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kilometres (about one-third the area of Tasmania), it includes sandstone plateaus, escarpments and gorges, riverine plains, and areas of prominently layered and intricately weathered limestone, including an extensive cave system. The park has been recently extended, but never thoroughly surveyed for its botanical or zoological attributes.

It seemed an appropriate venue for a Mueller commemorative expedition, providing an historic link with that great botanist and explorer, and worthy of an inventory of its vegetation to assist in appropriate future management and development. The consequent set of specimens gathered, almost certainly to include species not hitherto represented at the National Herbarium of Victoria, would build on Mueller's original Northern Territory collections and those haphazardly obtained since to create a rich resource for future botanical research.

The logistics

The National Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory supported the expedition, providing botanists from Darwin and Alice Springs Herbaria (including friend and former colleague from Melbourne RBG, David Albrecht), zoologists from the Wildlife Research Division, and logistic expertise. Catering and helicopter transport costs



Photo J. Wolseley

Grevillea byrnesii

- the park is largely inaccessible by ground vehicles
- were borne by the Commission and by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, largely through the generosity of the Melbourne Friends.

So, with all this in place, we arrived to the unaccustomed heat of Darwin, to be greeted with the shattering news that the elaborately-prepared base camp had been washed down the Humbert River as a result of 175 ml (seven inches) of rain in the preceding two days. 'No worries' we were told, in the great tradition of the Territory; base camp would be hurriedly shifted to the banks of the East Baines River, where an outstation of the former Bullita pastoral lease (now included in the National Park) would provide some fixed shelter, not to mention showers and flush toilets (well, sort of).

En route to Timber Creek, the nearest settlement to Bullita base camp, we saw our first baobab (*Adansonia gregorii*) trees. These had a particular significance to our expedition, being named by Mueller in honour of the leader of *his* expedition. The trees, with their extraordinary swollen trunks, were often used as 'signposts' to mark the progress of Gregory's trip. We were to encounter many baobabs in the course of our expedition, mostly lining the larger watercourses, but, curiously, in the limestone country, perched high and dry on elevated ledges.

Our busy base camp (containing up to 40 people

on some days) was dominated by a particularly impressive baobab, heavily carved by pastoralists who had used the outstation in early days. Festooned from other trees in the area - younger baobabs, ghost gums (*Corymbia bella* - a controversial new name for one form of the old *Eucalyptus papuana*) and baubins (*Lysiphyllum cunninghamii*) were seemingly hectares of tarpaulins - for shelter from the hot sun, or just in case the wet season made a brief reappearance. We were soon to appreciate both justifications, with two nights of heavy and persistent rain, accompanied by stunning thunder and lightning displays.

On more benign nights we were tempted to move away from the shelters to appreciate the magnificent Northern Territory astral display. From about 9.00pm, the heavens burned with breathtaking brilliance. Low on the northern horizon shone Ursa Major, characteristic of northern hemisphere skies; to the west Orion; to the east Sagittarius; and to the south, the Southern Cross. Between these, so many stars and so bright that there seemed hardly space for another!

Getting down to work

After creating a miniature suburban subdivision under canvas, we busied ourselves setting up the outdoor laboratory - areas for identification, preparation and preservation of the expected botanical bounty. The specimen driers were crucial pieces of equipment that were foreign to us southerners, rarely having had to deal with the combination of seriously high humidity and high temperature, perfect growing conditions for specimen-destroying moulds. The driers, developed by Paul Munns (a technician at Darwin Herbarium) have evolved into ingenious collapsible devices powered by gas burners. They efficiently dried all but the juiciest specimens in less than a day.

The main business of our trip, collecting, began with a scrutiny of geological, topographic and land-systems maps. The plan was to get even coverage through the parks while sampling all major habitat types. Coupling this aim with the logistics of getting the six two-person collecting teams safely deposited (and retrieved) by a Bell Jet-Ranger five-seater helicopter up to 120 km from base camp required astute daily planning by our Northern Territory colleagues. The chopper pilot and Global Positioning System units did a great job in finding us.

A crucial criterion for site selection was proximity to water. Fortunately the recent rains meant that most gullies and seasonal watercourses would provide a welcome, if tepid, drink (and if we were



Photo Bill Bachman, Australian Geographic

Artist John Wolseley on his way to work!

lucky a quick dip). The daily heat and humidity otherwise required the lugging around of litres of water, which seemed inevitably to leave our bodies too quickly for us comfortably to replace it.

The botanical bounty

As we became familiar with the terrain and vegetation, us southerners were able to predict with some accuracy the likely lie of the land from topographic maps (and from the chopper cabin) and be more selective in putting down in 'quality' collecting sites. Targeted communities included vine scrub (weakly-developed rainforest), often replete with dripping rock-faces or waterfalls; woodlands of the glorious orange-flowered Darwin Woollybutt (*Eucalyptus miniata*) on sandstone plateaus; stunted Snappy Gum (*E. brevifolia*) stands on slopes; or mixed woodlands of the distinctive waxy grey-leaved *Eucalyptus pruinosa*, Bloodwood (*Eucalyptus* or *Corymbia terminalis*), and the many species of *Terminalia* (small trees, frustratingly rarely with fruit, but some species famed for their fleshy fruit with extraordinarily high levels of Vitamin C) on riverine plains. In all of these communities unfamiliar grasses abounded - native aromatic Lemon-grass (*Cymbopogon* spp.), Spinifex (*Triodia* and *Plectrachne*), and a huge assortment of genera with savagely barbed seeds, the latter still making their presence felt as small inflamed splinter-sites a fortnight after we returned to Melbourne (not to mention the prickle-riddled



Specimens pressed and packed, the Darwin and Melbourne botanists prepare to return to their more mundane offices

socks). Figs (many species of *Ficus*), Gardenias, Calytrix, Grevilleas (some gloriously coloured, such as rare, orange *G. byrnesii*, claret-coloured *G. dryandri*, and pink *G. decurrens*), Acacias (including several species with remarkable 'minni-ritchi' bark - dark red papery curls, and the 'Elephants-ear Wattle' *A. dumii*, with huge asymmetrical, strongly veined young phyllodes), Hibiscus of many forms and colours, and a staggeringly diverse array of members of the Pea family were the most abundant shrubs encountered.

