



FRIENDS of the National Arboretum Canberra

NEWSLETTER Issue 46 March 2020

Dear Friends

The start of a new decade, but not too late to wish you all a very a happy new year despite the difficulties that many in the community have suffered by way of the natural disasters.

The Arboretum is looking quite beautiful right now after all the rain. As I sat in Mrs Keller's Garden earlier in the day, the green was almost everywhere you looked. The shrieks and joyful sounds coming from the Pod Playground and a very low growl coming from the baby dinosaur settling in to its temporary home....or maybe that was the long line of traffic wending its way up the hill, all made for a very entertaining and pleasant time.

Recently I had the pleasure of speaking to the cohort of new guides at their first training course. Sincere thanks to Sandy, Co-ordinator of the Guides Training, and all the other knowledgeable team members who are involved in this very important activity.



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Recently a handful of Friends and one community member attended a public consultation at Regatta Point to hear an NCA

representative discuss the amendment to the National Capital Plan to accommodate a luxury hotel to be built on a site on the south-western side of Dairy Farmers Hill. The NCA is 'interested in finding the right balance between people enjoying these places (the Arboretum) and providing a unique experience and protecting the unique landscapes'. An eco-lodge has been proposed that would be suited to 'luxury, wellness and natural devotees'.

My liaison with the Edinburgh Royal Botanic Gardens (ERBG) has borne fruit, in that reciprocal rights and membership fees are being discussed by their corporate team. And the NAC is developing a MOU with the ERBG.

Don't miss viewing the beautiful artwork by Valentyna Crane in the Visitors Centre, on display till 16 March. Val will be attending every day to discuss her work with patrons.

Our new Community Engagement Officer, Cally Earnshaw, (think the new Lauren) has been announced, having gone through the interview process, and she began her duties on 3 March. Do make her welcome!

Council has met already on 11 February with a full agenda. Christine Callen, from NAC management, attended and assured us The Bus is on its way... there are a couple of hitches with registration, but once they are sorted out, Ngulla will out on the road at the Arboretum. The Aboriginal design decorating the bus is the

same used on the all the Arboretum staff uniforms.

See you at the Arboretum.

Trish

Trish Keller, OAM
Chair

PS: I have just discovered that the Baby T Rex near my garden was so homesick he has been returned to his family at the National Dinosaur Museum.

Friends Forest Flourishes!

Andrew Carter has confirmed that in spite of recent challenges the Friends Forest is flourishing, (say it fast three times!) He notes that most plants seem to have survived the extended dry.

New plantings have not only survived but have responded to the recent rains to put on a huge amount of growth. The results are really pleasing, as you can see in the photo below and we can only hope that they continue to reward us with more as the trees continue to fill out.



Keeping in STEP

It was with much relief that we greeted the rainfall earlier this month. Things were quite desperate for the volunteers at STEP as we were watering by hand and having to consider whether this was just a “propping up” exercise or whether we should consider the extremes of heat and lack of rain as the new normal. It is wonderful how quickly plants have recovered.

We have had a meeting with the project manager for the construction of the new carpark and were shown the silt barriers and other measures put in place to ensure Forest 20 was not adversely affected by the work



Prior to the start of work on the new carpark, many rocks had to be removed so Bill Handke, Mike Todd and Mike Smith identified ones which could be used at STEP as landscape features or path markers. Once places for these had been selected, the hard work with shovels, crowbars and picks began, preparing scooped out sites for the new rocks.



With the help of Ed, a contractor for the NAC, most of these have now been placed and add considerably to the



appearance of Forest 20.

On Wednesday 5 February, we were host to the ANPS Walking group. It is very satisfying for STEP to offer tours for this group as ANPS was one of our founding organisations, and this is a small way we can give back to them and demonstrate how, given their belief in us, we have “blossomed”.



Our planting of Acacias for our Acacia walking trail has been very successful. In years to come we are sure this will be a “must see” destination for Wattle Week.

