

Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens

NEWSLETTER

Number 63 December 2009



Season's Greetings



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The Friends Newsletter is published three times a year. We welcome your articles for inclusion in the next issue. Material should be forwarded to the Newsletter Committee by the first of June for the August issue; first of October for the December issue; and first of February for the April issue.

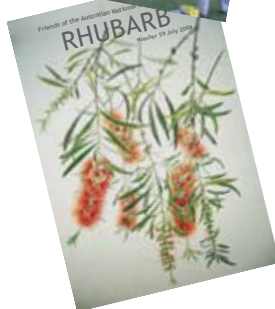
Email or post material to the Newsletter Committee at the above addresses or, place in the Friends letterbox, located inside the Gardens' Visitor Centre between 9.00am and 4.30pm, Monday to Sunday. Editorial messages: telephone (02) 6250 9548.

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Cover: 'Christmas Berries' by Madeleine Johns from Canberra College. First prize Colleges Colour in the Friends' Annual Photographic Competition for ACT and Queanbeyan Region High School and College students 2009. More prize winning photos on the back page.



Name our Newsletter Competition

Win \$100 voucher from the Botanical Bookshop and a year's free Friends membership

20 years on and over 60 editions down —it's time for a name change to better reflect the current magazine style of our 'newsletter'

Can you think of a name that captures the intent of this publication?

To inform our members about the people, plants, science and events that bring the Gardens to life

Please send your entries (multiple suggestions are welcome) to reach the Newsletter Committee **by 30 January 2010.**

The plan is that the April 2010 edition will bear the winning name.

Send entries marked 'Name our Newsletter Competition' by email: newsletter@friendsanbg.org.au by post: Friends ANBG, GPO Box 1777, Canberra ACT 2601 or deposit it in the Friends mailbox in either the Friends' Lounge or the Visitor Centre.

The winning entry will be selected by the Friends' Council.

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New directions for ANBG

Alan Munns, President, Friends of ANBG



Photo by Anne Rawson

Parks Australia recently announced important changes to the management of the ANBG. The Gardens will be transferred to a new science-based branch of Parks Australia. The head of the new branch is Dr Judy West, who took up the new position on 16 November.

Dr West was previously the Director of the Centre for Plant Biodiversity Research (CPBR). She is one of Australia's most eminent botanists, and is very familiar with the ANBG. The CPBR is a collaborative venture

between the Botanic Gardens and CSIRO Plant Industry and includes the Australian National Herbarium.

Dr West holds dual job titles: Assistant Secretary, Parks and Biodiversity Science, and Executive Director ANBG.

On behalf of the Friends of the Gardens, I have welcomed Judy to the position and said we look forward to working closely with her.

This change has seen the departure of the previous Director, Anne Duncan, who left the Gardens to pursue personal and other career interests. The Friends extend our very best wishes to Anne.

The Friends also welcomed David Phillips to the Gardens. David is an experienced manager with Parks Australia. He was appointed to the Director's position to bridge the gap between the departure of Anne Duncan and the arrival of Judy West.

Friends' Council members have been in close contact with Parks Australia senior executives about these structural changes. We have welcomed the new structure. We have also expressed our continuing concerns about wider issues of funding and staffing for the Gardens. We appreciate the fact that, in difficult economic times, the ANBG is maintaining a similar level of funding to recent years.

We look forward to a satisfactory completion of the project to enable lake water to be used to irrigate the Gardens. We hope for the speedy completion of the new management plan for the Gardens and resumption of many operational activities that have been on hold during that process, especially nursery operations. We are anxious to see the promised 'remediation' of the old nursery site for the Gardens 40th anniversary in 2010, and long-term redevelopment of the site in accordance with proposals which we expect to emerge in the new management plan.

These are challenging times for the ANBG and the Friends. We genuinely hope that the best years for the ANBG are in the future.

Pointing the way

The Gardens reports that new directional signs are proving popular with visitors moving around the Gardens. Information signs and rainforest gully interpretive signs are due to be installed before Christmas. All signs will be evaluated over summer and feedback from Friends would be most appreciated.

Backhousia citriodora

Peter Davidson, Joint Winner

Many ANBG guides surprise their groups following the main path by stopping at an otherwise unassuming small tree in the corner of Section 78. Only steps away are the much more fascinating rainforest gully in one direction and the iconic Wollemi Pine in the other.

Yet this glossy elliptical-leaved tree with its profuse bunches of pretty centimetre-wide fluffy white flowers in summer offers many opportunities for the guide to spin a yarn or two—with a contemporary Canberra connection thrown in. There must be few plants in the Gardens better suited to explain so simply the otherwise bewildering logic behind the scientific naming of plants!

