

ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS  
**GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP      NEWSLETTER NO. 2**  
 July 1993

Dear Members,

Our newsletters will not always follow so closely, as it will depend on how much material there is to include, but I think it's time for this one.

Our **MEMBERSHIP** has reached 60, with members in Queensland, NSW, Victoria, SA, Tasmania and the ACT. The list of new members is on the last page. I hope before long there will be sufficient members in states other than Victoria for people to be able to make personal contact with other local members. Queensland in particular seems rather a long way away; its superb range of indigenous plants and its different growing conditions probably lead to fascinating differences in garden styles. Fortunately the principles of garden design do not change with the climate. A reminder: members of ASGAP Study Groups should belong to their State or Regional SGAP Group.

**Extracts from members' and friends' letters**

*"Garden design, Oz style, has been my interest. I don't mean exclusively native plants, but an informal, even untidy, garden reminiscent of Australian scrub, very different from the English concept."*  
 Violet Hoare

*"While supporting all the aims of SGAP, my personal interest is in the beautiful effects to be obtained by incorporating Australian plants in well designed gardens."* R. K. Willson

*"I'm presently working in the garden maintenance and construction business and occasionally do some design. The latter is where my interest lies and I would like to do more of this in the future. I have just joined ASGAP and recently completed an Associate Diploma in Horticulture".* Frederick Young

*"My husband Keith and I live on 1 1/2 acres of dry sclerophyll forest/woodland in the NSW Southern Tablelands. This has provided the basic structure for our garden as there are significant numbers of Eucalyptus rossii, E. macrorhyncha, E. polyanthemos, E. melliodora, a range of local wattles and a few local shrubs (mainly varieties of peas). We have also put in a number of beds."* Vanessa Elwell-Gavins

*"I have reprinted your letter in the current Australian Grasses newsletter and requested members to forward their information (about reliable grasses) to me. I will then collate and record it and forward the results to you."* Knud Hansen (leader Australian Grasses Study Group)

*"In this area I have found Blackwood (Acacia melanoxylon) to be fantastic - just bend gracefully in our semi-cyclonic wind. I am planning on growing some hedges next year and had in mind Backhousia citriodora and Agonis flexuosa both of which I believe do well in wind."* Marion Bakker

*"Idea! Could members contribute "before, during and after" slides they may have, to make up a slide/tape set for loan to SGAP Groups for meetings, etc. Suggestions for medium hedge - Correa 'Marion's Marvel' (I have made a start, but eaten by rabbits!); callistemons - not tried."* Cherree Densley

*"I felt that because of the river, remaining vegetation and our concern for the wildlife in this area, a native garden would be perfect for our situation. As an art/craft and design teacher I would like to extend my skills in this area into the design of landscape. I find the aesthetic qualities of native vegetation and flowers both exciting and challenging and I'm looking forward to exploring this area further."* Jacquie Winder

*"I am enclosing a book (Planting a Native Garden) which you may find useful for your Study Group Library. It is not strictly a book on garden design, but it does have a chapter on landscaping and it will give you an idea of what will grow in the subtropics."* Jan Sked (A.S.G.A.P. Study Group Coordinator) (Jan compiled the book which is of general interest but particularly helpful to people between Rockhampton and Coffs Harbour.)

*"I'm in 3rd year of a 4-year Ass. Dip. of Landscape Design at Ryde TAFE, and I work as a Bush Regenerator with the National Trust and as an indigenous seed collector with Randwick City Council Nursery. I look forward to being part of this group."* Danie Olbrich

*"According to the information on the jacket (of Gardens in Time - see booklist additions) John Oldham was Australia's first full-time landscape architect and in 1956 became Western Australian Government Landscape Architect. His wife Ray is also described as an historian, writer and landscape architect. You may have a contact who could comment on John Oldham's work in W.A. as both he and his wife were interested in conservation particularly in regard to flora of Australia."* Geoff Simmons

**Financial statement**

At the end of the financial year 1/7/93 our bank balance was \$293.43

Receipts (membership fees and donations) total \$340.08

Expenses (mainly stamps and envelopes) total \$46.65

I think that members who joined the GDSG in the first few months will not have to pay another subscription until the end of this new financial year (i.e. June 1994). Members who join now are receiving a copy of the first newsletter to 'catch up'.

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**CLASSIFICATION OF GARDEN TYPES - NATIVE GARDENS**

Aliki Zouliou, Paul Thompson and Diana Snape

The following method of classification is designed purely as a means of categorising garden styles for the purpose of the A.S.G.A.P. Garden Design Study Group. It is not by any means the only method of classifying, nor is it necessarily the best method. It shall, however, provide a basis for categorising garden design styles in our research as a study group, and can be added to, modified and generally improved by the group as we feel appropriate. Please let us have your comments and suggestions.

**INTRODUCTION**

The elements of garden design relate to the interplay of land and plant forms, masses and voids, and the influence that nature and people have on these.

Classification of garden types can vary depending on the perspective from which a garden is viewed. A garden is categorised not only by what lies before our eyes, but what lies within our heads. It is expected that many gardens shall contain characteristics which are evident in several different defined garden styles. No matter how rigid a classification system one devises therefore, it may occasionally need to be put aside so that the viewer can open up all the senses to simply appreciate the unique sight, sound, smell, flavour or feel of whatever is encountered. Thus, in the classification of garden types, one must consider the overall essence or 'feel' of a space in addition to more specifically defined elements of design.

