

Winter 2010

# BOTANIC NEWS

FRIENDS of the ROYAL BOTANIC  
GARDENS MELBOURNE INC.

EXCITING  
REALISATION OF  
GUILFOYLE'S VOLCANO  
REFURBISHMENT



# FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Friends acknowledge with great appreciation the significant contribution made to the Friends and in particular the Growing Friends by Honorary Life Member Gillian Kirk who retired in February. In 1988 Gillian, together with several others including Lydia Bartlett and Dale McDonnell, founded a group which was to become known as the Growing Friends. Gillian was its first convener. Although she had no formal horticultural training, Gillian's lifetime interest in plants and nature was shared by her late husband, Neil, who was also very much involved with the Growing Friends. In all the years she was a Growing Friend, Gillian was passionate about what she did, tirelessly propagating plants, providing support and encouragement whenever or wherever it was needed and sharing her knowledge with her colleagues and Gardens staff.

In supporting Gillian's nomination as an Honorary Life Member in 1997, Growing Friends' member Sharon Beaman praised Gillian as an unassuming, friendly person with an enormous knowledge of plants. "If the Friends had not had Gillian with her tenacity, persistence and perseverance, the Growing Friends would not be the successful group that it is today", she said.

I heartily endorse Sharon's comments, and on behalf of the Friends pay tribute to Gillian and thank her for her hard work and dedication to the Growing Friends for over 20 years.

Once again, I am delighted to report that the Growing Friends' Autumn Sale was a

great success with a net amount of \$21,313 being raised. All members of the group work extraordinarily hard to achieve such success and I thank them very warmly. Thanks also go to everyone else who helped over the sale weekend.

Many gardens in Melbourne, including the Botanic Gardens, suffered severe damage in the hailstorm that struck early in March. It was wonderful for gardens to receive so much rain but the hail was another matter. I was full of admiration for the RBG staff who had the enormous task of tidying up after the storm and who managed to ensure that Guilfoyle's Volcano looked splendid on 31 March when it was opened by the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, the Hon. Gavin Jennings MLC. As Members are probably aware, the Friends contributed \$70,000 towards the Volcano project, with the Myer Foundation being the major supporter. On behalf of the Friends I would like to extend our congratulations to all involved in achieving such a magnificent new feature.

A large and very happy crowd



Photo: Cathy Trinca

gathered at the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne in March to celebrate the publication of the ninth and final volume of the *Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants Suitable for Cultivation*. The enormous task of researching, writing and illustrating the *Encyclopaedia*, which took over thirty years, was undertaken by authors Rodger Elliott (RBG Board Member and Friend of the RBG Cranbourne) and David L Jones, and illustrator Trevor Blake. Our warmest congratulations go to Rodger, David and Trevor, and their wives who assisted them, on their wonderful achievement. Of special significance is the fact that Australia is the only country in the world to have an encyclopaedia of this kind.

David Wilkinson, an early President (1989 - 1992), has always been an active supporter of the Friends. On a number of occasions, most recently in February this year, he and his wife, Bibi, opened their beautiful South Yarra garden to the public through Australia's Open Garden Scheme and have donated their part of the proceeds to the Friends. In addition to the

garden being opened, with our volunteers collecting the entrance fees, the Wilkinsons also invited the Friends to distribute information to garden visitors about our organisation and sell drinks and plants propagated by the Growing Friends. The proceeds from these activities come directly to the Friends. We greatly appreciate this support and thank David and Bibi most sincerely for their generosity.

Many interesting events are coming up in the next few months and I'd particularly like to draw your attention to the David Howard lectures on Thursday 19 August (see page 8 for further information). Members may remember the fascinating talks that David, formerly Head Gardener at Highgrove, the country residence of His Royal Highness, Prince Charles, gave for the Friends in November 2007. We thank Sofitel for kindly helping with David's accommodation.

*Janet Thomson, President*

*At left: One of the beautifully designed signs at the Volcano site listing donors to the project.  
Photo: Meg Miller*



# FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

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Front cover: Volcano planting.  
Photo: Peter Symes



Hon Gavin Jennings, MLC, after a successful tree planting at the Volcano site on Opening Day.



Photos: Matt Jones

## The Storm of 6 March

The severe storm on the afternoon of 6 March caused considerable damage at RBG Melbourne. The large amount of hail – and the considerable size of the hailstones – blocked many gutters, causing water to flood into buildings. Worst affected were the Visitor Centre, the Herbarium, and parts of Observatory House. The Observatory Café, the Gardens Shop and Visitor Centre Reception all had to be closed for repairs. Hundreds of books in the Library suffered various degrees of water damage, some ceilings collapsed, and carpets in parts of the Herbarium and Visitor Centre needed replacing. Fortunately the damage is largely covered by insurance.

Dehumidifiers and drying machines were installed progressively from the evening of 6 March. Books with only small amounts of water damage were air-dried, and water-logged books were quickly frozen before being treated by conservators via freeze-drying.

Many plants in the Gardens were shredded by hail and some trees lost limbs, but fortunately no trees were brought down. The new plantings at Guilfoyle's Volcano were hit hard, but are already recovering. Water from Birdwood Avenue flooded up to 1m deep into Nymphaea Lake, down Fern Gully and into the Ornamental Lake, carrying large volumes of silt and plant debris – but at least the water raised lake levels by 25cm!

The Gardens were closed on 7 March while staff checked damage and public safety. Nevertheless, several weddings

booked that day were able to proceed due to herculean efforts by staff to clear the function sites of debris and ensure they were safe for guests to use.

RBG staff were outstanding in their responses to the storm, commencing with the Rangers, Visitor Centre and Shop staff on duty when it hit and then staff volunteers who responded to calls for assistance. They worked late into the night on 6 March and returned to continue working over the next two days, often at considerable inconvenience to themselves and their families. The clean-up and repairs have continued for over a month, and I'm most grateful to all staff who have helped get things back to normal.

## Opening of Guilfoyle's Volcano

On 31 March the Hon. Gavin Jennings, Minister for Environment and Climate Change, opened Guilfoyle's Volcano. This spectacular water reservoir has commanding views of the city, and its striking landscape design showcases plants of low-water usage. Boardwalks and viewing platforms enable visitors to explore the site and learn about its history, water management and plants.

