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ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS
GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP



NEWSLETTER No. 13

May 1996

Study Group Leader/Editor: Diana Snape

Treasurer/Membership: Peter Garnham

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Dear Members,

The weekend at Warrnambool, hosted by the Warrnambool & District SGAP Group, was very stimulating and enjoyable. Both speakers, Peter Brennan and John Fenton, stretched my mind with fascinating talks which could not have been more different. Their ideas (reported in this NL) have some relevance for all of us whether we're designing large gardens or our 0.1 ha suburban plots.

This year has been quieter than last year for me (so far), in terms of talking to groups, but there has still been a lot on in the way of garden design and working in our own garden. Last month I enjoyed speaking to the South Gippsland Group of SGAP and visiting several gardens there. In the last week of April I'll be speaking on "Garden Design with Australian Plants" at the annual Conference of the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens, Victoria. This will give me a chance to meet a number of non-SGAP people. The theme for this Conference is "The evolving of Botanic Gardens".

I've also attended meetings of the Australian Plant Garden Network, which brings together representatives from public gardens in Victoria which have a significant proportion of Australian plants. This network is an excellent concept resulting from the work of a number of people but particularly two who (among many things!) are members of the GDSG, Rodger Elliot and Marilyn Gray. Some of the aims of the Network overlap with some of our aims, which is great.

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TREASURER'S REPORT

Peter Garnham

FINANCIAL STATEMENT for the quarter ending 31-3-96

<u>Receipts:</u>	Membership subscriptions	105.00
	Past newsletters, etc.	42.00
	Warrnambool W/E registrations	580.00
	Bank interest (29-3-96)	7.58
		<u>\$734.58</u>
<u>Expenditure:</u>	Warrnambool W/E expenses	443.00
	Refund of Warrnambool registrations	80.00
	Petty cash	91.60
	Newsletter 12 & stationery	249.64
	Postage - newsletter & miscellaneous	123.76
	GDSG NSW expenses	25.00
		<u>\$1013.00</u>
Balance in bank 31 -3-96		\$1659.90

Warrnambool W/E Financial Statement

<u>Receipts:</u>	26 registrations @ \$20.00 (net)	<u>\$520.00</u>
<u>Expenditure:</u>	Speakers' expenses (accommodation & travel)	225.00
	Hall hire & catering (Warrnambool & District SGAP)	180.00
	Misc. stationery, books, photocopying	<u>111.45</u>
		<u>\$516.45</u>

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL - see separate page

Extracts from correspondence

"We have a 5 acre bush block where I am trying to carve out some orderly gardens in Australian native plantings. I am now giving two garden beds one last chance before I throw in the trowel and plonk in azaleas and plumbago. I hope this Study Group can help me." Judith Dyke NSW

"We had our February meeting on Sunday last and it was well attended, approximately 15 people at any one time (some only came to one garden or couldn't stay to lunch). Over lunch we looked at Nadia Lalak's garden (with views over Pittwater). Nadia has worked a minor miracle on a steeply sloping site, previously all grass and pigeon sheds! Most people stayed on for discussion after lunch." Jo Hambrett NSW (leader of the Sydney group)

(Extract from a letter to Jo Hambrett.) 7 thought Sunday was a great success. . . . I am wondering what garden visits are meant to achieve. Are they just garden visits to further educate us and to compare different landscaping styles on various sites? OR Are these garden visits meant to promote Group discussion on style etc. between both amateur and professional members? If the latter, then there should be some obligation on all of us to engage in this discussion when we attend garden visits." Jeff Howes NSW

"I am not a professional and have no formal training in horticulture, landscaping or design. However, I have been very interested in these subjects since my early teens (when I joined SGAP) and, over the years, have acquired a number of good books on the subjects. I worked in a local nursery for a number of years and attained the position of manager before 'retiring' to have a family. I have 'designed' concept plans for family as well as my own gardens. The first was on an average-sized urban block, since sold. Now we are establishing the grounds of our new home which is situated on about half an acre of sloping ground.

My reason for joining the GDSG was to learn more about garden design using Australian plants and to see if I was headed in the right direction with my own garden. There are probably other amateur members of the group who, like myself, lack the confidence to help others. . . . I would recommend that GDSG members try to have articles from our newsletter published in their local branch newsletters to get information over to other SGAP members." Jeanette Heinemann Qld (See Jeanette's article on page 14.)

Thank you for supporting the Illawarra Grevillea Park with the donation from your group. Could you please send me some information about what the Garden Design Study Group aims are? Is there any way I can help your group?" Ray Brown, Honorary President of the Illawarra Grevillea Park Society Inc.

"On behalf of the Committee of Friends of Gardiner's Creek Valley, I am writing to thank you and your Garden Design Study Group Sub-committee for the excellent and exciting plan for the redevelopment of the Dunlop Street Reserve. We can imagine how much time and expertise has gone into the final product and hope that the Reserve will be transformed in the course of time into a delightful area for locals and visitors to enjoy.

By now the plan should be at Boroondara Council with, we hope, a favourable decision to go ahead being quickly reached so that work can begin on Stage 1. Our committee particularly agreed with your recommendation about employing an experienced landscape specialist and hopes that Council will do so. Thank you all once again." Kay Johnston, Hon. Secretary F.O.G.C.V.

"I enclose a map of Euroa Arboretum as you requested. It is 27 ha or 67 acres. Most items depicted are in place except the kiosk and the covered picnic area. The only vegetative mounds planted out are around the carpark area. The original funding was through the Shire of Euroa (now Shire of Strathbogie) as well as a substantial grant under the Commonwealth Government LEAP scheme. It has been made abundantly clear that this is unlikely to be available in the future but the committee is keen to battle on under its own steam.

We hope that members of your group could come up with an overall plan that would enable us to develop this park to the point it can stand on its own, and in time attract its share of visitors. It has never been a highly fertile dairy farm or the like; in fact it is quite a harsh, almost forlorn piece of land which we feel, if we get the right advice, will assume a distinctiveness, a uniqueness and a character all its own." Ron Horrigan, Chairman of Euroa Arboretum Committee

"I can see the potential of a s.i.g. (special interest group) plugging into a network structure. In my current work at Wesley my focus really is on large formal gardens (because that's where this place is), with the challenge of combining both "exotic" and Australian plants, in an overall design whose elements are basically already pretty well set-out, i.e the inheritance of stone walling, largelawns, etc. However when I leave this job next year, my focus may move to another "special interest" aspect - I don't know just yet. So I think that's quite a good proposal, out of which a lot of good work/ideas could come.

Now that I've been here for 3.5 years, I feel as though the gardens are really beginning to get into my bones, so to speak, and I'm hitting upon little things every now and then which seem to work, design-wise. Combined with this I've been doing some reading which is feeding into this. I can feel an article waiting to be written." Louise Gore NSW (Louise's thought-provoking article arrived a little later - see page 8)

A Seminar on Garden Design?

"It has occurred to me that it could be a good idea for the GDSG to conduct a Garden Design Seminar. Held in Melbourne over a weekend it could attract many metro (and wider) SGAP members. The seminar could cover the general principles of landscape design, cover garden design as an art form over time, show Australian and overseas examples of successful landscape with indigenous plants. Participants could be given the skills to create their own landscape designs. Issues such as garden renovation could also be discussed. This seminar may help to tie together the varied ideas which have been coming through in the GDSG newsletter." Catherine Drew Vic

For many of our members without professional training (and even those with), good speakers can give us distilled wisdom rather than our trying to find all the information for ourselves. The Seminar Catherine has suggested would need to be planned well ahead and we would need to be assured of strong support by GDSG and SGAP members. Please let me know if you are interested in this idea! Suggestions would be welcome. DS

GDSG WEEKEND in WARRNAMBOOL

An impression

Wendy Mackie NSW

For those of us who were fortunate enough to get to the Garden Design Study Group's weekend in Warrnambool, it was most worthwhile and enjoyable.

We had two excellent guest speakers in Peter Brennan and John Fenton. Peter explained the philosophy behind the Japanese-inspired Australian garden to be built in an old quarry in Warrnambool and set us all to thinking of our own gardens in a different way. Maybe I won't be stuffing my garden with heaps of plants after all!! John spoke of the necessity and difficulty of getting the rural community involved in landcare and conservation, and the dire consequences if we don't. He himself has created a wildlife paradise on a once bare 2000 acre paddock.

During the day we toured gardens ranging from a suburban block densely planted with banksias, to a small coastal garden consisting mainly of grasses and ground covers, which was most interesting, to very large (2 acre) country gardens. Each had lots of ideas for using plants in different ways, which showed how individual each garden is according to personal taste.

On the Saturday afternoon we had a workshop on two Design Projects - a new garden outside the local Water Authority and a reserve in Dunlop Street, Malvern, in Melbourne. We came up with excellent designs for both projects which will be presented to the appropriate authorities. The workshop was especially interesting because it gave us all a chance to put forward ideas and have them discussed for their suitability (or not!). These two projects will be good ones for the local groups to keep an eye on.

The Warrnambool Group did a great job of feeding us and showing us around, and the Garden Design Study Group must be congratulated on how smoothly the whole weekend was organised.

