

CAMPERDOWN BOTANIC GARDENS AND ARBORETUM TRUST INC

NEWS

7

SPRINTER 2014

Professor Tim Entwisle focuses on the seasons in Australia and the way we define them.



Spring is here – or is it?

Since 1788, Australia has celebrated four European seasons that make no sense in most parts of the country. We may like them for historical or cultural reasons, or because they are (apparently) the same throughout the world, but they tell us nothing, and reflect less, of our natural environment. I think it's high time we rejected those seasons and adopted a system in tune with our plants and animals; a system to help us notice and respond to climate change.

In a book just published by CSIRO (*Sprinter and Sprummer: Australia's Changing Seasons*) I suggest a five-season model for southern Australia. It starts with sprinter (August and September), the early Australian spring. That's when the bushland and our gardens burst into flower. That's also when that quintessential Australian plant, the wattle, is in peak flowering across the country. Next is sprummer (October and November), the changeable season, bringing a second wave of flowering.

Summer (December to March) should be four months long, extending into March, when there are still plenty of fine warm days. Autumn (April and May) barely registers in Sydney but further south we get good autumn colour on mostly exotic trees, as well as peak fungal fruiting. Winter (June and July) is a short burst of cold weather and a time when the plant world is preparing for the sprinter ahead.

I'm not the first to suggest an alternative way to divide up the year. Our Aboriginal communities have watched the world around them over tens of thousands of years and come up with two to seven seasons to suit their local area. I'm also not the first recent immigrant to suggest we need a change. Some bold and dedicated nature watchers have tried gallantly to change our way of thinking about seasons. Perhaps the best known is Allan Reid and his Timelines Project in the 1990s. As with Aboriginal Australia, a set of six seasons is the usual outcome.

My system is a compromise, based mostly on what plants do. Whether my new seasons are adopted or not, I hope they encourage people to notice the natural world around us, and how it changes seasonally and in response to the way we treat it.

*Professor Tim Entwisle
Director and Chief Executive
Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne*

Gardens for wellness – a talk by Steven Wells

Steven has combined the professions of nursing and horticulture to carve out a special career. At Austin Health, he has developed horticultural therapy programs and created sensory and healing gardens that bring benefits to patients, visitors and staff.

Gardening Australia's 2012 Gardener of the Year, Steven is passionate about the value of gardens for health and wellbeing.

Sunday 12 October at 2 pm
Theatre Royal, Camperdown
\$15 entry

Not to be missed!

Tickets at Corangamite Shire office or at the door. Enquiries to Janet O'Hehir 0427 629 557.





Above:

What's growing? Daffodils

In October 1901 Leonard Buckland, Camperdown lawyer and one of Australia's most highly regarded daffodil breeders, donated £1 11s 6d worth of daffodils as prizes for the town's horticultural spring show*. Over a hundred years later, Mr Buckland's daffodils have again been donated. Anne Bryant, current owner of Buckland's original property Keyham on the Cobden Road, generously offered named varieties, identified by an original catalogue, to the Camperdown Botanic Gardens and Arboretum. To make sure they would be identifiable, it was necessary to dig the clumps before flowering finished. An enthusiastic group of members dug up dozens of plants for planting beneath trees as part of the Arboretum redevelopment. Pictured above (L to R) Pamela Jellie, Karen Richardson, Sue Cole and Gillian Senior at Keyham.

*Allan Willingham', *Camperdown, A Heritage Study*, 1998

A case study for landscape design

A group of students from Melbourne University spent two days in Camperdown in August to focus on design issues in our Botanic Gardens and Arboretum. The students, led by landscape architect and Burnley lecturer Annette Warner, will develop design concepts for the site as their major research project in their Masters degree program.

During their visit the group consulted with the Trust and Council staff and called in at the Heritage Centre to view the original Guilfoyle plan and plant lists. They also visited three nearby gardens, where the owners showed their individual approaches to gardening on a historic property of similar vintage to our gardens. Our thanks to Trust members Pam Habersberger at Dalvui, Judy Roycroft and Jan Murray at Renny Hill and Louise Manifold at Meekri.

When funding becomes available for a Conservation Management Plan for our gardens and long-neglected arboretum, we will have a wealth of creative ideas to draw upon.



Above: Louise Manifold (left) show Melbourne University visitors the views from her garden at Meekri.