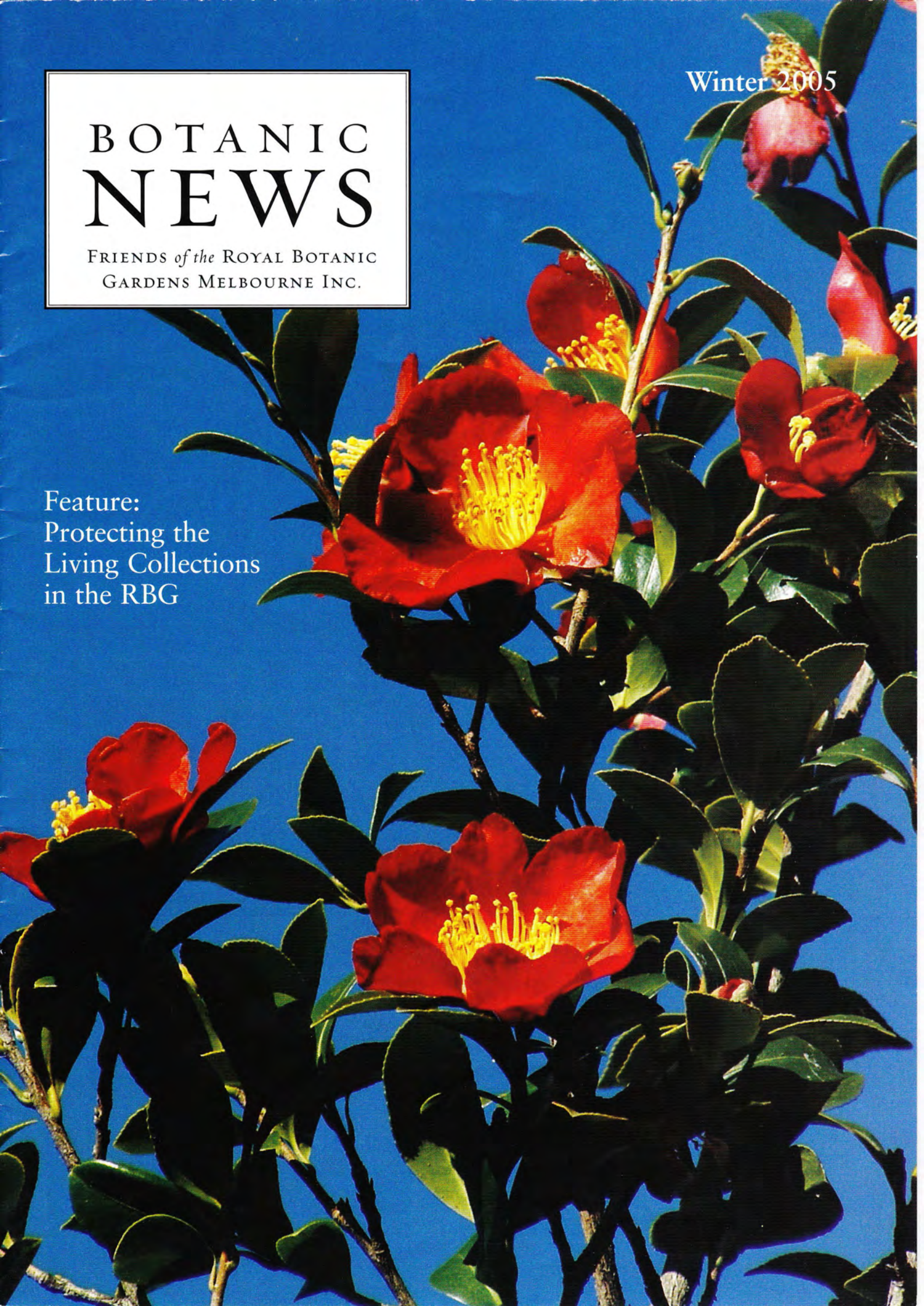


Winter 2005

BOTANIC NEWS

FRIENDS *of the* ROYAL BOTANIC
GARDENS MELBOURNE INC.

Feature:
Protecting the
Living Collections
in the RBG



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Autumn brought with it beautiful colours in the Gardens, making walking there even more of a pleasure. The successful Growing Friends' Plant Sale featured its expected range of plants in superb condition, despite heat, wind and rain, ensured that a large number of shoppers left the Gardens well-laden and looking very happy. Over \$22,000 was raised and our congratulations go to all the hard-working Growing Friends and the other volunteers who helped in many ways on the sale days. The Growing Friends continue to work very closely with Botanic Gardens staff to make sure that all plants propagated in their nursery do not have weed potential.

Life is never dull for our Activities Committee. Planning programs many months in advance, constantly on the look-out for interesting speakers, organising all the activities that Members enjoy, and thinking of new ones which will engage and delight, are all part of the day's work. In Spring 2003 the very successful Fit Friends' Rambles were introduced and this year 'Talking Plants' Coffee Mornings, which are informal gatherings of Friends with a common interest in plants and gardening. Following these Mornings, participants visit the Growing Friends' Nursery where they can peruse and purchase plants – the Growing Friends benefited by \$400 following the February Coffee Morning!

Early this year Cathy Trinca stood down as Convener of the Activities Committee, a role

which involves a very heavy workload, and her responsibilities in that regard are now being shared by Susie Brookes and Christine Harris. On behalf of all Members, I congratulate and thank Cathy for her work which she carried out with such skill and enthusiasm. My thanks go also to Susie and Christine for taking over such a challenging role. In the time that Cathy was convener of Activities she also handled much of the publicity for the Friends' activities and the Council is delighted that she has now chosen to expand this role, working closely with the Activities, Botanical Illustrators, Growing Friends and Membership committees to ensure that the Friends are in the public eye wherever and whenever possible. She will continue as an Activities committee member.

About sixty new Members attended the New Members' Welcome in March – a record number for such a Welcome. Everyone involved had a most enjoyable and happy evening. Our thanks as always to the Voluntary Guides who took our new Members on a tour of the Gardens after the function.

The greater the number of Friends, the more we can do for the Gardens and the more we can do to make our activities interesting and rewarding for Members. If every Friend persuaded another person to become a Member, our membership would double. Would you, as a Friend, try to recruit one Member this year?

Irwin Newman

Notes from Gate Lodge



Vale Eve Brunner

Our thanks to Beth Higgs, Foundation President of the Friends, whose tribute at the Annual General Meeting of the Friends in November 1996 to Eve Brunner when she retired from the Council, provides the basis for this tribute.

