

THE BOTANIC GARDEN

A Newsletter for the Botanic Gardens of Australia and New Zealand

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Theme: Marketing – how to sell
your garden and make money

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Disclaimer: Please note the views expressed in articles are not necessarily the views of BGANZ Council. We aim to encourage a broad range of articles.

Feedback and comments on the newsletter and articles are welcome. Please email: secretariat@bganz.org.au

Cover: The new Bendigo Botanic Gardens Playspace opened December 2013.
Photo Credit: Bendigo Botanic Gardens

The theme of the July 2014 issue will be 'New beginnings – innovations to meet changing demands'. See Page 5. The deadline for contributions is Friday, 13 June, 2014. Please contact the Secretariat if you are intending to submit an article.

CONTENTS

President's View	3
<i>Dale Arvidsson, BGANZ President</i>	
Editorial Update	5
International Botanic News in Brief	6
Marketing – how to sell your garden and make money	8
Balancing revenue streams	
<i>Glenn Maskell, National Rhododendron Gardens</i>	
The Queensland Botanic Trail arrives!	
<i>Dale Arvidsson, BGANZQ President and Curator Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens</i>	
Garden tourism and group tour guide fees	
<i>Kate Heffernan</i>	
Marketing and promoting the Bendigo Botanic Gardens	
<i>Brad Creme, Curator of the Bendigo Botanic Gardens</i>	
Marketing – how to sell your garden and know your visitors	
<i>Rebecca Maddern, Communications Coordinator at Kings Park & Botanic Garden</i>	
Community Greening: marketing horticulture for positive social outcomes	
<i>Phil Pettitt, Community Greening Coordinator at Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust, Sydney</i>	
Botanic Gardens Reports	16
2014 RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show in London set to promote Melbourne and Victoria	
<i>Katie O'Brien, Marketing Coordinator (PR) Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne</i>	
Camperdown Botanic Gardens and Arboretum	
<i>Pamela Jellie, President, Camperdown Botanic Gardens and Arboretum Trust Inc</i>	
New garden for Hamilton Botanic Gardens	
<i>Ceana Priest, Marketing and Communications Executive, Hamilton Botanic Gardens</i>	
Cyclone Dylan visits Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens, January 2014	
<i>Dale Arvidsson, Curator, Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens</i>	
Save our Flora – An independent online national project	
<i>Maria Hitchcock, a life member of the Australian Plants Society</i>	

CONTENTS continued

Conference Reports	19
Review of 5th Global Botanic Gardens Congress, 6th BGANZ Biennial Congress, Dunedin Botanic Gardens 150th anniversary	
<i>Annie McGeachy (AFBG Sec) and representative at the Congress</i>	
AFBG Meets BGANZ – AFBG Conference, a great opportunity to come together	
<i>Rana Baguley</i>	
Calendar of Conferences and Events	24

PRESIDENT'S VIEW

Dale Arvidsson, BGANZ President



BGANZ President
Dale Arvidsson.
Photo Credit: Mackay
Regional Botanic Gardens

This edition of *The Botanic Garden* covers a theme close to the hearts of everyone who is passionate about our botanic gardens, as well as those that balance the budgets! *Marketing - how to sell your garden and make money* is perhaps a very broad topic, but in this day of 'financial and community relevance' it's a message that's unfortunately at the very core of our day-to-day operations and will determine if our botanic gardens and arboreta survive the sword of rationalisation by our funding bodies into the coming decades.

I can share my own understanding of this theme via my entry into the world of botanic gardens and arboreta 10 years ago.

I arrived in Mackay in late 2003 just months after the opening of the first stage of the brand new and recently opened Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens (MRBG). With mainly young and new and some old existing gardens and infrastructural elements, literally acres of mulch and tube stock plantings – it was a dramatic, but not very engaging sight.

It was the task of myself and our then Curator Helen Paulsen to turn the negative feelings around to prove that this botanic gardens was not just another government spending spree.

Added to this were some very vocal elements in both our City Council and local community. They questioned the relevance of spending millions of dollars developing a new botanic garden that, at the time, was used by very few people, due to a combination of drought, heat and lack of shade.

It was the task of myself and our then Curator Helen Paulsen to turn these negative feelings around to prove that this botanic gardens was not just the result of another government spending spree created at the sake of the conditions of our local roads or for a few well-connected people interested in plants. We wanted to show that this was a place to be embraced by the community in the diverse way that all of our botanic gardens and arboreta are accessed and utilised.

While our core reason for existing was as a place for the conservation and preservation of species native to the Central Queensland Coast bioregion, we realised that until the specimens in the living collection were more mature and looking their best, we would need to focus on what our site did offer and who we could invite and work with to develop visitation and usage.

We started by developing an understanding of the site via a SWOT analysis in the context of what was happening in the wider community. Mackay was in the midst of regional Queensland's mining boom and was a city growing rapidly with the Council struggling to keep up with the rapid rise in population and the infrastructure and lifestyle elements needed to support this.

Before the FIFO phenomenon (the 'fly-in, fly-out' workers commuting directly to the mines from Brisbane and major regional centres) and cheaper airfares which are now the norm, it was common for families to move to Mackay for work, with the 'breadwinner' commuting the few hours west to the mines – often with a one-to-two week stay out at the mining facilities.

This typically left mum and the kids to their own devices. Apart from the beach (only available for swimming outside of the box jellyfish season that extends from October to May), a smattering of shopping centres and a new art gallery, there was very little to do. A two-to-three hour drive each way was required to visit the next city along the Queensland coast.

Combined with the 'original' population of Mackay feeling more ostracised as their suburbs filled with new people who they did not know, there was a general feeling of isolation across the whole community.

One of the MRBG's strengths was its proximity to the city and accessibility by car and public transport. Another was the fact that there were no previous expectations of the site as we were commencing a new program.

The third strength – and one that can never be underrated – was that, as part of community consultation, a volunteer Friends groups had been formed prior to the MRBG opening, providing a small group of highly enthusiastic volunteers ready to assist.

With a relatively small budget of \$25,000 a year along with myself as a full time event and education coordinator, we embarked on a series of monthly free events which, over time, grew to large scale events embracing multicultural aspects. Events at the botanic garden became so popular that the Council placed a 5000+ amphitheatre on site.

A kiosk was developed into a café which then became a destination restaurant. With people coming in droves and the living collection maturing quickly in the Queensland heat, the guided walks for school program developed into a fully-fledged education program under the guidance of Maya Harrison, a local educator with 20 years' experience joining the team.

All this visitation and usage – even through flood, two cyclones and long, long hours from our committed staff – have seen our regional Council – our main funding body – supportive of continued development.

We acknowledge that Mackay – a city of 'big sheds and sugarcane' seems an unlikely place to develop a botanic garden of significance. To undertake our core role – to conserve and research flora from the Central Queensland Coast bioregion – our challenge is to balance this work with attracting visitation and getting our messages out to the wider community.

A tree used for a shady picnic might not seem to be as important a reason for being as the conservation status of the same tree in the wild, or its historical significance to either the first peoples or the European settlers, but it is a just one of the ways that the importance of our sites and living collections are accessed and understood by the wider community.

We acknowledge that Mackay – a city of 'big sheds and sugarcane' is an unlikely place to be developing a botanic garden of significance.

We can all look at what we have to offer the community at large and find different ways to engage them. I believe that passionate people at the heart of all of our botanic gardens and arboreta can be ambassadors for both conservation and community whilst constantly looking for opportunities to find ways to source funding and commence new projects.

By selling the message that we are *vital* to our local communities on so many levels – as outlined in the Communications Toolkit developed by BGANZ for our members – we can start small and achieve many things. Through BGANZ and our professional networks, we can ask each other for advice and suggestions.

Read on to find how others have used marketing to enhance their day-to-day operations.