We are before a part-grown tree, curiously out of place in Canberra's winter, as opposed to its home range of the Queensland Coastal Rainforest. It would probably be happier in the nearby rainforest gully! Yet it thrives, even if nowhere near its natural height of up to eight metres.

Long known, but even yet by no means fully exploited for its commercial potential, the leaves offer man a dual reward. The plant is well named in common parlance as Lemon Myrtle (also Lemon Ironwood). Its essential oils give a distinction to products like perfumes, cosmetics or even a bracing after-shave. Dried, the leaves are finding favour on supermarket shelves under its favoured common name.

It is about now the guide launches his or her spiel onto the unprepared visitor. Happily the plant is usually co-operative in having shed a leaf or two and laid them conveniently on the ground beneath. But first we have to do battle with the dreaded Latinised form of the very English name that gives itself to that of the genus. The wise, if enthusiastic, guide will skip trying to unpack the rules for turning English—or Greek or any other language—into Latin. He will do well just to take the botanists' word for it.

Backhouse? James Backhouse, born in Durham County in 1794, died 1869. The circumstances of his parents had already set the path for James' life to unfold. They were wealthy Quakers. The Quaker in young James would call him to far places to bring a greater humanity to miserable people; the inherited wealth, supplementing that of other Quakers, would support that calling. But another leaf had yet to be written in the book of his life.

He set out to be a chemist, even beginning an apprenticeship. But tuberculosis put paid to that and he looked for an outdoor avocation. To be a nurseryman seemed a good choice—and a fortuitous one for our ANBG visitors.



Backhousia citriodora growing by the main path in the ANBG. Photo by Jane B. Rawson

Following training as a nurseryman he bought a nursery, with his brother, in York in 1816.

Imbued with the Quaker philosophy of justice and humanity he, with a colleague, sailed for Australia in late 1831. In Hobart Town they began what for James would be a busy six years in Australia. Visiting convicts, remote settlers and Aboriginal communities in every state they produced a dozen reports—and far-reaching recommendations for reform. Among those Backhouse influenced was Alexander Maconochie, who would introduce a whole new regime of humanity when he arrived on Norfolk Island as Commandant in 1840.

And the whole while James was collecting specimens of Australian flora to send back to Kew. For his diligence a new genus, with its handful of species, would be named for him as Backhousia.

The guide is well into his or her story. But what about the citriodora?

At this point one of those shed leaves takes centre stage. A quick crush by the guide and an invitation to smell the result completes the story.

The powerful lemon smell universally evokes the response ‘it smells just like lemon’. Citriodora—smells like!

An unassuming plant beside the path offers a whole story: of a generous self-effacing man, of a powerful description of a plant’s uniqueness, and of how we have those really logical names for plants. Nearly two centuries later Norfolk Island’s Alexander Maconochie, powerfully influenced by the humanity of the quiet Yorkshire Quaker, gives his name to the new ACT prison—claimed as the most advanced in the world for its humanity.

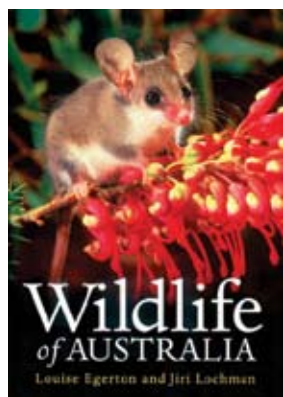
What began with a nineteenth century Yorkshire nurseryman continues in twenty-first century Canberra. Motorists on the Monaro Highway pass the Alexander Maconochie Correctional Centre and wonder ‘Where does that name come from? What made him worth remembering?’ Visitors to the Australian National Botanic Gardens who imagined ahead nothing more than a quiet afternoon stroll have learnt how we name our plants, and probably a great deal besides.

All that in a totally unassuming plant with glossy leaves and fluffy white flowers in summer quietly growing beside the path.



Photo by D. Greig

From the Bookshop Tom Butt, Shop Manager



Wildlife of Australia
by Louise Egerton and Jiri
Lochman
Jacana Books, Allen & Unwin,
2009
Hardcover, 448 pages, colour
photographs, maps, useful
information, glossary, scientific
names, index
ISBN: 978 1 74114 997 5
RRP: \$59.99

There is nothing to beat the extraordinary wildlife of Australia. Its colourful parrots, its venomous snakes, its abundance of hopping marsupials and the strange, egg-laying Platypus—these are just a few of the players in a story that began hundreds of millions of years ago.