Eve Brunner OAM joined the newly-formed Friends shortly after our launch in 1982 and, after 20 years as Bursar of Ormond College, brought to us her energy, considerable expertise and unparalleled dedication. Very soon she was a member of the Friends' Council, serving as Vice-President for eight years in a total of ten years. She was awarded an Honorary Life Membership in 1991, and in 1999 was awarded the medal of the Order of Australia 'for service to the community, particularly through the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens (Melbourne).....'



Eve was a volunteer in our first commercial enterprise, the forerunner of our very successful Friends' shop, which we ceased to operate in 2000. For many years she convened the Activities sub-committee. It was fitting that the final event to receive the benefit of the Brunner expertise was the major social event of the 150th Anniversary of the Royal Botanic Gardens – the Grand Ball, held in the ballroom of Government House – a wonderful climax to Eve's years of service. Sponsored by the Gardens Board and organised by a committee jointly led by Eve, it was a truly magnificent success. In the early days, Eve was our voluntary 'money lady' – checking the Friends' budgets, watching expenses and always there to count the takings from the Growing Friends' Plant Sales. She was involved with *Botanic News* for many years.

The formation of the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens (Victoria) Inc., now an Australia-wide organisation, was perhaps the achievement closest to Eve's heart. She personally promoted the formation of Friends' groups for several regional gardens in Victoria.

Eve's gentle, quiet charm and dedication to the Friends and the Botanic Gardens endeared her to all. We honour her contribution and her friends will miss her.

Janet Thomson

Photo: Janet Thomson

FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

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Front cover: *Camellia sasanqua*
'Yuletide'. Photo: Jennifer Marshall

Back cover: *Coprinus comatus*
Shaggy Cap 1971 watercolour by
Stan Kelly OAM



Photos: Meg Miller

Plant Sciences Update

The Plant Sciences Branch has begun implementing the Plant Sciences Master Plan 2005-2009. This Plan was prepared in-house and then externally assessed, prior to being approved by the Royal Botanic Gardens Board in February 2005. The Master Plan documents the future directions of the Branch, with specifically targeted actions falling under the five headings of 'Understanding and Documenting Plant Diversity', 'Conserving Plant Diversity', 'Using Plant Diversity Sustainably', 'Promoting Education and Awareness about Plant Diversity' and 'Building capacity for the Conservation of Plant Diversity'. One exciting action in the Master Plan is the establishment of a partnership between RBG Melbourne and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, UK, via their international Millennium Seedbank Project. The project, which should commence later this year, aims to conserve Victorian indigenous, rare and threatened flora through long-term seed storage. It involves seed collection and the development of a seed storage facility at RBG Melbourne.

We were most fortunate to have Prof. Raymond Tremblay, Professor of Biology at the University of Puerto Rico, undertake his sabbatical leave at the National Herbarium from September 2004 until May 2005. Raymond has undertaken a great deal of work in Puerto Rico in the area of orchid population dynamics, and he spent time

assessing and analysing population data that had been collected for Victorian orchids. In February, he conducted a four-day Population Dynamics Workshop – 'Tools for understanding and conserving our Australian Flora', at RBG Melbourne. The workshop was attended by 25 conservation managers from Victoria, NSW and South Australia.

And finally, the launch on 11 March of the 'Forgotten Flora' project was the culmination of two year's work for RBG Melbourne scientists Dr Teresa Lebel and Dr Josephine Milne, who developed three educational CDs and 10 posters on the so-called 'forgotten flora', which encompasses non-vascular plants (bryophytes, liverworts, hornworts, mosses, lichens and fungi). The resources have been developed to assist students to understand the significance of these often overlooked organisms, which provide food and shelter for many indigenous animals and insects, and without whose presence many ecosystems would not survive.

Fire at RBG Cranbourne

After a controlled burn at RBG Cranbourne in late March, a flare-up occurred, starting a fire on Friday 1 April which continued into the next day. The fire spread into the Stringybark Picnic Area and then into grassland outside the south-east boundary of the Gardens. Some damage to facilities was sustained in the Stringybark Picnic Area but fortunately no injuries were sustained, and there was only one reported animal death.

The fire was attended by a large number of CFA crews, who, along with staff members from RBG Cranbourne, contained the fires on Saturday 2 April.

Controlled ecological burns are an important part of managing the landscape at RBG Cranbourne, and the Royal Botanic Gardens has a fire management plan that incorporates this control to maintain its heathland biodiversity. Controlled burns at RBG Cranbourne are managed by the CFA. The fires reduce the fuel load at RBG Cranbourne and aim to ensure that if, on days of high to extreme fire danger, a fire starts in or close to the Gardens and enters the Gardens, it does not spread outside the boundaries of the Gardens.

RBG Cranbourne was closed for a brief period during April to allow the site to be monitored and the burnt area to be cleaned up and the damage assessed.

Royal Botanic Gardens Markets

As I mentioned in the Summer 2004 edition of Botanic News, three markets were held over Summer/Autumn at RBG Melbourne, featuring botanically inspired handicrafts and healthy produce. Pleasing attendance figures were recorded at each market, particularly the third market on 19 March, when the weather was at its best. I will be sure to let the Friends know whether 'Markets in the Gardens' will become a regular feature on our Summer/Autumn calendar.

The Australian Garden

On 18 March, we were fortunate to have four generations of the Murdoch family visit the Australian Garden at RBG Cranbourne, which is progressing well. Pictured below, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, Patron of the Royal Botanic Gardens, was accompanied by Mrs Janet Calvert-Jones, her daughter, her grand-daughters Mrs Penny Fowler and Ms Julie Kantor and Georgina Fowler, her great-grand-daughter. Dame Elisabeth planted an Angophora to mark the occasion and her generous support for the Australian Garden project. The tree was planted at the head of the Rockpool Waterway, which showcases the beauty of water moving across a predominantly flat area. The Rockpool Waterway was commissioned on 5 April and is flowing beautifully.

