

A long way since '64

THIS October 1-5 is the twenty-ninth year of the annual wildflower exhibition in Kings Park, an event on the Perth calendar that has come a long way since its inception.

The "seeds" for the first exhibition were apparently sown by Arthur Fairall shortly after he became Superintendent of the Park and upon his suggestion then Director Dr John Beard took up the idea and from there the first Wildflower Exhibition was launched on 12 September 1964.

The first exhibition was Saturday to Monday inclusive, held on the Fraser Avenue lawns under a hessian structure. Inside was a massed display of wildflowers collected from the wild (many being sent in from farming properties) and arranged aesthetically in landscaped designs as integrated displays from different regions within WA. Displays of mounted fruits and leaves and a collection of named plant specimens in jars of water completed the collection.

All botanists from the Western Australian Herbarium assisted with the identification of plants and as a raw graduate at the time this was included in my duties.

At the original Fraser Avenue site however, attendances were down during wet weather because the hessian structure was not waterproof. Only a few limited areas such as where the Country Women's Association served their teas were covered by a waterproof roof.

In an attempt to solve the inclement weather problem, the Exhibition was moved to the Lawrence Pavilion (now Cafe Ivey) in 1981. The event was renamed the Native Plant Display as under Dr Wycherley's direction the emphasis was shifted from plants collected from the wild to cultivated native flora.

This venue, although under cover, was very cramped and with the completion of the serviced Exhibition Ground and public amenities off Fraser

Avenue the event has been held there since 1982.

During the first 20 years all displays inside the main covered area (now the marquee) were mainly prepared by the Kings Park staff, but since 1985 more outside organisations have been involved. These include crafts, art, tertiary institutions, government instrumentalities and amateur groups.

Following the formation of the volunteer Kings Park Guides in 1984 guided walks of the nearby bushland have also been a popular addition to the occasion.

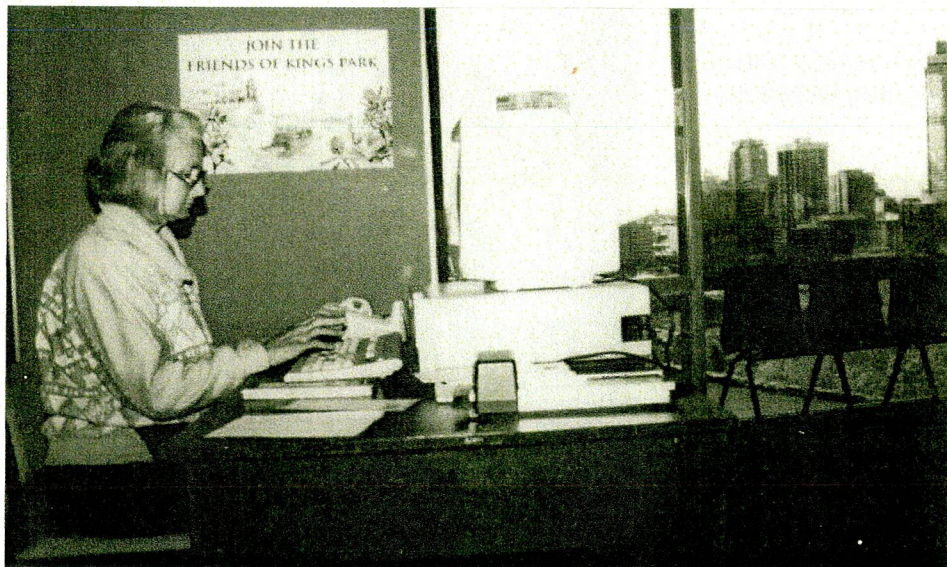
In the Bicentennial Year (1988) the event was renamed the Western Australian Wildflower Festival.

Since 1987 a theme plant family or genus has been featured - this year it is the family Asteraceae of Daisies. Such themes need to be decided up to five years in advance as there are many years of preparation.

There are several new features of the Festival this year. The innovation that will probably attract the most public interest will be guest speakers at 4.30 pm each afternoon. On Friday a member of the Wildflower Society of Western Australia will talk on plant propagation at home; on Saturday Alex Hooper from Zanthorrhoea Nursery talks about ground covers; on Sunday, Hazel Dempster will talk on native plants for hanging baskets; and on Monday John Colwill talks about growing Everlastings.

Each day the Horticultural Advisory staff will give propagation demonstrations at 11.30 am and 2.30 pm, and the Kings Park Guides will be conducting walks of the nearby bushland at 10.30 am, noon, 1.30 pm and 3.00 pm.

