

Spring 2010

# BOTANIC NEWS

FRIENDS *of the* ROYAL BOTANIC  
GARDENS MELBOURNE INC.

## GROWING FRIENDS PLANT SALE

Saturday 2 and Sunday 3 October.

## THE ART OF BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION EXHIBITION

6 – 21 November

# FROM THE PRESIDENT

A number of exciting things are happening this quarter. First, there's the Spring Plant Sale on 2-3 October. These sales are always a joy with so many interesting, different and frequently rare plants on offer. After the lovely winter rain, let's make this the best sale ever! Then, from 6-21 November, works by many of our very talented Botanical Illustrators will be on display, and for sale, in *The Art of Botanical Illustration* Exhibition. The very high standard and beauty of the works included make this a must-see exhibition so please don't miss it. Also not to be missed is Susan Scollay's talk on Islamic Gardens, on 28 October.

The Friends are delighted to extend a very warm welcome to Chris Cole who took up his position as Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne in July. Members will recall that the former Director, Richard Barley, left the Gardens in March.

A long-term member of the RBG staff, Helen Cohn, Manager of the RBG's Library, retired in July. Helen was always supportive of the Friends and we greatly valued her generosity in providing information or advice whenever there was a need. More recently she offered to assist with the archiving of the Friends' records. We thank Helen most sincerely for all that she has done for us and wish her well in her retirement.

Changes have occurred at Gate Lodge as well. Assistant Treasurer, Jackie Courmadias left the Friends in May to concentrate on her role with the Australian Garden History Society. She was a wonderfully

hardworking and cheerful member of our office team, and kept track of our finances with great skill and diligence. On behalf of the Friends I thank her for her significant contribution.

With a change in staff, the duties of the position were reviewed and slightly modified, and the position title altered from Assistant Treasurer to Finance Officer to reflect the changes. We are very pleased that Karlene Taylor has joined our staff in this new role.

This is the last time I shall be writing this column because my term as President comes to an end at the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting in November. I have great admiration for the Friends and have found the past four years richly rewarding. In particular I would like to acknowledge the help and support given me by my Council colleagues and all those whose voluntary input maximizes the Friends' efforts on behalf of the RBG. They make a substantial commitment and work exceedingly hard.

Our administrative staff at Gate Lodge deserve special thanks for all the cheerful and unfailing assistance they have given me.

As well, I thank Dr Philip Moors, Director and Chief Executive of the Royal Botanic Gardens and his staff for their advice and help which I have always valued.

*Janet Thomson*  
**President**

*Top: New RBGM Director Chris Cole  
Photo: D Robbins  
Centre: Library Manager Helen Cohn  
Photo: Mike Fogarty  
Bottom: Assistant Treasurer Jackie Courmadias  
Photo: M Miller*



Photo: Cathy Trinca



## New Members Welcome

Date: Wednesday 6 October at 10.00am  
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium  
Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra  
RSVP by Friday 1 October

Please join us for a New Members' Welcome! Invitations have been sent to all recently-joined Friends to come to our next 'Getting-to-know-you' gathering. Drinks and nibbles will be served while you mingle and meet other new members. Learn about the Friends' wide range of activities in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere with conveners of all Friends' groups on hand to provide information. The morning will finish with a special tour of the Gardens conducted by a Voluntary Guide. We look forward to meeting all those who have joined the Friends since our last Welcome, and those who have already requested an invitation. If you have not been able to attend a previous New Members' Welcome, and would like to come this time, you are warmly invited as well, so please call our office on 9650 6398 and we'll make sure your name is included on the list.

# FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

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Front cover: Looking over Central Lawn towards Princes Lawn.  
Photo: Michael Hare  
Back cover photo: Jennifer Marshall

## Going to the 2011 Chelsea Flower Show!

Every year for five days in late May, the grounds of the Royal Chelsea Hospital in London are transformed into the garden spectacular of the Royal Horticultural Society's Chelsea Flower Show. And next year the RBG will be staging one of the Show's major display gardens! Announced by Environment and Climate Change Minister Gavin Jennings on 18 May, this will be the first time that a Garden from Australia has been allocated one of the most prestigious sites at Chelsea.

We are using next year's Show to gain global tourism promotion for the completion of Stage 2 of the Australian Garden at Cranbourne in late 2011 – so we will be creating a display inspired by that garden's theme of 'the journey of water,' and presenting many Australian plants never seen before at Chelsea. The Show's massive media coverage – it has tens of millions of TV viewers worldwide - will reinforce Melbourne's international tourist reputation and highlight the Australian Garden as a 'must see' part of any visit to Victoria.

Work on the show garden, and obtaining the necessary plants, has been going on for several months. The garden is being designed by Jim Fogarty, the Melbourne landscape designer who has won many international awards, including at Chelsea and shows in Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Japan. It depicts the arid outback of Australia, characterised by the absence of water, and then the gradually increasing presence of water during an imaginary journey to the wetter, urban east coast.

Along the way the garden celebrates the wonderful array of colours, shapes, scents and foliage of Australia's remarkable plant life. Over 3,000 shrubs and trees have already been hand-selected by Jim Fogarty from specialist nurseries in Spain and Sicily and are now being grown on in England. Seeds from twelve species of threatened Victorian plants collected by the RBG for the Victorian Conservation Seedbank have been sent to

England and are also being propagated for the garden. Even the turf in the garden will be an Australian native species!

Jim and I visited this year's Chelsea Flower Show to prepare for our 2011 exhibit. We discussed the design and plant list with our plant managers and construction firm, examined 2,000 plants newly delivered from the nurseries in southern Europe, and carefully checked out this year's gold medal winners! Being my first time at Chelsea, I was very keen to see the garden and floral displays on show – and they certainly lived up to Chelsea's reputation as the 'Mt Everest' of the world's garden shows.

Our presence at Chelsea next year is being generously supported by the Victorian Government, philanthropic trusts, individual donors, and corporate sponsors. It's a most exciting undertaking that will raise international tourist awareness of the Australian Garden and promote Australian plants to British home gardeners.

