



GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP

ISSN 1039 – 9062

ABN 82 428 110 028

Newsletter

August 2015

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NEWSLETTER EDITOR

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Leader's Comments:

A new fiscal year has crept up on us so it is time for everyone to renew their membership in the Garden Design Study Group. Many of you have paid for multiple years so I will make sure that letters accompany this newsletter, either by email or snail mail, to remind those of you who need to renew. We have decided to increase the dues this year as they have been the same for many years. The new schedule is \$20 for a year of hard copy, \$15 for a concession hard copy (students and pensioners) and \$10 for email subscriptions. These increased costs are due mostly to inflation but also to the fact that we are now printing the *Newsletter* in colour which is more expensive. A number of the Study Groups have decided to provide only email newsletters which effectively eliminate costs of printing and mailing. We don't feel that this is appropriate for our group because so many of you are not able to receive and print the email version. In time perhaps, we will all be electronically connected.

Planning for the ANPSA Biennial Conference in Canberra is almost complete and registrations have been coming in. We have already received over 170 registrations from all states and the field trips are full as is the onsite accommodation at the Australian Institute of Sport. There is still plenty of opportunity to participate in the Conference in November.

Correspondence

Cloudy Hill Garden - Autumn 2015

A country garden located in the high country near Blayney, NSW

Photos and text, Fiona Johnson, NSW and Canberra

Summer ended dry and autumn started the same. After the moist January, the dry February and March, it came as a very unwelcome change. Several large shrubs, including a promising *Banksia serrata*, were outcompeted for moisture by the nearby *Eucalyptus macrorhyncha* (Red Stringybark) and departed the garden. On the positive side, this relatively dry area has high overhead cover and is a good place to try something requiring a bit of shelter that doesn't like wet feet. Something from Western Australia perhaps.

And luckily enough, although dry, the summer temperatures were not extreme and the majority of the garden managed quite well. April again saw reasonable rainfall on the tablelands and the garden responded. It is now early May.

The banksias are quite lovely. I am enjoying the multitude of forms of *Banksia spinulosa*, all in glorious flower at present, as well as *Banksia ericifolia*, my favourite *Banksia paludosa* 'Green Cape Dwarf' and the first ever flowers on *Banksia conferta*. The shrubby form of *Banksia*

marginata marketed as 'Bright Flowers' was an absolute mass of small yellow flowers and bees, but is now finished.

The croweas are continuing their lovely display and an array of different correas are in full cry. Lovely *Prostanthera cryptandroides* with its sticky, aromatic foliage is a picture and *Eucalyptus gregsoniana* (Wolgan Snow Gum) and a very young *Eucalyptus orbifolia* (Round-leaved Mallee) are making a nice display. The *Eucalyptus orbifolia* is just starting to develop its minni-ritchi-like bark.

Leptospermum squarrosum (Peach-flowered Tea-tree) is in flower for the first time; all the flowers right down low in the middle of the shrub. This tea tree flowers in autumn on the old wood, unlike the majority which are spring flowerers on new wood. The purple-flowered form of *Eremophila oppositifolia* (Weeooka) appreciated the April rain and has budded up beautifully for a late flowering event, but the pink one has not. Why is this so? The large red *Anigozanthus flavidus* hybrids and the potted *Chamelaucium uncinatum* 'Moulin Rouge' have also started flowering again.



Chamelaucium uncinatum



Hakea laurina

I continue the removal of underperforming plants, particularly grevilleas, as well as some that have outgrown my expectations. A lovely pink form of *Alyogyne huegelii* (Lilac Hibiscus) was too large in its position and, sadly, had to go. Several of the purple and white forms are also on notice as they are becoming much larger and denser than I want, plus the white one sends up suckers and could well become a menace. I have plans for the removal of more shrubs but will leave them to provide winter shelter before taking action.

With the onset of cooler weather I have started trying to provide some sort of frost, or at least wind chill, shelter for the more vulnerable new plants in the garden. I don't know if this actually works or not and I'm only prepared to try it for a plant's first winter. After that, if they cannot

survive our climate, they cannot survive. The grafted grevilleas and hakeas I planted this year are now quite large and will have to take their chances. Fingers crossed.

What a difference a week makes. Since I wrote the above, another fall of snow, this time the most we have seen in years (as with much of New South Wales), provided me with activity I wasn't looking for. The snow was beautiful and even now, three days later, there are patches in shady areas. Today I had a good look around the garden to see if there was any substantial damage. Not too bad really. A *Prostanthera ovalifolia* had fallen under the blanket of snow and snapped at the ground. An *Acacia spectabilis* has gone the same way. Some Banksias were so heavy with flowers that they split, but should recover with some judicious pruning. Various tea trees and correas are still quite bowed over, even though the weight of the snow has been lifted. It amazes me how some trees can bend right to the ground and then, once the snow melts or falls, they apparently shake themselves off and stand upright again without any damage whatsoever.

And the wallaby was back. We enjoyed watching how he scraped away the snow to get at the foliage beneath. I let him stay on such a day - but eventually he has to go!





