

Inverawe Native Gardens

Newsletter - September 2007

INVERAWE RE-OPENS 1 SEPTEMBER

- See the changes
- Take tea on the terrace
- Sit and soak up the stunning view
- Watch the abundant bird life
- Stroll kilometres of pathway
- Be overwhelmed by our collection of 6000 native Australian plants

WHAT VISITORS SAY

"exquisite"...

"best garden I've seen"...

"loved the information signs"...

"the solitude, it's so peaceful"...

"a great garden" ...

"overwhelming"...

"vast selection of natives"...

"just paradise"...

"inspired"...

"visionary"...



Three recent visitors have a well earned rest

WHAT'S NEW?

- We've added a Bunya Pine to keep our Wollomi Pine company
- Extensive understorey has been planted on the northern and southern terraces
- Signage, particularly our bird list, has been greatly improved
- Five more tree ferns have been planted in the rainforest area
- A safety rail has been installed above the rainforest area
- The Banksia garden has been extended to include 60 banksias drawn from a dozen species, forms or cultivars.
- Several hundred more trees and shrubs have been added to the grasslands.
- More seats have been installed
- We've seen Eastern Curlews and Dusky Wood Swallow –that's 83 bird species
- Oh, yes, and the tea terrace!

TEA TERRACE READY FOR BUSINESS

A portion of the southern terrace has been renovated during the winter and we are now able to serve tea. Tea with muffins, shortbread, raisin toast or "triple chocolate cookies" will be available. Expect to be entertained by honeyeaters and wrens whilst you soak up the view. You might even catch a glimpse of Harry, the Swamp Harrier, stirring up the local plovers but that's not guaranteed.

POETRY AT INVERAWE

The 2007 Nature Poetry Competition was won by New Zealand poet, Sue Wootton for her poem, *Temporal*. The senior secondary school section was won by an outstanding young Hobart poet, Robert Hortle, for *Night Time Mutter*. In 2007 there were over 200 entries in the open competition and another 200 entries in the student competition.

Entry forms for the 2008 open competition are now available on our website, www.inverawe.com.au With support from Kingborough Council, prize money has been enhanced. First prize in the open competition is now \$500 and \$200 for the runner up. A Tasmanian resident's prize of \$200 is on offer, as is an unpublished poet's award of \$200. Entries in the open competition close March 27 2008.

In the school students' competition a first prize of \$50 is offered in each of four divisions, as well as two \$25 runners up awards for each division and \$10 prizes for a total of ten "commended" poets.



Crowea "Festival" is one of many Croweas planted on the northern terrace. Croweas love dry going

GETTING THERE

Inverawe is beside the Margate Train, 1 Km north of Margate village, on the Channel Highway. From the north, watch for our big pink sign. You can find us on Google Maps by Googling "Google Maps Tasmania" and then "Inverawe Native Gardens" at the prompt. Google Maps offers detailed route instructions from your starting point, to Inverawe.

DRY COLD WINTER NO PROBLEM

Barring a downpour in the last few days of August, rainfall figures from April on through have been below our six year average. In June there were a number of frosts, including five consecutive nights of hard frost. We lost some recently planted seedlings but the bulk of the collection came through unscathed.

At Inverawe, plants are chosen for their suitability. Most of Inverawe is rated as Dry Sclerophyll (Dry forest) so plants have to be tough enough to survive poor soils and low rainfall whilst producing good form, texture and flowers.

Native plants have two sets of roots. Surface roots pick up evening dews and light rain showers whilst deep roots head down to the watertable. There is always moisture down there somewhere if you dig deep enough. For many native plants, what you see above ground is only a small part of the total plant volume.



Acacia suaveolens, right, *Grevillea rosemarinaefolia*, rear, and paper daisies, foreground, aren't troubled by frosts and dry conditions.

SPECIAL CARE PLANTS

We do have some specialist plants that require a little bit more. Our rainforest plants and our ferns require extra moisture in south east Tasmania's dry summers. Kangaroo Paws, used as feature plants, also require weekly watering when the rains fail.

Apart from these pampered softies, new plants are planted in autumn, winter or early spring and then left to fend for themselves. We expect a small failure rate from this "tough love". If we plant in summer the new plants are watered on a stress principle. If they look stressed they get a small amount of water. This encourages plants to develop a strong root system and gradually weans them off the need for supplementary watering. Sometimes we get it wrong and like Monty Python's parrot, that plant isn't stressed, it's dead. This is always disappointing but we are gradually building up an understanding of what grows where. Some plants love clay soils, others hate it. Some will only grow in sand. It's a matter of matching plants to conditions.

CHOOSING WINNING PLANTS

An Adult Education group asked me the other day "How do you choose plants that will thrive?"

We've all bought plants that looked good in the shop but started to die as you carried them out to the car. Do your homework first. We use *Flowering Natives for Home Gardens*, By Denise Greig and *Flora's Native Plants*, from Gardening Australia. Both these books give reliable information on what conditions a particular plant requires.

In the nursery, buy small sized pots, not large ones. Feel around the outside of the pot. If it feels rock hard, the plant is potbound. If it feels soft, the plant might have been potted up ten minutes before you arrived. Avoid them. Build a relationship with a nursery you can trust. Don't fall for the old line of "It's a bit pot bound so I'll let you have it cheap." It's no bargain. Once potbound, plants never thrive. Choose healthy plants that look as if they want to get on with the job.



Meloleuca nesophila is fast growing, colourful and hardy – a real winner for gardeners.

ONE LAST THING...

In bloom right now we have purple and white forms of Hardenbergia, fine leaved Clematis, lots of Grevilleas, Paper Daisies, Winter Pinks, various Correas, some Croweas, purple Native Hibiscus, several types of Westringia, Hakea, Eriostemon, Scarlet Kunzea, Propeller Plant, Wattles, a lovely little daisy called Astralasia and a few Kangaroo Paws.

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Open Tuesdays through Sundays, inclusive

1 September to end May,

from 9.30 am, last entry 5.30 pm.

Closed Christmas Day

Open Holiday Mondays.

Other times by arrangement.

Entry fee: \$8.00

Tea on the terrace: only \$6.00 extra!