

THE FRIENDS OF THE WAITE ARBORETUM INC.



NEWSLETTER

No 18
SUMMER 1998/9

Secretary
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GENERAL MEETING

Monday, November 8, 1998 at 6.00 pm.

For our final meeting of the year, 45 Friends and friends went down Cross Road to visit the newly established Wetlands on the Urrbrae Agricultural School's grounds. The teacher-in-charge, Dr Allin Hodson first spoke to us, fluently and entertainingly, about the history and function of the Wetlands. This was followed by a short walk, along the board-walk, to see the lake and its plants.

Poor drainage, especially when Cross Road flooded, had been a problem in this area for a long time. The Council of the City of Mitcham, trying to solve this problem, collaborated with Urrbrae and decided to construct a permanent Wetland. This would be designed for educational purposes and equipped with a learning centre. Council and school would therefore both benefit. Work began in August 1996.

The cost of the project, approximately \$1.3 million, was covered by grants from the City of Mitcham (\$600 000), the Department of Transport (\$400 000) and the Patawalonga Catchment Board (\$200 000). Urrbrae School provided the 4.5 ha of land needed.

70 000 cubic metres of heavy clay soil were removed to form two ponds. The larger is clay-lined and must be kept full of water. The second, lined with 2.00 mm black polythene, supplies water to the larger pond if the water level there drops. This supply has not yet been needed, as there is a continuous water-flow via the Cross Road inlet - perhaps from springs in the Springfield area.

Planting of 4 000 plants of foreshore, marginal and dryland species, was done under the direction of staff from Mitcham's Horticultural Services Division, and Urrbrae's horticulturalists. Urrbrae students and Skillshare trainees helped, plus students from schools in an area wider than the City of Mitcham, which had expressed interest as part of their environmental activities. Wood duck are abundant and very destructive to new plantings — a difficulty still not resolved! Another problem is the over-mature pine trees along the Cross Road boundary. They make vegetating the area beneath them impossible. It had been hoped to grow screening plants to reduce traffic noise from Cross Road.

The Wetlands filled for the first time in February 1997, followed by a rapid growth of invertebrate population. Independent studies have shown that there is no mosquito problem associated with this development, probably as a result of predation.

Already a number of learning experiences have resulted from the operation of Urrbrae Wetlands, both in flood-water management and in education. Many more plans are being investigated.

We were all most impressed by Dr Hodson's enthusiasm for and dedication to this project. Since our evening at the Wetlands we are delighted to have learned that he has been granted funding for a further three years.

Dr Hodson has expressed his warmest thanks to the Friends for their donation for the guided tour. It has enabled him to purchase darkfield objective stops for the compound microscope. He wrote that, "The magic of a Daphnia seen under darkfield just blows the kids away".

Mary Tester

FROM THE COMMITTEE

Meetings were held on September 28 and December 15, 1998.

A community Information Day concerning plans to develop a Visitor's Interpretive Centre in Peter Waite's garage, was held on Tuesday, December 8 and proved to be successful. A letter was sent in support of a request for a grant to proceed with these plans. The Interpretive Centre will include pamphlets and other information about the Arboretum.

The fund-raising dinner proved very successful, the total profit being about \$2 000. Letters of thanks were sent to those who made this most enjoyable event possible.

Twelve people attended the working bee in the North Arboretum, with Andrew Crompton, on October 27. A programme of operations and a follow-up session will be needed following the first rains in May or June.

Warmest thanks must be given to Mary Tester for her enormous contribution to the Art Exhibition described later in this letter. Mary requested that particular thanks should also be given to Peggy Rowe, at Urrbrae House, for her most welcome help.

Members of the Committee and Friends visited Folland Park last October. Steven Johnson gave us a very enthusiastic and knowledgeable walk. We hope to have another visit by the Friends to this valuable remnant of Adelaide Plains flora.

AN EXHIBITION IN PURSUIT OF NATURE'S TRUTHS

On Sunday, November 14, Dr Laurie Haegi, Head of the State Herbarium, opened an exhibition of Botanical and Zoological Art at Urrbrae House. This was the major fund-raising event for the Arboretum in 1998.

