

We revisit Artarmon Reserve by Mollie Shelley

It is now almost ten years since I first wrote about walking in the Reserve. Much work had already been done by Council and Volunteer Bush Regenerators in restoring what had become a weed infestation with thickets of lantana and convolvulus. The work has continued and progress is there for all to see. First let's do a recap on the basic conditions.

The soils are mostly sandstone but there are pockets of clay washed down into the gully from the Artarmon area. The original forest from which settlers harvested their timber was mainly Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus saligna*) and Blackbutt (*Eucalyptus pilularis*). The Blue Gum is a tall straight tree with a heavy crown of narrow pointed leaves which are paler underneath and a stocking of rough, grey fibrous bark above which the limbs are smooth blue-green. Blackbutts are very large straight trees with fluffy branches of leaves at the top. The rough, grey-brown stringy bark covers much of the trunk. Above that the trunk and branches are smooth and creamy-yellow. The Sydney Red Gum (*Angophora costata*) also known as the Smooth-barked Apple or Rusty Gum, is found mostly on sandstone soils. It is easy to identify because it earns its name from its rust-red trunk after it has shed its grey bark around Christmas time. It's the tree you'll see growing over sandstone rocks around the harbour. It often has wrinkles or folds under its armpits. Unlike eucalypts whose leaves are arranged alternately, angophoras leaves are arranged opposite each other. The



Cartoon by Wendy Bishop

dark red gum often seen staining their trunks was once used to stop bleeding.

Cordia Way, the shared pedestrian and bicycle path leading down to the Reserve, was declared open in March 2002 by Mayor Pat Reilly. It was named in honour of Pieter and Maylean Cordia. Their efforts were one of the main forces behind the successful development of the path. They will live on in our memories because the bicycle path is much used by both adults and children. A recent walk along it revealed new plantings of about a dozen *Prostanthera* or Mint Bush along a fence line in one section and a number of *Callistemon* or Bottle brush in another section.

One of my great pleasures is the swathe of maidenhair fern growing down near the little bridge and, if one walks along the track on the north side of the creek until it comes to a halt at the bamboo grove, one is now able to see those wonderful rock ledges in the creek and the grove of slender tree ferns that have colonised this part of it.

Weeds and how to deal sensitively with garden escapees are always a challenge for bush regenerators. The cooperation of people whose gardens back onto the Reserve is both welcome and important. That part of the Reserve has improved enormously because of the awareness of householders and we are all grateful for their efforts. ■

PERMACULTURE NORTH meets 3rd Monday evening each month in Lindfield. Contact 1300 887 145 or info@permaculturenorth.org.au.

The Artarmon Sustainability Street Group

SUSTAINABILITY ST.
IT'S A VILLAGE OUT THERE

has suspended its regular Thursday monthly meetings following the successful completion of the Sustainable Living Collection library project.

The group is now holding regular monthly working bees in the Sustainable Garden outside the Artarmon Library. Future working bees will be on Sunday **23 May, 27 June, 25 July 29 August and 26 September**. There will be plenty of time for sustainable discussion as we work! Please join us if you would like to help. You can also email stuartsexton@gmail.com for any sustainability issues and questions.

WWW.
ClimateCleverShop
.com.au

Save money, time and the environment with the online ClimateClever Shop.

Purchase discounted:

- Solar hot water systems
- Heat pumps
- Solar photovoltaic (PV) systems
- Rainwater tanks

Visit the website and start saving today!

Brought to you by:









