

was found on the property 'Kirkalocka' Western Australia 2001 and Summer 2003-04

named after Celia Rosser Botanical Artist 2003. Based on available material.

Banksia rosserae P. Olde & A. Marriott. This *Banksia*

BOTANIC NEWS

FRIENDS of the ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS MELBOURNE INC.

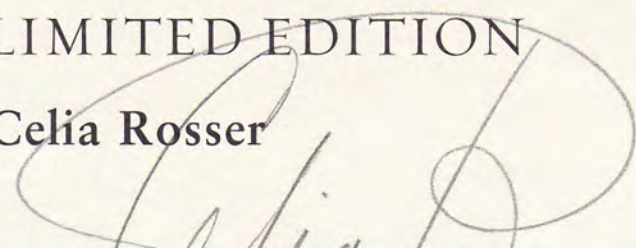


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OFFER: SPECIAL LIMITED EDITION

Banksia rosserae: by Celia Rosser



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Although my wife and I have been Members of the Friends for some years, it wasn't until I became President 12 months ago that I realised just how much our organisation depends on our many skilful and committed volunteers who work with our dedicated and talented staff to ensure that everything happens. Because of this input and the quiet and deft touch of our voluntary Secretary, Richard Smith, who oils the wheels and makes my task nearly effortless, being your President is a pleasure. Another great pleasure has been the opportunities I've had during the year to meet so many Members. The volunteers and the staff need and appreciate the support of all Members who can help by not only offering assistance when required, but by encouraging friends and acquaintances to attend activities and join the Friends.

Once again this Spring has been a most successful one for the Friends. The sale of botanical illustrations highlighting the beauty of mosses and other bryophytes exhibited in *Zen Salad*, started the ball rolling. I commend the very hard work and skill of Karen Beckmann in organising this exhibition. The Growing Friends Plant Sale raised an impressive \$28,461, the best result ever for a Spring Sale. One of the reasons for this success was the coinciding of the second day of the Sale with the first RBG Spring Open Day, which drew many people to the Gardens and included free guided walks, which ended at the Plant Sale. It meant

that the amount raised on the Sunday was significantly higher than on previous occasions as many people who'd come to enjoy the Gardens in the Spring sunshine found themselves leaving with an armful of plants. I would like to thank all those who helped with the Plant Sale, in particular Colin Herbert, Convener of the Growing Friends.

The Spring tour of Western Australia was booked out. The tour of the south-west took in many beautiful gardens, places and houses of historical interest, some wine-tasting and, of course, spectacular wildflowers, and was voted a great success by all who participated in it.

We have now completed updating our image with a newly designed, smart stationery package to complement the new-look newsletter. Our thanks to those involved in effecting the changes. As you renew your membership, your new hard-wearing card will be evidence of some of this work.

Whilst we support the Royal Botanic Gardens, we can only do this effectively because we have the support of the Board, the Director and the staff of the Gardens. On your behalf I thank them for their goodwill.

Our most significant financial contribution to the Royal Botanic Gardens this year has been our support for the *Water Works, Water Wise* project and we plan to continue this support next year by funding the irrigation system in the Ian Potter



Foundation Children's Garden. I urge all Members to buy the Friends' Christmas cards with the striking illustration of the Gardens' Cockscomb Coral Tree by Anita Barley. This is one way you can help make a contribution.

With best wishes to all Friends, readers and their families for a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Irwin Newman, President

Notes from Gate Lodge

Christmas Wishes

Virginia, Helen and Jean would like to wish all our Friends a very Happy Christmas and thank them for their support in so many ways. Please note that the Friends' office will be closed from 24 December to 2 January 2004 inclusive.



Late Wine Offer

Those members who were present at the AGM can vouch for the quality of the wine the Friends are selling. We were treated to a preliminary tasting, and all agree the wine will be good value.

If you would still like to purchase the wine, please ring the office on 9650 6398 before 3 December.

FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

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Photos: Meg Miller



150th Anniversary of the Herbarium

As part of the 150th anniversary celebrations of the National Herbarium of Victoria, Domain House (former ACCA building) is currently displaying an exhibition titled *Nature's Art Revealed – 150 Years of Botanical Art*. The exhibition contains some of Australia's finest botanical art, with works dating from the 18th century, many of which will be on show for the first time.

Renowned botanical artists represented in the exhibition include Margaret Stones, Anita Barley, Celia Rosser, Mali Moir, Su Pearson and Betty Conabere.

Don't miss out on *Nature's Art Revealed*, a magnificent exhibition on display until 17 December 2003. Entry is free and guided tours will be available to explain the role of botanical art in Herbarium conservation work. Thank you to the Friends who are generously volunteering their time to staff the exhibition.

Love, Death, Music and Plants – A musical infringement on the life of Baron Ferdinand von Mueller.

To continue the 150th anniversary celebrations, the Royal Botanic Gardens has, for the first time, staged a music-theatre work, produced by Jeannie Marsh. *Love, Death, Music and Plants* tells the story of Mueller as a

botanist, explorer, researcher and philanthropist. The season ran from 18-30 November in Mueller Hall, the ideal venue for the world-premiere of this dramatic show about such a remarkable life.

Entry Orientation Shelter at the Australian Garden

Major changes have begun to take place at the RBG Cranbourne. Most noticeable is the recently completed Entry Orientation Shelter. Located within the carpark precinct, adjacent to a 'drop off point' for visitors arriving by car, it provides a shelter and gathering space for visitors to the Gardens. The shelter also has fourteen display panels providing information on the Australian Garden and its construction. It will be used during site works as the first point of call for all site tours and information sessions.

I am pleased to announce that Cut & Fill Pty Ltd has been awarded the contract for construction of the Australian Garden. Construction work will include the civil engineering works and hard landscaping and is expected to be completed about August 2004. Planting will begin progressively next autumn.

The Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden Project

In recent months there has been much progress with the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden – the Discovery Shelter for school groups has been built, the first 'flax tunnel' has

been planted, a mini pine forest is springing up, and the raised beds for the Children's Kitchen Garden constructed. With the first stage of this exciting project nearing completion, the paving and hard landscaping are now under way. The opening of the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden is scheduled for October 2004.

