

ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS

GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER NO. 3

October 1993

Dear Members,

I expect this newsletter will be our last for 1993. The first official meeting of our Study Group was in April, so I think three newsletters in 9 months is a fair effort. A special welcome to all new members - it is good to see our numbers growing. I particularly enjoyed meeting members from the other states (and Victoria) at the ASGAP Conference last month in Sydney.

When mentioning plants in the newsletter I am following a policy of including accepted common names (where they exist) as well as scientific names. I think this may help new (and even old) SGAP members increase their familiarity with plant names. Please let me know if you approve or disapprove of this policy.

Membership: 98 (87 individual members + 11 Regions or Groups)

A list of new members, one change of address and additional phone numbers are all on the last page. One exciting possibility - a new member from Queensland, Klaus Querengasser, has expressed interest in having regular group meetings in that state. (An extract from his letter is just below.) I hope this does happen. Similar interest has been shown by Sydney members of the GDG.

Finances: Bank balance at 6/10/93 (before newsletter expenses): \$470.48

Extracts from members' letters

"I am especially interested in ideas relating to environmental considerations, such as designing a garden to be 'wildlife friendly', encouraging the use of threatened species, and making most efficient use of resources such as water, energy and soil. I am also interested in the use of food plants in the home garden, incorporating various ideas of ecologically sustainable living.

I would be grateful for any information about the anticipated future workings of the Study Group, and how I can best make a contribution. I am very interested in the possibility of forming a local group that could meet on a reasonably regular basis (providing there is enough interest), so a current membership list would be very welcome." Klaus Querengasser (Qld)

"We live in Hawley, a small inlet on the northwest coast of Tasmania. The climate is reasonably mild for Tassie, only W or so frosts a year, so we are able to grow a wide range of plants. The soil on our block is sand 1m deep over sandy clay; the top 15 cm has a lot of humus in it. Our house that we have just built is part of a 5 villa unit development. Our idea is to retain as much natural vegetation as possible and interplant with suitable species to give optimum privacy and create a beautiful environment to live in....."

Our block contains an interesting diversity of plants - Melaleuca squarrosua (Scented Paperbark), M. ericifolia (Swamp Paperbark), Leptospermum scoparium (Manuka), L. lantgerum (Woolly Tea-tree), eucalypts and members of the heath and pea families. Around our unit we have six areas of garden with a further three being planted out as we develop. Purists we aren't. We have chosen plants for flower colour, screening, bird attraction, form and foliage texture. We have the beginnings of a small fernery in three areas of heavy shade and a Tasmanian section with some rainforest plants. We have used the sandmound technique for plants that require excellent drainage (e.g. Scarlet Banksia (B. coccinea), B. menziesii, Adenanthos detmoldii, Hakea bucculenta (Red Pokers). The mounds are made of small rock sub base built up with crusher dust (crushed dolerite) and coarse sand with a good mulch covering over the top. The mulch is made from the vegetation that we have had to move to build and any prunings, put through a Masport mulcher. This technique seems to be working as the plants are establishing well, lots of new growth." Ricky and Katrina Reeves (Tas) (Ricky and Katrina also mentioned over 30 other genera of plants they are growing. I hope they will have time to send us detailed plans of the designs of some areas of their garden for future newsletters.)

"I am an experienced gardener, but my old garden was mainly exotics. . . . We are building at the moment and I am interested in interacting with other members for help designing my new garden." Wendy Geale (Tas)

"I am very interested in both Australian plants and creating a beautiful and pleasing garden with native plants (though you wouldn't think so if you saw my garden). Although at the moment I have very little time to garden I am constantly thinking about what goes well together and why - why some things please me and some set my teeth on edge." Denise Keim (Qld)

"Lawns in country areas - why not circular or stretched circular shape, with an animal (a lamb) to do all the work, providing you don't mind the little pellets they produce! We plan to have many circular shapes linked with small paths, to create different spaces and no work. The land slopes, so pushing a mower (which we haven't got) would be dreadful." Marion Bakker (Vic)

"I have an 18 acre "bush" block and aim to develop it using permaculture principles with natives e.g. as orchard understory. I am also looking at small scale, diversified cut flowers as an income supplement incorporating these in a large scale garden with design very much part of establishment and use." Shirley Bloomfield (NSW)

"I love designing gardens, although to date I have only done my own. We live out of town so, unlike city dwellers, the size of my garden is potentially unlimited. It currently measures 60m across the east west direction and 50m north south, and is on a north-facing slope. When we built the first stage of the house, we had 3 trees in that area. The largest of the trees was 60 cm high!! There are now a few hundred trees providing a bit of much needed shelter, even though we have only been here for 7 years. Our climate is warm in summer (up to about 32 degrees) and generally bitter in winter (occasional snow, frequent frosts)." Gillian McDonald (NSW)

"I have been a member of SGAP for many years, but I have never felt satisfied with the end result of our planting. This is flat, dry, harsh farmland but we do have access to irrigation water. I would like to have a garden others could visit. . . . We have had a colourful spring - a Hakea bucculenta (Red Pokers) has been blooming for months and is now 12 ft across and 9 -10 ft high. It has dozens of orange brushes on it - not all our plants do as well. It is on an old fence line where the wind blew dust for years when this was a wheat area." Phyllis Hawkey (Vic)

"Thank you for your letter and newsletters nos. 1 & 2.1 think this is going to be the best \$5 I've ever spent! In my view the most important objective of the GDSG is to promote and publicise good design using native plants, in order (as Geoffrey Long puts it) 'to give native plants their rightful place in Australian gardens'." Gordon Rowland (NSW)

"I have recently become a member of SGAP. . . . We are currently building a house and I am eagerly awaiting the opportunity to create a new native garden. With no previous experience the task is exciting, but overwhelming. I hope to learn from others who have created their own native gardens! My interest is in the use of colours & textures, gardens attracting native birds and the creation of informal landscapes compatible with a growing family. I am also interested in gardens with low maintenance & water requirements." Toni Peadon (NSW)

"I like to make good contrast of both leaf shape and colour; flowers seem to follow next. Beds are designed to complement existing trees and shrubs, walkways and driveway. Complete indigenous plantings seem a little boring. Experimenting with drainage and soils to grow other natives from all over Australia appeals to me. I mean God surely didn't create desert plants for just the animals to admire!" Robyn Hartley (Qld)

"Pity those Melbourne meetings are so far away - I guess we'll just have to get into gear up here! Regards the article on P6 of Newsletter No. 1 - Pam Polglase was my evening college teacher for a year (I just kept going back - sometimes drove for 3 hours to get there!) and from her I got the confidence to follow my heart & leave a job that was breaking me down. I really felt that, inexperienced as I was, I could one day design beautiful gardens. Her enthusiasm & interest & support, and her ability to communicate her ideas, like those on colour in gardens (I still remember clearly her class on colour 4 years ago), are wonderful. . . . I'm a great fan.

