EUCALYPT

NUMBER 64 — SPRING 2025

meet the 'ROLLS-ROYCE' of BUSH TREES

The Western Myall, *Acacia papyrocarpa,* is thought to live for around 500 years and sometimes even longer. It is the emblem of The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden at Port Augusta.

AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION of FRIENDS OF BOTANIC GARDENS

The **AAFBG** represents Friends of Botanic Gardens all around Australia, plus five overseas affiliate members. See our website for a full listing.

Address
PO Box 408, Eumundi QLD 4562
Email: info@friendsbotanicgardens.org
Website: FriendsBotanicGardens.org

EUCALYPT MAGAZINE
is published twice a year

EDITORIAL TEAM
Kate Heffernan
Editor & Copywriting
Friends of Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens, QLD
Jill Brownlee
Friends of Noosa Botanic Gardens, QLD
WordsWorth communicating
Layout

Email: mag@FriendsBotanicGardens.org
Tel: 0437 682758

We welcome your articles, photographs, and important calendar events. Contact us at any time to discuss your article, ideas, and events.

AAFBG acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land where we live and work.
We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

FriendsBotanicGardens.org

friendsbotanicgardens

@AAFBG

AAFBG ABN 99467025064
AAFBG Incorporation A0026805Z
ISSN !320-8578

Content

Celebrating the Friends of Botanic Gardens

Friends of our Botanic Gardens, whether individually or as a group, contribute to a broad range of activities and tasks, enhancing the gardens, on behalf of plants and people. They are to be congratulated for the considerable time, energy and generosity they volunteer towards achieving the goals of the gardens.

While the managers and leaders of our Botanic Gardens greatly appreciate the assistance and support of the Friends, it is important to consider the other side of the relationship. What do these Friends gain from their volunteering efforts?

Being a member of a Friends' group can raise members' sense of connection, belonging and purpose as well as feelings of self-worth. There is the importance of social connection.

Many Friends bring a lifetime of skills and experience and in return they find fresh opportunities to learn, share, give and grow. This could be by attending workshops or participating in field trips or propagating plants from different parts of the country or the world. With the knowledge they gain, they may wish to propagate and grow different species in their own gardens or properties.

Beyond their love of nature, Friends also play a vital role in welcoming visitors, sharing plant stories, and helping people understand the hidden work that supports the educational, conservation and display features of the plant collections. They excel in linking plants and people!

It is important for Botanic Gardens' governing bodies to work closely with Friends, especially in smaller communities, as this will help give their Botanic Garden a key place in their home town or community. Friends tend to have a 'silent' advocacy role for their Botanic Gardens.

Being a member of a Friends' Group provides a special role in the community. It is a way to give back, to contribute meaningfully and to feel valued. The ongoing dedicated contribution by Friends is worthy of special recognition.

Dr Judy West, AO
Patron

Editor's Note

The Spring edition of Eucalypt has inspiring articles from Friends and Botanic Gardens across five states. The contribution to botanic gardens by AAFBG and its members is demonstrated on every page of this issue. Great reading!

In the west, volunteers from the Friends of Kings Park show their commitment to the natural areas adjoining the Botanic Gardens with a major weed removal and restoration project.

Friends of Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden founder John Zwar celebrates 'the Rolls Royce of bush trees' with an article on The Myall – *Acacia papyrocarpa*.

Friends of Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens present the education and event building, opened in 2024 - The Bunya Pavilion, named in recognition of the first tree planted on the site in 2010. Other interesting news from Bowral Tim Entwistle has retired there and is now patron of the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Friends group. In a recent Radio National Science Show interview with Robin Williams, Tim highlights the crucial role that volunteers play in regional botanic gardens. Well worth a listen!

Tim Entwisle – The Sceptical Botanist: https://shorturl.at/UnTTw

Williamstown Botanic Garden celebrates its 165 year history with us, and an exciting new chapter in its evolution.

From the Gold Coast, a contribution from a valued partner – Griffith University, and the important relationship between academics and Not for Profit groups, including Friends of Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens.

Fighting plant extinction is a challenge. The Friends of Burrendong Botanic Gardens and Arboreta tell us about their role in ensuring four precious species are conserved.

Many thanks to those who participated in the recent member survey. The committee will be reporting on the findings in the October enews.

Thanks to all our contributors – each article shows the depth and breadth of Friends' involvement in the roles of botanic gardens.

Kate Heffernan, Editor Eucalypt
Hon. Life Member - Friends of Gold Coast
Regional Botanic Gardens Inc.

