

ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS

GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP

NEWSLETTER No. 15

November 1996

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

Dear Members,

Well, we survived and really enjoyed the "Australia's Open Garden Scheme" weekend and would actually recommend to keen members that they should consider becoming involved in the scheme. There was a lot of work beforehand, largely because our garden had been a little neglected in the last year or so, but it was an excellent incentive to catch up with all those deferred jobs. We greatly appreciated the help of GDSG members and other friends over the weekend and were most impressed by the negligible amount of damage done by 800 people walking through our small garden. People showed genuine interest and wanted to talk and ask questions about the garden, plants and design. Many said they had grown Australian plants in the 60s or 70s, then lost interest as they became woody or straggly (the old story), but they thought they would now start again. So I think it was a worthwhile effort and it was nice to meet other GDSG and SGAP members. Peter and Wilma Garnham enjoyed a similar experience when their garden was open the same weekend.

Our trip to Western Australia enabled me to visit a small number of W.A. gardens, mainly in and around Perth. Our time there was too short and I did not meet as many GDSG members as I'd hoped I would. It's a very different scene where magnificent Kangaroo Paws grow like weeds and blue masses of *Lechenaultia biloba* abound in many gardens. Significant factors were the soil (often pure sand), summer heat and lack of summer water - together quite a challenge. At Gelorup (just south of Bunbury) we were delighted to see the fascinating, evolving garden of Shirley Fisher, one of our members - also a magnificent College garden nearby where Shirley has been involved for many years. I'll write a little about some of these W.A. gardens for the next Newsletter.

Then back to Melbourne just in time for the Landscape Australia Conference, held the last weekend in October. The theme 'The Natural Garden' was addressed by both Australian and overseas speakers, who explored the meaning of the terms 'nature' and 'natural'. I found it extremely interesting (and also good for meeting up with GDSG members in the audience). After that came trying to catch up with mail and this Newsletter, so my apologies for any overdue correspondence. Please always let me know if you feel you've been neglected or if a contribution for the Newsletter doesn't appear. I have a horror of this happening! I don't handle the paper warfare very efficiently.

INDEX

2	Membership and Treasurer's report - Peter Garnham
2	CORRESPONDENCE extracts
3	A gentle colour scheme - Shirley Pipitone
3	Doryanthes and crinum - Betty Rymer
3	GDSG Newsletter Index
4	Australian Plant Garden Network - Marilyn Gray
4	GARDEN DESIGNS
4,5	A formal garden using indigenous flora - Mark Burns
4,7	A Blue Mountains garden design (in need of a landscaper) - Maxine Armitage
6	Pioneer Museum, Mulwala - Jan Hall
8	Integration of Australian plants in a large formal garden: Louise Gore's site - Pam Hailstone
9	Try Glowing Dodonaeas in the Garden - Jeanette Closs
9	BOOKS & MAGAZINES - Barbara Buchanan, Geoff Simmons, Jo Hambrett, Ian Percy
9	"Garden Design for Small Spaces" by Anne Houghton Heyning - reviewed by Ian Percy
10	"A Pattern Language" by Christopher Alexander et al - Jo Hambrett
10	Articles from "The Garden" - Barbara Buchanan
12	CD-ROM - Australian Tropical Plants: Volume 1, Version 2 - reviewed by Colleen Keena
13	Survey of landscape designers and gardeners
13	DESIGN IDEAS
13	Article on Joan Barrett's garden
13	Imitation and Imagination - Geoff Simmons

2

- 14 Formal/informal - Alik Zouliou, Geoff Long
- 14 Garden design over time in a temperate climate - Diana Snape
- 15 Defining the elements of Australian garden design - Grahame Durbidge
- 15 An Australian Landscape Design Ethos - Bruce Mackenzie (Extracts from an article in *Landscape Australia*)
- 16 Awkward plants - Geoff Simmons
- 17 The 1996 NSW Garden and Wildflower Spectacular - Betty Rymer
- 18 GDSG MEETINGS
- 18 First S.A. branch meeting - Margaret Lee
- 18 Sydney meetings - report of October meeting at Mt Annan Botanic Garden - Jo Hambrett
- 20 NE Victoria Branch meetings - report of August meeting - Barbara Buchanan & Margaret Garrett
- 20 Melbourne meetings - report of November meeting - Diana Snape
- 22 Slide and print library
- 22 New members & membership renewals

MEMBERSHIP & TREASURER'S REPORT

Peter Gamham Vic

Membership -1996/7 subscriptions -180, Since many of these subscriptions cover two members, our actual membership is well over 200.

Financial statement - quarter ending 30/9/96

<u>Receipts</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
Members subscriptions	940-00	Photocopying Newsletters	268-40
Donations	55-00	Stationery, stamps & postage	170-34
Past Newsletters	45-00	Signs (Sydney branch)	100-00
Bank interest	<u>4-60</u>	Photocopying (Sydney branch)	18-70
		Computer software - slide library	185-00
		Petty cash - misc. expenditure	<u>50-00</u>
	<u>\$1044-60</u>		<u>\$692-44</u>

Balance in bank (30/9/96): \$1866-67

CORRESPONDENCE extracts

(I'm sorry one or two of these missed inclusion in an earlier Newsletter. DS)

"I am involved in a "Creative Village" project at Loch Sport, E.Gippsland Lakes area. This is through the Victorian Arts Council - I am part of a team of four who visit the town, meet with locals including school children for two days and then interpret their wishes in an illustrated Master Plan and report. Others in the team are an architect and two artists/sculptors. Catherine Drew has previously worked on these projects I believe. The natural vegetation here is lovely, especially the Banksia serrata. Their main problem is mosquitoes and sandflies! They say the mosses shelter in the tea tree canopies." Rosemary Wianion Vic

Such projects are important initiatives which will be of great benefit to communities. We'll look forward to hearing how Rosemary's goes. (If you visit, take the RID!) DS

"I suggest that one of the aims of our group might be to promote group discussion on garden design between amateur and professional members. Perhaps the ultimate aim would be to add to and expand the body of knowledge of designing with Australian plants - perhaps to eventually publish a series of booklets or even glossy paperbacks on designing gardens on the coast, on Hawkesbury sandstone, on the Cumberland Plain, on the Western Plains, in the Blue Mountains, etc, using photographs of existing members' gardens or any person outside the group willing to allow us access to their garden. These gardens should, of course, be well designed using largely Australian plants. Which raises another point; who will determine what is a well-designed garden?"

I believe that publicising our existence is crucial to the group's continued existence and expansion, and consequent expansion of the idea that designing gardens using Australian plants is the only ecologically and economically sustainable garden design solution to today's environmental problems." Eva Flegman NSW (from a letter to Jo Hambrett)

"Perhaps those present (at the Sydney meeting) could add to Peter Lawson's list (of commonly used and successful native plant species) for Sydney gardens. Perhaps we could add attractive companion plants - both Australian and exotic, their particular needs, their acceptance of mixed fertilizers when grouped with exotics, their drought tolerance and ability to cope with extra watering. Perhaps this enlarged list would produce better supplies from nurseries and more variety in today's massed planting scenes. I'm enthusiastically compiling my list already." Caroline Gunter NSW (from a letter to Jo Hambrett)

"I do enjoy reading the Newsletter and am disappointed that distance has made it impossible to attend the Sunday meetings. Work is very busy presently and I am glad that there is a definite sniff of spring in the air - there is so much to do outside and the rains have been quite restricting. This side of the divide I've emptied a total of 350mm (14in) out of the rain gauge in just 9 weeks! Keep up the wonderful work with the Newsletter." Jennifer Clancy Vic

3

"With reference to Jeff Howes' comment, I used the word grand as I felt that plants (doryanthes) that grow to 2 metres diameter and about the same height probably fit the large garden. Crinums are not so large, probably 1m x 1m in my case, but lend themselves to massing in clumps or rows, I shall send a photo sometime to show what space they occupy." **Geoff Simmons** Qld

I'd add that the huge leaves and flower spikes (when they flower) make doryanthes arresting and fitting for a garden on a grand scale - I always picture Gynea Lilies at home among tall Sydney eucalypts and angophoras. However, with careful design, one (or two or three ?) doryanthes with compatible strong-foliaged plants can look fine in a small garden. From memory Betty Maloney has used one or two in her garden. DS

"We had an interesting week on Kangaroo Island led by Rodger and Gwen Elliot, following each other around the wet roads like a line of echidnas. A few vignettes that I appreciated there were:

- a naturalistic line of clean trunked *Eucalyptus* sp. stretching across a paddock with *Xanthorrhoea semiplana* in groups underneath. It looked simple and eye catching.
- *Xanthorrhoea semiplana*, a wonderful structural plant, skirted by groups of *Petrophile multisecta*, the rounded cones a soft foil to those long leaf spikes.
- the wind swept 'rock garden' of Cape du Couedic with neat rounded low shrubs and ground cover species such as *brachyloma*, *myoporum*, *olearia*, *grevillea*, *correa* and Early Nancy, between flat limestone rocks and shallow rounded pools." **Catherine Drew** Vic

I have just come across another Mirabel Osier article in 'Gardens Illustrated', describing her own new town garden and how she has been influenced by all the French gardens she saw and is clipping furiously, but among others "12 eucalypts flanking the path into airy globes no higher than 4 feet". "Two *E. gunnii* at the entrance to the garden have turned up their toes over winter" - whether these are part of the 12 is not clear, they are mentioned to indicate all does not necessarily go according to plan and there are losses. I think I will write to her and enquire more closely about the eucs, I'm quite intrigued." **Barbara Buchanan** Vic

"Please accept my apologies for any lack of contribution to such an exciting and interesting Study Group. I eagerly await your Newsletters - and can't wait till I have more time to really get back to my first love - plants and gardening! Keep it going!" **Mardi Simons** Vic

"At the present the Illawarra Grevillea Park is looking brilliant with so much out in flower. I am not sure how it is going to keep up till the end of September when we are going to have an Official Opening of the rainforest area. The weather was perfect for the first open weekends in March during Heritage week. 420 visitors came through the gates.Over the past few months we have mulched a large area of the garden beds at the front of the Park. Those beds that have been mulched look fantastic and this summer the weed problem will have been reduced dramatically.Earlier this year we had metal dust and most of the timber donated to us to finish off the paths. Now that the paths are properly defined they have definitely set this area off." **Ray Brown** NSW, Hon. President The **Illawarra Grevillea Park Society** Inc.

The GDSG supports The Illawarra Grevillea Park Society with a donation. I haven't managed to get there yet - it would be good to hear comments from any members who get a chance to visit the Park. DS

A gentle colour scheme

Shirley Pipitone ACT

I've been too busy to even get out into my garden very often, except to look. One of the things I have been doing is renovating my house. Now I am planning the plants to fill the new garden window in my bathroom. It faces north-west and is too hot for most "indoor plants". I am planning mostly blue and grey-green foliaged plants with blue or mauve flowers - mostly natives - to contrast gently with the pale beige of the room and the interesting texture of imitation travertine tiling! There isn't a lot of space but I'm hoping to squeeze in a smallish dianella or two, *Erbstemon nodiflorus*, *Dampiera rosmarinifolia*, *Lechenaultia biloba*, *Rhodanthe anthemoides* and *Scaevola* 'Mauve Clusters', many of which won't normally grow in Canberra of course. And I plan to have an English lavender, if I can keep its height under control. While the colours will be similar, there will be form and foliage contrast, and plants spilling everywhere.

Doryanthes and crinums

Betty Rymer NSW

I have a number of Doryanthes - both species. The local *O. excelsa* growing among large sandstone rocks are now forming a background as I look up the hill to a newly planted area of rainforest. I find this a very pleasing effect. These Gynea Lilies were grown from seed in 1981 and two flowered in 1993. You may be interested to know I have a white Doryanthes. I obtained seed from the wild plant in 1983 and it flowered in 1995. The original plant I believe is now in Canberra Botanic Garden.

We have an easement off the road and collect a lot of water from a nursery opposite, so I have many crinums growing along its banks. They get very large, have beautiful flowerheads and then the fruits form and the stem bends over and the fruits drop to the ground and germinate - so always many plants around. Again a plant very useful if you have space.

GOSG Newsletter Index

A reminder that this is now available free to members who send me a stamped self-addressed business envelope, the same size that the Newsletter is sent in (no smaller). DS

4

Australian Plant Garden Network

Marilyn Gray Vic

For some time it has concerned Rodger Elliot and myself that the staff of public gardens growing Australian plants operate in relative isolation. Each of these gardens is in a different area providing a unique set of growing conditions for a broad range of plants. Problems encountered may be unique or common. There is great potential for learning, exchange of information, experiences and plant material, and for mutual support. These gardens also provide an excellent opportunity to educate the public about Australian plants and their successful horticulture. One of the largest drawbacks is the amount of money and expertise available to most gardeners for promotion. Most staff are 'hands on' and do not have the time to allocate to some of these areas.

