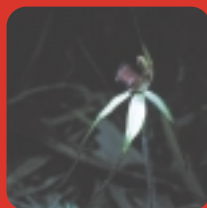


Summer 2001 Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne

floreo

welcome
to the pudding

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unveiling the new
Norman Lindsay
sculpture



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**Perfect
Partnership**

Fungi assist the
conservation of orchids



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What's On

Events to excite,
inspire and
fascinate you.

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The View

It is my pleasure to introduce the first edition of *Floreo*, a seasonal magazine highlighting the news, events and achievements of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne, the National Herbarium of Victoria and the Australian Research Centre for Urban Ecology.



Dr Philip Moors
Director
Royal Botanic Gardens

There are many exciting developments on our calendar for the year ahead, but first there is a major challenge we face to protect the botanical legacy we have enjoyed for 155 years.

As many of you would be aware, a colony of Grey-headed Flying-foxes has established a permanent presence in the Gardens' Fern Gully over the last few years.

The year-round roosting of up to 8000 bats is stripping trees and palms in the Fern Gully to the point of death. We have already had to remove a number of dead trees and palms, including century-old specimens. Some 65 percent of the trees and palms in the Fern Gully have been seriously damaged, including a number of Cabbage-tree palms, which are regarded as vulnerable in Victoria.

If the population of bats is allowed to remain this damage will only become more severe and will spread further into the Gardens as bat numbers increase.

Being mindful of conservation of both fauna and flora, we have aimed to protect the Gardens using dispersal strategies such as noise and smoke. None of these have worked.

A recent forum of bat experts and environmental agencies called by the Minister for Environment and Conservation, the Hon Sherryl Garbutt MP, agreed that there was no simple solution to this worsening crisis. A relocation program will be implemented, which is the least offensive of the options considered by the forum participants. If this is not successful, limited strategic culling remains the only option to save the Gardens.

**I welcome your comments by writing to me at the Royal Botanic Gardens,
1 Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra 3141,
or registering your comments on our website
www.rbg.vic.gov.au/batcrisis.**

I hope you enjoy Floreo.

Dr Philip Moors
Director
Royal Botanic Gardens

"To advance the knowledge and enjoyment of plants, and to foster their conservation, in order to give people a better understanding of the essential part that plants play in all life on earth."

conservation

Four of Australian literature's most colourful and famous characters of *The Magic Pudding* fame - Bill Barnacle, Sam Sawnoff, Bunyip Bluegum and Albert the Puddin' - are to call the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne 'home'.

want more info?

For more information about the stories included in this issue of Floreo or if you wish to be included on the distribution list, please contact the Marketing and Communications Branch on (03) 9252 2375 or floreo@rbg.vic.gov.au

support us

Please help support the Royal Botanic Gardens. All donations are fully tax deductible and can be addressed to the Development Branch, Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra VIC 3141. For enquiries call (03) 9252 2303.

Positioned within what is to become The Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden, the sculpture is both a wonderful gift and a brilliant focus for this future space where children will play, dream and learn.

Set in an area which was previously open lawn, broad bands of wheat-like grasses together with other plants with 'child-appeal' sweep upwards to frame the sculpture.

Andrew Laidlaw, Landscape Designer with the Royal Botanic Gardens

Melbourne, says, "The sculpture is the centrepiece and the focus of the area. The landscape which has been designed to surround it will draw children and adults inwards so that they can gain a true appreciation of Norman Lindsay's brilliance".

Sculptor, Louis Laumen, was commissioned to take author and illustrator Sir Norman Lindsay's illustrations and translate them into bronze. Says Louis, "*The Magic Pudding* certainly has an Australian flavour - that larrikin tradition."

"The illustrations are masterpieces of wit and brevity, but a close look shows how much discipline is behind them. My approach has been to respect the original source, to give as honest an interpretation as I could do. In order to fight that stolidity that can creep into sculpture, and give a sense of Lindsay's light touch of pencil, I forced myself to work swiftly", he says.

How the sculpture came to be is yet another example of the wonderful support given to the Royal Botanic Gardens by the community. For the past 15 years, the Committee for Melbourne has been

"It is all to do with passion for the

project and the ability to ignite that passion amongst others."

Janine Kirk, Executive Director, Committee for Melbourne

helping to develop and implement a wide range of projects for the benefit of Melbourne. Within this Committee, a mentor program for young leaders known as the Future Focus Group was set up to create, develop and carry out community-oriented projects. *The Magic Pudding* sculpture is the result of one such project.