## Working Wetlands Project, RBG Melbourne

Winter rains have been better this year – and the extra water in the Ornamental Lake has covered the mudflats exposed from last summer! Nevertheless the Lake is still scarcely more than half full. By next winter things should have improved significantly, though. The stormwater capture component of the Working Wetlands project should be completed by then and pouring large volumes of water from surrounding streets into the Lake. Even in



Above: The UK Horticulture display in Chelsea's Great Pavilion brought together a remarkable display of perfect flowers, fruit and vegetables.  
Below: More than 155,000 people flock to the RHS Chelsea flower show to delight in the exhibition gardens, floral displays and latest plant releases.



Photo: Dr Philip Moors

# FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

these drier times some 50 million litres of stormwater can be captured for the Lake each year after passing through 'biofiltering' wetlands to remove sediment, pollutants and nutrients. A secondary benefit is that the capture of these materials also helps improve the cleanliness and water quality of the Yarra.

This major \$3.2m project to advance water management and availability in the Gardens will unfold over the next 9-12 months. Tenders have been received, and we expect to have contractors on site soon. Funds have been provided by the Victorian Government (\$1.74m), the Sidney Myer Fund and The Myer Foundation (\$1.0m), Melbourne Water, and private donors.

Three biofiltering wetlands will be constructed on the margins of the Ornamental Lake, with another in each of Nymphaea and Central Lakes. Two rocky 'riffles' and a pond will be added to the stream bed in Fern Gully. The main purpose of these features is to improve water quality, but they will also offer attractive new habitats for native animals and plants.

The whole system of water-bodies and waterways will be linked – water will be pumped up to Guilfoyle's Volcano, from where it will flow down to Nymphaea Lake and the rain-garden in the Canna Bed, through Fern Gully and into Central Lake, before re-entering the Ornamental Lake. All the Lake's water will cycle through the system every 20-30 days. Water will also be circulated within the Ornamental Lake itself. The pipes for the system will be

installed by boring to minimise the impact on the Gardens although there will be temporary visual impacts from hoardings around the various worksite within the Gardens.

The planned next stage of Working Wetlands will enable treated water from the Lake to be used in the Gardens' irrigation system, thereby reducing our consumption of mains water.

## Herbarium Discovery Walk

Visitors to the Gardens can now learn about the history and scientific programs of the National Herbarium through the newly completed Herbarium Discovery Walk. Previously shielded from view by thick bamboo and other plantings, the northern face of the Herbarium building has been revealed along the main entry path with a redeveloped landscape, the repositioning of Mueller's sculpture, and the installation of interpretive signs and displays. Often regarded by visitors as somewhat mysterious, the work and significance of the Herbarium are now explained with images, text, specimens and books. For the first time the rich heritage of the Herbarium, home to the remarkable holdings of the State Botanical Collection, can be regularly displayed – and Ferdinand Mueller has been positioned in his rightful place as the 'father' of the National Herbarium!

This important project to promote the 157-year-long botanical role of the Gardens has been jointly funded by the

Friends of RBG Melbourne and by the RBG Foundation, and it is especially fitting that these two key supporters should combine to bring this part of RBG Melbourne's history to greater prominence. I warmly thank both organisations for their generous support.

## Chris Cole, New Director of Melbourne Gardens

On 5 July we welcomed Chris Cole as our new Director of the Melbourne Gardens Division. Chris comes to the RBG with a wealth of botanic gardens and management experience. He undertook his horticultural training at RBG Kew for three years before being appointed to the horticultural staff at Hampton Court Palace. He then worked in a landscaping and horticultural business in London before moving to Sydney, where his wife grew up. After a year in Sydney Chris became Curator of Townsville Botanic Gardens, where for four years he undertook a major and highly

successful rejuvenation of these important tropical gardens. Most recently he was the Manager of Horticulture and Arboriculture for Townsville City Council. I look forward to Chris's leadership of Melbourne Gardens and to working with him on our current and future projects.

*Philip Moors  
Director and Chief Executive*



*The bust of Mueller watches over the new plantings along the Herbarium Discovery Walk.*

*Photo: Meg Miller*



*Above: Dr Moors, Hon Tony Lupton, MP for Prahran, and Carillo Gantner, Chairman, Sidney Myer Fund, after ceremonially wading into the half-full lake at the opening of the 'Working Wetlands' media event.*



Concept map and explanation of the Herbarium Discovery Walk.



The Northern face of the Herbarium as it will now be seen by passers-by.

The opening of the Herbarium Discovery Walk on 17 August during Science Week marked the completion of a project designed to give the public a greater understanding of the work that goes on inside this familiar yet mysterious building. Much care and thought has gone into the choice of plants, most of which have been grown from seed or cuttings by RBG staff. They have been selected to cope with difficult growing conditions and to represent the achievements of several outstanding botanists associated with the Herbarium from its beginning to the present day. The Herbarium's founder, Ferdinand von Mueller, whose bust has been placed in a suitably important position, named more than 3,000 plants from all over Australia during his long career. A selection of these, including Mallee species such as *Eremophila gibbifolia* that are now classified as rare and threatened, have been included,

as well as *Rhododendron lochiaie*, the red Australian rhododendron named by Mueller after Sir Henry Loch, who was Governor of Victoria at the time. The work of three more recent botanists has also been honoured. Jim Ross, who retired in 2006, is represented by a plant he named *Hovea corrickiae* after his colleague Margaret Corrick, who worked with him at the Herbarium for many years. *Pomaderris adnata* and *Pomaderris cocoparrana* have been chosen to represent the many plants found and named by the current Senior Botanist, Neville Walsh, and *Grevillea jephcottii* and *Grevillea willisii* those by the late Jim Willis, who retired as Assistant Government Botanist in 1972.

Another plant, *Nemato Lepis wilsonii*, demonstrates the importance of the Victorian Conservation Seed Bank, which is situated in the Herbarium. The seed collected from this plant was used to re-establish the only known population near Marysville after it was destroyed by the Black Saturday bushfires.

Interpretive signs explaining many points of interest have been erected along the Discovery Walk, so, when you're next walking past, do take some time to look at the plants and to read about their connections with the work that takes place in the Herbarium and the dedicated people who carry it out.

*Marguerite Hancock with thanks to Catherine Gallagher and Ken Lake who provided the information.*

Waiting for three photos of plants from Neville Walsh for this page. He has been away.

