

GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP**Newsletter No. 60****November 2007****Study Group Leader/Editor: Diana Snape****Treasurer/Membership: Bryan Loft**

ABN 82 428 110 028

Website: <http://asgap.org.au/design.html>

OR google 'Australian Garden Design'

Dear Members,

While away visiting historic gardens in the UK, Jo Hambrett has not forgotten us. She has been pondering the relevance of these gardens to members of the GDSG and has expressed her thoughts on this topic in a fascinating article. Maree McCarthy raises the underlying problem of our borrowed cultural heritage still being dominant over our own wonderful natural heritage (as Jo says, our own cultural heritage too). In many urban and suburban areas of Australia our 'sense of place' is very confused indeed.

It's great to hear from Leigh Murray and Rosalind Walcott about plants they have found reliable in their gardens (and quite a few of those plants have also proved hardy here in Melbourne) - but what about the reliable plants of other members? I know it's a busy time of year but it was disappointing to receive so few lists. Please try to send in yours, because the more information we have coming in, the more significant and useful the exercise is. The next step could be to think of the plants in their most appropriate role(s) in design - whether they are best suited to being framework, feature, or ornamental plants. (The remaining category, infill plants, do not need to be reliable in the same way.) Then I'm still not sure how best to approach studying the successful grouping of Australian plants in garden design, such a complex subject which we have scarcely begun to study. Any thoughts on an approach?

Bev Hanson is a practising Melbourne landscape designer of very high reputation who trained under Ellis Stones. It is great to have in this Newsletter a plan of one example of her recent work, designing a Memorial Garden. Barbara Buchanan considers the importance of utility as well as beauty in design. There are also descriptions by Canberra members of two most interesting gardens, both in Canberra and both special for different reasons.

Two talks I have heard in recent months have strongly reinforced my attitude to the enormous importance of trees, evident in a variety of ways - practical, aesthetic and environmental. In addition there's the economic importance which weighs more heavily with some people. In an article I've tried to convey a little of what I felt when I heard those speakers. I also enjoyed talks on hedging and coppicing some Australian plants - so far research on these subjects is very limited indeed and there's so much more that could be carried out. Still it's good to see a small start being made.

INDEX

3 CORRESPONDENCE

DESIGN

- 4 Historic English houses and gardens and the ASGAP Garden Design Study Group Jo Hambrett
- 6 Memorial Garden in Rosanna Parkland Bev Hanson
- 6 Utility and beauty in design Barbara Buchanan
- 7 Landscape plan of Memorial Garden in Rosanna Parkland Bev Hanson

PLANTS

- 8 Save those trees Diana Snape
- 9 Ten reliable plants Leigh Murray
- 9 Plants one can trust Rosalind Walcott
- 11 Research on hedging and coppicing Diana Snape

GARDENS

- 12 Civic Gardens Maree McCarthy
- 13 Garden of Maureen and Bill Mutton, Urambi Village Jan Robbins, Ian Anderson & Shirley Pipitone
- 15 Report of Canberra GDSG visit to Orana School Open Garden Jan Robbins
- 16 The greenhouse effect, climate change and Myall Park Botanic Garden Lynette Reilly
- 17 Inorganic mulches Barbara Buchanan
- 17 More on mulch Jeff Howes

17 BOOKS

17 SNIPPETS

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- 18 Meetings
- 21 Membership news

- 22 Photographs

NEXT MEETINGS

Please see details of meetings and contacts on pages 18 to 20

NE VIC: Saturday November 3 10.30 for 11am at Glenda and Bernie Datson's

CANBERRA: Monday November 19 10am at Linda Johnson's garden

MELBOURNE: Sunday November 25 12 noon at Karwarra Gardens

SYDNEY & CANBERRA: 2008 March 28, 29, 30 proposed dates for

central west high country around Blayney, Orange, Milthorpe and Molong

Visiting members from other areas are very welcome at meetings!

CORRESPONDENCE

Just a few comments on several issues in the latest Newsletter:

1. In relation to plant survival I have concluded that a key factor is the gung ho way many people in the community generally prepare for planting and the method of planting. But I can only go on anecdotes because of unwillingness to talk about it, for fear it reflects on the person I talk to. Many say the losses are because of drought but I don't think so. Whatever the real answer it reflects badly on native plants generally.
2. I used micorrhizal fungi in a nursery situation & it is difficult to manage. If the plant is not very fresh it won't sell. If artificial fertilizer is withheld so as not to kill the micorrhiza then the plant looks starved. How many people would go to the trouble of supplementing at planting time after it leaves the nursery (apart from Design Group Members)?
3. Gillian Morris discussed understorey planting and mulching, as I recall. I try to make designs so simple that they are bullet proof. I have yet to succeed at bullet-proofing a design. So after 10 years I might have to replant with shade tolerant plants and thin out the overstory. Does anyone consider the benefit of leguminous plants as understorey in contributing to the mulch? In this area, *Hardenbergia* 'Mini-haha', some low growing acacias and *Cassia aciphylla* do well.
4. I have some photographs which may or may not be of benefit to Kevin Handreck. I suggest that it would be best if I emailed him a selection & he made the final choice. Regards, **John Hoile** NSW
Thanks, John. I'm sure Kevin appreciated your help with photographs. DS

It is quite easy to come up with a list of plants that one can trust, but not so easy to make that list only 10 items long! Our garden is only four years old, but there are some plants that have already become favourites. Photographs of most of these selections are attached.

Thank you for the wonderful Newsletter. I read it from cover to cover every issue. As I am Bulletin Editor for ANPS Canberra Region, I can really appreciate the effort that goes into producing such an extensive and interesting publication. Cheers, **Rosalind Walcott** ACT

See Rosalind's plant list page 9. Her photographs are beautiful in colour. DS

It was lovely to meet you at Litchfield's garden (ASGAP Conference tour)! I always love the fantastic info and discussions offered by the GDSG.

I've been heavily involved with organising the design and planting of Newcastle's Town Hall gardens, Civic Park and Christie Place, with Australian Plants Society and Newcastle Council. We had quite a lot of opposition to changing the annual flower beds to a native flower design between September 2007 and April 2008. For example, the morning of the planting day, I and some other members were personally told by Council staff that the idea was stupid and that it wouldn't work, would be ugly, and that the people would want the annuals. The Lord Mayor even publically stated on local TV his preference for the annuals - stating that it was an 'inappropriate use of the gardens'. Im still trying to get an appointment to meet with him to explain what a great idea it is. Anyway, I've written a little article for the newsletter. **Maree McCarthy** NSW
(See article page 12.) It can certainly be a battle, can't it? Some Councils in Melbourne are very sympathetic to the use of Australian plants (even indigenous ones), others are not. Keep up the good work! DS

Alan and I recently visited Rushworth and called on Kay and Trevor Dempsey. There was no mistaking an APS garden, a riot of daises spilled down the slope between the house and footpath, completely covering the ground. Kay felt it had passed its prime which indicates how spectacular it must have been earlier. Other people thought so too - a passer-by wrote to the local paper commending the display and

congratulating those who had made it for the benefit of all to see. Closer inspection revealed that under the daises there was a network of shrubs ready and bursting to take over and carry on the colour parade. It may not be a garden on the grand scale, but it is truly inspirational.

As the backyard adjoins a neglected nature reserve Kay is restricting planting there to indigenous species. It was quieter in tone but the Rushworth forest is renowned for it's wildflowers and Kay is steadily developing a range of locals, no easy task in drought conditions. Definitely a case of 'watch this space'.

Barbara Buchanan Vic *Well done, Kay! DS*

DESIGN

Historic English Houses and Gardens and the ASGAP Garden Design Study Group

Jo Hambrett NSW

This year, truly blessed by the patron saint of international travel, I have had the opportunity to visit the UK in April and again in September to add our voices to the Wallabies' cheer squad, ultimately alas, to no avail. Both times, we seized the opportunity to see some of the outstanding English gardens and houses that have been a very long time on our "must do" list.