FLORA: NATURE'S GIFT

GOLD COAST JULY 2026

By Cathryn Coutts

Flora: Nature's Gift is a major Botanical Art Society of Australia (BASA) exhibition for 2026, being held for the first time on the Gold Coast. The exhibition will run for one month from 5 to 30 July and will be officially opened on 5 July at 11 am.

BASA will hold the exhibition jointly with the Royal Queensland Art Society (RQAS), at their "Red Wall" Gallery in Broadbeach.

This is a major event for the Gold Coast, and we are very fortunate to already have plenty of local support.

In addition to prizes for Best in Show, Highly Commended and Visitors' Choice, a special prize for a painting of a Eucalyptus will be sponsored by Friends of the Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens.

Native Plants Queensland will also sponsor a prize for an image of any Australian native plant (no cultivars or hybrids please). All prizes will be judged by recognised experts in their field.

Our beautiful Gold Coast natural environment, from the beaches to the hinterland, offers a wonderful setting in which to hold such an exciting event. We anticipate it will attract both local and interstate visitors, as well as the many overseas tourists who visit the Gold Coast. The mild winter weather in July is an attractive option.

Two groups of BASA members – the Friends Botanical Art Group (Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens) and Brisbane Botanical Artists have combined to coordinate the exhibition, with a team including Cathryn Coutts and Sandra De Leacy (Gold Coast), Florence Joly and Joanna Thomas (Brisbane).

BASA members from all states and territories are invited to exhibit. There is an open choice for artists to paint any plant they wish, either native or exotic, with restrictions only for the two sponsored prizes mentioned above.

General information for artists and details for entries will be available later this year, on the BASA website.

For more information contact Cathryn Coutts at: cathryn.coutts@gmail.com

continued on page **19**

Friends of the Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens Inc.

Restoring Biodiversity in the Bush

Chris Olney
President
Friends of Kings Park

Jon Dodd, Linley Dodd and Kit Wignall with the free guide to bushland weeds. Image: Laura Skates

Perth's Kings Park is unique. Not only does it include the magnificent 17ha Western Australian Botanic Garden featuring more than 3500 species of WA flora, but it also includes 267 hectares of natural bush.

Hence the Friends of Kings Park caters for a wide range of interests. Our volunteers can assist in the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority's science laboratories, propagate plants for our four native plant sales a year or weed and prune in the botanic garden as well as the bushland.

Others, the Fixing Friends, help park staff with maintaining infrastructure, while the Horticultural Advisory Service answers questions on growing native plants.
Concern over the number of weeds choking the bush has led to the formation of our newest group, the bushland restoration team.

The Bushland Restoration Project was launched in 2022 with the aim of restoring 2.2 hectares of prime Kings Park bushland in a high-profile area near the botanic garden entrance.

The project attracted a $151,000 grant over five years from the Friends of Kings Park gift fund in a bid to reverse the degradation of the natural environment and improve native plant biodiversity. The funding helps pay for fauna monitoring equipment and the production of plants to revegetate the site, as well as herbicide spraying.

Volunteers have planted 1200 native seedlings from 28 different species which has increased the species diversity in the challenging restoration site.

Seedlings include two Kings Park vulnerable species *Myoporum insulare* and *Verticordia densiflora* as well as 45 banksias.

Bushland Restoration Kings Park

Perth, Western Australia

Bushland restoration volunteers with a mountain of weeds.
Image: Friends of Kings Park

The volunteers have worked hard to remove a range of weeds – notching up more than 430 volunteer hours in the first year alone. About 20 people volunteer each fortnight.

To assist volunteers identify what are weeds and what are native plants – it can be tricky in the bush - the Friends has launched a weed guide, available free to all volunteers. Many of the 'weeds' are escapees from suburban gardens which can smother our native vegetation.

While progress is slow, the signs of bushland regeneration are encouraging and the group was inspired after being recognised with a prestigious Handbury Award last year.

Vale Bodo Jensen

Words and photo by Linley Cleggett

Bodo Jensen

Bodo will be greatly missed around the Adelaide Botanic Gardens.

Bodo joined the Friends in 2001; trained as a Garden Guide in 2009; held Vice President and President offices between 2012 and 2015; served on the Gardens Foundation and the Australian Friends of Botanic Gardens Committee; ran orchid classes and walks, school holiday workshops; joined the Seed Centre team on collecting expeditions; took responsibility for the Visitor Information Centre and volunteered on Fund Raising events such as Gardeners' Markets, Herb and Salvia days. He was among the first to arrive at so many events, managed the setup, and was often the last to leave. He brought beautiful flowering orchids for display on ABG's front desk, (not forgetting all the gifts of enormous avocados to many). His trusty ute carted trestles, plants and other items for sale to many events for many years.