# EVENTS



## Spring Insiders' Walk HISTORIC BUILDINGS IN THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS

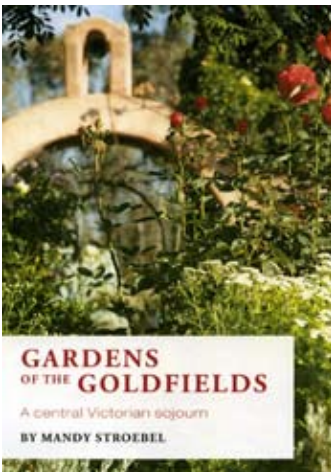
Friday 17 September at 10.00 am  
Meet at Gate Lodge  
COST: \$15 MEMBERS ONLY  
RSVP by Tuesday 14 September on  
enclosed booking form or download  
one from the Events page on our  
website: [www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org](http://www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org)  
Book early as numbers limited.

The walk starts at Gate Lodge (built circa 1902) with morning tea. Ian Polmear will lead us to the old Melbourne Observatory which was first occupied in 1863 and we will visit the Herbarium and F Gate Lodge (circa 1887) which served as Guilfoyle's original office. Here he created a Museum of Economic Botany and Plant Products.

In the Maintenance area we will see original Carpenter and Sign Painter workshops and stables which housed the

draught horses that pulled the lawn mowers until 1947. There are pre-fabricated, galvanised sheds which were made in London in 1848 and shipped to Melbourne to house military personnel.

We will visit the Volcano Reservoir, the William Tell Shelter, and the Rose Pavilion, and finish at Gardens House which was the Director's residence for about 130 years.



## Gardens of the Goldfields: A Central Victorian Sojourn

**ILLUSTRATED TALK BY  
MANDY STROEBEL**  
Thursday 7 October at 6.00 for 6.30pm  
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium  
COST: \$15 Non-Members \$25  
RSVP by Friday 1 October on  
enclosed booking form or download  
one from the Events page on our  
website: [www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org](http://www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org)  
Wine and savouries will be served  
before the talk.

Mandy Stroebel will be speaking about her book *Gardens of the Goldfields: A central Victorian sojourn*, in the context of gardens being a vital medium through which we can explore cultural heritage. What began as a simple 'how-to' manual on gardening in the climatic extremes and depleted soils of the goldfields evolved into an exploration of the region's cultural history and identity. As she travelled around gathering stories,

Mandy found herself increasingly immersed in the history of the goldfields' landscape and gardens. The result is a book essentially about the gardens of the goldfields, through which is woven the stories of the past and the challenges of the present.

Signed copies of the book will be available for sale.



## Fit Friends Ramble SOUTH MELBOURNE EMERALD HILL & ANAM CONCERT

Friday 15 October  
Meet at 10.30 am corner Park and Clarendon Streets (Stop 24 if you catch Tram 1 in Swanston St or Stop 129 if you catch Tram 112 in Collins Street.)  
COST: \$20 Non-members \$30  
The cost includes the fee for the tour of the Tapestry Workshop and a donation for the concert.

South Melbourne was first known as Emerald Hill. Our ramble will explore the area around Clarendon and Park Streets where Hoadley's chocolates and Sennits ice-cream were produced. Maples, Andersons and Crofts were the first retailers here and became well-known throughout Melbourne. The See Yup Chinese Temple was built 150 years ago on land donated by a prominent business man.

We will visit the See Yup Temple and enjoy a tour of the Australian Tapestry Workshop.

At 1.00 pm we will be treated to a concert by the musicians of the Australian National Academy of Music. Morning tea will be at our own expense. The concert should end at about 2.00 pm.

# EVENTS



## Gardens and Garden Culture in the Islamic World

**ILLUSTRATED TALK BY SUSAN SCOLLAY**

Thursday 28 October at 10.00 for 10.30 am  
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium  
COST: \$15 Non-members \$25  
RSVP by Friday 1 October on enclosed booking form or download one from the Events page on our website: [www.rbgfriendsmelbourne](http://www.rbgfriendsmelbourne)  
Morning tea will be served before the talk.

Susan Scollay is an internationally recognised specialist in Islamic textiles, carpets, art and culture. She is contributing editor of *Hali*, the London-based journal of carpet, textile and Islamic art, and is currently completing a PhD at LaTrobe University, Melbourne. Susan is a dealer, writer and researcher in European and Eastern textiles, and regularly lectures for various museums, academic institutions and arts organisations.

Oriental carpets often show stylised courtyards and gardens developed throughout Islamic countries. Large and elaborate gardens were planted around the palaces – from Spain across to India and Central Asia. At the same time small gardens, shrubs and potted flowers graced the courtyards of more modest residences reflecting the universal love of gardens and passion for flowers amongst Muslims.



## Spring Talking Plants

**BEAUTIFUL ROSES FOR COLOUR AND PERFUME.**

Friday 29 October at 10.00 a.m.  
Domain House, Dallas Brooks Drive  
COST: \$10 Non-members \$15  
RSVP by Monday 25 October on enclosed booking form or download one from the Events page on our website: [www.rbgfriendsmelbourne](http://www.rbgfriendsmelbourne)  
Book early as numbers will be limited.

Refreshments will be served during the morning.

Perfume, colour and a long flowering period, together with drought tolerance, make the rose a wonderful asset in any garden. Roses are extremely versatile, coming in a wide range of varieties suitable for gardens big or small and ideal to grow in pots for courtyards and balconies.

The President of the Victorian Rose Society will discuss the different types of roses, their growth habits, variety, growing conditions,

pruning advice, fertiliser requirements and diseases. He will also display many fabulous flowers and be happy to identify any roses you may bring along to show and share.



## The Art of Botanical Illustration Exhibition 2010

**OPENING AND RECEPTION**

Friday 5 November 6.00pm – 8.00pm  
Domain House Gallery, Dallas Brooks Drive, South Yarra (opposite the Herbarium)  
COST: \$25 Non-members \$35  
RSVP by Friday 29 October on enclosed booking form or download one from the Events page on our website: [www.rbgfriendsmelbourne](http://www.rbgfriendsmelbourne)

Book early as numbers will be limited.

The exhibition will be opened by well known author of garden books, and journalist, Sarah Guest.

The Friends proudly present this exquisite exhibition of 150 original works from Australian and overseas botanical artists. Botanical art has had a worldwide resurgence and has been used throughout history for the scientific documentation and identification of plants. An expert panel selects approximately 150 from over 400 works

submitted for selection.

