

# THE FRIENDS OF THE WAITE ARBORETUM



## NEWSLETTER

No. 7  
AUTUMN 1996

**Secretary**  
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**Editor**  
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**GENERAL MEETING** on Monday 12 February 1996 at 8 pm

It was more than a full house for this meeting to hear David Lawry, nurseryman at Coromandel Valley, past student of David Symon, member of the Landscape Association of S.A. and totally dedicated to growing trees. His subject was **New Techniques in Developing Advanced Plants**. David Lawry was introduced to the Arboretum as a source of information and material by Frank Ugody, also a foundation Friend and well known for many years for his work in the care of trees. Dr Jennifer Gardner inspired him and encouraged him and we were delighted in his approach to the task. It is a good example of the symbiosis of research and industry.

In this fast and instant era there is much call for advanced species of trees which drop no leaves; have no berries; are vandal proof; flower all year round; are tube grown therefore cheap; and are very BIG. Cross Road is a recent example of a reconstruction project which has used plane trees as tall as 3 to 5 metres to replace the old avenue. It will look superb reasonably soon, as does Hutt St. It is costly though, with each tree costing from \$400 to \$600 and the guard costing \$200!

David gave us information about the methods used for producing these very advanced specimens. A system developed in NSW has been adopted here and it centres on bags and pots, designed to stop roots from spiralling in the pot. Large trees are grown in a bag made of strong, porous textile which is capable of containing the roots in good health and permitting only small roots to reach through the fabric for nourishment outside. Harvested from the

nursery bed by bobcat at the rate of one tree every 40 seconds, the trees can be planted out at any time without delay in establishment.

Native trees are notorious for root problems after transplanting from pots but these pots and bags [which I baulk at trying to describe] seem set fair to enable many varieties of native trees to be used successfully in urban streets and at reasonable cost. Research at the Soils Dept of the Waite Institute is assisting in finding the correct soil mix for producing plants from seeds sown and raised in the same pot.

The role of the Arboretum is important for:

1. displaying different species to growers for trial
2. disseminating cuttings and rootstock
3. testing and trialling in rough conditions
4. the educative role led by Dr Gardner in her presentations to the trade.

David's work in furthering the use of trees appropriate to their setting is very valuable and we all applauded his enthusiasm and obvious success.

Barbara Crompton

#### **FROM THE COMMITTEE - Meetings on 16 January and 20 February, 1996**

- We regret the resignation from the Committee of Barry Dangerfield. As he is in charge of all the grounds around Flinders University he has found it impossible to attend our meetings. We thank him for his helpful contribution.
- Mapping has begun in the Arboretum for a new edition of the Catalogue.
- A new colour brochure is in production to advertise the Arboretum. It will be distributed through libraries, tourist offices, hotels etc. This is another venture made possible by the Friends' funds.
- Members who do not send their subscription will receive a reminder in the Newsletter and, if not responsive, will be contacted. It may be a way of finding out what members want from the Friends e.g. perhaps a name tag might accelerate acquaintance with others.

#### **CORRESPONDENCE**

We have had a letter from a very valued Friend, Betty Westwood, alias The Tree Lady of Strathalbyn. Betty is well known to generations of St Peter's boys, to Friends and Guides of the Botanic Gardens and to Trees for Life members. She has been responsible for promoting revegetation all around Strathalbyn and she has had letters delivered to her by Australia Post under her alias! We want you all to enjoy this letter too, not to blow our own trumpet but to appreciate the spirit of one who has given so much and still cares and contributes.

*"... Thank you for your interesting newsletter - wonderful to read of such activity. It was fascinating to read of the amazing pollination of the Ficus sycomorus. ... I had to read it several times to really understand it. Discussing the miracle of germination, a young visitor said to me, "It fairly blows you." I must send him this article and he will be really stunned! Long years ago one of my pleasures was to wander in the Waite Arboretum, and I used to think what a pity about the sheep grazing there, and the fencing and tree guards, and*

*no understory - also seldom any visitors. How the picture has changed! Wonderful. I regret not being able to come on one of your guided tours - a great way to give the public education, with pleasure. With good wishes, Betty Westwood".*

We wish too that she could come to a meeting as well and talk to us all. I know that we all send her our very best wishes.

Concern has been expressed about the low level of the dam and the threat to the plantings on its banks. The President, Tony Whitehill, wrote to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Adelaide about the possibility of water harvesting on the CSIRO and Waite sites. We reproduce the salient points of the reply, received on 6 February.

