

Fronds

Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens
Number 113 August 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 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: The ephemeral Purple-Flowered Poison-Pea, *Swainsona affinis*. Image by Rosemary Purdie. See article page 6.

Back cover: *Swainsona affinis* carpeting the ground with the daisy *Rhodanthe moschata* (Musk Sunray) in the foreground. Image by Rosemary Purdie.

The Ducrou Pavilion revisited

By Cathy Robertson

Did any of us realise that there is a 'whispering wall' at the Ducrou Pavilion? I learned about it in June, when members of the works' team who built the Pavilion made a site visit to the Australian National Botanic Gardens. Rocky Padjen, Don Maye and Alan Chambers joined Barbara Podger and me from the Fronds team to spend a morning recollecting their experiences constructing the Ducrou Pavilion and revisiting the projects they completed for the Gardens over several decades. They also gifted their photo collections associated with Gardens' projects to the Gardens' image archive.

The whispering wall was perhaps the most intriguing discovery during their visit.

How does a whispering wall work?

Historically whispering structures have been galleries in large buildings, such as the famous one in the dome of St Paul's Cathedral in London. However, a hemispherical enclosure, such as the Pavilion's wall, will also guide whispering because even the simplest constructed hemispherical form allows whispered communication from any part of the internal side of the circumference to any other part. The sound is carried by waves, known as whispering-gallery waves that travel around the circumference clinging to the walls, an effect that is thought to have been first discovered in St Paul's whispering gallery, built in the seventeenth century.



The team has constructed rock walls, paths, and steps in the Gardens.

APIL, R Padjen



APIL, R Padjen



Barbara Podger

Top: The Ducrou Pavilion with a view of the 'whispering wall', the curved blue masonry wall around the Pavilion. The Pavilion is located off the main pathway on the Eucalypt Lawn and has a relaxed, informal atmosphere. It was designed with a tree-like form and blends beautifully with its surrounds.

Above: (L to R) Alan Chambers, Rocky Padjen and Don Maye at the Pavilion in June 2026. Dan and Dan Forestry Services worked with several other contractors on this project. Don Maye prefabricated the steel structure and decorative panels. Over the years, the landscapers' projects have included a wheelchair accessible path up to the Rainforest Gully walkway, the wide stairs either side of the Rock Garden pool, pram ramps, the waste building, paving work around the entrance signs, flag poles and rock walls. Don Maye's company has fabricated steel structures for the Ian Potter National Conservatory.

During our site visit, Barbara tested the powers of the Ducrou Pavilion's wall to transmit whispers. She whispered to Alan at the other end of the curved wall, who heard her every word.

Rocky Padjen, a Principal of Dan and Dan Forestry Services, Alan Chambers, their Foreman, and Don Maye, the founder of Can-Weld, were invited by Malcolm Munro to partner with him to construct the Ducrou Pavilion.

Rocky had started his business planting trees, landscaping Canberra's

suburbs. As his company grew, the team adapted their skills and expertise and subsequently supported the development of the Gardens by constructing pathways, rockeries and rock walls. They installed the Sundial (the first project funded by the Friends, in 2000) as part of the construction of the extension to the Rock Garden above the lawn. Whilst Rocky and Alan have since retired, Don Maye has continued his association with Gardens projects.

Ducrou Pavilion (cont.)

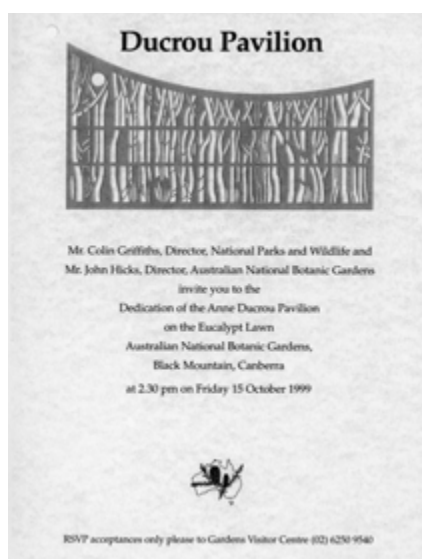
The bequest that made it possible

The story about the Pavilion begins with a donor's generosity which made this project possible. Anne Heather Ducrou (1945–94) made a bequest to the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). Ducrou had been a maths and science teacher and in her later career she had become a senior public servant. She was a member of several community organisations and at one stage took part in a winter survival course in a national park in winter, building a snow cave which she and her companions inhabited overnight.

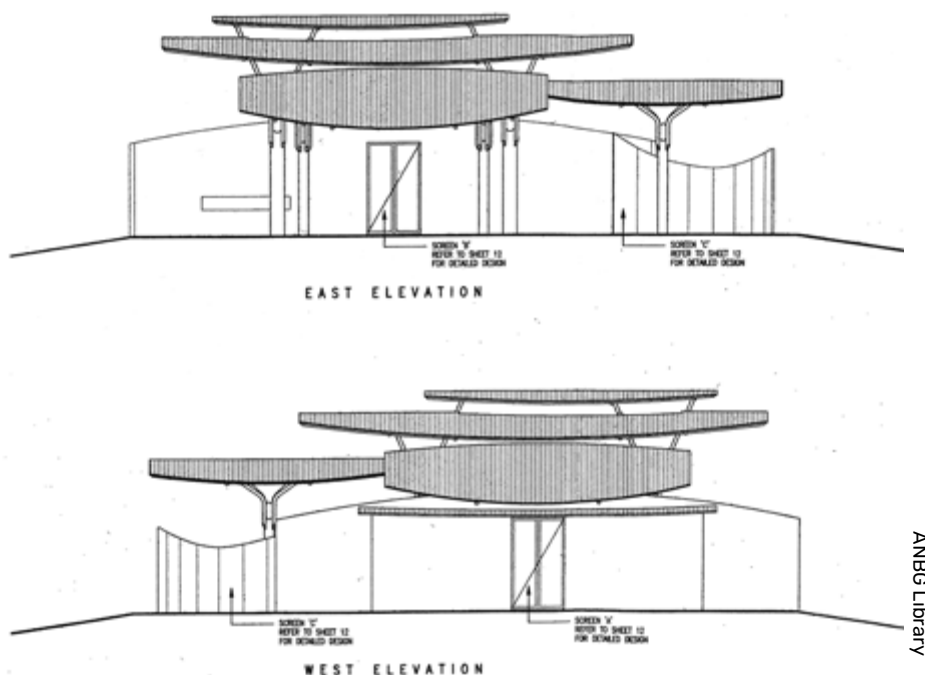
Although some funds from the Ducrou bequest were used to support wildlife research, the remainder was gifted in 1999 to the Gardens to build a shelter on the Eucalypt Lawn.

The Pavilion's design was groundbreaking

In 1999 the Gardens awarded the design for the Pavilion to Malcolm Munro and Associates, Landscape Architects in Canberra. Although Munro was well known in Canberra as an artist and architect, the Ducrou Pavilion was the project that launched his reputation.



The invitation to the dedication of the Ducrou Pavilion. The invitation records the close cooperation between the NPWS (which evolved into Parks Australia in 1999) and the Gardens.



The Ducrou Pavilion drawings submitted by Malcolm Munro and Associates Pty Ltd to the Gardens with the construction proposal.

