

ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS.



GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP
NEWSLETTER No. 45
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Dear Members,

Welcome to our first Newsletter for 2004. I must confess now to a love - hate relationship with the garden in Summer. As I trudge around checking for casualties [usually the result of over optimistic Spring planting or rabbits] and watering - at ghastly pre dawn or post sunset "mozzie and midge" times [to fit in with water restrictions] I usually find myself thinking longingly of an air conditioned apartment overlooking the ocean and next to a National Park!! Such sentiments are usually fleeting however as there is always beauty to be found in a garden; here, the *Angophora costatas*, *Euc paniculatas* and *Euc.punctatas* are really stripping off for summer, I've never seen such long shards of bark strewn so carelessly around, luckily one is more than compensated by the startling revelation of their smooth, tawny limbs against the blue summer sky. Cicadas, free of their earthy home, are singing with enormous gusto this summer; if only the Christmas beetles would reappear to bounce off the flyscreens at night - the big ones with iridescent, petrol slick colours swirling about on their perfectly shellaced backs and, whilst I'm wishing, a fat green frog in the toilet would be bliss!

NEXT MEETINGS

N.E. VICTORIA: Saturday 14th February at 1030 AM

MELBOURNE: Sunday 14th March at 2.15 PM

SYDNEY: Sunday 9th May

On behalf of the GDSG I'd like to wish our Study Group Coordinator, Jan Sked all the best as she embarks on radium treatment over the next 5 weeks..

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CORRESPONDENCE

Thanks for sending me the November newsletter. I love the read but rarely get the time to put fingers to keyboard to respond. Will try and do this more frequently.

I would have to agree on Vlad Sitta's philosophy without the 'Wine, women and poetry' in the sense that I suspect he, as a man, means it.

If I indulge too much in wine I tend to sit on the deck and delay going and actually doing something in the garden, women don't influence me in the way I suspect Vlad is implying but I love two of my dearest women friends for being able to talk gardens with them and for not being bored to sobs at the suggestion of 'Lets go and look at a couple of gardens this weekend', like my family is.

And I guess I am always looking at the poetry in garden design and compositions of plants. Even with compositions of exotic plants I try to define the major design elements then make a list of possible native alternatives.

I have lovely book called 'Breaking Ground' on ten garden designers. I can't remember the authors name but the photographs are magnificent and are a constant source of compositional inspiration.

Many thanks again for the newsletter. **Bettina Digby, NSW.**

Since I last spoke with you, Marie and I sold our house in Rozelle and bought 10 hectares (25 acres) at Pacific Palms on the mid north coast.

It is a sunny, partly cleared site hidden within wet sclerophyll forest, just over a kilometre up a dirt road off The Lakes Way (the coast road between Bulahdelah and Rainbow Flat).

The undeveloped, gently undulating site supports white-trunked Flooded Gums contrasting with other eucalypts, Sydney Red Gums (too few of these), Cabbage Tree Palms, Paperbarks, She Oaks and Wattles. From the entrance a 200 metre track winds through trees and palms across three narrow creeks, up to a plateau of scattered trees, then slopes down to another creek and lagoon/wetlands, before rising to the edge of Wallingat National Park. About 200 of Australia's 700 bird species inhabit the park, which is also home to kangaroos, wallabies, possums, gliders and frogs.

We are in the process of building a house and design studio that relate to the surrounding landscape, and planning an indigenous wildflower garden and wildlife refuge. To retain visual unity and sense of place, in my opinion vital factors in landscape design the planned organic flower, fruit and vegetable garden will be screened from view.

Re your editorial: I'm not sure about a web site, although I would be happy to receive the GDSG Newsletter by e-mail. **Gordon Rowland, NSW.**

Brown lawns: The past summer has been a very dry one for English conditions, and as a result, scenes reminiscent of typical Aussie summers have been prevalent, both in the countryside and in London's parks and gardens. Particularly so at Kew Gardens. It was really gratifying not to see a knee jerk reaction to the dry with people going overboard with watering, especially in the public gardens.

Is it not part of the cyclical rhythm of life to have an 'off period in the garden?

On the subject of colours, our autumn this year has been vibrant in its colours.

Possibly the dry and warm summer, maybe the air is crisper and cleaner. There have to be some advantages in being surrounded by the somewhat limited variety of trees. They do pull themselves full bore into the changes of the seasons.

In the latest edition of Australian Horticulture (15 Oct to 14 Nov) there was a very interesting article on the Replenish Garden created for the City of Banyule in Melbourne by Australian Quality Landscaping. I was intrigued by the concepts there. AH have quoted from the garden's information handout: The Replenish Garden demonstrates the importance of waste minimisation and resource conservation and recovery in achieving environmental sustainability. The garden uses recycled materials, art installations and paving treatments to explore growth, decay and renewal within a waste management context." Sounds worthy of a visit for Melbournenites and also more information, and debate!

I also noted in its book review on the Australia's Open Garden Scheme Guide that mention was made of Chris Larkin's tips on creating stunning Australian gardens. Congratulations Chris.

On another matter which I thought might be of interest to a few members, a new Australian War Memorial has been constructed in Hyde Park Corner, London. A dedication day was held on the 11th November and it is intended that this will be where Anzac Day will be commemorated. I have not seen it yet, but I quote from the booklet published to celebrate its Dedication Day as follows: Principal architect Peter Tonkin states "The form chosen for the Memorial reflects the sweep of Australian landscape, the breadth and generosity of our people, the openness that we believe should characterise our culture.". Inspired by the contours of Hyde Park Corner, the Australian War Memorial becomes partly a landform, rising from the surface and creating a focus for the site. Its use of green/gray Australian granite reflects the essence of the bush.'

