

# Friends of The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden, *Port Augusta Incorporated* **Newsletter**

Nov 2015

## President's Report *by John Zwar*



Zebra Finches - Georgie Sharp

Hello Friends. You will see from the Newsletter that there is much happening at the Garden. As I live in Adelaide I am not always aware of developments at the AALBG from day to day, but I do receive favourable reports from people who have visited, enjoy our guided tours and comment on the developments and improvements which have taken place, especially in the last few years. This is a great reflection on the management, paid employees and Friends volunteers who all work well together in a spirit of true co-operation for the betterment of the AALBG.

I have just returned from the biennial BGANZ Conference (Botanic Gardens Australia New Zealand) held this time in Wollongong NSW, a very attractive lush green city with high rainfall year round and rain forest pockets extending right into the suburbs. It was inspirational hearing presentations from Botanic Garden managers from the two countries, catching up with colleagues and meeting new ones. One of the presenters was Professor Richard Benfield from the USA who was our guest at our Friends 30th celebrations in July last year. He gave two very stimulating presentations. Many people attending have heard of the AALBG, some have visited and many are keen to visit. I was even asked if we would host a BGANZ conference in future, but as the next one will be in Adelaide that is very unlikely in the foreseeable future. I was impressed that our relatively low budget Garden provides many of the services that much better funded and staffed gardens do, and that we maintain high standards. Indeed a number of people I met made this comment and some of our innovations were referred to in presentations by various speakers!

The Wollongong Botanic Garden is very impressive, well staffed and maintained and trains young horticulturists in conjunction with Illawarra TAFE. The plant collection is diverse, both native including rain forest remnants, and exotic plants and collections as well. During the Conference we were taken to a large Grevillea garden developed by a local nurseryman and Grevillea enthusiast with complementary plantings of other mainly native species. Many plants, especially those from drier regions are grafted on to rootstocks of related species to enable them to survive the wet conditions. I was surprised to see a number of *Eremophila* species growing well, including *E. nivea*. Another local enthusiast had developed a large impressive Rhododendron garden, now managed by his son with just a few retired volunteers to help. Again there were many complementary trees and shrubs and remnant rain forest. I took the opportunity to visit national parks in the Illawarra Region after the conference and saw many native species including the NSW floral emblem, the Waratah, flowering in the wild and enjoyed spectacular tablelands, escarpment and rain forest areas. On my way home I visited the very impressive Blue Mountains Botanic Garden at Mount Tomah, the only botanic garden in the world located in a world heritage area, the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney celebrating 200 years next year, and the magnificent Chinese Gardens at Darling Harbour – all well worth seeing if in Sydney. I now have hundreds of pictures to show my TAFE horticulture and landscape design students and interested clubs and garden societies and found the whole time away stimulating and interesting. The world of plants is never dull! May you all enjoy a very happy Christmas season and we look forward to seeing many of you at our Garden next year.



Banksia Moth (*Psalidostetha banksiae*) Caterpillar feeding on *Hakea leucoptera* in the Garden  
- Bernie Haase



Adult Banksia Moth which was found in the Courtyard this year. They feed on Banksia, Hakea and Grevillea plants - Bernie Haase

### GUEST SPEAKER - KEN WARNES

Next Meeting: to be held in the Conference Room at the AALBG Visitor Centre, 5th December, 2015.

Ken Warnes is a farmer at Owen who has long-held love of the Australian Inland and desert flora, specialising in a study of the genus *Eremophila*.

He first ventured into the Gawler Ranges in 1967 and has returned about 25 times to study and enjoy this unique region. He has led groups of up to 24 plant enthusiasts on camping expeditions and he recently introduced his six grand-children aged 7 years to 10 weeks to the area.

"Grandpa, I can't believe I'm really here.  
Why are the rocks like they are?"

Ken's presentation will focus on the desert flora of this region.



Guest Speaker Ken Warnes with  
AALBG Life Member Fay Poole - Peter Hall

### DIARY DATES

**Next Meeting: Saturday 5th December.**  
1pm in the AALBG Conference Room.

**Thursday Night Dinners at the Bluebush Cafe.**  
AALBG - 12th November through to 17th December.  
Available to individuals and/or groups.  
Bookings essential, phone: 8641 9117.

### Christmas Shopping Extravaganza!

Exclusive to Friends & Corporate Members - Specials, Raffles, Nibbles and Regional Wines for Tastings.  
Tuesday 1st December, 6-8pm.  
at the AALBG Gift Shop.

### Birdlife Australia Club, Port Augusta and District, Field Trips.

- Sunday 15th November - Mount Gullet Beach.  
Meet in Mambray Creek Car Parking Bay 7.30am.  
Wear beach walking footwear.
- Sunday 6th December - AALBG.  
Meet in Car Park 7.30am.

Christmas Lunch follows in the Bluebush Cafe.

**Bring sturdy footwear, hat, sun protection,  
morning tea, lunch if staying longer and binoculars.**

**For more information, ring:**

**Peter on 8642 5723 or Greg on 8648 6630.**

### All of January Plant Sale

Special prices, special deals!

Further details will be on Facebook and the Radio.