Many members of Australia’s wildlife live nowhere else on Earth. They are unique, the result of evolution on a continent that has been geographically isolated from the rest of the world for 38 million years. *Wildlife of Australia* is an account of how these animals have developed in response to changing climates and habitats. It describes their day-to-day habits, where they live, how they find partners and care for their young, and how they protect themselves and find food and shelter.

Superbly illustrated with over 550 colour photographs by renowned wildlife photographer Jiri Lochman, the book also contains a list of scientific names, good zoos and

wildlife parks, useful websites and books, and a comprehensive glossary. *Wildlife of Australia* reveals the fascinating worlds of the animals that live all around us on this ancient land but remain largely unnoticed.



Cronin's Key Guide
Australian Rainforest Plants
by Leonard Cronin
Jacana Books, Allen & Unwin, 2009
Paperback, 192 pages, colour
illustrations and maps, glossary,
index
ISBN: 978 1 74175 113 0
RRP: \$35.00

An authoritative and indispensable guide to the unique and beautiful plants of Australia’s rainforests.

This comprehensive guide to the rainforest flora of Australia is packed with information on more than 300 commonly observed species from rainforests around the continent. Each plant is beautifully illustrated and described in detail in clear, concise language including its physical features, such as bark, trunk, leaves, flowers and fruit, as well as habitat and other information relevant to the species. Distribution maps accompany every species. The guide also includes an overview of the different types of rainforest.

Botanical art

Nilavan Adams



BAG artist, Lynn Nickols. Photo by Vivien Pinder

Botanical art can be defined as the art of depicting a botanical subject in a way that is both scientifically accurate and aesthetically pleasing. In doing so, botanical artists need to closely study the subject's botanical design and carefully plan on how to translate it into a pleasing work of art.

The 70 members of the Friends' Botanical Art Group (BAG), which is really two groups, have now been drawing and painting the plants of the ANBG since 2005 and had their second exhibition in the Visitor Centre Gallery in April this year. These artists are building on a very old tradition.

One of the oldest collections of botanical illustration is the Codex of Dioscorides (*Codex Vindobonensis*) dating from AD 512. It includes nearly 400 paintings of plants, many of which were copied from earlier illustrations of the first and second centuries AD, notably those by the Greek physician Krateuas.

In the 15th and early 16th centuries, Renaissance artists such as Leonardo da Vinci in Italy and Albrecht Dürer in Germany carefully studied living plants and began to depict them realistically. The mid-18th to the mid-19th centuries were called the golden age of botanical art. Botanical artists such as Ehret, Redouté and the Bauer brothers worked closely with scientists at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew and at the Jardin des Plantes in France.

On Australian soil, the early explorers from Europe collected and documented specimens. Englishman William Dampier's account of his voyages, published in 1699, includes drawings of Australian plants.

Seventy years after Dampier visited New Holland, James Cook was commissioned by the British government to

carry out an expedition in the South Seas. His commission took place when the art of botanical illustration was well established and his ship, the *Endeavour*, carried a team of scientists and artists including: natural historians Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander; botanical artist Sydney Parkinson; and landscapes and portrait artist, Alexander Buchan.

The new plants being found in Australia intrigued botanists through the 19th century and there continued to be a great deal of overseas interest in collecting and painting. During this time, Australia began to produce its own botanists and botanical painters, and to publish botanical works.

By the 20th century, settlement and agriculture had expanded greatly. Primary industries and economic botany placed great demands on the resources of the herbaria and their botanists. This was a time of consolidation for taxonomic botany, hence diagnostic and pseudo-diagrammatic representation was much more in demand than were grand works of art. Around this time botanical illustration throughout the world, except in Britain, had vanished from public view.

Around the 1970s and the bicentennial of James Cook's first landing at Botany Bay, botanical illustration and botanical art began to flourish again. To date, Australia has produced numerous botanical artists through public and private botanical art schools. Many of those artists have formed art groups, societies or associations in their own states and territories.

The establishment of the Friends BAG, proposed by Robin McKeown, was approved by the Friends Council



Eucalyptus ficifolia by Vivien Pinder

in December 2004. An inaugural meeting was held in the Crosbie Morrison Building on Thursday 10 March 2005 with 10 members attending. The group decided to hold a meeting on the second Thursday of the month between 9.00 am and 2.00 pm. Due to its rapid increase in membership, a second BAG was established in February 2006. This group meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month. Membership has now reached 70.

