

Flourish

Supporter News Autumn 2023



ISSUE 13

Tim hangs up his
gardening shears

Nature inspires art

Saving cycads



Royal
Botanic
Gardens
Victoria



Olivia Newton John's family, husband John Easterling and daughter Chloe Lattanzi, made a low-key visit to Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne in February ahead of her state memorial service.

The Gardens was one of Newton-John's favourite places, far removed from Hollywood. Throughout her celebrated career she always returned to "find solace and peace" and connect with nature.

Her mother, Irene Born, would take a young Olivia to the Gardens at every opportunity. "We would walk there every day," said Olivia two years ago. "She loved the trees."

ABOVE

Pictured Penny Fowler Deputy Chairperson, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Board, John Easterling, Chloe Lattanzi, Tim Entwisle, Director & Chief Executive, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. Photo by Nicki Connolly for The Herald Sun

COVER

Professor Tim Entwisle.

Welcome to Flourish Autumn

Dear supporters,

After ten thoroughly enjoyable years I have decided to pursue other interests. I'm keen to spend more time with my family and will finish in July, leaving time to find a successor.

I began my career here as a botanist in the 1990s. When I returned in 2013 as Director, I wanted to make the Gardens part of Melbourne's cultural life. We've done that, and more. I couldn't be prouder of the staff, volunteers, honorary associates and Friends of this wonderful organisation.

Over that decade, we've transformed our two beautiful botanic gardens into places for celebration and inspiration. We brought dazzling programs such as *Lightscape*, with more to come. In 2022, the Gardens won the Major Tourist Attraction prize at the Victorian Tourism Awards – for the third year in a row – off the back of winning the National Award last year.

We established Victoria's Plant Rescue and Care Unit, combining bushfire recovery, seed banking and orchid conservation. Science has prospered, expanding into 'genomics and bioinformatics', and delivering more plant information and new discoveries online via the online VicFlora and HortFlora. I'm delighted that Conservation Horticulture is now an indispensable part of RBGV's future, and we have also established the Climate Change Alliance of Botanic Gardens.

The two gardens have never looked better or been easier to access. In Melbourne, we've created new landscapes, restored pavilions, and celebrated the life of the fallen

White Oak. Over the coming months, we'll finish the fences and create a new City Gate entrance near Temple of the Winds. New signage, with a deeper connection to First Nations culture, will soon be installed at both Gardens.

At Cranbourne, the final touches are being applied to a dozen ecotourism projects.

Since 2013, we've raised over \$30 million, and in 2018 the Gardens achieved a 30% annual increase in its operating budget from the Victorian Government.

Finally, recently I've advocated for a new herbarium to protect our precious State Botanical Collection, and for a Nature Science Precinct to bring the wonders of our natural world to all visitors. I will continue to pursue the case for a new herbarium in my remaining time with the Gardens. I especially want to take this opportunity to thank you for your support, friendship, and your unwavering commitment to this organisation.

I love working here, and I know the Gardens will continue to flourish.

Best wishes,
Professor Tim Entwisle



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Entwisle', written in a cursive style.

Director and Chief Executive
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria

Supporter Spotlight

Pam Habersberger

Generous and talented donor Pam Habersberger has been involved in the Gardens for over 20 years, as a member and spokesperson for the botanical art group The Whirlybirds and as part of the Director's Circle with her husband, David.

Pam's love for botanical art began with her studies in Zoology and Botany, progressing into a career spanning 25 years of tutoring biology at Melbourne University. Pam wishes she had taken lessons from her father, a respected artist, though her impressive catalogue of work proves she's a master of botanical illustration.

"Drawing is completely absorbing, much like gardening. It's an interest that stems from a love of using my hands and clearing the mind," she said.

As a long-time collector of botanical art, Pam took up art lessons run by The Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, a venture that fortuitously led to her introduction to The Whirlybirds botanical art collective. The group, who began meeting weekly in the early nineties, are remarkable artists who collaborate with the Friends on numerous publications and exhibitions at the Gardens. Pam's work features on the cover of the recently published *Alphabotanical* and in an exhibition to be held in the Melbourne Gardens Visitor Centre this May.

Weekly visits to Melbourne Gardens ensure Pam is never short of botanic subjects. A significant Cedar of

Lebanon, located on the Hopetoun Lawn, has been selected as Pam's next study for The Whirlybirds project, *Significant Trees in the Gardens*. When visiting the Gardens, Pam is drawn to any vista that overlooks the water, finding inspiration in big trees, sweeping lawns and the Ornamental Lake.

She also enjoys meandering along the secluded paths of the Australian Forest Walk.

"To be inspired enough to paint or draw something, you need to be intrigued by it," she says.

An ability to capture movement and form through intricate detailing has resulted in the selection of some of Pam's artwork for inclusion in the State Botanical Collection at the National Herbarium of Victoria. One can marvel at the brilliance and consideration taken in Pam's work in watercolor and graphite. Three of Pam's illustrations of native orchids are housed in the Cranbourne Collection at the Herbarium featured here. One of these drawings was even blown-up in poster form and decorates the walls of the Herbarium staff room.