GARDEN DESIGN WORKSHOP. **WARRNAMBOOL. SATURDAY. 16TH MARCH**

Local members joined us in the CWA Hall for 2 projects:

1. The Friends of Gardiners Creek, Dunlop Street Reserve. This site had been inspected by some of us following a Melbourne meeting.
2. The South West Water Authority (Warrnambool) garden which we visited prior to the workshop.

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We divided into 4 groups so that there would be 2 designs for each project.

1. Peter Garnham outlined the brief for the Reserve, which included retaining the adjacent neighbours' views to Gardiners Creek.

The first two groups, after combining, were led by Bev Hanson to produce a single solution incorporating a wetlands/swamp area and retaining many existing trees in the new planting. Some Melbourne members of the group have since met to finalize the plan which has been submitted to The Friends of Gardiners Creek. The design was so well received that it is now before the Boroondara Council awaiting approval.

2. The brief for the other project was for a low-water-use garden at the headquarters of the Water Authority. The teams were led by Jane Calder and Catherine Drew, each group arriving at very different solutions.

Jane's group used colour for impact, in both the plants and the building, the columns and some walls of which, if painted the blue in the logo design seen above the entrance, would make a striking backdrop to the planting. As the site is wide and sloping to the footpath, three horizontal rows of massed plantings, each row of only 1 species, all of which have grey foliage and are local to the area were suggested: *Correa alba*, *Leucophya brownii* and a blue/grey *Poa sp.*

Catherine's group approached this project from the entrance to the building. A path from the steps leading to the front door and incorporating a ramp for the disabled, winds through plantings in drifts of single species to an open irregularly shaped "quiet area" which is not obvious from the street. Seating will allow office workers to use it as a lunch area and discreet access to the carpark will be provided. Trees dot the lower footpath level to screen the adjacent building without blocking its light.

All three designs stressed simplicity, no doubt influenced by the excellent talk given the previous evening by Peter Brennan speaking on "Plant and Space".

We all enjoyed this practical experience. The Warrnambool members were very hospitable and their local knowledge was of particular help in designing the Water Authority garden. I hope they report on any implementation (or rejection) of our plan.

Linda Floyd Vic

PLANT and SPACE

~ ~ ~ ~ ~
A Lecture/Talk/ Inspirational Discourse /Oration by **Peter Brennan Vic**

Reported by **Cherree Densley Vic**

Landscape Design took a whole new meaning when Peter spoke to the entranced audience at the above meeting. Peter is the designer of a very exciting proposed Japanese garden using Australian plants in an old disused quarry in the city of Warrnambool.

The underlying philosophy of a "Japanese" garden doesn't really exist in this modern world anymore and "Japanese gardens" even in Japan are not faithful to the ancient philosophy. Therefore Peter really set himself a great task to get to the very foundation of garden design before he started this project. Firstly he sent to Japan to get old books and then began to research into a 3000 (!) year old manuscript from Monash University (in Latin of course) to get a 'feel' for how the first designers thought the land should be designed to allow human development. He discovered that the ancient 'designers' used a holistic approach of the total living space. 'Gardens' as such were a necessary adjunct to houses and designers made no distinction between 'outside' and 'inside', or even further for that matter, into the very nature of the surrounding land. In other words, the whole living space was important and treated as part of the design.

Peter began to think and work with a reinterpretation of an Australian landscape using native plant material which is as old as the continent itself, with its special characteristics and unique qualities. How could one design a garden for an Australian area using anything but Australian plants? For the same reason a designer shouldn't use mountain plants in planting up a wetland.

After absorbing the essence of the printed word, Peter started his design by an intense study of the physical site - the quarry has wonderful microclimates all its own and it was essential to work with those qualities and not against them. What was there? Well, there was a proliferation of the pine trees which were popular when planted earlier in this century. These were studied to see what qualities they provided - of course to us they are 'weeds', but they provided sounds, fragrance, movement and a certain quality of space. But they had to go. What could be planted which would provide

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those same qualities, but be Australian?

This is where Peter called in Rodger Elliot who listened, to Peter talk non-stop for two and a half hours about his concept to landscape the area to be a 'celebration of light', and what plants could be used to be a 'celebration of absolute beauty', a 'temple without walls' and a 'shrine to nature', and how to 'flow energy through space'. To say that the audience was entranced is an understatement!

Peter has even taken into account the philosophy of how to design the light patterns needed to draw one through the gardens and to use materials such as quartz underfoot at the entrance. (This has the quality of slowing the heartbeat to relax the visitor as they enter and stabilises kinetic energy.) Areas were designed also for 'being alone space' because it is important to include these too, where one can use this space for reflection, for the contemplation of self or surroundings.

Each plant has its own special qualities and these must be understood before placing in a contrived landscape. For example, fifty *Angophora costata* will be used to create a grove where each trunk will create a special pattern of light to draw the visitor further into the area. The garden is designed to celebrate the smells of rain and dust, the sounds of the elements and the patterns of light in all seasons and times of the day.

Peter also talked of the practical aspects of ongoing maintenance, precision of planting necessary, how the natural water table and flow off from the surrounding areas will be utilised, and how to work with the existing soil. Public Gardens should be profitable and good gardens can be a big drawcard to tourists, a very important concern to Councils of course, who are driven by the mighty dollar rather than the qualities of 'plant and space'.

GARDEN DESIGN WITH LANDCARE

Extracts from a paper on which the talk given by **John Fenton** Vic at the Warrambool W/E was based.

compiled by Diana Snape

Our property 'Lanark' is situated in typical rural Australia, prime wool growing country. In such a short time (70 years) this property was completely cleared of all trees and drained of all water. It is interesting to read a comment made after a horseback traverse of this area in 1857:

"The Smokey River rises from the Branxholme Swamps. Great numbers of native companions, herons, ducks and geese frequent these swamps. The country between Branxholme and Hamilton, eighteen miles, I found to be plateau forests and swamps." (Bonwick, 1858)

It is sobering to note the words of Winsome McCaughey, the retiring executive of Greening Australia, in her final report.

"In December 1995 we have something like 2,500 local Landcare groups. This represents a quantum leap in the attitude of rural land managers. However, while we applaud this significant change in attitude it must be noted that to the end of 1995 we are still clearing over 660,000 hectares annually!"

Farmers and other workers in the field of Landcare continually use the catch phrase of sustainable land use but rarely use the term 'environmental land management'. How much can the land stand in the ever consuming drive termed 'production farming'? I believe the present farm management system of high input/high return to be non-sustainable in the comparatively short term; non-sustainable for the distinctly Australian fragile base resources - soil, water, but also for the so few farmers battling the elements in such a large land.

There has been much discussion and debate regarding remnant vegetation clearance controls. Make no mistake, we must immediately protect all the remaining remnants and it is up to the general community (experts!) to find a way that is acceptable to the people in control of that land. In my particular area, we must protect the very little natural vegetation we have remaining to give us a basis on which to build. The remnants provide a seed source and act as the only reservoir of bird, animal and insect species to recolonise our revegetation works.

Dr Rod Bird, senior research scientist with Agriculture Victoria, has demonstrated the financial benefits of establishing tree and shrub cover on farms. The benefits in his work have been confined to the easily measured wind speed reduction which results in:

1. Improved plant growth resulting in extra production.
2. Reduced maintenance energy required for stock.
3. Improved lamb survival.
4. Reduced losses of shorn sheep.

Other factors not considered in Dr Bird's study include control of soil erosion and salinity, barriers to the advance of fire, improved wildlife values and aesthetic factors, which improve the capital value of the farm. A systematic planting of 10% of the land for shelter of soil, livestock and pasture would reduce wind speed near the ground by 50% and would help achieve Landcare and sustainable agricultural objectives (salinity and erosion control).

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Our revegetation program now covers 10.8% of the property. I endeavour to fully integrate most plantings with due regard to the landscape integrity of the farm and region. But in the case of our bread and butter production component - *Pinus radiata* - we plant 1-2 hectares per year on the best site and best configuration for that site. That is, we are treating the pines as a temporarily fenced crop (agro forest) but I always have a permanently fenced component of indigenous species in association with the 'pine crop'. Indigenous planting for us is the establishment of trees, shrubs and ground flora, either by direct seeding or tube establishment, from seed collected from the nearest available 'natural' (remnant) seed source to the property. It is a sad reflection on past land management practices that seed collection for some species takes us up to 20 kilometres from 'Lanark'.

It is important in any program to recreate or enhance existing habitat to 'get the system working' as quickly as possible. If only improved exotic grassland is present the answer is to plant densely with the local pioneer plants. These are in our case the acacias, predominantly *A. mearnsii* (Black Wattle). Direct seeding is very successful with this species and also enables you to add a range of shrub and herb species. Farmers and planners often say that the pioneer acacias do not live long enough - "It's a waste of time planting wattles!". If *A. mearnsii* only lived for 10 years instead of 23 at 'Lanark' I would still be happy. We need to create some mess and confusion in the otherwise ordered landscape to quickly attract the range of birds, animals and insects to commence the long haul back to a balanced ecosystem.

We must regard the farm as part of a whole ecological and catchment system which, for our future viability, needs to be maintained and enhanced. We need to categorise the soils and water bodies on a given piece of land so that:

1. some areas can be permanently retired from grazing - wildlife corridors, wetlands, native remnant grasslands and major habitat blocks.
2. other sections can be partially grazed or cropped in combination with wetlands and trees- e.g.
 - a. agroforestry
 - b. water meadows
3. on the environmentally safe areas the agricultural production can be maximised if need be.

