



GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP

ISSN 1039 – 9062
ABN 82 428 110 028

Newsletter
August 2016

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Leader's Comments

When you receive this *Newsletter* the new fiscal year will have started. Those of you who receive paper copies and need to renew will receive reminders with your *Newsletter*. Those of you who get email copies and need to renew have already been reminded. Thanks to the generosity of Diana Snape and the other contributing authors who have given our Study Group the royalties of their book *The Australian Garden*, we are able to keep subscriptions at their current level (listed at the end of this *Newsletter*) and still print this *Newsletter* in colour.

The National Library of Australia, due to financial constraints, is no longer collecting paper copies of newsletters such as ours. We send our *Newsletter* to other libraries such as the ANBG, the State Libraries of NSW and Victoria, and while we are grateful that they collect them, it is not the same as being in the national collection. This makes our website even more important. The GDSG website (www.anpsa.org.au/design), ably managed by Brian Walters, which is part of the ANPSA website is our main communication portal to the outside world. We are in the process of revising some of the text on the website to bring it up to the present time and will be adding the design chapter from Diana's book soon. We are grateful to Diana and her publisher (Blooming Books) for allowing us to do this. It will add a lot of basic and advanced information on designing gardens using native plants to our website. We will also be adding our current *Newsletter*. I would encourage those of you who have not looked at our website recently to do so and look at the section "Garden Snapshots" under the "Visit an Australian Garden" section. Here we have put short pictorial reports on the gardens of members and others that we have visited. If any of you have ideas for other things we could add to our website, please let me know.

In the last *Newsletter* I mentioned the possibility of creating a formal native garden at the National Arboretum Canberra as part of the Galleries of Gardens near the Visitor's Centre. We submitted a proposal which was ultimately met by a disappointing response from the Arboretum Executive Manager, Stephen Alegria. He felt that since some of the planned 7 gardens had a native plant or two that would be sufficient. He suggested that "a native theme could fit well on one of the central valley terraces where the resilience of native species would be especially welcome".

When Disaster Strikes...

Words Ros Walcott, Canberra
Photos Ben Walcott, Canberra

On the night of Friday 22 July, or maybe the morning of Saturday 23 July, the last of our 85 year old pine trees (*Pinus radiata*) crashed to the ground. During that night in Canberra we had wind gusts up to 80 k/hour and the ground was sodden from record rainfall. We had the wettest June ever recorded in the capital this year.

The venerable pine removed most of the plantings in that corner of the garden. It took out our collection of callistemons, now 13 years old, a large *Casuarina cunninghamii* of similar age, and

our much beloved Silky Oak (*Grevillea robusta*). The 'Canberra Bells' correas that I talk about in the following correa article are now flattened, so are a group of *Hakea eriantha*. The well-established front hedge of *Callistemon salignus* and *Callistemon* 'Firebrand' will have to be resurrected in that section. We also lost our mature Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) in another section of the garden.



Acacia pycnantha down with its buds about to open

However, as is always the case in disasters, many treasures were spared – a group of *Cordyline stricta* nursed along through many Canberra winters, a recent planting of *Myoporum floribundum x batae*, *Brachychiton* 'Griffith Pink', a large patch of *Eremophila subfloccosa* and several *Calothamnus*.

We have removed the old pine trees (at vast expense!) from around the boundary of our property over the last few years. They were senescing and dropping limbs, but we left one last pine which looked healthy and was a popular perch for our local birds. This tree also had a nest-box on it which had been used in past seasons. It is still in use, Ben discovered, by a ring-tailed possum, even after the demise of the tree. The possum does not mind that his home has gone massively down-market!

We must look on this area as an exciting opportunity to plant anew. I well remember the 1987 'Great Storm' in England, the worst for over 300 years, which claimed many lives and felled over 15 million trees. I then admired the horticulturalists at Kew, while mourning their great trees, also managed to see it as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to plant afresh. Here, in microcosm, we have the same opportunity.



Pinus radiata upturned root ball is over 3 metres tall. The nest box is on its side but still occupied happily by a ring-tail possum.

Below you can see the devastating effect of the pine on the garden.



Correspondence

Diana Snape, Vic

Hi Ros,

I think it is an excellent idea for a formal garden of Australian plants to be planted at the National Herbarium in Canberra. I really hope it is successful. So many Australians still have no idea of our range of trees and shrubs, let alone how they can be used more formally. Some people still retain the old 60s and 70s picture of straggly plants, in need of pruning. We have come a long way since then! (*Ed. Unfortunately the proposed garden is not going to happen.*)

It is great that Lawrie Smith is hoping to organise a Queensland 'chapter' of the GDSG (I like the term 'branch' as it sounds more organic, rather than literary). It would be wonderful to see a wider range of Australian garden types represented in the *Newsletter*, in addition to those common in the south-east of Australia. The sub-tropical and tropical gardens of the north-east have a magic all their own, based on the very different conditions that plants have evolved in there. (Then, of course, there are the arid gardens of the more inland areas of south-western Australia.)

