



ANPSA 2024 Biennial Conference, Newsletter. September 2023, Issue 4.

Contents

Gardens for Life 1
 Conference Day Excursions 2
 Gardens for Wildlife in the City of Knox 2
 Chelsea Garden at Olinda 4
 Gardens for Life Banner 6
 Brouwer Garden 7
 Committee Profiles..... 7

Contact Details

Email: anspconference@psvic.org.au

Register Your Interest

<https://psvic.org.au/anspa-biennial-conference-2024>

Photo credits in this newsletter: Chris Larkin, Miriam Ford, Mabel Brouwer and Maree Goods.

Gardens for Life

We are almost 12 months away from our conference “Gardens for Life” in Melbourne and it is all coming together.

Our pre and post tour organisers are planning tours in late September to the best wildflower areas in Victoria to check what is in flower one year out and finalise itineraries. We are talking to potential speakers and have confirmed some high-powered experts – more detail in future newsletters. For example, Phillip Johnson who designed and created the wonderful new Chelsea Australian Garden at Olinda, has agreed to give our keynote Swaby address, named after Arthur Swaby who called the first meeting to start our Australian Plants Society in 1957. See the article below and more about the Olinda garden here <https://peopleandparks.org/project/chelsea-best-in-show-garden/>

Dr Megan Hirst - (Post-Doctoral Fellow - Seed Science Research at the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria), has agreed to speak about the Raising Rarity program - finding, propagating and growing Victoria’s most threatened species in partnership with regional botanic gardens and schools. We hope to have some for sale on our visit to the Cranbourne Australian Garden Friends nursery at Cranbourne. See a Raising Rarity fact sheet here - <https://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/media/0xrtmhj/raising-rarity-factsheet.pdf>

Content for our website is being put together with more details of speakers and topics, accommodation options and how to book. An “early bird” total price for the full five-day conference has been set at \$575 including lunches, morning teas and all excursions. Bookings for the Conference and the tours should open later this year and more detail and options will be on our new website.

Garden visits and excursions are a core part of all ANPSA conferences – we just love to show beautiful gardens with Australian plants. A regular activity in all our 30 district groups in Victoria are visits to members’ gardens sharing tips, advice and cuttings for propagation of plants. Nothing beats practical demonstrations of what is possible in garden design, plant selection and creation of habitat for wildlife. This newsletter highlights some of the gardens in the Gardens for Life excursion program on the Tuesday and Thursday of the conference.

Chris Clarke
 ANPSA 2024 Co-ordinator



Raising Rarity program: *Gevillea dimorpha*, Grampians National Park.

Conference Day Excursions

Gardens for Wildlife in the City of Knox

Chris Larkin

The Gardens for Wildlife (G4W) program was started in the City of Knox in 2006, initiated by members of Knox Environment Society (KES), a volunteer organisation propagating indigenous plants. It is a partnership between the Council, KES, and the community to encourage residents, businesses and schools to develop wildlife attracting gardens. People who register an interest in joining the scheme will be visited by a volunteer from KES who can give advice and answer questions to help them start their wildlife garden journey.

This scheme has been a role model for other Councils to follow throughout the state of Victoria. All gardens participating in this excursion are Gardens for Wildlife. It is notable that Bev Fox's garden was used in publications to promote the 'Gardens for Wildlife' scheme for many years.

Bev Fox Garden



Bev's house and garden are on a ¼ acre site with the back garden facing west. In 2003 she decided to redesign her garden, starting at the back with the front to follow. Roger Stone, a landscape gardener and long-time friend, designed and installed the hard structure – the shaping of paths, division of space, rock work, stone paving and change of levels. With no lawn anywhere the garden could be described as a stroll garden. Bev's extensive experience of growing Australian plants meant she took charge of the planting design. As a keen propagator Bev has an area set aside, which includes a glasshouse, to follow this passion. It is discreetly positioned off to the side and out of view from the house.

Bev's garden showcases a great diversity of plants, but she is careful to repeat some plants and keep low ones lapping the edges of her paths. Taller plants are used to hide or at least distract from the fencing. There is a large eucalypt in the front garden and more than one in the back along with a mature *Hakea multilineata*. These tall plants are important as design elements to make the space appear larger, provide wildlife corridors and habitat, and shade. Although this is not a big garden the experience of being in the very private back garden will transport you out of suburbia into a place of ease and tranquillity. A place to unwind and breathe easy. A place that wildlife like to visit too.

In more recent years Bev has planted out her nature strip using largely indigenous plants including grasses. This has increased the feeling of space in an otherwise modest front yard.