Jeff Howes, NSW

I first met Koji Miyazaki, as he is a member of the Garden Design Study Group, when he was in Sydney a few years back and I arranged for him to look at three Westleigh native gardens, one of which was mine.

I have been in regular contact with him as he has started a nursery in Japan selling only Australian native plants. As well, he runs a landscaping business specialising in Australian plants.

He is looking for Sydney gardens to visit with a group of 10 or so Japanese clients.

I have advised he can visit my garden and I am sure he will be able to visit Brian Roach's garden/nursery as well.

My request and reason for this post is to ask members in the Sydney district if they know of any suitable native gardens to visit. If you do, please email me, off-line at jeffh978@yahoo.com.au

Following is the text of his recent email to me:

Dear Jeff

I am planning to visit Sydney with my 10 or so clients hopefully next September(2016) to visit Grevillea Park(Illawarra) and someone's native garden.

Some of my clients are very keen on Australian native plants and want me to take them to Australia to learn about Australian natives plants.

I, honestly, would like to visit your lovely gardens with my clients if you don't mind.

If you are able to recommend someone who has a beautiful Australian native gardens and would not mind to accept the group from Japan, could you please tell me his/hers contact details.

Best regards,

Koji Miyazaki

P.S. I did a lecture at the seminar of "Australian native vegetation and gardening" using the materials (CD-ROMs) that you gave me the other day. Everyone liked the photos of your gardens and plants as well. Thanks.



Jan Hall's garden, Yarrawonga, all photos by Jan

Jan Hall, Vic

Dear Ros,

Thanks for another inspiring newsletter. The item from Pam Yarra about dry and shady gardens set me reflecting on how my garden has changed since the first planting 11 years ago. It has certainly changed the landscape from the windswept clay plain to a well-sheltered, somewhat shady, dry environment today. I should be pleased, as our natural plant community is (Vic.) Northern Plains Dry Box Woodland, but I want more variety, and now the shade, leaf and twig drop, plus root competition, reduces my choice of plants. I wanted trees and I am enjoying the benefits, but it means that I am losing some shrubs and it is quite challenging to prepare the soil for replacements and then find just the right plant to complement design ideas.

There is some overlap with Pam's list of species, but of course, the gardens are in different climates. I would love more banksias but *B. spinulosa* here is mostly a tub plant in a self-watering pot. *Banksia blechnifolia* and *Banksia repens* have surprised me where river sand was added to the clay mounds. My eremophilas generally don't mind the dryness but resent shade of course. However, I am using more *E. debilis*, *E. subteretifolia* and *E. glabra* forms as green groundcover. I tend to get a lot of grey foliated, drought-tolerant plants, then look for something green to freshen it up. *Dodonaea procumbens* and some



Graptophyllum excelsum



Eremophila debilis Photos from Internet

shrubby hop bushes are useful. Tufting plants are an easy option like certain *Lomandra* selections, *Dianella* species and grasses. The dead material in them in late summer means a lot of pruning and tidying up work though. I am using more *Thomasias*, *Lasiopetalum behri* and *Lysiosepalum involucreatum* as shady spots occur. I have ups and down with correas due to occasional wet periods and judging when to water in summer. *Correa bauerlenii* has lasted well. *Westringia fruticosa* forms are useful but some come into the 'replace every 5 years' category here.

I would have to mention *Rhagodia spinescens* as a problem solver. *Indigofera australis* is a long time favourite under eucalypts. Also some shrubby hardenbergias in places.

Many Melaleuca, Callistemon, Acacia, Hakea, Calothamnus and a few Grevillea species, planted in the early days with the trees, now need a trim to preserve their looks, but are okay. Pruning up the trees lets in more light and I do have to add water during the long dry summers.

Others include *Stenanthemum scortechinii*, *Correa glabra*, *Correa pulchella* pink, *Grevillea sericea*, *Grevillea* 'Gin Gin Gem', *Grevillea rosmarinifolia* forms, G. 'Forest Rambler', *Enchylaena tomentosa* (prostrate, the shrubby form is too weedy) and *Graptophyllum excelsum*.



Jan Hall's garden, Yarrawonga



In any list we find other factors need to be considered. Climate and soil conditions are paramount, then the degree of shade is variable. In my clay, some plants need an annual sprinkling of blood and bone, and occasional watering. Therefore the amount of maintenance depends a lot on where you live.

Postscript:

Yesterday we enjoyed working in the open garden of Helen and John Van Riet at Wangaratta, about 45 minutes drive away in different conditions of higher rainfall of 800mm. By comparison Yarrowonga has more hours of sunlight and 460mm rain, but the major difference is easily worked sandy loam soil on a gently sloping block. Plants grow more vigorously and include some spectacular plants.

Shade tolerant plants of note were – all sorts of *Correas* – the best being *Correa pulchella* orange and a *Correa decumbens* form, many *croweas*, *Diplolaena grandiflora* (4 hours of sun daily or dappled shade), *Phebalium* species, *Thomasia* and *Lasiopetalum* species, *Veronica perfoliata*, *Plectranthus argentatus*, etc.

