

# Australian Garden

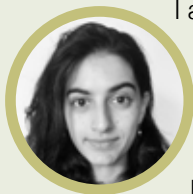
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## HISTORY



*Drosera capensis*  
CAPE SUNDEW

## Artist statement



I am a science illustrator and animator with a doctorate in Natural History Illustration from Newcastle University. My passion for science and learning drives my practice,

where I translate complex concepts – ranging from biochemistry and quantum mechanics to horticulture – into compelling visual narratives.

My work as a natural history illustrator is deeply inspired by my love for gardening and my fascination with the intricate beauty of the natural world. When I was invited to create the cover illustration for this issue, I turned to one of my current obsessions: carnivorous plants. These remarkable organisms, especially the Cape sundew (*Drosera capensis*), have captivated me as much as they entice the insects visiting my small balcony garden.

The cover illustration reflects the duality of allure and danger inherent in these plants. Rendered in a Japanese woodblock style, it riffs off Trevor Nottle's article (pages 12 to 14). The scene highlights the glistening, sticky glands of the sundews as they ensnare flies and a bee – a striking combination of nature's beauty and efficiency.

This fascination began after my partner and I moved into a new home, where a persistent swarm of flies on our balcony led me to seek a pesticide-free solution. The sundews flourished, solving the problem, but they quickly became more than just functional additions to the garden. They transformed into muses for my art, sparking both admiration and inquiry.

Observing nature has always been at the heart of my creative process, leading me to draw and document its wonders. Through my illustrations, I strive to celebrate the functional elegance of the natural world and share its stories with others.

**Iliana Oakes**



The leaf of *Drosera capensis* 'bending' in response to the trapping of an insect, photo Noah Elhardt, Creative Commons (CC BY-SA 2.5)

Iliana Oakes was the recipient of a Nina Crone Writing Fund commission. The Fund aims to encourage new and emerging writers to engage with garden history. This is the first time it has supported a botanical illustrator.

To donate to the Nina Crone Writing Fund, go to <https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/donate/>