The following main categories are proposed for classifying garden styles, within which are many sub-groups and possible crossovers between categories. The objective is to determine the essential groups and the main sub-groups. From there, one may progress to particulars of content for each group.

**1. NATURALISTIC GARDENS**

People use the term 'natural garden' to acknowledge the 'accidental design' which occurs in nature, in an untouched area appreciated as a garden for its natural beauty. For example such natural gardens proliferate in the Grampians (Victoria). A naturalistic garden is a created garden, its creator influenced wholly or partly by nature and natural communities of plants.

Key Words: informal, unmanicured, untamed, irregular, spontaneous, fluid, regenerating, harmonious, peaceful, undemanding, asymmetrical

General characteristics:

- \* the absence of formal geometric design
- \* lower maintenance
- \* tendency to be self-sustaining
- \* potentially low water useage

**SUB-GROUPS****1.1 Indigenous Garden:**

- uses plants which originally existed in the local area
- may aim to restore a natural plant community to a bare or alienated block
- defined in terms of content rather than aesthetics and design
- should be low water useage, the natural plant community being suited to existing conditions unless these have been greatly modified
- tends to be low maintenance and self-sustaining
- encourages native birds, wildlife

### 3

#### 1.2 Natural Plant Community Garden

- replicates the natural character and natural plant communities of another area
- included would be heathland gardens, woodland, coastal, alpine, wetland, rainforest, savannah, dryland, mallee and other such regional communities
- the extent of the regions from which the natural plant communities come could vary considerably, but the plants would have natural associations

#### 1.3 Ethos Garden

- aims to reproduce the ethos (characteristic spirit) of a natural plant community
- included would be heathland ethos garden and others listed in 1.2
- reproduces the mood of a natural area yet need not use the original flora
- atmosphere created is more important than actual content
- species may be selected which are foreign to each other plant
- the term 'bush garden' would generally refer to an ethos garden
- probably the most common of these three sub-groups

## 2. FORMAL GARDENS

This category is one of symmetry and repetition of forms. The formal style is disciplined, powerful and obvious, frequently complementing strong architectural features such as historical buildings and monuments.

Key words: geometrical, symmetrical, ordered, regular, planned, proportioned, repetitive, patterned, controlled, rigid, maintained, manicured

General characteristics:

- \* Definite patterning occurs in both plan and detail.
- \* There is usually one "ideal" viewing point.
- \* Proportions are usually classical yet need not be.

### SUB-GROUPS

#### 2.1 Classically formal

- patterning is based on geometric shapes (circles, squares, rectangles, triangles) and straight lines
- obvious rigidity or highly manicured designs e.g. clipped hedges, topiary, parterre

#### 2.2 Formalistic

- patterning is more asymmetrical and less rigid than classically formal
- more use of curvilinear lines in a contrived and controlled manner
- examples include treed avenues, some highway plantations, some municipal and industrial gardens, some styles of the traditional Japanese garden

## 3. THEME GARDENS

This garden type is one in which the design is based around an overall theme, idea or common factor, and all other elements are secondary.

General characteristics:

- \* an overall theme runs through the whole design, linking the elements together
- \* the theme dominates the design and is quite obvious
- \* the theme may imitate an existing garden style, historical period or culture

### SUB-GROUPS

3.1 Collector's Garden - collection of one or many species for the hobbyist, for research or as an educational resource (e.g. gardens linked to the Ornamental Plants Collection Association)

- examples include fern garden, grevillea garden

3.2 Colour Garden - follows a colour scheme

3.3 Productive Garden - edible produce/ cut flower

3.4 Functional Garden - children's/ disabled person's/ therapeutic

3.5 Perfume Garden - plants with perfumed foliage and flowers

3.6 Wildflower Garden - small flowering plants (herbs, daisies, lilies, low shrubs)  
- the equivalent of an Australian native "Cottage Garden"

3.7 Water Garden - features pool(s)/ lake(s)/ creek(s)/ waterfall(s)

3.8 Period Garden - e.g. Edwardian

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- 3.9 Cultural Garden - e.g. Oriental styles
- 3.10 Portable Garden - potted, miniature, bonsai, saikei
- 3.11 Sculpture Garden - the garden design incorporates sculpture
- 3.12 Idiosyncratic Garden - kitsch/surreal/dramatic/story-telling

### **4. ECLECTIC GARDENS**

This is the broadest category of all, encompassing most gardens that are created. Eclectic gardens essentially include a mixture of types. Particular design elements are drawn freely from various sources. The object may be to collect all and sundry or create a design with a number of featuristic components. There is no common factor, therefore no common design characteristics.

Key words: inconsistent, mixed, diverse, liberal, selective, non-purist, flexible, comprehensive, unrestricted, exciting, miscellaneous, individual, personal

### **SUB-GROUPS**

#### **4.1 Integrated Eclectic**

- the garden as a whole is integrated, with different styles, design elements or themes being combined and present throughout the garden

#### **4.2 Segregated Eclectic**

- the garden is divided into separate areas which may each follow a different style, design element or theme

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### **OUR OBJECTIVES**

As members of the GDSG we have formulated certain general aims. It might be useful to set ourselves more specific objectives to achieve in the short term ( 1 - 2 years) and in the longer term (say 5 - 10 years). If you agree with this idea, what do you think our objectives should be?