Kiah Martin Captures World Women's Tree-Climber title

Kiah Martin, Senior Arborist at the RBG Melbourne, has returned from the International Tree-Climbing Championships after being crowned Women's World Champion Tree-Climber. Kiah was placed second overall in the preliminary events but went on to gain the Champion's title after beating Wenda Li (2002 World Champion) in the Masters Challenge. The Royal Botanic Gardens is very proud of Kiah's success and we all join in congratulating her on this outstanding professional achievement.

Flying-Foxes

I am delighted to report that the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne remains flying-fox free. The Department of Sustainability and Environment and contract staff have continued 'herding' the flying-fox colony to a suitable site at Yarra Bend Park. The colony was moved progressively north during August along the Yarra in Hawthorn and the bats eventually began roosting in the southern-most section of

...CONT'D STAFF PROFILE



Dickinson Reserve. However, the flying-foxes did not settle there for long. Some attempted to return to the Royal Botanic Gardens. However, using our established methods, they were quickly and successfully dispersed at dawn and dusk. At the end of September the bats had established a new roost in bushland in Yarra Bend Park in Kew. Arborists at RBG Melbourne are progressing with the long job of repairing the damage caused by the flying-foxes in Fern Gully.

Once again, thank you to the volunteers from the Friends for your support and commitment.

Philip Moors, Director

Neville Walsh

This last Staff Profile will give readers an insight into the work of the Herbarium and help commemorate its 150th anniversary. We meet a reticent and very able botanist, Neville Walsh, co-editor and contributor to the four-volume Flora of Victoria.

His current work is in the taxonomic study of Australian Lobelia and related genera and plant conservation, particularly the identification and naming of new species and preservation of rare and threatened species. The job includes a field component which Neville particularly enjoys. Recently this required him to study areas of plant growth after the January 2003 wildfires, especially in the Alps. Neville's extensive knowledge of the flora of areas within the State means that he has been involved in the revegetation of Long Island at the RBGM and in selection of appropriate plants for the Australian Garden at Cranbourne.

Neville grew up in Rosebud at a time of unpaved roads and narrow bush tracks along which one could cycle or ramble to one's heart's content. It was a great way to become familiar with the indigenous growth of the area even if one wasn't able to name the plants. Neville says he remembers having seen many plants no longer growing in this popular holiday haven, but which he has only in adulthood been able to name. Other enjoyments included bird-watching, camping and bushwalking, all of which he

still pursues, and the experience gained has been invaluable in his working life.

While attending the local Primary and Secondary schools, Neville expected to follow his father into the family plumbing business, until in his final school year he attended an Open Day at Monash University and gained an insight into the possibilities available to him. Why Monash? Well, a renowned plant ecologist, Peter Bridgewater, lectured there and Neville valued the anticipated contact. As with other well-laid plans, this one went sadly wrong after Peter, now the Director of the Division of Ecological Sciences with UNESCO, departed Monash the following year!

As a Botany student, Neville had access to Summer holiday work in the Herbarium in 1976/77, and during one of these periods he met Paul Gullan who had established a fledgling ecological survey team at the Herbarium. Such activities appealed to Neville and so he asked to join the group on one survey trip to the Grampians. The result was the creation of a very enthusiastic young botanist and the following summer, after completing his BSc at Monash, Neville became a permanent member of the survey team. Vegetation surveys and searches for sites of botanical significance occupied the group for the following three years, and later surveys were to include the Victorian alps, Westernport catchment, and the Mallee. After funding for these broad surveys dried up, Neville returned to Monash to

study the genus Pomaderris, a group of plants that had caused many headaches in the surveys of eastern Victoria.

His wide experience in Victorian botany and his particular interest in threatened species and threatening processes meant that Neville's services are in demand as a member of the Scientific Advisory Committee for the Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee, which includes experts in marine and freshwater biology, zoology, ecology and invertebrate biology. He also works as a member of recovery teams for the Helmeted Honeyeater and the Grampians Pincushion Lily.

Neville coached basketball while his children (one daughter, one son) were growing up and still enjoys playing the game himself although the kids have 'retired'. He is a keen gardener, but his pursuits in the garden are often diverted by a desire to grow species that he studies (principally Pomaderris) to reassure himself that his identification and classification of these plants was indeed accurate. This does not always lead to domestic harmony, but his partner, Jan, is usually happy to maintain a bountiful vegie patch. I also understand that Neville's expertise and interests extend to music, where, together with some of his fellow scientists, he produces a haunting blues sound. Perhaps if you attend an RBG staff function, or some other obscure haunt, you might encounter this group.

Meg Miller

Photos: Neville Walsh



Pomaderris oblongata



Pomaderris elliptica

DOMAIN HOUSE



Photo: Meg Miller

Domain House, formerly known as the ACCA (Australian Centre for Contemporary Arts) building, is the site of an exhibition of some of Australia's finest botanical art. This exhibition, *Nature's Art Revealed*, open until 17 December, marks the National Herbarium of Victoria's 150th anniversary and includes many works not previously exhibited. Domain House, the management of which has recently been passed to the Botanic Gardens by Melbourne City Council, has a colourful past. It is an asymmetrical, freestanding, Italianate villa with an unusual timber fretwork verandah and finely detailed single window. According to Melbourne City Council its history is associated with both the Melbourne Astronomer and the Domain Gardens workforce.

It was built in 1863 as a residence for the first Government Astronomer,

Robert J Ellery and he occupied it until a new and larger house was built for him in the Observatory grounds near the main buildings. It was one of several buildings located in the Domain in 1865. The residences of the first and second Astronomer were two of the buildings in the Domain in 1865. Others were Government House, 'the Stables', the Herbarium Museum, 'the Gardener's dwelling', several small cottages and an isolated building for animals that was associated with the Melbourne zoo known as 'Alpaca House'. In addition there was an Immigrants' Home and six buildings clustered around a parade ground that was used by the military.

On maps of 1863 and 1865, a building of the same plan and dimensions was situated approximately 200 metres south/south west of the

Shrine of Remembrance. Its front faced towards St. Kilda Road, a different position from the one it currently occupies.

When the management of the Domain transferred to the City of Melbourne in the early twentieth century, the buildings that had been constructed for the Royal Botanic Gardens were taken over by the City.

In 1914 the brick building was demolished and most of the materials carried some 500 metres to be re-erected on its present site in Dallas Brooks Drive. The reconstructed building followed the original form, but modifications included a cavity wall and some internal modernisation. The house became the residence of the Senior Carter and was adjacent to a long wooden stable, part of the zoo buildings, that was still in use as a depot for the Melbourne City Council Parks and Gardens staff, who occupied

the relocated house for many years. The occupier in 1970 was listed as J.Patching of Olympic Games fame.