This week 3 of us from the nursery armed with quite a few hundred indigenous tubes & trowels worked with a few teachers & parents and 120 kids (not all at once!) to plant out 7 beds in a bare, windswept schoolyard. The kids ranged from kinder to 6th class & had a great time. It should be a different place in a year or two. We'll do a second planting of less hardy species once our hardy species offer some protection." Danie Olbrich (NSW)

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Cherree Densley (Vic) pondering on whether we need to classify gardens - "Each is so individual (or the ones I have seen anyway). They reflect the owner's personality, their lifestyle, interests, time available, expertise, economical resources & limitations, soil, climate, physical fitness & capabilities, their access to plants, and the list could go on and on!"

"I wonder if we should not forget about classifying a whole garden and concentrate on using our definitions for individual parts - the whole is always eclectic. Maybe my large garden is different from suburban ones in this respect." Barbara Buchanan (Vic) Barbara also chose this extract from an article on recollections of Gertrude Jekyll (I agree with her emphasis in terms of garden design): "Her interest was in plants that made effect in gardens, not botanical rarities. She had ... been making her garden pictures for 40 years and had assessed and assimilated all the salient points and uses of every plant she grew." The latter statement is quite a challenge!

Some ideas for the Study Group from Jacquie Winder "tours (bus or car) of native gardens to see existing or developing gardens; lectures with guest speakers, maybe specific topics like colour planning, or basic design principles, or 'purpose-built' gardens (birds, indigenous); slide nights of plants/gardens".

Geoffrey Long, a NSW member, is organizing a group of 10 people to go to Lord Howe Island for a week to study plants with Ian Hutton. The week starts on Saturday 5th November 1994 and the cost is \$1200, staying at the Somerset with D & B. If you are interested, Geoffrey's phone number is (02) 519 5522.

Why I Joined the Garden Design Study Group

Barbara Buchanan

For even longer than I have been gardening myself I have read all the books and articles that came my way on the making of gardens in England. The unfolding and development of the design, the challenge of turning liabilities into assets, the discussion of reasons for courses of action and choice of plant all makes for more interesting reading than a description of the garden as it is today. This reading led naturally into books on the history and development of the classical recognized Garden Styles.

Unfortunately it does not lead naturally into garden-making with Australian plants to give the illusion of a bit of bush. Our plants are so different to, say, hydrangeas and camellias and the bush does not have garden furniture, urns, statues, walls, terraces, balustrades, fountains which sometimes seem to be the most important elements of a style.

While I appreciate that planning for clothes hoists, sand pits and functional paths is an essential part of garden-making, this very practical aspect is no longer my chief interest. I am looking to translate the basic principles of good design to local conditions and materials. I am hoping for a garden that everyone will find beautiful and fellow collectors will find interesting. I am hoping the Group will provide support, inspiration, a sounding board and exchange of ideas to help me, and to lead to better Australian gardens generally.

SGAP Garden Design Study Group Record Form

With this newsletter comes a form we want to trial for recording any interesting design details of gardens which members visit.

Please refer to the classification scheme in newsletter no. 2 when considering garden style(s) or describing sections of the garden. 'Features' means any significant design features including e.g. use of foliage, or colour, or materials (hard landscape); water areas, low water usage, bird attraction, particular plant collections.

**** If you can, take a copy of the form before you use it, then try it out - on your own garden or some one else's. Your record doesn't have to be perfect!**

Please send me a copy for each garden which you visit, for GDSG records.

Reliable Australian Daisies

The GDSG is attempting to establish a repertoire of plants which have proved reliable in cultivation, under the conditions described in the literature. Our second newsletter included a list of reliable banksias. From big, bold banksias we now move to small, demure daisies. In 1987 members of the **Australian Daisy Study Group** brought out their first book, *Australian Daisies for gardens and floral art*, published by Lothian. The interest it stimulated in this appealing family may well be extended by the book they are currently preparing on brachyscomes. Daisies can provide colour in the garden very quickly and offer a multitude of hues; flowering can continue for long periods. Chapter 5 of *Australian Daisies* lists different categories - perennials or annuals, bedding, edging and border plants, ground covers and shrubs. It also contains lists of daisies suitable for various types of garden - tropical and subtropical, coastal, bog, alpine and frost-tolerant - so it is obviously a useful reference book. I think every garden deserves a daisy and it need not be the popular *Brachyscome multifida* (Cut-leaf Daisy). The choice is wide.

Esma Salkin, leader of the Australian Daisy Study Group, and other members have kindly compiled for us a list of daisies they regard as being reliable. The detail included in the list is impressive and will be both interesting and helpful to members of our Study Group (and other SGAP members). A reminder (to others like me) that *Bracteantha*, *Chrysocephalum* and *Ozothamnus* species were all formerly *Helichrysum*.

Perennial Daisies

* prune when new growth at the base of the plant is well established (not after flowering)

Ammobium alatum (has become established as a weed in some areas)

Brachyscome angustifolia var *angustifolia* (Stiff Daisy)

8. *angustifolia* aff. *formosa* (or var *heterophylla*) forms e.g. East Gippsland, Sydenham Inlet, Mt Drummer etc.

B. basaltica var *gracilis* (Basalt Daisy)

B. diversifolia var *diversifolia* (Mt Samaria)(Tall Daisy)

B. formosa 'Pilliga Posy'

B. formosa x ? *B. angustifolia* 'Strawberry Mousse'

**B. multifida* var *dilatata* (Cut-leaf Daisy) good forms includes 'Breakoday¹'; 'Amethyst' (NB this cultivar is very reliable in Orange NSW - hot summers, winter frosts); Blackwood form, white rays; and others

B. nova anglica white rays

B. parvula (Coast Daisy) Huntly, Victoria - white rays; Otways - pink/mauve rays; Pt Campbell - pink rays; Phillip Island - pink rays

B. radicans broad leaf form - can be invasive

B. segmentosa (Lord Howe Island Daisy)

B. tadgellii

Bracteantha bracteata (formerly *Helichrysum bracteatum*) cultivars 'Dargan Hill Monarch', 'Princess of Wales'

B. papillosa, *B. sp* aff. *acuminatum*, *B. viscosa* (Sticky Everlasting)

Calocephalus lacteus (Milky Beauty-heads) & *C. citreus* (Lemon Beauty-heads)

Calotis cuneifolia (Bindi-eye), *C. glandulosa* (burrs are a minor problem)

C. scapigera (Tufted Burr-daisy)

Cassinia quinquefaria (sandy soils) declared a weed in NSW?