Bodo had deep respect and appreciation for fellow volunteers, the horticultural and office staff.

He was humbled to receive the Premier's Certificate of Recognition for outstanding volunteer service in 2019.

Bodo's kindness, energy, practical skills, sense of humour and generosity made a huge difference to many people and events. He once said Australia was kind to him when he arrived with a young family and not much more. He was glad to have the opportunity to give back.

> The AAFBG acknowledges with appreciation Bodo's affable contribution representing Friends of Adelaide on the committee from 2016 until 2020 after which he continued support of AAFBG conferences where he always led a band of Friends of Adelaide, the last being Eurobodalla in 2022.

Celebrating 165 Years

of the Williamstown Botanic Gardens

Eliasha Muldowney
Curator Williamstown Botanic Gardens

This year marks the 165th anniversary of the Williamstown Botanic Gardens — a milestone that has offered the perfect opportunity to reflect on the enduring value of this treasured green space.

As one of Victoria's oldest, heritage listed botanic gardens, it is renowned for its sweeping arabesque path system, magnificent tree canopy, rich shrubberies, and distinctive Edwardian character. Like many heritage gardens, it has experienced its share of highs and lows over the decades.

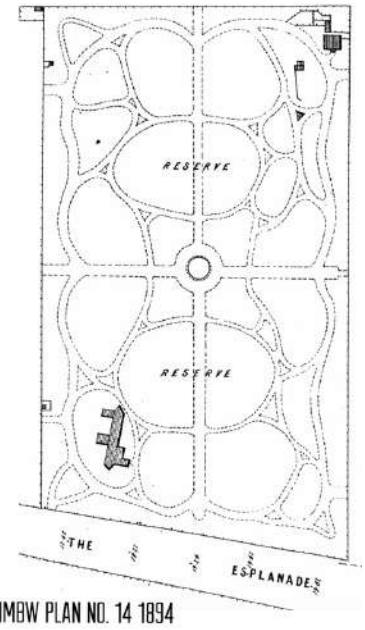
Recent development works, outlined in the 2018 Master Plan, have paved the way for an exciting new chapter in the garden's evolution. The most significant transformation has taken place in the Pinetum, located in the southern section of the gardens. Major enhancements have improved both its structure and along with planting have helped to reunify the southern and northern ends of the garden.

This vision has come to life through the creation of 38 new garden beds, the installation of boundary fencing and hedges, upgraded paths and picnic furniture, improved turf, a new suite of rubbish bins, and the revitalisation of the Open-Air Bandstand. And over the past two and a half years, more than 3,000 plants have been added to the garden beds.

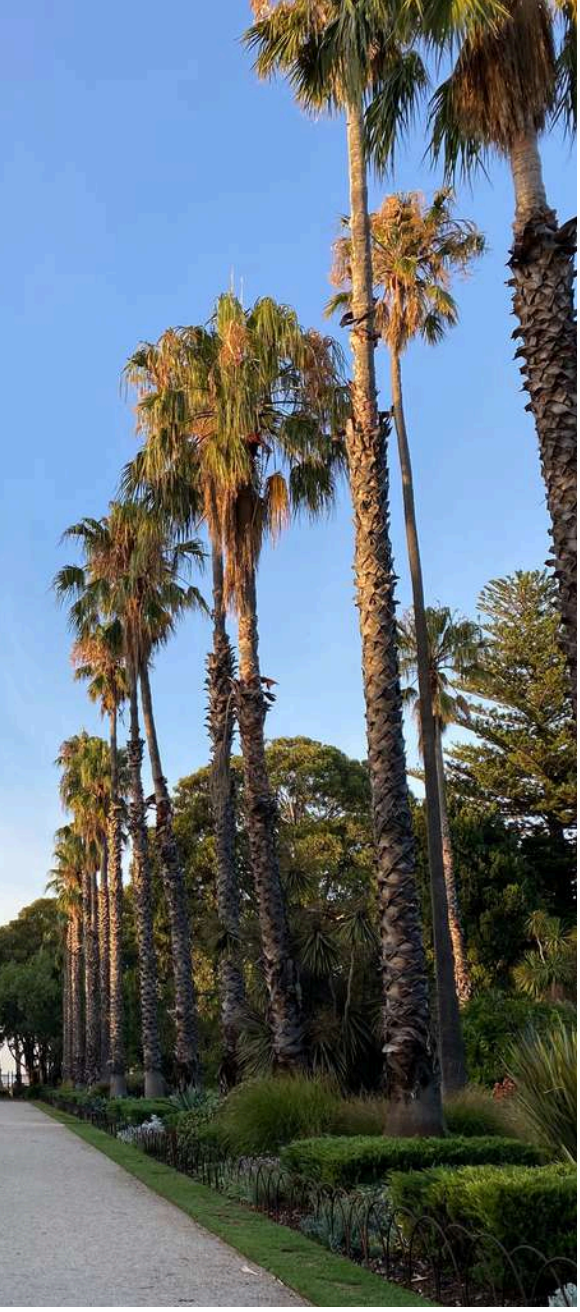
The planting strategy in the Pinetum was carefully developed to preserve the distinctive character, enhancing rather than altering its established nature. The overall design reinforces the garden's axial layout, further emphasised by decorative plantings along the main path—creating a strong visual and physical link between the northern and southern ends. Plants were chosen for their seasonal interest and resilience to local conditions, with species such as Beschonerias, Aloes, Junipers, Strobilanthes, Libertias and Euphorbias thriving in the rejuvenated landscape.

