



FRIENDS of the National Arboretum Canberra

NEWSLETTER Issue 53 December 2021

Welcome to Summer! And wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

We also very much hope to see you at the joint Friends and NAC End-of-Year Celebration for volunteers on December 13.

The National Arboretum Calendar for 2022 is out now! Get your copy from the Friends (<https://www.arboretumcanberra.org.au/shop>) or The Curatoreum. (thecuratoreum.com)

Other great gifts to consider include

- ❖ The newly-updated Arboretum Book 2021, which will be launched at the End of Year Celebration!
- ❖ Friends' Memberships for your family and friends



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Chair's Report

Dear Friends

It's been quite a year, hasn't it? Let's hope the new year holds better things for us all!

Thank you for your most valuable contribution in whatever way you have supported the National Arboretum Canberra in 2021.

I wish you the compliments of the season and look forward to seeing you at the Arboretum soon. It would be great if you can join us at the End-of-Year Celebration next week, and at the launch of the first Gazebo sponsored by the Friends and to be officially opened early next year. Work was luckily able to progress even despite the lockdown.



The Gazebo is getting very close to completion. With its great position, on the climb to Dairy Farmers' Hill, great views out over Canberra are to be had!

As Manager of the Seat Sponsorship Program on behalf of the Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra, I am regularly approached by members of the public to sponsor seats and picnic settings.

Recently I received such a request for a seat with the loveliest story about its' rationale. I asked the sponsor if I could print her story to share with you. She agreed.



'Tribute to Nicole and Cuthbert Henderson

Our much-loved mother, Nicole Henderson, came to Sydney as a 19-year-old Frenchwoman in 1932. She later met our father, Cuthbert Henderson, who with his family, owned a sheep and cattle property, 'Upper Wantagong', near Holbrook, NSW. After their marriage in 1935, Mum became an Australian citizen. She supported, aided and worked beside Dad while raising five children. Following the sale of the family property in 1950, they moved to Western Victoria, northwest of Hamilton where they bred merinos at 'Warrool'. Then in 1965, they returned to NSW, buying a grazing property, 'Grogansworth', near Yass. Mum relished its proximity to Canberra.

Our parents shared a great love of the land and the outstanding merino sheep industry, to which they made a significant contribution. Following Dad's death in 1980, Mum continued on, assisting our brother as he took up the reins of running 'Grogansworth' while establishing an impressive merino stud. Mum 'retired' to Canberra in 2005 when she was 92 and lived to nearly 102.

Mum's love of the Australian landscape, flora and fauna, was an essential part of her being. And wherever she lived, she created beautiful gardens with trees being a feature. Thus, when the Arboretum started taking shape after the disastrous 2003 fires, she was absolutely delighted and often said it would evolve into a world class facility. She gained great pleasure from visits there and was enormously impressed by the design of the Visitors Centre.'

Signed by Carole Flood, on behalf of the family

Thank you, Carole and family for sharing this delightful story with us. Carole's magnificent seat location is positioned to take in views of the adjacent protected box gum woodland with Mount Painter in the distance. To the west, the Brindabellas provide the perfect sunset viewing.

Kind regards Trish
Trish Keller OAM
Chair Friends of the National Arboretum

Calendar Dates for 2022

There will be lots to do at the Arboretum in 2022 ! Beginning with the launch of the Forest Sculpture Gallery on 25 February. Details below...
Other key dates to note will be:

- 8 March 5.30pm **Launch of the Friends Gazebo**
- 24-26 March **Bonsai Reshaped**
- 12 April, 5.30pm Friends' **General Meeting and Seasonal Talk #1**
- 10 May 5.30pm Friends' **AGM** and Guest Speaker TBA
- July **Launch of Warm Trees** TBC
- 12 July 12.30pm **General Meeting and Seasonal Talk #2**
- 13 September 5.30pm **General Meeting and Seasonal Talk #3**
- 8 November 5.30pm **General Meeting and Seasonal Talk #4**
- December TBC **End of Year Event: Thank You to Volunteers & Friends**

NATIONAL ARBORETUM CANBERRA
FOREST SCULPTURE GALLERY

LAUNCH
Friday 25 February 2022 | 6.30 - 9.00PM

Be one of the first to celebrate and support this bold new interaction of art in the Canberra environment.