I enjoyed the article on banksias (and photos). They are really such an iconic genus of Australian plants - not as widespread as eucalypts and wattles but fascinating in so many ways.

Best wishes,
Diana



Tropical climber *Tecomanthe hillii* from Fraser Island (Photo from the net)

Garden Design Study Group – Queensland Chapter

In the June NPQ Journal my suggestion that we should consider forming a Queensland Chapter of the GDSG stimulated at least three people to contact me. We had hoped for more (and there may well have been!) but unfortunately the email address at the base of the article was incorrect and I am concerned that some members intending to make contact were unsuccessful because of this. In addition I have had a major computer malfunction during the last month which has resulted in losing some emails and other data – so your initial application could have been one of these as well! Consequently I decided to reply by email to all those who contacted me initially, with what might well be the inaugural GDSGQ news sheet, I have decided to call it '**Sketch Plan**' and if you do not receive this response please contact me again. I suggest that we do not attempt to get GDSGQ up and running before the Spring Flower Show September 17 & 18 - but soon after that we will organise a meeting in a selected central garden to discuss how we would all like to see the group organised. Thank you to those who contacted me - your individual enthusiasm to learn more about designing local gardens with our Australian flora is catching. I know that once established our Queensland chapter will be able to add that special and unique tropical / subtropical experience to the garden design knowledge already shared around the temperate southern states. If I have not replied to your original email or phone call please try again, this time using the correct address displays@npq.org.au

Lawrie Smith

Two Cheers for the Correas

Words by Ros Walcott, Canberra

Photos by Ben Walcott, Canberra

We have had mixed success with correas since we began our Canberra garden 13 years ago. We found that our local branch, ANPS Canberra, was packed with correa aficionados, who were enthusiastically going on Correa Crawls, creating new correas for the garden and generally singing in praise of correas. We have had some correas which have given yeoman service since they were first planted, for example *Correa glabra* 'Winter Glow', 30 of them planted under varying degrees of cypress shade which have grown quite large even though they have been regularly clipped. Their cheerful lime green bells take us through the winter and their glossy foliage looks good all year long. Despite the fact that our old (decrepit, but heritage) cypresses keep dropping limbs and smashing the plants to smithereens does not discourage them. We also have 15 plants of an excellent flat groundcover *Correa decumbens* 'Mt. Lofty' with perky, upright flowers of red tipped with green, which roots vigorously as it goes along. It has narrow dark green leaves and flowers on and off during the year. We, of course, have about 40 plants of the reliable *Correa* 'Dusky Bells' which were also



Correa 'Winter Glow'

original plantings which have performed admirably. Two other foundation correas which have lasted well are *Correa bauerlenii* (15 plants), always a delight with their bubblegum-scented shiny leaves and cunning 'chef's cap' flowers and *Correa decumbens* (10 plants). Maria Hitchcock told us that our so-called *Correa decumbens* is actually a hybrid named 'Pink Panther' which grows to be maybe a metre high and wide with tons of pink bells on and off throughout the year. These plants make up our foundation correa plantings and we are grateful for their perseverance.

However, there are many other correas which we have planted over the years that have been not so successful. We had two uncharacteristically wet years in Canberra 2010-2011, and along with many other gardeners lost numerous correas in sodden soils. I vividly remember that one extremely committed correa grower removed all her correas (she had hundreds of species and cultivars) and did not grow



Correa decumbens 'Mt. Lofty' left and *Correa* 'Dusky Bells'

them again after the disappointment of losing so many established plants during that wet period. I also felt downhearted with the many failures during those two years. *Correa* 'Angels's Tears', *Correa* 'Federation Belle', *Correa* 'Firebird', *Correa glabra* red form, *Correa* 'Green Dream', *Correa* 'Pinker Bells', *Correa reflexa* Kangaroo Island form, *Correa reflexa* 'Skye Bells', *Correa reflexa* x *decumbens*, *Correa reflexa* var. *reflexa* 'Brisbane Ranges' and *Correa* 'Tucker Time Dinner Bells' all died during 2010-2011 despite being well established before that wetter period.

Correa reflexa var. *speciosa* 'Fat Fred' deserves a paragraph of its own. I tried valiantly to establish this plant in what I considered ideal dappled shade conditions for it, but to no avail. I ended up losing all ten plants, even after they had flowered successfully over a couple of years. So disappointing that I could not please this showy plant with its appealing 'fat' red and green flowers and dark green foliage. Has anyone had continuing success with this plant?



