



Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Heritage

MEDIA RELEASE

Gardens thanks its Volunteers

The Australian National Botanic Gardens is holding a special thank-you function for its many volunteers on International Volunteers Day, Friday 5 December. The Gardens and its sister organisation, the Centre for Plant Biodiversity Research, have around 150 volunteers engaged in a wide variety of activities, ranging from behind the scenes scientific tasks to face to face contact with members of the public.

In the past year volunteers have provided in excess of 20,000 hours of service to the Gardens, with an estimated value of well over \$500,000. Currently, the Gardens has 119 volunteers, aging from 25 to 85 years of age, who assist in many different areas, varying from regular tasks to helping with special events. In addition, the Friends of the Australia National Botanic Gardens' fundraising efforts during the year provided \$20,000 in project funding for the Gardens.

The Gardens was established in 1949 and although many volunteers worked on an informal basis in the early years it was not until 1985 that the first official volunteer task commenced – the production of the weekly information sheet “In Flower This Week”. In 1990, the Friends of the Gardens was formed and with it came opportunities for community involvement in a wide variety of volunteer capacities.

The development of the Volunteer Guide Service in 1992 has proved to be one of the most successful programs, and since that time an average of 4000 visitors have enjoyed guided walks each year. The service was an immediate success, and six training courses for new members have been offered in ten years – currently there are 55 Volunteer Guides. In 2002, the Gardens, together with the Friends of the ANBG, won the ACT Adult Learners Week “Award for Outstanding Program” for its Volunteer Guide Training Program.

In addition to the Guides Service, 30 volunteers assist with specimen preparation at the Centre for Plant Biodiversity Research Herbarium. Volunteers also assist in the Gardens Education Service, Library, Seed Store, Visual Resources and Visitor Services Sections.

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