In 1984 ownership transferred to the Ministry of the Arts. There followed major internal alterations to the house. The Gallery was added about 1986. It has been known as ACCA until now when the City has returned management of the building to the Royal Botanic Gardens.

The RBG will use Domain House as an educational institution for student classes with young children and also as an exhibition/display area.

Terri Kay

Reference: *Melbourne City Council Conservation Study prepared by Meredith Gould, Architect, Conservation Consultant 1984*

GIANT - ancient and historic trees



"The tallest trees in the British Empire -- Marysville, Victoria"
Percy Trompf poster design c1930

Australia has long been acclaimed 'the land of tall trees'. In 1888, for Melbourne's Centennial Exhibition, a competition invited entrants from all nations to identify the world's tallest tree. In spite of a generous reward, the competition was never decided conclusively. The two real contenders were the redwoods from California and the mountain ash from Australia.

To celebrate Australia's remarkable heritage of historic and significant trees, both native and exotic, the Geelong Gallery has launched a major exhibition and publication entitled *GIANT - ancient and historic trees*. The exhibition was opened by Dr Philip Moors, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne.

While the exhibition provides a general introduction to the story of great trees of the

world, followed by an outline of famous trees in Australia, the display and accompanying catalogue deal mostly with significant and historic trees of Victoria such as the Separation Tree in the RBG Melbourne, Gippsland's famous 'Ada' tree and several notable specimens that feature in colonial and Heidelberg School paintings.

With valuable exhibits drawn from state gallery, museum and library collections, together with contemporary photographs by John Gollings and wood engravings by Tim Jones, *Giant* examines a spectacular aspect of our natural heritage through the lens of art history in early

Australian and European paintings, 19th century and modern photographs, antiquarian prints, rare books and museum artifacts. It is particularly interesting when considering our widespread concern for the preservation of Australia's old-growth forests.

If you cannot visit the exhibition before Christmas, remember it is part of the Friends' bus trip on 11 February 2004.

Geelong Gallery, Little Malop Street is closed on Christmas Day and New Years Day. Opening hours Monday to Friday 10am-5pm. Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays 1pm-5pm.

SEPARATION TREE IN RBG MELBOURNE



Photo: Meg Miller

GROWING FRIENDS



Photo: Meg Miller

GROWING FRIENDS TAKING A WELL-EARNED POST-SALE TIME OFF IN PIRIANDA GARDENS, OLINDA

The Spring Sale was more than 12 per cent up on the Spring 2002 sale; we grossed approximately \$32,500 – a most gratifying result. We thank Gardens' staff for their assistance in moving stock to the sales area and their support in staffing the help desk. Thanks go also to the volunteers both in the sales and in the plant display area.

Sunday sales have traditionally been slow but the Spring Open Day organised by the RBG to coincide with, and thereby support our Sale, radically changed that! The sales on Saturday were slightly down on the corresponding time last year, but the crowds on the Sunday more than compensated. Steve Clancy, Manager Visitor Services at the Royal Botanic Gardens,

consulted with us at all stages to maximise the mutual benefit between the Growing Friends' Sale and the Spring Open Day, with great success.

Friends of Jocelyn Houghton will join us in sympathy for her shoulder problem for which she has had further surgery. We missed her cheery greeting at the Sales entry tent and her systematic gathering of statistics for publicity, and we wish her the best in recovery.

Two Growing Friends – Joy Ryan and Pauline Aw – must be thanked for their initiatives in refurbishing the Growing Friends' aprons and suggesting the making of calico bags to sell at the Sales.

In response to several enquiries of the Growing Friends, this and subsequent

articles in *Botanic News* may give some insights.

The majority of the plants we propagate are chosen for their suitability to our Mediterranean climate. Buyers are advised to determine the suitability of any plant for their local conditions using information from the catalogue. Some plants have a wide range of suitable habitats, others are highly habitat specific.

The Growing Friends' 'Hort(icultural) Committee' advises on plants to propagate. Our choice is strongly influenced by what has previously been popular at sales, and what is unusual, and consequently has novelty value. Occasionally, Members of the Friends request a plant they admire and have not been able to get at commercial nurseries.

They sometimes offer material from which to propagate; such offers are accepted at our discretion.

Some material comes to us from the horticultural staff at the RBG who are doing routine maintenance or lifting plants from garden beds. The ban on visitors removing material from the Gardens also applies to all people employed by the RBG. This ban is shortly to be strengthened by the Victorian Parliament. The horticultural staff, as with the general public, can buy plants propagated from Gardens' material through the Growing Friends' sales. We thus have a role in assuring continuation of stock for future use.

Colin Herbert, Convenor

ACTIVITIES



Nature's Art Revealed

150 Years of Botanical Art at the National Herbarium of Victoria 1853-2003
Wednesday 10 December at 10.00 am sharp
Gate Lodge, Birdwood Avenue
Cost: \$15.00 FRIENDS ONLY
RSVP by Wednesday 3 December on enclosed booking form

As part of the celebration of the National Herbarium's 150th anniversary year, the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne presents an exhibition of works from the State Botanical Collection at Domain House, formerly the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art. Some of Australia's finest botanical art, with works dating from the 18th Century, will be on show for the first time.

The exhibition will highlight the important role botanical artists play in the conservation and preservation work undertaken by Herbarium staff. Morning tea will be served at Gate Lodge before a guided tour of the exhibition.



Summer Quarterly Insiders Walk: The Role of Water in the Gardens

Wednesday 4 February at 10.00am sharp
Meet at Gate Lodge (opposite the Shrine)
Cost: \$10 FRIENDS ONLY
RSVP by Friday 30 January on enclosed booking form

Join this 'behind-the-scenes' walk on which we will be examining how water is used within the Gardens.

Water plays a very significant role in the life of the Gardens, from the daily routine of ensuring enough of this precious resource gets to the needy collections without waste, to the beauty of the Lakes that provide so much of the Gardens' ambience.

We will discover how it is all maintained and coordinated to ensure the Gardens remain as beautiful as ever.

A delicious morning tea will be served before the walk.