Chrysocephalum (formerly *Helichrysum*) *amplexans*

**C. apiculatum* (Common Everlasting) (get local advice on forms)

C. ramosissimum (Yellow Buttons)

**C. semipapposum* (Clustered Everlasting)

Helichrysum rutidolepis (Pale Everlasting)

Leptorhynchos squamatus & *L. tenuifolius*

Leucophyta (formerly *Calocephalus*) *brownii* (Cushion-bush)

L. brownii Cape Le Grande form, W.A.

Ozothamnus alpinus (formerly *Helichrysum alpinum*) (Alpine Everlasting)

O. costatifructum

O. ledifolius (Kerosene Bush) (very reliable in Oakleigh, Melbourne - not watered)

Podolepis jaceoides & *P. rugata*

Pycnosorus chrysanthes & *P. globosus*

Rhodanthe (formerly *Helipterum*) *anthemoides* (Chamomile Sunray) Qld form non-branching, branching forms *'Paper Baby'

R. anthemoides 'Paper Cascade' needs semi-shade, protection and moisture

Annual Daisies

Brachyscome bellidioides white rays & *B. iberidifolia* (Swan River Daisy)

Bracteantha bracteata (formerly *Helichrysum bracteata*) (Golden Everlasting)

Commercial Seed - colour forms; 'Ebor' - tall species

Hyalosperma cotula, *H. praecox* & *H. simplex*

Podolepis lessonii

Rhodanthe chlorocephala subsp *rosea* (formerly *Helipterum roseum*) (Rosy Sunray)

R. diffusa subsp *diffusa* (yellow) (Ascending Sunray)

R. humboldtiana (Golden Clusters Everlasting) (can get insect attack)

R. manglesii (Pink Sunray)

Schoenia cassiniana (Pink Cluster Everlasting)

S. cassiniana 'Gabrielle'

S. filifolia subsp *filifolia* and subsp *subulifolia*

Growing well in Brisbane #early opinions

Reports from Pat Shaw

Perennial daisies

Wrachyscome aculeata, *B. angustifolia* form (Stiff Daisy)

B. microcarpa (Barakula Forestry Reserve), *B. multifida* (Cut-leaf Daisy)

B. segmentosa (Lord Howe Island Daisy), *B. 'Valencia'*

#*Calocephalus citreus* (Lemon Beauty-heads)

Olearia canescens

#*Rhodanthe anthemoides* ?alpine form

Spilanthes grandiflora

Annual daisies

Brachyscome whitei

Rhodanthe chlorocephala subsp *rosea* (formerly *Helipterum roseum*) (Rosy Sunray)

R. manglesii (Pink Sunray)

Schoenia filifolia subsp *subulifolium*

Note *Olearia* (Daisy-bush) species have not been included in the main list. *Olearia phlogopappa* colour forms, though very attractive, are prone to borer and short-lived (similarly *O. ramulosa*). Most *olearias* however are easy to propagate from cuttings, so some gardeners may be happy to use them. _____

Please let us know what combinations of daisies you have used in your garden, how you have used them 2nd what other plants you think complement them.

Melaleucas & Leptospermums for SE Queensland

Col Cornford, leader of the **Melaleuca & Allied Genera Study Group**, has kindly prepared a list of plants from the *Melaleuca* and *Leptospermum* genera which are suitable for most of SE Queensland. (I hope members in other areas can extrapolate from this list.) Col says that "Australian Plants" Vol 16 No 125 Dec. 1990 and Volume 17 No 134 March 93 list **Callistemon** species and cultivars, many of which grow satisfactorily in SE Queensland, though some of the cultivars do not flower well there or are not readily available in nurseries.

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Melaleuca height remarks

<i>leucadendron</i>	10m	paperbark: broad-leaved form faster growing, more spectacular flowers; narrow-leaved form usually smaller; both, strongly perfumed flowers
<i>quinquenervia</i>	10m	paperbark: medium growth rate; flowers heavily in autumn with additional flowers through winter
<i>linariifolia</i> (Snow in Summer)		paperbark: heavy crop of flowers in spring
	5m	various forms available: Snowstorm 3m; Dwarf 1.5m
<i>stipheloides</i> (Prickly-leaved Tea-tree)		
	5m	as a street tree & in gardens; good screen plant; tolerates some wetness
<i>bracteata</i>	5m	very hardy, tolerates wet or dry; flowers heavily in spring; cultivars Revolution Green, Revolution Gold & Golden Gem are widely used
<i>nodosa</i>	3-4m	paperbark: yellow flowers in spring; generally upright habit
<i>armillaris</i> (Bracelet Honey-myrtle)		
	3.5m	widely used in the past, now out of favour as it becomes untidy with lots of dead wood, is subject to termite attack & usually lasts only 8-10 years
<i>decora</i>	3m	roughbark: fairly upright; white flowers in spring
<i>cheelii</i>	3m	grows quite well but difficult to obtain from nurseries
<i>tamariscina</i> ssp <i>irbyana</i>		paperbark: generally spreading crown, white flowers; not so widely
	3m	grown as previously & now difficult to obtain from nurseries
<i>tamariscina</i> ssp <i>pallescens</i> (previously sp 'Miles')		
	2m	dense rounded shrub with spread of up to 4m; small mauve flowers
<i>hypericifolia</i> (Hillock Bush)		requires well-drained situation, tends to be straggly unless pruned
	3m	regularly; not widely grown
<i>elliptica</i> (Granite Honey-myrtle)		
	2.5m	will persist for a few years in a favourable location; not widely grown
<i>decussata</i> (Totem Poles)		generally a multi-stemmed rounded shrub; grows in most conditions
	2 m	except very wet
<i>thymifolia</i> (Thyme Honey-myrtle)		
	1.2m	hardy under most conditions - five colour forms available: dark mauve, dark purple, dark pink ('Cotton Candy'), pale pink ('Pink Lace'), white ('White Lace'); a taller (2+m) dark mauve form is also available