I am looking forward to seeing it soon. The green/gray granite came from Jerramungup, Western Australia. **Nicky Rose, London**

DESIGN

The Australian Garden - a happening thing Chris Russell, Divisional Director RBG Cranbourne Vic.

The much anticipated commencement of the Australian Garden construction has arrived. The landscape that until a few weeks ago was a quiet ,windswept sandscape has now been transformed into a hive of activity as bulldozers, excavators, tip trucks, graders, compactors and a host of other massive equipment traverse the landscape. The contract is expected to be completed by Aug. 2004, and will deliver the main landscape elements of the first 11 hectares [the completion of the second stage will achieve the final 26 hectare vision.] These elements include the prominent and spectacular Escarpment Wall sculpture and rockpool waterway, underground services, ,roads, paths and garden beds ready for planting. The first stages of the contract have involved surveying the extent of works, clearing of some of regrowth vegetation and the spectacular bulk earthworks phase. Thousands of cubic metres of sandy soil have been moved and sculpted into what will become a memorable destination for thousands of future visitors from our own backyard and across the globe .Official commencement of works was celebrated on site on Thurs. Nov. 13* 2003 against the backdrop of a spectacular floral display, complete with the red sand that will be used in the Sand Garden, created by the talented Cranbourne staff.

A Cave in the Australian Bush Deidre Morton and Gabrielle Baxter

Member Deidre Morton's house and rooftop garden have featured in our own book "The Australian Garden" and the T.V. series "Burke's Backyard". She sent me a copy of a magazine article by Gabrielle Baxter which appeared in "Timber Living". The following is an extract from that article.

The house is earth sheltered, so as you approach it from the road, all you see ahead is the unending bush then a row of seven small square windows, apparently let into the ground, among a neat expanse of bush. This natural garden is actually on the roof, with steps and a path leading down to one side to the front door and the huge rock the house is built on. The rock itself appears organic. Its surface, cracked, buckled and uneven could be the scales on the back of a dinosaur - one tends to tread warily. It is indeed a magic place. Myriad birds abound. From tiny wrens like fuzzy ping pong balls with electric blue and black heads, and black hooded gang gangs, to crimson rosellas, sulphur crested and black cockatoos. The house is a celebration not only of its surroundings but also of what life means to this couple. They recall with pleasure the help they had from friends and family and how they produced 5000 mudbricks in all. In the centre is an old *angophora costata* "we couldn't cut down that tree, that would have been terrible" says Deidre," so we had to go round it." The Mortons have a unique solution to the mosquito problem, a

resident bat which cruises the joint in the evenings and often hangs up in the kitchen overnight! Before I left, I was taken for a walk in the bush - on the roof. It has its own irrigation system and the soil had to be barrowed on. The earth and plant cover help regulate the temperature in the house keeping *it* cool in summer and retaining the heat in winter. The house can only be described as a labour of love, both Ivor and Deidre told me separately "if we'd known what we were taking on we never would have started!" But you can tell from their expressions they're glad they didn't know, the pride in both their faces tells its own story.

Why walk the Australian National University? Jan Simpson ANPS Canberra Region.

This walk is based on the APNS April field trip, and is best undertaken in late autumn to see the best flowers and birdlife. Before you is a veritable smorgasbord - you will see:

1. Native plants, well looked after and grown to full size - a rare sight these days.
2. Planting designed for year round colour and bird food.
3. A time capsule-with plants of different ages and fashions tied to a united whole.
4. Plants the correct size for the buildings they surround- an unusual occurrence.
5. Broad acre landscaping with natives and exotics chosen for hardiness & longevity.
6. Multi layered plantings not often attempted outside tertiary schools.
7. Many courtyards differently landscaped.
8. New buildings providing new opportunities.
9. Linear plantings allied to hard landscape to good effect.
10. Grasses in use, as links, as ground cover & as a foil for Callitris.
11. Unusual ways with common plants and unusual plants used creatively.
12. How to use hard landscaping to provide different microclimates.
13. How to build flow - repeating plants in different courtyards, or using similar foliated but different plants to link levels.

The following article by N.S. W. Govt. Architect Chris Johnson looks at ecological sustainability in our cities; he says that a growing population should not be at the expense of the natural landscape. His ideas link in with some VladSitta expressed in N.L.44. Interestingly, the Morton's house and garden have more than a passing relevance to some of his ideas.

Government Architect

Magazine Article

[current issues](#)

I See Green
by Chris Johnson
October 26 2002

[current initiatives](#)[history](#)

Sydney's growing population need not be at the expense of the natural landscape: Chris Johnson envisages a city where trees, grass, shrubs, even wetlands are as much a part of its buildings as steel and concrete.

[links](#)

The world's image of Sydney is of a blue sparkling harbour wrapping around our famous Opera House and under the Harbour Bridge. It is this Yin-Yang intersection of the natural and built environments that makes Sydney one of the most desirable cities in which to live and work.

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Captain Phillip understood the potential when the First Fleet arrived in 1788 and grand streets were laid out with large blocks for building houses. Phillip virtually invented the quarter-acre block. All this was understandable 200 years ago when the extent of the continent seemed endless, but now the balance of the natural and the built systems is under threat as Sydney's population continues to grow.

[home](#)

No longer can the city's green areas sustain new housing wherever we please. We must plan our green fingers of parkland but we must also green our streets and individual buildings: in short, a campaign that I have called "Greening Sydney".