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### **More Books for the Booklist** Janet Coghill, Cherree Densley, Rodger Elliot, Geoff Simmons,

- Bazir, G. (1900) *Paradeisos. The Art of the Garden* Bullfinch Press  
'Brooks, John (1991) *Your Garden Design Book* Lothian, Melbourne  
Church, Thomas (1955) *Gardens are for People* Reinhold, New York  
Clouston, Brian (Ed.) (1977) *Landscape Design with Plants* Heinemann, London  
Eckbo, Garrett (1956) *The Art of Home Landscaping* Dodge Corporation, New York  
Eliovson, Sima (1991) *The Gardens of Roberto Burte Marx* Thames & Hudson, London  
Fairbrother, Nan (1974) *The Nature of Landscape Design* Architectural Press, London  
\*\*Grekj, Denise (1986) *Creating a Rockery with Australian Plants* Golden Press, NSW  
\*Henty, Carol (1988) *For the People's Pleasure: Australia's Botanic Gardens* Greenhouse Pub. Melbourne  
Jekyll, G. *A Gardener's Testament*  
"Lochhead, Helen (1987) *Gardens for Living* Greenhouse Publications, Melbourne  
"Oakman, Harry (1979) *Garden Landscape Trees in Australia* Rigby  
"Oldham, John & Ray (1980) *Gardens in Time* Lansdowne Press  
Symons-Jeune, B.H.B. (1932) *Natural Rock Gardening* Country Life Ltd, London  
Thacker, Christopher (1979) *The History of Gardens* A.H. & A.W. Reed  
\*Watts, P. (1982) *The Gardens of Edna Walling* National Trust, Victoria (perhaps more analytical on her designs and the elements that she used than her own writing)  
"Williams, Eleanor; Stacey, Wesley et al. (1977) *Timeless Gardens* Pioneer Design Studio, Lilydale Vic. (terrific photos of 35 'natural gardens' in Australia)  
\*\*Wrigley, J.W. & Fagg, M. (1992) *Australian Native Plants* Angus & Robertson (useful information on natives not yet covered by Elliot & Jones (from K - Z))

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### **Keeping Records of Gardens**

John Armstrong, with help from Helen Morrow and Spencer Wilson, has designed a form for members of the GDSG to keep records of the garden design of interesting gardens we visit, and currently this form is being trialled by Melbourne members. I hope you will receive a copy with the next newsletter; in the meantime please just record garden design details, making use of the classification scheme outlined in this newsletter. (You could try your own garden for practice.)

## 5

### A Visit to the Joyce Garden, Melbourne

Barbara Buchanan and Diana Snape

On Sunday 20th June some members of the Garden Design Study Group joined members of SGAP Maroondah Group to enjoy a visit to a garden designed by Paul Thompson for Colin and Liana Joyce, and described in *Landscape Australia* 4/1991. Paul won four *Landscape Contractors of Victoria* awards in 1990, three related to work in this garden. These were:- water features; water conservation in the landscape; the Nubrick landscape of the year award.

#### A few facts

Age of garden: 4 years

Area: 0.5 hectare (approx. 1 acre)

Soil type: mainly clay with little topsoil

Climate: typical for Melbourne

Orientation: the front faces north and it slopes down to the south at the back of the house

Special features of the block: the house and its location in a semi-rural area

What was there before? a cleared block with inadequate provision for drainage; an area excavated for a tennis court; a token garden and a few preserved remnant trees down the bottom

#### The garden

The entrance is the highest point of the block and from it slopes a driveway planted largely with casuarinas and acacias, already beginning to create a soft, spacious archway. Among the ground flora, native grasses predominate. The drive opens out into a courtyard-like area partly enclosed by the north and west wings of the house and dense planting on the fence. Several White Cedars (*Melia azedarach*) grow here for summer shade. Good use is made of a change in level which provides a perfect site close to the front entrance for a medium-sized pool, nestling into the bank. There is a nice balance between the size of this pool, the planted bank, the grouping of adjacent granite boulders, some pebble areas and large, flat stepping stones between the pool and the house. Tufted plants, groundcovers and low shrubs predominate among the plants.

The garden as a whole is eclectic but the central water area is the focus. The different areas are segregated but without sharp boundaries. A second courtyard-like area close to the house at the back (partly enclosed by the south and west wings) has a geometrical swimming pool and regular garden beds and planter bowls filled with attractive small plants. Both front and back areas close to the house are formalistic and detailed, requiring higher maintenance; further from the house the design is broadscale, with solid stone or timber garden "furniture" (seats, a barbecue area) placed openly but still inconspicuous in the landscape. The changes in levels and slopes of this quite steep block have been well sculptured.

The water garden is somewhat formalistic in its curvilinear shaping and design, the higher pool linked to a larger lower pool by a rocky waterfall. The planting is naturalistic; tufted plants soften the water edges and the eastern boundaries are thickly planted with shrubs. The lower pool is visually divided by a simple timber bridge just above water level. A pebble beach at one of its edges accommodates changes in water level and, further along this side, flat granite rocks form a substantial shelf. The water attracts hundreds of birds and the lower pool has a vegetated floating island to provide refuge. The system of pools plays a vital role in converting the block's drainage problem to an advantage, as they conserve water and maximize its use. The lovely view from a timber deck down across the pools to the distant hillside will be maintained, with no serious interruption allowed by a few eucalypts scattered on the slope. No attempt has been made to subdivide the lower garden by screens of plants, though necessary screens are now developing to hide a tennis court on one side and a conspicuous large house on the other.