Correa bauerlenii (left)

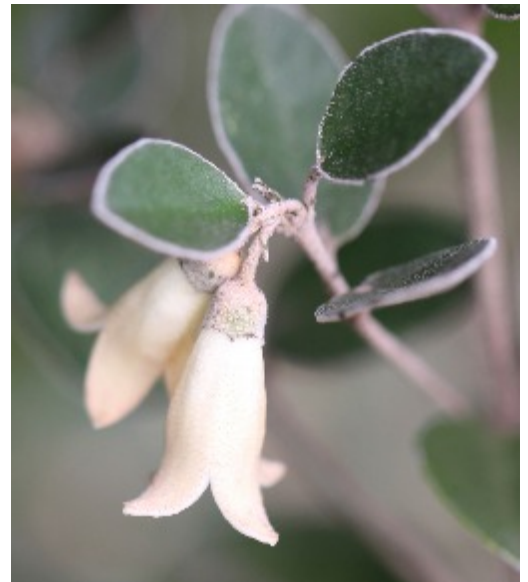
Correa decumbens or possibly 'Pink Panther'? (right)

All the *Correa pulchella* forms are long lasting in Canberra and very rewarding to grow. Gwyn and Geoff Clarke had a magnificent *Correa pulchella* with coral red flowers which lasted 37 years in their garden before they departed for Grafton environs. It could still be flowering profusely in their garden if it had not been bulldozed for the new house. Happily, ANPS Canberra Propagation Group was able to take cuttings from all of the Clarke's plants before the clearing of their block. We grow a number of different forms of *Correa pulchella*, red, pink and coral flowering. These plants are easy to propagate, tidy and long flowering in the garden. They are also particular favourites of the birds.

We have a long hedge of *Correa alba* which was established in two parts, one of 40 plants in 2007 and the other of 20 plants in 2013. These correas were very small when they were planted, but have grown well. The numerous foxes on our property smash through the hedge at night, even though we have considerably left a few paths through the correas for their use. We originally had 109 *Philotheca myoporoides* as our second lower hedge in front of the *Callistemon salignus*, but gradually all these waxflowers died and we eventually replaced them with the more robust correas.

This year has been our most successful year for correas. We are pleased with the performance of a number of hybrids and cultivars that we have planted over the past five years, despite my declaration that I was through with correas and would not plant them again after all the 2010-2011 disasters.

Correa 'Adorabell', *Correa* 'Autumn Rouge', *Correa* 'Crimson Tide', *Correa glabra* 'Barossa Gold', *Correa glabra* 'Cappuccino', *Correa glabra* 'Ivory Lantern', *Correa* 'Jetty Red', *Correa glabra* 'Long John', *Correa* 'Inglewood Gold', *Correa* 'Ivory Bells' (first hybridized in San Francisco), *Correa* 'Lemon Twist', *Correa* 'O.M.G.', *Correa* 'Pink Carpet', *Correa* 'Pink VoVo', *Correa pulchella* 'Pink Mist', *Correa* 'Rolly Polly' and *Correa* 'White Tips' are all flowering well this winter.



Correa pulchella left and *Correa* 'Ivory Bells'

We also have Neil Marriott's *Correa* 'Summer Belle' which I notice is performing well at the Australian National Botanic Gardens. The Gardens cut their plants back severely and they have responded well. We planted *Correa* 'Autumn Blaze' when it first appeared in our local nursery in 2007 as its bright orange colour was very attractive. This plant has not grown very well for us, but still flowers sparsely each year. One very successful correa for us is the Fleurieu Peninsula, SA species *Correa calycina*. This plant is most reliable, even under quite a bit of shade to protect it from our frosts. We have not had much success with *Correa backhousea* even though others in Canberra have had excellent results.

I had originally planted the old stalwart *Correa* 'Marian's Marvel' under some shade to protect it from the frost. It did flower, but not profusely. Then I saw 'Marian's Marvel' planted in full sun and frost in Murrumbateman at the garden of Margaret Streamer and David Herald. It was magnificent. I rushed home to plant five new 'Marians' Marvels' in full sun and have been rewarded by many more flowers

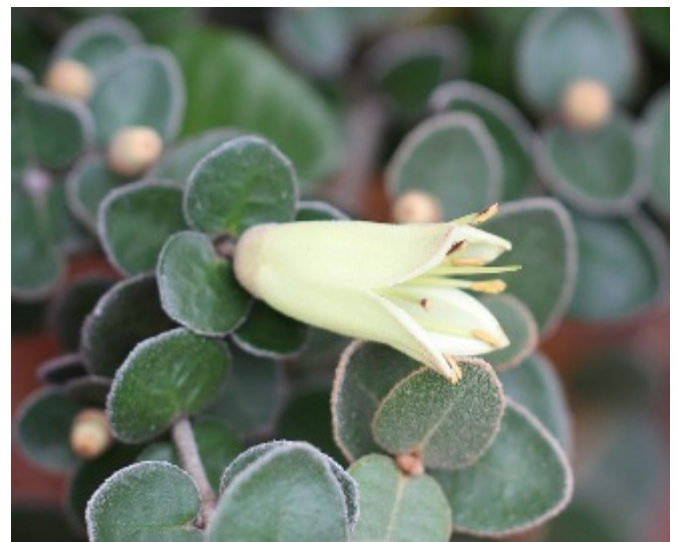
and healthy looking plants. Do not always follow the advice to protect plants from the frost – some are quite able to cope.