"Inspired by the statue of Peter Pan in Hyde Park", explains Janine Kirk, Chief Executive Officer for The Committee for Melbourne, "Simon Warrender, a Future Focus Group member, wanted to create something with a truly Australian theme. Having initiated the idea of a sculpture of *The Magic Pudding*, it was enthusiastically taken up by fellow members. The project was then launched and an advisory

committee formed which included Sir Norman Lindsay's grand-daughter, Helen Glad, who has given the project unreserved support. Other supporters of the committee included the National Gallery of Victoria, City of Melbourne and Victorian College of the Arts".

In order to complete the project, financial support was necessary. Australian-owned and one of Australia's largest computer service companies, Aspect Computing, caught the passion of the Pudding and became the sole sponsor - following the process of the sculpture's development and final placement with keen interest.

On 16 November, over 100 very excited school children were given the task of unveiling the four characters and welcoming them to their new home, the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne.

"I've based it on Norman Lindsay's emblematic

illustration where they're dragging the Pudding along."

Louis Laumen, Sculptor

puddin' passion



Victorian school children unveil *The Magic Pudding* sculpture.

A place where a child's imagination runs free...

The Magic Pudding sculpture is perfectly positioned as the central feature for the future development of a garden designed especially for children.

A grant of \$650,000 has been generously provided by The Ian Potter Foundation for the development of The Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden.

Many Melburnians have also generously contributed funds through our public appeal campaign to contribute to the development of the two-hectare site which will cost approximately \$800,000.

Ms Patricia Feilman, retiring Executive Secretary of The Ian Potter Foundation, says, "The Ian Potter Foundation is delighted to be the principal donor for the establishment of a children's garden at the Royal Botanic Gardens."

"It will introduce children to the wondrous life of plants and in a fun

way. It will provide them with an early appreciation of an important part of our environment", she added.

Education Manager at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, Jane Liefman, says, "The Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden is set to become Australia's first major environmental education garden for children. It will be a captivating place to climb, hide, dream and learn – a place where play is the key to discovery, and learning about nature becomes an adventure."



For Jill Burness, the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne reflects a truly Australian landscape.

botanic gardens dreams

meet Jill Burness

"I want people, the visitors here, to develop

a passion and appreciation for the value and significance

of our native flora", she says.

It is an absolute wonder that within one of Melbourne's fastest-growing urban corridors there sits a magnificent stretch of Australian bushland that is virtually untouched, and its future couldn't be in better hands.

Jill Burness has been the Landscape Planner at the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne since 1995. She believes that in years to come this place will be just as much a part of the heart and soul of Melburnians as its sister, the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne. "Although not formally planted and paved as you would expect in a traditional botanic garden, this place offers a sense of escape and a landscape that is truly Australian and a magnificent display of wildflowers in the spring", says Jill.

With a canvas of 363 hectares to work with, Jill teamed up with a growing group of staff and outside consultants who had already begun to protect and improve the Gardens.

"Some areas of the Gardens were previously used for sand mining, though in general the natural vegetation is still intact and therefore valuable. Obviously future development will focus on those areas which have already been disturbed."

Jill's involvement with key developments such as the new entry precinct and Stringybark Picnic Area have further developed her passion and appreciation for Australian plants and their horticultural development. "The previous entry gates were very basic and difficult to spot. What we've achieved by landscaping 100 metres on either side of the roadway is a sense of arrival - people are welcomed and they want to see more."

With the old cyclone gates removed, the existing vegetation was cleared to expose a magnificent stand of white-barked gums (*Eucalyptus scoparia*). These

are now set off by a mass planting of attractive Australian plants, highlighted by pale gravel which flanks the road. "The entry's beauty, colour and lines challenge the traditional use of Australian plants in the landscape and contrast with the surrounding bushland." New gates and signs complete the effect.

With the Stringybark Picnic Area, Jill and the rest of the Cranbourne team have used plants specifically indigenous to the site - again en masse. "The aim was to show these plants in a different light, so that visitors can appreciate that there are other ways to use them in the landscape."

"The team here at Cranbourne has developed into a very close group. Discussion about the projects is open to all and the process has produced some wonderful ideas and some wonderful results."

As for Jill, she knows that she has the good fortune to have found a career that is of personal interest and passion. With designer's ideals and an infectious enthusiasm, she is also committed for the long-term. "Forty years from now, I want to be able to visit and see a prospering botanic garden, wonderfully conserved indigenous bushland, and joy on the faces of all the visitors."

Building the expertise

In 1998, Jill was sponsored by the Maud Gibson Trust and assisted by the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne to participate in a garden tour of California and Arizona. "I was fortunate to meet some excellent practitioners and see new approaches to the display of Australian plants. The trip gave me both new ideas and the benefit of other people's experiences. At the same time, it makes you appreciate the wealth of talent that exists in Australia and the need to give our own designers, artists and horticulturists the opportunity to demonstrate their ideas."

