

THE FRIENDS OF THE WAITE ARBORETUM INC.



WAITE
ARBORETUM

NEWSLETTER NO. 54

Summer 2008

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Editor
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FROM THE PRESIDENT

A good roll up of members, volunteers and friends attended our combined Christmas function at Urrbrae House on December 3rd, and enjoyed a choice of tours before a short formal ceremony and brief speeches.

I raised the issue of our continuing gratitude to our volunteers and in particular the guides who give their time taking groups through the Arboretum during the year. These are Jean Bird, Roger Bungey, Bob Boardman, Jennifer Gardner, Peter Nicholls, Barbara Radcliffe, Isabella Rawnsley and David Symon.

Director Jennifer Gardner is initiating a number of new projects and with her oversight of the Arboretum has carried a heavy workload throughout 2007.

Your Committee has been active in some forward planning and we will include in this newsletter some dates for your 2008 diaries.

Many of our supporters are busy people but if you are unable to give of your time and can help with a tax deductible donation in addition to your membership it will be greatly appreciated. A limit to the number of fund-raisers that we can hold in 12 months rather restricts our ability to achieve our many objectives in improvements to the Arboretum.

We continue to look for further commercial sponsors who can provide resources and, in addition, help to promote the Arboretum.

We will get some exposure at the ABC Gardening Expo at the end of February.

I hope you will be able to attend the Basketry Exhibition from March 7th and our AGM on March 31st where we have obtained an excellent guest speaker, Sheryn Pitman, from the Department of Environment. Sheryn is to talk on

“Sustainable Landscaping and Gardening”, an important topic in today’s changing climate.

The Director and the Friends Committee continue to be concerned about the ongoing effects of the current water restrictions, most especially on new tree plantings and those recovering from the 2006 fire. We are grateful for the outstanding effort put in by Mark Ziersch, in difficult circumstances getting water and mulch on to newly established stock.

Bryan Milligan
President

IN THE ARBORETUM

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Waite Arboretum Report October 2007 – January 2008

Dry Rainforest Demonstration Garden

The Friends’ Christmas party provided an opportunity to inspect the new Dry Rainforest Demonstration Garden. The garden has attracted much interest and about 40 Friends visited it and heard Daryl Kinnane and myself talk about its purpose. The garden is one of 28 sites in South Australia included in the Sustainable Landscapes Demonstration Site Trail devised by Sheryn Pitman (Project Officer, Dept Environment & Heritage). Sheryn will be speaking about the collaborative Sustainable Landscapes project at our AGM.

Arboricultural work

In January Arborist Chris Lawry and Mark Ziersch spent another day deadwooding the elms in Elm Avenue and a day felling more trees which have died as a result of the 2006 fire and deadwooding others. Mature trees lost include a very fine and large Japanese Pagoda Tree *Sophora japonica* (planted in 1929), Red Cedar *Toona ciliata* (1932), Vlier *Nuxia floribunda* (1964), Pururi *Vitex lucens* (1928), Oriental Plane Tree *Platanus orientalis* (1928) and the rare Pince’s Pine *Pinus pinceana* (1979) and *Pinus oocarpa* (1976). Of the 178 trees in the area affected by the fire, 48 (27%) have now died. There are still others scarcely surviving and another cull will be done in autumn.

Guided Walks

The eight Arboretum guides conducted 18 walks during the year for ~350 visitors. Their efforts are greatly appreciated. If it is a while since you joined a guided walk, give yourself a treat and come along to a free walk at 11 am on

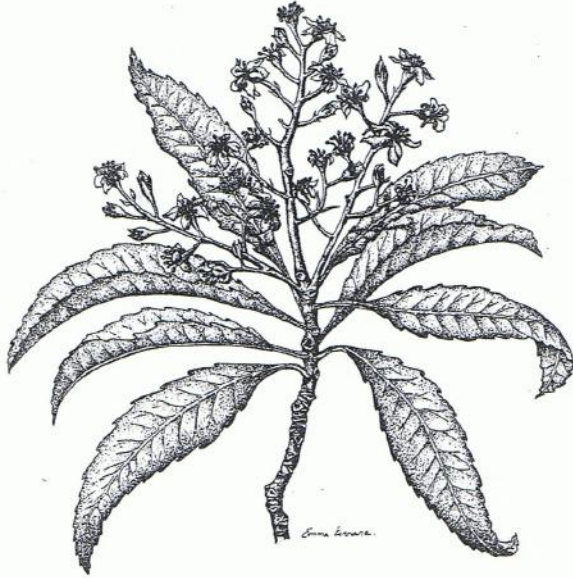
the first Sunday of the month (meeting in front of Urrbrae House). I would also like to hear from anyone who would like to become a guide to replace some guides who are retiring.

