



GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP

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Dear Members,

A long editorial in this, my last newsletter. There is lots to say before I hand over to Ros Walcott, who will become the third editor of the GDSG newsletter from the beginning of 2013.

Ros brings her energy, experience, knowledge and commitment to the newsletter, as to everything she does within the world of native plants.

Her fresh perspective is greatly anticipated and we welcome her warmly to the role.

Our GDSG newsletter is in very safe hands!

Please think about sending lots of articles to our new editor for the February 2013 edition.

Please send all future contributions for the Newsletter to:

Ros Walcott
10 Wickham Cres, Red Hill ACT 2603
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Now to business: first up a mistake in the August newsletter .

The 4th article of the Correspondence section was incorrectly attributed to Margaret Lee of SA ; it should have read Margaret James, Vic. Both Margarets are members and both work hard and long for native plants - that was my excuse!

Margaret James has been doing an enormous amount of work both in defining the processes involved in recording and classifying a garden and then, the hardest part, actually doing it!

If you have been following progress in the newsletter you will know she has recorded the first of the significant gardens for the GDSG, that of Bev Hanson's in Victoria.

Would that every state had someone as energetic and committed as Margaret, we would have at least a dozen gardens recorded in no time. Thank you Margaret on behalf of us all in the GDSG, for your generosity. One hopes you will continue to record other noteworthy Australian plant designed gardens in Victoria and influence others to follow suit. We now need a NSW and Qld. Margaret James equivalent!

I have listed FYI, in the following Correspondence section, noteworthy examples of members recording their own gardens. These can be used as templates to help you get started in recording your own garden and of course sharing the result with members via the GDSG newsletter

A flow on effect is that we will be alerted to a number of gardens out there possibly in need of closer inspection and formal recording. Much will sort itself out as we proceed, and again I thank the Melbourne branch for its good work in getting the project up and running.

I was lucky enough to be able to attend the 9th Fred Rogers Seminar, held in Melbourne and organised by APS Victoria; this year the topic was Garden Design.

It was an excellent seminar - a jam packed program of expert lecturers, a hands on garden designing exercise and a day tour of the Cranbourne Botanic Gardens; it succeeded in spades by dint of much hard work by APS Vic., including many of our study group members. A full report will appear in the next newsletter in February.

It was an added joy to meet members who have supported the newsletter over the years - Jan Hall, Margaret James, Barbara Buchanan, Pam Yarra, Bryan Loft, Koji Miyazaki, Merele Webb and Bev Fox.

As well, to renew acquaintances with Nicky Zanen, Bev Hanson, Chris Larkin, Ros and Ben Walcott, Fiona Johnson and of course Brian and Diana Snape.

You will notice a questionnaire in this newsletter from member Koji Miyazaki.

Koji is passionate about Australian plants and would like to share that passion with his countrymen. To this end he is propagating plants and planting Australian native plant gardens in Japan; as well, he intends to write a book on Grevilleas for the Japanese market, your answers to his questions will be of help in him achieving his goal.

The GDSG newsletter dissemination to groups and branches remains a challenge, I direct you to treasurer Ben Walcott's letter in Correspondence for an update.

Very best wishes to you all for the Festive Season, stay safe, happy and healthy; & remember record those gardens (photographs and text)!



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CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Jo

You must be right about the local Councils in Victoria producing booklets on indigenous plants. I found 2 on my shelves, for Nillumbik (*Live Local, Plant Local* 48pp) and Banyule (*Indigenous Plants for your Garden* 64pp). Banyule also produces a poster with coloured photos of many of indigenous plants in bloom.

Rosanna, where I live is in Banyule and Nillumbik is adjacent and I've found both booklets give much useful information, including size and growing conditions. Banyule also gives a list of environmental weeds and suggested replacements (e.g. *dianella longifolia* for *watsonia*).

I buy indigenous plants in tubes from Keelbundora Nursery at La Trobe University and have found them fun to grow, but not necessarily reliable or long-lived. My great joy at the moment is the shiny yellow blooms on several *Ranunculus lappaceus* (Australian buttercup) in my back garden. They have self seeded, along with the *Pelargonium australe* (Austral storksbill) and *Geranium solanderi* (Austral cranesbill). These three work well as small accent plants.