Grand gates, thanks to gift

Magnificent new gates at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne provide a stunning entry into the Gardens from the Observatory Gate Precinct, and are a fitting tribute to a remarkable man, the late Henry Simon.

Designer of the beautifully crafted gates, Darryl Cowie (whose commissions include the Mockridge Fountain in the City Square), incorporated many unique botanical elements into the cast-iron structure. Covered in detailed floral relief sculptures, the monumental gates stand tall at two metres and span eight metres across.

Mrs Anita Simon generously donated funding for the gates in memory of her late husband, Mr Henry Simon. Mr Simon was the founder of shoe manufacturer Koala Shoes.

Dr Philip Moors, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, said,

"The Observatory Gates are a majestic addition

to our Gardens and we are extremely grateful to Mrs Simon for the donation.

The Gates encapsulate many elements of our Gardens,

which have been very special

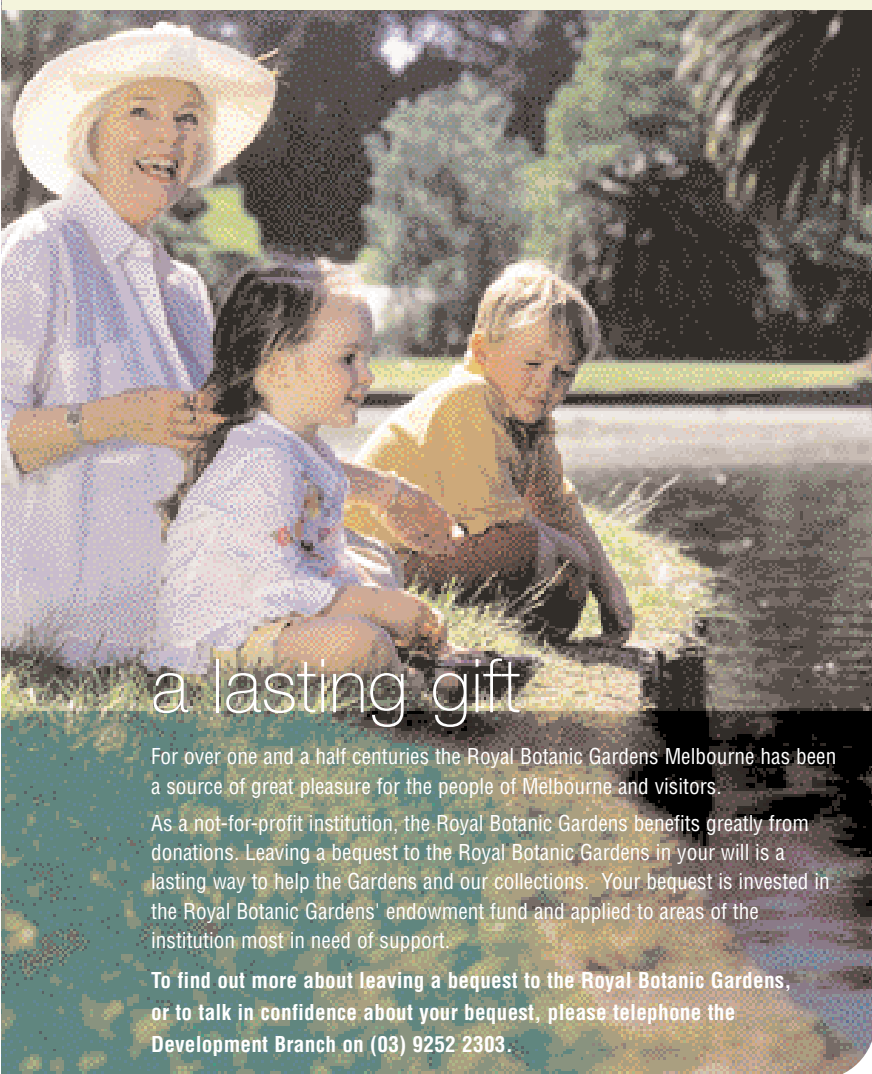
to the people of Melbourne for generations."



Mrs Anita Simon at the Gardens' new gates.

Copyright: News Limited

Flores | on



a lasting gift

For over one and a half centuries the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne has been a source of great pleasure for the people of Melbourne and visitors.

As a not-for-profit institution, the Royal Botanic Gardens benefits greatly from donations. Leaving a bequest to the Royal Botanic Gardens in your will is a lasting way to help the Gardens and our collections. Your bequest is invested in the Royal Botanic Gardens' endowment fund and applied to areas of the institution most in need of support.