Built by William Guilfoyle in 1876 as the 'header tank' for the Gardens' gravity-fed irrigation system, the reservoir remained in use for about 60 years. It was pressed back into service during droughts in 1967 and 1983, but since then quietly slumbered behind a high fence and dense shrubbery. The redevelopment closes this historical circle, because the Volcano has now

been linked back into RBG Melbourne's irrigation system and its water stored from the Ornamental Lake will drip-irrigate the project's new plantings.

The Volcano redevelopment commences our work to reduce the Gardens' reliance on mains water for irrigation. Stage 2 of the project – *Working Wetlands* – involves harvesting stormwater from nearby streets, channelling it through bio-filtering wetlands, and using the water to maintain lake levels and circulate up to the Volcano for irrigation use before flowing back through Nymphaea Lake and Fern Gully to the Ornamental Lake. Ultimately, we plan to use both harvested stormwater and recycled water to replace mains water for irrigation.

The Volcano project was completely funded by generous donors, especially The Myer Foundation and members of the Myer Family and the Melbourne Friends. Individual donors, many living close to the Gardens and regular visitors to it, completed funding for the \$1.6 million project. Many RBG staff played vital roles in its design, plant propagation, construction management, planting, interpretive signage and fundraising. It's a superb new destination for visitors to the Gardens – so do go and see Guilfoyle's Volcano for yourself!

## Farewell to Richard Barley

On 18 March, we farewelled Richard Barley after almost 30 years as a member of staff, as he departed for his new appointment as CEO of Australia's Open Gardens



# CONT'D FEATURE - THE VOLCANO

Scheme. For the past 17 years Richard was Director of the Melbourne Gardens, a position he filled with great distinction and success.

Under his inspiration and guidance during that time the landscapes and collections were rejuvenated and many new projects conceived and delivered. His professional and personal talents were central to delivering these achievements. Richard also led our successful efforts to conserve water in the face of a decade of low rainfall and climate change, while keeping the Gardens as a place of beauty and enjoyment.

These varied achievements are a fine legacy of Richard's leadership and vision, and they will delight visitors for years to come. I and the RBG staff and Board thank him for all that he's done and wish him great success in his new position.

*Philip Moors,  
Director and Chief Executive*



*Concept map from which the design was realised.*



*One of several boards at the site offering information about the project.*



*Photo: Matt Jones*

*Above: Visitors already enjoying the Volcano area and facilities.  
Below: Landscape realisation.*



*Above: Large rocks and red-tinted cement help simulate lava flows.  
Below: Project completed for opening day. It will be interesting to compare growth in 12 months' time.*



*Photo: Dr Richard Kirsner*

*Photo: Dr Richard Kirsner*



# FEATURE - THE VOLCANO



*Volcano shell clean, boardwalk and viewing platforms under construction.*



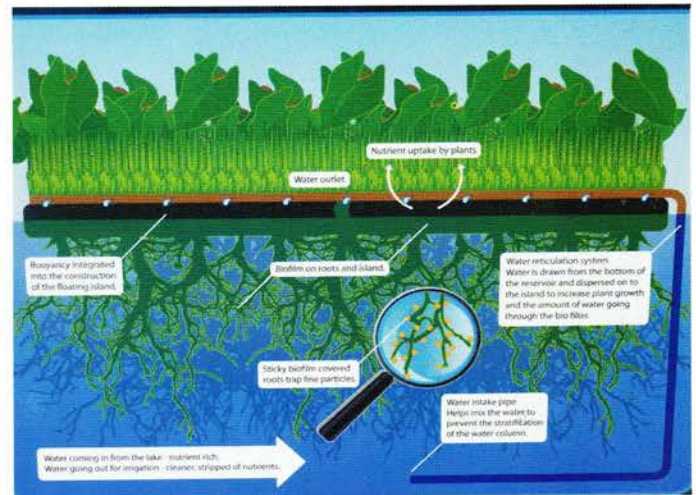
*Biofilter disks in place, ready for filling of shell.*



*Above: Volcano full, floating biofilters, planting commenced.  
Below: Plants growing in a biofilter.*



*Above: Landscaping advanced, plants growing on biofilter disks.  
Below: Sign at the site explaining biodisks and their function.*





# EVENTS



## Remote & Wild: Seeking the Unknown Australia

**ILLUSTRATED TALK BY RICHARD GREEN**

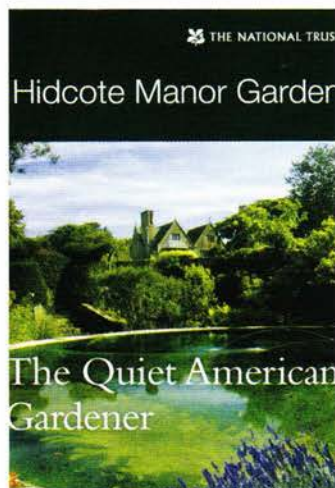
Thursday 24 June at 6.00 for 6.30pm  
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium.  
COST: \$25 Friends \$15  
RSVP by Friday 18 June  
on enclosed booking form or download  
one from the Events page on our  
website: [www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org](http://www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org)  
Wine and savouries will be served  
before the talk.  
Signed copies of the book will be  
available after the launch.

For 19 years, Richard and Carolyn Green have used their private helicopter as a flying camper van to find, reach and photographically record some of Australia's most remote, wild and beautiful natural environments, many of which are not accessible even by four wheel drive and have never previously been photographed.

A scientist by training, Richard uses the latest photographic technology to produce dramatic large format,

highly detailed panoramic photographs.

A show at the National Library of Australia in 2008 was very successful, attracting over 30,000 visitors. Following requests at this show, the authors have now documented their travels in a lavishly illustrated book. This will be the Melbourne launch of the book at which Richard will present an illustrated talk on their experiences and work.



## Winter Feast of Film

Tuesday 6 July at 9.30am  
The Lodge, Melbourne Grammar School  
Drive in beside 355 St Kilda Road,  
Melbourne for parking.  
Morning Tea 9.30am sharp.  
Films commence at 10.00am  
COST \$25 Friends \$15  
RSVP by Thursday 1 July  
on enclosed booking form or download  
one from the Events page on our  
website: [www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org](http://www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org)  
Early bookings are essential as  
numbers will be limited.

