

Summer 2010 - 11

# BOTANIC NEWS

FRIENDS of the ROYAL BOTANIC  
GARDENS MELBOURNE INC.

SUMMER FUN IN THE GARDENS

Wind in the Willows

SEASONS GREETINGS  
AND BEST WISHES

To all our Members



# FROM THE PRESIDENT



I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new President of the Friends. I have been a member of the Friends since 1988 and a Council member for 14 years, a Vice-President for the last six years and since 2007 have chaired the Operations Committee. My other responsibilities have included membership of the Events Committee, for a time acting as Convener, and a member of the Membership and Marketing Committee. The Royal Botanic Gardens has been a lifelong love as has horticulture and gardening. My qualification is in Science with a botany/genetics major plus a horticulture certificate from Burnley.

I would like to thank Janet Thomson for four years of dedicated and wonderfully organised service as President. Janet has been a friendly and inclusive President who has bound together all the various arms of the Friends into a harmonious and vibrant organisation. She has helped strengthen the bonds with our sister organisation at the RBG Cranbourne, and is our representative on the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens

Inc. Committee. She will continue as Convener of the *Botanic News* Editorial Advisory Committee and remains on Council as Immediate Past President.

I also welcome to new roles on Council Irwin Newman (formerly Immediate Past President) as an ordinary member, and Susan Brookes as a Vice-President.

John Hawker, while eligible for re-election, chose to retire after 14 years as an ordinary member. We thank John very much indeed for the contribution that he made to Council and to the Friends during that time.

At the Annual General Meeting on 15 November Professor Robin Sharwood AM, who was made an Honorary Life Member of the Friends in 2009, retired as a Trustee of the Trust Fund. Professor Sharwood was Chairman of Trustees from 1986, when the Trust was established, until 2009. Our thanks go to him for his substantial contribution to the affairs of the Trust. Janet Thomson was appointed a Trustee.

The Friends' Helen McLellan Research Grant was launched at the AGM and we were honoured that Helen's stepdaughter, Trish Peters, was present for this major announcement.

Since receiving the bequest of \$2.5 million from the Estate of Helen McLellan in 2007, the Friends have wished to publicly acknowledge this generosity and believe that establishing this Research Grant is a fitting way in which to do so. For further information about the



Helen McLellan Research Grant see page 4.

Although I have not been closely involved with the Growing Friends, I have a huge admiration for this group. Their Spring Sale coincided not only with the Grand Final replay on the Saturday but, more advantageously, with the RBG's Spring Open Day on the Sunday and as usual attracted large numbers of plant-buying customers. The net amount raised was \$21,645 and the Growing Friends are to be congratulated on this result. Thanks to all the volunteers involved.

The *Art of Botanical Illustration* Exhibition was officially opened on 5 November

by former RBG Board Member and well known horticultural writer Sarah Guest. The amazing talent of the artists involved could clearly be seen in the one hundred and sixty splendid works of art on display. As always the Botanical Illustrators Committee did a wonderful job in organising the Exhibition and I thank them for all their hard work.

I hope to see and meet many of you at the Friends' Christmas Cocktail Party this year at Gardens House, and I extend my best wishes to everyone for a safe and happy Festive season and New Year.

Cathy Trinca



Celia Rosser Medal and associated awards. From left to right: Ruth Jackson, Hon. mention – Terry Napier, Medalist – Deborah Chirside, Hon. mention – Celia Rosser – Tess Mahar, Hon. mention – Kate Nolan, Hon. mention

Photo: Greg Hoxley

# FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

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## Separation Tree Vandalism

Overnight on 19-20 August a vandal ring-barked the Separation Tree, an ancient River Red Gum pre-dating the Gardens. It has stood beside the Yarra billabong that eventually became the RBG's Ornamental Lake for well over 300 years, sheltering countless Aboriginal people and then Gardens visitors – and in 1850 the separation of the new Colony of Victoria from New South Wales was announced to local citizens beneath its spreading canopy. The wanton damage to this venerable tree is unprecedented in my time at the Gardens and has shocked all of us.

RBG staff and expert arborists have examined the extent of the damage and considered how best to treat the tree and assist its recovery. Helpfully some sections of the tissue layer immediately beneath the bark are undamaged, which is important for recovery. We have undertaken 'patch grafting' on the wounded area of trunk using sections of bark removed by the vandal. This procedure encourages reconnection of the tree's tissues that transport nutrients and water and enables natural callous tissue gradually to enclose the wound. A layer of shade cloth has been applied over the damaged areas of trunk to retain moisture and protect the wound. Soil out to 5m beyond the canopy margin is being kept moist through regular drip irrigation and by monthly sub-surface drenching with a pressurised soil probe.

And of course RBG staff are carefully monitoring the tree's condition to inform our management of its health during the months ahead. So far the tree is showing quite vigorous spring growth, although it will be at least 12 months before a definite outcome is known – keep your fingers crossed!

## The Australian Garden at Chelsea 2011

Excitement is building with preparations for the Australian Garden display for next year's Royal Horticultural Society Chelsea Flower Show. The garden will be one of the premium displays at the Show and is sure to attract a great deal of interest from visitors – and encourage them to come and see Victoria's magnificent gardens, including the actual Australian Garden at RBG Cranbourne.

Many plants for the garden have been growing on under the care of a specialist nursery in Somerset and promise to be in peak condition at the time of the Show. The last batch from our plant supplier in Spain will be delivered in February/March to complete the impressive diversity of Australian flora being displayed. In keeping with our focus on showing only Australian plants, we have even arranged for a new Australian grass cultivar to be grown for the first time in England to provide real Aussie turf for the garden.

The RHS Chelsea Flower Show lasts only five days (24-28 May 2011), but we are investigating whether our

garden can live on at another site. A popular public garden near London has expressed strong interest in having the Australian display garden transferred there once Chelsea has concluded – this would be a most positive demonstration of horticultural sustainability and also ensure that the 'new' Australian plants are seen and enjoyed by many more people.