Philip Moors, Director



Photo: Jo Fyfe

Eleanor Bridger is the RBG's Manager of Marketing and Communications. Her position includes management of corporate communications, such as the Annual Report, *Floreo*, brochures, and the 'brand management' of tourism and bequest brochures, children's garden guides, and seasonal and garden guides for both the Melbourne and Cranbourne Royal Botanic Gardens. Her concern is for how the organisation communicates with visitors and stakeholders and strong management of the visual identity supports this concern. Another aspect of the job is public relations, both for promoting activities and for issues management, such as the Flying Fox problems and the poisonous mushrooms sometimes found on the Oak Lawn. Media management of such issues can be initiated by the Gardens or be reactive to media inquiries and involves issuing press releases and can include arranging interviews or photographs. Eleanor's office also maintains a photographic collection of RBG activities.

Also part of Eleanor's responsibility is the management of market research within the Gardens. There will shortly be automatic counters at each of the entrances to both Melbourne and Cranbourne and the information will be fed into a database with links to the intranet for Gardens' staff use. A few years ago customer satisfaction research provided Gardens' staff with useful information about visitor needs

and expectations. Marketing also works closely with Information Services staff to develop the web site and web presence. Another role for the Marketing Branch is in product development of branded merchandise such as stationery, preserves and bed linen, in promoting the Gardens Shops and in promoting Tourism from the Gardens perspective. A major focus for the year ahead will be marketing the Australian Garden. Eleanor enjoys her work environment and says she is part of an enthusiastic and dedicated team.

Eleanor and her younger brother grew up in Singapore where she attended school until the age of twelve, then experienced schools in New Zealand, Kilmore and Seymour as their father travelled around with his family while employed by Ford selling tractors in Asia and New Zealand. Eleanor obtained an Arts degree from Melbourne University with Honours in History and a sub-Major in Politics, and then went on to complete a Masters degree in Public History. From there she joined the State Library as a Field Historian where she worked on an International Year of the Family oral history and photography project researching family ceremonies and celebrations. As this was a part time position, Eleanor also undertook additional projects in public history. She then joined the Victorian Government Graduate Scheme, where she was trained in various departments and gained a valuable insight into the workings of public



Photo: Geoff Rose

organisations. After a brief sojourn with the Education Department, Eleanor returned to the State Library where she became Manager of Communications, responsible for all official library publications, signage and media. During this time Eleanor gained a graduate certificate in Public Relations and a graduate diploma in Marketing.

For light relief Eleanor studied Italian for some time and is presently attending the Alliance Francaise learning conversational French. She has always ridden horses, and is currently training a horse in dressage to competition standard. Skiing and bike riding are also among Eleanor's interests and she has been cycle touring in Mexico, New Zealand and Victoria.

Eleanor says she and her husband maintain a Darwinian garden – survival of the fittest – and mostly Australian Natives. They live in Richmond, so many plants in the garden are indigenous to the lower Yarra and are watered from washing machine waste. With such a busy life, this would seem to be an ideal garden situation.

Meg Miller

GROWING FRIENDS



Salvia gesneriflora

Our 2005 Autumn Sale was held in the high heat of Summer. The strong northerly wind picked up the empty white boxes and hurtled them across the green; hats flew off, up and over; dogs barked; tablecloths were swept into bemused faces; pots fell over... and then it rained. It was a grand Sale displaying the full array of Melbourne's atmospheric conditions in one compact weekend – our congratulations and thanks to all those indefatigable Friends, visitors and Royal Botanic Gardens' staff with the 'Harvie Krumpet grit' to assist or purchase over the two days.

It has been said that gardeners can be divided into two categories; those who



Eucomis

collect plants for their individual qualities, and those who use them artistically to create living pictures. The variety of plants propagated by the Growing Friends for both our recent Autumn Sale and the forthcoming Spring Sale (8 and 9 October, 2005) should satisfy both groups.

Currently enlivening our nurseryscape are *Colocasia esculenta* 'Fontanesia'; *Eucomis*; several *Iris*; many interesting and bird-attracting *grevillea* and large numbers of *Salvia* and *Thyme* species. There are so many sensational plants! The Nursery is open to members on Fridays from 9.00am to 1.00pm – we hope you can visit us.

Pam Eames

Seaweed Helps Clean Up DDT

Seaweed is proving an unlikely but effective way of cleaning land contaminated by DDT. Although DDT is banned in the UK, the toxic pesticide is still used in 25 countries to combat malarial mosquitoes. If the technique using seaweed can be developed commercially, it may bring enormous health benefits to countries where malaria is rife.

Dr Ian Singleton, a biologist at Newcastle University, UK, decided to try using seaweed to break down DDT after experiments using sodium (a major constituent of the salt naturally present in seaweed) yielded positive results. Working with colleagues from Thailand and Australia, he found that too much seaweed hindered biodegradation, but a mix of 0.5 per cent seaweed by weight added to water-logged soil removed 80 per cent of the DDT present over six weeks.

"To understand how seaweed helps break down DDT, you have to imagine that the pesticide is locked in a box in the soil," he explains. "Essentially it becomes bonded

to the soil so that microbes can't access the compounds. What you have to do is open the box."

Adding a small amount of seaweed is effective as the sodium contained within it acts to break open the soil particles. This allows microbes to move in and break down the DDT.

Using higher proportions of seaweed proved less effective as extra carbon – the microbes' food source – is added with the sodium. The microbes then interact with the carbon from the seaweed rather than that in the DDT. A further complication is that adding more carbon puts more dissolved organic material in the soil, with which the DDT bonds, locking it away once more.

Although still at an experimental stage, several companies are interested in trying to use the technique on a commercial scale to clean up contaminated sites in the UK.

Carolyn Fry

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Salvia iodanthra



ACTIVITIES



The Chelsea Challenge

ILLUSTRATED TALK
by Jim Fogarty, Landscape Designer

Wednesday 15 June
at 6.00 for 6.30pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium
Cost: \$20 Friends \$15
RSVP by Friday 10 June
on enclosed booking form

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

After winning back-to-back
gold medals at every
Melbourne International
Flower and Garden Show, Jim
and his team were at a loss as
to what to do next. After some
brainstorming the solution
became obvious: why not pit
their skills against the best in
the world? Why not take their
award-winning garden to the
Olympic Games of horticulture
– The Chelsea Flower Show?

An animated and inspiring

speaker, Jim will share his
extraordinary experiences and
designing and building show
gardens in Australia, the
ultimate challenge at Chelsea
2004, where his garden won a
Silver Gilt Medal, as well as
Chelsea 2005, where he is a
team member on Julian
Dowle's twenty-sixth and last
Chelsea Show Garden on the
Main Avenue.

Signed copies of Jim's book
will be on sale.