The Celia Rosser award is presented to the artist/s whose work is judged the most outstanding. This year Susannah Blaxill is the guest artist. All exhibited works of art, along with a selection of cards, unframed works and the Friends' 2011 calendar will be for sale. Open daily 6 - 21 November week days 10am – 4pm, (Until 9pm Wed 10 November), weekends 10am – 6pm. Exhibition entry free.

# EVENTS



## The Art of Botanical Illustration 2010

### MORNING TEA AND TOUR WITH EDYTA HOXLEY

Tuesday 9 and Thursday 18 November at 10.00 am

Meet at Gate Lodge

COST: \$20 MEMBERS ONLY, LIMITED NUMBERS. Please book early.

RSVP by Friday 5 November on enclosed booking form or download one from the Events page on our

website: [www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org](http://www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org)

NB: Please nominate which date you are booking for on the form.

Edyta Hoxley, Convener of the Botanical Illustrators Group for many years, and an accomplished artist, will lead visits to the 2010 *Art of Botanical Illustration* exhibition. The tours will provide an opportunity to discover the intricacies of design and technique in botanical illustration and exhibition. The exquisite and detailed works on display cover a huge range of subjects and artistic styles and Edyta will endeavor to help you observe and understand

these differences.

We will meet first at Gate Lodge for morning tea and a brief introduction before walking over to the Domain House Gallery to view the exhibition.



## Rail trip to Castlemaine

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> November

COST: \$30 Non-members \$40

(Cost includes lunch and entry to garden and gallery)

Meet at Southern Cross Station Platform for Bendigo train at 10.15 am. The train departs at 10.35 am. Purchase your own return rail ticket to Castlemaine to receive concessions. (\$23.20 or \$11.60) Purchase of V-line tickets at local stations includes travel to and from Southern Cross.

We will journey by train to Castlemaine and you will receive some light reading for the journey.

Enjoy morning tea at our own expense in a coffee shop opposite the station. During our coffee break we will be given a short fashion update by a local designer, Riki. Then we will meander through the town to a private garden that is part of the Goldfields Gardens Week. After a light lunch at the Theatre Royal we will stroll

around the town shops and the Information Centre display. We will finish with a short walk to the Castlemaine Gallery and Museum to view historical paintings and artefacts from the gold rush era. The return journey begins at 3.30pm arriving at Southern Cross 5.19pm.



## Spring Guided Visit

### TO THE GROWING FRIENDS' NURSERY

Friday 12 November at 10:30am

Meet at Gate Lodge (opposite Shrine)

COST: \$5 MEMBERS ONLY

RSVP by Wednesday 10 November on enclosed booking form or download one from the Events page on our website:

[www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org](http://www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org)

Bookings are essential as numbers will be limited.

Late Spring is the perfect time to put in new plantings ready for Christmas, and our nursery holds a wide selection of plants ideal for the home garden. This is also an ideal opportunity to buy that special Christmas gift.

This visit is especially suitable for new members and others who are not familiar with the whereabouts and workings of our Growing Friends' Nursery. We will gather at Gate Lodge for morning tea and the opportunity to meet other like-

minded gardeners and then be guided along to the Nursery.

If you plan to buy a number of plants consider bringing strong carry bags or your market trolley to take your purchases home.

# FOR THE MEMBERS

## New! Membership Prize

At the end of June, the Friends launched a new quarterly membership prize of one year's subscription. Congratulations go to our very first winner, Mrs Deb Chirnside who lives on a property near Inverleigh and is a keen gardener. Deb is also a botanical artist who has exhibited her work at the 2004, 2006 and 2008 Friends' Exhibitions.

### How are prizewinners being selected?

At the end of each quarter, all Members who have paid their fee before the date printed on their first renewal notice will be eligible for a prize. The name of one lucky person, or household, is being drawn randomly as the winning Member for the quarter. For multiple-year Members, the prize will be the equivalent of one year of their next membership fee.

Check the renewal date! The September prize will be drawn very soon and then next at the end of December. This means there will be four lucky winners every year. Renew and join in the draw when it's your quarter!

### E-News Monthly

The monthly E-News service is an additional benefit for our Members. It often includes late news items which have missed Botanic News deadlines as well as reminders for upcoming events and plant sales. For example, the June E-News included an opportunity to win tickets for the Rupert Bunny Exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria; the July edition included a free invitation to Members to

attend the mid-month launch of a photographic exhibition at Domain House; the August E-News had a notice of a public lecture by the Director of Kew Gardens.

E-Bulletins are forwarded to everyone who has given their e-mail address to the Friends' Office. If this bulletin is not reaching you each month, please send an email message to [friends@frbgmelb.org.au](mailto:friends@frbgmelb.org.au) with a request to have your email address added to your membership record.

Members ideas and suggestions are important and always welcome.

*Lee Tregloan, Convener, Membership and Marketing.*

## Annual General Meeting

The Friends' Annual General Meeting will commence at 8.00pm on Monday 15 November 2010. Nominations for Council may be made by obtaining a nomination form from the Friends' office. Council members are elected for two years. This year Janet Thomson (President), Catherine Trinca (Vice-President), Maurice Castro (Treasurer), Susan Chandler, John Hawker and Peter Kelly (Ordinary members) are due to retire. All but the President and Vice-President are eligible for re-election.

Nominations are to be lodged with the Secretary at Gate Lodge by Friday 14 October 2010.

*Richard Smith  
Honorary Secretary*

## Enjoying My Membership

I have fond memories of walks and picnics in the Gardens, from an early age. Friends from overseas are always taken to the Gardens, usually for a picnic, and when my parents were visiting from the country a Sunday trip to the Gardens for afternoon tea was a favourite outing.

Really I should have joined the Friends years ago. Instead, I thought that my membership must wait until I retired. In thinking that making a contribution required more than membership, I overlooked the fact that being a member is a valuable contribution in itself. There is no need to volunteer for anything unless one wishes to. The Friends' quarterly magazine, *Botanic News*, keeps us up to date with Events and the endeavours of the Friends, while the Botanic Gardens' twice-yearly magazine *Floreo* adds to our knowledge and enjoyment of the Gardens. For anyone wishing to contribute beyond their subscription, a wide range of the Friends' endeavours welcomes all manner of talents.