## Working Wetlands Project

In a major boost for Working Wetlands, the vital new water management project at RBG Melbourne, the Melbourne Friends via the Friends' Trust Fund have made a grant of \$210,000 over three years 2010-2012. The grant greatly helps close the funding gap for this \$3.24 million project and continues the outstanding support from the Friends over recent years for water projects at the Gardens under the 'Water Works, Water Wise' program. These water and irrigation initiatives are essential to ensure water security for the Gardens in the decades ahead as we face the consequences of changing climate. All of us at the Gardens are highly appreciative of the generous extent of the Friends' support and the benefits this will bring to the Gardens and our visitors into the future.

Work is well under way with the storm water capture stage of Working Wetlands. Entracon, our contractor, is constructing the biofiltering wetlands in Nymphaea Lake and the Ornamental Lake, and is about to start the underground boring of pipes



Photo: David Cash

*'Bandaged' Separation Tree hopefully improving.*



Photo: Janet Thomson

*Dr Philip Moors and RBG Chairman Elaine Canty speak at the opening of the Herbarium Interpretive Walk.*



# FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2010

to link into the storm water drain on Domain Road. This latter section of works is being co-ordinated with the City of Melbourne, which is undertaking a major upgrade of the Tan Track along the southern boundary of the Gardens. Our current schedule is to complete the storm water stage of Working Wetlands by mid-2011. We hope then to move on to the next stage, linking the Ornamental Lake and its 'reservoir' of treated storm water into the Gardens' irrigation system.

## RBG's Expertise Helping Overseas

The expertise of RBG staff is increasingly being called on by overseas institutions. I mentioned in the Autumn issue of *Botanic News* that two horticultural staff were trainers at a 15-day professional development course in March in Singapore for Asian botanic gardens officers. And in addition during the last few months we have provided invited expert advice to institutions in Abu Dhabi, Korea and China.

Dr Pina Milne, Manager of Herbarium Collections, and Dermot Molloy, Acting Nursery Co-ordinator, were recently part of a small international group advising the Abu Dhabi Environment Agency about the design of a new Centre for Plant Genetic Resources. Associate Professor Mark McDonnell, Director of ARCUE, was invited by the Korean Ministry of Environment to participate in a workshop on the development of Korea's new Institute of Ecology, which is being built

south of Seoul. And Prof David Cantrill, Chief Botanist, has recently returned from invited participation in a Chinese Academy of Sciences meeting at Shanghai Chensen Botanical Garden in China on the role of botanic gardens in global plant biodiversity conservation.

Separately, ARCUE has strong collaboration with the Centre for Urban Greening and Ecology in Singapore; we have memoranda of understanding with two gardens in Asia; and for many years we have been assisting the development of Chagual Botanic Garden in Santiago, Chile. The global botanic gardens' network is increasingly benefiting from co-operation and exchanges such as these, and the RBG is very pleased to be contributing our expertise and experience to these collaborative initiatives.

*Philip Moors,  
Director and Chief Executive*



*Improvements to the Tan Track along the southern boundary of the Gardens. Photo: Meg Miller*

## 2010 Annual General Meeting

The 24th AGM of the Friends on Monday 15 November was presided over by Janet Thomson in her last duty as President. Cathy Trinca was elected unopposed as President for the next two years. John Hawker retired from Council, Susan Brookes was elected Vice-President, Maurice Castro re-elected Treasurer, Susan Chandler and Peter Kelly re-elected and Irwin Newman elected as ordinary members.

Janet Thomson was appointed a Trustee of the Friends' Trust Fund.

The outgoing President, Janet Thomson, presented Volunteer Service Awards to Dorothy Smith, Durham Smith, Robyn Tymms (each 20 years), Carolyn Tomkins (15 years), and Phyllis Dadley-Moore, Edyta Hoxley, Dr Richard Kirsner, Merle McIntyre, Merrill Shulkes and Richard Smith (each 10 years).

Staff Scholarship Awards were presented to Timothy Wall, Trevor Gallagher, Ollie Sherlock, Dermot Molloy and Chris Jenek.

Janet Thomson launched the Friends' Helen McLellan Research Grant. Retiring Trustee of the Friends' Trust Fund, Dr Robin Sharwood, welcomed relatives and friends of our benefactress, the late Helen McLellan.

Dr Philip Moors then addressed members regarding research activities in the RBG.

## Friends' Helen McLellan Research Grant

Following consultation with the Director and Chief Executive of the Royal Botanic Gardens and senior research staff, the Friends' Council and Trustees agreed to recognize the substantial bequest from the estate of Helen McLellan by establishing the Friends' Helen McLellan Research Grant. The grant scheme, to a value of up to \$20,000 per annum, is intended to support scientific research projects conducted by, or on behalf of, the Royal Botanic Gardens. It is expected that grants will be used to support research that would not otherwise be undertaken at the time.

The grant scheme will allow for a variety of applications including a contribution towards scoping, seeding or proving a piece of major research, the purchase of scientific equipment or the engagement of an external expert to assist with or conduct research for the RBG.

Grant scheme funding proposals will be invited annually and assessed by a judging panel including the Director and Chief Executive and Friends' representatives. The assessment process will give consideration to the scientific merit and relevance of the research objectives, the qualifications and experience of the researcher(s) and the likelihood of achieving the stated objectives.

Grant scheme applications will also be assessed in terms of the suitability of the project as a subject for publication on completion.

Applications for the 2011 Friends' Helen McLellan Research Grant will be invited in December 2010.

# COMMEMORATIVE TREES

## Commemorative Trees

On your walks through the Gardens you will have noticed trees planted by, or in memory of, notable people. There are between 70 and 80 such trees in the Gardens – a number of others have not survived. Although there were one or two earlier plantings, the practice was established during William Guilfoyle's directorship. He planted the Algerian Oak (*Quercus canariensis*) at the entrance to his residence, now Gardens House, in 1873, to mark confirmation of his appointment after six months on probation.

Since then, commemorative plantings have included, not necessarily in order of importance, royalty (British and foreign), governors, scientists, directors, benefactors, writers and politicians. A few are described here.