Some Australian plant gardens are involved with the study of specific plants or groups of plant, or grow plants indigenous to a specific area. Others use Australian plants to aesthetically landscape institutions, where the institution is the major focus causing the garden to suffer from a lack of public awareness. Most public gardens specialise in exotic species, with a few Australian plants randomly scattered. Some of these gardens are now expanding to include areas displaying their locally indigenous species.

In July last year Rodger and I invited the managers/horticulturists of nearly 20 public gardens to meet at Karwarra Garden to discuss the possibility of forming an association to mutually benefit ourselves and the gardens we work in. Out of this meeting was born the fledgeling Australian Plant Garden Network. Several meetings later we have developed a group of aims, decided on the above name, formed a committee and finally held our first general meeting where business was kept to a minimum and the exchange of information became the important part of the day.

Our numbers have grown to 35 gardens Victoria-wide. These are spread from Sunraysia Oasis Botanic Garden in Gol Gol (they consider themselves Victorians) to Nyerimilang and Orbost Rainforest Information Centre in East Gippsland. Members range from botanic gardens to educational institutions, the Zoo (take a look at the Australian plantings as well as the animals next time you visit), nursery and private gardens. Diana Snape represents the GDSG.

The criteria for membership includes public accessibility to gardens on a regular basis and the intentional use of a substantial number of Australian plants or incorporation of a section, often local species, within the garden. We are keen to encourage some of the botanic gardens which currently only have a small section of Australian plants to increase this percentage and so reap the educational and promotional benefits.

If you are interested to know more about the Network or believe that your garden fits the criteria please speak to Rodger Elliot, Diana Snape or Marilyn Gray. Unfortunately we only have the resources to include Victorian gardens at the moment but GDSG members interstate are welcome to contact us.

GARDEN DESIGNS

A formal garden using indigenous flora

Mark Burns Vic

This is a copy of an assignment that I completed for Geoff Olive & Ruth Beilin (both SGAP members) earlier this year as part of the degree course at Burnley. We were asked to design and cost out a small garden suitable for an inner-suburban backyard, preferably with a theme that was sympathetic to a chosen house style. I do not have a spare photo of the house I used as a backdrop for this design; however any of the modern style townhouses with strong geometric shapes (both linear and circular) and which use both a mixture of strong bold colours and earthy tones would be similar in style to the house this design is based on.

I have designed a formal rear garden using a selection of Melbourne's indigenous flora. It is for this reason that I have sent you a copy of my plan and the accompanying assignment (including the projected costs). I thought the plant selection and design elements may be of some interest for fellow readers. The only plant selection that Geoff questioned was the use of *Leucophyta brownii* as a clipped hedge. He felt that long term the increased bushiness would encourage fungal attack. If you or any of your readers could recommend a silver foliated indigenous plant that can be clipped into a hedge, I would love to hear about it.

Mark's plan is reproduced on page 5, omitting some details.

A Blue Mountains garden design (needing a landscaper)

Maxine Armitage NSW

This is a garden plan 1 devised earlier this year for a fellow Blue Mountains resident. The backyard is quite large, slopes down to a natural watercourse and backs onto a reserve. The owners wanted a garden design which would capture the essence of the local temperate closed forests, so predominantly local species were used. They were also very keen on a raised walkway through the 'rainforest'.

I am sending you my plan for two reasons:-

- it might be of general use to Study Group members
- my client has been unable to locate a landscaper willing to follow the plan. For some reason they insist on using non-indigenous species (even exotics), or they have a thing about building pergolas.

The site has already been surveyed and a *contour* diagram is available. Even soil tests have been done. Perhaps there is a member of the Study Group who is qualified to do, and excited by, this project. The site of the garden is Faulconbridge in the Lower Blue Mountains, NSW.

If somebody is interested would they contact me

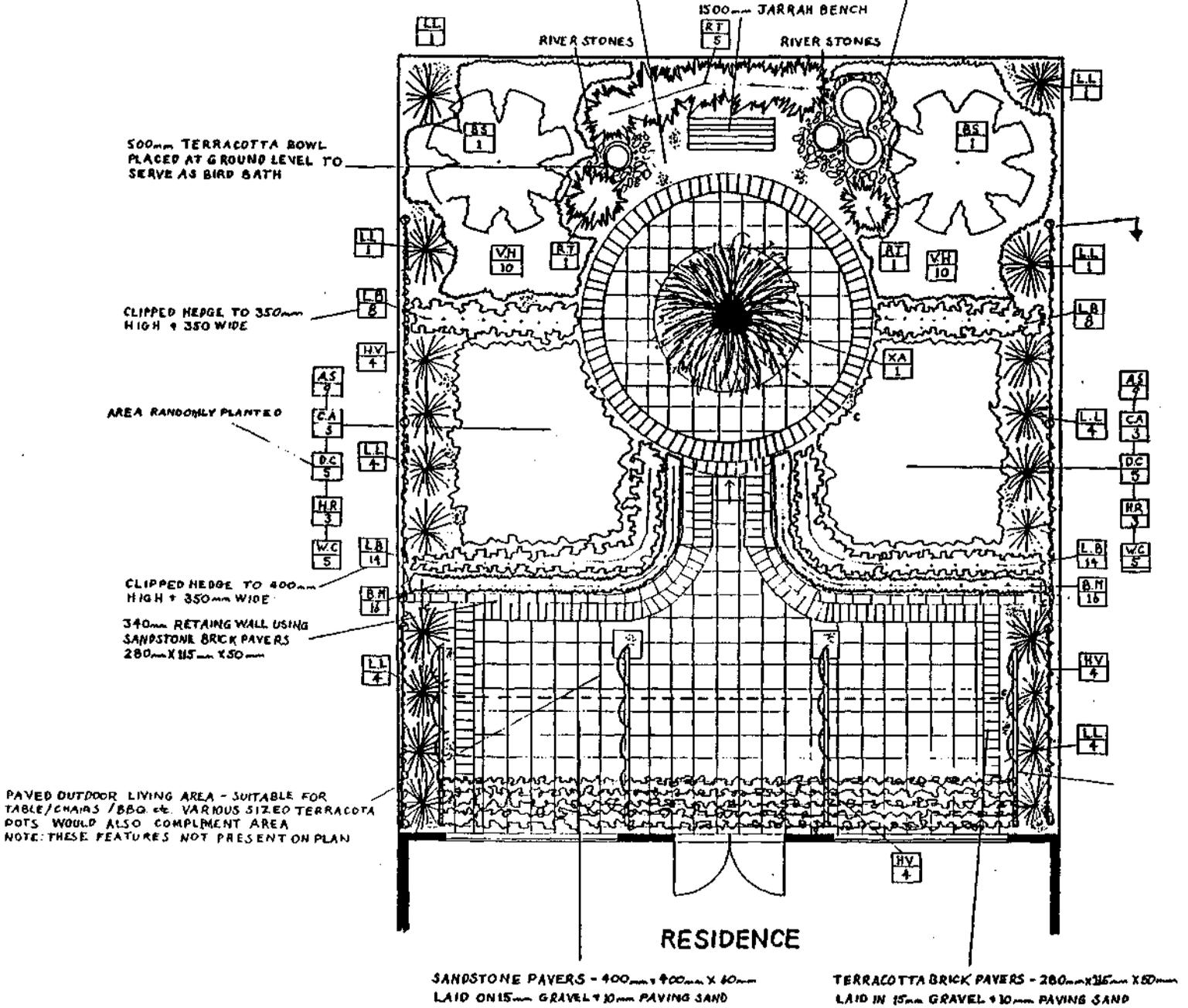
Maxine's plan is reproduced (much reduced) on page 7.

(A reminder that Maxine prepared our index, mentioned earlier in this Newsletter (page). Maxine also does book indexes, if any prospective author has this need. DS)



2x LARGE TERRACOTA URNS SET IN RIVER STONES. WATER WILL BE PUMPED INTO THE LARGEST URN FROM UNDERNEATH SPILLING INTO THE 2nd URN + ONTO A LARGE TERRACOTA BOWL. WATER WILL OVERFLOW INTO RIVERSTONES + PROCESS WILL BE REPEATED

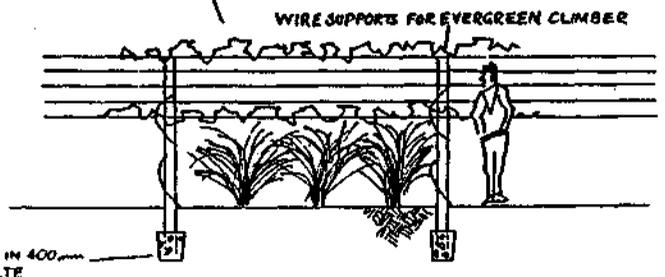
WASHED RIVER SAND MULCH 35mm DEEP- TO BE USED IN ALL PLANTED AREAS



DRAWN : MARK BURNS

SPECIES	QTY	SIZE	SUPPLY
AS- ARTHROPODIUM STRICTUM	18	02m x 04m	15cm POTS
BM- BRACHYSCONE MULTIFIDA	32	09m x 1m	15cm POTS
BS- BURSARIA SPINOSA	2	26m x 6m	20cm POTS
CA- CRYSOCEPHALUM APICULATUM	6	3m x 7m	15cm POTS
DC- DICHELACHNE CRINITA	10	5m x 3m	75mm TUBES
HV- HARDENBERGIA VIOLACEAE	12	1.5m x 1.5m	15cm POTS
HR- HELICHRYSUM RUTIDOLE PIS	6	35m x 75m	15cm POTS
LB- LEUCOPHYTA BROWNII	28	5m x 1m	15cm POTS
LL- LOMANDRA LONGIFOLIA	20	1m x 1m	15cm POTS
RT- RESTIO TETRAPHYLUS (DWARF FORM)	7	6m x 5m	15cm POTS
VH- VIOLA HEDERACEAE	20	15m x 1.5m	25cm POTS
WC- WAHLBERGIA COMMUNIS	10	3m x 15m	15cm POTS
XA- XANTHORRHOEA AUSTRALIS	1	2.5m x 23m	BAGGED

80mm ROUND ALUMINIUM POLES 2000mm HIGH + SET IN 100mm DEEP CONCRETE. POLES 3500mm APART WITH FIVE LENGTHS OF WIRE ATTACHED AT 200mm SPACINGS FROM THE TOP OF POLE + RUNNING THE FULL LENGTH OF POLES. EVERGREEN CLIMBER TO BE TRAINED AROUND EACH POLE MAINTAINING A SINGLE STEM + LEAFLESS APPEARANCE BELOW THE LOWEST LENGTH OF WIRE. POLES TO BE POWDER COATED IN SAME COLOR AS WINDOW FRAMES AT THE FRONT OF RESIDENCE



FENCE SCREEN

Pioneer Museum, Mulwala

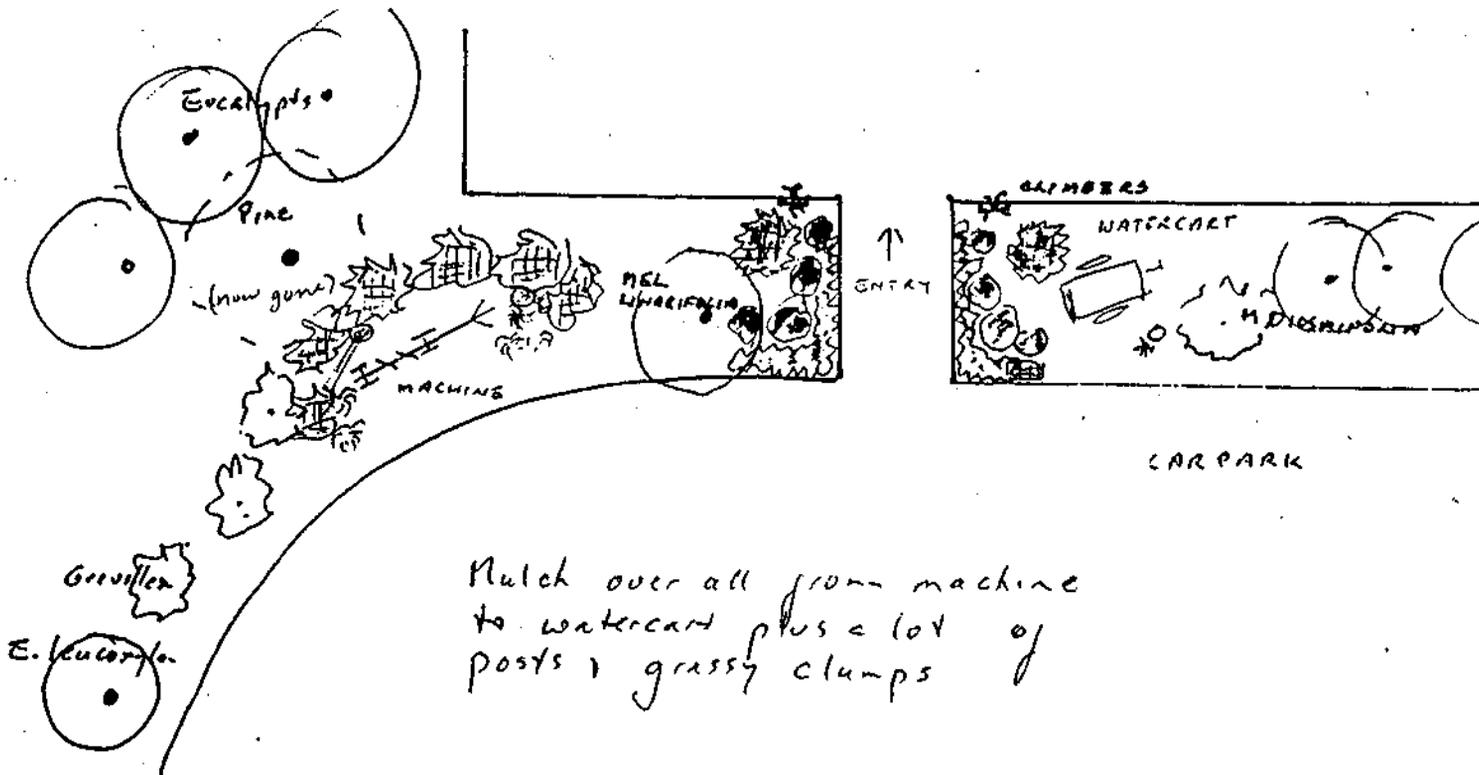
Jan Hall Vic

Enclosed is a copy of a plan I did recently for the local Historical Society to help them with Ideas for the approaches to their stark brick Museum. The site has some established trees and shrubs planted by the previous owners and my brief was to keep it simple (virtually NO cost).