The Mallee, Mildura and Mungo

ILLUSTRATED TALK
by Helen Page

Thursday 5 February at 6.30 for 7.00pm
Cost: \$17 Friends \$12
RSVP by Monday 2 February on enclosed booking form

On Anzac Day last year Helen Page, Chairman of the Victorian Branch Committee of the Australian Garden History Society, and 45 AGHS enthusiasts set off with Rodger and Gwen Elliot, experts on Australian flora, on a five day adventure through the National Parks of the Mallee and associated areas.

Dry and wet landscapes provided a wealth of beautiful

plants and birds. Encounters with the extraordinary and passionate people who have worked wonders in creating and preserving these unique habitats and parks were enlightening. Helen, together with some of those on the trip, will present a very special talk about the plants, the people, the birds, and the landscapes.

A glass of wine and savouries will be served before the talk.

ACTIVITIES



Water Wise Geelong Gardens

SUMMER BUS TRIP

Wednesday 11 February.
Meet at Vic Arts Centre (outside State Theatre)
St Kilda Road at 9.00am sharp
Cost: \$58.00
RSVP by Wednesday 4 February
on enclosed booking form

Our first stop is the Barrabool Hills Garden and Maze where Richard Seccull will explain how, after five years of drought, a new concept in gardening has been introduced. The planting includes natives, hardy exotics, grasses, flaxes, roses, perennials and succulents.

We will then visit the Geelong Gallery where there is a major exhibition: *Giant – ancient and historic trees*, the story of Australia's famous and significant trees as featured

in paintings, rare prints and photographs.

The Friends of the Geelong Botanic Gardens will take us around both the historic 19th Century sections plus the new 21st Century Garden. A light lunch and wine will be provided at the Friends' tearooms.

Finally, we will visit a strongly-designed garden on the Bellarine Peninsula. We should arrive back at the Arts Centre by 5.30pm.



Fit Friends' Ramble: Coastal Arts Trail

Friday 20 February, 9.20am sharp
Carpark at Ricketts Point, Beaumaris (Melway 85, 86-H7)
Cost: \$8 Friends \$5
Limit 30
RSVP by Monday 16 February
on enclosed booking form

This is a wonderful opportunity for Friends to walk together in the footsteps of Streeton, Roberts and Conder south from Ricketts Point along the Coastal Art Trail, to experience the inspiration its beauty gave to early settlers and artists, from the Heidelberg School to the present. Notes will be available.

On return to the carpark, the Ranger will show and

discuss the marine life of this beautiful area.

Morning tea/lunch is available for purchase at the teahouse kiosk, or you may BYO.

We will walk on beaches and rocks, so please wear sensible shoes, hat and sunscreen and bring water with you.



Sensuality in the Garden

ILLUSTRATED TALK

by David Kirkpatrick
Tuesday 9 March at 6.30 for 7pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium
Cost: \$20 Friends \$15
RSVP by Friday 5 March
on enclosed booking form

David Kirkpatrick is a leading Australian landscape designer who has been featured on radio and in numerous press and magazine articles.

David's philosophy is that the designed garden needs to be a reflection of your personal tastes and practical requirements. With a garden you are free to be fanciful, creating spaces that are functional, romantic and

imaginative, enticing with interest and the possibility of further spaces to explore.

His landscapes are beautiful and emotionally restorative and they often include a well-designed and constructed water feature. Join us for a glass of wine and nibbles before sharing some of David's philosophy together with beautiful photographic examples of his work.

ILLUSTRATORS

The Illustrated Garden



Magnolia liliiflora Dougl.

Dolores Skowronski-Malloni was born in Argentina, where she studied graphics and interior design, becoming an art teacher when she completed her studies. In 1973 Dolores migrated to Australia, worked and studied art in Sydney and Wagga Wagga (Riverina Institute), and in 1982 completed a Bachelor of Arts Degree at Monash University, majoring in glass design.

Dolores became involved in botanical art in 1992. Her preferred method is to choose, explore and investigate a plant species, then produce a collection of paintings rather than individual ones. Her work introduces the audience to the diverse and intricate nature of plants.

In 1993, Dolores was commissioned to paint wildflowers and grasses for the 1994 City of Werribee calendar. She was also invited as a guest artist for The Grampians Wildflower Show, in which she participated from 1994 to 1998 and 2000 to 2002, producing paintings of indigenous flora.

Her successful solo exhibition, *A Selection of Modern Roses*, was held in 1996 at Werribee Park, and commemorated the tenth anniversary of the Victoria State Rose Garden. Dolores also participated in the *Portraits of Roses* exhibition which commemorated the centenary of the Rose Society of Victoria.

In 1994, 1996 and 1998 Dolores exhibited her work on Camellias, carnivorous plants and Cacti in *The Art of Botanical Illustration* exhibitions at the National Herbarium of Victoria. Her painting of *Echinopsis*, or Ball Cactus, was acquired by the Herbarium for its permanent collection. In 2000, she painted a collection of conifers for the Art of Botanical Illustration exhibition. These paintings are registered by the National Trust of Victoria. Her painting of *Cedrus libani*, or Cedar of Lebanon, was acquired for the permanent collection of the National Herbarium of Victoria. This painting was also chosen to be the very first Friends' Christmas card as part of a new project, *The Illustrated Garden*, which features specimen plants from the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne.

For *The Art of Botanical Illustration* 2002 exhibition, Dolores produced four paintings of the Magnolia species. Featured here is her painting of *Magnolia liliiflora* 'Nigra' which was selected for *The Illustrated Garden* project.

Dolores has also taken part in numerous group exhibitions, and her work is represented

in corporate and private collections in Australia, Japan, Germany, England, Argentina, Belgium and the USA.

Rita Parkinson

Classes

A Four-day Beginners Workshop with Dianne Emery

6, 7, 8, 9 January

10.00am-4.00pm

Cost: \$220 (Friends \$200)

This intensive course is an introduction to Botanical Art via pencil and watercolour. Over the four days, students will begin to develop skills in outline drawing and foreshortening, tonal work and rendering of surfaces, basic colour work and paint application.

The cost includes drawing materials, paint, watercolour paper and brushes, and morning and afternoon tea. Classes will be held in the Whirling Room Studio, Observatory Gate.

Four-day Drawing Workshops with Dianne Emery and Mali Moir

12, 13, 14, 15 January

10.00am-3.00pm.

Cost: \$205 (Friends \$185)

Drawing: An Interesting Approach with Mali Moir.

Drawing exercises to develop personal skills and bring out the inner artist.