Starting from the Visitors' Centre, we pass Mueller's bust, splendid in its new location: he has no tree, but the Herbarium itself is his memorial. A little further on, near the corner of the Western Lawn, is a Chilean Wine Palm (*Jubaea chilensis*) planted in 1904 by Dr R.L. Ellery, our first Government Astronomer, a position he held for 42 years. He was trained as a surgeon in England but had a keen and long-standing interest in astronomy. He was a founder and first President of the Royal Society of Victoria, was on the council of the University of Melbourne, and was actively involved with the Alfred Hospital, the Public Library, Gallery and Museum. Have you noticed the scars near



Top: Mueller's statue at beginning of Herbarium Interpretive Walk.  
Centre: *Jubaea chilensis*, Chilean Wine Palm, planted by Dr R L Ellery.  
Bottom: *Libocedrus formosa*, planted by Queen Salote of Tonga.

the base of the palm? There are several, not very convincing, theories of their origin. Scythes can hardly have been the cause, since they had been replaced by horse-drawn mowers before the palm was planted. Boring insects are unlikely to have been responsible as the species is very resistant to insect pests in our part of the world. My own implausible theory is that the culprits were trying to extract wine from the Wine Palm. Fortunately they were unaware that the sugary sap can be obtained only by cutting it down.

At the far end of the Director's Tunnel is the Princes Lawn, named for Princes Albert and George, sons of Edward VII and Queen Alexandra. The Princes visited Melbourne in 1881 during a three-year world voyage as naval cadets in HMS *Bacchante*. Only Prince Albert's Chinese Windmill Palm (*Trachycarpus fortunei*) has survived: he died in 1892 having shown a conspicuous lack of interest in the serious side of life. Prince George was to be given another opportunity in 1901 when, as Duke of Cornwall and York (the future King George V), accompanied by the Duchess, he opened the first Federal Parliament. The royal couple planted the matching Himalayan Cedars (*Cedrus deodara*) on the upper side of the Hopetoun Lawn.

There are three other royal plantings on the Princes Lawn. The striking Firewheel Tree (*Stenocarpus sinuatus*) was planted by the Prince of Wales (Duke of Windsor) in 1920 on a tour to thank the Empire for their sacrifices in the Great

War. It may seem a quaint gesture now but it was deeply appreciated by many at the time. The shapely New Zealand Cedar (*Libocedrus formosa*) was planted in 1953 by the impressively proportioned and popular Queen Salote of Tonga who visited Melbourne on her way home from the Coronation of that year. While here, she addressed an assembly at Methodist Ladies College whose principal, Dr Wood, she had known in Tonga. Nearby is a planting by a less popular monarch. It is the Jelly Palm (*Butia capitata*) planted in 1974 by the Shah of Iran whose appearance in Melbourne was greeted with noisy protests against his regime. The Shabhanu (Empress Farah) planted the graceful Mexican Pine (*Pinus patula*), strategically placed to hide, when viewed from Government House, a block of flats on the eastern side of the Gardens. Four and a half years later the couple were driven into exile.

Perhaps because it is close to Government House, the Hopetoun Lawn has been a popular site for distinguished plantings. The lawn is named for Lord Hopetoun, Governor of Victoria from 1889 to 1895. His arrival in Melbourne with 'his household and a large staff of servants, horses, carriages, plate and 300 suits of livery' (*Argus*) was greeted with amazement. His generous hospitality and sociable manner made him popular with the local elite but Lady Hopetoun was considered haughty. Government House, of which Melburnians were proud,



# COMMEMORATIVE TREES

would have seemed modest to her compared to their palatial ancestral home near Edinburgh. He and members of his family planted Algerian Oaks (*Quercus canariensis*) shortly before leaving Government House. He went on to become Australia's first Governor-General, an appointment that turned out to be more demanding than he had expected. His older son, the second Marquess of Linlithgow, was also offered the governor-generalship, but instead became India's longest-serving viceroy. The Duke and Duchess of York (George VI and Queen Elizabeth) planted the Kanooka (*Tristaniopsis laurina*) and White Yiel Yiel (*Grevillea hilliana*) respectively when they visited Australia in 1927 to open Parliament in the new Canberra Parliament House and the tradition was maintained by their daughters. Queen Elizabeth II planted the Brush Box (*Lophostemon confertus*) on her first visit to Australia in 1954 and the candelabrum-like Araucaria (*Araucaria muelleri*) commemorates a visit by Princess Margaret.

The Black Bean (*Castanospermum australe*) on the edge of the path above the Hopetoun Lawn was planted by Maude Gibson, Foy and Gibson's heiress and one of the RBG's most generous benefactors. A major grant from the Maude Gibson Trust financed the purchase of the Cranbourne site. Of particular interest to Friends is the Engelmann Spruce (*Picea engelmannii*) planted in March 2002 by foundation President, Beth Higgs, and then-President,



Top: Princess Margaret's tree, *Araucaria muelleri*.  
Centre: *Lophostemon confertus*, planted by HRH Queen Elizabeth II  
Bottom: *Picea engelmannii* planted by Mrs Beth Higgs and Sir Ninian Stephen.

Sir Ninian Stephen to mark our 20th anniversary. It replaced the original planting, a Chinese Silver Fir (*Abies delavayi*), which, despite having been expertly watered in by Dame Elizabeth Murdoch, died in infancy.

In April 1903, Madame Melba planted a Golden Poplar on the Central Lawn, in the company of William Guilfoyle and the Governor's daughter, Miss Clarke.

Sadly, old age and disease took their toll on the tree, and recently it had to be removed for safety reasons. However, a sapling propagated from the original tree was planted close to the same spot in September by Dame Nellie's granddaughter, Lady Vestey.

Nearby, the handsome Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus x hybrida*) was planted in 1904 by Ignace Paderewski, the Polish pianist and statesman. The Queensland Bottle Tree (*Brachychiton rupestris*) on the Eastern Lawn was planted by Kate Baker in memory of her friend and hero, author Joseph Furphy. The Oak Lawn contains trees planted by our current director, Dr Philip Moors, and soldier and Governor-General, Field Marshall Viscount Slim. Sadly, Lady Loch's Oak is no longer there but a sapling from the original is proudly growing in its place.

Syd Crawcour former RBG Voluntary Guide



Photo: Tony Delues

Photo: Tony Delues



Top: *Brachychiton rupestris*, planted in honour of Joseph Furphy.  
Centre: *Aesculus x hybrida*, planted by Ignace Paderewski.  
Bottom: Marker for Lady Loch's tree. Photos by Peter Symes except as indicated.