Winter Fit Friends Ramble

Melbourne's Arcades and Lanes

Thursday June 23 at 10.00am sharp
Meet at the steps under the clocks
at Flinders Street Station
Cost: \$10 Friends \$8
RSVP by Monday 20 June
on enclosed booking form
Morning tea will be purchased at KoKo
Hot Chocolate (at own expense)

We will walk from Flinders
Street through the arcades and
lanes to La Trobe Street.

Melbourne's coffee and food
culture will be well displayed
on this walk. While we are not
shopping, many new and 'tres
chic' boutiques will be pointed
out before we catch the City
Circle tram at La Trobe Street
to the Docklands area.

There we will look at the

development of apartments,
restaurants, ferry and tram
services and cross south of the
river over the new award-
winning Webb Bridge. We'll
then walk back along the river
to St.Kilda Rd via Southbank.

On this strenuous three-
hour walk please wear
comfortable walking shoes,
bring a drink, and be able to
keep up a good walking pace.



Winter Quarterly Insiders Walk

**ASTRONOMICAL
BUILDINGS AT
OBSERVATORY GATE**

Wednesday 13 July at 10.00am sharp
Meet at Gate Lodge (opposite Shrine)
Cost: \$10 MEMBERS ONLY,
LIMITED NUMBERS
RSVP by Friday 8 July
on enclosed booking form

Payment must accompany booking as
this is a restricted numbers event

Barry Clark originally studied
engineering, physics and
optometry, but has been
fascinated by astronomy and a
member of the Astronomical
Society of Victoria for 50 years.

The ASV has a 20-inch
telescope, other facilities and
weekly activities at its society
rooms in Burwood. It is
developing the Leon Mow
Dark Sky Site north of
Melbourne, and for over 50
years the Society has played a
major role in the care of the

buildings and facilities at the
Old Melbourne Observatory.

Barry will take us on a tour
of the Observatory Gate site
and, in particular, the
telescopes. Depending on the
weather, we might have the
chance to look through the
telescopes set up to view the
sun (safely!) and its
prominences.

Join us for morning tea and
a brief information session at
Gate Lodge before the walk.

ACTIVITIES



Lighting Your Garden At Night

ILLUSTRATED TALK

by Amander Flaherty
Thursday 21 July
at 6.00 for 6.30pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium
Cost: \$20 Friends \$15
RSVP by Monday 18 July
on enclosed booking form

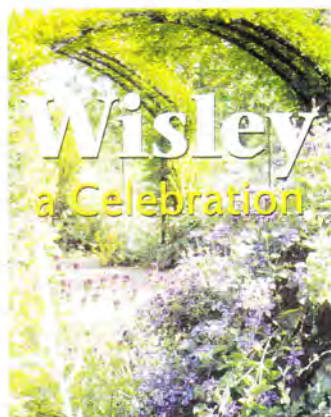
Please join us for a glass of wine and savouries before the talk.

Amander Flaherty is from 'Light on Landscape' an award-winning exterior lighting company that uses the nature of light to bring outdoor spaces alive after dark. Innovative designs and fittings can transform your garden into an alluring artwork, show off a building's architectural design or beckon you and your guests into your garden haven.

Lighting will allow you to enjoy your garden at night or

to create zones of light for you to experience after dark.

Discover how you can expand your living area and enjoy the natural beauty of your garden by both day and night.



Winter Video Show

Wednesday 3 August, 10.00am sharp
The Lodge, Melbourne Grammar School
355 St Kilda Road, Melbourne
Cost: \$18 Friends \$12
RSVP by Monday 25 July
on enclosed booking form

Numbers will be limited so book early to avoid disappointment.

Join us for a Winter treat in the delightful surroundings of the Lodge at Melbourne Grammar School. Morning tea will be served before viewing two fabulous videos. *Wisley, A Celebration: A hundred years of the famous Royal Horticultural Society Garden*, where millions have been inspired by dazzling displays and exciting plant collections. Then *La Mortella – Sir William*

Walton's Garden, designed by Russell Page on the island of Ischia, for the British composer and his wife Susana. This is an extraordinary collection of rare and exotic plants.

VCR and DVD copies of these, and many other superb films of garden and gardening, will be available for purchase on the morning, or orders may be placed. The Friends will receive 20 per cent of all sales!



Winter 'Talking Plants' Morning

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS

Friday 12 August at 10.30am
Meet at Gate Lodge (opposite Shrine)
Cost: \$5
Members are welcome to bring guests
RSVP by Monday 8 August
on enclosed booking form

Morning tea will be served during the morning

The Winter 'Talking Plants' theme will be Australian plants suitable for the home garden, with Linda Floyd, from the Growing Friends, who will discuss the morning's topic and make some interesting suggestions for us to ponder.

The morning will be held in the Gate Lodge garden (weather permitting) and will be an informal gathering of Friends with a common interest in plants and gardening.

All those attending are

invited to bring a piece of a favourite plant, Australian if possible, or a Winter 'Good Looker' to show and share information about.

Following the morning there will be the opportunity to visit the Growing Friends Nursery to peruse their range of plants.

ACTIVITIES



Canadian Gardens

ILLUSTRATED TALK

by Teena Crawford, Horticulturalist,
Gardening Writer and Broadcaster
Tuesday 23 August
at 10.30 for 11.00am
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium
Cost: \$20 Friends \$15
RSVP by Friday 19 August
on enclosed booking sheet

Join us for morning tea
before the talk.

Teena Crawford is well known as a gardening presenter, manager of a successful wholesale plant nursery and contributor to *The Age* and *Your Garden* magazine. Her vast horticultural knowledge and easy-going manner make her a huge success as a tour escort.

In July this year Teena will host A Canadian Garden Tour and will speak about it on her return. It will be a tour of a selection of gardens that are sure

to entice and inspire you, including a lovely assortment of private gardens along with the well-known gardens that continue to attract world attention.

Join Teena as she guides us through this magical visual garden tour.



Kyneton Daffodil Festival

BUS TRIP

Wednesday 7 September,
leaving 9.00am sharp from carpark
adjacent to Vision Australia,
Glenferrie Rd, Kooyong (Melways 59,
D3), returning approx. 5.00pm

Cost: \$58 (includes morning tea,
lunch, guide and all garden entries)
RSVP: Friday 26 August
on enclosed booking form

The Kyneton Daffodil Festival is a memorable experience: it appears to a visitor that the whole town is devoted to a glorious display of daffodils. The roadside verges, the parks and private gardens are planted with beautiful daffodils, which combined with spring blossom makes an overwhelming impact.