Many were built on the fortunes created during Britain's Age of Empire and the Industrial Revolution and I am sure, in some ways and depending on one's social position at the time, it is better viewing them from the very comfortable, albeit ultimately unsustainable, 21st century! This point was bought home to me whilst visiting *Stourhead* where, over many years, one unenviable winter job for a male employee was to cut ice from the lake, far below in the valley, into large panes and transport them up the hill to the ice house, a small shelter dug into the earth. Here a pane of ice would be laid down, covered with straw and another sheet placed on top, and so on. A supply of ice for the house the following summer was thus ensured.

It goes without saying that all the gardens and their houses were a sheer visual delight, deeply memorable examples of perfection in the art and craft of gardening. Views and vistas from breathtaking to intimate and in between; magnificent glasshouses, orchards and vegetable gardens, created by horticultural skills and practices honed over generations. Impossibly green lawns, patterned with wide striped swathes of alternating lawn pile. Wildflower meadows punctuated by a poppy's vermilion splash, exuberant herbaceous borders sheltered by warm brick walls and white apple blossom falling to rest fragrantly upon hillocks of shiny orchard grasses. Take your pick....universally beautiful images, and ones which, for most of us, resonate deep within our psyche, prodding historical memories.

Is there a relevance to those of us in the southern hemisphere, interested in garden design using Australian plants in the driest continent on earth? Does the best of British have something to offer us - apart from a salutary lesson or two in the game of Rugby [and I shall dwell upon it no more]? The answer is, of course, it does as it must. Exposure to great garden design provides the keen student with ideas and examples and, more importantly - seated amongst the shrubs and humming bees, green lawn lapping at one's feet - answers to the vital question "*why* is it so successful"? The countless relationships, *especially* spatial, that co-exist to produce such beauty can be examined, conclusions reached and knowledge gained.

Whilst our hemisphere, plant palette, climatic conditions and soil have almost nothing in common with the great Gardens of England, our inherited design philosophy does, beginning with the English Landscape

5

School of the 18th C and moving forwards. The age of the houses and some parts of the gardens ranged from pre-Tudor [in the case of Christopher Lloyd's *Great Dixter*] through to Elizabethan [Vita Sackville West's and Harold Nicholson's *Sissinghurst* and *Barrington Court*, both NT], 18th C. Georgian [*Stourhead A7*], Victorian [*Tatton Park A7*] and Edwardian [Harold Peto's *Iford Manor* and the Jekyll/Lutyens partnership garden of *Hestercombe*] and whilst not always exactly reflecting the period and style of the house, the garden design was certainly sympathetic to it. I have included both the houses *and* their gardens because in each instance the house was an intrinsic part of the garden's success. Conversely at *The Lost Gardens of Heligan* in Cornwall the fact that the house was not able to be viewed as a part of its garden within the landscape, for me, significantly reduced the experience.

Please don't misunderstand me - one doesn't necessarily require a magnificent Palladian mansion or a rambling Victorian Arts and Crafts to appreciate a garden! Rather, it is the *gardener's response* to the house [its period/age, size, construction material etc.] set within its landscape that greatly enriches one's overall experience and appreciation of the garden. A dwelling tells us much about the garden and its owner, and helps to anchor us within the immediate exterior space. The mere existence of a garden predicates the presence of human beings; that is what is so tantalizing about a secret garden - who created it, why is it there? It is the human mystery as much as the horticultural that entrances one so.

Plants, horticulture and garden design are taken very seriously by a large section of the British public - gardening is much more than a pastime - it belongs with fine art and architecture - it is a valued pursuit. Whilst visiting the houses and gardens I was struck by the number of families, not only babes and toddlers [in the now ubiquitous *very large strollers*] but teenagers as well, out for the day, roaming around the grounds and seemingly having a jolly good time! Possibly the ongoing generational embrace of recreational activities such as these helps to make the continued appreciation of heritage, history, traditions and gardening a given within a large section of the population?

There is something about beauty that makes people want to be near it, to be alive to it, to possess it, even vicariously - hence the importance of an appreciation of the elements of good design, of which beauty is surely one, and the necessity of its accessibility to as many as possible. At The Royal Horticultural Society's *Wisley*, the new glasshouse floats upon its own still lake, an image of reflecting planes of various greys and silvers; a little, I imagine, like the glass church that floated down the river in "Oscar and Lucinda."

What did I learn from visiting the gardens of this small European island, its landscape and culture defined by centuries of humanity? A country that whilst naturally poor in its own species of flora and with very little of its indigenous forests left (oak was such a good wood to build with) has gardened more successfully with plants from all over the world than any other nation. Obviously very few of the points above relate in any way to Australian conditions; to some, fortunately, the opposite applies. That is probably the first point - be grateful in the New World for the richness and diversity of our natural heritage. In the Old World it is the man made. Amongst some of the greatest historical houses and gardens in the world, one is exposed to the best garden design over past centuries that money could buy, practised by the finest gardeners in the land. One is immersed in an aesthetic, which appears to be esteemed, utilized and supported by the general public.

"Many people talk wistfully of heritage regimes in other countries, ...but there is a fundamental difference in Australia - and it is one that we either have to live with or change our culture. The difference is our attitude to heritage and the value we place upon it." Jacqui Goddard, National Trust NSW

As members of the GDSG and of the Association of Societies for Growing Australian Plants, we are knowledgeable about and interested in the history, natural, built, and written of past and present Australian gardens, particularly those which use predominantly Australian and indigenous plants; and we have been, if not physically then emotionally and intellectually, at the forefront of the Bush Garden Movement of the 1960s (see 'The Australian Garden article' on the ASGAP GDSG website).

Visiting some of Britain's finest historic houses and gardens has helped to reinforce the fact that in Australia we ignore the above warning to the peril of the interests of our society and, far more widely, to the detriment of our own nation's cultural heritage and future.

Memorial Garden in Rosanna Parkland

Bev Hanson Vic

In February 07, Banule City Council approached me to design a Memorial Garden in Rosanna Parkland adjacent to the unique housing estate, Elliston*. I felt honoured to be given the task and knew it had to reflect Ellis Stones' style of landscape. Ellis was involved in the fight to keep Salt Creek from being enclosed in a concrete pipe by the MMBW (Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works) along the length of the parkland. His influence led to the Council's decision to reject the Board's solution and to retain the creek as an open watercourse.

