

ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS

## GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP

NEWSLETTER No. 19

November 1997

Study Group Leader/Editor: Diana SnapeTreasurer/Membership: Peter Garnham

Dear Members,

It's difficult to know where to begin, with our own weekend Seminar in September and then the ASGAP Biennial Conference in Adelaide. We'll try to cover the Seminar as thoroughly as we can in this Newsletter, and I'll just refer briefly here to the ASGAP Conference - other members might like to expand on either of these. It was great to meet SG members from South Australia and also from other States at the ASGAP Conference - that's one of the best parts of attending. Our GDSG display, consisting of plans, large prints and a roundel of slides, attracted a lot of interest.

The theme of the Conference was 'hidden treasures', which could mean hidden as small, the 'petit point' of design work, the little understorey plants and their importance. It could also mean hidden for most of the year, the delightful elements of change and surprise. In many natural areas, the diversity is in the small plants. This was brought out in Ann Prescott's lively talk on the Mount Lofty Ranges. Depending on the area, for every tree species there might be two large shrubs, several small shrubs and many little understorey plants - two daisies, two orchids, two lilies, etc., and five grasses and sedges. Gardens often have a very different ratio with a higher proportion of trees & shrubs. Ann said the main differences between an average SGAP home garden and "average" native vegetation are in their:- diversity of plants; randomness of spacing; age structure (variation); height and density variation; interdependence with fauna; self-perpetuating character. I liked Ann's definition of heath as soil desert, compared with a rainfall desert.

Colin Jenning's talk on eremophilas (see NL13-11 & brief reference in NL14-13) reminded me once again of the potential of these beautiful flowering shrubs. I hope their use will continue to expand in our eastern States. Another speaker was Dean Nicolle, a young man who has just published an excellent small book (all colour) on "*Eucaiypts of South Australia*". He has growing in his arboretum 750 different species or subspecies!! He showed awareness of the need for small eucaiypts for small gardens, so I asked him if he would be able to find time to write a list (or a brief article) for us detailing the 10 or 12 small eucaiypts (6m or less) he would recommend. He kindly said he would.

Three talks were on the development of our plants for cut flowers and the commercialisation of Australian flora - a key theme of "*Native Australian Plants: horticulture and uses*" (UNSW Press) which I reviewed in NL 18. A fourth was on "Our wild foods to the world". Another strong theme was the interconnection between the geology of a region and its flora. Altogether much of interest, and there were also several garden visits including one to the display garden associated with Carawatha nursery (full of temptation). Another was to Thelma and Malcolm Vandeppeer's garden 'Dryandra', noted for its beauty and usually open for visitors in the Open Garden Scheme. Thelma says she is a collector, but like many collectors she has an eye for design too. Other gardens were 'natural gardens' with numerous orchids as 'hidden treasures'. Separately, I had the pleasure of visiting Ivan Holliday's garden (see page 21).

Back to our Seminar weekend - left behind: - somebody's notes; a nice white cup with two blue bands around the rim; a Ballarat Conference mug with its pale blue holder. Please contact me if you are missing any of these. Also please let me know if you would like a copy of the pamphlet prepared by Burnley on 'Planted native grasslands and indigenous flora gardens' - we still have a few left.

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### NEXT MEETINGS

*Please see details of these meetings in text (pages 20-21)*

**NE VIC; SUNDAY NOV 16th** at Barbara Buchanan's  
**MELBOURNE; SUNDAY FEB 1st** at Monika Herrmann's  
**SOUTH AUSTRALIA; SATURDAY FEB 14th** at Phillip Towe's  
**SYDNEY: SUNDAY FEB 22nd ?** - contact Jo Hambrett

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### CORRESPONDENCE extracts

"Congratulations to you and the ASGAP Garden Design Study Group for the wonderful job you have done in hosting the SGAP Victoria weekend. The program you have set up has been terrific and we have all been inspired by the presenters and the ideas brought forth, as well as the gardens visited.

The dinner last night was delightful, as was our speaker, and we have all enjoyed the weekend thoroughly and learnt a lot as well! Thanks again to you, Peter and the team for doing such a fine job."

**Nicky Rose** (President, SGAP Vic)

"I have now been engaged in four "Creative Village" projects for the Victorian Arts Council, the current one being Beechworth and the one before Warracknabeal - all quite different environments and challenging sites. I will be finishing the Beechworth project on Saturday prior to presenting our Master Plan and report to the Community on Monday evening.

The funding for "Creative Village" has ceased. We have found the experience of working on a collaborative design incorporating visual arts, architecture and landscape design, in consultation with communities and local government, to be a rewarding one. It is however up to the "Client" to follow through with our ideas; to get them up and running as community based projects in the main.

Native plant materials are very much part of the community perception which I know you will find encouraging." **Rosemary Manion** Vic

"As usual there are a number of comments that could be made on items in the Newsletter. For instance the reference to the use of conifers - a [list of Australian conifers](#) would be of interest. To my knowledge there are not many Australian conifers either species or cultivars, whereas there is a multitude of cultivars of exotic conifers. Incidentally, is it possible to have an arboretum of a single species? Or would

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grove be more appropriate? . . . . .

It is pleasing to see that there seems to be emerging, albeit very slowly, an Australian concept of garden design - perhaps two as it is apparent that professional landscapers and private do-it-yourself iand owners do have somewhat different agendas. I hope that the latter are not unduly influenced by computer driven programs but stick to the object of ASGAP viz. the growing of a variety of Australian plants rather than a select few. **Geoff Gimmons** Qld

*I think Geoff is correct about the small number of **A ustralian conifers**. The Encyclopaedia states there are 16 species of CaWtris and there are also about 7 Podocarpus species, both shrubs and trees. What other conifers are there? Magnificent Tasmanian endemics such as the three Athrotaxis species and also Huon Pine & Celery-top Pine; three Kauri Pines (Agathis sp.) from Queensland; the handsome Bunya Pine (Araucaria bidwillii) and Hoop Pine (A. cunningthamij). Does anyone know of a complete list of Australian conifers? If not, we should assemble such a list.*

*We could include conifer substitutes or look-alikes (where there are any). For garden design purposes, a number of flowering plants have form and/or foliage reminiscent of conifers - two of my favourite low shrubs are Homoranthus flavescens and H. papillatus. There is also a tall, very narrow, weeping form of Acacia pendula which in my view would make a most attractive substitute for a pencil pine. Way back in NL6-7, Fred Young raised the question of plants that harmonise with conifers, and a number were suggested. DS*

"There are plenty of challenges to growing Australian plants in the shelter/shade of existing or maturing gardens. Could this be a theme of a future GDSG Newsletter or have you done this already?"

**Cherree Desley** Vic

*Yes it could, Cherree. We had some very good suggestions for suitable plants in NL7-9, from Jan Hall, and a few ideas in even earlier Newsletters, but that was a while ago now and I'm sure other members would have more ideas. We'll hope to hear some. DS*

"I have taken to writing a weekly 'Landscape and Garden' column for the *Inner Western Suburbs Courier*, which means having to keep to deadlines, probably just what I need to stop me procrastinating!"

**Gordon Rowland** NSW

*Gordon's first articles are excellent, so watch out for them in Sydney. He also has a couple of exciting projects in indigenous landscaping in prospect - good luck with them Gordon! I hope we'll be hearing more about them as they progress. DS*

"Our garden continues to develop and some areas are looking almost finished. That is if a garden can ever be finished. We planted quite a few plants over the holidays to fill some gaps and to replace a few plants that have met their demise. I have had very mixed results with Calocephalus (Leucophyta) brownii. Once established it has a very quick growth spurt and then within a short time span dies thus leaving a large area empty. Cherree has given me a few ideas on how to prevent the demise but I think it might be easier to try another plant. I think I have had three die now." **Kellie Mentha** Vic

*Kellie's coastal front garden was an early 'Garden Design Project'. Cherree Densley who is Kellie's mother, and I produced a suggested plan and then it was over to Kellie to carry it out, making whatever changes to the design she liked. When I last saw the garden it was coming on very well. Have other members had similar experiences with Leucophyta brownii? I know we've had plants which just keep on growing vigorously if we don't manage to prune regularly right from the start, until they become too big for their assigned space. Then they don't like heavy pruning. DS*

"I am pleased to tell you that I have had a couple of extra contributions to our Sydney Easy Grow list. I imagine that some will have written to you with their ten favourites, and that you will publish them. What really delighted me were the personal anecdotes and the descriptions of the plants chosen - all too precious to simply list." **Caroline Gunter** NSW (See page 17 for the recent lists.)

#### **Professionals, semiprofessionals or outright amateurs?**

*A comment by **Betty Rymer** NSW in a recent letter to me that the Study Group seems to be "mainly professional or semiprofessional" I sensed had a slightly critical note. We can of course learn a lot from our professional members (or other people who are not members but contribute indirectly). We can learn from our amateur members too. I suppose we amateurs (the majority) do want to become rather more professional in our approach - I think the important thing is that the lines of communication are kept clear and none of us feel intimidated. What do you think? DS*

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**GARDEN DESIGN SEMINAR September 6 & 7, with SGAP Vic quarterly meeting****Overall view of GDSG weekend seminar****Chris Larkin Vic**

(The following report appeared first in the SGAP Foothills Newsletter.)

A very full weekend of activities was organised by the GDSG acting as hosts for the SGAP Vic Committee meeting and AGM. This was the first time that a Study Group had hosted such a weekend and it was a huge success, combining varied speakers and garden visits.

The three speakers on the Saturday morning and evening were John Burgess, Paul Thompson and keynote speaker Jim Sinatra. As a generalisation these speakers dealt with life philosophies and some of the abstract principles of design. Sunday's speakers in contrast were concerned much more with the different aspects of practising landscaping.

Catherine Drew took us through the 'how to' of putting down a design on paper. Bev Hanson entranced us all with the use of rocks in transforming a garden. She had some great before and after shots. Roger Stone covered the wide range of elements and skills necessary to execute a design. He said that the choice and placement of plants in the landscape was the single most important thing in shaping the environment. Lastly, Danie Ondinea tackled designing for wildlife. She seemed to give us permission to have messy yards - in fact, it now seems to be the only morally right thing to do, to attract and protect your local wildlife! (Apologies Danie, I think I've exaggerated a tad what you actually said.)

Garden visits were quite varied. Two of them in particular displayed the unique personalities of their owners and of these two Linda Floyd's showed a great sense of humour. As our last garden visit, Linda's cemetery for dead trees, stairway to the stars, mouse plague and many more garden jokes ensured we all came away from the conference on Sunday afternoon with a smile on our faces.