We will visit two gardens in the town and one garden of a renowned daffodil breeder on

the outskirts of Kyneton. The gardens highlight their daffodils, providing an opportunity to see and identify a range of these bulbs, many of which have been bred in the district. A guide will take us through the township giving the history of the splendid architecture and we will view other display gardens.

We will enjoy lunch at a delightful restaurant.



Wine and Roses in the Barossa Valley

BUS TOUR

Tuesday 15 November
to Sunday 20 November

Please phone Country Farm
Perennials on 5628 4202 to receive
a full itinerary and to make bookings

Early booking is recommended, as
the tour is filling fast

Following the success of our Tasmanian Wine and Roses Tour, Merrylye Johnson of Country Farm Perennials, in conjunction with the Friends, has designed a very special six-day tour to South Australia.

The Barossa Valley is an area with a fascinating past, leaving a legacy of historic homes and gardens, together with some beautiful contemporary gardens created through the prosperity of its famous vineyards.

We will stay five nights at Chateau Barossa – Lyndoch, set in its own garden of 20,000 roses over 12 hectares, and take day trips to private gardens, historic homesteads, wine tastings, galleries and restaurants, plus all the charms and attractions of the area.

Touring will be in a luxury 5-star air-conditioned coach.

Classes

Term 3 classes will commence week beginning 18 July 2005.

Classes will be held on Tuesday evenings and in the daytime on Mondays, Wednesdays (two sessions), Fridays and Saturdays. 2.5hr classes: \$245 (incl GST), Friends \$205 (incl GST) 3hr classes: \$280 (incl GST), Friends \$240 (incl GST)

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

Whirlybirds

The Whirlybirds meet each Tuesday in the Whirling Room Studio.

This group of botanical artist Friends share a common interest in painting, drawing and studying the fascinating world of plant life in a casual, caring and supportive atmosphere.

If you would like more details regarding this group, contact Miriam Blight on 9583 6098.

Friends are reminded that Dianne Emery's exhibition at Woodbine Art in Malmsbury will continue until 18 June.

Enquiries may be made to the gallery.

Botanical Illustrators Quarterly Meeting

Tuesday 7 June, 10.00 for 10.30am
In the Whirling Room Studio
Cost: \$5.50 (incl GST) Pay on the day
RSVP: Friends' office on 9650 6398
Joan Semmens will talk to us about the making of her book, *Bush Seasons – an affectionate study of a tiny bushland*.

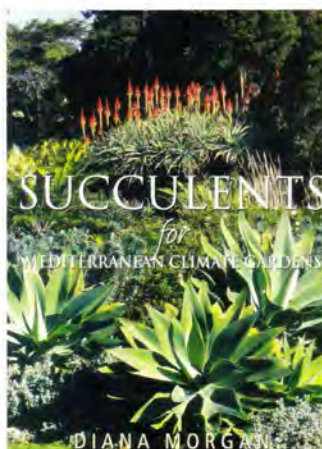
Joan lives in Alexandra and has always been interested in drawing from nature. She will tell how the book came about, the fifteen years developing it and the research undertaken.



Committee

The Botanical Illustrators have elected their new Committee. Edyta Hoxley remains as Convener, John Pastoriza Piñol Secretary, and the Treasurer is Diane Bamford. Judy Jarman covers Friends' Council liaison and Merle McIntyre, publicity.

Other committee members: Jean Dennis, Jo Brownell, Rita Parkinson, Dolores Skowronski Malloni, Louise Coronel (exhibitions only) and Helen Barraclough (Jenny Phillips' liaison).



Rosenberg 2004. RRP \$24.95

I have a confession to make. I used to run really lukewarm about succulents. But since I have cooed over a cotyledon, fawned over a furcraea and become positively gooey over a puya, oh well, I think you get my drift...

Not only are these majestic, and showy plants (at least two of the above anyway!) but they have low water requirements and are well suited to our climate.

Diana Morgan – who you may know as contributor to the garden pages of *The Age* – is so passionate about succulents that are suitable for our climate, that she has written a book about them. She believes we need to turn the spotlight onto low-water plants and champion them for use by gardeners in our increasingly dry continent.

This book organises succulents into categories based on their uses, such as Most Popular and Easily Grown, Plants for Small Gardens, Architectural Succulents. In each chapter Diana nominates her top ten

plants. They are shown *in situ* so the reader can understand their scale and really see how they look in the garden. In many cases, the pictures give an indication of how we can use succulents as companions for other plants.

At the end of each chapter, Diana also nominates a companion bulb, so we know just how to get the best impact.

Dr Philip Moors, Director of RBG Melbourne, is so concerned about water conservation that he launched this book.

But all that aside, just go to the Gardens, especially to the Water Conservation Garden and the Grey Garden, and see how spectacular these plants can be. Then look at the book to find out how to grow them.

Terri Kay

Spread the Word

The Publicity and Promotions committee is seeking dynamic, committed and enthusiastic volunteers to help with the promotion of the Friends in the wider community. If you love the Friends, help us to spread the word!

Subscriptions

There will be a modest increase in subscriptions from 1 July. Although we have tried to keep our rates as low as possible, we need to cover cost increases. The last increase was in 2003.

We ask Members to assist in keeping the Friends' costs down by promptly renewing their membership on receipt of their renewal notice.

FEATURE

In October 2002, the current *Draft Royal Botanic Gardens Hygiene Protocol for Managing the Potential Spread of Pathogens* (Hygiene Protocol) was completed by the Horticultural Management Group under the initial direction of Richard Barley. The main aim of this protocol was to protect the Living Collections (including the wider Living Landscape) from the introduction and spread of diseases through generic hygiene and containment practices.

This draft was implemented on a 6-month trial basis, to be followed by a review. The review, begun in early March 2005, should be completed by the end of June. Although it is timely to provide an update on the planned review, it is also an opportunity to draw our attention to the threats posed by exotic pathogens to the RBG.

It is understandable that in recent times, the terms 'border control', 'containment', 'incur-sion', 'quarantine', and 'biosecurity' would engender threatening thoughts of illegal immigrants, menacing terrorists and foreign powers invading Australia to impact upon our security and way of life. These same terms, however, can easily be applied in the protection of RBG plant collections from infiltration by and spread of exotic pests and diseases (all defined as pathogens further in this article), that could damage the heritage and scientific value of our Gardens. While we may think these descriptions are overly dramatic, the unfortunate reality is that we now have to consider placing a greater emphasis upon prevention and

management of pathogens.