We were involved in choosing *Correa* 'Canberra Bells' as the Centenary Plant for Canberra in 2013. Peter Ollerenshaw showed off about a dozen of his new *Correa* cultivars as possibilities for the Centenary Plant – all were attractive, but most of the small group of politicians, newspaper writers, representatives of ANPS (us) chose this very floriferous plant with red and cream bells. It was small enough to put in a pot on a balcony, (about 1 metre x 1 metre), or grow in even a very small garden. The pot that Peter showed had about a hundred blooms on it and I have seen a couple of his plants in pots since then with about the same number of blooms. However, in our garden, this plant is not particularly successful. I feel that I have placed it in too much shade for it to flower profusely. I must try some more in full sun. The fact that the plant was developed in Bywong, just outside Canberra, will mean that it is definitely frost-hardy.



Correa calycina left and *Correa* 'Marian's Marvel'

Correas are very rewarding to grow with their long flowering times, attraction for the birds, and compact shape. They are eminently useful in garden design because of their neat foliage, which can be clipped, and many small species and cultivars. Some of the larger species and cultivars make great hedges and boundary plantings. So, two cheers for the correas, or maybe even three cheers, when I learn how to grow them more successfully.



Correa 'O.M.G.' With very large flowers (left)

Correa 'Lemon Twist' (above)

State of the World's Plants report issued by Kew Gardens

GardenDrum May 11, 2016

How many plants exist on earth? If you've ever wondered this, and about their future, here's something for you! Kew Gardens has released its *State of the World's Plants* report which documents current information about the status of the plant kingdom. Surprisingly, it's the first of its kind.

Taking a year to compile, the report covers the rather large subjects of plant diversity, global threats, and policies dealing with those threats. While it collates a huge amount of available information, it also highlights shortcomings in how much is known. There are large parts of the world where there is little known about the plants, and only a small fraction of the genetic diversity of plants and whole-genome sequences is currently available.

And the message doesn't get much brighter, the synopsis saying "Given the threats associated with climate change, land-use change, invasive plants and diseases, best estimates lead us to believe that 21% of the world's plants are currently threatened with extinction." It's certainly a reminder that we can all do our bit at a local level by encouraging best practice when dealing with weeds and diseases to reduce invasive threats.

And the answer to that question is: an estimated 391,000 vascular plants are known to science of which 369,000 are flowering plants

The new 3CA Community Garden in Mallacoota Yvonne and Etienne van der Merwe, Vic

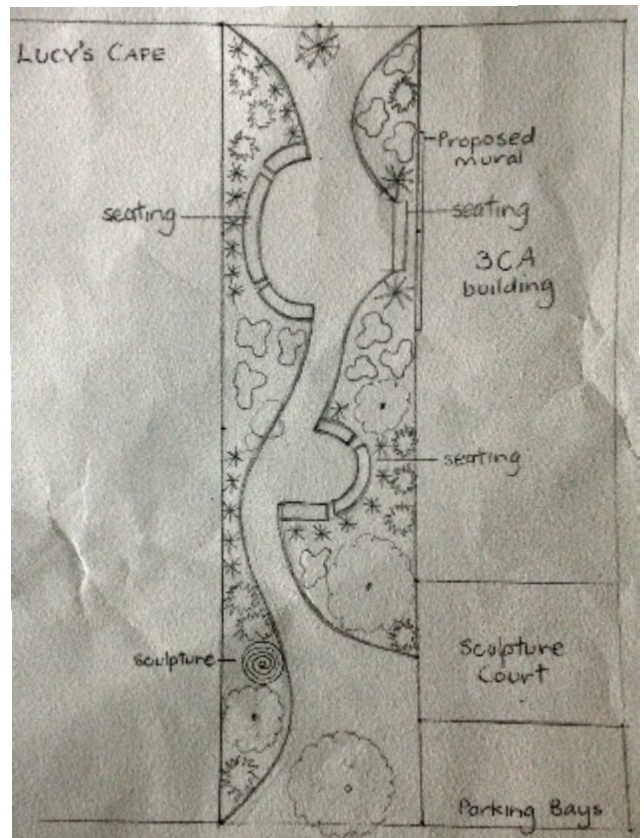
I was asked in late 2014 to create a garden on an empty block of land between the new 3CA building (Mallacoota Centre for Communication and the Arts) and Lucy's café.

The land was long, narrow and flat, so a design using a curved central pathway, flanked with raised beds was needed to break the monotony, add interest, and provide good drainage.

