



# GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP

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**Newsletter**  
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# 113

## STUDY GROUP LEADER / NEWSLETTER EDITOR

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*Newsletter Theme: 'Fragrance, Aroma and Garden Design'*

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*Prostanthera ovalifolia*

*You can plan secret pleasures waiting in every corner of a garden - it's a symphony of sensory stimulation when you brush past aromatic foliage, stop to caress the texture of a leaf or inhale the perfume of a flower.*

## ANPSA Garden Design Study Group Newsletter

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**Copy Deadline:** first day of the publication month, although earlier submissions will be welcomed by the Editor.

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**There is no charge for Membership of GDSG** . . . . . annual period from July 1 to June 30

Newsletters are distributed to all members only by email

Please advise if you wish to change your contact details or to discontinue membership.

## Newsletter timing & Themes

These are the 2021 Newsletter dates and themes:

Issue	date	Theme
114	February	Time as a Design Constraint or Opportunity
115	May	What's up Down Under?
116	August	Pruning for Design
117	November	Visual Attributes of a Garden

*Please ensure that your submissions reach the editor at least two weeks before the publication month.*

## The Editor Comments

Hello everyone!

No doubt you have all had more than enough news about the impact of the pandemic, so I will not mention it further. Except to say that being isolated at home probably means that your gardens like mine, are well and truly manicured and even extended as you have enjoyed the unexpected time to do what has been on your 'wish list'. So send a photo and a paragraph to share your efforts with us all in the next Newsletter.

The decision to discontinue printed / posted copies of the Newsletter has introduced me to a special early member Merele Webb, who was a founding member of GDSG along with Diana. More than that, she has significant experience in landscape design with native plants through being one of the 'Eltham Five' designers who were at the forefront of truly Australian garden landscape. She tells me that she first started to design with natives in the 1960's when living at Ivanhoe and was asked by Heinemann publishers to write a book, which she declined due to being a busy wife and mother of a young family. But now after all those years Merele has the time and has offered to write items for our Newsletter. In recognition of her experience, expertise and her involvement with the commencement of GDSG I am sure that you will agree it is fitting that we award Merele the position of GDSG Life Member. As a Life Member she will receive the Newsletter by post.

This trip down memory lane links smoothly with the theme for the next Newsletter (February) ***'Time as a Design Constraint or Opportunity'*** and may inspire Merele and other members to share their experiences. This theme is broad and probably has many interpretations, these are a few that spring to mind.

- How has time matured the design of long established gardens of native plants;
- No time to wait! Today we want instant gardens;
- Planning a garden to develop over time for future generations;
- Blocking views and breezes over time – did you make any incorrect plant selections?

## Garden Design Book, Fact Sheets or ?

In the May Newsletter #111, members were invited to share ideas on how we should utilise the invested proceeds from the book our study group published in 2002, *"The Australian Garden – designing with Australian Plants"*. The collective response from members since then indicates a preference for a flexible, digital based, interactive 'publication' as opposed to a printed book. Importantly this digital format would obviate the cost of printing and allow the available funds to be appropriately used to assist the process of finding, visiting, analysing, photographing and writing about the design of native gardens wherever they may be found.

While the basic principles of garden planning and design apply generally to all Australian regions there are significant and specific local differences which need elaboration, and this could ideally be prepared by GDSG members in the various regions. Obviously it is important to ensure that whatever form the 'publication' takes, it should be readily available, useful and informative to encourage the community to appreciate and design gardens with native plants.

Heather Miles, Chris Larkin and I have discussed a likely strategy and Heather's precis (below) indicates that to produce a useful and ongoing quality 'publication' practical and technical knowledge as well as considerable time investment will be required by those involved.

### Background

- Our key objective should be to share information about native garden design with a population of (say) 18 to 50 year olds, who are in a position to create or influence the establishment of gardens and reserves using native plants
- While it'd likely be valuable to publish a book (as a sequel to The Australian Garden), there are a number of existing books that also serve this market (Angus Stewart as a notable author)
- There appears to be a significant trend around sustainability, native fauna and the environment/climate change driven by the bushfires as well as Covid-19 that we would be tapping into

- People today gather information from online, predominantly via websites, search engines and social media. The Study Group archives are a great resource, but not user friendly by today's expectations. Different social media platforms appeal to different groups of people, with a mix of platforms being desirable to disseminate our messages as widely as possible (Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Snapchat, Pinterest and Twitter)
- The ANPSA site is being upgraded to a new website platform (Wordpress) which does allow a number of options for how information might be presented

## Proposal - 4 actions

### 1. Create a Garden Design website to share information

- Create a 'Garden Design with Natives' website to provide a broad range of information and stories about designing with native plants
- This website might be part of the ANPSA site or separate, depending on the structure of the ANPSA website (ie it can't be buried deeply in the website).
- The website would be both image and content rich
- Structure of the website might be:
  - Home
  - Resources/stories/information
    - Stories about native gardens and case studies
    - Garden design principles
    - Why plant native
    - Plants for specific regions and purposes
    - Links - other study groups as well as state groups to encourage membership, Youtube videos (by members or others) - see below, maybe garden designers,
  - About us
  - Contact - Who to contact for more information and to get your questions answered
- The website will need to be regularly updated with new stories and images i.e. a living website. This assists with search engine optimisation
- Information for the website will be drawn from existing fact sheets and newsletters and new writing
- New images can be sourced from members and others
- The site will need to be built (initial upfront cost) and then regularly managed (either by volunteers or paid contractor)

### 2. Build a strong social media presence and cross-post between the platforms and the website

- Use social media to build followers and send people to the website for more information
- Set up Instagram (images) and/or Facebook (images and stories) and/or Pinterest (images) sites to promote native garden design
- Post every day (such a posting schedule can be managed monthly)
- Set up a Youtube channel and create short 2 to 5 min videos about garden design with natives
- Tap into members (and others') knowledge and experience

