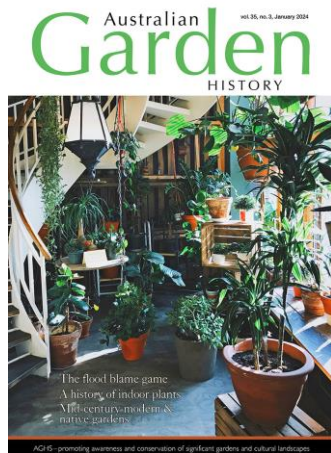




Media Release

December 2023

Déjà vu: recurring themes in gardens and landscape history



Indoor plants and mid-century modern are in fashion again! The craze for pot plants provoked by the pandemic has hardly abated. It follows on from earlier waves of interest, such as the 19th century mania for ferns – pteridomania, to give it Charles Kingsley's label. In the January 2024 issue of *Australian Garden History*, Tim Gatehouse surveys the history of indoor plants in England from the 16th century and in Australia from the 1820s.

The popularity of mid-century modern native gardens is easily observed in Canberra. Anna Howe explains how the architecture and landscape design of Southern California was first encouraged in the new suburbs being built in the bush capital in the 1960s and are now being revived.

On a more sombre note, Margaret Cook, author of *A River with a City Problem: A History of Brisbane Floods* (UQP 2023) chronicles the responses to floods of the Brisbane River between 1893 and 2022. She shows how humans have sought something or someone to blame rather than accept that a flood disaster is the direct consequence of societal decisions. As Cook told the [AGHS's annual conference in Ipswich](#), it is high time we address environmental amnesia in the face of climate change.

Delving into garden history can take us well beyond the horticultural. Sarah Kirby, a musicologist and cultural historian, shows how music in the gardens of the international exhibitions in Melbourne in the 1880s was a real crowd pleaser, being considered good for the visitor's health and wellbeing, and proving to be a sound commercial proposition. Sandra Pullman uncovers more about Mrs Lauretta Bogue Luffman, who was a pioneer in improving working conditions for women in the late 19th century as well as a champion of horticultural education for female students at Burnley College in Melbourne.

The January issue carries another story about a weed. This time the acanthus: so much more than a plant, also the decoration atop the Corinthian column and many a ceiling rose. The author, John Dwyer, has a new book out, an anthology of his writings about the science, art and cultural history of weeds. *Weeding between the lines* is available at the AGHS's [online shop](#).

Drawing attention to cultural landscapes at risk is a core activity for the Society. *Glenlee* on the Lugarno peninsula in Sydney, is listed by the National Trust for its Aboriginal cultural heritage and significant early settler history. Glenyss Barnham explains why residents are fighting to save the estate from development.

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Australian Garden History is the quarterly journal of the Australian Garden History Society (AGHS). It is available at <https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/shop/> To arrange an interview with any of the journal's authors, contact Francesca Beddie, editor@gardenhistorysociety.org.au or 0418 645 181.

The mission of the Australian Garden History Society is to promote awareness and conservation of significant gardens and cultural landscapes.