BGANZ NEWSLETTER REVIEW

The editorial committee needs your input and we've produced a short survey and encourage you to have your say. Please fill in the Survey Monkey questionnaire at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FCQNCRJ> and fill it in by end of April.

Alternatively please email Janelle at janelle.hatherly@bigpond.com with your suggestions.

There are only ten short questions to answer ...

1. What is your BGANZ membership type?
2. What is your job role? How many years have you been involved in the botanic gardens business?
3. How often do you read the BGANZ newsletter?
4. Why do you read the BGANZ newsletter? What do you hope to get out of it?
5. How do you generally read the BGANZ newsletter?
6. What section(s) of the newsletter do you most enjoy reading?
7. What sections(s) would you like to see changed/removed/improved.
8. Which of the following would you like to see included as regular sections?

✦ Opinion pieces and debates	✦ People profiles
✦ Research reports	✦ Information resources
✦ Horticultural/curatorial notes	✦ Links to useful websites
✦ New media and technology	✦ Advertisements
✦ Book reviews	✦ Sharing good ideas and useful tips
✦ People news	✦ Other (please specify)
9. What themes/ professional areas would you like to see explored in future articles?
10. Do you have any other advice or feedback on the newsletter for the Editorial team?

EDITORIAL UPDATE

Janelle Hatherly

I took my first selfie at the Big Merino Cafe in Goulburn on my way back to Sydney from Canberra. I'd visited our nation's capital to meet with Dale, Eamonn and Anne to discuss the future of the BGANZ Botanic Garden newsletter.

As Dale takes over from Anne Duncan as President of BGANZ, I take over from Eamonn as Managing Editor of this, our society's principal publication. We agree that we want to build on the achievements of the past and to continue to support the professional development of our sector as best we can.

We acknowledge the challenges all botanic gardens' professionals face in a rapidly changing world and the emerging role of digital marketing and e-communication. We discuss how this publication fits in with FaceBook, Twitter, LinkedIn and BGANZ's own bulletins and developing section forums (see Sharon's article on BGEN). We muse on whether the Botanic Garden is a newsletter, a magazine or a journal.

We settle on calling it a magazine for now – with interesting articles on multiple subjects by multiple authors. I'd like to change its name to The Botanic Garden(er). This would acknowledge the diversity of people in our organisations (directors, scientists, grounds staff etc), and that at the heart of it, we are all gardeners, cultivating meaningful connections with plants. We will continue to:

- produce it three times a year
- drive best practice and stimulate learning
- encourage contributions from all sections in our profession
- archive it as a lasting resource for members.

My photography and the turf could use some improvements!



We see the 'news' function falling more to the regular BGANZ bulletins with the forums encouraging active debates.

The editorial committee wants your input and to this end we've produced a short survey and encourage you to have your say. Please go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FCQNCRJ> and fill it in by end of April.

And we need articles for the next issue. Appropriately, the theme is "*New beginnings – innovations to meet changing demands*". We're looking to share great ideas (big and small) and encourage you to submit any quick tips, useful resources or new approaches that you've tried and valued. We also invite a botanic garden for our first *Speed Date* to tell us what they're particularly good at and why they're so 'special'. This way, BGANZ members who share similar interests might get in touch for advice, visit you, or recommend your gardens to a friend.

BGANZ EDUCATION NETWORK (BGEN)

Sharon Willoughby

We all know that *just been to a conference* feeling. Having spent time with colleagues who work in the same area, shared stories about what is working and commiserating about what isn't working so well, we head back home with our imaginations buzzing with new ideas. Re-energised with a fire re-ignited in our bellies there is always a burst of new activity after these conferences. Often the best professional development that we can offer our teams is time with their peers, sharing ideas and resources. After all, there is an enormous wealth of experience and knowledge within botanic gardens. Often something we are struggling with we find that someone else has already solved, in another State, at another garden.

The Botanic Gardens Education Network Australia and New Zealand (BGEN) is a special interest group of BGANZ. It aims to provide more opportunities for connections and resource sharing between staff and volunteers who work in the areas of: education, interpretation and community engagement in its broadest sense. BGEN is a way that we can keep those conversations flowing beyond the biennial conferences, share materials and ideas between gardens and develop strategies to support our communication with our community at a national level.

The BGEN Committee has developed a charter, a web page, an online forum and a link to resources that can be accessed via the BGANZ website (go to 'All Groups' to find the BGEN page and members need to login). Our aim is to develop a vibrant forum that allows for problem solving and resource sharing. The forum will be supported by sessions at the biennial conferences and workshops in between these times. Sign up to our page, start sharing your ideas and issues. The seeds of the special interest group are in place; please join us in growing BGEN.

INTERNATIONAL BOTANIC NEWS IN BRIEF

World's smallest water lily stolen from London's Kew Gardens

A plant thief has stolen one of the few surviving examples of the world's smallest water lily, which is extinct in the wild, from the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in London, police said today.

The tiny '*Nymphaea thermarum*' was stolen on Thursday 9 January 2014 from the Princess of Wales Conservatory, a giant glass house at the gardens in the southwest of the capital, a Scotland Yard statement said.

"Officers have been informed that the plant would have had to have been dug, or pulled up, from a shallow water lily pond," the force said.

Richard Barley, Director of Horticulture at Kew Gardens, said the theft was a blow to morale of his staff who are dedicated to the conservation of plants.

BGCI announces new partnership

BGCI is delighted to announce an exciting new partnership with *Chic Outlet Shopping*®, the collection of luxury outlet shopping villages in Europe and China associated with major cities and centres of design.

Celebrating the beauty of flowers through its spring campaign, *Chic Goes Wild!*, the *Chic Outlet Shopping*® Villages will feature stunning floral installations by designer Mark Colle. The spring campaign will raise awareness and funds for the BGCI network and support our global conservation projects.

Islamic view about plants and nature

A seminar held at Education City (located on the outskirts of Doha, the capital of Qatar) recently shed interesting insights into Quranic botanical gardens and the Islamic view about plants and nature.

The event was held by the Public Policy in Islam Programme under the Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies (QFIS), a college of Hamad Bin Khalifa University, in collaboration with Quranic Botanic Garden Project (QBGP).

QBGP's mission is to raise awareness of plants, botanical terms and conservation principles mentioned in the Holy Quran and Sunnah. So far, the project has managed to collect 22 botanical species, which are mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah. These species belong to three geographical areas: the Mediterranean, the Desert and Tropical. [Read more.](#)

Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens, USA, has been recognized as a 2014 'Editors' Choice Home & Garden Award' winner in Yankee Magazine's March/April issue. [Read more.](#)

The Xishuangbanna Declaration on Botanical Gardens and Climate Change

The Third Xishuangbanna International Symposium, *Botanical Gardens and Climate Change*, was held at the Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Yunnan, China, on 13-16 January, 2014. As a result of the Symposium, a Declaration on Botanical Gardens and Climate Change was launched, calling on botanic gardens to use their individual and collective capabilities to take forward climate change research and ensure the conservation of vulnerable species. Read the complete declaration [here](#).

Living Plant Conservation Collections: A Guide for Public Gardens

BGCI US has published a new guide, *Building living plant collections to support conservation*. The guide features work done by the Montgomery Botanical Center, including genetic evaluation of the Sinkhole Cycad. This guide is designed to provide a general blueprint to help strategically develop conservation collections. Find out more download a copy of the Guide [here](#).

Singapore's first bid for a UNESCO World Heritage Site moves ahead with the submission of the official nomination dossier for Singapore Botanic Gardens. The dossier details the gardens' historical, economic and socio-cultural importance. [Read more.](#)

7th Biennial BGANZ Congress Wollongong Botanic Garden 27-30 October 2015

Wollongong Botanic Garden is pleased to be hosting the 7th Biennial Botanic Garden Australia and New Zealand (BGANZ) Congress in 2015. We are currently developing an innovative conference program with a mix of keynote speakers, seminars, presentations, workshops, garden tours, team building exercises and evening networking events.

