

Program

Tuesday 23 September 2008. **Rethinking Landscapes**

9.00am – Registration
9.45am

9.45am – **Welcome**
10.00am Kay Rundle, CEO, City of Greater Geelong

10.00am – **Where in the world are we? Investigating world climates for plant introduction.**
10.30am Dr. Peter May, May Horticultural Services

Plants are introduced into horticulture for all sorts of reasons. While this can be done by attempting to match the new plant to the climate of its new location, often times it seems that other drivers are being taken into account. Developing more ecological approaches to garden plant introduction is seen by many as being of considerable importance in the “new” horticulture. This paper will examine the ways in which climate affects plant performance and will then look at some of the data that is available, and at some of the approaches that can be used, to help understand the climates, both of your own locations and of other places in the world that might be useful in aiding your understanding of how cultivated plants perform.

10.30am – **Rethinking landscapes fashions fads and avoiding a fatalistic approach.**
11.00am Felix Hemingway, Manager Urban Design, City of Greater Geelong.

The Pleasure Garden Verses the Desert.
Fashion is a concept that is very broad, however by definition most people are fashion followers rather than fashion leaders. Throughout horticultural history fashion has changed because of social and environmental impacts but sometimes just by people that are good salespeople.

It is our responsibility as plant lovers not to be caught in the fashion but to lead fashion fed from an understanding our needs and imperatives. It is not good enough to look at what others are doing and to blindly follow. The future is ours.

11.00am – **Waterwise Gardens the good bad and ugly**
11.30am Kevin Walsh, Landscape Planner, City of Greater Bendigo

In the last decade water-related issues have dominated at all levels of horticulture. Kevin Walsh will take this opportunity to give an overview of some of the best and worst aspects of what has arisen from the challenges of creating more waterwise gardens.

11.30am – **Selection and design of plantings for a new botanic garden**
12.00pm Paul Thompson, Landscape Architect, Principal Plant Design

This presentation is an explanation of the process for plant selection and the expression of the landscape design of the Australian Garden in the Cranbourne Botanic Garden. Landscape Architects Taylor and Cullity Lethlean with Paul Thompson have been working since 1995 in the design. This garden aims to ‘Celebrate the Australian Flora,’ and represent the ‘Nature and Culture of Australia’. The brief called for a garden that merges Art and Horticulture to show the splendor and diversity of the Australian Flora.

The garden has been developing in stages since the completion of the Masterplan in 1996 with stage one opened to the public in May 2006. Currently stage two is being documented and will be opened in 2011. This presentation traces the change and honing of plant selections and the process of design as a response to client needs, site understanding, increased botanical information and now climate change.

For the designers the overriding question with selection and design always is, ‘Is this group of plants the best representation of our Flora we can have?’

12.00PM – **LUNCH**
1.00PM

Rethinking Landscapes: Case Studies

1.00pm – **A new approach to the Australian Border**
1.15pm Neil Perkins, Horticultural Coordinator, Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne

The Australian Border is a significant linear garden bed in the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, measuring almost one kilometre. After over 100 years of the status quo, it underwent a significant change in the 1990s when a new collection was developed. However, Melbourne's rainfall patterns began to change when the redevelopment was completed. After a decade of unsuccessful attempts to establish the collection in the face of declining rainfall levels, some tough decisions had to be made to ensure the border's survival.

1.15pm – **Geelong's 21st Century Garden retrospective and directions in plant selection**
1.30pm Phil Mulroyan, Supervisor Geelong Botanic Garden

The presentation will provide an overview of the productivity and performance of plant growth. The topic will cover the drought and how plants at the Geelong Botanic Gardens have been affected and have adapted. Growth patterns and whether they have exceeded our expectations (or not) will be discussed.

1.30pm – **Gardens for a changing climate**
1.45pm Tim Rowe, Manger Parks & Environmental Services, Shire of Wellington

Sale Botanic Gardens was gazetted in 1860 making it one of the oldest public gardens in Australia. Since that time the gardens has waxed and waned in their popularity and relevance within the community.