Tickets \$150 (includes fundraising donation)



Purchase tickets online at:
forestsculpturegallery.act.gov.au

Discovery Kitchen Garden & Harvest Group Update

Article and photos: Ange McNeilly (unless otherwise attributed).



While all volunteer activities at the Arboretum were cancelled during the ACT's Covid-19 lockdown, for the months of September and October, it was easier for me to attend the Discovery Kitchen Garden as an "essential volunteer worker" as I had a swipecard and could avoid going into the Visitor Centre. Luckily, most of the planting for spring had already been done so maintenance was not too onerous other than cutting back and composting rampant plants such

as borage, Warrigal greens, alyssum as well as the brassicas.



During September, seeds were sown at home of tomatoes, chillies, Jack Be Little mini pumpkins, climbing spinach, Warrigal greens, and French marigolds (only three of the twice-sown marigolds survived due to pests).

In-store personal shopping was not permitted during lockdown, so on September 23, Pete Mealy from the Arboretum Horticultural Team went to purchase some of the available listed summer vegetables for the garden. Before the new seedlings were planted out on the following day, blood and bone was spread over the garden. The few considerably warm days that followed in late September showed that some of the garden soil was hydrophobic, particularly the sunny north-facing side, so *Seasol Super Soil Wetter and Conditioner* was applied.



The Bunnings receipt provided by the Arboretum showed that a 5% discount had been applied to all the purchases made with the PowerPass Card. Lyn Rees, FNAC Treasurer, was requested to follow up to see whether the Friends could obtain such a card for future garden purchases. Happily, this came to successful fruition and we now have the capability to make discounted purchases in the future (and I can buy plants instore should there be more lockdowns). If only we had known about this and had applied for it four years ago! Better late than never though!

The pots containing Floriade plantings were cheerful and a big success with visitors. It is something the Arboretum will consider doing in the future according to Operations Manager, Amalie Shawcross.

October was a busy month in the garden because of the urgency to purchase and plant out as many



summer vegetables and flowers as possible before the hot weather set in. There was little indication at this time that the weather was going to revert back to winter temperatures!

Nevertheless, to beat the crowds before opening following lockdown, on 21 October (and in possession of a PowerPass certificate) the bulk of summer vegetables and flowers were bought in a relatively calm atmosphere where Bunnings Belconnen staff outnumbered customers.

The garden soil was prepared on October 22 and the 43 seedlings were planted out on October 24 with the assistance of Colette Mackay OAM and Cynthia Kimlin. Also this month, the finger limes had been flowering profusely as had the culinary sage and the strawberries have been delighting kids and adults who manage to be around at the right time to pick the red, juicy ripe ones (yes you, Mr Scott Saddler)! At home, seedlings were transplanted into 100mm pots to grow on before planting out or being made ready for sale.



Photo: Debbie Cameron

Covid-19 restrictions and lockdown prevented the staging of Harvest Group market stalls since the end of May this year. Nevertheless, the Christmas Market Stall held on Saturday, 4 December was a great success with a profit of \$2,347. For the year 2021, the Friends' Harvest Group Market Stalls have raised over \$8,500 for Arboretum projects. An extraordinary effort! Many thanks to all the volunteers who devoted many hours of their time, to Arboretum staff for their guidance and assistance with advertising and setting up and a special thank you to Colette for her leadership, incredible energy and coordination to make these events so successful.

Also, for the first time, Lainie Shorthouse from STEP sold three varieties of native plant tube stocks worth \$176. We welcome Lainie to sell at our future market stalls, especially the deliciously scented Chocolate Lilly which I am sure was a hit.

Ian Chambers and Nicole Pietrucha from the Friends Membership Team were at the market stall to spruik the Friends to customers and give out membership brochures. We hope their efforts will be rewarded with increased memberships.



Photo: Ong

A 4-tier shelf unit was purchased to house the many plants that the Discovery Kitchen Garden team have propagated over time. With assistance from Ong, it was not the easiest or most straightforward project and some further adjustment is needed to make the wonky shelves level. The cost of this unit will be generously donated by Colette. Thank you Colette. Plants that have been propagated from the Discovery gardens are rose-scented geranium, chocolate mint, culinary rosemary, maidenhair creeper (including topiaries), blue chalk sticks, echeveria, alyssum, Warrigal greens and strawberry. All these plants have been lovingly tended by the devoted team who also collect seeds and prepare dried harvested herbs such as lavender.