At its most radical, the campaign needs to encourage the integration of landscape within buildings, in atriums, on terraces and on rooftops. The perfect result would be to have as much green within any development as the site contained in pre-settlement days. If the green landscape on balconies, on rooftops and around buildings equalled the site area, that would achieve the restoration of the original landscape.

The Conservatorium of Music is a good case study. Any visitor to the Royal Botanic Gardens can walk across this terrace as a seamless part of the experience. Shrubs surround the visitor, the lawns are used by picnickers and, below this idyllic landscape, trainee musicians can practise with views out to the lower garden. You can have your cake and eat it. You can have buildings and nature - the two are interactive.

The acclaimed Malaysian architect Ken Yeang has even proposed the integration of nature into tall office buildings. He has developed the bio-climatic skyscraper which integrates vertical gardens spiralling up to the top of his towers. A Ken Yeang tower has large atriums filled with landscape - all interconnected as part of a natural building system.

Yeang, who has visited Sydney several times and was runner-up in Sydney's Green Square town centre competition, sees the built environment as an integral part of the natural system. Essentially it is about reworking natural materials into steel and concrete to re-create new parts of the whole. So, why not weave nature through the building, maximise natural ventilation, carefully manage materials and recycle water?

In Sydney, Harry Seidler's Capita Centre has several high-level gardens that serve to break up the building's form, while the NRMA building at the junction of King and George streets has three-storey atriums filled with landscape. Abroad, Yeang creates

buildings that reflect the complexity and interest of nature - a Yeang building looks like a great place to work and certainly breaks down the sterile closed-box character of many tower buildings.

I recently tested the public response to his design philosophy while giving a talk to students at the University of Technology, Sydney. After explaining Yeang's architecture, I presented an image of the often-maligned UTS tower on Broadway, modified to include a series of aerial gardens running up through the building. My image gave a different message to the heavy, forbidding building that exists at present.

It also flushed out an enthusiastic response from Ronald Wood, who has just completed a PhD into the relationship between buildings and plants. The plants clean the air by absorbing toxins such as benzene from atmosphere, Wood says. Studies have shown that cleaner air in office buildings can improve productivity by up to 12 per cent.

Stephen Lesiuk completed his PhD at Sydney University in 1982 on the topic of people, plants and buildings. He is an expert in biotecture, the design of multi-purpose plant shelters for human occupation with integral conservation and energy generation capacity. His research has revealed that "one mature tree potentially provides nearly as much cooling as five 3-kilowatt air-conditioners".

The real value of landscaping is in quality of life and sustainability. Lesiuk's study shows that landscaping intercepts between 70 per cent and 90 per cent of incoming solar radiation and aids temperature control: "A large tree can reduce the surface temperature of an iron roof by up to 30 degrees Celsius and the temperature of a concrete car park may be 30 degrees warmer at 2pm, and 10 degrees warmer at 2am than an adjacent grassed area." Greening Sydney makes perfect sense.

As early as 1959, the Viennese artist Friedensreich Hundertwasser reacted against the sterile nature of recent buildings in his own city. He particularly bemoaned the limitations facing apartment dwellers who wanted to change and personalise their buildings. He proposed that trees be grown through the windows of vacant flats and that roofs be landscaped with trees and grasses. Hundertwasser took the next step when developing some housing in New Zealand where he incorporated grass roofs.

In Sydney, the landscape architect Tom Sitta has been fascinated for some time with the integration of landscape and architecture. In 1997 he developed the concept of the green wall. A wet cloth activated by drips from a recycled watering system was hung vertically and climbing plants were woven into the cloth. Over time, the entire wall became green. Sitta sees this innovation as an ideal cover for Sydney's suburban backyard fences. He has also proposed that green walls could cover the blank sides of city buildings. The green wall softens the visual environment, adds to bio-diversity and, importantly, as with Hundertwasser's work, demonstrates growth and change within the built environment.

There are some good examples in Sydney of urban gardens on the roofs of buildings, particularly on the tops of podiums. The residential tower over Paddy's Markets has a lower podium that has been fully landscaped with gardens and tennis courts. The Herald offices at Darling Park overlook a beautiful garden where trees, shrubs and lawns stand on a concrete slab. A warehouse in Surry Hills has a rooftop wetland which attracts migrating birds. Lend Lease proposes a roof of Australian plants at its new headquarters in Hickson Road.

Sydney won't be saved, however, by relying on the occasional experiment. The architect Peter Myers is writing a book on his idea for Sydney's third city. He describes the first city as an Aboriginal city, consisting of middens of oyster shells, the second

city the current built city, and the third city a new form of suburbia. Myers wonders if, with family sizes falling, the current suburban model isn't redundant. We must protect the heritage of western Sydney's suburbia, Myers proclaims, but with reference to the landscape, not the buildings. To Myers, the treed front and back gardens are Sydney's great legacy. As new housing types are required, simply replace individual houses with three- to four-storey blocks of large-sized flats between the existing landscape, he says.

I believe we can go one step further to ensure that the flats themselves are also about gardens. I have coined the name "garden apartment" to propose a model where every unit has a large outdoor terrace facing north. The outdoor space must be filled with landscape and be big enough for outdoor eating including the occasional barbecue. Privacy would be managed by locating units in the building to look like individual houses, using screens and pergolas. Garden apartments would become visually interesting places of activity, filled with greenery and emphasising individual housing units. The first of these garden apartments is under construction at Victoria Park, Green Square, and hopefully the model can be adapted to many places across Sydney. It is the ideal building type for interfacing leafy suburbs.