His subsequent works included a public artwork sculpture, *Commemoration*, commissioned by the ACT Government to commemorate the volunteers and torchbearers who supported the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2000 in Canberra. This sculpture stands outside the Canberra Stadium, in Battye Street, Bruce.

Another earlier example was the landscaping at the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) building in Sydney. Munro's design was selected as the winner from a wide field of entrants in a national RBA garden design competition.

The Ducrou Pavilion is a notable example of organic structuralism applied outdoors. Munro's design created the feeling of an extension of the site's ecosystem, while utilising defined, purposeful built elements such as paving, walls and roofs.

The *Canberra Times* report (Tuesday 24 October 2000) about the Pavilion's design noted that Munro and Leslie Shelley had worked to ensure the building does not 'swamp' the special character of the Lawn.

"The Pavilion features a series of roofs supported by columns – abstracted 'trees' which will help reinforce the importance of real trees to the Gardens' landscape. A special feature is a windscreen constructed of laser cut metal depicting a 'treescape' with profiles of some of the Gardens' wildlife."

State awards

The design and construction of the Pavilion attracted the attention of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA).

Although the Pavilion is a relatively small structure, it won four state and national awards in 2000: the RAIA conferred a Landscape Architecture State Award on the Munro firm which also won the Small Practice Award. Dan and Dan Forestry Services won the Landscape Contractors' Association State Award, and also the Landscape Industries Association National Award for Excellence in Landscape Construction for projects under \$1 million.

The Pavilion was a landmark for Canberra firms

Don Maye said that the Ducrou Pavilion, from an artistic point of view was the first really big project for his company. It gained award-winning recognition in the industry.

"I was the first to have an industrial steel cutter that could cut on a curved surface made possible by a device called 'the magic eye'.

This was the innovation that made it possible to build the design for Malcolm Munro."

"There's a saying in our industry: 'An architect's dream is a fabricator's nightmare'. It was a challenge to fabricate Munro's designs for the panels on the roof and the sides of the shelter with cut outs of birds and animals. We made the prefabricated steel panels in sections, seamlessly joined them and they were transported to the Gardens to be erected at the site."

Alan Chambers, the Foreman with Dan and Dan who built the whispering wall, remembered that: "When we came here (to work at the Gardens), unlike the noise and dust of the building sites we were used to, everything was peaceful and quiet – except for the birds of course."

"People would stop and enquire about the work we were doing. Everything was calm and relaxed. I was bricklayer, a builder and ran my own transport company. So, for me, constructing the whispering wall and wrangling tonnes of rock, aggregate, concrete and soil was satisfying and nice work compared to my earlier jobs."

Rocky Padjen recalled: "We were pushed to the limit. Everything had to be thought through very carefully. Creating curved walls and fitting the curved steel canopy required ingenuity."



APil, R Padjen

The windscreen panel constructed of laser-cut metal depicting a treescape (including a Cockatoo) was a remarkable innovation.

"There was also the issue of preventing the contamination of the environmental water flows caused by run-off from our construction. We had to improvise by making sand berms to collect all the runoff."

"The state awards we won for the Ducrou shelter were unexpected. But the National Award was the biggest surprise. That set us up as a go-to landscaping company in the ACT.

What I did realise was the Gardens' impact on my own garden. I got a lot of plants in my garden because of what I saw in the Gardens."

Acknowledgement

Thanks to the ANBG librarian and archivist, Ainslee Austin, for her assistance with images and to all who contributed to the Ducrou Pavilion's creation and maintenance.



APil, M Fagg

Murray Fagg suggested that gum leaves could be used to make prints on the floor of the Pavilion.

After the flooding rains ... chasing the blooming flora

By Rosemary Purdie

In March and April 2025 western Queensland received widespread drenching rainfall (Figure 1) that resulted in floodwaters inundating 13 million hectares of land associated with major river systems in the region – the Georgina, Eyre, Diamantina, Thompson, Barcoo, Cooper, Bulloo and Paroo.

Pastoral properties experienced major stock losses, damaged infrastructure, destroyed fencing and eroded land, the latter resulting in millions of cubic metres of topsoil being stripped away. Towns and homesteads were cut off, and roads and highways throughout the region became impassable – some for months. But such exceptional rain events also eventually transform the landscape, as plants respond to the prolonged moisture with massed flowering.



Figure 2. The main channel of Cooper Creek lined by Coolabah (*Eucalyptus coolabah*) trees and Lignum (*Duma florulenta*) shrubs. All photos by Rosemary Purdie (RP) or Murray Fagg (MF).



Figure 3. Cooper Creek floodplain (left) cloaked by the ephemeral daisy *Senecio depressicola* (top right) with Small White Sunray (*Rhodanthe corymbiflora*, centre right) and Scented Cress (*Harmsiodoxa puberula*, bottom right).

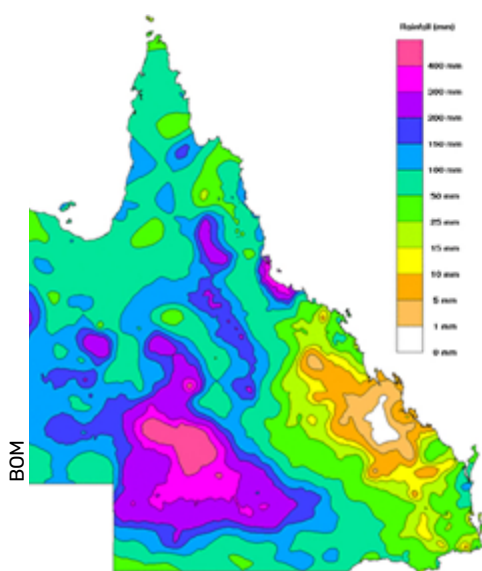


Figure 1. Rainfall total for Queensland from 21-27 March 2025 (Source: Bureau of Meteorology). The wettest areas (coloured purple, pink and red, receiving 200-400 mm of rain) were in the general region of the towns Windorah, Quilpie and Thargomindah.

Four months after the rain Murray Fagg and I headed to the region hoping to see the displays. We spent two weeks travelling through the southern areas, dodging rainfall and still-closed roads, and were not disappointed.

The Cooper Creek landscape south of Windorah is typical 'channel country', comprising flat alluvial plains up to 60 km wide from east to west with mostly deep, grey, cracking clay soils,

and traversed by a maze of shallow, anastomosing channels that distribute the water across the plains.

Near the South Australian border where the floodplain is constrained by higher topography, Cooper Creek narrows to a single channel about 75 m wide that was filled with water, its sloping upper banks marked with 'shore lines' from successive water levels as the floods receded (Figure 2).

The floodplains were covered in ephemeral herbs as far as the eye could see (Figure 3). Ephemerals are herbaceous species that survive as seeds in the soil during prolonged dry periods. Add sufficient water, and the seeds quickly germinate.

The plants start to flower, often when only a few centimetres tall, and continue to grow, flower and set seeds for as long as the soil remains moist. All the plants then die, their soil seed stores having been replenished for the next big wet.

The ephemeral daisy *Senecio depressicola* dominating the Cooper floodplain (Figure 3) formed herbfield vegetation half a metre or more high. But tucked away among the *Senecio* plants were numerous smaller species, many of them also daisies in the genera *Rhodanthe*, *Leiocarpa*, *Brachyscome*, *Calotis* and *Pycnosorus*.