Leptospermum

<i>petersonii</i> (Lemon-scented Tea-tree)		
	+/-3m	widely used as a screen plant; flowers well, attractive rough bark
<i>grandiflorum</i>	+/-3m	can be grown in favourable conditions, not common; flowers poorly
<i>leuhmanii</i>	+/-2.5m	flowers well, has attractive bark
<i>brachyandrum</i>	+/-2.5m	grows well, very attractive with bright green weeping foliage against white stems; flowers well but flowers small & not very conspicuous
<i>laevigatum</i> (Coast Tea-tree)		spreads to about 4m in favourable locations; not widely grown but
	2.5m	appears hardy; moderate display of flowers
<i>polygalifolium</i> (formerly <i>flavescens</i>) (Swamp Tea-tree)		
	2-2.5m	grows well, flowers heavily in spring
	1m	'Pacific Beauty' flowers heavily in spring
	1.2m	'Pink Cascade' (semi-prostrate form) flowers heavily in late winter
	0.4m	'Pink Cascade' (prostrate form) flowers heavily in late winter
<i>juniperinum</i> (<i>continentale</i>) (Prickly Tea-tree)		
	+/-2m	not commonly grown but seems to be OK & flowers quite well
<i>rotundifolium</i> (Round-leaf Tea-tree)		grows well; large pink flowers but flowers only moderately;
	2m	not readily available
<i>trinervium</i> (syn <i>attenuatum</i>)		flowers well, has attractive flaky bark; not readily available & not
	2m	widely grown
<i>whitei</i>	2m	grows well but rarely flowers; not readily available
<i>speciosum</i>	1.5m	grows & flowers well; difficult to obtain from nurseries but strikes easily from cuttings

Melaleuca, along with callistemon, was named by Glen Wilson in *Landscaping With Australian Plants* as one of the five basic landscaping genera. He considered leptospermum to be one of the six genera which came next in importance. Do you agree with this assessment? Let us know your ideas about the use of one or all of these genera in garden design.

Banksias in Garden Design

Diana Snape

Small trees rather than forest giants are appropriate for most suburban gardens. A selection may be made from many Australian species, with a wide range of qualities and appeal. Banksias, though used infrequently as small trees, have great character and interest. Generally slower growing than ever-popular eucalypts and acacias, and comfortingly long-lived, they maintain a more modest size than many of the speedy growers. Banksias have a solid presence; they have shapely trunks, often gnarled, and heavier foliage of characteristic profile interspersed with intriguing, definite forms of cones at different stages of maturity. *Banksia serrata* (Saw Banksia) with its serrated foliage and 'Old Man Banksia'¹ cones is the archetype for most Australians.

Recently at Alf and Esma Salkins' garden in Melbourne I admired three small, mature banksia trees. Coast Banksia (*B. integrifolia*), about 20 years old, grew very close to a wall of the house, its trunk bending nicely to avoid the gutter and its modest canopy at roof level. Seen from below the backlit silver underside of the foliage looked very beautiful. Of similar age was the rare *Banksia conferta* var. *penicillata* from the Blue Mountains near Sydney. With its shapely, symmetrical crown and rather formal appearance, I could picture it in the centre of an open area surrounded by paving, mulch or lawn. The third tree, *B. ericifolia* (Heath Banksia) had something of the archetypal character of *B. serrata*, but very different in detail with its long flower spikes and fine foliage. Its trunk was massive and (aged 35 years) it looked very old and almost oriental in its structure.

Banksias are tolerant of pruning and can be shaped to achieve a suitable form, for example near a path. You can choose to soften or emphasize any asymmetry or angularity. Two other attractive possibilities for small trees would be *B. marginata* (Silver Banksia), indigenous to Melbourne, and *B. aemula* (*serratifolia*) (Wallum Banksia), closely related to *B. serrata* but smaller. All those I have mentioned are from eastern Australia and reliable here, but there are also other striking banksias from the west for the adventurous to try.

Most banksias grow as shrubs of all different sizes, often spherical or spreading rather than upright in form. During the winter months their flowers provide a constant, rich source of nectar and they attract honey-eating birds and, if you are lucky in where you live, small mammals such as pygmy possums. Their flower colours range from bright gold, orange and red to more subtle shades of lime, green, buff and brown. A banksia shrub on its own can be a striking specimen plant and potentially a focal point in the garden. Alternatively one species can be repeated, possibly with the delightful variation provided by, for example, the different forms of Hairpin Banksia, *B. spinulosa*. One or more species can be used in an informal hedge or screen, or grouped so their foliage creates a wonderful massed effect. The smaller leaves of *B. spinulosa* and *B. ericifolia* link in well with those of callistemons, melaleucas, some acacias and many other natives. The more substantial leaves of other banksias contrast strongly with fine foliage, showing similarity to the foliage of waratahs and some dryandras, grevilleas and hakeas. Check the list in our second newsletter and the Encyclopaedia for the range of banksias which are reliable shrubs. Some like moisture, though not bad drainage, particularly *B. robur* (Swamp Banksia) and *B. aemula* (*serratifolia*) (Wallum Banksia). There are also just a few small ones (1-2 metres).

A number of prostrate banksias from Western Australia grow successfully in the east in suitable conditions; *B. blechnifolia*, *B. petiolaris* and *B. repens* can all spread vigorously to provide ground cover on quite a grand scale. These plants are excellent on slopes or banks and, with upright flower spikes and cones and attractive foliage (beautifully coloured when new), their ornate texture is fascinating. A fourth species *B. gardneri* (*prostrata*) is less vigorous. In addition to these naturally occurring species, prostrate forms of other banksias such as *B. spinulosa* and *B. ericifolia* are now available from nurseries. These combine well with paving or rock shelves and other distinctive

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foliage such as tufted plants or the horizontal strata of *Homoranthus* species, and also extensive areas of softer groundcovers in similar tonings. As is true for the shrubs and trees, these prostrate banksias are conspicuous in the garden, not shy and retiring, so selecting their position requires a little thought. It is well worthwhile for their unique offering.

Marion Bakker adds: "As a pommie I just love banksias - so Australian, great for the birds, with fascinating, gnarled bark. I can picture it in an Oriental garden as a feature with well placed rocks. The more gnarled form may go well with a Cork Oak - similar bark - great in Geelong Botanical Garden."

NATIVES TO REPLACE EXOTICS

One member suggested we should nominate native plants suitable as replacements for various exotics. Here are a few ideas to start us off.

Cherree Densley (Vic) suggests the following native plants to replace exotic ones:

1. all of them!
2. *Agonis flexuosa* variegated (Willow Myrtle) for a small specimen tree (in a lawn)
3. *Eucalyptus caesia* 'Silver Princess' instead of Silver Birch
4. Any *correas* for fuchsias
5. Rainforest plants as tub specimens
6. Australian ferns for exotic ferns
7. *Grevillea thelemanniana* for prostrate conifers (lovely foliage, deep pinkish-red flowers) (I'd add dwarf forms of *Baeckea virgata* for low conifers - beautiful plants, plus white flowers. DS)
8. *Brachyscome multifida* (Cut-leaf Daisy) - stands alone
9. *Dichondra repens* (Kidney Weed) for lawn (a few other suggestions in the article on Open Space)

Gordon Rowland (NSW) says "Where palms are required I always specify *Archontophoenix cunninghamiana* (Bangalow Palm) instead of the more widely planted exotic, *Syagrus romanzoffianum*, although the latter is not unattractive and is a bit cheaper and faster.

