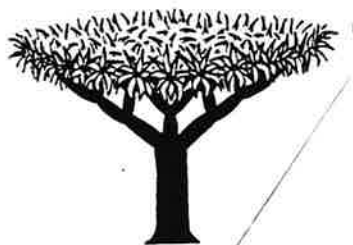


THE FRIENDS OF THE WAITE ARBORETUM INC.



NEWSLETTER

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332 1482

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379 6405

GENERAL MEETING February 13, 1995

It was gratifying to see 44 members present at this meeting to hear one of our younger members speaking. The Chairman, Tony Whitehill, in introducing Dean Nicolle, told us that he had been interested in plants ever since he was eight years old and that in 1982 he started to develop an arboretum on his father's property at Currency Creek. Dean describes his interest and that of other like-minded people, as Eucalyptology. While collecting in the wild he has discovered several eucalypts and other species which have not been previously described.

Dean Nicolle chose to talk to us on the subject **Collecting eucalyptus seed in the outback.** Just as a reminder, Dean told us that there are 700 to 800 eucalypts, the predominant tree in the Australian landscape. They vary from the huge Mountain Ash to the smallest mallee and their distinguishing feature is that the buds have an operculum. Many have never been in cultivation and all but two species occur in Australia. They occur as far north as the Philippines.

Clearly Dean has had an adventurous youth. First he described his quest for a mallee collected by Ernest Giles in 1876. All he knew was that it originated from somewhere beyond the Alfred Murray Range. He went with his father and others on three trips in search of *Eucalyptus rameliana* and never found it. Eventually it was found by someone else near Newman in W.A. and hundreds of kilometres from Giles' discovery. Dean's descriptions and slides made the tough conditions very real for his listeners. They carried packs of 35 kilos with Fying Doctor radio, solar panels and batteries to charge them and all their supplies into that desert country.

Dean has made many other journeys and his slides showed splendid eucalypts in a wide range of sites in W.A., N.T. and S.A. There are some trees still undescribed in the Great Victorian Desert. One of these, on the south coast of W.A., was a mass of purple buds and has potential for the cut flower trade. Another in the wheat belt of W.A. could be useful in a similar way as was an unnamed species on the coast of the Indian Ocean. Other slides were from his travels in the Elder Range of the Flinders, Fleurieu Peninsula, and the head of the Great Australian Bight. He showed interesting eucalypts from the wild, some recently described and some unnamed, outback roads — some made by Len Beadell — and unusual features like a telephone box, hundreds of miles from civilisation.

Dean brought a selection of his expertly mounted collection of eucalypt fruit and this was a great pleasure to see. It was a treat to hear this modern adventure story and despite the hot conditions everyone was most interested and appreciative.

Isabella Rawnsley

FROM THE COMMITTEE A Meeting on 13 March, 1995

This meeting proved us to be a well established committee now that the setting-up procedures are completed.

- * We are now 'Incorporated', which saves us sales tax and we have an honorary auditor, thanks to the kindness of staff member, Bernard Arnold.
- * The financial statement is excellent but that must not deter any further activity as there is much work to be done to make the Arboretum a world-class institution.
- * Some ideas were floated at this meeting for raising money: an excursion to Golden Grove in association with Dr Christophel's talk at the next meeting; a wood exhibition and Arboretum walk; postcard and poster sales, which seem popular; and an exhibition of the work of botanical illustrators. Your ideas would be gratefully received, either brainwaves or just comments.

SOME STATISTICS

Attendance on walks: Since 1 January 110 people have taken guided tours and that is encouraging since the Arboretum is not at its best in summer and especially in this very dry season.

Finance: Opening balance on 1.1.95 was \$4,637.75 and closing balance on 8.3.95 was \$9,568.35. This gain was derived from card and plant sales, 20% of the sales at Beryl Martin's Exhibition, subscriptions, tours and above all, the Director's matching grant.

Members: As of 28.3.95 there are 101 memberships (69 Individual, 28 Family, 4 Institutional / Corporate) representing more than 130 Friends.

MEMBERS

A warm welcome is extended to the following new Foundation Members of the Friends who have joined since 1 January: Ms G. Briggs, Highgate; Ms C. Clark, Norwood; Franklin Family, Glenelg; Freebairn Family, Alma; Mrs N. Gemmell, Strathalbyn; Dr E. Lees, Wollstonecraft, NSW; Ms J. O'Brien, Toorak Gardens; G. Phillpott Family, Murray Bridge; J. Phillpott Family (including our youngest member Michael aged 1 year), Murray Bridge; South Australian Bonsai Society; South Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation; Ms M. Symons, Kensington; Mr T. Wagner, Dundowran Beach, Qld; Ms B. Westwood, Strathalbyn; and Ms A. Wilson, Millswood.

With great sadness we note the death of a Friend and Volunteer, John Wagner. We extend our sympathy to his wife, Una, likewise a valued Friend and Volunteer and to their sons, David and Trevor and their families.