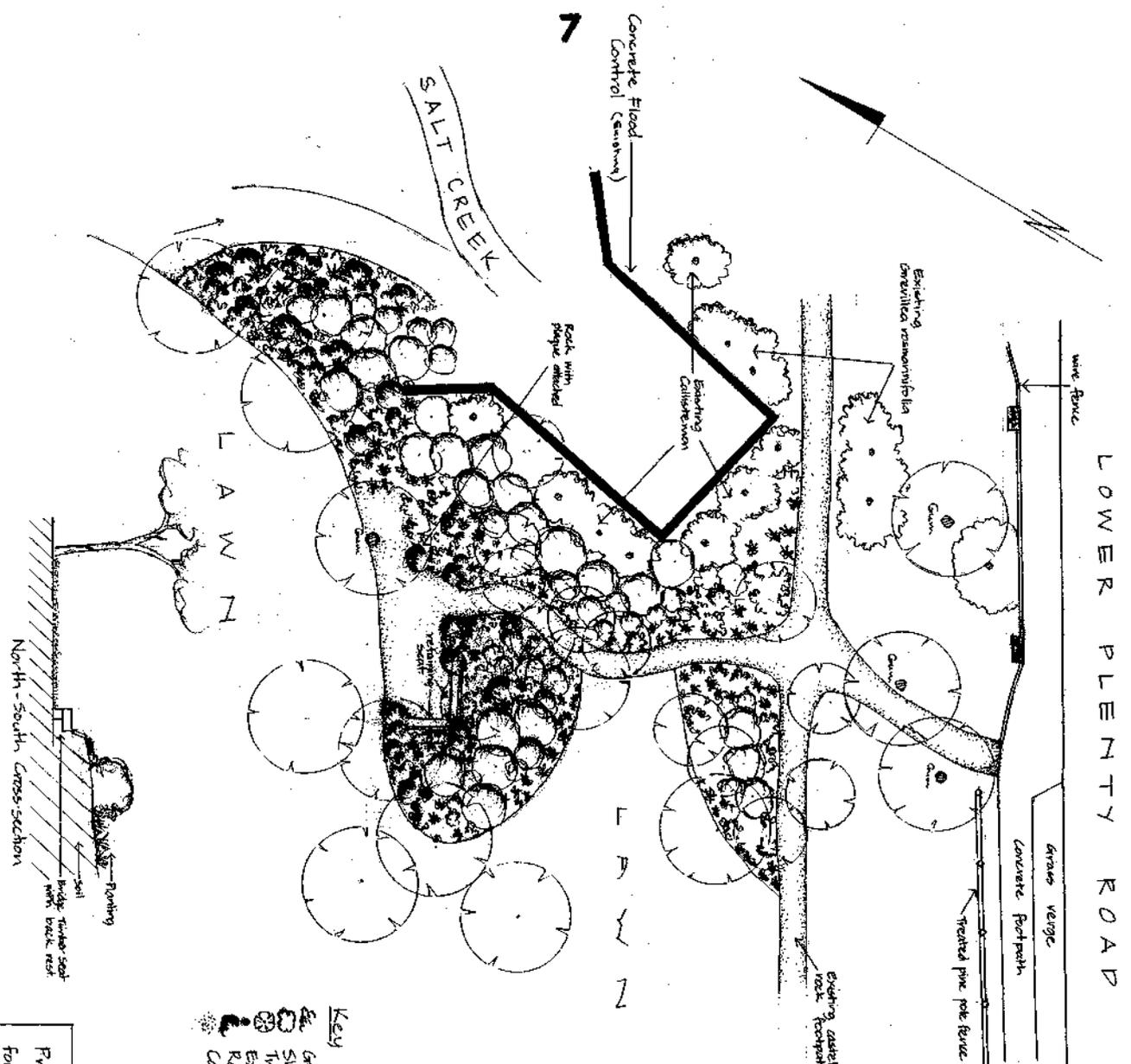
Flooding problems in Lower Plenty Road in 1991 saw a proposal to build a 4 metre high earth wall and levee banks across the park. Residents fought this and the current solution was implemented as seen on the landscape plan (page 7). The concrete walls are about 4 metres high at their highest point and quite ugly if viewed from the creek but could be successfully screened off from the garden site and most of the parkland. Large feature rocks were placed to look natural with one chosen to attach a memorial plaque. An L-shaped bridge-timber retaining seat was constructed facing the parkland to the north. All the planting is indigenous with several River Red Gums being the feature trees giving shade from the west.

*For details of the Elliston Estate, see *Margaret James'* article in NL 56, November 2006, page 9.

Utility and beauty in design

Barbara Buchanan Vic

What we mean by *design* is not simple. On reading Chris's article (NL59 p9) I was thankful I have never had to judge gardens, but I do appreciate her efforts in providing some framework by which to assess our own progress or otherwise. However I do think the appropriateness of a garden to the owner's needs and lifestyle is important, to me this is as much a part of the concept of design as the beauty of the garden. I don't agree that judging a house design should cover liveability for everyone with **no** reference to the owner's situation, any more than with gardens. Some basic aspects will apply universally, but the world would be a dull place if we all were mass produced products with the same lifestyle, not to mention stage of life. A well designed chair must be comfortable not just good to look at, whereas a painting only needs to be good to look at (even though we differ in our estimates of this). Art critics then analyse how a painting is composed and talk about the design, but this is a different aspect of design from the design of a house, a chair, a garden. To me design in these cases involves the best resolution of the sometimes conflicting needs of utility and beauty. I do agree that a well designed garden is seen by everyone as beautiful regardless of whether they are aware of the other needs the garden is fulfilling. We tend to blur over basic things like where the clothes are hung to dry because they are not the sexy part of design, but for anyone starting from scratch, these



LOWER PLENTY ROAD

PLANT SCHEDULE

BOTANICAL NAME	Common Name
1 EUCALYPTUS CAMALDULIENSIS	River Red gum
2 AKALIA MYRSINA	Lightwood
3 AKALIA MELANOTRILON	Blackwood
4 AKALIA MYRSINA	Golden wattle
5 BUDACARIA SPINOSA	Small Bursaria
6 APOCYNIA DVATA	Hop Goodenium
7 LONANDBA LONGISPOLA	Spry headed Mat Bush
8 PHAENICOPHORA	Common Tamarack shrub
9 ANAETHA HOVOR-ZELANDIAE	Sludge-widge
10 DANIELIA REVOLUTA	Black-drover
11 EUPHORBIA	Flax Lily
12 NITIDUS	Mocking Saltmarsh

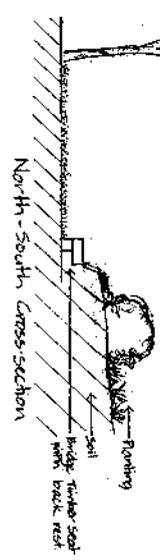
NOTES:-

- Rocks are to be large (approx 1 metre) selected feature rocks placed to look natural, retaining the earth.
- 25 x 75mm timber edge to be placed along the edge of the pathway and between the lawn and sitting area.
- The gravel to be used is castella crushed rock common similar to existing paths.
- Retaining seat - Bridge Timber seat with back rest

KEY

- Ground cover
- Shrubs
- Trees
- Existing trees (to be retained)
- Rocks
- Castella Crushed Rock

North-South cross-section



Proposed Memorial Garden
for Banyule City Council
Rosanna Parklands
Lower Plenty Road, Rosanna

Scale 1:100
Date: Feb 07

Bev Hanson
Landscape Designer
104 Webb St
Warrandyte
Phone 9844 3906

must be right or the whole fails. To me 'design..... is the successful and beautiful resolution of a problem'... or many problems.

It's an interesting question how much garden design can be an art (where beauty is all), rather than a craft (with beauty plus utility). I hadn't quite thought about it like that before. DS

PLANTS

Save those trees

Diana Snape Vic

The International Landscape Conference seems a long time ago now, so much has happened since. I certainly remember clearly the last presentation, which was by Greg Moore on the topic 'New design parameters for a changing climate'. Greg is the Principal of Burnley Horticultural College in Melbourne and was the inaugural President of the International Society of Arboriculture, Australia. He began his talk by asking us who felt guilty for watering their gardens, then spoke passionately about the importance of saving trees in the urban landscape. His words - "Perhaps never before in human history has there been such a dramatic need to appreciate the role of trees in climate control. They fix great quantities of carbon, hold water, purify air, provide protection from sun and wind, and are themselves ecosystems. We must design urban environments with them in mind."

Greg provided some statistics for Melbourne. There are 100,000 mature trees in Melbourne and between them they sequester a million tonnes of carbon, 'worth' (on current estimates) \$10,000,000. Of the total number of trees, 30,000 are privately owned, so their monetary value is significant too. He and some of his students had carried out a study on the pruning of street trees to avoid powerlines. They collected and weighed prunings and found pruning removes 25-30% of the canopy and on average 1.5 tonnes of carbon per tree. The carbon sequestration value of these prunings (not including the cost of the labour of doing it) would more than cover the cost of putting the wires underground! Sometimes we are not very clever.

At the ASGAP Conference in Newcastle, another talk reinforced many of the points made by Greg Moore about the value of trees. The topic was urban forests and the coordination of tree management in cities like Newcastle. Many photographs illustrated the ugliness created by removal (or absence) of trees. Some were taken from GoogleEarth of urban streets in Australia, dominated by cars, and urban streets in some European countries, dominated by trees. These photos were selective but they clearly showed the difference trees make to the livability of a street, in addition to all the vital services they provide. Every street tree is worth looking after, whether Australian or exotic, though the locals provide better ecosystems.