Proudly referred to by locals as 'The Gong', Wollongong lies on the narrow coastal strip between the Illawarra Escarpment and the Pacific Ocean in the Illawarra region of NSW. The Gong delivers a mix of metropolitan style, seaside living and small town charm, just one hour south of Sydney's domestic and international airport.

For those of you who may like to extend your stay, Wollongong offers an endless array of outdoor activities to enjoy including skydiving, hang gliding, horse riding and surfing – to name only a few. And for the discerning foodie, the Gong is a melting pot of cuisines to satiate every palate.

We encourage you to discover the beauty of our region by browsing through a selection of images posted on the [Destination Wollongong website](#).

We expect the Congress website to be launched later in 2014 so stay tuned.



**KATE
HEFFERNAN**
horticulture consultant
Plant & Preserve



After 15 years in a key role gathering support and establishing the Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens, Kate understands what it takes to bring a botanic gardens to life.

- Design and implementation of planting projects
- Community engagement, volunteer training & management
- Grant writing & fund raising
- Interpretation, education and visitor services
- Reports, policies and documentation
- Media, presentations and promotion
- Maintenance evaluation and guidelines
- Group tour organisation

QLD & Interstate



Before



After

Visit the Botanic Gardens pages of Kate's website
for more information : www.kateheffernan.com.au
Phone 0404 853 043 or 07 55 278 462 | Email kate.heffernan6@bigpond.com

MARKETING – HOW TO SELL YOUR GARDEN AND MAKE MONEY

Balancing revenue streams

Glenn Maskell, National Rhododendron Gardens



Visitor Shop at National Rhododendron Centre.
Photo Credit: National Rhododendron Centre

The National Rhododendron Garden is managed by the state government through Parks Victoria. The 40 hectare site concentrates on collecting Rhododendron but has a vast collection of other cool climate plants complementing that collection.

We have several streams of revenue that help the gardens: general revenue from the shop and events, to specific revenue for projects through to dedications and donations.

Entry

Four years ago the entry charge was removed to all Parks Victoria properties by the state government making entry to all parks free. The entry point to the garden supplies us with a valuable connection to our visitors. It enable us to control the entry of bikes, dogs and other unwanted activities in the garden but most of all we can offer advice on where to go and what to see in the garden.

Four years ago the entry charge was removed to all Parks Victoria properties by the state government making entry to all parks free.

Entry is through a little shop that sells garden-themed goods such as books, ornaments, jewellery and plants. Since the introduction of free entry we have seen a growth in visitation from 25,000 to 120,000. Lost revenue from entry has been replaced by improved sales in the shop. The benefit of greater visitation has also meant that the gardens are looked at more favourably when funding bids are made. We have also seen an increase in repeat visitation and greater appreciation is shown in our small donations box.

Events, weddings and photography permits

Revenue from events can be fraught with hassles and can take up far too much staff time. This makes any financial gain seem meaningless. Events can be good little earners provided hours of staff time aren't taken up by 'bridezillas' in organising their 'perfect day'.

Reducing staff input for events has been achieved by:

- carefully stating what is acceptable and not acceptable,
- building a car park specifically for events or restricting parking capacity and t size of events, and
- directing events to take place only in certain areas.

The designated areas can be booked for a fee and are open for use for a two period. The bookings are made through our gift shop and the actual event usually requires less than ten minutes of gardeners' time in preparation and supervision.

Memorials and dedication

The question has to be raised: Do you want a cemetery in your garden? We have in the past had memorial seats that require maintenance and can move quite a distance in a short time as people drag them to shade and sun. Every family then wants their chair restored and in the position they have designated. This results in a merry chase looking for seats and negotiating repairs and replacing plaques.

We have replaced all our memorial seats with trees that we guarantee for ten years giving us a point where we regain control of the plants' destiny. However, most trees will be there for recipients for much longer than the ten year period.

The question has to be raised: Do you want a cemetery in your garden?

We have removed 99% of plaques and have replaced the plaques with certificates given to family etc. showing the tree as planted, who it is for and where it is planted with GPS location and a map.

These memorials and dedications are for personal remembrance and there is no need for a public plaque. The only marking is on the plant tag so that staff know to inform the certificate holder of problems, should they arise.

The Balance

For us, while we will never raise close-to-enough money to run a large garden with these revenue streams, our aim is to try to raise money that helps subsidise the National Rhododendron Garden with minimal input from staff. Getting the balance right between service and income produced can be a challenge. Our aim is to maximise the time staff have to get on with what they want to do: create gardens for public enjoyment.

The Queensland Botanic Trail arrives!

Dale Arvidsson, BGANZQ President and Curator Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens

What started out as a simple marketing idea – a self-drive trail to link our inland botanic gardens to the more popular coastal tourism route – has led to the development of the Queensland Botanic Trail.

Faced with an initially disinterested state tourism authority, this project took over 10 years and needed the financial support of our Queensland members and sponsors to turn the idea into reality.

The vision for the BGANZ Queensland (BGANZQ) Network is:

'To establish a network of regional botanic gardens which will enable members to gain mutual benefit through cooperation, exchange of knowledge, ideas and experience, sharing of resources and increased strength associated with belonging to a large and influential organisation.'

Crossing tourism regions, crossing city and regional council borders and working together to promote all regional botanic gardens to the public is a core role of the BGANZQ Network.

A simple marketing idea – a self-drive trail to link our inland botanic gardens to the more popular coastal tourism route – has led to the development of the Queensland Botanic Trail.

Member gardens extend over 2,000km to the New South Wales border through to Cooktown, Cairns, Townsville, the

Whitsundays, Mackay, Rockhampton, Gladstone, Bundaberg, Hervey Bay, Maroochy, Noosa, Brisbane, Moreton Bay, Redcliffe, Gold Coast, and Mt Tamborine whilst the inland route takes in Longreach, Emerald, Myall Park, Toowoomba to Goondiwindi. Many of these botanic gardens are at the forefront of tourism offering interesting experiences and beautiful venues with a real regional look and feel. Some do not have designated staff or rely completely on volunteers to build, plant and maintain their facility.

A decision was undertaken in Mackay in 2004 at what was then, the Network of Regional Botanic Gardens conference, to promote the BGANZQ Network of Regional Botanic Gardens to travellers and holidaymakers. This was initially done by distributing each other's key promotional brochure at information points within each botanic garden.

In response to growing public interest and requests for brochures about other botanic gardens, a new jointly funded brochure was planned to promote a new Queensland Botanic Gardens Trail throughout the state. Importantly, we believe this new tourism trail concept and the information brochure now available will stimulate increased visitation by tourists travelling from one botanic garden to the next.

Tourism has long been one of the 'four pillars' of the Queensland economy. Some established botanic gardens in peak tourism areas of Queensland attract large numbers of visitors, whilst travellers often overlook other botanic gardens because they are unable to compete with well-funded private attractions.

Alone, many botanic gardens have a local focus, due to funding and operations by local City or Regional Councils. However these Councils are often the major funding contributors to Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs) that promote tourism regions as well as operate tourist information centres.

Queensland is divided into separate tourism regions and it's almost impossible for these individual RTOs to fund projects that support other (and in our case all) regions. So we had to go to 'the top' and approach the state tourism authority with our wonderful Queensland Botanic Gardens Trail concept. We thought it would be of huge interest and buckets of cash would be offered to develop a brochure, trail signage and marketing collateral.

However we soon realised that, from a state tourism perspective, botanic gardens do not rate highly on their marketing agenda and that our 'ground breaking' self-drive trail would be added to the 120+ existing self-drive trails throughout the state with no special funding or promotion offered. Surprised and a little dejected, our network decided that if we wanted this to happen, we would need to create this trail ourselves with the motto: 'Build it and they will come.'

Tourism has long been one of the 'four pillars' of the Queensland economy.