Jan Hall, Yarrowonga

The Australian Museum of Gardening

The Australian Museum of Gardening is currently being established at Carrick Hill historic house and garden, Springfield, South Australia. The Carrick Hill Trust (a statutory body vested with the governance of the heritage site) is committed to building the museum to display, study and store the collection as a permanent feature

Each year the museum will present different stories that define our Australian gardening history. The first exhibition will be held in the Guest Wing Gallery at Carrick Hill from August to November



2015. Garden Pleasures: How Australians enjoy gardening and gardens will explore the influences over the past 250 years that have shaped our interest as a nation in gardens and garden making either as a past time or profession.

The Museum's collection currently comprises over a thousand objects including a major donation of Old Mole's Tool collection that forms the core component of this aspect of the museum. Collected by Richard Bird (Old Mole of Armidale, NSW) over two decades there are seven hundred and sixty objects from around Australia and the United Kingdom.

Other categories will be added to the Museum of Gardening under the acquisitions policy that the Carrick Hill Trust has in place; for instance two collections of gardening books have been donated that will form the gardening research & resource centre within the museum.

Our mission is to preserve and present our gardening history and to promote it in close collaboration with the Australian Garden History Society, our national history and heritage partner.

Choosing an Australian climbing plant

Angus Stewart Garden Drum, April 16, 2015

With gardens getting smaller and smaller all the time, I am finding that there is increasing interest in climbing plants. These versatile plants can adapt to limited spaces, and are particularly well suited to horizontally-challenged gardeners. Anyone with a fence has an ideal opportunity to fill that vertical space with a climbing plant of some sort.

But what to plant? There are many exotic climbers that are very well known in Australian gardens but if you are not into the heady perfume of jasmine or the rampant antics of wisteria (lovely as it is in flower), then you may want to consider some of Australia's very useful native climbers.



Pandorea jasminoides in full flower

Before we get down to the detail of the various groups of Australian climbers, it is worth mentioning that many Australian climbers are not only able to climb upwards onto whatever support is provided, but can potentially also be used as ground covers. A word of caution, however, in that climbing plants of any origin will ruthlessly exploit nearby trees and shrubs as supports. So, if you want to use climbers as ground covers then it must be understood that they will either not be planted close to trees and shrubs, or be pruned to ensure they are not allowed to climb onto nearby plants.

Australian climbers are found in a diverse range of habitats and climatic conditions, from rainforests to dry eucalypt. As such, it is important to consider which species will best suit your particular needs and garden conditions. Many of these plants are 'pioneer' species that colonise disturbed soils after events such as bushfires, with members of the pea family (Fabaceae) being particularly important. Such species are particularly useful for difficult situations such as embankments with exposed subsoil that require rapid cover. Fabulously descriptive common names such as Happy Wanderer (*Hardenbergia* species) and Running Postman (*Kennedia* species) illustrate the fact that these species can be used as ground covers.



Kennedia coccinea



Hardenbergia violacea

Native sarsparilla (*Hardenbergia violacea*) is arguably the most adaptable of all Australian climbers and comes in white, pink or purple and there are also more compact shrubby forms such as 'Minihaha'.

The coral peas (*Kennedia* species) are also an outstanding group of twining climbers with an unusual range of colours available from the deep red of the dusky coral pea (*Kennedia rubicunda*) to the iridescent bright red and yellow of the coral pea (*Kennedia coccinea*), through to the very unusual yellow and black of the black coral pea (*Kennedia nigricans*). As well as the wild species being widely available to gardeners, there are now many cultivars that have been created by plant breeders and nurseries.

For my money the genus *Pandorea* is perhaps the most ornamental of all the Australian climbers and creepers. The bower of beauty (*Pandorea jasminoides*) produces flush after flush of its showy trumpet-like flowers from spring right through to autumn. It varies in colour from pure white (the cultivars 'Wedding Bellz' and 'Lady Di') to strong pink with a crimson throat ('Flirty Bellz'). There are also new cultivars with white throated flowers such as 'Funky Bellz' and 'Southern Belle', and these two plants also have fairly compact growth

The wonga wonga vine (*Pandorea pandorana*) is a common inhabitant of eucalypt forests all along the Australian east coast. It is particularly showy when it flowers in spring but it must be said that it has a narrow flowering window of several weeks in contrast to the bower of beauty (*Pandorea jasminoides*) that flowers over many months. The Wonga Wonga vine is a very vigorous grower that comes in a range of colour forms also ranging from the usual small creamy flowers with crimson throat to pure white ('Snowbells') or even golden colours such as the cultivar 'Golden Showers'. Another member of the family (Bignoniaceae) that *Pandorea* belongs to is the Fraser Island creeper (*Tecomanthe hillii*). It has gorgeous, glossy deep green, pinnate leaves and large pink tubular flowers over several weeks in spring.