### 3. Send regular newsletters

- Send newsletters regularly (monthly?) showcasing stories and case studies to people who express interest
- Stories referenced in the newsletter will be hosted on the website (a blog post)

### 4. Build a team to manage the content and promotion

- Set goals for what this effort will achieve
- Appoint a small team to manage the initial design and build of the website and social media presence. This will likely require contracting a website build specialist

- Build a small team of members (webmaster x 2, story writers, newsletter editor) to help guide and manage ongoing content creation and posting. This may also require ongoing contracted help if members don't have the time/skills.
- Engage regularly with APS state newsletter/journal editors and study group coordinators for stories that can be shared Australia wide

#### LAWRIES SUMMARY

To be honest I have placed the 'book' on hold for the past few months, however I still believe it is an appropriate and worthwhile task for our GDSG. Collectively our study group has a huge bank of experience and knowledge in garden design that we should share freely with others for mutual benefit. However these basic questions still ring loudly in my mind. Does the GDSG membership really want to be involved with this 'publication'? Perhaps there are other ways to use the investment to advantage? Or are we content to just leave the invested funds to gather minimal interest in the bank, for a future rainy day?

***The ANPSA website is currently being updated, so each Study Group will be able to have a much more 'user friendly' and versatile site soon. We will need to prepare much more attractive information and documents, so some investment \$ will need to be allocated to that use. This is great news as it will start to implement the wonderful suggestions outlined in Heather's proposed dot points above. YOUR COMMENTS VERY WELCOME!***

#### Newsletter #113 theme: 'Fragrance, Aroma and Garden Design'

Once again I have found the GDSG Newsletter archive on the ANPSA Website invaluable to seek out 'gems of wisdom' from our members about various subjects, although comments on fragrance and aroma generally focus on their sensory attributes as opposed to use in garden design. In the following paragraphs I have melded together my thoughts as well as those of others extracted from the Newsletters. In addition I referred to three publications which provide considerable information on this subject and are worth reference.

- 'The Australian Garden' by Diana Snape, GDSG; Introducing the 'sensuous' attributes of native plants into design.
- 'Fragrant Native Gardens' by Dr Judyth McLeod (Mt Annan Botanic Garden Native Plant Series); comprehensive descriptive use and species lists for each of ten bioregional areas.
- 'Perfumed and Aromatic Australian Plants' by Ralph Bailey (SGAP Western Suburbs, Brisbane); more than 150 species described one per page.

Our sense of smell is generally not considered, much less used, as one of the first and more important considerations in garden design. If it is thought about at all, it is often only as a secondary attribute for some of the plant species under consideration. Even in taxonomic descriptions the odours emitted by plants receives but a cursory mention. Nevertheless gardens are places for much more than just gardening and too few creators of built landscape consider the esoteric, the subjective and romantic role a garden can play in an otherwise everyday existence. One of the attractions of a garden are certainly the aromatic sensations experienced. Have you considered designing your garden with scents or pleasant aromas purely for you and your friends' pleasure?

Ideally the design of your garden should reflect your lifestyle and experience, enhanced through the integration of personal preferences for colour, texture and individual scents. By allowing our imagination to open up our senses, elements such as these become strongly apparent. Imagine, the scent of sun-baked earth of an arid region; the freshness of the element of water either at the beach, in a rainforest or in a spring garden. You can plan secret pleasures waiting in every corner of a garden - it's a symphony of sensory stimulation when you brush past aromatic foliage, stop to caress the texture of a leaf, or inhale the perfume of a flower.

The smell of our Australian bush is real and unique! Designing a home garden to enhance the perception of the scents inherent in our flora, clearly requires personal awareness, deeper study and careful tailoring of plants selection. This will need to take into account a number of variables, primarily the climatic effects of heat, rain and daylight on the release of aromatic compounds, as well as the times of seasonal blooming. Consider particularly

the direction of prevailing breezes when preparing plant design so that flower fragrance drifts toward the desired area of the garden.

### **Aromatic sources**

There are two main sources of garden scents - the aromatic oils in leaves, and the fragrance emitted by flowers. Organic compounds released from the soil particularly after rain, also add to the sensory mix.

**Aroma:** Invariably it is necessary to brush past or tread on the leaves to release the aromatic oils. Otherwise the plant is simply a green bush or tree, judged as a worthwhile garden plant because of other characteristics. Consider the leaves of *Backhousia citriodora* and *B. anisata* which have magnificent scents when crushed. Therefore specimens with aromatic foliage ideally need to be located at edges of walkways to ensure activation.

**Fragrance:** Scented flowers probably have more physical relevance in designing a perfumed garden. It could be assumed that fragrance might be a popular theme in Australian garden design. However it is rarely considered except in relation to individual plants. Think for example of highly perfumed *Boronia* or native Frangipani.



Plant fragrance is all about attraction and reproduction. While most floral scents are pleasant even alluring, some plants emit unpleasant odours evolved to attract specific pollinators. Imagine what might be attracted to *Grevillea leucopteris* better known as Old Socks, or blow flies swarming to the carrion odour of *Typhonium brownii* the well named Stinky Lily.



There is one relatively nondescript tall shrub that intermittently emits an odour from flowers and leaves which can be all pervading, instantly providing that familiar smell of the Australian bush. You either like it or find it offensive! *Mallotus laoxyloides* otherwise known as Green Kamala is generally found lost amongst the associated vegetation of waterways and drier forest communities north from central NSW to Cape York. So it is more likely to be an aroma of sub-tropical forests than temperate forests? Perhaps there is a similar equivalent?

Judyth McLeod in her book 'Fragrant Native Gardens' summarised the subject by saying that our tropical and subtropical native plants are full of exotic and beautiful floral fragrances that rival those of Polynesia, tropical Asia and South America. The coastal flora of the southern states is rich in essential oils rivalling the Mediterranean and the chaparral of California. Our nectar filled honey flora is perhaps the world's richest. She hopes that your nose is in fine fettle, and wishes you blissful sniffing in the Australian bushland and gardens.

