



GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP

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Newsletter
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Dear Members,

I would ask that members read Treasurer Ben Walcott's report; mainly so that they are across the decision we made regarding one of the problems (and advantages!) of the digital age, ie: the possibility of reproduction ad infinitum (I often think just how avant garde Andy Warhol really was). As we all appreciate there is very little control over what happens to information once it is unleashed upon the net. The GDSG newsletter is a case in point; in our case various APS branches, in subscribing to the email copy of our NL are in the happy position of being able to simply send it to any of their members (non GDSG members) who ask. Obviously this isn't optimal for the GDSG and after some head scratching we decided on a course of action about which you can read and comment on in the treasurer's report.

Now, my wonderful GDSG family, breaking news is that this year will be my last as Editor of our newsletter. As you know it's a time of change for the Hambretts at the moment and I don't want the ongoing uncertainty to affect the production and quality of the newsletter in any way; also, after 10 years in the job (where has *that* gone!) its time to give someone else the opportunity to take our wonderful NL into the future. The new Editor from 2013 will be Ros Walcott. After much consideration the role of Editor and Leader have been split and I will continue as Leader of the group into the near future. I will introduce Ros in the next NL although to the vast majority of our members she needs no introduction, such is her involvement at every level within ANPS Aust.

And lastly, still on things managerial, we need a NSW member to come forward and organize our NSW meetings. I am stepping down from next year from this position as well; it is not an onerous one and its an excellent way to meet fellow members, learn more about plants and design as well as influencing the overall direction and philosophy of the GDSG. Country members are very welcome - you don't need to live in Sydney to lead the branch, also it's a job that can be shared amongst friends. I will be around to help for a while as well. Please consider- it would be a shame to see the Sydney/NSW group go into recession.

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CORRESPONDENCE

I enjoyed all the garden descriptions and comments in the last newsletter but they reminded me of one thing that was missing for each - a garden plan. We're now starting to record gardens and really, if a record is to be complete, a garden plan is essential. Photos can show us clearly how different areas of a garden look but not how it all hangs together.

I'm no shining example, as I have not yet finished drawing up a detailed plan of our own garden (a winter project). However I do think a plan, however rough, is essential for anyone to picture at all accurately the layout of a garden and visualise what it looks like. We need to know at least the shape of the block, the position of the house and any other built infrastructure, where north is, any borrowed landscape, the layout of paths and the shapes of beds (if these are defined).

Then we can show positions of water areas, trees, large shrubs and any other significant plants. Rather than mark in individual plants, just the type of plants - trees, large, medium or small shrubs, groundcovers, tufted/strap-leaved plants, creepers - can be enough. With a plan like this, we can read a description and get a much clearer picture of the garden. It is easier for a smaller garden but the plan of a large garden can be much less detailed, while for a small garden we probably would name individual plants.

The 'bubble diagram' in 'The Australian Garden' on page 44 gives an idea of a simple sketch plan (though it refers to the initial design of a garden).

Nowadays we can draw a plan on paper then scan it into the computer, so it would be much easier than it used to be to include plans in the newsletter. In preparation for our next book, I think this would be a good idea.

Diana Snape Vic.

I have just found a booklet I have had for years - I am not sure where I got it from but I remember being impressed the first time I read it and I am re-impressed now all over again.....!

Its called Native Splendour - A Gardening Guide to the Indigenous Plants of Manningham - it is produced by Currawong Bush Park and Economic & Environment Planning, Manningham Council, Vic. June 2001.

It introduces the reader to 100 indigenous plants with photos of 50.

There are 5 sections based on plant habit and size as well as info re weeds, garden design and nurseries which stock the plants. There is information on plant selection, planting preparation, technique and follow up care as well as a "grow what where" section.

This is precisely the sort of thing which is needed as reference material for ratepayers and local public works gardeners alike.

It is an excellent little resource (77 pages, soft cover, A5 size) and really the ANPS Aust. could do a lot worse than work at getting a booklet like this into every single council in Australia (probably via the state APS regionals and through them the various branches could work on one for their relevant councils).

I know Barb Buchanan and the NE Vic SG branch are in the process of or may have finished already a similar booklet for their region.

Victoria may have a similar booklet in each local Council, I am fairly confident NSW doesn't and I don't know about the other States.

Jo Hambrett NSW

I know a number of Melbourne Councils do have similar (A5 size) booklets, though not as detailed as the one Jo describes. I have at hand *Backyard Biodiversity* (Boroondara) 37pp, *Sustainable Gardening* (Stonnington) 41pp and *Gardens for Wildlife* (Knox) 48pp.