If you are looking for climbers more for attractive foliage than flowers then the grape ivies (*Cissus* species) are very useful plants, particularly for shady areas. I find that they make superb ground covers for shady areas and are not difficult to manage in that context.



Pandorea pandorana



Pandorea pandorana 'Golden Showers'

The kangaroo vine (*Cissus antarctica*) has particularly ornamental foliage with toothed margins that has also made it popular as an indoor plant. It will surprise many gardeners to learn that these plants are relatively closely related to true grapes (*Vitis vinifera*) but unfortunately their fruits are not particularly palatable, a minor point given their ornamental value.

The native grape (*Cissus hypoglauca*) has smooth leaf margins and glossy green pinnate foliage and actually bears small, edible grape-like fruits. Also known as the giant water vine this plant is very adaptable and makes a fantastic alternative to lawns in those difficult shady positions beneath trees. You may also be surprised to know that Australia also has some interesting passionflowers (*Passiflora* species) that make spectacular garden climbers. The best of the lot for my money is the blazing red passionflower (*Passiflora cinnabarina*) which has an attractively lobed leaf as well. Unfortunately, the fruits are not particularly palatable but when you see the flower you will forget about food.....

And last but by no means least on my list of favourite Australian climbers is the snake vine (*Hibbertia scandens*) that has found great favour as a ground cover in public parks and on roadside verges. It is extremely tough and adaptable and can grow quite happily on coastal sand dunes and when given support to grow on it will twine its way upwards in snake-like fashion.

So if you are one of those gardeners that have run out of horizontal space then why not start thinking laterally about your garden by going vertical.

Happy gardening!



Passiflora cinnabarina, native passionfruit

An extraordinary glasshouse

GardenDrum April 10, 2015



Where is this exciting new Thomas Heatherwick designed glasshouse?

Thomas Heatherwick is the UK designer of the controversial new Garden Bridge over the River Thames in London. He proves his design credentials with this head-turning new glasshouse design at the Bombay Sapphire Distillery in Hampshire. You can read all about it in **The Galloping Gardener Thursday, 9 April 2015**

Eucalyptus Seminar - Friends of RBG Cranbourne Diana Snape Vic

Eucalypts are Australia's most iconic plants and they dominate our vegetation here more than a single type of plant does in any other continent. Of course there's a wonderful variety too, of sizes, shapes, bark, foliage and flowers, plus vital provision of habitat, so I think they really should be very widely used here in the design of gardens, parks and public spaces. Many of us want at least one eucalypt in our garden and, if there is space, many.

Recently a seminar about eucalypts was held at the RBG Cranbourne, organised by the Friends. The chief presenter was Dean Nicolle who has developed the Currency Creek Arboretum in South Australia and is, of course, extremely knowledgeable about eucalypts. He is also an excellent communicator (his website is www.dn.com.au).

Dean first gave us an up-to-date, brief overview of the classification of eucalypts.

There are well over 1,000 eucalypt subspecies, plus many forms and hybrids. We all now know the three genera of eucalypt, eucalyptus, corymbia and angophora. A fourth, eudesmia (!), may soon be split from eucalyptus. Corymbia and angophora are more closely related than either genus is to eucalyptus. Fortunately the term 'eucalypts' still covers all of them!

The genus angophora has just 12 species, comprising Apples and Rusty Gums. All have no bud caps or operculums, which are replaced by petals.

There are about 100 species in corymbia, which comprise Bloodwoods (subgenus corymbia, with woody fruit, often urn- or vase-shaped) and Ghost Gums (subgenus blakella, with more papery fruit). In corymbia the operculum does not always come off completely.

There are about 800 species in the genus eucalyptus, with a number of subgenera, the largest being Symphomyrtus with 500 or 600 species. Eucalyptus include gums, mallees, ashes, ironbarks, stringybarks, yates and gimlets. Eudesmia differs from all the others in having stamens in four bundles, for example *E. erythrocorys*. I won't even start to go into any details of the other subgenera here!



Eucalyptus erythrocorys



Eucalyptus synandra

Photos from internet

Please see Dean's website for classification details.

Urban cultivation

Unfortunately, the most widely planted eucalypt is *E. globulus*, which can grow to a height of 80m. (The so-called 'compacta' or dwarf form is still big.) Other popular and widely grown species include *C. citriodora* and *C. maculata* (both up to 30m), so when many people hear the word eucalypt they think 'BIG'. Of course, we know there are numerous small species, especially the mallees.

I'm sorry I don't have Dean's photos as illustrations - look up his Eucalypt Diversity Gallery for some rare species - and I've included just a few of mine. However I thought GDSG members might be interested in the names of recommended species (especially small ones) to look up. Dean had several lists of favourites (not surprising, when he knows every single species personally!). Following are his lists, with few details. I've put in an additional list of 6 small eucalypts,

that of Elspeth Jacobs from Melbourne, a very active and knowledgeable member of the Eucalyptus Study Group. If a species is on both her and Dean's list, that's a very good recommendation!