Most Sydney nurseries stock only exotic gardenias, although about sixteen species are native to Australia. The closely related *Randia*, with about ten Australian species, is also known as 'Native Gardenia'. They range from a 1.5 metre, spreading, unnamed *Gardenia* species from north-east Queensland with beautiful perfumed flowers, to *Randia sessilis*, a bushy tree to about 10m from the same region. My favourite, *Randia benthamiana*, from south Queensland to north NSW, has leaves resembling *Daphne odorata* with fragrant white flowers. It grows to about 6 metres.

How about *Melastoma affine* instead of the exotic *Tibouchina* cultivars?

Australia's answer to *Jacaranda mimosifolia* must surely be *Melia azedarach* var. *australasica*, the White Cedar, a beautiful, deciduous, fast-growing pioneer rainforest tree with larger pinnate leaves (which don't block gutters like *Jacaranda* leaves), delicate scented lilac flowers followed by golden berries when the branches are bare in winter. Popular with birds.

Casuarina and *Allocasuarina* species or, where space is available, *Araucaria cunninghamii* (Hoop Pine) instead of *Pinus* species.

Callitris species (or anything!) instead of *Cupressus*, *Chamaecyparis* and similar exotics. The above come readily to mind; I'm sure there are many others."

Gordon also comments: "Wherever possible I would love to see the steady removal of those numerous introduced trees which so disfigure the landscape, and their replacement with indigenous and other suitable native trees. (*Populus nigra* 'Italica' the Lombardy Poplar seems particularly inappropriate to Australia, although widespread around Sydney.)"

Street trees are a concern too, & though these do not strictly come under the heading of garden design, tree use in general certainly does. I would be very interested to receive members' suggestions for suitable native street trees as well as garden trees: let us know if you have seen good examples of their use.

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More Books for the Booklist

Subtropical gardening books which mention Australian plants, with helpful comments made by R. K. Willson:

Hirshfeld, Jo (1983) *What to Plant Where in Brisbane & the Coast* - not much on Oz plants however

Hirshfeld, Jo (1987) *Landscaping - Garden Design for Brisbane & Subtropics* chapter by Ralph Bailey 'Landscaping with Australian Plants' pp 51 - 58

Landplan Studio *Planting an Outback Garden* (on SGAP Queensland booklist for sale) - small, sketchy (Landplan Studio is Lawrence Smith's company. Jan Sked is an advisor to him on suitable plants for various locations, Lawrence Smith gave a most interesting talk to Qld SGAP on how he designed and established the Gladstone Botanic Gardens.)

Oakman, Harry *Tropical and Subtropical Gardening* contains a chapter by Beryl Lebler on 'Australian native plants for subtropical Queensland gardens' (trees, tall shrubs, small shrubs, herbs, groundcovers, vines). Only brief details and nothing about design.

Ruax, Craig (1992) *Brisbane's Native Plants - a Gardener's Guide* Pangolin Press - a small book, but there is so little else available - few but lengthy plant descriptions.

Sked, Jan (1986) *Planting a Native Garden* Pine Rivers SGAP - contains a chapter on design (Jan kindly donated a copy of this book to our Study Group library.)

Queensland Forest Service, Department of Primary Industries (1981) *Trees and Shrubs* - very useful small book (my copy cost \$5 last year) Includes many Australian plants, but also those from other tropical and subtropical countries. The plants, which are very cheap, are available from Forest nurseries, similar to the situation in Victoria.

Fairhill Nursery, Yandina Qld, which is near the Sunshine Coast, sell a catalogue but the plant descriptions are very brief. They have a Botanic Garden of Australian plants.

Whitby, Coralie (1982?) *An Eco-Garden* is recommended by Shirley Bloomfield

Dates and publishers which were missing for some books on our first booklist (see Newsletter No 1)

*Davies, Rosemary (1987) *The Creative Gardener's Companion* Hyland House

*Edmanson, Jane & Lawrence, Lorrie (1992) *The Australian Garden* Penguin/Viking

Maddocks, Cheryl (1990) *Garden Style* Transworld/Doubleday

*Patrick, John (1988) *The Australian Garden* Penguin

Gardens for Living by Helen Lochhead (Greenhouse Publications)

reviewed by Spencer Wilson

This interesting book gives a good overview of the fundamentals of garden design. It follows through to refining these ideas so people can live in and enjoy the garden. The principles laid down are fundamental to design whether it be native or exotic gardens. The book is divided into 3 parts:

1. Historic background
2. A framework for garden design
3. Four gardens

The first section deals in a general way with the evolution of the garden in Australia, from European settlement and early attitudes to present day gardens. It is basically an overview with comments on each period - the approach, particular styles of garden design and what the people concerned demanded, or experienced. The social background is also given for better understanding.

The second section forms the basis of the book. It's about the principles to be followed to achieve the desired long term effects with a good, well thought out garden design. When needs are sorted out a pattern will follow showing what is desirable in achieving the end. There is good coverage of the different styles that have occurred from the 1920s through to the mid 1980s. Included are:

- * planning with time/seasons
- * modifying the lie of the land
- * keeping the garden in balance
- * planning places for people
- * shaping places with plants
- * garden ornamentation
- * outdoor service areas

The latter part of the book deals with four gardens and the style each garden has. They are all different, but each is right for its owner. It is a very descriptive chapter, describing the gardens

and their whys and wherefores. It uses the principles and patterns that were explained in the previous section, bringing the whole book together with examples. I find this book very informative and interesting, a book that can be referred to as often as liked, and always refreshing - excellent for brushing up on design ideas and principles, needed at different times - a worthwhile addition to a small design/plant collection of books.

Garden Design Project - my apologies to Bev Courtney and Margaret Fraser

In their article in the last newsletter, I (or perhaps I can try blaming my computer) managed to omit a key paragraph (the third) on page 9 describing the colour scheme in Bev and Margaret's garden design project. Here it is - please add it mentally to the article you read in July!

We decided to use a mixture of species indigenous to the area and other natives. The foliage colour was to be predominantly blue-green, grey-green or dark green - no startling contrasts such as silver or bright yellow-green. For flower colour we selected greens, yellows through to orange, blues through to purple, and white and cream - no pinks or reds. Fortunately, these colours also appealed to the owners.

More Thoughts about Colour in the Garden

The Value of White

Barbara Buchanan

Sissinghurst Castle is one of the most popular gardens in Britain and, within it, the White Garden with only white flowers and grey and silver foliaged plants the most famous and the most imitated; I have even played at it myself.