They all differ in the information they present & how they present it but they are very good booklets, as is *It's Only Natural - water-wise gardening in north-east Victoria*, produced by APS Wangaratta (23pp). I'm sure there are more.

Diana Snape Vic.

Re the recording of significant gardens, I'd like to suggest the following process:

Stage 1 – Recorder meets with garden owner and produces initial draft for owner's approval.

Stage 2 – Draft in Word is circulated to small group of 3-4 , for comment. Recorder makes changes, circulating again to group and referring back to owner if necessary.

Membership of this group could be flexible, but I'd favour including at least one person who hasn't visited the garden. In the case of Victorian gardens, Jo could fulfil this role. (Chris and I have reached about this stage with our reports.)

Stage 3 – Taster or summary (written by recorder) published in NL.

Stage 4 - Recorder and garden owner sign off on final version, which is then sent to Jo and forwarded to Brian for uploading on the website.

I agree with Brian that the reports should not be published on the website as Word documents. I haven't worked with HTML, but I had assumed pdf files would be best, as the reports will run to several pages. People can then print or download the documents to their own computers for ease of reading. I'd like to see 2-3 photos included in the text, so readers can gain an immediate impression of the garden – there could also be a link to a more extensive range of photos in the gallery. The sketch map should also be included in the pdf. There will be different views about format, but I favour Arial 11 and 1.5 spacing.

A final suggestion – the final report, plus photos and map could be given to the owner on CD or in print, to be passed on when the property is sold. This might encourage new owners to respect and preserve the garden.

Margaret Lee S.A.

Carmel and I have just returned from the second reconnaissance for the post-conference tour to Mackay and the Whitsundays - should be wonderful at this time next year - the weather was sublime, the sky cobalt without a cloud, the sea turquoise and about 15 degrees; the rainforests were bursting with new foliage and flowers!! Just to give you a taste of what is to come!!

This weekend the 2013 ANPS Aust Conference team goes to Alexandra Park for three days for a test run of the facilities and the day trips!!! Registration opens October 1 - recommend to be quick!

Lawrie Smith Qld.

DESIGN

Daniel's paddock one year on

In May last year we wrote about Daniel's paddock, an eastward extension of the garden into what was most of the paddock where we kept Daniel the donkey when the kids were young.

We started with a few trees, mostly native and mostly planted by Win years ago, but including three old paddock trees, Eucalyptus dealbata and lots of thick tall grass.

We're still not fully planted but have come a fair way. We've put in over a hundred plants in the area but still have some spaces to go. We've also extended the gravel paths from the old part of the garden using 7mm gravel from a local quarry.

A feature has turned out to be some exposed rock, seen for years but ignored, but which we now watch with fascination as it changes. It is covered with moss and/or lichen (which we know nothing about) which changes colour as the seasons go by and as it gets wet with the rain then dries in the sun.

We have built a few, mostly stone, structures. The main one is what we call the Nonagon – for the obvious reason that it has nine equal sides – built with garden sleepers on the outside with a circular middle held up by a loose stone wall. It was to be a pentagon but the couple of truckloads of red basalt soil we had dumped were too big so we kept increasing the size until it fitted.

The soil comes from a nearby spot on Treetops which we, rightly or wrongly, assume to be a much weathered volcanic pipe.

The nonagon is on a sloping site four sleepers high on the down side and about half a sleeper on the uphill side. The idea was, and is, to have three specimens of nine varieties of *eremophilas* to match the nine sides, with one in an inner circle inside.

The nine varieties are: *Eremophila calorhabdos*, E. Bev Rice, E. *purpurea*, E. *macaloides*, E. *glabra*, orange, E. *maculata* (short leaf red), E. *nivea/drummondi* x *sargentii* and Summertime Blue. In the centre of the circle we have one *E. dempesteri*.

In other parts of Daniels paddock we have more *Eremophilas*: E. *complanata*, E. *maculata* (red), E. *hygrophana*, E. *tomentosa*, E. *maculata/viscida* cross, a couple more E. *dempesteri* plus another *Eremophila* of which we lost the tag for and hope to identify when it flowers

We also have:

Grevilleas : White Wings, Bonnie Prince Charlie, Canberra Gem, Silver Sprite and Lemon Daze .

Hakeas : *H. petiolaris*, *H. minnemarra*, *H. bucculenta*, *H. corymbosa*; Burrendong Beauty and *H. francisiana*.

Callistemon viminalis "Pink Alma", plus two we don't know the name of but hope to later identify.

Acacias: Queensland Silver (growing like crazy), *A. decora* and a dwarf *A. pravissima*.

Correa 'Catie Bec'

Eucalyptus leucoxyton (pink flowering yellow gum).

Baeckea virgata

Billy buttons.