Before the 9.00 am meeting time, plant specimens are collected by the duty ranger. Botanical names of the specimens collected are labelled and minuted before the members can take them as their drawing/painting subject. While some artists can produce a painting by the end of the meeting, some may take two to three days to complete. To accommodate individual drawing/painting pace, BAG members who wish to take plant specimens to complete their work at home may do so under strict guidelines.

BAG is reaching maturity and its members' artistic talents have been recognised through exhibitions of Australian native paintings in March 2008 and April 2009. A third exhibition is now being planned. Members are once again opening their paintboxes and cleaning magnifying glasses making ready for the new challenge.

Acknowledgements:

The author wishes to thank Robin McKeown for providing a detailed history of BAG; Jan Seatonberry for her editing assistance; Helen Hinton and Vivien Pinder for photographs. Completion of this article was not possible without their contributions.



DIOSCORIDES ANAZARBEUS PEDANIUS (B. CA. 40 AD).

DE MATERIA MEDICA.

Anicia Juliana Codex. Codex Vindobonensis medicus graecus 1. Facsimile. (Washington University, Becker Library)

Growing Friends

Loris Howes

The spring rains were much welcomed by Growing Friends as we did not have to water as often. A full tank at the beginning of summer is a blessing. Fortunately, apart from lots of debris resulting from the strong winds, our plants escaped damage.

We have been sowing seeds of grasses supplied by a Growing Friend who lives on a property in our region. One of these is *Joycea pallida*, the Red Anther Wallaby Grass. A tussock-forming grass with tall feathery flower heads with prominent red anthers. Another grass is *Lomandra longifolia* with dense tussocks and creamy, often fragrant flowers and with brown shiny fruits.

One of the advantages of growing grasses is that they do not require regular watering. Indeed some of them prefer a drier soil.

Another hardy is *Pelargonium rodneyanum*, a rockery or ground cover plant with magenta flowers in summer and autumn.

Check Friends website for date of next sale.



Pelargonium rodneyanum, *Joycea pallida* (left) and *Lomandra longifolia*. Photos by Murray Fagg. All © ANBG.

THE BERNARD FENNESSY 'WHAT'S IN A NAME?' AWARD 2009

Wilga (*Geijera parviflora*): Family Rutaceae

June Foster, Joint Winner



Photo by Anne Rawson

Downwards from the waterfall at the rock garden, at the Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG), across from the main path, on a corner, is a well established evergreen tree with long narrow leaves sweeping the ground. I am reminded of Dame Mary Gilmore (1865-1962) when I stand beside it. Among her published books were the *Rue Tree* (1930) and *Under the Wilgas* (1932). One of her poems begins:

*The Rue Tree is the tallest tree,
None other is so tall;
The Rue Tree is the smallest tree,
None other is so small.*

Born in the nearby Goulburn district she became a pupil teacher at Wagga Wagga. As a child she had been a 'sister' of the Waradjery tribe for a short time.

The name Wilga appears in the Concise Australian Oxford Dictionary for a drought-resistant small tree or shrub especially *Geijera parviflora* of inland eastern-Australia from Wilgarr in the Wiradhura language.

The generic name *Geijera* (pronounced guy-jet-aj) honours J.D.Geija, a Swedish botanist, author of *Diktamnographia* (1687) and other works.

The specific name *parviflora* is Latin for 'small flowers'.

The Wilga tree has many uses. It was valued by the Aboriginal people (see *Wiradjuri Plant Use in the Murrumbidgee Catchment*, compiled by Alice Williams and Tim Sides (2008)). Under the dense canopy of long aromatic leaves, small creatures could shelter and be a source of food. Wild bees made honey from the small flowers. The bark and roots made splints to treat broken bones, and boomerangs were made from the wood.

Rutaceae (the Rue family) is found in temperate and tropical regions worldwide, consisting of evergreen trees and shrubs, and often they are aromatic and of economic importance. Introduced citrus trees (oranges, limes, etc.)

are cultivated. Ornamental boronias, correas, croweas, eriostemons, etc. are among our native shrubs here at the ANBG.

In Europe, in the Middle Ages, leaflets of the small leafed shrub were carried and used for sprinkling holy water on open wounds to ward off infection. It was called The Herb of Grace. Judges kept the bruised leaves on their benches when prisoners were brought before them for trial to counteract evil odours (hence the expression 'to rue the day').

In grazing paddocks, the foliage is often pruned by stock nibbling the leaves within reach to create a mushroom effect. A valuable fodder plant, the Wilga may be cut and fed to stock in drought time. It is useful for shade and shelter in large gardens, parks, farms, and roadsides. In California, it is known as the Australian Willow, and it is grown as a greenhouse plant in England.