**Visual Elements in Design by John Burgess**reported by **Diana Snape Vic**

*John Burgess is a Landscape Architect and Architect with 30 years teaching experience in design education. His own teachers included Glen Wilson and Ron Rayment. John was instrumental in the development of the Landscape Architect degree at RMIT, where he lectured. He has a deep interest in the History of Landscape Architecture.*

In the first lecture of the Seminar, John Burgess looked at and analysed the elements of pure design and encouraged us to experience our own reactions to them. He compared classical principles of harmony - proportion and symmetry - with the reaction against the static nature of these in the disharmony of modernist design in the 20th century, exemplified by the work of Picasso. We focused on just one aspect of design, the visual, which for us tends to be dominant over all others.

John recommended considering starting a design for a garden or landscape with an abstract design concept, rather than starting with the conventional site analysis. I liked his idea of 'looking for an accident'. The site analysis has to be done at some stage but may be too constraining if carried out first of all.

Line is the first element and may be used in an infinite number of different ways - straight lines, curved lines, complex patterns of lines. John illustrated these with superb slides, such as an aerial photograph of a huge, perfect, closely packed salt spiral. Among painters, Mondrian was of particular importance in his use of line, with colour as a secondary element. We are accustomed to parallel lines as a partial screen; converging lines may be used to focus in, diverging lines to open up, crossing lines create shapes. A tracery of shadows of tree branches produces a secondary series of lines.

The next element could be dots, either micro or macro, as in traditional Aboriginal artwork and in the landscape itself - all sizes of rounded pebbles or rocks, and plants or groups of plants. Shapes or forms (circles, squares, or a great variety of others) can be hard edged or soft edged, and on their own or in combination with lines and dots.

Colour is another key element, often most effective when selective and limited. (Colour theory was flashed through in just a few slides.) This was shown in traditional Aboriginal art work before the introduction of colourful acrylic paints which has led to the creation of a new look. A wonderful slide showed parallel railway tracks with strings of rectangular containers viewed from above, their colours mainly subtle but occasionally bold. Other slides too showed the exploitation of a minimalist approach to the use of colour.

Light creates colour and also emphasizes texture, as in weaving. In gardens the ephemeral quality of light is very special. Also in buildings, as in the chapel of Le Corbusier in France with its deeply hollowed and sculptured windows introducing a fascinating pattern of light and shade. John reminded us of the glow of one colour against a complementary one as demonstrated in the recent exhibition in Melbourne of Amish quilts. Other slides captured the 'glow' of light in gardens, and the "green ambience of plants" (as described by Glen Murcett). John's description of the "tinkle" of pink and white *Epacris impressa* in a scene in the Grampians appealed to me.

We have each spent a lifetime building our own unique memory bank or repertoire of ideas and images to apply in our design work, and I'm sure this repertoire was enhanced by John's.

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### Design in gardens by John Burgess

Reported by Catherine Drew Vic

John Burgess illustrated his talk on design principles applied to the garden with slides. He showed Harry Howard's Sculpture Garden at the National Garden in Canberra. Images of soft casuarina against the stiff form of the sedge combined textural contrasts and lineal elements. In the same area of this garden flat lilies on the horizontal plane of the water, vertical sculptural pieces backed by sedges and casuarinas set against a high, plain coloured wall showed contrasting form as well as colour.

The texture of some plants provides the experiential component with the interplay of light on the subject. Shadows can be a strong design element in garden design. The sculptural 'ramp' or 'canoe' dipping into the water provided an effective lineal element. Elsewhere the flat dark water contrasted with whites and grey and blue of walls, sculpture and plants.

John showed examples of poor planting design with different tree species that did not relate to each other. He suggested that the design needs to be pulled together to make a statement, for example by removing the dominant tree, or by planting more of the same so the forms relate to each other. The harmony of strong form and limited colour range was shown where trees with definite vertical structure were combined with the indigenous housing style in Tuscany.

An attractive design detail showed screenings (the dots) combined with tufty low plants. This illustrated the point that scale and proximity of plants to each other is important.

In illustrating the use of colour the warm burnt tones of a banksia were repeated in the grasses planted beneath them. Another example was the vivid purple-blue of hardenbergia contrasting with the bright yellow blossoms of a wattle.

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### Plants as Form by Paul Thompson

Reported by Barbara Buchanan Vic

*Earlier highlights in Paul's career include four LCAV (Landscape Contractors of Victoria) awards in 1990. Recently, with Taylor and Cullity he is the plant designer for the new Australian garden at the Cranbourne Botanic Gardens. Currently Paul has the exciting challenge of planting design for the 'Gallery of Life' for the new Museum of Victoria.*

Paul's design interest began in his interest in plants, which is a very useful lead in as it is essential to know the character of the material one is using. He is currently writing a book trying to define the whys and hows of what he does and has condensed some of the ideas for this paper.

We should use forms purposefully. This point was illustrated with Overhead Projector Sheets with overlays. Starting with individual plants shapes, and there are a multitude of them, these can be aggregated to make another larger scale shape, and these can also be combined to give another larger scale shape or pattern of shapes.

The perceived form of plants in the garden depends on various interactive factors - perspective, light, season and foliage texture, itself dependent on leaf colour, shape and size. In one sense design is all about manipulating light. The placement of plants with varying leaf sizes and colours can affect the perspective, large leaves in the foreground grading to fine leaves in the rear will extend the distance, as will grading from dark leaves to light.

#### Using plants together

A haphazard mix does not occur in nature e.g. in a heathland which is very busy, but cohesive. This is dangerous to try in gardens and some collector's gardens are visually unco-ordinated. The regular grid or orchard planting needs reliability in the plant forms, not always certain with Australian plants grown from seed. It is also not a challenging form of design. Yet Paul showed a grid planting of *Eucalyptus maculata* in a courtyard in Macquarie University campus in Sydney which he had seen when it was young and panned; returning later when the trees had matured he found it very appropriate; it blends with the buildings, looks different during the day and from different angles. (I have stuck to *Eucalyptus maculata* because I believe, along with the W.A. Wildflower Society, that one genus Eucalyptus should contain all former eucalypts and angophoras, and that this genus has 3 subgenera eucalypts, angophora and corymbia. There is no automatic rule which can settle the point, it is just a matter of opinion.)

Contrasting shapes planted together should be linked by colour or foliage, e.g. four shapes, two colours to give cohesion. Interconnected groups of each plant, the mixed drifts of English borders, give a satisfying effect while allowing for changing emphasis, varying dominance and the opportunity to allow other introductions.

If there is to be a formal area, variety next to it will emphasise through contrast and draw attention to the formal area where a more restricted range of plants is likely to be used. Understanding the plant material reduces happenstance. A continuous background or foreground border of the one species can allow great variety next to it without the whole collapsing into a mess.

We have a huge variety of plants available to us, knowing their potential is the secret. While the avenue of *Eucalyptus citriodora* at Cruden Farm is justly famous, Australian plants are not always amenable to

such treatment. There is also surfacing under trees especially where there are clear trunks, shade patterns, leaf litter and fallen branches. The Snow Gum can be a living sculpture (it will take years to get there and may not be very exciting at low altitudes).

The collection of *Callitris* sp. in the National Botanic Gardens shows variety in shape with unity of foliage, an effective compromise (collectors note, there is hope yet). The natural bush is full of anomalies which can provide striking accent plants, e.g. *Doryanthus* sp., *Polyscias murrayi* (the lollypop tree); knowing about such plants and their needs helps us to use them.

A few more pointers:- look at daisies and similar small plants collectively; create ephemeral effects; the potential of lomandras, the power of *Gahnia sieberiana* used in a row; groupings of textures; some plants benefit from a backdrop e.g. *Eucalyptus sepulcralis*; pleached walls and topiary can be copied with our plant material; gateways for letting in light; there should be no confusion over which is the front door; the house and garden should have compatible forms, i.e. the use of trees to reduce the overpowering effect of a vaulted house, although this took 18 years to achieve.

(i just can't wait for the book.)

### **Sinatra in the Garden** by **Jim Sinatra**

reported by **Diana Snape** Vic

*After a distinguished career in Landscape Design and lecturing in the United States, Jim Sinatra moved to Australia where he is now Professor of Landscape Architecture at RMIT. His work is mainly in planning in rural and remote locations.*

I think Jim Sinatra's 'garden' is Australia, or possibly wherever he has travelled from his home in America and then from Broome through the centre of Australia to Melbourne. The contrasts between some of the earlier photographs taken in the U.S.A. and later ones in Australia were extreme. His fascinating slide presentation reflected a journey through space and time, and also I suppose a little of his own journey through life. Like John Burgess, he is obviously influenced by what he has seen and experienced in his travels and has absorbed an invaluable collection of images and ideas for design. We glimpsed just a selection of these in his presentation.

Jim responds strongly to people, and has spent much time working with Aboriginal communities. He says he meets people in his travels who give him ways of seeing the Australian landscape and we saw wonderful photos of Aboriginal people he had spent time with. He showed us slides of dust clouds due to erosion over huge areas of dry, inland Australia. We saw the value of 'rubbish' (which we would have immediately wanted to "tidy up") being allowed to remain to act as windbreak protection and mulch for small seedlings to emerge and grow. However Jim's efforts to help people reduce the dust blowing into their houses from certain directions by planting windbreaks was inhibited by their wanting the wind to blow in from those directions for traditional reasons - because it was a 'good wind'.

Closer to home, in Victoria, Jim has been most impressed by the work of John Fenton on his property, which those of us who attended the Warrnambool weekend in March 1996 (NL13-5) heard John speak about and saw in his photographs. Seen again, the conversion of degraded farmland into an oasis with healthy paddocks and expansive water areas is most striking. Photographs taken from the air show up the contrast brilliantly - the 'before' photos are not so different from central Australia, the 'after' photos site the property firmly nearer the coast. Provision for the future is being made here with both eucalypt and pine plantations.

Jim's work for Outreach Australia (ORA), to assist Aboriginal people, is very serious but he himself is obviously not always serious. One memorable image which reflects a certain playfulness was of a backlit Jim with electrified hair! Another delightful photograph was of a 'termite mound' as the feature of the small urban 'garden' of a brightly painted house - in the nature of an Australian symbol?

One member commented "The talks were most interesting and gave me plenty to think about, especially Jim Sinatra - how much we have to learn!!"

*The four speakers today and Paul Thompson who spoke yesterday were all among the founding members of the Garden Design Study Group.*

### **Putting it on paper** by **Catherine Drew**

reported by **Tony Roberts** Vic

*Catherine Drew is an experienced Landscape Designer with a special interest in horticultural therapy, i.e. access gardens for persons with a disability, the elderly, and nursing homes. Another interest is indigenous garden design.*

The first talk on the Sunday morning was a very practical one. Catherine Drew suggested that, even if you are employing a landscape designer, drawing a design on paper is a useful exercise to get order into your ideas and to help you sort out irritating problem areas in your garden. Mistakes made on paper are much less costly to fix than those made on the ground. The drawing is also a record of your plant collection and their situation in the garden.