# GROWING FRIENDS

## The Spring Sale

**For nursery open days and dates of the next Sale please see the new calendar on the back page of this issue.**

After a cool and wet winter the Growing Friends' nursery was lush and green. The relative lack of sun during the winter months resulted in fewer flowers than usual but the plants were looking vibrant. The Growing Friends were therefore looking forward to a great result from the Spring Sale.

Then there was the drawn AFL Grand Final! But the sun did shine on the Sale days.

Saturday morning proved to be a normal Sale Saturday morning (if anything, a bit more so than normal), very busy with buyers who knew what they wanted and were there to get it quickly – before somebody else did – and go. And they kept coming until early in the afternoon. The remainder of the day was, as expected, very quiet as many people stayed home to watch the football.

Sunday dawned bright and beautiful so the buyers (and lookers) came in a steady

stream all day; so much so that closing was delayed by a few minutes to let in the last enthusiastic customers.

Overall, while the value of sales was down marginally on previous years, in the circumstances the Spring Sale was a great success.

As usual the raffle made a welcome contribution to the total funds raised from the Spring Plant Sale. Thank you to all who gave their support and congratulations to the winners:-

1<sup>st</sup> Prize: Carolyn Tomkins who won the potted Hippeastrum.

2<sup>nd</sup> Prize: Tony Le who won the Italian Cookbook.

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize: Pat Orchard who won the Garden Hamper.

4<sup>th</sup> Prize: Jeff Niemski who won the Children's Garden Tools.

A special thanks to those who donated such tempting prizes: Jan Cheyne, Hannah Dibella and Prue Madsen.

Finally, I would like to thank the many volunteers, in the entry and exit tents and in the kitchen, who are an integral part of the Sale effort and help to make these sales so enjoyable and successful.

*Michael Hare, Convener*



Photo: Jennifer Marshall

## Australian Elm Register

Thirty years ago it would have been inconceivable in the State of Victoria that our gardens and townships would hold the last remaining great stands of elms on the globe. The deadly fungus, Dutch Elm Disease, has not yet spread to Australia, and the Friends of the Elms (FOTE) is pleading for help to maintain this last healthy elm population.

Because of the ever-present threat of Dutch Elm Disease being discovered in Australia, a contingency plan is soon to be released by the Elm Pests and Disease Taskforce in Victoria. This Taskforce is composed of government representatives, including Agriculture Victoria, the Melbourne City Council and Friends of the Elms. A major project, which FOTE has undertaken, is the establishment of a register of all elms in Australia.

We are following New Zealand's example. Their elm register pinpoints geographically as many of the trees as possible. Authorities inspected all these known elms and removed and buried any

elms showing signs of Dutch Elm Disease. The trees are inspected annually, helping to pinpoint new outbreaks of infestation before the disease takes hold on the trees. In this way, the problem has almost been eradicated.

FOTE would appreciate all elm owners registering their trees by calling the hotline, 0409 870 860, to request a reply-paid registration form, or to provide the address of any elms of which they are aware, so that a form and explanation of the importance of the register can be mailed to the owners.

Currently, the disease has not taken hold in Australia, but the European Elm Leaf Beetle, which has no natural predator in Australia, is rapidly spreading through the country. The Friends of the Elms issues a pamphlet detailing the methods of control of threats to our elms.

To register your elms, or obtain information, please write FOTE office, C/- Burnley Gardens, 500 Yarra Blvd, Richmond, 3121, or telephone 0409 870 860.



Photo: Jennifer Marshall

# EVENTS



## Seasonal Guided Visit

### TO THE GROWING FRIENDS NURSERY

Friday, 17 December at 10.00am  
Meet at Gate Lodge (opposite Shrine).  
COST: \$5 MEMBERS ONLY  
RSVP by Wednesday 15 December  
on enclosed booking form or  
download a booking form from the  
Events page on our website:  
[www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org](http://www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org)  
Bookings are essential as numbers  
will be limited.

Whether you are giving a plant as a gift or wanting to greet your family and visitors with beautiful living decorations, this visit to the Friends' Nursery will inspire you. Ideas abound and a helpful member of the Growing Friends is always on hand to advise and ensure you take away the best choice.

We will gather at Gate Lodge for morning tea and the opportunity to meet with other Friends before being guided

down to the nursery.

Our Growing Friends' Nursery visit is particularly suitable for new members and others who are not familiar with its whereabouts and workings. Being able to purchase plants here is an exclusive benefit of Friends' membership. If you plan to buy plants, please think about bringing strong carry-bags or your market trolley to carry your purchases home.



## Talking Plants

### SUMMER SURVIVORS

Thursday 3 February at 10.00am  
Meet at Gate Lodge (opposite Shrine).  
COST: \$10 \$15 Non-members  
RSVP by Friday 28 January on  
enclosed booking form or download  
one from the Events page on our  
website: [www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org](http://www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org)  
Book early as numbers will be limited  
Morning tea will be served during the  
morning

Success in your summer garden is a story to share with others. Bring along your plants and enjoy time out over morning tea in the courtyard at Gate Lodge to discuss how your garden fared, and what plants are real survivors during the hot dry days of summer.

Showing and sharing with others is the essence of gardening and it is after all how we learn. Join like-minded gardeners for an animated and inspiring discussion.

In the event of rain we will move to Domain House in Dallas Brooks Drive. Please check the Friends' website [www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org](http://www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org) the day before or ring the office on 9650 6398.



## Summer Insiders' Walk

### AN EVENING OF BIRD SPOTTING

Thursday, 10 February at 5.30pm  
Meet at Gate Lodge  
Refreshments will be served.  
COST: \$15 MEMBERS ONLY  
RSVP by Monday 7 February on  
enclosed booking form or download  
one from the Events page on our  
website: [www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org](http://www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org)  
Book early as numbers will be limited.

Meet our leader David Plant at Gate Lodge. From there we will stroll quietly down to Long Island to see Bell Miners (Bell Birds) and water birds such as Black Swan, Coot, Dusky Moorhen, cormorants and a variety of ducks.

We will wander around the Ornamental Lake and back up to Nymphaea Lake keeping our eyes and ears open for bush birds such as wattle birds and lorikeets and hopefully see and hear the noisy Sulphur-crested Cockatoos.

