

Australian Garden History Society

West Australian Branch

Autumn Newsletter 2022

The Australian Garden History Society promotes awareness and conservation of significant gardens and cultural landscapes through engagement, research, advocacy and activities.



Greetings and Welcome to 2022 from the West Australian Branch Committee

This year as well as the regular AGM and Christmas function, the event program includes three guest speakers and three garden visits. Our first event was the very interesting presentation on the history and perilous state of sandalwood in the wild by Richard McLellan. A podcast has just been released by Bush Heritage so if you want more information click on the link below:

<https://www.bushheritage.org.au/news/audio/big-sky-country>

The popular Day in the Country visit will feature an historic property in Serpentine. The other two visits are to the Palm and Cycads Society's state collection in Woodvale and to an 1860s cottage and garden in Guildford. Event details will be emailed to you and will be on our webpage.

For disappointed members who could not attend the Christmas function, we have included the Annual Chairman's Quiz with questions based on 2021 journal and newsletter articles.

We're looking forward to catching up with new and present branch members during the year.

John Viska Chair AGHS WA Branch

West Australian Branch

Contact: Lynette Petersen (lpetersen@aapt.net.au)

West Australian Branch Committee

Chair: John Viska (johnviska@gmail.com)

Secretary: Lynette Petersen

Australian Garden History Society Inc. (Inc in NSW)
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Welcome to the West Australian Branch. Our Branch has approximately 60 members throughout the state. We conduct numerous events during the year, including lectures and garden visits. Members, guests and visitors are welcome to all events. We communicate with our members by newsletter, email and the AGHS website for all events.

<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au>
info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au

Remarkable Gardens Update Project Sue Medalia

This is the second in our series Remarkable Gardens compiled by branch member Sue Medalia and features historic Hyde Park. All photos by Sue Medalia.

This very popular park at 505 William Street is located in the City of Vincent, just 2 km north of the Perth CBD in the suburb of Highgate. To get there take Bus route 60 from Elizabeth Quay bus port.

Hyde Park was originally a wetland called Boodjamooling by the Whadjuk Nyoongar people and was used as a meeting place and for the gathering of bush foods.



Glendower & William Street entry with jacaranda crescent

In the mid nineteenth century it was known as Third Swamp Reserve and was a fringe dwellers' camp and a watering point for stock. Attempts were made to drain the swamp for residential development but it interfered with the domestic water supply and in 1897 an area of 38 acres (15 hectares) was gazetted as a recreation reserve and in 1899 officially named Hyde Park.

The sloping sight was landscaped in sections, first from its southern boundary on Glendower Street and later north to the Vincent Street side. Originally it was surrounded by a wooden picket fence with the main entrance gates on the southern side at Palmerston and Lake Streets.



Jacaranda crescent, south-east corner.

A mixture of Monterey and Aleppo pines, *Pinus radiata* and *P. halepensis* were planted around its boundaries with some mature specimens of the latter still standing. London plane trees *Platanus x hispanica* went in around the lake in 1900/1. The south-east corner was incorporated into the park in 1899 and the original palm avenue from that time was later replanted with a crescent of jacarandas *Jacaranda mimosifolia*.



Shaded walk under the canopy of London planes and camphor laurels.

The site is renowned for its collection of mature trees, some 120 years old. These include London planes, Moreton Bay and Port Jackson figs, *Ficus macrophylla* and *Ficus rubiginosa*, camphor laurel *Cinnamomum camphora* and a variety of palms. A few original local trees are still extant, namely paper bark *Melaleuca preissiana*, jarrah *Eucalyptus marginata* and flooded gum *Eucalyptus rudis*.

Initially a large oval shaped lake with two islands was formed but in 1913 when a pedestrian causeway was constructed, the present two smaller lakes were the result.

In 1900 a three-tiered cement composition fountain was constructed inside the Lake Street entrance but due to deterioration was removed by 1920 and the bandstand rotunda erected in 1914 on the northern side demolished in 1956. A water playground for young children, was created as part of a major renovation in 1965, and still attracts many young families especially in warmer weather as do the community fairs and concerts.