We decided on a trail brochure as our first step at our network regional conference at the Gold Coast in 2008 and committed firmly to it in Gladstone in 2010. With quotes sourced and funding discussed, a draft design was tabled for the next BGANZQ conference in Maroochy in 2012.



Maroochyore Botanic Garden – just one of the botanic gardens on the BGANZ Queensland Botanic Trail brochure.

Photo Credit: John Sandham

Those botanic gardens that could support the project financially did, and sponsorship from affiliated sources helped boost funds for the first print run. However, the process took another two years of 'tweaking' due to tight funding and even tighter workloads. The final design for the brochure is just now complete.

Now that the trail brochure is printed and is being distributed to each botanic garden within BGANZQ, it is now up to the committee and our members to sell this to our visitors and commence sourcing funds for signage and marketing. The state tourism authority has recently shown interest now that we have something tangible and tourism press will be forthcoming.

So what have we learned?

If you are initially told 'no', listen to why, but don't be completely disheartened.

Use your time wisely. While we saved money coordinating the design process within BGANZQ, completely outsourcing the design and coordination would have cost more, but would have taken years off the project.

You need collateral to approach funding bodies and tourism authorities. An idea is just that – an idea. Design mocks-up and a business plan with a clear roll out calendar looks more attractive to potential supporters than a concept alone – no matter how small the project.

Work with our other BGANZ regional groups. There's no reason that the Queensland Botanic Trail cannot become a national trail of botanic gardens and arboreta!

Garden tourism and group tour guide fees

Kate Heffernan

The new Queensland Botanic Trail brochure described in Dale's article is the first step in what members of BGANZ Queensland hope will be a new and assertive approach to botanic garden tourism.

The disappointment of Queensland's botanic gardens not being considered of sufficient value to attract state funding for the brochure was a painful reminder that gardens themselves have to do the hard yards first...

The disappointment of learning that Queensland's botanic gardens are not considered of sufficient value to attract state funding for the brochure was a painful reminder that botanic gardens themselves have to do the hard yards first, in order to be recognised for their value as tourism destinations. In North America, Europe and the UK, garden visiting is one of the fastest growing tourism industries.

This means more work for some of Australia's smaller or regional botanic gardens, and possibly some of the larger capital city botanic gardens. However, efforts will be rewarded with more paying visitors and tourism figures to impress state or federally based tourism departments.

Travellers are looking for an experience and information, it can be easy if you understand and cater for their needs.



Cynthia, botanist and
volunteer guide at
Holehird.
Photo Credit:
Kate Heffernan

Every year plane loads of Australians head overseas to spend anything from a week to a month on organised garden tours. After many years as a teacher guiding students of horticulture and conservation around botanic gardens, I led my first 'professional' overseas garden tour in 2013.

Even the smallest or most remote botanic or public garden on my planned tour was proficient in meeting any request I made for specialist guiding. Email requests sent one day were answered the next, pro forma booking sheets gave me an opportunity to describe my preferred requirements with booking and payment methods clearly described, and there was usually one point of contact from start to finish.

Marketed as a 'Behind the Scenes' tour meant general walks around gardens was not going to be enough for my tour group and I had to offer exclusive access to parts of the gardens not usually accessible, or at the least, access to specialist guides knowledgeable on customised topics.

After being accustomed to the 'low' or 'no fee' approach to guide services at many Australian gardens, I was at first overwhelmed by some of the higher prices necessary to meet my special requests.

In all the gardens where a specialist guide was engaged, the highly professional service, from start to finish, more than warranted the fee. In some instances the fee was deemed a donation, and in others it was described as a fee for a service.



Colin, Head Gardener
at RBG Scotland's
Logan Botanic Garden.
Photo Credit:
Kate Heffernan



Brian, teacher and horticulturist at Scottish National Trust School of Gardening, at Lake Windamere.
Photo Credit: Kate Heffernan

Occasionally the fee was absurdly low in comparison to some... and I departed feeling we had cheated the system and often added a donation. Our specialist guides varied from employed professional visitor services/tour guides, to head gardeners and curators. They also included some experienced and knowledgeable volunteers.

A number of Australian botanic gardens do levy what could be considered a fair market price for specialist guiding services. However, often the phrase 'a small fee is charged' or 'free guided tours' is associated with botanic gardens group tours.

Searching the web for a one-stop-shop for information can sometimes be a challenge. The searcher is often asked to email or phone for further information which might send them to another garden website which does provide all the information on-line. Striking a balance between scheduled free guided walks, low fee for service walks and specialist guiding fees for group tours is essential.

Where there's a website there's a way!

Many Australian botanic gardens guides are well trained and have incredible knowledge. They are both volunteers and professional Visitor Service Officers. Whether guides are paid professionals or volunteers is irrelevant when an international standard, professionally presented, specialised service from start to finish, demands a fee to match. The key is in the delivery: from point of contact to parking arrangements, group tour costs, suggested themes and tour duration. Offering a few languages other than English will help attract different nationalities.

If the process is easy for the organiser, and visitors leave inspired with some lessons they can take home, it has been a success. I watched and listened to my tour group last May and it was obvious to see when they were inspired, had learned some new knowledge or understanding to take away. A year later we still talk about some of the guides that left us with indelible memories, and stories we repeat in conversation with others!

When someone joins a customised group tour, their expectations are to be entertained, enthralled and educated. They will long remember the event, but will quickly forget the fee. Tourists will overnight nearby, use the café, buy merchandise and promote your gardens well outside your region. A true win-win situation!

Marketing and promoting the Bendigo Botanic Gardens

Brad Creme, Curator of the Bendigo Botanic Gardens

(Bendigo will host the BGANZ Vic 2014 Conference and BGANZ AGM in November 2014.)



Summer in the Parks event 2013.
Photo Credit: Bendigo Botanic Gardens

The Bendigo Botanic Gardens (BBG) at White Hills is undergoing a rejuvenation and expansion phase. Previously known for its unirrigated landscape of remnant trees and captive displays of kangaroos, wallabies, cockatoos and even monkeys, the garden is now primarily known for its contemporary playspace, new and upgraded garden precincts, cool green lawns and its ambitious masterplan.

The green field expansion site of a further three hectares of contemporary landscape is currently being designed with implementation proposed for 2015/16. TCL and Paul Thompson

have been engaged to design the 'Garden for the Future' precinct which will integrate with the existing heritage gardens.

This shift in focus has been brought about from the community's desire to have a world class green space in the northern growth corridor of Bendigo and a newfound respect for the history of the previously named 'White Hills Botanic Gardens.'

This rare opportunity has brought about an increased community awareness of the site and an interest in the goals of botanic gardens and what they can offer to visitors.



BBG Playspace. Photo Credit: Bendigo Botanic Gardens

The community has a varied understanding of what's going on with some people up to date on recent developments, while others still remember 'the good old days' between the 1950s and 1990s when it was a very different site.

This change of focus is an attempt to turn what was essentially a 'local park' into a regional botanic gardens of significance.

A new found respect for the history of the previously named 'White Hills Botanic Gardens'.

Other changes include a move away from captive animal displays to horticultural displays and landscape design; from just maintaining old trees to planting new ones and from an inward looking garden to one which engages with the community in many ways.

Our community engagement strategy includes offering tours of the garden, educational programs for kids, adding interpretive signage throughout the garden and holding large events like 'Summer in the Parks.'

Along with increasing visitation and a higher public profile come the challenges of marketing this site afresh to those who know it and those who don't.

The visual identity of the BBG has been cultivated to focus on developing a unique brand, which is different to the City of Greater Bendigo's brand identity.

It uses its own specific colour palette, font and 'look' and this has been rolled out across a range of platforms including a new website, Facebook site, signage, local advertising and even our very own bus stop, a kilometer down the road providing directional information in the BBG style.