### **Several fragrant species mentioned in past Newsletters**

- Several *Prostanthera* species were recently planted in a garden that is shaded except in hot summer afternoons. *Prostanthera lasianthos* (Victorian Christmas Bush) 'Kallista Pink' and *P. melissifolia* (Balm Mint-bush), pink and mauve forms, at the back to screen the fence; *P. ovalifolia* (Mint-bush) for mid height in the middle, and *P. cuneata* (Alpine Mint-bush) and *P. violacea* as foreground plants.
- It is surprising to find how each one of the *Syzygium* "Lilly Pilly" family has a different foliage aroma.
- Sweet scented *Grevillea triloba* makes a great contribution to the garden when in flower.

- *Banksia* flowers at head height make it easy to enjoy the honey aroma.
- Enjoy the enticing aroma of *Franklandia triaristata* (Chocolate Bush)

### **Some sub-tropical species**

You would recall that in the last Newsletter I outlined how our members in southeast Queensland are dealing with the Covid19 isolation regulations by keeping in regular 'virtual' contact in the last few months through making comments in a weekly email 'task list' which posed three simple questions about garden design, plant selection or maintenance. The answers offered details about plants and design, probably far more comprehensive than is ever able to be provided in meetings or even walks with friends through a garden. Below is the list of species in answer to the question – “Which plants do you use to add floral fragrance or aroma to areas of your garden?” This list was compiled July 29, and is obviously from garden experience in the sub-tropics.

***Acacia macradenia*** - zigzag wattle flowering and fragrant at present

***Acronychia acidula***, Lemon Aspen - aromatic foliage

***Alocasia brisbanensis***, Cunjevoi – fragrant flowers

***Alpinia caerulea*** - fragrant flowers

***Alyxia ruscifolia***, Chain Fruit - dense shrub to 3 metres with clusters of highly perfumed small white flowers and chains of red fruits.

***Atractocarpus* sp.**, e.g. *merikin*, *fitzalanii*, *sessilis*; flower perfume

***Backhousia citriodora***, Lemon Myrtle - particularly early morning when the air is moist. Situated beside a path and driveway.

***Buckinghamia celsissima***, Ivory Curl Flower - Attractive small tree with a dense canopy of dark-green leaves and large spikes of creamy-white flowers in summer – honey aroma.

***Callerya megasperma***, Native Wisteria - Evergreen climbing vine deep green, glossy leaves, bears masses of lilac pea type perfumed flowers throughout spring, of rainforest, rainforest margins and wet sclerophyll forest

***Crinum* species** – fragrant flowers

***Dendrobium kingianum***, Rock Orchid - indoors, used instead of cut flowers, in a confined space lovely perfume

***Diploglottis campbellii***, Small Leafed Tamarind - A beautiful, small, dense shade tree with small white fragrant flowers followed by large orange fruits up to 7cm in diameter filled with a delicious, acidic pulp. A good shade and screening tree.

***Eupomatia laurina***, Bolwarra – flowers have strong ether like aroma

***Glochidion lobocarpum*** - I like the smell from such tiny flowers - it is amazing particularly at night.

***Grevillea leucopteris***, Old Socks - the flowers of this *Grevillea* from Western Australia did not receive its common name for nothing!

***Hibbertia scandens***, Twining Guinea Flower - large and attractive yellow flowers of this vine; fragrance which is less than enjoyable.

***Hovea acutifolia***, Purple Bush Pea - has a sweet, rather delicate perfume when there are massed flowers;

***Hoya australis***, Common Waxflower - the attractive spherical flowers of this twining vine provide pleasant fragrance

***Hymenosporum flavum***, Native Frangipani - fragrant flowers

***Macadamia*** various species, Macadamia Nut - fragrant flowers in the evening in spring

***Medicosma cunninghamii***, Pink Heart - Attractive medium sized tree with rich green, dense aromatic foliage with terminal clusters of white citrus like flowers providing a strong orange blossom fragrance.

***Pavetta australiensis***, Butterfly Bush - fragrant flowers

***Philotheca myoporoides***, Wax Flower - has a strong difficult to define foliage fragrance, enjoyed by many but disliked by some. White, star shaped flowers in spring and few in autumn, with a sweet floral fragrance somewhat like orange blossom.

***Pittosporum phillyreoides***, Gumbi Gumbi or Willow Pittosporum - fragrant flowers

***Prostanthera*** - commonly known as Mint-bushes due to the distinctive foliage aroma across the entire genus



*Acacia macradenia*



*Buckinghamia celsissima*



*Crinum pedunculatum*



*Hoya australis*



*Hymenosporum flavum*



*Philotheca myoporoides*

## The Fragrance of Boronias

Ros & Ben Walcott, Canberra

It is hard to go past boronias for fragrance in the garden. Not only do they have fragrant flowers, (for the 75-80% of people who can smell boronia fragrance), but also incredibly fragrant foliage as I rediscover every time I prune these plants. We grow about twenty different boronias, mostly in pots near the back door, but also three different cultivars of *Boronia crenulata* in the garden, 'Buckshot', 'Pink Passion' and Stirling Ranges.

The best boronia cultivar in our garden is 'Pink Passion', a small shrub with pink flowers over a very long period, including right through Canberra winters. We grow the following boronias in pots, *Boronia anemonifolia*, *B. clavata*, *B. coerulescens*, *B. denticulata*, *B. floribunda*, *B. heterophylla*, *B. keysii*, *B. megastigma* ;Dark Prince', *B. megastigma* 'Harlequin', *B. megastigma* 'Lutea', *B. molloyae*, *B. muelleri*, *B. pinnata*, and *B. 'Purple Jared'*. All of these have some sort of perfume, either leaves or flowers, but the aromatic champion is *Boronia megastigma* and its cultivars.