Drawing: "and now for something completely different" with Dianne Emery

Be bold and experimental, while refining hand/ eye co-ordination; create real space and illusion in your work, at the same time dealing with the reality of the picture plane.

Silk Floral Painting Workshop with Mali Moir

Cost: \$120 (Friends \$110)

19, 20, 21 January

10.00am - 1.00pm

A workshop that will introduce some basic silk painting techniques to produce a piece of floral art on silk.. Students will need to supply materials.

Plant Dissection and Microscope Workshop with Mali Moir

Cost: \$120 (Friends \$110)

27, 28, 29 January

10.00am - 1.00pm

Suitable for beginners and more advanced artists. Basic botany and plant dissection for illustration will be covered. Choose your medium - pen and ink, graphite pencil or watercolour. Students will need to apply for a materials list.

Term Classes will commence the week beginning 9 February 2004. Classes will be held on Tuesday evenings, and in the daytime on Mondays, Wednesdays (two sessions), Fridays and Saturdays.

For further information on workshops and classes, contact Dianne Emery on 9523 5397 or Mali Moir on 9822 8198.

Whirlybirds

Botanical Illustrator Friends are invited to join the Whirlybirds. This group meets on Tuesdays in the Whirling Room Studio to paint and share technical and botanical information and ideas. The atmosphere is informal and friendly. If you would like to attend, just ring Miriam Blight on 9583 6098 for more information.

ILLUSTRATORS



Banksia rosserae

LIMITED EDITION PRINT BY CELIA ROSSER

In 2001, while on a field trip to a remote and arid region of inland Western Australia in search of grevillea, botanists Peter Olde and Neil Marriott discovered a previously unknown banksia. Specimens of this new banksia, *Banksia rosserae*, were growing in deep white sand among other low sand plain shrubs and mallee eucalypts in an area with an annual rainfall of only 200mm, making this the only documented case of a banksia growing exclusively in an arid environment.

It is most closely related to *Banksia laevigata*, and is unique in having a massive underground lignotuber and papery bark on older branches, undoubtedly adaptations to survive harsh inland conditions. *B. rosserae* has spherical flower heads, which are terminal, nodding and possibly yellow in colour although this description is

based on old, dry flowers that were still attached to the plant.

After seeing the exhibition of Celia Rosser's Banksia paintings at the State Library in April 2002, Olde and Marriott resolved to name the new species *Banksia rosserae* in honour of one of the world's greatest living botanical artists. At that exhibition Celia presented an illustration of the new banksia, then named *B. kirkalotta* after the property in Western Australia where it was found. Earlier this year she acquired new plant specimens, produced this illustration with its new name, and reproduced it as 500 limited edition prints. The painting details leaves, a maturing fruiting cone, and below a single developing follicle from this cone. Also illustrated is a mature woody follicle that has opened revealing two elliptical-shaped seeds with wrinkled surfaces and a separator that sits between the two seeds within the follicle. The flowers have yet to be seen; recent rainfalls have failed to reach this remote region and stimulate the flowering process. When eventually this intriguing plant does flower, Celia will produce a complementary illustration and print series of a flower head to partner this first series of the fruiting cone. We are delighted to offer a limited number of these exquisite prints for sale to our Members through the enclosed order form. The prints are A4 size and accompanied by a full description of the plant and the story of its discovery.

Louise Coronel



The Oaks

A group of botanical illustrators from the Friends has embarked on a project to document the Oaks of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne. Oaks from the family Fagaceae, including the English Oak *Quercus robur*, the Italian Oak *Q. frainetto*, and the Californian Live Oak *Q. wizlizenii*, can be found in many parts of the world. There are some 30-40 wonderful, mature examples of these trees spread around the Gardens, the majority of course on the Oak Lawn. Many are historic trees, planted throughout the Gardens' history by such luminaries as Lady Loch and W R Guilfoyle.

The illustrations will be full plate paintings which illustrate the key diagnostic features of the taxa-buds, male and female flowers, acorns, habit etc.

This project will take some time, as each illustrator will need to follow the growth through a full season. At present we have about 15 studies underway. Any illustrator interested in taking part in this project is very welcome to contribute. For more information contact Rita Parkinson (9821 5883) or Mary Gregory (9836 8587).

Rita Parkinson

Christmas Break-up

Meet on Tuesday 2 December at 10.30am in Whirling Room

Please bring a plate and some current work for us all to see. We will walk in the Gardens and return for a shared lunch at 12.30pm in the Whirling Room.

QUARTERLY TALK

Preserving our Heritage: a day in the life of an arborist

Tuesday 17 February at 10.00am for 10.30am in the Whirling Room, Great Melbourne Telescope Building
Morning tea will be served before the talk. Cost: \$5.50

RSVP to Friends' office, 9650 6398

Kiah Martin, award-winning RBG arborist, will give a talk to the Illustrators about caring for the trees in the Royal Botanic Gardens. She will discuss, among other topics, conservation, historic trees and planning for the future.

Visit to Cranbourne Botanic Gardens

On a cold, wintry Tuesday in August, 15 members of the Botanical Illustrators met at the Stringy Bark picnic area. We were taken on a most interesting and informative walk by two of the RBG Cranbourne Rangers. We were surprised to see such a variety of early spring flowers, including four different greenhood orchids, and so many small birds, including yellow robins, wrens, honeyeaters and Australian thrushes. We enjoyed the Rangers' amusing frog calls, identifying each frog with a photo. We were also thrilled to see bandicoots running across the tracks.

Judy Jarman

MEMBERS

Membership

Are you looking for an original and enduring Christmas gift idea this year? A gift of Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Inc. membership lasts a full twelve months and brings a number of valuable benefits, including discounts at the Gardens' Shops, Terrace Tearooms by the Lake, selected Bookshops, Bed & Breakfasts, Nurseries and, of course, our seasonal issues of *Botanic News*. New Friends also receive a special welcome pack. By giving a gift of Membership to the Friends you are also helping to support the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne. To arrange a gift of Membership, simply call Gate Lodge on 9650 6398. Our office is open Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm. If you are able to visit, you will find the Friends' 2003 Christmas Cards illustrated by Anita Barley and featuring the *Erythrina cristagalli* are magnificent.