The communities that express most concern about urban consolidation are those that hold on to the values of the suburban house with its garden. If consolidation included the values of gardens and individuality in a four- or five-storey building, we could maintain the quality of green suburbs. Much of Sydney's recent urban consolidation is not well designed. Around the harbour are several massive developments that incorporate almost no landscape. At Birkenhead Point, the landscape seems to have been sacrificed for water views. In contrast, just around the bay, the older parts of Balmain still have a balance of green landscape and buildings. We can do better with new developments, particularly around the harbour's edge, and the integration of green landscape is the key.

Landscape networks will inevitably follow watercourses. An aerial view of Sydney looks like a tree, with the harbour and Parramatta River as the trunk and countless branches heading off into the suburbs. Each of these branches is a river or creek, often surrounded by natural bushland. As development increases, the green fingers become even more important. A program to encourage these landscape fingers, called Greening Western Sydney, has been initiated by PlanningNSW and Greening Australia. Since 1992, the project has been restoring the natural environment in open-space corridors across western Sydney. Today it is the largest urban land rehabilitation project in Australia. Over the past 10 years, 1500 hectares have been improved along Eastern, Ropes and South creeks.

The Olympic site at Homebush Bay is another good example of restoring natural bushland and wetland. From a degraded condition, Haslams Creek has been cleaned up and restored as a natural system. Millennium Parklands, twice the size of Centennial Park, is going through a process of regeneration. There, the Newington Nature Reserve, the grasslands, the wetlands, the estuary and the remediated areas will help the greening of Sydney.

But it needs to retain an Australian character. Tim Flannery has raised concerns about Australians trying to remake a continent in the image of Europe. He would ban European landscape and particularly the thirsty suburban lawn. The greening of Sydney needs to be about restoring the indigenous landscape. Gum trees/flowering shrubs and native grasses are being used in most of the projects I have written about.

Sydneysiders are undergoing a reassessment of their relationship to the land and the natural system. The greening of Sydney needs to be driven at the scale of urban parks and landscape corridors, at the scale of housing estates with their water management and associated landscape and, importantly, at the scale of individual buildings. If the built environment can be seen as an integral part of the natural environment, then the

city can regain an ecological balance that will sustain it for future generations.

PLANTS and DESIGN

Seasonal Changes at Yarrawonga Jan Hall Vic.

I have been pondering on the question of seasonal changes noted in the exchange with Glenys [N.L.43]. We have recently sold our house and garden of 29 yrs. but I can reflect on the many seasonal happenings of that rural garden where conditions were often quite harsh. People often commented *on* how interesting it was at *times* when little was to be seen in the way of flowers. A young garden depends more on floral display but as it ages trees and vistas become more important. Seasonal change was also evident in the comings and goings of wildlife and the presence or absence of water and rainfall. It seems to me that enjoying the changes in Australia has a lot to do with gardening in harmony with nature.

Spring: Floral displays changing month by month - drifts of pink and white everlastings with a touch of yellow ; the purples and pinks and whites of *Alyogyne huegii* and *Eremophila nivea*. Lovely this year after good rain at last.

Late Spring into Summer: *Brachychiton discolor* [and other brachychitons] and *Grevillea robusta* shedding leaves prior to their wonderful flowering time. Wildflowers in the garden and bush.

Summer: The first really hot day heralds the shedding of bark by the eucalypts to reveal lovely smooth white, pink and bronzy trunks. Flowers on the plants which revel in full sun, *Isotoma axillaris*, some daisies and *Hibiscus trionum* [if this is now declared an exotic its too bad because of its use in Summer, I'm sticking to it!] Many *Eremophila* and *Grevillea* spp. plus summer flowering acacias and eucalypts. The flowering heads of grasses in the dry grassland contrast with the cool greenery of the rainforest and woodland plants on the shaded southside of the house. A water feature and the birdlife are viewed from the house.

Autumn: A very dry time here. The silver and greys of the current season's growth on many *eremophilas* and saltbush spp. In fact new foliage on everything before Winter when the cold and frosty weather dulls their appearance. Special flowers on *Euc.*

Erythrocorys and *Callistemon recurvus* Tinaroo. Saltbushes fruiting with subsequent bird activity. Weird and wonderful fungi appear as Winter starts.

Winter: Winter rains mean new growth and greening of grasses, reemerging native lilies ,eg; *Arthropodium* and *Bulbine* spp., spreading seedlings of wildflowers such as *Pelargonium australe* and monitoring the progress of other self seeders - used or removed as required. New basal growth on *Brachyscomes* and other plants which can finally be pruned after the long dry months. *Euc. Leucoxylon* and *sideroxylon* flowering - with frenetic bird activity. Winter flowering shrubs such as *Hardenbergias*, and acacias provide a "wattle extravaganza 'through to Spring.

Reading Jan's evocative descriptions of her garden through the seasons reminded me again of how different our Australian gardens are throughout the continent. In Sydney our dry Spring with its wild winds knocks the new growth around and dries the soil and pruning is late summer/autumn as is the rainfall. It would be great to hear from our W.A. and S.A. and F.N.Q. members on this topic. As gardeners interested in design we should be aware of not only the prevailing conditions but the seasonal responses of the various local plants -foliage ,fruiting bodies,colour etc. so those features can be utilized in the design. Jan's point about the presence or absence of wildlife and water is a good one — worth thinking about in a design context also. JH

Designing a Decent Daisy Field Jan Simpson ANPS Canberra

When I was about seven, Dad took the family picnic to an astonishing local event. The red sand and stone hills between Whitton and Griffith N.S.W. were literally covered, as far as the eye could see, with paper daisies, mainly yellow but lots of white! Never again has this happened, ever since I've hankered to see them again. Whilst I saw an astounding orchid meadow in W.A., trips to the Centre and the West produced no daisy fields. But pictures of fields of flowers in these places have spurred me on -I have come up with a sort of mini substitute.

