

# *Fronds*

*Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens*

*Number 112 April 2026*





# Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens

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## Fronds is published three times a year. We welcome your articles and photographs.

The deadline for articles is mid-February for the April issue, mid-June for the August issue and mid-October for the December issue.

Email material to the *Fronds* Committee at the above email address or place in the Friends letterbox, located inside the Gardens Visitor Centre, between 9.30 am and 4.30 pm, Monday to Sunday. Editorial messages: telephone 02 6250 9548. Previous issues of *Fronds* may be found on the Friends website under the Newsletter tab.

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Friends Council, November 2025. Back L-R: John Barrow, John Pilbeam, Beth Tyerman, Darrell Porter, Ian Primrose. Front L-R: Cathy Robertson, Alan Henderson, Linda Beveridge, Rod King.

Simone Slater



Friends of the ANBG is a member of the AAFBG

## Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land throughout Australia and their continuing connection to country and culture, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

Front cover: Narelle Aldridge's 'Dew Drops in the Desert', *Isotropis centralis*, was highly commended in the David Cox Memorial Prize, and winner of the Ranger's Choice award, at the *Illuminate 25* exhibition of the Friends Photographic Group.

Back cover: Runner up in the Fauna Category was 'Bubbling Bee' by Karin Neufeld, portraying a Masked Bee (*Hyalaeus* sp.).

# Various vile weeds: Close-up

By John Fitz Gerald

In my view, a lot of vile vegetation needs to be vaporised, or maybe vanquished. Readers could guess from this corny opening that my theme here is weeds featuring the letter 'v'.

My first plant is Sweet Vernal Grass, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*. It is shallow-rooted, truly vile, and a serious weed of many places including both the grave-site block, and its surrounding woodland, at Hall Cemetery.

Friends of Grasslands (FOG) members regularly weed here and have seen this perennial C3 grass steadily becoming more of a problem, particularly in recent wet years. In summer 2026, this grass finished flowering and dropped abundant seed, ready to grow again next spring.

Downey<sup>1</sup>, in his 2023 assessment of naturalised alien plants for the ACT Government, considers it to be a high priority weed.

The species is native to Europe, western Asia and north-west Africa. The Atlas of Living Australia<sup>2</sup> (ALA) lists 18,800 records, almost all in the south-east temperate states, but a few from the temperate south-west corner of Western Australia.

My next victim is *Vulpia bromoides* or Squirrel-tail Fescue. This is a small but pesky annual C3 grass. There are probably few grassy areas in temperate Australia that don't have at least one of the *Vulpia* species.

Sadly, this includes some of the valuable, high-diversity grasslands in the ACT familiar to FOG members, such as St Mark's Native Grassland in Barton, Hall Cemetery and Yarramundi Grassland.

Downey assesses this weed as having moderate priority in the ACT. It is a prolific seeder which, like Sweet Vernal, has largely finished its growth this season releasing abundant seeds.

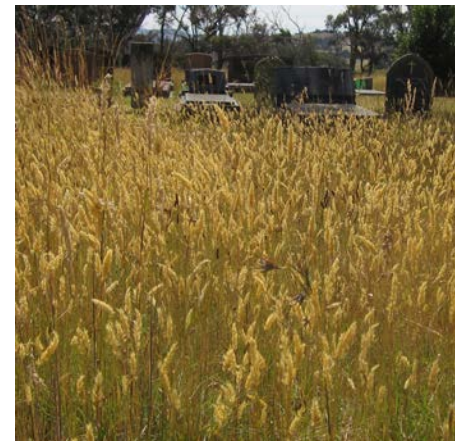


Provided

Left to right: John Fitz Gerald and Jeanette Jeffery, and (then) National Seed Bank Manager, Lydia Guja, collecting seeds of Australian native plants, not weeds, in Namadgi National Park.

It is difficult to manage, being such a small plant which grows close to other species that FOG prefers not to dig or treat with herbicide. It has to be controlled before flowering as its seeds are easily dislodged once mature.

The species is native to temperate areas in Europe and North Africa. ALA lists 12,400 records in the south east and south-west corners of our country.



Left: Sweet Vernal Grass, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*. Image shows six dark hairy florets, each having a brown awn with one bend, plus a thinner bristle. The bottom right side of the image shows two shiny flattened seeds prised from other florets. The scale bar is 1 mm long. Right: Sweet Vernal Grass at Hall Cemetery. Images by John Fitz Gerald.

# Various vile weeds (cont.)

My final species is *Vicia sativa* ssp. *nigra*, or Narrow leaved Vetch. This is a scrambling annual herb in the pea group. It is a native of Europe, Asia and North Africa. I understand it is often sown by farmers as a nitrogen-fixing legume which is highly palatable to sheep and cattle.

Unfortunately, its hard-coated seeds spread from farmland and it's a fairly common minor weed of native grassy areas.

Downey rates it as a low priority weed in the ACT. ALA lists 2,380 records, once again in the temperate south east and south west of our country, mainly across the south east.

The good news is that, in February, a brisk walk around the outer fence of the Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG) showed up just one tiny patch of the *Vulpia* grass and no Sweet Vernal or *Vicia*. Nevertheless, I did see that Gardens' management must be vigilant to control other weeds here (see 'Other weed threats' below).

Finishing on the 'v' theme, I hope that readers of this Close-up find it neither vague nor vacuous.

## Other weed threats

Possibly the worst weed threat is from *Eragrostis curvula*, African Lovegrass. This plant is regarded as one of the ACT's worst weeds because every plant produces huge numbers of small seeds, too many of them being fertile and easily spread by water, machine (mowers) and foot traffic.

The Clunies Ross and Frith Road edges outside ANBG contain many plants of this weed but active management is ongoing.

Another serious threat growing near ANBG fences is *Nassella trichotoma*, Serrated Tussock.



John Fitz Gerald



ALA, Thomas Mesaglio

Left: Squirrel-tail Fescue, *Vulpia bromoides*. Image shows three thin florets, each about 5 mm long with an awn about twice that (longer than could be included in the micrograph). In the centre of the field of view, the awn and lemma have been removed to show one channelled seed about 3 mm long. The scale bar is 1 mm long.

Right: Squirrel-tail Fescue seed heads are predominantly one-sided in nature.

## Acknowledgements

This piece was printed in January-February 2026 edition of *News of Friends of Grasslands*, a bimonthly publication of the community advocacy group, Friends of Grasslands. It has been trimmed and given an ANBG context.

I used the Nikon microscope at the National Seed Bank in the ANBG for the highly detailed images of seeds. They can be reproduced freely with reference to the Creative Commons licence CC BY.

Information in this article was gathered from websites including:

1. List of naturalised and doubtfully naturalised alien plant species in the ACT – an advisory list, 2023. Paul Downey. Available from [act.gov.au/environment/animals-and-plants/plants/invasive-plants-and-plant-pests#Downloads](https://act.gov.au/environment/animals-and-plants/plants/invasive-plants-and-plant-pests#Downloads)
2. Atlas of Living Australia, [ala.org.au](https://ala.org.au)
3. Plants Of the World Online, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew [powo.science.kew.org](https://powo.science.kew.org)



John Fitz Gerald

Serrated Tussock plants in heavy flower, and seed heads on arching stems: one of the most vile weeds.



Top left: Narrow-leaved Vetch, *Vicia sativa* ssp. *nigra*. Image shows seven seeds each 3 mm diameter released from dark black pods. Seeds are hard-coated, near spherical and attractively patterned. The scale bar is 1 mm long.

Top right: Narrow-leaved Vetch pea pods, showing how they change from green to black when ripening, the reason for naming the subspecies *nigra*.