I wish to acknowledge the hard work put in by so many STEP volunteers. They have given unstintingly of their time and energy to maintain Forest 20 as the amazing place it is. Thank you all very much.

Judy Smith
President STEP

Friends and Volunteers celebrate together

The combined Friends and Volunteers end of year celebration was a great way to round off the achievements of a busy year at The Arboretum.



Guests were treated to a wonderful energetic Welcome to Country by the Wiradjuri Echoes father and daughter duo Duncan and Nakiya Smith.

This was followed by the presentation of the Jake Keller Scholarship to CIT student Carol Dale, whose project is planting in the English Oak forest.

The traditional raffle was replaced with a blind auction of an assortment of donated goodies, then Chief Minister Andrew Barr joined Friends Chair Trish Keller and Senior Director Scott Saddler in cutting the cake to celebrate the signing of the MOU between the Friends and the Arboretum.



Trees in focus

Eucalyptus pulverulenta



Eucalyptus pulverulenta outside visitor centre - after pruning

Although this tree does not have a forest to call home, it is such a feature of the Visitor Centre environs that it merits some attention to its story.

Common names include Silver-leaved mountain gum, Silver-leafed Gum, Powdered Gum, Florists Silver Dollar, Silver Mountain Gum

Its botanic name derives from Latin *pulveratus* or powdered, referring to the white bloom on the leaves, flower buds and fruits.

Eucalyptus pulverulenta was named by John Sims (1749-1831) in 1819 from a specimen growing in the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, England. It is believed the seed was collected during a journey from Sydney to Bathurst in 1815 by Governor Macquarie.

Tree description:

Eucalyptus pulverulenta is a distinctive straggly mallee or small tree which grows to around 10m. It is an unusual Eucalypt (especially for eastern Australia).

because it retains its juvenile foliage into maturity. It only rarely produces adult leaves, which are stalked and lance-shaped. The buds occur in clusters of 3 and the large cream-coloured flowers are produced from September to November. The flowers are followed by large gumnuts.



Distribution

In its natural habitat the Silver-leaved Gum is a rare plant with restricted distribution. It is listed as vulnerable under the Australian Government Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act). It is found in two quite separate areas, the Lithgow to Bathurst area and the Monaro (Bredbo to Bombala).

In the past it may have been more widespread and there may even still be some hidden in the wild country of the Blue Mountains National Park and the Warragamba Dam Catchment Area which have hopefully survived recent bushfire activity.

It grows in shallow soils as an understorey plant in open forest, typically dominated by Brittle Gum (*Eucalyptus mannifera*), Red Stringybark (*E. macrorhynca*), Broad-leafed Peppermint (*E. dives*), Silvertop Ash (*E. sieberi*) and Apple Box (*E. bridgesiana*).

Uses

The Silver-leaved Mountain Gum is widely grown in California as an ornamental. In Australia it is cultivated as a cut foliage plant.

The D'harawal people of NSW had many traditional uses for the tree, using the bloom, the sap and gum, nectar, leaves and bark for food, remedies for colds and other respiratory diseases, conjunctivitis, an anaesthetic, and alcohol. The bark could be stripped for columns and shields. You can hear D'harawal senior and botanist Aunty Fran Bodkin discuss them in more detail [here](#).



Meet the taxonomist

John Sims (1749-1831)

John Sims was an English physician, botanist and respected taxonomist. After being educated at the Quaker school in Burford, Oxfordshire, he went on to study medicine at Edinburgh University.