At the Canna Bed we will look at the large bee hive nearby in the Magnolia Bed and pause to discuss the wonderful initiatives undertaken by the Gardens in water management. From Nymphaea Lake we will walk through the Australian Border back to Gate Lodge.

The pace will be leisurely with time to appreciate the sounds and sights of the beautiful Royal Botanic Gardens.

Bring your binoculars!





## Australia's Remarkable Trees

### ILLUSTRATED TALK BY RICHARD ALLEN

Tuesday 15 February at 6.00 for 6.30pm  
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium  
COST: \$15 \$25 Non-members  
RSVP by Friday 11 February 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.

During 2008 and 2009 writer Richard Allen and photographer Kim Baker travelled 60,000 kilometres to photograph and write about remarkable trees from the far north of Western Australia to the bottom of Tasmania and throughout the country's dusty interior. Their book, *Australia's Remarkable Trees*, celebrates in words and photographs fifty iconic individual trees.

Most of these trees are old and many are large, but all

have strong personalities, fascinating histories and their own unique stories to tell.

Richard Allen has been a journalist for 20 years and has written on a wide variety of subjects for *the Australian Financial Review*, *the Age*, *the Sunday Telegraph (UK)*, *Good Weekend Magazine* and *BRW*.

Signed copies of the book will be available at the talk.



## Summer Fit Friends Ramble

### SHRINE OF REMEMBRANCE

Tuesday 22 February at 10.00am sharp.  
Meet near reception desk in the RBG Visitor Centre.  
Enter from Birdwood Avenue.  
COST: \$15 \$25 Non-members  
RSVP by Friday 18 February on enclosed booking form or download one from the Events page on our website [www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org](http://www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org)

Book early as numbers will be limited.

The Shrine of Remembrance is the largest and most visited war memorial in Victoria and a well recognised Melbourne landmark. Most people may have visited the Shrine over time, but there may be many who have yet to visit this extraordinary site which pays homage to the courage and indomitable spirit of those who fought for our freedom.

Our tour will include a visit to the Crypt, the Gallery of

Medals, and the Sanctuary, a deeply moving and uplifting tribute for all visitors to share.

Before taking our guided tour, we have been kindly offered morning tea in the visitor gallery.

We will also visit the outside memorials, gardens and plaques and have a short memorial service.



## Summer Talking Plants

### HOW TO GROW SUPERIOR FLOWERS AND VEGETABLES

Friday 25 February at 10.00 am  
Domain House, Dallas Brooks Drive  
COST: \$10 \$15 Non-members  
RSVP by Monday 21 February on enclosed booking form or download one from the Events page on our website: [www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org](http://www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org)  
Book early as numbers will be limited  
Refreshments will be served during the morning.  
Fresh seedlings will be available for sale at the talk.

This illustrated talk will take us on a virtual tour of the Oasis Nursery on the Mornington Peninsula and will show how seedlings are grown, tracking the growing process right up until the seedlings are ready for sale. It is a fascinating and surprising journey.

There will be wide-ranging information on how to achieve superior plants such as the best time of year to plant, site location, soil type, sun or shade, fertilisers, watering,

pruning and pinching out, as well as critical advice on the best way to transplant to avoid root shock.

Following the talk there will be an opportunity to visit the Growing Friends' Nursery to purchase plants. Please note that if the temperature is 34°C or more on the day, the nursery visit will not be available due to the Royal Botanic Gardens heat policy. Ring the office or check on the website on the day should temperatures be forecast for over 34°C.

# ILLUSTRATORS

## Classes

Term 1 2011 will start in the week beginning Saturday 5 February. Classes will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings and in the daytime on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays (two sessions each day - 2.5hr), Thursdays (one 2.5hr session) and Fridays (one 3-hr session).

2.5hr classes: \$270 (incl GST)

Friends: \$225 (incl GST)

3hr classes: \$315 (incl GST)

Friends: \$270 (incl GST)

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

## Fungi

Rod Orr, a Bendigo field naturalist, gave the Whirlybirds a very interesting talk on fungi, illustrating it with excellent photos. He had been on many field trips, and showed numerous specimens from Wombat State Forest.

Rod divided fungi into sections, including:

Fungi with gills

Fungi without gills

Sponge fungi

Jelly fungi

Coral fungi

and suggested we start looking for specimens during



*Brachychiton species 'Wangi'*

## Genus Brachychiton

Jean Dennis, Botanical Illustrator, Whirlybird and Friend of the RBG, has recently completed a full florilegium of the Genus *Brachychiton* in detailed life-sized watercolours. This is a rare and important achievement. All but one *Brachychiton* (commonly called Kurrajong) were found in their native habitats. One from New Guinea has been painted from dried specimens held in both the Brisbane and Sydney Herbariums. This project has been achieved without the in-field assistance of either a botanist or outside funding.

The florilegium consists of

31 species, two sub-species and eight recognised hybrids. There are several new species in the florilegium still to be named.

On finding *Brachychiton* species in the bush, detailed notes are recorded and photographs taken. The specimen is then painted in meticulous detail, flowers first as these are the most fragile parts of the plant. This interest has led Jean to collect and preserve *Brachychiton* specimens for the collections of the Melbourne, Brisbane, Northern Territory and Western Australian Herbariums.

As part of the 150-year celebration of the Burke and Wills expedition, in October this year Jean joined Mali Moir and eight other botanical illustrators on a field trip to Menindee in NSW to find and paint samples of the plants collected by Dr Hermann Beckler, a member of the original expedition.

Jean was also represented by her beautiful painting of *Swainsonia formosa* (Sturt's Desert Pea) at this year's *Art of Botanical Illustration* exhibition.

Meg Miller



## Whirlybirds

The Whirlybirds Botanic Illustration group meet every Tuesday in the Whirling Room.

It is an informal gathering where we have an opportunity to support, encourage and advise our fellow illustrators while working on our own paintings.

The concept is so popular we have now started a second group on Thursday mornings.

If you are interested in further information please contact Sandra Sanger on 9598 9532.

May and June, until September. Fungi are mostly found in decaying matter, and during identification we need to note colour of gills, stems and caps, whether the specimens are slimy, and make a spore print on black and white paper to see the colour of the spores.

In some areas fungi are protected.

We were amazed to see such an extraordinary range of very bright colours and shapes, from very large specimens to tiny little ones.