In October 2014 I marked out the shape of the meandering path with a pink spray can. Then a local contractor, Mr Mark Rogers, a real artist with his front end loader, armed with my "mud map" design, proceeded to rip up the hard packed surface (an old gravel road) and shape the raised beds with soil



Above, the space for the garden and right, the plan



donated from a local building site. He then brought down a number of magnificent, very large granite rocks with his machine and nudged them into place. The path was topped with local Genoa gravel, a very pleasing pink/cream crushed granite. Surplus rainfall from the garden beds and path collects into pebbled, dry creek lines, which eventually drain into a concrete pit at the southern end of the garden. My husband built a timber sleeper bridge to cross the ephemeral creek.

A local craftsman, Mr Peter Sands, made the curved timber slab seats which completed the design. As the new building was painted in shades of purple & grey, I decided to base the overall colour scheme of the garden in shades of mauve and silver with touches of gold. The plants came from a local grower of indigenous flora, Kuranga nursery in Melbourne and Plant Mark in Frankston.

Generous friends responded to my call for help, and with their aid the garden was planted out and mulched in November 2014. After initial hand watering for a few weeks, the weather was very kind and we have had ideal growing conditions, with the garden thriving as a result.

This garden, situated in the centre of Mallacoota village, exists through the generosity of the Radio and Arts Council of Mallacoota and has become a popular thoroughfare for visitors from the camp park and the patrons of Lucy's café, who sit on the verandah and look out over the garden as they sip their coffee. It has generated many positive comments and a lot of interest in our beautiful native plants.

The Wrens and Honeyeaters have moved in, which is the icing on the cake!



Plant List

Purple

Alyogyne huegelii, *Brachyscome multifida*, *Prostanthera ovalifolia* *Hardenbergia* 'Happy Wanderer', *Hardenbergia* 'Regent', *Orthrosanthus multiflorus*, *Patersonia occidentalis*

Silver

Leptospermum brachyandrum, *Leptospermum laevigatum*, *Plectranthus argentatus*, *Correa alba*, *Themeda australis* (silver form), *Lomandra* 'Seascape', *Spyridium parvifolium*, *Leucophyta brownii*

Gold

Banksia serrata, *Helichrysum obcordatum*, *Xerochrysum viscosum*, *Banksia integrifolia* (prostrate), *Banksia* 'Birthday Candles', *Lomandra* 'Tanika', *Persoonia pinifolia*

Ed. What a wonderful community project which both highlights our marvellous native flora and gives pleasure to everyone who visits Mallacoota. Well done, Yvonne and Etienne.



Reprinted in part from Garden Drum May 30, 2016

I feel confident anyone reading this would agree that gardeners have a better insight than most into changing weather patterns. Whatever the reason, the hot days seem to be getting hotter and the cold days colder but it's usually the former that presents the greater challenges in selecting the right plant for the hot spot.

Enter stage right our wonderful grey-foliaged native plants.



Maireana oppositifolia at Broken Hill.



Leucophyta brownii along the Great Ocean Rd.

On a recent trip out through Broken Hill to the Flinders Ranges I could only look in awe at the great swathes of blue-bush, *Mariana oppositifolia* and *M. sedifolia* that adorned the hot and often rugged countryside. Obviously these plants are wonderfully adapted to a hostile landscape where water is scarce and sunshine plentiful.

On our return trip we stopped off at the new Shearers' Centre at Hay. It was hellishly hot but what was loving the weather in the garden was *Eremophila glabra* 'Kalbarri Carpet'. I've been growing this plant for a few years now and it's as tough as old boots once established. The ochre coloured flowers contrast beautifully with the shimmering, silver foliage which seems to actually reflect the heat of the sun. A few years earlier we drove out along the Great Ocean Road and there was Cushion Bush, or *Leucophyta* (formerly *Calocephalus*) *brownii* coping so well with the harsh salt-laden air and hot, sandy conditions. I was amazed at just how big these plants could grow. Unfortunately, my experience in Sydney is that these plants do not cope with our humid, summer conditions. So nature has been able to work it out...so why can't we? To coin an old racing adage, it's all about 'horses for courses'.

One of the very first native plants I grew around 40 years ago was *Olearia phlogopappa*. It was worth growing just to rattle off that wonderful name to anyone who would listen. But in recent times another *Olearia* with wonderful grey foliage has come into my garden. *Olearia lanuginosa* 'Ghost Town' is one of those unkillable plants and thrives in a hot spot with very little demand for water. It's low growing to around half a metre high and if left to itself, will certainly spread a couple of metres over time but it's very amenable to severe pruning. The foliage has a delightful aroma when cut or crushed. It's not the small, white flowers that make this plant well worth growing, but rather the silvery, grey foliage that fairly laps up the hot sun. An added bonus with this plant is that cuttings strike with ease.