Equally spectacular, but seen in only a few localised areas beyond the floodplain, was herbfield dominated by the pea flower *Swainsona affinis* (see cover images).

Areas that had only received heavy rainfall (but no floods), were also ablaze with ephemerals, the species present varying with the different types of land. For example, in the widespread red earth and sandy red earth plains where the vegetation was dominated by Mulga (*Acacia aneura*) trees and shrubs, the ground was carpeted by the daisies *Calocephalus knappii* or White Everlasting (*Rhodanthe floribunda*), or by Pee-the-Bed (*Goodenia glabrata*), depending on subtle changes in the soil characteristics and topography (Figures 4 and 5).



Figure 4. The daisies *Calocephalus knappii* (top) or White Everlasting (*Rhodanthe floribunda*, bottom) dominated the ground layer of Mulga open shrubland towards Adavale.



Figure 5. The ephemeral herb Pee-the-Bed (*Goodenia glabrata*) densely carpeting the ground between Mulga (*Acacia aneura*) trees north of Quilpie.

After the flooding rains (cont.)



Figure 6. Species of the shrubby genus *Eremophila* flowering after the heavy rainfall included Silver Turkey Bush (*E. bowmanii*, middle left and top left growing with Peethe-bed), Berrigan (*E. longifolia*, middle right), Turkeybush (*E. gilesii*, bottom left) and *E. lin-smithii* (bottom right).

Shrub species in these areas, especially from the genus *Eremophila*, had also responded to the rainfall and were flowering heavily (Figure 6), while species of *Dodonaea* brightened the landscape with their red fruit (Figure 7).

Sand dunes and sand plains that are scattered through the region support a different suite of plants to the floodplains and Mulga lands. Comprised of red siliceous sands or earthy sands, they are generally dominated by the perennial hummock grass *Spinifex* (*Triodia* species, Figure 8, next page). They support a high diversity of herb, shrub and subshrub species, many of which were also in full bloom (Figure 9, next page).

Driving around the region, it was evident that genera in the daisy family frequently dominated the floodplain, Mulga and sand dune/sand plain ground layer plants in terms of both the number of species growing and the sheer quantity of plants present. Turkey bushes (*Eremophila* spp.), cassias (*Senna* spp.), hopbushes (*Dodonaea* spp.) and occasionally wattles (*Acacia* spp) dominated the shrub layers, colouring them in various shades of purple, red or yellow.

But one other genus, *Ptilotus*, kept on catching our attention. West of Isisford we saw swathes of the ephemeral Prince of Wales Feathers (*P. exaltatus*) on the brown, self-mulching clay Mitchell Grass plains (Figure 10, next page).

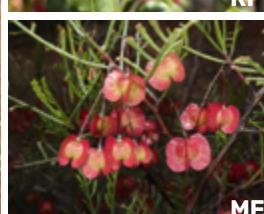


Figure 7. The hopbushes *Dodonaea petiolaris* (left) with their inflated, 3 cm long fruit (top right) and *Dodonaea sinuolata* with their smaller, strongly winged fruit (bottom right) were fruiting heavily in some parts of the Mulga country.



Figure 8. The mass of up to a metre long flowering stems on these spinifex plants (*Triodia* sp.) developed in response to the March-April rainfall.

In spots between Quilpie and Windorah the herbaceous *P. xerophilus* overshadowed the ephemeral daisies in Mulga woodlands (Figure 11).

Halfway between Eromanga and Noccundra the subshrub *P. remotiflorus* (Figure 12) brought us to a screeching halt ... as did so many other plants during the trip.

Experiencing the region looking so lush and vibrant left me marvelling at the powerful forces of nature, and the diversity, beauty and resilience of the flora. The trip was well worth the drive.

About the author

Rosemary is a botanist who carried out extensive field work in south-west Queensland in the 1970s while at the Queensland Herbarium. She then worked in a variety of positions in the Commonwealth and ACT governments. After retiring she refocused on plants, becoming an Honorary Associate at the ANBG and the Australian National Herbarium. She remains an active plant collector and will 'go bush' at the slightest excuse.

Figure 10. Mitchell Grass (*Astrebla* sp.) grassland (top right) covered in Prince of Wales Feathers (*Ptilotus exaltatus*) plants (top far right).

Figure 11. The fox-tail *Ptilotus xerophilus* flowering in the ground layer of Mulga woodland (middle right and far right).

Figure 12. *Ptilotus remotiflorus* growing on shallow rocky soils in Mulga open shrubland (bottom right and far right).



Figure 9. Plants flowering on the sand dunes and sandplains included the herbs Yellowtop (*Senecio gregorii*, top left), Native Camomile (*Gnephosis eriocarpa*, top centre) and Wild Parsnip (*Trachymene ochracea*, top right), the shrub Sandhill Oak (*Grevillea stenobotrya*, bottom left) and subshrubs *Newcastleia cephalantha* (bottom centre), *Scaevola parvibarbata* (centre right) and *Androcalva laxophylla* (bottom right).



Friends Briefs

Friends' new online membership system

Our new membership system is now in operation, alongside the old database while the Membership Team makes checks and finalises new procedures.

All existing memberships are now in the new system. Most members have been contacted (by post or email) and asked to check their personal details and update them if necessary. Having correct addresses is important.

While some things will continue unchanged, there are new options for members who like operating online. Household members will notice some changes.

Cards and permits

We're sending annual membership cards and parking permits as usual to everyone who renews, and to those whose memberships don't expire this year.



Renewals

Members without an email address in our database will receive renewal letters by post as usual in early October.

Members interested in renewing online can do so early if they wish, from 1 August. The renewed memberships will still take effect on 1 November. Go to the Member Portal fanbg.memberjungle.club/ and click the 'Renew' button at the top of the page.

In mid-September, if you are due for renewal (and haven't done so early) and we have your email address, the Member Jungle system will send an automatic notification email.

Later in September, we will post letters to members who are due for renewal but haven't yet done so online. This is so no-one misses out, and everyone has time to get used to the new system.

Household memberships

The 'primary' member will keep their current membership number but 'secondary' members will now have their own. They can also add their own individual email address and mobile number.

Enquiries

The Membership Team is happy to assist members and answer any questions.

There's an online contact form at fanbg.memberjungle.club/need-help or if urgent call or message to 0494 616 197, and one of our Team will call you back.



Stephen Hunter



Stephen Hunter

Welcome to new Friends Alison Campbell, Jenny Nelson, Bonnie Field (L to R top), Angela Brools and Michael Allen (L to R bottom), who attended the New Members Welcome and Morning Tea on 17 May 2026.

Friends 2026 Annual General Meeting

The 38th Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the ANBG will be held on Thursday 15 October at 3.00 pm in the Gardens' Theatre, followed by light refreshments in the Dickson Room.

On the agenda will be the elections for President, Vice-President and one member of Council. If a current member of Council nominates for and is elected to another vacant position, there will be an additional vacancy for an Ordinary Member.

The agenda will also include reports from Dr Matt Parker, Director of the ANBG, Linda Beveridge, President of the Friends and Rod King, Treasurer of the Friends.

Nearer to the date, a notice will be issued on the Friends website and in the e-bulletin with the AGM documents and information about how to nominate for the vacant positions.