Bottom left: African Lovegrass, *Eragrostis curvula*. Ripe brown seeds. The scale bar is 1 mm long.

Bottom right: African Lovegrass plants, growing at Strathnairn, ACT.

All images by John Fitz Gerald.

## About the author

John Fitz Gerald came to Canberra for a scientific position at ANU's Research School Earth Sciences and joined Friends of the ANBG soon after its inception. Later, on retiring from ANU, John turned to landcare activities including the first intake of volunteers at the National Seed Bank. That volunteering was initially for seed collecting via the Friends National Seed Bank initiative known as Seedy Volunteers. John then joined the ANBG program for Seed Curation Volunteers, sharing his research knowledge about imaging with microscopes. He continues to enjoy work in both volunteer streams.



## Friends Benefits

### As a Friend you are entitled to:

- Three issues of *Fronds* a year
- Three hour free parking pass

### Discounts at:

- Botanical Bookshop (most items)
- Pollen
- Jindii Eco Spa
- Cool Country Natives, Pialligo
- Australian Choice, Canberra Centre

### You also receive:

- Advance details of lectures
- Advance bookings for some events
- Discounts on some events
- ANBG library membership – borrow books, serials, videos and DVDs, and use computers and interactive CDs
- Special rates for functions at ANBG

### You can join:

- Botanic Art Group
- Growing Friends
- Photographic Group
- Plant Science Group
- Plant Recognition Group
- Nature Journaling Group
- Assist with ANBG research projects
- Become a guide

And you can relax with tea/coffee and interesting reading material in the Friends Lounge in the Ellis Rowan Building, open 9.30 am to 4.30 pm.



# National Seed Bank upgrade

The Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG) is now home to a superb conservation and research facility in the upgraded National Seed Bank (NSB). The new NSB was officially opened on 6 November 2025 by the Director of National Parks, Ricky Archer.

The upgrade of the NSB has been a key priority for Parks Australia, to ensure the facility can continue to safeguard native flora and conduct leading research to increase plant biodiversity knowledge. The Seed Bank is a key contributor in Parks Australia's mission to protect and conserve biodiversity within and beyond commonwealth parks and gardens.

The Seed Bank came into existence as a horticultural seed store at the ANBG nursery, before being moved into the Research Cottage in 1996. It was renamed 'ANBG Seed Bank' to reflect its transformation into a conservation and research facility, and a laboratory was set up in what was the lounge and kitchen of the cottage. The year after that the first volunteers joined, assisting with processing collections.



Ricky Archer, Director of National Parks, cutting the ribbon to open the upgraded National Seed Bank.

The seed bank had an official name change in 2012 to the National Seed Bank, and Lydia Guja was appointed to start a seed focused research program. The NSB started hosting research students in 2014, with students from the Australian National University, University of Canberra and Charles Sturt University. The program grew dramatically over the next decade, bringing us to the point where a new facility was desperately needed for not only a growing number of staff, students and volunteers, but the collections had reached storage capacity.

This new facility is testament to the Project teams' strategic planning, future vision, and persistence over many years. The NSB is now a state-of-the-art seed banking facility.

Our new facility will enable us to grow. In 2026, the NSB will host ten staff (both permanent and short-term), seven undergraduate student interns, two post-graduate research students and 46 volunteers assisting with both seed collection and curation.

The NSB team is dedicated to protecting and conserving Australia's precious native flora, and plays a key role in this mission through its integrated collecting, storage, and research efforts. The new facility enables us to increase our seed science capability – this means more species banked, greater genetic diversity captured within species, greater capability for research and collaborations, and increased capacity to generate and share knowledge of Australian native plant seed biology and ecology.

We have a dedicated seed preparation laboratory for cleaning and processing seeds, microscope and x-ray rooms, a seed biology laboratory, and an incubator room, which now features four temperature gradient plates – expanding our capability to determine the climatic conditions seeds require to germinate. The new facility also features custom-designed office and meeting spaces to support research, collaboration and volunteer activities.

We are currently working on a research project funded by the ACT Government's Office of Nature

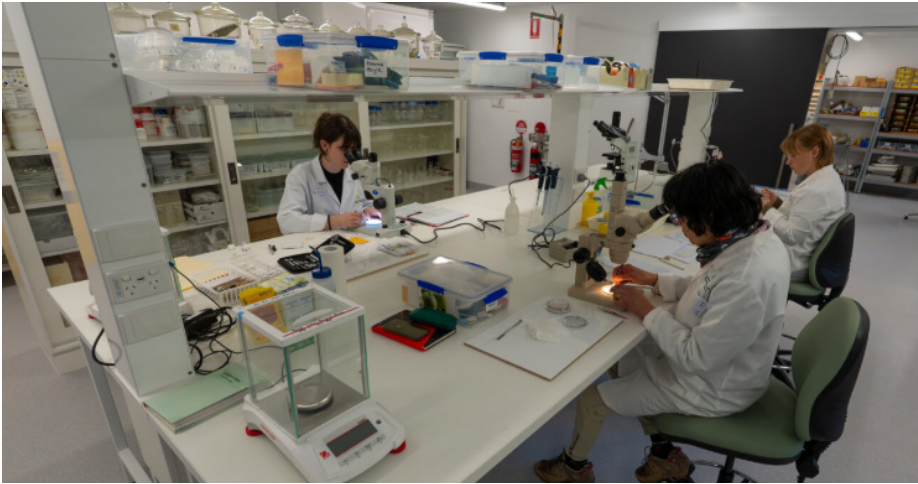
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Australian National Botanic Gardens



ANBG



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Top: Assessing germination tests in the NSB Biology Lab. Left to right: Pip Alvarez, Fanny Karouta and Freya Brown.  
 Bottom: NSB staff, volunteers and students at the opening of the upgraded facility (including Peter Byron and Judy West, back row).

Conservation to resolve collection and seed biology protocols for a suite of temperate grassland species to enable better use of these species in restoration. Funding for this project will support the employment of two short-term positions to collect seed over the summer period, and also to continue our engagement with local traditional owners, ensuring we obtain free, prior, and informed consent to collect from country.

We are also about to start a new research project into species within the Rutaceae family to resolve complex

germination dormancy within this family. This project has been privately funded by the Kedje Foundation over 18 months to support the recruitment of a research scientist into this role.

Our partnerships with universities, NGOs, and membership of the Australian Seed Bank Partnership have allowed the NSB to deliver excellent research and generate new biodiversity knowledge.

As an ex situ conservation facility, the NSB currently holds 4,183 taxa across over 8,500 accessions. Amongst that number are 1,654 accessions of 180

taxa that are listed as threatened under our national environmental legislation, protecting them in face of threats such as climate change, bushfires, habitat loss and invasive species.

These collection numbers will greatly increase over the next ten years thanks to the additional capacity provided by the new facility. The new  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$  vault will have capacity to hold four times the number of collections than was held in the old facility.

We are incredibly grateful for the mammoth effort of our volunteers and are glad to be able to better accommodate them in our new facility. The NSB is highly dependent on its large workforce of incredibly dedicated volunteers, who assist with collecting and processing seeds, and assessing collection viability.

Last year, our volunteers dedicated a total of 881 hours over 31 field trips, assisting us to collect 116 different taxa. A further 3,680 hours were spent processing seed collections and assessing seed viability.

The NSB team members are now putting their minds to how best to capitalise on our increased capacity, and will soon release the National Seed Bank Strategy, which sets out our key priorities for the future, and will guide us as we seek to start new projects, collaborations and partnerships.

We look forward to sharing more information about our future plans and how we will continue to support national and international biodiversity conservation targets.

Thank you to the NSB team, architects, engineers and Built team for working together to design and build this upgraded facility and ensuring that it is fit-for-purpose now and into the future.