To find out more about leaving a bequest to the Royal Botanic Gardens, or to talk in confidence about your bequest, please telephone the Development Branch on (03) 9252 2303.

Step into the director's circle

The Director's Circle honours and recognises donors who make an annual, fully tax deductible gift of \$1,000 or more to support the Royal Botanic Gardens.

Director's Circle members enjoy exclusive behind-the-scenes tours and presentations at both the Melbourne and Cranbourne Gardens, meet our expert staff and have the opportunity to become involved with the Gardens' future plans and developments.

For more information, contact the Director's Circle Co-ordinator, Sally Elford, on (03) 9252 2311.

Stunning and fragile, Australia's rare and endangered spider orchids are the focus of a new research study, one that aims to find each species a perfect partner for growth.



Orchids flourish on fungi

“By sourcing and matching fungi to four species of the spider orchid genus *Caladenia*, I'm gaining a greater understanding of the relationship between orchids and the specific fungi associated with their germination and growth”, says Ruth Raleigh, PhD student at the Royal Botanic Gardens.

Rob Cross, Horticultural Botanist at the Royal Botanic Gardens, is one of Ruth's three supervisors (the others being Anne Lawrie of RMIT University and Adrian Moorrees of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment). “To appreciate the value of Ruth's work, and those who have contributed to the process before her, it's important to understand that a third of Australian orchid taxa are found in Victoria, and of those, about half are threatened. Among these, *Caladenia* species are the worst affected - hence the study”, says Rob.

Ruth says, “It would be wonderful to find a super fungus which would support the germination of all

Caladenia orchids, however it seems that due to their diversity they each need to be matched with a specific fungus. This requires a lot more research and dedication, but the rewards of reintroducing these stunning orchids to our environment are invaluable”.

“...a third of Australian orchid taxa

are found in Victoria, and of those,

about half are threatened.”

Funding support from the Australian Research Council assists Ruth and other scientists to advance their knowledge of the relationship between orchids and fungi.

As part of the study, the fungi are harvested from parent plants at different times in the growing season. By growing the fungi in conjunction with the germinating *Caladenia* seeds, which are as fine as ground pepper, those fungi that appear to form the most supportive relationships are chosen. Through DNA testing the relationships are being identified against a database of previously isolated fungi.

“We developed an 'ideal' environment where germination is both reliable and consistent. This has enabled us to speed up the growth process of the orchids, improving their conservation status. Even now, what I can propagate in the nursery here at the Royal Botanic Gardens in seven months usually takes up to two years in the wild”, Ruth says.

Identifying the best methods for the cultivation of these orchid-fungi partnerships is another issue that will be addressed. This will enable the successful reintroduction of the orchids into the wild.



Ruth Raleigh, PhD student at the Royal Botanic Gardens, is making a major contribution to the conservation of Victorian orchids.

World-class camellias

Some camellias at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne are so ancient that they stand like trees rather than shrubs.

This may be one reason why the Gardens has been given an award as a 'Camellia Garden of Excellence' by the International Camellia Society — a world first.

Volunteer guide Jenny Happell, who has a great passion and interest for the Gardens' camellias says the award recognises the contribution made by two former directors, William Guilfoyle and Alexander Jessep.

In saying this, Jenny recognises two periods in the 150-plus years' history of the Gardens when its Directors made major contributions to the Camellia Collection. What she doesn't emphasise are the past nine years she has dedicated to researching and 'stock-taking', and her efforts to have Australia's camellia experts become interested in the Collection, all of which have led to this latest recognition.

In 1996 the Collection was named the Australian National Reference Collection by the Australian Camellia Research Society. Clearly what is currently known about the Collection has a great deal to do with the efforts of Jenny Happell.

"The Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne has a Collection of about 800 plants spread throughout the Gardens, including approximately 200 in the camellia bed. Many of these are old Australian, Asian and European cultivars and some plants date back to 1875", she says.

"In 1991 I approached Roger Spencer, Senior Horticultural Botanist, to ask if I could have a voluntary job at the Gardens. With his help, and that of Rob Cross and Michele Arundell from the National Herbarium of Victoria (located at the Melbourne Gardens), I began work on the list of camellias as part of the Gardens' on-going census of plants.

Once I had exhausted what references were readily available, it became apparent that I needed expert help to identify many of the older camellias."

"With help from Bob Withers of the Ornamental Plant Collections Association, I was able to convince several people to help, among them internationally known breeders Erica McMinn and Tom Savige. The latter is also renowned for his work which completed the



International Camellia Register."

There followed a series of early hands-on surveys and much discussion.