Margaret James Vic.

Dear Jo,

The extract from Anne Warham's book "The Bad Tempered Gardener" really touched my heart. We have just put our house on the market after 30 years as well.

I think our garden would qualify for the Significant Gardens Registrar, what do you think?

The garden has settled in and is looking wonderful at present.

We wish you all the best in your move and hope you have found the right custodian for your much loved garden.

Deidre and Ivor Morton NSW

Thank you Deidre, I wish the same for you and Ivor. I am sure your garden would be considered a significant Australian plant garden in NSW and is of course well worth recording. You are fortunate in that it appeared in the GDSG book The Australian Garden in 2002, an excellent record, but a more detailed study would be ideal. Can you and Ivor record it and take photos before you move? NSW is a tad (!) behind Victoria's progress in this area.

To get started on recording your garden for the NL, excellent templates to follow, written by members and published in our recent newsletters, include the following:

- ❖ Cloudy Hill garden- four years on, Fiona Johnson, NL 80.
- ❖ Recording Significant Gardens Project, Margaret James, NL 78 .
- ❖ Janet and Andy Russell's garden, NL78
- ❖ Checklist for AOGS selection, NL 74
- ❖ A Format for Recoding Gardens, Ros Walcott, NL 73
- ❖ Headings and Questions for Recording Gardens, Jeff Howes NL 73
- ❖ Our garden at Whiteside, Lawrie Smith NL 72
- ❖ Guidelines for Selecting Gardens & Format for Recording Gardens, Chris Larkin and Melb. Branch GDSG, NL 72.
- ❖ The Garden of Joy, Joy Cook, NL 68.
- ❖ Where Eagles Drift, Jennie & Ted Finnie, NL 63.
- ❖ Our Eco House and Garden, Marie and Gordon Rowland NL62.

Jo Hambrett NSW

Re electronic Newsletters sent to APS groups.

This matter was raised in our last newsletter and I have included some further thoughts of our Treasurer, Ben Walcott, for members to continue to think about and hopefully get back to us with their ideas and/or possible solutions.

As we all know we can switch over to the internet entirely but that will not be, as Ben has pointed out, without cost and not purely of the financial kind either.

To be revisited no doubt!

JH

I too think we are at a decision point. If we make the Newsletter freely available to all on the website, we would certainly get the information out there which is a major plus. One could also have pictures included in the Newsletter which would be very appealing.

One of our major functions should be to show how one can use Australian plants in all sorts of garden situations.

On the one hand, it takes resources even to do on line things and if you want to generate some funds to do projects like publishing (or to support the publication) of a book that takes much more. *(It is also nice for the GDSG to have some income put away to pay for important things such as the ongoing Indexing \$60 / NL or \$240/pa, and other, intermittent sundry expenses. JH)*

Also another point is that a number of people either don't have or don't like to use computers/email. I find that about 1/2 of our ANPS membership gets their monthly bulletin by email with the rest requesting hard copy I do believe that at this time, about 1/3 of the Garden Design membership would lose out if we went solely to a web site system.

In the future, things will go more the way of "Blogs" but I certainly am not competent or interested in that route, I will leave that to the next generation.

I think it might be very helpful to get input from the other active Study Groups. I did correspond with Peter Olde but he was in Africa at the time and was going to get back to me.

Jan Sked renewed for QLD paying \$30.00 and requested that we send her an electronic version with her guarantee that she would only make one additional hard copy for their library. This makes me think that if we get other Societies to make a similar pledge, then they could have their Newsletter by email but no pledge, then only paper.

Ben Walcott ACT

DESIGN

Cloudy Hill garden – four and a half years on

The Garden Design Study Group visited a number of gardens in the Central Tablelands NSW in March 2008. My Cloudy Hill garden, which actually did not exist at the time, was one of the sites visited.

In 2008 GDSG members listened politely as two very excited and enthusiastic folk talked about their ambitions to establish a predominantly native garden around their house, which itself was only three-quarters complete. I thought GDSG members might like an update, and a few thoughts on what worked or did not work from a design perspective (from someone now slightly less excited but no less enthusiastic).