HYDE PARK, NORTH PERTH, W.A.

Hyde Park with its collection of mature trees is a shady, tranquil retreat and a perfect place for picnics, barbeques and weddings. Strolling around the picturesque lakes or walking a dog on a leash have always been popular activities.



Western Lake

In recognition of its historical importance it was entered onto the State Register of Heritage Places in 1998 with a Conservation Management Plan completed in 2003.

Further information see Inherit website, City of Vincent Local History Centre, Conservation Management Plan on Line, 2001 pamphlet *The Trees of Hyde Park and The Oxford Companion to Gardens in Australia*.

Vale Tom Crossen

We note the passing of Dr Tom Crossen former Treasurer. Through his efforts he was able to obtain sponsorship from the Bendigo Bank and Wignall's Winery in the Great Southern for the 2014 Albany National Conference, at which he spoke on the geomorphology of the area. He lectured in Viticulture at a tertiary level and was interested in Moghul Gardens, the subject of a presentation for a branch function.

New Members

Welcome to new members Lynda Chadwick and Barbara Johnson. We hope you enjoy being part of the society and look forward to meeting you at some of our events.

Chairman's Christmas Quiz John Viska

The annual quiz at Christmas is always hotly contested and extremely competitive. A member suggested that for those who weren't there it might be fun to include the questions in the newsletter. So here it is! Test your knowledge and see how you go.

1. Members met in Hyde Park to hear Rodney O'Brien talk about the history of a special feature that had been in the park. What was the special feature?
2. The journal article on street names in Albany by Malcolm Trail was based on what subject?
3. The branch participated in the National Heritage month with an illustrated talk about what material used in gardens?
4. An autumn day in the hills, included a garden visit to the property of Angus and Leslie Richardson located where?
5. Why did the visit to Government House garden have to be rescheduled?
6. Due to Covid complications a virtual National Conference was held. What was the theme?
7. What was the linking feature on the journal article about a Subiaco house and garden?
8. Why has Hyde Park had continual coverage in Landscapes at Risk?
9. Dr Kingsley Dixon gave a fascinating talk about the Harper Sisters' Wyemando Nursery that sold what type of plants.
10. Name the most common conifer growing in Claremont Park.

How did you score? Look up the answers at the bottom of page eight.

Landscapes at Risk – AGHS Advocacy Issues

Hyde Park Kiosk Update John Viska

The city of Vincent has awarded the contract to operate a commercial kiosk/café to Veggie Mamma. The next step will be to convert the gardener's shed on the northern side of the toilet block from which food will be sold. At the 2022 AGM in February the validity of the consultation process was queried with an official response expected at the next Council meeting on 5th of April.

National Conference 2024 Patsy Vizents

At the February National Management Committee meeting, WA was asked to consider hosting the 2024 National Conference which it has accepted. The last time we hosted was in 2014 and a decade will have passed by the time the next is held. The following are some of the tasks to be undertaken: Venue, Budget, Speakers, Conference booklet, Catering, Garden Visits, Tours, Transport, Conference Dinner, and Decorations. An executive conference committee will be formed from the existing committee to form the conference subcommittee but as there are many tasks to be fulfilled branch members can also nominate to be on it.

Records Management Lyn Oliver

There are a few records management projects to be undertaken by the WA Branch in the future to ensure that all records of the Branch are in the correct place and retrievable for reference or research. Firstly, the branch has donated back copies of the Society's journals to the State Reference Library. Their holdings showed that there had been none submitted since July 2007. That project is almost complete and issues will be delivered to the library moving forward.

Another project is the bringing together of all the WA Branch records so that key documents can be digitised into the Society's archives as per the national document retention guidelines. This is going to be quite a big project and will require obtaining a grant to cover the cost of digitisation.