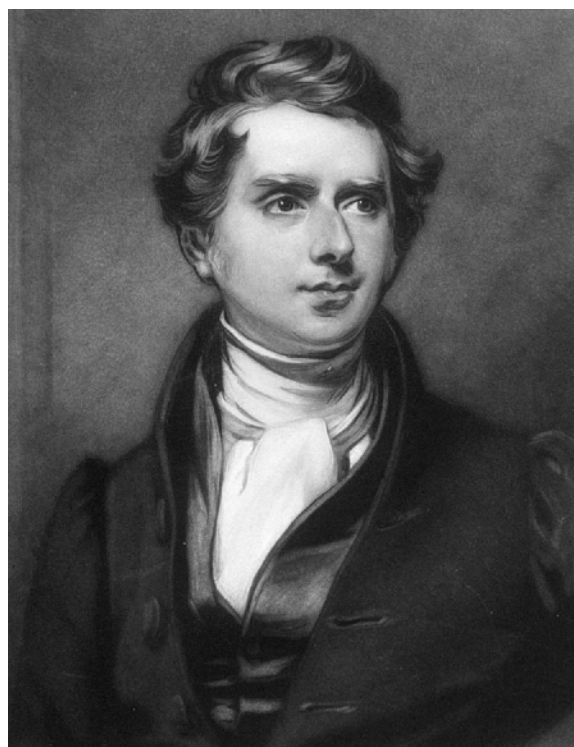
In 1766 he moved to London where he bought an obstetric practice and worked as a physician, and in 1780 he was appointed Physician and Man Midwife to the Charity for Delivering Poor Married Women at their own Houses. In 1817 he was called to the ill-fated childbirth of Princess Charlotte at which mother and baby regrettably died.

In his other career as a botanist Sims was the first editor of Curtis's Botanical Magazine after the death of the founder, William Curtis, and edited *Annals of Botany* (1805–06) with Charles Konig. He was also a founding member of the Linnean Society. In March 1814 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

His papers on botany include a description of the effect of moisture on *Mesembryanthemum* for the *Medical and Physical Journal* (vol. ii. 1799), and a "Description of *Amomum exscapum*" to the *Annals of Botany* (vol. i.).

The genus name *Simsia* was published by Robert Brown to honour his work. His herbarium was purchased by George Bentham and passed to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

The International Plant Names Index lists 91 botanical names that he published, mostly in the *Botanical Magazine*.



Harvest Group and Discovery Kitchen Garden Update

What a difference a little rain makes to the Arboretum landscape and to the gardens! It has been such a pleasure watching the brown, desiccated hills progressively turn green and the air to be breathable again.

The terrible heat and smoke of this summer has definitely affected productivity in the Kitchen Garden. The scarlet runner beans, while full of flowers, have not set any pods and the capsicums have also been slow to fruit. Tomatoes and eggplants are ripening later and are not as prolific as expected given the good compost, regular watering and fertilising of the garden. The exceptions have been the very pretty small purple striped Lebanese and Fairy Tale eggplants. They are like little jewels and too beautiful just to cook! Amalie (right) is setting a new fashion trend by wearing them as earrings!



From mid-February, tomatoes, banana chillies and eggplants (left) were harvested to make chutney and relish to sell at the **next Harvest Group**

Market Stall scheduled for 28 March 2020. Basil pesto will be available for sale as well as the ever popular and delectable fig products, plant seedlings, dried lavender bags and packaged seeds. So support the Friends and the Arboretum.



The Mortgage Lifter tomatoes are beginning to form their legendary large fruit (last year one tomato weighed 570 grams). Growing these bigger tomatoes, with their thin skins and few seeds, makes processing them into preserves so much easier than the tiny cherry and pear-shaped tomatoes which are beautiful but very fiddly to skin.

There are many visitors to the Discovery Kitchen Garden. Some, like Carolynne and Stephen Yates (below left), come to get ideas on plant layering for their own garden. Others, like this beautiful red spotted jezabel butterfly (right), come to visit the Jack Be Little pumpkin flowers. Baby blue tongue lizards (centre right) are always welcome to the garden. However, not so welcome visitors to the service court this February were tiny baby brown snakes! Ugh!



Rain has been so infrequent that its advent lured the resident water dragon (right) out from its usual sunny ledge to see what was causing the change in the atmosphere. This water dragon, affectionately named Felicia, can often be seen near the entrance to the Village Centre, captivating all passing visitors. Having shed it's old brown skin it is now a sleek grey-green.