Initially, we had invaluable assistance from Shirley Pipitone, following a detailed brief from us, in the preparation of an overall plan for the garden along with suggested plantings. I had been quite overwhelmed by the how and where to start in turning sheep paddock into garden and without Shirley's plan, I might still be in a state of anxiety wondering what to do. Our intention was to have a bird-friendly, somewhat formal garden, which took account of the house, local landscape and views, was adapted to the local conditions, required some work (I *like* gardening) and ultimately was a pleasure for us to walk around with a glass of wine at the end of the day. We chose not to restrict ourselves to local species (yes, I have kangaroo paws growing next to snow gums).

As it was, we decided to adopt the elements of the plan immediately surrounding the house and leave some that were further afield, partly due to what I thought I could realistically maintain in the years going forward and partly because there are areas where we like the simplicity of cut grass. Plus it provides balance to the heavily planted areas. What we did not know is that the environmental conditions in the garden would be dramatically different after an extended wet period, and of course we started the whole project during the dry years.

I am not actually sure of the size of the house garden but I think probably about one to one and a half acres; not huge by country garden standards but big enough to provide me with plenty to think about and do.

The garden takes shape

We decided to develop the garden in stages, one stage a year for three years. We would prepare an area (spray with herbicide if necessary, rip, lay newspaper, mulch) during autumn/winter and plant in spring (our winters being too severe for much autumn planting), and by mid 2010 we were feeling pretty smug with the progress. Described simply, the house garden is a structured and quite intensively planted shrubbery with paths winding throughout. Trees are used strategically to help ground the two-storey house, or to eventually become shady areas whilst not jeopardising the main views. Groundcovers and smaller plants are used extensively. We are also gently planting alongside a bush track leading to a 'secret' dam. We think this very informal bush area will provide a nice foil to the 'formal' house garden.

But the rain kept falling and the water table filled, and we discovered that we actually live on a hill that is waterlogged for extended periods of time. Springs and layers within the ground meant water was moving through, or being held in, our garden's clay-based soil, creating no end of difficulties. So the learning curve continues and it has definitely been a case of two steps forward, one step backward, but as the overall progression is still forward, all is good.

Cultivation issues

A few comments about plant cultivation at Cloudy Hill (daytime temperatures about 3 degrees below Canberra/Bathurst):

- We have discovered cold hardiness and frost hardiness is not the same thing. We certainly have many frosts but not often below about -2 or -3 degrees and these do not appear to be too much of a problem, but we have several months where the days can be relentlessly cold and often windy, and I think plants just get exhausted. However, as the garden grows, losses directly due to wind damage are reducing.
- Most plant losses occur at the end of winter/early spring. This is when growth starts, but the roots probably rotted away in the cold wet soil during winter and it only becomes apparent when the spring growth is initiated.
- We have a definite growing season and plants do not have the same growth rates I see (with envy) in gardens on the eastern seaboard, so progress can seem slow.
- There are several areas within the garden which have what appears to be a solid, sulphuric sub-soil and shrubs will not grow successfully in them. Grasses and weeds will. (Unfortunately, when the house was built I did not realise that the cut into the hill would result in much of the garden being at sub-soil level. Some aspects of learning by experience can be long-felt.)
- We cannot grow the striking large-flowered plants available elsewhere so have to focus on subtlety and foliage for effect, rather than flowers.

As this article is theoretically on design aspects, I will not focus more on the cultivation challenges of native plants in a cold climate with sub-optimal soil conditions (although that might be worthy of an article in itself).

A thought to share: our Cloudy Hill property was not named for the friendly white fluffy cumulus clouds of summer, but for the grey dank clouds streaming past at eye level at 2 o'clock on a winter's day.

Design lessons

Where to start? Maybe with some elements which we think work, and then go to some which have been more problematic and some possible solutions. These will not be new to anyone, but it's hopefully useful to revisit them anyway. What would really be useful is for someone with an informed, objective eye to comment of the final design as we find we are too emotionally involved to be objective.

