Town and Country Gardens**
1280 Malvern Rd, Malvern
24 Whitehorse Rd, Balwyn
10% off plants over $20 only.

**Holmesglen Nursery**
585 Waverley Rd, Glen Waverley
5% off everything

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

**Collectors Corner**
Springvale Rd, Keysborough
10% off all plants

**Kew Nursery**
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10% discount

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1067 High St, Armadale
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via Daylesford. Ph: 5424 1821
10% discount on accommodation

**Killarney Cottage B&B Sorrento**
Ph: 5989 2729. 10% discount on 6-person self-catering accommodation

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

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

**Cloudehill Nursery**
89 Olinda-Monbulk Rd, Olinda
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We invite you to join the Friends and help us grow. See back page for application form. Subscribing Friends support the work of the National Herbarium and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne. Benefits include:

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Botanical Photography
Attend talks, lectures, behind-the-scenes visits, guided walks, social events, day trips and extended tours.

**Botanical Illustrators**
Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced classes available

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

**Volunteers**
are always welcome.
Contact Gate Lodge for details.

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*I would like details of:* ☐ *Life Membership*
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FRIENDS of the ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS MELBOURNE INC.

# BOTANIC NEWS

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


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Print Post Approved
PP 345842/10025
A12827T

ISSN 08170-650

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