# Chris's Observations by Chris Nayda



*Eremophila miniata*



*Eremophila miniata*

Two variants of *Eremophila miniata* are now flowering in the extended Eremophila Garden at the AALBG. One has white sepals (which enlarge with age) and pink corolla (flower); the other one is all pink. The bushes are about one metre high now but will eventually grow into a large shrub or small tree 5m x 4m.



*Eremophila mackinlayi*

Native Blue-banded Bee on *Eremophila mackinlayi*.



Banksia Moth (*Psalidostetha banksiae*) Caterpillar

This caterpillar has been found on a number of hakeas at the AALBG over the last two months. It was first seen at the AALBG in 2005 on *Hakea macrocarpa*. The adult moth is mainly white with black markings, (See page 1).



Raspy Cricket

A male Raspy Cricket from Family Gryllacrididae, identified by Kristen from Bugs & Slugs.



Ronda Hall speaking with staff and volunteers.

Ronda Hall inservicing staff and volunteers with updates on the latest propagating techniques in the Arid Smart Nursery, AALBG.

## Living Icon by Fran Paynter

**Port Augusta City Councillor Fran Paynter's speech delivered before she unveiled the plaque recognising the contributions of the Friends to the AALBG.**

It has been said many times that Australia would come to a halt without its volunteers. The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden is a shining example of the voluntary work done by a group of dedicated people with a vision they believed in and the passion and determination to make it happen.

The Friends of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden was formed in 1984 under the leadership of John Zwar, the Parks and Gardens officer of the Local Council at that time. With the support of the Local Government, State and Federal Governments, the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide and Western Mining, the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden became a reality in 1993.

Since then the Friends, in collaboration with Port Augusta City Council, have committed to work in the nursery, Garden, promotion, guided tours, providing financial support for projects and research, applying for funding, and encouraging support through their network which is not only national but international.

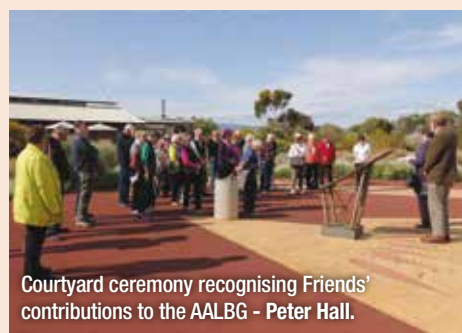
In more recent times they have worked closely with Council and their employees to take the Garden to a new level. The Eremophila Garden has been extended to include a new area of plantings, one kilometre of

disability access paths installed, new seating placed in the Garden with more to come, a bird identification book published and then a second revised edition of that. A similar book of Plants of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden is almost ready for sale, and funds have been loaned to the City Council to purchase solar panels and a new tractor and other incidentals that the friends feel that they can cover. Friends membership is increasing with new Corporate Members involved, three Arid Smart Gardening Expos have been held, along with events like the Wattle Walk and Breakfast with the Birds, and the Bush Tucker Garden has been updated to include a new track network, landscaping and additional plantings.

At the same time, the constant maintenance of the Garden continues to see countless hours of weeding, new plantings, pruning, mentoring of staff, particularly trainees, and the propagation of stock for the Arid Smart label.

The Garden is truly a community facility; funded by the community through Council, supported by the community with volunteers, friends and patrons; and in turn supporting the community by supplying an amazing recreational space and injecting millions into the local economy through tourism.

So it is fitting that there is a reminder in the Garden of the selfless efforts of the Friends who have created this living icon for Port Augusta.



Courtyard ceremony recognising Friends' contributions to the AALBG - Peter Hall.



City Councillor Fran Paynter & FAALBG President John Zwar - Peter Hall.



# Bird Talk from the Garden *by Peter Langdon*

## ANOTHER BIRD SPECIES FOR THE GARDEN

On the morning of 16th July 2015, fellow birdwatcher Chris Baxter and I noticed three Honeyeater species (White-plumed, White-fronted and Singing) harassing another Honeyeater species in the Eremophila Garden. This bird was a Grey-fronted Honeyeater (*Lichenostomus plumulus*), a fairly common bird in the nearby Flinders Ranges, but this one was the first for me in the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden. The list of honeyeater species for the Garden now numbers 15 and the total bird species 145.

On 17th October 2015 the Garden hosted over 25 visitors from the Fleurieu Bird Watchers. They were very impressed with the Garden and the birds, and enjoyed the meals from the Café and purchased gifts from the Gift Shop.

The attached photo is of the Grey-fronted Honeyeater in the Garden, feeding on the flowers of the *Eremophila biserrata*.



Grey-fronted Honeyeater feeding on *Eremophila biserrata* - Peter Langdon

## Time Travel *Courtyard Development over 20 years - by Bernie Haase*

**1995 November** - marked out, constructed.  
**December** - projection sundial installed.

**1996 March** - mulched.  
**April** - perimeter garden planted.  
**May** - irrigation installed.  
**June** - garden beds planted.

**2003 July** - some rows replanted with other species.

**2009 March** - redevelopment started.

**2010 February** - cleared of existing plants and sand mounds constructed.  
**March** - sub-surface irrigation installation started.