We are again able to enjoy the lovely surrounds of the Lodge at Melbourne Grammar School for the viewing of two excellent features about wonderful British gardens. Because the day falls during the school vacation, there is parking available within the school grounds for those travelling by car.

The first film is *The Quiet American Gardener: Hidcote Manor Garden*. (This film was scheduled to be shown last year, but its release was

unfortunately delayed. Those who were disappointed will be pleased to see it now.)

The second feature is *Gardeners' Views, Volume 3*. We continue our visit to some of Britain's best gardens included in the Open Gardens Scheme. We visit Algars Manor, Devon; Chyverton, Cornwall; Luton House, Kent; and other gardens in Wiltshire, Worcestershire, County Durham; Gwent; Lincolnshire and Suffolk.



## Winter Insiders Walk

**INSIDE THE NATIONAL HERBARIUM OF VICTORIA**

Wednesday 14 July at 10.00 for 10.30am  
Meet at Gate Lodge.  
COST: \$15 MEMBERS ONLY  
RSVP by Friday 9 July  
on enclosed booking form or download  
one from the Events page on our  
website: [www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org](http://www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org)  
Early bookings are essential as  
numbers will be limited.

After morning tea and introduction at Gate Lodge, we will walk to the Herbarium to observe the intricate and detailed mounting of specimens, work carried out by dedicated volunteers.

Dr Pina Milne will then discuss the work of the scientists within and the importance of the Herbarium specimen collection not only to their work, but also to historians and botanical artists. A selection of Herbarium specimens will be on display and Dr Milne will

inspire us with the stories and discoveries associated with this unique collection.

Note that numbers are strictly limited for this event. Please book early to visit this important area of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne. After having made a booking, if unavoidable circumstances arise and you are unable to attend, please inform the Friends' office as soon as possible on (03) 9650 6398.



# EVENTS



## Winter Talking Plants

### THE CHARM OF IKEBANA FLOWER ARRANGING

Friday 23 July at 10.00 am  
Domain House, Dallas Brooks Drive  
COST: \$15 Friends \$10  
RSVP by Tuesday 20 July  
on enclosed booking form or download  
one from the Events page on our  
website: [www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org](http://www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org)  
Refreshments will be served during  
the morning.

Ikebana is one of the traditional arts of Japan. It emphasises a sense of harmony between the materials, the container and the setting. Any plant materials including branches, leaves, grasses, fruit and flowers can be used. Over the years different approaches have developed, yet each aims at creating a special kind of beauty. While a work may be composed of only one, or of many different kinds of materials, the selection of each

element demands an experienced eye and the arrangement requires considerable technical skill. Mrs Aiko Nakada of the Ohara school of Ikebana, will surprise you as she arranges the flowers and foliage into works of art before your eyes. This school uses low, shallow containers for landscape arrangements and tall cylindrical vases for upright styles. The arrangements are both traditional and free-style with materials reflecting each season.



## Fit Friends' Ramble

### MELBOURNE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS

Thursday 29 July at 9.50am sharp  
Meet at Zoo North/Rear Gate entrance.  
COST: \$25 Friends \$15

**Note: This excludes cost of entry.**  
10% discount for Seniors. Further pensioner discount available).  
RSVP by Tuesday 20 July on enclosed booking form or download one from the events page on our website: [www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org](http://www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org)  
Early bookings are essential as numbers will be limited.

Tram 55, stop 25  
Train: Upfield Line, Royal Park Station.

Due to many requests, we are again offering this popular excursion. We will walk amid lush, tropical Asian and African rainforests, environments for the rich wildlife that plays an important role in education, research and conservation.

After morning tea at the cafe, we meet our first guide at 10.30am, who will conduct us on a 'behind the scenes' tour through the Nursery, followed

by a visit to the Butterfly House. We will then meet the gardener who tends the Japanese Garden and who will show us around.

Lunch is easily purchased or you may BYO if preferred. After lunch, we are free to enjoy the botanical aspects of the Zoo and explore all our favourite spots. It will be a wonderful opportunity to visit two new major sources of interest; Mali the baby elephant and the Seal Pavilion.



## Winter Guided Visit

### TO THE GROWING FRIENDS' NURSERY

Friday 6 August at 10.30am  
Meet at Gate Lodge (opposite Shrine)  
Cost: \$5 Members Only  
RSVP by Wednesday 4 August  
on enclosed booking form or download  
one from the Events page on our  
website: [www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org](http://www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org)  
Bookings are essential as numbers  
will be limited.

Winter is the perfect time to plan for your Spring garden, as trees and shrubs are best planted at this time of the year.

This visit is particularly suitable for new members and others who are not familiar with the whereabouts and workings of our Growing Friends' Nursery. We will gather at Gate Lodge for morning tea and the opportunity to meet other like minded gardeners, and then be guided down to the nursery.

If you plan to buy a number of plants, think about bringing some strong carrybags or your market trolley to help take your purchases home.





## Hunters and Collectors

### A MORNING OF PLANT HUNTING WITH DAVID CANTRILL & DAVID HOWARD

Thursday 19 August at 10.00am **sharp** (morning tea will be served between lectures)

Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

Cost: \$65 Friends \$55

Covers both lectures

RSVP by Monday 16 August

on enclosed booking form or download one from the events page on our

website: [www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org](http://www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org)

Early bookings are essential.

## Lemon, Lime and Bitters

Prof. David Cantrill, Director, Plant Services and Biodiversity in the National Herbarium. The flora of New Caledonia occur in a botanical paradise with exceptional endemism – five families, 108 genera and approximately 2500 species of plants found nowhere else on the planet. This includes *Amborella trichopoda*, the sister group to all other flowering plants. The *Rutaceae* (Citrus family) is well-

represented, being the fifth largest family. Not surprisingly, given that New Caledonia was once connected to Australia, there are several genera and even species shared with Australia.

How are the plants in New Caledonia related to those in Australia? What does this tell us about the evolution of these two regions? David's talk will focus on the *Rutaceae* flora from New Caledonia, providing insights into the vegetation types and history of this group.