Dean's top mallees for South Australian gardens, in no particular order, are *Eucalyptus*:
websteriana - attractive foliage and mini-ritchie bark, compact, slow-growing and therefore long-lived

orbifolia - attractive foliage (you can prune the tree by cutting back to ground level)

erythronema (Red-flowered Mallee) (or *armillata*, with flanged fruit) - attractive bark

preissiana subsp. *lobata* (6 lobes visible in fruit) - yellow flowers, sturdy form

synandra - flowers age from cream to pink, wispy habit (rare in the wild)

lacrinans and *sepulchralis* - both have weeping habits - tall, wispy. let light through

torquata and *woodwardii* - will be more suitable for Melbourne in a warmer future

pimpiniana - bushy with yellow flowers (to 2.5 m tall)



Eucalyptus caesia



Eucalyptus gillii

Photos from internet

Elspeth Jacob's 6 favourite eucalypts for small gardens show considerable overlap with Dean's. *Eucalyptus*:

orbifolia; *caesia* ssp *caesia*; *erythrocorys*; *erythronema*; *sepulchralis*; *lacrimans*

Just a few larger trees recommended by Dean (and already well known)

Corymbia ficifolia

E. leucoxylon subsp *megalocarpa* less tall, dense rounded crown flowers range from white to pink

E. petiolaris very similar to *leucoxylon* (they can hybridise) but breeds true to flower colour, whether white, pink, red or cream

Dean's 5 top trees for parks and gardens in S.A.

1 *E. erythrocorys* - either as tree or mallee form

2 *E. vitrix* Little Ghost Gum - 4 or 5 metres (less than 12m) - smooth-barked

3 *Angophora hispida* (Dwarf Apple) - prefers acidic sands to alkaline clays

4 *Corymbia torelliana* - from North Qld, lovely green trunk; dense, rounded, canopy

5 *C. apperinja* - for a hot, dry area

Another 5 of Dean's favourites (he has many, not all of which are widely available, or even available at all yet in nurseries) *Eucalyptus*:

macrocarpa and *rhodanthe* (both well known)

3 lesser known species:

wyloensis; *gillii*; *sinuosa*, with fascinating curling bud caps

Plus (Dean added) of course there's *E. caesia* subsp. *magna* ('Silver Princess'), another tree that can be cut to ground level for pruning, and also *E. kruseana*.

So, if you live in a suitably southern area of Australia and want to grow one or more small (or smallish) eucalypts, these lists may give you a few suggestions to check out.

Master Plan for the Australian National Botanic Gardens

Towards the future: Inspiration, Conservation, Education and Recreation

The Master Plan provides the framework for the Gardens' projected infrastructure to support enhanced visitor experiences, horticulture and research capabilities over the next 20 years. This long-term vision will ensure that the Gardens remain at the forefront of contemporary gardens world-wide.

Key features of the Master Plan include:

A new National Seed Bank to help conserve our native flora

a Conservatory to display tropical plants from northern Australia and our Islands

a new Visitor Centre and Cafe

Children's Nature Play Terrace

Ecotourism activities in the bushland precinct.

To bring the Master Plan to fruition we will be establishing a range of fundraising campaigns supported by capital funding from Parks Australia.

www.anbg.gov.au/gardens/about/management/master-plan.html



Artist's impression of future Visitor Centre

Book Review: 'Connected' by Phillip Johnson

Janna Schreier GardenDrum, April 29, 2015

If natural, Australian style gardens are your thing, you'd have to go a long way to find a book more inspiring than Phillip Johnson's '*Connected – The Sustainable Landscapes of Phillip Johnson*'. From the moment you pick up this exquisite book, you won't want to put it down; everything from the cover onwards is beautifully presented and the talented Claire Takacs' photography makes you hungry for more with every page.

'Connected' is written as a series of twenty garden case studies, beginning with the garden Phillip grew up in, moving on to his current home garden and incorporating many designs he has created for private residences and international shows, culminating with the Chelsea Best in Show, 2013.



On the right: Phillip Johnson's 'Equilibrium' garden: MIFGS 2012. Photo: Janna Schreier

Each case study has a description of the brief and resultant garden but this book is a classic case of 'a picture tells a thousand words', with images stealing the show. The text is not entirely free of inconsistencies (was he 5 or 8 when he designed his first garden?), unusual assertions (*Aspidistra* is a 'typical English plant' – which doesn't survive frosts) or questionable logic (*Hydrangea* planted to monitor a billabong's water pH), nor does Phillip hide his light under a bushel ('the Royal Horticultural Society....fell in love with our concept and with my passion and drive....'), but as the story progresses, you can't help but admire this man. As Phillip describes googling the Queen's height in order to optimise the Chelsea garden studio's dimensions for royalty, it is clear what a hard working, single-minded, passionate designer he is. Phillip describes the impact of time spent as a teenager in rural national parks on his desire to replicate the natural environment in his designs. He has a particular passion for waterfalls and loves to design landscapes that capture water to use within the home and garden, using natural filtration methods for swimming pools. He is a huge proponent of sustainability and whilst many of his designs have made great leaps in this agenda, one wonders how removing large rocks from their natural location and transporting them many miles to an unnatural location can fit comfortably with this sustainability message. Phillip's own garden in Olinda and '*Lubra Bend*' in Yarra Glen are standouts of the book: stunning rural gardens that blend perfectly with their

surrounding landscapes; the suburban gardens work to greater and lesser extents and arguably have both positive and negative impacts on sustainability. Overall, there is no question that this is one of the best books in existence providing visual ideas for an Australian style garden. It doesn't give much away in the form of written design tips, but the photos are clear and attractive, with a good mix of broad angle and close up shots; they alone will develop your thinking on Australian landscapes (and leave you dreamy with desire for one).