Many thanks to the Friends' Council for approving the Wollemi Proposal. This proposal was put forward as a project for the Friends to raise funds from the sale of Wollemi Pine trees which will be propagated and grown, under contract to the Yarralumla Nursery, for a period of two and three years. The seeds for this project were collected onsite at the Arboretum as part of the Wollemi Seed Collection Project managed by Roger Hnatiuk. Propagation is expected to commence in March 2020.

Thanks also go to Colette and her fabulous "figgers" who have picked and cooked 65 kilos of figs so far this season! There will be lots of delicious fig produce to sell! Fingers crossed that the recent rain will help to ripen figs and provide a further boost to the harvest this year.

Autumn is the time to continue harvesting vegetables, fruit and herbs; to make preserves; to sow or plant winter brassicas; to sow flowers such as sweet pea, calendula and cornflower; and to sow pulses such as pea, snow pea and broad beans (more information on the COGS website). Happy gardening!



Article and photos by Ange McNeilly.

“It was so worth going!”

Australasian Botanic Guides Conference 2019

Why go to a conference for botanic guides?

By Joanne Maples

I thought my days of going to conferences were over when I finished working. However, in 2017, I did go to this biennially-held Australasian Botanic Guides Conference because it was in Canberra. It was hosted by the guides at the Australian National Botanic Gardens and they did a very good job organising it. I learnt a lot and met like-minded people, but of course, I knew quite a bit about the garden and natural spaces here in Canberra already. So, why travel to another conference two years later?

- It was in Western Australia when their wildflowers were blooming!
- It was at Kings Park and Botanic Garden, which showcases Western Australian flora and has an arboretum!
- It promised (and delivered) ‘Beauty Rich and Rare’.
- It promised (and delivered) lots of interesting activities to learn from.
- It had associated pre- and post-conference bus tours for 1, 3 or 5 days organised with a commercial company to go to see even more wildflowers in their real homes and other interesting sights.

It was an easy sell to me!

What happened while I was there?

Some people I met at the 2017 conference actually remembered me! That was nice, though I was a complete failure on reciprocating, unless the guide was from the ANBG.



There were:

- lectures, walks and talks on-site, including early morning bird walks, on over 30 topics—you can’t go to them all—delivered by very eminent botanists, science communicators, horticulturists, arborists, garden staff, artists, as well as volunteers in the gardens with various relevant backgrounds
- a short video showcasing Kings Park, as it is a major tourist attraction, and another for use to train new guides that featured Kings Park guides acting the parts of three undesirable and one desirable guiding role models—it was very entertaining
- a day-long excursion off-site (choice of four) to nature spaces and other places in the local Perth area—I reveled in Wireless Hill Park and the Western Australian Herbarium
- food (too much), including one dinner/soiree.

I loved it! My favourite topics:

- Gija Jumulu - the boab story
- Guiding for different personality types
- Bush regeneration after fire
- Tree management
- WA's spectacular eucalypts
- Connecting park and river.



Lemon-scented gums (Corymbia citriodora) along Fraser Avenue in Kings Park and Botanical Garden, Perth.

Where's the next one?

It's at Royal Melbourne Botanic Garden (including Cranbourne) from 11-15 October 2021.

If you are a guide, add it to your calendar now. I have! And plan your 2021 stay in Victoria visiting family, friends, sights and events.

