



Friends of The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden,

Port Augusta Incorporated | ABN 72 979 332 415

Newsletter

May 2019
Issue #181

President's Report *by John Zwar OAM*

**#1 REGIONAL
BOTANIC
GARDEN IN
AUSTRALIA**

**AUSTRALIAN
GEOGRAPHIC**

Dodonaea microzyga - Peter Hall



John Zwar with Maurie Kupsch, Curator & founder of Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden Burnie, Tasmania - John Zwar

After a very hot summer with temperatures up to 49.5 degrees in Port Augusta when volunteer work in the Garden slackened off, our Friends volunteers are back at work fencing, guiding tours, propagating plants, maintaining and helping further develop the Garden and assisting with plant sales at events in Clare and Laura.

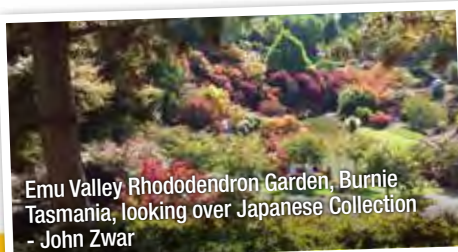
As I write I have just returned from Tasmania where I visited three major gardens. The Royal Tasmanian Botanical Garden in Hobart celebrated 200 years last year. It has an excellent collection of Tasmanian plants and from temperate areas around the world. Autumn colour was just beginning. The RTBG is beautifully located near the Derwent river with views of Mount Wellington and surrounding ranges. There is a fine Japanese Garden, an Antarctic house, kept cold, displaying plants of Australia's Sub-Antarctic Islands and of course the vegetable and fruit garden featured on Gardening Australia. Well worth a visit if in Hobart.

The Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden is near Burnie and was proposed in 1981 (the same year as our Garden). It is owned and operated by members and operated by volunteers. It is growing to maturity and looks spectacular. The focus is Rhododendrons which are planted in groups according to countries of origin, complemented by a wide variety of other appropriate trees and shrubs and it looked spectacular with autumn colour and some of the vireya rhododendrons in flower. There are many Tree Ferns and Tasmanian trees as well. The site is steep, with lakes and Japanese, Chinese and other structures in relevant locations and a fine visitor and conference centre overlooking the garden. I was fortunate to meet Maurie Kupsch the Curator who proposed the EVRG in 1981. A must see if in NW Tasmania.

The Tasmanian Arboretum is located inland from Devonport and is sited in an area with existing Tasmanian trees and vegetation and includes plant groupings from around the world with a strong focus on Tasmanian natives. There are lakes and we saw 3 platypus which was quite special. They are commonly seen there. There was beautiful autumn colour in this garden as well. It was established in 1984 and is a not for profit association owned by its members. This large garden has heritage walks and rich birdlife and is a must see for anyone interested in trees, plants and natural history.

In January I talked to The Australian Plant Society and following this their Council agreed to donate \$5,000 to us to assist with the feral proof boundary fence currently under construction at the AALBG. We are most appreciative. Unfortunately community grants I applied for from NEXIF (building a wind power station near Port Augusta) for assistance with boundary fencing, and BHP for assistance in purchasing our new label making machine were unsuccessful. I look forward to seeing some of you at our next meeting.

Best wishes, John Zwar - OAM, President.



Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden, Burnie Tasmania, looking over Japanese Collection - John Zwar

DIARY DATES

May 26th: BOTANIC GARDENS OPEN DAY.

AALBG will be celebrating as part of this with a free guided tour and info table. Stay posted.

May 21st - 27th: VOLUNTEER WEEK.

June 1st: FRIENDS MEETING

1:00pm, Guest Speaker Jan Forrest, 'Great Victoria Desert'.

July 29th: NATIONAL TREE DAY

NEXT MEETING

Date & Time: Saturday 1st June, 1:00pm.

Venue: WMC Meeting Room, AALBG

Topic: The Great Victoria Desert

Guest Speaker: Jan Forrest OAM, President, Friends of the Great Victoria Desert Parks.

The Great Victoria Desert is the largest desert in Australia yet few people know where it is. Jan's talk will provide information on the work being carried out by the Friends group including monitoring of camel damage on quandong trees and photographing vegetation with a drone.

She is passionate about the desert; it is an amazing part of our state. Jan will show images of plants and animals taken by members in the desert including some from her very first trip undertaken in 1976 with the South Australian Museum.



Jan Forrest OAM

FIELD TRIPS

Bird Watching Field Trips for Birds SA, PORT AUGUSTA GROUP

Sunday 16th June: Carrierewloo Station. Meet at start of Stuart Highway at 8:00am.