# Friends Briefs

## Member Jungle, Friends' new online membership system

Over the next few months the Friends will introduce a new online membership system to replace our current database which dates from 2013. Although updated since, the old system doesn't allow online access by members or online payments, and is hard to maintain.

From 1 May 2026, online access will be made available to all members whose email addresses are on our Membership Register.

### No email address?

Currently, 136 members have no email address on file. They are welcome to continue communicating with our Membership Team by mail and phone if they prefer, or to provide an email address if they wish to have online access.



### What is Member Jungle?

Our new online membership system operates via membership management software which the Friends have licensed from Member Jungle. Member Jungle is an Australian firm specialising in software for managing membership payments, digital membership cards, events and communications online. [memberjungle.com/membership-management-software](http://memberjungle.com/membership-management-software)

### What will happen?

Members will be contacted progressively from 1 May.

The invitation email will show your login details for the new Member Portal. When you login you will be asked to set your own password. You can then check your personal details and update your contact information.

The email will include contact information in case you have questions or need help.

### When will the Member Jungle online system handle renewals?

Renewals will commence in September 2026. The new system will offer the option of self-service renewals online. With the new system, you will be able to pay securely online by credit card, as well as by direct deposit.

For the foreseeable future, the Membership Team will continue to mail out membership cards and parking permits to all members.

### Hard work and great results

Our sincere thanks to the current voluntary Membership Team, who will be continuing with business as usual for some time. Our thanks also to the members of the Membership Database Project Team.



APII Murray Fagg, 2009

*Cassinia longifolia*. Black Mountain Reserve, SSE side of midlevel carpark.

## Bushland Nature Walk

We had perfect weather for our Bushland Nature Walk on Saturday, 14 February. Four Gardens guides led the walk and we divided into two groups with two leaders each so that people could get close and see the details of the plants being talked about. We kept an eye out for butterflies and had the joy of seeing a few Common Brown butterflies at this late part of the season.

The *Cassinia* species (*Cassinia longifolia* and *C. quinquefaria*) in

flower were spectacular in some of the gullies and made a lovely 'Cassinia corridor' as we neared the lookout. We were so focused on admiring all the plants that we forgot to take photos!

We also had the experience of seeing 200 (yes, 200) fit young ANU students doing this walk, (much more quickly than us, without pausing to look at the plants) as part of their Orientation Week program. It made me wish I was 18 again ... but with the knowledge I now have!

**Linda Beveridge**

## Bruce Lindenmayer Memorial Lecture

The Thursday Talks team arranged and hosted the inaugural Bruce Lindenmayer Memorial Lecture which was held on 5 February 2026 at Manning Clark Hall at the ANU.

The talk, *Rethinking fire in Australian landscapes*, by Distinguished Professor David Lindenmayer drew about 330 bookings.

Promotional activities included two radio interviews by the speaker: one on a Victorian radio station and another on ABC Radio Canberra.

At the request of David Lindenmayer, the talk was video recorded, and the video has been posted on a YouTube channel set up for the Bruce Lindenmayer Memorial Lectures, for this and coming talks in the series ([youtube.com/@BruceLindenmayerMemorial](https://youtube.com/@BruceLindenmayerMemorial)). A link to this recording is also available on the home page of the Friends website.

After the event, both Phil and David Lindenmayer said they were very happy with the attendance and interest in the talk from members of the public, and are eager to identify a suitable speaker for next year, recognising the great interest in the series.

**Sharon Abrahams**

## Get snapping: The annual student photo competition

Our perennially popular photographic competition is back again for its 26th year.

The competition is open to students in Years 3 to 12 at Australian primary or secondary schools or colleges, or undertaking home study in Australia. It offers a fun and educational opportunity for students to capture the value and beauty of the ANBG, and share that beauty through their photography.



Stephen Playford

Distinguished Professor David Lindenmayer presented his research findings about fire in Australian landscapes.

All entries must be digital photos taken in the ANBG between 30 August 2025 and 28 August 2026, featuring some aspect of the Gardens such as plants, wildlife or scenery.

So don't wait till the competition opens in winter: encourage your student photographers to visit the Gardens in the April school holidays.

Cash prizes are awarded across five categories for individual students, and their winning entries are displayed in the Gardens. The 1st Prize winners also receive \$250 and a native plant for their school or college garden.

The competition entry form opens on 1 July and closes at 5.00 pm AEST on Friday 28 August 2026. More information is on the Friends' website at [friendsanbg.org.au/activities\\_schoolsphotocomp](https://friendsanbg.org.au/activities_schoolsphotocomp)

**Julie Hamilton**



The 2026 Students Photographic Competition poster features prize-winning photos from last year's competition. Share it with your networks and encourage eligible students to enter the competition.

# Friends Briefs (cont.)



Kevin Gale

Left: (Left to right) Karin Neufeld, Matt Parker, Director of ANBG, Linda Beveridge, President, and Debbie Howard. Right: 'Silver-leaved Mountain Gum (*Eucalyptus pulverulenta*)' by Debbie Howard. 'Bubbling Bee' by Karin Neufeld, is shown on the back cover.



## Donation of photos to ANBG

Two images – 'Bubbling Bee' by Karin Neufeld, portraying a Masked Bee (*Hyalaeus* sp.) on *Grevillea petrophiloides* producing a bubble of nectar, and 'Silver-leaved Mountain Gum (*Eucalyptus pulverulenta*)' by Debbie Howard – were presented by Linda Beveridge, President, to Matt Parker, Director of ANBG, for the ANBG's art collection on 27 February 2026. These photos were selected from *Illuminate 25*, the exhibition by the Friends Photographic Group, from 21 November to 14 December 2025.

Karin said she is learning a lot about Australian plants during her first year with the Photographic Group. During a walk she noticed intermittent sparkles and, upon looking closer, she was intrigued to see the bee blowing a bubble, and then found that these bees, along with several other species of Australian native bees, produce bubbles of nectar to concentrate the nectar before ingesting it.

Debbie had walked to this eucalypt tree several times as she was particularly interested in a good photo of its flowers in the axil between the leaf and the stem, whereas flowers are more commonly seen nearer tips. Debbie has been a member of the Photographic Group for about seven years and has exhibited selected photographs previously. She enjoys photography as a means of clearly showing the characteristics of plants.

**Linda Beveridge**

## Butterfly Walks

Dr Suzi Bond led our fully booked Butterfly Walks again this year. We were disappointed that it was overcast and cool during both the morning and afternoon walks. Although there had been strong winds during the days before, it was mostly calm on this day and we walked in sheltered areas.

Our walk took us up the incline beside the Eastern Mallee section of the Gardens, then into the Rainforest Gully. We walked across to the Rock Gardens and its lawn area, then past the Asteraceae gardens and also across the Brittle Gum Lawn.

As butterflies need the warmth of the sun for energy to fly, we saw only eight species this year, fewer species and fewer individuals than in previous years.

During the morning, for example, we saw only one Common Brown butterfly, a male, whereas in previous years we had seen scores of males and females enjoying sunny weather at this time of year.

An Orchard Swallowtail was perched in one of its favourite native citrus shrubs waiting for the sun. Macleays Swallowtails flew overhead during both the morning and afternoon walks.

After walking from the Rock Gardens we paused to look at a Kurrajong tree and the evidence there of the larval shelters of Bronze Flat butterflies and the neat holes the caterpillars had chewed in the Kurrajong leaves.

Observing an Australian Painted Lady egg-laying on a native daisy in the Rock Gardens was an unexpected opportunity for several photographers in the group. The small Common Grass Blue butterflies are much easier to see when they fly up from the grass as we saw in the afternoon. A Yellow Admiral butterfly was also spotted, flying very fast.