We have a lot of hop bushes locally so have planted a clump around the base of a couple of the *Eucalyptus dealbata* already there

Most of the area will be planted but we have reserved a section for local native grasses which will need culling and identification. In a bare spot where the gravel was dumped we are trying to get some Kangaroo grass growing from seed we collected from some we have growing on a nearby hill.

We started by clearing all the grass then spreading mulch, which was fine, but left the soil somewhat exposed so when we had 10 inches over four or five days during summer the damage was pretty extensive. So we now have contour banks and a flat area (a swale?) in the middle to let the water to settle and soak away. We're a bit concerned about people stumbling on the banks (although they are pretty low) so we are putting obvious step stones on the top of the contour banks for people to see and use.

We are also not clearing the grass away before we plant. Instead we are spraying the grass so that we have the benefit of the roots providing some stability and the long grass when it dies makes good mulch. As the plants grow and spread the dead grass will become less obvious and be like the rest of the garden which is now pretty much self mulching, with lots of pulled out weeds thrown in for good measure.

Win and Jim Main NSW

Sky Gardens, the green roof fad comes to town.

Helen Young, Weekend Australian, Aug. 18-19 2012

In Sydney's Pyrmont, we're standing on the rooftop of a heritage listed building, surrounded by a vast garden sitting in the sky. M Central is an apartment block whose 2005 resurrection as a hip inner city residence came a century after its construction as a wool store. Landscape designer Daniel Bafsky of 360 Degrees, who designed the 3000sq. m communal garden, says the brief was to surprise rather than "have the ubiquitous pool and hard deck".

Swathes of native foxtail grass lend an almost rural ambience at one end, their furry plumes swaying with the breeze. Bold succulents give textural contrast, while the centrepiece of small lawn is a magnificent dragons blood tree. On the upper level

vine covered arbours and wide timber boardwalks, shaded by tall tuckeroo trees, flank a covered events area. The sound of water tinkles gently.

The garden is beautiful but also a social hub for M central's 400 residents, offering interaction, from Barbeques to dog waling.

"There is no question about the environmental benefits of green roofs but the social benefits are not yet fully explored. Up on the roof, everyone is equal", Bafsky says.

The burgeoning interest in green roofs is driven by their multiple environmental and social advantages. Greening a city's roofs is one of the best ways to combat the urban heat island effect (UHIE), a phenomenon that causes significantly higher temperatures in cities compared to rural areas. Reduced rainfall run off, which feeds to stormwater, and absorption of airborne particle pollution by vegetation are among other environmental benefits.

Energy efficiency is another target area, with green roofs reducing heating and cooling loads through their insulating properties. Internal noise levels are also lowered, of particular benefit near airports.

Green roofs differ from roof gardens in significant ways although there are fuzz boundaries. By definition, green roofs have soil and plants covering most of the roof over specialised waterproofing and drainage layers. In industry parlance, there are two types. "Extensive" green roofs have a thin soil layer, less than 200mm, with low growing plants requiring minimal maintenance. They can be installed on pitched roofs and are not designed for recreational use.

"Intensive" green roofs are flat, with garden bed depths of 200- 1500 to allow for substantial planting, including trees and shrubs. Consequently they require greater structural load bearing maintenance and irrigation.

Germany has been the forerunner in developing green roofs, dating back to the late 60s, and now has the world's latest number of green roofs. They're common across Europe, with many cities mandating green roofs in development controls. The US, Canada and Japan are fast catching up.

When the Committee for Melbourne's Future Focus Group launched Growing Up - the blueprint to green roof Melbourne competition for retrofitting an existing city rooftop, it attracted about 70 entries. The winner was Bent Architecture for 131 Queen St., a 10 storey office block with a mix of small business tenants. Its design, featuring a landscaped hill planted with succulents, and a variety of gathering and seating zones, was built at a cost of about \$250,000, with funding from the project and support from suppliers. The chosen plants survive on natural rainfall, except for a small edible garden irrigated from a rainfall tank. Merran Porjasoski, principal of Bent Architecture says " its become an urban backyard for the building". Companies such as Fytogreen are at the forefront of the Australian industry. With involvement in more than 112,000 sq. m of rood gardens over the past 10 years, Fytogreen is the contractor for the Victorian desalination project which, at 26,000sq m, will be the largest roof garden in the southern hemisphere.

Other projects include the Museum of Old and new art in Hobart and the Envirodome roof garden at Adelaide Zoo. Its 10th floor roof garden at Freshwater Place in

Melbourne covers 2,000 sq m and includes lush lawns, bbq area and views to the Yarra river.