Open Gardens WA Talk John Viska

At the invitation of Open Gardens WA, I was asked to be the guest speaker for their first Sunset Sundowner for 2022. Below is part of the address I gave on the topic of

“Yesterday's Gardens Tomorrow”

The lead up to the sesquicentenary in 1979 provided an impetus to identify and record gardens throughout the state that were deemed significant and culminated in the 1980 Historic Gardens Study (WA) for the National Trust of Australia WA. This was prepared by Oline Richards and a copy is in the public domain within the State Reference Library's Holdings. Over the years due to varying factors many gardens originally listed are no longer extant. Besides the obvious effect of our changing climate here are some thoughts to ponder. **Design.** The English author, John Claudius Loudon's publication *The Encyclopaedia of Gardening* was influential in garden design during the 19th and early 20th centuries. He advocated the use of a great variety of plants in such a way that their individual features could be seen to their best advantage, such as specimens in lawn areas and named the style, Gardenesque. Governor Stirling owned a copy and the new Queen Victoria Public Library had it in on its shelves when it opened in 1897.

A modern design, where a limited use of species and restricted colour schemes are employed in upgrading an older garden can destroy this feature. This is evident in properties of Peppermint Grove where many interesting and mature plantings have been obliterated. E.g. Unalla.

Changing ownership and its effects on the garden's survival. Wirra Willa in Armadale is a four acre garden that has its origin in the 1930s when the area was semirural. It was purchased in the 1970s by the Hargreaves, retired farmers from Coolup. Mary, a keen plant

person, set about taking advantage of the fertile soil, protected location and abundance of water by introducing cool season plants such as camellias, deciduous magnolias, heritage roses, and specimen trees including Blue Atlantic cedar, copper beech, swamp cypress and pink cedar.

When they decided to put it onto the market it was first offered to the Armadale Council at a reduced price for a unique satellite garden. The Shire declined, stating that they had to provide public amenities such as playing fields, swimming pools and the like and a public garden was not a high priority. It was consequently sold to a gardening family who further enhanced it and when they put it onto the open market an investor purchased it.

An opportunity for a garden that could have been in the public domain and appreciated for the last forty years was lost. In 2021 its historic importance was finally recognised when it was placed on the State's permanent Register of Heritage Places. What will be the fate of Tania Young's extensive garden in Claremont when it eventually comes on the market?

Reimagining the past. The Anglican Deanery in Perth has had intensive restoration work on the 1852 building, the result of extensive documentary research. In the original garden was a white mulberry, one of the dozen trees that were planted inside the fence line by the Rev Wittenoom. They were known as the Twelve Apostles and ran from Cathedral Avenue to the Deanery corner on Pier Street. A newly fashionable giant aloe *Agave americana* was featured along with Cape lilacs in the front garden and a large E shaped grape arbour in the rear garden. The reimagined garden today has transplanted jacarandas, multi-planted star jasmines as ground covers, group plantings of Dianellas and modern hard landscaping materials. The wonderful opportunity to tell the story of the garden's past was lost in translation!

Cultural significance of Heritage listed properties. At Overton Lodge, the Town of Cottesloe has respected the cultural significance of the grounds and followed the recommendations of its Conservation Management Plan, which is to interpret the large Federation Period garden that dates from the late 1890s. This has seen the restoration of retaining walls, cement balustrading and urns, with the tennis pavilion reinstated. The Council is currently following the Garden Master Plan, that is, when the opportunity arises to replant appropriate plants of the era. The WA branch of the Australian Garden History Society gave a grant of 600 dollars as well as providing advice to help achieve this aim.

A greater use of water wise plants and native plants being promoted. Due to lack of a reticulated water supply the back bone of many early gardens were tough hardy ornamental plants and shrubs. Among these were *Agave americana* from Central America, oleanders from the Mediterranean basin, bulbous plants from South Africa like bella donna lilies and lantana from South America. It's ironical that the use of many of these hardy plants is now discouraged and native plants recommended which in many cases turn out to be not entirely maintenance free and regularly need to be replaced.

Fashion trends. Rose breeders of the late 19th and 20th centuries strove to bring a brighter range of colours into the Hybrid Teas. By the 1930s they had a palette of strong colours such as coppery pinks and brighter yellows, many two toned. These roses were the mainstay of Perth's developing suburban gardens. In the late 1970s, doctors in the Western Suburbs were reporting a greater incidence of snow blindness and were perplexed by the problem.