**Linda Beveridge**



### Always welcomes Friends...

...with a 10% discount on purchases over \$10 (including gift vouchers) on presentation of their current membership card.

No discounts given on redemption of gift vouchers or sale table items.

For more information please visit the Botanical Bookshop Facebook page, Instagram or website

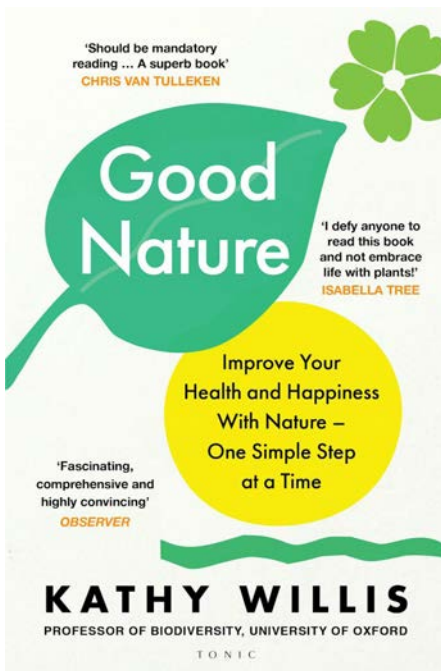
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Suzi Bond

Common Grass Blue butterfly.

# Botanical Bookshop book reviews



**Good Nature. 2024**

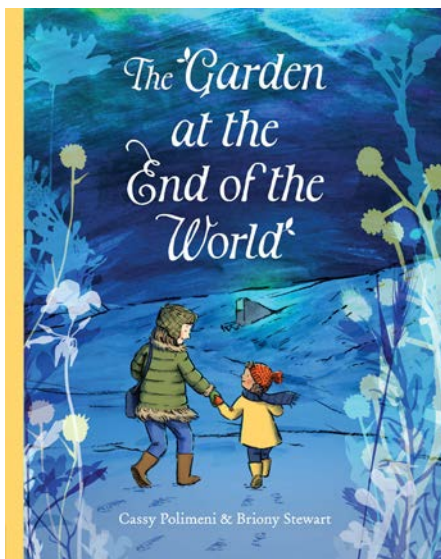
**By Kathy Willis. Includes colour photographs. Paperback, 325 pages, \$25**

We all know that nature makes us feel better. But what does the science say about this?

Professor Kathy Willis explores the latest research behind how nature affects our senses and the surprising benefits to our health.

From looking at green leaves to make us more focused and creative, to listening to birdsong to reduce pain, or getting our hands dirty gardening to increase our gut microbiome, there are a myriad of small ways we can incorporate nature to improve our lives.

This book also suggests how including more nature into schools, workplaces and community spaces could promote public health and productivity. Something as simple as more indoor plants and wood panelling in rooms could contribute to a more relaxed and happier society.



**The Garden at the End of the World. 2023**

**By Cassy Polimeni. Illustrations by Briony Stewart Hardcover, 32 pages, \$27**

Inside the mountain is a vault. And inside the vault are millions of seeds.

Isla finds an intriguing seed pod in her garden. Her mother suggests taking it with them to the Svalbard Global Seed Vault located on the icy Norwegian island of Spitsbergen.

Author Cassy Polimeni has taken a somewhat complex topic and knitted it into an inspiring, easy to follow story with a little hint of fiction. A whimsical adventure completed by Briony Stewart's charming artwork, incorporating flora cyanotypes throughout the pages.

A comforting book to introduce elements of preservation, climate science and food security to children, and perhaps encourage the start of their own backyard seed bank.



Botanical Bookshop staff (left to right): Ange, Natski, Sue and Rebecca.

## Sue Dowling retires from Bookshop

The staff of the Botanical Bookshop would like to wish the wonderful Sue Dowling all the best for retirement. Sue has been the heart of the bookshop for many years and a part of the ANBG for several decades.

We will miss her wealth of knowledge and unconditional passion for all things nature, science, education and community. Thank you, Sue.

You may not see her behind the counter anymore, but you might just catch her on a walk around the Gardens!

# Friendly Chatter

## Botanic Art Group

The Botanic Art Group is pleased to announce that our 19th annual exhibition will be held in the Visitor Centre from 10 April to 3 May 2026. The exhibition by members features artworks of native flora, and in addition this year, some works will focus on a theme of wetland plants.

Artists have chosen to work in a variety of media in addition to the more traditional watercolour, including linocuts, scratchboard and coloured pencil. A number of artists have focused on the broader subject of habitat. Once again we will have small Squares of 12 x 12 cms on display to illustrate some of the work undertaken in monthly meetings.

The exhibition is open everyday from 9.30 am to 4.30 pm. All works are for sale including the Squares which range in price from \$10 to \$50.

Jacqui Gilleland has generously donated a painting which will be raffled to raise money for the Friends. Jacqui has received awards from the Royal Horticultural Society in past years and her work is held in national and international collections

**All Friends are invited to the Special Preview on Thursday 9 April, from 2.00 to 4.00 pm when they will have the opportunity to purchase artwork before the exhibition is open to the public on Friday 10 April.**

New members are always welcome. There are three meetings a month (except in January) including a Saturday group. If you would like further information about meetings or workshops please email [botanicart@friendsanbg.org.au](mailto:botanicart@friendsanbg.org.au)

**Kate Ramsey**



Above: Mangrove, Morgyn Phillips.

Right: *Nymphaea violacea*, Margaret Steele.



## Growing Friends

Looking back at the summer just past, the weather has been confusing for both gardens and gardeners alike. Vacillating between days of elevated temperatures in the 40s, and then the next day in the teens with quite cold nights, even for Canberra. Many gardeners have lost plants, and most have observed a confused growth of plants in their gardens this year.

Growing Friends has been busy with the installation of new improved cutting beds, with a now screened in area to encourage a more humid microclimate. With the new cutting beds, the plants require less water at the roots level, whilst the upper leaves enjoy the humid microclimate on a continuous basis.

Another cutting bed is planned for commissioning in the coming months. The second cutting bed will enable

different temperatures and watering conditions in each bed to cater for diverse groups of cuttings.

The group has also started organising small groups of members to visit other facilities in the Gardens. These include the Gardens Library and NSB. Growing Friends appreciates the time that Gardens staff gave in hosting these visits.

Thank you to Tom North, Curator, and to Lyn for organising 20 Growing Friends (mostly the Tuesday group) to tour the NSB on 20 January. The group appreciated the upgrade to the old building and could see how that would enhance the NSB capability.

The group really enjoyed the opportunity, and the acknowledgment of contributions from Friends to purchase some of their equipment. We will organise a smaller group tour again later in the year.

Notification of a total fire ban and partial Gardens closure on 5 and 6 February caused a change in arrangements to the monthly meeting and cutting session. At the monthly meeting, the group discussed a long-term plan for how watering might be done when restricted or no access to the igloo was available, either for fire bans or high winds (over 27 km/hr winds plus gusts).

Growing Friends has now installed a seed incubation bed, for the specific needs of germinating seed. The sealed incubation bed controls the temperature and provides a stable environment.

At the November Volunteers Recognition Ceremony, Cath Hewson and Lynn McKeanie from the Growing Friends were awarded by President Linda Beveridge, named for their services to the group and a keen interest on propagating seeds and promoting interest in other areas of the Gardens, including guiding ad hoc walks around the Gardens after our working bee and coffee on Tuesday mornings.



Above: *Calothamnus*, watercolour by Rose Hurley.  
Right: Tree House, watercolour by Cynthia Breheny.