In recent years I have often looked at the weather maps on TV and seen weather systems (with much-needed rain) approach Melbourne from different directions but veer away as they neared the city. I suspect the city acts as a heat island and this affects the movement of clouds in the vicinity. If only we could green the city with more trees, plus roof gardens and even vertical gardens on blank walls of buildings. We also need to harvest the water that falls on our buildings and on open areas, either for water storage or to help restore groundwater. Another speaker at the Landscape Conference was Frenchman Patrick Blanc who spoke about vertical gardens. He showed scores of photos of impressively large and magnificent vertical gardens that he had designed and which are widely used in European countries. (On a recent 'Gardening Australia', an Australian showed some of his small vertical gardens.) A single tree is the equivalent of many small plants - I think trees are unique and wonderful organisms and we should value them more highly!

The toughest plants at Queanbeyan (near Canberra), on a windy west-facing ridge of shaly soil, with hot summers and cold winters (minus 7 frosts), are the indigenous plants:

<u>Trees</u>	<i>Eucalyptus goniocalyx</i> , <i>E. polyanthemos</i> , <i>Callitris endlicheri</i> , <i>Exocarpos cupressiformis</i> , <i>Acacia rubida</i> , <i>Bursaria spinosa</i> ,
<u>Shrubs</u>	<i>Einadia hastata</i> , <i>Grevillea juniperina</i> , <i>Xerochrysum viscosum</i>
<u>Climbers</u>	<i>Hardenbergia violacea</i>

Ten plants that I rely on to fill gaps and attract more wildlife are:

<u>Trees</u>	<i>Acacia implexa</i>	<i>Hakea eriantha</i>
<u>Large shrubs</u>	<i>Acacia iteaphylla</i>	<i>Acacia boormanii</i>
<u>Medium shrubs</u>	<i>Grevillea arenaria</i>	<i>Correa glabra</i>
<u>Small shrubs</u>	<i>Correa pulchella</i>	
<u>Climbers</u>	<i>Clematis microphylla</i>	<i>Billardiera scandens</i>
<u>Tufts</u>	<i>Lomandra longifolia</i>	

These plants also do well at Tuross Head on the NSW South Coast (with a mild climate, salty gales, no frosts, granite soil). The ten toughest cookies at Tuross are:

<u>Trees</u>	<i>Acacia implexa</i>	<i>Allocasuarina verticillata</i>	<i>Banksia integrifolia</i>
<u>Large shrubs</u>	<i>Eucalyptus conferruminata</i> (often sold as <i>E. lehmannii</i>)	<i>Melaleuca nesophila</i>	
<u>Medium shrubs</u>	<i>Grevillea arenaria</i>		
<u>Small shrubs</u>	<i>Templetonia retusa</i>		
<u>Climbers</u>	<i>Hibbertia scandens</i>		
<u>Tufts</u>	<i>Lomandra longifolia</i>	<i>Anigozanthos flavidus</i>	

Under our conditions, all of the plants listed benefit from occasional watering during lengthy periods without rain.

Thanks, Leigh, for 3 very helpful lists. It would be interesting to hear other members' experiences with these plants, in similar or different areas. DS

Plants one can trust

Rosalind Walcott ACT

We garden right in the middle of Canberra, quite close to Parliament House, on a sloping block about a hectare in area. Our Canberra garden is protected from wind by Red Hill, has pH neutral clay soil, and an annual rainfall of 625mm. We do supplement the natural rainfall, mostly in the hot summer months, with irrigation from a bore on our property. There can be up to 7 degrees of frost during the winter but most of the plant failures in our garden occur in the heat of summer, not during or after the winter.

1. *Grevillea 'Lady O'*

Medium sized spreading shrub, 1.5m high x 1.5m wide. Developed by Peter Ollerenshaw of Bywong Nursery near Canberra and named for his mother. The plant flowers year round, even in Canberra's climate. It has a neat outline and cheerful red flowers. My husband's favourite plant in our garden.

2. *Eucalyptus gregsoniana* (Wolgan Snow Gum)

Bushy eucalypt, height 2-7m, from NSW which withstands cold winters and hot summers. Flowers over a long period with spherical white flowers which are most attractive to bees.

3. *Hardenbergia violacea 'Candy Wrapper'* (photo p22)

Developed by Peter Ollerenshaw once again, a hardy vine with bright pink flowers appearing first in

mid-winter and continuing for a long period. Very attractive figured leaves. Growing over our back garden gate with very little protection overhead.

4. *Grevillea jephcottii* (Green Grevillea)

Medium shrub with bright green woolly foliage and cream and green flowers much beloved by birds. Needs a partly shaded position and adequate water to do well.

5. *Callistemon* 'Pink Champagne'

Of all our many callistemons, the one that blooms the most and looks the best. A tall shrub, 3m x 2m, for a sunny position with adequate water.

6. *Eremophila maculata aurea*

Our specimen was rescued at the last moment from the dumpster. It appreciated being placed in a more protected spot, resurrected itself and has proceeded to bloom non stop ever since. We shave it back quite severely each spring and are rewarded with a constant procession of bright yellow flowers much appreciated by birds and bees.

7. *Melaleuca incana* (Grey Leafed Honey Myrtle)

Medium shrub with a delightful weeping habit and pretty grey foliage. In the morning, with the sun shining through wet foliage, it is ethereal. We grow it in a wet position in the garden. Tip prune regularly, but sensitively.

8. *Grevillea* 'Nancy Otzen'

Hybrid evergreen shrub, 1-2m high, with soft green foliage and attractive red and cream flowers in winter and spring. Likes to be trimmed to keep it in shape. We have it in a hot and dry position and it performs magnificently.

9. *Correa* 'Redex'

A cross between *C. reflexa* and *C. decumbens*, 'Redex' has small tough, shiny leaves and masses of red and yellow bird attracting flowers over a long period. The best performing of our many correas in full or filtered sun, in wet or dry positions.

10. *Acacia cardiophylla* (West Wyalong Wattle)

The most reliable of our wattles, with attractive feathery foliage and masses of ball flowers in the spring. Fast growing and tough in many different positions in the garden. A little frost sensitive in Canberra.

11. *Leptospermum* 'Aphrodite'

Developed by Peter Ollerenshaw once again from a batch of seedlings of *L. spectabilis*, so suited to local conditions. Forms a dense bushy shrub 2.5m high x 2m across, and is covered in bright pink flowers in spring. Everyone loved this plant on our Open Day last spring.

12. *Olearia phlogopappa* 'Nimmity Belle'

Introduced by Kangarutha Nursery, Tathra, NSW. Small glossy green leaves have spectacular red tips in the spring before flowering with a white daisy flower. Very hardy to frost. My favourite daisy.

13. *Acacia aff verniciflua* 'Avenal' 'Sigma Weeping Wattle'

Small softly weeping shrub to 1.5m high x 1.5m across, with aromatic foliage and bright yellow perfumed flowers in spring. Grows in full sun or part shade, in well drained clay or sandy soils, and withstands heavy frost. Very attractive 'filler' wattle which does not take up much room.

14. *Banksia* 'Giant Candles'

Cross between *B. ericifolia* and *B. spinulosa* with huge and prolific orange spikes borne over a long period. Very popular with birds, fast growing and fits well into smaller gardens, 3-5m high x 2m wide.

An enticing list, Rosalind. I don't know many of the special forms but they looked lovely in the photos. DS

In early September I attended two lectures put on by the Friends of the Royal Botanic Garden, Cranbourne. These were on the results of research carried out by university botanists on aspects of cultivation of Australian plants. It's great to see this type of research finally taking place.

Hedging

Hedges serve different roles in design, screening areas of the garden and providing sheltered microclimates. **Dave Kendal** spoke about his trials of hedging with fifteen different species, all but one of them Australian plants. For his research he planted 40 hedges each of 5 plants spaced at 300mm centres. They were first pruned 6 weeks after planting and the study is now 3 years old.

The requirements Dave was looking for in hedging plants were:

- 1 ability to tolerate severe pruning;
- 2 retention of basal foliage;
- 3 high shoot density;
- 4 relatively small leaves;
- 5 quick formation then slow growth;
- 6 freedom from serious pest and disease problems;
- 7 genetic uniformity (though he questioned whether this was always essential).