The booking form in this issue of *Botanic News* outlines the exclusive events and

activities open to Members and their friends. The Activities Committee provides you with the opportunity to enjoy cultural, scientific, educational and stimulating spheres of action - you will find a wide choice. The fabulous Catering Committee supports Friends' events held in Mueller Hall. Their *Cookery Book*, published recently, promotes ingenuity and idealism in the kitchen during mornings and afternoons, an often elusive quantity. A limited supply is available at Gate Lodge.

The Friends' organisation is built on the enthusiasm of hundreds of Members, all wishing to support the Royal Botanic Gardens and the Herbarium. Contact the Friends if you feel you could offer any assistance, whether it be casually or otherwise; you'll be surprised how valuable and rewarding it can be. If you can't water the garden this summer, water your soul - become involved with the Friends!

Pamela J. Eames
Membership Committee

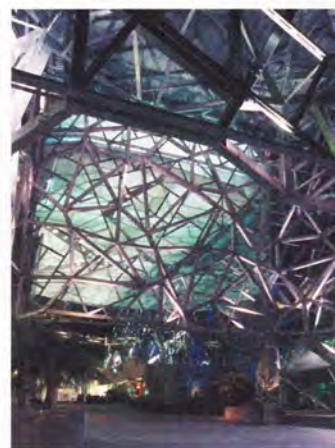
Photography course

A group of twenty enthusiastic amateur photographers met in the Whirling Room each Saturday in October to learn more about photography, to increase their skills and understanding and hopefully to produce wonderful photographs.

The course, run by Rosa Niran and her partner Michael Prior, was a wonderful learning experience, which took the amateurs into the realm of the professional. While covering cameras, film and basic skills of composition, on the first morning, they developed into twenty critical photographers, who not only could analyse their own photographs but now recognise why certain photographs work better than others and why images from items such as calendars are so appealing.

Participants arrived with a range of cameras - compact, SLR and digital - varying skill levels and artistic talent, with which Rosa and Michael coped marvellously while enthusiastically inspiring everyone to complete their homework each week - rolls of film, to come up with a few great photographs for discussion!

It was in the third week that Jeff Jeanes from the Herbarium shared his stunning photographs of the orchids he had photographed in the wild, and which have been published in a book on *Victorian Orchids*. He told some hilarious stories of his experiences, particularly of trying to fix a dimly lit small



Photos: Michael Prior

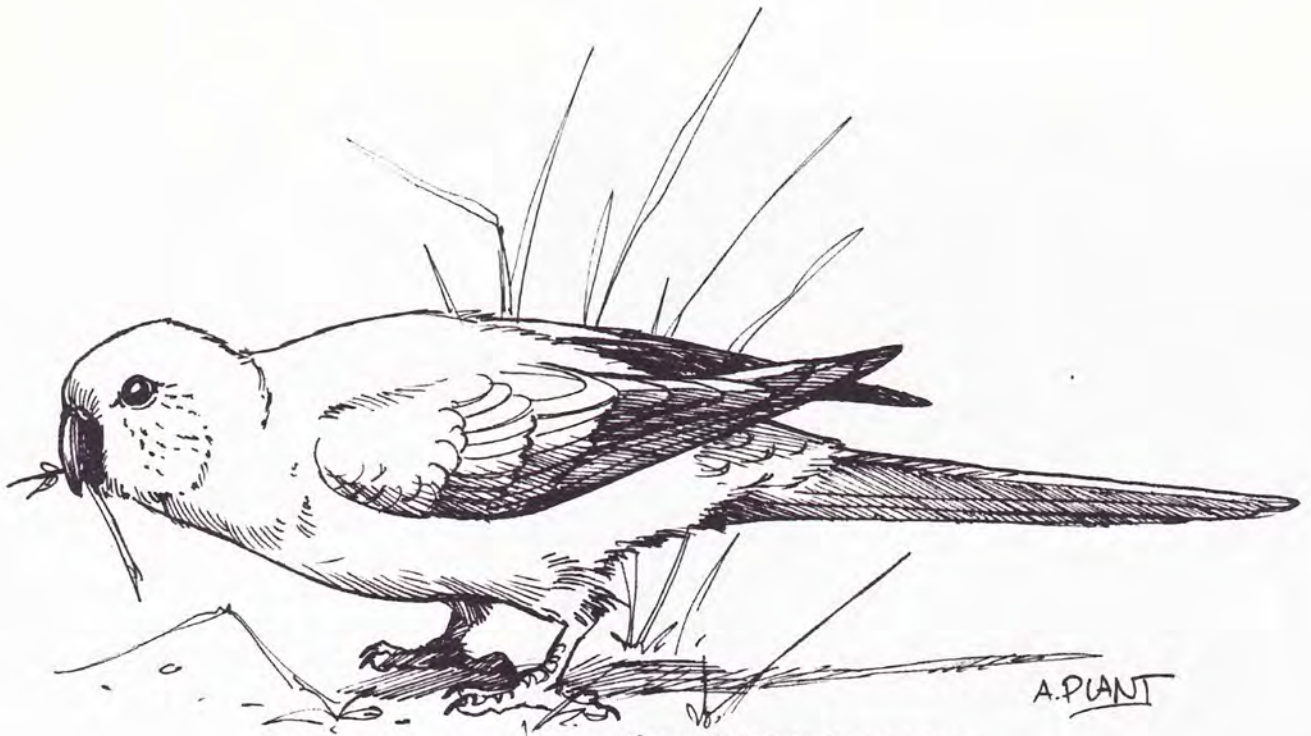
orchid in a static position, before the group ventured out to the potager behind the Observatory Café to try their hand with somewhat larger and simpler artichokes and chard.

In the final session Stephen Markham gave a fascinating insight into the techniques he uses for successful landscapes, using a variety of cameras, lenses, filters, trekking with a 28kg backpack loaded with remarkably neatly stored essential items, including water to spray the bark of snow gums, and walking at least half a kilometre to get the right angle on a landscape. From the photographs he showed the class, all the effort was worth it!

Every presenter shared their enthusiasm and passion for their art, generously gave their ideas, shared their photographs, patiently answered questions, and gave positive criticism. This was a wonderful and stimulating course interspersed with humour. Sincere thanks to Rosa, Michael, Jeff and Steve who gave their time so generously.

Pamela Carder





RED-RUMPED PARROT

Botanic Birds

Now that Spring has passed it is lovely to look back on what occurred in the Gardens during that vibrant time of the year. Muted green buds burst from the outer branches of the trees, and shrubs announced the change in many colourful ways. Camellias, after brightening the winter, gradually stepped back to allow other shrubs to delight the eye. Daffodils and freesias popped up from many unexpected places, and weeds made another vain attempt to gain a foothold in the garden beds and lawns.