These days I regard white as far too valuable to be so isolated; instead I consider it both an insulator and a joiner. Some plant colours do not mix easily and I try to arrange for groups of similar colours, with suitable contrasts, to grow together. However it is also important to put plants with similar needs (especially for water and shade) together and this is when a mingling of white flowers or grey or silver foliage can prevent discords. True blues can also be useful but are nowhere near as readily available. Whites really set off and emphasize other colours. Creamy white is best with the yellow shades; a brilliant white *Kunzea ericoides* enhances a rich red callistemon. The "apple blossom" whites of some eriostemons for example, with pink buds opening white, tone in with other reds and pinks as do the whites which 'fade' to red as in forms of *Micromyrtus ciliatus* and *Hypocalymma angustifolia*. The main thing is to avoid any 'dirty' or greyish whites.

One other function that follows from a consistent scatter of white plants is that of tying together different areas of the garden, even if several different species have been used. If a garden is subdivided, it is good to have some visual links that coordinate the whole and there are plenty of white-flowering plants waiting to do just that.

A Comment on Colour

Gordon Rowland

Was it John Brooks who said: "Take care of form and let colour take care of itself"? And Cezanne: "When form has its fullness, colour has its force." Although they convey an important point, I don't take these remarks too literally, as I have an aversion to bright yellow and orange, except in entrance gardens. In back gardens I prefer relaxing colours: pinks, carmine, crimson, a touch of red, blues, mauves, violet and, of course, lots of green. Because it weakens other colours I use white with caution, preferably in shade, and have yet to see pink and bright yellow used to advantage together. I don't much care for variegated foliage."

Frequently we talk about colour in the garden in general terms without much thought about the detail of proportion and scale. The size and massing of flowers is very significant in the impact of their colour. I have been thinking of some of the white-flowered plants in our garden. When our largest *Leptospermum flavescens* (*polygalifolium*) (SwampTea-tree) (3 metres high by 4 m. in diameter) is in full flower the whole shrub is white and it completely dominates its area of the garden. At the opposite end of the spectrum, several plants of *Cryptandra amara* in full flower are dotted with hundreds of flowers, pure white but tiny; foliage colour is clearly visible and the overall effect of the plant's colour is much more subtle. The flowers of a shrub can be scattered or bunched together, form arcs or sprays, stand up or droop down. The different sized flowers of the many white daisies are spaced differently too and their impact varies.

Similarly with brightly coloured flowers. A floriferous red callistemon which has been pruned to encourage flowering is spectacular; the red flowers of its twin left to grow unpruned may be sparser and softened by foliage. The role of these two in garden design is not the same. Small red grevillea flowers are partly neutralized in terms of colour by the green of surrounding foliage (a complementary colour). With small flowers of softer hue, the overall impact of a shrub even in full flower may well be of a modified shade of green; the actual flower colour may be noticed only when close to the shrub. Coloured buds, fruits, new leaves or stems can all be conspicuous or subtle.

When we consider colour combinations, we also need to consider proportions. Equal amounts of two colours may not be as satisfying as a significantly larger proportion of either one. Equal amounts of pink and orange, for example, may not appeal at all, but among a preponderance of pinks a splash or two of orange (or the reverse) can be lovely. *Chorizema cordatum* (Heart-leaved Flame Pea) actually combines deep pink and orange in its flowers and could act as a link. The shade of pink will make a difference, and a touch of a third colour can change the effect again. Picture orange with accents of pink and a rusty red as compared with pink with touches of orange and lilac. Many colour schemes are complex and they can be as varied as the palettes different artists use when painting.

The colour of flowers may be short-lived, but I think most of us are conscious of it and try to take it into account in our gardens. Foliage colour is there all year round (with some variations) and the proportion of foliage in the garden scene is high, whether we consider it as a background, a matrix or the principle component. Using foliage colours well - there's another challenge!

The Chelsea Flower Show in the U.K. - does it have any relevance to us?

Barbara Buchanan sent me an extract from a report of the Chelsea Flower Show in the July edition of *The Garden*. I've selected just a few comments made by Andrew Wilson (a Director of Garden Design Studies) under the heading 'Aspects of garden design', as I thought they raised points of general interest.

"The gardens at this year's Chelsea embodied almost every ecological niche from coastal community through to mature woodland. This created an atmosphere of environmental awareness and with the addition of an anti-allergenic garden the picture of a flower show with a conscience seemed too good to be true. Unfortunately this proved to be the case, as I felt the overall design quality was disappointing. It seemed to me that the Garden Design Exhibits fell into two distinct categories, those which offered garden design inspiration and those which offered a technical display.....

Julie Toll's sand-dune garden..... a re-creation of a wild coastal community..... (won the award for) Best Garden perhaps for its relaxed and evocative style, but I couldn't help wondering where the idea of a dune-top pool came from.....

For clarity, simplicity and receiving my vote for this year's best garden, Lucy Huntington provided a treat for the National Asthma Campaign and for hay fever sufferers everywhere. No wind pollinated plants were allowed, a restriction which ruled out whole families of plants and restricted the choice of cultivars in the chosen colour range. Heavily scented plants such as honeysuckle were also ruled out and the entire planting list was approved by experts. One result was that the traditional lawn was replaced by two rectangular pools, and these formed the central feature of the garden. Lucy's cause imposed severe design constraints on the garden but the results were stunning. The layout was geometrically clear with a good level of softening from the planting. The bold, clear cut colour scheme of yellow and purple-blue was not for the faint-hearted but this made the garden stand out from the rest.....This was truly a garden worthy of Chelsea, devoid of the overplanting and overdesign which we have almost come to expect."

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Australian Design, Australian Plants or Both

Geoff Simmons

The horse before the cart or vice versa? An Australian garden can be a design in which native plants are chosen for specific characteristics or a collection of native plants around which a design is based. In my opinion it does not matter which direction is chosen, as 'creative possibilities' is the name of the game where gardens are concerned. Mixing the two concepts may even be possible.

The factors that are special to the Australian scene may be worth considering and the following may be a base to build on or alter:

1. Poor soils, low in elements such as phosphorus, and low rainfall encourage plants to space themselves for living room.
2. Many native plants have xerophytic characteristics such as narrow leaves.
3. Plant-fungal associations are not uncommon e.g. banksias.
4. Limited rainfall over a short period has influenced life cycles so that some plants have short growth periods.
5. High light intensity influences the appearance of colours so that a pale shade attractive in Melbourne may be less so in the tropics.
6. Australian birds or butterflies require compatible plants or habitats.
7. Compatibility, or lack of, will determine plant combinations e.g. casuarinas inhibit other plants.
8. Spiky/prickly plants are not uncommon e.g. hakeas, grevilleas, citriobatus and alchorneas.

These eight aspects do not constitute an exhaustive list but have a bearing on whether there can be an Australian design uniqueness. The extent to which each of these factors can be reproduced outside of this continent will determine if there is an Australian design readily recognised as such. Some plant species may grow in gardens overseas but as more and more of these influences are displayed in our garden design it is possible that a peculiarly Australian design will show out against exotic garden design.