He assessed the hedges himself and also visited many groups of people (for example APS groups) with photographs of his hedges, asking which ones people preferred in terms of their appearance.

Dave provided a very helpful summary of his results, from which the following extracts are made: Of the 15 species he tested (one an exotic, some indigenous to Melbourne (i), some requiring irrigation (ir), his **7 Australian recommendations** were:

<u>Formal hedge</u> (2-3 trims per year)	<i>Philotheca myoporoides</i> (ir); <i>Westringia fruticosa</i> ; <i>Correa alba</i> (i)
<u>Informal hedges</u> (1-2 trims per year)	<i>Callistemon 'Captain Cook'</i> ; <i>Dodonaea viscosa</i> (i); <i>Rhagodia parabolica</i> (i)
<u>Tallscreen</u> (1 trim per year)	<i>Bursaria spinosa</i> (i)

4 **species** not recommended but still worth considering were:

Acacia acinacea: Dave said "I really liked it, but it has an unusual branching pattern that not everyone liked. Flowered profusely." (*I liked it too.*)

Kunzea ericoides (Burgan): "not appealing after trimming, much more attractive left unpruned"

Acmena 'Minipilly': "attractive immediately after pruning, regrew very unevenly"

Eremophila racemosa: "popular but fragile and likely to be short-lived"

Three species were dropped from the study, two because of too many plant deaths (possibly due to high levels of fertiliser) and one because the form selected was too prostrate. Dave said the species he tested were certainly not the only Australian plants worth testing.

Note: The photos of the *Acacia acinacea* and *Bursaria spinosa* hedges (page 22) were taken after the research study (and the pruning) was concluded so they don't represent these hedges looking their best!

Coppicing

From the introduction to the Friends of Cranbourne lecture, "**John Raynor's** teaching and research interests include design, planning and managing landscape vegetation, particularly low-water use perennials, groundcovers, shrubs and climbers. He has established a number of research plots to assess the growth and forms of many Australian shrubs and groundcovers, including *Atriplex*, *Correa*, *Dianella* and

Rhagodia species. In recent years John has been completing research into selected *Eucalyptus* species for use as 'low-input, managed forms' in urban landscapes."

This research reflects a new approach to the use of Australian plants in urban landscapes. As with hedging, it could help introduce their wider use by making possible more automated or, at least, automatic and regular maintenance over time. Altogether John investigated the coppicing of 20 different eucalypt species. These were grown as replicates in blocks of 4, spaced at 50 cm, trimmed to a height of height of 1 - 2 metres.

Some eucalypt species were rejected as being:

~~too vigorous:~~ *E. bridgesiana, cephalocarpa; dalrympleana; rubida.*

~~not vigorous enough:~~ *E. albida; crucis; cyanophylla; gillii.*

The ~~most promising species~~ were: ~~*E. cinerea; perinniana; polyanthemos; pulverulenta.*~~

John found the best of all was ~~*E. pulverulenta*~~ (used by Paul Thompson in Birramung Marr, near Federation Square in Melbourne), in particular the form ~~*E. pulverulenta 'Baby Blue'*~~ (photo page 22).

Other eucalypts mentioned in John's talk were:

E. gunnii unsuitable because it has no lignotuber;

E. crenulata unsuitable because its basal shoots are too large;

E. saxatilis used for a hedge in Burnley; *E. nitens* used for hedges in the U.K.; and *E. kruseana*.

E. cinerea is used for hedges in New Zealand and Chicago.

GARDENS

Civic Gardens

Maree McCarthy NSW

Pansies, poppies and primulas warm hearts with their powerful and proud show of colour. They take many of us back to an old homeland of ancient years, ie England. A land where the sounds, smells, colours, and marked changes in seasons have been impregnated into our blood.

We have gone forth to a foreign land - with unfamiliar colours, smells and sounds, etc. This land feels as if it is less fertile, and lacking some elements (terra nullius' perhaps?! Is there an instinctive need to 'improve' the soil, 'build' on it, and *make* it our 'home'? Our Science tells us the Land is species-rich by world standards. Yet, what good are these strange species?... except to learn which ones to avoid.

Unexpectedly perhaps, some of us have a love of 'an opal-hearted country' that is contrary to our 'normal' understanding of comfort, as in Dorothea McKellar's moving poem, *My Country*.

Today, our Civic Parks and private gardens are still planned with the same accepted wisdom of our forebears from 200 years ago. What would our parks and gardens be like if we planned with the knowledge, love and understanding expressed by those such as McKellar? Perhaps we could see gardens where Water Dragons were happy to be viewed by passers by; native birds such as King Parrots and Blue Wrens would grace us with their presence; soils would be rich with indigenous Nature - rather than sterilised with colourless pesticides and herbicides. Are we ready to live with this 'wide brown land?'; this land of far horizons, of droughts and flooding rains'?

Even though many of us still cling to the ethos of 'ordered woods and gardens', we in Newcastle have taken a brave new step. After 12 months of intensive planning, negotiating and networking, we have planted out

our Civic garden beds with Australian plants... admittedly, following the traditional styles of garden planning including colour and seasonal changes. However, with one exception: all the plants chosen for the design are 'Australian', including *Brachyscome* 'Pacific Breeze', Kangaroo Paws, 'designer' grasses and *Chrysocephalum* Silver & Gold'.

These new plants, carefully selected from the wilds of our 'foreign' land, are surprisingly happy with the local rainfall patterns. On closer inspection, there is more colour than just the flowers -there are birds... then suddenly, there are native butterflies. Interestingly, there are other insects around them too. Some are performing a special kind of 'buzz- pollination'¹, such as the golden-fur Teddy Bear Bee and the Blue-Banded Bee, whilst others are feeding on the pesty Aphis and scale around the other gardens. Wow! And these are only some of the species we find inhabiting our 'new' gardens. Maybe there is more to a 'water-wise' 'environmental' garden after all! Perhaps this is a new, wonderful way of life!

Garden of Maureen and Bill Mutton, Urambi Village

Jan Robbins, Ian Anderson and Shirley Pipitone ACT

Introduction

Although Maureen and Bill's garden includes exotics as well as natives, it is a most striking example of conscious design by landscape architect Karina Harris of Harris Hobbs Landscapes. In the garden, plants are valued for both their own beauty and their potential as design elements.

Background on Urambi Village

Urambi was initiated as a housing cooperative in 1973. It was awarded the Royal Australian Institute of Architects CS Daley Medal for Housing in 1977 and the ACT Chapter 25 Year award for maintaining the integrity of its original design. The style and colours of the 72 tri-level or courtyard houses are earthy (see <http://www.urangivillage.org.au/index.htm>) and cars are kept to the periphery. As the builder went broke before completion, the residents developed the site landscape themselves, leading to a somewhat eclectic design approach and lack of planning for succession. The plants are "predominantly native", although not necessarily local to the area.

Developing Maureen and Bill's garden

About five years ago, Bill and Maureen approached Karina Harris to redesign their garden. They were seeking:

- o Low maintenance (less work and more enjoyment from the garden leaving them free to travel)
- o Garden use for entertainment (e.g. a deck under the silver birches in the best sitting spot)
- o Sense of calm
- o Dappled shade
- o Year round interest in foliage and/or flowers
- o More light in the house (as trees and shrubs had become too big)
- o Bird attraction
- o Links to the outside landscape
- o Maintaining the architectural authenticity of the 1970s' house, and the existing arrangement of natives on the golf course edge and exotics in the inner courtyard area

Analysis of the back garden

Our first impression of the back garden was its sense of calm and sculptural look. Although small, its long narrow shape allowed it to be divided into several 'rooms' for different uses. The rooms were subtly separated by low walls, a row of mondo grass and the different heights of the ground surfaces. Colour is used to create coherence and unity: the low walls pick up a purple-grey colour in the bark of distant eucalypts on the golf course, and white and light grey appear in pavers, weeping birch, eucalypts, a sculpture, birdbath and large pots, and silvery foliage. The flowers are all white, blue or purple. The careful selection of multiple numbers of a limited number of plants also helps create an effect of unity. Use of the same bricks as the house as part of paving gives unity with the house and repetition of the long horizontal low walls also ties the overall design together and gives a sense of calm like a long soothing stroke.