The artists were: Silvio Apponyi, Chris Bigwood, Beth Chandler, Gilbert Dashorst, Sue Nathan, Sue Stranger, Marie Walsh, Rosemary Woodford Ganf and Jan Woodman. Over 50 works included a splendid bronze sculpture of a wombat by the renowned Sylvio Apponyi. Other works were on paper, linen and board and gave viewers a delightful experience of plants and animals. Rarely do we see such a colourful, thoughtful and meticulous group of works of art by a number of prominent South Australian artists brought together in such a perfect setting.

Dr Haegi spoke of the work of the Herbarium at the Botanic Gardens and of his responsibility as custodian of 850 000 pressed specimens of South Australian flora. This collection provides an impeccable source of knowledge of the plants of our state for scientists, writers, artists and anyone else who chooses to use it. It contributes to the State's economy and development by providing knowledge of our flora and thus the biodiversity of species whose conservation is vital to our future economic sustainability and our own survival as a species.

Referring to the title of the exhibition, Dr Haegi spoke of each artist's wonder and delight in all that plants and animals stand for in so many aspects of life. He described the artists' contributions to knowledge through the accuracy of their drawing, the delicacy of texture, character of living subjects and explorative nature of the designs. His was an address that informed the audience about the truths of the natural world and our flora and fauna, thereby adding depth of understanding to our viewing.

Dr Haegi's talk was much appreciated as was the work of those who hung the pieces. Our thanks are due to Mary Tester and her committee of organisers: their hard work and good taste made the exhibition one of our most outstanding events. We are also grateful to the crowd of more than 200 people, who were most enthusiastic. That almost half the works were sold by the end of that day was very encouraging to all those friends of the Arboretum who contributed to the overall success of the Exhibition.

Barbara Crompton

FINANCIAL SUMMARY SINCE 8/7/98

Receipts		Spent	
Tours	119.50	Andrew Crompton (Action Plans)	200.00
Subscriptions	156.00	Marcus Lodge (Printing)	1000.00
Donations	2.00	Spring Newsletter	44.00
Publications	—	Petty Cash	100.00
Beryl Martin Cards	6.00	Dinner	509.00
Arboretum Cards	4.00	Natures Truth	9882.10
Echidna	25.00		11,736.10
Honey	6.00		
Dinner	2590.00		
Woodies Exhibit	811.60		
Natures Truth	11,728.35		
	15,448.45		
Macquarie Interest	435.07	Excess	4,147.40
Commonwealth Interest	—		
	15,883.52		15,883.50

Assets	
Macquarie Bank	23,015.64
Commonwealth Bank	31,906.03
	54,921.67
Cheques to be written	8,931.03
Total available	45,990.64

Commitments	
Pruning	1,410.00
Mallee Block	18,000.00
Exhibition Room	10,000.00
	29,410.00

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to:

Angela Davis, Gilberton and Mary Marlow, Glenside.

ARBORETUM NEWS

Overseas trip

During my recreation leave, I visited a number of botanic gardens and arboreta overseas. These included: Jardin des Plantes, Paris; Cambridge Botanical Gardens, Westonbirt Arboretum, Forest of Dean, Hillier Arboretum and Kew Gardens in the UK; New York Botanical Garden and Bayard Cutting Arboretum, New York; Houston Arboretum, Robert A. Vines Science Centre and Arboretum, Austin Wildflower Research Centre and San Antonio Botanic Gardens in Texas.

I was able to meet with a number of curators and discuss labelling, database management, mapping etc. Nowhere did I see labels which gave as much information as those in the Waite Arboretum. Nor did I find a map of planting as detailed as mine. The maintenance of labels and finding a satisfactory method of their attachment were problems shared by all the arboreta and gardens I visited. No-one seems to have the ideal solution, but I will trial a different method in the Arboretum this year.

I also made about 40 collections of seed, mostly from Texas, but it was a poor year for acorns due to the prolonged heat wave and high predation pressure on the few seeds which did set. The seeds are being grown at Mount Lofty Botanic Garden and any which successfully germinate will be shared with them.

Indigenous species for the Arboretum

Volunteers have now sown eight species of local provenance understory species for planting in the North Arboretum next spring where serious weed infestations have been sprayed. The seeds, tubes and potting soil were provided by Trees for Life. Cicely Bungey is thanked for co-ordinating the volunteers' efforts. If anyone else would like to participate in this project, either collecting local provenance seed, growing plants or adopting a small patch of native understory, please contact me (8303 7405).