The Growing Friends autumn plant sale on 14 March was the most successful ever held. Over 1,500 plants were taken home by happy customers, and around \$9,800 was raised, which will be used to support projects around the Gardens.

For more information about the plants that the group propagates for its sales, as well as how to join the group, please email [growingfriends@friendsanbg.org.au](mailto:growingfriends@friendsanbg.org.au)

**Donna Growcock**



Bron Houlden

Large numbers of people had queued before the opening of the Growing Friends autumn plant sale to buy their 'wishlist' plants. Most plants were sold within 30 minutes.

## Nature Journaling

The Friends Nature Journaling Group meets once a month, on the first Monday of the month. We meet at the Visitor Centre at 10.00 am and then disperse in the Gardens. We then meet up again at a designated spot in the Gardens about 11.30 am to share our thoughts, drawings, photos, and poetry. Because we are moving around the Gardens we travel light, with art materials, portable stool, camera, binoculars etc.

It is not necessary to be an accomplished botanical artist. It's really about meditation, contemplation of the natural environment and recording what you see and feel, in whatever medium you choose. It's a very peaceful activity.

If you would like to join us, please contact [lespage26@gmail.com](mailto:lespage26@gmail.com)

**Lesley Page**

# Friendly Chatter (cont.)

## Photographic Group

Since the last edition of *FronDS* went to press the Photographic Group's annual exhibition, *Illuminate 2025* drew to a very successful close.

At the very well attended opening of the exhibition the President of the Friends, Linda Beveridge, announced the prize winners, all of whom were present and delighted to be recognised.

The David Cox Memorial Prize for Australian Native Flora and Fungi was awarded to Karin Neufeld for her photograph 'Rusty'. Pam Rooney was Runner Up with 'A Silver Princess'. Narelle Aldridge received a Highly Commended for 'Dew Drops in the Desert'.

In a reversal of fortunes, Pam Rooney won in the Fauna Category for her multi imaged 'Bush Dialogue: Tracks and tunnels of the scribbly gum moth larvae'. Karin Neufeld was runner-up this time with 'Bubbling Bee'. Simone Slater received Highly Commended for 'Seven!'.

The blind judging for these awards was undertaken by award winning nature photographers Helen McFadden and Cristy Froelich who also generously spent time with several photographers at the opening, discussing their entries with them.

This year's Rangers Choice Award was collected by Narelle Aldridge for 'Dew Drops in the Desert'. The Friends of ANBG selected not one but two photographs to purchase for the Gardens. They are 'Bubbling Bee' by Karin Neufeld and 'Mountain Gum' taken by Debbie Howard.

*Illuminate 2025* ended on Sunday 14 December. Total sales were around \$15,000 with raffle sales of \$1,300. Twenty per cent of the value of sales will go to the Friends.



Karin Neufeld



Pam Rooney



Simone Slater

Top: The David Cox Memorial Prize for Australian Native Flora and Fungi was awarded to Karin Neufeld for her photograph 'Rusty'.

Above: Pam Rooney was runner-up with 'A Silver Princess' (left) and Simone Slater received Highly Commended for 'Seven!' (right).

Over half the framed photographs on display were sold. A great result. In addition, multiple reprints of several images and lots of other merchandise were sold.

A big thank you to all the exhibitors, other members of the Photographic Group that helped with staffing the exhibition and the *Illuminate 2025* working group which put such a big effort into making it a success.

The Photographic Group's final monthly meeting for 2025 took place on Friday 28 November. Graham Gall was the speaker. He briefed the meeting about the Birdlife Photography Biennial Conference which by the time you have read this will have taken place in Canberra in early March 2026. Graham, who is Chair of the organising committee for the conference told us about the themes of the conference, the invited speakers and associated birding outings and other events.

The November meeting also re-elected members to the Photographic Group Committee.

Phil Green continues as Convenor, Stephen Hunter as Publicity Officer, Paul Bainton as Membership Officer, Kevin Gale, Secretary and Simone Slater and Wendy Shelton as Committee members.

Our Cameras and Café walks continued over the summer months with a record attendance in January. The Photographic Group also continued to provide the Gardens social media team with images to help promote ANBG.

Work has already commenced on assisting the Gardens to prepare the 2027 Calendar and the Photographic Group Committee is putting together a lively selection to speakers for our regular meetings, which take place on the final Friday of each month. Remember, membership is open to all Friends.

**Phil Green**



Guides (left to right) Trish, Jane, Beth and Julia at the welcome reception at Government House.

Kerry Moir

## Volunteer Guides

Volunteer Guides really enjoy showing visitors around our wonderful Gardens, and one thing they enjoy just as much is visiting and learning about other botanic gardens.

In October last year the 18th Australasian Botanic Gardens Guides Conference was held in Adelaide and Guides who attended had many opportunities to visit botanic gardens in and near Adelaide. The Botanic Gardens of SA manages three very different botanic gardens – Adelaide, Mount Lofty and Wittunga – as well as Botanic Park. The conference program included tours at each of these locations, a garden tour and welcome reception at Government House, and excursions to other gardens near Adelaide.

Despite the cold and wet weather, ANBG Guides enjoyed the garden visits. Here are some of their reflections. Elizabeth particularly

enjoyed the Mount Lofty tour. It was a beautiful garden and the rain made the colours of the flowers more vivid and the variation of greens in the foliage more lush.

The Australian Forest at the Adelaide Botanic Garden was a highlight for Kay. The forest was established in 1867, so there are lots of mature trees that are now 150 years old.

The Wittunga Botanic Garden visit was a highlight for Trish as it gave her the chance to renew her acquaintance with many of the South African plants that she had seen before.

ANBG Guides also enjoyed meeting guides from botanic gardens all over Australia and experiencing different guiding techniques on numerous guided walks. Attending the conference and garden tours was a significant professional development opportunity for the Guides who attended, and they all appreciated the financial support provided by the Friends of the ANBG.

**Kerry Moir**

# Gardens Shorts

## Director's report

Welcome back to the ANBG for 2026!

The start of the year was marked by some very hot weather. It will come as no surprise that watering was a big focus over summer, with our horticulturists working overtime to keep our plants healthy during heatwaves. The Rainforest Gully provided a cool oasis on 40-plus degree days, with temperatures in the lower gully dropping more than 10 degrees below the outside temperature.

Behind the scenes, work continues on the development of the ANBG Living Collections Strategy. This important document will guide the curation and management of our living collections for the next 10 years. Consultation workshops have been underway with Friends, volunteers and staff to gather input and feedback.

Construction of the Ian Potter National Conservatory is moving forward, with recent works including ducting and steel work. Passersby will be able to see the developing external landscape including construction of paths and retaining walls, and building up soil profiles. The ANBG Living Collections team has also been preparing and planting out the entrance walk leading into the site.

The upgraded National Seed Bank was officially opened in November 2025. The Seed Bank team is making good use of the increased storage capacity and expanded laboratory facilities, with numerous seed collecting trips occurring throughout summer and autumn.

Also in November, ANBG hosted the 2025 Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand (BGANZ) Congress. Over 200 delegates attended the Congress, representing botanic gardens and arboreta from across Australia and New Zealand.



Carol Dale

Congress delegates tour the ANBG Nursery.

Congratulations to the ANBG and National Seed Bank teams who put in a huge amount of work organising tours, field trips and presentations. We are also grateful to the Friends for their generous sponsorship of the Congress.

Public engagement has been strong so far this year. The ACT Herpetological Society returned to the Gardens in January with their annual *Snakes Alive!* event, delighting children and adults alike with live displays of reptiles and frogs. In February, staff from the ANBG Education and National Seed Bank teams attended the STEM Extravaganza at the Canberra Show for the second year running. Finally in March the ANBG hosted a special event for *Enlighten*, using UV torches to explore biofluorescent plants, animals and fungi in the Gardens.