Successful design elements

- Sweeps of a single plant species work well, rather than a multitude of different varieties.
- Judicious use of rocks, logs and sculptures help ground or break up the mass of vegetation, and provide habitat for fauna (which will then eat something you don't want it to, like jacky lizards harvesting the billy button flowers!).
- Low growing plants allow important views to be maintained (but are more in the frost zone).

- Bird baths, some food sources (like kangaroo paw) and sculptures are visible from house windows which is important for indoor days (plentiful in winter). The house is basically only one room wide which means outdoor views in various directions from nearly everywhere inside.
- The overall colour of the garden (ie, grey green, olive, plum and silver rather than rich green) echoes the landscape and the house so it looks like it 'belongs'. It also gives nice tapestry effects from house windows.
- Repetition of Alex's stonework on the house and throughout the garden creates a feeling of continuity or unity.
- Comfortable seating at different points around the garden encourages pause and contemplation, and focus on particular views.
- The curves in the house structure are replicated in the curves in the outdoor paved area (pavilion), curves in the paths, curves in sweeps of plants, and the curve of the lawn area.
- Cut grass areas and the driveway surrounding the house and garden work as part of the fire mitigation strategy, as do crushed granite paths. Also, the grassed areas provide a feeling of openness and contrast to the intensively planted garden.
- The crushed granite paths mean good all-weather access without walking in mud. Paths are wide enough for two people to walk abreast and key paths are wide enough for a small tractor to access. The clear paths also mean no tripping over unseen snakes!

And less successful

- I have found it difficult to use many different foliage types for effect: many plants surviving in our conditions have small and quite similar foliage. My solution has been largely to focus on foliage colour rather than on foliage form, aiming for a tapestry effect.
- I like sweeps of grasses and they look good, but they encourage kangaroos into the garden with disastrous results. Plants are broken as the 'roos move through, and the juveniles appear to positively enjoy mutilating plants. Over the next year or two I will remove most of the grasses and may replace them with some of the smaller lomandras. I would still like something that moves with the breeze.
- Unexpected water seeping through the garden, coupled with our clay-based soil, has created major problems. We installed a number of subsoil drainage lines (ag pipe) which helped in some areas but not others. In one area we were able to overcome the problem by Alex building a stone retaining wall and bringing in soil to create a terrace (which compromises my principle of gardening to the conditions). This has created a nice feature in itself, but topography does not allow it to be repeated in other problem areas. We have tried to build up some areas, again with soil brought in, and replanted with more tolerant species.
- In another area with particularly problematic soil, my current solution is to plant on it rather than in it and, as well, not to plant at all. We have set out some planter pots cut from a hollow log, as well as some rocks in a more or less sculptural or artistic way, and hope this might answer the purpose. The jury is still out. But there is still one other small area I have not yet been able to work out a solution for and the current plants (westringias) look extremely unwell. *Any suggestions would be most welcome.*
- The multiple paths mean there is no obvious circuit route without doubling back. This is fine for us, but we have found visitors tend to miss areas of the garden. This is not

actually a problem as we garden primarily for ourselves and the birds rather than other people, but it was interesting to note.

- The paved area in the garden has table and chairs and is great for fine weather days, but an undercover area might be more versatile.
- Definite mistake: the house and garden are too close to the tree line and the boundary fence. This has created problems in terms of plant competition with the trees and also lack of space to discreetly place or screen compost/mulch bins, shade house and green house, as well as increased shade in winter. Solution: live with it. As best we can, we are trying to screen the compost bins, and the drier conditions caused by tree competition appears to suit correas so we have created another garden bed nearer the trees for species hopefully able to thrive with a little competition and shade. We cannot do anything about the long winter shadows created by the bush to the north east of the garden.

Latest project

During the 2012 winter we played around with landscaping a very small dam hidden in the bush not far from the house. Alex built a curved stone retaining wall around about a fifth of the dam's edge, an excavator cleaned out the mud and reeds from just in front of the wall, we laid railway sleepers onto the wall to create a deck area, boardwalk and bridge, and thinned out rampant eucalyptus regrowth. Fortuitously a tree had fallen into the dam last year and this added to the charm of the area, and to the birds' delight. The result is a simple, peaceful and secluded area where it is lovely to sit and watch the reflections of the trees, the clouds moving across the water or the birds in the trees, both upright and fallen. A little strategic planting will complete the area.