The Friends of the Williamstown Botanic Gardens have played a pivotal role in these developments, especially through their regular propagation days.

Main Palm Walk



Depicting the axial layout of Williamstown Botanic Gardens (Source: Melbourne University)



Their contribution is most evident in the main path planting, where an impressive one-third of the plants were grown by the Friends themselves—a true testament to the community's passion and commitment to the gardens.

Another standout addition to the garden has been the establishment of beds showcasing locally indigenous, rare, and threatened plants. We worked with Hobsons Bay Biodiversity Team, Newport Lakes Native nursery and Sancha Hovey from Greenjoy landscape design on the design and plant selection. The chosen species, native to the Hobsons Bay region, are thriving and provide inspiration for visitors seeking sustainable and climate-appropriate options for their own gardens.

However, the journey has not been without its challenges. Like many of Victoria's heritage gardens, Williamstown is facing the realities of an aging tree canopy. A significant portion of its trees were planted within a short timeframe, resulting in a lack of age diversity.

Compounding this is the fact that many of the tree species popular during the Victorian era have typical lifespans of just 80 to 120 years in our climate. In response, we have focused our efforts on actively managing and rejuvenating the tree population to ensure long-term health and vitality. Recent plantings include an exciting addition of nine Araucaria species, complementing the existing Monterey cypress, pines, and other iconic conifers.

As the Williamstown Botanic Gardens celebrates 165 years of history, it stands as a vibrant example of how thoughtful stewardship, community engagement, and adaptive planning can preserve and enrich a heritage landscape. The recent revitalisation of the Pinetum is not only a restoration of beauty and structure but also a forward-thinking approach into the garden's future. As we continue to care and collaborate with the Friends group, we know that it will remain a cherished place of botanical significance and public enjoyment for many generations to come.

All images: Eliasha Muldowney

The Bunya Pavilion

Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens

The Education Building/Function Room was built with the generous support of both the Federal and NSW governments, and officially opened on 19 April 2024 by Stephen Jones, MP (Fed) and Judy Hannan, MP (NSW).

The building has been renamed as the Bunya Pavilion in recognition of the first tree planted on the site in 2010 by former Governor of NSW, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO.

Our Bunya Pavilion is a unique and versatile venue option for a variety of events, from private parties to conferences, lectures, book launches, workshops, weddings, and memorials.

Some of the Venue Highlights:

The Bunya Pavilion: Seats up to 80 guests (lecture-style) or up to 60 for dining, depending on table configuration, with indoor/outdoor flow

Beautiful Outdoor Areas: Each with charm and views, ideal for expanding capacity and creating memorable experiences

Boutique: Operated by SHBG, a not-for-profit charitable organisation, we offer some of the most reasonable rates of any Southern Highlands venue.

The Bunya Pavilion has already been hired for various functions over the past few months, including an information evening, a dinner, a children's birthday party, a wedding celebration, a 90th birthday lunch, and various community meetings.