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### Materials needed for plan

Catherine advised that for the drawing you need basic materials such as A1 or A3 size tracing paper, plus a board large enough to which to attach the paper; pencil, rubber, scale ruler and measuring tape or measuring wheel. The plans should be drawn to scale using metric measurements, with north to the top. The following table shows the scale to be used for the plan for larger gardens on A1 paper or smaller areas on A3.

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### Area shown on A1 paper at various scales

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Dimensions (metres)</u>	<u>Area (square metres) (approx. hectares)</u>	
1:50	42x29	1218	(0.12 ha)
1:100	84x59	4 956	(0.5 ha)
1:200	168x118	19 824	(2 ha)
1:250	210x147	30 870	(3 ha)
1:500	420x294	123 480	(12 ha)

### Area shown on A3 paper at various scales

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Dimensions (metres)</u>	<u>Area (square metres) (approx. hectares)</u>	
1:50	21x14.5	304.5	(0.03 ha)
1:100	42x29	1218	(0.12 ha)

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### Site analysis

You must analyse the site for any relevant physical aspect which will affect your design. Such aspects include:

- Location and details of house - main windows, doors, verandahs/eaves and their heights. Other buildings/sheds, roads, vehicular and pedestrian access.
- Location of water, electricity, gas, sewer and telephone services. Damaging these can be both dangerous and expensive to repair.
- Record position, size and access amenity value of all existing plants, rocks, water features and landforms - slopes, drains.
- Plot prevailing wind direction in summer and winter.
- Note views - both desirable and undesirable.
- Photographs both within the garden as well as from outside can be extremely useful. Plot on plan where these photographs are taken.
- Record soil characteristics and collect some for soil analysis.

### Analysis of people's needs

It is important to talk to all members of the family to determine their needs - therefore record ages, sex, hobbies, pets, etc.

Your analysis should include other details:

- Number of vehicles and parking facilities required.
- The sort of plants people want - any allergies.
- Does the family entertain outdoors a lot? Terrace, deck, BBQ, garden lighting and furniture. Shade and screening requirements.
- Recreational facilities - swimming pool, tennis court, etc.
- Children's playing facilities.
- Vegetable garden, fruit orchard.

If you are designing for other people, your charges and other costs must be made clear and agreed to from the beginning.

### Design phase

Not until the site has been analysed and the needs of the family determined can you start to design the site. Try to involve the family as much as possible. Initially create rough concepts - when the family is happy with these you can then design the site in detail including the planting plan.

Catherine convinced us that time spent putting it on paper is time well spent.

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### **Designing with rocks** by **Bev Hanson**

The report of this talk will be included in the next Newsletter.

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### **Putting it into practice** by **Roger Stone**

reported by **Chris Larkin** Vic

*Roger spent 9 years in the nursery trade (six at Austraflo) before setting himself up as a contract landscape designer /gardener about 13 years ago. He has been a member of SGAP for 20 years. The experience gained through these years is undoubtedly pivotal to a remark made during his talk "it is after all, finally, the plants that shape the landscape".*

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Roger's well illustrated talk touched on a wide range of the practicalities involved in working towards realising a design idea. He covered such things as the following:

- Soil preparation. If you must bring in additional soil then try to get the local soil; the kind of soil that is already on your block. Make sure that you blend that soil with the base soil thoroughly. Use gypsum in clay areas to help improve the soil.
- Weed control. Set about a program of weed elimination before you start a job. Poison or remove manually. Leave the area undisturbed and re-treat if necessary.
- The right machine for the job - depending on the size of the job, accessibility of the site, manpower available and task in hand.
- Mulching. Only touched on when Roger mentioned he generally uses pine bark mulch which 'holds' quite well on embankments. However, slides showed the importance of mulching as good ground preparation prior to planting.
- Retaining walls. The use of sleepers, rocks and dry wall (stone) emphasising the need for strength and drainage particularly behind sleeper walls / seats.
- Paving. To blend paving with house and garden by choice of materials and possibly having rocks jutting into the paving space for interest. Roger talked of the skills required for successful paving, i.e. making sure you have good foundations, levels and drainage. He also showed several slides of good results obtained by using second-hand bricks.
- Decking. A tricky business where angles are involved.
- Rocks. For retaining, planting interest & bird baths. Sourcing local rocks & using man-made rocks.
- Steps / ramps. Blue-stone, timber and sleeper. Ramps for easier access to a home for the elderly or wheelchair bound.
- Water features. Roger showed the construction of concrete ponds and the use of the base of an old swimming pool. Sometimes the need to take into consideration electrics for pumps, how to hide pipes and how to manage an overflow. For a natural look the use of river stone and pebbles.
- Seating in the garden.

Roger lastly talked about the selection of plants saying the choice of foliage must be the most important consideration as generally plants only flower for a small part of each year. When selecting plants for their foliage look at the deliberate use of complementary or contrasting textures. Also use grey foliated plants for contrast and white flowering plants to highlight other colours in the garden. Be aware that there can be such a thing as the use of too much bright colour and make sure that if you are incorporating a feature plant into the landscape, e.g. Xanthorrhoea, that you don't plant in such a way that you detract from its special beauty.

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### **Designing for Wildlife** by **Danie Ondinea** NSW

reported by **Monika Herrmann** Vic

*'Designing for Wildlife' is Danie's business name. Her qualifications include ones in landscape and bush regeneration. She is involved in regenerating urban land, in fauna and habitat management, in designing, installing and maintaining landscapes, and in community education. Danie has also been a zookeeper at Tooronga Zoo.*

With her obvious experience and expertise, it was a delight listening to Danie enthuse about our wildlife and the important role we play in their survival. She is heavily involved with land and vegetation management and bush regeneration within the Sydney region; her main aim is to make areas attractive to humans and wildlife. Some of our long-held views on 'tidiness' may have been given a shake-up and, in other cases, provided reassurance! Two interesting ideas were: 'Tidy' gardens are not conducive to attracting wildlife' and 'A garden is not beautiful unless there is wildlife.'

As we know, we are continually damaging our biodiversity. It may only be minor in some cases 'but the little bits add up'. When we are planning and designing our gardens or, more importantly, changing them, we need to take care not to be too ruthless by removing vegetation and yes, even weeds, before we know what uses it and who lives there. The transition period is often devastating to wildlife and patience here is definitely a virtue as is some procrastination (good to hear). Danie recommends that we familiarise ourselves with our backyard fauna or reserve/wasteland/ public land etc over a period of a year. Write down our bird visitors, our small reptiles and insects, observe the frequency of their visits, etc. It seems that Murphy's Law applies here too: the least attractive area, the one you wish to remove, will be the best habitat. This is where the patience comes in. Don't remove it until you have provided an alternative.

Important messages repeated themselves in her cautions and advice:

- be flexible in your design and maintenance
- allow one area to remain as a refuge and do not disturb it
- without realising, we are actually harming our wildlife when we feed birds regularly, preventing migration in some cases and disrupting normal breeding cycles
- carry out your work plan in stages, do sections at a time
- remove only about a third at a time when pruning larger areas or removing rubbish

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- leave logs, rocks, leaf litter and mature trees and provide layers of vegetation with at least some indigenous plants
  - use an aerobic compost area (beetles complete their life cycles here), not anaerobic bin.
- It is obvious that we must compromise a little to gain more, be flexible in our choices and not be too fanatical in our ideas.

Danie's closing statement will stick in my mind: "Remember, it's not a mess, it's somebody's home!"

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### **GARDEN VISITS** - from the 'Comments' box

Comments by **Jennifer Davidson, Cherree Densley, Pamela King** and anonymous.

#### **General**

"The gardens were inspiring and certainly seemed to reflect the needs and personalities of the owners."

#### **Margot Knox's garden**

an "interesting, artistic garden, worth seeing for a different way of tackling a design - but not for me";  
"sensational";

"very interesting";

"so much work and a stunning effect - but I personally need more space."

"I thought this garden was absolutely intriguing and delightful. The combination of unlikely plants was stunning with the mosaic sculptures. These fabulous constructions spoke to me in a way I could not really fathom - I guess they fulfilled a childish sense of wonder."

#### **The Bass garden**

"was interesting so close to a highrise area - a great surprise";

"great to see how a bush/water garden can be placed in the inner city, blending rocks, grasses, screening trees, etc - worthwhile";

"I loved the rock pool at the Bass garden - a peaceful haven so close to the city."

"wonderful use of rock and slate - superb use of water flow - really superb sitting wall".

"I found this a most interesting and pleasing back garden by Paul Thompson. The effect was very restful in the surrounding urban environment. I loved the way Paul used Mansfield mudstone to create a curved sitting area overlooking the pool, which was a miraculous focal point."

"I especially enjoyed the Bass garden - the use of the wonderful rock wall and Paul's design - the site of the water feature in the sunny low corner was a staggering lesson to all. The other sensational feature was the sitting wall - just the right height and in the right spot to look at the garden and catch the sun on a cool day. Another lesson to learn. (It is great to spend money on a seating feature or nice set of chairs and a table, but it must be put where it can be used, not as a feature in itself.)"

#### **The 'exotic' garden**

Not surprisingly, the garden with non-Australian plants and a formal design was least popular, though one visitor liked the "great colours";

"didn't gain much here - design was not inspirational";

"This garden left me wondering how I would transform it into a native garden - perhaps such formality wouldn't be right".

"This formal garden with its rectangular lines did not appeal to me. I found the back of the house quite stern-looking and the garden design did nothing to soften this."

"Visiting this garden was a bit of a waste of time due to the absence of Australian plants in the planting scheme, but no doubt it provided some lessons - like the unsatisfactory placing of the water feature beneath heavy shade, and that hedges clipped to form design lines don't work if the plants let you down by not growing evenly (plus the aspect of such high maintenance design features)."

#### **Linda Floyd's garden**

I forgot to move the 'Comments' box to Linda Floyd's place for the Sunday afternoon garden visit, and people went home from there, so I'm sorry I missed out on most comments.

"We enjoyed Linda's garden / landscape /fantasy land."

"I think you saved the best for last. What a pleasure to visit a garden reflecting so much delight in owning and living in a garden. One could not help feeling happy there."

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***Thank you very much to all GDSG members (and friends) who contributed in so many different ways to the success of the Seminar weekend, which was attended by over 100 people. Sincere thanks to all the speakers, the garden owners, and those who introduced and thanked speakers, helped look after lights and things mechanical, put up signs, moved tables and chairs, arranged flowers - all the behind-the-scenes workers, particularly Joan Barrett and her team of wonderful cake-makers.***

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## 10 GARDENS

### The "walkabout garden"

Geoff Simmons Qld

Expressive colloquial words and phrases furnish inspiration for naming and constructing a garden that reflects sociological and botanical features of past and present Australia. For example the word "walkabout" could be the source word for putting fantasy into Australian garden design. How much more impressive than "cottage" or "natural", it suggests a leisurely walk, a meandering path or a purposeful pursuit of a journey, and reflects features of the lifestyle of the original inhabitants. The walkabout garden could be based on vast open spaces or mountainous regions. It can be devised for desert or alpine areas, or forests of many different types from tropical heat to cold climates.