Judy Jarman



*Brachychiton muellerianus*



# ILLUSTRATORS

## Workshops

**ALL CLASSES WILL BE HELD IN THE WHIRLING ROOM STUDIO, OBSERVATORY GATE.**

**For bookings and further information, please contact the Friends' office on 9650 6398.**

Beginners' Workshop  
with Dianne Emery  
4, 5, 6, 7 January  
10.00am to 4.00pm  
Cost: \$307.00 Friends: \$260.00

This intensive course is an introduction to botanical art via pencil and watercolour. Students will begin to develop skills in outline drawing, foreshortening, tonal work and rendering of surfaces, basic colour work and paint application.

The cost includes drawing materials, paint, watercolour paper and brushes and morning and afternoon tea.

Illustrating Plant Dissections  
with Mali Moir  
10, 11, 12 January  
10.00am to 4.00pm  
Cost: \$232.00 Friends: \$185.00

This workshop is designed to give students an idea of what is required when drawing plant dissections to support a botanical painting, or when producing scientific illustrations for publication.

Basic botany and plant structure will be covered, as will pen and ink techniques, preparation and page layout, and handling, storing and recording of specimens. References will be made to some of the visual language needed in line art.

Morning and afternoon tea will be provided. Students will need to apply for a materials

list from the Friends' office.

Vellum and Watercolour  
with Mali Moir  
13, 14 January  
10.00am to 4.00pm  
Cost: \$187.00 Friends: \$140.00

This workshop is offered to experienced students only. Vellum is an animal skin from the leather industry, especially prepared for painting on. Its semi-opaque quality gives watercolours a uniquely lustrous and vibrant effect. This course will focus on producing small works using primarily a 'dry brush' technique.

Kelmscott vellum from England will be available for purchase at the workshop or you may bring your own. A 6x8 inch piece will cost approximately \$25.

Morning and afternoon tea will be provided. Students will need to apply for a materials list from the Friends' office.

Design and Composition  
with Helen Burrows  
17, 18, 19 January  
10.00am to 4.00pm  
Cost: \$232.00 Friends: \$185.00

This three-day workshop provides a framework for fostering artistic confidence and

also aims to help artists who need to review their practice. By gaining an understanding of the elements of design and the art of basic composition, students will have the basis for developing their own artistic style. Activities are designed to encourage visual thinking, problem solving and ideation. Selected botanical specimens will be used for drawing exercises including: design elements; the design process; designers' rectangles; figure and ground; illusions and space; light on form and colour. These activities are both fun and rewarding and the result should be a beautiful painting.

Morning and afternoon tea will be provided. Students will need to apply for a materials list from the Friends' office.

Drawing Workshop  
with Dianne Emery  
24, 25, 27, 28 January (please note 26 January is a public holiday)  
10.00am to 4.00pm  
Cost: \$297.00 Friends: \$250.00

This workshop is aimed at those with some experience. The first two days will be spent looking at scraperboard techniques for botanical art

and natural history works, and during the third and fourth days students will learn quick drawing and painting techniques suitable for keeping an art notebook, travel journal or visual diary.

Morning and afternoon tea will be provided. Students will need to apply for a materials list from the Friends' office.

## Botanical Illustrators

### CHRISTMAS MEETING

Tuesday 7 December at 10.30am  
in the Whirling Room  
RSVP to Friends' Office, 9650 6398  
The Whirlybirds will celebrate the end of their tenth *Art of Botanical Illustration* exhibition, and several artists will talk about their trips to the Trust for Nature property, Ned's Corner, 100kms from Mildura.

Pam McDiarmid will then entertain us by playing on the Hurdy-Gurdy she built recently. Please bring a plate of food for lunch.

*Judy Jarman*



*Iris germanica cultivar painted by Helen Burrows.*



*Celia Rosser and Celia Rosser Medal winner Terry Napier beside several of Terry's beautiful works displayed at the art of Botanical Illustration Exhibition 2010.*

*Photo: Greg Hoxley*

# ILLUSTRATORS

## The Art of Botanical Illustration Exhibition 2010

The tenth biennial exhibition was opened by Sarah Guest, former RBG Board Member and well-known horticultural writer and author. Sarah said 'These artists can all do it, but this year the bar has been raised. There is a little edginess this time – much more than just good technique or scientific perfection. Having risen to the top of their art form, these artists have turned Melbourne into a recognised centre for botanic art'.

Works of art purchased for the State Botanical Collection with a grant of \$5000 given by the Friends for that purpose, were announced by Chairman of the RBG Board, Elaine Canty.

Edyta Hoxley, Convener of the Botanical Illustrators' Committee, introduced Celia Rosser who presented the Celia Rosser Medal to Terry Napier. Edyta thanked all the artists for the beauty around and explained that this year, Celia had decided to recognise some of the emerging botanical artists by awarding Honorable Mentions. Recipients were Deborah Chirnside, Ruth Jackson, Tess Mahar and Kate Nolan. Terry Napier received the Celia Rosser medal.

*Above left: Tess Mahar, Hydrangea quercifolia - Oakleaf hydrangea.*

*Above right: Deborah Chirnside, Miscanthus sinensis 'Zebrinus'.*

*Below left: Ruth Jackson, Aclanthus caudatus.*

*Below right: Kate Nolan, Cynara cardunculus, 'Spanish cardoon'.*

## Celia Rosser Medal



*Top left: Pimelia physodes - Terry Napier, winner, Celia Rosser Medal*

*This page, State Botanical Collection.*

*Top right: Beverley Lewis, Acacia melanoxylon.*

*Centre: Heather Simkin, Avicenna marina.*

*Below: Christobel Spafford, Pandorea jasminoides.*

*Page 13, State Botanical Collection.*

*Top: Noelene Sherwin, Mandragora officinarum.*

*Middle: Sue Boxshall, Protea neriifolia (dried).*

*Bottom: John Pastoriza-pinol, Paphiopedalum hybrid.*

*Photo: Greg Hoxley*

## State Botanical Collection



## Honourable Mentions - Celia Rosser





# MEMBERS

## State Botanical Collection

## Introducing



Members of the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens are now able to access additional member benefits through special arrangements agreed with the Reader's Feast Bookstore.