Saturday 13th / Sunday 14th / Monday 15th July: South Gap Station. Meet at start of Stuart Highway at 8:00am. (Camp out. Facilities available.)

Saturday 17th / Sunday 18th / Monday 19th August: Munyaroo Conservation Park. Meet at Whyalla Wetlands at 8:30am. (Camp out. No facilities available.)

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



AALBG plant sales stall & volunteers Viti, Shirley, Chris, Ronda & Anna, joined by Angus Stewart, Clare Autumn Garden Fair - Peter Hall

Volunteers in The Garden *by Brian Reichelt*

Since our February Newsletter the weather has cooled off a little to allow outside work to go ahead in the Garden.

It is amazing to see the growth that has occurred on the plantings around the picnic area. It really shows that the arid zone native plants love the heat and will grow fast provided they have water.



New growth in the Picnic Area - Brian Reichelt

The volunteer propagators have continued to assist staff in producing some very nice plants for sale. The Friends attended two major plant sales during this period, the two day Laura Folk Fair and the one day Clare Autumn Garden Festival; this year they were both held on the same weekend. A big thank you must go to all of the Friends volunteers who conducted the stalls at both of these sales with a total of \$9,594 worth of plants sold - Shirley, Ronda, Peter, Tim, Anna, Viti, Ian, Jan, Karen, Chris, Caroline and John.



AALBG plant sales stall & volunteers Caroline, Jan, Shirley & Ian, Laura Folk Fair - Chris Nayda



AALBG plant sales stall & volunteers, Ronda & Shirley, Clare Autumn Garden Fair - Peter Hall

Volunteers and staff have been very busy planting to replace those plants that have been lost over summer, and we have also been mulching areas to assist in saving on water evaporation and to make the Garden more appealing to the visitors. The areas to gain the most attention have been the Highlights Walk, old Eremophila Garden closest to the café, the service road leading into the café, and the Arid Explorers Garden; approximately 200 plants have been planted during this time.



New plantings in old Eremophila Garden - Brian Reichelt



Fresh mulch and new plantings, service road to cafe - Brian Reichelt

The Arid Explorers Garden received an upgrade to its plantings, wooden structures (seats, bridges, shelters) have been oiled to increase their life expectancy and a drinking fountain has also been installed.



Oiling of seats, Arid Explorers Garden - Brian Reichelt



New drinking fountain installed in Arid Explorers Garden - Brian Reichelt

The main entrance to the Garden on the Stuart Highway has had an upgrade to the old myall post fence as it had been damaged by kangaroos breaking it down to gain entry to the Garden.

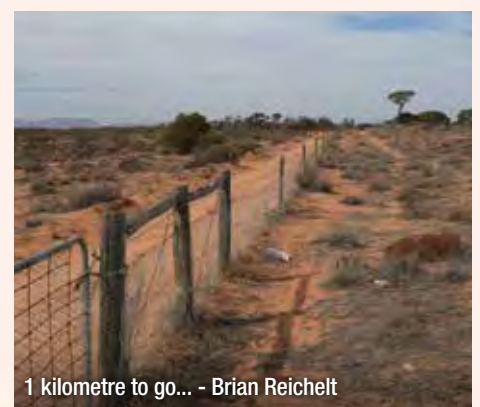


Upgrade to old myall posts - Brian Reichelt

As mentioned in the last Newsletter commencement of the next stage of the feral proof boundary was on hold until the weather cooled, and as this has occurred, preliminary works have commenced with the upgrading of the strainer posts at the entrance to the Boardwalk lookout on the Stuart Highway and the installing of two other strainer points for the new fence. It is anticipated that construction of the 1 kilometre of fence will commence late April. Once completed this will be approximately half of the boundary fence completed.



New strainer posts - Brian Reichelt



1 kilometre to go... - Brian Reichelt

Bird Talk from The Garden by Peter Langdon

The continuing dry spell is making bird watching in the Garden a bit slow. However, there are a few sightings of note.

White-fronted Honeyeaters (*Phylidonyris albigularis*) have stayed around for some time now and can be found scattered throughout the Garden. A few Elegant Parrots (*Neophema elegans*) are watering regularly at the Chenopod Hide in the mornings and often have young birds from last season amongst them.

A solitary male Australian Bustard (*Ardeotis australis*) was sighted near the water-treatment plant on 9th April 2019, the only one of that species seen in the Garden for some time.



Elegant Parrot - Peter Langdon



White-fronted Honeyeater - Peter Langdon

Peter's Plants by Peter Hall

If you are ever driving up the Stuart Highway north of Port Augusta and you see flashing past you plants of about one metre by one metre covered in by what you may think are red-brown flowers, it's probably *Dodonaea microzyga*. If you take the time to stop and take a closer look you will find that it's not flowers you are seeing but the fruits of the native hop bush. The capsules are usually four-winged and are shiny red to reddish-brown.