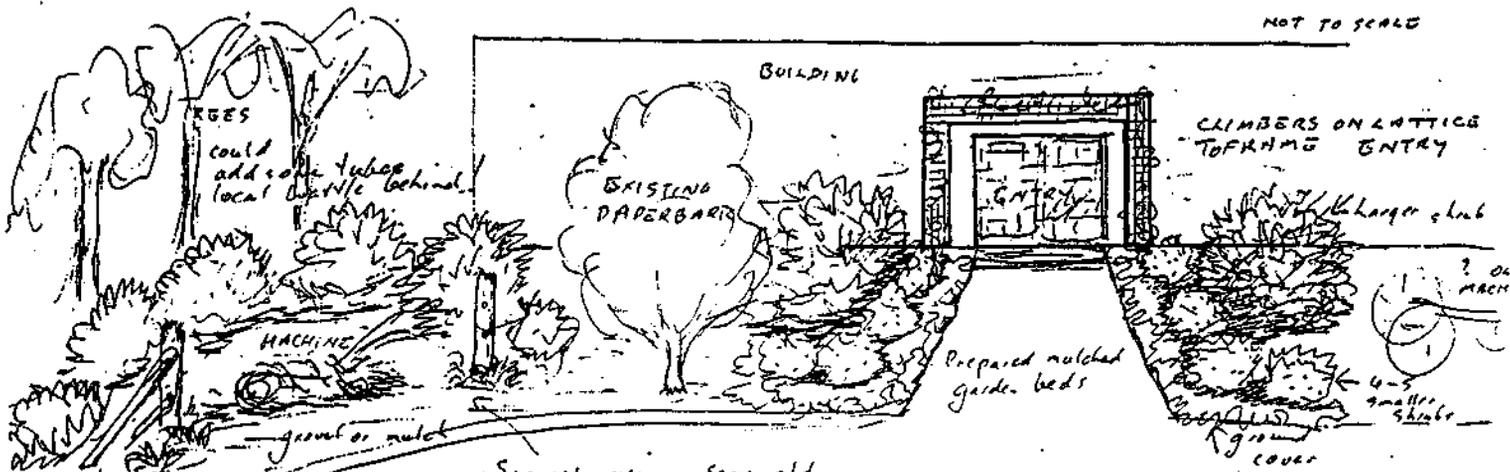
Now I'm quite amused to see what they have done. Some old machinery was to be placed on a mulched area, previously infested with weedy grasses. Using Grahame Durbidge's article ("Australiana Images" NL12-15) for inspiration, I sketched part of an old post and rail fence and single posts, which had formed part of these fences. The posts were set off by planting local grasses with some indigenous shrubs for annual colour.

The "nil" budget means no shrubs yet but already we have some great posts with their accompanying clumps of sedges and grasses, obviously dug just as they were from the Secretary's farm. Situated beside the roadside, the old windmill with its rustic fence is the eye-catcher for the visiting tourists. The hope is that they will patronise this excellent museum - and we may yet generate the funds for the purchase of some shrubs!

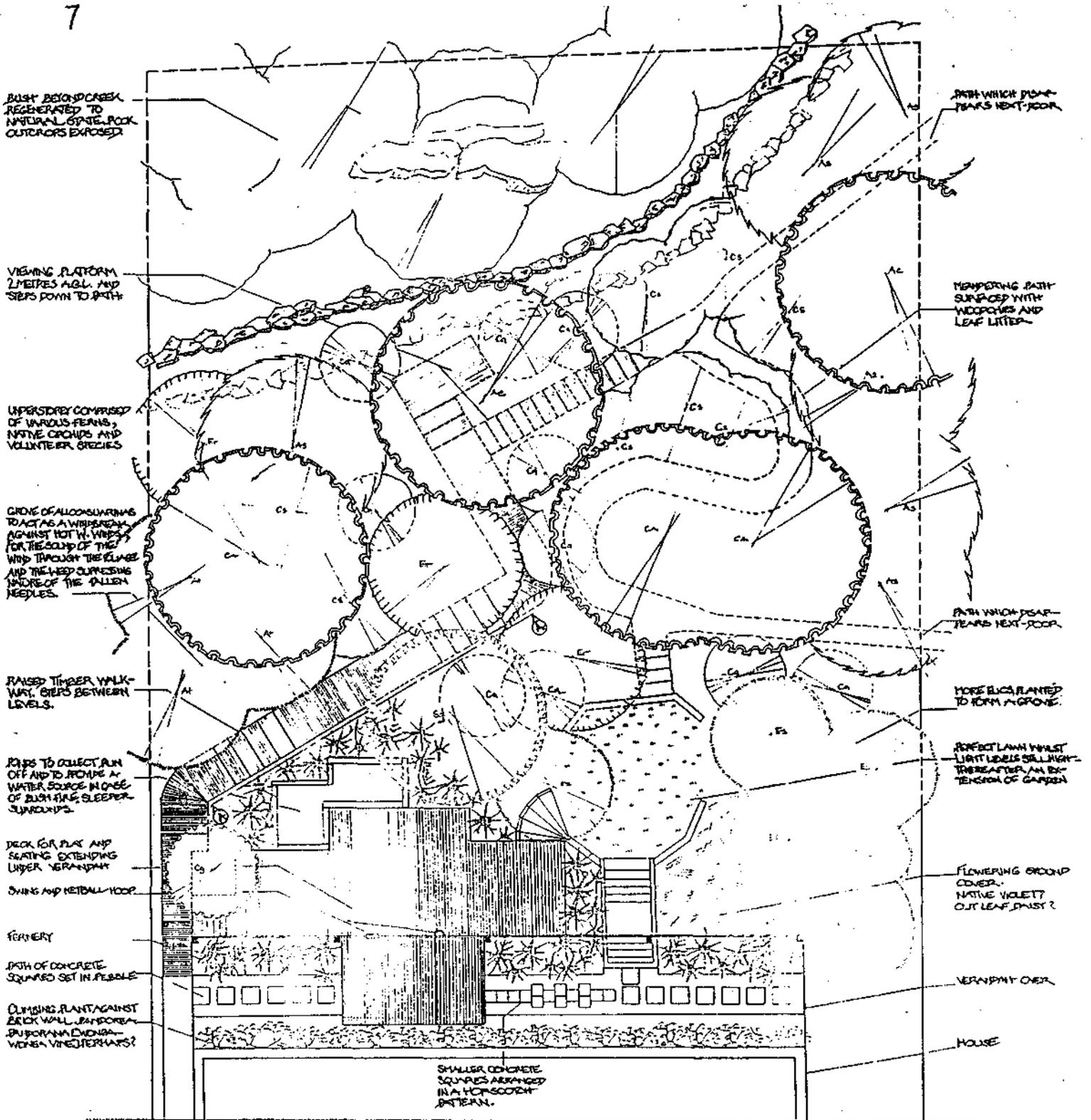
PIONEER MUSEUM MULWALA



Mulch over all from machine to watercart plus a lot of posts & grassy clumps



Suggest using some old weathered posts or wooden gate etc to set the scene. Clumps of native grasses would look appropriate.



CONCEPT PLAN

PREPARED MARCH 1976 BY: MAXINE ARMITAGE

RAINFOREST GARDEN



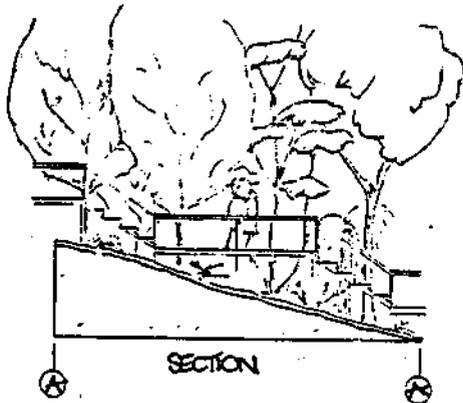
PLANT KEY

- Ae Acacia elata [Cedar Wattle]
- As Acmena smithii [Lily Lilly]
- At Allocasuarina torulosa [Forest She Oak]
- Ca Cyathea australis [Rough Tree fern]
- CA Ceratopetalum apetalum [Cockswain]
- Cg Ceratopetalum gumiferum [NSW Christmas Tree]
- Cs Calliandra ornata [Black Wattle]
- Er Eucalyptus species
- Sg Syncarpia glomulifera [Lerpine]

FERNS

- Adiantum aethiopicum
- Blechnum wellsi
- Calochortus dubius
- Podia aspera
- Sticherus lobatus
- Todea barbara

ALSO CONSIDER C. cooperi [FAST, HARDY] OR Fickoria antarctica [TRANSPLANTS WELL]



We have been receiving the GDSG Newsletter for some time now and I am always sent into a frenzy of stimulation - every issue gives so many ideas with which to argue or agree. Thank you to everyone who contributes.

I have been Working as a professional designer for 12 years and had a good deal of design study and experience in other related fields before that. There is still, I find, resistance from clients to the use of Australian plants (although it is often the case that people who engage professional designers really don't know which are "native-plants"). Another difficulty is that my knowledge of Australian plants is still scant (I'm working on it) and availability is frequently a problem.

It is my strongly held belief though, that we designers must PROVE ways of using appropriate Australian plants in many different design styles and conditions before they will be widely accepted. Louise Gore's comments (NL13-8) about personal preferences and objectivity when making or maintaining a garden for someone other than oneself are very relevant. Objectivity along with sensitivity and knowledge is crucial in the decision making, otherwise time-wasting expensive mistakes are made. There is a vital need to study and apply design principles (i.e. balance, rhythm proportion, scale, dominance, unity, etc) if we are to make satisfying beautiful living spaces incorporating Australian plants. It is the understanding of the design principles together with horticultural knowledge which produces really pleasing results in any chosen style. This understanding solves the aesthetic problems of combining Australian and exotic plants too.

The world's best garden designers have combined plants from all over the world successfully. This has not been achieved by worrying about where the plants originated but rather through a thorough understanding of how to combine the forms, textures, colours, etc of plants for particular effects and design purposes.

Further ideas on Louise Gore's site

I hope these few thoughts may be useful as an extension to what Louise has written.

