

Friends of The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden,

Port Augusta Incorporated | ABN 72 979 332 415

Newsletter

November 2018

President's Report *by John Zwar OAM*

**#1 REGIONAL
BOTANIC
GARDEN IN
AUSTRALIA**

**AUSTRALIAN
GEOGRAPHIC**

Eremophila mirabilis - Peter Hall

Our next meeting on December 1st will be our last for the year and will feature an overview of progress at the AALBG in the last year, presented by Brian Reichelt and Peter Hall. The meeting will be followed by end of year Christmas nibbles. It has certainly been a good year for the Garden with record visitor numbers - 106,967 for the last financial year. It is estimated that visitors to the AALBG spend close to \$20 million a year in Port Augusta which is a significant boost indeed to the local economy. The Guest speaker at our last meeting was Jane Edmanson from ABC TV's Gardening Australia and she presented a wide ranging talk covering many aspects of horticulture with a lively discussion following. The next morning Jane led a very well attended walk around the Garden stopping to discuss many of the plants along the way. We had Friends and visitors from many parts of SA and interstate including Longreach in Queensland and even one from Ecuador! Jane enjoyed her visit and was very impressed by the Garden. Recently a Toyota agency in Port Augusta sponsored a National Tree Day event at the Garden and children planted plants around the newly developed picnic area. Toyota purchased the trees and plants from the Garden and provided the tools and equipment for children to use. Our small overworked band of Friends volunteers has erected a very impressive large picnic shelter near the bus park in the garden. It was paid for by a fund my neighbourhood grant which we won last year. We have a couple of new volunteers at the Nursery as a result of our TV advertising of the Garden which highlights the role of the Friends. Recently former committee member and garden guide extraordinaire, Jim Hayward and wife Wendy plan to leave Port Augusta for Victor Harbor in January. Jim will certainly be missed, but assures us he will return every few months to help out with the successful bonsai group he established at the AALBG. Last month I applied for BHP Community Grant funding for 1 Km of the 7 Km feral proof fence to be erected around the AALBG and for funding for a replacement Gravograph machine (used for producing our plant labels). The Friends provided the Garden's original basic Gravograph machine, but it is worn out after producing thousands of engraved metal labels. We will be notified in November if our applications have been successful. Recently the Friends were nominated for a Port Augusta Business Award and I completed the detailed application paperwork. Results are to be announced in late October. I have also corresponded with the Minister for Environment and Water seeking funding assistance for Port Augusta Council to help cover the AALBG budget shortfall but this was unsuccessful. (The state government funds the three Adelaide Botanic Gardens).

I was very disappointed to hear that in the recent state budget the government plans to close the TAFE SA Urrbrae campus, the centre for horticulture, Landscape Design,

Conservation and Land Management, Arboriculture and Turf and Irrigation training in SA, where I lectured for 12 years until my retirement in March this year. This well equipped purpose built campus cost many millions of dollars and trains the vast majority of students in these fields and has so many students that lecturers are being brought in from other campuses, but the government states the campus is underutilised. Where will SA's horticulturists of the future come from; interstate or overseas?

Currently the major project for our Friends Garden Construction volunteers is the replacement of the deteriorating 7 Km boundary fence, with feral proof fencing as used at the Arid Recovery Project near Roxby Downs. We have a severe problem with rabbits and sometimes feral goats damaging plantings and feral cats and foxes killing native fauna - birds, small animals and reptiles. At present, with drought conditions a large number of kangaroos and flocks of emus are on site causing considerable damage to Garden plantings. As mentioned some funding has been sought from BHP and other corporate assistance from large businesses in the region is being sought. We are seeking donations large and small to complete this fence replacement, and have already received some generous assistance from Friends. The fencing is \$14,246 per Km for materials and \$2,000 per Km to erect, so this is a significant project indeed. The new fence has a life expectancy of 50 years so will adequately protect the Garden from feral and other grazing animals well into the future. Materials will be purchased from a local supplier at a favourable price.