Unfortunately, the seed is often unreliable to germinate and cuttings slow to propagate at present.

The name is commemorated as a place name in Canberra in Wilga Place, O'Connor and Geijera Place, off Cunningham Place, in Kingston.

A visitor to the ANBG once told me that a grateful farmer had named his newborn daughter Wilga, because this tree had saved prized sheep in drought time.

Another visitor—not to be outdone—thought that she recalled that a country woman of that name had once successfully won a competition to make a sponge cake in a microwave oven!

Wilga, a delightful, versatile Australian name.

*A Tree of Grace, the Wilga tree.
Deserving widespread fame;
Drought-tolerant, sheltering, evergreen,
Delightful given name.*

What's on at the Gardens

December - March



The Friends of the ANBG use the 'gold' coin donations received at each activity to support Australian National Botanic Gardens' programs and development. The Friends thank all those who have donated, and all those who will. The Friends especially thank the many speakers who volunteer their time and talents to further the knowledge of all who attend the events in the Gardens.

Please note: Unless otherwise indicated, talks are in the ANBG Theatre.

When bookings are required, phone the Visitor Centre on 02 6250 9540. Members who make bookings for events are requested, as a courtesy to their fellows, to notify the Visitor Centre if they are unable to attend.

Summaries or PowerPoint presentations of Thursday talks are available to Friends from the ANBG library. A donation to the Friends for the use of this material will be gratefully accepted.

Details of events are correct at the time of printing. For changes and updates please check the Friends' website at: www.friendsANBG.org.au or on the Gardens' site at: www.anbg.gov.au or in the local press.

REPLANT

a new generation of
botanical art
16 November to
31 January

An exciting exhibition of 20 limited edition etchings and six photographs that explores the unique characteristics of species that survive and prosper through the climatic extremes of monsoonal rains, dry weather and wild fires in northern Australia.

BUSH MAGIC

Story time in the
Gardens

Join us for a children's book in a Eucalypt nook for story time fun. One hour of stories, songs and activities suitable for pre school-aged children with parents / carers. Gold coin donation, bookings not required,

Friday 4 December at 10.00 am
Friday 5 February at 10.00 am
Friday 5 March at 10.00 am
Crosbie Morrison Lawn

DECEMBER

Friday 4 December 11.00 am
Thank You morning tea

Brittle Gum Lawn
All ANBG volunteers

All volunteers are invited to a morning tea to recognise and celebrate the enormous contribution made to the Gardens. Volunteers have been an integral part of the ANBG since its establishment 60 years ago and this morning tea and ceremony is a way we would like to express our gratitude. RSVP essential on 6250 9540

Saturday 5 Dec. 5.00-7.15 pm
Carols in the Gardens

Eucalypt Lawn
Flood your senses with music. Enjoy the beauty of Canberra's premier choir, SCUNA (the Australian National University Choral Society) presenting a choral Christmas concert. Then join in with family, friends and community, singing popular carols to celebrate the festive season. Bring a rug and your best singing voice to the Eucalypt Lawn. Free. No bookings required.

Wednesday 9 December
Senator Kate Lundy's Forum
in association with the Friends
see flier insert for details

JANUARY

Monday 18 to Sunday 24 January
Snakes Alive!

Weekdays, 10 am-4 pm
Saturday & Sunday 10 am-6 pm

Crosbie Morrison building

Be charmed by our live displays of Australian snakes, lizards, frogs and turtles, presented in partnership with the ACT Herpetological Association. \$5 adults, \$4 concession, \$2 children

SUMMER SOUNDS



Photo by Brian McLeary

Concerts on the Eucalypt Lawn
Saturdays and Sundays
over four January weekends
9 and 10, 16 and 17, 23 and 24,
30 and 31 January

Share a sparkling summer evening at Canberra's most popular outdoor music series. Wine, beer and soft drinks are available for sale from the Friends. Gold coin donation

FEBRUARY

Thursday 4 February 5.00 pm Friends Annual General Meeting Theatrette

Drinks and nibbles in Dickson Room at 5.00pm. Meeting in Theatrette at 5.30. Guest speaker will be Dr Judy West. Details in Occasional Newsletter in January.

Sunday 7 February 1.30 pm Music and Dances of Neighbours National Multicultural Festival Crosbie Morrison Lawn

Join us in celebrating the National Multicultural Festival by enjoying authentic music and dance from Australia, New Zealand, Bulgaria and Greece. Performers include the ACT Torres Strait Islander Dance Group, Canberra and Queanbeyan Maori group, ensemble Dusha Balkana and the Canberra Hellenic Dancers.