We are working to a 100 year farm plan for 'Lanark' that I commenced 30 years ago. Over latter years I have been fortunate to have an input from experienced people from various fields. Studies carried out by two diverse groups have shown that, from a sustainable landscape sense and also from a monetary and land care health approach, the figures for future tree/shrub cover on this grazing property is 30%-40%. Approximately one half of this is to be indigenous planting and the balance high quality farm forestry for saw log timber production (both softwood and hardwood).

In 1985 World Wide Fund for Nature scientific officers suggested to me that the number of bird species present on a given piece of farmland and the number of individual birds present is a direct indication of the health of that piece of land'. In 1956 with only 0.3% of woodland, only 38 species had been observed at 'Lanark'. With a comparatively small improvement to 2.7% of woodland and re-establishment of 5.4% of the property to wetlands by 1986, the number of bird species was 144. (It is now 158.) The subsequent increase to this date of woodland to 10.8% and wetland to 7.9% of the 800 hectares has resulted in conditions becoming such as to enable the first wild release on farmland of Victoria's most endangered native mammal - the Eastern Barred Bandicoot, once widespread across the basalt plains of Western Victoria.

Most of the beneficial insects have a limit to the distance they range from their base. Therefore the more general the tree/shrub cover throughout the property, the more dispersed are these species and the more biological control of pest species eventuates. The more diverse the tree planting, the better control will be provided over the pest species in both the pasture and the trees themselves. We have not needed to use sprays on 'Lanark' for twenty five years.

To achieve and improve the nature conservation on land used for primary production, a number of points warrant consideration. As just one example, the farm sector finance is driven by a very short term budgeting and production need. There is no comprehension of long term sustainability which is more often than not achieved only at a substantial short term cost. A way must be found to put a value on the retained and created structure that go to make up an ecological balance on broadacre lands. The problem is not the fault of individual financial advisers, bankers or farmers but rather a failure on behalf of governments and organisations.

The Aborigines occupied this country for at least 40,000 years without inflicting great degradation. We have only been here for 200 years and if our society is to have a meaningful future we must make sure that what is left from our past settlement is preserved and nurtured. In this way we will help our future citizens - the children of today - to proudly proclaim an affinity with this great land and a true 'sense of place' and identity.

PLANS for the PRIMARY SCHOOL

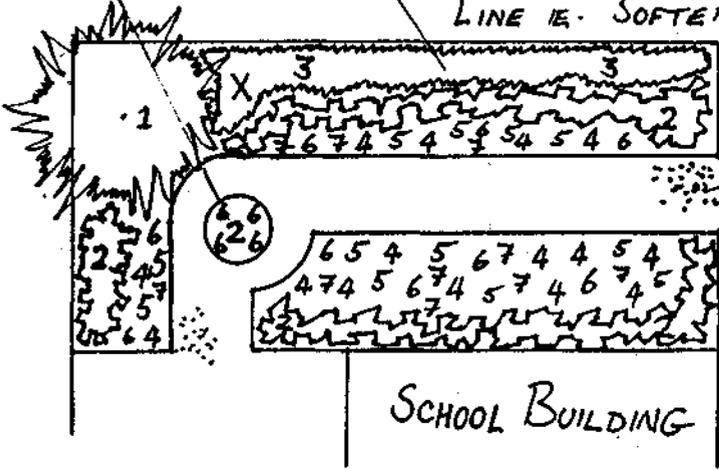
Mark Burns Vic, Jeff Howes NSW.

The two plans on the following page (the top one by Mark, the lower one by Jeff) and the third plan by Anne Pye on page 17 were provided in response to the request in NL12-15. The plans have been sent to the teacher involved and I'm sure she, the students and GDSG member Stephannie Rennick will enjoy deciding on their final plan. We'll look forward to hearing about this later on. Thank you to these members for their response.

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GARDEN BED MAY NOT BE APPROPRIATE IF HIGH TRAFFIC AREA

ENCOURAGE *KENNEDIA PROSTRATA* THROUGH FENCE -
LINE 1E. SOFTEN WIRE FENCE

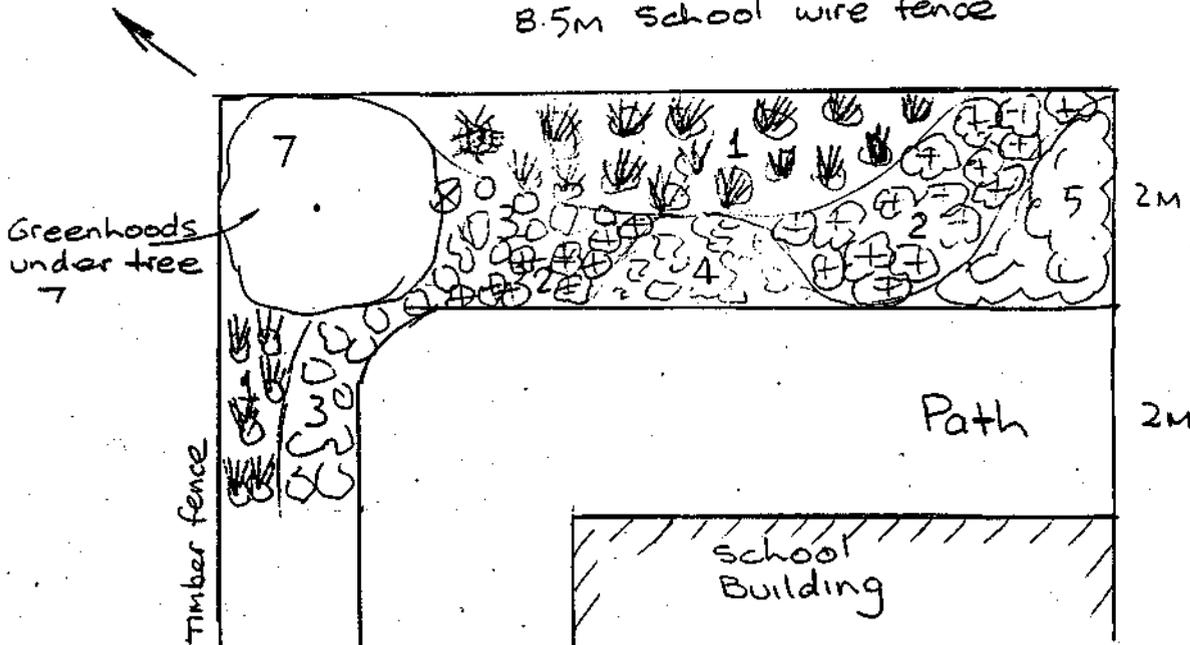


GRAVEL PATHWAY

- 1 *BURSARIA SPINOSA*
- 2 *CHRYSOCEPHALUM SEMIPAPPUSUM*
- 3 *KENNEDIA PROSTRATA*
- 4 *DANTHONIA SP.*
- 5 *ARTHROPODIUM STRICTUM*
- 6 *WAHLENBERGIA SP.*
- 7 *PTEROSTYLIS SP.*

SCALE 1:100

Street
8.5m school wire fence



- Plants
- 1. Wallaby grass
 - 2. Everlasting daisies
 - 3. Chocolate lily
 - 4. Bluebells
 - 5. Running Postman
 - 6. Greenhood Orchid
 - 7. UV tree (with spikes)

0 1 2m
Scale

Design for a
Primary School
JH 17.2.96

Integration of Australian plants in a large, formal garden

Louise Gore NSW

The following are some thoughts on trying to integrate Australian plants within the established framework of a formal garden. The visual aesthetic I think I apply to my use of Australian plants, in garden design, comes from years of bushwalking in Sydney sandstone bushland, and my preference for a look which approximates the bush - a "semi-wild" look. But how to make this work in a highly formal architectural context?

Last summer I was reading "*A Pattern Language*" (Christopher Alexander et al) which inspired me to find ways to do this. In the section called "Connection to the Earth", the authors remark that "a house feels isolated from the nature around it, unless its floors are interleaved directly with the earth that is around the house". A major design constraint at the front entrance of the College grounds where I work, is a very large area of lawn. Its uniform, unbroken, flat surface gives a sense of the front of the College being "all floor", if you can see what I mean. On the very front perimeter of the lawn sit a dozen or so randomly placed large boulders, which had some native plantings around them when I began work here. The abrupt contrast between these and the highly formal lawn and sandstone walling is what I've been trying to soften.

By extending the plantings in a wide strip around all the rocks and mulching heavily after clearing the grass back, the visual contrast started to feel a bit better, but not quite there yet. I've been thinking of doing a lot of spot planting of large shrubs/small trees from the rocks area into the lawn area as a sort of extension, in greater numbers closer to the rocks and then more sparse getting further into the lawn. (Any other suggestions?)

Before Christmas I discovered, by accident, that leaving a large section of lawn at the rocks end unmown, helped integrate the two design elements. I noticed many little blue native butterflies fleeing the grass before the advance of the mower blades, and I realized how mowing was destroying their habitat; I spontaneously decided to not mow a whole section of lawn. I made a large circle (25m diameter) of uncut lawn, and everyone who saw it had a positive response to the visual effect - it had its own "semi-wild" feeling (especially as it kept growing, prompting some students to refer to it as a "paddock").