Unbeknown to them the "Iceberg" had arrived on the scene.

Countless thousands of healthy reliable coloured roses were sacrificed on the altar of good taste. In some extreme cases zealots were reported to be planting up to one hundred of Iceberg roses in one bed, which lead to the much quoted phrase "having a Titanic moment" when another iceberg was sighted!

Garden Upkeep. Horticultural maintenance workers, from the W.E Hackit School of Pruning can now demolish, I mean service gardens in record time, assisted by spray packs, whipper snippers, leaf blowers and, with their mechanised pruning equipment, have transformed vast numbers of ornamental shrubs into meaningless topiary.

Heritage listed Edenvale in Pinjarra had an established garden with mature shrubs, aged camellias and varied plantings. A recent garden makeover has seen the aged camellias dug out and discarded the standardising of plants into lollypops and extensive hedging introduced within a limited planting scheme.

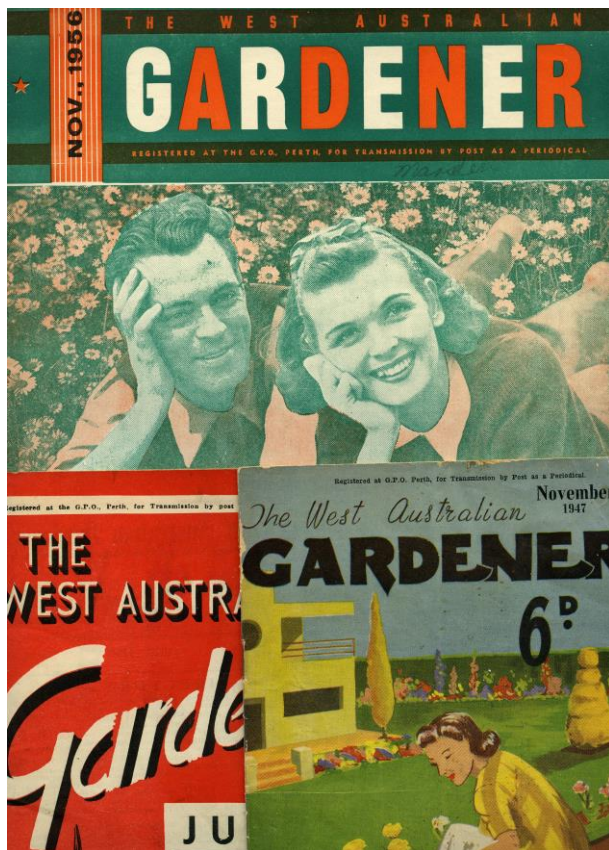
Government Policy. Historic Guildford with its 1830 layout and variety of gardens from the 19th and 20th centuries have survived but its mature plantings of sugar gums, olives, pine trees and domestic gardens are now under threat. As the pressure of the Government's policy of higher building density and urban infill is being adhered to, the unique character of Guildford is being lost with the first casualty its plants and gardens.

In conclusion I am not advocating that every old garden be held in a state of suspended animation or not upgraded, but we need to also respect and enjoy ageing gardens and the experience of their past they bring to the future.

[Open Gardens WA – Bringing People and Gardens Together](#)

Ninetieth Celebration of West Australian Gardener Magazine John Viska

In January this year, The Western Australian Horticultural Council celebrated the first edition of the West Australian Gardener magazine which was issued ninety years ago. It was published by them and launched in 1932, being the first monthly gardening magazine produced in WA. Prior to it, information was through the newspapers and a regular weekly gardening column in the *Western Mail* newspaper.



Besides providing gardening advice it was also the official organ of the Horticultural Council of WA containing a directory of horticultural societies. It took the form of a monthly periodical, registered at the GPO for transmission by post and contained articles, many illustrated with black and white photographs, on plant culture, new varieties and gardening tips. Advertisements for local nurseries and associated horticultural and landscape services helped to offset production costs. In 1958 it ceased production and in 1969 revived until 1998 when it again ended. In 2002 it was relaunched finally closing in 2005. Bound copies can be requested at the Battye Library in the State Library of Western Australia, James Street, Perth.