Photo by Barry Brown

Thursday 11 February 12.30 pm Stuart Johnson

Check www.friendsanbg.org.au for details.

Thursday 11 February Friends Twilight Dinner Hudson's Cafe in the Gardens

Details and booking forms for this increasingly popular event will be forwarded to Friends in the Occasional Newsletter in January.

Thursday 18 February 12.30 pm 'The Importance of Seed Collecting'

Franz Grossbechler and Mark Jones

Check www.friendsanbg.org.au for details.

Thursday 25 February 12.30 pm

Max Bourke

Check www.friendsanbg.org.au for details.

MARCH

Thursday 4 March 12.30 pm

'Bloomin' Showbiz'

Bill Stevens

How an encounter with a wild boronia led a shrinking violet up the primrose path to the wonderful world of showbiz.'

Thursday 11 March 12.30 pm

'Plants of the World Series – Tibet'

Roger Farrow

Spectacular plants and spectacular country encountered during Dr Roger Farrow's third Alpine Garden Society expedition from Chengdu in western Sichuan to Lhasa in Tibet.

Saturday 13 & Sunday 14 March

A tree in the palm of your hand – exhibition of Australian plants as bonsai

Experience a fascinating exhibition of Australian plants as bonsai. See banksias, eucalypts, wattles, tea-trees and other Australian plants from the collection of bonsai enthusiasts. Bonsai demonstrations. Admission charge applies.

Sunday 14 March 2010 at 2 pm

'Australian Succulents'

Attila Kapitani

Check www.friendsanbg.org.au for details.

Thursday 18 March 12.30 pm

'Albury Children's Garden'

Paul Scannell

Paul Scannell takes us through the planning and development of a children's garden at Albury Botanic Garden. The experiences and practical solutions to problems are explained by one of Australia's foremost garden

managers.

Thursday 25 March 12.30 pm

'Cryptogams'

Christine Cargill

Check www.friendsanbg.org.au for details.

Sunday 21 to Sunday 28 March

Seniors Week 2010

Free parking permits upon presentation of Seniors Card at the Visitor Centre

The Botanical Bookshop

www.botanicalbookshop.com.au

always welcomes Friends of the ANBG to the store.

A 10% discount is offered:

- on purchases over \$10
- on production of your membership card
- to the person whose name is on this card

No discount given for 'Red Spot Specials'.

Friends' Benefits

Your Membership Card entitles you to the following benefits:

Parking Pass

Botanical Bookshop—A discount on most items.

Hudsons Café—Loyalty cards, one for meals, one for tea/coffee.

Friends Lounge— in the Ellis Rowan Building, open to members 9.30 am to 4.30 pm.

Botanical Resource Centre— Public access herbarium, text books, access to online resources.

ANBG Library Membership— Borrow books, serials, etc

Birds in season

Text and photos by Geoffrey Dabb

Here are some birds that may be found breeding in the Gardens in the warmer months.



Yellow-faced Honeyeater. In Winter present in only small numbers, but in Spring and Autumn thousands stream through Canberra as they follow tree-flowerings, mainly of eucalypts. Main call is a grating 'chuk-ka-ruck'. Yellow 'warpaint' face markings distinguish it from similar honeyeaters.



White-browed Scrubwren. An often-seen resident with an estimated 120 individuals making the Gardens their home. Usually seen feeding on the ground, including on pathways. A high proportion has been colour-banded for research purposes.



White-winged Chough. Any visitor to the Gardens will soon see one—or more likely several—of these birds. The group co-operates in building the large mud nest and raising the young. The white wing patches are only evident when the bird flies or spreads its wings while giving its harsh alarm or warning cry.

Birds and still

Text and photos



Fan-tailed Cuckoo. A Summer visitor and probably the most common cuckoo in the Gardens. Males reveal presence by a loud trilled 'brrrrt', sometimes alternated with a whistled 'pee-wee-er'. Females lay eggs in nests of various other species including fairy-wrens, scrubwrens and honeyeaters.



New Holland Honeyeater. Although common in the Gardens this species is otherwise uncommon in the Canberra area as it relies on plantings of grevilleas, banksias and other nectar-rich shrubs. Often seen interacting with other small honeyeaters.



Satin Bowerbird. Male is a satiny blue-black but more often seen are 'green birds'—either females or immatures. Advanced sub-adult males are identified by pale bills, and will also build bowers. This species is becoming more common in the Canberra area.