However, it's still not quite there yet, that feeling of balance between the formal and "semi-wild". I think the main thing I've learnt in all this is how difficult I find it to step outside my visual memories/background preferences and be more objective about design. The book gave me a way of looking at landscape which was quite a bit more objective, helping me find a "language" with which to talk about the visual, about design. I've also been finding Ian Reed's book "*The Bush*" helpful in this regard.

Back to "*A Pattern Language*" - in the section called "Garden Growing Wild", the authors talk about "the quality which brings a garden to life - the quality of a wilderness, tamed, yet still wild, but cultivated enough to be in harmony with the buildings which surround it and the people who move in it". This is what I'm striving for in my work as a gardener.

An Australian or an exotic 'look'

Diana Snape Vic

In this article I'll use the term 'Australian garden' to mean one where Australian plants are dominant and so the 'feel' or 'look' of the garden is Australian. However we know that there can be many different Australian 'looks'. Although I'm familiar with Victoria and (southern) NSW, I'm much less at home with the 'look' of Queensland or Tasmanian gardens.

I think Australian plants and exotics can be combined successfully in either of two ways. The first is by selecting appropriate exotic plants so the garden remains 'Australian', particularly if the gardener wishes the garden to be naturalistic. The second way is by choosing suitable Australian plants to fit in with the more 'exotic' character of the garden. It's a matter of balance - I don't think the division between Australian and exotic can be equal (though one type in the front (usually exotic!), the other in the back garden is not uncommon). Maybe people unfamiliar with Australian plants would not be as sensitive to the difference between an Australian and an exotic 'look' as long-time SGAPers are.

It's interesting to compare just a few of the many different factors involved in successful combinations in which the garden remains 'Australian'.

1. Trees

The wonderful qualities of Australia's evergreen trees include their often magnificent trunks, extremely important in the structure of a garden. They are also beautiful throughout the year, with subtle changes of foliage &/or bark, buds, flowers and fruit. I'm completely prejudiced in their favour, but for a touch of brilliant autumn colour, why not one claret ash against the grey-green foliage of several allocasuarinas or melaleucas, or a single golden elm against the blue-grey foliage of a group of eucalypts? Then the winter skeletons are less depressing. Some exotic trees are more compatible in appearance (eg jacarandas?) but again I'd like to see them used in the minority with a majority of Australian trees of complementary foliage form and colour. If non-Australian trees are dominant in a garden, I think the garden as a whole cannot look 'Australian'.

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2. Foliage

Compatible combination of different types of foliage is especially important - for example, big, bold green leaves and small, fine grey-green leaves look wrong together. It depends on both size and colour, and may relate to foliage of plants which would grow happily under similar conditions in nature - if they wouldn't, they probably don't look very happy together in the garden either. The following are some broadly generalised foliage types - each would combine well with similar types of foliage belonging to exotic plants.

- lustrous, relatively large green leaves - eg rainforest type plants
- green or blue-green foliage - eg of forests (intermediate in type between rainforest and woodlands)
- small/fine grey-green leaves, filmy plants - eg of heathlands or woodlands - a common category (often shown to disadvantage near exotic plants)
- silver/grey foliage - eg desert & coastal plants - as described so fondly in Doris Gunn's article on page 11
- tough, spiny or prickly foliage - probably few plants used, chosen for reasons other than the appearance of their foliage (eg bird habitat)

For special effects; or for a more formal look, contrasting foliage types might well be chosen.

3. Flowers

These are less important than the other two except in a 'wildflower' or 'cottage' garden, when size, showiness and colours of flowers must be considered. Large flowers of bold colours can 'kill' small, delicately coloured flowers, so they need to be kept apart or combined with caution. Plants with small flowers can be massed for a lovely effect.

4. Groundcover

The green of an exotic lawn is still a worry to me in an 'Australian' garden; I look forward to the day when lawns of Australian grasses are a real option. For small areas there are many other possibilities for covering the ground.

Australian Bulb-like Species

Geoff Simmons Qld

Part 1 (Starting from an exotic viewpoint) No hosts of golden daffodils

This group of Australian plants (bulbs, corms, tubers and such-like) are not used to any extent in gardens and they are low-key rather than flamboyant.

One of the most spectacular features of exotic plants is the floral displays produced by the use of bulbs such as tulips and daffodils. By contrast, bulbs native to Australia are rarely seen and even less to any great effect. One can pose the question of why is this so? My view, based on growing only a few, is that few produce large or brightly coloured flowers. However anyone who has seen the bed of old tulips in Kew Botanic Gardens will realise that modern tulips have been developed from rather ordinary looking flowers. The two major development strategies viz. selection and genetics have yet to be applied to Australian lilies and it is problematical whether they will ever be utilised to enhance the beauty of this group of plants.

The other factor is mass planting to produce a total scene as when daffodils are used in lawns or beds. The first hurdle to overcome if one wants to use bulbs in this manner is to get a sufficient number at a reasonable price. As there doesn't appear to be a specialist Australian bulb nursery, purchasing is not an option. The alternative is to find a seed source and grow the required number from seed. This has two difficulties - first find such a source and second, the use of seeds may result in a mixed batch with variation destroying the uniformity desired.

The third unfortunate fact about native bulbs is that their flowers are often small and of unremarkable colour.

Calostemma purpurea is an example of a plant that has quite attractive foliage but the flowers are rather weak.

The above has a gloomy outlook as far as Australian bulbs are concerned, so it is worthwhile ending on a more positive note, for example their longevity and low maintenance characteristics. Perhaps one also could mention unusual colours such as the mauve of the Lawn Lily *Murdannia gramineum* or the purple of *Thysanotus tuberosus*.

(I can't resist mentioning wonderful displays of Kangaroo Paws. DS)

Part 2 (Starting from an Australian viewpoint) Delicate and wispy / robust and bold

These words can be used to categorise many of the Australian bulb-like species. They are terms that cannot be applied to exotic bulbs such as daffodils or tulips that are 20-30cm in height and mostly die off after flowering. In contrast, its wiry stems and grass-like habit give *Tricoryne elatior* (with 6-petaled bright yellow flowers) a lace-like appearance not often seen in exotic bulbs. The propagation and use in landscaping don't seem to have had much attention even though this plant is something different. Species of *Thysanotus* and *Murdannia* also have unusual features.

In the other category, that is bold appearance and robust habit, can be included *Doryanthes* and *Crinum* species which lend themselves to landscaping on a grand scale. The spear-like foliage of doryanthes or the thick round stems of crinums readily suggest how that can be used in garden design. The magnificent red spike of the *Doryanthes* flower must be awaited with a lot of patience, although one would hope that selection may shorten the long wait. It is worth noting that established *Doryanthes* plants quickly grew new leaves even though all had been destroyed by a bushfire and the ground had been subjected to intense heat from burning bark mulch.

The white flowers of *Crinum* species are always amazing with thin petals contrasting with the stout leaves. Propagation is easy as numerous seeds are produced. *Crinum flaccidum* with white, cream or yellow colours is also an Australian plant waiting for development. Gardens designed with white flowers as the dominant colour could well have a place for Australian plants such as *Crinums* and *Euracles*.

The above mentions only a few species that have special characteristics that need to be explored.

A mix of Australian and exotic

Jennifer Borrell NSW

A comment in response to another issue in the last Newsletter, the mixing of exotic and Australian species. Whilst I grow a lot of exotics in my garden - herbs and vegetables and azaleas, begonias and fuchsias in pots in a shady paved area - they are not usually mixed with the Australian plants. There is however one exception. I have a strong addiction to friesias and in the spring I have friesias popping up all over the garden. They look really pretty amongst the Kangaroo Paws and the pale creamy flowers are a lovely contrast to the red flowers and grey green leaves of *Brachysema lanceolatum*. In a few weeks they will die down and my front garden will return to its total Australian style. I am also enjoying a pleasant view of a neighbour's garden at the moment from my bedroom window where pale pink blossoms complement the white trunk of a Sydney Bluegum.

Multiculturalism in gardens

Geoff Simmons Qld

Multiculturalism is an often used word these days and basically means that there are many cultures in a community. In garden design there can be similar mixing of plants from many countries of the world including Australian species. It raises the question of whether there can be a garden without Australian plants or Australian plants included and still be a garden recognisable as of Australian design. This question I consider to be outside the scope of the ASGAP GDSG but there remains the point of mixed exotics and Australian plants. If exotics are included, they are used for reasons such as nostalgia or special effect.

Both vegetable and fruit tree gardens generally consist of 100% exotics, notwithstanding the publicity given to Australian plants producing edible products - bush tucker.

The arrival of settlers from Europe and Asia and, in fact, from all round the globe, served to push out endemic flora as they were considered bizarre, commonplace in the surrounding bush, or lacking in appeal compared with the plants of the homelands. In a book written in 1915, the author (English) deplores the vegetable monstrosities (elkhorns) seen growing on verandahs and balconies in Sydney. Such was the knowledge at the time that the author (H. M. Vaughan) thought that they were parasitic non-flowering orchids.