Back at camp the driers were working overtime, so much so that a 'go-slow' was ordered, meaning that commonly-encountered species were passed over in favour of more exotic specimens. One lay-day, and a rejigging of the burners, and we were off again. The daily commuting by speedy, agile chopper certainly beat the drudge of the 'south-eastern carpark' (the SE Arterial in peak hour), or rattling along in more conventional heavy steel commuter conveyances. None of us will forget the exhilaration of seeing land drop away before our feet as the machine passed over plummeting escarpments, or flying low over watercourses as if they were empty freeways (or was that a croc. down there?). And none of us is likely to forget the peculiar smell that results from a blend of Jet A-1 aviation fuel and four hot, sweaty, botanists squeezed into the glass dome of a helicopter cabin!

The other records

While the plants were being gathered and pressed, providing a vegetational record of the expedition, the human recorders, journalist, photographer and two artists, were compiling their own impressions on magnetic tape, celluloid, paper and canvas. They worked mostly unobtrusively amongst us, save for the odd 'just hold that' or 'a bit to the left', or sometimes alone and remote, absorbing the dramatic landscape and vastness of the park. Their work will appear in *Australian Geographic* in July. It also featured in an exhibition, *In the footsteps of Mueller*, held at the National Herbarium, RBG Melbourne, from December 1996 to January 1997, together with detailed watercolour plant portraits by botanical artist Anita Barley, painted from fresh expedition material and photographs. Sadly, Lin Onus died suddenly, shortly before this exhibition was staged, making his strong dark paintings an especially poignant and valued record of our expedition. Five intriguing works of art by John Walseley and ten large, stunning photographs by Bill Bachman have been added to the Library's art collection.

The expedition's legacy

It will be a little time before the significance of the haul of the 2500-odd botanical collections from the expedition is realised. Certainly the managers



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of Gregory National Park are the richer for the inventory of plant and animal species now accurately identified and located within their 1.3 million wild hectares. The specimens themselves will provide a rich resource for taxonomists at Melbourne and other herbaria. An initial assessment suggests that seven new, unnamed plant species were collected. In a fascinating link with Mueller, a species of *Baeckea* previously collected only once before - by the Baron 140 years ago - was relocated on a remote sandstone declivity, deep in the gorge of the Victoria River. It may be placed in its own genus. The other novelties belong to the genera *Eucalyptus*, *Euphorbia*, *Hibiscus*, *Ipomoea*, *Melaleuca* and *Scaevola*. The eucalypt starred in a competition to suggest an appropriate species name during the *In the footsteps of Mueller* exhibition. The judges are still considering their decision.

All the participants on the expedition will undoubtedly carry some indelible memories of this once-in-a-lifetime trip; for those staff members at the National Herbarium of Victoria, the special significance of this expedition, rekindling the association with this remote area that Mueller began 140 years ago, is particularly humbling. We are grateful to all those individuals and organisations whose planning and financial support made the commemorative trip possible.

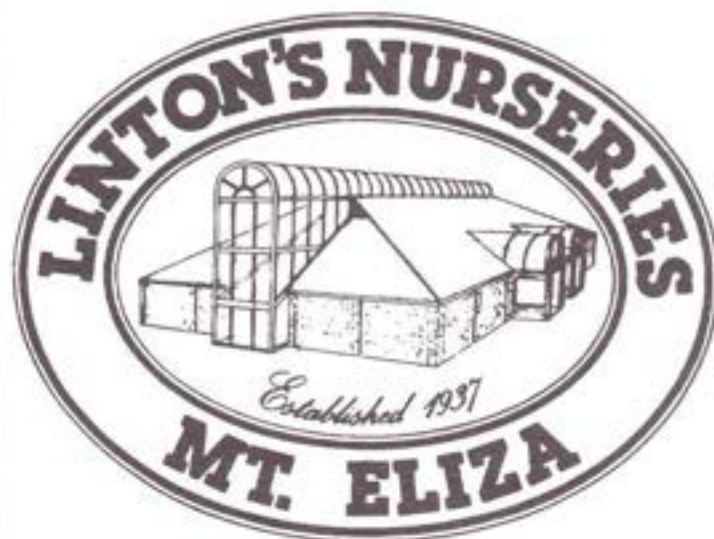


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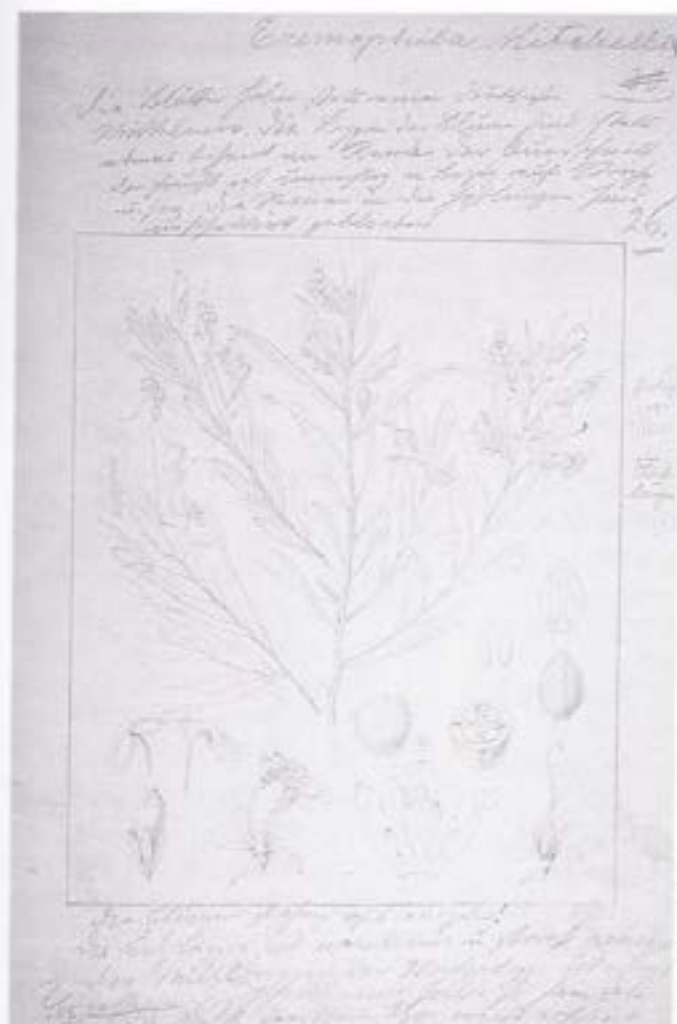
To quote from a talk given by Don Foreman to the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens in 1996: 'From the earliest printed herbals of the sixteenth century to modern-day Floras, botanical artists have played an important role. They have, with varying degrees of skill and accuracy, interpreted the structure of plants in a far more meaningful way than even the most skilled photographer can achieve.'