As professional designers/gardeners we must cultivate the ability to put aside our personal preferences for a certain look or style, particularly when working within or adding to an established framework or setting. In a situation such as Louise describes, my first move would be an analysis of the problems and my working notes would read:-

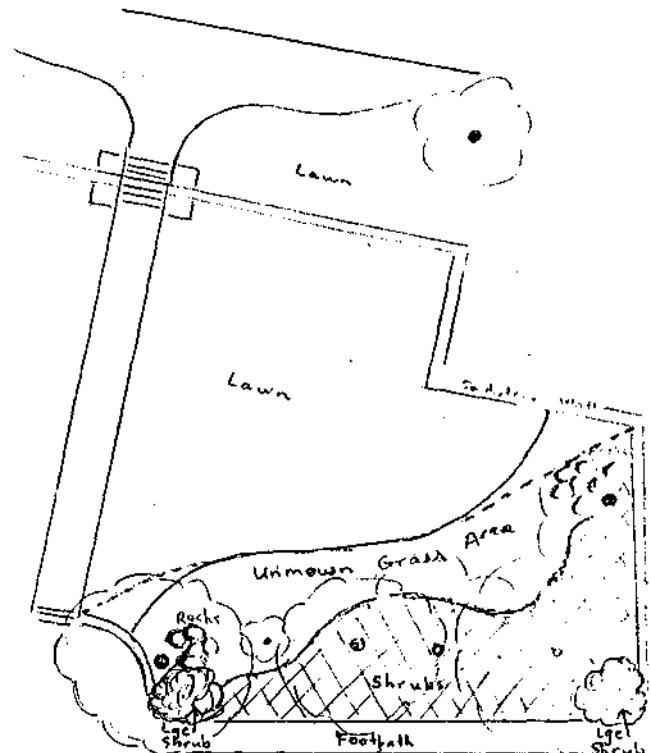
- (1) Feeling of flatness (or "all floor") brought about by large areas of lawn and exaggerated by the canopy of dense foliage trees on a higher plane with no intermediate transitional planting.
- (2) Incongruity brought about by unsuitable choice and positioning of rocks in the formal setting. (The placement of rocks shown in the sketch (May) would appear spotty and without purpose even in a naturalistic setting.)
- (3) The layout as shown is lacking in harmonious rhythm e.g. angularity is dominant with a small degree of contrast in the curved paving edges near the building and in the wall at the property entrance. O.K. this far. The circular shape of unmown grass is not working. (Unmown grass idea is great in my opinion, Louise, but the idea can be integrated more happily by changing the shape.)
- (4) The curved entrance wall and the Southern boundary wall both end abruptly and need "settling in".

My solutions would then be>

- (1) Add shrubs of varying graduated heights in drifts to cover the shaded area on my sketch, thus providing transitional height between floor and canopy.
- (2) Place the rocks together in natural looking groups where indicated. Do not create more than two groups or position the groups elsewhere. (Strong danger of these becoming too dominant.) OR remove them from the site!
- (3) The unmown grass area to have a big sweeping curved edge to roughly repeat the paved edge shape near the building. Take care to run the edge in to the walls so as to make good easy shape for mowing. (The dotted lines on my sketch show how easy it is to create sharp difficult and ugly corners.)
- (4) Use solid-looking large shrubs where shown to soften and settle in the abrupt wall ends.

Benefits from these alterations would be:-

- The new layout and added planting would soften the formality at the outer edges of the property but harmonise with the existing fixed lines, e.g. walls, paving.
- Maintenance would be easier once the new areas were established.



Jeanette led the recently disbanded Dodonaea Study Group for thirteen years.

Dodonaea is a great genus to use in the garden and many of them really do glow, if you make sure that you get a female plant. The colourful fruit which is a dry dehiscent capsule with a papery wing appendage remains on many plants for some months and the colours range from green to many shades of reds, pinks and deep purple. These fruits are usually called hops because of their similarity to the fruit - *Rumex vesicarius* - which is used for making beer. When I first saw some of these shrubs in full fruit, in northern South Australia, I thought of the burning bush of the Bible story.

The flowers of most of the species are quite insignificant and rarely would one grow them for their flowers. However, Tasmania's only endemic dodonaea, *D. filiformis*, presents male flowers that resemble tiny red crowns and can be quite colourful in amongst their fine needle-like leaves. This is an erect plant growing from 1-2m in height. In Tassie it grows often along water courses and in damp places, so will grow well in heavier soils.

One of my favourite Dods, is *D. megazyga* which comes from the eastern side of the Great Dividing Range from Sydney to just over the Queensland border. It also likes a cool moist situation and does well in cool temperate gardens. This is the tallest of the ornamental Pods, being a small slender tree growing to about 3-4m. It has large pinnate leaves with a broad rachis and clusters of pink winged fruit hanging below the leaves. At times it has been mistaken for the inland exotic Pepper Tree, but does not get nearly so large and is much more elegant. The subspecies of *D. viscosa* are mostly much taller but I don't think of them as ornamental species, although they have their place in gardens as fence screeners or background shrubs. The exceptions are perhaps *D. viscosa* ssp. *cuneata* and *D. viscosa* ssp. *angustissima* which are a bit smaller and more decorative than other subspecies.

The most commonly grown member of this genus is *D. sinuolata*, which has been sold under a number of incorrect names. It is usually 1-1.5m high, erect with the crown spreading a little. The leaves are pinnate, 1-3cm long and dainty. The fruits of the female plant are very eye-catching and remain on the bush for quite a time. It seems to be tolerant of most conditions but the fruits will be a brighter colour if in the sun.

There are a number of small Dods, which are ideal for rockeries or tubs. *D. procumbens* from south eastern Australia is a prostrate plant with pale green leaves. The fruit are not so cotoufu! but the effect of it cascading over rocks is great. *D. hexandra* also doesn't put on a bright show but the fine linear leaves contrast well with yellowish stems, to produce a dainty dense mass. It comes from areas of low rainfall and calcareous soils, but does fairly well in our garden in Hobart. It would also make a good tub specimen. *D. camfieldiis* not readily available but, if you can find plants, you will be rewarded with foliage that is wine to green in colour and the ribbed stems extend into the small leaves. The four winged fruits are brown to purplish and appear in spring. This species grows naturally in Hawkesbury sandstone country and would appreciate some shade.

D. stenozyga and *D. concinna* could win the prize in my garden for the best display. The former has been a "burning bush" for months; it is a rounded bush about 1-1.5m and it has stiff angled narrow pinnate leaves that set off this display very well. I keep this in a tub, as it comes from the hot dry areas of Australia and probably would not be happy in my heavy soil. The latter is quite happy in the garden and is about the same size, but the leaves are smaller and softer, setting off the masses of red fruits. This species comes from the south-west of Western Australia.

D. boroniifolia is available from some specialist nurseries and as its provenance is from Victoria to Queensland it is hardy in most situations. Plants may grow to 2m tall but usually much less than that. The leaves are small, dainty and pinnate and the fruits show off their pink to purplish fruits from November to April. The general effect is of an open and very decorative shrub.

There are many more to try and if you have trouble obtaining them from nurseries, the seed banks of most SGAP Regions have seed passed on from the disbanded Dodonaea Study Group. Otherwise seed may also be obtained by writing to the author at 176 Summerleas Road, Kingston, Tasmania 7050. Seed should be treated by the same method used for acacias and other members of the Fabaceae family, that is pouring boiling water over them and leaving overnight before sowing.

BOOKS and MAGAZINES

(Please keep book reviews or comments on books and magazine articles coming in. These are very popular.)

"Garden Design for Small Spaces" by Anne Houghton Heyning (Macmillan, 1974)

Reviewed by **Ian Percy** NSW

The book is divided into two parts:- 1. Problems and Principles & 2. Planning in Practice.

Part 1 deals with the factors that determine visual impact - shape, balance, form, texture, colour, dimension and scale. A sentence from her section on colour is worth quoting:- "Imagine the weeping grey foliage of *Melaleuca incana* on a carpet of *Grevillea gaudichaudii* or the soft colours of the Australian bush framed by the impressive rust-coloured branches of *Allocasuarina torulosa*."

As a new resident of Australia, Anne was captivated by the more subtle seasonal changes apparent in a garden of Australian plants, with the winter garden of natives looking much better than its European counterpart. She also found that shapes and patterns cast by trees and shrubs in our bright sun equally fascinating. Shadows project forms without obscuring vision and create an illusion of spaciousness and, in her eyes, a tree provides "a sparkle of dancing leaves with texture and life to rival a riotous bed of full-blooming annuals".

Part 2 of the book deals with design solutions such as the techniques of perspective planting in narrow spaces, the visual alteration of dimensions through planting (vertical landscaping) and the use of curved lines in a design to increase apparent space. Also such aspects as hard surfaces, changes of level, fences and other structures, lighting, the use of water, and container gardening are covered in this part. On "low maintenance" she firmly believed that Australian plants were not so and that their cultivation requirements were as varied as the geographical areas from which they came.

Children are also given a fair go in this book by the inclusion of a small garden designed especially for their activities, although once they leave home "instructions" are given on how to get rid of the lawn and some choices for ground cover as replacement are considered.

Unfortunately there are not many photos of gardens of Australian plants, and this is a pity because her description of a tiny garden with a miniature grove of *Eucalyptus torquata* as its focal point sounds quite charming.

The main plea from her book is to follow a Japanese garden design sensibility and in small gardens create simple pictures, using just a few species. Native plant enthusiasts get chastised for "crowding these potential beauties so closely together that each loses individual effect and impact".

Her suggestion of showing off the delicate tracery of *Baeckea linifolia* against a brick wall, rather than try to hide the wall and decrease visual space, is one idea I have taken up. Instead of the baeckea I have chosen *Viminaria juncea* (Native Broom) which I have pruned at 1 metre so that it has branched out more effectively. This book may still be available at the local library or in a second hand book store. It is worth seeking out.

"A Pattern Language" by Christopher Alexander et al (O.U.P. 1977) Jo Hambrett NSW

Some relevant passages with thoughts on design which I found interesting and think other members will too -

Tree places

"When trees are planted or pruned without regard for the special places they can create, they are as good as dead for the people who need them. . . . We see the complex interactive symbiosis between trees and people.

- 1 People need trees (which have a very deep and crucial meaning to human beings).
- 2 But when people plant trees, the trees need care (unlike the forest trees).
- 3 The trees won't get the care they need unless they are in places people like.
- 4 And this in turn requires that the trees form social spaces.
- 5 Once the trees form social spaces they are able to grow naturally.

If you are planting trees, plant them according to their nature, to form enclosures, avenues, squares, groves, and single spreading trees toward the middle of open spaces. And shape the nearby buildings in response to trees, so that the trees themselves, and the trees and buildings together, form places which people can use."

Garden seat

"Somewhere in every garden, there must be at least one spot, a quiet garden seat, in which a person - or two people - can reach into themselves and be in touch with nothing else but nature. Make a quiet place in the garden - a private enclosure with a comfortable seat, thick planting, sun. Pick the place for this seat carefully; pick the place that will give you the most intense kind of solitude."

I have the small book by **Barbara Salter** called "**Australian Native Gardens and Birds**" and wonder if her garden at Black Rock is still there. **Ian Percy NSW**

I think Barbara Salter moved from Black Rock to the country some years ago and I learnt very recently that she died in September. I do not know if her garden is still there - does any other member know? DS

An excellent book is "**Second Nature**" by **Michael Pollan** (Delta) 1991. The author is an American journalist and a passionate gardener and his book is as much about gardening philosophies as establishing a garden from a neglected farm in Connecticut. An excellent read and very thought provoking. **Jo Hambrett NSW**

Two articles from "**The Garden**", **Journal of the R.H.S.** (Royal Horticultural Society) July/Aug 1996

Barbara Buchanan Vic

'Garden maintenance', an untenable term? by John Sales

John Sales believes that real gardens are not 'maintained' in the way that buildings and furniture are, rather they are continually renewed and redesigned as part of the upkeep process and their character at any time depends on the degree of skill and judgement employed therein. It may be economically efficient to draw up a maintenance schedule that can be used for competitive tenders for continuing garden care, but a garden so treated loses its personality and soul. The living (and dying) nature of plant material means changing situations calling for fresh consideration and decisions.

Pruning is an obvious illustration of his point. In a formal garden it will be heavily used as a form of vegetable sculpture, whether maintaining the characteristic shape of the plant as it ages or imposing unnatural shapes as in hedging and topiary. Even with informal gardens pruning is needed as views change and spaces alter with the maturity of plants and there is always a need for a vision of the future and an understanding of how to achieve it.

Replacing and replanting can also readily be seen as part of the grand design process; it is not so easy to think of weeding, deadheading or lawn mowing in such terms, yet by thinking of them in such a positive way the design may be embellished and the jobs are no longer drudgery. Weeding will include recognition of desirable seedlings, calling for decisions as to removal, retention, or transplanting to a more appropriate site. Considering that an immaculate lawn is generally regarded as an essential ingredient of an English garden, I found it refreshing to read suggestions for varying it by mowing at different heights or times or leaving some of it weedy, just as GDSG member Louise Gore described (NL14-7).

All of this is known instinctively by dedicated gardeners but it is helpful to have the ideas clarified in words. When I first began gardening I imagined the original designing and executing were the exciting parts of garden making - one would almost need a new garden to keep the interest. I did not appreciate the ongoing fascination of responding to the changing situations produced by the development of a garden, let alone that my ideas would change and develop. It is important to keep the momentum going, to keep thinking about potential refinements after the first flush of enthusiasm subsides and there comes a period of waiting for things to develop as envisioned and perhaps other areas of life demand attention, it is important to keep seeing the garden as if with strangers' eyes (although we make our gardens primarily for our pleasure), to spot weak points and correct them, to recognize successes and build on them. It is important too to keep the focus on the whole picture and not let it narrow excessively into a hunt for rarities.

'Great expectations' by Mirabel Osier

This focus on the whole is a theme of Mirabel Osier in discussing visits to other people's gardens. She feels the Show bench is the place to peer intently, notebook in hand, at each specimen; in the garden it should be the overall effect that counts. She is able to enjoy all sorts of garden styles which she has no wish to follow herself, but admits that with her own garden she is as "indeterminate as an unset jelly", wanting many mutually exclusive effects at once - or in quick succession. Don't we all.