If you have any questions, please send them to secretary@friendsanbg.org.au

Tribute to Jean Geue

Jean Geue was a member of the Friends of the ANBG since 1998. She had a strong interest in conservation and propagation of Australian native plants, and regularly made large donations to the Friends of the ANBG during her membership, which we greatly appreciated and put towards several Friends projects.

Jean supported the Friends role in encouraging people's interest in native plants and the natural environment. She was at the Thursday Talks almost every week when she often asked pertinent questions about recent research on the topic of the day. At the Growing Friends Plant Sales she bought many plants for her garden.

She was very interested in the Red Centre Garden, a link with her experiences in Northern Territory. As we walked around that garden she told me a lot about the plants in it. She also told me about Olive Pink, a regular customer at the Alice Springs Library, who was a tremendous advocate for conservation of arid plants. Now, Olive's 16 hectare property (about 40 acres) is the Olive Pink Botanic Garden at Alice Springs.

The hostel where Jean lived in Alice Springs had a camera club which arranged weekend excursions into the arid landscape, which she loved. Many of us remember Jean with at least one camera around her neck as an 'inveterate photographer' of native plants during walks at the ANBG, Wednesday Walks and other walks in nature reserves.

Jean contributed greatly to several community groups involved in the conservation and propagation of native plants, including the Australian Native Plant Society, Friends of Aranda Bushland, Friends of Black Mountain, Friends of Grasslands, Greening Australia, National Parks of Australia



Jean Geue, an inveterate photographer of native plants.

Linda Beveridge

(ACT), ACT Government ParkCare groups, Weed Swap weekends, and other groups. She was Convenor of Friends of Aranda Bushland for several terms, and committee member for several other groups.

Jean passed away on 14 May 2026 and we pay tribute to Jean and her involvement with conservation and propagation of Australian native plants.

Linda Beveridge



The 2026 Students Photographic Competition is now open. See the Friends website friendsanbg.org.au for more information.

Friends of the ANBG Student Scholarships

Applications for the second round of Friends scholarships open on **3 August 2026**. The research of the three successful scholars will aim either to enhance knowledge about or protect Australia's natural environment.

The guidelines are little changed from those developed in 2023, with scholarships only being awarded to students (Honours, Masters, or PhD) enrolled in an Australian university. They will be for multiple years, and subject to satisfactory annual progress (for PhD and master's students). PhD and master's applicants will also need to be recipients of a stipend scholarship (for example an Australian Research Training Program Scholarship). They are intended to support students in their research, to attend conferences, undertake fieldwork or as a personal stipend.

The panel selecting the successful candidates and managing the program comprises Dr Veronica Briceno Rodriguez, Conservation Horticulture Manager; Dr Alyssa Weinstein, National Seed Bank Manager; and Dr Rosemary Purdie, representing Friends of the ANBG.

The second round should help establish Friends of the ANBG Scholarships firmly in the purview of relevant departments of Australian universities. Over time it will be pleasing to build an expanding alumni of Friends scholars, some of whom might seek employment at the ANBG.

More information and application forms are on the Friends website friendsanbg.org.au/student-scholarships

Applications close on **Monday 12 October 2026 at 5.00 pm AEST**.

Friendly Chatter

Botanic Art Group

The Botanic Art Group (BAG) held its 19th Annual Exhibition at the ANBG Visitor Centre from 10 April to 3 May 2026 on the theme *Wetland Plants*. There were 64 works exhibited in various media from 29 artists. Around \$4,600 was donated to the Friends from sold artworks, 'squares', cards and raffle tickets.

This year, the Friends selected *Wavy Marshwort* by Margaret Saul to be donated to the ANBG collection. The Horticulturists' Choice was a native orchid watercolour painting by Jenny Mun and the Rangers' Choice was Susan Spiller's native violet.

The BAG would like to thank members and staff from the ANBG who assisted in making this another successful exhibition.

An inaugural BAG General Meeting was held on 16 May 2026, attended by 23 members. Vivienne Howe was nominated as the BAG point of contact/membership secretary, taking over from Judy Hutchinson. We would like to thank Judy for performing this role for the last four years, and Wendy Antoniak and Jann Ollerenshaw for the 11 years of service to the Exhibition



Stephen Hnter

Above, L to R: Jann Ollerenshaw, Matthew Parker, Margaret Saul, Linda Beveridge and Judy Hutchinson.

Committee. Thanks also go to Kate Ramsay for her role as Publicity and Advertising Officer.

As part of Botanic Gardens Week, the BAG offered a session called *Have a Go at Botanical Art* on 20 May. With mentors from the BAG, seven participants enjoyed their experience in painting gum leaves and expressed interest in joining the BAG. Due to the limited space at that workshop, this event was extended to the following week on 27 May, and again it was well attended, generating strong interest in joining the BAG.

Meetings held in May have been well attended and we look forward to new members joining the meetings planned for the coming months.

If you would like further information about our Botanic Art Group meetings or workshops please email botanicart@friendsanbg.org.au for more information.

Mignon Atkinson and Jenny Mun

Growing Friends

Recently the Gardens and Growing Friends agreed on a renovation program to the Growing Friends area.

Stage 1 started in May when an old raised bed outside the igloo was removed, the shade cloth roof then re-positioned at a higher level and the plumbing changed. This area will now become an additional working area. I did suggest, in jest, that we should add an outside BBQ.

Stage 2 started in early June with the old raised beds inside the igloo being removed and other modifications made (see next page). This has given us the opportunity to create a better workflow which is important since Growing Friends has seen increasing membership over the last 18 months.

While the work was being done, all the cuttings from the heated beds were looked after by staff in the Gardens' nursery for which we are very grateful.





Debbie Dennis

Growing Friends igloo after stage 2 of renovation.

As part of Botanic Gardens Week, Growing Friends ran two sessions during which people could see how to propagate cuttings and seeds. Despite the rain and cold, lots of people turned up and not only looked-on but enthusiastically joined in. Some of the attendees enjoyed themselves so much that they have now joined the Growing Friends.

For more information about how to join the group, please mail growingfriends@friendsanbg.org.au

Donna Growcock

Plant Science Group

In May, Professor Peter Bernhardt, a widely read expert on pollination from the USA, was in Australia promoting his new book *The Unsung Heroes of Pollination: More than the birds and the bees* and the Plant Science Group was delighted to have him give a presentation focusing on *Secrets of Cypripedium sex*, one of the chapters from the book. (*Cypripedium* is a genus in the Orchidaceae family that contains slipper orchids.)

Peter explained that whilst all *Cypripedium* species requiring cross-pollination utilise the 'in one way and out the other' act of pollination, their flowers vary greatly in size, colour patterns and scent molecules because different species exploit very different

pollinators. He explored Darwin's theory about the function of hairs in the flowers and compared differences in their natural rates of fruiting and seed set among different species.

In June, Leo Lovesy, a recent ANU Honours graduate now working part-time with the horticultural staff at the ANBG, gave a talk on his honours project titled *Influences of dieback in high elevation Eucalyptus communities on carbon cycling*. His research provides insight into how carbon cycling may shift in the future given large scale sub-alpine dieback events that are currently occurring.

If you wish to receive information on the activities of the group please email plantscience@friendsanbg.org.au

Lesley Harland



Murray Fagg

Professor Peter Bernhardt.

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.



Friendly Chatter (cont.)