The walkabout garden also has a basis in the past isolation of the flora and, within this isolation, the development of a great variety of plants. Many of these plants have special characteristics that have been incorporated into the folklore and traditions of the many types of people that have arrived here over thousands of years. Interlaced with this flora are the effects of climate, particularly bushfires, and a diverse range of unusual fauna.

Walking through a garden may result in the sighting of Kangaroo Grass and Emu Bush, or in resting by a billabong. Eucalypts with their fruiting bodies expressively named gumnuts also offer leads to garden design. The prevailing colour of grey as seen in saltbush is also apparent.

Not to be forgotten are the common names given to Australian plants such as Lilly Pilly. Not only species but newly developed cultivars are available to be used in a "Lilly Pilly garden". These plants could equally be included in a "bush tucker" garden, along with acacias and macadamias, etc.

The development and selection of varieties of Australian plants enables small plots or tracts of land to be planted with massed colours mimicking natural sandplain areas of everlastings. The mono-coloured varieties could also be used in other ways. How many gardeners have put their knowledge towards making a garden with the colours of their favourite Australian Rules football team? These are a few of our unique words that come to mind!

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### Use of water in the garden: the 3-bucket rainforest revisited

Colleen Keena Qld

The recent drought in South East Queensland as well as the cost of metered water led to the establishment of a three-bucket rainforest described in an earlier issue (NL9-10). At the time of the drought there was an increasing awareness of the advantages of local area plants, so the garden consisted predominantly of these. While the main consideration was to develop a rainforest that would receive no artificial watering after establishment, aesthetic qualities of plants were exploited, particularly for colour and texture. Colour was to be derived not only from flowers but also from seed-bearing plants such as *Pittosporum rhombifolium*. Plant combinations were designed to complement, e.g. *Melicope elleryana*, *Evodiella mueileri*, or contrast, e.g. *Backhousia citriodora*, *B. myrtifolia*.

The garden was visited when two years old (see photo page 21). At this stage visitors were dwarfed by most of the plants. Many species were flowering, e.g. *Hibiscus heterophyllus*, *Brachychiton bidwilli* and others such as *Pittosporum* sp. and *Pleiogynium timorense* were bearing seeds or fruit. The garden has "worked" in that it receives only rainfall and yet has continued to flourish. Thorough soil preparation and choice of appropriate species, e.g. species found in dry rainforest, have contributed to the rapid development. Perhaps a further pointer can be learnt from a recent Rainforest Study Group Newsletter (No. 37, July 1997). It was suggested that if the rainforest were to be planted in an area that had not previously been a rainforest community, then it would be inappropriate to attempt to establish rainforest there. The article continued that that does not mean that it cannot be done as "the more you put in the more you get out". This garden has been established adjacent to eucalypt forest so it is unlikely to have been a rainforest community. Mulch was only applied to part of the garden. Mulch has been described by Peter and Ann Radke and Garry and Nada Sankowsky as absolutely essential because "it reduces evaporation of water from the soil, thus reducing the amount of watering needed and it conditions and enriches the soil as it decomposes. It provides a nutrient-rich layer for surface roots to feed in; prevents the growth of weeds and grass; and keeps the soil cool. It also enhances the populations of soil micro-organisms which are necessary to recycle nutrients and keep harmful disease organisms under control". The need for mulch has been demonstrated in this garden as the mulched area has resulted in enhanced growth and reduced maintenance, in contrast to the reduced growth and increased maintenance in unmulched areas.

Reflecting on any changes that might be made with hindsight, there are two areas of possible change in choice of plants. Plants closest to the house verandah were chosen for the large, glossy leaves expected of rainforest plants, e.g. *Stenocarpus sinuatus*, whereas plants backing onto the eucalyptus forest at the rear were selected to blend, e.g. *Acacia fimbriata*. The plants chosen included local species, but I would now include only local species in the section of any garden backing onto bushland. This is because there are a number of "native" species that have become invasive in local bushland. Choosing plants from the local plant community should prevent such "takeovers". Plant descriptions on the DPI internet site (<http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/fiqweb/tsm/html/treetext.htm>), include cautions about weed potential, and plants that have the potential to become, or already are, environmental weeds in Queensland.

The second change would be to increase the number of bushfood plants. Since this garden was established three years ago, there has been an upsurge in interest in bush food species. This has been reflected in ever increasing information, e.g. a magazine "Australian Bushfoods" devoted entirely to bushfood, an article in Australian Plants Online about Bush Tucker and feature articles in Global Garden (<http://www.global-garden.com.au/gardenaustrianplants.htm>) about bushfoods. While a number of bushfood species, e.g. *Ficus coronata*, *F. fraseri*, *Backhousia citriodora*, *B. anisata*, *Acmena smithii*, *Syzygium oleosum*, *S. leuhmanii*, *Sterculia quadrifida*, were included in this garden, I would increase the number of edible plants, particularly local species such as *Pipturus argenteus*, Native Mulberry and local *Acronychia*, *Diploglottis*, *Brachychiton* and *Syzygium* species.

Lessons learnt from this garden are that with appropriate site preparation, selection of suitable species and mulching, what has been described as a "low-input landscape planting" (2) is possible in SE Qld. However, low-input does not mean no-input. What is put in impacts not only on what you get out in terms of growth rates but also in reducing ongoing maintenance and need for watering. As use of water in the garden comes under greater scrutiny, landscaping can become "part of the solution rather than part of the problem" (2). This garden has demonstrated that trees and shrubs from dry rainforests can indeed become part of the solution. Moreover, as rainforests provide a wide variety of edible fruits, nuts, shoots and tubers (3), perhaps they have even more to offer than their aesthetic qualities and their ability to flourish on natural rainfall.

Australians are not the only ones re-evaluating gardening practices. Widrlechner, (2) writing of the American nursery industry, has identified the increasing importance of low-input plantings as water becomes more expensive. He also notes surveys that show a shift in interest to amenity gardening, with integration of food gardening with an attractive landscape. The two may be linked. As we reconsider the use of water, it may make more sense to look not only for planting methods and plant species that minimise the use of water but also for edible plants, thereby maximising output.

#### REFERENCES

1. Peter & Ann Radke, Garry & Nada Sankowsky (1993) Growing Australian Tropical Plants, Frith & Frith Books, Qld .
2. Widrlechner, M. 1990 Trends Influencing the Introduction of New Landscape Plants, p. 460-467 in J. Janick and J.Ed. Simon (eds), Advances in new crops. Timber Press, Portland, OR.
3. Mansfield, Darren (1992) Australian Rainforest Plants for Your Garden (Mount Annan Botanic Garden Native Plant Series), Simon & Schuster, Australia

#### AUSTRALIA'S OPEN GARDEN SCHEME

One aim of the GDSG is to encourage greater participation of Australian plant gardens in this Scheme. This year most were open in September or October and I'm sorry I didn't think quickly enough to include a list of these in the August Newsletter. They are listed in the Open Garden Scheme book, which may even have come out too late for inclusion in that NL. Perhaps members in other States could help next year (98/99) by doing a list for their State. I hope members will visit some open gardens and then tell us a little about them. Please be on the lookout for gardens of Australian plants (at least 55% Australian) suitable to recommend for the Open Garden Scheme. I'm a Selector for the Scheme this year, so let me know, or else the Co-ordinator for your State whose name is in the Open Garden Scheme book.

#### BOOKS

**"Landprints: reflections on place and landscape" by George Seddon (1997, Cambridge)**

Reviewed by **Diana SnapeVic**

"Landprints" is a fascinating book which will appeal to those who like to set their interest in garden design in a wider context, with historical, geographical, geological and sociological elements. It follows six themes, each illustrated by a number of individual essays, and this approach produces diverse perspectives with many links between the themes. The fourth theme "Making: creating gardens and the evolution of styles" is particularly relevant to the GDSG.

Essays from earlier themes are also of interest, referring to concepts such as 'contrived disorder', "dreaming up a rainforest", the "genius loci" and "the sense of place" (the title of his best known book). He now questions the usefulness of this term and whether it has lost its initial relevance by over-use. He discusses the concepts of 'the garden as a forest clearing' and 'the garden as oasis' and refers to the functional problems of 'heath gardens' and 'bush gardens' which have not been resolved.

In 'Gardening across Australia' Seddon describes frankly the different gardens he has created for himself. The differences are due to "location and climate, available resources, and changes in myself" as he experimented and learnt from books, travel and other gardeners. In his first garden in Perth he planted (overplanted) lots of trees and his back garden was a 'clearing in the forest' style. In Sydney in a Paddington terrace house, the "building form virtually dictated the garden", in Melbourne, his first garden (Hawthorn) was pleasant without demanding any "great creative energy". His second garden (Richmond) had no lawn, but limestone stepping stones and "choice plants" - like a Dalmatian meadow or a karst landscape. However boundary maintenance was beginning to become a chore when he left. Back in W.A., in his current garden at Fremantle, he is now applying the knowledge and experience gained from his earlier gardens.

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### GARDEN MAGAZINES

As well as book reviews or comments, please write to tell us about any items of interest you come across (however small) in any garden or landscape magazines, e.g. "Australian Gardener", "Australian Horticulture", "Landscape Australia", etc. Similarly with interesting articles in newspapers.

In the 15 Sept-14 Oct issue of "Australian Horticulture", there is a fascinating article by Julia Berney on the new banksia garden in King's Park, which already has 52 species growing. I was particularly interested to read about the marble mosaics on the theme of banksias, designed by artist Philippa O'Brien, and her comment "By associating native plant imagery with valuable materials like Italian marble, you bring together different cultural strands and help people see banksias as valuable too."

I look forward to my next visit to King's Park!

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**"Natives are out, roses in for city"** by Christine Retschlag in "The Courier Mail" 25/8/97

Sent by **Geoff Simmons** Qld

"Brisbane residents dislike native flora, preferring European-style front gardens in which roses are prized plants" according to a university researcher. . . . QUT planning and landscape architecture lecturer Delwynn Poulton said "European-style gardens were colourful, had a defined edge around the garden beds, only one tree and a few shrubs. Brisbane people don't like native plants which they see as twiggy, untidy and scrubby plants that can't be controlled and get out of hand. Most Brisbane people don't like trees in their gardens very much. They think that trees look good in the bush. . . . The study also found front gardens were an important setting for social statements. The intention of the garden is to tell people about them. If it is neat and tidy, it tells the world they are neat and tidy people." (The article describes a cottage-style garden whose owner has given away rose gardening after contracting a poisoned thumb.)