Pam's passion for the Gardens highlights the importance of botanic art and the role it plays as a resource for staff and researchers at Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria.



“To be inspired enough to paint or draw something, you need to be intrigued by it.”



ABOVE
Pam Habersberger in front of the Cedar of Lebanon.

ILLUSTRATION
Dipodium roseum 2004, Cranbourne Collection.
Pam Habersberger.

Events

End of Year Celebration



We came together last December to celebrate the end of the year at the beautiful new Terrace events space.

Situated by Ornamental Lake, supporters were greeted with The Terrace signature cocktails and spent an evening in conversation with Tim Entwisle Director and Chief Executive, Chis Trotman Royal Botanic Gardens Board Chair and the team from the Gardens.

The evening was a wonderful chance to thank our donors, sponsors and supporters for their generous support and passion for Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria.



LEFT
Sally Browne with Lynda Entwisle and Andrew Laidlaw.

RIGHT
Phil Lukies and Janet Whiting

BELOW
Tim Entwisle with Penny Fowler and John Calvert-Jones.

Cranbourne Gardens Donor Tour



A group of donors came together at Cranbourne Gardens this autumn to celebrate Australian flora with a special tour of the Australian Garden.

Tim Entwisle Director and Chief Executive and Chris Russel Executive Director Cranbourne Gardens led tours around the Garden, assisted by Horticulture Team Leader Marie Velthoven and Conservation Horticulturalist Russell Larke.

Chris Russell reflected on his delight in seeing the Garden transform since its start as a sand mine to the now

award-winning contemporary botanic gardens, recognised for its plant and wildlife conservation. Donors were fascinated to hear about the new education hub, planting native species that are beautiful to look at and require minimal maintenance and how the team is keeping fungus at bay.

After the tour, we came together for afternoon tea and Friday afternoon champagne – a great start to the weekend!

LEFT
David and Belinda Lawson.

RIGHT
Judy Dunster and Chris Trotman.

Plant Rescue

Saving the Cycads

Royal Botanic Gardens horticulturists Georgie Moyes and Tim Uebergang will join an expedition to conserve rare, native cycads in New South Wales this year.

They will join Montgomery Botanical Center (Florida) and the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney in the Warrumbungle, Piliga and Mt Kaputer National Parks to develop a *Macrozamia* collection for the purposes of conservation, awareness and maintenance of genetic diversity.

“This project presents us with a fantastic opportunity to combine our botanic and horticultural skills to preserve the species in an ex-situ collection. By building on a genetically diverse living collection, we play a role as part of a global safety net against plant extinction,” says Tim. “We are targeting six species in the genus *Macrozamia* found in New South Wales, and plan to develop a long-term pollination and seed production program, while considering a potential reintroduction plan.”

The *Macrozamia* genus has around 41 species, most that are unique to the east coast of Australia. Currently these plants are experiencing threats from land clearing to a changing climate. As part of this field work the three gardens will collect data on natural plant colonies, take herbarium specimens for each species and hopefully harvest seed that will go toward a meta-collection project between Sydney and Melbourne.

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria recently become an affiliate member of the

Australian branch of the BGCI’s Global Consortium of Cycad Conservation. The Gardens offers accomplished scientific and horticultural resources to measure the effectiveness of the conservation efforts of this project over the long term.

RBGV aims to grow its collection of wild collected species for conservation value due to the climate suitability of many *Macrozamia*. The collection areas in New South Wales National Parks align with Melbourne’s predicted 2070 temperature and other climate conditions. Fifteen different species have been identified for collection in NSW including four endangered, one vulnerable and two near threatened species.

“RBGV aims to grow its collection of wild collected species for conservation value.”

“These plants align perfectly with the ideal climate zones identified in the Gardens’ Landscape Succession Strategy and over time are likely to be used as part of the Australian Drylands Walk Project,” says Director and Chief Executive Tim Entwisle. “We will use this new landscape at Melbourne Gardens to raise awareness of these species by displaying the various forms and colours and providing signage and interpretation that explains the plight of this vulnerable plant group.”



LEFT
A *Macrozamia communis* at Royal Botanic Gardens
Melbourne

RIGHT
RBGV Horticulturalists Georgie Moyes and Tim Uebergang

TOP
Macrozamia diplomera in habitat Coonabarabran, NSW.
Copyright Bryan Laughland



Ill. Coccineus et Coeruleus, l. c. petiolo glandulis 4
 instructos describit; Loureiro l. c. glandulis 2; quare et
 Lindlani l. c. plantam hanc (sic) diversam habet.
 Prosimiliter vero numerus glandularum a 2 ad 4 variat.
 In meo specimeni curam vidi 2, et 3 glandulas; praeterea
 corona ultima corollae in meo specimeni brevior est ac
 in icona Lavoulliesiana, et bractea paullo obliuorescent,
 atque certissime hoc nil est nisi variatio, sicut folia
 caeforina interdum septemloba occurrunt. —

Plantam plantam fenestralium ipse colui, et
 sicavi, 1824.