The main focal point of the back garden is provided by two rectangular pots at the back of the garden framed between two tall distant eucalypts. The pots define a visual end to the courtyard and a clear separation of private versus the public space of the golf course below, while framing the view beyond. Looking from the edge of the golf course, the private space is delineated by steps offset from the main courtyard, and the solidly planted slope which includes a striking clump of *Correa glabra* plants, with their almost iridescent green foliage shining through. Looking from within the house the view to the golf course is framed at the bottom by the foliage tips and flower stems of a mass planting of dianellas.

The use of plants with strap-like leaves draping over garden borders, such as dianellas and lomandras, softens the straight line effect which would otherwise be conveyed by the straight borders of the garden beds. Several tall eucalyptus trees soften the roof line of the house as well as framing the vista into and out of the living room. The high brick wall separating the townhouse from a neighbour is softened by creepers which also create a cooling effect. Under one of the eucalyptus trees a small area set aside for tussock grasses has been something of a challenge to establish, but the owners are continuing to experiment with different grass species.

The front garden

The front garden is very new and distinctive with a large steel planter picking up the rusty reds of large rocks and eucalypt bark in summer, and harmonising with a terracotta water bowl and yellow ochre pavers which match the bricks of the communal spine path. Contrasting grey basalt walls at the bottom of the slope double as seating. These warm colours are cooled by the bright green tree ferns and birds-nest ferns outside the south-facing house window with *Viola hederacea* to pick up the purple of the front door, and blue-green lomandras on the bank.

The front garden is small but some distance from the communal spine path so the massive and angular walls, rocks, planter and stairs are not out of place but give a feeling of solidity and stability. The wide stairs are friendly to elders with walking frames and are well-lit. Plants are used mainly as shape elements - e.g. round ferns, linear lomandras and xanthorrhoeas. The mostly new *Banksia serrata* plants will contribute their sculptured trunks as a major vertical element linking the lower level of the house and paving with the upper level of much of the planting and the communal space.

Conclusion

Both front and back gardens fit well with the strong horizontals and earthy brick appeal of the 1970s' architectural style of the house. The garden is people friendly, with significant open paved areas for sitting or

walking which give an impression of spaciousness. The owners are well satisfied with the resulting garden, which is low maintenance, interesting at all seasons of the year and practical.

The visit finished in a delightful way with late morning tea and a chat in the Urambi Village Community Hall. We ambled along the curved footways linking the house to the hall and other houses in the village, passing through created bushland with wattles flowering, birds calling and no traffic noise.

Maureen and Bill's garden has made a significant contribution to the ambience of the village and we greatly appreciate the opportunity to visit.

Report of Canberra GDSG visit to Orana School Open Garden

Jan Robbins ACT

"Orana" is Canberra's Steiner school and incorporates biodynamic gardening as part of the school curriculum. The school was damaged in the Canberra bushfires in January 2003 and has rebuilt and extended since. To help sustainability, the landscaping incorporates water-harvesting, biodynamic gardening and native plantings.

For many of us, the highlight of the visit was a talk by Paul Totterdell of Clearwater Environmental Design Pty Ltd (see <http://www.biotech.kth.se/iobb/news/kenneth/whsheet-0604.pdf>) on his water-harvesting system for both stormwater and grey-water. Totterdell's systems are based on his own observations on natural water purification in streams in the Snowy mountains and on the work of Peter Andrews (reported in the book "Back from the brink: How Australia's landscape can be saved") on the way natural stream and floodplain systems worked in Australia prior to European occupation. Both men focus on underground collection, filtration and distribution of water, which is thus protected from evaporation. Stormwater and grey-water are initially collected at Orana in separate "dry creeks". These are underground water-conducting channels Totterdell describes as equivalent to the natural ancient river beds that underlie surface rivers in Australia.

We also enjoyed a talk about biodynamic gardening and permaculture, and a walk around to look at the native plantings of various ages. Many areas were being designed as "Learnsapes" with built-in exercises in counting and other skills, areas for games and socialising. Another interest was a large four row windbreak of local plants planted in 2004 after the bushfires to provide shelter from the prevailing hot and cold north-west winds. Criteria for plants were safety for the children and beneficial flowers, fruits or aesthetics. Despite the continuing drought, the windbreak had managed an 85% survival rate instead of the expected 40%. The wattles and eucalypts were doing particularly well, but callitris and casuarinas were also survivors.

Comment by Shirley Pipitone

I was away enjoying the ASGAP Conference and Tours so I missed the visit to Orana School. However I have heard Totterdell describe his system in another forum. Installing Totterdell's channels requires a great deal of excavation so I doubt his claim that his system can be implemented bit by bit around existing gardens by relatively inexperienced people. Anyone considering such a system should research the field beforehand. For example, John Hunt's book '*Creating An Australian Garden*' describes a simple swale system for minimising runoff and maximising water availability to plants rather than a full system of water collection and filtration. I am about to trial my own shallow channel system to divert stormwater from my garage roof to a section of my garden.

The greenhouse effect, climate change and Myall Park Botanic Garden

Lynette Reilly Qld

This article was first published in the Newsletter of the Myall Park Botanic Garden.

The greenhouse effect

Anyone who's ever come back to a closed car on a summer's day and been overwhelmed by the heat trapped inside, has experienced the greenhouse effect. The sun's rays bring heat in and as it can't all escape, the temperature rises. The same thing is happening, ever so slowly, with the Earth.

The mix of gases in our atmosphere has always trapped the sun's heat to some extent and so our air keeps us warm. We experience major temperature fluctuations as the seasons change and minor ones as the weather moves from 'high' pressure to 'low'. What is worrying now is that the mix of gases in our atmosphere is changing.

The amount of carbon dioxide and other gases (such as water vapour and methane) is increasing and this results in an increase in their greenhouse effect. This is cause for concern because although there have been fluctuations due to natural causes (seasons, volcanoes, etc) over the millennia, people's fuel-burning activities in the last few hundred years have put the natural cycles out of balance.

Climate change

Scientists and national leaders are currently addressing the causes of global warming, and all of us can do our bit to reduce energy use and slow the warming down. [We know about 'recycle, reduce, reuse' but growing plants helps too. A cover of plants (trees, shrubs and pasture grass) removes CO₂ from the air and helps sequester it in the ground.]

This slowing will not happen overnight and in the meantime, our climate will continue to change. Glaciers and polar icecaps will continue to melt and storms to increase in ferocity and frequency. Some parts of the country will get hotter and drier, a few tropical parts hotter and wetter.

Myall Park Botanic Garden and the plant diversity challenge

The future of humankind may depend on maintaining the diversity of plant species in the world - they are our natural resource for the future. Plant species which have not been 'Rare & Threatened' on the IUCN's Red List up till now, may well become so as the climate changes. Myall Park Botanic Garden, like other botanic gardens round the world, has several important roles to play:

- o Our collection of plants from the arid and semi-arid areas of Australia constitutes a 'plant insurance gene pool' in case their original sites become unsuitable for their growth. We must continue to keep them growing well.
- o These trees, shrubs, flowers and ground covers are hardy and may inspire visitors whose gardens become exposed to hotter, drier conditions.
- o Monitoring of local flora and collection of its seed is a role we have been playing for some time. The Millennium Seed Bank, managed by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, in the UK, already has some seed from our local plants.
- o Myall Park Botanic Garden will continue to be involved at the local, national and international levels to conserve natural resources and minimise biodiversity loss as the climate changes.

Lyn's comments on Myall Park Botanic Garden and plant diversity are relevant to botanic gardens and nature reserves everywhere. DS

I can only say that as we were waiting for the fires to arrive in January I was extremely grateful that we had gravel mulches close to the house and only wished they were more extensive. All plants will burn ultimately, admittedly some more fiercely and readily than others. It so happens that I am not especially enamoured of some of the recommended fire-retardant ones, especially to have them in the important areas close to the house. Some years ago we had a series of heavy frosts (-7s) and the group discussed the reputation of organic mulches in increasing the frost damage. I was frankly incredulous at first as I simply could not understand how this could be. However observations of frost all over organic mulch but not the gravel or bare earth made me think again. The local grape growers prefer bare earth in a late frost that will damage buds starting to burst. The explanation given is that the mulch conserves heat....so the warmth of the soil is kept in the soil, if the earth is bare the warmth radiates out and gives some protection. Nothing is as simple as it seems on first glance -.