*/ won't make any comments, but I'd welcome yours. DS*

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### Software Review: 3D Landscape

**Alison Payne** Vic

From the user's point of view (See also Doug McIver's report NL18-12)

"3D Landscape" is landscape design software package. It allows the user to design a complete garden, including almost everything you could think of - house, arbors, arches, dogs, fences, birdbaths, as well as a large range of generic and specific plants. Each of these items can be customised, e.g. you can choose a particular pitch, material and colour for the roof of your house and a particular shape, height, width, flowering season, flower colour, etc for each of your plants. The program supports accurate scale (height, width, etc) and 3D viewing. The user can effectively "walk and fly" around their garden, viewing it from any angle and direction. This allows the user to consider the implications of a new tree or garage, etc, on the overall look of the garden. Things such as privacy can also be considered by "walking" past your garden.

It is possible to specify the age of a plant when you put it in and consider its growth over time. For the impatient among us, this allows us to see what the garden should (!) look like in a particular number of years. The plant database which supports most of the program features offers a large number of plants in-built and also allows you to enter and store your own plants. However there are areas in which it falls short, in particular only a few Australian plants exist in the database which limits the usefulness of a number of the features. In-built plants have quite a lot of information stored about them while those you enter yourself are restricted in what you can enter. This means that the data is not available for the growth over time feature and also limits the "photo-realistic" quality of the picture, given that the database doesn't store foliage type or colour for your plants.

Now, I wonder if Version 3.0-will have a bobcat interface ...

#### Example application: our front yard

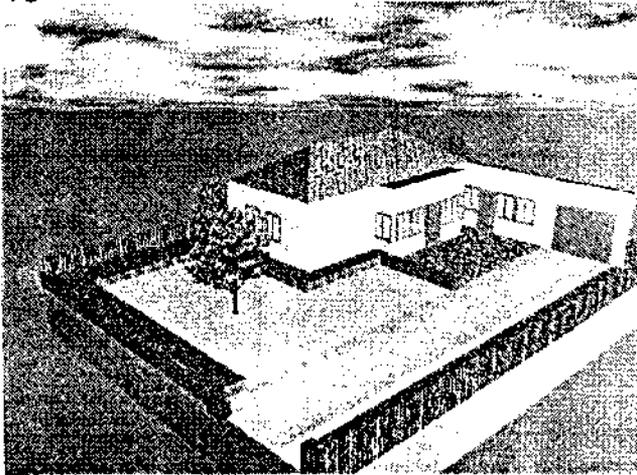
You may wonder why have I spent time playing with a computer-based landscaping program? The short answer is we are in possession of a garden in need of landscaping! Trees have overgrown their position, many are hacked and straggly. The beds and garden style do not suit us, with much use of narrow, raised concrete garden beds and "mulch" of slate and pebbles. The established plants are all bar one exotic and the sole *Melaleuca nesophila* is on a 30 degree angle to the ground, plonked in the middle of the front lawn. Many features of the garden were designed to absolutely maximise privacy, with large shrubs and lattice covered with creepers dividing the front garden into street and house areas.

There are many parts of the house from which we could view a nice garden. The street is quiet and neighbours are far enough away that the front can be opened up and made into one flowing garden (with a little lawn to balance it). We are working towards an Australian native garden, with the associated all-year flowering and bird life. We hope that we may enjoy it from inside the house and also provide ourselves with more outdoor living and entertaining areas.

#### Stage 1: the basic plan

The first step in our garden redesign process was to get a basic, accurately dimensioned plan of the front yard. Armed with the original house plans, including positioning on the block, I merrily entered our pinkish brick house, red medium pitch tiled roof, doors and windows. Our garage went in too, then the major components defining the region in which we were to plan our garden - the street, footpath, fences, driveway, slate paved area and carport.

So far, so good. The picture had started to look like our house - a little naked without the trees - but the fundamental area we had to work with was defined. We were able to "zoom" around the garden using the walkabout 3D feature and get an idea of the space we had without the clutter of the current "fixtures and fittings".



1. Here's the general format of the old garden. The roof isn't actually that funny looking - my roof & window skills are still being refined. The carport is already gone.



2. Here is a 3D view of an early design. This is one attempt to consider privacy issues for the windows, I played a lot with the general heights and depths of the plants and beds.

### **Stage 2: the current garden**

The second stage of the process involved putting in the current garden structures and plants. I could enter the raised concrete beds which grace the external edge of the entire area. It is possible to specify height, width and shape of beds very accurately. The next thing I did was to enter some of the major trees and shrubs which have a chance of surviving our redevelopment. I chose a rounded style deciduous tree for one of them, and a more sprawly option for the other. These general types weren't bad representations for the trees. There were some limitations. It wasn't possible to capture the 30 degree lean on my favourite Australian plant, or the butchered nature of some of the trees.

I also put many of our new "baby" plants into the plan, guessing as I went on basic (again generic) shapes and fully grown heights. One thing I did discover was that my estimation skills are somewhat lacking with many of my plants too close together and way too big for the spots I had chosen for them (I have a ban on buying any plant over 2 metres at the moment). I think this is one of the most useful aspects for a beginner. To get an idea of how a garden may look fully grown is hard without experience.

### **Stage 3: what if ...**

There were many things I wondered about the front garden - what if that wasn't there, what if we changed the shape of this, etc. The program enable experimentation with these ideas and then the scope to view and assess the impact of the changes. The following are a few of the things I tried.

**The carport:** The carport had to go! That was one thing we were sure of, but what of the implications of sun on the many glass windows underneath it? Would the house look odd and bare without this structure? We could see from the program that the shade of the trees and of the house protected the windows during most of the day. We also got a sneak preview of the quite normal house which would emerge in the life after the carport, and how the beds around the house (currently with no light and white pebbles) might look with some healthy plants in them.

**The beds:** Again, it was obvious the beds were too narrow, probably too high and with ugly edging, but what do we replace them with? The program gave us the opportunity to try out a number of different shapes and forms for the beds. A number of lunchtimes passed considering squares, curves, hexagons and circles in the medium of our front yard.

**Saving the Melaleuca:** The melaleuca sticks out in the middle of the lawn looking lost. The program was used to see if there was any way that the tree could be lowered from its sore thumb status. Much of the bed planning exercise was engaged in putting beds around the melaleuca. Unfortunately, I am now convinced that it has to go.

**Lattice:** The lattice forms a very distinct division between the house and the garden. To its right is slate and no plants and to its left the garden. The program gave us the opportunity to try out "softer" ways of dividing the two components. Plants could be placed in the slate or to hang over the slate. The lattice is going and we are happier to open up the front yard a little more now we have seen what it might look like and considered some other options.

**Generic plant shapes and sizes:** So, what size plant do I plant where? It is difficult to decide what size plants to put in the garden and how to get some balance between shapes and sizes of plants. The program has allowed me to experiment without having to nominate particular plants, to try to get something that "looks right". I have a still developing general plan for the garden.

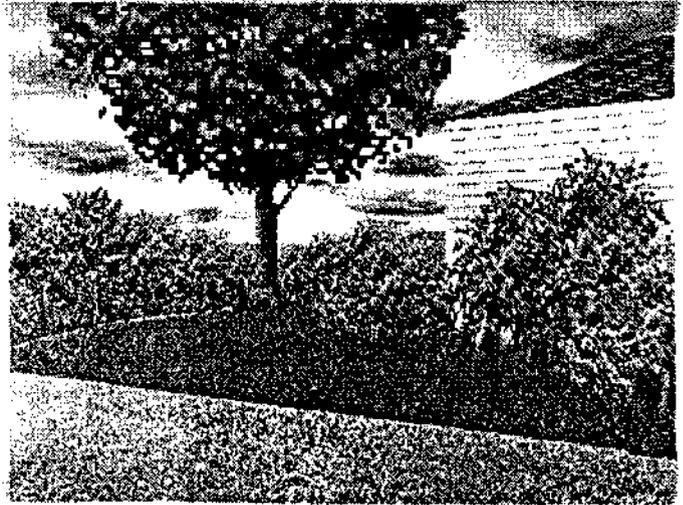
### **Stage 4: the future**

Too much playing with a computer and not enough gardening can make your eyes go funny and your fingers go brown! Finally, it was time for action. We knew that we did not have the time to take on the scale of redevelopment we envisage in the front garden, especially with plans for major autumn plantings. The next step was to find a professional landscaper, to get advice about our amateur ideas and to do the hard work of driving the bobcat/shovel.

My first attempt with a major nursery left me a little deflated. I have faith in their skills, but the range and availability of interesting Australian plants was just about nil (how many red bottlebrushes can one fit in a small front garden?). ; One thing the experience has taught me is that I am probably interested enough to learn to design my own gardens, to

choose the plants I like the look of (at SGAP sales & meetings and those I propagate) and then to have a pre-planting go at placing them in my virtual garden. I can use the program to check flowering times, making sure I have a range of plants in each garden, and it may also be useful to keep a record of what the plants are.

Well, the real garden is still in Stage 0, but the program has provided many opportunities to do low effort major rearrangement and a good interface to view the results. The marketing for this product includes statements such as "Great realistic views of your dream landscape in minutes", "visionary home and garden software" and "so real you can almost smell the roses". These statements aren't too far off the mark, although the minutes may be hours and I don't have a smell card to test the final claim. . . . It's not perfect, but it's usable multimedia software! The product is produced & sold by «Books that Work [www.btw.com/products/3dlan/3dlan.html](http://www.btw.com/products/3dlan/3dlan.html)», a US company. (Details on page 22.)



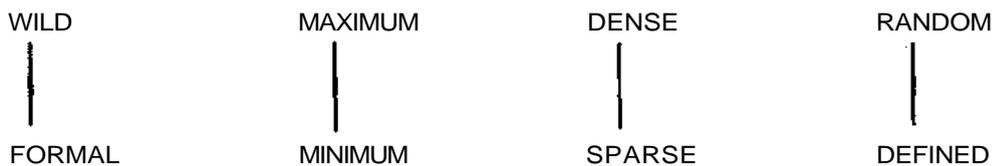
*This is a closer look at the front garden. You can see how distinct plans are viewed &, in a realistic plan, you could get a feel for how the garden would look.*

## DESIGN IDEAS

### Design ideas for fun

Grahame Durbidge NSW

Garden design might be thought of in terms of some extremes, like the ones here:



So if you wanted a wild garden, then have a maximum number of plants very densely but randomly planted. If, at the other extreme, you wanted a formal garden then limit your variety of plant material, don't crowd it and make sure the plants are defined.

It's fun to think about other combinations. Say you went for the middle of the range between the extremes, as I think most of us do, the result might be a semi-formal garden where plants are balanced in relation to each other and the site. Try jotting down some extremes and see how you score when it's transposed to the garden.

It would be good if examples of the formal style, in the extreme, were chosen using Australian plants. What Australian plants do you consider suited to the formal style? Is it just a question of keeping them clipped and defined or are there some that lend themselves naturally to formality?