Open Space in Suburban Gardens

Diana Snape

The articles by Bev Courtney and Barbara Buchanan in the last newsletter set me thinking again on this topic. Nan Fairbrother in "The Nature of Landscape Design" comments that the natural succession is from bare ground to grasses and herbs, to scrub and finally trees. This is the "inherent type of vegetation which would reestablish without any help". This is not true everywhere of course, depending heavily on climate and soil, but it is a thought-provoking generalization. In gardens the effort required to maintain an area frequently increases in the reverse order of this succession - it is least for trees and greatest for bare ground. It is strange that open space can be more difficult to maintain (meaning both 'look after' and 'keep') than the actual "garden". One must plan ahead to retain space in the future, as open areas (and especially paths) tend to shrink or be lost as plants expand slowly and inconspicuously over the years.

I think the balance of space and vegetation makes a very important contribution to the "feel" of a garden, partly because of its practical effect on sun and shade. Volume is implied by the height of trees which "contain" the garden, and the proportions of this volume change the feel of the space. Very tall trees dwarf a tiny garden, but moderately tall trees in a small garden carry its space upwards; if all plants are less than fence height, the garden seems very constrained. Space can sometimes be "borrowed" from beyond the boundaries, depending on the surrounding scene, and a neighbour's trees (or open space) can help. The size of a garden can seem greater when the total space is divided into separate areas, but each separate area must then be sufficiently large itself with its own space/vegetation balance. The edges of open areas are valuable, providing semi-shade or open shade positions for many plants.

Two pragmatic aims when selecting the ground surface of open areas (apart from the aesthete ones) are minimum maintenance and expense. Inert surfaces such as stones, bricks and concrete blocks can satisfy the first requirement but possibly not the second. I would like to try using concrete to simulate large flat areas of stone, at ground level, in the same way it has been used in recent years to simulate rocks. Softened by leaf litter and in combination with areas of groundcover plants or grasses it could look attractive.

We have timber decking (treated pine) in a section of our garden; I have seen one boardwalk used to great effect in a very small indigenous garden and another in photos of a rainforest ethos garden; timber roundels are appropriate as steps. I think more use could well be made of timber. A gravel (or sand) surface has all the advantages Bev wrote of, but if your area suffers from an abundance of weed seeds these will unfortunately germinate as readily as the plants you want. Without this one disadvantage, gravel is wonderful. A quite different option, and *one* with many benefits, is a water area - reflections extend the space of a garden in a new way.

Organic mulches of many different sorts have varying colour, texture and length of life, and excel in shady areas such as under eucalypts. Native grasses combined with organic mulch can replace a traditional lawn of grass, which often detracts from the foliage colours of garden beds. "Living mulches" of prostrate or low-growing plants are beautiful, if you're not troubled by intrusive weed seeds. Prostrate grevilleas like 'Royal Mantle' have proved their worth (*G. thelemanniana* has been excellent for us). Our unintended "lawn" of *Pratia pedunculata* (Matted Pratia) moves around, spreading happily over woodchip mulch but sometimes leaving bare areas behind. Others are *Dichondra repens* (Kidney Weed), *Viola hederacea* (Native Violet), and daisies such as *Helichrysum ramosissimum* (Yellow Buttons) and some forms of *Brachyscome multifida* (Cut-leaf Daisy). Just one species could be used, or several in combination. A similar "tapestry" effect could be gained by creating an open area with different species of low spreading shrubs (less than a metre high), reducing the vertical space of the garden just a little.

Unlike shrubs or shrubby trees, fine tree trunks (combined with any of the above) are "see through". Although they interrupt the space they do not confine it. Vistas through the garden emphasize space; views from house windows and seats in the garden are of great value. They depend on space, not just the plants we concentrate our efforts on, but then each view line through a space should ideally end in something worth looking at!

1993/94 Australia's Open Garden Scheme

This is my summary of the proportion of predominantly native gardens based solely on reading the brief descriptions in the book. I've also included native/exotic gardens (those whose descriptions sounded as though they included a significant proportion of natives) to give the total % (which is even more approximate than the % native).

<u>State</u>	<u>No. of gardens</u>	<u>Native</u>	<u>% Native</u>	<u>Native/exotic</u>	<u>Total %</u>
SA	76	9	12%	12	28%
Vic	138	12	9%	17	21%
Qld	71	4	6%	12	23%
Tas	58	2	3%	3	9%
NSW	246	5	2%	16	9%
(ACT	13	2	15%	1	23%)
Overall	602	34	6%	61	16%

These percentages are just approximations of course but, as far as the general public are concerned, they may well reflect the awareness of native gardens at the moment. It is certainly an indication of the relatively few "role models" available to people who do not belong to SGAP but who are planning gardens. I think the GDSG should aim ultimately both to help increase the number of native gardens in the Scheme, and to help raise the standard of design in native gardens which are then open. I know opening a garden to the public entails a lot of work and many people shun the publicity, but those who visit gardens know how much the opportunity is appreciated.

It would be excellent if all members could help record gardens in the Open Garden Scheme in their state for the GDSG. It would be worthwhile contacting the gardens' owners, explaining about the GDSG and asking if it would be possible to arrange a visit at a time other than the actual Open Day to see the garden, talk to the owner about it and (if possible) take photographs. I am very keen to receive copies of records sheets for these gardens, and also longer descriptive reports wherever possible.

Please help if you can! Your report form doesn't have to be perfect - we're nearly all beginners at this and just learning! It doesn't seem worth giving all the details here, but the following are the numbers of the native gardens as listed in the Guidebook. These will help you quickly check the details for your state in the Guidebook.

NSW 1, 5, 31, 163, 213 ACT 186, 189 Qld 260, 270, 316, 323
 SA 340, 376, 377, 378, 381, 384, 394, 400, 405 Tas 411, 445
 Vic 478, 479, 480, 485, 504, 548, 551, 580, 581, 587, 594, 601

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The "Landscape Australia" **1994 Garden Design Conference** "Gardens for Tomorrow" will be held on Thursday 10, Fri. 11 & Sat. 12 March 1994 at the 'Leonda' in Melbourne.

The all-inclusive cost is \$292.50 per person (if booked before 1/12/93). There are international as well as Australian speakers and the program is interesting. In one session, Rodger Elliot will talk about Australian Plants for Australian gardens, and John Patrick about Designing with Australian Plants. Another session is on garden design for water conservation. I'm looking forward to being there and I would encourage anyone else who is able, to attend.