For me a bonus of joining the Friends is how much I enjoy attending Events. I look forward to reading what each new quarter brings. I garden in a modest way and often choose practical topics, but on other occasions I broaden my horizons by hearing speakers whose interests are national or international in scope. I always learn something, and find someone with whom to have a conversation. Speakers have great expertise which they always share. I have had the privilege of speaking to possibly 'the' Australian plant

authority about blue wattles on our family property in East Gippsland. He pointed out the specimen in the Rare and Threatened Species section of the gardens, which, safe from being chewed and rubbed against by cattle, was looking unrecognizably splendid.

The Catering Committee consistently excels at these Events and the delicacies we enjoy with tea, coffee or a glass of wine are typical of their efforts.

One of the jewels in the crown of the Friends, and a reason for joining in itself, is the Growing Friends' Nursery to which we have weekly access. Plants propagated have already gone through a rigorous selection process so amateurs like me are protected from the worst excesses of impulsive and inappropriate purchases. This is not to say the plants are common: indeed I observed one of my well-informed gardening friends admiring my white *Justicia* and advanced *Gardenia thunbergii*. It is also the best place I know to purchase herbs. The growers will always help with suggestions and advice.

I have been a member for only a short time and members of longer standing could add to my list of the delights of being a Friend. I marvel at the significant and expert contributions made by many members and enjoy meeting these people. For anyone like me, though, who is just getting into the swing of being a Friend, I personally recommend Events and the Growing Friends' Nursery as great places to start.

*Christine Georgiou*

# GROWING FRIENDS

## International Camellia Society Congress 2010.

It was with much anticipation that in March 2010 my husband and I, along with 234 others, attended our first International Camellia Society (ICS) Congress in Kurume, on the island of Kyushu in southern Japan. Kurume is the country's leading producer of camellia seedlings and the world-famous Kurume azaleas also originate from here. The Japanese word for camellia is tsubaki.

The morning after a lavish welcoming banquet - which included a 'kagami-biraki' or breaking of the lid of a sake cask with wooden hammers - began with a visit to the Ishibashi Cultural Centre. It is set in a beautifully planted park where the first cherry blossoms had started to bloom. There was so much to see - bonsai exhibitions, paintings, arts and crafts, hands-on camellia origami, and dance performances by Japanese children. At the vendor tents selling camellia plants we looked on enviously as our non-Australian friends

loaded up with purchases of some beautiful and rare cultivars. We ate a delicious bento box lunch at the new Kurume City Camellia Garden and it was then off to visit the Azalea Centre and some private gardens. Along the way we walked along neighbourhood lanes admiring striking podocarpus and pine trees wired and shaped in the elegant manner so emblematic of Japanese gardens. There were also backyard orchards of persimmons and figs.

The Congress extended over three half-days - afternoons were taken up with tours. A wide range of technical papers was presented by representatives from various countries. Topics included camellia history and culture, biodiversity and conservation, and molecular biology. Mr George Orel from New South Wales tabled a paper on the exotic *Camellia amplexicaulis*, a flower associated with the celebrating of Tet, the Lunar New Year in Vietnam. The ICS presented six new 'Garden of Excellence' Awards - three to

gardens in Japan, the other three at Villa Anelli in Oggebio, Lake Maggiore; Locarno City Camellia Park, Switzerland; and Vergelegen Estate, Somerset West, near Capetown. To qualify for this award gardens must have a sizeable collection of camellias, well cared for, attractively planted, and carefully labeled. One such award was presented to the RBGM in 2001.

Over the next few days we visited several private gardens to see camellia trees 300-400 years old, all in great condition. A couple of these were *C. japonica* 'Masayoshi' the emblem flower of the Congress. The ground around the trees was carpeted in thick layers of petals, such was the profusion of flowers. At a plant market street called Greening Centre we visited a nursery holding many plants we would see in Victorian gardens.

One of the highlights of our tour in the Kurume region was a visit to Kumamoto Castle, the setting for the Tom Cruise movie *The Last Samurai*. Kumamoto is home of the

stunning higo camellias, which are uncommon in Australia. Higos feature a large sunburst of stamens in a single flower. They were an emblem of courage in samurai culture, often planted on the warrior's grave. DNA analysis so far points to higos being hybrids between *C. japonica* and one of the Chinese species camellias, but added to debate in Kumamoto are also higo-sasanquas. The Higo Camellia Society had put on a dazzling display of bonsai higos where scions were grafted on to old camellia root stock, and despite the steady drizzle, both local and overseas visitors jostled for camera space. It was a difficult choice between visiting the interesting and beautiful interior of Kumamoto Castle or pressing on in the wet to see the semi-private higo garden. The latter turned out to be a treat as the many trees displayed prolific blooms of gorgeous colour and size, and for many in our group, unlikely to be seen in such concentration again. A Japanese higo hybridist in our

One of the 3-400-year-old Camellias visited during the tours.

A lovely sample of the famed 'Higo' Camellias

Photos: Graeme Ball



# GROWING FRIENDS

group had sought permission from the Castle staff to take armfuls of cuttings but again, we were not able to avail ourselves of those offerings.

The Congress ended with a very happy and convivial dinner where the ICS Congress flag was ceremoniously handed over to the next host. In 2012 the Congress will be held in Chuxiong in Yunnan, China. This south-western part of China besides being home to many old camellia trees, is also the centre for the famous Yunnan camellias and many new cultivars.

March 25 was the start of our 6-day Post Congress Tour. At Suizenji Park we saw the encapsulation of Japanese 'strolling garden' design with lakes, islands, winding streams and a striking grass miniature of Mount Fuji. Later that day we drove up to Mt Aso but disappointingly, inclement weather prevented us from viewing the world's largest caldera system volcano.

Our next visit was to Oita Agricultural Park where we received a warm welcome, a

huge lunch, an exhibition of camellia blooms, tempting cultivars for sale (more excess baggage for our European friends!) and then an electric open tram ride to the camellia garden. This was built 13 years ago, over 1.7 hectares with more than 500 trees of about 200 cultivars. A sight to behold were five-metre high trees of sister cultivars of *C. japonica* 'Hakuhan Kujaku', the peacock camellia. This cultivar was available at our previous RBG Growing Friends' Spring and Autumn sales.