She likens garden visiting to listening to music. On the first occasion of hearing a symphony no-one analyses what instrument is playing when, one absorbs the whole sound. So it should be on visiting a new garden; the critical, analytic part comes after the first general impressions. I would suggest we rush more eagerly into dissecting a garden because we all dream of creating our own, masterpiece or not. Few of us would aspire to creating musical symphonies, we leave that to the specialists. Then again a symphony, once scored, is largely fixed. It may be differently interpreted but it does not grow. In responding to the growth of our own gardens we all have our chance of making our own paradise.

"L'Ami des Jardins et de la Maison" and "The Secret Gardens of France" Geoff Simmons Qld

The review of the book *"The Secret Gardens of France"* (NL14-11) was rather surprising to me as for several years I have subscribed to a leading French garden magazine *"L'Ami des Jardins et de la Maison"*, not with any great desire to emulate their gardens but as an exercise to see what was happening in northern dimes in gardening and practise my very poor reading of a foreign language. As this journal has portrayed quite a large number of gardens not only in France but also in England and surrounding countries, a good cross section of what are considered the better garden examples have been given. I have seen Versailles and I fail to see how anyone could not admire it as a great garden. However when I read about and see photos of French gardens that the journal shows, the feeling is that they are a mess - plants en masse without any clear view of what the owner is trying to achieve. The Australian scene whether formal or informal has a sense of placement and space that surely reflects the nature of this continent.

"In My Garden" by Christopher Lloyd (from *Country Life* May 94) Barbara Buchanan Vic

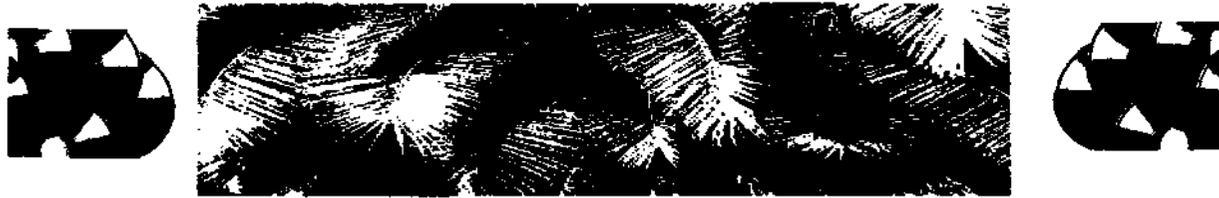
Perhaps there is hope that Australian plants and gardens will be appreciated by others. In this edition of his weekly column, Christopher Lloyd has some savage things to say about parts of the famous RHS garden at Wesley. In particular he is scathing about the solid blocks of colour produced by evergreen azaleas, although the public were in raptures and miles of film were being exposed. He then provides suggestions as to ways of offsetting the aggressiveness of the solid colours and, while these use all exotic (to us) plants, the concepts suggest a softer, more natural mingling of plants which would be more akin to a garden of Australian plants.

Taste is a very personal matter but Christopher Lloyd is one of the recognized leaders of taste in the U.K., reaching a wide gardening audience through his writings, which I enjoy reading even though the details are irrelevant to me, so it is most heartening to find such a pundit looking beyond solid colour.

(Another note that struck a chord, he bewails the need for rabbit proof fencing around lilies.)

CD-ROMs - the way of the future?

Most of us are probably still focused on print (on paper that is). Colleen Keena's review over the page of a CD-ROM started me wondering very seriously - is this the way of the future for information about plants? With the abundance of information they can provide, I'm sure it will be at least one way!



This CD-ROM has been produced by Zodiac Publications and is available from Yuruga Nursery, Phone 070-933826. The cost is \$65 plus \$3 Pack & Post. Windows 3+ or Windows 95 is required to run the program. The cover states "Vast amounts of data and 1250 pictures of 524 species of Australian tropical plants". The information is available as **With Preview**: Data plus pictures; **Without Preview**: Data only - fast access; **Run Slide Show**: many options; **Quick Preview**: quickly view any picture; **Multiple Queries**: complex database searches, with possible search criteria of Flowering time, Fruiting time, Form, Flower colour, Will grow in (shade, semi-shade, sun), Survival and Special features (showy flowers; attractive foliage; attractive fruit; perfumed flowers; shade tree; screen plant; windbreak; tub plant; bush-tucker; **Utilities**: view distribution maps; print an image to colour printer; growing tropical rainforest plants and print registration form and Australian or International **Version**.

The multi-query was accessed in order to plan an edible garden for Brisbane. The output from Multi-query used Brisbane and Bush-tucker as the search features. The printed list had 47 plants. This was subsequently printed as a separate list for sun and for shade. The list has been useful in two ways. Firstly, there were plants listed that had been overlooked in my pre-printout stage of planning, such as *Alpina caerulea*. Secondly, there were plants listed but with which I was unfamiliar and that could then be looked up in the **With preview** section. For example, the fruit of *Diploglottis bracteata* was described as one of the best of the *Diploglottis* and the fruit of *Diploglottis smithii* as very acid and as making delicious drinks and jam. Although I already have almost half the plants on this list, there are now some more **must have** plants. There were however some interesting omissions of plants included on the database but not on the bush-tucker output from multi-query. Species not listed include *Psychotria loniceroides*, *Randia fitzalanii*, *Syzygium kuranda*, *S. iuehmannii*, *S. moorei*, *S. oleosum*, *S. tiemeycum* and *S. wilsonii* although all of these were described by Jones (1986) and Cribb and Cribb (1987) as having edible fruit. There are two possible reasons for these omissions. Firstly, **Growing Australian Tropical Plants**, also available from Yuruga Nursery describes *Syzygium wilsonii subsp. wilsonii*, as having fruits that are edible but not particularly palatable. Just as beauty is in the eye of the beholder, edibility may be in the taste-buds of the taster. Having sampled *Randia fitzalanii* and *Syzygium luehmannii*, I can understand the omission of both these species but would love to see my favourite lilly-pilly *Syzygium oleosum* included. The second possible reason for these omissions is addressed by Cribb and Cribb in their description of *Syzygium oleosum*: "although trees vary in the quality of the fruit, we have found the blue lillypilly one of the best for fresh eating and for jam and jelly". Perhaps I have been lucky in having a tasty form of *Syzygium oleosum*, (with edibility endorsed by the local possum population).

The database is a helpful checklist, if only because it lists plants that may not have been considered for a particular purpose and because it provides detailed information on so many species. In the introduction to the program, it is suggested that landscape architects may find the program very useful as a lot of detail is available for each species. When a plant is looked up in the **With preview** section, the flowering time, fruiting time, special features, grow in (sun etc.), plant family, region, distribution map and 1, 2, or 3 pictures with zoom features are available to decide on the suitability of the plant. In addition to the amount of detail, I was also surprised at how many of the plants included in the database are not restricted to the tropics, e.g. 56 plants are listed as suitable for Melbourne. Over 20 of the species listed occur in Brisbane, e.g. *Acronychia laevis* (Cape York to Sydney) and *Syzygium australe* (extends to central N.S.W.) The real power of the database can only be discovered as it is used for a particular garden design, e.g. Bush-tucker plants could be identified for Brisbane, with Attractive Foliage, which grow in Sun, Attract Birds and Butterflies and Fruit in a particular month or Bush-tucker plants for Brisbane which make good tub plants. The variations are endless. Given the extensive list of features available in the multi-query, when Australian Tropical Plants are to be included in garden design, the planning can be far more intentional and effective through use of the database. Whatever the features to be emphasised, e.g. attractive flowers in a particular colour, attracting birds and butterflies, a detailed list, showing species, form, height, flower colour and survival rating can be generated and printed immediately. The survival rating is useful, e.g. *Syzygium luehmannii* which has survived a long drought without extra water is rated 5, that is, after establishment the plant does not need any water, apart from natural rain, and does not show signs of stress during the dry season, whereas *S. erythrocalyx*, which consistently dies on me, is only given a rating of 2.

This review has concentrated on only an extremely limited sample of the information that can be gained from the program, namely edible plants. There are however other areas of the garden yet to be designed, **screen plants** against the neighbour's fence, **windbreak plants** on the long westerly boundary, **tub plants** for the courtyard, and perhaps plants with **attractive foliage** to screen out the other neighbour, of course, **bird and butterfly attracting** species as much as possible and areas near the bedroom window to have **perfumed flowers**. I keep seeing more and more ways in which to use this program and am really looking forward to VOLUME 2 which Yuruga Nursery advises is already in preparation and which will include information on another 500 plants.

13

"Return of the native" Gardening with Cheryl Maddocks (from *The Australian Magazine My 96*)
Recently a national survey of 100 landscape designers and gardeners was carried out by the Australian Horticultural Corporation and Barbara Buchanan gave me this article by Cheryl Maddocks to read. I thought the following results were of particular interest:

"The survey revealed that Australians are sticking to traditional styles when designing their gardens. The two most popular styles are English traditional country cottage (39%) and formal (33%). These were followed by more contemporary styles which included Australian native or bush gardens, low maintenance and tropical. {My underlining - the implication is that these are one and the same. DS}

Despite these results, 60% of landscapers said a distinctive Australian style was emerging. Common features of this style include the use of native plants, rocks, stone or sandstone and a less lush appearance than other approaches. The study also mentioned an emphasis on groundcover rather than lawn, the use of water or ponds, and mixing of exotic, native and rainforest vegetation. This reflects a shift that has been emerging over the years away from high-maintenance perfect green lawns and immaculate flower beds and towards a more natural approach,

.... Natives topped the list of which plants landscapers used frequently and the lilly pilly and grevillea were the two most popular natives used.

.... Respondents claimed the main sources of inspiration were neighbours, friends and relatives (86%), gardening/home magazines (80%), gardening/homemaker TV shows (22%), landscape gardeners (12%) and nurseries (only 3%)."

(My underlining again, I suppose the spread of 'new' influences through that 86% is likely to be slow, hence that 72% of people sticking to traditional styles as indicated above. SGAP members may influence their own friends, relatives and neighbours, but that leaves a lot of people untouched. Gardening/home magazines appear quite significant, so if you have a chance to write for one (even if the style is a bit glossy), take it! DS)

DESIGN IDEAS

An article on Joan Barrett's garden

Recently the garden of one of our Melbourne members, Joan Barrett, was written up with enthusiasm in a local paper "*Inside and Out*". Among the design features of Joan's garden described in the article by Lorraine Lawrence were:

- "a fine collection of Australian plants growing in an informal setting of gently mounded spaces topped with plant clumps and ground covers that coat or flow over the slopes
- haze of mixed foliage - blue greys and yellow greens
- the jewels - the small bright flowers that hang here or there or cover plants
- in the established back garden and the much newer garden at the front, sitting "wells" have been cut into the slope.

They are gravelled, circular spaces, retained on the higher side with a curve of two courses of unmortared bluestone pitchers, grading down to a few rocks. At the back is room for a small table and chairs and with the protection of the wall and surrounding plants, a sheltered spot...."

I think the article gave a good impression of Joan's lovely garden and also publicity for designing with Australian plants.

Imitation and Imagination

Geoff Simmons Qld

Over 150 years ago C.C. Colton said that "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery". The designs used by Australian gardeners reflect designs developed throughout the world as can be seen in many TV programs when Japanese or English garden forms are portrayed. Another form of flattery is the use of environmental landscapes of Australia for inspiration in design. An example is the "bush" garden and the degree of success depends on the creative ability of the gardener in choosing form and colour of Australian plants, along with placement to produce pleasing combinations,

A more advanced stage in making a garden is when the elements are selected and used so expertly that the result is not flattery but originality. It is a sad truth that something completely different will rarely be achieved as gardening has been taking place for centuries in many lands, so anything "different" has probably been used before. However a plus for Australian gardeners is that many of our plants are relatively unknown and present a range of design possibilities, so that there is no need to copy classical design forms. While for many reasons such as nostalgia or beauty, natural landscapes may be used, here again new discoveries can be made in their application to the garden.

A very neglected area of Australian design seems to be in the choice of inanimate features. Statues, fountains and buildings without any significance to the Australian environment, history or unique aspects of this Continent are not the norm, rather imported objects depicting something relevant to Europe or Asia are used.

Both imitation and originality play a part in garden design. Imitation of overseas gardens or Australian bush landscapes, or imagination to create a unique landscape. The old saying that there is nothing new under the sun also applies to garden design but this should not prevent endeavour to create something different. It is worth recalling that the Australian flora is unique because of the drift of the continent from other land masses millions of years ago. The development of specialised, highly adapted plants could be a lesson for garden design. For instance, when sitting down to draw up a garden concept, forget about cottage gardens or meadow landscapes and dwell on the Australian background of one's own existence. The saturation of the mind with visits to famous overseas gardens, shows or expos, such as Chelsea or Kew, should only serve to stimulate the imagination rather than imitation.