Boronias are so rewarding in pots for those of us who cannot grow them in the ground. They flower for long periods and appreciate the protection given in pots from hot sun, wind and frost. They also like plenty of water. We have success with them for five years or so, then the heat manages to carry them off and we replant. We use straight native planting mix for these pots. Usually we would use sand in addition, but for boronias they like to retain moisture more than other plants we grow in pots.



*Boronia anemonifolia* was planted in a pot two years ago and has flowered well.



*Boronia coerulescens* or Blue Boronia was planted in a pot 9 years ago. This is a small shrub to 50cm with short thick linear leaves and bluish pink flowers over a long period. My original plant from Belair Nursery in SA flowered well for six years until I unwisely cut it back in 2017. The plant resented being trimmed and promptly died. The new plant was put in a pot six years ago and has flowered well every year since then. The advice on the label was that this plant is difficult to maintain in optimum condition or more than three years, but I have found it more reliable than that





***Boronia heterophylla*** forms a stunning shrub in a pot growing to 1.5m high and 1m wide with narrow fragrant foliage and masses of bright pink flowers over a long period. Our original plant went into a pot four years ago and performed brilliantly until we went to Melbourne in November 2019 for a week and the pot was only watered twice instead of every day. The plant succumbed to the heat so I have planted anew.



***Boronia keysii*** Rare species of boronia from southeastern Queensland, which was lost to science for 60 years then rediscovered in 1971. Flowers for most of the year with aromatic foliage and pink, star-shaped flowers. Height to 2m. Hardy plant which thrives in a partly shaded position in moist well drained soils. Growing very vigorously 3/20.



***Boronia megastigma 'Lutea'*** forms a shrub 1.5m high and 0.5m wide with fine aromatic foliage and fragrant yellow flowers. Our original plant was planted six years ago and performed well every year for five years. The original plant succumbed to the heat two years ago so we have planted another one.



***Boronia 'Purple Jared'*** Evergreen vigorous hardy shrub to 1.5m tall x 1m wide which tolerates light frost. Highly scented purple bell flowers late winter/late spring. Cross between *B. heterophylla* and *B. megastigma*.



***Boronia crenulata*** The only Boronia that we can grow in the garden. It is a little beauty



**Planting Design Comment:** If you only have 20 plants, I would always plant them packed together in one small area, rather than spread out over a larger one. A full garden bed looks generous, vibrant, and alive. It accentuates the colours and the contrasts. A smaller number of plants, all grouped together, will also be more manageable. Healthy plants make a garden. This means regular pruning, adequate water and nutrients and most importantly, plants that thrive in your climate and conditions. A few, healthy, tightly positioned plants always beats straggly, dotted about plants, regardless of how many there are.

*by Janna Schreier UK Garden Designer - after visiting and being impressed by Royal Botanic Gardens, Cranbourne*

## A Tale of Two Gardens

Lawrie Smith, Brisbane

Some of our members may belong to the ANPEF Australian Native Plants Enthusiasts Forum on Facebook and daily enjoy following the various posts, of garden photographs, questions asked, advice provided but generally enjoying the positive reaction to the diversity of native plants shared that ANPSA and GDSG members have known about for many years. It is apparent that through ANPEF so many people are being introduced for the first time to native plants – and this is wonderful! This past month has seen several photographs of two surprisingly different yet similar gardens - a small residential garden in Melbourne's north east and large rural garden in Gympie, southeast Queensland both of which successfully demonstrate so many facets of excellent garden design. Both gardeners were pleased to let me share my observations of a small section of their gardens with our members – thankyou both, I hope to have done justice to your magical environments.



Creator of this small garden is Deb McMillan, a manager of ANPEF and she tells me she is intending to join a Victorian APS group. I have had the pleasure of meeting Deb at the Maroondah APS meeting I addressed earlier this year but have not seen her garden. Apparently it is a small residential garden on a sloping block which in photos appears much larger than it is. This photo makes it abundantly clear that her ability to carefully select, place and maintain many differing species in simple design relationships that not only complement one another, but play with perspective to extend the apparent visual depth of the garden remarkably. It is all tied together by the irregular russet coloured mulch path which narrows toward the back enhancing the sense of depth and space. Similarly the plants use scale to the same effect with small forms in the foreground variously transitioning to taller forms in the background.

One useful design technique is the specialised up-pruning of some shrubs to reduce foliage bulk below eye level to allow viewing into the garden behind through transparent sculptural stems. The piece de resistance is the relationship of colour and texture of the individual species which although diverse, provide a linking matrix of foliage in tones of green with silver grey accents, all of which is embellished through the careful use of most of the primary colours and tones of the spring flowers. You can imagine that as the flowers fade the visual attributes of the garden will still held together by the strength of the overlapping three dimensional foliage forms within. The closer you look into the photo the more design elements you see – the careful use of rocks for structure as well as aesthetics, the innovative organic sculptures, plants in containers and a garden seat, all of which add interest, are skilfully integrated and 'belong' exactly where they have been placed. The photo suggests that this attractive, restful and inviting garden would be an ideal subject for botanic artist Ellis Rowan.

*Footnote: Deb added this after reading my analysis. "I started small with the coloured pots. I found they added height and colour even when there was not much in flower. Then when a large eucalyptus branch fell down, I cut it up to use as garden edging. I found the odd shapes added interest too. I dressed up old tree stumps, added bird baths and soon I started having garden 'visions'. When I couldn't find a plant small enough without overtaking a spot, I thought to break it up with rustic artefacts, I have found this very successful. The more I built the garden, the more I knew what I wanted out of it and what to do. Like layering and drawing the eyes up through the garden to higher points. Nothing was planned or envisaged to begin with and it's still a work in progress."*