Seats

Two more seats have been donated for the Arboretum. These add to the amenity and encourage visitors to sit a while and enjoy this special place.

Jennifer Gardner
Director

The interpretive sign for bronze loquat is below



Eriobotrya deflexa

Bronze Loquat

Eriobotrya deflexa, native to Taiwan, produces dense clusters of bright coppery-red new leaves about 20 cm long in winter and the colour persists for a considerable time before turning green.

It is a much smaller and more handsome species than the common edible Japanese loquat *E. japonica*. Naturally a dense rounded shrub, the crown can be raised and bronze loquat is used as a street tree overseas. It can also be espaliered or grown in a pot on a deck or patio, and is an excellent screening plant.

In spring, bronze loquat produces terminal clusters of small fragrant white flowers, followed by tiny inedible fruits less than 1 cm diameter. The leaves and seeds are considered poisonous.

The species grows in full sun or part shade and grows well on well-drained alkaline soils but will also grow in acidic soils, clay, loam and sand. It performs well along the coast with some protection from salty air.

Bronze loquat should be watered well until established, and then it is drought tolerant.

The generic name is derived from Greek *erion* (wool) and *botrys* (cluster of grapes), referring to the woolly inflorescence; and the specific name *deflexa* means abruptly bent down referring to the mature leaves.

Drawing by Emma Kinnane, text by Jennifer Gardner. Sign donated by The Friends of the Waite Arboretum Inc.

POT – POURRI

THE EMPRESS TREE

The Empress (Princess) Tree belongs to the genus *Paulownia* (Family Scrophulariaceae) and is a native of China. Trees of this genus are noted for their rapid growth and are widely cultivated for their wood in many parts of the world, including parts of Australia. In some regions outside China e.g. parts of the USA, these trees are considered to be weeds.

Once we had two *Paulownia* trees in the Arboretum but, sadly, after living for nearly 70 years, albeit as rather poor specimens, they died. The Arboretum was probably too dry for them (J. Gardner, pers. com.).

One can only speculate as to why the authors of the genus named a Chinese tree after a Russian princess but it appears that they did! *Paulownia* seems to have been named after Anna Pavlovna (1795-1865), the daughter of Pavel I, Tsar of Russia and son of Catherine the Great. 'Pavlovna' means 'daughter of Pavel'.

Anna Pavlovna married the Dutch Crown Prince (later King William II) and was a well-loved Queen of the Netherlands until her death. So she was a princess and then a queen. Hence the common names for *Paulownia*.

Paulownia tomentosa and *P. fortunei* both have the same common names (although the latter is also sometimes called the 'Foxglove Tree'). This apparent confusion lends some weight to the argument for the use of scientific rather than common names for plants (and animals, too, for that matter!).

In ancient Chinese legend, the Empress Tree was considered to be an omen of good fortune because of its association with the mythical Phoenix. The Chinese Phoenix apparently descended from the heavens when a virtuous new ruler was born, and alighted on the Empress Tree. This evidently presaged great luck in the near future. The association with the Chinese Phoenix and the Empress Tree is rather obscure. Unlike the Phoenix of Phoenician mythology, the Chinese Phoenix did not 'rise from the flames' and so its association with *Paulownia* cannot be related to the latter's ability to regenerate after fire.

Jean Bird

Much of the information for this note was derived from the websites :
www.paulownia.org. and www.localharvest.org.

In Newsletter # 51 (Autumn 2007) I printed a letter of appreciation from Ms Helen Linke and in # 52, two of the poems written by her daughter, Jayne. The other two poems, which were omitted then due to lack of space, follow, copied verbatim. Ed.

Ochre Home.

Graceless & awkward;
nature's sleight of hand, you seem to be,
like me,
a waddling misfit on the land

But at home on the lake
you belong, becoming
demurely balanced & poised;

regal and grand
gracefully in hand.

I think
if you could talk to me,

you'd understand
you'd see,

like a cosy home
this ochre-silted,
golden filtered river sets me free.

Lynx.

La Nuit.

Je parlez
en mon Coeur
c' est la nuit...
c' est m' amis, c 'est belle beaucoup.

The Night.

I speak
in my heart
it's the night...
it's my friend, it's very beautiful.

Lynx.

As a result of a snippet in Newsletter # 50 (Summer 2007), Glen Woodward has provided the following information.

The new café at the Adelaide Botanic Garden called 'Café Fibonacci' is named after the Italian mathematician, Leonardo Fibonacci, who is best known for the number series called 'The Fibonacci Sequence'. (Incidentally, he discovered this series while doing an experiment on the breeding of rabbits! – Ed.).