ARBORETUM NEWS

Stage 2 of the Arboretum wetlands - the redevelopment of the area around the dam - will commence in May. This project has been funded by a grant of \$20,000 from The University of Adelaide Quality Audit Fund Community Service Initiatives Scheme which will provide the materials, together with a grant of \$57,600 from The Landcare and Environment Action Program (LEAP), an initiative of the Federal Dept of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) to provide opportunities for young Australians to enhance their employment prospects through vocational training and practical experience. LEAP funds will provide training allowances for 10 young people for 26 weeks plus fees for trainers and a full-time supervisor.

The project will include the construction of a walking trail, retaining walls, a viewing platform and a floating island; the emplacement of seats and identification markers; planting waterplants and making a collection of reference herbarium specimens, as well as extending the banksia collection. This project will allow public access to the area, greatly enhance the amenity of the Arboretum and enrich the conservation value of this water catchment by providing an inviting sanctuary for native birds and other animals.

Following the development of Stage 1 of the watercourse, I participated in FROGCENSUS '94. Two species were tape-recorded: the Common froglet *Crinia signifera* and the Spotted grass frog *Limnodynastes tasmaniensis*. More species are to be expected when the waterplants are planted in spring. A White-faced heron very quickly discovered the billabong.

The Palm and Cycad Society are planning another working bee in April to plant more specimens along the banks at the start of the watercourse. The Friends committee have approved \$200 to purchase some rare specimens to supplement those being generously donated by members of the Society.

Jennifer Gardner

AUTUMN in the ARBORETUM *Quillaja braziliensis* & *Q. saponaria*

Few would deny that the rose is the Queen of the Flowers. It is probably the most popular and widely cultivated garden flower in the world. But the rose is only one genus in the large Rosaceae family - there are 122 genera with 3,370 species in the world, mostly found in the northern hemisphere temperate zone. This family is of exceptional economic and horticultural significance. Plums, cherries, quinces, apples, pears, almonds, apricots and strawberries are some of the best known commercial species. An ornamental shrub or two would be found in many gardens e.g. *Cotoneaster*, *Pyracantha*, *Crataegus*, crab apple to name but a few.

In our Arboretum are two interesting and unusual small trees of the Rosaceae family - *Quillaja braziliensis* [No. 480] and *Q. saponaria* [No. 488] both in G11. These are natives of Peru and Brazil where they live in the rainforests in moist soil in protected shaded positions. There they grow to 20 metres with a spread of 5 metres. They are evergreen, stout branching trees with thick, darkly-coloured bark, leaves which are glossy green, smooth and oval. In Adelaide they flower from January to April with small flowers like tiny single roses - open, white, with five petals which occur in terminal clusters of three to five. The fruit is a pome.

Fossil records indicate that the Rosaceae is one of the most ancient of the flowering plants. Chemotaxonomic evidence shows that *Quillaja* is a relic of an ancestor of the Pomoideae sub-family, but it is generally placed in the Spiraeoideae sub-family - the least specialised. *Quillaja* could perhaps be called a living relic.

Quillaja are commonly called the soap-bark trees. They contain a bitter tasting glycoside compound, saponin, which is soluble in water and produces foam. This is used as a substitute for soap in cleaning textiles. It has the property of removing grease from dyed cloth without affecting the colour.

These certainly are most useful, interesting and unusual plants.

Mary Tester

RECIPE FOR PEAR FANTASY

The label says " 473A *Pyrus amygdaliformis* Vill., Rosaceae, Sthn Europe and Asia Minor, 1973".

This is one of the wild pear species, some forms almost evergreen, with dense displays of flowers and small, round, hard, inedible fruits. Several collections are doing well in the Waite Arboretum with different trees flowering heavily between July and the end of September. Pears sucker sparsely so a single clone may last many years - and why not centuries? - through many generations of trunks.

The label does not say so but this tree was collected at Mycenae in Greece from the rocky slopes of that citadel, Golden Mycenae, of the wide ways, capital, palace, and fortress of Agamemnon.

Here our fantasy begins. Did its ancestors see Agamemnon off to the Trojan Wars and hear the horrific news of the sacrifice of Iphigenia " for a fair wind"? Did they shade Orestes and Electra at play? Did Clytemnestra and Aegisthus plot the murder of Agamemnon in the shelter of that tough wood, away from the ears of the palace? Were they flowering when the king returned home to that grim welcome? Did the blood and bone of the great king of Pelops speed its growth? "And nightingales sang in the bloody wood when Agamemnon cried aloud." Now in the Arboretum without the tinkling of goat and sheep bells to recall Greece it showers the grass with its silent petals.

David Symon

This elegant piece by our first Honorary Life Member appeared in the Gazette of the Friends of the Botanic Gardens in 1993 and is reproduced with permission. We celebrate the Rosaceae family this April at the Waite Arboretum, the Waite Rose Garden and in the Botanic Gardens.

A SUGGESTION

The Committee were interested in an idea that Friends might be encouraged to consider the donation of a seat for the Arboretum in memory of those whose lives they would want to celebrate. There are very few seats in the Arboretum and more would be welcomed.

DIARY DATES

The next General meeting will be held on **Monday, 10 April at 8 pm** in the drawing room at Urrbrae House. The Committee hopes that you will come to hear Dr. David Christophel speaking on 'South Australia's Greatest Arboretum that Nobody Saw'. Professor Margaret Sedgley will speak at the following meeting on 10 July.