Down the lower western boundary is a woodland ethos garden with selected eucalypts now 4 or 5 metres tall, planted quite close together. Colin says if they were beginning now they would probably use all indigenous species. At this stage the grass underneath is mown, but as the trees mature and their shade and leaf litter inhibit the growth of exotic grasses, native grasses will be introduced here too. The garden links with the wildlife corridors which they have helped plant along the gully and up the far hillside; these will become part of the 'borrowed' landscape.

This is not a collector's garden and, though a few plants are rare, most are not uncommon and there is repetition (e.g. *Acacia leprosa* and *A. cognata* provide a link between front and back gardens). Plants chosen for each area are varied and appropriate. The owners have collaborated closely with the designer; their aims coincide and their planting and continuing work in the garden are in sympathy. Colin says "the garden has changed our lifestyle" and their obvious enthusiasm has already inspired two nearby neighbours to grow native gardens. This beautiful garden is young but has been planned for the future. It will be fascinating to see it mature.

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## 6

**BANKSIAS reliable in Melbourne soils (& as a guide for other areas)**

Few native gardens fail to include at least one banksia, whether a tree, a large or small shrub or prostrate groundcover. Banksias are plants of enormous interest and appeal, quintessentially Australian and valuable in garden design for their form and foliage throughout the year and their abundant, bird-attracting flower-spikes in sequence between attractive buds and fascinating cones. *Please let us know your ideas about the use of **banksias** in garden design, in different styles of gardens. Do you think there are other genera with which they combine particularly well ?*

**Trevor Blake**, leader of the **Banksia Study Group**, has kindly provided the following list of banksias found by B.S.G. members to be reliable in the varying soils of Melbourne. I am sure G.D.S.G. members from further afield in south-eastern Australia will be able to extrapolate from this list, but Queensland members may find it more difficult.

NAME of BANKSIA	Eastern species	Melb. clays	Southern sands	Northern shales	Mountain soils	Comments
aemula			/		/	
baueri		/ (6-7 yrs)	/		/	good drainage
baxteri			/		/	
blechnifolia		/	/		/	
brownii					/	
burdettii					/	
caleyi		/	/	/	/	
candolleana			/		?	
canei	E	/	/	/	/	
coccinea					/	
conferta var. conferta	E	/	/	/	/	
var. pencillata	E	/	/	/	/	
dryandroides		/	/	/	/	
elderiana		/	/		/	good drainage
ericifolia (both forms)	E	/	/	/	/	
gardneri var. gardneri			/		/	
goodii			/		/	
grandis			/		/	
integrifolia v. integrifolia	E	/	/	/	/	
v. compar	E	/	/	?		
v. aquilonia	E	/	/	?		
laevigata ssp. fuseolutea	/	/			/	good drainage
lemanniana			/		?	
marginata	E	/	/	/	/	
media		/	/	/	/	
menziesii			/		/	
oblongifolia	E	/	/	/	/	
occidentalis			/			moisture & drainage
ornata	E		/			touchy
paludosa	E	/	/	/	/	
petiolaris			/		/	
praemorsa		/	/	?	/	
prionotes			/		/	good drainage, deep soil
repens		/	/		/	good drainage, deep soil
robur	E	/	/	/	/	
saxicola	E	/	/	/	/	
serrata	E	/	/	?	/	
speciosa			/		/	good drainage, deep soil
spinulosa (all varieties)	E	/	/	/	/	

Species not included are unknown by the B.S.G. in Melbourne apart from odd plants but this is a wonderful range of banksias to choose from, both eastern and western.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*In Sunshine and Shade - Change in the Garden* by John Stowar

(published by Kangaroo Press)

Barbara Buchanan

For some years now I have pondered the problem of how best to deal with a maturing native garden. It has always seemed to me relatively easy to have a lovely garden that is 3 or 4 years old, but how to keep it pleasing is quite another matter. Twice we have side-stepped the issue by moving house but now, to help me with the ageing of what I swear is my last garden, has come this book by John Stowar. That it is not confined to native plants does not detract much from its value. Basic principles are stated clearly and simply with examples from the whole range of garden plants, but where appropriate special reference is made to Australian plants.

I found the approach stimulating: the opening chapter 'What makes a beautiful garden?' while providing definite answers and basic principles to help achieve beauty still had me speculating on personal, individual situations. The next chapter gives brief summaries of garden styles from ancient Persia, China and Japan to Europe and the present day, which highlight the links between social and cultural background and the ideal of a garden, leading to the proposition that our gardens today are basically for show and display. The discussion then moves to the special case of the Australian environment and the need to develop our own garden style(s) instead of trying to adapt European ones.