The Small House, in Sydney's Surry Hills, was built on a foot print of just 46sq m. The home of architect Dominic Alvaro, it was picked as the best house at the 2011 World Architecture Festival awards in Barcelona." The roof terrace is the fifth room in the house," Alvaro says "It was our only opportunity for green space and benefits the street and neighbouring apartments, which now look down on to a garden instead of ugly air conditioning equipment."

A large fig tree creates a canopy, while layers of pots support screening and edible plants. As principle of architects Woods Bagot, Alvaro is keen to apply his experience of "extending the green" to commercial residential projects.

PLANTS

Seasonal change

In a recent program on Lake Eyre, the presenter commented on the vast seasonal changes that occur there – not seasonal as in the four seasons of the year but seasonal as in droughts and floods over irregular periods. Droughts can last for very many years and then, finally, water from rainfall hundreds of kilometres away takes weeks (or maybe months) to arrive. When it does, plants once again flourish and the area affected turns green again – for a while. Plants reproduce, then gradually over time all the ephemeral plants appear to die out again. That's just how it is.

Of course the seasonal changes in our garden are nothing by comparison but I started thinking about my general expectation that our garden will always be more or less the same, probably just a little dryer in summer, a little wetter in winter. As a gardener, I'm always a bit concerned when plants don't look their best. I acknowledge but don't really accept that natural cycles occur, with fluctuations in rainfall and amounts of sunshine, and that plants will respond as best suits them, not me. If in some years or in some seasons they don't look their best, should I worry? I suppose it depends on the level of perfection we require in our gardens and their appearance at all times.

I remember once pulling out rather carelessly a precious but dead-looking (established) pimelea from W.A. and, as I did so, too late I saw the tiny new green shoots appearing at its base. (I re-planted it but I'd upset it and so had no further luck.) Brachycomes also can look almost dead before green appears at the base of

the clump. Of course, summer is the dormant season here as winter is in Europe and many plants are *meant* to look less happy then!

On the other hand, in spring growth can be so vigorous that I then worry about the maintenance involved in keeping pruned those plants that really do need pruning. This includes vigorous creepers, especially any pandoreas (we have two left – a *P. jasminoides* on a side fence and *P. pandorana* ‘Ruby Belle’ on the front fence where conditions are tough) and Gum Vines (*Aphanopetalum resinosum*). Even some billardieras (eg *B. erubescens*) can outgrow their allotted space. However during the rest of the year growth is slower, less demanding and easier to handle.

Our garden varies continuously, during each year and between years. I have often intended (but never actually managed) to keep a record of the actual flowering times of all the plants in our garden over a number of years. It would be fascinating to see the differences in starting and finishing times and abundance of flowers. Has anyone else achieved that for their garden? Then there’s the arrival of particular birds or lizards; the time when bark peels off certain trees, or when new foliage starts to grow. In autumn the garden is full of little fungi of different colours, shapes and sizes – a delight to see but I wouldn’t necessarily want them all year round.

Do you know that guilty feeling when a shrub dies and you immediately start thinking of the other plant or plants to replace it? There can be another reason for its death but perhaps sometimes it’s simply old age. Should we accept, even revel in, the variations that reflect the natural cycles of life taking place in our gardens, even when it means some plants are not looking their best. Without this quieter period, would we feel as much joy when the rains come and bring a flush of new life in the garden?

Diana Snape Vic.

The Botanic Gardens of Queensland

Queensland State Herbarium has identified and classified thirteen bioregions throughout the state - Cape York; Wet Tropics; Einasleigh Uplands; Gulf Plains; Northwest Highlands; Central Queensland Coast; Brigalow Belt; Desert Uplands; Mitchell Grass Downs; Southeast Queensland; New England Tableland; Mulga Lands and the Channel Country. Currently there are more than 25 botanic gardens in various stages of development, with at least one located in each of these bioregions.

This development process has not been specifically planned but there have been five distinct periods in the establishment of the network of botanic gardens. In the first thirty years following the proclamation of the state, botanic gardens were established in Brisbane (1855), Rockhampton (1869), Townsville Queens Gardens (1870), Toowoomba Queens Gardens (1875), Cooktown (1878) and Cairns (1886).

There was a long pause of almost fifty years until 1932 when Townsville Anderson Park and Toowoomba Laurel Bank were added as second gardens, and Myall Park was established in 1941.

Thirty years later Brisbane commenced a new botanic garden at Mt Coot-tha in 1970, with Bowen and Hervey Bay following in 1974. In the same year Fairhill Nursery on the Sunshine Coast developed its botanic gardens as a significant research facility for native plants.

The pace of development then quickened, primarily as a result of a Royal Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation conference in Coffs Harbour which investigated the collections of native plants in the existing Australian botanic gardens and arboreta. The resulting comprehensive report (1984) recommended the development of a series of botanic gardens be developed in the regions of Australia to supplement and extend the research and knowledge of Australia's unique flora. The collections in the various gardens basically concentrated on the economic and aesthetic value of exotic plant material.