This paper provides a short history of the gardens and describes the recent innovations that have led to the renaissance of the gardens and the re-engagement of the community. The garden now has an exciting future with the recent announcement of State Government funding for the "Gardens in a Changing Climate" project.

1.45 – **Innovative approaches to water conservation gardens**
2.00pm Richard Rowe, Curator of Horticulture, Melbourne Zoo

Melbourne Zoo's Main Drive display has brought great pleasure to the plant loving and zoo going community of Melbourne for well over a century. Against a backdrop of this tradition, a decade of drought, poor soil health, increasing labour costs, unsustainable resource use and reducing botanic relevance the Zoo has launched a new direction for its plant collection. The Main Drive plant display has been the focus of the first wave of long-term change.

2.00pm – **Carlton Gardens parterres; rethinking heritage plantings**
2.15pm Angela Hill, Senior Planning Officer, City of Melbourne

The Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens were listed on the World and National Heritage List in 2004. The recently reconstructed parterre garden beds, which are based on the original 1880 design, have made a significant contribution to creating an appropriate setting for the Royal Exhibition Building. This exacting project, managed by the City of Melbourne, and involving a range of consultants, has been based on extensive research and analysis, archaeological investigation, respect for and responsiveness to changing environmental conditions, and current social and financial contexts. The original shape and position of the parterre and scroll garden beds have been re-instated. An exploration of the opportunities and limitations afforded by plant materials to respect significance, but work within current day environmental parameters will be discussed in this presentation.

2.15pm –
2.30pm

California Dreaming

Tim Wall , Horticulturist, Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne

Explore the potential for Californian native plants as strong performers in Australian conditions by appreciating their ornamental quality, diversity and low water use. Encouraging people to consider selecting them when they design a new planting in the future or just to get the home gardener to start to use them.

2.30pm –
2.45pm

Rejuvenating plantings- everything old is new again

Shelley Wood, Head Gardener, Williamstown Botanic Gardens

Meander through the historic Williamstown Botanic Gardens with Shelley as she reveals the exciting restoration and rejuvenation projects currently unfolding within the gardens. Incorporated in this presentation are plants fashionable in the Victorian /Edwardian times and how they have survived or been reborn into current “must have” plants of fashion!

2.45pm –
3.00pm

Cool climate havens for plant collections

Kristen Jackson, Managing Curator & Glenn Maskell, Team Leader, Dandenong Ranges Gardens

The Dandenong Ranges Gardens (DRG) managed by Parks Victoria less than one hour from Melbourne provide a great example of cool climate botanic gardens. With climate change resulting in a drier and warmer climate overall, in the future, the areas which will still be suitable to grow species which like cooler and wetter climates will be further limited. This presentation will discuss the current and future role of the DRG in sustainable species preservation.

The presentation will also discuss strategic management planning for the gardens properties including potential commercial opportunities and strategic partnerships. The issues of plant collection policies and management resources will also be covered.

3.00pm –
3.30pm

Afternoon Tea

3.30pm –
4.30pm

Rethinking Landscapes: Panel Discussion

4.30 pm –
8.30 pm

Tour & Dinner, Geelong Botanic Gardens

A relaxing evening walk through the garden followed by an informal dinner in the garden.

Wednesday 24 September 2008. **Diversity and Directions, Influencing the Agenda.**

9.00am –
9.30am

The role of botanic gardens in influencing public and private horticulture. “Plants: we can’t live without them”

Dr. Phil Moors, Director and Chief Executive Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne

Each year more than 13 million people visit Australian botanic gardens, and amongst broadly-defined cultural institutions, only cinemas have larger annual visitations. With such massive ‘audiences’, our botanic gardens are in a prime position to positively influence the knowledge and actions of our visitors and communities.

Two key inter-linked areas in which botanic gardens can be at the forefront of making a difference are environmental sustainability and responses to global climate change. Central to both these issues are the conservation of plant biodiversity and our ultimate reliance on plants for continuing life on Earth.