A warm welcome to the newest member of the Discovery Kitchen Garden team, Amanda Downing, who will be working with Nikki Lucas in the garden on alternate Mondays.



Photo: Tracey Bool

The Friend's Wollemi Pine Propagation Project continues to progress well and the most recent nursery visit was on Tuesday, November 30. Tracy Bool from the nursery emailed to say that nine plants were transplanted on October 25 from forest tubes to super tubes to make up the 70 required and wrote that *"Overall, super tube stock has taken over growth of the 200mm stock. Most are around 30-40cm, in both super tubes and 200mm"* (pots).

November 2021 has been Canberra's wettest month on record and the 'wet' is expected to continue throughout December. Canberra had the dubious honour of being the coldest capital city in Australia on November 26.

The soil is soaked, growth is lush but where is the sunshine, heat and warmth for the tomatoes, beans, eggplants, pumpkins, zucchinis, cucumbers, chillies, etc to flower and set fruit? This is great weather for the Arboretum landscape which has never looked so green and if you are a frog or a snail but what about the poor bees, and at home, the Australian Harlequin Bugs do not seem to be put off by the cold and wet as they are mating everywhere in the garden!

"The heat of summer is just around the corner.." writes Jackie Warburton (CityNews, November 25). I sure hope so, as I write this article in winter woollies with the heating on. Not too many people in Canberra will be harvesting tomatoes before Christmas this year! And expect to pay high prices for honey and produce this season as fields and crops are rain damaged!

PS: The maximum temperature on the day of the market stall was 28° and the next day it was a cool 18°! What a rollercoaster for growing produce this season! Happy gardening!

Chat with Cally



The Horticulture Team were involved in the exciting rescue of a Wollemi pine earlier this year.

As a result, a very tall Wollemi arrived in late May, and is now living in one of our 'daleks' at the Arboretum.

The tree is called 'Big John' in thanks to its donor, a Canberra resident in Forrest. John donated the tree to the Arboretum for more people to enjoy as it had outgrown its courtyard home. Since then, it has settled into its new pot and looks perfectly in proportion next to the eave of the southern side of the Village Centre



The wet Spring has meant lots of great sights to see around the Arboretum. Just in time, the Ngala Bus tours have now recommenced and provide tours Wednesday to Sunday for a special tour around the Arboretum. And the Welcome Walks have resumed with the new times of 10.30am, 11.30am and 12.30pm.

The Japanese Dogwood in Forest 8 put on a magnificent floral display.

Don't forget the Forest Walks too - over summer they run at 10am on Saturday, Sunday and Monday. Merry Christmas and see you at the Arboretum!

Cally Earnshaw
Community Engagement Officer

Keeping in STEP

What else can be said except wet, wet and more wet. Our poor *Eucalyptus macrorhyncha* and numerous understorey species are out shopping for SCUBA equipment, and STEP volunteers are coming equipped with gumboots and snorkels.

Despite the wet conditions underfoot, we have had quite a few visitors to Forest 20: David Shorthouse conducted an hour long orientation for three prospective volunteers (and all of them have joined and have attended working bees); Max Bourke AM gave a tour for representatives from the Friends of Blaxland Park, Griffith, demonstrating the native plants which can be successfully grown in Canberra; three STEP representatives met with Brad Pillans on site to discuss the plans for a National Rock Garden at Forest 13 adjacent to Forest 20 and David Shorthouse and Jennie Widdowson conducted a tour for representatives from the National Capital Authority arranged by Suzette Searle (Wattle Week convenor) to view wattles which might be suitable for a project in the Parliamentary Triangle. (See Photo below)



It has also been gratifying to see walkers at various times mid-week in Forest 20. On Wednesday 17 November, there were four “birders” enjoying the birdlife and the relaxing ambience



The number of bird species is increasing. White winged Choughs (see above left) felt enough at home in Forest 20 to build their very distinctive nest and raise three young, and Bill Handke managed to snap a photo of a Gang Gang in a eucalypt near the She-oak Nook.

A less positive matter is damage to gardens and paths. The weekend before lockdown ended, there was considerable damage to an area in the ephemeral wetland.

Base gravel was moved to create ponds, rocks (some of a substantial size) were moved to create a cairn of sorts, covered in mud from the watercourse and gardens, and then “decorated” with plants and flowers pulled out of the ground from nearby display gardens. This was so disappointing.