"In the past seven or so years I've picked many hundreds of flowers from around the Gardens to compare with other flowers, illustrations, and descriptions of camellias, and continually up-dated the census."

A majority of the 800 plants has now been identified and their positions plotted. This is no small feat considering the age of many of the plants and that an estimated 32,000 cultivars are currently in existence world-wide.

Despite all the research there are still some mysteries among the 'seedlings' which were bred by Alexander Jessep while Director of the Gardens 1941 - 1957. "It's quite likely that some of them were planted out in the Gardens without being named." Another mystery is a large camellia on the Western Lawn to the left of the boardwalk behind the Herbarium. "The flower is small and cherry red. It could quite possibly be *Camellia japonica* 'Margherita Coleoni' but no-one is prepared to agree with me at this stage."

To let visitors gain a better appreciation of the Collection, plans are afoot to lay a path through the main camellia bed. Information gleaned from this project will also form the basis of future interpretive signs.



The Gardens Shop
ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS MELBOURNE

The Gardens Shop, Observatory Gate and Lakeside

The Gardens Shop offers a unique 'botanic' shopping experience, seven days a week.

Select your special item from our range of botanically themed books, cards, gifts, garden products, homewares, and original and limited edition botanical art. We have something for your every occasion.

An exciting range of Royal Botanic Gardens branded merchandise will also be available including greeting cards, bookmarks, clothing, calendars and body care products, so you can take a little piece of the Gardens home with you.

Free gift wrapping is available.

For enquiries or to register your interest in our catalogue, due out in September 2001, phone: (03) 9252 2475

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS MELBOURNE

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(Melways Map: 2F, K12)

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E-mail: rbg@rbg.vic.gov.au
Internet: www.rbg.vic.gov.au

Open every day from 7.30am
and closing 8.30pm (November
to March) and 5.30pm (April to
November).

Entry is free.

Bookings for walks and tours
are essential and prices are
inclusive of GST.

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS CRANBOURNE

Ballarto Road
(off South Gippsland Highway)
Cranbourne Victoria 3977
(Melways Map: 133, K10)

Telephone: (03) 5990 2200
Facsimile: (03) 5990 2250
E-mail: rbgc@rbg.vic.gov.au
Internet: www.rbg.vic.gov.au

Open every day of the year
from 9.00am to 5.00pm, except
Christmas Day, Good Friday and
days of total fire ban.

No dogs allowed.
Entry is free.

Bookings for walks and tours
are essential and prices are
inclusive of GST.

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Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne

The Night Sky Experience Guided Tour

Seasons, stories, constellations and star gazing through a telescope built in about 1874.

Tuesday nights, 9.00 - 10.30pm Meet at the Visitor Centre, Observatory Gate
\$15.40 adult, \$11.00 concession, \$37.40 family (two adults and two children)

Flora Explorer

Explore one of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne's plant collections with a horticulturist.

Fridays, 11.00am - 12.00noon Meet at the Visitor Centre, Observatory Gate
\$4.40 adult, \$2.20 concession

Stars, Cows and Spider-Webs

An interesting look at the history of the Old Melbourne Observatory.

Wednesdays, 2.00 - 3.00pm Meet at the Visitor Centre, Observatory Gate
\$6.60 adult, \$4.40 concession

Gardens' Highlights Guided Walk

Discover the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne's history, cultural significance, horticultural diversity and other fascinating insights.

Sunday to Thursday, 11.00am and 2.00pm, Fridays, 2.00pm
Meet at the Visitor Centre, Observatory Gate
\$4.40 adult, \$2.20 concession

Moonlight Cinema

Pack a picnic and enjoy an evening of arthouse, classic and cult films under the night stars in the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne.

15 December 2000 - 10 March 2001 (Tuesday - Sunday)

Tickets: Ticketek 13 2849 or at D-Gate Information: www.moonlight.com.au
\$13.50 adults, \$10.50 concession, \$9.00 child/pensioner

Summer Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet

Experience romance and tragedy in an exceptional setting.

19 December 2000 - early March 2001

Tickets: (03) 9650 1500, Ticket Master or F - Gate Information: 1900 931 932
Tuesday - Thursday and Sundays: \$28.00 adults, \$24.00 concession.
Fridays and Saturdays: \$33.00 adults, \$28.00 concession.

Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne

Bushwalk

Discover the natural wonders of the Cranbourne Gardens on a walk with one of our Rangers.

Sundays, 1.00 - 2.30pm Meet at the Stringybark Picnic Area Free

Starry Nights

Search for constellations and other intergalactic surprises. BYO torch.

Friday 23 February, 8.00 - 10.00pm \$5.50 per person.