## From Coventry to Kashmir

### ILLUSTRATED LECTURE BY DAVID HOWARD

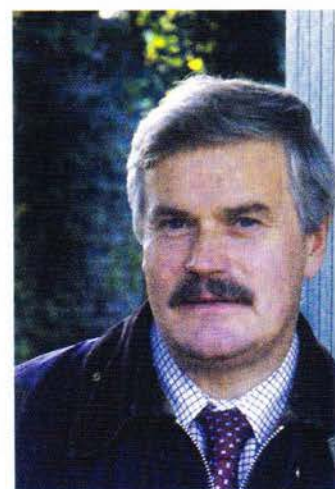
Thursday 19 August following David Cantrill's lecture.

David Howard was Head Gardener at Highgrove House for 10 years, where he gardened for HRH the Prince of Wales. Members may remember David's previous visit to Melbourne in 2007, when he spoke about the garden at Highgrove and the principles and practice of organic gardening.

David has been plant collecting in the Himalayas where he undertook an

expedition to Kashmir and high up into the mountains over a period of three months. The flora of Kashmir is extensive and diverse, covering familiar species and many of our favourite garden plants.

Breathtaking panoramic views and unusual botanical images illustrate his eventful and entertaining journey.



## New Lands – New Gardens

### ILLUSTRATED LECTURE BY DAVID HOWARD

Thursday 19 August at 6.00 for 6.30pm

Mueller Hall, National Herbarium.

Cost: \$45 Friends \$35

RSVP by Monday 16 August

on enclosed booking form or download one from the events page on our

website [www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org](http://www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org)

Early bookings are essential.

Since leaving Highgrove in 2008 David Howard has been working in Japan, the USA and the UK as a horticulture consultant and lecturer. He will share observations from recent travels in the United States, Australia and Japan, looking at how the English Gardening style has influenced developing gardens in these countries, across a broad range of temperature regimes – how do oak trees cope in Australia? Conversely, how foreign plants

from these new lands have been absorbed and utilised in this English Gardening style, how do eucalyptus trees cope in the UK? With global warming and shifting climates, how might this English Gardening style continue into the future? Tree Ferns in the UK aren't a new innovation, they were there 20 million years ago!



# EVENTS

## The Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne

### 2010 LECTURE SERIES

Australian Garden Visitor Centre  
Auditorium, RBG Cranbourne  
COST: \$15 per day  
FRBG Members \$12 per day.  
Payment: Friends RBGC Bookings,  
Petrel Place, Berwick 3806  
Information: Contact Bev Roberts,  
phone: 0408 378 615

#### DAY ONE

Sunday 4 July 2010 at 2.00pm  
'Weird & Wonderful'



Lecture One:

#### MILLIE ROSS

'The Practical Gardener, Role of Recycling in Gardens'

Millie Ross is a breath of fresh air in the gardening scene. She is young and effervescent, but at the same time a very experienced gardener. She is a highly renowned recycler (as often seen in *Gardening Australia* Magazine) and will pass on some of her fascinating tips. Currently employed as a researcher for *Gardening Australia*, she also has worked in garden centres and nurseries and run her own garden maintenance business. In 2009, she received the Young Achievers Laurel Award of the Horticultural Media Association Australia. A regular panellist on the popular 3CR Garden Show, Millie also features on the Gardening Show on 774 ABC Radio.



Lecture Two:

#### JOHN RAYNER

'Why Green Walls & Green Roofs?'

John Rayner is a Lecturer in Urban Horticulture and Course Co-ordinator at the Burnley Campus of the University of Melbourne. Along with Nick Williams, he is at the forefront of Australian research on, and application of, green walls and roofs. Rooftop and vertical gardens are more common in the northern hemisphere and it is early days for constructing them in Australia, although experiments were conducted as early as the 1980s.

John's talk will bring us up to date with his and Nick's research and the relevance of such landscape constructions in Australia. Plant selection is an integral part of the research and it is one aspect the researchers want to improve as they undertake trials at Burnley and on city buildings.

#### DAY TWO

Sunday 1 August 2010 at 2.00pm  
'Links to Africa'



Lecture One:

#### DR TONY RINAUDO

'Australian Acacias for Food in Africa'

Tony Rinaudo joined World Vision in 1999 as a Program Officer for Kenya and Ethiopia and is their Australian Natural Resource Management Adviser. Before this he worked in Niger Republic on agricultural projects for 17 years introducing agro-forestry farming systems. He was instrumental in introducing Australian acacias as an agricultural crop. Some acacias produce seeds with high food value. Having long-term crops means that communities are less reliant on regular rainfall required for cultivation of many other staple food crops.

Tony has qualifications and experience in agricultural science and has contributed to, and co-authored, articles in scientific journals and books.



Lecture Two:

#### DR MARY GIBSON

'Plants of Tanzania'

Mary Gibson is Senior Lecturer in Plant Biology and Ecology in the School of Life and Environmental Sciences at Deakin University. She loves working with plants and is renowned for inspiring her students to become excited about plants.

Mary loves travel, specifically trekking, and, of course, many photographs of plants from these trips magically appear on the camera. These are used for teaching and research to provide a global perspective, but also to provide snapshots of the ecology and physiology of plants. In recent years she has been visiting Tanzania where she has been able to study the fascinating plant life of that country which she will share with us during this lecture.