Events such as these connect the ANBG with the broader Canberra community, allowing us to showcase our beautiful Australian flora and champion the incredible science and conservation work undertaken by our staff and project partners.

**Matthew Parker**

## ANBG hosts Botanic Gardens Congress

The ANBG was proud to host the 2025 Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand (BGANZ) Congress, held from 2–5 November.

The theme of the Congress was 'Advancing our reach: Innovation and leadership in botanic gardens'. A total of 212 delegates came together to share experiences and expertise, and to build relationships with colleagues from across Australia and New Zealand.

Through plenary sessions, presentations and workshops, delegates shared innovative projects happening in their gardens. Topics ranged from event horticulture to threatened species conservation and respectful co-design with First Nations peoples.

The congress also allowed the ANBG and the National Seed Bank to showcase some of our incredible conservation work, such as the collaborative Survive and Thrive bushfire recovery project, and to celebrate the work undertaken daily by both our Living Collections and Visitor Experience teams in presenting a world-class horticultural, tourism and educational institution.

Thank you to the Friends of the ANBG for their generous sponsorship of the Congress.



Katy Burffinton

The National Seed Bank and ANBG tables at the Canberra Show.

## STEM Extravaganza at the Canberra Show

On Saturday 21 February, staff from ANBG and the National Seed Bank shared their knowledge and enthusiasm at the Canberra Show's STEM Extravaganza.

The National Seed Bank encouraged people to look at seeds on agar plates and learn about germination strategies. Children sowed their own seed germination tests to take home.

ANBG Education staff showcased activities from the Plant Science Learning Hub, helping attendees make wind-dispersed seeds.

Visitors also learned about the important role of beneficial insects in pest control, examining live bugs through microscopes.

The stand was brought to life by specimens of threatened plants *Muehlenbeckia tuggeranong* (Tuggeranong Lignum), *Viola improcera* (Dwarf Violet) and *Pneumatopteris truncata* (Christmas Island Fern).

An estimated 400 people visited the ANBG stand, increasing the visibility of the Gardens and its scientific work behind the scenes to new audiences.

## Corpse Flower turns over a new leaf

A year on from its memorable flowering event in February 2025, the ANBG's Corpse Flower, *Amorphophallus titanum* – nicknamed 'Morphy' or 'Morpheus' by staff – continues to thrive.

*Amorphophallus titanum* only produces either a single leaf or flower spike (inflorescence) at a time, senescing afterwards to a dormant underground corm or tuber.

After flowering, Morphy's 8 kg corm was repotted into a larger pot. After 10 months of dormancy, a new leaf bud appeared on 10 December 2025. Leaves take several weeks to mature, growing as tall as 5 metres. This is an important growth stage, allowing the plant to photosynthesise and store sugars to support future flowering events.

*Amorphophallus titanum* is an endangered species from Sumatra, Indonesia. Recent blooms in botanic gardens across Australia are the result of long-term conservation programs, increasing the number of mature plants over the last 20 years.

During last year's flowering event the ANBG Glasshouse team collected pollen from our plant. This pollen was stored in different conditions in the National Seed Bank to determine the best method for long term viability.

A single, massive leaf might not garner fervent media attention – or smell like rotting meat – but every growth cycle is a step closer to its next flowering event.



Carol Dale

Corpse Flower in February 2026.

# Gardens Shorts (cont.)

## Securing species on Balawan/Mount Imlay: collaboration and innovation

Nestled amongst the temperate sclerophyll forests of the New South Wales south coast lies Mount Imlay, called Balawan in Yuin language.

Due to its geographic isolation, this steep, rocky mountain is home to a high number of endemic species – organisms that are found nowhere else. Balawan is considered an Asset of Intergenerational Significance for two threatened endemic plants species, *Eucalyptus imlayensis* and *Hibbertia circinata*, under the amended NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act.

### Collaboration to support conservation

Since the bushfires of 2019–20 the ANBG Nursery and National Seed Bank (NSB) have worked with NSW Parks and Wildlife Service and research partners to drive recovery of threatened species on Balawan.

In November 2025, staff from ANBG and the NSB joined conservation partners on Balawan to bag seed from several threatened plant species. The team returned in February 2026 to collect the bagged seed.



ANBG



ANBG

Mesh seed cup on *Persoonia brevifolia* (left) and bag on *Oxylobium bracteosum* fruit (right).

The primary target species of these trips was *Hibbertia circinata*, or Connie's Guinea Flower. These plants, which are only found on the summit area of Balawan, are being badly affected by the root-rotting fungal disease *Phytophthora*. A total of 1,317 *Hibbertia* seeds were collected, securing a future for this species.

Other species targeted included *Boronia imlayensis*, *Oxylobium bracteosum*, and *Persoonia brevifolia*. Final collection numbers for these species will be confirmed once processing is complete.

The NSB will use this seed to create an insurance back-up in the seed vault and to research germination protocols, supporting ongoing conservation efforts including development of ex-situ collections at ANBG.

### Trialing new methods for remote collecting

Seed collecting in remote locations is challenging, as field trip opportunities don't always align with seed collecting windows of target species. Bagging seed involves placing bags around fruit to catch seed as it falls, to be collected on a return trip at a later date.

The Balawan team has also been trialing a new seed collecting mechanism designed by NSB volunteer Leigh Murray. Leigh designed an open, free draining cup which collects seed without excluding pollinators, accommodating plants with prolonged or sequential flowering.

While the design still needs some refining, this could be a game changer for seed collecting in remote locations where fieldwork opportunities are limited, especially with more erratic seasons and fluctuating ripening times driven by climate change. The team are grateful to Leigh for her skills and patience in providing a prototype for the seed cups.



ANBG

The main target species for seed collection was *Hibbertia circinata*, shown in flower.

# What's on at the Gardens

## April to August 2026

Details are correct at the time of printing. Please check the Friends website [friendsanbg.org.au](http://friendsanbg.org.au) or the ANBG website [anbg.gov.au](http://anbg.gov.au) for changes and updates.

## Walks, Tours and Trails

### Guided Walks

**11.00 am and 2.00 pm daily  
Free\***

Enhance your visit to the Gardens by going on a free guided walk with a Volunteer Guide. Every guided walk is different as Guides share stories about the fascinating array of Australian plants on display.

### Self-guided walks

**Free**

Collect a map from the Visitor Centre to begin the trail.

### Flora Explorer Bus Tours

**Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays**

**11.30 am and 1.30 pm  
\$8 adult, \$5 child and concessions**

**Book on ANBG website**

Sit back, relax and be taken on a 45 minute highlight tour of the Gardens.

### Secrets of the Australian Bush

**April 7, 9, 13, 15 and 17  
10.30 am**

**See ANBG website for details**

Join us for a family-friendly Flora Explorer bus tour.



Elizabeth, ANBG Guide

Jamie and Ben from Victoria thoroughly enjoyed a private, booked Flora tour to celebrate their first wedding anniversary.

### Book a Private Tour

**Costs apply**

Tour the Gardens with your own tailored guided walk or Flora Explorer bus tour to suit your special interests, or purchase as a gift. Conditions apply. For more information contact [bookedwalks@friendsanbg.org.au](mailto:bookedwalks@friendsanbg.org.au) or [floragroups@anbg.gov.au](mailto:floragroups@anbg.gov.au)

### Themed Walks

**11.00 am and 2.00 pm one hour walks  
Free\***

**Way out West (Flora of WA)**

**4-10 May**

The south-west of Western Australia is a Biodiversity Hotspot, one of two in Australia, with only 35 recognised globally. A free guided walk will look at the riches of WA flora, with their amazing adaptations to the environment. We will also learn about the efforts taken to get them to grow at the ANBG in very different conditions to their native habitat.