Increasing the profile of the site is the first step, but this doesn't necessarily equate to increased visitation. We've found that recent improvements and additions to the site have resulted in a visitation rate double that of a couple of years ago. This was measured with visitor tracking counters and helped us evaluate visitation levels.

Along with online analytical tools, we can also track visitation to our website and Facebook sites to see what information people are responding to most strongly.

One of the main challenges in promoting the site, and increasing our revenue, has been an attempt to streamline the booking system to allow for a wide range of events while maintaining consistency between the fee structures across other open spaces in the municipality such as Rosalind Park, Lake Weeroona and the numerous pocket parks through local neighborhoods.

Working out an acceptable fee structure is challenging as we must find a system that Councillors can support as well. Most of the BBG's revenue comes from local government funding, with a much smaller amount being recouped from events and bookings for parties, local get-togethers, functions and public programs.

Completely offsetting operational costs with revenue generation is an unrealistic expectation at this stage in the gardens' life. I doubt any botanic gardens can ever achieve this goal but would love to hear from any that claim to do so!

With the introduction of a contemporary landscape, visitor centre, shop and café, it is planned that that the BBG can recoup further expenses while continuing to deliver its core goals: to provide recreation, education and conservation services to the community. As we build up services, and promote this tourist attraction to a wider audience, it is hoped new ways of making money can be found and implemented.

After thinking about the bottom line, I'm also reminded that botanic gardens contribute to the economic wellbeing of a community in many intangible ways. Botanic gardens are capable of increasing tourism levels to the town they're in, creating educational opportunities and behavioural changes in kids by

showing them how to grow their own food, providing health benefits to the community by providing recreational spaces and, more generally, reducing stress in the workforce through the provision of open space.

After thinking about the bottom line, I'm also reminded that botanic gardens contribute to the economic wellbeing of a community in many intangible ways.

While it's hard to put a dollar value on these things, the Bendigo Botanic Gardens considers these just as important as making money from ticket sales.

Having said that, please consider attending our next upcoming event on Sunday 16 March. Called 'The Food Fossickers Presents a Picnic with the Mad Hatter', this will be our first partnership with the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival. For \$10, guests will be provided with a tasting glass and access to many food vendors and activities and competitions and prizes, throughout the day. Details are on our website.

Visit our website or download the masterplan at: www.bendigobotanicgardens.com.au

Visit our Facebook site at: www.facebook.com/bendigobotanicgarden

Site bookings can be made by calling the City of Greater Bendigo Customer Service Centre on: 5434 6000.

Marketing – how to sell your garden and know your visitors

Rebecca Maddern, Communications Coordinator at Kings Park & Botanic Garden

Knowing your visitors is the best way to draw people through the doors of your garden, according to the team at Kings Park and Botanic Garden in Perth, Western Australia.

Whilst market research and visitor evaluation are often on our wish lists, in reality, limited time and budgets often mean it falls to the bottom of the 'to do' list.

However, investing in good data and evaluation will make your marketing simpler and more cost-effective in the long run.

In Kings Park, information is collected through large-scale visitor surveys twice a year, people and vehicle counters, and a formal process to record all visitor feedback. Website and social media analytics are increasingly being used to understand what information people are looking for online.

Together, these sources of information paint a detailed picture of who our visitors are, what motivates them to visit us, and how they typically behave when they are here.

We design our marketing activities to match these needs and expectations. Over time, we can track trends, respond to changes

in visitor expectations and start to predict various types of behaviour to shape our marketing activity.

This knowledge is used to choose the best 'weapon' from our armoury of marketing tools to suit each segment of our audience – from our website and social media presence, to signage, brochures and maps. Special events, such as the Kings Park Festival, and other forms of community involvement are also used to engage.

With almost six million visitors each year in Kings Park, there is no 'one size fits all' marketing tool or marketing message to suit everyone.

Our visitors come from all walks of life and respond to different tools and messages.

No marketing strategy, however, is a substitute for a fantastic end-product.

Spectacular gardens, great facilities and a wonderful visitor experience will make word-of-mouth your best friend and ultimately sell your garden.



Kings Park, Spring Festival
September 2013.
Photo Credit: Kings Park Botanic
Gardens, WA

Community Greening: marketing horticulture for positive social outcomes

Phil Pettitt, Community Greening Coordinator at Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust, Sydney

Helping people to garden

The Royal Botanic Gardens & Domain Trust (the Trust) has a commitment to take its expertise 'beyond the garden walls' and serve the broader community through innovative outreach programs.

To meet this objective the Community Education Unit has forged strong links with communities in need who have established or who are interested in establishing their own communal garden projects.

In 1999 the Trust joined with Housing New South Wales to establish a partnership called 'Community Greening'. 'Community Greening' is the name for a range of activities to promote communal garden projects undertaken by the Royal Botanic Gardens & Domain Trust and Housing New South Wales together.

By promoting communal gardening in social housing communities, and on nearby locations, we make a significant contribution to improved social cohesion, crime reduction and public health in both urban and regional New South Wales.

Thanks to financial support from Housing New South Wales, the Trust employs full time education horticulturists on the 'Community Greening' program, who work with the Housing New South Wales Community and Tenant Participant Programs Unit and Regional Coordinators. Currently there are in excess of 200 communities participating in the development or establishment of gardens in social housing communities, on local Council land, in the grounds of churches, hospitals and schools throughout New South Wales.

One of our best marketing tools for 'selling the program' is our quarterly newsletter called *Greening and Growing Together*. It has been produced since July 2010 and ensures ongoing and effective communication between the Trust, Housing NSW, benefactors and community members. Read all about it at http://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/education/community_greening



Villawood Community Garden Embraces 'Hugelkultur'

The community gardeners at Villawood community garden, with Community Development Worker John Paul Taberdo, are doing some amazing things in the garden with what others may put out as green waste.

Bunnings kindly donated a continuous raised garden bed and rather than completely filling the area with purchased soil, the Villawood team is using the Hugelkultur method to create a living soil that will be rich for a long period and more resistant to dry growing conditions.

Hugelkultur, pronounced Hoo-gul-culture, means hill culture or hill mound. Instead of putting branches, leaves and grass clippings in the green waste bin, the Villawood volunteers are building a hugel bed. The gardeners are mounding cut tree branches, leaves, grass clippings and other



L to R Volunteer Leslie Flynn, John Paul and Anthony Kassis

compostable material inside their raised bed and allowing nature to break down the materials to create a rich soil. The Hugel bed will be used for growing produce while the materials are breaking down.

This practice has already been trialled at the OEC Community Garden at Dubbo where gardener Rhonda Lang wrote into us about the amazing results she had this

summer, comparing the growth rate of chia in a traditional raised bed compared to a hugelkultur bed, created in mid-2013.

The advantages of a hugel bed are many, if you would like more information on hugelkultur, with photographs to demonstrate the practice, visit the website: <http://www.permaculture.co.uk/articles/many-benefits-hugelkultur>

Torton Place Makeover

In February, residents of the Torton Place complex in Penrith participated in a hanging basket beautification activity at the Casa Bella community centre, located within the complex.

Nepean Community and Neighbourhood Services received funding from Penrith City Council through a community grant. The

covered outdoor community area was identified as a suitable project space and to finish the event, a fully catered meal was provided.

Elizabeth from Community Greening had earlier prepared a hanging basket, inspired by a traditional English pub basket, to show residents how their baskets will eventually look once their



Jay and John working on their baskets

moss was used to line the baskets. Story continued on page 4...

BOTANIC GARDENS REPORTS

2014 RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show in London set to promote Melbourne and Victoria

Katie O'Brien, Marketing Coordinator (PR) Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne

The Royal Botanic Gardens is excited to announce its partnership with Tourism Victoria, Tourism Northern Territory, Qantas and leading UK tour operator Trailfinders to present the 'Essence of Australia' show garden at the world's largest flower show, the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show, in July.

