

MEDIA RELEASE

Australian National Botanic Gardens



GPO Box 1777 Canberra ACT 2601

Telephone: (02) 62509450 Facsimile: (02) 62509599

<http://www.anbg.gov.au/anbg/>

Gardens Guides win “Award for Outstanding Program”

The Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG), together with the Friends of the ANBG, has won the ACT Adult Learners Week “Award for Outstanding Program” for its Volunteer Guide Training Program 2002. The award was presented at the Canberra Institute of Technology last night.

Gardens Visitor Services Manager, Rodney Harvey was delighted. “Congratulations to all those staff and Friends involved with developing the course and making presentations. It is a fine achievement and excellent external recognition of the work of the ANBG and the Friends,” he said.

The comprehensive course developed by the Gardens, in conjunction with the Friends’ Volunteer Guide Service is designed to provide high quality practical training for new guides, and includes:

- an overview of the history and development of the Gardens, and its scientific, conservation and education functions
- an introduction to the biology and horticulture of Australian plants
- an introduction to plant names and classification
- communication and planning skills
- knowledge of issues relating to occupational health and safety

The Gardens commenced its first training course for Volunteer Guides in late 1991, and on the Easter weekend of 1992 the first group of 28 Guides began sharing their skills and knowledge with visitors. The service was an immediate success, and training courses for new members have been held on a regular basis ever since 1991. This year’s training course was the sixth offered in ten years, and has swelled the ranks of the Volunteer Guides to 75 members.

In addition to their regular tours each day, Volunteer Guides conduct special walks, such as twilight walks, early morning bird walks and walks based on particular themes. Special tours can also be booked by community organisations, clubs and coach groups.

The Volunteer Guide service includes people of different ages and backgrounds, and this diversity is one of its greatest strengths. The service offers wonderful opportunities for those who like people and plants, have some spare time and want to increase their knowledge.

One of the Guide service’s most significant achievements was the organisation and hosting of the National Conference on Volunteer Guides in Botanic Gardens, held in Canberra in late 2001 and attended by over 100 delegates from 16 botanical gardens.

Contact: Paul Ziesing
Public Relations Officer
(02) 6250 9538
0419 594 626

paul.ziesing@ea.gov.au

4 September 2002