During the eighties, the Bicentenary of Australia stimulated perhaps the most dynamic period of development with new botanic gardens being established throughout Queensland: Gladstone Tondoon (1979), Innisfail (1980), Bundaberg (1981), Tamborine Mountain (1983), Redcliffe (1984), Emerald (1987), Noosa (1987), and in 1988 Townsville Palmetum, Rockhampton Kershaw, Ipswich Kholo and Goondiwindi.

The stimulation of the bicentenary together with the growing interest in native plants saw the development of the network of botanic gardens continue to expand throughout the nineties into the twenty first century: Mt Isa (1990), Gold Coast (1991), Longreach (1991), Barcaldine (1992), Mackay (1994), Maroochy (1994), Tweed (1994), Redlands Indigiscapes (1997), Nationla Tropical Botanic Gardens (2003), Ingham Tyto Wetlands (2007) and Whitsunday (2009).

Most of these botanic gardens continue to develop as a vital component of the regional community; unfortunately some have faltered and are waiting for a new stimulus. BGANZQ believes that the potential commemoration in 2020 of 250 years since Captain Cook and Joseph Banks sailed up the east coast in 1770 that will set off a new wave of development for the Botanic Gardens of Australia.

Almost without exception, every new regional botanic garden in Queensland established during the past forty years is the result of the involvement of local members of the Society for Growing Australian plants through actively promoting, contributing to planning, assisting with development and participating in management. It is fair to say that without the considerable knowledge, experience and expertise of SGAP members through the collection and trial of bioregional species in their own gardens these numerous botanic gardens would not have been established.

Certainly without their involvement the immense scientific value of the collections, the related research and development and the provision of information would not have been so freely available. The Botanic Gardens of Queensland and the general community owe a debt of great gratitude to these dedicated members who have put into practice the SGAP motto "Cultivation, Conservation, Education".

Lawrie Smith AM
Landscape Architect
Hon Secretary BGANZQ

During his career spanning the last forty years, Lawrie has been responsible for the planning and design of many of the regional botanic gardens in Queensland as well as other major projects such as World Expo 88 and Roma Street Parkland. He was instrumental in forming the Network of Regional Botanic Gardens of Queensland now known as BGANZQ.

Plant variability (and unreliability)

Di Snape Vic.

I read Ros Walcott's comments in the last newsletter, in Correspondence, with great empathy – the uncertainty involved in designing with Australian plants has long been a concern for me. I'm sure it has prevented wider use of our plants by professional landscape and garden designers, who can't take the chances that we're prepared to take. Their clients expect perfection! There are many reliable Aussie plants and these are quite widely used but there are a great many more that we cannot really depend on, in terms of size, growth habit, or simply survival. Being a Pollyanna, this does help to make each of our gardens unique as we find out and then keep growing those plants that do well in our particular conditions. We still may have to adapt our design as some plants behave differently to our expectations but our garden may

even be more interesting because of it. At least with naturalistic or informal gardens, repeated plants don't have to exactly match each other. Gardens evolve anyway – but still, sometimes we DO need predictability, for a special feature plant or to get one that is just right for a particular spot.

Ros's comparisons with garden designing in America and the reliability of plants there made me think. She listed a number of key factors, generally to do with the comparatively recent introduction of our plants into cultivation. Some are very recent indeed – months or even weeks – and it takes years to really test plants in gardens. WE are being the testers. Nobody else is going to do it for us. Whether we (and other non-APS gardeners) keep on buying those plants determines their future life in nurseries. There's another problem here. I know I will often buy a new plant in a nursery and then try to propagate it myself to introduce more into our garden. This is good for me but it does not send any positive message about that plant to the nursery! I'm sure the same is true for many (most?) APS members.

These factors are probably quite sufficient but, in addition, there are a couple more that may help explain the difference between gardening here and in America. The first is that, in general, America has deep, fertile soil – often metres deep - due to the action of glaciers in the last Ice Age 10,000 years ago. By contrast, in Australia we missed out on these geological events and, as a result, have largely impoverished, hungry soils. Their depth is often measured in centimetres and they are short of essential nutrients. This means that plants have evolved ways of surviving all over our extensive continent, often in virtual niches, for example involving mycorrhizal fungi. So it makes it much more difficult to match the conditions in the nursery (and then in our garden) with the conditions to which plants have adapted in nature. If a plant has always grown (or been grown) in ample good soil and this is provided in the garden, there is no problem.

So it is a challenge but it's some small comfort to know, when that new plant does poorly or dies in our garden, it is definitely NOT our fault (is it?).