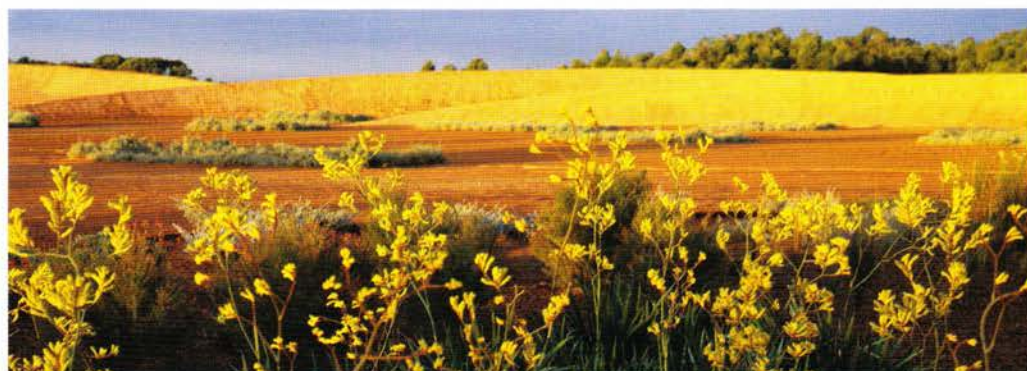


Photo: Janusz Molinski



## Retirement of Gillian Kirk



Photo: Meg Miller

In February, Gillian Kirk retired from the Growing Friends after almost 30 years as a volunteer supporting the RBG Melbourne. Gillian started as a Voluntary Guide in the early 1980s but in 1988 she saw an opportunity to provide funding support for the RBG by selling plants which had been propagated and raised by the Friends. Thus, with a dedicated group of friends she set up what was to become the Growing Friends. At that time, the plants had to be moved by trolleys from the Nursery area to the Friends' nursery near the Observatory. This, together with the need to be there each day to hand water the plants because there was no watering system, was hard work, and but for Gillian's commitment and leadership the project may well have failed. The fact that the Growing Friends is now such a vibrant group is testament to her determination and foresight. Gillian's knowledge and experience was called upon regularly throughout her time with the Growing Friends, and her departure leaves a big gap. We thank her

for her continual efforts over the last 30 years and wish her enjoyment and pleasure in her future life.

### AUTUMN SALE

In the lead-up to the Autumn Sale there was a large stock of plants in the Nursery, due in part to the success of our recent propagating efforts. The warm, but not excessively hot summer, together with some rain, provided for ideal growth so the plants were in wonderful condition. We were therefore looking forward to a very successful Autumn Sale. What we didn't anticipate was the

could not be saved and had to be discarded. A few were judged to be too good, or too special, to be discarded but were not up to sale standard and these were offered for sale in the 'Hail Sale' area.

A separate area was set up to display the attractions of some of the plants that were for sale. This drew appreciative comments and will be a feature of future Sales.

Overall, the Autumn Sale was a great success and the money raised will go to the continuing development of RBG Melbourne. The lucky winners of the Sale raffle were:-



Photo: Michael Hare

storm that struck Melbourne on 6 March. While the damage to the Growing Friends' Nursery was nowhere near as serious as that sustained by the RBG nurseries, the hail did significant damage to those plants not protected by the bamboo wall on the western side of the Nursery. The only saving feature of the situation was that the Sale was still six weeks away. Due to the great efforts of the Growing Friends many of the damaged plants were brought back to sale quality. Some unfortunately

1. Fiskar hedge clippers  
Donated by Bunnings.  
Won by Elizabeth Langford
2. Succulents in ceramic pot  
Donated by Don Allison and Sue Spicer.  
Won by Liz Rogers.
3. Alfresco Candelabra on a tray set with wine, flutes, chocolates and linen.  
Donated by Rosemary Ball and Bev Teague.  
Won by Diane Michell.

Michael Hare, *Convener*.

## An Avian Success Story

In February-March 2001, a single Purple Swampphen (*Porphyrio porphyrio*) was sighted in the RBG around Dog Flat. The bird had been listed by Ferdinand Von Mueller in the 1850s, by Percy St John between 1884 and 1937, and by Roy Wheeler between 1937 and 1958, so its return in the new century was most welcome.

The bird seemed to disappear for a few months, but returned later in the year, most likely with a mate, as the breeding season saw the first brood of three chicks. Although one chick was lost, perhaps to a fox, water rat or eel, the others survived. Over the following years the number has steadily increased and there are now several families around the Gardens. One family lives around Long Island, one at Nymphaea Lake, one around Central Lake and Lawn and one on the grass promontory across from The Terrace Tearooms. Breeding has taken place on some of the islands and there may well be one or two other families.





# BIRDS

This last breeding season seems to have been especially productive. The Central Lake family now consists of two adult birds, three immature birds and two chicks, indicating a double breeding over Spring and Summer. There are probably over 20 resident birds of varying ages now, so their 'occupation' of the RBG over ten years has been highly successful.

## Hail, Rain, Dry Lake and Birds

The extraordinary hailstorm on March 6 caused a great deal of damage around the Gardens, even to the almost completed Guilfoyle's Volcano. But one positive outcome was to deliver much needed water to an increasingly lower Ornamental Lake. Even the birds sang with relief – after the hailstones melted, the rain stopped and the wind died down.

One of the pleasures of observing the bird life in the Gardens is to bump into another birdwatcher. Surprisingly often this turns out to be a visitor from overseas, and it is a joy to be able to point out a few of our bird treasures. In February, it was an Englishman from Nottingham, equipped with binoculars and camera. He was trying to find a Bell Miner on Long Island, little realising that one was sitting about a metre away on a low twig.

In early March, it was an American from San Francisco, clearly an experienced 'birdo', equipped with field guide and very expensive binoculars. He had visited the Gardens on previous visits to Australia so was familiar with most of the

birds. He reported that he had seen a Rufous Fantail near F Gate, although we couldn't confirm it ourselves. He wondered if he had also seen a Black-tailed Native-hen, but we suggested that was unlikely. Other than that, however, he was very quick with his observations. He spotted a Darter on Ridoutt Island before we did. 'It looks like an Anhinga.' This is an American bird closely related to our Darter and shares the same colloquial name of Snakebird – this is obvious when you see the long snake-like neck. Unfortunately this Darter seemed to be playing with a large

Cormorants appeared to be about normal. The latter seemed to relish the low water level and a group of about eight or ten would swim around, diving in and out of the water, pretending to be porpoises. Whatever they were eating must have been fine as they stayed around for a couple of months. Peter Symes reported that there was an 'explosion of macrophytes' in the water over the breeding season, and this may have provided an additional food supply, especially for waders. It might also have helped to sustain the Swans, Moorhen, Swamphen and Coot, as all of these species bred well.



blue cloth that the Garden staff discovered was wedged in its throat. They were unsuccessful in trying to catch it and its eventual fate is not known.

Both of these visitors were amazed at the low level of the water in Central Lake, and we discussed the effect on the bird life, especially on the waterbirds.

Strangely enough, they do not seem to have been greatly affected. Perhaps there were not as many Little Pied Cormorants breeding on Ridoutt Island over Christmas, but the number of Little Black

In fact, the breeding season seemed to go on much longer than usual over Spring and Summer, and there was almost certainly a number of multiple breedings during that time. Of particular note were two large broods, about eight or nine chicks in each, of Hardhead Ducks, but Black Duck and Chestnut Teal also bred successfully. The number of Wood Ducks remained very high, around thirty birds, and also included some young.