While Australian plants can be compared with exotics, can we consider different species endemic to different local regions of Australia as multi-origin flora if they are planted in another region of the continent?

BOOKS**"Gardening on the Wild Side: The New Australian Bush Garden" by Angus Stewart (1995)**

(published by ABC Books)

reviewed by Jacci Campbell Vic

This beautifully illustrated book covers a wide range of topics which include new cultivars, propagation, pruning, maintenance, wildlife and wildflower walks.

The section on Australian Plant Cultivars is well set out, giving a description of each plant, its origin, how it is propagated, and its needs in cultivation and comments on its use.

As a breeder of Kangaroo Paws for 15 years, Angus Stewart has devoted a large part of the book to cultivars - of *Anigozanthos*, *Acacia*, *Banksia*, *Brachyscome*, *Callistemon*, *Ceratopetalum*, *Chamaelium*, *Correa*, *Everlasting*, *Daisies*, *Eriostemon*, *Grevillea*, *Hardenbergia*, *Leptospermum*, *Pandorea*, *Pimelea*, *Prostanthera*, *Scaevola*, *Telopea*, *Lilly Pillies* -

For anyone who is endeavouring to include Australian plants in a garden which is predominantly of introduced species, these lists would be very valuable, as these Australian plants can provide spectacular, reliable and, in some cases, year-round display of flowers. It is a book written by someone who loves the Australian bush and who is trying to encourage and help other people create their own Australian habitat in their backyard. Not for the purists but certainly worth reading, for it asks us to consider the use of cultivars and varieties, the number of which will only continue to grow with the use of new scientific techniques.

"The Bush Garden" by Esther Wettenhall (1995)

(published by Hyland House)

Reviewed by Jane Calder Vic

I felt an immediate affinity with Esther Wettenhall when I read in the front of this book both that she had had to delay for many years realising her dream of a larger garden and that, in her commitment to the Australian bush, she felt any bush garden should work with the bush and not against it.

The book takes us through all the steps of establishing a bush garden on a near enough to bare block, but along the way we gain so much more knowledge and pleasure than could ever be reaped from a simple 'how-to-do-it' book. There is the importance of learning to live with apparent chaos, leaving leaf litter on the ground as habitat; there is the despondency over the death of plants quickly supplanted by the joy of watching a raft of Imperial White butterflies hatch and expand their crumpled wings. I particularly liked the suggestion of giving children a part of a garden as their very own. What a wonderful gift from grandparent to city grandchild. The common perceptions/misconceptions of native gardens such as 'no maintenance' are also addressed along the way, though interestingly I cannot recall any mention of fire as a force which needs to be included in one's bush garden thinking.

I enjoyed too the author's delight in all the creatures that share her garden, not only the pretties and the appealing such as butterflies and birds, but also the 'bullants which have as much right as I to live in the garden'. The illustrations are an

added pleasure even with an occasional inaccuracy - the photograph of Early Nancy is actually a Milkmaid, *Burchardia*, and I suspect heads of introduced Ryegrass and *Briza* have found their way into the little spray of summer 'native' grasses. I found myself wondering too how a non-Victorian who wanted to know the actual botanical names and so be better able to relate to a Native Fuchsia or an Egg and Bacon would actually access such information; the index would not help here.

These giggles are minor. This is not only a charming book full of inspiration and delight but also one with plenty of useful and accessible information on how others too can create for themselves a similar environment of deep personal satisfaction. I am sure that I will be dipping into my copy on many future occasions.

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 "Not directly to do with plants but, if you have an interest in animals, I draw your attention to a book recently published by the Queensland Museum and Brisbane City Council, titled '*Wildlife of Greater Brisbane*'. Retailing at \$24.95, it is an excellent compilation, profusely illustrated in colour. It includes birds, butterflies, moths, reptiles, mammals, etc." Geoff Simmons Qld (*Geoff included several photos of fantastically coloured harlequin beetles on his Australian hibiscus. Brilliant! DS*)

EREMOPHILAS Information from **Colin Jennings** S.A. (leader of the Eremophila Study Group)
 Additional reference: *Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants* Vol.3 Compiled by Diana Snape

Eremophilas occur only in Australia and there are at least 180 species, many with outstanding potential as ornamental shrubs (or small trees). The Eremophila Study Group has just carried out a survey among its members to find out which are currently the ten most commonly grown eremophilas. This gives us an indication of the combination of their appeal and availability. These are the results of the survey.

The first two (both way ahead of all the others) are:

E. glabra (Common Emu-bush or Fuchsia-bush) - widespread small shrub, an extremely variable & complex species - many different ornamental forms eg *E. glabra* v. *tomentosa* (Murchison River form)

E. maculata (Native Fuchsia or Spotted Emu-bush) - widespread small to medium shrub, also variable with many attractive forms eg *E. maculata* v. *brevifolia*

A clear third was *E. polyclada* (Flowering Lignum or Lignum Fuchsia-bush) - a hardy, small to medium shrub with lovely pale flowers, from inland areas subject to flooding

Then come (in alphabetical order):

E. bignoniiflora (Bignonia Emu-bush) - shrub or small tree, widespread species of the inland, adaptable

E. calorhabdos (Red Rod or Spiked Eremophila) - small to medium shrub, with beautiful deep pink or red flowers

E. decipiens (Slender Fuchsia) - small shrub with red flowers, one of the most reliable in cultivation

E. longifolia (Berrigan or Emu-bush) - small shrub to (rarely) small tree, pink or red flowers; widespread & adaptable

E. maccdonnellii - prostrate to dwarf, spreading shrub with purple flowers; variable, most ornamental

E. oppositifolia (Twin-leaf Emu-bush) - small to medium shrub, cream/pink flowers; decorative, adaptable

E. weldii - dwarf to small shrub, white to purple flowers; widespread, adaptable

E. latrobei (Native Fuchsia) was a close 11th - small to medium shrub, widespread, variable in forms & flower colour

A further 30 species were listed by Colin Jennings as being fairly easy to obtain in S.A. and *potentially good* as garden specimens. (This list is available to GDSG members who request it, but I have not included it here because our aim is to build on and expand the use of known successes, rather than experiment ourselves.) Colin says these "have a respectable life, although most seem to appreciate a good pruning in the early stages of growth to give them a bushy habit; otherwise they get very leggy and seem not to recover in later growth."

For garden design, most of these eremophilas are small to medium shrubs with attractive colourful flowers. Of these eleven, only two are likely to grow as small trees (*E. bignoniiflora* and *E. longifolia*). Eremophilas can be selected for and grown in a varied range of conditions. Many are long flowering and a number have attractive or interesting foliage. Recently, selected grafted plants have become available. Although many come from drier areas of Australia, reports say that even these may tolerate (or even like) a reasonable amount of moisture. I'm sure this is one genus that we'll hear a lot more about (and continue to grow more) in the future.

Submission of articles on disc

A reminder that articles submitted on disc are welcomed with open arms by the editor. My word processor is a Mac, but Jeff Howes has kindly given me advice to pass on to people who have IBM compatibles. Apparently in order for discs to work with PC exchange, you need to save as text only (Microsoft) or DOSS format (WordPerfect) (ASCII) format). I will of course return all floppy discs.

Articles not submitted on disc are also welcome, especially if they're easy to read. Remember you can just send a short note - a sentence or two - about any topic to do with garden design you like, or your reaction to any article or comment in the Newsletter. WHY WOT? Very few of us are 'experts' - we are ALL learning and we need your ideas too.

Grey and Silver Plants in the Australian Garden**Doris Gunn Vic**

This popular paper was presented by Doris at the ASGAP Biennial Conference at Ballarat in September 1995. Unfortunately printing it we miss out completely on Doris's wonderful Scottish accent and sense of humour, including her references to picking and discarding red flowers that appeared where they weren't wanted. DS

This paper is not about individual grey and silver plants in the Australian scene but rather about grey and silver plants in general; grey gardening overseas, the biology of grey plants, grey and silver plants from Australia, and the various uses of grey and silver foliage in our gardens. The idea is not to dwell on individual names but to try to inspire you to do something different and grow an all grey garden or a small area within your garden or even add a few well chosen grey plants as an accent and contrast in your present garden.

Australia is a major contributor to the grey and silver scene as we have the conditions which produce grey foliage. In fact, the Australian flora is thought of as being more grey/blue than green. Actually, grey salt bush occupies some 5% of this continent. Drought prone regions such as deserts, shorelines, alpine herb fields and rocky, exposed limestone cliffs are the natural home of grey plants.

Among the first plants collected in Australia by Europeans was *Conostytis candidans* (Grey Cottonheads) and this was found in Shark Bay by William Dampier, the privateer, in 1699. This is a beautiful plant both for its form and colour and probably stood out amongst the surrounding vegetation. During Cook's voyage in 1768/70, among the first plants collected in Botany Bay were *Chrysocephalum apiculatum* and *Actinotus helianthii*. These plants no doubt caught the keen eyes of the botanists Banks and Solander sailing with Cook. There was certainly little time wasted by the English horticulturists in exploring the booty of grey plants to be found in Australia.