The fruits of the *Dodonaeas* were used by early settlers as a substitute for European hops for brewing beer.

Native hops grow in most states of Australia and there are about fifty species.

Dodonaea microzyga or Brilliant Hop-bush is a very ornamental species and occurs over a large area of Australia. *Microzyga* means small leaflets.



Dodonaea microzyga - Peter Hall



Dodonaea microzyga - Peter Hall



Dodonaea microzyga - Peter Hall

John's Travels in Tassie!



Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden, Burnie Tasmania, Japanese Collection - John Zwar



Inside the Antarctic House, Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens - John Zwar



Tasmanian Arboretum, bird and platypus hide - John Zwar

Guide Report by Chris Nayda

With most of the hot weather gone (we hope) there has been an increase in numbers of visitors enquiring about tours.

In recent times there have been two large groups, the first being 50 Chinese horticultural students from Adelaide Uni who asked many questions and bought more than 30 copies of our book 'Plants at AALBG' which will be ideal for their studies. They were on their way to Wilpena Pound. Photo shows them very excited to be with the author of their book.

Also, in early March, three guides took 20 people around the Garden.

Coralie Bee has returned to guiding after a year or so and we welcome her back. Annette Henry has nearly finished her training and we also welcome her.

Other Guides are: Shirley Mundy, Robyn Place, Karen Coleman, Mike Chuk, Julia Harris and Chris Nayda.

We are looking forward to a busy year with Lake Eyre filling up, and many tourists coming through. All we want is rain.



Chinese Horticultural students visiting AALBG, with Chris Nayda - Photo taken by a student

2019 Corporate Members

2019 CORPORATE MEMBERS OF FRIENDS OF THE AUSTRALIAN ARID LANDS BOTANIC GARDEN

We welcome these additional corporate members and encourage Friends to patronise their businesses.
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.

D&G TYRE SALES

CINEMA AUGUSTA

GHAN MEDICAL CENTRE

Dan VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN MP

helloworld

NORTHPOINT

FlindersPower
Zero Harm - Best Practice



**CROSSROADS
ECOMOTEL**

**roewe
partners**



**rossign
multi print sa
port augusta**



**KE
KEVIN FREEMAN
ELECTRICAL**

**AUGUSTA
COURTYARD
MOTEL**
GOLDEN CHAIN

**uorn
CARAVAN PARK**

**PORTAUGUSTA
REFRIGERATION
AND
AIR CONDITIONING
SERVICE**

BHP

Kudos for The Garden

Despite our dry times, numbers of visitors to our Garden have continued to increase over our hot summer and unseasonably hot autumn, giving rise to speculation that 2019 will see the total year's numbers brought to another high that may even exceed the unprecedented rise of 2018 where we saw an **increase of 13,717 visitors** - from 99,076 by end of December 2017 to 112,793 by end of December 2018! Our best ever!

Summer-Autumn comments from Trip Advisor Posts



Anonymous



Reviewed March 2019 via mobile

**Worth a Visit
Something Different
Something Quite Unusual**



Anonymous



Reviewed April 2019 via mobile

**What a surprise to find such a treasure!
Outback Experience
Excellent**



Anonymous



Reviewed Dec 2018 via mobile

Fantastic information centre, shop & cafe

Visited this garden briefly on our way through Port Augusta. Very impressive modern & artistically designed information centre, including a well-stocked shop selling books, seeds, mementos, and a good range of Australian native plants suited to low rainfall areas. The cafe sells ice creams flavoured with native plant herbs & seeds and good coffee. Didn't really have time to do justice to the informative walks in the gardens, but they looked enticing! Will be back for a longer visit next time.



Anonymous



Reviewed Dec 2018 via mobile

Very worthwhile

This unique centre is well worth a short visit for everyone. It's very well presented and the staff are eager to answer your questions. Even if you think it's not for you, take the short highlights walk and then enjoy something at the cafe. You'll be pleasantly surprised! If you're interested in Australian plants, you'll love it.



Anonymous



Reviewed Jan 2019 via mobile

Simply the best, A must

What a wonderful surprise when we arrived at the Arid Lands Garden. As we wandered around the sign-posting on what seemed every plant was amazing. This place is a must if you love the outback, plants and animals. Excellent food and gift shop.

Reminder

Are you financial?

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

Renewals of Memberships for Friends (singles & families) are due on 1st July 2019, at the start of the NEW FINANCIAL YEAR 2019-2020.

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.



AALBG plant sales stall & volunteer Jan, Laura Folk Fair - Chris Nayda

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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