Beppu, a scenic bayside town, is famous for its hot springs and the famous Jigoku or 'Boiling Hells' bubbling mud pools set in picturesque gardens. We could see steaming vents all over the city and we visited a group of greenhouses, stocked with tropical plants, which were also heated by steaming vents just outside their back door. The scalding water from these hot springs is piped to private homes for heating and also to the many public baths and hotels. Many in our group subsequently

enjoyed an invigorating dip in the hotel's communal pools

From southern Japan we took off for Kyoto by Shinkansen (bullet train) and less than 3 hours later we arrived at the New Miyako Hotel, conveniently located opposite the vast railway station. Kyoto's rich cultural heritage could not be adequately covered in the very brief time we were there. We made obligatory visits to Nijojo Castle and well-known temples and shrines in the Kyoto and Nara areas. There was a delicious lunch at a tofu restaurant and a quick glimpse of the famed cherry blossom-lined Philosopher's Walk. At Ginkakuji Temple we were greeted with striking 50-metre long hedges in layers of stone, bamboo and dense camellias forming a 'green wall' some five metres high. Also known as the Silver Temple, its Zen culture origin is displayed with a raked gravel garden and a perfectly proportioned sand Mt Fuji. One smaller temple garden stood out in our tour: Reikan-ji Temple had origins as a nunnery, and the abbess who

is a member of the International Camellia Society, warmly welcomed us with tea and camellia-shaped rice cake, *mochi*, which looked too good to eat. We also squeezed in a visit to a private garden with an 800-year-old camellia tree, very floriferous, sporting five different-coloured blooms.

The final coach trip to our hotel near Kansai International Airport took us through the vast and astonishing industrial/marine landscape of south-western Osaka. It was the antithesis of our earlier encounters with serene gardens and green, mannered, tranquil spaces. As we said goodbye to our hosts we could not really express enough our heartfelt thanks to the Camellia Society of Japan and its volunteers for a Congress and Tours superbly organized to the last detail.

For information on the International Camellia Society go to [camellia-ics.org](http://camellia-ics.org), and locally in Victoria to [camelliasvic.org.au](http://camelliasvic.org.au).

Rosemary Ball  
*Camellia Co-ordinator  
Growing Friends*

Amazing Bonsai Camellia.



Sample of Camellias seen at Oita Agricultural Park



Photos: Graeme Ball

## The Growing Friends Nursery

In Spring the Nursery is open to Friends

on the following dates:

Friday 4 and 11 September;

Friday 29 October;

Friday 5, 12, 19 and 26 November.

We look forward to welcoming you between 8:00am and 1:00pm.

By the time you read this issue of Botanic News the Growing Friends Spring Sale will be only about 4 weeks away. However are you aware that Friends of RBG Melbourne may visit the Growing Friends Nursery on most Fridays to buy plants, or just to browse? (see bold type above for dates and times).

Not all of our plants are taken to a particular Spring or Autumn Sale, and, by visiting the Nursery on a Friday, you are able to see the full range of plants we have in propagation and purchase them if ready. If the plant you want is too small to be sold at that time, you can return when it is ready to sell.

Most of our plants are not in flower at the time of the Sales. By visiting on a Friday you can see what is in flower and can also take the opportunity to discuss your needs with the Growing Friends. They can suggest what plants might best suit your requirements and provide advice on appropriate planting and care.

*Michael Hare  
Convener, Growing Friends*

## Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens Inc.

In May approximately seventy delegates gathered at the Australian Inland Botanic Gardens on the north side of the Murray River from Mildura for the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens Conference.

Beautifully organized by the Friends of the AIBG, the conference addressed the theme *Secrets of the Mallee*, and the excellent speakers covered a diverse range of topics. These included the fascinating geology – rocks that tell the tale of oceans, deserts, tropical rain forests, earthquakes and volcanos – of the Murray Basin; the shocking impact of rabbits on the semi-arid woodland species of north-west Victoria and managing and reducing this impact; the role of the AIBG in the conservation of indigenous flora and irrigation technology; and the increase in water savings following the installation of closely-controlled pressurized sprinkler and drip irrigation systems and the adoption of soil monitoring techniques. A further presentation on water looked at the past, present and future of water management in the Murray Darling Basin, the most significant water reforms undertaken in the past 15 years and their impacts on local communities and the environmental issues involved.

Delegates also enjoyed presentations from seven Association Member gardens: the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne (Stage 1 and 2 of the Australian Garden), Melton Botanic Gardens (development),

Wilson Botanic Park (history and facilities), Bendigo Botanic Gardens (Master Plan for the new garden development), Hamilton Botanic Gardens (general information), Albury Botanic Gardens (the concept and construction of the Children's Garden), and the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Gardens Port Augusta, (host for the next AFBG conference). It is always very interesting to learn what is happening in other gardens and the significant involvement of their Friends' groups.

At the Annual General Meeting of the AFBG held at the end of the conference, Melbourne Friends' member Graeme Caple was elected as Treasurer and I was re-elected as an Ordinary Member of Committee. It was very pleasing to learn from a discussion following the AGM that those attending the conference expressed strong support for the work of the AFBG and the way in which it draws together 49 Friends groups from all over Australia and one New Zealand Friends' member. For further information about the AFBG please see the website [friendsbotanicgardens.org](http://friendsbotanicgardens.org).

*Janet Thomson*

## RBGM Glasshouses

Ex-Curator of the Tropical Glasshouses, Jeremy Prentice, has undertaken to compile a history of the glasshouses from 1850 to the present. He says 'the story of the glasshouses of the RBGM is not easy to uncover. Many have explored this path before me, and yet, to my knowledge a clear, concise summary of this has yet to be offered.'

The history Jeremy has so far written is divided into time sections, such as: 1850 to the early 1870s; 1870s to the early 1900s; early 1900s to 1950; 1950s to today; into the future.

While the Gardens library has a collection of memorabilia, it is by no means complete. The State library also has some records, often in books about the Gardens. Jeremy is therefore asking, through these pages, if any of our Members have any photographic memorabilia, or recollections of glasshouses in former times, that they would like to share. Please feel free to contact him at: [drplantman@gmail.com](mailto:drplantman@gmail.com), or phone 0423 521 682. Photos and memorabilia can be left at the Friends' office for Jeremy to collect.