Knox Park Primary School

The school, nestled in suburbia, has a magnificent large stand of remnant *Eucalyptus cephalocarpa* (Silverleaf stringybark) which is on a state register. It borders Lake wood Reserve to the north with indigenous plants used along the school's fence line to complement and connect with reserve's plantings. Many different gardens have been developed around the school including: Butterfly Garden, Small Bird Habitat and Sensory Garden. The expansion and upkeep of the extensive gardens of indigenous and broadly Australian plants is largely thanks to two APS Vic Foothills members with connections to the school who for years have spent several hours each week working there. The APS Vic Foothills group holds their monthly meetings at the school and members help out with working bees a few times a year. For a long time a Green Team of students was in operation but this is no longer the case due to COVID and time constraints.

The garden has lovely art work on buildings, colourful totems in the garden and interpretive signage. The gardens have been created for the children's enjoyment, wellbeing, cognitive development, learning and appreciation of an Australian environment.

Chris Larkin Garden

This large garden of approximately an acre on a steep north facing hillside was started in 1991 by employing the landscape gardener, Roger Stone, to design and plant out a relatively small section of garden on the southside of the house. Garden beds beyond this were established by Chris over time. Major developments on the northside of the house happened over the next five years. Roger Stone was again employed to do the landscaping but Chris always worked with him serving a kind of apprenticeship as she tried to learn what she could. There have been a few further changes since those early days but they have always been guided by Chris.

This is a stroll garden with curved paths running across the contour of the land. This helps to slow the downward flow of water so it soaks into the soils. At the same time the steepness of the hillside ensures there is good drainage. Informal terracing using rocks and sleepers holds the soil and creates safe paths and steps.

A very wide range of plants can be grown in a garden of this size that has a range of growing conditions



Nature strip in front of Bev Fox's garden.

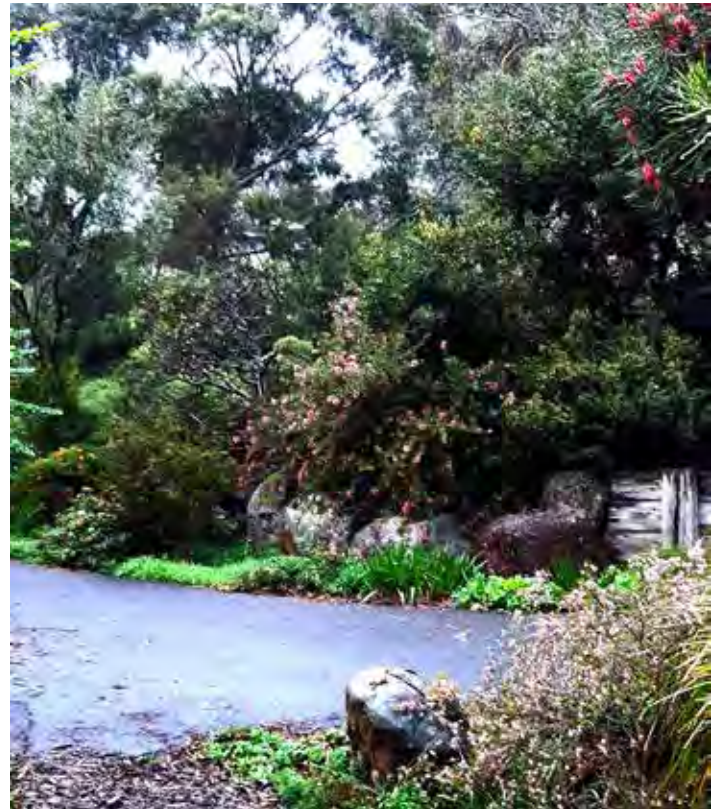


Chris Larkin garden.

from wet to dry and sunny or shady. Chris has been interested in garden design with Australian plants for close to thirty years. Care is taken to repeat the same or similar plants, to work with complementary and contrasting foliage etc., but there is also room to experiment and play by trying out something new. She wants a beautiful, peaceful, wildlife friendly garden that preserves through views to the Dandenong Ranges and the distant hills to the north. Internal views of the garden are equally as important to her. To create and maintain these internal views ground covering plants and low shrubs are used extensively.



Knox Park Primary School grounds.



Chris Larkin garden.