Photographic Group

Preparations are now underway for one of the Photographic Group's key activities, its annual exhibition. *Illuminate 2026* will feature framed photographs, each of which will be for sale, as well as items such as calendars, cards, and jewellery. A healthy proportion of the proceeds goes to the Friends.

The exhibition incorporates several prize categories including the David Cox Flora and Fungi Award for Native Flora and Fungi of the ANBG and a Fauna Award for Native Fauna of the ANBG. A special bookmark to promote *Illuminate 2026* is included with this edition of *FronDS* and features photographs that will be in the exhibition.

Illuminate 2026, which takes place in the Visitor Centre gallery will open to the public on Thursday 5 November and conclude on Sunday 29 November. It is a great opportunity to browse for a seasonal gift and support the Friends at the same time.



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

botanicalbookshop.com.au



Above: Bunya Pine by Karin Neufeld.

Right: *Swainsona formosa* by Deb Howard.



The group's regular meetings take place on the last Friday of each month, except December, in the Theatrette.

We have enjoyed a lively series of presentations in 2026. In April Stephen Hunter shared his experiences in preparing for overseas travel from the photographer's perspective, illustrating his talk with images from places as diverse as the Galapagos Islands, Patagonia and Uzbekistan.

In May Graham Gall, a member of the group and highly regarded and awarded Canberra photographer, shared with a very well-attended meeting, his philosophy and expertise in photographing flora.

In June another very highly regarded Canberra photographer, Cristy Froehlich, continued the group's tradition of growing the skills of its members, by offering a very constructive critique of images brought to the meeting by members.

All regular meetings include an opportunity for participants to share up to six images and the stories behind them in a 'show and tell' segment. This has been enhanced by the wonderful new flat screen that has been installed in the Theatrette.

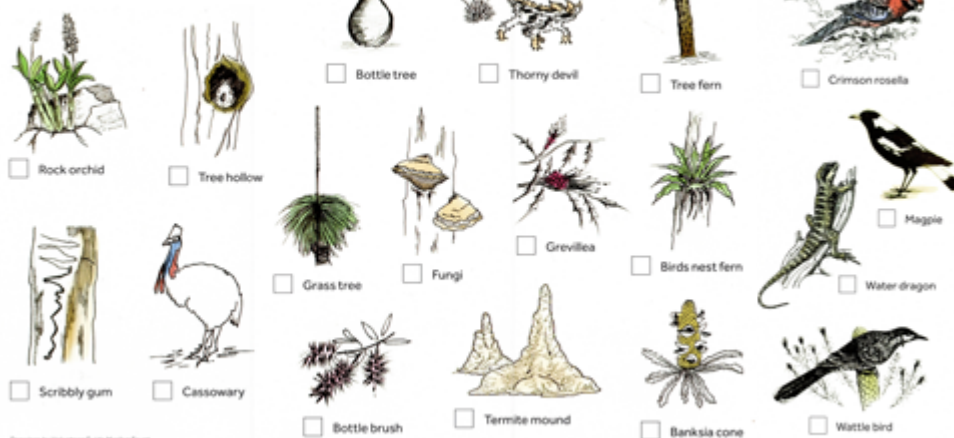
The group's *Cameras and Café* monthly walks in the Gardens have continued to draw strong participation from existing and new members. In May the walk was opened to all members of the Friends as part of Botanic Gardens Week. It was very enjoyable to host a broader group of participants who became very engaged in seeing the Gardens through a photographer's eye.

It is always a thrill for members of the group to have their images used to illustrate and promote the beauty and scientific significance of the Gardens. The calendar and its social media presence are two significant promotional activities for which the Photographic Group provides images. Keep an eye out for the 2027 calendar when it goes on sale in the Botanical Bookshop. It contains many memorable photographs.

The group's membership is now around 150 and continues to grow. We are open to all members of the Friends, so give it some thought if you are interested in photography and are keen to grow your skills or simply enjoy the sociable activities of the group.

Phil Green

What can you find on your adventure today?



Drawings by Volunteer Guide Marilyn Faust

Secrets of the Australian Bush brochure.

Volunteer Guides

Secrets of the Australian Bush

School holidays in January, at Easter and in spring bring a special treat for some of our Flora Explorer drivers: the *Secrets of the Australian Bush* tours. These tours are carefully designed for primary-school-aged children to learn about some of the amazing secrets of the Australian bush. How do plants survive in incredibly difficult conditions? What are spores and where do you find them? Are they the same as seeds? What are some of the

Thorny Devil's clever strategies for surviving in the Red Centre?

On the *Secrets* tour, which lasts about an hour, the children board the Flora Explorer bus with their accompanying adults. They are given a bag with a special brochure highlighting some of the things they will see, as well as some stickers and pamphlets with all sorts of information about the Gardens. Then they set off with a Driving Guide and a Walking Guide to explore!

There are two walks as part of the tour: one through the Rainforest and one in the Red Centre Garden. There, the children can use magnifying glasses to look closely at some of the plants, smell the rainforest and wonder at the amazingly resilient plants of the Red Centre. The tour finishes near the Paperbark Forest and the Tree House.

The *Secrets* tours are very popular with children and their adults and are usually booked out in advance. They are also popular with the *Secrets* Guides, who enjoy sharing the Gardens with enthusiastic and interested young people.

The Secrets Team

Vale Tony Lawson

1945–2026

Anthony (Tony) Lawson joined the Gardens Guides in 2006 and was a guide for over 14 years. During this time, Tony led many rostered guided walks as well as themed walks. He was also a guide for the Friends' bird walks and involved with the annual butterfly walks.

He assisted with training new Guides, sharing resources and information about the Gardens as well as native plants and the environment. He keenly shared information resulting from his reading on issues and developments related to native plants, birds and their habitats, to help others learn about these things.

To encourage sharing of information, he and Jane Keogh initiated and set up the Google Group and GuidesMail to share information. He was also a member of the GuidesWeb team, monitoring and maintaining this online resource.

Consistent with his interest in native flora and fauna, Tony was also a longtime member of Canberra Birds, Field Naturalists and Southern Tablelands Ecosystems Park, and a volunteer guide at the National Arboretum.

He is remembered as being a very interested and active member of the Friends of the ANBG and a great advocate for shared learning for the Guides and other interested people.

Linda Beveridge



Tony Lawson



Gardens Shorts

Director's report

Winter is in full swing, with frosty, foggy mornings creating a magical atmosphere. I encourage you to brave the cold and experience the unique beauty this season brings to the Gardens.

Throughout autumn our Horticulture teams have been busy with the annual autumn plant out. In total over 4,000 new plants have been added to the Gardens, a process requiring months of planning and preparation across various teams. The Living Collections and Assets team have also been cleaning and resealing ponds and waterways, and supervising major tree work across the Gardens.

The last few months have seen progress on vital conservation projects. Partnerships with ACT Government to protect the endangered species *Swainsona recta* (Small Purple Pea) and *Muehlenbeckia tuggeranong* (Tuggeranong Lignum) have been completed. Within the Gardens the Conservation Horticulture team have also been undertaking genetic testing of key threatened species within our collections to ensure our conservation collections are complete.

In May we celebrated Canberra Tree Week, with three ANBG trees included in a self-guided trail of significant trees across the ACT. This was followed by Botanic Gardens Week, which this year celebrated the health and wellbeing benefits of botanic gardens.