Recent acquisitions

At the October 1996 *Art of Botanical Illustration* exhibition the Friends donated \$2000 to

purchase two paintings for the RBG collection: Medlars (*Mespilus germanica*) by Dianne Emery and the orchid *Sarcocylus falcatus* by Helene Wild.

Paintings by Mary Gregory (*Agathis robusta*), Bernadette Lim (Himalayan Magnolia), and Judy Roberts (*Papaver somniferum*) were acquired for the RBG collection through a donation from the Pappas family, while the mixed media print of the 'living fossil', the Wollemi Pine, by Christine Payne of the ACT, was



Photos J. Krutop

Mueller's corrections on a Robert Graff drawing



Euphemia Henderson's delicate Correa, Hibbertia, Styphelia

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(In addition, Esso Australia, a major supporter, chose five works from the exhibition to display in the atrium area of its new Southbank building. These paintings, by Dianne Emery, Alwynne Fairweather, Fiona McKinnon, Carol Morris and Jenny Phillips, were of Gippsland rainforest plants growing in the atrium.)

The Friends have undertaken to spend \$2000 on purchases from each future Botanical Illustrators exhibition to enlarge the RBG botanical art collection.

Four large watercolours by Anita Barley, of specimens collected on the 1996 Northern Territory Commemorative Expedition, have also been added to the collection.

First acquisitions

For much of its existence the Royal Botanic Gardens has not

had a resident botanical artist. There is a notable gap in the collection from the time of Ferdinand Mueller, Victoria's first Government Botanist from 1853 to 1896, until well into this century.

Mueller employed a number of artists to illustrate his folio works on Eucalypts, Acacias and other plants. In the RBG collection is a series of 30 pencil drawings by one of Mueller's compatriots, Robert Graff. Mueller wrote in the margins of these drawings the corrections he wanted made before they were lithographed. Comparison of the drawings with the very fine published lithographs shows that Mueller's suggestions were heeded. Also in the collection are 25 delicate watercolours painted by Euphemia Henderson, Mueller's fiancée in the early 1860s.

The core of the collection

In recent years the Royal Botanic Gardens has had on its staff a number of very talented artists. Anita Barley was the first botanical artist appointed to the RBG and her work is regarded by many as being among the finest produced today. Anita (née Podwyszynski) spent 15 years at the Gardens on several major projects including *Flora of Victoria*, the aborted *Upper Yarra Valley Illustrated Flora*, a *Wildflower poster* and illustrations in *Muelleria* and *The Flora of Australia*.

Anita's work comprises more than 800 species in watercolour and pen and ink drawings. She continues to undertake commissions for the Gardens and conducts classes in botanical illustration for the Friends.

At present Enid Mayfield, Mali

Moir and Su Pearson are employed at the Gardens, producing mainly pen and ink illustrations for Herbarium publications such as the *Flora of Victoria*, the *Horticultural Flora of South-eastern Australia* and *Muelleria*. Their contribution to the collection amounts to several hundred drawings so far.

Other RBG staff members not employed as botanical artists have, nevertheless, in the course of their work, produced some fine art which is included in the RBG collection. For instance Rex Filson, the first lichenologist appointed to any herbarium in Australia, is represented by 100 works. He left not only watercolours and black and white sketches of lichens, but also drew a series of Bush-peas to illustrate the work of Margaret Corrick, another former staff member. Ian Clarke, presently working in the Identifications and Botanical Information section at the RBG, produced about 100 pen and ink drawings to illustrate a book *Name that Flower*, which he co-authored with Helen Lee.

High profile artists

Other professional artists whose work is in our collection include Betty Conabere, Jenny Phillips, Celia Rosser, Ellis Rowan and Margaret Stones.

Well known for her work in *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*, Margaret Stones, who now resides near Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, is represented by 38 early watercolours. These include plants from Victoria's High Plains painted in the 1940s and a second series from the Keilor Basalt Plains painted in 1975. Margaret Stones preferred to work from fresh material, often collected personally. Works from the RBG collection were included in *Truth in Beauty: the Art of Margaret Stones*, a highly

successful retrospective exhibition mounted by the National Gallery of Victoria in 1996.

Betty Conabere's series of 31 watercolours of Victorian plants dating from the 1970s was commissioned by the Maud Gibson Trust; her work deserves to be more widely recognised. Most of these paintings are of alpine plants from Victoria's high country. The book *Wildflowers of South-eastern Australia*, published in 1974, featured Betty Conabere's exquisite paintings.

Celia Rosser has achieved fame for her *Banksia* paintings which have been produced over a period of about 20 years for publication by Monash University. This project was sparked by a series of six watercolours of Victorian *Banksias* commissioned by the Maud Gibson Trust. They were reproduced as a limited edition set of prints, the originals remaining in the Library. *Banksia saxicola*, drawn by Celia for the Gardens' 1993-94 *Annual Report*, was subsequently purchased and donated to the RBG collection.

Jenny Phillips, who conducted botanical art classes at the Gardens until 1996, is represented in the collection by a pencil drawing of *Capparis*.

Talented amateur artists

The natural talents of William Nicholls, Stan Kelly, Collin Woolcock and Mary D White set them apart from most other self-taught artists.

William Nicholls was a teacher and ardent naturalist who concentrated his attention on orchids. The result was a set of vivid watercolours, now housed in the Herbarium, which he painted in the 1930s and 1940s depicting every Australian

orchid known at the time. After his death the paintings were published as *The Orchids of Australia*. Botanists today still appreciate the accuracy of Nicholls' paintings.

Former train driver Stan Kelly undertook the mammoth task of illustrating all known *Eucalyptus* species, and about 500 of his watercolours constitute an important part of the RBG collection. For a time Stan was able to keep up with the newly-named species, but their recent proliferation is beyond the capacity of a single artist.

Work by Stan Kelly and Collin Woolcock was shown at the Gardens' exhibition of Botanical Art in 1986.