### Up Close and Personal

**15-21 June**

Join a free guided walk to get up close and personal to our wonderful Australian flora. Are they roots on the outside of that trunk? The young of that tree has very different leaves to its parents. Where are the petals on that bottlebrush flower? This walk will focus on the interesting details of Australian plants that we might not notice at first glance.

### Plants Through Time

**20-26 July**

Come on a free guided walk through the ANBG and look at the life story of plants on Earth, the main evolutionary changes that have occurred in plants over 3 billion years and how plants have changed our planet. To keep a grasp on that time scale we will condense that 3 billion year period into a calendar year.

### Seeds of Wonder

**17-23 August**

Science week in 2026 has the theme *Seeds of science: Nurturing knowledge for all*. Seeds of plants come in all shapes and sizes. Seeds, with their packed lunch on board, are a place where time can stand still. But seeds don't stand still, they move around the environment. Come for a free guided walk in the Gardens and discover some of the amazing properties of seeds.

### Storytime in the Gardens

**First Friday of the month**

**10.00 - 11.00 am**

**\$5 per child, adults and infants under 12-months free**

**Crosbie Morrison Lawn**

**Book on ANBG website**

Join us on the first Friday of every month for family fun with stories about Australian plants and animals. Each themed session is packed with stories, songs and craft. Suitable for pre-schoolers.

\*Meet at the flag near the cafe bridge. No booking required for individuals, but groups of more than six people should contact [walks@friendsanbg.org.au](mailto:walks@friendsanbg.org.au) a week in advance.



## Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*

1–6 April

Burbidge Amphitheatre  
Book on ANBG website

Step into the world of ancient tragedy this April as the award winning Greek Theatre Now brings Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* to life under the open sky at the beautiful Burbidge Amphitheatre.

## Removing woody weeds from Black Mountain and/or ANBG

Saturday 4 April, 8.30 to 11.30 am  
Saturday 2 May, 6 June, 4 July and 1 August, 9.00 am to 12 noon

Weeding Work Parties are the first Saturday morning of every month. See details on the Friends of ANBG website for the meeting place for each party. Please book so there is enough delicious morning tea. Email [friendsofblackmountain@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofblackmountain@gmail.com) for further information or phone Linda on 0437 298 711.

## Canberra and Region Heritage Festival

11 April to Sunday 10 May

See ANBG website for details

**First Nation walk** (Black Mountain)

Wednesday 15 April and  
Saturday 9 May, 10.30 am – noon

**Volunteer guided walk**

ANBG history  
Saturday 2 May, 11.30 am

**Flora tours**

Friday 24 April and Thursday  
30 April, 11.30 am

## Canberra Tree Week Children's Art Exhibition

1–31 May

Children's Trail  
Free

See the work of Canberra's budding artists on display in a special outdoor exhibition showcasing the winning entries from the children's 5–12 years *Branch Out* art competition.

## Exhibitions

Visitor Centre Gallery

Open Daily 9.30 am – 4.30 pm

Free

10 April – 3 May

**Wetlands**

The Botanic Art Group is pleased to announce their 19th annual exhibition, featuring artworks of native flora, with a special focus on wetland plants and habitats. The works are in a variety of media, from the more traditional watercolour to linocuts and scratchboard. All works are for sale.

**A special preview for Friends will be held on Thursday 9 April, 2–4 pm.**

6–31 May

TBC. See ANBG website for details.

3–28 June

**Interleave – Canberra Craft Bookbinders' Guild**

*Interleave* is an exhibition of contemporary artists' books inspired by the notion of botanic gardens: their ability to arouse the senses, their science, their craft, their politics and their educative role. Through intimate engagement with gardens, artists will respond through contemporary bookbinding practices. Join the guild for a public book binding workshop (TBC).

1–26 July

TBC. See ANBG website for details.

26 August – 20 September

**Nature: A New Look**

*Nature: A New Look* is an exhibition of nature inspired works in a variety of media showing a diversity of styles from traditionally realistic to expressive and free. Vivien Pinder, Wendy Antoniak, Cornelia Buchen-Osmond and Maria Boreham are four long-standing members of the Friends Botanic Art Group have joined together for the fourth time to exhibit their artworks. This exhibition shows the evolving art practises, taking some in diverse directions, but still expressing their love of nature.

## Botanic Gardens Week

18–24 May

More details to come

Botanic Gardens Week is a celebration to highlight the role of plants in our lives and the important work botanic gardens and arboreta do every day to conserve them for future generations. The theme for this year is *The Health and Wellbeing Value of Botanic Gardens*.

## MEGAfauna

1–31 July

Free

See ANBG website for details

What traces did these giants leave behind and how do scientists find out what they ate, how they moved and what might have caused megafauna to die out.

# Thursday Talks

## April to August 2026

One hour talks are held at 12.30 pm every Thursday from February to November in the ANBG Theatrette. We welcome donations by gold coins, notes or electronically. The Friends use the donations received to support Gardens programs and development and thank all those who have donated. It is a good idea to reserve a seat at the talks that you wish to attend; talks can book out very quickly. The booking link is on the [friendsanbg.org.au/calendar](https://friendsanbg.org.au/calendar) entry for the talk. Bookings can be made about 30 days in advance of the Wednesday night before the talk.

The Friends of the ANBG thank the speakers who volunteer their time and talents to further the knowledge of all attending events in the Gardens. Some summaries or PowerPoint presentations of talks are available from the ANBG library. Please direct queries to [talks@friendsanbg.org.au](mailto:talks@friendsanbg.org.au)

## April

### 2 April

#### Linda Swift Australian plants as bonsai

Linda was the manager of the Canberra Bonsai Society's *Australian Plants as Bonsai* exhibition, *The Secret to Looking Old*, at the ANBG in February 2026. She will share some tips and techniques for creating a mature aged-looking bonsai tree, illustrated with images from the exhibition.

### 9 April

See website for details.

### 16 April

#### Dr Pip Alvarez, Millie Stevens and James Perkins The National Seed Bank: Taking our science and practice to the global and regional stage

This talk will cover some of the projects at the NSB, including testing the viability of seed in storage, the exchange of plant knowledge with the Mala women rangers at Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, and the germination of *Leionema* and *Phebalium* species.



Above: Seed sorting.  
Right: Shiny Phebalium (top) and Alpine Phebalium (middle) flowers and seeds.

### 23 April

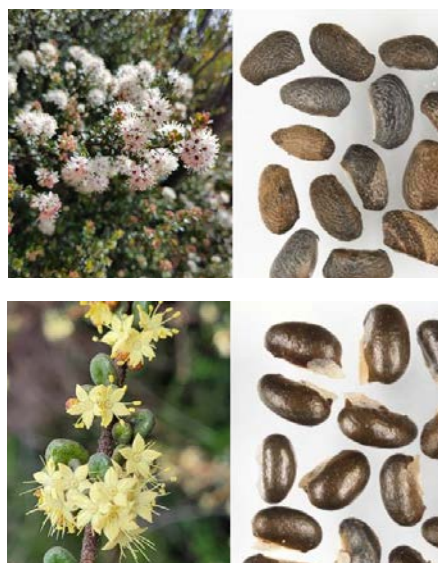
#### Dr Leo Joseph 12 birds, 3 books, 5 cities, and 3 continents: An ornithological life not yet finished

Leo recently retired as Director of the Australian National Wildlife Collection of the CSIRO. He will look back on his travels and study of birds and their evolution in Australia and South America.

