

THE FRIENDS OF THE WAITE ARBORETUM INC.



NEWSLETTER

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Secretary
Mrs Anna Cox
8332 1482

Editor
Mrs Barbara Crompton
8379 6405

GENERAL MEETING

on Monday 10 August at 8 pm.

Our speaker this evening was Andrew Crompton and his subject, " Conservation of the Black Forest". Whilst an Agricultural Science student at the University of Adelaide at Urrbrae, Andrew grew to love the Arboretum and appreciated its value as a scientific resource. He completed a Master's degree in Environmental Science and worked for many years as a lecturer in the Department of TAFE. He is now an environmental consultant.

The Black Forest was a community of plants which, in pre-European settlement times grew in the areas now covered by the suburbs of Burnside, Urrbrae, Unley, South Adelaide, Black Forest, Clarence Park, Edwardstown to the River Sturt at Marion. It was named thus for the density and the sombre dark bark and foliage of the trees - Eucalyptus microcarpa [Grey Box] and Eucalyptus leucoxydon [SA Blue Gum] and Callitris preissii [Native Pine]. Grasses and shrubs like Hardenbergia [Native lilac] and Acacia pycnantha [Golden Wattle] were abundant. For an excellent description of these grassy woodland plants which used to clothe the Adelaide Plains, see Kraehenbuehl - Pre European Vegetation of Adelaide: a Survey from the Gawler River to Hallett Cove. Darrell N. Kraehenbuehl was our speaker in 1996 after the publication of his book and our speaker for this evening quoted him frequently. There are still remnants of the Black Forest in small parts of the Hills Face behind the Waite and in the north west corner of the Arboretum, in Stonyfell at Ferguson Park, the Beaumont Common, in the South Parklands, Heyward Park and at Sleeps Hill and other southerly places.

Andrew showed enough slides of such woodland remnants to demonstrate the beauty which has

been lost. He was able to cite many examples of rare indigenous plants still growing bravely, primarily in public lands, despite detrimental treatment. New Council policies of restricted mowing and watering have brought about regeneration of indigenous grasses, chocolate lilies and orchids, bulbine lilies, helichrysum and bursaria in the South Parklands, Beaumont Common and Heyward Park and other sites. It is something of a detective story to establish what was here before but the picture becomes clearer as more Councils become aware of the value of preserving our biodiversity.

The question is how to save these precious remnants? First we must learn to recognise the plants and then to change management practices in order to favour indigenous elements and eliminate weeds. Andrew has written reports and management plans for several of these sites and, most pertinent to the Friends, is his work on the northwest paddock of the Arboretum where there are several grey box trees. Since his request for less mowing there has been some good regeneration, thanks to Jennifer Gardner's willingness to support this. The rewards are great for habitat, biodiversity and aesthetic values. Compromise is usually the best approach as there must be room for all interests to exist.

This was an illuminating address about issues important in our day. The slides were beautiful and opened a vista of the past. It was nice to see a good audience on a wintry night and good discussion over supper. It is always worth attending because members become familiar with each other and meet a variety of members according to the subject which is offered.

Barbara Crompton

IN THE ARBORETUM

ANGOPHORA COSTATA [Gaertner] Britten *Myrtaceae*
Smooth - barked apple. Brown apple

Angophora costata is a medium sized tree of great beauty, smooth barked and slender leaved, closely resembling smooth barked eucalypts such as spotted gum and lemon scented gum.

It has a shorter bole than these two and in open woodland formation often carries its symmetrical crown down to ground level.

The leaves are bright green and always appear fresh with little insect damage, unlike those of eucalypts.

These trees occur in open forest formations in association with many tree species on the central coast of New South Wales, where it is plentiful from Sydney to north of Newcastle. It is common again around Brisbane, extending north to Mackay and west to the Great Dividing Range towards Roma.

The species has ornamental value and is frequently retained in new housing areas. It is one of the principal tree species growing around the north shore of Sydney Harbour and in National Parks close to the city.