Collin Woolcock, a chemist, adopted an unusual technique using crayons. His work is represented in the RBG collection by 65 drawings, mostly of daisies and various members of the pea family. As far as we know none of the drawings in this series has been published; however, Collin's illustrations of Terrestrial Orchids were published several years ago with descriptions by his wife Dorothy.

As described elsewhere in *Botanic Magazine*, 1117 watercolours by Mary D White, depicting the flora and fauna of the Anglesea area, were bequeathed to the RBG collection in 1996. Miss White was a tireless campaigner on conservation issues. Her paintings represent an unparalleled record of the flora of Victoria's Otways region.

This article is based on a talk by Don Foreman to the Friends of the RBG. Additional information was provided by Helen Cohn, Mary Gregory and Alwynne Fairweather.

International Benchmarking for the Gardens

In 1996 the RBG Director, Dr Philip Moors, visited 10 leading botanic gardens in Asia and Europe to gain information about their management and operations. It's important to know how Melbourne measures up. The Director's happy conclusion was 'that the overall standards of administration, horticultural management, revenue-raising activities, visitor services and education at the Royal Botanic Gardens are generally the equal of anything which I encountered. In a few specific areas we are yet to reach the highest standards but in others we are already in the leading position'.

In regard to planning, Dr Moors asserted that the RBG was clearly ahead of all the institutions he visited, while only the botanic garden in Edinburgh had significantly better horticultural management and presentation than Melbourne. No garden had an automatic irrigation system nor an integrated

sign system to compare with ours. Melbourne's program of events and functions was also unmatched, while only Kew and Edinburgh delivered school education programs as successfully as RBG Melbourne. The Director observed revenue-raising practices in the shops at Wisley and Kew from which we could learn; for example, developing branded products, expanding stocks of china and food, mail-order sales and licensing RBG products for sale in other outlets.

Some of Philip Moors' comments are summarised in the article that follows. His findings are variously challenging, amazing, heartening and enlightening.

The Director's itinerary included Pisa, with a botanic garden founded in 1543 and regarded as the oldest in Europe. It moved to its present site in 1591, but has been open to the public only for about 30 years; despite the large number of tourists visiting the nearby Leaning Tower, the garden has an inconspicuous entrance and does not attempt to attract visitors.

The Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew believes that its entry fee of \$9.20 'weeds out undesirable visitors' and so creates a safer environment. There have been no muggings, major thefts or indecent exposures reported for 'many years', but thefts of plants are a significant problem.

The Living Collections Division has a ratio of one gardener per hectare of garden, similar to RBG Melbourne. Declining staff numbers have led to shortcuts - more correctly 'no cuts' - with, for instance, grass managed as uncut meadows in some areas. The Division's curator was impressed to learn of Melbourne's progress relating to employment, industrial relations and salary conditions for horticultural staff. Kew's complex system has a salary structure linked directly to performance assessment. This can lead to managers giving more generous assessments to maintain a good relationship with their staff, clouding objectivity and equity across divisions. It also places unplanned financial pressure on the institution.

There is no master plan as yet, and only an informal collections policy. The Herbarium is not



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database, its collection being considered too large to cope with the backlog.

An independent commercial company has been set up to manage the revenue-generating activities of the institution. It returns all profits to RBG Kew. Its manager considers the primary purpose of the company is to continue the visitor experience created by the gardens, and not to be solely focused on generating revenue. The greatest recent growth in retail turnover has been in the class of expensive, exclusive items costing up to \$400. (Other main merchandise classes are souvenirs up to \$20 and gifts to \$60.) The manager is interested in reciprocal stocking of branded items by RBG Melbourne and Kew.

RBG Melbourne is well ahead of Kew in the variety and type of cultural events staged in the gardens and the use of the gardens for private functions. Information about 'behind the scenes' at Kew held strong appeal for visitors. Surveys revealed a mixed reaction to touch-screen video exhibits, most people preferring 'low-tech' displays.

The Millennium Seed Bank is a Kew initiative funded largely by the Millennium Fund established by the British Government with national lottery profits. The project will be based at Wakehurst Place (a National Trust property administered by RBG Kew) with its own staff and building. The total cost is \$140 million.

The Seed Bank will concentrate on storing viable seed and genetic material from the British flora and the world's dryland vegetation. The goal is to have 10 per cent of the world's higher plant taxa in storage (c. 24,000 species) by 2010. When fully operational in 1999 there will be 65 permanent staff and facilities for up to 25 visiting researchers. RBG Melbourne has been encouraged to consider providing material for storage and/or to be involved in research projects at the Seed Bank.

Wisley Garden, run by the Royal Horticultural Society, has an outstanding shop and plant nursery, together with trial and horticultural displays of the highest order. The society's membership is 200,000 and growing by 10 per cent annually. High visitation by the public has led to Sundays being reserved for members only. The RHS Plant Selector, an interactive computer database, provides a print-out for nursery customers seeking a specific plant, or information about plants with particular characteristics.

The Chelsea Physic Garden, near the site of the famous Chelsea Flower Show, depends on its commercial operations for its continued survival. It is one of the few gardens in London available for hire, with charges varying from \$1840 to \$3675 per day. Marquees cost \$4490.

'Outstanding' was Dr Moors' verdict on horticultural maintenance and presentation at **Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh**, where entry is free. The garden is managed intensively, with about 2.5 horticultural staff per hectare of garden (Melbourne and Kew 1 per ha). The labour-intensive 2 ha Rock Garden is particularly impressive.

In the face of some opposition, multi-skilling was introduced about two years ago, making staff in each garden section responsible for all aspects of propagation, planting, mowing, landscaping and maintenance within it.

Events and functions at the Edinburgh garden are limited at present, mainly because of debates about acceptable activities in the botanic garden and concerns about possible damage. Most events take place within buildings. Similar concerns also limit opportunities to increase the number of students attending educational programs. There is an emphasis on providing pre-visit material so that teachers and students are well prepared when they arrive.

Dr Moors was surprised by the virtual absence of interpretive signs and information about the plant collections, and apparent lack of urgency in their provision. He also noted that development of

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major horticultural and landscape projects seemed to be 'ad hoc', as there was no Master Plan. The first Corporate Plan (to 1999) was recently prepared. The mission of RBGE: *'To explore and to explain the plant kingdom - past, present and future - and its importance to humanity'*.