The Chelsea Garden at Olinda, Dandenong Ranges, Melbourne

Miriam Ford

Phillip Johnson's design for the Chelsea Flower Show UK in 2013 won both Gold and Best in Show, the first Australian Team to do so and the first time it was a unanimous decision by the judges for Best in Show. It was made possible by Fleming's nursery. Phillip's aim was to bring the Australian Landscape, particularly the Victorian Landscape, to the show - *I've designed this landscape to connect humanity back to the beauty of nature – to show how important it is to add biodiversity and greening to our urban environment.* The Garden's recreation in the Dandenong Ranges was enabled when part of the old Olinda golf course was transferred to the Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden and this gave the space for a garden of 20 times the original size and with a level change of 15 meters. The project was actively supported by many agencies, the Federal Liberal and State Labor Governments, many community and individual donors and it relies on such for ongoing support.



Phillip Johnson.



Garden Billabong.

The wonderful red volcanic soil allows for the growth of an incredibly diverse range of plants. Four different microclimates have been created – full sun north facing, part shaded through to full shaded to wet/water area. Over 10,000 plants have been included into the 6,000m² garden with several grafted species of *Hakea* and *Grevillea*. Extensive nursery preparation went into ensuring that many could be planted out as mature flowering specimens such as Tree ferns, Grass Trees, Wollemi Pines and many others. The diverse range is the key to attracting wildlife into any garden and this garden will attract a large variety as it beds in and the word spreads far and wide. There are many different types of plants in the garden: Trees, large, medium, and small shrubs, ground covers, strappy leaved plants, ferns, annuals, aquatics and many rare species and there are photos and lists on the website <http://www.chelseaaustaliangardenatolinda.com.au/> which provide more detail. This website provides a lot of interesting backstories to the various features in the garden including the splendid and now iconic Waratah sculpture - inspired by Phil's parents, created to represent how it would feel looking from the inside



out of a waratah bloom and with a viewing portal the exact height of her late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. She remained interested in the progress of this new garden and Phil kept her informed, right up until her death in 2022.

The onsite works took place during the very challenging wet winter of 2022. Huge rocks and huge cranes on muddy slopes made for an interesting adventure in muck and mess and just look how it all

Gardens For Life Banner



Garden Walk.

turned out. The first section to be built was the rocky outcrop which provides echoes of the origins of the Dandenong Ranges and gives a special microclimate where plants can grow naturally in its nooks and crannies. The waterfalls cascading into the billabong below provide the beating heart of the garden. It is an organic system powered by solar panels and fed by storm water gathered from the surrounding area and the levels vary naturally according to local conditions.

This is a garden that reveals itself slowly, various views are framed as you walk around. There are lots of lovely rest stops with informative decorative signs which encourage spending time just looking and listening, watching quietly to see what comes and goes. It cannot be underestimated how much we need the beauty of nature, natural places in our lives for our mental health and well-being. This garden supports that deeply.

Reference: Chelsea Garden at Olinda website.

Gardens For Life Banner

The Banner is now available to District Groups to display at their flower shows, plant sales or any other public function they are holding. The District Group will be responsible for collecting and returning the Banner to APS Vic.

To book the Banner email:
secretary@psvic.org.au



APS Victoria invites you to register for the Biennial Conference.

PRESENTATIONS
WORKSHOPS
GARDEN VISITS
TOURS



psvic.org.au/anpsa-biennial-conference-2024



The garden of Mabel Brouwer. This garden will be visited by conference attendees who are on the Grampians Wimmera Tour.

Profiles of Committee Members for the ANPSA Conference 2024

Chris Larkin



Chris has been a member of APS Vic Foothills Group for around 30 years. She is currently the leader of this group. Chris has a passion for garden design using Australian plants and has been thinking and writing about it for 25 years for the Garden

Design Study Group and more recently the Victorian quarterly newsletter 'Growing Australian'. She has a large stroll garden of approximately one acre on a north facing hillside 35 kms south-east of Melbourne. The garden showcases a wide range of plants and is a haven for wildlife.

Ross Field



I became involved with the Society in 1974 when I accompanied my Mother to the foundation meeting of SGAP Springvale and District Group. I went on to be Leader for six years.

I am a past-President and past-Newsletter Editor for APS Victoria.

My first experience with a Federal conference was in 1981 when my Father and I helped to stage a living garden display in the foyer of the main meeting venue. I became Vice-President in time to join the organising Committee for the 2009 ASGAP Conference in Geelong. With all the work being done by my fellow organising Committee members, I am looking forward to a fantastic ANPSA conference in Melbourne next year.

We encourage you to take a look at the short promotional video on the APS Vic website <https://apsvic.org.au/anpsa-biennial-conference-2024/> and register your interest.