The RBG cannot be indifferent to putting into practice measures to reduce the risk of invasions from other exotic pathogens such as Asian Longicorn Beetle, Asian Gypsy Moth, Dutch Elm Disease and Sudden Oak Death. Furthermore, we have to consider our obligations to protect plant habitats, horticultural industries and other landscapes from possible 'escapes' from within our own Gardens. You will recall the disruption and trans-Tasman issues caused by the discovery and eradication of a Fireblight-like pathogen (*Erwinia amylovora*) within the Gardens. There are also many other pathogens that could potentially cause similar degrees of disruption to the RBG (see appendix 1).

Our high plant diversity of 12,000 species is an asset to the Gardens, but it also increases the risk of an exotic pathogen finding a suitable host for establishment. Over the last several years, we have had new pathogens detected in the RBG, some of which have either been new to Australia or Victoria. For example, in September 2000, a *Phytophthora aff. megasperma* was recorded on *Agavaceae* at the RBG for the first time in Victoria and possibly Australia. This disease has been a continuing and significant management issue to date. In July 2004, *Phytophthora niderhauseria* was diagnosed from an area of unthrifty Xanthorrhoeas, and is a first on record for Australia. In November 2004,



Photo: Peter Symes

Phytophthora Aff. Megasperma on Agave Attenuata

a Mahonia Rust (*Cumminsia mirabilissima*) was likewise a first on record of this disease on Mahonias in Victoria.

Pathogen threats have been recognised under the RBG Risk Assessment Management Plan where the damage caused by a known or unknown pathogen has been assessed as a major risk to RBG interests. Major risks are considered of such importance that they are the responsibility of Board.

Once again, this all may seem to be sensationalism; yet, if the value of our living collections and amenity of the heritage landscape are damaged by pathogens, then the very essence of our Gardens is diminished. My suggestion is that we need to be cautious, but not hysterical! The horticultural staff are very committed to early detection of any new diseases and we also have the strong support of Plant Standards, Department of Primary Industries, Knoxfield, who are examining ways to improve early detection methods and surveillance programs that would benefit the RBG.

The review of the Hygiene Protocol is but one approach in the arsenal of weapons we can employ to mitigate the risks of exotic pathogens affecting the living collections and the amenity value of the Gardens

Some of the current issues that the review is intended to address include:

- * Our capability to effectively protect the living collections from existing and potential pathogens, in a manner that is practical and achievable within our resources.
- * Maintaining the necessity to protect the horticultural industry by not inadvertently releasing a pathogen into the wider environment.
- * Organising and supervising contractor compliance with hygiene requirements.
- * Ensuring sustainable and practical soil recycling practices to avoid the potential spread of pathogens across the Gardens.
- * Improving our current lack of control over accidental introduction or spread of pathogens by visitors.
- * Upgrading inadequate processes to effectively quarantine incoming plant material.
- * Establishing 'hygiene stations' and suitable equipment to assist hygiene practices.

In summary, an increased awareness of pathogens and the risks they present to the Gardens is the real benefit we all have, both from the discussion of the issues, and the development and review of pathogen management strategies.

Peter Symes
Senior Curator, Horticulture

FEATURE

APPENDIX 1: SOME HIGH-RISK PATHOGENS THAT COULD THREATEN THE RBG

Scientific Name	Common Name	Countries	Crops Affected
<i>Anisogramma anomala</i>	Filbert Blight	N. America	Hazelnut
<i>Bursaphelenchus xylophilus</i>	Pine Wilt Nematode	North America, Japan, Australia	Conifers
<i>Cryphonectria parasitica</i>	Chestnut Blight	Europe Asia N America	<i>Castanea</i> spp, Eucalyptus
<i>Deuterophoma tracheiphila</i>	Mal Secco	Europe Asia Africa	Citrus
<i>Elsinoe fawcettii</i>	Scab	N. America, (restricted in Australia)	Citrus
<i>Fusarium circinatum</i>	Pine Pitch Canker	North and Central America, South Africa, Japan, Spain	Pinus and Pseudostuga
Geminiviruses	Various	N and S America, Caribbean, widespread	Various
<i>Heterobasidion annosum</i>	Annosus root and butt rot	North America, Europe, Asia	Wide range of woody plants
<i>Liriomyza sativae</i>	Vegetable Leaf Miner	Africa, North America, Central America, South America, Asia, Oceania	Wide range with preference shown for Solanaceae and Fabaceae, recorded on lucerne, eggplant, celery, cucumbers, ornamental flowers, melons, peas, potatoes, tomatoes
<i>Liriomyza trifolii</i>	American Serpentine Lead Miner, Chrysanthemum Lead Miner	Africa, Europe, North America, Central America, South America, Asia, Oceania	Wide range with preference shown for Asteraceae - recorded on beetroot, brassica, celery, cabbage, chrysanthemums, cotton, cucumbers, lucerne, lettuce, leeks, marrows, melons, onions, peas, potato, spinach, tomatoes, watermelons, many other ornamental flowers
<i>Lymantria dispar</i>	Asian Gypsy Moth	Asia, North America	600 species incl. Eucalypts, fruit trees, urban ornamentals
<i>Mycosphaerella junvenis</i>	Blue Gum Mycosphaerella	South Africa	Eucalyptus
Nepoviruses	Various	Widespread	Various
<i>Phytophthora ramorum</i>	Sudden Oak Death	North America	Camellia, Quercus, Arbutus, Lithocarpus, Ericaceae and increasing.
<i>Plasmopara halstedii</i>	Sunflower Downy Mildew	North and South America, Africa, Eurasia	Asteraceae
<i>Popilla japonica</i>	Japanese Beetle	North America, Asia	Wide host range incl. Malus, Prunus, Rosa, Rubus, Vitus, Salix, Castanea, Populus, Acer, Glycine, Juglans, Platanus, Aesculus
<i>Puccinia psidii</i>	Guava Rust	Central and South America, Taiwan	Psidium, Eucalyptus, other Myrtaceae
<i>Xanthomonas axonopodis</i> pv <i>citri</i>	Citrus Canker	Asia, N and S America, part Africa	Citrus
<i>Xylella fastidiosa</i> , (multiple strains)	Various leaf scorches, plum leaf scald, citrus variegated chlorosis, Pierces and peach phoney diseases, alfalfa dwarf	N. America, S. America, Europe?	Grapevine, prunus, Citrus, Oleander, Medicago, Saccharum



Camellia granthamiana. Photo: Richard Barley

I was recently musing over the various attributes of the genus *Camellia* with an acquaintance, and, realising that I was perhaps not speaking to one of the greatest supporters of these plants, observed that “they’re not everybody’s cup of tea”.

