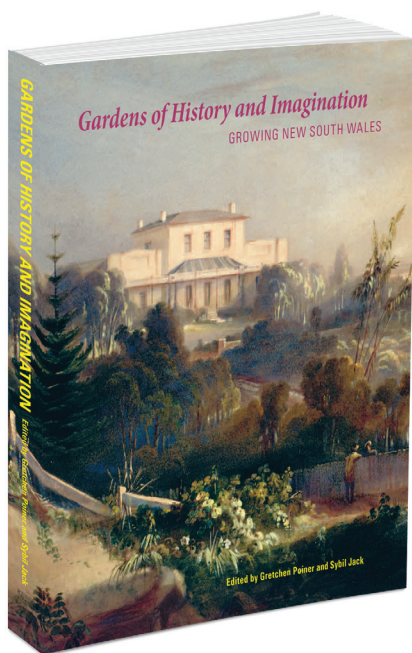




Gardens of History and Imagination: Growing New South Wales

Edited by Gretchen Poiner and Sybil Jack



To celebrate the bicentenary of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney University Press will release the *Gardens of History and Imagination: Growing New South Wales*, edited by Gretchen Poiner, an honorary associate in the Department of Anthropology, and Sybil Jack, an honorary associate in the Department of History at the University of Sydney. The book features ten scholars, members of the Independent Scholars Association (Sybil Jack, Janet George, Gaynor Macdonald, Ailsa McPherson, Colleen Morris, Gretchen Poiner, John Ramsland, Stuart Read, Catherine Rogers and Sue Rosen), exploring the significance of gardens in the history of New South Wales, and is richly illustrated with rarely seen images from the State Library's Mitchell collections.

As Gaynor Macdonald observes, the story of gardening in Australia does not begin in 1788. Aboriginal Australia is perhaps “the most humanised landscape in the world”, and can show us new ways of understanding how people and landscape interact.

While the first colonial gardens in New South Wales were planted for practical reasons, to grow food or medicine, from the start they had a deeper importance. As Gretchen Poiner writes in her introduction, for many early colonists “making a garden was not only an act of settlement – it was one of hope, promising productivity and beauty and, in these creative endeavours, establishing a new life and even a new identity.”

The authors explore the role of gardens in health and wellbeing, in social and cultural life, and in attempts to exercise moral control over the state's citizens. They consider how changing fashions in garden design have reflected shifting economic, cultural and technological conditions. And they tell the stories of individual gardens and the gardeners who made them, from suburban veggie patches to grand country estates.

Gardens of History and Imagination is co-published with the Independent Scholars Association of Australia with generous support from the Australian Garden History Society – Kindred Spirits Fund, the City of Sydney, the Nursery and Garden Industry Australia, the Royal Botanic Gardens and the State Library of NSW.

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Authors are available for interview.

About the editors

Gretchen Poiner is an honorary associate in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Sydney. She is a member of the Independent Scholars Association of Australia. **Sybil Jack** is an honorary research associate in the Department of History at the University of Sydney. She was Dean of the Faculty of Arts from 1986–1989.