The Gardens' fauna always looks forward to the warmer weather. White-tailed Rats, possums and foxes all busied themselves making cosy nests; but it is the birds that are the most noticeable when it comes to looking for a new home

or renovating an old one. In fact an avian housing boom took place in the Gardens, with intense competition for the best location and outlook. Security from predators and the elements were top of mind. The few nesting holes were keenly fought over, with birds, possums and even bees eagerly inspecting a part of the market which has barely increased since the last spring.

In time, Black Swans were the first to show off their young with seven cygnets on the Nymphaea Lake. Newly arrived Purple Swamphens surprised everyone when they appeared with two youngsters around Long Island (does anybody recall this happening before?). Long Island has proved a habitat bonanza for the Gardens' native birds. It was appreciated by a pair of Red-rumped Parrots which were regularly observed

looking for a suitable nesting hole. Secretive Little Grassbirds returned to the thick cover near Dog Flat and Clamorous Reed-Warblers built their beautiful cup-shaped nests in the reeds.

Water birds such as Coot and Dusky Moorhen busily collected water weed, sticks, stems and grass for their nests. The English Song Thrush, whose call is even more beautiful than the Blackbird's, sang with amazing volume from the tops of elms and oaks, proclaiming its territory to all. Blackbirds were seen furtively carrying grass and small twigs into low bushes and Spotted Turtle-Doves prepared their very flimsy nests of sticks and twigs.

Elsewhere, a small group of Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos was observed flying with their characteristically slow, heavy wing beat, making their weird "weelar weelar" call, seeking

out pine trees. Other interesting sightings were a pair of Eastern Rosellas, a species not recorded in the Gardens for many years, and an Azure Kingfisher, recorded by several people, fishing in the billabong at Long Island. This tiny kingfisher is an absolute gem as it swiftly flies from one fishing perch to another.

We are always interested in unusual bird sightings, so please ring David Plant on 9857 6006.

David Plant & Tony Delves



Summer is once again upon us, and very soon we will have forgotten how we savoured the bracing freshness (for this read ‘were blown from pillar to post’) during some classic Melbourne spring days. We will have backed the first three place-getters in the Melbourne Cup, and will be feeling rather good about ourselves in the cricket test arena, not to mention the rugby...or perhaps not. While the ebullient rush of spring will have subsided to some degree to the more measured pace of summer, there are nevertheless some absolute highlights to observe in the Gardens’ plant collections. A few favourites which catch my eye include:

Melaleuca linariifolia

(Snow-in-Summer): It’s hard not to have the eye caught by this magnificent tree which grows adjacent to the path junction near the Perennial Border. When in flower (from late November) it actually does take on the appearance of having been generously dusted with unseasonable snow – or maybe desiccated coconut. It’s no slouch for the rest of the year, with several sturdy trunks and a dense rounded canopy. Our junior visitors seem to find the trunks almost irresistible for climbing.... of course we don’t allow such rampant lawlessness.

The large papery white flowers of the Californian Tree-poppy *Romneya coulteri* are profuse from middle to late December. The plants at the Californian Garden always

seem to do incredibly well – I’ve not seen such masses of flowers on this species anywhere else to date (perhaps I haven’t looked hard enough). For whatever reason – expert care, ideal location, good plant stock – these plants seem to do very well in the Gardens. Inspired by their beauty and vigour, I have managed to torture several in the home garden at Woodend, to no particularly satisfactory

outcome. I note in the literature that it doesn’t enjoy being transplanted, and that it hails from southern California in the northern Baja area. This may account for its pickiness regarding the charms of a Woodend climate.

Towards the end of December the *Schotia brachypetala* (Weeping Boer Bean or Hottentot Bean) at the bottom of the Central Lawn comes into flower. It presents very showy sprays of deep red inflorescences. It is dwarfed to some extent by the large Bunya Bunya just next to it, but it certainly steps into the spotlight when in flower. Another tree to claim equal billing is one of my favourites (favourite for its common name as much as its flowers) – *Chiranthodendron pentadactylon*

(Macpalxochiquahuitl). One day we will learn how to pronounce the common name, but in the meantime we make do with the rather less daunting ‘Mexican Hand Tree’, or ‘Monkey’s Hand’. It looms up behind the Works Yard sheds, abutting the small lawn outside the Tropical Glasshouse. We germinated some seed from this tree during the past year, and they have already reached a height of around one metre!

The visitor’s sense of smell can be well-exercised when passing the *Michelia champaca* (Champak) in flower in the Director’s Tunnel Bed, just downhill and across the path from Guilfoyle’s Oak. While I personally find the heady aromas from the late-winter flowering *Michelia doltsopa* a bit overpowering (eye-watering!), *M. champaca* gives of a more delicate and sweeter fragrance, which often has the passer-by wheeling on their heel, nostrils a-flare, seeking to track down the source.

Of course some of the Gardens’ collections will be at their peak through the summer months – the Perennial Border with its array of strong colours and forms, the Water Conservation Garden, Long Island, the Australian Rainforest Walk to name a few. The recovery in the Fern Gully since the departure of the flying-foxes has been tremendous – hopefully the Fern Gully will once again be a much appreciated cool oasis in which to escape days of summer heat. The Southern Chinese Collection is also a place for escape from the heat-tucked between the lake and

the river, with its shady glades composed from a mixture of some familiar horticultural stalwarts and many of their less familiar cousins from southern China.

Despite the apparently more 'traditional' spring which Melbourne has experienced, particularly in terms of rainfall, it is essential and unavoidable that the Gardens staff will continue to pay very close attention to conserving our precious water. Ensuring the health of the living landscape in the Gardens while minimising the amount of applied irrigation water takes considerable expertise, effort and judgement, and is a major focus for the staff through the spring preparation period and the heat of the summer months. The valuable support of the Friends towards completion of the irrigation system throughout the Gardens continues to be very much appreciated!

Richard Barley

Cranbourne Friends

CHRISTMAS BREAK-UP

The Cranbourne Friends' Christmas break-up will be held on Sunday, 14 December, commencing at 4.30 pm.

As with the past two years, this will take the form of a BYO barbeque or picnic tea, and we will again have the popular 'Jazz Doctors' playing. Please join us...