Garden styles and plant varieties are somewhat ephemeral in nature, often being dictated by the multi-million dollar horticultural industry. Keeping up with the Jones-es applies equally to gardening but good garden design should impress whether in fashion or not. This does not necessarily mean that the garden is beautiful but that it has appeal by design, plants or other striking characteristics.

It is difficult to avoid imitation. For example if a garden plot is shaped like a boomerang, there is an imitative component, albeit with a typical Australian theme. However inspiration is required in choosing the site and selecting the plants. In regard to the latter, my choice for the plots mentioned in a previous Newsletter (NL8-19) was to leave the plants already there, that is normal/local flora. The only maintenance that I do is to take out exotic weeds. The grasses, hibbertias and ferns that grow are not without appeal and as it is the only area in which I have seen a quail, the design suits my wish. In summary, the baggage that one accumulates from reading books, TV garden sessions, etc., should not be allowed to stifle the imagination.

Formal/informal**Allki Zouliou Vic**

Some thoughts in response to the issue you raised in the last Newsletter about whether or not formalistic gardens can contain 'informal/uncontrolled' plants.

Where the design of a garden has a basic formal layout, for example with neat lawn areas and symmetrically shaped, well-defined garden beds, it is possible for informal plants to be left to flourish within the rigid boundaries of these beds. The overall formal feel of the design will dominate the selection of plant material used.

Consider also informal trees such as eucalypts being used as avenue planting alongside a driveway or road. In this case the trees are not 'controlled' but the repetition of the closely spaced, straight trunks parallel to the side of the road gives the sense of formality.

'Controlled' plants could be used just as successfully in informal arrangements. We just need to look at nature to find a species such as *Leucophyta (Catocephalus) brownii* (Cushion Bush) which is quite 'formal' in appearance, occurring in an uncontrolled seaside landscape setting.

In my opinion, it is the overall feel created that is most important in garden design. Classification rules should not be too imposing.

Formal/natural**Geoff Long NSW**

One may have quite a formal garden with native plants unpruned if the structural elements are prominent - paving, pergola, brick steps to sunken area, pool with sandstone capping, fountains, boundary wall (especially if brick or stone), statuary, etc. Such a garden needs the usual removal of dead fronds/branches etc but otherwise minimal pruning. Also needs a gap cut for electrical wires - that's the formula for our city garden.

The rainforest one is meant to look like God's work but we are prepared to fill in gaps/treefalls, encourage certain species, discourage others, tidy up fallen branches by turning them to mulch for the paths, construct stone steps and viewing patios but still have the visitor feel he/she is in natural rainforest - no discernable pruning.

Garden design over time in a temperate climate**Diana Snape Vic**

Geoff Simmons' article on evergreen plants in the last Newsletter prompted me to think about other differences in designing gardens in Australia compared with designing in the northern hemisphere (of which I have no direct experience). Our temperate climate must result in very different growth patterns in our plants. It depends of course on where in Australia we live but, in general, growth is more continuous throughout the year in the absence of those Song, cold winters when European plants are completely dormant. We face the completely different challenge of planning for faster growth throughout the year, faster development, faster ageing and also death of more plants over time. Changes from one season to the next may be less conspicuous here; changes from one year to the next, more conspicuous.

If we consider first those evergreens - the trees which generally dominate our landscapes. In any climate, it is important to choose trees well at the beginning; it is sad to have to remove or replace one later on. In Australia we need to investigate carefully the data which is available on the mature height and canopy spread in conditions as near as possible to those we are providing. This will give us an idea of future root spread, which affects underplanting, and future shade. For small suburban gardens we should try to resist the temptation of planting trees we know want to be forest giants. If we can't resist, we should probably be planning their pruning (or their ultimate removal) at the time of planting. The majority of Australian trees are long lived if planted in the right conditions. Some, like many acacias, benefit from early pruning to restrict their size and prolong their life.

After initial rapid growth, most trees will reach their maturity slowly relative to smaller plants, so can there be an optimum time for the garden as a whole? If so, how long can that optimum time last? Must we wait for trees to mature? Large shrubs may also be an important part of the structure of the garden, as wind-breaks, screens, frames, etc, so these need to be reliable too. The growth rates of shrubs vary greatly and 'nursing' slower growing, longer lived species with faster growing shorter lived species can be useful. The loss of a large shrub can leave a sad gap in a garden. It's often important to prune a shrub in (and from) the early stages to achieve and maintain a desired size.

15

loss of one plant is less significant, I hope more low shrubs and herbaceous plants will become available in punnets for mass planting - if we want to, we may become more accustomed to having areas in our gardens which have some annual plantings. As in exotic gardens, quick effects could be obtained. Groundcover plants also can fill a wide range of niches over time. Some prostrate grevilleas, once established, are there for the long haul. Some species, like *Pultenaea pedunculata*, I have found to be slow to establish but then long lasting. Others (eg some daisies, grasses, violets, scaevolae, Isotomas) may be 'easy come, easy go' and can be re-established quickly.

in most gardens where the whole garden (or a section of it) is planted at the same time, this planting effectively begins a 'race' between the plants, each growing, spreading and maturing at its own rate and affecting its neighbours as it does so. (If plants are put into the same area at different times this can create its own problems.) A shrub may remain at its 'best' (In our eyes) for a relatively short time before racing on to the next, less desirable stage (especially if not pruned). I think it would be rare that a whole garden is 'just right' simultaneously. Maybe that's easier to achieve in colder climates where the plants are 'moving' (growing) more slowly and relative size changes are not great from one year to the next. However, our quite rapid growth of plants and occasional sudden deaths do provide opportunities for rejuvenation and implementation of new ideas, with new rewards, so our gardens may change over the years like giant (green) kaleidoscopes.

If we are sufficiently knowledgeable and green-thumbed to achieve 'perfect' plant growth in our gardens, will there ever be a moment of having a 'perfect' garden? How long could this moment last? Even if it could be achieved and could last, I don't think the idea of a static garden, however 'perfect', appeals to me. I think I'd prefer my kaleidoscope and the continuing challenge.

Defining the elements of Ausfraian garden design

Grahame Durbidge NSW

Visiting the Japanese garden at the University of Southern Queensland (and I guess the Japanese Garden at Cowra NSW would be similar), I noticed that many of the plants in the landscape were not in fact Japanese (eg NZ Christmas bush, diosma). These plants, clipped to a bun shape, fitted into the scene perfectly. Of course bamboo and azaleas were there and they act as clues to the Japanese style of garden. But there was more: all the classical Elements were there - "The Pavillion Overlooking the Lake"; "The Raked Gravel River" (Yui-shin Tei - Solitary Mind Garden); "The Waterfall" and "The Cobblestone Beach".

The Japanese garden is replicable and stylised. You can faithfully reproduce it if you incorporate the traditional design elements. What Elements define an Australian garden in the way that a Japanese garden is defined? Well it's fun to think about this. Here's the list I came up with:

- 'The Creek Bed' - wet or dry
- "The Waterhole" - billabong, pond, dam
- 'The Rocky Outcrop' - there's something especially Australian about our geology and the bush rocks
- "The Windswept Heath" - lots of small, dense knit (planted) plants
- "The Swamp" - sedges, rushes, paperbarks
- "The Forest" - trees, shrubs, groundcovers, grasses and climbers
 - pieces of wood, stumps, branches

*Grahame's suggestions started me thinking. In a large Japanese garden there may be room for the classical Elements but in a small garden they must be small scale or symbolic. Similarly a large Australian garden could incorporate a number of Grahame's suggested Elements, though not all might "go" together naturally. **How much do those of us with small suburban blocks use symbols or small scale versions of some of these Elements? DS***

An Ausfraian Landscape Design Ethos by Bruce Mackenzie NSW

Extracts from an article in *Landscape Australia* May 1996, reproduced with permission.

I will reflect upon an experience of nearly 30 years ago when I stood overlooking the City of Canberra from a viewpoint at the top of Red Hill. . . .witnessing the amazing spectacle of Canberra in its autumn splendour.My interest in nature at that time was compelling but had not been driven by scientific enquiry or academic need and it is pleasing in this respect to recall some thoughts of my friend and colleague, the late Alistair Knox. He would declare that the initial appreciation of the Australian indigenous environment is seldom an intellectual one but more an intuitive experience like falling in love. "The loved one can become more beautiful and we can become obsessed." Alistair would claim that he had yet to see a man in love with the indigenous environment who fell out of love with it, or for that matter ever fell in love with any other.

From my viewpoint on Red Hill I was sufficiently startled to be confronted with the problem of reconciling my profound feelings for the nature of Australia with the presentation before me of an alien landscape, albeit laid out like a grand tapestry of rich detail, colour and texture . . . patterned and disciplined with consummate skill. This was Canberra, the Australian capital city - my capital city. I felt offended and have continued ever since to be offended whenever the special qualities of the native landscape are wasted or worse, humiliated - in this instance even with the best will in the world and with such indisputable competence. Always in the *background*, it seemed, the bush may be retained, as was the case on the hills surrounding the city of Canberra at that time.

Later that year (1969) at the first National Conference of the A.I.L.A. (Australian Institute of Landscape Architects) Alistair Knox and I pleaded for a design ethos inspired by our indigenous environment. Alistair required that this landscape should be accepted totally and proposed that it could not be subdivided and placed in convenient compartments for the use of "modern man and his stereotyped surroundings ... you have to accept it prickles and all... until death do us part".....

Surely it must be time now (in 1996) for our landscape profession in Australia to also embrace with unrestrained commitment the obvious, and bring together with skill and artistry the essential components of sustainable landscape practice and the challenging aesthetic of the authentic landscape Australia?.....

In arguing the case for a design ethos driven by the intrinsic nature of Australian landscape systems, an ethos that must also embody design excellence and functional effectiveness, underlying foundations can be defined:

- **definition** in the sense that the images created convey means of identification and benefits of comprehension, distinctiveness
- **authenticity** in that the character of the place appears to be one that belongs, that is believable
- **sustainability** in environmental circumstances that are not always gentle and manageable, and that may produce extremes which can threaten survival of the created landscape
- **self-sufficient** to the extent that the fashioned landscape sustains society, rather than one which must be served and nurtured by society.

The design ethos promoted by this discussion has at its foundation this essential genius, the very spirit of the place.(I would) consider and welcome, instead of the stereotyped repeated images drawn from conventional procedures and exotic origins, the refreshing and almost unlimited challenge of exploring the unique and complex qualities of our natural landscape base ... a distinctive theme barely exploited.....

Design skills shaped by a comprehension of nature's dynamics need to be learned and utilised. The theme is not one of building a giant native plants garden, but of applying appropriate techniques to generate telling images of plant community associations and sensitive treatments of landform, always guided by the environmental imperatives of the locality or the region. The one outstanding feature still required is the need for designers as a body to accept the totality of the principle that the only design ethos for landscape practice is one based on Australian landforms, soils and flora. Landscape design should never be a thing of fashion ... in its moods and characters, landscape should be persistent, perennial.

Awkward plants

Geoff Simmons Qld

Australian plants belong to the awkward category if they fall into one of several groups that make their use in design a trifle difficult or unsatisfying. While the disadvantages that these plants have can be overcome, they cannot be ignored if their use in a garden is desired. It is not intended to discuss those plants that have a characteristic size daunting for even a large garden, such as a height of 20 metres or more, or girths of several metres; nor potential weeds such as Umbrella Trees. The categories chosen are based on experience in my garden so they are not exhaustive or, indeed, applicable to other gardens.

1. Water requirements that seem to be rather awkward.

Bog or water plants are not included as anyone growing these would know full well that special needs must be met. The following species have proved unreliable when bought to place in ordinary garden sites with the expectation that they would survive and become established.

Metrosideros queenslandica. In a previous Newsletter (NL6-4) I have pointed out my experience with a number of these. They can be shaded but unless the soil is kept quite moist they die.

Phaleria chermsideana, This tree grew quite well in another garden which had a rather high water table indicated by the natural growth of melaleucas and banksias. Several plants have been tried in my present garden but they died. I have noticed that one plant in a pot in the shade house is best kept standing in a saucer that can hold water from time to time.

Helmholtzia glaberrima. Data on this plant records that it grows near streams. Several that I have tried with attempts to give them rather more moisture than normal have not thrived. I can only conclude that in fact they need to have their roots continually damp.

Angiopteris evecta. This fern very quickly shows water stress as fronds collapse. Here again we have a plant for which constancy of moisture in the soil is vital irrespective of how humid the atmosphere is.

These four plants are examples of experiences in which circumstances would generally augur success but this did not happen. Other explanations for failure are possible but I believe that the main factor is the need to provide a constant rather high level of moisture at the root zone at all times. For the trees this may only be a temporary requirement which becomes less important when the roots grow into subsoil holding water.