No sooner had the words left my lips, than I realised the foolishness of this remark. They are, of course, everyone’s cup of tea. Tea – the usual kind you find in the tea-pot, or in the direst of circumstances, the tea-bag (less said about these, the better) – is *Camellia sinensis*. Specifically, it is selected tip leaves, dried, fermented and appropriately treated to deliver (when introduced to its comrade boiling water) the superb infused beverage upon which the quality of day-to-day existence is significantly based.... Well, mine is, at the very least.

There are many varieties within the species *Camellia sinensis* which contribute further to the whole tea thing. The tall *Camellia sinensis* var.

assamica for example, produces the characteristic Assam Tea. I don’t pretend to be an expert on the length and breadth of tea varieties, but suffice to say I warmly appreciate them.

A ‘bracing cup of the soothing oolong’ as PG Wodehouse would aptly put it is never less appreciated than midstream in a Melbourne Winter. It is that mid-stream point where you realise that there is no point trying to return to the previous Summer and Autumn, so one may as well press on to the next Spring. Under these circumstances, the spirits may be uplifted and the soul galvanised (or vice-versa, if that suits) by not only imbibing the marvellous tea infusion, but also by drinking in the splendour of the *Camellia* genus more generally, whose representatives flower from Autumn right through to Spring at the RBG Melbourne.

We have, in our Gardens, one of the more significant *Camellia* collections in public gardens in the world. It is

registered as the National Collection by the Australian *Camellia* Research Society, and is one of very few collections in the world to receive an Award of Excellence by the International *Camellia* Society.

The collection has developed during three main periods of activity. According to an article in the 1952 American *Camellia* Yearbook written by Alex Jessep (Gardens Director 1941-1957), after Mueller’s Directorship of the Gardens concluded in 1873, there were only two *Camellias* recorded on site (one *C. japonica* and one *C. reticulata*). Following the appointment of William Guilfoyle as Director 1873, the collection started to grow. By 1875, eighty-five *camellias* were recorded in the Gardens. These consisted of one *C. reticulata* (possibly the same one), one *C. sasanqua* and eighty-three *C. japonica* varieties.

The collection continued to grow during Guilfoyle’s term as Director. After his retirement, the development of the collection declined over several decades. Jessep notes that just before the start of the Second World War (and during Jessep’s own Directorship), interest in *camellias* among the gardening public, and the nursery industry generally, sprang up again. The influence of Horticultural Fashion at work.

One variety which captured the public fancy was *Camellia* ‘The Czar’. This was first commercially released by R W Hodgins’ nursery in Essendon some time after 1912, from material collected from the original parent plant which grew at Breslin’s Nursery in

Camberwell. It was not until the years around the War, however, that ‘The Czar’s’ popularity increased markedly unlike its Russian namesake, whose fortunes had declined somewhat in the Russian Revolution. The original plant survived at the old Breslin’s Nursery site (long since overtaken by suburbia), until in the 1950s it was transplanted to the Gardens by Alex Jessep. It is still growing happily on the southern edge of the *Camellia* Bed.

Alex Jessep was very active in the development of the *camellia* collection at the Gardens, his influence being marked by around 145 new species or varieties of *camellia* being added to the collection in the pre- and post-war years. Again, according to Jessep in 1953 there were 214 labelled varieties, and a number of other plants of unsure name in the Gardens. He was the first to import *Camellia granthamiana* to Australia (and add it to the RBG collection – north side of *Camellia* Bed) in 1956, only one year after it was first discovered in the wild in China.



Photo of *Camellia* ‘The Czar’ from Stirling Macoboy’s What *Camellia* is That? courtesy Lansdowne Press

GARDENS

If we spring forward to the most recent period of active growth of the Camellia Collection – the last 15 years – we get a sense of how things have moved ahead. We have been very fortunate to have the support of several single-mindedly enthusiastic volunteers, who have donated plant stock, and their time and expertise in the interests of development of the collection. A trio of experts with encyclopaedic knowledge of the genus *Camellia* – Tom Savige, Ken Brown and Dr Bob Withers – spent many cold wintery days in the Gardens in

Plans are afoot to extend the area of the Camellia Collection.

the early 1990's seeking to identify the existing stock when it flowered, ably assisted by volunteer Jenny Happell.

Bob Withers alone donated 214 of our camellias (along with stock of other genera) over a number of years. By mid- 2004 the collection of 894 plants included 47 different *Camellia* species and 447 cultivars, of which 108 cultivars are Australian-bred.

Late in 2004, recognising that his own failing health was not going to allow Dr Bob Withers to continue to maintain his extensive personal collection of camellias, he agreed to transfer his collection to the Gardens. In total, this added 328 taxa (including some multiples of stock already held) to the RBG Camellia Collection. Most of these are still in the Gardens' Nursery, while the sites for their planting out in the Garden are being

selected and prepared. Dr Bob Withers died early in 2005, leaving a legacy of plants, enthusiasm and knowledge which cannot be over-valued.

Plans are afoot to extend the area of the Camellia Collection. Curator Olivia Thwaites has been working with Andrew Laidlaw and others, to identify new homes for many plants. The old 'Rhododendron Bed' (adjacent to the Camellia Bed), for example, will be one of the first areas to be redeveloped. The storms of early February have opened up a number of new planting opportunities too.

Olivia freely admits that when she first started at the Gardens, and was given the responsibility of curating the Camellia Collection, she was not ecstatic. "I didn't like them", she candidly confessed recently. Over several years her knowledge and interest have grown, and the collection has blossomed accordingly. Jenny Happell continues to be a marvellous source of energy and support, after fifteen-odd years of championing the Camellia Collection.

So – in the depths of winter, when you are next feeling the need for some uplifting of the spirits – make your destination the Camellia Collection. You won't be disappointed. Follow this up with a bracing strong cup of tea, and all will again be right with the world.

