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THOMAS ROBERT NOEL LOTHIAN, O.B.E.

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Biography

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Noel Lothian, Director of the Botanic Gardens, Adelaide, from 1948 to 1980, was born in Melbourne in 1915 and educated at Scotch College. After attending Burnley Horticultural College he undertook professional training at Fitzroy Gardens, Christchurch Botanic Gardens, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and then Munich Botanic Gardens until 1939 when war was declared. During World War II he supervised army farms in New Guinea.

He returned to New Zealand to take a National Diploma of Horticulture for which he was awarded the Cockayne Gold Medal and held the post of Senior Lecturer in Horticulture at Lincoln Agricultural College from 1945-1947. He married Ngaio Chaffey in 1940.

On assuming the Directorship of the Botanic Gardens, Adelaide, in 1948, Noel Lothian became a Councillor of the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society of South Australia and remains a Councillor of that body and of the University of Adelaide where he was elected to the Council from 1978 to 1982 and again in 1987. He was Chairman of the Field Naturalists Society of South Australia between 1952 and 1954 and editor of the South Australian Naturalist from 1950 to 1974. He is Past President of the South Australian Division of the Royal Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation of which he is an honorary Life Fellow and Past Chairman of the South Australian National Parks Commission.

Noel Lothian has held numerous Government appointments to committees concerned with conservation, tree planting, land management and horticulture and visited overseas botanic gardens on behalf of the South Australian Government in 1974. In 1975 he visited China on an Australian Cultural Mission and since revisited the country with the Friends of the Botanic Gardens of which he is President.

Notable amongst his publications are *The Practical Home Gardener*, third edition 1967, *Growing Australian Plants* (with I. Holliday) 1967, *Commonsense Gardening* 1974 and *Complete Australian Gardener* 1976, second edition 1980.

Noel Lothian married in 1973 Elizabeth (Vivian) Exon. He was honoured with the Order of the British Empire in 1961 and the Royal Horticultural Society's Veitch Memorial Gold Medal in 1975. Retired from Botanical Gardens 1990?

#### SOURCES:

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Orton, James (ed.) Debrett's Handbook of Australia. 3rd edition. Sydney: Collins, 1987.