Last year our GDSG Qld group visited this three acre garden two hours north of Brisbane which is a lifetime odyssey for Carolle Gadd. (Refer to GDSG Newsletter November 2019.) It is a large garden of ‘rooms’ linked by lawn ‘walkways’ in which plants from many parts of the continent are massed together in dramatic but related groupings. In the same way that Deb’s Melbourne garden is a ‘picture’ comprising so many smaller temperate plants, Carolle’s garden needs the acreage to display a comparable artistic collection of the larger and more robust subtropical and tropical species. It is the vibrant spring colours of the specimens at all levels that are so visually obvious. As soon as the main flowering is over the pruning shears come out and in the case of the Grevillea collection, the rapidly growing branches are carefully ‘tamed’ to maintain the designed height and form, to increase foliage density as well as promote optimum flowing for the next season. It is really a ‘walkabout’ garden in which many and varied items of ‘sculptural’ interest are carefully integrated into the gardens to be ‘found’ unexpectedly as you explore. Close views into a number of special garden pockets, such as the waterway, enrich the enjoyment

of the garden. In addition, expansive vistas to the surrounding town, river valley and mountains are framed and directed by the mature tree and shrub specimens which form the structural landscape. Perhaps the exuberance of this garden would inspire floral artist Margaret Olley to take out her canvas and palette.

## Principles of Landscape Layering

Amy Fedele, landscape design USA

*Lawrie comments: While ‘surfing’ the www for a particular subject I came across this article which looks at garden design in an interesting way. Although it was written for North American conditions it does have application for us, so where necessary I have modified the text to relate to conditions ‘down under’.*

This is a guide to help you create a layered landscape using a few main principals of landscape design:

**Repetition in Landscape Layering:** Component of landscape layering by using groupings or “drifts” of plants. Consistency in your layered garden design is really important. Repetition can be created by repeating a specific plant, a specific colour or a specific plant feature.

### *Repeat a Specific Plant or Plant Type*

Think about how the plant would look if it were a mass planting (like a group of 3, 5, or 7 of the same plant). Planting a “drift” of plants creates a lot more impact than random spotting throughout.

### *Repeat a Specific Colour*

Achieve repetition by choosing different plants in the same colour family, such as light green, yellow, or even pink! Repeating the same colour (even if the textures and sizes vary) will give a similar effect and allow your eye to bounce across the landscape.

### *Repeat a Specific Plant Feature*

Consider using several spiky form plants, or several shrubs with horizontal branching structure, this will mimic the plant feature, and create visual repetition. Using repetition of plants in your landscape can also create unity and flow across the entire landscape.

### *Don’t forget about texture*

Play soft textures off of hard ones. Spikes against curves. Little leaves against big ones. There’s so much texture in plants– use it to unite groups of plants, or to make one stand out.

**Scale & Layering:** Scale is very important garden layering technique for arranging plants in your landscape. It determines how many plants to use and what sizes of plants are needed. This means using scale to determine the proper plant size, using varying sizes of plants and using enough plants for the size of the landscape.

### *Using the correct size plants*

Make sure that selected plants will fit appropriately into the area when they are fully grown. It's important to use large enough (or small enough) plants for the space in which they will be placed. Don't stuff every crack and crevice indiscriminately, you'll end up with an overgrown mess.

### *Using varying sizes of plants*

Contrasting the size of adjacent plants can create visual interest. Using a low, wide shrub next to a tall, narrow tree will accentuate the features of each plant.

### *Using enough plants*

Make sure you're filling up the space with enough plants for the size of your house and garden. If you don't use enough plants, your landscape will look a bit scarce and disconnected.

**Flow by Layering:** When planning for layering your plants in the landscape, ensure the plants and garden beds visually flow from one of the next.

### *Combine your garden beds together*

Creating proper landscape flow may involve considering both the physical and visual relationships of your garden beds. Think about the garden landscape as a whole and that means you will have to do some planning, first.

### *Extend the gardens out from permanent structures*

Instead of creating small planting beds which hug close to a house or boundary fence, extend the beds out so that the house nestles into the landscape. If there is a tree near a garden, encompass that tree into the planting area.

### *Nestle the house into the landscape*

Anchoring the corners of your home with larger plantings will make it look like it is set "into" the landscape and help to create a better visual flow.

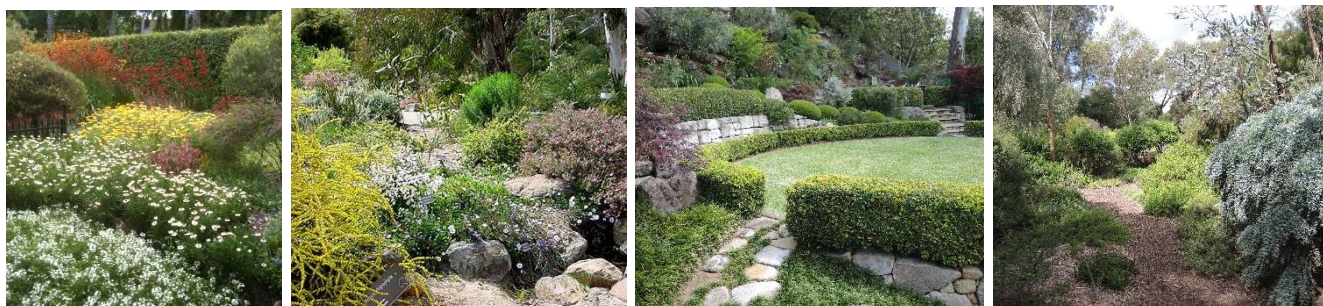
**Depth of Layered Gardens:** This is the most important part of landscape layering. Many garden beds, especially beside house foundations, are often not deep enough for most plant specimens. To improve the appearance of your landscape extend your garden beds out about two metres from the house foundations. If you have the space, make it even deeper than this! The more space provided, the better is your final result.

### *Create Depth with a Foreground, Middleground and Background*

Adequate depth in garden beds allows planting design in layers of foreground, middleground and background. The tallest plants go in the back graded down to the lowest placed in the front of the garden bed.

### *Weave Plants in and out of the Layers*

Carefully weave a pattern of smaller and middle size plants merging into the taller background and also into the foreground. This will require thought to plan the layout so that all plants are visible and an integral part of the design. Offsetting their locations in the bed will assist to enhance the visual diversity of the garden.