The Fibonacci sequence has great significance in nature, architecture and design and has been incorporated into the design of the Schomburgk Pavilion, thereby creating an architectural design reflecting the natural world.

In a Fibonacci sequence, each number is the sum of the two numbers immediately before it i.e. 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, ... and Fibonacci sequences can be seen in many different aspects of biology e.g., in the arrangement of leaves and the branching of bushes and trees, the way a sea shell grows, the pattern of a snail's shell, the spiral pattern of horns etc.

Glen provided information about drawing the Fibonacci sequence, a Fibonacci spiral and the Golden Mean, an important ratio in art and architecture and which Leonardo da Vinci used in many of his drawings and paintings.

Further information can be obtained from a State Government fact sheet entitled 'The Fibonacci Sequence'.

Below is a summary of an article in 'Jubaea', the Friends of the Geelong Botanic Gardens Inc. Newsletter, which gives some of Chris Daniels' thoughts about why our backyards are so important. As you know, Chris is a Professor of Urban Ecology at UNISA and was the keynote speaker at The Australasian Conference of Volunteer Guides of Botanic Gardens in September 2007.

Australian backyards are smaller now than they were 50 years ago, largely because houses are bigger, much of the remaining land is paved and the 'garden' often consists of a few 'structural' plants, a water feature and a barbecue.

Unlike Australians of earlier times, European city dwellers have always had small courtyards, with their green space being provided by public parks and gardens, which, among other things, provide the habitat for small birds, insects and other animals.

Public open space in Adelaide is only 5.5% compared with 45% in Berlin and 47% in Vienna. Lawns and trees predominate in Adelaide's public open space and while these provide a habitat for large nesting birds, there is not much habitat for smaller birds and other animals. This has been provided in the past by vegetation in the typical Australian backyard. It is vital that we maintain urban biodiversity in our backyards by providing vegetation e.g. bushes to protect the smaller wildlife.

Other major factors which bedevil our urban lifestyle are (1) problems with water management (2) inactivity among children and adults with nowhere much to play outside (3) fear that shrubbery in parks could conceal muggers, perverts and snakes and, in addition, be a fire risk.

We must, so Chris maintains, redesign our urban areas for biodiversity and, if this is not done on a public scale, we should create our own biodiversity in our own neighbourhoods or backyards.

Jean Bird

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Once again the time has come for the renewal of your membership. Last financial year members were extremely generous with donations to the Friends when they renewed their membership and this allowed us to fund more new labels for the trees, arboricultural work and to provide some

financial assistance towards employing Mark Ziersch who is such a treasure in the Arboretum. Again the FWA Committee asks that you donate generously in order that the work in our beloved Arboretum may continue. **NB: donations to the FWA are tax deductible.**

Our combined Christmas Party held on Monday 3 December was, as was last year's party, very well attended and pronounced a resounding success. Prior to the party, Jennifer took about 40 people for a walk in the new Dry Rainforest Demonstration Garden where she explained that, although it appears to be a contradiction in terms, Dry Rainforest is a recognised vegetation type which occurs where the rainfall is low. Seven Illawarra Flame Trees, *Brachychiton acerifolius*, have been planted to form a screen and some 30 trees and shrubs have been added. Daryl Kinnane of Native Rainforest Flora, who secured, propagated the wild seed and donated the seedlings was also present and spoke to the gathering.

Guests who chose not to walk in the Arboretum were also catered for, prior to the beginning of the party, by Yvonne and Peggy who gave talks in their favourite rooms in Urrbrae House. Yvonne's choice was the dining room where there are many reminders of Peter Waite's history, e.g. the photograph of the headstone at the grave of Peter's oldest brother, James and where Peter and Matilda's 3rd child, who lived for only 12 days, is also buried, the dining table, with a hidden bell at each end for the purpose of summoning the servants, chairs and sideboard which were bought in Edinburgh in 1876. The sideboard has the initials 'PW' and the family motto engraved on it. The ceiling paper points to Peter Waite's interest in art. He commissioned Aldham Heaton, London, to plan and buy wallpapers, etc for the house (completed in 1891) and this was Heaton's only commission in Australia. Yvonne also talked about the Waite Bequest and Waite's vision for agricultural and pastoral Australia.