I hope that the approaching holiday season will be an enjoyable time for you all.

Best wishes for 2022 from the STEP team.

Regards
Judy Smith
President STEP

Update from the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection

Article provided by NBPCA.

The bonsai pictured below is believed to be the oldest tree in Australia to have been grown and designed specifically for bonsai and still alive today. It was kindly donated to the National Bonsai & Penjing Collection of Australia (NBPCA) by Dorothy Koreshoff and

was originally grown by her late husband Vita. Vita arrived in Brisbane, Australia, from Manchuria in 1928, with his parents and sister. Initially because his mother was feeling homesick, Vita was prompted to make a few bonsai, thinking that these would serve to remind his mother of their previous home. This began Vita's interest and enjoyment in creating and growing bonsai, an interest that he continued to enjoy for the rest of his life.

In their home in Brisbane, some of the trees that Vita had propagated were planted into the ground when the decision was made to move from Brisbane to Sydney. However, a number of trees were brought to Sydney at the time of this move, one of them being the pictured "Sawara cypress" (*Chamaecyparis pisifera* 'Squarrosa'), grown from a cutting in 1937. The tree has had many techniques applied to it. It was split down the centre to alter a bar branched appearance, but after 50 years the callous has almost filled the gap. Vita also formed sinews on the trunk by making a sliced cut down the trunk, allowing it to



callous before slicing again and again, which produced depth and appeal as a raised sinew. As time passed, the trunk has developed into the most interesting feature to reflect its age. Tree dimensions – 1200 high (including pot) x 1300 wide.

Inaugural NBPCA Patron Announced

Congratulations and welcome to the team, Mr Lindsay Bebb!

Mr Bebb is our first NBPCA patron. His role as patron will be to assist in forming and reinforcing working alliances with similar bonsai facilities around the world. The term for this position is two years.

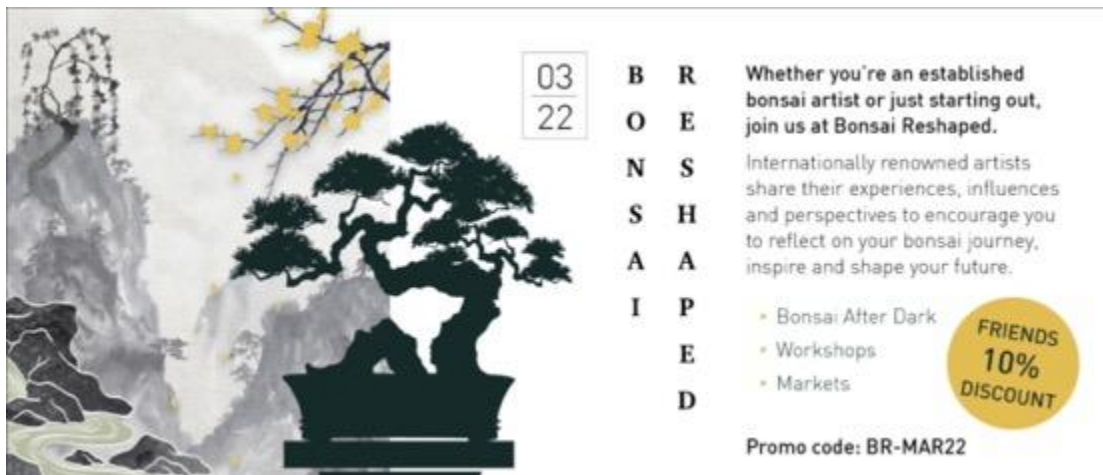
Mr Bebb has been practicing bonsai since 1970, and for 30 years operated his own bonsai nursery in Brisbane, with wife Glenis. He is a Bonsai Artist, Demonstrator, Author, Judge and Teacher. He has demonstrated, conducted workshops, lectured, critiqued and judged bonsai in Washington DC, Guangzhou, Singapore, Portland USA, Puerto Rico,

Taipei and New Zealand, as well as being on the judging panel of many international photographic contests.

Previous and current honorary positions held by Mr Bebb include President Bonsai Society of Queensland 1980-1992; President Australian Associated Bonsai Clubs 1991-2002; President Queensland Nursery Industry Association 1994-1996; Director, 3rd Vice President and 1st Vice President of Bonsai Clubs International 1996-2001; and is currently Director for the Australia/New Zealand region; and President of the World Bonsai Friendship Federation.