The established tradition of exhibiting commercial nurseries selling their display plants at bargain prices will wind up the Festival from 5.00 pm on Tuesday.



Friends membership secretary Audrey Dixon working in her office with "the best view in Perth" - the Kings Park Education Centre atop the Scarp, 250 m north of the State War Memorial.

Dr Eleanor Bennett
Principal Display Botanist.

Kings Park Guides report

GUIDES joined Friends at the Live-It-Up Expo, Burswood Superdome, enjoying the well laid out, attractive Kings Park displays. Friends and Guides on duty were able to meet individually and exchange ideas.



Guides Christine Gladstone and Barbara Hannay at the Guides exhibit at the Expo.

A fortnight later Friends and Guides met *en masse* at a social get-together at the Kings Park Administration Centre. Mr Tognolini welcomed all to the gathering on behalf of the Board. A number of those present "wore two hats" and it was an opportunity for those Guides who are also family-membership Friends to introduce their spouse to others involved with the Park.

The committee has decided to apply for Incorporation of the Guides. This will not in any way affect the operation of the Guides but formalises matters connected with legal liabilities and insurance.

A party of Guides joined Tourist Commission staff for morning tea at the Tourist Centre in Forrest Place and in future it is hoped some of the Tourism staff will avail themselves of our hospitality to experience the Park first hand and listen to some of the public's queries.

During winter the Guides had some lean days in the Park as cold winds and rain discouraged visitors. The rains

didn't even reward us with prolific fungi as it was too cold for these. Consequently a Guide's fungal walk was replaced in favour of conifers. These beautiful trees may not have flowers but can be relied upon to delight the eye at any time of the year. Thankfully, the Information Centre is well-stocked with books and reference works as there is no limit to self-education about the Park during those times when the weather is inclement.

Now spring is upon us there is an endless stream of visitors with their many questions about the Park and nature in general. The season peaks for us of course with the annual Wildflower Festival, but large scale public interest in the Park also continues into summer.

Friends and Guides will be co-operating yet again at the Wildflower Festival, with the Guides staffing the main information desk and providing guided walks into the neighbouring bushland. As a Guide I welcome the Friends participation in their first Festival, knowing we all look forward to their assistance in staging this important annual occasion.

Roger Hilton
Further Education Officer
Kings Park Guides.

Kangaroo Paws and Catspaws

The lively, authoritative text in this definitive work on *Kangaroo Paws and Catspaws* is written by Stephen Hopper, Director of Kings Park and Botanic Garden, who is widely known for his work on kangaroo paws and catspaws.

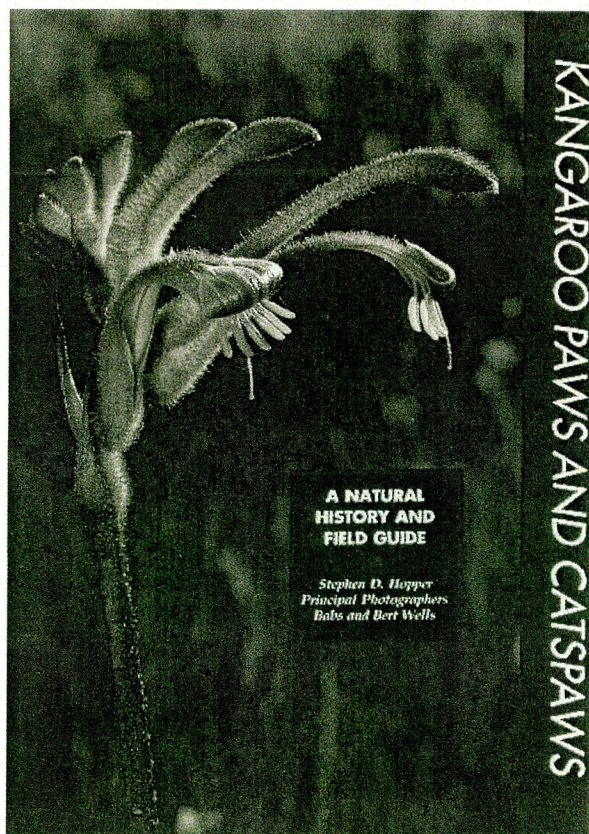
The superb photographs are provided by internationally acclaimed wildlife photographers Babs and Bert Wells. Margaret Pieroni complements the text with her outstanding illustrations.