Finally

We have learnt a lot over the past four and a half years, and continue to learn as we go. I still hesitate to say with confidence whether or not any particular plant variety will grow here (and I still can't resist the opportunity to try new and different ones whenever I can).

Over time, we have deviated more and more from Shirley's original plan as circumstances and conditions have dictated, but we continue to be thankful for it. Whilst the plan has not had the solutions to all our challenges (Shirley couldn't even know what challenges would arise), it gave us direction and a feeling of achievability at a time when the task was too overwhelming and confusing for us, and enabled us to get going. For anyone without confidence or skill in design, I certainly recommend seeking assistance from someone who has them. It can reduce a lot of angst, and give you time to go through the process of learning for yourself whilst good progress is still being made.

As I sit in my favourite chair looking out the window at the garden, I sometimes wonder if there is any visible design, rhyme or reason to the garden or if it appears as a shemozzle (particularly as little has reached maturity yet), but then I see birds bouncing around where there were no birds before, and I'm happy. So I cease to wonder.

And finally, you might think I've dwelt overly on our difficult conditions, but don't be mistaken into thinking I'm complaining. We love it here, and we love this climate. A mild summer, a glorious spring and autumn, and a brisk winter. Wonderful. The challenges in developing our garden just add to the fun.

I hope one day members of the GDSG may find themselves back in the Central Tablelands – you will always be very welcome to visit.

Post script

I wrote the bulk of this article during winter before the first good snowfall followed by a strong wind. As I removed or pruned broken plants (including the small birds' single most valuable shrub, an Acacia pravissima, probably the largest shrub in the garden) and noted the others that had already succumbed to the season, I had some sympathy for the local view that it's too hard to grow natives here. At my lowest ebb, I do feel as though I'm virtually starting from scratch every spring. But of course natives do grow here and I will continue to garden with them, but I can see my plant palette becoming narrower and more prosaic as I finally give up trying some of the more interesting but challenging varieties. Interestingly, the locally indigenous smaller shrubs are amongst the most difficult to grow in the garden!

Fiona Johnson NSW

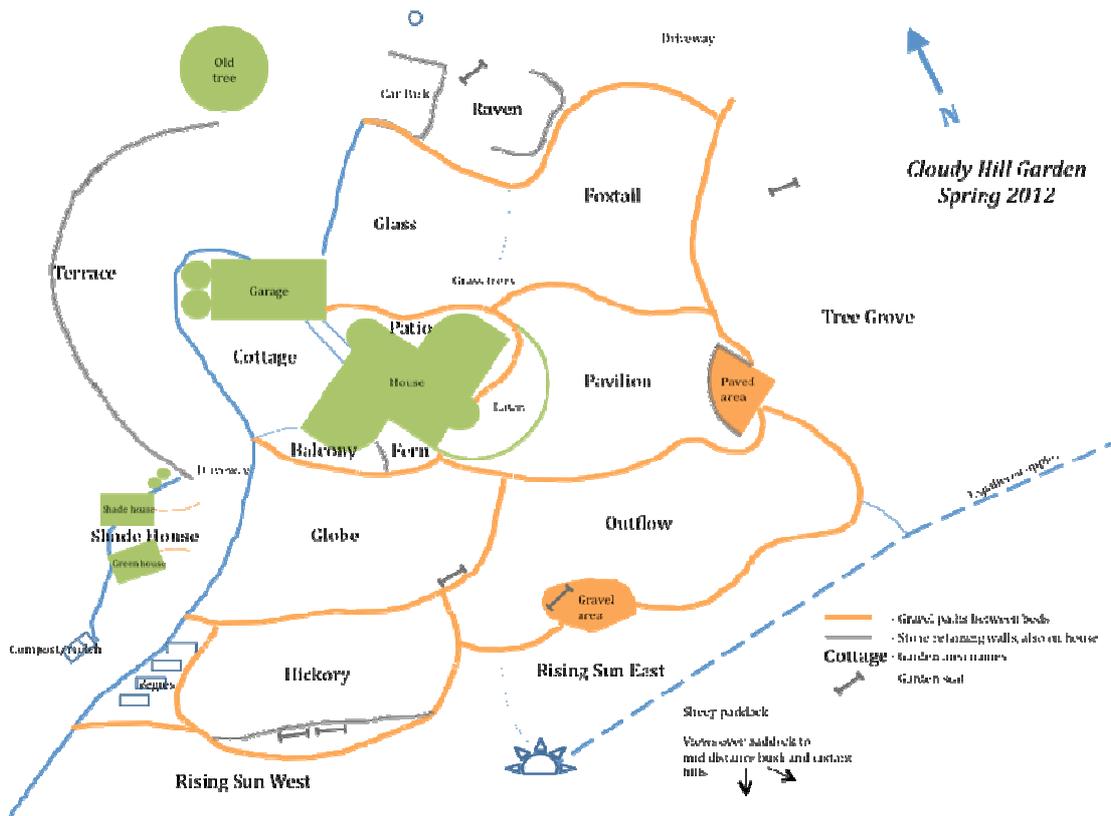
I am sure all of us can relate to that "lowest ebb" feeling at times when we survey our gardens, Fiona! There is just so much potential for disasters of all shapes and sizes. I hope you continue to pioneer the use of natives as garden species in your area and eventually disprove the locals. As you say, possibly more thought and ingenuity has to be applied your garden than others not as climatically and environmentally challenged; fortunately such discipline rarely detracts from a garden, a reduced palette is often a design bonus but such a necessity can be frustrating for gardeners who rightly revel in a bit of green fingered experimentation. After admiring the beautiful photos of Cloudy Hill methinks you and Alex are well up to the task!