In particular, if you are thinking of commissioning Phillip Johnson to design your garden, this book will give you an extremely good insight in to what you would receive. Phillip is undoubtedly one of the leading landscape designers to focus entirely on natural, Australian gardens and even professional designers call on him to help with their home billabong construction. His publication is not only an ideas book, but also one with a 'feel good' message, portraying the triumph of passion and hard work over pretension and perfection, particularly demonstrated through the Chelsea exhibit. Frankly, in the world of gardening, what characteristics could possibly be more apt or feel more deserving of success than those of passion and hard work? It is uplifting to read of the achievements so justified in this story of exceptional focus and determination.



Trailfinders Australian garden presented by Flemings. Design Phillip Johnson. Chelsea Flower Show 2013

Connected – The Sustainable Landscapes of Phillip Johnson; Published November 2014 by Murdoch Books; RRP: \$59.99AUD; 304 pages; ISBN: 9781743363331; ISBN-10: 1743363338

*Ed. This is an important book in the history of Australian garden design. The photos of the twenty gardens are inspiring and Phillip is a most enthusiastic and entertaining guide to the design problems and solutions for each garden. The excellent review above by **Janna Schreier**, reprinted from GardenDrum, will give you a very good idea of the pleasures of this book.*

Burnley's new gates

GardenDrum October 29, 2013

What magnificent new gates! Friends of Burnley designed them and they were built by an artisan in Daylesford for the field station at Burnley.



Open Gardens Australia Garden

New Open Gardens Australia Garden design announced

Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Shane Rattenbury, announced the selected design for the new Open Gardens Australia Garden at the National Arboretum Canberra.

Together with Mrs Tamie Fraser OAM, patron and tireless ambassador for Open Gardens Australia, Minister Rattenbury turned the sod today for the new garden, the first in the Arboretum's Gallery of Gardens. They were assisted by the recently elected President of the Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra, Ms Trish Keller.

The Open Gardens Australia Garden will be created to honour Open Garden Australia's long history and success in opening almost 20,000 gardens and raising more than \$6 million for charitable causes over the past 27 years.

A selected panel of garden designers and landscape architects were invited to submit designs for this new addition to the Arboretum. The designers were asked to draw inspiration from the theme 'artistry of gardens' and to reflect the goals shared by the Arboretum and OGA.

The design selected was submitted by local landscape designer Neil Hobbs from Harris Hobbs Landscapes. The design concept for the garden fulfils the 'artistry of gardens' theme and will feature a grassed marquee space, a bird bath and various seating and paved areas. It contains a mixture of Australian and exotic plants, reflecting the diversity of gardens that were showcased by Open Gardens Australia.

Open Gardens Australia has generously funded the design and development of the garden; a truly wonderful gift to the Arboretum and all Australians.



The site of the new OGA garden

Photo by Helen Stevens

Report of Melbourne garden visit on Sunday May 24

Diana Snape, Vic

Our meeting consisted of a visit to the garden of Bob and Dot O'Neill and a 'question and answer' session about the garden. They moved to their current one-acre property just four years ago but their garden, begun from nothing (actually worse than nothing), is already well established. The growth of plants has been remarkable, so that the garden now looks twice its age. The amount of work involved in achieving this has been enormous. They showed us a video recording the progress over the four years, so we had to believe them!

Their soil is good - a fine, grey, sandy loam. The air is clear with no city pollution and the garden is sunny with, as yet, not very much shade. In addition to this (plus all the hard work), as one member said, "much-loved gardens thrive".

Their garden is a model of practical design. First they had about 14 large cypresses (with other similar exotic trees) removed - a huge job. They also put a root barrier along one fence to keep unwanted tree roots out. Other plants and structures were also removed. In the first year, in an unexpectedly wet period, they lost many plantings and discovered they had a high water table. To improve drainage, they treated this problem in two ways - by using agricultural pipes and by importing 140 cubic metres of soil to build up beds.

To lay out the garden, they marked out beds on the existing lawns with hoses (Dot) or stakes (Bob), then sprayed and re-sprayed these areas until the grass was completely dead. Beds are curved as are the grassed paths between beds. The number of plants in the garden is in the thousands (for example about 200 were planted last summer) and Bob has propagated about 90% of these, mostly from cuttings coming from many sources.