Designed by respected Australian landscape designer Jim Fogarty – who also designed the Gardens' gold medal-winning Australian Garden show garden at the 2011 RHS Chelsea Flower Show – the Essence of Australia garden will feature a wide range of Australian native plants including several species that will grow well in the UK.

Royal Botanic Gardens' Director and Chief Executive, Prof. Tim Entwisle said the garden will inspire inbound tourists from UK and Europe to visit the Australian Garden and show people just how beautiful and diverse Australian flora can be.

"Participating in such a popular garden show also gives us a chance to highlight stunning Australian plants suitable growing in the UK and promote the conservation work of the Gardens to an international audience."

Camperdown Botanic Gardens and Arboretum

Pamela Jellie, President, Camperdown Botanic Gardens and Arboretum Trust Inc

The Camperdown Botanic Gardens and Arboretum Trust was incorporated in September 2013. The group was formed as an outcome of the Corangamite Shire's community planning initiative. The plan, *Imagining Camperdown*, identified the restoration of the botanic gardens and arboretum as a priority project.



The Trust's fourth working bee was held on 4 February 2014.
Photo Credit: Camperdown Botanic Gardens and Arboretum trust

A series of public meetings considered different models of management, and called for the establishment of an expert group to provide advice to Council. Community contributions are being coordinated by the Trust to raise friends and funds, conduct projects and coordinate engagement and volunteer efforts.

The rejuvenation of the gardens was launched with a public lecture by Professor Tim Entwisle, CEO of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne at Camperdown's Theatre Royal on 30 June 2013. Earlier in the day he planted an Australian Desert Willow *Geijera parviflora* to mark the start of the restoration of the arboretum. Twenty-one new trees have since been planted.

These were selected from the plant list in the original Guilfoyle plan of 1889–90 displayed in the local heritage centre. More plantings are planned for the coming autumn.



View from the gardens across the volcanic crater Lake Gnotuk.
Photo Credit: Camperdown Botanic Gardens and Arboretum trust

New garden for Hamilton Botanic Gardens

Ceana Priest, Marketing and Communications Executive, Hamilton Botanic Gardens



Hamilton Gardens - Tropical Gardens.
Photo Credit: Hamilton Gardens - Tropical Gardens

Visitors to Hamilton Gardens in New Zealand are being transported to warmer climates where lush tropical spaces filled with bromeliads, palms and exotic orchids flourish in the gardens' newest living display.

Paying homage to temperate climate gardeners who have tried to recreate the mysterious beauty of tropical landscapes since the 16th Century, the Tropical Garden was officially opened in early February.

A vertical garden wall covered with thousands of tropical plants housed in 6,000 'pockets' has been set above a ravine, which is a key feature of the latest addition to the gardens' fantasy garden collection. Visitors can walk

along a jungle path, across a boardwalk before crossing the bridge where the vertical wall can be viewed.

Hamilton Gardens Director Peter Sergel says the Tropical Garden concept is relatively simple: 'It features plants that look tropical but which will survive in a Waikato climate. They create the impression of a lush tropical garden but in fact are hardier species than those found in steamy tropical locations.'

Vertical gardens are becoming increasingly popular in Europe, but are uncommon in New Zealand, Mr Sergel says. The vertical gardens are attached to a block wall which runs through the centre of the garden. Each of the vertical garden pockets holds a plant and they are fed by quite a complex drip irrigation system. The challenge of green walls is keeping them watered.'

Orchids from Australia, bamboos from Asia and birds of paradise plants have been planted. Roughly 200 species feature in the garden, with more than 8,000 individual specimens planted. This garden was first mooted in 1999 and construction was started in 2011.

Hamilton Gardens has been developed substantially over the last 35 years and includes internationally recognised themed garden collections. The Hamilton Gardens are the Waikato region's most popular tourist destination. www.hamiltongardens.co.nz

Cyclone Dylan visits Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens, January 2014

Dale Arvidsson, Curator, Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens



MRBG Cyclone Dylan damage.
Photo Credit: Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens

Cyclone Dylan, the category 2 cyclone, crossed the Queensland coast at 4am approx. 140 kms north west of Mackay, on 31 January. Initial damage was less than predicted at the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens with only 9-10 medium-sized trees felled, but with extensive damage to many limbs and to smaller shrubs that necessitated removal of further specimens at a later stage.

All paths except for the Tropical Shade Garden were quickly cleared and reopened with the Eulamere Boardwalk remaining closed due to the storm tides over the weekend that also flooded several coastal suburbs.

Staff worked throughout the following weeks to remove all damaged specimens and undertook a detailed inspection of tilted and wind damaged specimens to either monitor, attempt remedial pruning or plan for removal as required.

The full extent of the damage became clearer later as trees suddenly lost their crowns and large limbs split off trees, weeks after the storm. Approximately 100 hours per week throughout February to chainsaw, prune and chip were spent by our horticultural crew of five (one staff member per 10 hectares is our ratio) placing most other summer duties on hold. However, that's the curse – and joy – of living in the tropics.

Save our Flora – An independent online national project

Maria Hitchcock, a life member of the Australian Plants Society

An independent online national project has just been launched which aims to develop an online registry of individuals, institutions and groups around Australia who are growing or who wish to grow our rare and threatened flora.

This registry will fill a large gap in networks currently available by linking native plant enthusiasts, botanic gardens, researchers, community groups and anyone else involved in growing our rare, threatened or at risk flora.

Many enthusiasts have been collecting rare Australian native plants for years but are unknown. They have developed propagation techniques and horticultural skills which might be of great benefit to botanic gardens and other institutions. Regular electronic bulletins feature a cuttings and seed exchange allowing for interaction between members.

The underlying motto of the group is 'Preservation through Cultivation'. By cultivating different species in a variety of habitats we build a body of knowledge about the resilience of these species. This will be important if climate change affects natural habitats. Two bulletins have already been sent out.

Since its launch in mid-November 2013, Save our Flora attracted 100 members in the first six weeks. Membership is free and simple. Register by emailing: saveourflora@gmail.com

This project was started by Maria Hitchcock, a life member of the Australian Plants Society and Bob Ross, an environmentalist and Conservation Officer for APS-NSW. Maria is Leader of the Waratah & Flannel Flower Study Group, a past Leader of the Correa Study Group and author of several books, 'Wattle' (AGPS 1991), 'Correas' (Rosenberg 2010) and 'A Celebration of Wattle' (Rosenberg 2012). She is a BGANZ member and holds the National Correa Collection in her garden in Armidale NSW.

CONFERENCE REPORTS

Review of 5th Global Botanic Gardens Congress, 6th BGANZ Biennial Congress, Dunedin Botanic Gardens 150th anniversary

Annie McGeachy (AFBG Sec) and representative at the Congress

The Congress held in late October 2013 was all about Celebrating Success – the influence and appeal of botanic gardens.

As a reminder, the Conference themes were:

- Success globally – progress and achievements in plant conservation around the world
- Beyond the garden walls – social engagement involving our communities
- Horticultural changes – are we able to meet the challenges and opportunities facing botanic gardens?
- Science and innovation – using resources to develop new solutions in a changing world.

Held in the recently refurbished Dunedin Centre the Congress was an outstanding success drawing 347 delegates from 45 countries, including China, South East Asia, Europe, US and Canada, Russia, Azerbaijan, Republic of Korea, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Jordan, Oman, Mauritius, Mexico and Tonga.

For many Australian botanic gardens delegates, this was a once only opportunity.

A Mihi Whakatau or welcome by Maori leader Huata Holmes likened delegates to a Maori story of birds collecting messages and taking them across the world. Delegates were also welcomed by Baroness Walmsley, Chair of BGCI and Alan Matchett, Curator of Dunedin Botanic Gardens.



View from Lanarch Castle Gardens Dunedin.
Photo Credit: Annie McGeachy

Over four days there were 17 plenary speakers, and over 100 presentations in parallel symposia. The depth and breadth of subjects and quality of the speakers and the conference program was extraordinary, and also somewhat daunting, making subject selection very challenging.