*Members of the Association of Friends at their meeting in the beautiful old wool shed at*  
*Photo. Patricia Bannatyne.*



# GARDENS

Photo: Jennifer Marshall



## Australian Elm Register

Thirty years ago it would have been inconceivable in the State of Victoria that our Gardens and Townships would hold the last remaining great stands of Elms on the globe. The deadly fungus, Dutch Elm Disease has not yet spread to Australia, and the Friends of the Elms (FOTE) are pleading for help to maintain this last healthy Elm population.

Because of the ever-present threat of Dutch Elm Disease being discovered in Australia, a contingency plan is soon to be released by the Elm Pests and Disease Taskforce in Victoria. This Taskforce is composed of government representatives, including Agriculture Victoria, The Melbourne City Council and Friends of the Elms. A major project, which FOTE has undertaken, is the establishment of a register of all elms in Australia.

We are following New Zealand's example. Their elm register pinpoints geographically as many of the trees as possible. Authorities inspected all these known elms and removed and buried any

elms showing signs of Dutch Elm Disease. The trees are inspected annually, helping to pinpoint new outbreaks of infestation before the disease takes hold on the trees. In this way, the problem has almost been eradicated.

FOTE would appreciate all elm owners registering their trees by calling the hotline, 0409 870 860 to request a reply-paid registration form, or to provide the address of any elms of which they are aware, so that a form and explanation of the importance of the register can be mailed to the owners.

Currently, the disease is not a threat in Australia, but the European Elm Leaf Beetle, which has no natural predator in Australia, and is rapidly spreading through the country. The Friends of the Elms issues a pamphlet detailing the methods of control of threats to our elms.

To register your elms, or obtain information, please write FOTE office, C/- Burnley Gardens, 500 Yarra Blvd, Richmond, 3121, or telephone 0409 870 860.



Photo: Paul Bangay

## Garden DesignFest 2010

The Rotary Club of Kew's renowned charity 'designer' open garden weekend is on again!

Now a major biennial event on Victoria's spring gardening calendar, Garden DesignFest 2010 presents an amazing opportunity for gardeners and horticultural professionals to visit over 25 stunning privately owned and professionally designed gardens open across Melbourne and the Mornington Peninsula - all in a single weekend. Enjoy a stroll through a magnificent array of garden styles and sizes, from a breathtaking Mediterranean inspired coastal retreat to an intimate series of city courtyards - there are gardens on offer to suit every taste and budget, from the traditional to cutting edge trends in landscape design. Gather ideas, take notes and as a unique feature of this event discuss your design issues with Melbourne's talented designers who will all be on hand to meet, greet and assist

you in their respective designed gardens over the open weekend. Participating designers include Paul Bangay, John Patrick, Rick Eckersley, Jim Fogarty, Andrew Laidlaw and many other inspirational established and emerging landscape designers. Freshly brewed coffee, food tastings, diamond ring raffle and giveaways are all part of this exciting open garden weekend. All proceeds to selected charities (details on website). For further information, garden addresses/images and to subscribe to E-Newsletters visit [www.gardendesignfest.com](http://www.gardendesignfest.com)

### Opening Hours:

10am to 4.30pm  
Sat & Sun 13/14 Nov

### Tickets:

\$25 all gardens via website and garden gates or \$5 per garden at garden gates only.

### Information:

Jill Forsyth 0412 171 353  
or Jenny Wade 0409 000 089

### Bus Tours:

Beverley Read 0418 766 905



# ILLUSTRATORS

## Classes

Term 4 will start in the week beginning 9 October. Classes will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings and in the daytime on Mondays, Wednesdays, Saturdays (two sessions each day - 2.5hr), Thursdays (one 2.5hr session) and Fridays (one 3 hr session).  
2.5hr classes: \$270 (incl GST)  
Friends: \$225 (incl GST)  
3hr classes: \$315 (incl GST)  
Friends: \$270 (incl GST)  
For further information about classes contact the Friends' office on 9650 6398.

## RHS Birmingham

Having spent two years painting Eucalypts, Sandra completed nine studies suitable for exhibiting at the Royal Horticultural Society's botanical exhibition held at BBC Gardeners' World Live 2010, NEC Birmingham in June. This show differs to the other RHS Exhibitions as the work has to be framed and attached to the display boards. The duration of the exhibition is six days including setting up.



The judges, including the President of the RHS, Giles Goode-Adams, and Gillian Barlow, assess the paintings first and foremost as botanical illustrations which must have an overall unity. Sandra's work was titled 'Australian Eucalypts'.

After fully researching her paintings Sandra found they all originated in Western Australia. She had found them to be the most varied and interesting.

Gillian explained that the judges use a points system, and Sandra was fortunate to have covered all aspects of the criteria and so was awarded a Gold Medal and 'Best in Show'.

The RHS Lindley Library has also purchased a painting titled *Eucalyptus erythrocorys*-Illyarrie Red-Cap Gum.

The Friends congratulate Sandra on her success and hope it inspires others to produce Eucalypt paintings for our own Eucalyptus exhibition planned for 2011.

*Sandra Sanger.*

Waiting for photo in correct format.

## Feather, Fur and Flowers The Art of Botanical Illustration Exhibition 2010

Janet Matthews, a well-known wildlife artist, and specialist in colour pencil work, gave a three-day workshop to 15 rapt artists. She demonstrated her various techniques by drawing long and short fur on possums, defined and soft feathers on birds, and gum tree flowers using many surprising colours and layers. We then used her techniques ourselves to draw a possum or bird, with Janet giving us individual tuition and help. We were all so interested that we did not to waste much time for lunch – a very happy three days and a great learning experience.

This workshop booked out so quickly that Janet agreed to give another one during the following week, which was equally successful.

*Judy Jarman*

## Whirlybirds

A group of Botanical Illustrators meet and paint in the Whirling Room on Tuesdays. One of our artists, Peter Lewis, who is also an apiarist, was the guest speaker for the June quarterly meeting. His informative talk on bees, their life and activities, gave us a greater awareness of how the bees function in the hive and their future in Australia.

At present work is being completed for submission to the *Art of Botanical Illustration 2010* Exhibition. Attendance is so consistent we have a waiting list for interested artists. If you would like to join the group in the future please contact Sandra Sanger on 9598 9532.

Susannah Blaxill will be the guest artist at this year's exhibition. She is an Australian artist with a strong international reputation with her work held in both public and private collections worldwide. Susannah is recognized worldwide for her ability to take a moment in an ordinary plant form's life cycle, anywhere from the beginning of growth to the dying and decaying plant, and turn it into a portrait that will take your breath away. She is able to make the viewer see the plant as they have never seen it before, with detail and form that is almost unbelievable.