When they do buy a large plant in a pot, they immediately take cuttings, pot the plant on and keep the original plant as a stock-plant. Bob recommends planting at 6-inch-pot size, so roots have developed sufficiently to find water in the soil. To plant out a new bed, they arrange plants in place (mainly Dot), rearrange (both), then plant (mainly Bob). Many beds are surrounded by lawn, giving more 'edges' for small or low-growing plants, with medium shrubs behind and taller shrubs along the centre.

They plant the whole year round, taking particular care over summer months, with both watering and mulching as necessary. They use tank-water to water plants for their first summer and do all watering by hose (with no sprinklers). They use coarse mulch to a maximum depth of 5cm (2 inches). We were impressed the garden was virtually weed-free. Bob uses a hoe to cut off very small weeds at ground level so that no larger weeds have to

be disposed of. This works for nearly all weeds, though a few nasties like oxalis have to be weeded by hand. Dense planting of garden beds also helps minimise weed growth. The O'Neills' garden is a collectors' garden. They initially specialised in correas and are growing about 200 different forms, with two of each sort where possible. They keep records of which of the 47 numbered beds each correa is planted in. Bob recommends space and sun for good flowering in correas (and eremophilas). For example numerous beautiful forms of *C. pulchella* were among the correas in flower and Bob has found (as have others) these are generally more reliable than forms of *C. reflexa*. Eremophilas are a more recent interest and they grow nearly all of these (including *E. nivea*) on their own roots. As it was late autumn a relatively small number were in flower.



Their interests are not restricted to these two genera with, for example, 50 epacris plants currently in pots, about seven species of lechenaultia (they have found *L. biloba* to be the most reliable) and some verticordias. Many other genera are also represented in their garden. They cut their Kangaroo Paws back to ground level each year and they too are flourishing. Bob says the best time to visit their garden (which has been in the Open Garden Scheme) is November, when the greatest range of species is in flower. (Bob O'Neill was recently the OGA Gardener of the Year.)

Then there's the hothouse where all the propagation is done, two ponds, and a fruit tree and vegetable area. There's a trellis with *Kennedia rubicunda* and *Hibbertia scandens* growing, and a large gazebo in the garden where we enjoyed our lunch and afternoon tea. We thanked Bob and Dot for the opportunity to visit their garden and be shown around by the two experts.

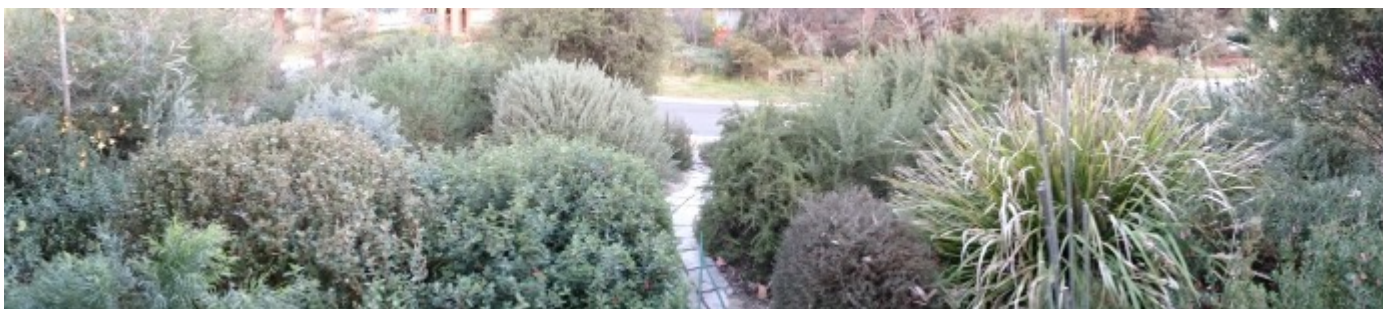
Next meeting

Sunday August 16 at RBG Cranbourne, to look at the designs of some of the small gardens in Stage 2, in particular the group of displays for small urban gardens near the far end of the Gardens, near the lake. These will be the focus of our discussions. Then we'll look at the small Seaside Garden and the Weird and Wonderful Garden (plus others if we have time).

Unfortunately the coffee shop/kiosk at the far end of the gardens is not open in winter so, if you can come down for lunch, we'll meet at 12.30 just outside the shop near the entrance. There are two options. If it's a nice fine day, bring a picnic lunch and we'll eat outside. If the weather is doubtful, we'll eat at the main cafe. I'll make contact when we have the weather forecast.

If you come after lunch, we'll all meet outside the shop at 1.30 and probably catch the Garden Explorer down to the far end. (The times are earlier than usual so we are not too late leaving Cranbourne.)

As usual, please let me know if you are planning to come to the meeting and also, this time, if you're coming for lunch. We'll know to look out for you. Suggestions for a venue for our November meeting will be welcome.



Bill and Jenny Handke's Garden, Kambah, ACT

Bill and Jenny Handke

This garden started out in 1976 – a totally bare block, with not even a weed growing. Over the next 39 years there have been many iterations to arrive at its current state: no doubt further iterations will follow.