In Britain and Europe grey gardens are very popular. Botanical gardens at Kew and Edinburgh have areas that are devoted to grey plants. In England there is a nursery that sells only grey and silver plants and they issue a catalogue which lists more than three hundred plants (and is printed on grey paper). It was largely the White Garden at Sissinghurst in England that popularised this grey and silver cult and this garden is said by some to be the most beautiful in the world. The Nicholsons who created it called the White Garden the Moon Garden, for reasons which I will discuss later.

Melbourne Botanic Garden has extended the rock gardens in which grey plants are grown. Many local authorities are now planting grey plants in roundabouts, traffic islands and in landscaped gardens around buildings. Australia has many advantages in growing pale foliage, not least of which is the luxury of long, hot, sunny days throughout most of the year. It is one of the criticisms of grey gardens in Britain that they look so 'tatty'¹ in winter when the plants are usually just twiggy tufts of cut back foliage. How dull grey plants look on wet cold days and how they shimmer in bright sunlight.

The Mediterranean coast which has a climate resembling much of Australia's climate produces a great number of grey and silver plants which are grown in Europe. Why do regions with hot, dry and hard climates produce such wonderful grey plants? Grey and silver coloration is generally the result of a layer of white hairs on the leaf surface which reduces water loss by reflecting the sun's rays and which holds moisture close to the leaf surface and thus keeps the tissues cool.

Many salt marsh plants suffer from what is known as physiological drought as they must resist the tendency to lose water to the surrounding medium which is generally a concentrated salt solution. These plants are also sometimes succulent and frequently have bluish, waxy or felted leaves such as *Sarcocolla quinqueflora* (Beaded Glasswort) which is highly succulent, quite leafless and often covered with a waxy bloom to minimise water loss. It is common around our coast and colonises with *Disphyma blackii* (Pig-face). The remarkable *Avicennia marina* (White Mangrove) has lustrous upper surfaces but white, felted undersurfaces to its leathery leaves.

This xerophytic way of life is manifested in a range of structural peculiarities such as small, compact fine leaves as in conifers, allocasuarinas and leucophyta in which there is a lower ratio of surface to volume. It has been noticed that if the same species of plant has forms occurring in dry and moist areas it is almost always the one in the dry area which has the denser covering of hairs. This is another reason for selecting plants from similar conditions to your own.

Other xerophytes may have narrow leaves which are oriented with the edge towards the sun, such as eucalypts. This habit helps reduce heating and therefore water loss. Leaves may also be rolled in upon themselves, such as grasses in deserts or coastal areas. The outer waxy or glaucous layer, which gives many plants a grey or bluish colour, no doubt has a water retaining function. This bloom or mealiness is easily rubbed off - one can think of many eucalypts with this property. Many plants from dry, sandy areas have a tight compact habit which produces a humid climate within itself, such as *Leucophyta brownii* (Cushion Bush) which resembles a ball of crumpled silver wire. There is no doubt that the hairy covering of the silver and grey plants serves to reflect light and keeps a humid layer close to the surface of the leaf, thus keeping the plant cool and reducing water loss. The reason why silver plants shimmer in the sunlight is that

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the hairs of these plants lie sleekly close in the sunlight but in cold, wet weather they are upright to increase water loss. *Atriplex* sp. (Saltbushes) have this characteristic.

There are other qualities of grey plants of which we could take advantage apart from the artistic ones. Two in particular are their qualities as fire retarders and as light reflectors at night. Saltbush plants in the family of *Chenopodiaceae* have a high salt content in their tissues and this is the reason why they have a fire suppressing capacity. Several of the ornamental greys can be used for this purpose. *Atriplex* sp and *Rhagodia* sp, the true saltbushes, make particularly fine firebreaks. Light reflecting leaf surfaces that make greys and silvers shine during the day can also be used to good effect at night. It is noticeable that grey plants are increasingly being used on traffic roundabouts and at other potentially dangerous sites: perhaps for their hardiness but also because they show up at night in car headlights. A driveway edged with *Leucophyta brownii* would be most effective both by day and night.

The pale foliage of blue and silver eucalypts looks stunning in sunlight, but also is very noticeable in car headlights at night. Clever use of pale foliage plants in areas of your garden which can be artificially lit at night, particularly when combined with white flowers, is very striking indeed. Pale foliage and white flowers also stand out in moonlight and this is why such gardens are described as Moon Gardens.

Do not overlook the fact that grey plants are very drought tolerant and are useful for those dry corners. Such plants are best grown in sunny exposed conditions but a few such as *Atriplex cinerea* grow quite well in shade, less compact but a good colour.

Among the grey plants now fairly commonly used overseas are *Eucalyptus perriniana*, *E. crenulata*, *E. tetragona*, *E. gunnii*, *E. cinerea* and *E. globulus*. Heavy coppicing of these trees is practised to preserve the juvenile foliage which is pale and silvery. This can be done several times and perhaps we could do more of this in our gardens.

A special area in your garden devoted to grey and silver colour and of varying leaf sizes, possibly mixed with white, blue and some pink flowers and illuminated at night would look stunning.

I am sure that there are still many beautiful plants that could be grown for their foliage alone that are untried, unsung and untested in the garden. These could be winners overseas and perhaps there is an opening here for growers and nurseries to specialise in and popularise grey and silver plants. I hope I have inspired you to grow a grey garden and experiment with a few lesser known foliage plants.

Planning for all-year colour

Diana Snape Vic

This paper was presented at the ASGAP Biennial Conference at Ballarat in September 1995.

What colours do we want in our gardens? It probably depends partly on where in Australia we live, then on our attitude to the natural environment, and finally on personal taste. We may want the colours in our garden to blend with those of the local landscape, or to contrast with them. This is a philosophical choice. I think many people have not yet adapted to the colour schemes of the Australian landscape, which are often different from the colours of European or other landscapes. As an obvious example, many gardeners still crave bright green lawns, which may not look so out of place on the more humid coastal fringes of Australia, but provide a quite startling contrast in dry inland areas, or in times of drought. A vivid green lawn may detract from the softer grey-greens or blue-greens of many Australian trees and shrubs.

In the past, most SGAP members have developed 'naturalistic' gardens, but there's no reason to reject the planned use of colour in any style of garden. In a garden which has rather more formality, using colour very deliberately can be fun.

Gardens of indigenous plants use colours which belong to the local landscape. For example, in coastal gardens, foliage colours may include the blue-grey of Saltbush (*Atriplex* species) and silver-grey of Cushion Bush (*Leucophyta brownii*). Here the background of sand or gravel is pale - cream, grey or fawn. Heathlands can display a variety of colours, often with repetition; in woodlands these are interspersed with patterns of trunks. Forest greens may contrast with the red of waratahs; wet or dry rainforests have a variety of colours in flowers and fruit. In natural alpine gardens a wide range of green occurs with washes of flower colour - white, yellow, mauve - mainly in summer. Tasmania's forest colours include the added splendour of Deciduous *Beech* (*Nothofagus gunnii*) in autumn.

In our own gardens we may forget the colour of a house but it's certainly there all year round. As a permanent background it can contribute usefully to a colour scheme close to the house, or be a distraction. Neutral colours - fawns, greys, browns - may deliberately tone with plants, eg eucalypt leaves or banksia cones, and disappear into the landscape. White is eye-catching and particularly so with black. Brick colours such as orange and red are strong and stand out in combination with nearby colours. Colour choice for a painted building is unlimited; the choice may provide a colourful but sympathetic background, or two colours may match contrasting colours in eucalypt trunks.

Other hard materials in the garden may also contribute significant areas of colour, which can be planned. Similar

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comments as for walls of buildings apply to the vertical planes of fences and walls, except these can possibly be avoided altogether. They can be made inconspicuous or conspicuous, be a frame or a foil for plants. Sculpture and ornaments are 3-dimensional, usually with more emphasis on their vertical than horizontal dimensions. These are often meant to be eye-catching, depending on their colour as well as their form. They are not yet used very frequently in gardens of Australian plants but their potential for adding colour and character is great.

Horizontal planes cannot be avoided. They intermingle with the garden, leading into it, blending with it, shaping spaces. Hard surfaces include paths and open areas - natural rocks such as sandstone or granite if you're lucky, stone or brick paving, timber, gravel or sand. Again, colour matters and should be considered; for example red scoria is a strong colour, reminiscent of the terracotta of some inland areas. For most of the day, especially in summer, light will shine more directly on these horizontal surfaces, so colours appear lighter than vertical surfaces. Possible groundcovers include numerous different types of organic mulch, with natural colours which often change as they age.

Living or 'green' groundcovers have a special appeal, including Australian grasses, whose soft colours follow the seasons. There are many groundcover plants to choose from, of different scale and texture with a great variety of foliage and flower colours. Water could be regarded as a unique category of 'groundcover' and an ever-changing element of subtle colour - shades of blue or green, grey, silver or dark - as it reflects and interacts with light. Water helps attract birds which add a delightful touch of colour to the garden, and it can add safety from fire.

Trunks, bark and branches of trees can introduce lines or patches of colour in addition to texture and definite forms. Eucalypts and angophoras are celebrated for this, but another winner is the Bell-fruit Tree (*Codonocarpus continifolius*) with its pink trunk and branches. A pattern of dark or pale lines can highlight colours of flowers and foliage. Buds, calyxes & fruit, for example eucalyptus buds and acacia seed pods, often contribute to the subtle, colours of 'tapestries'. Others can be as conspicuous as those of NSW Christmas Bush (*Ceratopetalum gummiferum*).