Both Port Augusta Council and the Friends are continuing to assist with funding research at the AALBG by The University of Technology Sydney into the heat tolerance of plants. Professor Andrea Leigh states: "how grateful I am for the Friends' ongoing support for our work at the Garden! Please pass on my enthusiastic gratitude! Alicia, Kirsty and Neil are all analysing results and writing up papers for publication. They also are planning to present their work at the Ecological Society of Australia conference in November. Their presentations on this work are always really well attended and well received. The AALBG is firmly on the map with respect to plant thermal tolerance research in Australia".

I look forward to seeing some of you at our December meeting and wish all Friends a very happy Christmas and new year.

Best wishes, John Zwar - OAM, President.



John Zwar

NEXT MEETING

Venue: WMC Herbarium and Meeting Room, AALBG

Date & Time: Saturday 1st December, 2018 at 1pm

Guest Speakers: Long-time Friends of the AALBG, Peter Hall and Brian Reichelt, both tireless workers and passionate supporters of the Garden, using photos to illustrate their points, will outline what Friends have achieved in the past twelve months in partnership with Garden Staff. You will be amazed and delighted by the scale of contribution achieved by so few Friends.

Please note: At the conclusion of the meeting, after a short break, there will be Nibbles (drinks at own cost) for Friends as an end-of-year and Christmas celebration.



Peter Hall & Brian Reichelt

DIARY DATES

Saturday 1st December at 1:00pm

Friends Meeting, WMC Meeting Room.

Saturday 2nd March 1:00pm

First Friends Meeting for 2019.

Additional meetings for 2019 are on 1/6, 31/8 AGM, 30/11.

Bird Watching Field Trips of the Birdlife Australia & Birds SA Clubs PORT AUGUSTA GROUP

Please bring binoculars, sturdy footwear, hat, sun protection, morning tea and lunch.

Contacts: Peter 8642 5723 / 0457 708 859 or Bernie 0419 863 834 / b.haase@telstra.com

Sunday 25th November:

Weeroona Island/Port Pirie Wetlands.

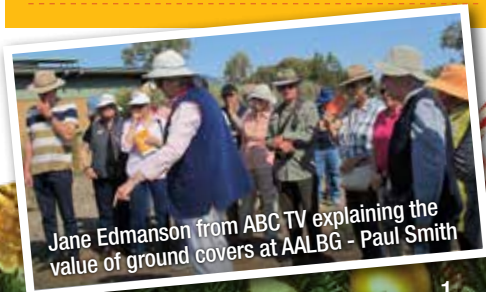
Meet at Weeroona turnoff at 8:00am.

Sunday 9th December:

Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden.

Meet in the Car Park at 7:30am.

Christmas Lunch in Café will follow.



Jane Edmanson from ABC TV explaining the value of ground covers at AALBG - Paul Smith

Volunteers in The Garden *by Brian Reichelt*

As per our last newsletter our Propagating Group continues its valuable contribution to the Garden by continuing to propagate, pot up and prepare plants for sale.

Plant Sales attended by the Friends now amount to \$18,010.00 in takings for the Garden with the last sale being Burra Garden Festival. Hawker Field Day was staffed by Ronda and Peter Hall, Bev Reichelt and me. The Burra 2 Day Garden Festival was staffed by Jan and Ian Hopwood, Karen Coleman, Bev Reichelt and me.

As mentioned in the last newsletter kangaroos have become a problem in the Garden due to the extremely dry year, but on the plus side the kangaroos have virtually eaten all of the wild turnip that grew this year (a blessing in disguise) which certainly saved the Volunteers a lot of time weeding. Volunteers and Staff installed two poles and banners at the beginning of the entrance path to the Garden to welcome visitors. The modified poles came from the now closed Homestead Park and were part of the overland telegraph display; and the banners were purchased by the Friends. It is planned to install up to three more along the entrance path in the future to advise visitors as to some of the services available at the Garden.



Entrance Path poles and banners - Brian Reichelt

The picnic shelter construction is completed, and the surrounding area has been planted with around 120 plants as part of the landscaping of the area. The planting was sponsored by Northpoint Toyota as part of their Landcare involvement and children from the area were invited to come along and plant the trees with assistance from Friends and Garden Staff. By the next Newsletter it is anticipated that table settings will have been installed under the shelter along with a drinking water bubbler with a dog watering point for travellers who have their dogs with them.