The Great Egret continued to visit and a pair of White-

faced Herons produced two chicks from a tree nest on the Hopetoun Lawn. This is probably a very rare event in the Gardens.

As can be seen from the photograph the 'mud-flat' outside the Tearooms attracted a variety of species. Of course there have been large numbers of Silver Gulls, but the photograph also includes a White-faced Heron, a Swan and a Masked Lapwing. The latter was one of a pair that spent two or three months there. At one point it looked as if they might have been breeding, but there have been no reports of chicks. Probably the most exciting sighting was a Black-winged Stilt. Many of us hoped that the low water would attract some migratory waders such as Sandpipers or Stints, but the Stilt was nevertheless a real bonus, even if it was only a solitary wader visiting from Albert Park Lake (where they can be seen every Summer).

Nevertheless, it is great to see more water in the Ornamental Lake.

*Tony Delves and David Plant  
Bird photos: Tony Delves*



## Friends Scholarship 2009

### DIPLOMA OF IRRIGATION SPECIALISING IN DESIGN

Thanks to the generosity of the Friends' Scholarship Program I was able to enrol in, study, and successfully complete, the course mentioned above. This Diploma is one of the few on offer that comprehensively covers the design process. It is run by Sunraysia Institute and delivered by Irrigation Systems Australia. The course outline consists of the following modules:

- Audit irrigation systems, design irrigation, drainage and water treatment systems
- Water System Management
- Design of water treatment systems
- Determination of hydraulic parameters
- Preparation of estimates, quotes and tenders
- Provision of specialist advice to clients
- Project Management
- Creation of 2D drawings using CAD (Computer Aided Drawing) system
- Technical drawing interpretation
- Interaction with computing technology
- Inventory Control.

The RBG area encompassing Dog Flat, Embankment Lawn and the Vireya Bed was chosen for the design/redesign of the irrigation system. These areas allowed for the use of various irrigation applications (larger sprinkler types, rotators and drip) as well as the theoretical option to pump water from the lake to gain some experience in pump selection. All this has ended up as an AutoCAD-generated plan which could be implemented in

part or as a whole future project subject to funding.

Initially, the learning began with a crash course in the use of AutoCAD which helps reinforce the theories and methods they learn. There is a more sophisticated software program called IrriCAD, which reproduces planning electronically, once students have mastered the necessary concepts of irrigation plans.

An audit of the designated area looked at the water supply, irrigation control system, issues with excessive pressure losses and an evaluation of one of the irrigation stations on Dog Flat to establish its efficiency. The results provided background information for the design process and highlighted any potential problems that needed to be overcome.

The next stage considered irrigation layouts and positioning of sprinkler heads, followed by the determination of hydraulic parameters such as flow rates, pipe sizing and pressure losses within the pipework in order to ensure acceptable pressure variation between sprinkler heads to maximize irrigation uniformity. Main lines were also sized to allow the required number of stations to operate simultaneously with the right pressures for maximum efficiency.

A pump and filtration unit was then selected. It was based on the necessity to operate within given time frames to take into account the needs of that area, and any withholding periods that may be needed because of the use of non-potable water such as that from the Ornamental Lake.

A list of materials and costs

was established to help in the preparation of a quotation for the installation of the design as required in the course.

So far this Scholarship has allowed the following projects to be completed in-house at substantial savings compared to the cost of using external sources:

- Banksia Bed (Water conservation garden): Irrigation redesign and installation using sub-mulch drip system
- Grey Garden: Irrigation design and installation
- Vireya Bed: irrigation design and installation
- Design and installation of an irrigation system for a non-irrigated area of the Californian collection to maintain plant health
- Irrigation redesign and installation for the F-Gate replanting
- Irrigation design and installation for the Herbarium Discovery walk
- Work on the RBG irrigation system flow manager/pipe model after installation of the new water supply head-works below the Temple of the Winds, to reduce the overall watering times.

The course has also enhanced our knowledge and understanding of the irrigation design for the Guilfoyle's Volcano project to enable informed decision-making for any modifications that might be needed during the construction phase.

An example of the cost savings to the RBG is the design of the system for the Canary Island section of the Grey Garden. Several years ago a contractor estimated the cost at \$10,000. The cost of my design for this section plus parts and labour is \$1,638, a saving of \$8,362 or 84%. Similar percentage savings would be estimated for other projects.

I would like to thank the Friends for providing the Scholarship program to allow me to undertake this professional development in irrigation. This has resulted in improved expertise, shared learning with other horticulturists, and financial savings and improvements to water efficiency for our Gardens.

*Philip Bowyer-Smyth*  
**Horticultural Technician, RBG**

*Setting up irrigation in the Grey Garden.*



Photo: Philip Bowyer-Smyth



## Qui, Quae, Quod

### CUR LATINUS? WHY LATIN?



My Latin journey began in 2007 when I attended a workshop on Botanical Latin at the ASBS Symposium in Darwin. The workshop was a very intense two days of nouns, adjectives, superlatives, comparatives and vocabulary. I found myself in a very deep pool and wanted to learn more about this language and its use in botany. On returning to Melbourne, I found that the Centre for Adult Education (CAE) offered Latin courses for beginners through to experienced students.

In the first year of the course, I learnt different noun declensions, what a case was, how to conjugate basic verbs, and vocabulary. Having a taste for this language, I wanted more, but was aware of the RBG's limited budget for staff professional development. The Friends' Scholarship was then in its second year, so with the support of my line manager, I submitted an application for funding to cover my second year of Latin at CAE (units 3 and 4). Several months later, I received the good news that my application had been successful.

My second year of studying Latin became harder. The weekly class involved one and a

half hours of reciting Latin and translating it into English. I then spent 2-4 hours on homework, typically reading and translating for the next class.

The classes follow the Cambridge Latin Course, which comprises five books. Latin 3 and 4 are based on books 3 and 4, together with an online site that includes various learning tools. The course material contains historical stories with some fiction to make it a little more exciting. The first book started with life in Pompeii, the explosion of Mt Vesuvius and the aftermath. Other themes included Roman life in Britain, Alexandria and Rome, with information about what people did, how they lived, the class system and the hierarchy of the army. It's both a language course and a history lesson!