Initially we developed the garden as a mixture of exotics and natives (utilising, of course, the then allocation of free plants from Yarralumla Nursery for new gardens): perennials and annual exotics with swales of lawn in the front and back; pergolas with Wisteria and Star Jasmine; deciduous trees for winter sun; gums, wattles, paperbarks, bottlebrushes, grevilleas etc as boundary plantings. The mixed garden lasted 7-10 years. There are now few exotic remnants of this BE period (Before Enlightenment period): a Ginkgo (30 years old but looks more like 5 probably due to the cat shredding its trunk by using it as a clawing post), liquidamber, prunus and *Magnolia grandiflora*. while other early plantings, *Melaleuca armillaris*, *M. decussata*, *M. incana*, *Eucalyptus nicholii* have given way to new plantings.



The soil in this area is unfriendly to gardeners: white clay which is concrete hard when dry. Nonetheless, with 39 years of accumulated leaf drop and some loam, the soil has improved considerably.



The overarching objective for the subsequent move to near total native plantings was to establish a garden that was enticing to native birds given that we are enthusiastic birdwatchers, and to have a garden with contrasting leaf texture and colour. That time – late 70s and early 80s – was the period of general enthusiasm for Australian native gardens. However, the selection of native plants that was available in garden nurseries tended to be focused on the well-known genera: such as eucalypts, callistemons, acacias, melaleucas, grevilleas, banksias and within those, the common species. As a consequence, the upper structure for the garden was very much set by this.



The mid storey plantings were initially driven by the theme of contrasting leaf texture and colour, with garden sections with either colour matching (leaves or flowers) or deeply contrasting flowers (eg whites together, or white mixed with contrasting purples, yellows with purples etc). Initially, mid and lower storey plantings comprised grevilleas, banksias, baeckea, boronias, correas, croweas, leptospermums. This led into the phase of periodic “enthusiasms”,

but ever conscious of the need for bird-attracting plants. There was the period of grasses, lomandras, dianellas; then the hakea phase; then the enthusiasm for olearia, zieria, eriostemon, westringia, prostanthera, thomasia; subsequently eremophila (see photo above) and the peas (swainsonia, pultenaea, daviesia, mirbelia, bossiaea, eutaxia, hovea, chorizema, gastrolobium, hardenbergia, dillwynia). As things died and were replaced the themes broke down. So now there is no theme at all!

Significant renewal and remake has occurred a few times: the impetus for this has been the loss of some large eucalypts: the annoying habit of a *E. nicholii* (Small-leaved Peppermint) in the front garden to drop large branches onto the house was one, the 2003 bushfires which unsettled a large *E. melliodora* (Yellow Box) in the back garden was another (it eventually toppled), borer damage leading to subsequent death of another peppermint was a further one, while the recent inexplicable rapid decline of a *E. cinerea* (Argyle Apple) and its removal is another. A house extension in 2008 resulted in the loss of some plantings and the need for another remake. In the last few months various hakeas and acacias along the back fence line and their understorey of correas declined in vigour and have been replaced.

A major “enthusiasm” over the past 7 years has been the growing of eremophilas. In large part this is because of their huge variety in leaf texture, colour and shape and the wide colour range of their flowers. Plus they are highly attractive to birds: honeyeaters for the open trumpet flowers (reds, pinks, greens and yellows) and insectivorous birds for the swat flowers (purples, blues and whites). The Kambah garden is full of them (71 species, 115 plants): and more of them in our Tathra garden (an additional 60 species and 133 plants). A horticultural approach has been to mulch them with pea gravel – adopting advice from Paul Carmen who has done this at the Australian National Botanic Gardens. The pea gravel is a good mulch, letting every bit of moisture through to the soil (unlike plant mulch which soaks much of it up) and gravel retains heat in the cooler months. Difficult to know which is best - the best growers of eremophilas I know, Ben and Irene Stocks, use deep plant mulch. It works brilliantly for them.

An interesting aspect of the garden has been the number of plants that have self-sown: acacias, gums, correas, croweas, grevilleas, and even *Exocarpos cupressiformis* and Kurrajong – seed from the latter two coming from, presumably, Mt Taylor. As can be seen from the photos, another horticultural approach is to crowd plants.

This garden is a work in progress. But an extremely enjoyable one.
Bill and Jenny Handke

Treasurer’s Report:

If your membership in the group needs to be renewed for this fiscal year 2015-16, you will be reminded by either an enclosed letter or an email.

Accounts:

Cheque Account: \$ 8,195.92

Term Deposit: \$ 25,077.62

Total: \$ 33,273.54

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ANPSA Garden Design Study Group *Newsletter* is published four times per year in February, May, August and November.

Copy is due by the first of the these months although earlier submissions will be welcomed by the Editor.

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Membership dues 2014-2015: per year

Email *Newsletter*: \$ 10.00

Paper *Newsletter* \$ 20.00

Concession paper \$ 15.00 (For pensioners and full-time students only)

Dues by cheque or EFT to BSB 032-729, Account # 28-5385