I have the multiple trunked white Eucalypt, a red flowered *Euc.leucoxylon*, and plenty of largish local granite rocks, as its expanding drip line began to kill off my small and pretty bushes, I decided *Chrysocephalum apiculatum* silver leaved forms and *Chrysocephalum semipapposum* grey leaved forms would be candidates for this drying zone. I had tried *Helichrysum baxterii* and the local *Helipterum albicans*, both pink and yellow forms but could not keep them going in an area watered only monthly. So far I have four forms of *C. apiculatum* and two forms of *C.semipapposum*. I intend to add *Helichrysum scorpioides*, some lemon Beauty Buttons, Bachelor's Buttons and the local wildling that Gwyn and Geoff have in their drive. A packet or two of *Waitzias* should work too. *Brachyscomes* wouldn't work, as they are too lush and soft looking, *Olearia rhysomatica* could be a good candidate as it is low growing and tough looking. I grow *Bracteantha viscosa* in the front garden but its too green and thick, however mixed with *Wahlenbergia stricta* it's a knock out. Adding *Bulbine bulbosa*, Bluebells, *Convolvulus*, *Dampiera*,

Scaevola and various Peas that are tough enough to survive under the Euc. gives you a very pretty meadow. Low growing Correas, Baeckias. Grevilleas and Calytrix would turn it into a heath. I'd like to hear if anyone else has turned a concept into reality they did it - please put your experiences onto paper so those with similar yearnings may have some guidance and encouragement.

MORE ON THE LAWN DEBATE Chris Larkin

Thanks JeffHowes for raising that old chestnut - do we need lawns in suburbia?

I will make a couple of comments to start with. It certainly is possible to have an Australian grass lawn. There are two gardens close to Melbourne that provide good examples. Blake's garden in Ringwood East has a very large lawn comprising predominantly *Microlaena stipiodes*. The 3 times I've visited it has been neatly mown looking for all the world like a healthy exotic lawn. Does their lawn sometimes have a tufting look from being left uncut? I don't know but certainly the wallaby grass section of Jane Burke's garden in Sorrento is deliberately left to flower for effect. I've not seen it in flower myself but I have heard it makes a glorious sight.

The second observation I'd like to make concerns the idea that children need a lawn 'to kick the footy around'. A few years ago I made a special point to ask a couple of children visiting Snape's garden how they had liked it. (Diana and Brian's garden doesn't have a lawn.). They said they loved it. To which I replied - but aren't you concerned that there's no lawn to play on? No they said, this garden is lots of fun with different places to explore and if we wanted to kick a footy we could do that in a park. Two young boys who visited my garden recently, (which also has no lawn area), told their mother on the way home that they just wanted to take the whole garden home with them. I know some readers are going to say who's got time to take children to a park, or is it safe for children to be unaccompanied at a park, or not everyone has a park close by. But I'd like to side step all this by asking questions like the following. How often is the footy kicked around the backyard? Is kicking the footy around the backyard more valuable play than what is possible in an entirely different style of garden?

In my case eliminating 'lawn' has been a gradual process for half the garden. (The other half of the garden went from being a complete mess to a designed space with no lawn.) The garden up behind the house has been developed in stages to replace most of what was once a mown grass hillside. As I expanded the garden on and up the hill I established garden beds with grass pathways opening to larger grassed areas. When the grass was green and neatly mown the garden beds were nicely defined but I'm afraid this never ever made up for the dry dead look in summer which I personally don't like. For years I wanted to eliminate the grass - not an issue for the paths themselves - but how would I be able to maintain the feeling of space in those open grassy areas? It took a long time - visiting friends' gardens to get ideas, thinking and discussing possibilities - before I could solve this problem.

J Solving open space treatment was at the heart of my difficulty in eliminating 'the lawn'. And maintaining open space is an important element in any garden. Paths and areas that are paved, graveled or mulched are one way it is achieved. Ponds too provide this effect. Planting solutions are possible too by using ground covers such as *Myoporum parvifolium*, *Pultenaea pedunculata*, *Brachyscomes multifida* selections, *Helychrysums ramossisima*, *Grev. lanigera prostrate*, *Correa reflexa numularifolia*, *Scaevola 'Mauve Clusters'*. If you combine appropriate plants a tapestry effect is also possible. The addition of tufting plants like *Orthrosanthus laxus* or *multiflora*, *Thelionema caespitosum*, or low growing lomandras can also add interest without closing in the space. All the plants I've mentioned so far, apart from the tuftys, grow quite flat to the ground but open space will still be maintained with plants that have some height, say under 0.5m unless they are grown down a slope in which case the gradient of the slope will determine the acceptable height. If you want to be able to walk on the plants then you could also try using low growing Australian grasses or *Pratia* or *Dichondra repens* but be warned these last two can become quite invasive if they are given the right conditions. When I tried to grow *Dichondra* as a single ground cover over a reasonably large area it left gaps for weeds to grow in and went on a march into my garden where the mulched beds were much more to its liking. Once there it out-competed small plants like *Hibbertia obtusifolia* and became quite a management problem.

So yes I think there are various interesting, beautiful, restful ways to replace lawn but I suspect what has to be challenged first is the concept many of us have of gardens being largely border gardens. This after all is still the prevailing garden style evident as we take a drive through any suburb.