## **Wrapping Up**

When creating an effective landscape using landscape layering, always think initially about how the plants will look together as a whole. Let the concepts of repetition, scale, depth and flow guide how you put it all together.

**Garden of Gail & Adrian Wockner, Toowoomba**

Ros &amp; Ben Walcott, Canberra

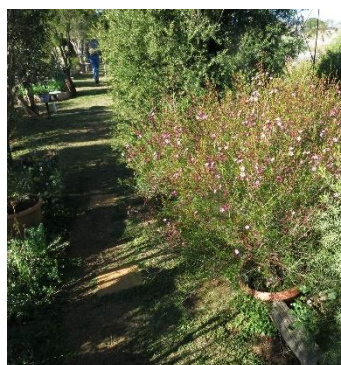
We have just returned from the ANPSA Eremophila Study Group Conference held from Friday 31 July to Monday 3 August 2020 in Warwick and Toowoomba. We visited six different and interesting gardens and met many impressive gardeners, but I would like to focus on one particular garden, that of the Wockners. This garden is the retirement garden of some very knowledgeable gardeners, who have downsized from a larger country garden. Adrian said that he had been looking forward to gardening in the famous rich, red, basaltic soil of Toowoomba, but did not quite get that soil on his and Gail's Highfields block, more red clay.



Front garden with large flowered grevilleas and standard grevilleas



Farm implements



*Chamelaucium uncinatum* in pot



Back Garden

However, what they have achieved in ten years of gardening on this 2624 square metre suburban block is quite remarkable. I really appreciated the simple design of this garden, basically two very large rectangular beds, front and back, on a slope, with curved side beds, all filled to the brim with interesting plants. There is not a lot of shade, most plants are pruned comprehensively, and the garden is overflowing with flowers. This densely planted tapestry effect reminded me of visits to Western Australia where native plants crowd each other for space in the sun.

The Wockners agricultural heritage is remembered by a collection of farm implements. The garden does not have a watering system, but Gail and Adrian mark new plants and make sure that they water these for a few weeks to settle them into the garden, after that, the plants are on their own. The Wockners have a great collection of pots, with precious plants shown off to perfection. There is a collection of large flowered grevilleas (sigh – grevillea envy!), an array of eremophilas, and some interesting small eucalypts and acacias, as well as many other special native plants. Gail's specialty is grevilleas and Adrian's loves eremophilas. Gail gardens mostly in the front bed and Adrian in the back bed, but Gail assures me that they do garden together.

**Fuchsias are Australian Plants?**

Eleanor Handreck, Netherby, SA

Extract from APS SA Journal August 2020

Our front garden is native plants, however the back garden contains much more than just native plants – I grow some fuchsias. Like most fuchsia collections, mine consists of many cultivars. *Fuchsia* species occur naturally in Central America, South America, New Zealand and Tahiti. I've often thought that it would be great if fuchsias were Australian native plants. Many of our native plants are closely related to or even in the same genera as plants from the same places that are home to *Fuchsia* species. Surely there must be a *Fuchsia* species hidden away in some as-yet unexplored part of Australia? In reality it is extremely unlikely that a native *Fuchsia* will be found in Australia as all suitable fuchsia habitat (and there isn't much of that) has already been combed by botanists.

Fuchsia is a member of the Onagraceae or evening primrose family and there are members of that family here. Worldwide, there are 17 genera in Onagraceae and only two have Australian native members - *Epilobium* (215 species – 13 in Australia & five in SA) and *Ludwigia* (75 species – seven in Australia, none in SA). Even though there are no native fuchsias in Australia now it seems that there were in the distant past. Confusingly some species of *Correa*, *Eremophila* and *Epacris* are sometimes inaccurately known as 'native fuchsia'.



*Ludwigia octovalvis* Primrose Willow



*Correa* 'Canberra Bells' - Native Fuchsia



*Eremophila bowmanii* Velvet Fuchsia;



3 photos on right from 'Gardening with Angus'

*Epacris longifolia* Fuchsia Heath

Evidence suggests that Fuchsia arrived in Australia from South America via Antarctica (when it had temperate forests) and then moved from Australia to New Zealand where there are now three *Fuchsia* species. Relatively recently (in geological terms) it was dispersed to Tahiti where there is one species.

The 1990 article from which I gathered this information reported fuchsia related fossil pollen in the Murray Basin (NSW & Victoria), Otway Basin (Victoria) and the Capricorn Basin (Queensland). It seems that Fuchsia was present and possibly widespread in Australia between perhaps 37 – 20 million years ago, when rainforest was widespread in southern Australia. It is likely that the cycles of aridity of the Late Tertiary 5.4 – 1.5 million years ago spelt the end of Fuchsia and other Gondwanan flora in Australia.

*Lawries comment:* Your very interesting article on *Fuchsia* inspired me to add to the confusion! In Queensland we have at least five natives with 'Fuchsia' in their common name – all are excellent garden subjects.



Family ACANTHACEAE - Species from left to right:

*Graptophyllum excelsum* Scarlet Fuchsia & Native Fuchsia; *G. thorogoodii* synonym

*Graptophyllum ilicifolium* Holly Fuchsia & Mt Blackwood Holly

*Graptophyllum reticulatum* Spikey Fuchsia, Veiny Fuchsia & Veiny Graptophyllum

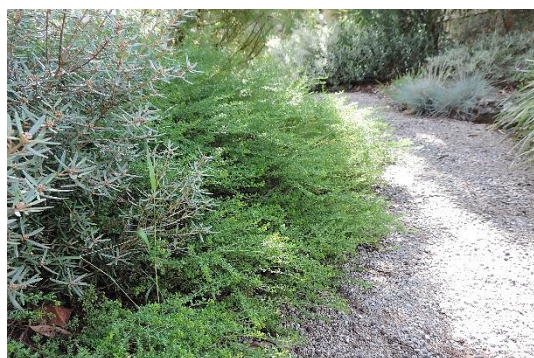
*Graptophyllum spinigerum* Spiny Fuchsia & Samford Holly

Also several species from New Guinea & New Caledonia

## PLANTS IN DESIGN

### Two plants that work well in my garden

Bev Fox, Melbourne



Some of my favourite garden plants are the ones used for edging a garden to stop the Black Birds throwing mulch on my paths. I have attached a copy of two I use a lot of *Acacia lasiocarpa* prostrate and various *Scaevola* species.