### Designing for a view from the window

Cherree Densley Vic

Our old country house at Killarney doesn't have the luxury of any floor-length windows - I've always envied SGAPers who can sit in their homes and view their gardens from the base of the plants to the topmost leaves. These wonderful views can sometimes be, in the homes I have had the good fortune to visit, from the shower or "using the facilities" (an Oprah expression - see, you can tell I've retired from work!) (*What's Oprah, Cherree?*)

So I have to go outside - any excuse will do! - whilst eating lunch, having a cuppa, collecting the mail, to wander out to find a patch of sunlight and see what's flowering, what needs to be done, see what the rabbits have eaten off overnight, spend some time reflecting on planning extensions, modifications, redoing an area or whatever. I don't think I'm alone in this pastime - I bet there are hundreds or even thousands of us who do the same thing. In some of these small walks, which usually end up to be half of the morning, I decided about 5 years ago to try to bring the garden closer to what I may be able to see out my high windows - without upsetting the "main maintenance man" (Ian) with plants that rub against walls, gutters or spouts, or crawl across pathways, flop wetly against legs along access paths or block the passage of the mower or wheelbarrow.

This had meant planting colourful, long flowering tall shrubs or small trees almost in the foreground of the beds surrounding the house - not in the background. This has worked well from my point of view - from inside the house -

although there are problems outside where these same plants have obstructed vistas or small plants beneath them. However, with careful placement *just outside windows* there have been great successes. The increased interest in what can be seen from the windows outweighs any subsequent loss of light, which has been minimal because the plants are set back from the walls by several metres.

As a result, at present (in July) I can see from my office (a converted bedroom - a result of the emptying nest syndrome) a *Hakea laurina* in full bloom. *Melaleuca nesophila* and *Hibiscus heterophyllus* were a fantastic combination in summer with the soft mauve of the melaleuca and large cream flowers with a deep purple throat of the hibiscus. Outside my lounge window, where I read or watch Oprah, the 'Bourke Street intersection' of honeyeaters almost need a traffic warden as they line up along the roof of the garage to get into the glorious flowers of *Eucalyptus erythrocorys* opening in succession. (I really had worries planting this so close to the house, but there is a wide path directly adjacent to the wall of the house, so there are no complaints from Ian - well so far!)

Outside our bedroom we can see a flowering *Banksia praemorsa* and a *Callistemon pallidus* (the lemon yellow bottlebrush), which in hindsight should have been a longer flowering plant - perhaps a *Callistemon* 'Endeavour' which flowers for months. *C. pallidus* is very attractive, especially the new growth, but it is all too fleeting. (I prune this back very hard every year, so for 11 months it is hardly a traffic stopper, but the banksia makes up for the display by flowering for many months.) Outside the visitors' bedroom, a *Eucalyptus diversifolia* is alive for months with a dense flowering of white flowers. It is a very good tree for bird viewing at all times of the year with even a barn own sometimes using it as a roost.

So, in general, my planning has been a success. I would still love to live in a house with deep windows but, for the present, I have developed a compromise which does work.

### Fifteen ideas for garden design

Diana Snape Vic

*I was asked by Helen Moody for some suggestions for designing with Australian plants, to be included in an article she was writing for the SMH (4/9/97). In her article Helen says "The most distinctive quality of Australian plants and native gardens is that they impart a spirit of place that is uniquely ours. They create a feel, a sense, a smell and a sound of their own."*

*Jeff Howes thought my ideas might be reprinted in our Newsletter, so here they are as I wrote them - Helen used nearly all of these but had already covered a few in her article. (They are visual "sound bites").*

- A garden is an artistic creation which evolves through time and is never 'finished'; gardeners are artists who follow their own vision and those of us who love Australian plants can gain inspiration directly from aspects of the Australian landscape.
- Plants which occur naturally in the same environment - desert, for example, or coastal - usually look happy together in the garden because of their complementary adaptations as well as their similar requirements.
- Sculptural Australian plants, like Tree-ferns, Grass-trees, Gynea Lilies and banksias, will distinguish a garden and deserve to be treated with respect and placed carefully in a garden landscape.
- Three or four different species of the numerous Australian groundcover plants (daisies, hibbertias (Guinea Flowers), scaevolias (Fan Flowers), etc.) can be chosen and repeated to create a lovely tapestry effect at ground level.
- Even in a small garden, a tree of the appropriate size such as one of the smaller eucalypts extends the space of the garden upwards, acting as a focal point as well as being a magnet for birds.
- Don't just look at the shapes of the plants in a garden, look also at the shapes of the spaces between plants; the balance of 'mass' and 'void' should be satisfying.
- Australian daisies and grasses combine nicely with rocks - a pleasing contrast of soft and hard textures, with clumped or sprawling daisies and tufted grasses complementing the definite curved or straight lines of rocks.
- A huge variety of fine foliated tufted Australian plants look excellent beside water - rushes, sedges and lilies, either upright or weeping. There are shrubs and small trees too with weeping foliage which is very appealing when reflected in water.
- A sympathetic formal touch - a well made stone wall, paving of appropriate colour and outline, or sculpture - can bring solidity to the fine foliage of many Australian plants.
- Australian rainforest plants continue to gain popularity because of their colourful new foliage, flowers and fruit; with glossy green leaves of medium size they blend well with exotic plants.
- There are many small-leaved Australian plants (e.g. Lilly Pillies, melaleucas, leptospermums, westringias) which can be pruned and treated formally for hedges or even topiary, to be used for example as a focal point among less formal shrubs.
- From the variety of Australian shrubs now available, such as the range of beautiful grevilleas, it is possible to create wonderful massed or layered garden beds with colour schemes which can be vivid or subtle. Remember to tip prune.
- The rapid growth of some large shrubs or small trees, in particular some acacias, is of benefit in

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planting for succession - it enables them to be used as 'nurse' plants for a screen and for shelter while slower growing plants are being established.

- A garden of ~~Saw~~ shrubs (a metre or less, pruned if necessary to maintain this height) gives an open and spacious feel to the garden, while several small eucalypts with fine trunks could provide a vertical element.
- The variety of foliage of Australian plants is amazing, in form, texture, colour - from large and dramatic to tiny, delicate leaves - and many attractive effects can be achieved with foliage alone.

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### The role of maintenance

Jeff Howes NSW

I have been talking to a Sydney freelance writer about how you resolve the problem of using Australian plants to create a garden that is (to use his words) "not all leggy and unkept". He inferred that most gardens that use native plants end up that way.

Of course, part of the answer to this problem is defining how a suburban garden that uses predominantly Australian plants should look. Using his criteria that these gardens should not be all leggy and unkept implies that some maintenance is needed.

This maintenance bit means different things to different people, so I will have a go at defining what it means to me:

- not tolerating plants that do not perform well i.e. subject to scale, insect attack, do not flower, or are not happy where you are trying to grow them;
- needing to be diligent in tip pruning;
- cutting away dead twigs or branches in order to present the plants at their best;
- pruning off dead flowers especially with callistemons;
- keeping a healthy layer of mulch on your garden beds;
- weeding when necessary;
- watering and fertilising when necessary as Australian plants never were and never will be plants that can be planted and forgotten;
- removing and replacing plants that are past their use-by date. The most obvious signs of this are when they do not shoot when pruned; and
- lastly checking on your plants at night with a good torch as it is fascinating the activity (or should I say damage) that occurs after dark. Your neighbours soon get used to your nocturnal activity once they know what you are up to.

Perhaps all this sounds like hard work, well maybe. If that is the case how much and what type of maintenance is needed to successfully garden with Australian plants? Are they any different to introduced plants? What are your thoughts?

*I think our last article on maintenance was one I wrote a couple of years ago (NL12-16). Jeff's takes a more practical approach and we'd probably agree with many/most (or all?) of his points. We'd welcome your comments. DS*

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### Straight lines or curves?

Geoff Simmons Qld

"Straight lines are forbidden here" (see NL 18 - 4)

Once again we see inferred that curved paths are good and straight lines are bad. It is interesting that we read comments on the importance of serenity in garden design by several contributors, (in this respect, the simplicity of straight lines belies the myth that curved lines are the be-all of garden design. Most persons are more at peace with orderliness than the anarchy of chaos.

Straight lines are desirable for ease of progression and ability to provide uninterrupted views. Curved lines have a place when the topography of the land dictates that a straight line would be a poorer option. Progression from a lower to a higher level can be done by straight stairs or a curving sloping path. Which is used depends on the site and the choice of the designer.

The superiority of straight over curving was brought home to me when I converted 5 round beds (representing the five stars of the Southern Cross) to either 5 or 7 sided polygons. Walking on the paths was more pleasurable and sensing of the plant in the beds more apparent. Eventually the straight sides dictated the planting patterns by producing greater definition of the area. Either a radial segmental or longitudinal design were the obvious choices rather than a random mish-mash. As the plants in these beds, such as cycads, were expected to be long-lived this was a plus. In another part of the garden, as palms aged, the straight vertical lines became more noticeable adding to the majesty of the scene.

Which Australian features are expressed in straight lines and open spaces? A clay's drive on flat areas of western Queensland or a rail journey on the Nullabor represent to me powerful characteristics of the Australian landscape. From views expressed in the Newsletter, it is clear that open spaces are gradually assuming greater recognition in Australian garden design.

Just as a driver may have disquiet at long stretches of winding road, so the pedestrian may prefer a simple straight path over a winding path especially in large areas. Similarly the driver on a winding road cannot devote much

attention to passing scenery but the casual stroller along a straight path can do so at leisure and with more visible vertical and horizontal scenery.

Nature has demonstrations of both straight and curved lines. Garden designers should also employ both. It would be unwise to exclude one or the other, particularly one characteristic of the Australian continent.

## PLANTS in DESIGN

### SYDNEY Easy Grow plants

**Caroline Gunter** is collecting lists from as many Sydney members as possible to compile an overall list.

#### Ten favourite plants

**Jennifer Borrell** NSW

It has taken me a while to get this down. I have cheated a bit as there are really more than ten plants here.