### 30 April

#### Associate Professor Brad Tucker The past, present, and future of Mt Stromlo: Celebrating Mt Stromlo's 100th anniversary

Brad will explore the observations and discoveries made at the 100 year old Mt Stromlo Observatory, and how it is shaping the future of astronomy and Canberra – in particular as a test case combating light pollution.



## May

### 7 May

#### Kristy Gould Conserving Canberra: Healing country through restoration

Kristie works with Ngunnawal Cultural Advisors, specialised bush regenerators, a spatial ecologist and volunteers to improve restoration of bush through development of spatial planning tools, delivering on-ground work at three key sites.

### 14 May

#### Kim Pullen More treasures - insects in fens and bogs

Kim, Honorary Fellow at CSIRO, will discuss bogs and fens as an insect habitat; the variety of ecological niches that insects occupy; and outline some threats to the fauna. He will show some local examples of the fauna of this habitat.



Bogs and fens create habitat for fauna, including dragonflies.

Kim Pullen

# Thursday Talks (cont.)

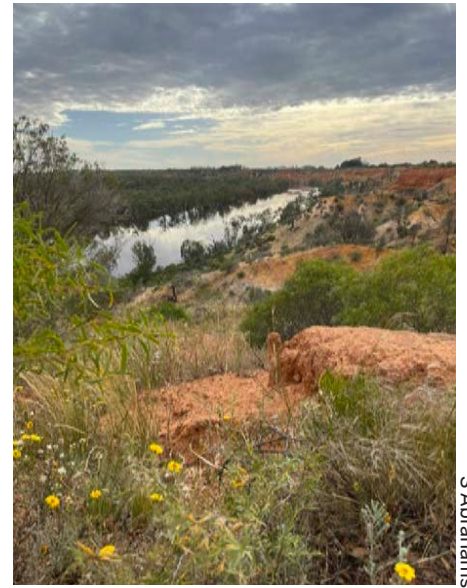


Merinda Campbell



Heidi Zimmer

Left: Andrea Wild in the CSIRO collection. Above: *Thelymitra*, commonly known as Sun Orchid, is a genus of more than 100 species of plants. Right: The River Murray near Renmark, South Australia, December 2022.



S Abrahams

**21 May**

**Andrea Wild**

## **Awe and wonder in CSIRO's collections**

Andrea will share some of the stories from the new popular science book *Wild Collections*. Learn about sharks living in sponges, orchids flowering underground, Spotted Handfish guarding their eggs, weevils rolling dung just like scarabs do, Giant Kelp towering in Tasmania's seas, quirky tales of worm bums, Darkling beetles undertaking a decathlon, the curlicues of shark's eggs and much more.

**28 May**

**Roger Farrow**

## **Back from the brink or a resilient survivor: The case of Key's Matchstick Grasshopper, *Keyacris scurra***

Roger, an unretired CSIRO entomologist interested in native plant ecology, will tell a tale of mystery and suspense involving two geneticists, some cemeteries, a taxonomist, a survey, sheep, habitat loss, citizen scientists and a sceptic.

**June**

**4 June**

**Charlie Blumer and John Darvill**

## **Flower power and no bad bees: Getting the big picture on pollinators in the ACT**

Charlie and Jon explore the identities and ecology of some of the 200-odd native bees and other pollinators in the ACT. They identify why they matter, the threats to them, and how we can help them, balancing this against the presence of European honey bees and the likely impact of the *Varroa* mite.

**11 June**

**Dr Heidi Zimmer**

## **Why do orchid names change?**

This talk will give an overview of taxonomic and nomenclatural principles, provide a gentle introduction to modern methods used in orchid taxonomy and discuss some interesting orchid case studies.

**18 June**

**Dr Rosemary Purdie**

## **River Murray and Coopers Creek surge in flowers**

Rosemary will talk about her trip to Murray River floodplains around Coopers Creek, and the post-flood surge in flowers.

**25 June**

**Dr Fiona Fraser**

## **Protection of threatened species, and bake-offs**

Fiona will talk about recent developments with the implementation of the *Threatened Species Action Plan 2022-32*, and awareness raising events in the community.

**July**

**2 July**

**Dr Gina Newton**

## **Murray River endangered ecological community listing**

Gina will talk about the key pressures that led to the listing of the lower River Murray downstream of the Darling junction as a Critically Endangered ecological community and the implications for its management.

**9 July**

**Professor Rod Peakall**

## **The magic of chemistry in the pollination and evolution of Australian terrestrial orchids**

Rod will describe how orchids use specific floral volatiles to secure pollinator attraction and highlight new insights on the evolution of Australia terrestrial orchids. The talk will be illustrated by beautiful photographs and fascinating video clips.



Rod Peakall

Some of the beautiful photos of orchids Rod Peakall will use in his talk.

**16 July**

**Dr Phillip Kodela**

**Wattle in your pocket, the bank-notable wattles: Science behind the Next Generation Banknotes of Australia**

Philip had the excitement of advising the design and five species of *Acacia* to be used in the Next Generation Banknotes. He will address why there was a need for the new banknotes, why these wattle species, and some of the technical issues and challenges with the project.

**23 July**

**Dr John Turnbull**

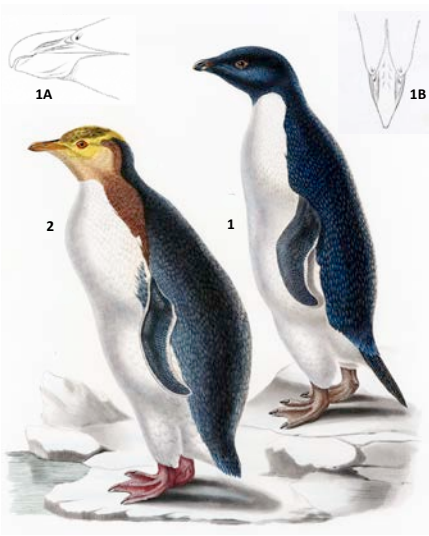
**Trees, woods and man**

John, a former CSIRO forest research scientist, will trace the importance of trees from earliest times to the present day.

**30 July**

See website for details

Veronica Briceno-Rodriguez.



Provided

Above left: Illustration of two penguin species described and illustrated by members of the French expedition, with the Adélie Penguin (right) and the Yellow-eyed Penguin (left), found in New Zealand. This is the first illustration of both penguin species published in 1841. Above right: Jawoyn ranger and a malaise trap, used for trapping flying insects.



Jo Harding

**August**

**6 August**

**Emeritis Professor Patrick De Deckker**

**On the extraordinary expedition of Dumont d'Urville that discovered Antarctica in 1840**

Patrick, formerly of the ANU, will present many of the Dumont d'Urville expedition's findings between 1837 and 1840, from 6,740 pages of text, 481 plates of illustrations and 77 maps of Antarctica. He will also show slides of the surroundings of the French Antarctic station called Dumont d'Urville.



Provided

**13 August**

**Dr Veronica Briceno-Rodriguez**

**From lab coats, hiking boots, and hot desks to plant conservation at the ANBG**

Join Veronica, Conservation Horticulture Manager at the ANBG, as she shares her journey from plant ecophysiology research to conservation policy, and ultimately bringing it all together with hands-on plant conservation at the ANBG.

**20 August**

See website for details.

**27 August**

**Jo Harding**

**Bush Blitz driving new approaches to working with traditional owners**

Recent expeditions – from Nitmiluk in the Northern Territory to the Pilliga region of NSW – have revealed species not previously recorded and strengthened scientific understanding of culturally significant landscapes.

This presentation will share how Bush Blitz is improving the way we work with Traditional Owners and will share the practical approaches that have made these partnerships successful.

*Friends* of the  
Australian National  
Botanic Gardens



*Helping The Gardens Grow*