For more than 19 years, Reader's Feast has been located at Midtown Plaza at the corner of Bourke and Swanston Streets in central Melbourne (Tel: 03 9662 4699).

It has been recognised for its excellent services and comprehensive range. In addition to in-store sales, telephone, mail and on-line ordering services, Reader's Feast also provides a special order service for hard-to-find titles. Its welcoming and knowledgeable staff include its three buyers who work in the store talking with customers every day.

In October, Friends' Members were invited to join the Reader's Feast Privileged Reader Programme (PRP) and at the same time, enter a prize draw for one of ten \$50 Reader's Feast Gift Vouchers. Benefits of the Programme include twice-yearly vouchers to PRP members (conditions apply), quarterly book guides and invitations to special events and festivals. By the time this edition of *Botanic News* has been delivered, the prizewinners will have been notified. However, although this offer is now past, interested members can still contact the Friends office to enquire about joining Reader's Feast.



In addition to the introductory benefit for current members, as people join the Friends, they will also be able to sign up for the Reader's Feast Privileged Reader Programme and receive a \$25 gift voucher to welcome them.

For new members, details about the programme and an application form are being included in their member welcome package along with the latest information about the other organisations and businesses which provide special discounts and packages for Friends.

As part of this new relationship with Reader's Feast, we will also benefit through receiving packages of books twice a year to the value of \$500 chosen in consultation with the Friends. These books will be distributed as prizes and special gifts.

### Australian Chamber Orchestra 2011 Season

#### Free CD offer to Members

In the past year, members have been able to access discounted concert tickets through the Friends' link to the Australian Chamber Orchestra, one of the best chamber orchestras in the world. Details about the ACO's 2011 National Concert Season have now been released.

Friends' members are being given the opportunity to receive a free Australian Chamber Orchestra CD. This is available on request. Go to the ACO website at <http://www.aco.com.au/> and find FREE BROCHURE in the top left corner of the site. Select 'More Information' and complete the details required on the form provided. To arrange for delivery of the free CD, insert

the code word FRBG in the box for 'optional codeword'.

### Announcing the latest winner of our Friends' quarterly membership prize.

Earlier this year, the Friends launched a new quarterly Membership Prize. At the end of each quarter, all Members who have paid their fee by the date printed on their first renewal notice are eligible for a prize. The Prize is an award of free membership for the following year.

Congratulations go to our second winner, Mrs Krista Allan from Pearcedale, which is located to the south-east of Melbourne. Krista has been a Friends' member for over 13 years and was delighted with her unexpected bonus.

Renew and be part of the draw when it's your quarter!

The final prize for 2010 will be drawn at the end of December and the winner will be announced in the Autumn 2011 issue of *Botanic News*.

### And in the meantime?

More news items and reminders of upcoming Friends' events are included in our monthly electronic news bulletin to members. Please ensure that the Friends' office has a current email address for you so that you don't miss out on special announcements and offers. Send a message to: [friends@frbgmelb.org.au](mailto:friends@frbgmelb.org.au)

*Lee Tregloan, Convener, Membership and Marketing*

## Nursery and Garden Industry National Conference

The theme of the 2010 conference was *Grasp Your Opportunities* and was held at the Darwin Conference Centre in Darwin. (See image)

It looks so inviting but you will notice the lack of people. It's 27°C at night, 33°C during the day, 80 per cent humidity, and 1.6m rainfall pa. Most of the rain falls between December and March while late April to some time in October can be virtually rain free. However, neither this, nor the ever-present threat of huge crocodiles could prevent 252 Nursery men and women from attending the conference.

Registration was held on the first night at none other than Crocasaurus Cove: a meet, greet and pity the poor huge crocs in tiny enclosures. I managed to avoid the 'cage of death' competition. I did meet up with the manager of AQIS post-quarantine Nursery. She had also entered her Nursery in the new Best Government Nursery award. As this was a new award there were only three entries, AQIS Post-Quarantine Knoxfield, City of Whitehorse ParksWide Nursery and Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne. Later on in the Conference proceedings, AQIS Post-Plant Quarantine Centre of Knoxfield were named the Best Government Nursery for 2010. I did congratulate the manager through slightly gritted teeth.

Much of the focus of the conference was on retail



and wholesale nurseries and garden centres, and I found the conference and the Nursery and Garden Industry Australia had, and have, a lot to offer the RBG.

His Honour Mr Tom Pauling officially opened the conference. He spoke of Darwin as being not only the gateway for tourism but also for pests and diseases coming in from Asia and suggested as an industry we should be putting pressure on the government to protect our nursery and garden industry for our country's health.

The first speaker was Gerry Wood, the Hon. Member for Nelson. An inspirational speaker, he began by stating, "If making mistakes makes you a better person I must be an expert".

Gerry studied Horticultural Science at Burnley prior to going to the NT in 1970 and has been instrumental in developing the Daly River Mission garden which supplies vegetables for the Aboriginal community of 300 people.

Gerry was followed by Neville Norman, an Economist whose talk was entitled *The Crystal Ball*. After explaining the economy and why we are where we are he looked at

Nursery and Garden driver factors to turn green consciousness to our advantage. He also spoke about customer propensities: less shopping time and money, smaller home gardens and a general Nursery and Garden interest.

Annette Gillanders, Managing Director of BiZnorth, discussed methods of keeping good staff and increasing productivity. She spoke about the importance to staff of: environment, expression, recognition, stability, structure and teamwork. Expectations reflect a desire to make collaboration a highly valued and commonly used method for reaching work objectives. Those who rate this expectation highly want to view themselves as part of a team that shares its knowledge and skills to attain agreed-upon goals. They expect colleagues to cooperate with each other and be committed to helping each other succeed.

Trevor Cochrane from Garden Gurus spoke on *How to use the media to benefit my business*. The most interesting aspect of this in relation to the RBG was the emphasised importance of remaining abreast of modern methods of

reaching one's audience. Not that I have much idea about Facebook, blogging or tweeting, but these are apparently valuable tools in reaching our X and Y generations. Perhaps there are openings here for the RBG to get our message out.

Rod Turner, General Manager, Plant Health Australia; Bio-secure Business, focussed on the importance of recognising and reducing incursions of new plant pests. The Nursery Industry is perceived to be one of the greatest risk creators. In the financial year 2009-10 there were 13 emergency plant pest incursions that cost millions of dollars to clean up.