New Wildflower Video

Take a stroll through Kings Park and Botanic Garden from the comfort of your favourite chair. The dazzling colours and unique forms of a selection of our beautiful wildflowers have been captured on this professionally produced 30 minute video. The video includes a free packet of wildflower seeds so you can create a tiny piece of the Park in your own garden.

Part of the proceeds will aid the Park in the preservation of Western Australia's natural heritage.

You can buy your copy at the Wildflower Festival, at the Park's outlets, or by calling Quality of Life P/L on (09) 388 1376. The video costs just \$24.00, (\$20.00 for Friends of Kings Park).



FRIENDS membership count on September 14 was 196 and although this number was less than had been projected we are hopeful of welcoming a lot more people to swell our numbers during the Spring tourist season. Although we gained very few new Friends at the Live-It-Up Expo we sold more than 700 raffle tickets for a trip to Broome and our group was introduced to many of the 14,773 people who attended over the four days of the Expo.

VICE President Tom Alford has applied on behalf of the Friends for a Small Grant from the Gordon Reid Foundation for the removal of woody weeds from Kings Park bushland. The intention is for a group of volunteer Friends to be trained by Kings Park and Botanic Garden staff in a combined assault on removing invasive acacias from the Park.

ONE of our major benefactors is the recently introduced ecotour "Perth and Beyond" who offer visitors to Perth an insight into WA's floral treasures with a visit to Kings Park, a wildflower drying shed, a wholesale fresh flower outlet and a new Aboriginal art gallery in Subiaco. The new tour's Principal, Maggie Edmonds describes recent interest and progress in these tours as steady and she looks forward to gathering momentum as spring progresses. Congrats on your enterprise Maggie and thanks again for donating a dollar to the Friends for each fully paid seat on your flora tours.

OUR historical research group under the very able leadership of Margaret Smyth is already making inroads into the mass of data and minutes of meetings held at Kings Park and Battye Library. Mrs Smyth is well versed in the Kings Park environment as her father John Ernest Watson was the Park's first combined Secretary-Superintendent, a position he held between October 1938 and July 1962. The Ivey Watson Children's Playground and Cafe Ivey were both named to honour Mrs Smyth's mother. Able research assistance is been given

by Friends Karen McPherson, Dave and Jeanice Powell, Merle Rigden and Sally Wilson.

AMONG our many interesting friends is former Kenyan sculptor Margaret Penny whose most recent work is a family of emus cast in bronze (see accompanying photo). Margaret is currently looking for someone to take this Australian icon out of her garden and off her hands, for a reasonable fee of course. Several people have already offered to partly sponsor her asking price but final negotiations are still pending. Rumour has it that Kings Park may be in the running as a future home for Margaret's life-like family of symbolic Australians?

RECENT guest speakers at Friends meetings included Kings Park's horticultural advisor Bob Dixon who gave an enthralling talk on some of his horticultural secrets at the August general meeting (Bob has kindly consented to include more of his hard earned expertise in future editions of *For People and Plants*). Mr John Dell of the WA Museum told us about the vertebrate fauna in Kings Park at the September meeting. These included the

unique Turtle frog and a mixed bag of reptiles, plus mention of the Brushtail possums that cause problems to some plants in the Botanic Garden. John also had samples of taxidermed birds for us to inspect at close range. The guest speakers schedule for the next three months is included in *Coming Events* on page four.

FRIENDS can now avail themselves of 17 nature books at very generous discounts, providing you lodge your order forms at Kings Park. These include such bargains as edition 2 of *Orchids of south-west Australia*, by Hoffman and Brown - \$38 to Friends (\$59.95 retail); Dr Hopper's new book *Kangaroo Paws and Catspaws* - \$21 (\$24.95 retail); and Brooker's locally relevant *Field Guide to the Eucalypts 2* - \$52 (79.95 retail).

ON the Monday evening (4 October) of the Kings Park Wildflower Festival all Friends, Guides and Staff are invited to an Evening Celebration between 7.30 - 9.30 pm. You may be pleasantly surprised by who will be there? \$15 admission covers food and refreshments. If you bring a friend, the Friends of Kings Park joining fee is a preferred option.



This is **not** Jurassic Park! These are Friend Margaret Penny's emu family, photographed in their domesticated bliss outside her home. Please note Father Emu in the background doing his bit to incubate the emu eggs while Mother is free to roam.