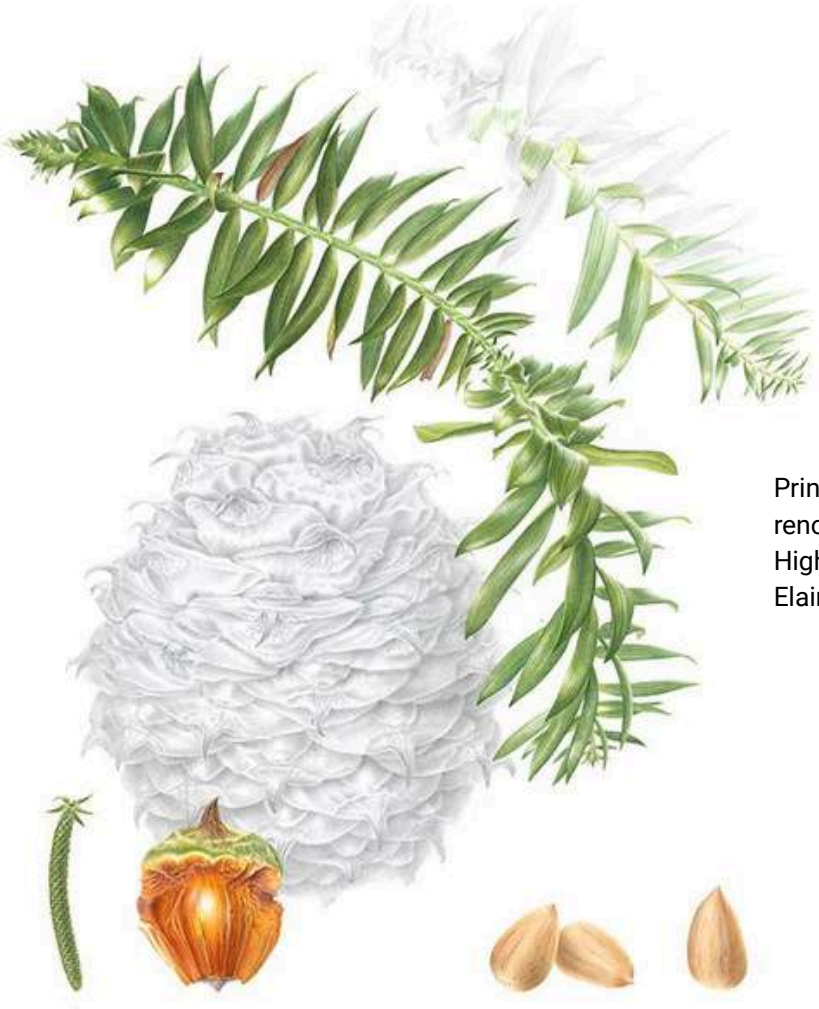
Image: Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens

Plus, the Pavilion is a great asset for our SHBG operations and has been used for various activities, including transformation into a café for our Autumn Plant Fair 2025 weekend and hosting drinks for the garden owners and volunteers. Also conducting workshops and providing a facility for board and committee meetings.

The recent NSW chapter annual meeting of BGANZ was successfully held in the Bunya Pavilion as a day-long event with thirty-eight attendees, guest speakers, and various presentations.

In Spring, a twin tower clock will be installed on the building tower and will complete the overall design of the Bunya Pavilion. This will be known as the Tony Davis Clock in commemoration of Tony as a founder of the Southern Highland Botanic Gardens. Tony was a well-known daffodil breeder whose national collection of daffodils will be displayed in full bloom on this commemoration day in the Gardens.

To enhance the space to be further attractive for corporate and live streaming events, we are now seeking funding opportunities for the installation of video conferencing capabilities.



Print of a Bunya Pine by the renowned and local Southern Highlands botanic artist, Elaine Musgrave

Botanic Gardens Week - Zoos for Plants

Article and images: Rachel MacSmith

BURRENDONG Botanic Garden & Arboretum

Inspired by the success of zoos in raising awareness for wildlife conservation, this year's Botanic Gardens Week theme was 'zoos for plants' – places where rare and threatened species are safeguarded for future generations and where society can learn and connect with nature. And, just as zoos are connected globally, so are botanic gardens. We are a network of gardens collaborating and sharing species to fight extinction. So for Botanic Gardens Week 2025 (May 19-25) OBA displayed our Threatened Species banner in the Wellington Arts window. Read on to learn about BBGAs' four threatened species projects. BBGA is working to do more threatened species projects in future, and our support is critical in assisting them in doing this.

1. *Zieria odorifera* subsp. *copelandii* (Critically endangered) is endemic to New South Wales and was listed as Critically Endangered in 2017, following a survey that found fewer than 15 mature individuals remained in the wild.