Leucophyta brownii left and *Olearia lanuginosa* 'Ghost Town' right

A wonderful new plant was only discovered in the wild about a dozen or so years ago up around the Copeton Dam near Inverell. Members of the Grevillea Study Group were on the prowl for an elusive grevillea when they spied a stunning, yellow flowering plant. It was keyed out and found to be *Homoranthus prolixus* and apparently never before brought into cultivation.

It has wonderful blue/grey foliage with red stems on the new growth and stunning bright yellow flowers across the horizontal growth of the plant in late spring and early summer. Growing naturally on granite outcrops in an extreme climatic environment, this is yet another great plant to cope with our topsy-turvy climate.



Homoranthus prolixus, with stunning yellow flowers

The grey, strappy *Conostylis candicans* has been around for quite a while but I've never managed to maintain one for any appreciable time. Related to the Kangaroo Paws as it is, I suspect it's one that doesn't enjoy our humid summers.

However, around 20 years ago my mate, Peter Olde, sent me some material he'd collected in WA – as he has done from time to time – and he labelled it as *Conostylis aurea*. I've been growing the plant ever since with wonderful results. It's a low, clumping plant to around 20cm high with very grey foliage and masses of yellow flower stems from late autumn through into early spring. It really is a stunner and is as hardy as anything else in the garden. I find it strange that I've never seen this plant for sale in all the time since I first received it.



Conostylis candidans.



Actinotus helianthii, our iconic Flannel Flower

Any mention of grey-foliaged native plants would be remiss without mentioning *Actinotus helianthii*, our wonderful east-coast Flannel Flower.

Okay, so they're difficult to maintain in the garden for more than a couple of years, but ain't it worth it! With a bit of luck there'll be a bit of self-seeding, especially if you pluck off the dying flower heads and sprinkle the seed about

But if I had to pick my favourite on the basis of toughness and display in my Sydney garden, I think I'd have to opt for *Senna artemisoides*. That wonderful grey, lace-like foliage is contrasted so stunningly by the bright yellow pea-flowers. And again, let the seed pods develop and lots of little babies are sure to put up their hands to be dug up and potted on. And don't be frightened to cut it back quite heavily after flowering to maintain a dense plant as shown in this photo.

So let's hear it for Amazing Greys – how sweet the ground that sees a stretch of these.

Ed. Another excellent and versatile grey-leaved plant is Rhagodia spinescens, This plant puts up with many different soil types and climates and can be anything from a large hedge to a clipped edging.



Senna artemisoides

Fungi in garden design?

Diana Snape, Vic

An excellent workshop at RBG Cranbourne has reminded me of the importance of fungi in the garden. All fungi consist of bundles of microscopic threads called hyphae, grouped in mycelia. They occasionally produce a conspicuous fruiting body called a sporophore (eg a mushroom). DNA analysis shows they are more closely related to animals than plants. They cannot produce their own food as plants do but partner with plants, or algae (in lichens), or else feed on dead organic matter or some living hosts.

Do fungi have a role in garden design? They do break down dead branches, foliage, etc, storing their carbon and nutrients in the soil. Most importantly, mycorrhizal fungi (mf) have a symbiotic, mutually beneficial arrangement with living plants. The mf form a fine sheath around the plants' roots and then extend well beyond them, multiplying their effectiveness. They supply plants with additional nutrients like potassium, nitrogen and sulphur, plus micro-nutrients. In return, plants provide the mf with carbohydrates.



Anyone who is interested in growing Australian terrestrial orchids knows that they all depend on particular mycorrhizal fungi. Orchid seeds are so tiny they have no stored nutrient of their own. Their mf help them find nutrients immediately so they can begin growing. However, not only orchids depend on mf. All Australian plants do, with just one exception - the Proteaceae Family. Grevilleas, banksias, etc, have proteoid roots which are already more efficient in gathering nutrients from poor soils. (So Proteaceae don't like fertilizers that over-provide them with nutrients.)

About 90% of plants world-wide have mf too. However, the northern hemisphere obtained good, deep soils during the Recent Ice Ages, when Australia missed out, so our soils are mainly old and infertile. This is why Australian plants are more in need of that extra help and why we should appreciate the role mf play.

Why can we grow all sorts of plants in our gardens without worrying about their particular mf? This is because the air is full of microscopic fungi spores and there are mf 'weeds' that adapt and are suitable to many different plants. However, if you want to revegetate part (or all) of your garden with specific plants indigenous to your area, they may be fussier and not grow so well without their own mf. I was told once that, to grow difficult plants, it was best when planting to dig in some soil from a cultivated one already growing successfully. Now I know why!

Anyone involved with revegetation of larger areas using indigenous plants will know the difficulties of re-establishing the original ecosystem - ground-flora, shrub layers and trees. We should be aware that the complexity of (and volume occupied by) the mf ecosystem below ground level is just as great as that of the plant ecosystem above it.