2. Plants that have no suppression on growth beneath.

A major desire of many gardeners is to have a low maintenance garden. Suppression of plants below another may be a disadvantage in some instances such as lawns failing to grow under gum trees and many words of advice are

available to overcome this. On the other hand, weeds or other unwanted plants below a specimen plant may be unsightly and mean work by hand weeding or herbicide use. This allelopathic effect by some Australian plants such as casuarinas is quite marked but others have negligible effect. In the latter category, examples in my garden include cycads and hibiscus. None of the representatives of the four genera of Australian cycads that I grow appear to have any inhibitory effect and as it takes a long time for growth to reach any height, it is a matter of gardening on knees to weed. For those species that forms trunks, a solution may be to burn off lower leaves once trunks have formed. With hibiscus, netting guards 300mm high help to keep space in which to carry out the weeding.

3. Plants that have awkward shape.

Some Australian plants grow without any formality in respect to shape - while this may appeal to anarchists it does not look tidy. This haphazard growth is not always the tree's fault as borers or other insects may attack branches, leading to the straggly appearance. In this category I would include species of cassia. Attempts to discipline several varieties by pruning is a rather futile exercise as the resulting growth never seems to appear as desired.

4. Undesirable appearance.

Most Australian plants can be appreciated in one way or another but occasionally one encounters a plant that doesn't always present a favourable picture.

One such an example involving the natural habit of the plant is *Graptophyllum reticulatum*. When the flowers die, they turn black resulting in a dirty appearance. If there were only a few flowers - they are quite small - no great problem would be created but my bush usually looks as if it has been sprinkled with soot. It is a temporary problem but quite noticeable when it occurs.

Another problem is that certain plants seem to attract scale and subsequently black fungal growth that covers stems and leaves. Two genera that have shown this are cassia and lasiogyna. It is noted that new growth is free of fungi so there may be a case to use white oil as an insecticide. {*Sons Kangaroo Paws (anigozanthos) suffer from this problem in Melbourne. DS*}

5. Suckering.

Fortunately my experience with this awkward category is limited. The two species in which this has occurred are *Graptophyllum excelsum* and *Cassia tomentella*. In the case of the latter, the suckers appeared following a bush fire that destroyed the main trunk but exposed roots that had been covered with bark mulch. The former may also have been affected by fire but I think they also occurred in roots not affected in this way. It is not a major problem as only about half a dozen suckers have been seen in a planting of several hundred plants. I have dug up some of the suckers and potted them up for new plants. Interesting enough, they seem to have a more spindly appearance than cutting grown plants.

(I must admit I think suckering plants can be very useful but I'm thinking of groundcovers such as dampieras, not trees or large shrubs, unless you actually want to have a thicket of, eg, Melaleuca ericifolia.

Regarding Helmholtzia glaberrima, we have one plant which has grown successfully for many years in a reasonably shady, well mulched fern garden with regular but not excessive watering. It flowers, but not every year. DS)

The 1396 NSW Garden and Wildflower Spectacular

Betty Rymer NSW

We've just had our NSW Garden and Wildflower Spectacular. From our survey last year we discovered that many people asked for help in design and choosing the right plants for their gardens. So we decided to follow this up. In the centre of the vast grey tarmac we had three garden designs, one presented by a local landscape nursery, one by students from the University of Western Sydney and one from Richmond TAFE. They certainly filled the area with greenery. . . . but in my view did not help the public design their gardens.

It was interesting to see the TAFE setting up - about 20 students and three staff from the landscaping for the handicapped course were involved. The students probably gained a lot from setting up the design - the use of different materials and the attention given to detail such as cutting with a chain saw to fit the corners of sleepers into a diamond. I was quite impressed and I think it really gave those students a sense of achievement.

The Uni. landscape was set up by one member of staff, although I gather students had been involved in the design. The plants they wanted obviously came from books with no regard to their availability from nurseries, so they had to change their ideas at the last minute. . . . The local landscape people had many more resources available so they used more variety of materials but nothing spectacular plant wise.

Lacking over the weekend were people to talk to the public about the designs - maybe this is where the Garden Design Study Group could be involved. The GDSDG was present and I can only praise the work of Jeff Howes - he must have gone home hoarse. He talked all day - always had groups around him - he talked about SGAP, Study Groups and anything related - good on you, Jeff! Jo Hambrett held the fort another day and was kept busy and did a very good job.

Another addition this year was the presence of two nurserymen from Victoria. Their plants for sale were different but unfortunately many may not be hardy in the Sydney area. This is a point one has to be careful about - can the plant survive in your particular conditions? So often plants suggested in books are 'drop dead plants' in Sydney's summer humidity.

First GDSG S.A. branch meeting

Margaret Lee

Margaret sent this excellent report of the first meeting of the S.A. branch and I thought it would be of interest to all members to see the particular aims and areas of concern they put forward, and also how a branch 'started off'. DS

This meeting was attended by eight members, with one apology, Members first discussed the aims of the Study Group which included presenting Australian flora to the public in the best possible way and providing information to facilitate this.

Actions suggested to enable the aims to be met included the following:

- List plants which are likely to do well in particular areas around Adelaide and not become "feral".
- Plants should be assessed at say, 4 years, generally hardy, not tending to woodiness and no more than 4m high.
- Make a list of those which can be substituted for particular exotics (e.g. English box).
- Suggested matters to be considered before planting:

Design
Plant selection
Maintenance
Regeneration

- It was agreed that maintenance is a problem, particularly when designing for others. It is difficult to find trained personnel and to persuade clients to pay a fair wage to such people.
- Builders' behaviour on sites, quotes, tenders and proper preparation were mentioned. Contact with Councils (volunteer work at first may be helpful) can be useful. Getting in early with developer before subdivision is worthwhile.
- It was agreed that we recommend to SA Region Council that the database used for describing plants and their required growing conditions for Sales should be available to be searched by general members, Logistics to be worked out.
- It was agreed that we recommend to SA Region Council that lists of plants available be disseminated both at general meetings and by written request (possibly appoint a "plants available" officer, like a seed bank officer). Growers could provide a brief description of what they have most of the time and update it as necessary.

It was pointed out that there is now a wholesale plant market in Adelaide which many growers supply and where landscapers may order by fax and the order can be met by a number of growers if necessary - constantly computer updated.

- Design principles - suggested an article be prepared, either for Journal or GDSG Newsletter (*or both DS*). To supplement what would, of necessity, be only a brief outline, a reading list could be prepared.
- Margie Barnett advised that she has the "Grow What Where" program prepared by Vic SGAP on disc and finds it very useful - could be advertised in Journal.
- Definitions of garden styles - for future brain-storming.
- Demonstration gardens would be useful. The gardens at Black Hill Flora Park are currently being renovated and will contribute to this.

Members' personal aims for joining the Study Group included:

- To gain more knowledge
- To visit gardens, analyse, comment and learn
- To compile lists of plants which may be useful

Suggested that meetings be held about every three months, some in the evenings.

S.A. branch next meeting to be visits to gardens at Victor Harbor. Meet at Nangawooka public garden, Main Road, just before entering Victor Harbor at **11 a.m. on Saturday 2 November 1996**. Bring lunch. Families welcome.

Ian Bond will show us around and explain rationale re various gardens.

(I'm sorry the Newsletter has come out too late for this meeting. DS)

Sydney branch October meeting - Mt Annan Botanic Garden

Jo Hambrett

Sunday 21 October 1996 saw the trusty stalwarts of the GDSG gather at Mt Annan Botanic Garden for a most interesting and enjoyable lecture by the Horticultural Development Officer and fellow GDSG member **Peter Cuneo**. As HDO Peter is responsible for the overall coordination of the development of Mt Annan, directing the field-collecting programs, the installation of new interpretational signage and the cultivation of horticultural material. (In short, this is one busy guy!)

Mt Annan Botanic Garden is the largest in Australia covering over 1,000 acres (400 ha). It is interesting to know that this fledgeling Botanic Garden - first plantings 1987 in the Terrace garden - has had no major funding since 1989 and is already under intense pressure from nearby rapid suburban development, proposed major transport corridors (road and rail) and the nearby coal-washery.

Horticultural challenges

- The garden aims to represent every species of Australian plants - it currently has 12%
- It is a policy that all the species are wildsource collected
- The Terrace garden is planted in taxonomic sequence established by the Swedish botanist Dalgren. Over 2500 species are set out in family groups, beginning with the most primitive (ferns), through to the flowering plants, through to the palms and ending with the most highly evolved species, the grasses. Special soils and irrigation systems were installed to provide the practical requirements of the enormous range of plants.
 - The garden has an extensive seed bank and are looking at horticultural marketing as a potential revenue-raiser, eg seeds & cut flowers. Staff of the gardens screen and assess genetic material as it occurs in the wild to select the most suitable for commercial use.
 - Mt Annan has the largest grevillea collection in the world - 270 species. Threatened grevilleas are grown grafted on to silky oak (there are only nine plants left in the world of one particular species).
 - Soil quality is very varied (to pH 9 at depth) consisting largely of heavy clay. The soil is improved with the addition of crushed granite (high iron content), sand and a low phosphorus mulch. Staff work closely with Simon Leake (his article on the feeding of Australian plants was brought up by Peter Lawson at our July meeting) to mimic the forest soil profiles as closely as possible.

The Design of Mt Annan

Two one-way loop roads, each of about 5km (and more than 20km of walking tracks) wind through the Garden connecting the Theme gardens (Bottlebrush, Wattle, Banksia and Western), the ornamental lakes and picnic areas.

The Terrace is a 4 acre (1.6ha) hillside reshaped into a series of terraces. It reminded me of a "Horticultural Guggenheim" as we slowly wound our way up and around the hillside, remarking as we went on the many rare and beautiful species happily growing and flowering. Peter was able to bring us back to earth with stories of behind the scenes heartbreaks as well as the triumphs.

Peter avoids straight lines in the Garden as he feels it is a natural layout: he works within the established thematics and coordinates the technical aspects of the collection. He plants in groves, using odd numbers to maintain the "naturalness". He predominantly defines the palette of Australian plants that can be used rather than demonstrating a strong design element. His main concern is to establish the BONES of the garden - ie to put down what will still be in existence in 100 years time. To this end Peter would like to do more skyline plantings of large, distinctive trees such as the bunya, ficus, kurrajong, etc.

There are two natural areas within Mt Annan, a woodland regeneration area and the dry bushland area of Mt Annan itself. Peter would like to build on these to maintain the local flavour within the Garden.

Across the road from the Terrace garden sits the Visitors' Centre, cafe and carpark and planted around the carpark are the cultivars - it is these, says Peter, which generate the most public interest! There are plantings of rare and endangered species around the entrance to the Visitors' Centre. The loos are terrific, crammed with callistemon, eriodendron & others where the washbasins usually are. The washbasins are situated separately and it forces one to walk on small, intimate crushed gravel paths with beautiful, scented plants pushing in from all sides - a very successful design element I thought.

The size of the Garden, the quality of the facilities (picnic areas, BBQs, landscaped lakes, cafe, toilets, etc) and the linkage of the theme gardens by road, all contribute to the usage of the Garden by a large number of people as a huge recreational park where pursuits such as bike riding, roller blading, barbeque/picnicking and cross-country walking take place - is this the Botanic Garden of the Future?

Unfortunately for Mt Annan it does not possess the breathtaking harbour and cityscape views of Sydney B.G. or the spectacular mountain scenery of Mt Tomah cold climate B.G.. Mt Annan's entrance is profoundly compromised by a burgeoning suburban development, as will be its vistas in the not too distant future - all the more reason to improve its entrance from a design and aesthetic point of view - a combination of excellent design and sublime plant material should leave the visitor to the Garden in no doubt as to the esteem in which the nation holds its native flora. Peter envisages a strong practical usage of the presently vacant land near the entrance. He would like to set up an urban greening demonstration area so the public could be given advice on erosion control, drought management, etc, all within a suburban garden context.

Many thanks to Peter Cuneo for a very informative and comprehensive talk and tour of Mt Annan. We do appreciate him giving up his time to the GDSG. Thank you too, the members who supported the day.

Sydney branch next meeting on Sunday 16 February 1997. Please ring me no later than 10 Feb for details, I am trying a new approach, Sydney members - you ring me rather than the other way around. I'm finding life a little too busy and our membership a little too large now to do all the phoning, so if you are interested in maintaining the impetus of the group please ring!

I am thinking about a Canberra/Queanbeyan weekend for the group. This way we can meet all our ACT members and see some interesting new gardens. Please contact me if you have any information re Canberra & environs garden design.

.....

Report of NE Victoria branch meeting 11-8-96 Barbara Buchanan & Margaret Garrett

TOPIC: Use of rainforest plants Glenda Datson

Generally-rainforest plants will blend more readily into a predominantly exotic garden because of their large soft leaves and water needs, hence they represent the thin edge of the wedge for the widespread acceptance of Australian flora. What have you tried? What have you had success with? How/where do you grow them - in pots, a separate rainforest area or integrated in the garden? What plants do you recommend or want to hear about? Any other tips, questions or suggestions?