JH

Please see attached photographs which are on a page at the end of this Newsletter. The images are also on the GDSG webpage at <http://anpsa.org.au/design/picasa.html>

...and click on the 'November 2012 Photos' link.

CLOUDY HILL GARDEN MAP



PLANTS

Planning and Designing Australian Gardens – A few ideas to get you started.

Mounds/raised beds to provide improved drainage needed for good plant growth, create more interest in a flat garden and to screen out by raising plant height.

Create ponds/hollows for wildlife, to control water runoff, for water and bog plants and to allow rainwater to soak into the soil.

Using the space: Add seats to enjoy your garden. Make a sandpit and/or a cubbyhouse for children. Think of the wildlife by adding/making rocks, nesting boxes, above ground runways, access holes in fences. Add/install a compost bin for recycling green waste, a rainwater tank or two and a watering system to save water. Ensure open areas are covered with mulch or porous paving that allows rain to soak in. Make a solid edge to lawns that adjoin bushland to prevent lawn grasses invading the bush.

Use mulch: as it reduces evaporation from soil, helps to maintain constant soil temperature, keeps weeds to a minimum, reduces runoff and erosion, allows roots to better use the upper and richest layer of soil. There are two types of mulches: inorganic mulch which

reduces humidity, increases light for plants requiring these conditions and organic mulch that naturally recycles leaves and twigs.

Keep what's there: Retain any rocks and creeks and remaining bush plants. Trees - especially those that are framing any distant views you have. Dead trees providing they are not dangerous, as they are any ideal habitat for wildlife.

Bushland protection: If you live near bushland, avoid overhanging trees near house and planting flammable trees and shrubs near your house. Avoid plants with high oil content as they burn easily. Clean up dead growth and shrubby plants near your house. Use hard surfaces or inorganic mulch near and around your house.

Choosing plants: Plants provide cool shade, protect plants and houses from heat and cold, make our suburbs beautiful, provide oxygen, reduce glare, makes windbreaks, filter dust and pollutants from air and screen undesirable views, to name a few.

Choose plants with a purpose: Reduce fertiliser use by choosing plants whose roots are adapted to poor soils. Good examples are species of Banksia, Grevillea, Acacia, Baeckea, Bossiaea, Brachysema, Chorizema, Hypocalymma, Jacksonia, Lechenaultia, Pultenaea to name a few. Or add fertiliser (nitrogen) to soil naturally by choosing Acacia, Cassia, Casuarina, Pea flowers and other Australian legumes.