Lindl. prodr. T. 3 p. 330. N. 102.
 Loureiro Flor. Cochinch. et Wilden.
 p. 644. N. 2.
 Lavoull. Dissertat. X p. 461. N. 638, tab. 295.

Passiflora coerulea. Lindl.



MEL 2503952

The Global Collection Project

Improving Access to Botanic Treasures

The Global Collection is comprised of over 400,000 specimens sourced from countries outside Australia, impressively representing plants across all 434 families.

The Global Collection project, which began in 2014, is working to database and curate these specimens to improve access to these botanical treasures. Since its inception, the team has grown from one Database Officer to four, thanks to support from individual donors and generous trusts and foundations including the RBG Foundation and John T Reid Charitable Trusts. The detailed work carried out by these officers in The National Herbarium of Victoria ensures an invaluable record of the world's botanical diversity remains.

Last quarter, the team logged 6006 specimens, bringing the number of specimens databased for the project to a staggering 85,456. Database Officer, Eugenia Pacitti, recalls some of the unique discoveries made during the curating process:

“Databasing herbarium specimens can be like solving puzzles made up of 19th-century handwriting, foreign languages, abbreviations, and places that have changed name or no longer exist. This detective work involves cross-referencing dates with a collector's known field trips and lifespan, a keen memory for an individual's handwriting or stylistic flourishes and recognising the layout of a label or sheet.”

LEFT


An example of Joachim Steetz botanical specimens retrieved from the Global Collection.

A fascinating example of this can be seen in the cataloguing of the extensive work of German botanist Joachim Steetz. The Herbarium purchased Steetz's herbarium in 1863, adding to the collection more than 5000 specimens from approximately 160 collectors and more than 30 countries. The collection is rich in specimens from South Africa, South America, the Arctic, and the Banat region of central Europe

Steetz's neat cursive handwriting, as seen in the pictured specimen, is noted by Pacitti as being “instantly recognisable” to those who work on the collection. She reflects, “Steetz was a stickler for precision – a trait evident in the meticulous descriptions that accompany his herbarium specimens. His sheets usually include the taxon name in large lettering near the bottom of the sheet, and a Latin description, literature citation and synonyms for the species in the lower area. Below or next to the specimens is a note detailing the collector, locality, date, and often the name of the person from whom Steetz bought or acquired the specimen.”

The work of the team is dependent on philanthropic funding. The project highlights the extent of the work required to safeguard these fascinating records. As Pacitti notes, “each of Steetz's specimens that we uncover in the Global Collection contributes a new piece to the bigger picture of his work, and its place in the overall collection.”

The Global Collection needs support, to learn more contact the Development Team at development@rbg.vic.gov.au

An aerial photograph showing a dense, lush green forest in the foreground, with a winding river or stream cutting through it. In the background, the Melbourne city skyline is visible under a clear blue sky, featuring several prominent skyscrapers and modern buildings. The scene is captured from a high angle, looking down on the park and across towards the city.

In 2023 we are offered an opportunity to respond to the challenges behind us as well as those ahead. The importance of plants and green space has never been more apparent, both for our own health and wellbeing, as well as the planets. At Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, we will continue to strive towards a future enriched and sustained by plants.

It is through the generosity of our donors that the Gardens continue to flourish.

Show your support today by making a fully tax-deductible donation as we continue our efforts in world-class science and horticultural research, landscapes and public programs.

YES, I would like to support the Garden's mission to see life enriched and sustained by plants.

Title First name

Last name

Address

State

Postcode

Email

Phone

Date of birth

I will give \$

via: (please tick)

MasterCard

Cheque (enclosed)

American Express

Visa

Card no.

Expiry date / CVC

Cardholder's name

Signature

Please send me information about including a gift to the Gardens in my Will

I have already included a gift to the Gardens in my Will

Please tear off and return to:
Private Bag 2000,
South Yarra Victoria 3141

To donate online, please visit:
rbg.vic.gov.au/support-us/excursions

All donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible

Green stories of wellbeing and healing were shared with us during our last Appeal from generous donors about their own moments at Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria.

“Tony Bennet once sang about leaving his heart in San Francisco; for me, it was within the walls of your beautiful, botanic gardens, filled with works of wonder and delightful people” – Judy Dunbar

“The Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne is a sanctuary from the hustle and bustle of the city. I’ve always loved this place, and now, in my 70th year I regard it as my church with “nature” at the core of my spirituality. One day I’ll have another park bench to sit on from my heavenly place. This is my Will!” – Jill Dawson

“Everywhere you look within our beautiful Botanic Gardens there is always something that brings joy to the heart. Whether it’s having hands in the soil or just sitting quietly, resting – there is another joy – and that is of giving! To help keep these wonderful gardens going – they’re so special for everyone!” – Meg Bentley



Royal
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To support our work or learn more please contact us on:
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development@rbg.vic.gov.au

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