Australians see botanic gardens as reputable and reliable organisations – as being places and people ‘who know about plants’. We therefore have a responsibility to be leaders in our communities in advocating and demonstrating sustainable systems, in utilising our expertise for the *ex situ* conservation of biodiversity, in delivering engaging educational programs, and in inspiring our visitors to take action in response to the climate changes affecting Australia now and in the future.

We will achieve more by collaborating, whether through informal networks or through organisations like Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand, and Botanic Gardens Conservation International. BGANZ already has four regional networks and strong links to BGCI, and facilitates collaboration through conferences, newsletters and workshops. Sharing information, learning from the experiences of our colleagues, collaborating to develop horticultural, educational and conservation programs - all these approaches are needed to make progress with our responsibilities.

9.30am –
10.00am

Wattle We Plant Now? Plant selection and promotion for the paying public.

Helen Tuton, Sustainable Gardening Australia

A plant's inherent suitability for the chosen site is paramount in all sustainable garden designs, irrespective of whether the plant is destined for a public park or garden or a private backyard or courtyard. With a plethora of ‘plantastic’ choices, this can make plant selection an incredibly daunting if not downright frightening pursuit for the professional or amateur gardener.

Not only does informed plant selection make life easier from a maintenance point of view but is a key to true sustainability. Many plants fail simply because they are placed in the wrong spot. Yet many of us cannot resist choosing plants that we know are totally unsuited to the harsh Australian environment.

So can we avoid invasive plants and still have attractive, user friendly gardens? Can we ensure that maintenance regimes and inputs are truly viable and sustainable? Can we meet clients' visual expectations whilst still creating habitat and promoting biodiversity in their gardenscapes?

Can any organisation, public garden or plant retailer lead the change from inappropriate plant selections to sustainable alternatives without flying in the face of consumer resistance? Is it possible to educate plant buyers to make the change willingly thereby creating a broadscale sustainable psyche in gardening communities?

This paper explores the correlation between education, clever marketing and consumerism specifically in relation to creating a sustainable future through appropriate plant selection. After all, the roots of education can be bitter, but the fruits are sweet!

10.00am –
10.30am

Reinstating the focus on plants: investing in future horticulturists

Tony Hughes Education Manager Horticulture, Gordon Institute of TAFE

This paper will focus on outlining the role of TAFE in delivering training to our future horticulturalists working in different facets of the industry. Demystifying Training packages and their prescriptive but constantly evolving nature as enforced by Government regulations. The challenges for TAFE teachers balancing training packages with the variable needs of industry sectors and geographical areas will be explored.

10.30am –
11.00am

Morning Tea

RESEARCHING FUTURE DIRECTIONS

11.00am – **Recent advances in the selection and cultivation of Australian plants** Rodger Elliot, AM
11.30am Board Member RBG Melbourne, horticulturist and author

This presentation aims to provide a selective overview of recent advances in selection and cultivation of Australian plants over the last 10 years or so with an emphasis on the recent 5 years. There is a strong element on plant breeding and selection with examples provided for many plant families. Coverage is also provided on cultivation techniques and plant management.

11.30am – **Researching for survival,- water coefficient trials**
11.50am Ian Smith, Horticultural Consultant

Most major Australian cities have experienced drought for many years, water reserves are low and consequently restrictions have been applied to garden and landscape irrigation. In mixed urban landscape plantings, water is often wasted due to lack of knowledge of ornamental plant water requirements.

Though reference evapotranspiration is available from the Australian Bureau of Meteorology, it has not been routinely applied to water scheduling for garden and landscape plantings. Irrigation scheduling based on evapotranspiration, soil moisture levels etc. has been applied to crops, but little data is available on the response of ornamental species to reduced irrigation levels.

Experimental plots were established at Silvan, Victoria, Australia, consisting of five 100 m² blocks allowing four irrigation treatments replicated five times. Thirty-seven cultivars were planted into 20 m² experimental units within the sub-mulch drip-irrigated blocks. Irrigation treatments were initiated in November 2005 and consisted of 1.0, 0.75, 0.50 and 0.25 evapotranspiration. Height and width measurements provided a quantitative assessment of growth and plants were scored to determine acceptable landscape performance.