The fruiting bodies of many fungi are intriguing, beautiful or colourful (or all three). We can't really design for these but in suitable conditions they will appear. Autumn in our gardens would be disappointing without them, so enjoy their appearance and don't be concerned. Very few fungi are harmful in the garden - bracket fungi on eucalypt trunks may be an exception. Also remove those spotted red and white exotic fungi weeds before they shed more spores. Most fungi are beneficial, so welcome and enjoy them.

Gardens in Cornwall

Pam Yarra, Vic

In early May this year husband Jim and I flew to London. We then travelled by train from Paddington Station to Penzance.

At the outset, I should say that our trip was not a garden tour. The initial plan was to visit the Outer Hebrides Islands. However after reading about The Tresco Abbey Garden and more research, the Isles of Scilly were added to our itinerary. From Penzance we caught the ferry to St. Mary's, the largest of the five inhabited islands in the Isles of Scilly. St. Mary's has an approximate population of 2,300, three quarters of the total population of the five inhabited islands. We stayed for a week at Hugh Town, the capital of St. Mary's. Our small flat was conveniently located close to shops and the quay. Ferries leave daily to visit other islands.



Tresco Abbey garden- Ruins of St. Nicholas Priory

Our first island visit was to Tresco to visit the Abbey Garden on a day of brilliant sunshine, no “mizzle” or fog (that came later). The creation of this garden began in 1834, extending over the grounds around the remains of the 12th century St. Nicholas Priory. There are many garden zones with themes such as “Higher and Lower Australia”, “Mexico” and “South Africa Cliff”. Mediterranean and South American species are extensively represented, as well as those from California, New Zealand and the Canary Islands. Altogether there are over 4000 species growing in exceptional sunshine and the benefit of the Gulf Stream. Many of the original plants were purchased from passing sailing ships returning to Britain from the southern hemisphere. The whole garden is protected by long shelter belts of trees and hedges and the design includes terracing, as well as walled areas. *Banksia spinulosa* was in full flower and the hedging of *Correa backhousiana* was impressive. These gardens have been acknowledged as one of the world’s finest botanical experiments.



Tresco Abbey garden - *Banksia spinulosa*

After returning to mainland Cornwall, our next destination was St. Michael's Mount. This sits in Mount's Bay, separated by the sea from the town of Marazion. This National Trust castle and tropical garden can be reached by foot if the tide is out or by boat. The granite rock of the Mount, the castle looming overhead and the sea pounding the shores are features that define and influence the garden. However despite the gales and salty winds, the Gulf Stream ameliorates the climate so that frosts rarely occur and the rock acts as a giant radiator-absorbing heat by day and releasing it at night, so creating a micro climate in which many unlikely plants grow.

Despite their robust location, the gardens need constant conservation to keep the Georgian and Victorian walls, paths, steps and terraces in good condition. A gardener observed abseiling down the walled gardens takes gardening to new heights. The history and complexity of the garden is not easy to describe in a few lines, as those who have visited it will appreciate. The East Terraces were built in the 1880s to complement the east wing of the castle. Within this terrace is a lawn, reached by steps from above. This area is supported by three massive convex buttresses. There is also a well in the East Terraces. This is of Victorian construction and the semi circular walls contain a giant steel water tank, which was designed to collect rainwater from the castle's gutters and drains.



Walled garden



East Terrace

The Walled Gardens are thought to have been created in the 1780s. The mellow red brick creates an intimate and feminine setting in contrast to the grey granite of the fortress looming above. It was at the lowest level of this garden that I spoke with gardeners pruning silver foliage bushes. Yes, there were Australian plants, *Leucophyta brownii*, pruned regularly to maintain their



Leucophyta brownii

spherical shape, never getting to flower. The drift of these bushes was an impressive contrast to the foliage in the garden beds above.

The West Terraces, like other garden beds have many plant species. These feature amongst many plants, Leucodendrons and Pelargoniums. At the top there is a seat to rest and absorb the stunning view over the bay.

This natural rock garden was spectacular in beauty and magical location.

The next garden of great interest was The Lost Garden of Heligan. Heligan is one of the most mysterious estates in England. Between 1770 and 1914 four generations of the Tremayne family created a thriving and almost self-sufficient community.



Mud Maid in woodland area

In 1990 two men discovered the ruins of this garden and so began the restoration of the Lost Gardens of Heligan. Excavation of a toilet cubicle revealed a list of pencil signatures. Little was known about the service and sacrifices they gave in World War 1. However workbooks of the time record enlistments and numerous Heligan staff names appear on local war memorials. In 2013 Heligan was officially recorded as a “Living Memorial”, by the Imperial War Museum. The garden restoration took 25 years, but restoration continues to a deeper level extending to traditional practices and the reintroduction of traditional livestock breeds into the Estate. There are over 200 acres, many types of gardens containing plants from around the world, productive gardens, woodlands and parklands. A raised boardwalk leads around four ponds, under tree ferns, giant rhubarb, bananas and towering palms. Along the woodland walk are mud sculptures and natural play areas, a very relaxing experience. This garden is also home to a large number of wildlife species and many can be viewed from the wildlife hide.