More recently our Visitor Experience team have been hard at work preparing and delivering the annual MEGAfauna event. Running throughout July, MEGAfauna provided families with a fun and free activity during the school holidays, boosting ANBG's visitation during an otherwise quiet time of year.

In June we welcomed a new librarian, Ainslee Austin. Friends of the ANBG are eligible to borrow items from the

library, so make sure you drop by during business hours to make her welcome.

Earlier this year we also welcomed two Indigenous trainees, Phoebe Harrison and Jackson Knight. Phoebe and Jackson are participating in the Indigenous Trainee Development Program and will rotate through various work areas to develop a broad understanding of activities across the Science and ANBG Branch.

Much of the recent work on the Ian Potter National Conservatory has been occurring out of sight, with design teams finalising details such as the locations of power points and the loading of plant chandeliers. Internally on the building, sections of steelwork have been painted and insulation panels have been installed.

Winter is such a beautiful time in Canberra with clear, crisp sunny days. If you haven't had the opportunity to see our new fogging system in the Rainforest Gully yet, make sure you take the opportunity and enjoy some time re-exploring this magical place.

Matthew Parker

A bright future for Small Purple Pea

The future is looking rosy for the endangered Small Purple Pea (*Swainsona recta*).

Over the past 10 years, ANBG and the National Seed Bank have worked with ACT Government to collect and grow seed from remaining wild populations, developing a seed production area at ANBG. The science-led project has focused on increasing genetic diversity and establishing new populations of the species.

Since 2022 the ANBG Nursery has grown 1,000 new plants for translocation across the ACT in a multi-year trial project.



ANBG

Small Purple Pea, *Swainsona recta*.

The final planting was completed this autumn. Monitoring indicates strong early success, with translocated plants surviving and producing seed!

Moving forward, our project partners will continue to monitor and manage these populations to assess long-term outcomes and support continued recovery efforts. This project demonstrates the value of cross-agency collaboration to achieve conservation outcomes.

Microscopes donated to Deadly Science

After upgrading our education program's light microscopes, we found ourselves with a collection of antique – but still fully functional – microscopes gathering dust in storage.

Hoping they could be put to good use, we reached out to Deadly Science,



Deadly Science

Student looking through microscope.

a charity dedicated to inspiring and promoting STEM education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. They enthusiastically accepted our donation of 25 microscopes, which will now become part of program resources.

There was just one challenge: how do you safely ship around 100 kg of delicate microscopes safely to Port Macquarie? After months of planning – and help from our four front desk volunteers – the microscopes were carefully packed in boxes with ample protection and sent on their way.

We're thrilled that these microscopes will have a new lease on life and, most importantly, will help to inspire the next generation of curious minds.

ANBG goes to Tasmania

What do Canberra and Tasmania have in common? Despite the geographical distance, their shared cool-climate conditions make the ANBG one of the few Australian gardens able to successfully cultivate unique Tasmanian species. This connection led three members of our Living Collections and Conservation Horticulture teams to travel to Tasmania on a productive and inspiring journey.

Hosted generously by the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens (RTBG), the trip was packed with highlights. The team began by planting critically endangered *Phebalium daviesii* for the RTBG seed orchard project, before collecting seeds and cuttings of native Tasmanian species at The Needles, Mt Field National Park. In their final days, they visited the Tasmanian Orchid Conservation Centre and the Inala Jurassic Garden on Bruny Island.

Overall, the trip was a great success, enabling the exchange of valuable knowledge and acquisition of important plant material to support future conservation and horticultural work with Tasmanian species at the ANBG.



Blake, Tamera and Acacia in front of a Huon Pine at the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens.

Tamera Watson

2026 Volunteer Botanical Training Program

Friday 13 February marked the end of the 34th Volunteer Botanical Training Program at the Centre for Australian National Biodiversity Research (ANBR) in Canberra. Twelve trainees successfully completed the 6-week program this year.

Amongst a packed schedule of online presentations, workshops and in person visits to the ANBG Seed Bank and Nursery and associated CSIRO collections, trainees contributed to the curatorial work of the Australian National Herbarium and enjoyed a one day botanical field trip around the Canberra region.

The trainees found the experience educational, eye opening and inspiring, and were extremely grateful for the time and effort put into the program by ANBR, ANBG, Australian Biological Resources Study and CSIRO staff.

We also extend our sincere thanks to the Friends of the ANBG for their ongoing support of the program. The trainees were very excited to receive their book vouchers (donated by the Friends) and visit the Botanical Bookshop to find an appropriate reminder of their time in the program. We look forward to following the future careers of all participants.



Murray Fagg

Friends of the ANBG President, Linda Beveridge, and Coordinator of the Volunteer Botanical Training Program, Bronwyn Collins, with the 2026 Trainees. L to R: Hugh Severn, Jayden Walsh, Zoe Imber, Jason Lubke, Samanta Lesteval, Jaspar Gibson, Linda Beveridge (President of Friends of ANBG), Gabrielle Green, Bronwyn Collins (Coordinator of the trainee program), Clare Finnigan, Remy Wilcher, Sally-Ann Bird, Lani Shea-An and Zoe Ramshaw.

Gardens Shorts (cont.)

Profile: Sarah Aylott, ANBG Plant Records Team

My name is Sarah, and I'm part of the Plant Records team at ANBG. My job is to press plant specimens. My childhood self would be delighted, although I no longer use the Yellow Pages to press flowers: instead I have an official ANBG plant press!

An interesting fact about the ANBG is that most of the plants in our Living Collection are wild-sourced, meaning they have been grown from seed or cuttings that were collected from the wild.

Data about these collections and any corresponding specimens are held at the neighbouring Australian National Herbarium (ANH) in the form of a voucher. A herbarium specimen, or voucher, is a preserved sample of a plant with fertile material (such as flowers and fruit) that is pressed, dried and mounted on cardboard.

These specimens are a physical record to preserve a plant's identity, support research and provide a basis for further study.

Every time a collection is undertaken in the wild for the ANBG, a voucher is also created and the specimen is determined (or identified) by a botanist. This ensures that we know what the plant is and where it's from.

Sometimes fertile material is not available when wild plant material is collected. In this case, a clone of the plant is grown at the ANBG from the cuttings or seed, and a sample is taken later from either that plant or its descendants.

Plants in the collection that need to be vouchered are marked with blue-painted aluminium tags. The Plant Records team monitor these plants, and when fertile material is available, a sample is taken and pressed in a special plant press.



Tamera watson

Above left: Sarah pressing a specimen for a herbarium voucher.

Top right: Plant presses full of collections made by the Plant Records team. These collections will be used to query ID, to make vouchers for existing plants or to confirm new determinations.

Bottom right: The wet room at the Australian National Herbarium at the CSIRO Black Mountain site, where ANBG specimens are curated.



Sarah Aylott



Sarah Aylott

The press is taken to the ANH where it is stored in a dryer for two weeks, before being frozen for three weeks to remove any insect and fungal contamination which could damage the dried specimens in the Herbarium.

The Living Collections botanist then looks at the voucher to confirm that the plant has been correctly identified. If not, we update our records.

The pressed specimen is then mounted onto cardboard by volunteers. When complete, the plant voucher is stored in a giant compactus underground and registered in the ANH database so that we can access data about the collection, including where and when was it collected and by whom.