A few things I learnt:

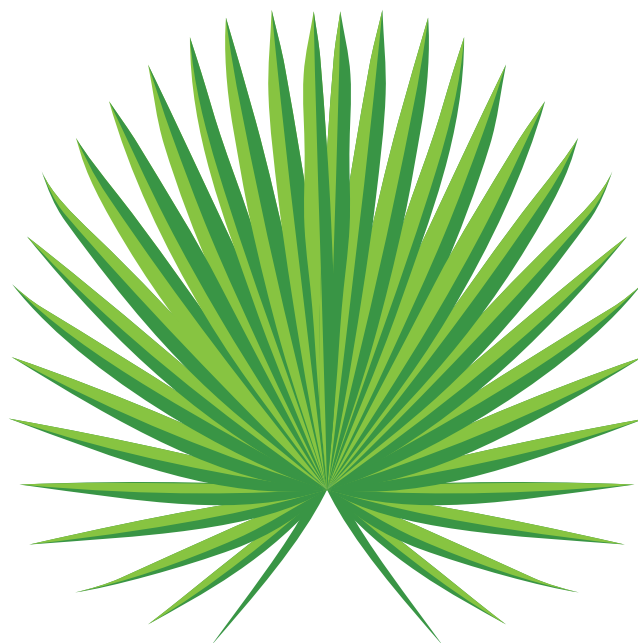
- WA flora is spectacular; the land's stable, old and 'gutless' soils have led to it being extremely biodiverse; it has more bird pollination than any other flora
- WA flora species include about half the number for Australia; about two-thirds of WA floral species are endemic
- WA Herbarium have a portal <https://florabase.dpaw.wa.gov.au> with lots of useful information
- for my own guiding: try to find out about Indigenous names for plants and what those names mean and try to tell stories about remarkable people/events and relate them to place/plants.

Congratulations to The Friends of Kings Park (especially the guides) and the management of Kings Park who put in a huge amount of work and did a tremendous job.



Aleppo pine in Kings Park and Botanical Garden, Perth.

Joanne Maples



2020 Banks and Solander

Friends Celebrating 250 Years



AAFBG
Biennial Conference
 Brisbane Botanic Gardens
 May 22nd – 24th 2020

Proudly Hosted by



Friends of
 Brisbane Botanic Gardens
 & Sherwood Arboretum

Featuring...

Joseph Banks Society Lecture
Speakers and Walks
Tours and Talks

Celebrating the botanical wonders of 1770s exploration and the influence of English botanist, Sir Joseph Banks and Swedish naturalist, Daniel Solander, who could be claimed as the first '*Botanic Gardens Friends*'.

How have their discoveries influenced our gardens and horticulture today?

The conference logo represents *Livistona australis*, the first plant identified by Banks, sighted from on board HM Bark Endeavour sailing off Batemans Bay NSW.

This iconic palm species grows from northern Victoria to Far North Queensland.



For More Information see www.fbbgsa.org.au
Enquiries: events@fbbgsa.org.au

How to join the Friends

Visit arboretumcanberra.org.au to join online or to find out more about the benefits of being a member

OR

Email your details to: contact@arboretumcanberra.org.au and pay by funds transfer or cheque

OR

Complete the Application Form and mail it to:

The Secretary, Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra,
PO Box 48, Campbell, ACT 2612, and pay by funds transfer or cheque.

☐ Bank details for funds transfer:

Westpac, Petrie Plaza, Canberra, ACT: BSB 032 719.
Account: 375379 – please include surname in description.

☐ Cheques payable to: Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra Inc.

Membership type	1 year	2 years
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$45	\$80
<input type="checkbox"/> Household	\$55	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Concession *	\$25	\$40
<input type="checkbox"/> Club/Association **	\$100	\$180
<input type="checkbox"/> Business **	\$500	\$900

* Pensioners, health card holders & students

** See website for details

Membership Application Form

Membership type:

Title: First name:

Last name:

OR

Club/Association/Business name:

Address:

..... State: P/code:.....

Email address for newsletter and updates:

Phone: Mobile:

Number of parking passes:

Total amount payable (include membership/s and parking pass amounts): \$

Signature:

Date:

Parking Pass

1 year

☐ Friends' Annual Parking Pass \$35 per vehicle

For a parking pass, please include your vehicle's registration number.

Note: An Individual Member is entitled to apply for one Parking Pass at the Friends' rate and a Household Member is entitled to apply for two Parking Passes at the Friends' rate.

Parking passes are issued for one year from the date of purchase.