It grows on a wide range of sites from coastal flats to mountain ridges...on skeletal soils derived from sandstone in the Sydney area to deep sands in Queensland.

The coastal sites are frost free but some of the inland sites in Queensland average fifty frosts per year. The annual rainfall varies from 600 mms to 1200 mms.

Angophora is endemic to Australia and there are seven species, *Angophora costata* being the only smooth barked species. The bark is shed from the stem and branches in thin plates leaving a slightly

dimpled surface. The newly revealed surface is pink or orange brown but becomes grey with age. It is frequently stained by kino exudations.

The name *Angophora* comes from the Greek *angos* [a goblet] plus *porus* [carrier], alluding to the goblet shape of the fruit. *Costata* comes from the Latin *costa* [a rib] in reference to the ribbed fruit. The common name comes from the smooth bark and apple from the apple tree appearance of the first observed species at Botany Bay by Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander.

The adult leaves are opposite to sub-opposite, unlike eucalyptus leaves which are alternate. Leaves contain no eucalyptus oil and when new are bright red in colour. Flowers are abundant in early summer and stamens are usually cream.

Angophora species are easily mistaken for Eucalyptus species and one specimen planted in the Adelaide Botanic Gardens carried a *Eucalyptus maculata* label for several years.

Angophora costata is growing well in the Waite Arboretum. There are two specimens , one planted in 1954 and the other in 1975. # 51 is in Section I 13 and # 98 is also in I 13.

Roger Bungey, President of the Friends

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to: Ms Gwen Chambers, Highgate; Dr Denise Chapman, Torrens Park; Ms Wendy Laffer, Brighton; Mrs Joan Mackie, Millswood and Ms Jean Moss, Highgate.

ARBORETUM NEWS FROM THE CURATOR

RESTORATION OF THE BLACK FOREST IN THE WAITE ARBORETUM

The Black Forest was the name given to the dense native forest which spread over the Adelaide Plains from Mitcham to Mile End and along the foothills through Glen Osmond to Beaumont and Burnside. The trees were, for the most part, the dark trunked grey box *Eucalyptus microcarpa* (which probably gave the Black Forest its name), with red gum, *E. camaldulensis*, along the watercourses, blue gum *E. leucoxydon*, sweet bursaria *Bursaria spinosa*, drooping sheoak *Allocasuarina verticillata*, golden wattle *Acacia pycnantha* and native pine *Callitris preissii*. The understorey included native lilac *Hardenbergia violacea*, running postman *Kennedia prostrata* and many species of grasses, lilies, orchids and small ground covers.

Little of the Black Forest remains on the Adelaide Plains today, but there are five remnant grey box in the northwest corner of the Arboretum. Some of these very fine specimens predate white settlement. Since the removal of sheep seven years ago and the cessation of mowing in this area over the last year, the regeneration of the indigenous flora has been very encouraging. There are numerous grey box seedlings (all of which have been tagged) and swathes of attractive wallaby grasses *Danthonia* spp. and spear grass *Stipa* spp. together with good patches of climbing saltbush *Einadia nutans*, ruby saltbush *Enchylaena tomentosa* and native bindweed *Convolvulus* sp.

Environmental Consultant Andrew Crompton has prepared for the Friends an Action Plan to conserve the remnant flora and gradually restore the area to be a fine example of remnant Black Forest and a seed source for other restoration projects.

A few patches where the introduced weed species are worst will be sprayed and planted with local provenance grasses and bulbs. With the willing cooperation of Grounds Manager Andrew Brokenshire and his interested staff Rodger Humphrys and Jodie Cameron, many of the native understorey plants have recently been located and marked with stakes. The area around each native plant will require careful hand weeding. This is where we need some help.

Why not spend an occasional 15 minutes of your lunch hour enjoying the tranquility of the Arboretum while making a valuable contribution to preserving the natural floral heritage of the Waite Campus?

If you would like to help with the hand weeding or come along to the North West Arboretum from 5.30 pm on Tuesday 27 October. Andrew Crompton will be on hand to identify the native understorey and

talk about the management strategy. Please contact Cicely Bungey on 8271 5720 if you would like more information.