For evergreen plants, foliage is there all year round and more planning could go into its use in the garden. Despite the comment "but there's no colour", we all know that green really is a colour. The beauty and serenity of a fern garden appeals to most people. But the range of foliage colours of Australian plants is large - all shades of green, some blue tones, silver-grey, even purple tints, rust or lemon. Leaf size influences the visual effect, and foliage colour can vary throughout the year. There are particularly lovely colours in the new or juvenile foliage of many rainforest plants as well as eucalypts, banksias, callistemons, hakeas, and lots of smaller shrubs. Interaction with light can give special effects and this can be anticipated when planting, illustrated by Clay Wattle (*Acacia glaucoptera*) foliage "front lit" or "back lit". After rain, light shining through water droplets on fine casuarina or Geraldton Wax (*Chamelaucium uncinatum*) foliage can produce tiny rainbows.

Last but, of course, not least there's the colour of flowers. In general, these appear softer than the obvious "loud" or "noisy" colours of exotic flowers which have such wide appeal. Some flowers of Australian plants are big, bold and bright, but colour effects are more often subtle. Small flowers may be colourful close up and whole shrubs can be colourful too, but many appear as delicate washes of colour from a distance. Even in massed effects, the colours are often gentle and muted by foliage, especially when individual flowers are small. It's not necessary to be concerned about flower colour in the garden at all, but it is possible to have some all year round just with careful selection of either eucalypts or acacias alone. Daisies are wonderful for providing almost continuous colour. You need to plan ahead and even then variations do occur in recognized flowering times, depending on locality, climate and each particular season. It's worth checking local gardens and records. Many different colour combinations are possible in all the seasons, but especially in spring.

If we are planning ahead for flower colour, we should consider colour schemes for maximum effect. White is valuable in a hundred ways. Because it reflects light so well, it 'lifts' a dark corner or acts as a foil for other colours. The visual effect of any colour varies according to its concentration or intensity and the size of its area - compare a linear white trunk, the massed flowering of a leptospermum and scattered small flowers of daisies or pratia. A colour wheel shows us pairs of complementary colours - those opposite each other in the wheel. Red is complementary to green, and red flowers are striking against a completely green background (with apologies to people who are red-green colour blind.) Again we see a different balance between massed reds of callistemons and daintier patches of red lechenaultias. Blues and purples of hardenbergia, prostanthera, patersonia or dampiera team well with virtually any other colour, but especially with shades of gold or yellow, their complementary colours. Blues and purples are lovely with pinks and mauves, colours which show up well against white or grey but are tricky against an orange or red brick house. Blues and purples are vibrant with a crimson red. Yellow, orange and clear red are very cheerful together. Various shades of green are fine backgrounds for all colours. A combination of pale colours - pink, cream, white, lemon - is pretty, or you might prefer a mix of bright colours. Artists each have their own individual palette of favourite colours and so can gardeners.

I think designing (and then developing) a garden is probably the most challenging of all arts, one on which the Garden Design Study Group focuses. Using colour is one aspect of this challenge. With Australian plants I can guarantee there will be colour in our gardens all year round, even if it is not planned. If we do plan, we can use colour more consciously and effectively in whatever way we choose!

Some thoughts on design**Jeanette Heinemann Qld**

I would like to see articles in the Newsletter on the general principles of design, perhaps with example layouts of the hard landscaping and suggested positions and forms of plants that could be used. I feel that suggestions of actual species is of less importance than knowing what size, form and appearance the plants should have to fit into the particular theme or design. There are vastly differing local conditions for our Australia-wide membership and local groups should be able to recommend species most suitable for their areas. A trait that probably will always be present with many SGAP members is that of 'trying' plants they fancy. While this doesn't always lead to planting to a design, it is a good way of finding out what will grow in a particular area and needs to be accommodated in some way.

In general, I think that gardeners should be encouraged to give consideration to what plants look best together. Foliage usually is not given enough consideration. At the last Australian Plant Spectacular, held by our Mackay Branch, we had a foliage display to illustrate the variations of colour, shape, texture and aroma of foliage and its year-round role in the look of a garden.

Too much emphasis can be placed on trying to categorise or to define just what is an Australian Native Garden. There are nearly as many different types of gardens that contain native plants as there are SGAPers. So much depends on individual taste, practicalities and finance available. My own garden gets its Australian Native 'look' from large Grass Trees, strategically placed in an embankment garden which runs parallel to the front of the house. These were successfully transplanted from a property that was clearing a fire break. We do have a Eucalyptus section beside the driveway but the Grass Trees attract most comment.

As one example of how practicalities and finances can dictate design, while the wooden sleepers used for steps in our embankment looked more natural, these soon deteriorated. Reject concrete sleepers, a cost effective alternative to other materials, had been used in the construction of a terraced retaining wall, so the wooden sleeper steps and garden edgings were also replaced with concrete sleepers. We intend experimenting with measures to 'age' the concrete sleepers. Already, trailing / prostrate plants are softening the outlines.

A comment on "Australiana Images" by Grahame Durbidge (NL12-15). We've been seeking out very old, disused farm-type machinery for features in the garden. They were used in this district so give a local 'feel'.

'Aftercare'**Barbara Buchanan Vic**

An area of interest is the one you have written up, 'Maintenance as design'. Here are some quotes from the Feb. 96 'Gardens Illustrated' (an American special issue), first Penelope Hobhouse on Lynden Miller who has revitalized and redesigned many of New York's public gardens. "She is remarkable not only for her artistry and horticultural knowledge but also for her passion and understanding of the importance of aftercare. She never takes on a project unless there is a funding commitment to maintenance and never walks away from any project."

A further article by Michael Pye on Fred and MaryAnn McGoutry who have a nursery in Connecticut. Fred talks of 'using some of the ideas of Gertrude Jekyll but with the realization that, ultimately, all of her gardens failed. She just didn't recognize plants as living entities, always on the increase or decrease. When you have 90/100 plants to monitor, the system breaks down after a few years." What an iconoclast! But he is voicing my concerns that only the expensive, formal, hard landscaping is likely to survive us.

And a quote from Dean Riddle, a garden designer, of his own 7m by 10m plot in the Catskill mountains of N.Y. "I have learnt that a garden of good structure, however small, can offer years of pleasure in refining its style." His garden is extremely regimented and ordered and not to our tastes but I'm sure it can still apply to any degree of 'bush' garden. There's always room to improve

I would take issue with Jane Shepherd that Japanese influence is responsible for ponds, stepping stones, etc. in 'bush gardens'. Maybe in some cases but I think it is analagous rather than homologous evolution, reaching the same appearance by different developmental routes.

Maintenance**Jeff Howes NSW**

I found Diana Snape's article "Maintenance as design" (NL12) very interesting because, after the initial selection and planting, maintenance certainly has to be carried out if some semblance of order and unity is to be maintained. I would be interested to hear from some of our professional members if the criterion of high or low maintenance is taken into account when selecting plants for a landscaping project. I would imagine that known high maintenance plants would not be selected as part of a landscape plan if these plants were to form part of the "backbone" of the garden or placed in a key spot.

Ground cover plants**Barbara Buchanan Vic**

How well would the *Myoporum* "lawn" smother weeds? It sounds quite good but, as I have been realizing, mowing a grass area gets rid of/ hides the weeds and so copes with big areas. I'm not ready yet but ultimately I would like to try such lawn replacement. Currently I have *Einadia nutans* in garden bed areas, with the benefit of water and feed I suppose, and self sowing around, but seed and transplants in the woodlot areas disappear. Although it is beautifully green, it does not stay flat for long but arches up and smothers shrubs. My Muntries (*Kunzea pomifera*) stays flat but the sorrel comes up through it. Several slightly higher growing perennials seem to smother sorrel beautifully but they are so darned hard to strike, I only have the original plants.

A very hardy ground cover**Jeff Howes NSW**

In reply to your request in NL12 for comments on *Myoporum parvifolium* I would like to add the following. I treat this plant as a very hardy ground cover to about 1.5m diameter. I have one plant growing for over 15 years in heavy clay, facing north and getting morning sun. It receives no artificial water and appears quite happy. I would not recommend this plant for any area that is subject to foot traffic as it is brittle and stems break off quite easily. Its other redeeming feature (besides its hardiness) is its ability to root at the nodes. Perhaps this feature ensures it receives enough moisture even in a dry situation.

An index of GDSG Newsletters

A recently joined member from NSW, **Maxine Armitage**, has generously volunteered to prepare an index of GDSG Newsletters. Maxine is a Librarian & professional Cataloguer, an Indexer of local history and legal publications, as well as describing herself as an Almost graduate of Ryde School of Horticulture - excellent qualifications indeed. I have been most impressed by the speed and thoroughness with which Maxine has been working on the index. We are very fortunate to have a member with her qualifications who is prepared to put in so much work for us.

Sydney News**Jo Hambrett NSW**

The February meeting was a great success. Garden owners Betty Maloney and Norah Elliott were extremely gracious and gave generously of their time. The weather was glorious as we repaired to Nadia Lalak's beachhouse for lunch and discussion. Over lunch we were able to appreciate the minor miracle Nadia has worked on a steeply sloping site once covered in grass and pigeon sheds! Thank you to members and friends who supported the day and an extra big thank you to those who stayed for the discussion; there were some excellent comments and observations put forward on the gardens we have seen so far.