- Brachy(s)comes - I love them all. Pink, white, blue and yellow, they look wonderful in massed plantings.
- Rhodanthe - These lovely pink paper daisies from WA (formerly *Helipterum*) grow well in Sydney. Sow the seeds in Autumn for a Spring display. With a bit of luck they will self sow for you.
- *Helichrysum heptapetalum* - This plant has a fairly insignificant flower but beautiful soft grey round leaves which make a wonderful contrast foliage in the garden. You need to cut it back fairly hard.
- All the hybrid Queensland grevilleas - These flower so generously throughout the year in many colours from cream to deep gold and pink. When they are not in flower they have very attractive foliage. My favourite is "Moonlight", a beautiful cream flower with a hint of pink.
- *Grevillea speciosa* - The trend is to grow indigenous plants. This is a beauty from the Sydney bushland. Try to get the form which flowers on the end of their stems.
- *Crocea saligna* - Another Sydney beauty which will flower for most of the year in the right place.
- *Persoonia pinifolia* - Florists love the foliage but in December - January everyone loves its clear yellow flowers. Another Sydney native which deserves a place in every garden. Don't forget to tip prune it. It can grow rather big if the conditions are right.
- *Prostanthera scutellarioides* - We saw this planted as understory in Betty Maloney's garden. This is how I have grown it too.
- Scaevolae - There are quite a few varieties which will grow well in Sydney - *S. nana*, *S. albida* and the very striking *S. aemula* with its purple flowers.
- *Ceratopetalum gummiiferum* - Every garden needs a Christmas Bush and given sufficient sun and water you will get a wonderful display every December. It too needs to be kept pruned for maximum effect.

#### Indigenous + introduced

**Julie & Garry Jones** NSW

Our soil is sandy with lots of small rocks close to the surface. Our block slopes west to east and drainage is good. We have approximately an acre and most of this is natural bushland. We have planted some areas around the house using some organic soil mixed with our existing soil. I have included the indigenous species that I can identify as well as some of the plants we have tried with success.

##### Indigenous

1. *Lambertia formosa* (Mountain Devil) - These thrive and bring the birds.
2. *Grevillea sericea* - very hardy. Tends to be straggly but foliage is fine & delicate. Plants would improve (most likely) with more water.
3. *Blandfordia nobilis* - We only have one plant which flowers if we have good rainfall at the crucial time. So far this has been twice over seven years.
4. *Persoonia pinifolia* - We introduced the one we have but have seen these on a bush walk not far from our house. It has fared well and is a lovely shrub so I will be planting more.
5. *Persoonia chamaepitys* - Our lone plant, also introduced, is thriving and is a lovely ground cover.
6. Other species we have include: acacia; angophora; *Banksia serrata*, *B. ericifolia*; leptospermum; lomandra; *Eucalyptus melliodora* (Yellow Box); eriostemon; dampiera; ceratopetalum; pultenaea.

##### Other species that have succeeded

*Acacia cognata*, *A. fimbriata*, *A. pycnantha*  
*Correa pulchella*, *C. reflexa*  
*Cyathea cooperi*!  
*Dampiera diversifolia*  
 Epacris  
*Hakea sericea*

*Hardenbergia violacea*  
*Orthrosanthus multiflorus*  
*Telopea 'Shady Lady'*  
 Westringia  
 Xanthorrhoea

**Hardy plants for Sydney**

Jeff Howes NSW

Following is a list of plants that I have found hardy growing on 100-150mm of loam over heavy clay at my place. This list is a result of 20 years experience on the same site.

*Acacia iteaphylla* - grows 3-4 metres, flowers twice a year, good for ten years

*Banksia spinulosa* - should be grown more although resents long dry spells

*Banksiamarginata* - also deserves to be grown a lot more

*Baeckea crenatifolia* - hardy, tall, skinny

*Chorizema cordatum*

*Crocea* 'Festival' - especially drier spots, good as cut flowers

*Correa reflexa*, *C. pulcheila* - various forms, will take some shade and neglect

*Calothamnus villosus*, *C. quadrifidus* - both 2m, will accept hard pruning, flowers on old wood

*Darwinia homoranthoides*

*Callistemon* 'Captain Cook'

*Eriostemon myoporoides* (long leaf form)

*Grevillea* 'Robyn Gordon' - needs sun, stands hard pruning

*G.* 'Coastal Glow' - 3m x 2m open

*G. dimorpha* (fine leaf form)

*G. oleoides* x *shiressii* - 2m x 2m will flower in shady places - quick growing

*G. banksii* hybrids - any, but need sun

*G.* "Bronze Rambler"

*Hihhertia obtusifolia*, *H. serpyllifolia*, *H. dentata* - should all be used more.

*Indigofera australis*

*Lambertia formosa* - needs some moisture to flower well

*Leptospermum petersonii*

*Lomatia silaifolia* - over 10 years only.

*Melaleuca fulgens*, *M. lateritia*, *M.* 'Snowstorm', *M. thymifolia*

*Myoporum parvifolia* (white flower)

*Prostanthera ovalifolia* rosea - the only Mint Bush that has shown long term success. They do much better in lighter soils where *P. rotundifolia* and *P. phyllicifolia* seem reliable.

*Pimelea ferruginea* 'Bon Petite' - reliable even in some shade.

*Thryptomene sax/co/a* var *payneii* - good for cut flowers.

*Westringia longifolia* - can be pruned hard.

*Zieria* 'Pink Crystal' - over 10 years only.

Jeff also sent Caroline a long list of 'Successful native plants for beginners' compiled by **Brian Roach** (not a SG member) in 1993. This will contribute to Caroline's list. Brian Roach starts by asking: "What criteria do you apply to arrive at a suitable list? When is a plant successful? Hardy - spectacular - versatile - obtainable - or even, easily propagated? It's probably a combination of two or more of these various qualities, but when starting out the majority of plants should be hardy."

**What are your favourite ten plants?**

Caroline Gunter would like more lists from Sydney members to make the overall **SYDNEY Easy Grow** plant list really worthwhile. Probably the main two criteria are reliability (hardiness) and playing an attractive role in garden design. Please send your list to Caroline at 4 Winsome Ave, Nth Balgowlah 2093.

We're still keen to receive lists from members from other areas too - please send these to me. With this sort of data, nurseries which grow few Australian plants might be encouraged to expand their range.

**Ten favourite plants**

Pat &amp; Ron McKeownVic

The drought is quite severe here in East Gippsland and we had to pick this year to have our garden in the Open Garden Scheme - oh well, such is life. I enclose my list of 10 favourite plants :-

1. *Hypocalymma angustifolium*
2. *Micromyrtus ciliata*
3. *Guichenotia macrantha*
4. *Adenanthos sericea*
5. *Scaevola aemula*
6. *Boronia* - all species but particularly *Boronia anemonifolia*
7. *Acacia aphylla*
8. *Acacia boormannii*
9. *Helipterum (Rhodanthe) anthemoides*
10. *Livistonia australis*

Incidentally all these plants are coping quite well with a very low water regime. Two other plants that are doing well are *Thomasia purpurea* and *Eucalyptus nutans*. To let you know how dry things are we have even had correas die. This year will be a testing time here in East Gippsland for plants and planters alike, I think. Ron and I enjoy the Newsletter tremendously. Well done to all concerned.

## MEMBERSHIP & TREASURER'S REPORT

Peter Garnham

### FINANCIAL STATEMENT - Quarter ending 30/9/97

<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Expenses</u>
Subscriptions 115-00	Photocopying 237-00
Donations <u>30-00</u>	Postage <u>182-00</u>
<u>\$1145-00</u>	<u>\$419-00</u>

Current funds (13/10/97) after payment of all Seminar expenses:

Balance in bank	\$2568-53
Cheques in hand	<u>40-00</u>
	<u>\$2608-53</u>

### MEMBERSHIP

1997/98 SUBSCRIPTIONS - 180 paid as at 30/9/97

*Peter has had to work overtime this quarter, with the Seminar registration fees and finances as well as membership renewals. Thank you to Peter and to all members who helped keep the Seminar administration simple. DS*

### ASGAP GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP SEMINAR - SEPT. 6 & 7, 1997

<u>RECEIPTS</u>		<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	
REGISTRATION FEES	\$3640-00	HALL HIRE	\$400-00
RAFFLE	70-00	CATERING-dinners	1680-00
		- lunches	823-60
		- other (drinks, fruit, etc)	128-10
		SPEAKERS - general	280-00
		-travel	150-00
		GIFTS-speakers & garden owners	118-00
		MISCELLANEOUS incl. photocopying,	
		postage, stationery & telephone	<u>106-10</u>
	<u>\$3710-00</u>		<u>\$3687-80</u>

*P. Garnham (Treasurer) 13/10/97*

### Members' News

It is great to hear GDSG member **Michael Bates** presenting the Garden segment on the Comfort Zone program on A.B.C. Radio National. Congratulations Michael! Initially I think he used to be on much earlier in the morning (about 6.45 a.m.) but now he has advanced to a more comfortable and popular time slot (between 8.30 and 10 a.m.). It's not all Australian plants of course, but it's excellent to have a sympathetic presenter in a significant position.

### Sydney meetings

Jo Hambrett NSW

For our October meeting the Sydney branch met at Study Group member Wendy Mackie's place at Mortdale and went on to see two more gardens of SGAP members in the area.

Maureen's garden exists to encourage the native wildlife back to her area and to provide a home for indigenous species whose natural environment is under threat. These plants are then propagated and given away to ensure their survival. Maureen says "I am interested in what goes on in my garden, anything productive is kept, despite the look."

Judy's garden is, she says, a propagator's garden. She is a member of the Grevillea Study Group and most of her garden plants are propagated by her. The garden is crammed full of beautiful Australian plants and is designed around her three young boys and a large dog. Judy puts her "hard to grows" in pots where she can sit and look at them, surrounded by the smells of the bush while enjoying a beer!

Wendy Mackie's garden was nearly upstaged by her wonderful 1916 house and its beautifully decorated interior, however the two complemented each other to perfection. Wendy's aim is to make people in the street realize how good Australian plants can look and she certainly achieves this aim. *Boronia megastigma* sits in pots flanking the stairs to the verandah, grevilleas (*G. sericea*, *G. 'Evelyn's Coronet'*, and others) jostle with a *Lambertia formosa* near the front gate. On the other side of the path, a large callistemon provides the wattle birds with food and shelter. Underneath it hakea, eriostemon, thryptomenes, *Acacia*

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*fimbriata*, eremophilas and prostanthera flourish giving it a truly Australian 'cottage garden' feel. A frangipani and various Australian and non-Australian plants as well as Birds Nest and other ferns hit the right historical/horticultural notes for the house and its locale.

Plants in pots surrounding a frog pond solved the problem of creating a garden underneath very large old trees which would have created too much competition if the plants had been planted directly in the soil. A rainforest hedge is well underway along the back fence. It was a most enjoyable day with advice sought and freely given on various design elements within the garden, plus a tree pruning lesson from the irrepressible Jeff Howes!

It was wonderful for us to share the deep sense of satisfaction and commitment with these gardeners. Thank you very much to Wendy, Maureen and Judy for your hospitality and energy and a big thank you to the members who came on the day. I value your support of the GDSG.

A nursery tip ALTRA Native Nursery, Depot Rd. Mortdaie.