Coming events

Guided Walks	Day	Starting point	Available
Botanic Walk (about 2 hrs)	Mon 10 am	Karri Log, Fraser Ave*	April 1 - Oct 31
Botanic Garden and Bushwalk (about 2 hrs)	Tues 10 am	Karri Log, Fraser Ave*	April 1 - Oct 31
Botanic Garden (about 1 1/2 hrs)	Thurs 10 am	Karri Log, Fraser Ave*	April 1 - Oct 31
Nature Trail - Wildflowers (about 1 1/2 hrs)	Wed 2 pm & Sun 2 pm	Pines Car Park, Lovekin Drive	July 1 - Oct 31
Bushwalk (about 2 1/2 hrs)	Fri 10 am	Cnr Saw Ave & May Dve	April 1 - Oct 31
Summer Walk (about 1 hr)	Sun 11 am	Karri Log, Fraser Ave*	Nov 1 - Mar 31

*Opposite War Memorial

Kings Park Wildflower Festival		
Guided Walks	Daily	10.30 am, Noon, 1.30 pm, 3.00 pm
Propagation Demonstrations	Daily	11.30 am and 2.30 pm

Friends, Guides and Staff
THE FESTIVAL FUNCTION
 in the Festival marquee.
 (Sir David Attenborough's film crew has been invited.)

October 4
 7.30 pm
 Admission \$15
 Guests \$20

FRIENDS IN THE PARK
 Tuesdays & Fridays
 Weekends
 in the Education Centre
 (250 m north of the State War Memorial.)

10 am - Noon
 Noon - 3 pm

FRIENDS MEETING
 2nd Thursday each month
 (excluding January)

Admin. Centre
 8.00 pm

Speakers:

October 14 Dr Paul Wycherley (ex Director) talks about the history of Kings Park and Botanic Garden.

November 11 Verity James talks on marketing and promoting Kings Park.

December 9 Dr Phil Playford (ex Director Geological Survey of Western Australia); Geology of the Perth Region, including Rottnest Is.

What's flowering

(October to December)

MOST people think that once November arrives all the beauty of the bush ends. This is not true. The well-known Christmas Tree, *Nuytsia floribunda*, comes into flower to create the spectacle we all associate with the festive season. Jarrah also commences its flowering as does the Slender Banksia, *Banksia attenuata* and the Bull Banksia, *B. grandis*, while the three Hibbertia species (Buttercups) and all Scaevola species (Fan Flowers) seen in early spring are still flowering.

Near Kings Park Avenue the Free-flowering Leschenaultia, *Lechenaultia floribunda* and Rose Banjine, *Pimelea rosea* are coming into flower. One of the spectacular, lily-like flowering species is the intense blue *Agrostocrinum scabrum*.

Most of the wattles are setting seed by now and Hackett's Hop Bush, *Dodonaea hackettiana*, once gazetted as a rare and endangered species, will develop their characteristic yellow and red, three-winged fruits.

The three Calytrix species occurring in the bushland all commence to flower now and continue into the new year. The two yellow-flowered species, *Calytrix angulata* and *C. flavescens*

occur in scattered populations but during summer the Pink Summer Calytrix, *C. fraseri* transforms the bush into a mass of pink.

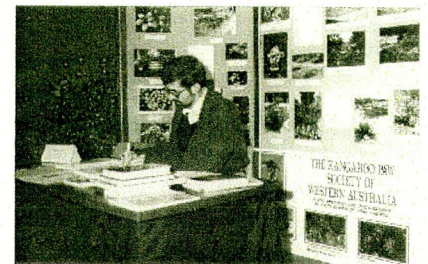
Along the escarpment, two species of honey myrtle will transform parts of the slope into a mass of white. These are the low shrub *Melaleuca acerosa* and the taller *Melaleuca hugelii* or Chenille Honey Myrtle. Also flowering on the escarpment, but often not as obvious, is *Acacia cyclops*, a tall shrub with broad leaves.

The final flowering and seed-setting of the Tree Smokebush, *Conospermum triplinervium* will be occurring after its spectacular display of the previous couple of months.

The dreadfully named Snottygobble, *Persoonia saccata* will also be recognizable by the contrast between its foliage and the usually dense racemes of yellow flowers.

During spring the Rare and Endangered Garden is also well worth a visit as the Kangaroo Paw hybrids growing in the back bed will be in full flower, with their colour combinations and habit variations created by hybridisation.

Dr Eleanor Bennett
 Principal Display Botanist



Kings Park Horticultural Adviser Bob Dixon, working hard at one of the Kings Park and Botanic Garden displays at the Live-It-Up Expo.

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 FRIENDS OF KINGS PARK.

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