Plant growth rate was significantly reduced in all cultivars at the .25ET and no irrigation treatments, though landscape performance was not always significantly affected. Cultivars of plant groups e.g. *Cordyline* sp., *Phormium* sp. *Dianella* sp. often considered as tolerant of dry conditions, varied significantly in their growth and performance at low irrigation rates. Plant groups e.g. *Rosa* sp. often considered to require moderate to high irrigation rates for acceptable landscape performance, were not significantly affected by low irrigation rates.

The trial protocol did elucidate differences between cultivars in their growth and performance based on variable irrigation rates. Trial results indicate the need to scientifically quantify ornamental plant performance in relation to applied irrigation which would form the basis of labeling and plant selection by gardeners and professional landscapers.

11.50pm – **Plants for tough gigs – plant based research at Burnley Campus**
12.30pm John Rayner, Lecturer, Melbourne University Burnley Campus

Plants in urban landscapes are subject to a multitude of challenges that influence their performance. Site and environmental stress factors and the available resource and maintenance inputs are of critical importance to short and long term success. Ideally we need to increase the use of more durable and robust plants – plants that tolerate often hostile urban sites, have low levels of intervention and still look attractive. More performance-based information on these 'tough plants' is needed to assist in their selection and use. This presentation will discuss three current research projects aimed at improving knowledge in this area: (i) coppiced eucalypts for urban shrub mass; (ii) new Australian plants as ground cover; and (iii) the new green roofs research project.

12.30pm – **Lunch**
1.30pm

1.30PM – **Guilfoyle's Volcano**
2.00PM Andrew Laidlaw, Landscape Architect Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne

The development of the reservoir site provides a rare and exciting opportunity for the gardens to further enhance the historic landscape and create a unique garden feature for the public.

The reservoir was constructed in 1876 and sited at the highest point in the gardens to gravity irrigate the surrounding landscape. The Reservoir held a total capacity of 1.3 megalitres and provided enough water for one day of irrigation. It was the main water supply for the gardens for about sixty years before it fell in to disrepair. Designed almost as a perfect circle with a narrow rim and sloping to all sides it has a distinct Volcano shape and was the central feature of Guilfoyle's design. The surrounding rock outcrops, the mounded garden beds and the sequence of flowing lawns terminating at Nymphaea Lake are all part of the original design.

The new design concept will work closely with the historic significance of the site both as a designed element within the landscape and as a water reservoir. The challenge of this project will be integrating the ascetics of the 19th century landscape with current and very important issue relating to water conservation, people amenity and environmental sustainability.

2.00pm – **An Untapped Resource: Garden Plant Conservation Association of Australia**
2.30pm Richard Barley, Director, Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne

The Ornamental Plant Collections Association (OPCA) was formed in 1986 for the purpose of conserving the diversity of 'ornamental' horticultural plants. The conservation activity took the form of registered plant collections, which were held mainly by private collectors, and sometimes in public gardens. Since that time the association has evolved towards having a more explicit emphasis on garden plant conservation – most recently with the name being changed to the Garden Plant Conservation Association of Australia (GPC).

The plants held within the GPC collections provide a potentially valuable resource in terms of being sources of species and cultivars well suited to our current and future climate, and meeting diverse garden and landscape needs. BGANZ Victoria and the GPC are working towards providing a greater level of benefit to the horticultural public and the community more broadly from the association's plant conservation program. A key part of this is to create an increased awareness of the GPC and its untapped potential.

2.30pm – **Workshop: Future Prospects**
3.15pm Facilitated by Tim Rowe, Manger Parks & Environmental Services, Shire of Wellington

3.15pm – **Plants Forum closing**
3.30pm

Botanic Gardens of Australia & New Zealand

BGANZ is the chief body representing the interests of botanic gardens in Australia and New Zealand. It promotes the interests and activities of Australian and New Zealand botanic gardens and botanic gardens generally and enhances the state of botanic gardens for the benefit of the community. Individual, Institutional or Associate membership of BGANZ will provide opportunities for information exchange, advocacy, development and grant opportunities and the benefits derived from national conferences and exhibitions.

www.bganz.org.au