Biomes at Eden Project

Still in Cornwall, we spent a day at the Eden Project. It is impossible to describe this project in a few lines, as it is not a garden per se, but a project that connects us with each other and the living world.

It is an educational charity and social enterprise, creates gardens, exhibitions, art, events, experiences and projects that explore how people can work together and with nature towards a better future. Their first project was to make a 35 acre global garden in a 50 metre deep crater, which was once a china clay pit, to demonstrate regeneration and the art of the possible.

The area contains two biomes; the largest is a rainforest in captivity and a Mediterranean one that provides scents and stories from the Mediterranean, South Africa and California.

demonstrating the need for the balance of wild and cultivated gardens. A grassed roof link serves as an entrance to both the biomes and the Eden kitchen.

A stage is the base for seasonal events programs providing entertainment and information for all age groups.

The outdoor garden, once a barren landscape, with no soil and no plants, celebrates the dependence on plants in the cropped and wild landscape and explores their importance.

The Core is a large building built with responsibly sourced materials and energy efficiency in mind. It houses many exhibitions, art, schools programs, and the 75 tonne Seed sculpture. Also

for example a huge glass ball represents the world's ecosystems: rainforests, oceans, grasslands etc and it demonstrates the ecosystem services, which keep us alive. It also demonstrates the challenges that humans impose on these systems.

We did enjoy seeing many gardens, some small and rambling and some quite structured such as those surrounding National Trust properties.

Travelling to Scotland and more specifically the Outer Hebrides Islands, gardens were not a feature of the landscape. Trees did not survive in the harsh winter conditions, so gardens were often comprised mainly "bedding plants" in summer.

Visiting the gardens described, including the Eden Project caused me to reflect on the many reasons for people gardening: hobby/ relaxation, therapy, design, display and habitat and maybe there are more. I see the garden as a link with the "big picture", an environmental link with our land to promote biodiversity. We are part of nature and it keeps us alive, as we need to keep it alive.



Walled garden at National Trust B&B farmhouse

Melbourne garden visit May 22

Diana Snape, Vic

GDSG members joined a garden visit to the home of Mirini and Russell Lang (Glenn Waverley), organised by APS Maroondah Group. (Many of us are members of both groups.) Mirini, who is a qualified horticulturist, has recently joined the GDSG.

When they were choosing their house site, Mirini particularly wanted a sloping block so it would be possible for them to create a waterway, plus grow the ferns that she loves. (I asked her if she could possibly name a couple of favourites and, reluctantly, she said *Blechnum nudum* (Fishbone Water Fern) and *Platycerium bifurcatum* (Elkhorn Fern) for Australian ferns but also *Adiantum radianum* (Delta Maidenhair Fern) and *Blechnum moorei* (Brazilian Tree Fern).

The block they chose slopes to the north. They built the house about 8 years ago and having seen the work of Phillip Johnson, decided to ask him to do the hard landscaping before any planting was done. Mirini has planted densely to minimise maintenance and has found groundcovers more successful than mulch in preventing weed growth. Under the house, they have a worm farm plus water tanks holding 10,000 litres.

As the short drive slopes quite steeply towards the house, a swale parallel to the front of the house catches rainwater and directs it away from the house, through plants that can help absorb it. The small front garden provides a screen from the street and the eastern side path is also well screened. (A *Persoonia pinifolius* was in full flower there.) Behind the house, an area has been levelled for a lawn. There is a screened service area and a thriving vegetable garden. At the back, beyond their screening, is a 'borrowed landscape' of trees in the adjacent school.

On the western side, in a quite narrow space, the waterway created by Phillip Johnson flows down through a luxuriant fern gully to a small pool. Irregular stone steps form part of the path down. Rocks and water are complemented by sympathetic planting, for example an old favourite of mine, *Balaskion tetraphyllum* (*Restio tetraphyllum*) or Tassel Cord Rush. Mirini finds this area very soothing after a busy day!



Path beside pool (top left), pool (top right), section of 'creek' (bottom left) and path through fern garden (bottom right)





Lechenaultia 'Tropicana' (left) and *Xerochrysum bracteatum* 'Leon' (right)

Treasurer's Report:

Cheque account: \$ 8,125.85
 Term Deposit: \$ 25,368.38 (Renewed end of January)
 Total: \$ 33,494.23

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ANPSA Garden Design Study Group Newsletter is published four times per year in February, May, August and November.

Copy is due by the first of the these months although earlier submissions will be welcomed by the Editor.

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Membership dues 2016 - 2017: per year

Email Newsletter: \$ 10.00

Paper Newsletter \$ 20.00

Concession paper \$15.00 (For pensioners and full-time students only)

Dues by cheque or EFT to BSB 032-729, Account # 28-5385