Guided tours are offered for booked groups at a fee of £2.00 (\$4.10) per person. Guides, mostly retired people, earn wages of £4.00 (\$8.20) per hour; they receive about one month's training.

RBG Edinburgh has established its own retail company and expects an annual return of about £250,000 to be achieved within the next few years. It will also run functions and events in the future.

Besides the city garden, RBG Edinburgh has three regional gardens providing a range of different growing conditions. The whole system faces a tough budget. More than 90 per cent of their funds comes in direct Government grants. Reductions in horticultural and scientific staff may be necessary.

Singapore Botanic Gardens is the most financially independent of the major gardens visited. While general entry is free, a small charge for visitors to its multi-million dollar National Orchid Garden generates a large income. Staff in the Orchid Garden shop have to meet a daily individual sales target of \$A1780.

A master plan commissioned in 1988 has formed the basis for a major development program. The \$A11.6 million Gateway project, due for completion this year, will provide new administrative headquarters, Herbarium and library, and purpose-built visitor information and tourist facilities.

Most tourists, 60 per cent of whom are Japanese, visit on package tours. There are neither voluntary nor paid guides at the gardens. A new development will be established beside the Orchid Garden, with ginger as its theme.

Besides organising education programs for about 5000 students each year, the Botanic Garden runs the only horticultural certificate and diploma courses in Singapore.

The Herbarium, which holds 600,000 specimens, is run-down, primitive in its facilities and lagging far behind RBG Melbourne in storage and curatorial practices.

Cibodas Botanic Garden in Eastern Java, which lies on the flank of an active volcano, was established in the mid-19th century by the Dutch. Its large collection of temperate and tropical trees includes a diverse range of Australian taxa.

Much staff time (and few staff have any horticultural training) is devoted to clearing and disposing of rubbish left by up to 10,000 visitors each Sunday. Staff run 20 or so hawkers' stalls within the gardens, selling drink, food and souvenirs. They do this in a private capacity, the gardens accepting that the stalls provide additional income to supplement the relatively low wages. Also, hundreds of stalls, many selling plants, line most of the 5 km entrance road to the gardens.

All of the gardens' budget is supplied by the Indonesian Government, although income from the small entry fee is retained by the garden.

Bogor Botanic Garden, largely government-funded, is the main garden in the network of four in Indonesia. Dr Moors described the landscapes and planting designs as 'memorable', with few tropical botanic gardens able to match Bogor's diversity, tree size and presentation. The garden was founded in 1817 by the Dutch, and plant records, based on a card index system, are available even for the early Dutch plantings.

Health and safety standards are noticeably lower than at RBG Melbourne, and because grass cutting and much work is done by hand, maintenance is labour-intensive but very good.

Friends of the Bogor Botanic Garden, formed several years ago, funded interpretive signs for the garden. Guided tours are available in four languages, and educational activities are directed mainly at students from trade courses and tertiary level rather than school students. The Rotary Club of Bogor is sponsoring an anti-littering and rubbish recycling campaign.

The garden has close links with two nearby major biological research institutions, and is developing international research links with European and North American institutions; particular areas of interest are conservation of threatened plants, systematics, horticulture, and applied botany including pharmacological uses of plants.

Heather Ironmonger

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Wilson Botanic Park, which was opened near Berwick township in 1992, can boast a unique fossil record of its botanic heritage.

The park is developing on the site of a former bluestone quarry, whose northern section was donated to the then City of Berwick by the grandson of the former owners; the Council subsequently purchased the southern part.

After work began in 1988, a bulldozer forming a new track in the vicinity of the Top Lake uncovered some dry compressed mud. Neville Green, a geologist from the University of Melbourne, had been searching for this mud, as he assumed it would contain fossil specimens preserved after volcanic action and flooding over millions of years left layers of basalt, sand and mud. Green knew of this area from the findings of Henry Deane, published in 1902 as *Notes on the Fossil Flora of Berwick in Records of the Geological Survey of Victoria*. Deane described 29 species of leaves, including seven Eucalyptus and four Fagus. This dry mud, as expected, contained plant fossils and pollens, and captured a stage in the transition from rainforest-dominated landscape to open woodlands dominated by Eucalyptus. This period has been dated at about 22 million years ago, making this find the earliest-dated eucalypts in the world.

New studies of the leaf fossils have shown Agathis, Dacrycarpus, four species of Lauraceae, Gymnostoma, Nothofagus, Eucalyptus and some Proteaceae and Cunoniaceae.

The vegetation of Wilson Botanic Park appears to have been forest, dominated by Nothofagus (beech), with Cunoniaceae, Podocarpaceae and Agathis with the Eucalyptus. It is unusual to find the Eucalyptus co-existing with the more tropical Nothofagus.

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The site also contains pollens with the macrofossils. The pollens (microfossils) tend to reflect regional vegetation because they can travel long distances in the air. The macrofossils (leaves and fruits) tend to reflect localised vegetation as they are not usually well transported. This combination of the two types of fossils provides a view of the landscape at two levels.

Recently a group of students from Monash University uncovered some specimens of leaves which appear to be unclassified plants. These finds ensure that Wilson Botanic Park holds a unique place in Australia's geological and botanical history. Some fossils are on display, including a large section of tree trunk and other fossilised timbers.

The park, on a challenging site about the same size as RBG Melbourne with hills, plateaus, gullies and lakes, is being developed with native and exotic plantings. It will also showcase the families and genera revealed by the fossil specimens. It is owned and managed by the City of Casey; with few staff, it is greatly assisted by its 250-strong hands-on Friends group, which includes local Federal and State MPs and the City's Chief Executive.

Lex Nieboer
Superintendent, Wilson Botanic Park

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NEW PUBLICATIONS FOR THE GARDENS

Survey by Janet Thomson

Flora of Victoria

Volume 3 - Dicotyledons: Winteraceae to Myrtaceae

N G Walsh and T J Entwisle, Editors.

Inkata Press, Melbourne, rrp \$295.00

Dedicated to the memory of Dr Jim Willis AM (1910-1995), *Flora of Victoria* Volume 3 is the second taxonomic volume of the four-volume series being produced by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne.