Red Wattlebird. A large honeyeater, present year-round but in greater numbers in Spring/Summer. Conspicuous from its lively feeding on various flowering shrubs, when it allows a close approach, and from its raucous cries of 'four o'clock', 'tobacco' and 'kronk-kronk-kronk'.

more birds in season

by Geoffrey Dabb



Red-browed Finch. This is one of the grass-finches known as 'firetails'. They usually feed in flocks on seeds on the ground, but also relish the seeds of casuarinas when they come into season.



Leaden Flycatcher. A Summer visitor, usually heard or seen high in the trees. The sexes are different, with the male a handsome dark blue-grey and white, female with a rufous throat patch. Builds cup-nest on a smallish dead limb.



Spotted Pardalote. One of two pardalote species present year-round. In sunlight, male is a brilliant jewel with a golden throat patch. Resonant call is a far-carrying repeated 'bibit' or 'bit, bibit'. Nests in a hollow in tree or a burrow in an earth-bank.



Crimson Rosella. The most common parrot in the Gardens—and in Canberra's suburbs. Feeds on tree ferns and on seeds of all kinds. Nests in hollows. Sexes similar; immatures have the blue cheeks and varying degrees of green plumage, sometimes being mistaken for a separate species.



Weebill. One of the confusing 'small brown birds' but distinguishable from the similar thornbills by a stubby bill and pale eyebrow. Picture shows an adult peering from its domed nest, and a close-up of the head.

Garden Shorts

Message from Judy West



By the time you receive this newsletter I will have taken up a new position as Executive Director of the Australian National Botanic Gardens. This is an exciting new role for me and one which I am looking forward to immensely. There are many challenges ahead for the Gardens as a whole, and for me particularly—that is all part of the stimulation.

The Friends of the ANBG are an important asset and play a significant role in the well being of the Gardens, and I look forward to developing a collaborative working relationship with the Friends.

I would like to thank Anne Duncan for her considerable contribution to the ANBG and hope that we can continue to build on some of the activities that were initiated in the period of her time at the Gardens.

My background is in plant taxonomy and various aspects of plant conservation. I have been working as a research scientist in CSIRO Plant Industry, right next door to the ANBG,

and during much of that time as Director of the Centre for Plant Biodiversity Research, a partnership between the ANBG and CSIRO. An important element of that relationship is the Australian National Herbarium, which is a key facility to both the CPBR and the ANBG.

Having had a long association with the science elements of the ANBG I am enthusiastic to work with those dealing with horticulture and the public face of the Gardens.

I look forward to contributing further to the next edition of the Newsletter once I have settled into the new position.

Judy West

Photos of weeds



Opuntia ficus-indica. Photo by R.G. & F.J. Richardson © ANBG

The 'Australian Plant Image Index' (APII), as the Gardens' photograph collection is known, has been slowly growing for almost 40 years. In mid-2009 the APII was successful in getting a contract to manage the weed images for the Weed Unit of the Dept of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts. This extra funding enabled two staff to be employed to seek and database weed images for the collection. The contract will end in mid-2010. Several people have generously donated large collections of weed photo to the APII, and the database is growing by the day. The aim of the APII is to have photographs of every native and naturalised plant in Australia, so this contract has been significant in helping us head towards that goal. Each week the public accesses almost 300,000 images from the APII website.

Update on Management Plan

The draft of the ANBG Management Plan is nearing completion and the comments received from the extensive 'Have Your Say' consultation process have been carefully considered as part of its development.

The draft plan will be made available for public comment around February/March 2010. The public comment period of 60 days will be widely advertised and both electronic and hard copy versions of the draft will be available.

The management plan will outline the strategic direction of the ANBG for the upcoming 10 years and also include broad policies and key management actions for the institution.

Recycled water

The Gardens are on track to use recycled water for irrigation. The water project has gone out to tender. Once a contractor has been selected turning of the sod is expected to commence. Construction is expected to take about six months to complete so you may see some disruption to the Gardens while this takes place. But of course the good news is that by next summer the Gardens should be using recycled water. Exciting news.

40th anniversary calendar 2010



\$25 rrp but big 20% discount, down to \$20, for Friends of the ANBG. Available from the Botanical Bookshop, ANBG. Great Christmas gift for family and friends.

Friends Briefs

Summer concerts



Photo by John Connolly

As we go to press, it seems that the ever-popular summer concerts in the Gardens will be staged over four weekends next January (see *What's on at the Gardens* in this Newsletter for dates). Gardens' budget constraints have, once again this year, caused some uncertainty. To ensure the concerts go ahead, Friends Council will use funds donated by concert goers to cover the cost of publicity. In the past this was paid by the Gardens. And as usual, the cost of bands and sound will be paid from donations.