More on mulch

Jeff Howes NSW

This is a good article on frost and I have extracted the advice on mulching from it. May be suitable for NL, if that topic is still going.

<http://www.global-garden.com.au/gardenfeature2.htm>

Manipulating soil

Firm, bare damp soil absorbs more heat during the day than one that has been mulched or is covered with vegetation. Of course, in Australia, mulch is essential during the hot, dry season, but Dr Peter May (Burnley College, University of Melbourne) suggests simply raking mulch away from plants in winter, and reapplying it in summer, for a best-of-both-worlds solution.

As Barbara has made clear after her experiences with fire, in any fire-prone area inorganic mulch such as sand, gravel or rocks is far preferable to organic mulch. Ultimately all organic mulches are flammable. DS

BOOKS

Books mentioned in or relevant to this Newsletter:

'Australian garden design' by **Ellis Stones** 1971 (Macmillan)

'Creating an Australian Garden' by **John Hunt** 1991 (Kangaroo Press)

'Back from the brink: How Australia's landscape can be saved' by **Peter Andrews** 2006 (ABC Books)

There's also a recently published book: **'Small by Design'** by **Paul Urquhart** 2007 (New Holland) It would be good to have a review (or reviews) of this book, especially as the topic of small gardens is one that members have thought deserved more consideration by our Study Group.

SNIPPETS

'Australian Horticulture' October 2007

I find each issue of *'Australian Horticulture'* has at least one article of interest, i.e. the regular one written by Gwen Elliot. Sometimes that is the only one concerning Australian plants but in the October 2007 issue there are 6 articles of interest, nearly all about plants - a welcome increase.

18

- Gwen's is an enticing one on the beautiful eremophilas (the genus of the moment for dry areas?).
- Melanie Kinsey has one on a visit to Alice Springs with a description of the Olive Pink Botanic Garden and a mention of the Alice Springs Desert Park - both well worth a visit.
- Melanie also writes about the *Solanum* genus, including an attractive species seen in inland Australia.
- In Queensland, 3 cultivars of *Ptilotus nobilis* have just been released and they look wonderful. They are now being planted at the Roma Street Parklands in Brisbane and Mt Coot-tha B.G. west of Brisbane.
- Ozbreed is releasing more Australian plants among its range of tough landscape plants.
- Lastly there is a report on the Australian Landscape Conference.

As part of a presentation I gave recently as a special event for the Open Garden Scheme, I spoke briefly about plant classification. For this I prepared a summary of selected genera from 16 dicotyledon families (5 VIFs (very important families) and 11 QIFs (quite important families)). The idea was to help people unfamiliar with botanical names by giving them a framework to work with. It was an interesting exercise and I found it helped me too.

Please let me know if you'd like a copy of my summary, either sent by email or in the next NL. DS

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

MEETINGS

A meeting at the ASGAP Conference

Diana Snape Vic

We were able to hold a short meeting of GDSG group members at the ASGAP Conference, though unfortunately no time had been allocated for such meetings. About 20 members were present, including current Branch leaders Chris Larkin (Melbourne) and Shirley Pipitone (Canberra). There was also Gordon Rowland, the first leader of the Sydney Branch, who had been a speaker at the Conference. In addition there were representatives from Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and the NE Victoria Branch. It was good to meet every one in person and hear their different points of view and different approaches to the work of the Study Group. Several potential new members also attended. There was no grand plan for the meeting - it was just a rare and welcome chance for us to get to know members from other areas and put faces to some of the names we see in Newsletters.

North East Vic Branch meetings

Barbara Buchanan Vic

Next meeting: Saturday November 3rd at 10.30 for 11am at **Glenda and Bernie Datson's**

Detailed directions available.

Glenda has put a lot of thought as well as plants into her garden since we first saw it (Sept 05). Because she has been very selective in her plantings it has taken time to acquire them so much of the garden is still very young but I am confident she will convey her vision to us and we can check it in future years.

Report of meeting on August 12th.

With so many of you tripping, or otherwise unable to make it, we were indeed a very small group at Freida Andrews and John Lloyd's exciting straw bale house at Chesney Vale. I hope some of you may be able to call in individually, and record any ideas on garden development you may have. John and Freida have prepared plans and also their Vision statement, guidelines as to what they hope the finished product will resemble. Seldom do we have such a well prepared introduction to a project, which follows the pattern they followed

with the house. John built the house himself with expert help where appropriate and they are now ready to tackle the grounds.

Before we go into the garden, a word about the house - they had just heard that it has been awarded an Architecture Prize which seems only natural when you see it and all its environmentally friendly features. From its siting on the block, snuggling into the saddle on the hill, the windows with stunning views from every one, stone feature wall, . . . to worm compost waste system which includes the sewerage, every possible detail seems to have been considered. The architect must have thought all his Xmases had come when he met such receptive and well prepared clients. John had prepared both a plan and a Vision statement.

There is one problem with living on a hill, the wind. (Jan Hall also cops it on the flat). So John has started wind break planting with all indigenous plants. The wallabies have caused considerable damage, but next spring should see them start to get above the danger line. The only direction without extensive views is to the north, luckily when their land runs out their non-resident neighbour is leaving his property in a natural state. So apart from right next to the house only indigenous material will be added to create extra interest. Some of this is planting itself, great clumps of *Stypandra glauca* have just arrived. Several large rock outcrops provide wonderful natural features, but do suggest the soil is very shallow there. Glenda suggested scooping the soil out at an appropriate spot to make a natural bird bath.

To the east there is a glimpse of Lake Mokoan and a rocky ridge making a short stroll to a lookout point. The rocks are extremely colourful. This is another area where little beautification is needed, only shelter belts for wind and to screen an intrusive neighbour. The land slopes down to the south and west where the prevailing winds come. Some 5 years ago when the building started a flat area was scraped out for a tennis court. It is still known as the tennis court but John and Freida have decided not to continue with it, which poses the question, how best to use this space? In another situation I could see a chance for something very formal, say a parterre, but in such a natural context, what are the options? Similar conditions apply to a courtyard to be built next to the house.

Freida is keen to have a Grevillea collection, but the thought hit me since, it is an ideal place for eremophilas and eremophilas would be ideal plants to use. With the lake alongside the birds are abundant and grevilleas and eremophilas will pull them in for most of the year. I will also suggest lots of dodoneas, so many of them have bright green foliage even at the height of summer.

There was so much else to see and discuss, my little poser re a water feature to view from the kitchen window in Benalla seemed dull, but I did get two excellent comments. Firstly if I use a half wine barrel, it will pay to fill it with rocks so that birds have a landing platform breaking the water surface. Secondly, how about some (cheap) pot saucers sunk in the ground? (I have since realised cats in an urban area might spoil this idea, which I have actually used here at Myrrhee). No posers this week apart from the tennis court.

I do urge those of you who can, to try and visit John and Freida for yourself,

Melbourne Branch meetings

Chris Larkin Vic

Report of Melbourne meeting March 10

The meeting on Sunday September 9th at Glaxo gardens was postponed until some time next year. Many

people had made other commitments for that weekend and had made apologies for the meeting, so it was felt that it was inappropriate to visit Glaxo when only a small number of members could attend.

Melbourne End of Year Meeting: Sunday November 25, 12 noon at Karwarra Gardens

We propose to have a picnic lunch at the gardens which we have not visited for a number of years. Earlier this year Marilyn Gray was seconded to compile a flora listing for the shire and so the garden has been under new management. How have these gardens been affected by having a different person at the helm? Come and see for yourself. BYO everything to enjoy a picnic lunch; meet at 12 at the front gate.

