



ALEXANDER WILLIAM JESSEP, M.Agr.Sc., B.Sc., Dip.Ed.  
(Director and Government Botanist at Melbourne Botanic Gardens and  
National Herbarium since 1941)

## DIRECTOR'S PREFACE

The National Herbarium of Victoria is the oldest, largest and the most important repository of dried plant material in Australasia, containing, as it does, approximately one and a half million numbers of botanical specimens. By common consent, the adjacent Melbourne Botanic Gardens is also without equal among the scientific and scenic plantations in the Commonwealth and New Zealand. Types of all the 2,000 species described by Baron Sir Ferdinand von Mueller during his 44 years as Colonial Botanist are housed therein; many duplicate types of Robert Brown's, F. Sieber's, A. Cunningham's, T. Mitchell's and other important historical collectors enhance the value of the herbarium, which is rich, too, in cryptogamic collections — mosses, hepatics, algæ, lichens and fungi.

Yet, in the 98 years of its existence, the institution has never had a journal of its own (if Mueller's 12 volumes in Latin of the *Fragmenta Phytographiæ, Australiae*, 1858-1882, be excepted), and much special work done upon this vast accumulation of world material has never been printed for the benefit of other workers at home and abroad. Members of the staff have been obliged to publish their researches through the various Royal Societies in Australia or, more often, in the acceptable but restrictive space of the *Victorian Naturalist*.

In view of its growing importance to agriculturists, foresters, nurserymen, school teachers, ecologists and the community at large—up to 15,000 specimens are identified for the public every year—the Melbourne Botanic Gardens and National Herbarium now regards some official organ as a *sine qua non*. Without any medium of literary exchange, it becomes increasingly difficult to build up the library—rich in older monographs and botanical periodicals, but deficient in many modern and highly desirable publications.

## MUELLERIA

On 26th January ("Australia Day") 1953, it was exactly a century since the appointment of Victoria's first Government Botanist, the then Doctor F. J. H. Mueller, who added such lustre and world renown to his office. As this auspicious occasion passed, it was felt that no more worthy memorial to such a distinguished man of science could be conceived than a journal, bearing his name and emanating from the very institution he had founded. Very generously, the trustees of the Maud M. Gibson Botanic Gardens Trust have agreed to defray the initial expenses and cost of the first number of such a Herbarium journal. So, with due acknowledgment of the Trust's munificent gesture, it is a great pleasure to present the first number of this commemorative periodical, and to express the hope that its pages will ever do honour to Baron von Mueller's name.

Intended primarily as a vehicle for the publication of botanical monographs, descriptions of new species, horticultural papers, systematic and historical notes by officers of the Melbourne Herbarium, it will yet be wide enough in scope to embrace items of interest by members of other herbaria and by amateur botanists both within and outside Victoria.

*Muelleria* will be issued from time to time, as occasion demands; it will not observe any fixed periodicity. Intending contributors may obtain reprints *gratis*, and are requested to adhere carefully to the adopted format, arranging their typescripts (with double spacing) in accordance; papers typed on both sides of a sheet are not acceptable.

For the present, Mr. J. H. Willis has consented to act as editor.

National Herbarium,  
The Domain,  
SOUTH YARRA, S.E.1., VIC.,  
1955.

A. W. JESSEP,  
Director and Government Botanist.