PLANT SNIPPETS

Wildlife Attracting Plants

Wallabies and my Garden - Bev Cross S.E. N.S.W. APS

My garden receives the intimate attention of a couple of wallabies, I have tried many things to deter them but the only thing that works is good old chicken wire around individual plants, once a plant reaches a certain size they seem to leave it alone - most of the time!! A few nights ago I looked out the kitchen window and saw a red necked wallaby sampling a newly planted *Rulingea*, as I was about to rush out and do bodily harm, I saw a tiny head poke out from the pouch and have a few nibbles. It stopped me in my tracks - how can you beat the "cute factor"? I will just have to learn to live with them.

Some Plants they LOVE: *Lechenaultia*, all *Brachysema*, *Chorizema cordatum*, *Hemiandra pungens*, *Anigozanthus*, *Callistemon*, *Pimelea*. *Scaevola*. *Dichopogon*, *Helichrysum*, all peas and daisies.

Some Plants they DON'T: Hakeas, Calothamnus, Leptospermum, Epacris, Waratahs, most Eremophilas, Acacias, Grevilleas, Banksias.

Surprise Visitors - Maureen Macquire StGeorge N.S.W. APS

You never know what you are going to find in a native garden, but it will always be interesting - have you ever noticed the sweet light perfume of *Lomandara longifolia* ? I am reminded each Spring when I flowers ,it always takes me by surprise .Last Sept. I discovered two black Cockatoos sampling the Banksia cones in the *Banksias errata* outside our bedroom, while I watched one flew into the *Hakea sericea*;_when they'd gone I noticed they'd opened every nut the same way - removing a single chunk which gave them direct access to the seed without wasting time or energy. A week later I noticed them feed on the nectar of the Callistemons across the street -I have never seen cockies feeding on nectar. Crimson Rosellas have also been frequent visitors to our garden, they have been observed eating the seeds of *Correa alba*, *Pultenaea daphnoides*, and *Acacia ulicifolia*, as well as native broom and dead dandelion flowers.

Growing Orchids in the Garden

JohnMoye "The Blooming Orchid." N.E. NSW

Many species of orchids are equally at home grown as garden plants and can be used to complement other plants or as specimens in their own right. In some instances plants so grown out perform those grown in pots. Where to plant an orchid in the garden depends on the type of plant available, most *Dendrobium kingianum* or *D. speciosum* type plants and hybrids grow well in an open environment. Select an area which receives sunlight for part of the day at least [avoiding strong afternoon sun] and that receives maximum sunlight in late summer-autumn. The dappled light under an open crowned tree is ideal.

Create a rocky area by removing some soil and infilling with blue metal or crushed rock,larger rocks are then placed randomly on this base with spaces filled with smaller rocks and blue metal. Repeat until desired height and shape is achieved and maximum drainage assured. Cover the mass with 50-50 blue metal and 1cm. treated pine bark and surround the plants in their desired planting position with this mix also. Water plants regularly until established, depending on area's normal rainfall. I give my plants a light application of liquid fertilizer on a regular basis.

Both species named above and their hybrids are suitable for garden cultivation *D. kingianum* plants come in a variety of pinks, while *D.x gracillimum* [*D. speciosum*x*D. gracilicaule*]has yellow flowers and *D. suffusum*[*D. gracilicaule* x *D. kingianum*] flowers vary from lime green to whitish. Any combination of these plants will put on a stunning display in the Spring lasting 3-4 weeks. Plants known as *D. speciosum* and its several varieties are equally at home grown as epiphytes, simply tie the plant using

fishing line or twine onto a rainforest type tree [one that doesn't shed its bark]. In time new roots will attach the plant to the tree and this material can be removed. N.B.: all epiphytic and lithophytic orchids are protected species, when purchasing these plants ensure the mandatory "protected plant" label is attached.

The Quest for the Flying Duck Orchid

Newsletter of the Friends of the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens.

There are many strange, interesting and beautiful ground orchids common in our Region, but none so delightful, appealing and downright cute as *Caleana major*, the Flying Duck orchid. Teresa Van Der Heul, from Dalmeny, is fascinated by Australian orchids. Her orchid specimens are a valuable part of our Herbarium collection. Early in October she phoned me with news of a colony of Flying Ducks she had found just off the Princes Hwy. north of Dalmeny. She had said that the orchids are rather small and grow in very dry gravelly places, she added that the first one is very difficult to find, but once sightlines are established the others appear as if by magic. The flower has a delicate, intricate form, evolved over millions of years, a form that is highly specialized to attract insects for pollination. The lower part is somewhat cup shaped and contains nectar, above this, connected by a tensioned straplike appendage is the "duck head" that contains the pollination mechanism. When an insect lands on the cup - attracted by the nectar - the spring is activated and snaps down depositing pollen on the insect's back, after a while the spring releases and the insect is free to fly away, transferring pollen to another orchid flower.

*/ thought the above articles above might remind and encourage GDSG members to include some orchids in their garden design - wherever they live
The article below appeared in the President's Report, Wildflower Soc. of W.A. Inc. N.L. 2003. It ties in, I think, with our concerns that native gardens are under appreciated and under valued by large sections of the community. I feel such initiatives should be taken up on a National level as well as by the other States - congratulations W.A.*

Garden Projects W.S.W.A.

The Garden sub-committee was formed in 2001 as a result of the view of some members that the Society had much to offer the community in the way of horticultural expertise, it was evident that there are sections of the community looking for information and assistance that is generally not provided by the horticultural industry. [It was] an extremely busy year with a range of activities from Open Gardens, a series of workshops [with the assistance of Water Corporation funding], web page information, a power point display, magazine articles and greater involvement with Garden Week.