All this work means that if someone (eg a researcher from a university) needs material from a particular plant, we can quickly and easily locate the physical collection and access records about its provenance and propagation.

These records help with the naming and classification of plants, monitoring variations in plant communities between regions and over time, and other scientific research.

All in all, I still love pressing flowers.

Rainforest mist upgrade

The much-loved Rainforest Gully mist has been upgraded! The existing system has been replaced with finer 0.2 mm misting nozzles, positioned at wider intervals.

The new hardware produces a finer mist that spreads further and lingers for longer, maintaining a stable, humid microclimate more akin to natural rainforest conditions.



Kevin Meng

Afternoon light streaming through the mist in the lower Rainforest Gully.

As well as creating a magical effect, this new misting system enhances evaporative cooling, improves temperature moderation, and expands the effective area of influence. It also significantly reduces surface wetting, runoff and plant disease risk. Our rainforest plants will benefit from more consistent humidity, supporting healthier and more resilient growth.

Importantly, the new design also reduces water use by approximately 89 per cent, greatly improving the long-term sustainability and efficiency of the system.

The Rainforest Gully misting system operates daily. Check with the Visitor Centre for the current schedule.

The Life of a Seed

The National Seed Bank recently released this great video about *The Life of a Seed*. If you have been wondering what is happening in the new NSB building at the Gardens, have a look: [youtube.com/watch?v=1pyVfTY7SZk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pyVfTY7SZk)

Botanical Bookshop book reviews

The Great Frog Choir. 2025

By Jed Pearson and Anke Maria-Hoefer
Illustrations by Nikki Morgan
Hardcover, 32 pages \$22.95

Come down to the wetlands for an amphibious sing along with some of Canberra's most talented frogs.

Written by Anke Maria and Jed from FrogWatch ACT and Ginninderra Catchment Group to showcase eight of our local frog species and their spectacular calls. Get to know the sounds and unique features of the Spotted Marsh Frog or the Whistling Tree Frog with the wonderful illustrations by local Canberra artist and volunteer Nikki Morgan. This book gives you pages of handy information so, after choir practice, you can get involved in your local frog community. Learn their life cycles, habitats, and threats, as well as some fun facts and how to be a Frog Hero!

Keep an eye out for a fun frog activity night for the Friends of the ANBG (see page 20), hosted by the team from FrogWatch ACT. Come rugged up, bring your favourite torch and best frog jokes.



The Enigmatic Echidna. 2026

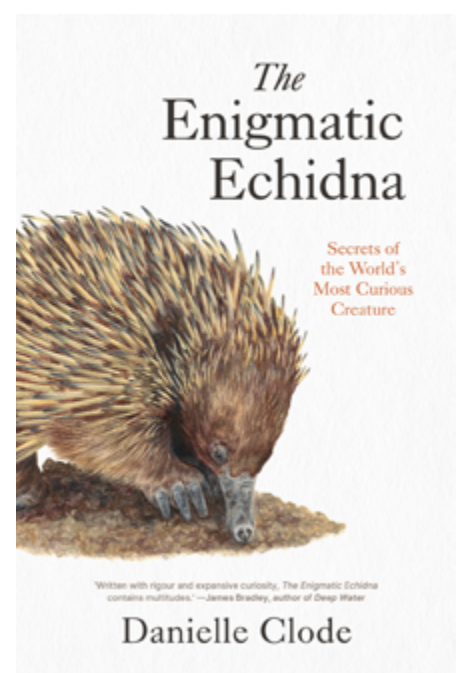
By Danielle Clode
Paperback, 310 pages, \$37

Which Australian mammal is the most widespread in Australia, yet difficult to find, hard to catch, and is notorious for being an escape artist? It is the beloved, spiky, ant-eating monotreme, the Echidna!

Author Danielle Clode takes the reader on a journey down the puggle hole to learn more about the iconic Echidna. She explores the origin of echidnas in fossils and First Nations' stories and also examines the early European scientific history of this puzzling porcupine-like creature.

The latest research reveals fascinating facts about the Echidna: their snouts can detect electromagnetic fields, they have rather large and complex brains, and they can make over a thousand digs a day, which contributes to soil fertility.

Whether you are an animal lover or looking for an educational, yet easy to follow read, *The Enigmatic Echidna* has something to offer even the prickliest of readers.



What's on at the Gardens

August to November 2026

Details are correct at the time of printing. Please check the Friends website friendsanbg.org.au or the ANBG website 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.

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 or floragroups@anbg.gov.au

* 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 a week in advance.

Themed Walks

11.00 am and 2.00 pm one hour walks
Free*

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.

Wattle Walks

31 August – 6 September

Did you know there are more species of wattles than even of our iconic eucalypts? It's not surprising that the floral emblem of Australia is a wattle. What are those wonderful floral globes made up of? Why does their foliage vary so much?

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.

Australian National Herbarium Tour

Wednesday 19 or Wednesday 26 August
10.00 am
CSIRO Black Mountain site
Friends \$10
Bookings essential
See Friends website for details

Maintained by CSIRO, ANH is one of the largest plant collections in the

country, providing crucial information on native plants and weeds in Australia and the region.

This tour is exclusive to Friends of the ANBG. It is restricted to adults, as we will be passing through or near labs with various hazards and chemicals. The building is suitable for people with mobility issues.

Enquiries: events@friendsanbg.org.au

Frog Listening Evening

Friday 25 September
6.30–8.00 pm
Crosbie Morrison Lawn, ANBG
Adults \$10, Children \$5
Bookings essential
See Friends website for details

Have you ever heard the frogs in the Gardens and wanted to know more about them? Join Anka Maria Hoefer, Frogwatch Coordinator for ACT & Region, to listen and learn about Canberra's amazing frogs in the beautiful surrounds of the ANBG. Bring the family and test your listening skills to see if you can identify the different frog calls.

Enquiries: events@friendsanbg.org.au

Woodcraft Guild annual sales and exhibition

2-5 October
Banksia Centre
Costs apply
Book on ANBG website

The Guild has over twenty different special interest groups, including small box making, woodturning, furniture making, pyrography, scroll saw, bush craft (traditional hand tool woodworking), toy making, a school and community program, computers in woodcraft and many more.



Bugs Alive! Exhibition

2–8 October

Crosbie Morrison Building

Costs apply

Book on ANBG website

In the *Bugs Alive!* exhibition at the Gardens, you can see a wild range of invertebrates including praying mantis, stick insects, spiders, scorpions, beetles, snails, butterflies and more. Most of them are from around Australia, including rare and endangered species.

Wake Up With the Birds

Saturday 3, 10 and 17 October,

Sunday 11 October

8.30 am

ANBG

Friends \$15, Non-Members \$20,

Children (school age) \$10

Bookings essential

See Friends website for details

In a small group, experience the Gardens early on a spring morning when the birds are nesting and at their most active. The event includes a 1.5–2 hour guided walk with an experienced guide.

Some binoculars will be provided, but bring your own if you have them. Children attending the walks must be over the age of 8 and accompanied by an adult.

Enquiries: events@friendsanbg.org.au

Australian Native Plant Society Spring Plant Sale

Saturday 17 October

Southern Carpark

8.30 am – 1.00 pm

This spring sale features around 7,000 Australian native plants, with over 250 different species represented. All plants are selected to be suitable for Canberra and surrounds, and are grown locally.