For more information see the Western Australian Horticultural Council website.

<https://horticulturalcouncil.com.au>

Do you have recording skills?

Do you have an interest in technology or experience with using Zoom or a recording device? Perhaps you have a camera that takes videos and would like to help us in the WA Branch to record moments that are here today and gone oh so quickly? We host many fine events and many of our members are not able to travel to venues. We could all benefit from having the talk, walk or presentation captured so we can watch it on our computers. But we need someone who is comfortable with doing this. Is this you? Please contact John Viska if you feel you can help or you know of anyone who would help us out with this request. It is a brilliant way to help the branch and to spread the word of AGHS to members and potentially, new members.

WA Branch Event Diary

Gascoyne Park Walking Tour

Saturday, 30th April, 2pm to 4pm

Gascoyne Park is a joint project between The Palm and Cycad Society of WA and the city of Joondalup an. It is located on the corner of Gascoyne Avenue and Timberlane Drive, Woodvale. The walk will be led by PACSOWA Coordinator, George Sevastos. Please meet at the WA Branch event sign and bring a chair and afternoon tea to enjoy in the gazebo after the walk. The site is relatively flat but we suggest wearing sensible walking shoes. See the flyer on the last page of this newsletter for more information about the park.

Cost: \$10.00 (AGHS members) \$15.00 (non-members).

50 cent ticket fee applies to online bookings

Bookings: Through Trybooking

<https://www.trybooking.com/BYOXW>

The number of tickets is limited to 25. Please note that we will be complying with WA Government COVID-19 public health and social measures in place at the time of the event. For any enquiries, assistance or apologies regarding this event please contact Lynette Petersen lpetersen@aapt.net.au / 0439 941 822

National Events

2022 Annual National Conference, 11th to 13th November, Wrest Point Casino, Hobart

[2022 Annual National Conference - Australian Garden History Society](#)

Chairman's Christmas Quiz Answers

1 Fountain, 2 Plant names, 3 Glass, 4 Sawyer's Valley, 5 Wet conditions, 6 Many Dreams, One Landscape, 7 Roses, 8 A commercial café /kiosk, 9 WA native plants and 10 Norfolk Island pines.

Gascoyne Park Information Flyer

[Gascoyne Park | Palm and Cycad Society of Western Australia \(pacsowa.com.au\)](http://Gascoyne Park | Palm and Cycad Society of Western Australia (pacsowa.com.au))

Gascoyne Park Palm & Cycad Botanic Garden



Gascoyne Park is a joint project between the Palm and Cycad Society of WA and the City of Joondalup. It was established in 1989 and officially opened in March 1996. The Park is situated in the northern Perth suburb of Woodvale at the corner of Gascoyne Avenue and Timberlane Drive. It is 25km from the Perth GPO.

The Park covers approximately 5.2 ha (12.9 acres) and consists of dense plantings of palms and cycads, open grassed parkland and remnants of the original native vegetation of eucalypts, jarrah trees and grassland.

Many of these are advanced mature specimens. The palms and cycads in the Park come predominantly from warm-



temperate and sub-tropical climates and to a lesser degree, from equatorial tropical areas.

The Society has planted over 2000 palms and cycads of 130 different species and hundreds more are added every year.

The plants most suited to the Park come from Western Africa, Madagascar, northern Australia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific islands. Some are from the Americas. Perth's climate is ideal for growing many species of palms and cycads and the rich diversity of Gascoyne Park is testimony to this. Anyone interested in palms and cycads should visit the Park to see the magnificent range of specimens on display.



The Society is responsible for the upkeep of the garden areas and conducts regular working bees, usually on the fourth Sunday of every month.

For more information about the Park, contact the coordinator, Mr George Sevastos, on 9448 4816, or visit the Society's website at:

www.wawebsite.com.au/palmswest