Susannah is an Australian, who moved to England in her early twenties, where her interest in gardening and subsequently drawing and painting took root. She became a professional artist and was elected a member of the Society of Botanical Artists in London before returning to Australia nearly fifteen years later and since then she has been living and painting in New South Wales.



*One of the paintings Susannah Blaxill has entered in The Art of Botanical Illustration 2010 exhibition.*

## Volunteer Wanted!

### Advertising for The Art of Botanical Illustration Exhibitions

#### Skills required:

Communication

Telephone.

Be part of the Botanical Illustrators' committee or liaise with committee .

Be prepared to delegate tasks to willing volunteers and follow up.

#### Computer

Email.

Word processing.

Image file manipulation – training will be available.

#### Writing:

Advertising material is rewritten for every exhibition. This can be done by the advertising person or volunteer writers may be available to assist.

#### Time required:

Monthly meetings 1 – 2 hours.

Work starts 12 months prior to the biennial exhibition; it can range between 1 and 10 hours a week. Setting up the advertising campaign requires a larger number of hours.

N.B. An information manual will be provided plus a copy of Margaret Gee's Media Guide.

Please telephone Merle McIntyre on 9885 7470 for further information

## Botanical Illustrators Quarterly Meeting

### WATTLES

Tuesday 14 September at 10.00am for 10.30am in the Whirling Room

Cost \$5.50. Pay on the day.

Bendigo botanist Rod Orr will speak about the genus *Acacia*, which includes Australia's national floral emblem, *Acacia pycnantha*, the Golden Wattle.

## Bees

At their June quarterly meeting, the Botanical Illustrators enjoyed a presentation about bees from one of their members, Peter Lewis. His was a wide-ranging talk which covered a large number of topics including native and imported bees, the life of a hive, the work of an apiarist and the threats faced by bees.

Native bees, of which there are 1500 types, are mostly solitary and do not make hives. They vary in size (some are only a couple of millimeters in length), and prefer native plants. They have been depicted in Aboriginal paintings.

The bees we see in our gardens are not native to Australia. They were originally imported in the early 1800s to fertilize imported plants. On each trip, a worker bee collects pollen from the same species of plant. On returning to the hive it performs a special dance to direct others to those plants. When a hive becomes overpopulated (50,000 bees) the queen and about half of the workers move out and a succession struggle commences.

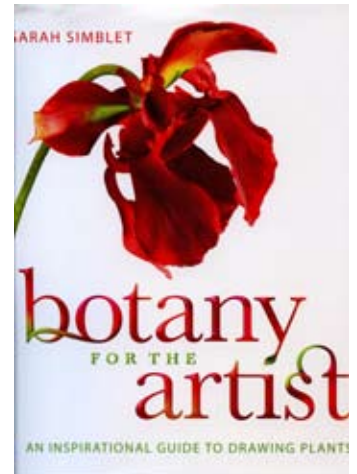
Worker bees make their own honeycomb in the wooden frames of beehives and the queen lays her eggs in the empty cells. The beekeeper uncaps the cells of the honeycomb and spins the honey

out in a centrifuge. The frames are then returned to the hive. Honey keeps well, although it varies considerably, depending on the plants visited by hive members. After five to ten years it becomes darker and has been found in the pyramids.

In 1992 bumble bees were accidentally introduced into Tasmania and there have been attempts to prevent them reaching the mainland. Peter said an Asian honey bee was accidentally introduced in Cairns in 2005.

Bees are under threat around the world. The advent overseas of Colony Collapse Disorder, thought to be caused by overworking the bees, and *Varroa destructor* bee mite which has spread to most of the world, is most alarming. It is why the import of honey products into Australia is banned - we don't have these diseases here yet. Instead, Australia is now exporting honey to USA and Canada. Peter pointed out that one-third of all the food we eat is pollinated by bees, and in China farmers are hand-pollinating pear crops as bees have died out in some provinces. A very convincing argument for Australians to protect their bee populations.

*Judy Jarman*



## Botany for the Artist

### AN INSPIRATIONAL GUIDE TO DRAWING PLANTS.

By Sarah Simblet

ISBN: 9781405332279

Publisher: Dorling Kindersley.

This beautifully presented art book is a joy for the botanical artist to read and use. The book is divided into sections dealing with the approach to drawing plants, the diversity of plant life, and the various parts of a plant.

Each section has exquisite photos, illustrations, and pen and ink sketches. The sketches are clearly labeled and some chapters include drawing classes giving readers guidelines on how to approach the illustration.

This book is an informative and attractive addition to any library, and is also a lovely coffee table book.

*Mary Harper*

*Peter Lewis with an assortment of bee-keeping paraphernalia and honey from his hives.*

*Photo:*

# NEW MEMBER APPLICATION

PLEASE PRINT

Name(s).....  
(Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms / Dr)

Address.....

Postcode.....

Telephone: ( ).....

Email:.....

I wish to apply for membership in the following category

- Household - 1 year** **\$68**  
(Two adults living at same address. Please state name of second person)
- 2 years \$125  
 3 years \$186
- Individual (within 50km of the GPO) - 1 year** **\$47**
- 2 years \$83  
 3 years \$125
- Interstate, Overseas, Country, Pensioner\*, Student\* (full-time)** **\$34**  
(\*state pension number / student number and educational institution)

**Life/Group Memberships/Bequests/Wills**  
Please send me details

**Trust Fund DONATIONS**  
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**TOTAL ENCLOSED** \$

Cheque/Money order enclosed OR please charge my

Visa  Mastercard

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Signature Expiry Date

**Please make cheques payable to Friends of RBG and post to:**  
**Friends of RBG, Gate Lodge, 100 Birdwood Ave, Melbourne 3004**

Age Group

Under 25  25-39  40-59  60 and over

How did you hear of the Friends of RBG? .....

Subscription rates as at 1/4/10. Rates subject to annual review. ABN 43 438 335 331



**FRIENDS** of the  
ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS  
MELBOURNE INC.

# BOTANIC NEWS

BOTANIC NEWS is produced quarterly for Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Inc. which was formed to stimulate further interest in the Gardens and the National Herbarium and to support and assist them whenever possible.

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