Richard Barley

Cranbourne Winter Lecture Series

This year we have again been able to garner a number of excellent speakers with interesting and challenging topics to educate as well as entertain us on three Sundays. The first in the series was held on Sunday 1 May and featured lectures by Dr Terry Coates and Dr Michael Looker. This Series will continue what has become a Friends of RBGC tradition over the last few years. There will be two speakers on each day and afternoon refreshments.

Series 2: Sunday
26 June, 1:45 for 2.00pm

CITY OF CASEY OFFICES, Patrick
Northeast Drive, Narre Warren.
Melways 110 D4.

The popular and inspirational **John Arnott** who, as **Director of Geelong Botanic Gardens**, has been leading those gardens into an exciting new era of development, will talk on the subject *Beyond the Gardens Gates*. Come and learn about some challenging things happening in the Geelong region, which should also be relevant wherever you live!

Gwen Elliot, the second Speaker, is a well-known Friend of RBG Cranbourne. Gwen is author of ten books on Australian plants and is heard each Sunday on the popular 3CR Garden Show radio program. Gwen keeps up-to-date with what is happening in the Australian plant world by working a couple of days a week at a leading retail Australian Plant

nursery. Her subject is *Native Gardens: Sensible and Sensual*.

Series 3: Sunday
14 August, 1:45 for 2.00pm

CRANBOURNE SECONDARY
COLLEGE, Clarendon St, (off South
Gippsland Hwy), Cranbourne.
Melways 133 K4

The first speaker will be **Randall Robinson**, a renowned practitioner and speaker on indigenous plants. His topic is *Indigenous Plants: Why and How*. Randall is often involved in Greening Australia workshops and is currently undertaking post-graduate study at Victoria University. He has an excellent knowledge of indigenous plants and the problem of invasive weeds.

Dr John White will be the second speaker. John is Lecturer in Wildlife Ecology at Deakin University where he is head of the School of Ecology and Environment and his lecture subject is *Wildlife in the Suburbs*; a very important issue as the suburban sprawl of Melbourne is engulfing what were once rural areas. This talk should hold much interest for both members and non-members.

Cost: \$12 per day \$10 for Friends of
RBG Cranbourne & RBG Melbourne
Bookings can be made by phoning
5990 2200 on weekdays,
9.00am to 5.00pm





Illustration by Andrew Plant

Botanic Birds

Suddenly there is a loud chorus of alarm calls ringing out over the Gardens. The blackbirds always seem to be the loudest, but all the other small birds add to the cacophony as they tell the world that a raptor is on the hunt.

Raptors comprise that group of birds which prey on other creatures, including birds, for their food. Eagles, hawks, falcons, kites, kestrels, buzzards and harriers all form part of this group. Owls and frogmouths are also birds of prey but more of them later.

Of the 25 species of hawks etc. to be seen in Australia, 10 have been seen in the Royal Botanic Gardens over the years. Ferdinand von Mueller, in his letter to the Zoological Society of London in 1869 listed six species, three of which haven't been seen since. The Grey Goshawk is more likely to be seen in the mature forests of eastern Australia. The Spotted Harrier is a bird of the dry inland and the Brown Falcon prefers open country throughout Australia.

In the last ten years, five of this elegant family has been recorded in the Gardens. The Collared Sparrowhawk was seen in 2000 to 2002 at various times. Where it went to, nobody knows. The Peregrine

Falcon was noticed in 1997/98 and is likely to be the pair which makes a city high-rise its home. No doubt they have hunted in the Gardens before and since those dates but being such extraordinarily fast flyers they haven't been noticed.

A single Nankeen Kestrel was hovering in its characteristic way over the Garden's carpark in the spring of 2001 for about ten minutes before moving on. One of the smallest raptors, they can often be seen hovering over open grassland looking for mice, grasshoppers and other large insects. For many years a pair have nested in the tower of the Camberwell Town Hall.

The Australian Falcon, or Hobby as it is also known, is a regular sighting in the Gardens. A pair nest in the tall trees near "E" Gate on a regular basis. A single Hobby set off the avian alarm during the recent Friends Plant Sale. A few pale grey feathers on the pathway to the works area suggest that a Silvereye may have been the victim. Hobbies, being built for speed, take their prey on the wing whereas the handsome Brown Goshawk, which also makes its home in the tall trees near "E" Gate, has broad wings. This allows them to begin their hunt from

a perch and fly quickly through the trees after their prey which can be as large as rabbits. A few months ago the Gardens' pair were seen participating in a mating flight over the Princes' Lawn. Calling loudly, they twisted and turned in a regular pattern. A thrilling sight.

Owls and Frogmouths are a different group of birds, but they do hunt for their prey. The most notable owl is the Powerful. There is no pattern to its visits but it is often seen on a limb clutching a possum in its claws. Tawny Frogmouths are occasionally seen and no doubt often in the Gardens, but their cryptic plumage makes them hard to locate. Finally, the Southern Boobook are very occasionally seen and more often heard making the well known "book-book" call.

David Plant / Tony Delves

Loss of Mature Trees at RBG Melbourne

Unseasonal weather has caused havoc at the RBG in other ways over the past months. I'm sure that many of the Friends will recall Melbourne being lashed by fierce storms on 2 February 2005. With rainfall of over 125 mm and gale force winds, the damage was widespread across the city, and RBG Melbourne was no exception. Several significant and mature trees were lost, as well as a number of smaller trees and shrubs, and the clean up efforts took staff several weeks to complete.

The mature trees lost were two Mossy-Cup Oaks on Oak Lawn, each over 100 years old, an English Elm on the Service

Road Bed, near Observatory Gate, a Maritime Pine on the Princes Lawn Bed and a Manna Gum on the Eucalyptus Lawn. The damage to these trees follows the loss of five mature trees across the site late last year, which was also largely caused by strong winds and heavy rains. Needless to say, our three-person aboriginal team has been incredibly busy in the last few months, dismantling the trees and removing them from the site. As much of the timber as possible will be recycled. However, skilled management of tree canopies and root zones across the site by our arboricultural team meant that we were able to avoid more serious losses.

On a final note, water from the Yarra entered the RBG Melbourne lake system during the February storms. This may have contributed to the deaths of several hundred eels, an occurrence which was reported elsewhere in Victoria at the same time. We are waiting to find out the exact cause of the eels' deaths.

Philip Moors



Andrew Hilke with *Pinus pinaster* fallen into *Agonis flexuosa*

Photo: Renee Werbicki

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Gate Lodge
100 Birdwood Avenue
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Tel: (03) 9650 6398
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