WEBSITE NEWS

This may be off interest to you all – relaunch of the **Garden Drum** and this is the words that came with it: Look at: <http://www.gardendrum.com/>. Then register – easy and not many mandatory fields. You need to do this to look at the articles in detail. On the home page click on the article 'Designing small spaces' --- on the rhs about half way down. This is a long and detailed article with great pictures – well worth a read, well I think so anyway.

Jeff Howes NSW

MEETINGS & GARDEN VISITS

MELBOURNE

Report of Melbourne Branch Meeting, Saturday August 18 at Christine and Angelo Gaiardo's

The attendance at this meeting was good, especially considering a number of members were away, for family reasons or through winter illnesses or travels. It was our first Saturday meeting for a long time but we have decided to hold more meetings on Saturdays next year, as some members cannot come on Sundays.

Garden visit

On a cold, rather wet day, we were lucky after lunch to have a fine spell to walk around Christine and Angelo's garden, which is situated on a steep corner block. Merele Webb was involved in the initial design of the garden some 28 years ago and so she was particularly interested to see how it had developed over the years. Many members commented on aspects of this mature garden that appealed to them and their comments are included in the paragraphs below.

With no fence and a profusion of plants in the beds sloping steeply down to both streets, we thought the garden makes a great contribution to the streetscape. Very large rocks were well placed initially to help stabilize the slope. There are plants of all ages, leading to attractive layering effects. Many older trees and shrubs have been kept well trimmed, some quite severely, to maintain a neat appearance as well as produce younger growth.

At the back, taller plants successfully screen a high brick wall, giving a high level of privacy to the house. A massive Staghorn Fern is a striking feature growing on one tree near the back door. There are many lovely views of sections of the garden from inside the house. The garden is informal, with curved paths providing pleasant vistas. Although Australian plants dominate, these are blended with a few favourite exotic plants. The garden has a slightly European feel and contains some formal notes, like the paving and the edging of garden beds, intended to deter blackbirds. Christine regards these as a bigger problem than the shade that has developed in the garden over the years.

Despite some areas being shaded, there are many different, lovely grevilleas flowering, especially most of the hybrids belonging to the Robyn Gordon, Superb, Moonlight, Peaches and Cream, Coconut Ice 'family'. These light up the garden and

also attract birds – we admired two species of honey-eaters from inside the house. (We also admired and benefitted from a flourishing lemon tree in the side garden.) It is a delightful garden to visit.

Fred Rogers Seminar in November

Following my presentation to the Committee, the APS Vic garden design banner is going to include the GDSG logo, situated within the central bottom picture. The banner maker is looking at the overall design now and Cathy Powers (APS Vic President) expects to have the first draft of the final banner very soon.

I had prepared a set of 60 garden design slides for showing at the beginning of sessions at the Seminar. These will be shown for 5 seconds each. I brought along a memory stick plus Brian's laptop, hoping we could use a larger computer there, so members could approve (or disapprove) the pictures I'd chosen. However Angelo did even better, as he was able to set up a system so that the set of slides could be shown on his TV screen and everyone was able to see them very clearly. It was suggested that one slide (of front entrances) should be changed but otherwise the members present approved the set.

At a previous meeting, it was decided that GDSG bookmarks with the logo, website, the motto "designing beautiful gardens with Australian plants" and an elongated picture (either landscape or vertical) would be better than a leaflet to hand out at the Seminar. Therese Scales' son Tim had generously worked on the design of bookmarks before he left to go overseas. However a little work still remained to be done and Liz Triggs offered to do this for us.

Many suggestions were made about how these bookmarks could be used, apart from at the seminar, where one will be given to each participant with the other material handed out. For example, they could be available at APS meetings, at Australian plant nurseries and at community festivals or functions involving Australian plants. We discussed the number we should have made – probably a minimum of 1,000 – and whether these should use just one picture or three different pictures (for three different bookmarks). Bev Fox offered to talk to the printer (used for a long time by APS Vic) about cost. I'll ask Jo about funding by the GDSG and whether NSW and other States would find these bookmarks useful too, in similar ways.

We decided not to proceed with a leaflet or pamphlet about the Study Group for the Seminar, or for other occasions. The website provides far much information than any leaflet can give and attractive bookmarks that give the website are probably much more useful and user-friendly. Almost everyone uses the internet now and those who

don't access it themselves usually have a friend or young relative who will help them, or do it for them.

Wilma Garnham brought an article about an interesting Australian plant garden in an unexpected place in *The Age* – in the Auction Results! There have been a couple here in recent weeks, of greater interest than the Garden Page!

As we were running out of time, we deferred any discussion of proposed books or booklets until next meeting.