*"We are investigating every possibility of maintaining the wetlands in both the short-term and the long-term. ... Hopefully, we can organise a system which will provide a limited volume of water to maintain the wetlands, and a minimum level of water in the dam. ... In the meantime, I have asked that attempts to maintain the plants in the wetlands be supported."*

Barbara Crompton

## **NEW MEMBERS**

A warm welcome is extended to: Ms A. Camp, Gawler East; Davey Family, Unley; Mrs T. Fuss, Kingswood; Mrs N. Gemmell, Strathalbyn; Ms J. Henderson, College Park; Mrs E. Hope, Cherry Gardens; Impact Landscaping, Magill; Mr R. Kretschmer, Beulah Park; Mr J. Lamb, St. Peters; Mr K. Langley, Millswood; McEntee Family, Belair; Mr M. Oreb, Glenelg North; Dr B. Randell, South Brighton; Miss I. Roberts, Auburn; Mr S. Rudduck, Norwood; Ms A. Scheffler, Stirling; Ms D. Smit, Athelstone; Ms V. Smith, St. Marys; Mrs Robertson, Burnside; Mr I. Tinlin, Hawthorndene; Prof. O. Schmidt, Waite Institute.

## **GUIDES**

The Guides gave 21 walks between January and the end of March and are applauded for their effort in very warm weather. Walking patrons included the Coolibah Club, audiences at the Festival Fringe Coffee Concerts, Landscape Association and Horticultural Media Association, Adelaide TAFE Environment Tourist students and participants in the Music and Roses joint event with Carrick Hill. Two new walks are being prepared: Edible Plants Trail and an Aboriginal Plant Trail.

## **ARBORETUM NEWS**

Thirty dead trees and a number of fallen branches were removed recently. I was pleased to offer the timber to members of Woodgroup SA and other artists and craftspeople who will use the unusual wood to create beautiful objects. In return, members of Woodgroup SA have offered to give to the Arboretum some items made from the timbers they collect there, and several donated sculptures and bowls are already on display. Members are also making standard samples from each timber to form a permanent reference collection housed in Urrbrae House. The Woodgroup will also be mounting an exhibition of their works as part of *An Arts Experience*. If any other Friends would like to have future access to wood for artistic purposes, please contact me.

Jennifer Gardner

## AUTUMN IN THE ARBORETUM

by Cate Paull

***Citharexylum fruticosum***

Family VERBENACEAE #783 (Grid C6) Planted 1929

With about 60 species of shrubs and small to medium sized (rarely large) trees, *Citharexylum* are widely distributed throughout tropical and subtropical America. The leaves are simple, sometimes glandular, entire or toothed, opposite or ternate. The flowers are small, often fragrant, and borne usually in axillary or terminal spikes or racemes. The fruit is a small berry-like drupe with thin juicy flesh which in some species is edible.

The best known species is *Citharexylum fruticosum* Miller commonly known as Florida fiddlewood. An evergreen or semi-deciduous slender tree with narrow clusters of small fragrant white flowers, it grows to a height of 6 m with a spread of 3 m. The leaves vary greatly in shape and are shiny yellow-green on the upper surface, turning orangy red before falling. The trunk has rough brown bark becoming fissured with age. The sap wood is light brown and the heartwood is reddish and is described as being heavy, exceedingly hard and close grained. The a specimen in the Arboretum, an attractive neat small tree.

*Citharexylum fruticosum* has been known for 250 years or more in the West Indies as Fiddlewood, said to be a corruption of the name Bois Fidele employed by the early French colonists alluding to the strength and toughness of the timber and not, as is sometimes stated, because the wood was used for making musical instruments.

## References:

- Bodkin, F. (1983). *Encyclopedia Botanica*. Corn stalk Publishing.  
 Little, E. L. Jr and Wadworth, F. H. (1964). *Common trees of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands*. US Dept of Agriculture, Washington DC.  
 Record S. J. and Hess R. W. (1972). *The use and abuse of Americas natural resources*. Arno Press, New York.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND DIARY DATES

**Reminder to start potting up any plants you can offer for sale on Open Days on 13 October and 24 November.**

**General Meetings:** 8 pm on Monday 29 April [AGM], 12 August and 28 October.

The speaker at the AGM will be **Andrew Beale** on **The Emerging Native Food Industry**. Andrew is well known, with Andrew Fielke, for the Red Ochre Grill and Australian Native Produce Industries. He will be bringing food to taste and plants to buy. As usual we will keep business to a minimum but all positions will be declared vacant and you are encouraged to nominate willing workers. The Constitution will be available to those who request that it be sent to them.

**On April 21, Festival of Food** will be the second joint fundraising event in 1996 with Carrick Hill. It will include walks in the Arboretum. An evening gourmet experience featuring unusual foods and botanical commentary is planned for later in the year.

**On 13 October, An Arts Experience** will be the third joint event with Carrick Hill. This will include an exhibition of botanical art, silver jewellery with a botanical theme, and an exhibition of wood carving, wood turning and sculpture. Friends will be invited to the opening of the exhibition at 6 pm Friday 11 October. The exhibition will run for three weeks and a 20% commission on all sales will go to The Friends of The Waite Arboretum.

**From 11 October to 3 November** there will be a **Textiles Display** in Urrbrae House.