The western slopes of Mount Kaputar National Park represent the only known location for this highly restricted species.

The Saving our Species (SoS) *Zieria odorifera* subsp. *copelandii* conservation project installed cages around individual plants and seedlings to protect them from goats and park visitors, conducted goat control, undertook targeted surveys to investigate the abundance and distribution of the species, and carried out emergency watering. Seedlings and cuttings collected after a mass germination event following high rainfall in 2020 were used to establish an ex situ populations at Botanic Gardens Sydney and Burrendong Botanic Garden and Arboretum.

The Friends have created an art work to highlight, promote and celebrate the four threatened species projects going on at Burrendong Botanic Garden and Arboretum (BBGA). Crafty Friends (members) have embroidered squares of old pieces of cotton fabric with letters representing one of those four species -

a. *Swainsona recta* - Sr
b. *Grevillea obtusiflora* ssp *obtusiflora* - Go
c. *Zieria obcordata* - Zo
d. *Zieria odorifera* ssp *copelandii* - Zo

The squares have been sewn into a large patchwork which was revealed and displayed at the Friends Spring Plant Sale on September 13th 2025.

2. Granite Zieria (*Zieria obcordata* - Endangered) is found in the NSW South Western Slopes bioregion and has a highly restricted distribution, being found at only two locations near Wellington and Bathurst. As the name suggests, this specialist shrub is found only on granite rock outcrops. This species is threatened by browsing from wallabies and livestock, weed invasion, and extended periods of drought combined with extreme temperatures over summer months. Occasional monitoring of the species' abundance has occurred since 2009, however, it is only in the last five years that continuous population data has been collected. Notable outcomes of the project include the establishment of an ex situ population and translocation of propagated individuals to Burrendong Botanic Garden and Arboretum.

3. *Grevillea obtusiflora* subsp. *obtusiflora* (Endangered) is a low, multi-stemmed shrub to half a metre tall, with narrow leaves and pink to pinkish red flowers, and is restricted to Clandulla State Forest near Kandos. It occurs as scattered groups in the understorey of low open eucalypt forest at altitudes of around 730 metres above sea level. BBGA Horticulturist Gay Bennison collected 60 cuttings on the 23 April 2024 from Clandulla State Forest. After some time in the glasshouse the plants were transferred to the nursery and are clean and healthy. BBGA is hoping to establish an ex situ population of *Grevillea obtusiflora* subsp. *obtusiflora* in 2025. The nursery will retain 3 mother-stock plants for further propagation material and an additional 2 plants to be planted in the Threatened Species bed near the nursery for continual monitoring and maintenance.

4. *Swainsona recta* Small Purple-pea (Endangered) is a small perennial herb, which, when flowering, can grow to 30 cm tall. The leaves are almost hairless and divided into up to six pairs of 10 mm long, very narrow leaflets, each with a pointed tip. The Local Land Services Progressing the Small Purple-pea project aims to stabilise or improve the trajectory of the Small Purple-pea by assisting the recovery of populations through regional community surveys, improving habitat quality and establishment of new ex situ populations, including the one at BBGA. Volunteers have played a key role in this project, with volunteers from the Australian National Botanic Gardens Canberra assisting with the planting of over 700 Swainsona *recta* tubestock in April 2024, and subsequent population monitoring. BBGA staff and FOBA volunteers have maintained the watering of the plants over the recent dry summer and autumn.

The Wellington Craft Co-Op has provided wonderful support for the project. It was all about involvement, not champion embroidery skills and some of us learnt a thing or two about those too.

Acacia papyrocarpa, Western Myall
The 'Rolls Royce' of bush trees

Article by
John Zwar
President
The Friends of The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden, Port Augusta, SA

Acacia papyrocarpa, or Western Myall is the emblem of The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden at Port Augusta. It occurs naturally in the Botanic Garden on undulating sandy loam dunes with other arid zone shrubby woodland species.