*Acacia lasiocarpa* is a very decorative prostrate low spreading ground-cover with dense small fresh lime green foliage and masses of golden flowers in winter and spring. A versatile plant for full sun to part shade but will flower more profusely in the sun. Will grow happily in coastal dune environments, as this is one of its native habitats in Western Australia.

**Grevillea 'Honey Gem' - cultivation notes and observations**

Lawrie Smith, Brisbane



This cultivar is a hybrid between *Grevillea pteridifolia* and *Grevillea banksii* (red form). The plant was obtained as a *Grevillea pteridifolia* seedling in Cherril Jerks, garden at Taringa, Queensland. Honey Gem is an excellent garden subject, exhibits hybrid vigour, grows quickly and will reach six metres tall with a spread of three or more metres over several years. It displays decorative fine grey green foliage which is an excellent foil to the large honey coloured flowers in terminal displays. Regular formative pruning will encourage multiple irregular branching, consequent dense foliage and increased flower production. In subtropical climates it is best to carry out tip pruning in the early summer to autumn no later

than April, to ensure that new growth has adequate time to develop and allow flower production in July and August which is always on the new terminal growth.

Most specimens of the cultivar seem to have a naturally irregular and sculptural habit of trunk and branch formation which creates an interesting garden subject or focus supporting the grey green foliage canopy. This cultivar seems to be receptive to quite radical pruning and when carefully done for design reasons this can exaggerate the sculptural form of the trunks and branches. Branches of 100mm diameter or more will readily produce epicormal growth and this may need to be thinned out to ensure a pleasing density, form and direction of the branching structure.

**Notes from Members****My Favourite Colour!**

Rhonda Daniels, Sydney

Following on from garden design in courtyards, colour is also important in courtyard design in a very contained space.

I have a favourite flower colour (yellow) and do feature this, but another way to include favourite colours in the garden is with coloured ceramic pots. Two issues are matching the plant and pot colour, and matching pot colour with the broader garden and other materials, where "matching" means in harmony rather than the same. Most of my pots are ceramic in earthy colours for a more natural look, but I do have a few smaller pots in brighter colours in prominent spots. These are good when plants are not in flower or for particularly showy but short-flowering plants, such as small orchids.

**First Golden Wattle seeds in Space**

Nicky Zanen, Melbourne

During the Australia All Over Sunday 30 August 2020 program, Macca received a phone call from Richard Court, currently Australian ambassador based in Tokyo. Members may recall he was once premier of Western Australia. Richard called Macca to tell him that through the Japan Space Agency, packets of wattle seeds are being sent into orbit to the International Space Station and on their return they will be distributed to schools in Australia to encourage kids to take more interest in science. *'After the seeds have had a good viewing of the earth'* was the line that caught my attention, although Richard also mentioned these would be the first Golden Wattle seeds going into space. The seeds were handed out to the JSA in front of a wattle tree in the Australian Garden, Tokyo.

**Extracts from Past Newsletters (Issues 41 to 44)**

The GDSG Newsletter index on the ANPSA website is a great way to search out specific ideas and recommendations offered by members in relation to garden design over the years since the first Newsletter in May 1993. There are many gems of inspiration similar to the following excerpts below that are worth repeating as they are still as relevant today as they were when first published.

*Make sure you read the full article of these references as well as other articles on the GDSG Newsletter archives section of the ANPSA website.* <http://anpsa.org.au/design/des-news.html>

## Newsletter #41 February 2003

### After Ten Years of Great Leadership, Thanks Diana!

Chris Larkin, Melbourne

An article on garden design in APS Victoria Newsletter December 1992 ended up with Diana saying; "I wonder whether the time has come to form a Study Group within SGAP for those members who have a special interest in Garden Design"? Diana founded the ASGAP Garden Design Study Group 10 years ago in 1993. . . . Now that she is about to hang up her shingle, hand in her badge and pass the baton on - to more than one person I might add - it seems an appropriate time to say - thanks Diana

### 230 Years since Sir Joseph Banks

Lawrie Smith, Brisbane

Sir Joseph Banks was not the first Caucasian to experience Australia's unique flora. The Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and other European powers have left evidence of their visits during the 16th and 17th centuries. The peoples of the South East Asian archipelago had been making regular visits over the Arafura Sea, possibly for centuries. Some sources suggest that explorers from China and the Middle East also travelled to these shores in the 12th to 15th centuries

### Australian Planting Design by Paul Thompson (Book Review)

Chris Larkin, Melbourne

I was extremely curious about the content of Thompson's book. Would it cover some of the same ground already covered by other similar books, or would it offer something different? . . . . This is a 'how to' book with a difference! It will not tell you how to lay paving or build a dry stone wall but it does provide sufficient information about how to shape space and arrange elements in space to empower the reader to create their own garden. . . . This book is, I believe, essential reading for someone interested in landscape design. It is an excellent reference book that can be read and reread. . . . I only wish it had been written a dozen or more years ago so that I could have arrived at some understandings a lot sooner.

## Newsletter #42 May 2003

### Principles of Pruning

Audrey Gerber

Many Australian Natives and Proteaceae grow into large, straggly, extremely woody plants if left untended. This growth habit is suitable in some landscaping situations where the plant is used as a screen, eg on roadsides and central highway strips. However, in a commercial plantation where we require plants to be productive and compact we need to . . . .