Future meetings & visits:

Sat & Sun September 1 & 2 - Brenda & Tony Moore's (and Helen & Max Kennedy's)

AOGS Open garden weekend

Sunday September 23 - Chris Larkin's garden (joining Maroondah group visit)

Sunday October 21 – Jo Cameron's garden (joining Maroondah group visit)

Sunday October 28 - Malcolm & Monika Freake's

Sat & Sun November 10 & 11 - Fred Rogers Seminar on Garden Design

Meetings for next year

Nicky Rose had attended the Maranoa Festival and, before the meeting, had suggested to me that the GDSG should write to Maranoa praising their efforts in maintaining this beautiful public garden of Australian plants. Not everyone is familiar with Maranoa so we thought that it would be a good venue for a meeting next year and then we could all follow Nicky's suggestion.

Another venue suggested was Knox Park Primary School, where Fred Rogers was once the Principal and other noted APS members have more recently been involved. Chris Larkin reported that much work has now been done to re-establish and extend and improve the original garden and it is well worth a visit, possibly in combination with one local APS member's garden.

We thanked Christine and Angelo for their warm hospitality and for showing us their garden (and Christine's beautiful handiwork, for example her cushions featuring Australian plants).

Diana Snape Vic.

SYDNEY

Thanks to members Caroline and John Gunter our group was able to visit 3 gardens on the northern beach peninsula suburb of North Balgowlah. It was a beautiful sunny day, our due reward for a largely cold and wet winter; over coffee and cake we made the most of the sun trapped in the Gunter's lavishly planted, sub tropical beachside backyard.

Our walk covered the undulating coastal Sydney sandstone hillsides, the area was very ably described by Caroline in NL 78.

Garden 1: is owned and gardened by a keen bush regenerator. Interestingly with the 3 properties we saw we were able to view the front garden only. Here, the owner explained that the backyard is, of necessity, grass and a clothesline to suit the needs of the inhabitants, sporty, party holding teens and a dog.

This small, 8 yr old west facing front garden was of particular interest because it was completely formal and used a 95% Australian plant palette with many species indigenous to the area. The palette was restricted in forms and species- a good idea as it was not a large space and the plants had to perform, the owner was time poor and not a plant collector.

The bed closest to the street boundary, was raised, affording more privacy for the owners and better growing conditions for the plants. It is made from "good sandy soil" and a handful of gravel was used at the bottom of each planting hole. Grevillea 'Forest Rambler' is doing very well here.

Red flowering kangaroo paws planted behind this bed and beside the path leading to the front door are simply magnificent, some of the best and happiest I have seen, the owner cuts them back to ground level after flowering or if there is a hint of blackspot.

Two formal hedges of consisted of *Westringia frucosa* and *Leptospermum* "Pageant" the latter was different and therefore eye catching and the owner made the point that it must be kept very short on order to retain its foliage and shape. must keep short

An informal boundary hedge of *Callistemon* interplanted with the Australian native fox tail grass worked well. A large *Gynerospora* lilly surrounded by dwarf grey dianella was a successful combination, echoed nearby by a large *Crinum* under a Blackbean tree, the predominant plant in the front garden. Near the entrance, an outside pot surrounded by tightly planted *Lomandara tanika* repeated the strappy leaves and forms of the other plants.

Garden 2: an east facing, newly planted designer front garden using strong formal elements and Australian native plants; this smallish garden is very heavily planted

and much maintenance will be needed to maintain all the species in good shape, literally!

A row of *Grevillea* 'Sylvia' planted behind behind the front brick fence will form an informal hedge; behind these, the feature tree, *Tristania laurina*, is in the centre of the front lawn area, a cream/yellow compacted aggregate keyhole shaped path leading up to and surrounding it.

Behind the feature tree is an informal bed planted with Gynea lilies, *B. serrata*, flowering gums and kangaroo paws. *L. taniki*, as elsewhere provides the first line of planting along the front.

The southern boundary side fence is lined with a lilly pilly hedge, *Syzigum paniculata*, in this wide bed flanking the front path in front of these are a line of *Banksia serrata* and in front of these are planted Gynea lilies interspersed with *Westringia* 'Zena' with *Lomandra taniki* lining the front path edge on both sides.

Garden 3: is the largest garden of the 3 we saw, again it was just the front and sides and is east facing. It was of interest also because there was not only been an extensive make over of the garden but of the original 40s-50s brick bungalow as well. The front garden was previously with a perfectly flat front lawn (for the lady of the house and keen bowler to practice her lawn bowls) with some camellias planted along the side fence.