Bushland Nature Walk

Saturday 24 October

9.30 am

ANBG

Cost: \$10 (All proceeds to the Gardens)

Bookings essential

See Friends website for details

Join a special guided walk to explore the Gardens' Bushland Precinct, across the Black Mountain road from the main part of the Gardens. The walk celebrates its official opening in December 2016, and the official opening of the Gardens in October 1970.

The path meanders through the Bushland Precinct of the ANBG, a section of original natural flora, culminating at a viewing platform offering spectacular views across Lake Burley Griffin. The walk is easy to medium on uneven ground, a few stairs and short steep sections. There are some places to rest along the way. Distance is 3.2 km.

Enquiries: events@friendsanbg.org.au

Growing Friends Spring Native Plant Sale

Saturday 31 October

9.00 am – 11.30 am

Banksia Centre carpark

Exclusive event for Friends, staff and volunteers

All plants are propagated from cuttings or seeds sourced from within the Gardens, and a full list of plants will be available on the Friends website closer to the sale. Plants will cost \$6 a pot. All proceeds go to the Friends to support the Gardens. Sales by card only.

Exhibitions

Visitor Centre Gallery

Open Daily 9.30 am – 4.30 pm

Free

29 July – 23 August

Eggpicnic at the Gardens

Inspired by years of exploring the ANBG, *Eggpicnic at the Gardens* celebrates the remarkable plants, animals and fungi that call it home. Through illustration and sculpture, the exhibition invites visitors to discover the hidden stories, connections and seasonal wonders woven throughout this unique landscape.

11 September – 31 October

Canberra Art Biennial

Canberra Art Biennial presents artwork that responds to stories and histories within the designed landscape of Canberra. Sculptural commissions and a group exhibition by Anna-May Kirk, Jacqueline Bradley and Rosalind Lemoh will be presented within the Gardens and in the ANBG exhibition space. See canberraartbiennial.com

November (dates TBC)

Revitrification

Revitrification showcases the sculptural works of Canberra-based glass artist Matthew Curtis. This project represents an exciting opportunity to showcase innovative design for the *2026 Craft + Design Canberra Festival*.

5–29 November

Illuminate 2026

The Friends of the ANBG Photographic Group shares its passion for discovering, appreciating and valuing Australia's unique flora and fauna as seen through the lenses of their cameras. In addition to photographs there will also be a range of associated merchandise available for purchase and an opportunity to meet some of the photographers.

Thursday Talks

August to November 2026

One hour talks are held at 12.30 pm every Thursday from February to November in the ANBG Theatre. 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 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

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.

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.

20 August

Professor Marcel Cardillo
Grevillea and Hakea: The story of a remarkable evolutionary radiation

Marcel will tell the story of the *Grevillea* and *Hakea* genera, including their origins and evolutionary history, current patterns of diversity and prospects for the future under rapid environmental change.

27 August

Jo Harding

Bush Blitz driving new approaches to working with traditional owners

Recent expeditions 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.

September

3 September

Anthony Hoffman
The Illawarra-Shoalhaven shrublands on volcanic outcrops ecological community

The Illawarra-Shoalhaven shrubland ecological community occurs on exposed ridgetops and slopes from the Great Eastern Escarpment to the sea between Wollongong and Batemans Bay. They are dependent on the underlying substrate formed over 66 million years ago and provide a significant linkage between the rainforests and woodlands of this increasingly developed landscape.

10 September

Dr Gavin Smith

Some reflections from a decade of working with and learning from one of Australia's most misunderstood snakes

Gavin brings together his research in sociology, ecology and conservation with his expertise in handling snakes.

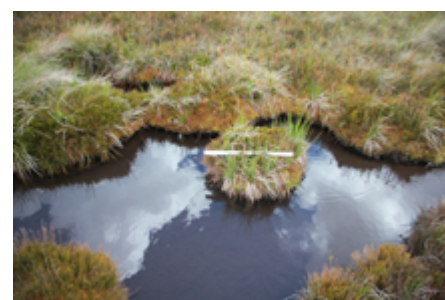
17 September

TBC. See website for details.

24 September

Ben Keaney
With a little help from my friends: Recovery and rehabilitation of peatlands in the Australian Alps following the 2020 fires
-Increasing biodiversity through water harvesting

Ben from ANU's Department of Archaeology and Natural History will discuss some of the programs set up to rehabilitate peatlands after the fires of 2019-20, as well as the recovery of Sphagnum Shrub Bogs in the Alps more generally.



Sphagnum cristatum recovery in an artificially created pool in Kosciuszko National Park (pipe 50 cm).



Provided



Provided

Samuele Ramellini (L) and Xingyi Jiang (R) are students at the ANU studying Superb Fairywrens in the Gardens.



Anna Howe

Anna Howe will share her photos of views of Black Mountain and its tower.

October

1 October

Samuele Ramellini and Xingyi Jiang

The social lives and collective behaviour of an iconic bird species: The Superb Fairywren

Superb Fairywrens lead complex social lives and have a multilevel social structure in the non-breeding season as well as the breeding season. Xingyi and Samuele will discuss the decisions individuals make in their community.

8 October

TBC. See website for details.

15 October

Tasha James

What we can learn from the endemic flora of Mt Imlay

Tasha will give us an update on her research on the isolated peak Mt Imlay, home to several endemic and endangered flora.

22 October

TBC. See website for details.

29 October

Jay Nicholson

Understanding the impacts of climate change on plants at Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park: A summary of my PhD working with Anangu

Jay will summarise his work on the interesting strategies desert plants use to overcome the complex and extreme environment that is the Australian desert.

November

5 November

Shelley Rowntree

From the herbarium to the genome: New discoveries in Australia's everlasting daisies

Shelley reveals surprising relationships in the complex tangle of *Chrysocephalum* species in her research.

12 November

Anna Howe

36 views of a mountain, a tower and gardens

In this talk Anna compares photographs of Black Mountain and its tower to Hokusai's 36 views of Mt Fuji and discusses how they might guide us to look at local scenes in different ways.

19 November

Dr Karen Marsh

A koala's guide to fine dining

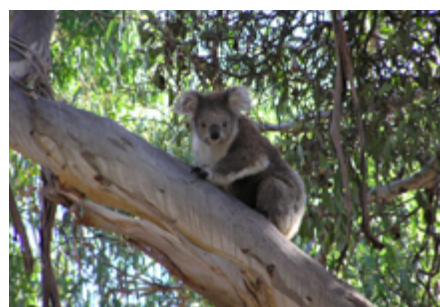
Karen will talk about Koalas' dietary habits and how they influence where they live.

26 November

Maurice Herman

Success in propagating and growing Australian native plants

Maurice will show us how to successfully propagate Australian native plants, without the need for a glasshouse or a 'green thumb'. He will also give some tips on how to plant and care for native plants.



Karen Marsh

Famous for being fussy eaters, Karen Marsh will explore the hidden world of Koala nutrition and food choice.

A photograph of a vast field of purple and yellow flowers, likely a wildflower meadow, under a clear white sky. The purple flowers are the dominant color, covering most of the field, with patches of yellow flowers interspersed. The background shows a line of trees or shrubs under the white sky.

Friends of the
**Australian National
Botanic Gardens**

Helping The Gardens Grow