**2012 March** - plantings increased.  
**June** - annuals bed constructed.  
**August** - sub-surface irrigation completed.  
**November** - irrigation connected to central control unit

**2013 January** - irrigation upgrading completed.  
**February** - extra plantings.  
**May** - perimeter rammed-earth wall constructed.

The original courtyard plantings were alternate, curving rows of *Eremophila maculata* varieties such as the yellow (aurea), the local pink, a red and var. *brevifolia*. These were the green-foliaged plant rows. The grey-foliaged plants were *Maireana sedifolia* (Pearl Bluebush) and the end rows were *Cratystylis conocephala* (Bluebush Daisy), some of which are still there now. There was also a row of *Olearia pimelioides* (Showy Daisy Bush) but they were not as successful as a dense row because plants would die leaving gaps in the row.

The Courtyard currently showcases numerous species of plants that grow in sand.



**June 1996**  
First plantings in the mulched Courtyard.



**Approx. 1999**  
First plantings grow displaying alternating rows of contrasting colours.



**July 2015**  
The re-developed Courtyard.



**June 1996** FAALBG Volunteers Left to Right: A. Murphy, M. Kosonen, F. Poole, U. Meese, J. Brodie, J. Laister, M. Haase, A. Daw, M. Vile.



**Approx. 2002**  
First plantings of *Eremophila* and Bluebush mature further.



**July 2015**  
Poached- Egg Daisies thrive in the Annuals Bed.

## Contacts

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# Peter's Plants *by Peter Hall*

## SCAEVOLA COLLARIS

*Scaevola collaris* is a plant that grows locally around Port Augusta to about 0.5m x 0.75m. It has mid-green, succulent leaves that are about 5 to 7cm long and about 5 to 8mm wide. The flowers are a most unusual colour being a creamy yellow with a tinge of mauve.

*Scaevola collaris* likes to grow in well-drained, sandy soil and can be found growing near salt lakes at times. The name *Scaevola* comes from Latin, meaning left-handed, and refers to the one-sided flowers that all *scaevolas* have.



*Scaevola collaris* - Peter Hall

## What's New in the Garden *by Joy O'Brien*

### What a difference two months makes!

Last newsletter I mentioned how the self-sown everlasting daisies in the courtyard garden were just peeking through, but now, there is an abundance of yellow and white.

The bird-life is amazing with the wattle bird, willy wagtail and crested pigeon everywhere, especially around the pond. It is delightful sitting in the Café and watching them come in to drink.

The plants in the extension to the Eremophila Garden have grown profusely since my last visit and the plants look rejuvenated after some winter rains. Obviously some pruning and weeding has been done with everything looking fresh and new.

Three more garden seats have been installed and it was just lovely sitting and enjoying the view. I also noticed some small metal sculptures which I hadn't seen before, e.g. wombat, bilby, birds and emu.

Numerous ground cover species including pig face is flowering beautifully. The following plants are also in flower: showy groundsel (*Senecio magnificus*), cotton saltbush (*Chenopodium curvispicatum*), poached egg daisies (*Polycalymma stuartii*) and golden everlasting (*Xerochrysum bracteatum*), to name just a few.

New plantings seem to have been added to all parts of the Garden together with the additional garden seats. What an asset they are! Visitors, whether younger or older or in-betweeners, can stop, sit, rest, and enjoy the Garden.

The Friends Committee is looking for more donors for provision of a further 14 garden bench seats. \$700 provides the bench, the plaque (recognising either the donor or in memory of a loved one) and the concrete footing. If you can see your way clear to donate to this worthy cause it would be greatly appreciated. Please note that these donations are deemed to be tax deductible and that tax deductible receipts are issued.



- Peter Hall

## Corporate Members News Flash!

Remember that you have until this Christmas to take up your 2015 entitlement to a free use of the Conference Room at the Visitor Centre at the AALBG.

Reminder that annual subscriptions fall due on 1st January 2016.

## Join or Renew Subscription



### TO JOIN OR RENEW SUBSCRIPTION

Fill in this form and send with remittance to:

**Friends of the Australian Arid Lands  
Botanic Garden Port Augusta Inc.**

PO Box 2040, Port Augusta SA 5700

[www.australian-aridlands-botanic-garden.org](http://www.australian-aridlands-botanic-garden.org)

Enclosed is my:

Subscription \$ .....

Donation \$ .....

TOTAL \$ .....

PLEASE TICK: ☐ New Membership ☐ Renewal of Membership

NAME: Dr / Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms: .....

Address: .....

Date: .....

Email Address: .....

Any donation will be gratefully accepted. Donations of \$2.00 and over are tax deductible. Please make cheques payable to 'Friends of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden Inc.' Receipts will be posted. A SAE would be appreciated but not obligatory.

### DIRECT DEBIT BANKING DETAILS

BSB: 035-065

Account No.: 164 604

Account Name: FAALBG

Reference: 'name of person banking'

Please notify by email to

[friends@aalbg.sa.gov.au](mailto:friends@aalbg.sa.gov.au)

### MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION

Annual: \$30.00