The change with age theme is then developed in a series of chapters dealing with new, youthful and mature gardens each subdivided into coastal, frost free and frost prone climates, with ideas on how to plan for and turn to advantage the increasing levels of shade. Another section is devoted to tackling an overgrown garden. Garden-making can never be completely finished but with forewarning and forethought the energy input can be decreased as garden and gardener age. As a garden develops, unwelcome decisions have to be taken and implemented and this book provides some moral stiffening to take drastic steps in the pursuit of Beauty. Above all it invites us to query why Australians make the type of garden most do and to think about trying something more appropriate and more truly beautiful here. Dyed-in-the-wool SGAPers may not like the message that the ultimate Australian garden will use the best of local and exotic plants, but I personally agree that it is inevitable and for most people our plants have to win their place on their own merits.

I heartily recommend this book for anyone wanting a brief introduction to the history of garden design and a sound but simple statement of design principles. This makes an excellent starting point for anyone aiming to do more than plant up an interesting botanical collection.

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*Grow Native* by Bill Molyneux (published by Anne O'Donovan) Joan Barrett

This small paperback is actually a compilation of articles written for the Melbourne Age over 31/2 years, first published in 1980 and reprinted several times. I feel my attachment for '*Grow Native*' is due to it having diverted me from an exotic garden to the infinitely greater challenge of converting a Kew backyard into bushland.

In his Introduction Bill Molyneux writes "I tried ... to convey a sense of 'Here is what can be done' rather than 'This is what you should do'". In the event, he gives us a bit of both; the result is informative as well as inspirational. The text leads from (a) observation and appreciation of our native bushland, through (b) practical application and many useful hints to

(c) the goal: that a sense of the bush can be created in the smallest suburban block.

The colour photographs and Sue Forrester's sketches are a delight.

The author says there are no plans for a reprint - it has been long superseded by '*Native Gardens - How to Create an Australian Landscape*' by Molyneux and MacDonald. Nevertheless, '*Grow Native*' is available in most libraries and I will always retain my affection for it.

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OPEN SPACES in SMALL GARDENS

OPEN SPACE

Bev Courtney

In a small garden, particularly if the owner is an avid plant collector, there is often the temptation to make the most of limited space and cram the planting area with as many species as possible. This can have the unwanted effect of making the garden seem crowded and even smaller. Open spaces are therefore probably even more important in a small garden than in a larger one.

Traditionally, the open space in a typical small suburban garden is occupied by a lawn. To me this is a rather uninteresting way of using space and not exactly environmentally-benign, when one considers the often wasteful use of water, fertiliser and fossil fuel (if not hand-mown), and the limited amount of wildlife which a lawn can support. Lawns are usually separated from the planted areas by a cut edge or a defining mower strip and never seem to be 'tied in' to the garden as a whole. They are really only effective in large gardens where space is not at a premium; in a small garden the effect tends to be lost.

I much prefer an open area to be covered with a natural mulch, either organic or gravel. An organic mulch may look softer than gravel, but gravel will encourage the germination of seeds and, if small wildflowers and grasses are being grown in the main garden beds, these can pop up in odd spots giving a pleasing natural look. Whatever the mulch, it can be continued into planted areas giving the whole garden a more unified appearance. If the open area is very small, paving is also an option and there are some very attractive pavers currently available in colours that blend in with foliage or rocks.

Open areas provide more light and air circulation which may be important for some plants and can be the site of a particular feature such as a small pool or a favourite statue. One or two seats are a must and possibly a table, maybe even a barbecue. More than one open area can be created and they can be linked by pathways which entice the visitor to explore further.

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## **OPEN SPACE, GRASS and the LARGER GARDEN**

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**Barbara Buchanan**

Everyone who gardens has some idea, however hazy, of what makes a beautiful garden; these ideas develop and alter with time and experience, just as the garden itself grows. When we SGAPers set about making a garden we generally want to recreate our own little bit of bush. Mostly we accept that it is neither desirable nor possible to make an exact replica but seek instead to capture an atmosphere, the spirit of the bush. The ways we try to do this depend on the size of the garden (and I am writing specifically about larger ones), the state of the garden when we start; the strength of our obsession with Australian plants and how we balance the collector's urge against the yen for artistic expression and the yen for naturalism.

There are two important, usually interrelated elements well known in all Garden Design styles that are equally relevant when designing with Australian plants. One is the need for open space and the other the need for screens, walls or hedges to divide up the total space so that the whole area is not seen at first glance and separate compartments can be treated in different ways. These screens also provide a background which can enhance the values of plants in front of them. However as the description of the Joyce garden in this newsletter shows, experts can break the rules in the appropriate situation - in this case with tall trees funnelling the view to the large water area and the 'borrowed' landscape.

The need for some open space I believe to be more fundamental, though the details may vary. A garden may be a real collector's paradise, packed with plants from fence to fence, but with just a narrow access path so one can only focus on individual plants. In such a garden any sense of artistry and design is sacrificed to the needs of the collection and it only succeeds in the absence of an overhead canopy so that sunlight is available. Many of our most floriferous plants need sun to flower properly and staggering of plant heights from around an open area allows for this and for plants to be seen and appreciated. As a garden is a painting in three dimensions, the best gardens have a balance of clumps and voids with individual plants in the clumps chosen for form, foliage and flowers. The void may even be the space between the canopy of a tall tree and the ground, or the trees may be at the heart of a clump of shrubs with open ground between clumps. Photographs of lovely English gardens show large open areas with clipped yew hedges framing the famous mixed borders set in lawn all fully exposed to the sun. In Australia we also need patches of shade.