Mr Bebb's profile within the global bonsai community will assist the NBPCA achieve its aspirations and strategic goals at an international level. Mr Bebb has had a long involvement with the NBPCA, beginning with the inaugural Bonsai Management Committee, who were instrumental in the establishment of the NBPCA, along with other roles in the Collection Advisory Committee. He has a thorough understanding of the NBPCA and will be a great asset to the team into the future.

Book Now for Bonsai Reshaped in 2022!

A promotional poster for the 'Bonsai Reshaped' event. On the left is a traditional Japanese ink wash painting of a pine tree on a rock. To its right is a date box showing '03' and '22'. Further right, the words 'BONSAI RESHAPED' are arranged in two columns. To the right of the text is a description of the event and a list of activities. A yellow circular badge on the right says 'FRIENDS 10% DISCOUNT'. At the bottom right is the promo code 'BR-MAR22'.

03
22

BONSAI RESHAPED

Whether you're an established bonsai artist or just starting out, join us at Bonsai Reshaped.

Internationally renowned artists share their experiences, influences and perspectives to encourage you to reflect on your bonsai journey, inspire and shape your future.

- Bonsai After Dark
- Workshops
- Markets

FRIENDS 10% DISCOUNT

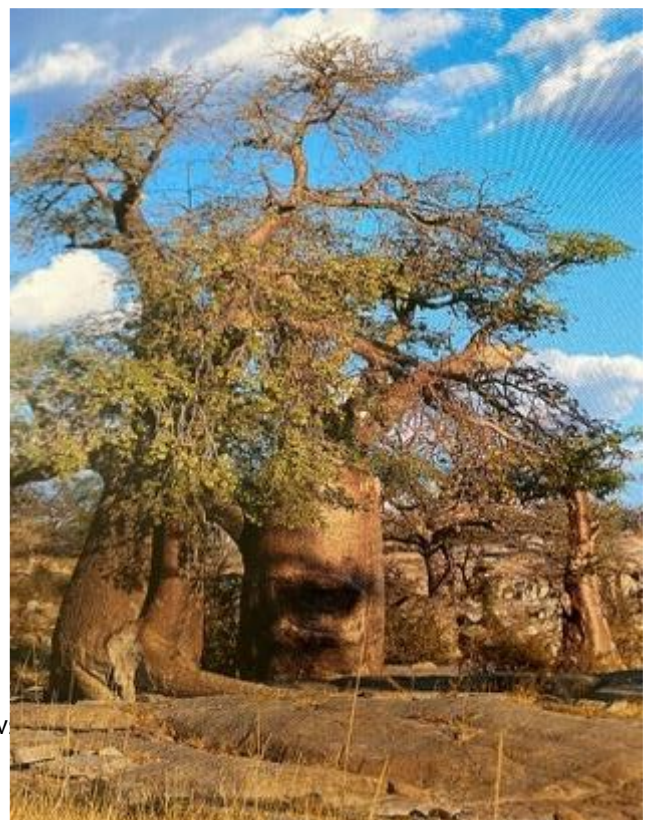
Promo code: BR-MAR22

Farming the African Baobab, *Adansonia digitata*

Contributed by Helen Hemphill

The baobab – a new food source

The African baobab lives on the parched thorn-scrub and low veld in 20 countries in Africa, south of the Sahara Desert. The species *digitata* is the most widespread. These trees dominate the landscape, growing to 25 metres in height, they grow near watercourses making these visible from a long way away.



Their rate of growth is determined by the availability of groundwater or rainfall, they can live up to 2,000 years but it is very hard to determine their age. Old trees are hollow and the tree rings in the bark are impossible to count because they are so faint.

This tree is related to our Silk Floss Tree, *Ceiba speciosa* in Forest 58. It belongs to the same family, Family Malvaceae, which means the flowers and fruits are similar. Baobabs are also a pachycaul with an enlarged trunk and capacity to store water. Their trunk is very thick which is out of proportion to their height, and they have only a few branches. They take between 8 and 23 years to flower.

The large pendulous white flowers last just a day. They smell sour to humans. However, they are food for fruit bats and bushbabies which cover themselves in pollen thus acting as propagators. Some African people believe the tree to be the home of their ancestral spirits, and traditionally they have valued them as sources of food, water, and for medicines and places of shelter.