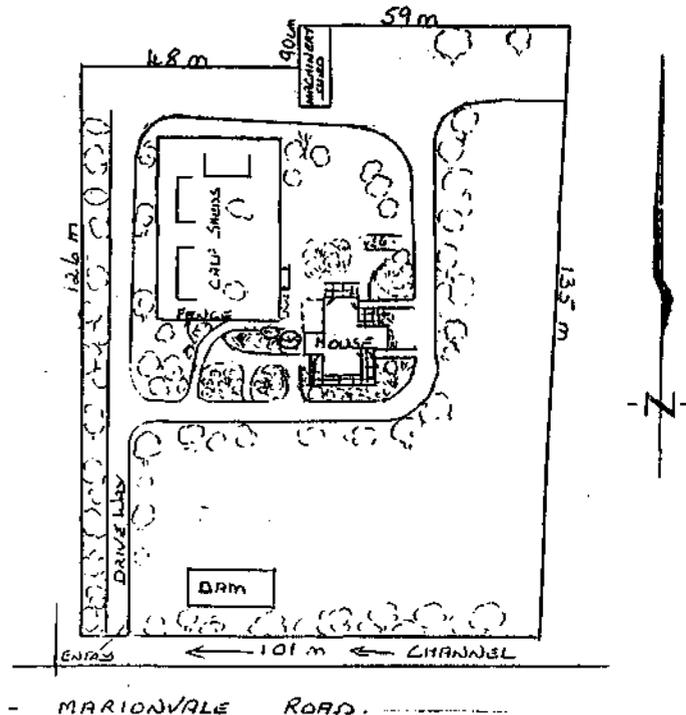
Margaret Garrett spoke of gardens overseas.

- 1 The use of callistemons as street trees in Singapore; "found" objects, clay pottery, old wood, iron, etc, used creatively in the exquisite orchid garden at the Singapore Botanic Gardens.
- 2 The photos of the Amsterdam Tulip Festival arrived when she was reading Glen Wilson and she used a series of them to illustrate some of his points, such as trees give structure, provide shadows and so give perspective. So the principles of good garden design apply equally in any type of garden and the techniques are the same, repetition, two and three dimensions, planting in clumps, or multiple trees in one hole. Trees give structure, beds give the flow.
- 3 Home gardeners in Norway seem to be like us experimenting with the concept of the all native or bush garden. The Botanical Garden, almost in the Arctic Circle, has left a natural wooded area where wildflowers were in profusion. Hedging was used extensively to divide off bedded areas and presumably for protection.
- 4 The grand gardens of Ireland incorporate several styles in one garden, e.g. Garinish Island has a fine Italianate walled water garden complete with temple, an enormous herbaceous border and a coastal walk where wildflowers are encouraged to drift up from the sea into the garden proper.

The general impression was that Australian garden designers can learn plenty from studying the great gardens and arboreta in other parts of the world.

Kay **Dempsey** spoke of her impressions from Italy, where she felt buildings were of first importance and not hidden by planting. There were many colourful window boxes in which the colour was always restricted to a single shade. The gardens that she did see were restricted to green; there were few flowers to be seen.

Kay's garden. Kay had prepared a plan (shown). We spent some time looking at the possibilities of the entrance garden and dam as well as the start she has made in planting. Several rough sketches were produced and left with Kay, who will try to amalgamate the ideas and use what seems most appropriate in her design.



'Landscaping with Australian Plants' by Glen Wilson (Nelson, 1975)

We had chosen this as a first book as at the time it was published it was such a ground-breaker, giving Australian plant gardens status in the serious gardening world. It is still relevant today. The chief impressions that emerged from our discussions were: importance of trees and three dimensional space; simplicity is usually best; grouping of leaf types with occasional contrast. Most of the advice is practical commonsense. Lists at the back for planting suggestions.

NE Victorian branch next meeting on **Sunday 17 November at 11am** at Barbara Buchanan's,
Bringing your own lunch, tea and coffee provided.

Report of Melbourne meeting Sunday 3 November

Diana Snape Vic

An intrepid group braved showery weather conditions to enjoy a fascinating bus tour, devised and led by **Rodger Elliot**, of (mainly) indigenous public gardens around Melbourne. Rodger had prepared notes about the gardens with a little of their history and I've drawn upon these for my report, which gives only a very brief impression of their variety. Any additional comments are mine. (I've left out our unscheduled but well deserved afternoon tea stop.)

21

1 Yaita Bend State Park

Here an inspiring regeneration and revegetation program is being undertaken, with the involvement of Darcy Duggan. We could compare the great beauty of the restored areas with the sad state of areas which are still weed-infested.

Points which were noted include:-

- large established willow on the banks of the Yarra are being poisoned and then cut down, rather than removed (which would destabilize the banks)
- indigenous grasses are widely used, eg beautiful areas of grasses such as *Poa ensiformis* now clothing some slopes
- a pleasing range of plants all indigenous to the local area are being used, from trees to groundcovers - one pretty plant new to me was *Linum marginale* (Native Flax)
- where it is more level, between roped off planted areas, access is left to the river for people who want to fish

2 Royal Park, Gatehouse Street, Australian Garden

This is an example of an original plan (by Grace Fraser) which was only partly implemented - the designer's horror. Elements of her design remain and are evident and attractive, in the pleasing curves of the outline of the pool and bog area, the plant selection and the repetition of plants in groups. The Melbourne City Council omitted some aspects of the design and changed a number of the subtle elements. Maintenance of such a garden requires a sympathetic eye too.

3 Zoo and SW corner of Royal Park

We looked from the bus at the recent plantings for the controversial new parking areas at the zoo, where large eucalypts such as *E. cladocalyx* predominate and *Poa labillardieri* march in straight rows. I don't think this regimentation will remain obvious. We then walked to see an impressive example of Gordon Ford's rockwork and planting beside a large, steep-sided pool in the SW corner of Royal Park. The use of granite boulders in a basalt area was questioned, and how the safety aspect would be treated now. Some SG members thought the long uniform curve of just one melaleuca species, stretching from around the pool to then screen this whole area from the highway, with just two or three small areas of grasses in front, could have been improved by inclusion of several groups of a second shrub species of different height.

4 Corroboree Tree Lagoon, Albert Park Reserve

This is an amazing oasis right next to an extremely busy highway. It was created in 1988, based on plans by Phillip Pegler with advice on plant species from Flora Survey and Rob Scott (St Kilda CC). Because of lack of indigenous remnants in the surrounding area the sources of some species planted had to be more distant. You enter the quite small area from a more open park and are soon enclosed by a sheltering screen where *Melaleuca ericifolia* is suckering. The small, natural-looking lagoon is a complete surprise, ringed by reeds including *Juncus pallidus*. The Corroboree Tree, a magnificent and ancient *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, stands beyond the lagoon and right beside the road, for me this was one highlight of the day.

5 St Kilda Foreshore

A quick look on foot (the rain was fairly steady now) at indigenous coastal plantings, happier on the sheltered side of an informal hedge than on the exposed side. Even a slight sand ridge and dip helps give some shelter to plants from the prevailing wind. Some species used were Sattbush, *Lomandra longifolia*, *Banksia integrifolia*, *Allocasuarina verticillata* and beautiful Coast Spear-grass (*Stipa stipoides*) with rusty foliage. Rodger advocated close planting of hardy species to provide shelter behind, and occasional rejuvenation of *Lomandra longifolia* by severe cutting back.

6 Dveworks Park, Prahran

This is an unusual modern park in a very busy area, close to high density housing, shops and light industry. It is easy to drive right past concentrating on the traffic and not see it through a row of parked cars. It was designed by Mark McWha Landscape Architects, constructed by Greg Fry and opened in 1993. There are no indigenous plants but a long curved row of *Eucalyptus citriodora* frames the park, against the backdrop of a high brick wall. A very stylised water course meanders into a pond and a formal grid of pear trees will provide summer shade. Some of us thought the park needed to be more enclosed from the street and "busy-ness" of parked and moving cars, as on the other side it's adjacent to a quieter and more open parking area. This could be done by repetition of a wall segment used in a section of the park.

7 Yarraberg Riverside Development

Planting has been carried out between a new housing development and the Yarra River. The river bank is high and steep, and here the willows and other exotic trees low on the bank have been left. Growth of relatively large indigenous plants such as acacias now screens the river almost completely from the units, which seems a pity, though there are attractive smaller plants. On a level grassed area between the units and the slope *Eucalyptus maculata* has been planted. Once their trunks are tall enough the foliage will not block the view but this will take a few years.

Our sincere thanks to Rodger for an exciting journey of discovery in our own city (that is, except for Danie Ondinea from Sydney). We appreciate all the time and thought Rodger put into the preparation which made the day so rewarding. I'm sure many of us will be back to take another look at some of those places. Thanks also to **Trevor Blake** who was our skilful bus driver for the day.

Next Melbourne meeting on Sunday 2nd February 1997 at 2 pm at Diana Snape's place,

This will be (in part) a planning meeting for 1997 - what would you like to do during next year? Come along and let us know.

Slide and print library

A reminder that we are currently looking for 'before & after' photographs (slides or prints), or just 'before' photos, e.g. showing topography, borrowed landscape, and then shaping of the land - changes in level (mounds, terraces, slopes, embankments) and 'hard landscape' (steps & retaining walls). Photos of any other aspects of garden design are still welcome too; trees in the garden will come next. We'll copy and return slides if requested - also negatives of prints.

Please send photos to our **Siide Librarian, Doug McIver,** Phone Doug

if you have any questions or would like a GDSG form to note helpful details of the garden or what your photograph shows. Thank you to those members who have already contributed to our library,

MEMBERSHIP

New members *A warm welcome to the following new members.*

Christine & Angelo Gaiardo

Leanne Harper

Majella Hedger

John & Annette Houseman

Tim Lucas

Kate Malfroy

Don & Thelma Peterson

Lyn Reilly

Mr & Mrs S. Riley

Maureen & Geoff Short

Joy Stacey

Membership renewals *(I'm sorry some of these missed inclusion in the last Newsletter.)*

Michael Bates, John & Christine Beasley, John Bramley, Jane Calder, Lindsay Campbell, Tony Cavanagh, Jennifer Clancy, Karen Clarke, Matthew Collins, Janice Creasey, Rosemary Gunning, Peter Cuneo, Brian & Mary Dacy, Glenda & Bernie Datson, Sandra Davey, Laurie Dunn, Judith Dykes, Vanessa Eiwel-Gavins, Wendy & David Evans, Theresa Feile, Steve Fielke, Eva Flegman, Gloria Freeman, Margaret Garrett, Wendy Geale, Ron Gornall, Marilyn Gray, Caroline Gunter, Pam & Steve Hailstone, Jo Hambrett, Chris Hampson, Bev Hanson, Robyn Hartley, Nick Hockey, Kevin Hoffman, Lyn Johnson, Julie Jones, Paul & Barbara Kennedy, Florence King, John Knight, Faleiry Koczkar, Madia Lalak, Bryan Loft, Tim Lucas, Pat MacDonald, Wendy Mackie, Rosemary Manion, Neil & Jane Marriott, Allan & Judy McKechnie, Ron & Pat McKeown, Helen Morrow, Bruce Muir, Penny Munro, Erica Nathan, June Parrott, Alison Payne, Shirley Pipitone, Royce & Jeanne Raleigh, Stefanie Rennick, Jan Schapper, Kaye Schofield, Peter Sharp, Mardi Simons, Rosalind Smallwood, Stuart Taylor, Gloria Thomlinson, Philip Tow, Robin Trevilyan, Belinda Wallis, Jane Weyand, Carol & Frits Wilmink, Alik Zouliou.

(if you have renewed and your name isn't here or in NL 14, please let Peter or me know. DS)

SGAP Qld, S.A., Vic, Geelong Group, Pine Rivers Branch.

Lists of professional members

We now have lists of those professional members in each State who wanted their name to be placed on a referral list available to people who enquire about professional help. These lists provide contact phone numbers (and a little information about each member's specialist areas, where this has been given).

Lantana, Privet and exotic vines, concrete blocks, sheet metal and old pipes - what place could these have in garden design? We'll find out in the next Newsletter.

A possible theme for the next Newsletter (following on the Landscape Australia Conference) is the "natural garden", which George Seddon described as a contradiction in terms. You might remember we in the GDSG use this term only for truly natural areas that people would recognize as having garden-like qualities. I'd like to include a report on the Conference in the next Newsletter, with a little help from other members who attended. If you were there and found one (or more) of the talks of special interest, please write and send me a few (or many) lines about it, or your response to it. There were speakers from Europe, the USA and New Zealand as well as locals, all touching some aspect linked to the theme.

Other ideas are "wild" gardens and designing for wildlife. Remember to ask for any topics you want us to focus on; one recent suggestion is garden design for indoors. Perhaps this topic comes partly under the Containers Study Group but the design aspect is ours. Don't waste your reaction to this NL and don't forget to write something - just a note will do - over November or December (or very early January)(but don't feel too guilty if you can't!).

I hope all GDSG members have a very happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year, and we'll be in touch again with the February 97 Newsletter.

Best Wishes

jT^
(Y' t v w z r

Diana Snape