There is currently a reaction against lawns as ground cover because they are not perceived as part of the bush, need precious water in summer and constant mowing. We do need to look again at what effect we desire in our gardens. I for one would put shade very high on the list and with shade, soft refreshing greenery to contrast with the glare of the dried grass in the paddocks or the asphalt and concrete of our towns. Grass is a very effective source of greenness which need not only come as manicured lawns and it is good to see the current experimentation with different ways of using it. A few clumps of trees and shrubs with a sweep of rough lawn beneath - I sometimes wonder why we torture ourselves with more elaborate effects.

The extent of the areas needed to properly set off our plant combinations varies with the sizes of the plants and the type of garden. 'Bush bashing' can be very enjoyable but I believe to really see the bush a walk down a quiet road such as a disused timber track allows for a better view of the bush as well as all the colonizing and often colourful plants found on the verges. The equivalent in the garden, broad grassy rides through tall trees allow for vistas to distant views, as well as easy access and fire breaks, or lead intriguingly around a corner. Narrower paths through the massed shrubs opening here and there to broader spaces fit the lower growing areas.

While there are various hard surfaces available for treating open areas in small blocks or close to the house, for the larger garden grass and water stand alone. Other prostrate plants which can be used as ground cover are high in maintenance, at least during establishment. Water is a separate topic with a history of use in gardens as long as the history of gardening, but modern materials make it more accessible. While grass is associated with manicured lawns whose maintenance is a chore, it need not be so demanding. *Microlaena stipoides*, Weeping Grass, has colonised our paddocks from the bush. It thrives in acid soils that develop here, responds to fertilizer and to any summer rains. With a bit of judicious help and watering around the house, we are hoping to develop it for our lawns. It does need mowing (but not often) to remove the seedheads, for the seeds are a menace in clothing, especially socks. It is low growing, in contrast to *Themeda triandra* (Kangaroo Grass), stays green at the base even in drought but is soft green with watering. We hope to extend it to replace pasture weeds in the open areas of our garden, together with a fine-leaved Wallaby Grass (*Danthonia* sp.) which survives mowing and trampling. The *Microlaena* is a pest in garden beds (another reason for mowing the seedheads) but I am hoping that as the shrubs grow they will suppress it and it can be confined to where it is wanted without too much effort. Come back in ten years time and see how successful we have been; meantime don't despise lawn grass in large gardens for open space and as a foil for native plants.

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**GARDEN DESIGN PROJECTS** for large or small gardens, or sections of gardens, will give us opportunities to practise and improve our design skills while helping others achieve the results they want. In the suburbs small gardens predominate and are just as important to their owners as larger, grander ones. Here is an example of such a project. The plan is shown on the next page.

#### A Garden Design Project

Bev Courtney and Margaret Fraser

The opportunity to carry out a garden design project came when neighbours opposite decided to landscape a small area in front of their home. Originally a lawn, it had been dug over by hand and gypsum incorporated into the heavy clay soil. Two lines of bricks had been laid to form an edging for the central area which was resown with grass to function as a wide pathway between the drive and the side gate. The remainder had been covered with pinebark mulch and was ready to plant.

The area is small, only 5m x 5m, so not too daunting for a couple of novice landscapers. It is bounded by the driveway, the house wall (no windows), a treated pine fence and the footpath. There is a slight slope away from the house to the footpath, and the garden faces due east. No grasses, plenty of colour and something tall against the bare wall were the only requests from the owners.

The tall shrub against the house gave us some trouble at first. The garden bed is only 50cm wide at the point where it was to go, and anything tall would be bound to require constant pruning to keep it back from the path. We eventually decided on *Acacia boormannii* (Snowy River Wattle), because it can be cut up to an attractive trunk and would not intrude onto the lawn. It often produces multiple

trunks from low down but to make sure we grouped three together. The heads of foliage will soften the bare wall and will ultimately be well above head height.

Larger shrubs were selected against the fence on the right hand side and smaller species for the centre so as to provide a view of the background planting against the house wall. Small moisture-loving species such as patersonias and brachyscomes should be happy at the bottom of the slope beside the footpath.