Gabion seating under picnic shelter is completed - Brian Reichelt



Landscaping progress in picnic shelter area - Brian Reichelt



Many hands make light work around the picnic shelter area - Brian Reichelt



New plantings around the picnic shelter area - Brian Reichelt



New plantings at the side and front of the picnic shelter area - Brian Reichelt



October 3 2018, Brian Reichelt & Tony Robinson, AALBG - Bernadette Reichstein

Thanks to a generous donation of \$29,892 from the Friends, \$1,000 from Peter and Ronda Hall, \$200 Shirley Moy, \$200 Port Augusta Caravan Club, \$350 from Augusta Automall, and \$4,000 from the Garden budget we have purchased fencing materials to build a new feral proof fence on the northern boundary of the Garden. Friends and Staff are busily dismantling the old fence ready for the contractor to install the new fence. Completion of this section is proposed by the end of October. It is proposed that the Friends will raise funds to complete the last 6 kilometres of fence by the end of 2019. If you would like to assist with this project donations will be gratefully accepted, as a total of around \$70,000 is needed to complete the project. Your continued support by becoming a Friend and making donations will continue to assist in the growth and promotion of our wonderful Garden.



Removal of part of old boundary fence - Brian Reichelt



Removal of part of old boundary fence - Brian Reichelt



Removal of part of old boundary fence - Brian Reichelt



New Picnic Shelter - John Zwar

Bird Talk from The Garden *by Peter Langdon*

The extremely dry conditions at present are making birds a bit scarce. However, a few Black Honeyeaters have been about the Eremophila Garden since mid-September, and are still present.

Also a few White-winged Trillers, mostly males, in breeding and eclipse plumage have been seen throughout the Garden. Sighted a Red-backed Kingfisher in the first week of October, the first one for the spring.

Rainbow Bee-eaters were sighted on 17th October and a huge flock of Little Corellas (c. 250+) has been feeding on the seed pods of the mulga trees, and other acacias, and also on *Eremophila duttonii*.



Corellas eating *Eremophila duttonii* drupes
- Brian Reichelt



Corellas eating seed of Mulga
- Brian Reichelt

Jim's Jottings *by Jim Hayward*

FIRST SATURDAY CLUB

Chris led a great 'Wattle Walk' on Saturday 4th August.

Thanks to Anne for leading her first free Friends tour on October 6th.

The next 'First Saturday' gathering is on November 3rd when we will visit the Great Victoria Desert region of the Garden.

TOUR GROUPS

Our records show that 729 individuals registered for tours led by volunteer Friends for the 2017-2018 year ending 30th June 2018.

Recently Flinders View Primary School and Melrose Primary visited for tours. Your tour guides do keep busy!

And just in case you missed it, view some thoughts on Arid Plants by entering: <http://tenplay.com.au/channel-eleven/scope> into your search engine. Look for Season 4, Episode 62 of this Scope Children's program. We feature soon after the 6 minute mark.

BIG FRIENDS

The fourth gathering for the year of our Friends Bonsai Interest Group was held on Saturday October 6th. We each brought along a plant to critique... and have found that the hardest thing to do is prune! But, with encouragement from each other, we are working on that. The shop has now sold 25 Australian native bonsai over the last 2 years.



Big Friends Gathering, 18 May
- Jim Hayward



Melaleuca after pruning
- Jim Hayward

Peter's Plants

by Peter Hall

Eremophila mirabilis (mirabilis meaning wonderful, extraordinary) refers to its grey, warty leaves, and its unusual, coloured flowers. The flowers are a butter-yellow with reddish-purple spots. *Eremophila mirabilis* will grow to about 1.5 metres in height. It is very hard to propagate, the most suitable method being grafting. It's a good plant to grow in a pot. *Eremophila mirabilis* grows naturally in Western Australia.



Eremophila mirabilis - Peter Hall

Chris's Observations *by Chris Nayda*

BIRD DROPPING SPIDER

I have been monitoring a Bird Dropping Spider at AALBG since 30th July. They are really well camouflaged as their sacs look like bird droppings. They only feed on army worm moths and the adult doesn't make a web. She produces a string of pheromone covered mucous that attracts the moth to her.

Her abdomen was quite large when I first saw her (first photo) but now after producing another 5 sacs (8 in total) it's much smaller (2nd photo - spider is in lower right hand corner). The sacs have not hatched yet (17th September). They are usually found in citrus trees but this one is in an acacia tree.