The next meeting will be **Sunday 21-7-96**. **Peter Lawson**, a Sydney-based Landscape Architect, has agreed to speak to us. Peter is Managing Director and Principal Landscape Architect of CLASP (Consultant Landscape Architects and Site Planners). His talk, provocatively titled "Native Plants (and why I don't use them) in Garden Design" should elicit a response in every SGAP breast - BE THERE!! The time and place are yet to be advised; we are hoping we can actually be in a space designed by Peter whilst he is talking. I should have the details by late June so get in touch with me then. Put the date in your diary now and support the day. We don't want Peter preparing the talk and giving up his Sunday to talk to a mere handful of people.

SGAP NSW Ltd would like the GDSG to become involved in their 1996 Native Plant and Garden Spectacular 16-18th August. At this stage it appears it would involve the group designing a garden space 12m x 12m. Construction would be 12-15th August. Please give me some feedback on this, members. It could be the chance to do something really superb but we need people with time, commitment and creativity. Ring me if it's you! **Michael Bates** has generously offered his services however he stressed the need for more than 2 workhorses on this project. I should think a group of 6 or so would suffice and we would have to be thinking about it by May.

Victorian News**Melbourne meetings**

It seems ages since our first meeting of the year, in February. This was a busy meeting as it involved planning details of the Warrnambool weekend in March and our 'rock' - making on Monday April 8th.

Coming meetings (Please ring to confirm details)

May 5th: 1.45 for 2pm at Diana Snape's, Topics - rocks in garden design; if time, constructive criticism of garden design (to be discussed and then practised on our garden, with helpful suggestions!)

June 2nd No meeting in June

July 7th: 5 pm at Linda Floyd's, - a late afternoon meeting (including a 'take-away' meal to look at garden lighting. Please contact Linda close to the date to confirm details.

Formation of a N-E Victoria sub-group of the GDSG**Margaret Garrett Vic**

On Sunday 14th April, nine GDSG members met at my home in Strathbogrie and decided to form a N-E Victoria sub-group of the GDSG. It was agreed to operate within a loose structure and to meet no more than four times a year. Meetings will be an all day affair and have two components:

1. a discussion time to review history and theory of garden design, to provide an opportunity to chat about design issues, in particular issues raised in GDSG Newsletters.

2. garden appraisal. Walk-about in members' gardens, public gardens and any gardens of worth (native and exotic) with a view to a group appraisal as to why the garden is successful or not. The parameters that we will especially focus on are:- plant associations that work well; use of space; plants that do well in the N-E; use of indigenous plants (and hence compile a list of good indigenous plants); design that has maintenance built into the design.

The distance members will have to travel to meet is a perceived problem. Albury to Strathbogrie, Shepperton to Merton with everywhere in between is a big area to cover and offers a wide diversity in climate, soil type and plant performance. However the enthusiasm of all who attended the meeting should provide the impetus to overcome that problem.



Rock-making with Geoff Stitch - photographs by Peter Garnham

For sandstone 'rocks'

Before you start, study many examples of the type of rock you intend to make.

1. Choose site and excavate topsoil to a minimum depth of 0.1 m (depending on the amount of rubble you have to bury). Allow for a 'moat' around the rock size you want,
2. Pile rubble randomly to achieve approximate shape of rock, leaving moat clear.
3. Shovel sand to cover rubble and fill any large gaps, leaving moat clear.
4. (photo) Mix concrete (4:2:1) with water to suitable consistency then shovel it over sand and trowel or work it from moat up to top of rock.
5. Shape wire netting fairly closely over rock and staple edges together.
6. Repeat 4, then allow to dry a bit until firmish (have a cuppa or a light lunch).
7. Shovel brown coloured mortar (3:1) over rock and trowel roughly.
8. Scatter yellow and 'marigold' pigments sparsely and unevenly over rock.
9. Mark rock eg shaping flat ledges or drawing parallel lines to simulate cracks.
10. (photo) Work surface of rock with a piece of wet iambswool to blend colours and achieve an irregular and natural - looking finish.

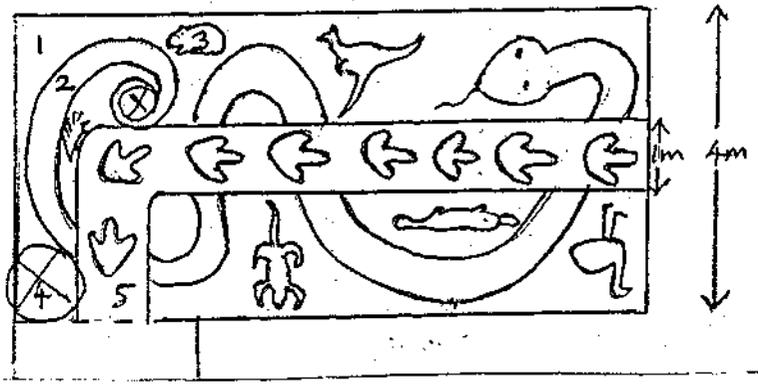
Wait for rock to dry to see the final stage in a miraculous transformation.

Design for the Primary School

Anne Pye SA

KEY

- X. stump
- 1. Wallaby Grass, as background planting
- 2. Running Postman, in the shape of the Rainbow Serpent, the Aboriginal Animal of Creation, maybe outlined in rocks.
- 3. Mixture of Everlastings, Chocolate Lilies, Bluebell, Greenhood orchid, in various animal shapes perhaps permanently outlined in stones. (Geoff Simmons' butterfly planting gave me the idea of animal shapes for the kids to look at on their way into school.) (Animals could include kangaroo and emu at the gate as part of the Australian emblem, then platypus, goanna, wombat, ecM^na, or any other animal the kids like.)
- 4. Bursaria spinosa placed to give afternoon shade.
- 5. Pathway of pinebark with large wooden cutouts representing emu tracks as steps (could be painted in bright colours if kids wanted to give permanent colour to the planting).



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Visit to Euroa Arboretum in Victoria

On Sunday 14th April, five members of the GDSG and four members of the Euroa Arboretum Committee met on the site of the Arboretum, briefly described in Ron Horrigan's letter on page 2. The Committee has a number of different goals for the Arboretum, which can be coordinated to be complementary.

With such a large project, in an area of 67 acres, consideration was mainly given to the appropriate earlier stages of the development. These were (very briefly, without any of the supplementary details discussed *on the site*):

1. The carpark and picnic area. This is already well underway and should be the first stage to be completed. It was suggested that assistance be sought from VicRoads as it would make an attractive roadside stop.
2. A lake for birds and wildlife (to complement the wetlands and the dam for fishing and swimming already there). This will involve input from local water authorities and from local groups (including school groups) in planting suitable wetland plants.
3. The vehicular access track. This will provide an opportunity for designed use of trees in some sections; planted in avenues, clumps or groves, and featuring shapes, trunks or foliage; in single species or combinations. I thought of Geoff Simmons' concept of a 'tree garden' (NL12-13).

Later stages:

4. Walking tracks, open areas and other planted areas.
5. A lookout "tower". As the area is rather flat, this would add interest.

It is recommended that indigenous plants be used wherever possible to fill the required roles. If no indigenous plant will do the job, other hardy and showy Australian plants to be used. As it is an arboretum, the emphasis is to be very largely on trees, though less so close to the picnic area and water areas. Low maintenance is a desired characteristic.

Mistletoes in Garden Design?

An interesting prospect!

If you would like to learn more about these fascinating plants, the Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria (FNCV) is holding a three-day Forum based in Melbourne to study botanical, entomological, avifaunal, agricultural and cultural aspects of mistletoes (not garden design, but you might get some ideas).

There will be a hands-on workshop on Saturday 18th May (\$30 or \$20 for FNCV members), lectures on Sat. 31st August (\$30/\$15) and an excursion on Sun. 1st September (\$40/\$30). Numbers are limited for the workshop and the excursion and lunch is provided. Enquiries FNCV Office 9877 9860.

New members (* professional member)

A warm welcome to the following new members.

Maxine Armitage*
Michael Dear*
Dinah Drummond
Judith Dykes
Caroline Gunter*
Felicity Hallam*
Jo Kopp
Alison Payne

Renewal of membership - see separate page

Please do send in your subscription promptly. If your memory is anything like mine, it's much safer to do it straight away and know it has been done. Peter Garnham will be away for the month of May, so during this time membership renewals can be sent to me, though it doesn't matter if you send them to Peter as they will be forwarded.

If you have decided not to renew, please let us know so we don't keep sending you unnecessary reminders.

Then I'll be away for June and Peter will be back on the job, Brian and I are heading north to Lawn Hill, a beautiful National Park in western Queensland, nearly up to the Gulf of Carpentaria.

I hope I'll hear what you think about the suggestions of Jeanette Heinemann and Catherine Drew, plus many other issues raised in this NL. I also hope that Jo Hambrett will get a good response from Sydney members interested in helping design a garden space at the 1996 Native Plant and Garden Spectacular on 16-18th August - a wonderful opportunity! enough members are able to participate!

Best wishes for the winter months



Diana Snape