Today, baobab products are valuable. The fruit, seeds, leaves, flowers, and roots are edible and the fibre from the bark is used to make hats, mats, and ropes.

In recent years the pulp of the fruit has been approved as a food in the USA and Europe, to where it is now exported. But the fruit is only collected from wild trees. Now two scientists in Ghana are now looking at growing these trees commercially for food. If the baobab is grown in plantations it will help to diversify farming as well as improving food security, particularly as these trees store water in their trunks and can keep fruiting during droughts.

The two Ghanaian scientists grafted branches from mature trees that were already fruiting onto seven-month-old seedlings. The first tree began to flower after only 20 months, when it was just 1.7m high. This is a great improvement on the usual eight years or more. Collecting fruit from much shorter trees will also be a huge advantage. Plantations will also protect the wild baobab, which is declining in numbers and being affected by climate change.

References:

“Around the world in 80 trees”, Jonathan Drori, 2018, Laurence King Publishing.

“Remarkable Trees of the World”, Thomas Pakenham, 2002, W.W. Norton & Company Inc.

[Wikipedia.org/wiki/Adansonia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adansonia)

Christmas at The Curatoreum

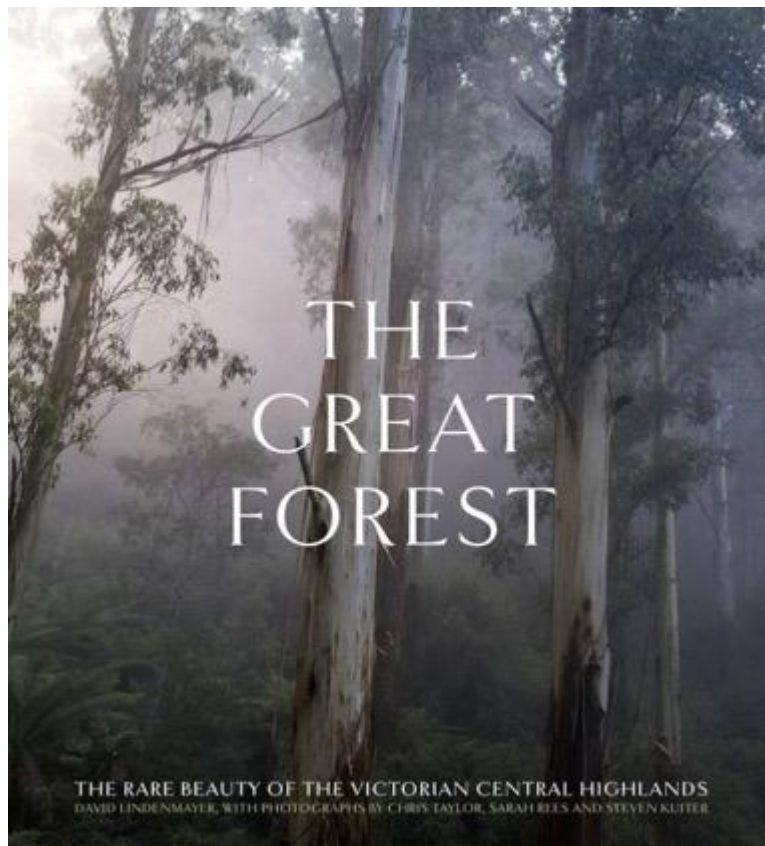
It's my favourite time of year at The Curatoreum, as each day brings more wonderful books, jewellery, and objects into the store, just in time for Christmas. I have far too many favourites to list here, but here are just a few that have particularly caught my eye. Browse online at thecuratoreum.com or come up to the Arboretum and say Hi! Don't forget to show your Friends' card for 10% discount.

Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays XX
Mel & the team at The Curatoreum

The Great Forest: The Rare Beauty of the Victorian Central Highlands

by David Lindenmayer

The city of Melbourne lies on the edge of a vast plain surrounded by a green and blue mountainous rim, whose hills and peaks are home to the magnificent Mountain Ash, the tallest flowering plant on the planet. The Mountain Ash forests were 20 million years in the making, and deep within the valleys are even more ancient, Gondwanic rainforests.



