

FOREWORD

THE MAUD GIBSON GARDENS TRUST

Miss Maud Gibson, formerly of Melbourne, a lover of gardens, under a Deed of Settlement dated 1945, set up a Trust with assets valued at approximately £20,000. The income from this sum of money was to be applied to the maintenance, development, replacement and improvement of the flora of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens, and also for "the promotion of botanical research and the publication of papers of a scientific or educational nature dealing with botanical subjects". Her object was to commemorate her father, the late William Gibson, founder of the firm of Foy & Gibson Limited, Melbourne.

Melbourne is the fortunate possessor of a magnificent botanic garden, which is world famous. Included in its administration is the National Herbarium, housed in a fine building donated to the State by the late Sir MacPherson Robertson in 1934. The Trustees of the Gibson Gardens Trust have, for many years, realised the importance of this Herbarium. It is probably the largest and the most valuable south of the Equator, and it owes its importance largely to the pioneer work of Baron Sir Ferdinand von Mueller. The Trustees have also recognised that, on present-day standards abroad and in Australia, the National Herbarium in Victoria is under-staffed, and can only undertake essential research work on the innumerable problems presented by the flora of such a vast area as Australia when the day to day needs of identification are satisfied. A herbarium is much more than a mere collection of dried plants and an office where numerous school-teachers and amateur botanists can get plants identified. It is primarily a research institution, as is fully recognised in such centres as Kew and the Arnold Arboretum. Pending greater support from the public and the Government along these lines, the Gibson Trust has assisted the Herbarium in several ways — with equipment and by providing salaries of part-time additional staff to enable the full-time staff to spend more time on the preparation of a new hand-book to the flora of this State. In the year 1951 the Trust brought out from Kew, Dr. Melville, who is in charge of the Australian plant collection there. He visited every State and State Herbarium in Australia, collected widely, both for the Melbourne and Kew Herbaria, and did much to stimulate research into our rich native flora.

The Trust now takes another step in this direction, by financing a new Herbarium journal "*Muelleria*". The proposal for the establishment of this journal came from the Director of the Gardens and State Botanist, Mr. A. W. Jessep. A great deal of modern research in agriculture, horticulture and forestry by State departments, the C.S.I.R.O. and universities rests on the sure foundation of the systematic description and naming of the plants investigated. Although the scientific journals of the world welcome full-scale articles on these subjects, facilities for the publication of shorter records and descriptions of more local interest are lacking.

The Trustees are convinced that the initiation of this new journal will encourage research in a most important field of science.

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(University of Melbourne),
Chairman of the Committee advising the
Trustees of the Maud Gibson Gardens Trust.