On Wednesday we had a day off!

Over 4 days there were 17 Plenary Speakers, and over 100 presentations in parallel symposia.

In sunny weather we toured the lush spectacular Otago Peninsula, visiting the superb Lanarch House garden, the Albatross Colony, the 307 hectare Orokonui Ecosanctuary and a local wetland.

Thursday saw an excellent dinner and evening at the Dunedin Town Hall. Drummed-in by the O-Taiko Drumming Ensemble we were further entertained by the essential Dunedin Pipers and a superb presentation of Maori song by a winning group of Dunedin High School students.

After dinner, there was much vigorous dancing!

Given the complexity of the Congress I have selected a snapshot only: the global perspective, and a few quite remarkable conservation projects 'outside the garden walls'.

Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI)

Founded in 1987, BGCI is the respected international voice linking botanic gardens globally in the development of strategies for biodiversity conservation.

BGCI networks include:

- **The Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC)**
Target 8 of GSPC strategy is to have at least 75% of the world's threatened species in ex-situ collections by 2020, preferably in their country of origin and at least 20% available for recovery and restoration plans. The strategy aims to halt the continuing loss of plant diversity.
New initiatives in the BGCI 2013-18 Plan include focusing on ecological restoration, monitoring invasive pests and diseases and broadening the social agenda.
- **GardenSearch**, a publicly accessible database, provides information on over 3,000 gardens, identifying the collective conservation and research resources available within the garden community.
- **PlantSearch** is the only global database of plants in cultivation in botanic gardens with links to global and national Red Lists and other relevant data, with the capacity to identify the plant diversity maintained in botanic gardens.

Two new BGCI initiatives launched in Dunedin:

- **An International Plant Sentinel Network** is being established as part of a European-funded project in collaboration with BGCI. The project will make use of the 1,000,000 records in the PlantSearch database and activities provide early warning of emerging plant pests and diseases.
- **Ecological Restoration Alliance of Botanic Gardens**
In response to the United Nations target of restoring 15 percent of the world's damaged ecosystems by 2020. The Alliance has set an ambitious goal to restore 100 degraded ecosystems which include tropical rainforests, temperate woodlands, grasslands, Mediterranean scrub, beaches and wetlands.

International Botanic Garden Projects

OMAN – Muscat

A bold visionary 420 hectare botanic garden, funded by the Sultanate of Oman, on the Arabian Peninsula is under construction. The aim is to present the total native Arabian flora in eight naturalistic habitats, ranging from endemic deciduous cloud forests and sand and gravel deserts to high-montane Juniper woodlands, with related climatic zones provided in three large biomes.

With temperatures ranging to 50°C the project will provide innovative scientific, architectural design and engineering solutions based on sustainable principles.

All plants have first had to be found, and thousands are currently being propagated.

The Horticultural and Living Collections team from the garden also rescue mature trees (especially frankincense) otherwise doomed to major infrastructure developments. Using essentially brutal methods, they have collected over 1,750 trees transferring some 1,000 kms to a satellite nursery in Sallalah prior to translocation to the garden.

All plants have first had to be found, and thousands are currently being propagated.

Given 50% of Oman's population is less than 18 years of age, such a large project that provides an authentic environment, inspires research, science, exploration, discovery and education and demonstrates a proud cultural history is critical.

VIETNAM – Mangrove restoration

A project carried out by the Delft Botanic Gardens University of Technology in the Netherlands in conjunction with local population is using a simple economical and practical method of rehabilitating mangroves affected by Saigon and Mekong Rivers.

The Delft Botanic Garden University of Technology has developed the concept of 'Building with Nature' using plants to successfully modify wave-pattern and stabilize coastal dunes, to better tolerate rising water levels and improve water quality.

The work has been adapted to mangrove forests, calculating the minimum area and density of mangrove forest needed to break up waves, tidal waves and torrents, using rows of 'sticks' to break wave action and reduce soil loss before planting new mangroves. Introducing these simpler management methods is more likely to enable communities to undertake mangrove restoration.

HAWAII – Breadfruit

The high yielding breadfruit tree *Artocarpus altillis*, or ulu to Hawaiians, has sustained Pacific cultures over thousands of years and hundreds of varieties have been identified throughout the Pacific.

Over the last 40 years the National Tropical Botanic Garden (NTBG) in Hawaii has assembled the world's largest collection as one of its ex-situ conservation projects. They have now developed the knowledge and protocols that will allow breadfruit to be used globally to address food security and widespread hunger.

Pilot projects have been planted in Hawaii, Central America, Caribbean and Africa, with a goal of planting one million trees

in the next 10 years. These projects also provide economic opportunities for the communities. Perhaps Sir Joseph Banks 18th century vision has been realized, although his focus was rather about producing food for plantation slaves!

VLADIVOSTOK, RUSSIA – mapping plant climatic regions

The Vladivostok Botanical Institute has undertaken detailed mapping of the varying plant climatic regions across the continuous permafrost in northern Asia where active soil levels are minimal and the evolved adaptations of the flora and crop species hold unique genetic diversity. Such information will be critical to their conservation in the face of any rapid climate change.

JORDAN – community-based rangeland rehabilitation project

A key premise in the Royal Botanic Gardens (RBG) in Jordan's approach to biodiversity conservation is to recognize and embrace humans as one of the dominant species in the ecosystem.

Established in 2005 the RBG identified food security as a major challenge facing Jordan, given the overgrazing, desertification and the increasing population. The gardens established a 180-hectare project in 2007. Given the Bedouin had traditional use of the unfenced rangeland for 1,000 years, engaging the community in a participatory approach was critical. Starting with five participating families living near the RBG site in 2007, this increased to 38 families by 2013.

To counter local opposition livestock owners were supplied with replacement forage, in return for them withdrawing their flocks. This enabled rangeland vegetation and biomass to be gradually assessed and managed stocking rates and grazing plans and flock management introduced, improving vegetation and biodiversity by 30% in three years and critically, the health of grazing stock. Livestock owners are now reaping the benefits from the reviving eco system and policing themselves and others to sustain it.

Families have also learned alternative income sources, including from bee products, mushrooms, dried yoghurt and handicraft skills, thereby gradually improving the livelihood and general health of the community.

This remarkable multifaceted approach to the project by the RBG Jordan provided communities with the fundamental keys to their food security.

To counter local opposition livestock owners were supplied with replacement forage, in return for them withdrawing their flocks.

KOREAN DEMILITARISED ZONE (DMZ) – potential impact of a botanic garden

2013 is the 60th anniversary of the Korean War Armistice that produced the DMZ, an area 4kms wide and 248 kms long that is a buffer between the North and South and, unlike its name, remains heavily fortified. In the south an adjacent area called the Civilian Control Zone (CCZ) was created for military bases and farming.

These two zones represent Korean ecosystems, including wetlands, grasslands, mountainous highlands forest to coastal ecosystems containing extensive wildlife and possibly 3,000 flora and fauna species.

Closed off for 60 years, the DMZ has become a wild refuge and botanically exciting and such a project would be extraordinary. A previous master plan that also includes science, environmental and conservation principles has been unearthed. Conversely much of CCZ no longer used by the military is badly degraded or deserted and farming relies on pesticides. The challenges are enormous and rely on political agreement.

HORTICULTURALISTS – are they a threatened species?

Dr David Rae, Director of Horticulture RBG Edinburgh, expressed concern that over the last 30 years he had witnessed a general decline in horticultural staff numbers and standards as botanic gardens responded to pressure of corporate and commercial needs.

He also felt that poor wages, poor job profile and career structure is limiting the numbers enrolling in horticultural courses, affecting the quality of horticultural staff available to maintain gardens and collections and the ability to support research and education.

