

BOOK REVIEW

THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN GARDENERS' DIARY 1990 may well become a bible to serious Western Australian gardeners.

It contains tried-and-tested information on growing herbs, vegetables and flowers, including natives, and its month-to-month format gives ample room for daily entries and notes for future reference.

Each month has separate chapters on general garden maintenance and many coloured photographs and diagrams. Its plastic-coated cover is perfect for protecting it from grubby, soiled hands.

Edited by leading Western Australian gardening expert George Barnard, it contains

tips and handy hints on successful gardening.

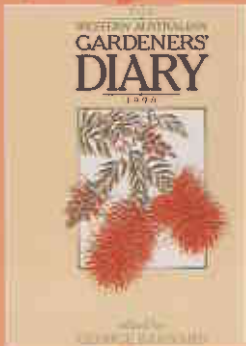
George's straightforward writing style will inspire anyone to help make their "domestic backyard deserts" bloom to their full potential.

Specific gardening books for WA are rare but this one has been tailored to suit our harsh and often difficult growing conditions.

The diary is available from leading bookshops,

newsagents, nurseries and garden centres for \$19.95.

Sadly, on December 5, 1989, George Barnard died suddenly. He will be missed by his many friends and thousands of readers and listeners.



**AURORA AUSTRALIS
THE SOUTHERN LIGHTS**



Photo - Courtesy of the Perth Observatory

A phenomenon rarely seen in Western Australia has been visible this year.

The biggest display of the Aurora Australis, or the southern lights, occurred over three nights in mid-March, with another strong showing in October.

It appears as a pink, green or white glow in the southern sky and can change to blood red if conditions are right.

Stars are visible through the glow, and there are often vertical white streaks, known to astronomers as "curtains", that move along the southern horizon from west to east, or east to west.

The aurora can be confused with the glow in the sky of a distant bushfire.

The phenomenon is caused by activity on the sun. Solar flares (which cause sunspots) eject streams of charged particles which the earth sometimes runs into as it moves in its orbit around the sun.

The particles excite the gases in the upper atmosphere, which glow in the same way as a fluorescent tube does when an electric current is passed through it.

The curtaining effect is caused by particles being channelled into the lines of the earth's magnetic field.

Most of the activity occurs around the earth's magnetic poles and is best seen from around the North and South Poles, but in times of strong solar activity the aurorae are visible from regions well away from the poles.

The sun is presently approaching a period of maximum activity as part of its 11 year cycle. It will peak in June 1990 but the level is already above that of the peak of 1979.

The increased number of solar flares also cause interference with radio transmissions around the world.

Aurorae are difficult to predict. They usually occur within two days of a solar disturbance, but the effects are not visible from all locations.

Because of the high level of solar activity at present it is likely that further auroral activity will be noticeable over the next six to ten months.

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FEATURES



Dolphins, whales and seals frequently strand along the WA coast. Find out who helps them and what they do on p. 10.



Powerful forces have formed the rocks and land surface of WA over billions of years. See p. 48.



Why are the thousands of feral camels that roam inland Australia the scourge of the desert? Turn to p. 22.



Explore the fascinating subterranean worlds deep beneath the earth on p. 28.



Inlets and rivers, towering karri and tingle forests, rugged coastline and remote wilderness areas - Walpole-Nornalup National Park has it all. See p. 15.

Australian sea-lion (Neophoca cinerea). Photo - Nick Gales



SHORE SURVIVORS
NICK GALES, DOUG COUGHRAN & CAROLYN THOMSON 10

WALPOLE-NORNALUP...
AN ANCIENT LAND
GRANT WARDELL-JOHNSON & VANESSA SMITH 15

DESERT BIGFOOT
ANDREW BURBIDGE 22

LIVING LIMESTONE
JOHN WATSON, BARBARA YORK-MAIN & BILL HUMPHREYS 28

UNRAVELLING THE MYSTERIES
OF VERTICORDIA
ELIZABETH GEORGE 35

SHOOTING FROM THE STARS
RAY BAILEY 39

PHOTO ESSAY
RAINBOW DESERT 42

BLAZING COMPUTERS
JUDI BECK 46

ROCKS OF AGES
GEOFFREY SHAW 48

REGULARS

IN PERSPECTIVE 4

BUSH TELEGRAPH 6

ENDANGERED
WALPOLE WAX 27

URBAN ANTICS 54

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