The work of 37 authors, from many parts of Australia as well as Germany and the United States of America, is drawn together in this volume by the editors Neville Walsh (Senior Botanist) and Tim Entwisle (Manager, Research) at the National Herbarium of Victoria. All native and naturalised dicotyledons in the families *Winteraceae* to *Myrtaceae* are treated, and the detailed descriptions of 1467 species in 332 genera and 65 families are accompanied by diagnostic line drawings and a selection of specially commissioned paintings - the major contributors of illustrations are Anita Barley, Enid Mayfield and Mali Moir.

Appropriately, *Flora of Victoria* Volume 3 was launched at the 1996 Commemorative Conferences organised by the Gardens to mark its sesquicentenary and the 100th anniversary of the death of Baron Ferdinand von Mueller. One of these conferences, *Beyond the Floras*, assessed the future of systematic botany in the 21st century. By the year 2000 a large number of regional and state *floras* will have been completed, including the *Flora of Victoria*.

The challenge facing botanists in the next century, according to Dr Entwisle, will be to decide what

sort of research will be needed, the role of taxonomists and where to focus their efforts.

Bearing in mind the cost of definitive references like the *Flora of Victoria*, Dr Entwisle says decisions will also need to be taken about how to make the information they contain widely accessible. He commented that 'there is no point doing all the research if it is never used'. Options could include smaller regional guides, botanical keys and the information super-highway.

Flora of Victoria Volume 4, which will cover *Dicotyledons: Oleaceae to Asteraceae* is scheduled for publication in 1998.

Through the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Trust Fund the Friends have given financial support to the publication of each of the first three volumes of the *Flora*.

Horticultural Flora of South-Eastern Australia

Volume 1: The Identification of Garden and Cultivated Plants. Ferns, Conifers and their Allies.

Text by Roger Spencer, Horticultural Botanist, Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne
Illustrations by Anita Barley and Su Pearson.
University of NSW Press, rrp \$79.95



Roger Spencer (right), author of the *Horticultural Flora*, and Ian Clarke who conduct the RBG's Identification Service

The *Horticultural Flora of South-eastern Australia*, Volume 1 is the first of a four-volume identification guide to the cultivated plants, both native and exotic, in South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales and Southern Queensland.

The *Flora* should become a standard reference work for students of horticulture, landscape

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architects and designers, nursery staff, botanists and anyone involved with cultivated plants. It is the first comprehensive account of its kind in Australia, providing extensive identification aids and taking advantage of the resources and expertise at the Gardens. Plant descriptions are in non-technical language and each is accompanied by a high quality line drawing and identification aids.

Emphasis has been given to aspects of special Australian significance such as our specialists and growers, major plant collections and prominent parks and gardens.

Detail provided includes the range of available cultivars (with descriptions and details of their origin when known); specialist societies including their addresses and journals; the places and people holding outstanding collections; and the localities and brief history of outstanding specimen trees.

For nearly 17 years Dr Roger Spencer has identified plants in public and private gardens throughout Victoria and for over 10 years he has worked with the Plant Identification Service of the Royal Botanic Gardens. During this time he has accumulated a vast amount of information about plants cultivated in Australia. He has also become aware of the inadequacies of European and



Illustrations from Vol. 1 of the Horticultural Flora:
Conifer by Anita Barley and Fern by Su Pearson

American floras when using them for identification - thus his decision to write a horticultural flora. His gardening, technical and scientific background placed him in an excellent position to undertake such a task.

The Horticultural Flora Volume 2, which will treat many groups of plants including rhododendrons, camellias, oaks, elms, birches, beeches, magnolias and waterlilies, should be available from 15 August, and Volume 3 is scheduled for later in 1998.

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BOOK REVIEWS

by Bary Dowling

Going Native

Gwen Elliot's AUSTRALIAN GARDEN

Hyland House rrp \$39.95

Gwen Elliot's *AUSTRALIAN GARDEN* replaces her earlier *Gardener's Guide to Australian Plants* which is now out of print. She says that the last 10 years have seen major changes to attitudes and practices in the growing of Australian plants but that most of the plants recommended in the earlier work reappear here along with additional species and cultivars.

Elliot's new book is for DIYs and offers practical advice, from planning to maintenance, for the private gardener, bush blocker or for community gardens.

She lays to rest the idea that native gardens are 'no maintenance' gardens, but says that they can be low maintenance.

She also recognises fashions in gardening. In the 1960s there was a strong movement for national identification in literature, painting, architecture and gardening. Australian houses required Australian gardens, but intentions often outstripped knowledge and some native gardens were badly planted. Yet this does not seem to fully explain why the fashion lapsed and cottage gardens (usually meaning *English* cottage gardens) arrived. Whatever the reasons, Elliot bends with the wind and devotes space to Australian plants for cottage gardens, and to Australian annuals.

The importance of indigenous, or purely local planting, rather than a garden of exotic natives, rightly receives attention and Elliot explains the need for wildlife corridors, asserting that private gardens can be part of these corridors. But she is not dogmatic; her book will be as useful to the newcomer, the cottage gardener and the general all-rounder as it is to the purist.

How and what to plant for specific soils, climates and purposes (including fire protection and tolerance to exhaust emissions) are strengths of the book. This information is backed by a catalogue of the most likely species giving descriptions and a code: H - hot, O - open, S - shade, B - birds, etc. It is illustrated in colour throughout, has a helpful glossary and a sound index.

Wildflowers of Southern Western Australia

by Margaret Corrick and Bruce Fuhrer,
edited by Alexander George
Five Mile Press and Monash University

WESTERN AUSTRALIA, or the West, is huge, about a third of our continent. For generations, like wise men from the East, we Eastern seaborders have been making pilgrimages to view spring wildflowers in Western Australia. And rightly so. What is annually thrust from the earth there is spectacular, though it varies from season to season and place to place. 'Spectacular' is too much and not good enough, as this term could be applied equally to massed cannas in the Botanic Gardens. The wild West does lay on massed, single-species displays, but it also overwhelms the Easterner by diversity. Flowers may be looked up to, or at eye height, at knee level, or emerge from the ground apparently unrelated to the parent plant, like *Banksia repens*.

Victorian wildflower lovers, used to quickly identifying a typical habitat, can be confused. To walk in heathland in Western Australia and see something new does not mean (as in Victoria) that this species will be regularly repeated; we may have to walk a long way to see it again, and we keep finding new plants with each step, many of

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them being very weird. There are explanations for this; the landscape is 100 million years old, and the State, being so far removed from Eastern Australia, is unfamiliar to us.