We hope that many Melbourne members will be able to come along to this final get-together for the year.

Please let Chris know you are coming by ringing her

Canberra Branch meetings

Shirley Pipitone ACT

Meeting reports

Please see articles on pages 13 and 15.

Next meeting: Monday 19 November: 10am - 12.30pm at Linda Johnson's garden,

The meeting will be mostly social, with some discussion about our plans for next year and we may have some suggestions for Linda's garden.

February 2008 meeting of the Canberra Branch

Monday 18 February: 10am - 12.30pm at Els Wynen's garden,

Els has a small

section of her garden which needs revitalising.

In **March 08** we will join the Sydney Branch for a tour of the Orange/Blayney district and our next meeting after that will be in May.

Sydney Branch meetings

Jo Hambrett has recently returned home after being away for 6 weeks

Sydney / Canberra Branch meeting March 2008

Caroline Gunter NSW

Shirley Pipitone and I have found some exciting existing and proposed gardens to visit in the central west high country around Blayney, Orange, Milthorpe and Molong. These visits are being planned for the weekend **28, 29, 30 March 08** (or soon after). I'm hoping we can make it a long weekend by starting on Friday as there's lovely country to drive through, wineries and eateries with cold climate specialities to try and possibly wild food to gather, not to mention great gardens and enthusiastic gardeners to meet.

As this is the tail end of summer there most probably will be silvered drought landscapes to contrast with our designed gardens. The weather can be pleasant by day and nicely cool at night. I've made temporary bookings at a central motel for us to have easy access to restaurants so will need to know who's interested as soon as possible to confirm. We'd love any country members to join us. If you are interested, please contact Caroline Gunter as soon as possible - even though you haven't got your new diary yet! Our phone keeps a record of callers if we are not home and I'll ring you back.

Oct - Nov 08

We are also looking at a weekend trip to **Gordon Rowland's** property on the North Coast.

New members

A warm welcome to the following new members of the Study Group. We hope you enjoy your membership and look forward to sharing ideas with you.

Kerry Artis

Pascale Jacq

Renewals

Welcome back to all renewing members too!

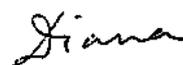
Michael Bates, Judy Baghurst, Dorothy Cassidy, Dianne Clark, Meredith Farley, Beverley Fox, Carol Guard, Mary Graham, Marilyn Gray, Cheree Hall, Jo Hambrett, Charles Hrubos, Margaret James, Joan Knight, Diana Leggat & Martin Rigg, Sue McColl, Diedre Morton, Andy & Janet Russell, Doug & Margaret Mclver, Kris Schaffer, Celia Sharpley, Ross Smyth-Kirk, Philip Tow, Leigh Tuck, Christine Wadey, Jeff Wallace, Pat & Jim Watson. APS Armidale & District, APS Tasmania, APS Keilor Plains, APS Warnambool & District, WA Wildflower Society.

September and October were extremely busy for me (I'm getting old and not used to it). Roughly in order there were: attending lectures organized by the Friends of Cranbourne Botanic Gardens; the weekend Landscape Conference in Melbourne; our weekend opening for the Open Garden Scheme; helping a friend with a new garden; the ASGAP Conference in Newcastle; a weekend with family in Sydney; a few days with a walking group at Shoalhaven Heads. I gave a talk to an APS Group, a presentation at Heidi Museum of Modern Art and two seminars (held at our place) for the Open Garden Scheme on the topic 'Right Australian plant, right place'. (It's nice to be retired.) All the events were most enjoyable (especially when I wasn't involved in talking) and I've mentioned in this Newsletter some of the stimulating new ideas I encountered.

Brian and I worked hard for our Open Garden weekend and its success was ensured by a sunny weekend and a good article in a popular newspaper. 950 adults (and at least 50 children) visited, making approximately 1000 pairs of feet. Visitors did virtually no damage at all (though our paths weren't designed for that number!) and showed great interest and enthusiasm, asking about plants and also our water tanks, watering and mulch. To avoid labelling plants, we had prepared a display board with photos of more than 100 flowers (plus a few of foliage) taken in our garden, mainly in winter and spring. The photos showed both scientific and common names and there were always a number of people looking at them. The weekend was a great experience and people were very appreciative but after six openings it will be the last time for us. We now plan to give the garden a major overhaul so it will require even less watering in the future, which in Melbourne is looking as though it will be very dry. (Will our small fern garden disappear?)

I'd encourage anyone with a suitable garden to consider having it in the Open Garden Scheme. It's a challenge to try to have the garden looking its best - and then don't miss the opportunity to take photos of it (before the weekend). We always need photos of attractive garden scenes and vistas. Having the garden open is a very rewarding experience for the owner; people can really be inspired by visiting our Australian gardens and it's helpful for a variety of different ones to be open.

Best wishes to all members for a happy and peaceful Christmas and summer holiday season.



Diana Snape

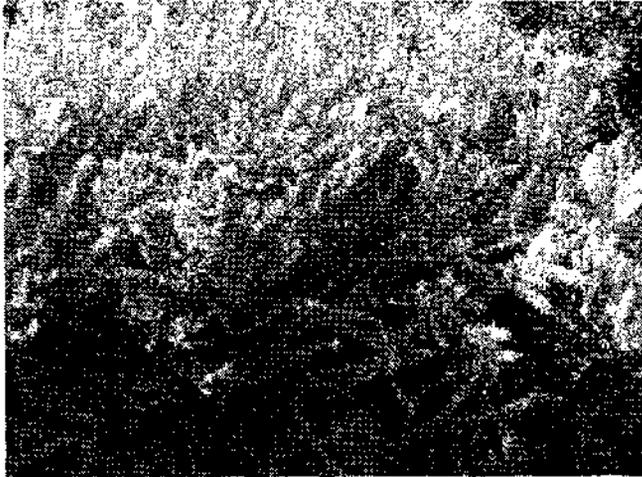
Photographs

Examples of hedges and coppicing - Diana Snape

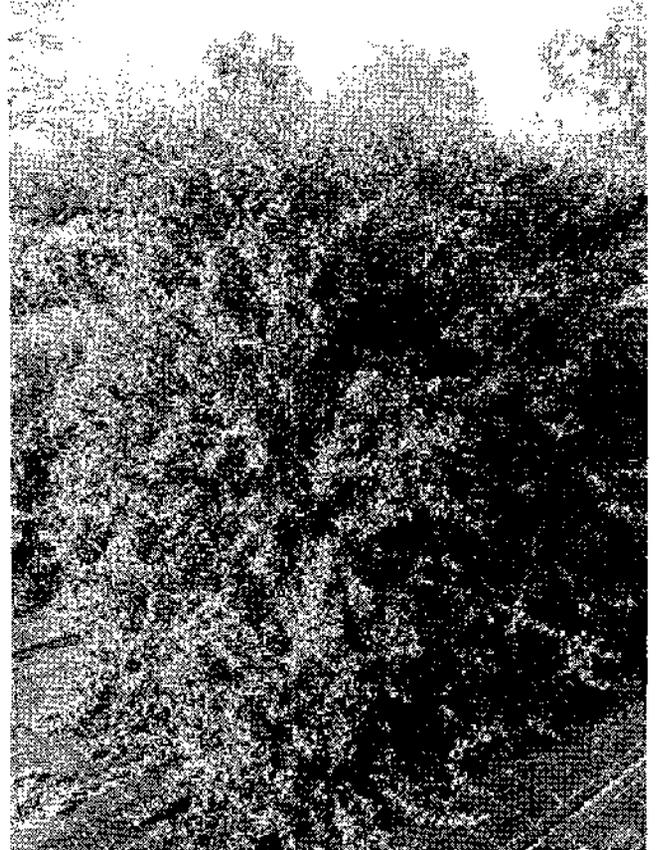
Hardenbergia violacea 'Candy Wrapper' - Rosalind Walcott

I'm sorry that black and white does not do justice to the photos.

Acacia acinacea hedge



Bursaria spinosa hedge



Eucalyptus pulverulenta 'Baby Blue'



Hardenbergia violacea 'Candy Wrapper'