TREENET activities

A meeting was held in September of all the South Australian commercial tree nurseries together with Flemings from Victoria. Considerable interest was shown in propagating the Arboretum selection of *Pyrus calleryana* growing in the Urrbrae House garden. Flemings indicated that they would donate new cultivars to the Arboretum for trialling.

Another meeting brought together the people involved in arboricultural training (TAFE and Urrbrae High) with professional arborists in the newly formed South Australian Society of Arboriculture (SASA). The Waite Arboretum is a foundation member of the Society. SASA will advise on the development of an accredited course based on national standards and work to raise the level of skill and training of people engaged in tree maintenance in the State.

If anyone would like to volunteer to measure new plantings in TREENET trial sites, please contact me.

Paths in The Mallee

The paths have been completed. The reaction of visitors has been very positive. The December meeting of the Friends of Urrbrae House included a guided tour of The Mallee and watercourse. About 50 Friends came on the walk, many of them had not visited the Arboretum for years though they frequently visit the house. Several people of limited mobility would not have ventured into the Arboretum had the paths not been there.

Sculptures

The group of five bronze waterbirds commissioned especially for the Arboretum by a private donor were installed in September. The sculptures were designed by Meliesa Judge and made by Liquid Metal Studios.

In November a bronze piece by Will Kuiper entitled 'Owl Pole' was installed. This work was made especially for the Arboretum and is on loan at no charge for 18 months.

Both sculptures have attracted a great deal of interest from visitors.

New Seat

A welcome new seat, in memory of Nelly Bleys, has been installed in the Arboretum.

Vandalism

There was a bad spate of vandalism in the Arboretum last November with a number of trees destroyed including a 15 year old *Capparis mitchellii*, scores of posts uprooted and labels removed or destroyed. In addition one of the bronze waterbirds was removed but subsequently recovered when the youths fled on being approached by a vigilant local resident. If anyone notices any suspicious behaviour, please immediately notify the police on 11444 and Waite 24-hour security on 8303 7200.

Jennifer Gardner

SUMMER IN THE ARBORETUM.

***Euclea Pseudebenus*. Cape ebony EBENACEAE South West Africa.**
#859 (B9)1981, #968 (B9) 1980.

One of the rarest species in the Arboretum is *Euclea Pseudebenus*. This attractive shrub can grow to a medium sized, slender tree, 3-10 m high.

It has very decorative, drooping branches with narrow leaves. The small fruits (5-8 mm across) are black when mature and also edible, but are reputed to be not particularly pleasant tasting, except to birds and monkeys. They are, however, eaten by native tribes, who also make a beer from them.

The wood is reported to be beautiful, hard, durable and fine-grained. The heartwood is black. The timber is very suitable for both carving and inlay work, but is very scarce.

Cape ebony occurs naturally in the arid areas of stony and sandy deserts in South West Africa, where few other trees can survive, through to regions of tropical Africa. The rainfall in the desert is almost nil, though there are nightly fogs for a large part of the year. The scientific name is based on the Greek *eukleia*, meaning "good fame" because of the fine, ebony-like wood.

Jennifer Gardner.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND DIARY DATES

Exhibitions for 1999.

- A photography Exhibition has already been planned to run from October 24 to November 14 this year.
- A Beryl Martin exhibition will be held, opening on May 2, with a preview on April 30. The exhibition closes on May 16. This will be a fund-raising event for the Arboretum.
Volunteers will be needed to staff this exhibition. If you can spare a couple of hours, please contact Peggy Rowe, phone 8303-7397.
- The SA Woodgroup will put on a display in August of articles made from Arboretum Timbers, or species represented there.

General Meetings

These will be held on Mondays at 8.00 pm (except where otherwise stated) — February 8 at 7.00 pm, April 12 (AGM), August 9, November 15.

The meeting of February 8 will take the form of an entomological walk through the Arboretum. We shall be joined by Dr Mike Keller and Dr Gary Taylor from the Department of Applied and Molecular Ecology, of The University of Adelaide. Members of the SA Entomological Society will also be present. We meet at the Rose Garden Urrbrae House and **please note the early starting time of 7.00 pm**. After the walk, there will be coffee and cake whilst viewing a display in Urrbrae House.