The decision to pay these costs means we will receive less income from the concerts than in the past. Nevertheless, Council believes the main aim of the concerts is to provide a venue for Canberrans and visitors to enjoy the wonderful ambience of the Gardens on summer evenings, with good music, friends and picnic fare, and that we should forego some income to ensure this event continues.

Program details will be on the Friends' website in December and in the *Canberra Times Panorama* on concert weekends in January.

As always, volunteers will be needed to collect donations (the *bucket brigade*) and to help with the drinks table. A roster will be on the corkboard in the Friends' Lounge from early December: those who can help please drop in and list your availability. Alternatively, you

could email stating date/s available and task preferred (bucketeer or drinks table) to: info@friendsanbg.org.au.

Senator Lundy's Forum

You are invited to have your say on future directions for the ANBG at a Forum on 9 December.

This follows on from the Forum on *The Future of the ANBG* held on 22 October 2008 and is again under the joint sponsorship of Senator Kate Lundy and the Friends of ANBG. This first Forum focussed mainly on the scientific aspects of the Gardens and the view was that a second Forum was needed to look more widely at other priorities and roles, such as education and the Gardens as a national institution. The second Forum is also an opportunity to discuss key issues emerging from the preparation of a new Management Plan for the Gardens. See separate flyer for full details. Information will also be on the website

Parliament House Gardens



Photo: Pam and Keith Hammond

Two tours were held in September and October to visit the Parliament House gardens with Paul Janssens (former Curator at ANBG). Numbers were restricted, but about 24 Friends participated in each tour. This was a rare opportunity to visit the 17 internal courtyards of Parliament House; they are not normally open to the public. Paul gave insights into the way the gardens have developed, including the blending of native and exotic plantings. One notable point was that there are many water features, most of which are currently not operating due to the water restrictions. Paul offered to run a tour in 2010 to the public native

gardens outside the Parliament inner ring road. The Friends intend to take up this offer and details will be supplied in a Newsletter in 2010 and posted on the website when available.

Wattle Day and Exhibition



Photo by Barry Brown

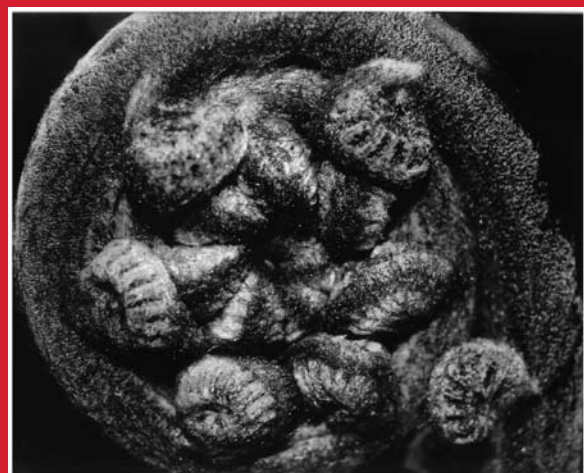
To celebrate the 21st anniversary of the designation of *Acacia pycnantha* (Golden Wattle) as Australia's floral emblem, a special exhibition was mounted by Pat and Warwick Wright on behalf of the Friends. The exhibition was opened on Wattle Day (1 September) by Sir William Deane in the presence of the Minister for Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, the Hon Peter Garrett AM MP. A key part of the opening was the unveiling of a floral sculpture of *A pycnantha* by the artist Lynne Stone, a gift from the Friends to remain on permanent display at the Visitor Centre.

The exhibition included a wide range of information and memorabilia, showing ordinary people's everyday use of wattle through to use by government and Royalty. The six week exhibition closed on 11 October. Pat and Warwick Wright are giving Wattle talks, on request, to community groups on behalf of the Friends and ANBG.

Open Gardens

Thanks to Pam Finger and Ros and Ben Walcott for nominating the Friends as recipients of half the entrance fees to their beautiful, inspiring gardens. And thanks to those Friends, ably organised by Doreen Wilson, who raised more money by providing afternoon teas to visitors to these gardens.

Schools photo competition 2009



From top left, going clockwise: Tobias Hayashi 'Salutations 1' First prize Colleges Black and white (Orana School); Olivia Hatfield 'Invasion' Third prize High Schools Black and White (Canberra High School); Hayley Parsons 'Fern' Second prize Colleges Black and White (St Clare's College); Talia Borman 'Indecision' First prize High Schools Black and White (Canberra High School); Grace Quilty 'Berries' Third prize Colleges Black and White (Canberra College); Chloe Tredrea 'Fern Abyss' Second prize High Schools Black and White (Canberra High School).