Peggy chose to talk about the library and billiard room. She pointed out that, in common with the rest of the lower part of the house, the library was cool and had a lot of natural light. The library houses Peter Waite's personal collection and books associated with the Waite family. There are bound copies of 'Illustrated London News' and 'The Graphic' which sit on a non-original desk. The woodwork in the library is, however, original as is the Heaton ceiling paper. One imagines that members of the Waite family avidly read the English newspapers to keep abreast, albeit somewhat belatedly, with world news and, perhaps, fashion. The billiard room also contains Heaton paper. The splendid billiard table was made in Victoria and transported to Urrbrae House by boat and then bullock cart. The Friends of Urrbrae House had the billiard table refurbished with new baize. The billiard room was the only room in the house where smoking was allowed! Peggy pointed out a small room which was apparently used as a darkroom by one of the Waite girls. Marion Wells, Peter Waite's great granddaughter, told Peggy that it had originally been a lavatory.

Prior to the speeches by the Presidents of the three Friends Groups, the 'Urrbrae House' plaque was unveiled. Each of the Presidents thanked his

Committee members and summarized the work done, their fundraising events, how the money was spent and future commitments. The President of the Friends of the Waite Arboretum gave particular thanks to the Director, Jennifer Gardner, and the President of the Friends of Urrbrae House mentioned the success of the children's program and paid tribute to Yvonne Routledge and Peggy Rowe who have both recently retired.

The Committee wishes to draw your attention to some ways you can assist the Friends and help the Arboretum:

(1) The Friends of the Waite Arboretum have elected to participate in the Gardening Australia Expo (see below for details). **Volunteers are needed to staff the FWA display table. Please see the roster on the tear off slip included with this newsletter and respond promptly if you are able to help.**



First Adelaide Gardening Australia Expo kicks off the 2008 calendar

A new city has been added to the Gardening Australia Expo calendar in 2008. For the first time, South Australians will have their own Expo, tailored to their needs, at the Adelaide Showground, Wayville.

The **Gardening Australia Expo** will be held over three days in Adelaide from February 29-March 2.

This spectacular gardening expo brings ABC TV's popular *Gardening Australia* to life, as its presenters appear on stage to provide advice and answer questions. Other horticultural and landscape industry experts will also be on hand to help create a

dynamic, informative and inspirational event for all gardeners, from beginners to seasoned enthusiasts.

There will be thousands of products to see and buy and non-stop practical gardening demonstrations and talks from several stages.

Don't miss your chance to experience the exciting and inspirational
Gardening Australia Expo.

Where & When: Adelaide Gardening Australia Expo
Adelaide Showground, Wayville
February 29 – March 2, 2008

Open: 9.30am – 4.30pm daily

Tickets: Tickets available at the door.

Groups: Pre-booked tickets are available for groups of a minimum of 10 people at a discounted rate.
To arrange a group call (02) 9452 7575.

Information: Visit www.abcgardeningexpo.com.au or call 02 9452 7575.

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- (2) **For the Basketry SA Exhibition** (see Forthcoming Events), we shall need to provide helpers to staff the exhibition – **see the tear off slip included with this newsletter**. If you are able to donate a few hours of your time during the exhibition, will you please return the slip with your subscription?

- (3) **The President has received information from The Government of SA Office for Volunteers regarding a Free Website and Other Electronic Promotion Development for Community Groups.** If you would be interested in being involved in this program, commencing late February 2008, to promote the Friends of the Arboretum and would like more information, will you please contact Lynda Yates (8298 2452) who has kindly agreed to coordinate the Friends' involvement in this program. Please note that participating organizations are required to make someone available to maintain regular email communication with a student for a period of four months.

Arboretum and Garden Volunteers are always welcome. If you are able to spare Tuesday mornings to help in either of these areas, please contact the Director (8303 7405).

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Friday 7 March: 6 p.m. Official Opening of Basketry SA Exhibition in Urrbrae House. The exhibition will be open to the public from 8 – 16 March

from 11a.m. – 4 p.m. daily. There will be special guided walks on Sun. 9 March and Sun. 16 March at 12 noon and 2 p.m. to view the trees from which material for baskets has been taken.

Monday 31 March: 8 p.m. Urrbrae House. Annual General Meeting. The speaker will be Sheryn Pitman, Sustainable Landscape Project Officer, Dept Environment and Heritage – Science and Conservation, who will present an illustrated talk entitled ‘Sustainable Landscaping and Gardening’.

Sunday 15 June: 2 – 4 p.m. Urrbrae House. ‘Australian Flora in Verse’ – poems selected and read by David Symon. Afternoon tea will be served. Cost - t.b.a.

Monday 18 August: 8 p.m. Urrbrae House. General Meeting. Richard Heathcote, Director of Carrick Hill, will speak on ‘Creative Garden Developments and Innovative Storm Water Harvesting at Carrick Hill’.

Late August/early September: Visit to Ian Roberts’ garden and gallery at Blyth.

Thursday 4 & Friday 5 September: National Wine Centre and Arboretum. TREENET. 9th NATIONAL STREET TREE SYMPOSIUM.