### Death of a Garden - a Change in the Landscape

Jo Hambrett, Sydney

Unfortunately the last three months have not been the easiest or happiest of times at Yanderra. As the drought dragged on and bushfires raged 3 km away; our neighbours of fifteen years completed the sale of their property. Members who have visited this garden will remember its beautiful Bruce Mackenzie design in the Romantic landscape tradition using exclusively Australian and mainly indigenous plants . . . .

### Now for the 40,000 year forecast

James Woodford

To Frances Bodkin, a traditional D'harawal Aboriginal descendant, the massive flowering of *Acacia decurrens* 18 months ago was a terrible meteorological warning. According to the calendar of her ancestors, it signalled a meeting between the climate cycle Gadalung marool and the season Gadalung burara, bringing . . . .

## Newsletter #43 August 2003

### Water-wise Garden Design & Management

John and Helen van Riet

Originally the front garden consisted of sweeping lawns to the kerb, no front fence and garden beds 1 metre wide skirting the house, side fence and path to the front door. Main species were roses, oleanders, gardenias, azaleas, camellias and rhododendrons. The back garden was similar. . . . .

### Wind-taught Pruning

Leigh Murray

This is what I've learnt in four years: To withstand wind, plants have to have strong trunks and branches, not much soft growth to act as a sail, and be fairly vertical. Pruning helps achieve this. It also helps plants withstand drought, flower more and longer, grow more densely and fit into tight spaces. . . .

### Garden Design and the Collector

Chris Larkin, Melbourne

One of the most interesting and hopefully instructive discussions you can have regarding designing with Australian plants concerns whether a collector's garden can also be a well-designed garden. . . . In his book review of 'The Australian Garden' Tony Cavanagh was critical of 'the brevity of the discussion on theme gardens and collectors gardens' and followed saying he was 'sure that many APS members would like to know more about how to indulge their passion for collecting native plants and still make a designed garden'. . . .

### Newsletter #44 November 2003

#### Collector's v Designer's

Barbara Buchanan, Victoria

This is a confrontation which has uses but can be carried too far. Few of us amateur gardeners think of ourselves in these terms and few of our gardens fall neatly into one or other category . . . . this had me pondering on the different reasons for collecting. There are of course the followers of fashion who must always have the latest plants . . . . something that displays wealth or status, . . . . other collections are sentimental, plants which hold memories of people and places. . . . I have decided I would rather be remembered as a Plantsman than a Designer or Collector.

#### Landscaping — do we need lawns in suburbia?

Jeff Howes, NSW

Over my many years association with the Australian Plants Society (SGAP) and the Australian Open Garden Scheme, I have visited many gardens and their choice of plants has ranged from using all Australian natives to using all exotics and many are a mix of both. . . . all but the smallest have had a lawn. These lawns are always mowed, green and use exotic grasses . . . . I have yet to see gardens that make use of native grasses as a lawn substitute.

#### Ian and Tamara Cox's garden, Kenthurst.

Caroline Gunter, NSW

This garden was begun in 1992 on a 5 acre block of transitional Hawkesbury sandstone and Wianamatta shale, the house sits roughly in the middle of the block facing west towards the Blue Mountains, surrounded by indigenous species such as casuarinas, leptospermum and banksias. The decision was taken to manage the bush - the natural part and tend the garden or more formal part. The owners see one of the roles of the garden as showcasing Australian plants, the plants are chosen for their showiness of flower, foliage and form and their needs are closely monitored.

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

### Coming 'Garden' Events – check out the ANPSA Website for specific details and other garden activities

*Please send any information for 'Garden events' in your region to promote in the next Newsletter*

### Warm welcome to new members – we look forward to your active participation in the study group

Anne Keaney, Stanwell Park, NSW; Richard Mac Ewan, Lockwood South, Vic; Sky Waynforth, Gold Coast Q

**Current Membership:** 185 - including 3 posted Newsletters & 180 email Newsletters

### Treasurer's Report – November 30, 2020

General account: \$ 4,339.16

Expenses: Newsletter 112 costs - \$ 88.11 (included above)

Term Deposit: \$ 27,949.21 (incl interest of \$628.38 - reinvested for 12 months to January 25, 2021)

TOTAL: \$ 32,288.37

***There is no charge for Membership of GDSG and the quarterly Newsletters are distributed by email.***

### ANPSA Garden Design Study Group Newsletter

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**Copy Deadline:** first day of the pre-publication month, although earlier submissions will be warmly welcomed by the Editor.

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**POSTSCRIPT**

**Terra Australis Garden – Update**

Ros & Ben Walcott

Ros and I met with the Arboretum staff at the Terra Australis Garden on Friday (October 9). Present were Alison (stepping in for Amalie who is on maternity leave), Owen, the head horticulturist and a new guy who is the new full time gardener/horticulturist for the Gallery of Gardens. We talked about doing some pruning as some plants have grown very well and need to be pruned up as well as replacing some that haven't done as well. It was agreed that they have some extra of Angus' roopaws that they will put in and we will provide some other plants as well. We will organize a time so that we can place the plants and then the new horticulturist will put them in.

They were also concerned about the various types of mulch 'bleeding' into each other. Kids run all over the garden and kick stuff as well as birds like Choughs moving the forest litter. They are going to put in metal edging which will help. They are also going to add rocks to areas that get a lot of kid foot traffic to protect plants.

We also talked about labelling the plants. The Arboretum is in the process of linking their plant database with an APP that will identify plants in the various gardens. They were delighted that Ros has kept such good records of what plants are in the TA garden.

By the way, the *Eucalyptus leucoxylon rosea* in fact has lots of white flowers. Still very pretty but would have been better if it were red. The tree is doing very well. Both Ros and I are very happy with how the Arboretum staff are taking over and they seem to have considerable knowledge on native plants which is great. It all sounds good to us. Cheers, Ben and Ros



View from southern entry across western sandplains



view north along the sandstone and eastern coast



south from central 'Great Divide lookout'



north from central 'Great Divide lookout'



tropical coast & hinterland - basalt