Digging up the front lawn revealed sets of sandstone steps leading to terraces and old sandstone flagging. Sensibly the owners made use of the original varying levels planted out the terraces and created a pond from the retention tank water. They have filled the area with mainly indigenous plants (cycads and ferns as well as others below) and created beautiful spaces, cool and lush - far more interesting and with a true genius loci - far more perfect than a flat buffalo lawn!

Plants used included: *Goodenia pultenea*, *Euc maaculata*, *B. integrifolia*, *Grev rosemarinafolia*, *Correa alba* *Grev laningra*, grass trees and flowering gums. On that note, Jeff Howes made the point that 'Summer Beauty tends to die at 5-8 years old in order to prevent this happening the rootstock has been changed to *E. maculata*.

Interestingly and excitingly In the case of each of the 3 gardens we visited, all had inspired the neighbours to give natives a go, with good success!

Afterwards, at Manly Dam reserve, the sun still shining, surrounded by the indigenous species beginning their late winter flowering and wafts of bush bbq cooking smells, we hoed into lunch and a cuppa with gusto!

******* the Sydney branch Xmas party, to be held at Jeff Howes house, on 2 Dec. has unfortunately had to be cancelled.**

CANBERRA

Visit to Marcia Else's garden, ACT

Marcia Else lives on a street where the back gardens open to the street and the front gardens open to shared parkland. She has a tiny, pocket handkerchief garden (720 sq m) where plantings of Australian natives are blended with the original exotics from the 1960s. She first moved to her garden in Curtin in 1967, but did not really start to plant natives until the early 1970s. Since then she has largely replaced exotics with natives, with most of the work being done since she retired in 2001. The garden comprises borders of groundcovers and plantings of small to medium shrubs, bearing in mind the small size of the block, and a few medium to large shrubs, callistemons and banksias, also two *Eucalyptus nicholii*. Altogether there are over 50 species of natives in the garden. The garden is remarkable for its range of native species and its success in attracting native birds and mammals.

Thirteen hardy souls turned up on a foggy morning to inspect Marcia's garden. The temperature at first hovered between 6-8 degrees and then the sun came out and it was glorious. Marcia's backyard is centred around a gravel (once lawn) circle filled with pots of interesting native plants. These pots get full sun and could be added to as more treasures are found. Marcia has a magnificent 25 year old grass tree and several other smaller grass trees established in her backyard. Her land slopes, which helps drainage and she fertilises all her plants twice a year with Healthy Earth fertiliser. Her croweas are particularly fine. There are many sculptures of owls, frogs, turtles and a lizard happily integrated with the garden. Satin blowerbirds come to drink at her birdbath and a possum family was in residence until a recent tree fall.

Sunday August 19, 2pm
The Lost Garden, Rob and Norma Vernon

Seven members gathered on a sunny, windy Sunday to consider the possibilities of this garden and make suggestions about suitable plants and design. The 2,000 m² block in an urban environment, slopes down in a northerly direction, offering perfect exposure to the sun and good drainage. The poor, sandy soil sits on a strata of sandstone. Although the property is situated towards the top of a hill, Colorbond fencing, several mature trees, including a magnificent *Grevillea robusta*, and extensive shrubbery offer some protection from winds. There is an unfenced swimming pool in the back garden.

When Rob and Norma bought the property two years ago, the garden was in a sad state of neglect and abuse. Rampant cotoneaster stands covered hundreds of broken beer bottles, old motor parts, building debris and remnants of bonfires. They have done a sterling job in cleaning out and opening up the site. It is now possible to see the original design of the garden, where edging stones, crumbling steps and rotted retaining walls are present.

Their aim is to restore the garden to its former glory, following the original design.

Ultimately, they hope to turn it, as far as is possible, into a low maintenance, largely native garden. Unfortunately, they are unfamiliar with Australian plants as most of their experience in gardening was gained in Canada. This is the first garden they have owned in Australia, so they are looking for all the help and education they can get.

Ros Walcott ACT

TREASURER'S & MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Current bank balance: \$ 10,474.50

Term Deposit: \$21,980.97

Thank you all who have renewed your memberships. To those who have not renewed yet, I will send out a reminder with the next Newsletter and that will be your last reminder.

It came to my attention a while ago that some Societies were purchasing an email membership and then were passing along the email newsletter to any of their members who were interested.

In fact, one group posted the current Newsletter on their website making it available to all. While we certainly want to spread the word about the Garden Design Study Group and the use of native plants, such actions could ultimately remove any incentive to pay the dues and thus remove the financial support that the Study Group needs to produce the Newsletter and to subsidize its other work such as the production of a new book on using native plants in small gardens.

Thus we decided that all Societies must pay for and will receive the printed version of the Newsletter unless they agree in writing not to distribute the email version.

Ben Walcott ACT