AUSTRALIAN ARID LANDS
BOTANIC GARDEN

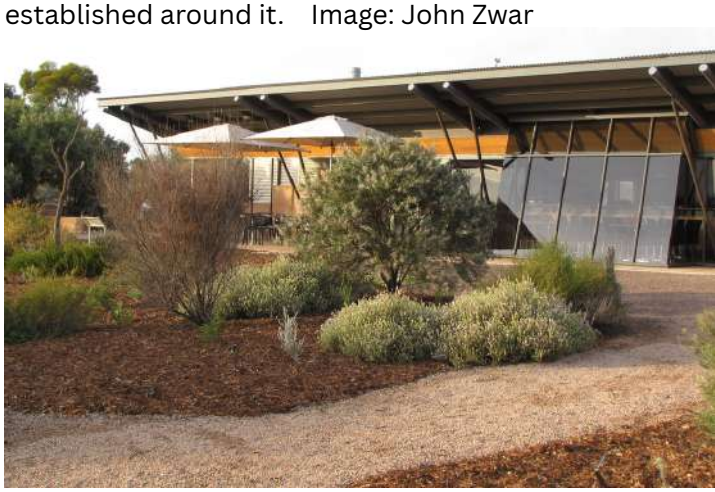
There are approximately 1,350 Acacia species worldwide, with about 1,000 found in Australia. Many acacias are short-lived, but some, especially those from arid regions, can be very long-lived. Western Myall is thought to live for around 500 years and sometimes even longer. It is slow growing, and has very dense, hard wood, a beautiful dark red when polished. It is used for woodcraft and ornaments.

The wood has been used for fence posts and house stumps in station country, and is known to last a very long time. It has also been used as firewood, and a log can last for 24 hours before being burnt to ash.

Western Myall is widespread through much of northern and western South Australia and extends well into the southern arid zone of Western Australia in areas of 150 to 300mm average annual rainfall.

Growing on alkaline limestone soils, clay soils, and sandy loams, it is often in association with chenopods (saltbush and bluebush) and low-growing, open shrubby woodland, and near salt lakes. It grows from two to ten metres tall and at its best develops into a very attractive tree, often with an umbrella-shaped crown, sometimes drooping to ground level.

This tree near the Visitor Reception Building was quite small when the AALBG was established but has grown significantly since irrigated plantings were established around it. Image: John Zwar



Visitor Reception Building taken 2012
Image: Kate Heffernan

Western Myall prolific flowers in a particularly good season AALBG. Image: John Zwar

Some forms are weeping while others are more upright. It is usually multi-stemmed with rough, grey, fissured bark. The phyllodes (modified stems that act as leaves) are four to 12 centimetres long, thin and with a slight soft point. They are grey-green in colour, flat and straight. In November, particularly if there has been good rain, a flush of beautiful silvery coloured new foliage is produced, gradually fading to the duller grey-green. Bright yellow, spherical wattle flowers are produced in spring (August to November), and are prolific in good seasons, followed by thin, flat seed pods containing small black seeds. In dry country, the root system extends well beyond the canopy of the tree, with some near the surface roots able to take advantage of occasional light rains which do not soak deeply into the soil.

Brian Powell, a foundation member of The Friends of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden and a well-known conservationist, pastoralist and tree planter in outback South Australia, called Western Myall, “the Rolls Royce of bush trees”. Large, well-grown specimens are particularly impressive in their harsh arid surroundings. They produce shade and shelter.

Western Myall is propagated by seed that needs hot water treatment before sowing unless sown fresh. Although naturally very slow growing, they will grow faster with some irrigation and can make fine specimens in dry gardens with very alkaline soils. In Roxby Downs when the new town was being developed, particular importance was given to retaining mature Western Myall trees. Houses were sited between them, roads and subdivisions designed around them, and some attractive groves retained as urban parks. They are tolerant of extreme temperatures, with Roxby Downs experiencing temperatures as low as -6 degrees C some winters and up to forty-nine degrees C some summers. With a warming, drying climate in our part of Australia, we may see Western Myall being planted more widely as an attractive amenity tree tolerant of very harsh conditions.

Image: John Zwar

Virtuous cycles of informal partnerships between academics and Not-For-Profit groups

Professor Catherine Pickering
School of Environment and Sciences, Griffith University
e.mail: c.pickering@griffith.edu.au.
Phone 0457 414 952

Many partnerships with community groups, organisations, industry, and government involve formal MOUs, contracts, or other types of agreements setting out specific terms and conditions defining a formal relationship. But there are also many, less formal partnerships between academics and specific Not-For-Profit groups and organisations focusing on a public good that fits within civic university models. They can reflect virtuous cycles, achieving multiple benefits where chains of events create one benefit leading to another and another, promoting continuous improvements. Here we illustrate informal partnerships as virtuous cycles, focusing on a specific example at Griffith University – 'Developing and sharing expertise in growing native plants'.

The Gold Coast campus of Griffith University has been transformed to function as a botanic garden with 230 types of native plants set out in demonstration gardens illustrating green solutions (cooling, water harvesting, supporting wildlife, nature play, wellbeing, and cultural values) in cities. They provide tangible experiences for students, staff, community groups, industry, and governments of the multitude of ecosystem services that green spaces deliver.