Is there a lesson here for us? Do our Australian regional botanic gardens suffer this? Is a career in horticulture viewed as worthwhile? Is it promoted by committed professionals as fundamental to conservation and securing biodiversity, to public education and as being at the core of botanic gardens? Is the quality/standard of our horticulture courses high enough and are our people valued?

BGANZ – our own region

Many other excellent papers were presented by RBG Melbourne and Cranbourne, Sydney, ANBG Canberra, Hobart, Adelaide, Gold Coast, Dubbo, Williamstown, Wollongong, Wilson Botanic Park and, of course, New Zealand.

At the BGANZ AGM in Dunedin on 25 October, retiring President Ann Duncan was thanked for her considerable efforts in guiding BGANZ given her challenging task following the retirement of founding President Dr Philip Moors. Anne is replaced by incoming President Dale Arvidsson from Mackay Botanic Gardens Queensland.

New Agenda for Botanic Gardens

In his closing address, Peter Wyse-Jackson, President of the Missouri Botanical Garden and one of the world's foremost and best known botanists and plant conservationists, outlined the recent successes of botanic gardens and the challenges for them in the future.

Worldwide there are now over 3,000 botanic gardens known in 175 countries and of those, less than 750 were established prior to 1950. South America now has 200 botanic gardens and Africa there are 20 countries with at least one garden.

Created in the last two years, there is now a complete world network at the global, national and regional levels. The role of botanic gardens has been reinvented over the last 30 years replacing mainly science, research and living collections and public amenities with limited educational roles. The gardens are multi-purpose botanical resource centres serving cities, countries and the world through global strategies to conserve threatened plant species.

He highlighted the importance of expanding plant conservation and environmental education through botanic gardens, and the increasingly influential role of botanic gardens in the development of international policies in biodiversity conservation.

Finally

Throughout the Congress the mood was vibrant with a constant buzz as delegates took advantage of connecting and sharing with national and international counterparts. The message that botanic gardens need to be multi-purpose as well as working 'outside the garden wall' was apparent in many presentations.

In closing the Congress Friday lunch time, incoming Chair of BGCI, Professor Stephen Blackmore, Regis Keeper and Queens Botanist RBG Edinburgh, confirmed this the 'best ever' BGCI Congress and Alan Matchett and his team were given a standing ovation. Then, in the words of Huatu Holmes 'the birds flew off with their messages' across the world.

I acknowledge with thanks the generous support of BGANZ Council and the assistance from AFBG Committee for my attendance at this 'best ever' congress. Thank you to the AFBG members who at the speed of light, responded with photos for the poster.

An event such as this illuminates the extraordinary achievements and targets of BGCI and botanic gardens globally leaving the feeling that this is where the real work on mitigating climate change, securing biodiversity and food security is quietly taking place. Australia is well represented in this club.

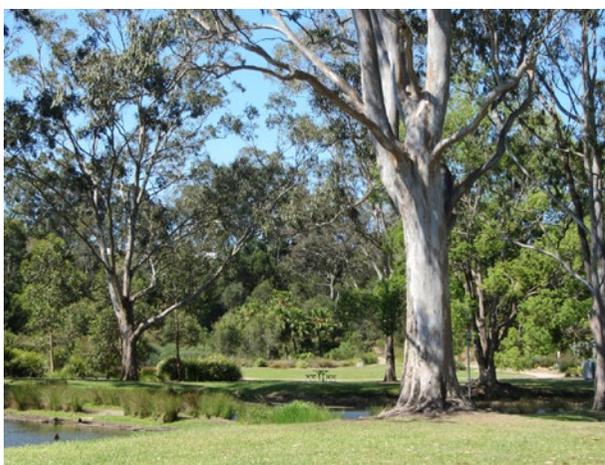
Having managed only a short visit to Dunedin's outstanding botanic gardens, the discovery of a favourite, the handkerchief tree, *Davidia involcrata* in full splendour among the 'flaming' rhododendrons provided some consolation.

AFBG Meets BGANZ – AFBG Conference, a great opportunity to come together

Rana Baguley



Banksia spinulosa (Hairpin Banksia) growing in the Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens. Photo Credit: Rana Baguley



Mangrove to the Mountains Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens. Photo Credit: Rana Baguley

A Memorandum of Understanding between Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand (BGANZ) and the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens (AFBG) has formalized the long-standing alliance between the two national botanic gardens organisations. The President of BGANZ, Dale Arvidsson will be a speaker at The National Conference of the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens on 8-10 August 2014 at the Mercure Gold Coast Resort, Palm Meadows Drive, Carrara.

Friends of Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens are hosting the conference. The Association has over fifty Friends groups from botanic gardens within Australia and two from overseas.

This conference, the first to be held in Queensland, aims to attract delegates to the Gold Coast with our stunning 'Sprinter' weather, the term coined in 2009 to describe the early native spring flowering season. Great venue facilities away from the hustle and bustle, but with easy access to our popular tourist attractions, excellent keynote speakers, wonderful regional botanic gardens and super friendly hosts will ensure a memorable conference.

The theme of the conference is "*Growing Matters ... Growing Gardens, Growing Friends*". We have been fortunate enough to secure Professor Tim Entwisle as the keynote speaker. Professor Tim Entwisle is the Director and Chief Executive of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, and formerly Director of Conservation, Living Collections and Estates at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

There will be several other very interesting and motivating guest speakers who will deliver enlightening presentations. Topics will include conserving regional plant species, using technology

to identify plants, effective education programs to engage students and the community, attracting and involving volunteers to gardens.

The conference program is planned to inspire and enthuse Friends from around Australia to continue to 'grow' their Gardens and their Friends. The event will celebrate the wonderful work done by Friends organisations in Botanic Gardens around Australia and New Zealand!

The 'Welcome Cocktail Drinks' on Friday evening and the 'Conference Dinner' on Saturday evening will give delegates the opportunity to meet up with old Friends and make new Friends from botanic gardens around Australia.

There are pre and post conference full day tours to the stunning Gold Coast Region and Hinterland visiting:

- ♦ Tamborine Mountain, famous for its beautiful botanic gardens, lush private gardens and national parks and
- ♦ Springbrook National Park - Mt Cougal Section, with sub tropical Currumbin Creek and the award winning sustainable Eco Village.

Pre and post accommodation packages at Binna Burra Mountain Lodge and O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat in the World Heritage-listed Lamington National Park with extensive views and walks.

Registrations with Early Bird Registration are open. Visit the AFBG website www.friendsbotanicgardens.org or the Friends of Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens <http://www.friendsgcrbg.org.au/event/afbg-conference-2014/> to find out more information and register.

CALENDAR OF CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

BGANZ & PLA Seminar

Thursday 28 November 2013
Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne

BGANZQ Conference Cairns 2-4-October 2014

BGANZ NSW Conference Dubbo 2014 (dates tbc)

International Horticulture Congress

17 – 22 August 2014, Brisbane
The “Olympics” of horticultural science
www.ihc2014.org/

BGANZ 7th Conference

27-30 October 2015
Wollongong Botanic Gardens, NSW

BGCI Education Conference Missouri USA 2015

6th BGCI Conference Geneva 2016



2014 BGANZQ Biennial Conference Date Claimer






The BGANZQ Biennial Conference will be held in 2014 at the Cairns Botanic Gardens.
Details for the conference are:

Date: 2 - 4 October 2014

Where: Cairns Botanic Gardens,
Collins Ave, Edge Hill, Cairns, QLD

Registration: will open 1 April 2014

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The organising committee is pleased to invite papers, case studies and interactive workshops from botanic gardens academics, workers and volunteers.

This year's theme is “Cultivating Connections” with keynote speaker, Kate Faithorn, Director Public Engagement, The Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney, setting the tone for the three day event.

For more information, please go to the conference website,
www.cairnsbotanicgardens.com.au,
or call the conference secretariat,
Rebecca Anderson on 07 4044 3019.






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