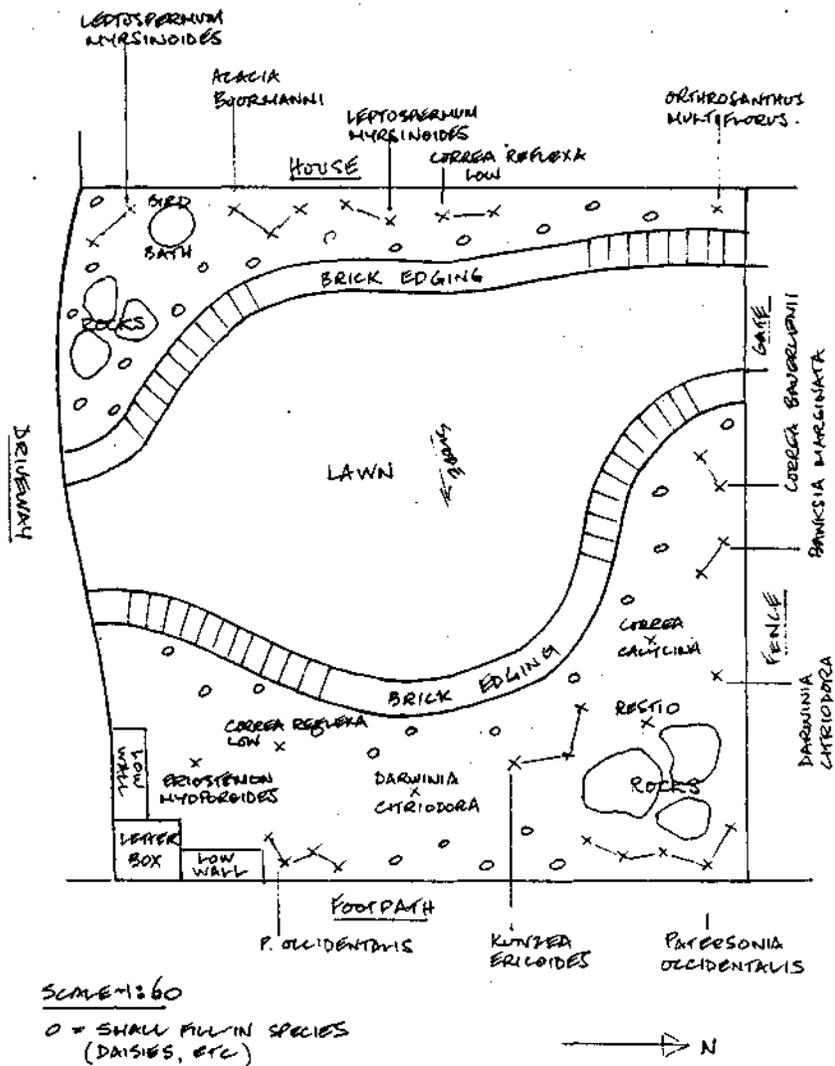
**Species used:**

Main species

- Acacia boormannii*
- Banksia marginata*
- Correa bauerlenii*
- C. calycina*
- C. reflexa* (low form)
- Leptospermum myrsinoides*
- Kunzea ericoides*
- Dillwynia cinerascens*
- Eriostemon myoporoides*
- Lomandra longifolia*  
(blue-green form)
- Darwinia citriodora*
- Pultenaea pedunculata*  
(orange and yellow forms)
- Orthrosanthus multiflorus*

Small fill-in species

- Helichrysum ramosissimum*
- H. amplexans*
- Pimelea humilis*
- Brachyscome multifida*  
(white and mauve forms)
- Patersonia occidentalis*
- Sphaerolobium vimineum*
- Rhodanthe anthemoides*  
(Keilor Plains form)
- Hibbertia stricta*
- Dampiera linearis*
- Scaevola albida* (white)



We photographed the area before planting started and we hope to continue the photographic record as the garden matures.

Most articles concentrate on plants grown successfully and how to grow them, not garden design, but are still of interest (particularly to those who live in the same or similar area).

\* indicates a book (in italics) or an article with some emphasis on garden design.

June 93 1Z. 135 p98 *Australian Native Gardens; putting visions into practice\** - Diana Snape, Vic.