This process, under Prof. Catherine Pickering's leadership, involved informal personalised partnerships with local Not-For-Profit groups including Native Plants for Queensland and the Friends of the Regional Botanic Gardens on the Gold Coast. The Not-For-Profit groups shared information about suitable species to try out in the gardens, as well as living plants, including rare and threatened species. Then, based on the gardening successes (and some fails), Prof. Pickering again partnered with the Not-For-Profit groups and two Work Integrated Learning students (Kueper Ralph and Brendon Kelly) to produce books capturing information about how and where to grow native plants, addressing two key challenges/opportunities in cities:

1. **The loss of green with densification;**
2. **The importance of school gardens for engaging with nature.**

With increased densification of cities, larger private gardens are less common as more people are living in high-rise units, reducing urban greening and opportunities to grow plants. Schools, in contrast, provide important opportunities for nature play and keeping cities green. But there was a dearth of information publicly available about the best natives for pots to playgrounds. Lists of suitable species were compiled and revised, then information for the most appropriate 80 species per book was assembled, including images, growing conditions, and biodiversity benefits.

The first book, “Native plants for Indoors and Small Gardens in South East Queensland” was launched in 2023, while the second, “Native Plants for School Gardens in South East Queensland” was launched in 2024 with members of the Not-For-Profit groups. PDF copies of both books were made available online on the Griffith Biodiversity website, while over 10,000 copies of the books have been given away, reflecting the University’s focus on public good, and the generosity of members of the Not-For-Profit groups who shared their knowledge and images. These types of informal partnerships can flourish when they reflect complementary expertise and joint motivations for the public good, incorporating virtuous cycles that provide ongoing benefits, growing sustainable environments, and building communities.

continues on page 18

Professor Catherine Pickering.
Image: Griffith University

Students from Benowa debriefing after a morning of planting.
Image: Kate Heffernan

Booklets Available for Download

Native plants for indoors and small gardens in South East Queensland

https://shorturl.at/tABHd

Native plants for school gardens in South East Queensland

https://shorturl.at/NopzN

Benowa SS Project 18 months after planting. Image: Kate Heffernan

An informal partnership

Kate Heffernan Friends GCRBG

Friends of Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens, with the School of Environment and Science, Griffith University, has benefited from several joint projects.

These include the Friends' volunteer nursery propagation of selected endangered species.

Friends have been successful with stem propagation of the regional species, Swamp Orchid *Phaius australis*, collected from Griffith University gardens.

Other projects include a landscape developed in collaboration with a Griffith University Environmental Studies student, and implemented by Friends volunteers, and 70 students from Benowa State School from Prep to Grade 2. The project included rock placement, soil remediation, a rock yarning circle, dry creek bed, informal path, and the selection and planting of over 300 tubestock plants that met the Indigenous Plant Use and Wildlife Habitat design.

Professor Tony Carroll, with several PhD and Honours students from Griffith University School of Environment Studies was assisted by Friends' volunteer Herbarium team in a research project "specifically looking at flower chemistry as a tool to distinguish similarities and differences within the genera, subgenera, sections and series within Angophora, Corymbia and Eucalyptus species". The project was in collaboration with Dr Paul Forster from the Queensland Herbarium and Dr Dean Nicolle from Currency Creek Arboretum in South Australia. The project provided opportunities to train the next generation of scientists. The Eucalypt flower collections will also provide opportunities to explore the chemical ecology of animals that utilise Eucalypt flowers and to study the medicinal properties of Eucalypt flowers.

Friends of the Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens Inc.

Prof Pickering with Rana Baguley (R) and Kate Heffernan (L). Image: Nikki Murphy

Phaius australis in flower. Image: Kate Heffernan

Prof Carroll is in the centre of the background group. Image: Laura Ryan

Flora: Nature's Gift

Botanical Art Exhibition
Gold Coast, 5 – 30 July 2026

RQAS 'Red Wall' Gallery,
25 Broadbeach Blvd,
Broadbeach, QLD

Opening
Sunday 5 July, 11:00

Flora Nature's Gift is a major national exhibition being held for the first time on the Gold Coast.

Proudly supported by

basa Botanical Art Society of Australia

RQAS Royal Queensland Art Society Gold Coast Inc.

Friends of the Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens Inc.

Native Plants Queensland

Image: John Zwar

Stay in Touch