The course teacher is Peter Daly, who has a rich knowledge of both Classical Latin and Ancient Greek. He is a very patient teacher and is generous with sharing his knowledge.

Since starting my Latin training, Herbarium botanists and other staff have asked me to translate various texts. Most commonly, botanists have requested a Latin diagnosis (or description) for a new species they have described. Under the *International Code of Botanical Nomenclature*, all new species descriptions must be accompanied by a Latin diagnosis. I've been fortunate in having been able to 'pick the brain' of Neville Walsh when writing these short but complex descriptions. To date, Neville and I have written Latin descriptions for Eucalyptus groups, several diagnoses for



Photo: Meg Miller

species of the freshwater alga *Nitella* and a number of descriptions for fungi.

I have also been able to help fellow Curation Officers with translating Herbarium specimen labels from the 1800s. This has been one of the most rewarding benefits of learning Latin. Translating such labels into English is much easier now that I understand the sentence structure and rules governing cases.

I am also assisting the Mueller correspondence project by translating some of Mueller's Latin dedications from *Fragmenta Phytographiae Australiae*. These are short descriptions in which Mueller summarises why he has named a species after a particular person.

Post Scholarship, my study of the Latin language continues into 2010. More nouns, more verbs and more stories to read.

I would like to thank the Friends for supporting my Latin course in 2009. I would also like to thank my line manager, Catherine Gallagher, and my Manager, Pina Milne, for their support.

Wayne Gebert

## Herbarium Discovery Walk

Major work on the garden surrounding the 1988 extension of the Herbarium is due to be finished late in June. This project, partly funded by the Friends, is an interpretive walk designed to highlight the work that goes on inside the building and the collections that are kept there. It will provide a 'window' into the Herbarium, allowing visitors to see what happens in a place they are rarely allowed to enter. Board-walks and broad gravel paths have been constructed, and the bust of Mueller, who founded the original Herbarium in 1852, has been moved to a suitably prominent position beside the entrance to the new Walk. Interpretive signs will be erected and display cases constructed under the verandah. The winner of a Friends' Scholarships for RBG staff, Philip Bowyer-Smyth, has designed the drip system for irrigating the new beds. (See p. 12 for Philip's article about his course.) The beds will be planted with species described by Mueller and contemporary botanists such as Neville Walsh.

Marguerite Hancock



# ILLUSTRATORS

## Classes

Term 3 will start in the week beginning 17 July. Classes will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings and in the daytime on Mondays, Wednesdays, Saturdays (two sessions each day – 2.5 hr), Thursdays (one 2.5 hr session) and Fridays (one 3 hr session).  
2.5hr classes: \$270 (incl GST)  
Friends: \$225 (incl GST)  
3 hr classes: \$315 (incl GST)  
Friends: \$270 (incl GST)

For further information about classes contact the Friends' office on 9650 6398. Please note: The Saturday morning class is no longer available to beginners.



## Botanical Illustrators Quarterly Meeting

Tuesday 22 June at 10.00am for 10.30am in the Whirling Room.  
Cost: \$5.50. Pay on the day.

### World Without Bees

Peter Lewis, one of our Botanical Illustrators who is also an apiarist, will give us a talk on bees and their immediate future in Australia. He will tell us how flowers adapt to attract bees and other insects and describe some of the problems our gardens face in a world potentially without bees.

*Judy Jarman*



*Above: Banksia Lunch featuring an Eastern Spinebill*

*Below left: A Handful of Waratah featuring a sugar glider*

*Pencil drawings by Janet Matthews.*

## Feathers, Fur and Flowers

### PENCIL WORKSHOP WITH JANET MATTHEWS

30 June, 1, 2 July

10.00am-3.30pm

Cost \$250 Friends \$190

For application form and materials list please contact the Friends' office on 9650 6398 or email [friends@frbgmelb.org.au](mailto:friends@frbgmelb.org.au)

Janet Matthews is a well-known wildlife artist who specialises in the medium of colour pencil. The workshop is suitable both for beginners and those at a more advanced level, and no experience in botanical illustration is necessary. Students will explore several techniques in colour pencil while learning to draw birds, possums and flowers. They will be shown how to depict the different textures of feathers and fur and details such as stamens and eyes. Subject material will be provided, or students may choose to bring their own. Janet will combine step-by-step demonstrations with personal tuition, and all will complete the course with their own workbook of notes and studies for future reference.

## The Art of Botanical Illustration Exhibition 2010

### ARTISTS' INFORMATION SESSIONS

Two sessions were held – in October 2009 and February 2010 – to assist those artists intending to submit work for *The Art of Botanical Illustration* exhibition in November this year. The sessions were held primarily to help artists understand the Terms of Entry and for them to raise any questions. In addition, we advise all artists intending to have their work identified by the botanists at the Herbarium to do so early and with live specimens if possible.

Roger Spencer from the Herbarium came to our meeting in February and gave a most useful talk. He mentioned that identification of plants at the Herbarium is carried out from Monday to Thursday, 10 am to 1 pm. Anyone wanting a copy of the notes, please contact Joanna Brownell: 9822 4426 or [Joanna@brownell.com](mailto:Joanna@brownell.com).

### THE EXHIBITION

The 2010 exhibition will be held at Domain House from 6 – 21 November. Submission of entry forms is required by Friday, 27 August, and delivery of art works for selection on Monday, 6 September. Further details in the next Newsletter. Entry forms are available on the Friends' website now.

We are still keen to receive images for publicity purposes. Please contact Edyta Hoxley: 9761 9711 or [ehoxley@tpg.com.au](mailto:ehoxley@tpg.com.au)

## Whirlybirds

The Whirlybirds are a group of botanic artists who meet every Tuesday to paint and exchange ideas in the Whirling Room. At present we are involved in completing work for submission to the *Art of Botanical Illustration* Exhibition, 2010.

At the same time we have revived an interest in the Eucalypts of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, and we will be exhibiting these studies in Spring 2011. If you are interested in selecting a Eucalypt from the list in the Whirling Room, please contact Sandra Sanger on 9598 9532 for further information.