The spider must be exhausted.

We thank Kristen Messenger from Bugs n Slugs for the information about the spider.



Tim, Adrian, Ollie and Ben, from Adelaide Botanic Gardens, with Friends Vice President Brian Reichelt - Chris Nayda

VISIT BY TRAINEES

On 17th Sept 2018, four Garden Trainees from the Adelaide Botanic Gardens drove to the AALBG and were shown around many areas of the Garden by Brian Reichelt and Chris Nayda, ending up at the nursery to find out how Staff and Friends manage the Garden and to see the plant collection. Many questions were asked and the boys took lots of photos and bought plants from the nursery shop. It was suggested it be an annual trip.

VISITOR NUMBERS RISE

Visitor numbers for calendar year:

2016: 94095

2017: 99076

With totals for the three remaining months of 2018 yet to come in the visitor numbers are looking very promising: 86441 so far. With 25000+ anticipated for Oct Nov Dec together, numbers may reach 111000 or more.



Calytrix tetragona
- Chris Nayda



Calytrix tetragona
- Chris Nayda



Calytrix tetragona
- Chris Nayda

CALYTRIX TETRAGONA

Calytrix tetragona is an Australian native shrub commonly called Fringe-myrtle. It grows across many parts of southern Australia in high and low rainfall areas. When in flower it's a spectacular plant.



Bird Dropping Spider
- Chris Nayda



Jane Edmanson, Fay Powell, & John Zwar at the Quandong Cafe in Quorn
- Geraldine Davis

2018 Corporate Members

2018 CORPORATE MEMBERS OF FRIENDS OF THE AUSTRALIAN ARID LANDS BOTANIC GARDEN

We welcome these additional corporate members and encourage Friends to patronise their business.
Don't forget to mention that you are a Friend of the AALBG and that we appreciate their business participating as a corporate member of the Friends.

**SPENCER GULF
SECURITY SERVICE**



NORTHPOINT



Kudos For The Garden

On 20th October Bernadette Reichstein et al were very honoured to receive two awards for the AALBG at the 2017/18 Rowe Partners Business Port Augusta Outstanding Business Awards in the following categories:

- "Excellence in Hospitality & Tourism"
- "Excellence in Delivery of Services (by a not for profit or Government Department)"

Bernie says, "A big thank you to the Port Augusta City Council, our hard working volunteers and Friends of Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden (FAALBG), our staff and of course the Port Augusta community for their ongoing support. Well done also to the hard working Business Port Augusta crew who put in a lot of hard work to run such a successful night - it was a lot of fun and a great positive vibe in the room."

We are excited that the AALBG has been named as a finalist in two categories for the 2018 SA Tourism Awards (1. Ecotourism 2. Tourism Attraction). The Flinders Ranges and Outback Region is well represented with many other tourism operators also being named as finalists. Bernadette Reichstein has once again done us proud with her comprehensive submissions and we look forward to the announcement of winners on 9th November.



Reminder

Are you financial?

Renewals for Corporate Memberships for the 2019 year are due 1st January, 2019.

Renewals of Memberships for Friends (singles & families) were due on 1st July 2018, at the start of the NEW FINANCIAL YEAR 2018-2019.

Discounts for the purchase of meals and gifts in the café and gift shop only apply to the Friends Membership card holder/s and cannot be transferred to family and friends who are not members.



Western Myall or *Acacia papyrocarpa* is the emblem of the AALBG. Some individual trees flowered prolifically in the Garden this spring. This long lived Acacia can live for 600 to 1000 years and has beautiful dark red very hard timber. - John Zwar

Join or Renew Subscription & Contacts

TO JOIN OR RENEW SUBSCRIPTION

Request a form from Contacts or collect one from the Visitor Centre

Or 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

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@aalg.gov.au

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION

Individual (1 adult) \$30

Due annually 1st July. Includes 1 membership card.

Family (2 adults & dependent children under 18) \$50

Due annually 1st July. Includes 2 membership cards.
(2 forms must be filled in).

Corporate \$250 Due annually 1st January.

(includes 1 membership card issued in one name
nominated by the business)



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