**Next meeting due on Feb 22 1998.** I would ask that members try to give me some feedback (by mail, or phone or fax Jo Hambrett on [redacted] on what they want from the Sydney branch as far as meetings go. I would like to see a few more faces as regulars. Presently we meet three times a year - maybe once a year is enough! **What do you think?!**

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### GDSG Northeast Victoria Branch

Barbara Buchanan & Margaret GarrettVic

Report of meeting at Elizabeth Brett's on 10/8/97

It was a relatively small meeting and there had been no NL just out, nevertheless time went quickly. Unfortunately the Kennedys were unable to be present, but we decided to look at the proposals for their pond area so that they could be passed on to them to bear in mind during any work over spring. We all seemed to call for much more work than could be easily implemented and decided to give ourselves the license of a 'Tatt's win solution', though it may be more helpful to 'clients' if we also include plans that can be easily and cheaply carried out. Gloria (Thomlinson) and Kay (Dempsey)'s collaboration did not disappoint but we were pleased that ours bore some similarities.

We then drove across the river to Jennifer and Ian Davidson's new garden, which has changed wonderfully since we last saw it a few months earlier. The formation of the drive gives a real form, which the new plantings are not yet able to supply but surely will. There has been extensive planting of *Calocephalus lacteus* and *Microlaena stipoides* as ground cover among the new trees and in front of the house. The river is as wonderful a backdrop as ever. It will be most interesting to follow the progress over the years.

### Next meeting

**Barbara Buchanan's Mvrhee on Sunday November 16 at 10 a.m.**

The venue is altered because a new member of Wangaratta group, Jill Judd, would like advice on her new garden which is on the outskirts of Wangaratta not far from Myrree. I have made the time earlier because members who were present at the GDSG Seminar weekend will be able to tell something of the proceedings, although these will appear in Diana's NL in due course. We also will have suggestions for Elizabeth and a quick look at my garden before lunch and going to Jill's place. A busy day, especially if there is a NL.

Garden design seminar in Wang (Wangaratta)?

One idea which could be implemented in Wang next year as a means of spreading the word is running courses/seminars jointly with TAFE. It seems to me that 'cottage gardens' or 'garden design' are themes that are likely to interest the general public. The Wang secretary, Mary Ward, has attended several similar courses and reported full houses for them. Last weekend I saw Mary's garden, not pure Australian but most new plantings are, and I was very impressed. Her current plan is to develop a parterre using Australian plants!

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### Melbourne meetings

The September meeting was of course the weekend Seminar (with no separate formal meeting), and then in October many of us were away for the ASGAP Conference in Adelaide (either just returning from it or on the post-Conference tour).

The location of the November meeting (2/11) had to be changed from Tony and Joy Roberts' place to Jane and Malcolm Calder's, due to building problems (the sort most of us may have experienced at some time). It was very kind of Jane & Malcolm to have us, and it gave us the opportunity to see their magnificent garden too - it's unique. As well we did a little planning for the year ahead, in the course of a lively meeting.

The first meeting next year will be on **Sunday February 1st 1998** at 2 pm (or 1.45 for 2 pm) at

**Monika Herrmann's.**

Please phone Monika or Diana Snape to let us know whether you're able to come.

As well as the regulars, it's great to see new members at meetings. Come along for a visit to Monika's garden, situated on a steeply sloping site and presenting some challenges. We'll look forward to an exchange of ideas.

Please bring this Newsletter too, with any items you'd like to discuss marked with a highlighter (or whatever).

In the Open Garden Scheme, in Victoria, the McKillop garden at 107 Burnes Rd Shoreham will be open on Jan 10-11 and May 2 - 3, 1998 - the last one for this season described as an Australian plant garden.

GDSG members in Adelaide visited two gardens at the homes of two brothers, Ivan and Cath Holliday, and Ray and Miriam Holliday.

Ivan's garden has been established for some years now and was looking wonderful, particularly as many plants were flowering. Ivan has many plants that are not well known yet, including quite a few *Melaleuca* spp.

Some areas are mounded, to improve drainage for particular plants e.g. *Banksia repens*, growing at the base of a large established eucalypt. Rocks are used throughout the garden to help raise the soil level, or to add another texture. Ivan prefers to leave the soil without mulch, so that when precious rains come, moisture is immediately available to the plants and not on top of the mulch waiting to evaporate again. None of his plants are irrigated and those that don't survive, don't belong.

Two groundcovers growing well, thick (dense) and far-covering are *Hibbertia aspera* and *Acacia cometes* (W.A.), the latter not readily available in S.A. I discovered how beautiful was one of our indigenous Hills' daisies low-growing in semi-shade with large white daisy flowers - *Olearia grandiflora*. *Conostylis candidans* clumps grow in front and back gardens, usually near rocks, as were some of the native grasses e.g. *Poa sieberiana*. *Scholtzia laxiflora* grew in a similar manner to *Thryptomene saxicola* but is longer flowering (months) with more dense clusters of flowers. *Acacia convenya* grew in semi-shade, standing out with a very blue-grey foliage (possibility for cut foliage).

Ivan's blend of Australian and exotic plants was pleasant especially with flowering thyme amongst rockeries and as groundcovers among larger plants.

Ray's garden is more recent - the front garden established a year ago, while the back was developed in this last year. Although relatively small, the front garden does not appear so, with two mature *Acmena smithii* (remaining from the previous garden) and sawdust chip paths winding through the acacias, callistemons and other shrubs.

Entering Ray's back garden from the house (large glass windows bring the outside in) one is 'enveloped' in another 'room', a green leafy shaded area (exotic Chinese Elm and others) paved and designed for function. The paved area drains into a 'bog' garden where *Juncus* sp., *Restio tetraphyllus* ssp. *meiostachys* (dwarf form), *Viola hederacea* and other moisture-loving plants grow.

Another 'room', the "green room", contains the rotary clothes-line, with a *Dichondra* 'carpet' and *Pandoreasp.* and honeysuckle climbing on trellises to become screening 'walls'. This is shaded by an established *Eucalyptus leucoxyton*. A little hedge of lavender bordering the vegetable garden is soon to be enlarged with the planting of *Maireana sedifolia* alongside.

A general discussion followed about the dangers of designing 'from books' - emphasizing the importance of garden visits/discussions/information sharing, and becoming familiar with what plants grow well in local conditions. We enjoyed these visits, and thank the Holliday families for their kind hospitality.

Next meeting - Saturday February 14, 1998: 2 pm at the home and garden of Phillip Towe

- and afterwards at the home of Anne and Colin

Dealtry (Dealtry Native Garden and Plant Nursery

Please phone Margie Barnett

to confirm attendance (or inability) and for directions.



## MEMBERSHIP

New members

*A warm welcome to the following new members of the Study Group. We hope you enjoy your membership.*

Michael Cook  
Betty Denton  
Pamela King

Membership renewals      *We value the continuing membership of all our members who renew.*

Maxine Armitage, Susi & Steve Barber, Michael Bates, Carol Bentley, Beryl & Trevor Blake, John Bramley, Maree Burgoyne, Jane Calder, Lindsay Campbeil. Wendy Cannon, Jennifer Clancy, Daniel Cole, Patrea Cook, Ian & Tamara Cox, Janice Creasey, Peter Cuneo, Brian & Mary Dacy, Glenda & Bernard Datson, Dinah Drummond, Judith Dykes, Wendy & David Evans, Theresa Feile, Steve Fielke, Janet Fisher, Barrie Gallacher, Wendy Geale, Robin Gemmill, Ron Gornall, Joanne Hambrett, Leanne Harper, Majella Hedger, Annette & John Houseman, Greg Ingerson, Brenton Isted, Barry Jahnke, Barbara & Paul Kennedy, Lyn Johnson, John Knight, Jo Kopp, Nadia Lalak, Chris Larkin, Nicole Lenffer, Bryan Loft, Kate Malfroy, Rosemary Manion, Pat & Ron McKeown, Iris Mullins, Penny Munro, Erica Nathan, Alison Payne, Ian Percy, Jonathan & Georgina Persse, Donald & Thelma Peterson, Shirley Pipitone, Chris Purchase (Hampson), Janet Schapper, Kaye Schofield, Julie Slifirski, Rosalind Smallwood, Ross Smyth-Kirk, Joy Stacey, Greg Varady-Szabo, Stuart Taylor, Stephen Thomas, Paul Thompson, Jane Weyand, Carol Wilmink, Spencer Wilson, Taresa Yates; SGAP Foothills Group, SGAP Geelong Inc; SGAP Victoria; Wildflower Society of W.A. (Inc.); ASGAP (Association of Societies for Growing Australian Plants).

Please note:      *Acknowledgements of renewals or subscriptions may have been delayed as Peter has been away. We'll catch up as quickly as we can when he returns.*

3D Landscape program (please see p 12). Alison says versions are available for the PC and the mac. It requires at least a 486/66 IBM PC running Windows 3.1 or 95.8M RAM, VGA graphics, CD-ROM and sound card. It costs \$59.95. If you wish to deal locally, it may be possible to specifically request the product through a Computer Software shop.

A reminder to members that topics we have looked at in the past are still of interest, and new members continue to join. If you have ideas about any of the following, for example, please write in :-

- plants which will tolerate dry, shady conditions (as in Cherree Densley's request)
- your 10 favourite plants for garden design
- Australian character or style in a garden
- plants which combine well - in terms of foliage, form or flower.
- small trees for small gardens and how they can be used
- 'formal' plants and design with Australian plants - for example Barbara Buchanan (Vic) recently suggested trimming small-leaved *Hibbertia empetrifolia* for a formal low hedge.
- plants for 'cottage' or 'wildflower' gardens (and their maintenance over time)
- low water use and low maintenance gardens

These aren't the only topics of course!! Any aspect of garden design can be raised. In this issue, as one example, I thought Geoff Simmons' article on the connection between using straight lines and the vast spaces of the Australian landscape was challenging.

It's always inspiring too to see actual plans of gardens or sections of gardens, which don't have to be of a professional standard. I now have a new computer which can translate from Microsoft (text only) or DOSS format (WordPerfect) (ASCII) format, so if you can send articles on disk on one of these formats I'd be very grateful. (Your disk will be returned.) Otherwise typed or clearly written or printed articles are favoured by your editor. I also now have a scanner, so (when I learn how to use it!) the quality of photographs, plans, illustrations, etc. in the Newsletter should improve tremendously. This should be before the February NL!

Articles for the February Newsletter are requested as soon as possible and certainly by early January.

The problem of a failing memory! On my return home from the Adelaide Conference, putting away my papers, books, etc., I came upon a fascinating key-shaped garden plan with accompanying plant list. My problem is I have no recollection of its context - who gave it to me or showed it to me or where it came from - and there's no name on it and no other clue. Please have sympathy and let me know if you can help jog my memory, as I feel terrible about it!

It seems very early to be wishing members a happy and peaceful Christmas, New Year, and holiday season. I hope you have had rain and that summer won't be too hot and dry. Colleen Keena's 3-bucket rainforest (that's Colleen in her young rainforest in the picture on page 21) can be an inspiration to reassess our approach to water dependence.

Very best wishes

*Diana*

Diana Snape