There was a multiple guest session covering Labels. This topic raised a number of important questions and issues for me. What do the RBG and the Growing Friends want or need on their labels? There is the opportunity to review labelling information and perhaps put more information on Growing Friends' labels about sponsorship, and web address directed to more information about the Friends of the RBG - and whether



the plant purchased from the Growing Friends is growing in the RBG.

John McDonald of Nursery and Garden Industry Queensland introduced the participants to an amazing array of hand-held infield pest and disease diagnostic tools. The single-use plastic unit is approximately 2.5 x 6cm and average cost is \$20.00 per unit. The diagnostic process involves placing a sample of leaf tissue in a provided container together with a number of ball bearings and a chemical solution. This is shaken up for 3 minutes then a drop of the solution is applied to the receptive pad. An output of either a single or double line will indicate the presence or not of the tool specific pest. It functions by isolating a particular pathogen protein. At the time of the conference there were units that identified 15 separate species and the list is growing; from *Phytophthora* to Fire Blight. Some of the units will only key out to genus level, however the unit can then be sent away for identification to a species level.

These units could be an invaluable tool in the initial evaluation of disease at the RBG. We have a *Phytophthora* unit that will be trialled shortly.

I fear my 600 words, like all things RBG, have grown. I'll finish with a few points and questions raised by Tanya Ha, author, *Greeniology*, SBS presenter, about enhancing the reputation and raising the profile of your business.

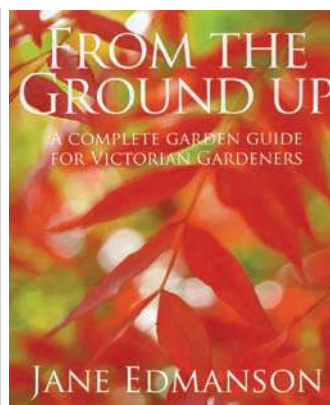
She suggested incorporating cooking into marketing campaigns; it's in vogue and rating extremely well. "Market

indoor plants by identifying their air quality improvement benefits", she said. Everyone loves growing their own and practising sustainable gardening at the moment, so market products and advice that highlight these. Encourage community plantings and/or demonstrations. Use the after-Christmas – slow news week to advantage by sending out press releases about your business. A new area that is booming is green infrastructure, roof and vertical gardens. How can these be incorporated into your marketing, she asked.

Thank you so very much to the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens for making this conference available to me through their Scholarship program. It is such a wonderful opportunity for all staff to advance and share their knowledge on the national and international level.

*David Robbins*  
**Nursery Coordinator**  
**Acting Plant Records Officer**  
**June 2010 – Feb 2012**

Ed note: The Friends' Scholarship makes available up to \$10,000 each year to applicants from all staff employed by the RBG Board. The scholarship is intended to help staff further their expertise in a way which will benefit both them and their place of employment. David was one of three winners of the 2009 Scholarship.



## From the Ground Up

### A COMPLETE GARDEN GUIDE FOR VICTORIAN GARDENERS

Jane Edmanson  
Neutrog, 2009  
RRP: \$65.00

At first glance this looks like many other general garden books. It includes information about how to grow and look after plants, what to grow – annuals, perennials, natives, bulbs, vegetables, etc. – dealing with pests, and so on. As the title promises, a lot of attention is paid to soil, soil quality, composting and fertilising. Neutrog, the publisher, is a producer of organic fertilisers.

This book, however, does have an added attraction. The Victorian reader can be relatively confident that any of its recommendations – whether for plant material or pest or disease identification – will be relevant to our conditions. That is a real bonus since books often tempt us with glamorous photos and fabulous descriptions of things that are totally inappropriate for our climate or soil. The results of these temptations are either

immensely disappointing, or extremely exciting. Of course, that is one of the thrills of gardening.

Jane Edmanson has written in a no-nonsense manner and has included interesting tips and frequently asked questions for each chapter. There are lists of further reading at the end of each chapter to encourage the gardener to increase their knowledge. The book also is very colourful with a clean and open presentation and many photos. There are currently three books in this series of Australian state-specific garden books – the other two address gardening issues for South Australia and NSW.

There is plenty here for the new gardener, but also quite a lot to jog the memory, or enhance the knowledge of those who have been gardening in Victoria for a long time.

*Terri Kay*

## December 2010

- 1 Christmas Cocktail Party
- 3 Growing Friends' Nursery open 8.00am to 1.00pm
- 10 Growing Friends' Nursery open 8.00am to 1.00pm
- 17 Growing Friends' Nursery open 8.00am to 1.00pm
- 17 Guided Nursery Visit
- 24 Office closes from 1.00pm

## January 2011

- 3 Office reopens
- 4, 5, 6, 7 Illustrators' Beginners' Workshop.
- 7 Growing Friends' Nursery open 8.00am to 1.00pm
- 10, 11, 12 Workshop 'Illustrating Plant Dissections'
- 13, 14 Illustrators' Workshop 'Vellum and Watercolour'
- 14 Growing Friends' Nursery open 8.00am to 1.00pm
- 17, 18, 19 Illustrators' Workshop 'Design and Composition'
- 21 Growing Friends' Nursery open 8.00am to 1.00pm
- 24, 25, 27, 28 Illustrators' Workshop 'Drawing'
- 28 Growing Friends' Nursery open 8.00am to 1.00pm

## February 2011

- 3 Talking Plants
- 4 Growing Friends' Nursery open 8.00am to 1.00pm
- 5 Illustrators' Classes begin
- 10 Insiders' Twilight Walk
- 11 Growing Friends' Nursery open 8.00 to 1.00pm
- 15 Remarkable Trees of the World
- 18 Growing Friends' Nursery open 8.00am to 1.00pm
- 22 Fit Friends' Ramble
- 25 Talking Plants
- 25 Growing Friends' Nursery open 8.00am to 1.00pm

## March 2011

- 4 Growing Friends' Nursery open from 8.00am to 1.00pm
- 11 Growing Friends' Nursery open from 8.00am to 1.00pm

## April 2011

- 30 Growing Friends' Plant Sale 10.00am to 4.00pm

## May 2011

- 1 Growing Friends' Plant Sale 10.00am to 3.00pm

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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