FEATHERED FRIENDS

You are invited to come along and learn about the birds of

Cranbourne. We meet on the second Saturday of every month, at 9 am, at the Stringybark picnic area, and we finish at about noon. BYO binoculars and something to drink.

To make a booking, ring Dawn Neylan on 5996 3073 or the Cranbourne Gardens Office on 5990 2200.

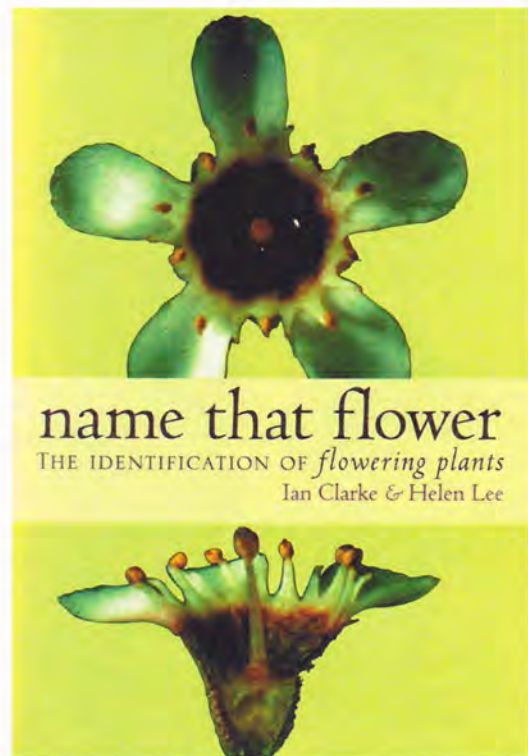
THE PRESS GANG

Collect, press and mount specimens of all plants found within the Cranbourne Gardens. They welcome any Friends who might enjoy collecting and studying plants, and practising the fine art of botanical mounting. Linda Moon's group meets on the second Sunday of every month from 9.00am-1.30 pm approx. and is still short on numbers. Call Linda Moon on (h) 5996 9759 (w) 9251 7472.

Nola Foster's Weekday Group meets on the first Monday of every month from 9.00 am-1.30 pm approx. Call Nola Foster on (mobile) 0438 548 296 for more information.

THE GROWING FRIENDS

The Cranbourne Growing Friends have regular work sessions on the third Wednesday of every month; sessions are generally between 10.00 and 2.30 pm. You are very welcome to join in; no experience is necessary and you can learn a lot about propagating Australian plants. Come to our nursery which is situated alongside the Gardens administrative area. For further enquiries, ring the Gardens office on 5990 2200.



Name that Flower: The Identification of Flowering Plants, 2nd edition

Ian Clarke & Helen Lee

Melbourne University Press, 2003
rrp \$34.95

As a horticulture student at Burnley doing plant identification I used the first edition of this book with glee. As an explanation of how to identify flowers it is useful to bush walkers and botanists alike.

This comprehensive text introduces the reader to a language that opens up the world of plant identification via floral formulae. It explains the structure of flowers, and inflorescences, the process of reproduction, plant structure

and function as well as the process of plant classification and nomenclature. It then goes into the process of plant identification and explains what we are looking at when examining a flower. The keys that are so important when identifying plants are also covered.

The plant families are then illustrated using diagrams, mainly of native flora of southeast Australia. The flowers are described, and spotting characteristics for the family are noted. Also included for some is the route though plant keys.

This second edition uses updated plant names and has enlarged its treatment of some families as well as incorporating an enlarged bibliography.

Terri Kay

The Gardens Shops offer 10 percent discount on Members' purchases over \$20. The following businesses kindly offer discounts to Friends on PRIOR presentation of their signed current membership cards, which are not transferable.

Gills Nurseries (all branches)

1 Centre Rd, East Brighton
390 Balcombe Rd, Beaumaris
cnr Bay/Graham Sts, Port Melb.
589 Glenferrie Rd, Hawthorn
5% off plants only

Berna Park Nursery

cnr Park Rd/Paul St, Cheltenham.
5% discount off plants

Bulleen Art and Garden

6 Manningham Rd West, Bulleen
10% off plants, 5% off other goods

Town and Country Gardens

1280 Malvern Rd, Malvern
24 Whitehorse Rd, Balwyn
10% off plants over \$20 only.

Holmesglen Nursery

585 Waverley Rd, Glen Waverley
5% off everything

The Gardeners Corner Store

190-192 New St, Brighton
10% off all plants

Collectors Corner

Springvale Rd, Keysborough
10% off all plants

Kew Nursery

Cnr High & Gladstone Sts, Kew
10% off all plants

Burwood Garden Patch

1418 Toorak Rd, Burwood
10% discount

Garden of Eden Nursery

33 Ferrars St, Albert Park
10% off everything

Cultivate Nursery & Gifts

Rear 91-93 Doncaster Rd
North Balwyn. 10% off everything

The Arts Bookshop

1067 High St, Armadale
10% discount

Banksia Hill B & B

RMB 5349, Horsham, 3401
10% discount on accommodation

Feldspar at Trentham B&B

via Daylesford. Ph: 5424 1821
10% discount on accommodation

Killarney Cottage B&B Sorrento

Ph: 5989 2729. 10% discount on
6-person self-catering
accommodation

Blackwood Lane Gallery

24 Blackwood Lane, Gembrook
10% off paintings, prints and
commissions

Botanical Creations

122 Grange Rd, Glenhuntly
Discount on monthly Garden
Club items

Simply Panoramic

Landscape Design & Maintenance
Ph 9859 3610 Michael Seeley 10%
off garden consultations

Terrace Tea Rooms & Reception Centre RBGM

Complimentary Tea or Coffee with
meals, scones or cakes

Lister Teak Garden Furniture

22 Industry Court, Lilydale, Ph:
9735 4010. Free 100-page colour
catalogue of Cotswold Furniture
Collection. Ask for the Members'
surprise

Cloudehill Nursery

89 Olinda-Monbulk Rd, Olinda
10% off all purchases

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FRIENDS' OFFICE

Virginia Henderson
Helen Fahey
Jean Woodger

Gate Lodge

100 Birdwood Avenue
Melbourne Vic 3004
Tel: (03) 9650 6398
Fax: (03) 9650 7723

Email:

friends@frbgmelb.org.au

Website:

www.rbg.vic.gov.au/friends

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