Margaret Corrick and Bruce Fuhrer have confined their *Wildflowers* to the most prolific area of Western Australia, the south-west - draw a line from Shark Bay to Esperance. It is a rain-favoured but tiny chunk of the West, about the size of Victoria, and the area where most wildflower lovers go.

The book lists, and illustrates in colour, 755 flowering plants, 656 of which are endemic. That is impressive. Most are found on roadsides or in places accessible by conventional vehicles. There are more than 4000 species in this bit of Western Australia and 80 per cent of them grow nowhere else.

So, how was selection of species for inclusion in *Wildflowers* made? Apparently on the basis of 'most common', though this is only stated on the back cover blurb, not in the text. One may wonder why Karri (*Eucalyptus diversicolor*) is included but not Jarrah (*E. marginata*).

This is an excellent work for the layman or professional botanist. The author, photographers and editor are to be congratulated as is the production by Five Mile Press, though it is noted that, unfortunately, printing was done in Hong Kong. The photographs are clear. Plants are listed in alphabetical order of families and each caption gives botanical and common name, size of plant and flower, habitat, and distribution. This is identification made easy.

- ◆ Margaret Corrick joined the National Herbarium of Victoria in 1975, and retired in 1987 as Senior Technical Assistant. Now an Honorary Associate of the Herbarium, she is a frequent visitor there, continuing her work on *Pultenaea*, and was a contributor to *Flora of Victoria* Volume 3.
- ◆ Bruce Fuhrer, who provided most of the photographs, is also an Honorary Associate of the Herbarium. In 1991 he was awarded an honorary M Sc. from Monash University, where he worked for nearly 25 years, retiring in 1996.
- ◆ Alexander George, the editor, had a 20-year association with the WA Herbarium and was founding Executive Editor of *The Flora of Australia*.

The book sold out at publication in October 1996. A reprint is due in July 1997, with an expected rrp between \$40 and \$45.

The Virago Book of Women Gardeners

Edited by Deborah Kellaway
Penguin Books rrp \$16.95

WOMEN GARDENERS has its charm though it is directed at northern hemisphere readers and is about northern gardens. It is a pot pourri of observations by women who have written about gardens, from the early 19th century to the present time. Chapter headings show that the book covers much ground, including Weeders and Diggers, Advisers and Designers, Kitchen Gardeners, Flower Arrangers and Visionaries.

Excerpts may be brief paragraphs or run to pages. Famous garden names such as Vita Sackville-West, Penelope Hobhouse, Gertrude Jekyll, Rosemary Verey and even Edna Walling rest beside those better known in other areas, such as Germaine Greer and Colette. Valuable contributions have been unearthed from obscurity.

Like most anthologies, it is a mixed bag. What will appeal to one reader may be of little interest to another: ...perhaps the chiefest attraction of a garden is that occupation can be found there. No idle people are happy, but with mind and fingers busy cares are soonest forgotten. - Alicia Amherst, 1902. Is this a gem? Or a banal statement of the obvious?

Viscountess Wolseley complained, in 1919, of iron benches: not only for their unpleasing appearance...they are shaped so that neither by stooping forward, nor by reclining at full length, can comfort be obtained.

For the last word, consider Elizabeth Barrett Browning's closing stanza of *Lines from the Lost Bower*:

*As I entered - mosses hushing
Stole all noises from my foot;
And a green elastic cushion,
Clasped within the linden's root,
Took me in a chair of silence, very rare and
absolute.*



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THE FOREVER GARDEN

Creating an easy-care garden

by Cara Rosehope
Hyland House rrp \$24.95

'I grow old, I grow old, I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled' - T S Eliot. Eliot's contemporary, James Thurber, wrote that 'The claw of the Sea-puss gets us all in the end'.

Rosehope (good name for a gardener) says that if we roll up our sleeves and start pulling weeds we will delay the Sea-puss and have a rare old time doing so. For those who protest that they are becoming unable or less able, Rosehope has answers; her book is for them. She says that we can garden as geriatrics and forever.

She details awful things that age does to the body and mind but has an answer for each. Her answers rearrange the garden or the mind, the body or garden tools or effort, so that enjoyable but limited gardening can continue. Accepting what she says will be rewarding.

The bulk of the book gives practical advice on size of garden, raised beds, ergonomic tools and warm-up exercises, as well as much sound horticultural information on how to create an easy-care garden.

ORNAMENTAL CONIFERS for Australian Gardens

by Raymond J Rowell
University of New South Wales Press
rrp \$44.95, 320pp

ORNAMENTAL CONIFERS is a good reference book covering all conifers that Rowell believes suitable for Australian gardens from ground covers and prostrates to Murray Pines and North American Redwoods. The yews are here, and he allows traditional inclusion of the Ginkgo, that

lonely family of one, which is really not coniferous, but has nowhere else to go.

Rowell gives basic information and uses botanical language only when necessary. Identification is made clear, as is selection for our various climatic zones, and cultivation.

A typical entry: *Callitris columellaris* var. *campestris*, the Murray Pine, other common names given, also a silhouette, details on growth habit, foliage, flowers, cones and wood, suggested uses and cultivation, climatic zones and suitable sites. Among the photographs is a small one of var. *campestris* and a much better one of the RBG *C. columellaris* specimen below the Hopetoun Lawn.

A flaw. Photographs are given numbers in the contents but there is no corresponding number on the plates.

Bary Dowling is the author of the acclaimed *MUDEYE - an Australian Boyhood and Beyond* (Wakefield Press) in which he describes growing up in Ballarat. After attending VCAH Burnley, Bary turned to farming and landscape gardening. He is now a writer, reviewer, field naturalist and 1997 trainee Voluntary Guide at the RBG. A collection of his stories, *Stories of the White Hawk*, is due for publication in July.

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Our Gardening Heritage

Heather Ironmonger notes two recent books which provide an insight into our garden history.

Australia's Timeless Gardens draws on paintings, engravings, sketches and photographs from the Pictorial Collection of the National Library of Australia. It begins with the first garden created by white settlers at Sydney Cove – a vegetable garden that convicts started digging three days after the First Fleet arrived on 26 January 1788. Then it traces the development of Australia's private gardens over the next 200 years or so, with Trisha Dixon's photographs bringing us to the present time. They include some images of Canberra gardens signalling perhaps that this is a garden city whose time has come (horticulturally speaking).