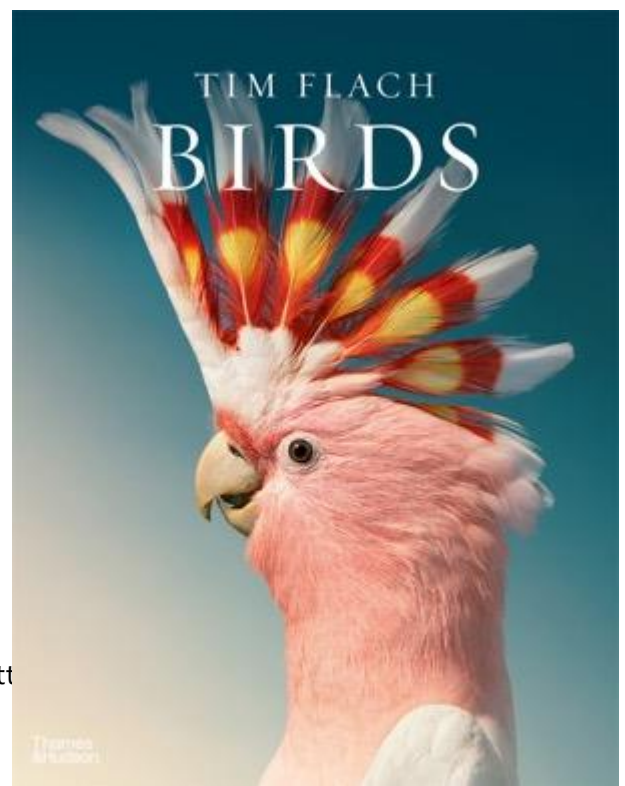
The Great Forest showcases these forests as well as the world's tallest moss, breathtaking snow gum plateaus and the remnants of massive extinct volcanoes. The Great Forest is a tribute to extraordinary landscapes now under severe threat from logging and wildfires, such as the catastrophic fire that struck on Black Saturday in 2009.

It uncovers the intricate webs of life that make Mountain Ash forests so much more than their towering trees. It explores the unique

forests that have sustained the Gunaikurnai, Taungurung and Wurundjeri peoples for tens of thousands of years, and that provide a home for creatures found almost nowhere else.

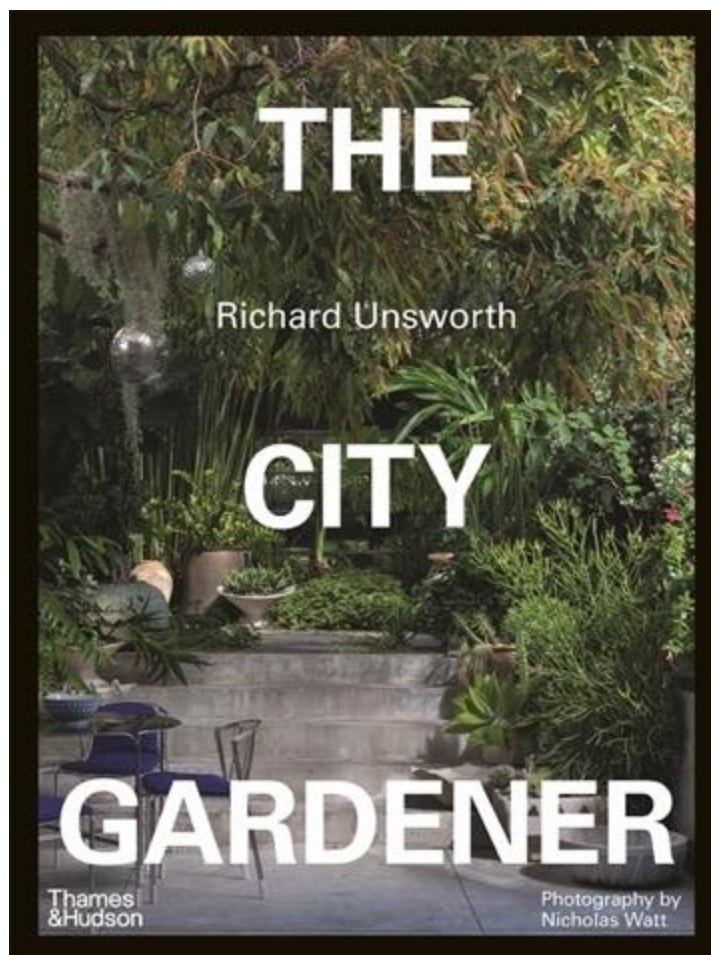
Birds by Tim Flach

Birds are a revelation. Radiating grace, intelligence and humour, they tantalise the human imagination. Working for years in his studio and in the field, internationally acclaimed photographer Tim Flach has portrayed nature's most alluring creatures alertly at rest and dramatically in flight, capturing intricate feather patterns and subtle colouration invisible to the naked eye. From familiar friends, including the king penguin and the black swan, to marvellous rarities, such as the kagu and the Bali myna, Flach conveys the dazzling diversity of birds.