Importantly some members were invited to participate in a local government working group set up to develop a - Model Perth Landscaping Policy for Local Government. This will be quite a milestone for the promotion of local plants if it wins general acceptance by

local governmentAt the moment the City of Swan is very supportive. The buying power of local govt. has the potential to influence the production practices of the nursery industry.

Britain's A.P.S. on Show Jeff Irons, England [Eucryphia, APS Tas.]

Each year Britain's Royal Horticultural Soc. holds a number of flower shows. One of them, at Cheshire's Tatton Park, is fairly close to the homes of a number of Australasian Plant Soc. members. This year they took a stand at the Show, it is held in late July, when most Australian plants have finished flowering, consequently most of the stand's colour came from annual forbs and bulk was provided by foliage plants .Much of the colour came from massed plantings of pale yellow brachyscomes, the public loved them and could not resist riffling their hands through them as the walked past. A large *Rhododendron viriosum* in full bloom surprised several who were unaware that the Antipodes possesses rhododendrons. Many wanted to find out if a cushion plant is hard or soft so a specimen of New Zealand's *Scleranthus uniflorus* had been placed out of reach - that did not stop one R.H.S. member prodding it with the tip of his umbrella! [see N.L 43] Large specimens were loaned by a member nursery and they played no small part in gaining the award of a Bronze medal for the display.

More proof of the stand out textural qualities of Australian plants. JH

Useful Websites and Email addresses courtesy "Gumnuts".

Britain's Australasian Plant Society : <http://an2plantsoc.org.uk> an excellent resource for Northern Hemisphere growers of Australian plants.

Native Grass Trials of *Microlaena stipoides*, City of Knox, Melbourne:
Robyn.Mansfield@knox.vic.gov.au

For free Red Flowering Native Frangipani seed: petervaughan@bigpond.com

"Gumnuts" has discussed the White Cedar at length and the consensus seems to be that whilst toxic to us and fish, it is relished by — Possums, Black Cockatoos, Wompoo Fruit Dove, Rose Crowned Fruit Dove and the Superb Fruit Dove as well as various insect and nectar feeders.

The Natural Alternative

I'd really like to see if we could make this a regular feature, Diana was very keen for the Group to try and find Ozzie replacements for popular exotics used in garden design and I

think we should keep this aim in mind and communicate ideas and suggestions, ideally every Newsletter. I'll start the ball rolling with a Buxus alternative that of *Leionema* "Green Screen", a dense vigorous hybrid between *Leionema* [formerly *Phebalium*] *elatus* and *lamprophyllum*. No one has come up with a bamboo replacement yet!

BOOK REVIEWS

"Napoleon, the Empress & the Artist." Jill Duchess of Hamilton, Kangaroo Press

The story of Napoleon, Josephine's garden at Malmaison, Redoute & The Australian Plants.

Dedicated to the memory of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the first person to speak up for simple native plants, this book is a terrifically informative read. Jill Duchess of Hamilton describes the brilliant achievements of Napoleon and Josephine - two individuals influenced by the works of Jean- Jacques Rousseau. Recent research has revealed that Josephine played an essential role in natural history in France at the beginning of the 19th. Century. The great opportunity for her garden at Malmaison — a place of experimentation and study of new plants and animals- was the scientific bounty from the voyage aux terres australes- the Baudin voyage conceived by Napoleon. As well as bringing back new plants, the ships brought back swans, emus and other animals to join the kangaroos already in the park - probably courtesy of great navigators La Perouse and d'Entrecasteaux, who proceeded Baudin to Australia. The story of the Australian flora is woven into the history of France , Josephine ordered dozens of paintings of Australian plants by the celebrated botanical painter Pierre Joseph Redoute for the two magnificent books on her garden, many are reproduced in this book. Years before Bauer published his fifteen illustrations of Australian flora, the French had already published just on a hundred, all drawn by Redoute.

You will be surprised at just how many of our plants have French names after reading this book, c'est tres bon!

"Studies in Australian Garden History" edited by Max Bourke and Colleen Morris
Australian Garden History Society

This journal, the first edition of a properly refereed series of papers marks the beginning of a new endeavour by the Society .The aim has been to encourage a broad definition of garden history, sweeping across gardens, landscapes and botany through various scientific and artistic disciplines .It is an effective vehicle to deliver detailed research to a larger audience, the seven papers presented make informative and interesting reading and add greatly to our knowledge of Australia's gardening history. Available from AGHS office; 61396505043.

MELBOURNE MEETING - 14 March

The date remains the same as agreed to at our previous meeting but the activity has had to be changed.

Please meet at 2.15pm for 2.30 start at the home of Chris Larkin,

Please ring _____ to let me know that you will be attending. If you have not been to the house before then it would be best to get directions over the phone before the meeting. Please bring a folding chair and a small plate of eats. The business of the meeting will be further discussion of the 'Criteria for a Descriptive Assessment of a Garden's Design'. In preparation for the discussion I am asking you to use the listed criteria published in the last newsletter to assess **your own garden**. Please note any criteria you believe should be added to the list and be prepared to make comments on how easy and useful this tool was for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of your own garden's design. The list was meant to be relevant to a wide variety of gardens in differing situations so you may find that some of the criteria are not really relevant for you in your situation. If you have only just joined the study group and don't have the last newsletter to hand then please phone and ask me for a copy of the criteria which I can then post or fax to you.

REPORT ON LAST MELBOURNE MEETING - Nov 2, 2003

Our last meeting was a big one combining a look at 2 new gardens and a Christmas/end of year afternoon tea. The two gardens we visited were at the homes of Shirley Cam and Bev Fox. Both gardens have been designed and installed by Roger Stone with the plantscaping by the respective owners.