Many design styles are documented in this potted history, from colonial to kitsch. The book is colourful and pretty, elaborately designed – almost distractingly so – and interesting to dip into.

In contrast *The Flower Garden in Australia* (published in 1893) offers no visual delights, but reveals the homespun philosophy of a dedicated gardener. It's a no-nonsense, text-only facsimile edition reprinted in 1995, of what is said to be the first Australian gardening book by a woman. Victor Crittenden, a well-known authority on garden literature, has added a biographical introduction. (Presumably the author chose to capitalise on the fame of her husband, author of *Robbery Under Arms*, to increase sales, although Rolf Boldrewood was his pseudonym; her married name was Margaret Maria Browne.)

The book, subtitled 'A Book for Ladies and Amateurs', was written after Margaret settled in Albury – the sixth move since her marriage ... six gardens loved and left. (Her final move was to

Melbourne in 1895.) But she's philosophical: 'I have often changed residence but always formed a garden, leaving it for others at our departure. Somebody in that case benefited from my labours. Yet to live without a garden would be for me an impossibility.'

Margaret was an active gardener from childhood, her first plot containing capsicums and jonquils. History records that she was sometimes taken to the Double Bay Nursery of Mr Guilfoyle (William's father) and 'never came away without a few gift seedlings from the proprietor'. She opines 'If cottage homes were more generally beautified with flowers and shrubs greater domestic happiness would often result. Husbands would linger and admire, perhaps help to plant and water; children would learn to be more thoughtful and unselfish; and the family acquire a common interest in the growth of flowers and even vegetables...'

The book is written as a monthly calendar, like many modern manuals. Information is down-to-earth and practical, though sometimes Mrs Boldrewood waxes lyrical, as in this description of *Salpiglossis*: 'Beautiful, showy annuals, richly veined, as if they had been stitched with coloured silks'.

The small book has curiosity value, and many readers will share her gentle passion for flowers and the enriching qualities of a garden.

AUSTRALIA'S TIMELESS GARDENS

by Judith Baskin and Trisha Dixon
National Library of Australia rrp \$24.95

THE FLOWER GARDEN IN AUSTRALIA

by Mrs Rolf Boldrewood
The Mulini Press, Canberra

Acknowledgment: thanks to the Plant Craft Cottage for the loan of their library copy.

A STREETON JOINS THE RBG COLLECTION



This view of the Gardens painted in 1927 by Arthur Streeton was a sesquicentenary gift to the RBG from Dr Douglas Rae of Tasmania. Dr Rae is the son of Frederick Rae, who was Director of the Botanic Gardens in Melbourne from 1926 to 1941. Streeton was a family friend and often stayed in the Rae household at the Director's Residence. It is believed that this elevated view across the Gardens, in sepia watercolour wash, was sketched from a property in Anderson Street.

'A Perfect Place for a Real Australian Christmas'

The Gardens hold special associations for some people – a romantic proposal, feeding the ducks as a child, making the acquaintance of a rare plant

For five generations of one Melbourne family, the special link has been Christmas lunch. Almost every year since 1956, they've met under a huge oak tree near Anderson Street to celebrate Christmas with all the trimmings.

Elsie Wright of Sandringham began the tradition, tired of slaving over a hot stove only to have many a Christmas meal spoiled by latecomers – a despair many cooks would echo. 'Enough is enough' she exclaimed. 'Next year we're going to have a picnic in the Gardens.' And so they did, carrying folding chairs and tables, food and presents, rugs and babies. In the early years they'd go to the kiosk to fill the billy with boiling water for afternoon tea.



Joan, Judy and Elizabeth (daughters of Elsie and Allan Wright) continued the tradition. Those who were carried into the picnic in baskets are now bringing their own babies with them. The gathering has been extended progressively with the addition

of in-laws, girlfriends and boyfriends. Usually 18 or so congregate for lunch, with friends dropping by for a celebratory drink during the afternoon.

In the early years, the family almost had the Gardens to themselves; now they have to arrive early to find car-parking space and claim their favourite spot under the oak tree.

Last year, while preparing the jellied plum pudding,

Judy Rothwell reflected on this happy family tradition and paid a tribute to the Gardens by way of a letter to *Access Age* – 'a perfect place for a real Australian Christmas'.

Heather Ironmonger



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SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS

To celebrate the 150th birthday of the Royal Botanic Gardens and to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the death of Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, three organisations published special editions of their journals in 1996

Australian Garden History
Vol. 7 No. 5 March/ April 1996
Journal of the Australian Garden History Society rrp \$5

Melbourne's Pride and Glory: 150 Years at the Royal Botanic Gardens
Victorian Historical Journal
Vol. 67 No. 1 April 1996
Published by the Royal Historical Society of Victoria rrp \$15

The Victorian Naturalist
Vol. 113 (4) 1996 August 1996
Published by the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria rrp \$10

Copies of *Australian Garden History* and *Melbourne's Pride and Glory* are available at the Gardens' Shop. *The Victorian Naturalist* is out of print.

Photo courtesy Kevin O'Neill Florist



Florist Kevin O'Neill with Robyn Tymms in the ballroom of Government House after their team had completed decorations for the Grand Ball. Kevin, often a generous contributor to Gardens functions, died within six months of this occasion.

Photo D. Albert



The organising committee at the Grand Ball in June. From left, back row: Sandy Nicholas, Noey Webb, Judy Ann Stewart. Front: Ann Hyams, Robyn Tymms, Heather Biggart, Caroline Cornish, Olga Cook. (Eve Brunner was absent.)



Photo Victorian Tapestry Workshop

Yet another achievement for Celia Rosser. In May 1997 she was presented with a prestigious award by the Linnean Society in London. Banksia serrata, the second of her paintings to be woven in tapestry, was recently completed by the Victorian Tapestry Workshop for Monash University.

Photo D. Stewart



In 1996, Flora for Victoria honoured Mueller's remarkable plant distribution feats. More than 3000 specially propagated plants - 800 different taxa - were given by the RBG to 35 regional botanic gardens across Victoria. In this case the presentation was made to Kay Gambetta of the Sunraysia Oasis Botanic Gardens by Dr Philip Moors, project director Trish Vanloon-Benson and Richard Barley.



Photo Sunraysia Daily



*The Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Inc.,
has been formed to stimulate further interest in the Gardens
and National Herbarium of Victoria, and to support and assist
them wherever possible.*