March 93 17 134 p47 **Gardening in Perth\*** (Garden 13) - Michael Filby

p51 Gardening at Dumbogan, NSW (Garden 14) - Enid Turton

March 92 J6 130 p269 My Garden in Ingham, Queensland - H.R. Bosworth

p274 A Tropical Garden (a plan) - Peter Ball, Darwin

- p275 Planting a Native G. in N. Queensland - Yuruga Nursery
- Dec. 91** 16. 129 pi 91 **Tropical Gardening\*** (includes a plan) - Peter Ball, Darwin
- Sept. 91 16 128 pi 43 Wildflower G. (Using Native Annuals) - Merv. Hodge, Brisbane
- p146 My Garden 8 Sand in my Shoes - David Andrews, Sydney
- pi 56 Our Garden 9 - N. & S. Kemble, NSW
- p159 Our Garden 10 - Pam & David Shiells, Vic.
- March** 90 15. 122 p239 My Garden 5 **Garden of Shade\*** - David Cheal, Melbourne
- p245 *Shady Gardens* \* - Virginia Reed
- p247 The Wildflower Forest\* - W.H. Payne, NSW
- p256 My Garden 6 My Rainforest Garden\* - Ray Collins, Rockhampton
- p263 My Garden 7 A Wildflower Garden - R.G. Cooke
- Dec. 89 15 121 p209 My Garden 4 (Wildflower) - C.L. Wheeler, Vic.
- Sept. 89 H 120 p156 My Garden 3 - Noel Gane, Sydney
- June 89 15 119 p95 My Garden 2 - Graham Eastwood, Vic.
- pi 06 *Crowea* and *Boronia* in My Garden - K. Rachel Makinson, NSW
- Dec. 88 H 117 pi 1 My Garden 1 Keith May, NSW
- Sept. 87** 14 112 pi 68 **Grasses in home landscaping\*** - Dermott Kelly
- Dec. 86 14 109 pi 8 My Wildflower Garden - Martin Johns, Vic.
- p22 *Wet-lovers: Gardening in That Wet Spot* - Ina Armitage, NSW
- Sept. 86 11 108 p361 *Creating a Wildflower Garden* \* - John Hunt, NSW
- June 86** 13 107 p287 **Landscaping a Tropical Garden\*** - Margaret Haupt, Cairns
- p291 *Wildlife in the Garden* - Graham Bennett, Cairns
- Sept.** 85 11 104 pi 43 **A Wildlife Garden\*** - Harry Butler
- June 85 H 103 p106 *Establishing an Arid Zone Garden* - Meg Simmons, Alice Springs
- March 85 13 102 p47 *Colour Your Garden* \* - Gwen Elliot, Vic.
- Dec. 84 11 101 p23 *Transforming a Property in New England NSW* - Maria Hitchcock
- Sept.** 84 12. 100 p361 **Tasmanian Highland Plants for Rock Gardens\*** - Sib Corbet
- p366 *A Garden in Tasmania for a Dry Area* - Mary McEvoy
- June** 84 12. 99 p310 **The Eco-Garden 3\*** - Coralie Whitby, Vic.
- p315 *The National Botanic Garden Rockery* - Geoff Butler, ACT
- March** 84 J 2 98 p239 *Low Maintenance Wildflower Gardening* - Neil Marriott, Vic.
- p260 **The Eco-Garden 2\*** - Coralie Whitby, Vic.
- Dec.** 83 12. 97 pi 91,8 **Landscaping with N. Q'land Plants\*** (includes plan) - T Irvine
- p203 **Creating a Rainforest** \* - Garry Sankowsky & Mike Schaul
- p216 **Gardening on the Atherton Tablelands with Dry-land Plants\*** - P & A Radke
- Sept.** 83 12. 96 pi 61 **The Small Rockery\*** - Philip Milner, Tasmania
- pi 64 *Rockery Construction* - Geoff Butler, ACT
- June 83 12 95 pi 06 *Native Gardens* \* Bill Molyneux & Ross McDonald, Vic.
- Dec.** 82 12 93 p3 **Wildflower Gardens in Dry Areas\*** - Ian Bond, S.A.
- Sept. 82 H 92 p335 *Eco-Gardening - The Six Priorities* \* Coralie Whitby
- p361 *A Wildflower Garden* - Peter Bailey, Melbourne
- p363 *Starting a Wildflower Garden in Victoria* - P.S. Mills
- March 82 H 90 p239 *Grow Native* \* Bill Molyneux, Vic.
- p242 *Wildflower Gardening* - W.H. Payne
- Sept. 81 11 88 p145 *Wildflower G. are for People* - Byron Lamont, Perth
- June 80 10 83 p330 *A Native Garden in Sydney* - Les Taylor
- June 78 9 75 p314 *A Native Garden* - W.H. Payne
- June 77 9 71 pi 19 *Gardening in Limestone Areas* - Pauline Tully, S.A.
- Sept. 76 8 68 p338 *A Wildflower Garden* - Jack Crowley, Vic.
- March 76 8 66 p242 *My Native Plant Garden* - A. Nitschke, S.A.
- March 75 8. 62 p54 *Hillside Gardening* - John Donohue, Townsville
- Dec. 74 8 61 p61 *Small Eucalyptus Forest Garden* - W.H. Payne
- Sept. 74 Z 60 p371 *Growing Alpine Plants in Cooma NSW* - Margaret Parris
- p383 *An Alpine Rock Garden*
- March 74 7 58 p254 *Dry Area G. & Plants of the Centre* - Robert Dalby, Alice Springs
- p295 *Rural Landscaping*

## Requests

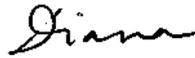
There are many ways in which members can contribute to the work of the GDSG. I thought it might help to put our requests together here on the back page for easy reference.

- # GDSG objectives; # suggestions of books or articles; # review of a book or article
- # designing a logo for us (designs submitted will probably be included in next newsletter)
- # involvement in a garden design project
- # photography of aspects of garden design; 'before' and 'after' photos
- experience &/or ideas about # hedges; # formal gardens; # open space in gardens
- lists of # reliable plants; # good nurseries; # gardens to visit (possibilities)
  - # native plants to replace specific exotics
- # report/description of the design of a garden (it could be your own) - check that the owners would not mind the publicity of their garden being featured in this newsletter
- # use of banksias in garden design
- # problems or questions about garden design
- # successful combinations of a small number of species - their names, and why you think they go well together (take photos too if you can)

Please keep in touch and let us know what you are doing. We'd welcome suggestions for other ways we could be working. Every comment or idea is worthwhile.

### Next Melbourne meeting

I'll be away for the first Sunday in August, somewhere south of Alice Springs, so it was decided the next meeting will be on Sunday 5th September, at 1 p.m. at my place. Best wishes to all members for the remainder of winter - and the arrival of spring.



Diana Snape  
leader Garden Design Study Group

**New Members** of GDSG (\*professional qualifications &/or practice)  
(Please add to your list from the first newsletter.)

Mark Ashdown  
Shirley Bloomfield  
Ian Bond\*  
Tony Cavanagh  
Jerry de Gryse\*  
Bohdan Durnota  
Rodger\* & Gwen Elliot  
Vanessa Elwell-Gavins  
Wendy Geale  
Doris Gunn  
Violet Hoare  
Eleanor Lancaster  
Geoffrey Long  
Fred & Joy McKew  
Danie Olbrich  
June Parrott  
Tony\* & Joy\* Roberts  
Phillip Skillicorn\*  
Steve Thomas\*  
R.K. Willson  
Jacquie Winder  
Frederick Young\*

Chris Hampson  
Dawn & Rex James