Save Water: Plants will need frequent watering for a few months after planting until they are established so best to plant new plants, in late winter/early spring or in autumn. Give established plants a deep soaking occasionally or not at all when very dry (the plant will give you visual clues if it needs water). Water plants in the evening to avoid loss by evaporation. Try to group plants together according to their water needs. Use an efficient watering system/soaker hoses rather than a hand held hose.

Encourage nature's exterminators by protect snail-eating Blue Tongue Lizards by not using chemical snail bait and providing logs, rock piles and other cover for retreat. Encourage insect-eating birds, frogs, spiders, lizards, bats and marsupials. Avoiding use of insecticides as that will protect ladybirds, lacewings, hover-flies, bugs, praying mantis and wasps which prey on insect pests; protect butterflies, dragonflies and bees.

Jeff Howes NSW

MEETINGS AND GARDEN VISITS

CANBERRA MEETING

Visit to Ros Cornish and John Wilkes' Garden, Carwoola
September 18, 2012, 292 Widgiewa Road

On a mild spring day 14 people gathered to walk around Ros and John's garden. Ros' description of the garden and its development follows.

We have owned the property since 1983. It is part of a large subdivision of an old property called 'Widgiewa' on the Captains Flat Road just before Whiskers Creek. Our block is 16 hectares (40 acres), longer than wide, running down to Whiskers Creek. Many years ago it would have been grazed and some firewood would have been gathered however, it is reasonably preserved. This is probably because it is largely rock with no hope of turning it into improved pasture. We are on/near the Whiskers Fault at 820m above sea level with the Molonglo River Valley to the east. We don't have 'soil' as such - shale with some quartz outcrops would describe it. A pinch bar/crow bar is used to test the ground prior to planting anything. When it doesn't bounce, there is the possibility that a hole can be dug. So, 'planning' plantings is impossible.

A major bushfire went through in March 1985 burning all ground cover and trees to the top of the crowns. We started building the house in 1986 and moved in in April 1987. The house is a passive solar design, facing north and on a slight rise with what we call the main garden, at the front, sloping down to the north. We did some initial planting of large shrubs where we found "holes" - banksia, hakea, acacia, callistemon - but preserved as much of the indigenous plants as we could. Can you believe I don't have a formal list of our indigenous plants?! Although, I may have one by the time you get here. The block is open woodland with some grassland - *Kunzea ericoides* (the bane of my life) and *Joycea pallida* feature prominently and are constantly cut to keep our bushfire risk as low as possible. Near the house, the main indigenous trees are *Eucalyptus nortonii*, *E. rossii*, *E. macrorhyncha* and *E. mannifera*. They have grown incredibly since the drought broke and we are having to remove some to allow sun to get into the house and to lessen the bushfire risk.

We have roaming kangaroos which keep the smaller grasses under control and swamp wallabies who eat anything but grass. They proved to be a major problem when we were trying to establish a garden so after trying many things we fenced off a large area with 2m security mesh which is what we now refer to as the garden. However, we have also built over the years a large vegie garden, an orchard, berry garden and small vineyard - all fenced and all but the vegie garden, netted. We are nearly self-sufficient in fruit and veg. People are welcome to look at these if they wish - they are relatively close to the house. We put in 2 dams and use these for watering the produce but not the front garden. Once we left "the paid workforce" in 1996, we had a little more time for the block. I joined the Wednesday

Walkers (ANPS Canberra) and became an active member (and John would often come when he could). Under the tutelage of people such as Jo Walker and Merren Sloane, we were able to put names to many of our plants and got to see the amazing range of plants around the Canberra area. At about this time I was also in the Australian Daisy Study Group and was in the Grasses Group started up by Merren. Soon after, Jo convinced me to join the Rhamnaceae Study Group which she ran and we also joined Friends of Grasslands (FOG). These all influenced our garden.