The gardens are a similar size - quarter acre - but quite different in topology, the number of remnant trees on the block and the relationship of house to garden. Shirley's house is set behind a front fence with the house itself facing down the slope of the hill and onto a large expanse of garden rather than towards the front street. In this situation there is plenty of privacy for the whole garden and the opportunity for pathways to connect in a flowing manner around the house and through the garden. Effective use of rocks and contouring of land and paths has avoided the need for steps even when there is a

J reasonable steep incline. The garden combines sections of stroll garden with an area of lawn. Shirley is lucky to back onto a small park with lovely large trees so that there is continuity with the trees in her property and those in the park.

Bev Fox's home has a clearly defined front garden and large back yard. The make-over in the front yard has brought about some changes but nothing like the transformation of the back area. Bev's block only slopes gently to the back fence but the scale of the yard and even this amount of slope has enabled Roger to use a relatively few rocks quite effectively for visual interest and change of levels. There is no lawn in the back but a wide softly curving pathway leads around the space and should in time produce some lovely vistas. Bev's property backs onto an oval and park and I know that she has planted to make visual connection with the *allocasuarinas* in the park.

What was most obvious in both gardens was the hard landscape design. In both cases there are new exciting plantings that will eventually transform the spaces yet again. Hopefully the group can visit again in a few years time to check out progress although Shirley is mooting a possible shift. Thank you Bev and Shirley for allowing us to look at your lovely gardens. Thanks too Bev for hosting the afternoon tea.
Chris Larkin

GDSG NORTH EAST BRANCH

Next meeting Sat. 14th Feb 2004 at 10.30am for 11. at Buchanan's

If the temperature for Wangaratta is predicted to be 37degrees or more or there is a total fire ban the meeting will be postponed to March 20th. If in any doubt ring me. After the normal meeting we will go to my neighbour and fellow APS member, Mike Burston's garden. Mike has a background in horticulture and grows some cut-flowers including magnificent waratahs. He has a great dream for his garden which is becoming visible, but be warned, it is not all Australian. His conditions vary and can be very different from mine as the soil is lighter sand, or even beds of waterworn rocks that can only be tackled with a pick.

Report of meeting Oct 25 2003

We began in the garden in gentle rain. We have been visiting Datson's garden for some years now and watched it developing steadily over the years. The interest begins around the front door where there is a small collection of special plants in pots, hi the long sloping garden there is more to see each time we visit, more nooks and crannies with something of interest, more corners to turn to find what lies beyond. Outstanding in their dramatic eye-appeal were the grafted grevilleas halfway down the slope, while quiet charm came from the simple plantings and grasses under the great eucalypts at the foot of the slope. The new bird hide is a well kept secret from higher up the garden, there is certainly no shortage of subjects to observe.

On one of the small terraces is Glenda's *Euc.* in a pot doing very well. Did you all see it, and how is *yours* going? Better than my first try I hope, I should have known *Euc. erythrocoris* would not be happy here.

We were delighted to have Trevor and Beryl Blake at the meeting as Trevor had been giving the Wang and Albury groups a spot of armchair travel the previous two evenings. From the last NL the question of criteria for judging gardens arose and one suggestion was criteria for selecting gardens for the Open Garden scheme could be relevant. Some brave? foolhardy? member suggested or challenged us to submit our gardens for opening.

We also discussed our 'homework', lists of successful plant groupings. Paul's list was built up to provide focal points at each season, rather than everything in bloom at once. We agreed to continue to look out for more 'pictures'.

The meeting then headed off to the Charles Sturt, Albury, Environmental Studies campus to see grasses used in the landscaping. The whole campus is designed on green principles, rammed earth walls, dry earth toilets, gal. iron water tanks as part of the structure for insulation as well as water storage, simple air flow systems providing natural air conditioning and probably much more. An archway through one of the buildings framed a view of a garden based on some really large rocks. A double headed grass tree carried two floral spires reaching skyward wMie the rest of the planting was clumps of various grasses. It was one of the most successful pictures I have ever seen, so the other use of grasses was disappointing in comparison although Glenda had warned us that it was a trial situation to learn how to manage the grass. These grasses filled their beds and were planted in groups of several species but the tall poa flower heads swamped other species and lost the effect of different bands. Most beds were in at least their second year and the clumps were getting untidy and less attractive with one kangaroo grass clone, the only one distinguished from the poa, downright ugly. The young clumps with their tall waving heads were quite lovely, the trick is going to be to keep them like that. In fact I am not sure these plantings are right - a whole field of grass waving and bending in the breeze can be a delight and individual tussocks as with the rocks or with the right mix of shrubs can give an elegance to a planting but these smallish beds were neither one nor t'other. It is experimental so watch this space! We certainly hope to keep track of what develops.

Late addition

I have had a request from Chris Larkin that we consider the criteria for judging the design of a garden as laid out in the last NL. Chris pointed out that it was not to run a competition but to formulate a set of guidelines by which members could judge progress in their own gardens and also to offer new members to give some practical indication of what we are on about. Chris would like us to apply the criteria to our own gardens and report on how useful the system is overall and which individual points are most useful/irrelevant As we discussed when we rather ducked the issue as too hard last meeting, judging artistic merit is very subjective but if we use the criteria in this entirely personal way we may learn something about our own objectives and how better to realize them. It is all about the best outcome for the given situation with all its constraints and problems which the garden maker is best placed to be aware of. So give it a try and if the weather is not too hot we could apply it to a part of this garden too, see if there is consistency.