*Begoniaceae painted by Eileen Curwell.*

Congratulations to artist Members Mali Moir, Kate Nolan and Dorothee de Sampayo Garrido Nijgh whose artwork has been selected for exhibition in New York's *Focus on Nature XI: Natural History Illustration*, which opened at the New York State Museum on 12 April, 2010.

The exhibition, which runs until 31 October, features 93 illustrations, representing the work of 73 illustrators from 13 countries, including eight artists from Australia.



# FOR THE MEMBERS

## Enriching the Membership



Photo: Gary Heery

Melissa Barnard of the Australian Chamber Orchestra

The recent Autumn New Members' Welcome saw forty new Members bringing along 20 of their friends to meet us.

New members discover us in various ways; these include the FRBG website, and our display outside the Observatory Café. Also, the National Gallery Society provides a link for new members to find us. However, the statistics show many more join as a result of referral by current Members. Thank you for your help with this.

We have also been securing some additional benefits for Members in 2010.

The Australian Chamber Orchestra is now offering tickets at 10% discount to current RBG Friends for its Sunday afternoon concerts scheduled for Melbourne in 2010. The dates to the end of the year are: 6 June, 11 July, 26 September and 14 November. All programs will start at 2.30pm. The June concert will be at the Arts Centre and then the program will move to the Melbourne Town Hall for the rest of the year. Friends' Members who wish to

book tickets should go to: <http://www.aco.com.au> for program details and then check on Buy Tickets and insert FRBG in the box requesting a promotion code.

Members are also invited to explore some of the superb programs being presented at the South Melbourne Town Hall by the students of ANAM, the Australian National Academy of Music. Many of these performances are free to attendees. For more details about ANAM and its concert schedule, go to: <http://www.anam.com.au> or contact ANAM on 96457911.

An additional benefit in 2010 has been announced by Friends' Member Bill Ellerton, who is offering members a special 10% discount on purchases related to a new watering system. For details, go to: <http://www.green-stay.com.au>

### Are you receiving your Friends E-News each month?

Many Members are taking advantage of the reminders about events and activities which are included in the monthly electronic news sent to their email address.

If this bulletin is not reaching you each month make sure that you are up-to-date with the latest news by sending an email message to [friends@frbgmelb.org.au](mailto:friends@frbgmelb.org.au) with a request to have your address added to the email list.

Meanwhile, upcoming issues of *Botanic News* will announce details of new membership initiatives being developed. Ideas and suggestions from Members are invited and always welcome.

*Lee Tregloan, Convener, Membership and Marketing*

These businesses and organisations kindly offer discounts to Friends on PRIOR presentation of their current membership cards, which are not transferable.

The Gardens Shops offer 10 per cent discount on all Members' purchases.

RBG Cranbourne - Australian Garden: Entry fee \$7.35. Non-members \$9.80.

Terrace Tea Rooms, RBG, offers Members 10 per cent discount on all purchases. [www.terracereception.com.au](http://www.terracereception.com.au)

National Gallery of Victoria offers 10 per cent discount at the NGV shop and \$10 off NGV annual membership (new membership only). For membership enquiries contact 8620 2233 or email: [members@ngv.vic.gov.au](mailto:members@ngv.vic.gov.au)

### Botanical Creations

122 Grange Rd, Glen Huntly  
Ph: 9571 9922  
10% off all plants

### Bulleen Art and Garden

6 Manningham Rd West, Bulleen  
[www.baag.com.au](http://www.baag.com.au)  
10% off plants, 5% off other goods  
(excludes paving/retaining walls, tanks and turf)

### Cloudehill Nursery - Gardens - Restaurant

89 Olinda-Monbulk Rd, Olinda  
[www.cloudehill.com.au](http://www.cloudehill.com.au)  
10% off plants only

### Collectors Corner (at Garden World)

810 Springvale Rd, Braeside  
[www.gardenworld.com.au](http://www.gardenworld.com.au)  
10% off all plants, Collectors Corner only

### Cultivate Nursery, Florist & Gifts

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[www.cultivenursery.com.au](http://www.cultivenursery.com.au)  
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via Daylesford  
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10% discount off accommodation

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33 Ferrars Rd, Albert Park  
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10% off everything (cash)  
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Ph: 9735 4010  
Free 100-page colour catalogue of Cotswold Furniture Collection. Free delivery.

### Peonies & Picnics - quality tools, specialised gardening books

8 Howe St, Daylesford  
Ph: 5348 1882  
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### Sculptured Steel Custom Metalwork

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### Sue Jarvis' Gallery & Botanic Garden

24 Blackwood Lane, Gembrook  
By appointment Ph: 5968 1567  
10% off artworks.

### Town and Country Gardens

1280 Malvern Rd, Malvern  
Ph: 9822 9704  
10% off plants over \$20 only

### Town and Country Gardens

24 Whitehorse Rd, Balwyn  
Ph: 9816 9300  
10% off plants over \$20 only

(List current at May 2010)



# NEW MEMBER APPLICATION

PLEASE PRINT

Name(s) .....

(Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms / Dr)

Address .....

Postcode .....

Telephone: ( ) .....

Email: .....

I wish to apply for membership in the following category

☐ **Household - 1 year** **\$68**

(Two adults living at same address. Please state name of second person)

☐ 2 years \$125

☐ 3 years \$186

☐ **Individual (within 50km of the GPO) - 1 year** **\$47**

☐ 2 years \$83

☐ 3 years \$125

☐ **Interstate, Overseas, Country, Pensioner\*, Student\* (full-time)** **\$34**

(\* state pension number / student number and educational institution)

☐ **Life/Group Memberships/Bequests/Wills**

Please send me details

**Trust Fund DONATIONS**

(Tax deductible over \$2.00, receipt issued)

\$

**TOTAL ENCLOSED**

\$

Cheque/Money order enclosed OR please charge my

☐ Visa

☐ Mastercard

Signature .....

Expiry Date .....

Please make cheques payable to Friends of RBG and post to:

Friends of RBG, Gate Lodge, 100 Birdwood Ave, Melbourne 3004

Age Group

☐ Under 25

☐ 25-39

☐ 40-59

☐ 60 and over

How did you hear of the Friends of RBG? .....

Subscription rates as at 1/4/10. Rates subject to annual review. ABN 43 438 335 331



**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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Photo: Jennifer Marshall