SUCCESS AT THE ROYAL SHOW

The Waite Arboretum and Urrbrae Agricultural High School for the second year successfully entered the horticultural section at the Royal Adelaide Show winning 17 First and 10 Second Prizes. As part of their plant identification course, Year 11 students together with their teacher Ed Tylkowski and the Curator of the Arboretum selected, collected and displayed specimens from the Arboretum in a variety of classes. Every student who participated will receive a certificate from the school. This annual collaborative activity raises awareness of the Arboretum in the students and fosters an interest in botany. It also builds links between the school and the University which will encourage recruitment of students to the Waite Campus.

NEW PATHS

Paths are under construction in the Mallee Section. These will be paid for entirely by the Friends of the Waite Arboretum. The paths will provide an all weather, wheelchair friendly surface for visitors. They will also entice more of the visitors who come to Urrbrae House to follow the paths and explore the Arboretum as well. Already the paths are being well used by staff, students and local residents.

The recent fund-raising dinner in Urrbrae House show-casing the combined talents of Botanist David Symon and Chef Ann Oliver was very successful. This will enable the Friends to support the development of statements of entrance into the Arboretum from the driveway and from the rose garden.

"WATERBIRDS" IN THE ARBORETUM

On your next visit to the Arboretum, follow the new path south along the watercourse to the Contemplation Pond and you will discover a beautiful bronze sculpture of a family of water birds. The sculptor was Meliesa Judge, Construction Design by Will J. Kuiper and Bronze Casting by Liquid Metal Studios. The sculpture was commissioned especially for the site and donated to the Waite Arboretum by the Heard Family.

SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

Letters were sent to nine local Junior Primary Schools inviting visits for two especially prepared walk "Trees and Australian Aborigines". Visits from Highgate Primary years 1 & 2 were very successful. Congratulations to Jean Bird who did the research, devised the walks and prepared the worksheets for the children. We plan to expand this programme next year.

Jennifer Gardner

HELP HELP ?

It is a very companionable exercise to work in the Arboretum, Urrbrae House or the garden as a Volunteer. There are many groups doing many tasks and if you would like company at times the house and garden welcomes you with open arms. Some specific tasks are helping to revise the tree maps in the Arboretum and similarly revising the self-guided walks; producing small plants for the Open Day stall and serving on rosters for exhibitions and Open Day.

The University is no longer able to match our fund raising efforts and nor do they fund pruning and other Arboretum maintenance. It is therefore wonderfully helpful if the Friends do what they can to serve these needs.

There is a need too for a Friend with some computing skills to assist with the Newsletter. The Editor has produced it, with help from Jennifer Gardner, for over four years and though it is a pleasurable and simple task she is finding that her role as a Burnside Councillor has vastly increased and the camel's back is breaking. Please speak to Jennifer or Barbara if you would be interested.

Jennifer Gardner invites you to telephone her on 8303 7405

FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND DIARY DATES

6 pm Monday 9 November. General Meeting will take the form of a guided walk through the recently established Urrbrae Wetlands, followed by light refreshments in Urrbrae House.

11 am Sunday 15 November. **Opening of 'In Pursuit of Nature's Truths - An exhibition of recent botanical and zoological art'.** This exhibition by nine South Australian artists will be a major fundraiser for the Friends and will continue until 6 December.

Guided walks are taken on the first Sunday of every month. Meet at Urrbrae House at 11 am.

OPEN DAY - WAITE HISTORICAL PRECINCT

SUNDAY 22 NOVEMBER from 11 a.m.

At this Annual Event, the Friends provide produce and potted plants for a trading table on the verandah of Urrbrae House. We should welcome new volunteers for an hour or so to help sell these and other items. It is a good way to meet other Friends as well as to help the Arboretum.

Bring and buy cakes, biscuits, jam and other preserves, cut flowers, herbs - anything from your kitchen or garden. Included with this Newsletter you should find a slip to return which tells which time you prefer or perhaps you would ring the Secretary, Anna Cox at 8332 1482.