Compelling text by prominent ornithologist Richard O. Prum takes the reader into the deep history of birds, ancestors of the dinosaurs living among us, and sheds light on the distinct behaviours of each species. Discover how female guira cuckoos lay eggs in shared nests, distinguishing their own with unique markings, and why the Nicobar pigeon swallows small colourful stones. Learn of the vulturine guineafowl's penchant for fallen fruit, the common ostrich's rapid growth rate, and more as you navigate your way through these pages. The result of much patience, precision and persistence, *Birds* features more than 130 extraordinary photographs. Putting us face-to-face with some of Earth's most magnetic living beings, Flach evokes the magnificence of the animal kingdom - and the urgent need to protect and defend it.

The City Gardener: Contemporary Urban Gardens by Richard Unsworth



Our urban gardens provide an essential green refuge amid the expanding concrete jungle. Even without the luxury of sprawling suburban lawns or vast garden beds, there are many ways to create unique verdant spaces in the inner-city - from a succulent-laden, full-sun rooftop to an entertainer's semi-tropical courtyard.

The City Gardener demonstrates how inspired design can optimise the space we have, whether large or small, to create a plant paradise. The book explores twenty private gardens created by Richard Unsworth and his design practice, Garden Life.

Ranging from 38 to 1385 square metres, the gardens

run the gamut of possibilities for revolutionising urban home life outdoors. Garden plans detailing layout and materials, as well as full planting lists, accompany each case study, and expert tips on design principles, planting palettes, furnishings and finishes make this the ultimate urban gardening resource. The City Gardener will inspire, educate and empower readers to celebrate and engage with their outdoor spaces.

Help record the Arboretum's history

The Friends are planning to embark on a project that will capture the 'told' and 'untold' history of the Arboretum. It is envisaged the history will be compiled through interviews with the players in all sectors who were involved in the early planning and decision-making that led to the opening of the NAC in February 2013. The Friends' Council, would oversee the project.

Email: contact@arboretumcanberra.org.au If you would like to discuss being involved in this important historical project.

Thank you to all our Sponsors and Contributors

If you have ideas for articles, or items that might be of interest to the Friends such as stories or photos from the Arboretum or further afield, please contact me Nicole Pietrucha on: pietruchanac1@gmail.com. Many thanks to the people who have contributed articles and photos for this and previous issues of the Newsletter, and given generously of your time to write, read and proofread. I could not do it without your help.



How to join the Friends

Visit arboretumcanberra.org.au to join online or to find out more about the benefits of being a member

OR

Email your details to: contact@arboretumcanberra.org.au and pay by funds transfer or cheque

OR

Complete the Application Form and mail it to:

The Secretary, Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra,
PO Box 48, Campbell, ACT 2612, and pay by funds transfer or cheque.

- ☐ Bank details for funds transfer:
Westpac, Petrie Plaza, Canberra, ACT: BSB 032 719.
Account: 375379 – please include surname in description.
- ☐ Cheques payable to: Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra Inc.

Membership type	1 year	2 years
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$45	\$80
<input type="checkbox"/> Household	\$55	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Concession*	\$25	\$40
<input type="checkbox"/> Club/Association**	\$100	\$180
<input type="checkbox"/> Business**	\$500	\$900

*Pensioners, health card holders & students
**See website for details

Membership Application Form

Membership type:

Title: First name:

Last name:

OR

Club/Association/Business name:

Address:

State: P/code:

Email address for newsletter and updates:

Phone: Mobile:

Number of parking passes:

Total amount payable (include membership/s and parking pass amounts): \$

Signature:

Date:

Parking Pass 1 year

☐ Friends' Annual Parking Pass \$35 per vehicle

For a parking pass, please include your vehicle's registration number.

Note: An Individual Member is entitled to apply for one Parking Pass at the Friends' rate and a Household Member is entitled to apply for two Parking Passes at the Friends' rate.

Parking passes are issued for one year from the date of purchase.