Close to the house we focussed on grassland plants. Further out though, we try larger, local plants all with varying degrees of success. The long drought killed off a few things, then, abundant rain in the last 2 years also killed off some. The most recent focus on the garden has been to make it less of a bushfire threat. We have removed all the plantings that came right up to the front of the house and have paved there instead. Shrubs further out have had drastic pruning and some have been removed, with the added bonus of opening up the views. We have more work to do in this area before we feel comfortable. We grow most of our own plants from seeds and cuttings, using a small shadehouse. Most are planted inside 'the compound' but some are planted outside it but really only within what we'd call the 'house envelope'. If/when the bushfire comes, I only plan to grow local plants. Over the years of living here, we have noticed that they are the ones that do best and we feel it's the most responsible way to go. There's such a lot to choose from! We get enormous pleasure out of the habitat that we have produced - through no real plan. We have wonderful bird life, frogs love the pond we put in - and the snakes are attracted to the frogs (an unwanted result on my part!), blue tongues and other lizards abound, echidnas and wombats trundle by having burrowed under the fence. The wallabies are probably the only ones not happy!

I can't promise that the garden will be looking good when you come in September - November is our peak flowering month - our frosts here are pretty bad, not to mention the wind and I will only just have pruned back some of the daisies. However, you should get an overall appreciation of how we have tried to integrate any plantings with what is indigenous - I'm hoping that some orchids will be flowering for you (they were).

Ros and John have chosen pebble mulch instead of eucalyptus mulch because of fire hazard. They are trying to attract as many birds as possible by planting for shelter, food and nesting on their block and are hoping to keep New Holland Honeyeaters present all year round. They are also attempting to have plants in flower all year round.

Ros was not sure when she started to describe her garden that she had any real 'garden design' to share with us. By the end of her description she realised that she did indeed have a garden design quite firmly in her head and was following it wherever possible. Many of our ANPS Canberra members say that they do not have any garden design, but when pressed can always come up with good reasons for the plants that they choose and the place that they choose to plant them. I tell them that this is the essence of garden design.

We all thoroughly enjoyed both Ros and John's hospitality and their interesting and different indigenous garden.

Ros Walcott, Leader, GDSG Canberra

SYDNEY MEETINGS

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

Until new NSW leader steps forward I am hoping to arrange a visit to Cloudy Hill Garden in the future. Please check the February newsletter for details.

Meanwhile until we find someone willing to become NSW leader - all NSW members with ideas and suggestions re garden visits and meetings please contact me.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Accounts as of 23 November 2012:

Cheque account: \$ 10,629.19

Term Deposit: \$ 21,980.97

Questionnaire for Grevilleas

Please find 10 minutes to answer the following questions regarding Grevilleas (Answers may be duplicated.)

Q1: Where do you reside?

- QLD NSW ACT VIC
- SA WA NT

City/Suburb:

Q2: List the Grevilleas growing in your garden

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Q3: Write down your favourite Grevilleas

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Q4: Write down five Grevilleas you would recommend for a large garden

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Q5: Write down five Grevilleas you would recommend for a very small garden

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Q6: Write down five Grevilleas you would recommend for pot culture

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Q7: Write down five suitable Grevilleas for hedges

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Q8: Write down five suitable Grevilleas as groundcovers

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Q9: Write down five suitable Grevilleas for a shady position

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Q10: Write down five suitable Grevilleas for cutting flowers

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continued>>

Q11: Write down five hardy Grevilleas you have grown

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Q12: Write down your favourite Grevilleas for each flower colour

Red:

Orange:

Yellow:

White & Cream:

Pink:

Others:

Q13: Write down five suitable Grevilleas for the city of Yokohama, Japan

(It has very hot and humid summer, sometimes gets to more than 35° C, more than 40 days of rain season prior to the summer, and quite cold winter, could get to below 0° C and snow)

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Q14: What is your recommended recipe for the soil/potting mix for Grevilleas

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Q15: Write your growing tips for Grevilleas

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Thank you so much for your time and cooperation. I would like to review your answers effectively for writing my Grevillea book.

Please send the answer sheets by fax or an email to Koji Miyazaki:
fax: +81-45-330-6009
email: gardener@gokasya.jp

If possible, please send your ANY species of copyright-free Grevillea photos to me by an email, too.

Yours sincerely,



Koji Miyazaki
Gokasya, the Australian native plants specialist