Research on garden design using native plants

I have recently written a short article (3 paragraphs) on the GDSG for 'Landscape Australia' (published in Victoria). In it I requested information about any research relevant to our SG which has been carried out by students, gardeners or landscapers anywhere in Australia. I also said we were keen to record examples of good garden design using Australian plants. Do you know of any other journal or organization to which I should send this article? DS

Requests

These are some ways in which members can contribute to the work of the GDSG:

- * tell me which logo you like best (or design an irresistible one for us yourself)
- * suggest books or articles; review a book or article
- * involvement in a garden design project - it can just be a small section of a garden
- * tell us your experience &/or ideas about:- use of banksias, daisies, melaleucas, leptospermums in garden design; formal gardens; colour; open space in gardens
- * write out your list of:- reliable plants; native plants to replace specific exotics; successful combinations of a small number of plant species (their names, and why you think they go well together)
- * raise any questions or problems about garden design (general or specific)
- * photography of aspects of garden design
- * report sheet/description of the design of a garden (it could be your own, or one in the Australia's Open Garden Scheme) - if a description, please check that the owners would not mind the publicity of their garden being featured in this newsletter

Please contribute in any way you can; keep in touch and let us know what you're doing. We'd also welcome suggestions for other ways we could be working. Every comment or idea is worthwhile.

The **next Melbourne meeting** will be on Sunday 7th November, at 2 p.m. at Linda Floyd's place, 543 Dandenong Road (corner of Egerton Rd) Melways 59 A9.1 hope you can be there!

Barbara Buchanan has made an appealing suggestion for next year: *"Is it appropriate to think of the Garden Design Group using 15 Mile Camp (near Wangaratta, Victoria) one weekend next year? With a bit of driving we could look at a few gardens, and have workshop(s) on theoretical or actual gardens, slide nights, etc."* This location might give NSW members (and possibly some members from more distant states) a chance of meeting with Victorian members. Please let me know if you are interested in this idea, as we will need to start planning well in advance.

My very best wishes to all members for the remainder of this year, and (if I am not in contact with you again before then) for a happy, peaceful Christmas and New Year.



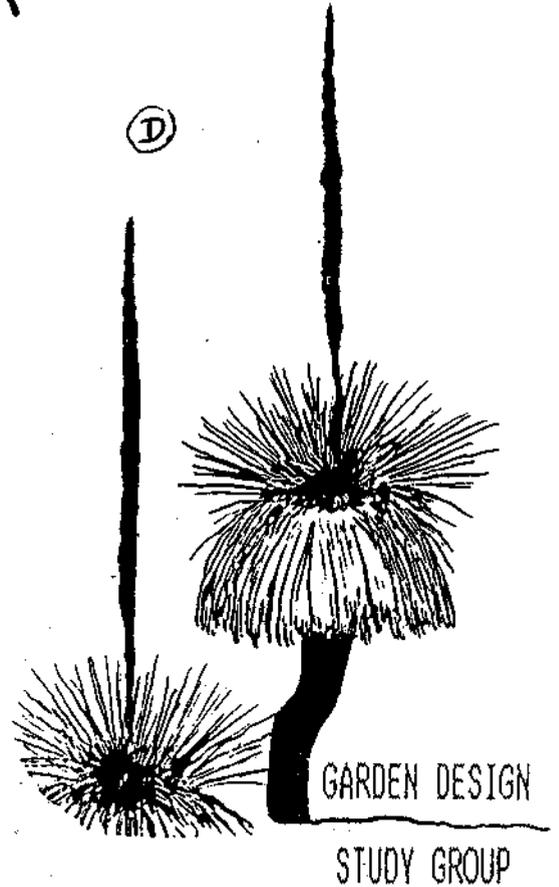
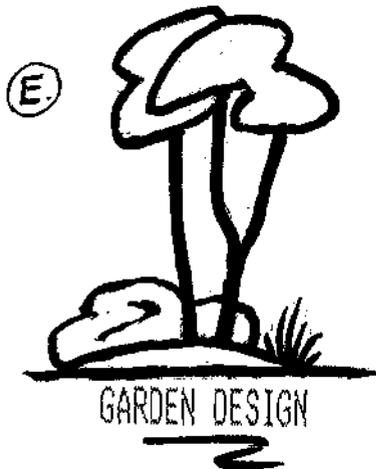
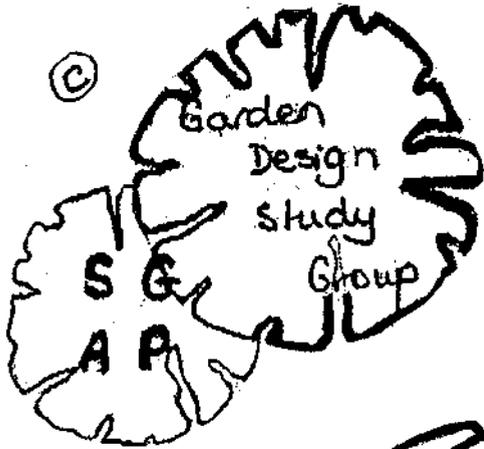
Diana Snape
leader Garden Design Study Group

WHICH LOGO DO YOU LIKE?

If you have a preference for one (or more) of these suggestions, please write and let us know your choice. You can also name the one you like best and suggest slight alterations to improve it. The size of each logo can vary of course.



garden design
Study Group



(F) A suggestion that (because *Eucalyptus* is the quintessential Australian genus) the logo takes the form of a stylised eucalyptus leaf and flower enclosed within a circle.

Note: (B) and (F) are both appealing suggestions, but members in Melbourne think it is important that the Garden Design Study Group logo suggests a combination of plants in a garden, not just a single genus (however attractive). What do you think?

New Members of GDSD (*professional qualifications &/or practice)

Ingrid Adler*
Karin Andersson
Michael Bates*
Beryl Blake
Betty Drummond
Laurie Dunn
Ronald Gornall
Joy Greig
Robyn Hartley
Phyllis Hawkey
Leon Horswell*
Barry Jahnke
Denise Keim
John Knight*
Trish Mactavish
Gillian McDonald
Toni Peadon
Ian Percy
Klaus Querengasser
Ricky & Katrina Reeves
Gordon Rowland*
Shona Sadler
Ross Smyth-Kirk
Marie Spicer

Change of address

Spencer Wilson

Shirley Bloomfield
Vanessa Elwell-Gavins
Wendy Geale
Danie Olbrich
R. K. Willson
Jacquie Winder

In addition to individual members, the following SGAP Regions or Groups have subscribed:
SGAP NSW Ltd; Queensland Region; SA Region; SGAP Vic; Wildflower Society of W.A.
Foothills Group; Geelong Group; Maroondah Group (all from Victoria)
Menai group; New England Branch (both from NSW)
A subscription has also been received from the Australian Botanic Gardens Library.